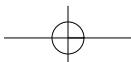


The Influence of Jewish Culture



HUMANITAS

STUDIA KULTUROZNAWCZE

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Badania

The Influence of Jewish Culture

**ON THE INTELLECTUAL HERITAGE
OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

Edited by
Teresa Obolevitch and Józef Bremer

Wyższa Szkoła Filozoficzno-Pedagogiczna „Ignatianum”

Wydawnictwo WAM

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Contents

Preface (Teresa Obolevitch, Józef Bremer)	9
---	---

Historico-cultural perspective

Tomasz Gąsowski Yiddish Land – an Expedition to the Land of Shadows.	13
Edyta Koncewicz-Dziduch Sephardi Jews in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Tradition and the Present	37
Alexander Lokshin On the History of Traditional Jewish Education in the Russian Empire: the Volozhin Yeshiva	49
Olga Gubareva The Mythologem of the Promised Land in the Soviet Culture	61
Małgorzata Śliż The Contribution of Scholars of Jewish Origin into the Development of Selected Fields of Study and Academic life, based on the example of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow in the Dayd of the Galician Autonomy.	67

Philosophico-theological perspective

Svetlana Klimova The Russian and Polish Existentialism as mirrored by the “Jewish Problem” (the turn of the 19 th and 20 th centuries)	79
Irina Bardykova “The Jewish Question” in <i>Writer’s Diary</i> by Fyodor Dostoyevsky.	89
Vyacheslav Musolov Dialogue of Cultures: the Role of the Philosopher (based on the Interaction between the Jewish and Russian Cultures in the 19 th century)	93
Victoria Kravchenko The Kabbalistic concepts in Vladimir Solovyov’s Philosophy: Philosophical Tools and the Creative Development of Ancient Tradition	101
Vyacheslav Moiseev Judaic Motifs in the Works of Vladimir Solovyov and his “Logic of the Absolute”	121

Alexey Kamenskikh Philo of Alexandria and Vladimir Solovyov: Two ways of Sophiology	127
Olga Zaprometova The Symbol of Torah as Wisdom and Light reflected in Eastern European Culture	137
Vadim Miroshnychenko On some features of the concepts of “Dialogue” and “Communion”: through Negation to All-Unity	147
Peter Ehlen The Personalistic Philosophy of Semyon L. Frank (1877–1950)	157
Teresa Obolevitch Judaic Motifs in the life and works of Semyon Frank	163
Oksana Dovgopolova The “fraudulent” place of Lev Shestov in Russian Culture	173
Krzysztof Duda Jews and the implications of Judaism in the life and thought of Nikolai Berdyaev	183
Ina Nalivaika From the Profane to the Sacred: the Dialogue between I and Another in Poetry and Everydayness	195
Olena Petrikovskaya The Image of Judaism and the Problem of Synthesis of Religions in the Philosophy of “New Religious Consciousness”	207
Oksana Kravchenko The religious roots of the Aesthetic Principles (V. Ivanov on the Sublime) . . .	215
Lidia Bogataya The Influence of Kabbalah Ideas on Analyses’ Methodology Formation of Symbolic Units (based on V. Shmakov’s works)	225
Elina Shekhtman The Seminal Idea of Dialogue in the Work of Martin Buber and Mikhail Bakhtin	241
Svetlana Panich “Jewish issue” in the Russian immigration discourse of 1930 th –1940 th : some reflections on the Witness of Mother Maria (Skobtsova)	249
Józef Bremer Wittgenstein and Hasidism: Some Remarks	267
Andrzej Gielarowski Revelation in the Philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig and Józef Tischner	289

Jacek Bolewski The Significance of Gershom Scholem for Christians.	311
Kirill Voytsel Israel and the Church: The Unity of the Community of Election in Karl Bacht's Interpretation.	327

Literary perspective

Dieter Schrey Borrowed Metaphysical Splendor. On the Possibility of an Aesthetic Theodicy after the Disruption of the Epoch (1914–1918) in the Example of Joseph Roth's <i>Job. Novel of a Simple Man</i>	347
Fritz Hackert Does Joseph Roth's <i>Hiob</i> Have a Happy Ending?	359
Elina Svetsitskaya, Sergey Sichov, Tamara Panich Jewish Tradition in Anna Akhmatova's Poetry	365
Irina Shatova Particular characteristics of the Kabbalistic Idea of the Invisible Word Representation in Daniel Kharm's Carnival Art	373



Preface

Jewish culture has left a lasting mark on the intellectual heritage of East-Central Europe. Yet what is it, in fact, that is meant by the phrase “Jewish Culture?” For example, was Jewish culture in the Austro-Hungarian Empire in essence the same as in Tsarist Russia? Even when we just focus on Jews residing in the latter of these two places at a specific historical juncture, talk of a single Russian Jewish culture seems highly imprecise. The reason for this state of affairs is partly to be found in the dispersed and diverse geography of the places where Jews have lived, as well as the not unconnected fact of the plurality of languages spoken by them (including Russian, Yiddish, German, Hebrew and Polish). Yet it also partly lies in the shifting attitude of the Jews themselves towards their own tradition, and towards religion and politics more generally. An example of this last feature is, perhaps, the plurality of approaches adopted to Zionist thought. Such thoughts about a culture inevitably prompt a further question: can it, whatever it is, be grasped from outside? Is it not the case that only those who acknowledge a culture as their own can properly claim to know it, and is it not then also the case that only these are entitled to evaluate the influence of other cultures with respect to its intellectual heritage? Moreover, as a result of the extermination of the Jews carried out during the period of the Second World War, we have, in an important respect, lost our access to the cultural phenomenon of a multi-national, multi-cultural and multi-faith East-Central Europe.

As editors of the book entitled *THE INFLUENCE OF JEWISH CULTURE ON THE INTELLECTUAL HERITAGE OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE*, we are concerned with these difficult issues, and it is for this reason that we have chosen to invite distinguished specialists from Belarus, Germany, Russia, the Ukraine and Poland, working in a variety of domains of the humanities, ranging from philosophy and theology to history and literary studies, to cooperate with us. As a result, this publication has an interdisciplinary character and sheds light on the subject

mentioned in its title in three distinct contexts. The first part (“Historico-cultural perspective”) contains articles that depict selected aspects of Jewish history and culture in East-Central Europe: i.e. in Poland, the Soviet Union and Russia, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Particular attention is paid to the motive of the Promised Land, and to educational questions. The second (“Philosophico-theological perspective”) explores and analyses the particular topics connected with the presence of strains of Jewish culture in the thought of a wide range of distinguished writers, philosophers and theologians of the 19th and 20th centuries, coming from Poland (Józef Tischner), Russia (Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Nikolai Leskov, Vladimir Solovyov, Semyon Frank, Lev Shestov, Nikolai Berdyaev, Vasily Rozanov, Vyacheslav Ivanov, Vladimir Shmakov, Mikhail Bakhtin, Mother Maria (Skobtsova), Viktor Malakhov, et al.) and German speaking (Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Gershom Scholem and Karl Barth). Finally, the third part (“Literary perspective”) presents material connected with the Jewish tradition that appears in the literary works of Joseph Roth, Anna Akhmatova and Daniel Kharms.

The resulting publication is supposed to furnish an opportunity for a strengthening of institutional and personal connections linking together scholars from Poland and from elsewhere, providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences. It is also conceived as a modest illustration of the state of research into Jewish culture (in the broader context of research not confined to Poland), and as a nexus of scholarly interaction. It is our hope that the presentation of Jewish threads in European civilisation, and the mutual currents of influence – sometimes hard to separate out – of these great cultures on one another, will engender a deeper understanding of their significance for the development of our intellectual heritage generally, and, especially, for the philosophical heritage of East-Central Europe, opening the way to further studies in the area of the history of ideas, as well as to interfaith dialogue.

We wish, here, to thank all of the authors who responded to our request for contributions to the book for their excellent and fruitful cooperation. We would also like to thank the administrative authorities of the “Ignatianum” Jesuit University of Philosophy and Education in Cracow, as well as the Goethe Institute in Cracow and *Ignatianum* Press/WAM, for all their assistance connected with the preparation of this volume for publication.

Teresa Obolevitch, Józef Bremer

HISTORICO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE



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Yiddish Land – an Expedition to the Land of Shadows

I. The search for Central Europe

Since ancient times, the fact that our continent was divided in a multitude of ways has been considered as obvious, constant and normal. Starting from natural conditions, through matters of ethnicity, culture, civilisation or, finally, politics, Europe has always been and remains divided in many different ways. There have been numerous divisions functioning in various times and various contexts, but I would like to concentrate on one division, which first appeared during the period between World War I and World War II. The authors of the division were a number of political scientists, as well as historians from Poland and Hungary. A particularly important role here was played by Oskar Halecki, who – starting from his speech during an international congress of historians in the year 1923, continued to promote the idea of the existence of another part of Europe, located between the Western and the Eastern parts of the continent – the Central Europe.¹ The idea was a kind of intellectual, but also partially political, reaction to

¹ J. Cisek, *Oskar Halecki: Historyk – szermierz wolności* [*Oskar Halecki: The Historian – a Champion of Freedom*], Warszawa: IPN – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu 2009, p. 9, 39-40. His most important publications concerning this matter include: *The Historical Role of Central-Eastern Europe*, Philadelphia 1944; *The Limits and Divisions of European History*, New York: Sheed & Ward 1950; *Borderlands of Western Civilization: a History of East Central Europe*, New York: The Ronald Press Company 1952, as well as *Historia Europy – jej granice i podziały* [*The Limits and Divisions of European History*], trans. by J.M. Kłoczowski, Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej 1994.

the profound changes which took place in Europe following World War I, which involved the fall of the neighbouring Romanov and Habsburg empires. As a result of these changes, a number of new countries appeared between the weakened Germany and the Soviet Russia, more or less in the middle of the continent. The elites of these countries were searching for a manner in which they could define their place in the inter-war Europe. These countries were created by nations which had either freed themselves from the rule of the tsar (the Balts, the Poles), or were the beneficiaries of the fall of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Stressing the separate character of this region became of even greater importance after World War II, when the political map of Europe ended on the Elbe river, and the remaining part of the map, which was coloured red, continued all the way to the Pacific Ocean and only had one centre: Moscow.

In the 1980s, the idea of Central Europe (in some sources, also the name of Central-East Europe is used) was revived. Independent of one another, three outstanding intellectuals: Milan Kundera from the Czech Republic, György Konrad from Hungary and Czesław Miłosz from Poland started to place great stress on the separate character of their “motherland Europe.” It seems that the most intensive reaction was provoked by the essay written by the first of the intellectuals, under the title *The Kidnapped West or the Tragedy of Central Europe*.² The essay was a kind of appeal, an emotional manifesto addressed to the public opinion of the free world, stating that between Western Europe and Eastern Europe (Russia, in other words), there existed Central Europe, a part of Europe which was culturally and historically connected with the western part of the continent. He began his essay by reminding the world of the profile of the director of a Hungarian press agency, who in the year 1956, on the day when the Soviet Union army entered Budapest, sent a telegram to the world, stating that “We would die for Hungary and for Europe.” The unique character of Central Europe, an area dominated by the Communists at the time, results from the fact that this region “had an extremely condensed experience of history.” The region was a bastard of history, which gave it up to Eastern Europe, to which it had never belonged culturally. Above all, it was the Europe of small nations – let us not depend that the author of the appeal came from Bohemia – which in the past used to be parts of the Austro-Hungarian empire. What are “small nations,” actually? They are nations which are not certain of their

² First printed in “Le Debat” (1983), then in the “New York Review of Books” 4 (1984). Polish edition was printed in “Zeszyty Literackie” 5 (1984).

fate, of their existence, which have to prove time and again to the world that they do exist and that their existence is indeed justified, most frequently on the basis of their input in the European culture. Central Europe is also the embodiment of the idea of multiculturalism. According to Mr Kundera, the central European model was based on the rule of maximum multiculturalism on a minimum space. At the end of his work, Kundera presents the profiles of two outstanding inhabitants of Central Europe, whose profiles are of unique importance for the following part of this argument. The first of them is Sigmund Freud, the Austrian psychologist who spent his childhood in Bohemia and his Jewish family came from the “Polish” Galicia. The second one is the German-speaking Jew Franz Kafka, who lived in the Prague and in the Czech language was used in his home. In my opinion, among many potential candidates, at least one more person should be mentioned: Joseph Roth, a famous Austrian writer who was born near Brody in Galicia, and who never managed to accept the fact of the collapse of his father land, the monarchy of Franz Joseph.³ At this moment, Kundera makes his most important point, stating that

Jews were the most important cosmopolitan element which integrated Central Europe. They were a kind of intellectual binding material for the region, an embodiment of its spirit and the creators of its spiritual unity.

And it was their disappearance that gave the hardest blow to the European character of this region, which became dominated by Russia as a result of the Second World War.

The idea was repeated, in a less emotional but equally suggestive manner, in the essay under the title *The Three Historical Regions of Europe* by the Hungarian historian and philosopher Jenő Szűcs,⁴ and also, at a slightly later date, by Timothy Garton Ash.⁵ In current times, the idea continued to be expressed not only by historians,⁶ but also by writers such as Yuri Andrukhovych or Andrzej Stasiuk. The territorial shape of the area has also

³ The novel *The Radetzky March* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie 1995), as well as the volume *The Bust of the Emperor* from the so-called Galician-Austrian triptych, Poznań: Bene Nati 1996.

⁴ First printed in *The Three Historical Regions of Europe*, Budapest: Magvető 1983, Polish edition under the title *Trzy Europy [Three Europes]*, trans. by J.M. Kłoczowski, Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej 1995.

⁵ T. Garton Ash, *The uses of Adversity: Essays on the Fate of Central Europe*, London: Penguin 1990.

⁶ Here, it is necessary to mention, above all, the founder of Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej [The Central-Eastern Europe Institute] in Lublin, professor Jerzy Kłoczowski.

recently been defined by Csaba G. Kiss.⁷ He defines the area as a territory “located East of Germany and West of the Russian-speaking area.” The area does not only include countries which comprised the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, but also countries outside the Empire, such as Poland and the Balkans.⁸

The discussion concerning Central Europe continues, in particular in terms of defining its borders and the formula – is it Central or Central-Eastern Europe? However, nobody questions the existence of the area any more. The argument rather concerns the definition of the character of the area – political or only cultural, or in other words, whether it is of material or only spiritual character. In terms of defining the area, I am in favour of the classical definition, according to which Central Europe encompasses the Polish-Lithuanian state, as well as the countries of the Crown of Saint Wenceslas and the Crown of Saint Stephen (i.e. the historic Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Hungary and Bohemia). In terms of the other facet of the definition, I place greater stress on the cultural aspect, although in some cases, the political aspect only played an important role in the consolidation of this region.⁹ A specialist in the field, the history professor Piotr Wandycz, in his work under the title *The Price of Freedom*, presented several constitutive features of this area which form the basis of the community.¹⁰ Among others, the professor mentions the important presence of the Jewish community and various roles played by the community in different areas of life. This means that the literary intuition of Milan Kundera was confirmed by the acclaimed historian, a professor at Yale University. It is not a surprise, then, that this territory is also frequently called “Yiddyshland.” The area and the fate of its inhabitants are the main theme of this text.

⁷ *Lekeja Europy Środkowej. Eseje i szkice* [*The Lesson of Central Europe. Essays and Sketches*], Kraków: Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury 2009.

⁸ *Jak widzimy siebie nawzajem. Obrazy narodów i uprzedzenia w Europie Środkowej* [*How We Perceive One Another. The Images of Nations and Prejudice in Central Europe*], “Herito – Dziedzictwo, kultura, współczesność” 1 (2010), p. 6.

⁹ As a result of the rule of the Jagiellonian dynasty, then the Habsburg dynasty, and after the year 1989, it was the so-called “Visegrád Group.”

¹⁰ P.S. Wandycz, *Cena wolności. Historia Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej od średniowiecza do współczesności* [*The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present*], trans. by T. Wyrozumski, Kraków: Znak 1995, p. 23-25.

II. The birth of Yiddishland. Ashkenazi Jews in Central Europe – from the darkness of the Middle Ages towards the lights of the Enlightenment period (11th–18th century)

Starting from the Middle Ages, the rulers as well as lords in the area had a supportive attitude towards the Jews coming to live in this area, who had in most cases been refugees from the Catholic monarchies of Western Europe, such as the German states, France or even Spain.¹¹ Their attitude remained friendly in spite of the protests of the local church authorities, who followed the Catholic doctrine of the time, which defined Jews as a threat to the believers in the only true, holy faith, as well as a group which was harmful for the social fabric, destroying it by its usury activities, and also the sale of alcohol. However, even though appeals, orders or even just warnings against any contacts with the “infidels” had been repeatedly issued since the thirteenth century, they did not manage to stop the constant, and sometimes dramatically increasing, influx of Jews into the area of Central Europe. While the motives of their migration towards the East are fairly obvious, the decisions taken by the local elites to accept the Jews, and in some cases even to encourage them to inhabit their lands are much more complicated. These decisions were not an act of deeply humanitarian tolerance, which they have sometimes been claimed to be. What was important was the multitude of various advantages of the presence of Jews for the area. These resulted from the fact that Jews specialised in various fields of the economy at the time, they became the initial group which formed the core of early inhabitants of towns, and were frequently in high demand in the newly created settlements. Another useful feature include the Jews’ skills in medicine or other more sophisticated handicrafts, such as e.g. minting. Another important feature worth noticing, which resulted in a fast increase in the number of Jews (also called Hebrews) in this area was the high birth rate.

A huge majority of Jews who decided to settle in this area were Ashkenazi Jews, one of the two major groups of the Diaspora, who had travelled from Italy to the Rhineland region, and then started to travel further towards

¹¹ The broadest printed collection of information concerning Jews in Central Europe is present in a two-volume work edited by the outstanding researcher David Gerszon Hundert: *The Yivo Encyclopaedia of Jews In Eastern Europe*, vol. 1-2, New Haven – London: Yale University Press 2008, which provides information on the current state of research conducted by numerous scientists from many countries and research centres who specialised in this subject matter.

the East.¹² As early as in the first half of the eleventh century, Jewish communities existed in the Prague, Cracow and Esztergom. In the centuries which followed, new communities were created, and the number of their inhabitants was rising at a fast rate. The wave of Jewish settlers was moving East together with the boundaries of Poland, and then the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Everywhere, the legal status of the inhabitants was defined by the *servitus Iudeorum* (“the captivity of Jews”) formula, which defined their dependence on the state authorities as well as the Church. Their status was further defined by special legal acts – statutes introduced at almost the same time, first by the king Bela IV of Hungary in 1251, then by Ottokar II of Bohemia in 1255, as well as the Greater Poland prince Boleslaw the Pious in 1264. It is worth noticing that the state laws created in this manner also accepted of some forms of Talmudic Law, respected the Torah oaths and also mentioned the *cherem* (the highest ecclesiastical censure). The religious life of Central Eastern Jews was, above all, based on the Talmud and on the tradition, and to a lesser extent on the decisions taken by the rabbis. At the same time, the first Jewish districts (“town”) were created – the earliest ones in the 1270s in the Prague. In the next two hundred years, following the collapse of the Spanish centre, the Prague was to become the most important centre of the Jewish spiritual and intellectual life on an European scale. At a later date, Poland increased in importance. The wealthy and densely populated communities in Cracow, Lublin, Lviv, or Vilnius, were inviting more migrants from the West, particularly as regular violence from the commoners or the edicts of Catholic monarchs, forcing Jews to be christened or be forced into exile, did not give them hope for a secure existence. The situation was different in Poland. It was then that the Jews became more frequently present on private lands, thus becoming dependent on the local lords. Their fate in some cases was worse, but frequently it was better than the fate of the Jews who remained under the rule of the monarch, in the cities controlled by the King.¹³ In this manner, the unique Central European community of Ashkenazi Jews was growing in the spirit of relative freedom of practising their religion, following their traditions and culture.

¹² H. Zaremska, *Żydzi w średniowiecznej Europie Środkowej: w Czechach, Polsce i na Węgrzech* [Jews in Medieval Central Europe: in Bohemia, Poland and Hungary], Poznań: Poznańskie Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk 2005, p. 29f.

¹³ Por. G.D. Hundert, *The Jews in a Polish private town*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press 1992, also A. Kaźmierczyk, *Żydzi w dobrach prywatnych w świetle sądowniczej i administracyjnej praktyki dóbr magnackich w wiekach XVI–XVIII* [Jews on private Lands in the Light of Judicial and Administrative Practices of Noblemen's Lands in the 16th – 18th centuries], Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka 2002.

The sixteenth century became “the golden age” in the history of Jewish communities in Central Europe, and above all, in Poland. The dynamic demographical growth facilitated the creation of new communities and the formation of a three-layer system of autonomic Jewish authorities which encompassed a number of districts, and whose crowning achievement was the Council of Four Lands (*Waad Arba Arcot*), which started operating in the 1580s, in Lublin and in Jarosław in turns. A similar institution was also created in Lithuania. From that time, the Jews living in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth enjoyed two centuries of the existence of a unique system of extended autonomy, which made it possible for them to live in relative peace, in accordance with the Torah, Talmud and the Halakha. At the same time, the system managed to strengthen the integrity of Jews in institutional, religious, cultural and also spatial (separate Jewish “towns,” districts, or streets) terms, thus turning Jews into a separate estate in the feudal society of the time. The accusations sometimes presented towards Jews, as well as signs of aggression (also in physical terms), which were ideologically supported by anonymous brochures stemming from the spirit of Christian anti-Judaism of the time, were much less frequent here than in the countries of Western Europe. However, there was also another aspect of this solution, which in following years started to develop into a difficult problem. The matter involved deep isolation of Jews from the surrounding Christian communities, which was made even stronger by the language difference. This was because at the time, the Ashkenazi Jews used their own language, a local version of Yiddish, which was sometimes called “jargon” by Poles. It was this situation that became the source of the legend presenting the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as “Po-lin,” a place where one could find shelter and a safe haven in the world. The Commonwealth was also sometimes called “the pillar of Torah,” or, somewhat exaggeratedly, the “Paradisus Judeorum” (the Jewish Paradise). Also other cities of the Commonwealth, such as Cracow, Lublin or Vilnius, became known after some time as “the New Jerusalem.”¹⁴

Nevertheless, the presence of the Jewish community remained clearly visible in the two remaining countries of the region. Consequently, when the “golden age” of the Jewish community in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth came to an end in the middle of the 17th century, the Prague again became the centre of the Jewish community in Europe. A sign of their

¹⁴ Cf. D. Kac, *Wilno Jerozolimą było. Rzecz o Abrahamie Sutzkeverze [Vilnius used to be Jerusalem. The Story of Abraham Sutzkever]*, 2nd edition, Sejny: Pogranicze 2004.

presence which is visible until this day is the perfectly preserved Jewish district in the city, nowadays one of the biggest tourist attractions in the whole region.

In spite of the fact that the condition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was gradually deteriorating, at the end of the 18th century it continued to be the home to nearly 80% of the whole global population of Jews. In the 19th century, this area had the biggest Jewish population in the world. Shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, the total number of Jews in the area exceeded five million, three quarters of the total number of Jewish inhabitants of the Old Continent. On the New Continent, that is in the USA, a community had only begun to form, then continued rising until at the end of the 20th century, it became the biggest Jewish community, which mainly comprised emigrants from Central Europe. However, the exceptional force and importance of the Central European Jewish community was not only defined by its sheer numbers.

In spite of some regional differences, the community formed a unified, almost homogenous group functioning within the Yiddish culture, as it is nowadays called. As was mentioned previously, it is for that very reason that this area is sometimes called “Yiddishland,” although today the name only refers to its historical heritage.¹⁵ When Jews were settling in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, in Bohemia or in Hungary – lands which starting from the 16th century were incorporated in the second inter-regional empire – the Habsburg Empire, they brought along their cultural heritage, which they continued to develop and enrich creatively, taking advantage of the favourable conditions. The basis of the heritage was formed by the unchangingly integral Judaism, including all its religious imperatives and prohibitions, religious observances, custom and way the lives of individuals, families and whole communities were organised. This kind of community life was organised within the Jewish Quahal (kehilla), the autonomous governments of Jewish communities, including their institutions, functions and structure. In all major cities of the region, Jewish quarters, sometimes even called Jewish towns, appeared and remained open in day time – the town of Kazimierz near Cracow is a good example. The towns did not have the form of closed ghettos, which were characteristic for Western Europe. Another unique form of Jewish settlements, unknown to the inhabitants of Western Europe, was the shtetl, a settlement which found its definite form in the 18th

¹⁵ For example E. Geller, M. Polit, *Jidyshland – polskie przestrzenie [Yiddishland – Polish Spaces]*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego 2008.

century. The shtetl was a town in which Jews comprised the majority of inhabitants.¹⁶ This kind of settlement is clearly a direct opposite of the Western European ghettos. A huge number of lands in Central and Eastern Poland, Lithuania, the Ukraine, Transylvania or Slovakia were covered with Jewish towns of this kind right as long as until the Second World War. It was the “Lord’s Land,” which was described, in a slightly poeticised manner, by Abraham Jehoszua Heschel.¹⁷ In some cases, the features of the shtetl are ascribed – due to the fact that this settlement is unique and not very clearly defined – also to towns in which Jewish inhabitants were not the majority, but which they themselves perceived as their “little homelands.” “Little” ones, as the “huge” homeland, their ideological homeland was always the Promised Land – the Palestine. Consequently, it is worth remembering that the country where the Jews settled, or the region or the country was not of major importance in this emotional system. The inhabitants of a shtetl were well-visible and fully participated in the social and cultural lives in these towns, and in some cases they were elected to hold important official positions. Finally, there is another important feature which characterised the inhabitants of this region – a unique form of religiousness which first appeared in the Podolia area in the middle of the 18th century as a result of the religious teachings of the “Master of the Good Name,” Yisroel (Israel) ben Eliezer, often called Baal Shem Tov or Besht, a Jewish mystical rabbi. He is considered to be the founder of Hasidic Judaism.¹⁸ In the following century, Hasidic Judaism became the dominating, although not the only form of religiousness for the huge numbers of Central European Jews. These were the beginning of the presence of Jews in this region and this is how the foundations for the existence, culture and cultural heritage were built for the Jewish community.

¹⁶ *The Shtetl: Myth and Reality*, A. Polonsky (ed.), “Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,” vol. 17 (2004).

¹⁷ A.J. Heschel, *Pańska jest ziemia: wewnętrzny świat Żyda w Europie Wschodniej [The earth is the Lord's; the inner world of the Jew in East Europe]*, trans. by H. Halkowski, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Esprit 2010.

¹⁸ Cf. J. Doktor, *Początki chasydyzmu polskiego [The Beginnings of Hassidic Judaism in Poland]*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 2004; *Hassidism in Romania*, “Studia Judaica,” vol. III (1994), p. 7-170. See also: R. Elijor, *Mistyczne źródła chasydyzmu [The Mystical Sources of Hassidic Judaism]*, trans. by M. Tomal, Kraków – Budapest: Wydawnictwo Austeria 2009.

III. Between Haskalah and Hasidic Judaism – the challenges and dilemmas of the 19th-century modernisation processes

The profound civilisation changes which took place in Western Europe starting from the end of the 18th – beginning of the 19th century, also reached the central part of Europe, resulting in a number of changes, new trends and phenomena. The feudal system, divided into a number of estates, in which every individual and every community had a predetermined position and way of life from the moment they were born to the moment they died, became a thing of the past. As a result, the former social order, which until then guaranteed a relative degree of security and freedom to the lives of Jews in Central Europe, was starting to crumble at an increasing rate.

The system was replaced by new principles and rules, based on the slogans of the victorious revolution: “Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.” The idea of human and citizen rights sounded both noble and beautiful, and it resulted in overcoming the barriers and increasing the sphere of contact between the Christians and the Jews, but one of its long-term consequences was an increase in competition between social groups. Previously, the competition was quite effectively cushioned by the estates structure, which was now coming to pieces.

The increasing competition did no longer involve the believers in two different religious systems – Christianity, in its various forms, and Judaism, which was also becoming more and more diversified, but encompassed all spheres of life in the modern nations which were forming at that time. The societies were becoming “modern” in the sense that their national ideologies were becoming stronger, as in the 19th century, various versions of nationalism were becoming popular among increasing number of citizens in this region, who previously did not have any self-awareness in terms of nationality.

A constitutive element of any ideology of this kind is always a kind of opponent, or even an enemy against which it is necessary to protect the nation, and which needs to be destroyed before “they” stand a chance of attacking “us.” As the principle of equal rights of Jews was proclaimed in a number of countries in the region, most frequently in constitutional form, the process of emancipation of Jews was encouraged.¹⁹ As a result of their

¹⁹ J. Katz, *Aus dem Ghetto in die bürgerliche Gesellschaft. Jüdische Emanzipation 1770–1870* [*Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770–1870*], Frankfurt am Maine: Jüdischer Verlag 1986, passim.

emancipation, Jews started leaving their ghettos (sometimes, literally, but more often in metaphorical terms) in the second part of the 19th century. As a result of the process, it became necessary to search for a new formula or formulas of co-existence between Jews and non-Jews within the frames of liberal democracy, which was slowly but surely making its way forward in our part of the continent. At the same time, these new circumstances encouraged, or even actually forced the inhabitants of the area to change their lifestyles, which had previously been strongly based on religious tradition, in a number of ways. What changes ought to take place in these terms? The issue became the matter of a heated discussion, whose participants included, on one side, the new Jewish elites which competed strongly against one another, and on the other hand, the huge groups of Jews who were unwilling to accept any changes. The arguments brought about profound changes inside the Jewish population in Central and Eastern Europe. The process of changes was initiated by the Jewish version of the European, Christian Enlightenment, called *Haskalah*, which began in Berlin in the 1770s.

It was as a result of this movement that the differences between Jews living in Western and Eastern Europe, who were now frequently called “*Ostjuden*.”²⁰ In Western Europe, Jewish inhabitants, whose number were relatively low, were eagerly taking advantage of the benefits of progressive democratisation of public life and becoming acculturated and then also assimilated, easily and willingly. In accordance with the popular formula of the time, they became German or French citizens in the streets, and Jews in the privacy of their homes. On the other hand, such changes were taking place in Central Europe in a much more complicated manner.²¹ There, the number of Jews was much higher and the tight-knit groups were more traditional and attached to Judaist values, which meant that they were far more resistant towards modernisation. The lifestyle in a *shtetl* was unchangingly regulated by the rhythm of a week and annual religious celebrations, and the time was measured in a different way, as Jews used their own calendar.

²⁰ Another way of differentiating between the two groups was by means of the clothes characteristic for both groups, hence the names “*Krawattenjuden*” and “*Kaftanjuden*,” see H. Haumann, *Historia Żydów w Europie Środkowej i Wschodniej* [*A History of East European Jews*], trans. by C. Jenne, Warszawa: Adamantan 2000, p. 133, as well as F. Battenberg, *Żydzi w Europie* [*Jews in Europe*], trans. by A. Soróbka, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków: Ossolineum 2008, p. 316f.

²¹ More information on the subject can be found in M. Wodziński, *Oświecenie żydowskie w Królestwie Polskim wobec chasydyzmu. Dzieje pewnej idei* [*The Jewish Enlightenment in the Polish Monarchy in relation to Hassidic Judaism. The History of an Idea*], Warszawa: Cyklady 2003.

Such lifestyle could not be easily changed. It continued, although small groups of young people who craved for a different life were gradually moving away from it.²² In search for a different type of education from the traditional one, they started to move to big cities in order to start learning in gymnasiums, and then to enter universities, which had already opened their doors for Jews by that time. On the other hand, others decided to travel to the new Promised Land (America) in search of better living conditions. For the inhabitants of a shtetl, contacts with the outside world remained limited, while those who had escaped or been evicted from the traditional communities were forced to face it. The outside world was a challenge for them and they were tempted by the idea of having an influence on its future shape. It was possible to shape the new world by attempting to match families such as the Rothschilds, the Hirschs, the Blochs, the Kronenbergs or the Poznańscy family, that is by making a fortune on the capitalist market, or alternatively by becoming outstanding intellectuals who influenced the intellectual life of the time, which was the path taken by those mentioned at the beginning of this work.²³ It was also possible to choose yet another way – reject the current social order and join revolutionary movements.²⁴ All that meant that the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century became the time of choosing a new way of living. These changes are reflected the life of Sholem Aleichem and his family, who became famous as a result of his literary work, and then as a result of a musical written on the basis of the work. The family described in the work lives in the village of Anatevka, on the border of what used to be Polish lands. The head of the family is Tevye the milkman, but what is more interesting than his life are the lives of his five daughters.²⁵ His favourite daughter Hodel has to follow her revolutionist husband Perchik into exile to Siberia. Bielke marries a wheeler-dealer, and runs away to America with him.

²² M. Kłańska, *Aus dem Shtetl in die Welt. 1772–1938. Ostjüdische Autobiographien in deutscher Sprache* [From the Shtetl to the world. 1772–1938. Autobiographies of Eastern European Jews in German], Wien – Köln – Weimar: Böhlau 1994, p. 241f.

²³ The first way is described in W. Sombart, *Żydzi i życie gospodarcze* [The Jews and Modern Capitalism], trans. by M. Brokmanowa, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN 2010, p. 188f.

²⁴ The supporters of this form of modernisation considerably increased the number of social democratic parties in Austria, Russia and Poland. The group of outstanding individuals of this kind is large and it includes O. Baurer, K. Kautsky, R. Luxemburg, L. Trotsky, A. Warski, J. Martow-Cederbaum, F. Perl and many others. For example, see M. Waldenberg, *Kautsky*, Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna 1976, as well as: *Jews, Poles, Socialists: the Failure of an Ideal*, A. Polonsky (ed.), “Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry,” vol. 9 (1996).

²⁵ Szolem Alejchem (S. Rabinowicz), *Dzieje Tewji Mleczarza* [Tevye the Milkman], trans. by A. Dresnerowa, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie 1989.

Chava elopes with a non-Jewish self-educated man (the new Gorky), but after some years returns to the family, which had considered her dead. However, the return to the Ukrainian Anatevka should rather be treated in symbolic terms, not as a return to the Diaspora, but as a return to Zionism, the new kind of Jewishness.²⁶ This is how the story presents the four paths, four choices of identity which became available for Jews living in Central and Eastern Europe. Tevye stands as a symbol of persistent presence in the face of adversity, even the threat of losing his life. The choices of his daughters include revolution, emigration to America and the Zionist emigration to the Palestine, or Erec Israel. In the case of Tevye's daughters, every choice they make is accompanied by adopting secular lifestyle, while maintaining selected fragments of the Yiddish culture. This certainly does not mean that their identity as Jews is in any way changed. From another point of view, Jewishness might be considered a stigma which could become a curse and, in some circumstances, a death sentence. This situation was also confirmed by other literary works, such as those written by the son and grandson of Hasidic rabbis, Icchak-Hersz Zynger, later the Nobel-prize winning novelist Isaac Bashevis Singer, who was born in Leoncin near Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki.²⁷ The proportion of Jewish inhabitants choosing each of the options varied in different parts of the region, as it depended on local conditions. For example, apart from the economic situation, a major role was played here by the policies of national governments and the accompanying moods in the society, or the attitude of the public opinion. An interesting example in this context is the case of Hungary, whose conservative elites decided to introduce a policy of integrating the Jewish community with the Magyar national community in the second half of the 19th century. The policy brought excellent results in the form of new, highly valuable and creative intellectual, political and economic elites of the country, which included citizens of Jewish origin but with a Magyar identity. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Budapest and Vienna were the two most numerous and most creative centres of Jewish intelligence on the European scale.

²⁶ Y. Slezkine, *Wiek Żydów [The Jewish Century]*, trans. by S. Kowalski, Warszawa: Nadir 2006, p. 227-229.

²⁷ Particularly in the novels: *Dwór [In My Father's Court]*, trans. by T. Wyrzykowska, Warszawa: PIW 1994, *Spuścizna [Estate]*, trans. by T. Wyrzykowska, Warszawa: PIW 1994, or *Rodzina Muszkatów [The Family Moscat]*, trans. by J. Borowik, Warszawa: Muza 2003, as well as in a number of short stories. The topic is also present in the Galician tetralogy written by Pesach Stark, the son of a melamed in Stryj, Julian Strykowski, later the Nobel Prize candidate: *Głosy w Ciemności [Voices in the Dark]* (1956), *Austeria* (1966), *Sen Azrilla [Azril's Dream]* (1975), and *Echo* (1988).

The policy only came to an end in the dramatic circumstances of the end of the Second World War.²⁸

IV. The time before the Holocaust (1918–1939)

The first years of the inter-war period seemed to be a harbinger of the opening of a new, difficult but still hopeful era in the history of the Central European Jews rather than the herald of its end. Jewish citizens received the status of ethnic minorities in individual countries which were created in this region following the collapse of the Habsburg empire and a partial movement of the borders of Bolshevik Russia towards the East, which was confirmed by the so-called small Versailles Treaty. Other positive changes included the consolidation of the elements of religious and cultural autonomy.²⁹ In spite of the progressive diversification of Jews in Central and Eastern Europe, the group managed to maintain the basis features of the Jewish community, including (albeit in various configurations) the Yiddish culture and religion, even though they were observed in many varying formulas and versions. However, it is important to point out that the Yiddish culture, which continued to grow so rapidly in this region until the beginning of the Second World War, was a culture created by Jews and for Jews, and not accessible for others. Non-Jews, on the other hand, were mostly uninterested in the culture or its representatives, with few exceptions, such as e.g. Stanisław Vincenz in Poland.³⁰

In each of the countries of the region, which included Poland (i.e. the Second Polish Republic), Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, the three Baltic states (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia), as well as Austria and, to a certain extent, the Balkan states (Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece), the lot of Jewish citizens was slightly different. The situation is adequately described in the excellent work by Ezra Mendelsohn *The Jews of East Central*

²⁸ E. Mendelsohn, *Żydzi Europy Środkowo-wschodniej w okresie międzywojennym* [*The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars*], trans. by A. Tomaszewska, Warszawa: PWN 1992, p. 136f.

²⁹ J. Żyndul, *Państwo w państwie?: Autonomia narodowo-kulturalna w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej w XX wieku* [*A Country within a Country? National-Cultural Autonomy in Central and Eastern Europe in the 20th Century*], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG 2000.

³⁰ His interest, particularly in Hassidic Jews, is clearly visible in many parts of his literary output, e.g. S. Vincenz, *Tematy żydowskie* [*The Jewish Themes*], London 1977, 2nd edition: Gdańsk: Atext 1993.

Europe Between the World Wars.³¹ Let us consider for a moment the situation of Jews in the biggest of these states, the inter-war Poland. “A bad time for Jews, a good time for Jewishness,” is the most succinct, synthetic characteristic of the fate of the three-million group of Jewish citizens of the Second Republic of Poland. It was a bad time, as it was difficult in economic terms – huge numbers of people were becoming impoverished and the attitude of a major part of the Polish society and political authorities was not sympathetic. At the same time, it was good because it was the last period of such splendid development of not only the Jewish culture, but also a unique kind of Jewish civilisation, which took place within the borders of the Polish state of the time.³² In the Second Polish Republic, Jews comprised about 10% (3–3.5 million) of the total number of its inhabitants, but in cities, and particularly in smaller towns, the proportion was far higher, for example, it amounted to 33% in the capital in the year 1921. Equal rights for Jews were guaranteed by the constitution, and the communities which were members of the Jewish Religious Association maintained a considerable degree of autonomy. Although trade remained the most important field of their economic activities, an increasingly important role was played by handicrafts, industry, services as well as freelance jobs. At that time, the Jewish community enjoyed extremely rich, differentiated and creative cultural as well as political life, which manifested itself in a number of individual artistic, educational and publishing achievements.³³ These accomplishments were the works of a community which was developing more and more clear-cut features of a modern nation with a pluralist internal structure. The processes of modernisation, which also reached the shtetls, resulted in a profound differentiation of the Jewish community in terms of culture and identity. The changes were taking place in a number of directions, starting from the total (albeit this time voluntary) negation of the external world, in the case of the Hasidic Jewish communities, which remained numerous, to a total Europeanization combined with secularisation or changing one’s religion, as well as one’s name and surname. The most important division lines were as follows: between the religious Jews (who were divided into three groups: the Orthodox Jews, the Reformed Jews and the Hassidic Jews) and the non-religious ones, as well as between the supporters of the Yiddish language and culture, the supporters of the Hebrew language and a small number of

³¹ Warsaw 1992.

³² E. Mendelsohn, *Żydzi Europy Środkowo-wschodniej...*, p. 120f.

³³ R. Żebrowski, Z. Borzymińska, *Po-lin. Kultura Żydów polskich w XX wieku [Po-lin. The Culture of Polish Jews in the 20th Century]*, Warszawa: Amarant 1993, p. 111f.

Polonized Jews. These divisions were accompanied by differences in the economic and professional status and the different ideological choices. In the inter-war Poland, Jews were divided into a number of formations of Zionists, socialists connected with the Bund, as well as a number of liberal democrats and communists, whose numbers were slightly higher. The divisions were reflected in the intensive political life, particularly during the times of parliamentary or local government elections. In this way, within the 20 years of the inter-war period, Poland became the global centre of Jewish spiritual life. It also acted as a unique laboratory in which the role models of modern Jews were formed. The process took place in spite of the difficult economic situation and the unfavourable direction in which the Polish-Jewish relations were moving. The signs of anti-Semitism, which became particularly strong in the 1930s, and which were visible, among others, at universities (the *numerus clausus* rule and then the *ghetto benches*), were a symptom of the existence of the complicated matter of Jews, which could indeed not be solved within a national state, which the Second Polish Republic actually was.³⁴ The previous feeling of being mutual strangers was now accompanied by modern ideologies and political programmes, which left too little room for any integration. At the moment when the Polish state was born in November 1918, differences appeared between Poles and Jews in the way the future of the country was perceived. The differences had various practical consequences, which became visible many times in the years to follow, until matters came to a head at the moment of the Soviet attack on Poland on 17th September, 1939.³⁵

Another important element of the time was the separation of a Jewish community of a few million people, which remained within the borders of the Soviet Russia, from the remaining part of the community. However, even in that community, it was possible to maintain some elements of the Yiddish culture, although in a purely secular form, as well a considerable

³⁴ M. Natkowska, *Numerus clausus, getto lawkowe, numerus nullus, "paragraf aryjski": antysemityzm na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim 1931–1939* [*Numerus Clausus, the Ghetto Benches, Numerus Nullus, "the Aryan Paragraph" – Anti-Semitism in the Warsaw University 1931–1939*], Warszawa: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny IN-B 1999.

³⁵ N. Davies, *Smok wawelski nad Tamizą, Eseje, polemiki, wykłady* [*The Wavel Dragon on the Thames. Essays, Polemics, Lectures*], Kraków: Znak 2001, p. 132. The consequences of that are described in M. Wierzbicki, *Polacy i Żydzi w zaborze sowieckim. Stosunki polsko-żydowskie na ziemiach północno-wschodnich II RP pod okupacją sowiecką (1939–1941)* [*Poles and Jews under the Soviet rule. The Polish-Jewish Relations on the North-Eastern Lands of the Second Republic of Poland under the Soviet Occupation (1939–1941)*], Warszawa: Fronda 2001, p. 192f.

number of autonomous institutions, including an attempt made at creating the new, Soviet Promised Land in the form of the autonomous Jewish Birobidzhan oblast.³⁶ Another numerous group of Jews became an important part of the political and intellectual elites of the country.³⁷ Whether the memory of the Jewish background was cultivated at all and to what degree was rather a matter of individual choice than any generally-accepted rules.³⁸ The situation changed dramatically in the year 1937, when a relatively liberal (in terms of Soviet Russia) policy concerning ethnic minorities suddenly changed into a wave of repressions as a result of Stalin's decision. The first victims of the repressions were Poles, but Jews were not spared either, including Jews who had until then been supporters of the machine or terror (e.g. Geinrich Jagoda).³⁹ Jewish communists and intellectuals who had until then been members of Bolshevik civil and army elites were uprooted, while others were suddenly banned from demonstrating their Jewish identity. A good example of the sudden change was the fate of Birobidzhan and its inhabitants. Only a small number of the inhabitants, such as the famous writer Ilya Ehrenburg, the creator of the unforgettable literary character of Lejzork Rojtszwaniec, a tailor from Homel, managed to survive the wave of terror, which only came to a definitive end after the beginning of the war against Germany in the year 1941. At that time, the whole Central and Eastern Europe came under the domination of Hitler, which put an end to the existence of Jews in the region. The genocide in Ponary near Wilno or Babi Jar near Kiev in the summer of 1941 were in fact the beginning of the terrifying actions of Holocaust.⁴⁰ The experience of genocide again brought together the fates of Jewish inhabitants of Central and Eastern Europe.

³⁶ A. Patek, *Birobidzhan – sowiecka Ziemia Obiecana? Żydowski obwód autonomiczny w ZSRR [Birobidzhan – the Soviet Promised Land? The Jewish Autonomous Oblast in USSR]*, Kraków: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze “Historia Iagellonica” 1997, p. 21f.

³⁷ Y. Slezkine, *Wiek Żydów*, p. 125, presents, among others, the profile of Isaac Babel. The most recent work in which the matter is discussed is A. Polonsky's *The Jews in Poland-Lithuania and Russia 1350 to the Present Day*, vol. 3, 1914–2005, Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, Oxford 2011 (November).

³⁸ In some cases, one can come across the description of the followers of revolutionary trends as non-Jewish Jews, cf. P. Johnson, *Historia Żydów [The History of the Jews]*, trans. by M. Godyń, M. Wójcik, A. Nelicki, Kraków: Platan 1993, p. 476-480.

³⁹ See T. Wittlin, *Komisarz [Commissar]*, London 1972, also: P. Wiczorkiewicz, *Łańcuch śmierci. Czystka w Armii czerwonej 1937–1939 [The Chain of Death. The Purge within the Red Army 1937–1939]*, Warszawa: Rytm 2001.

⁴⁰ A unique story describing the genocide can be found in Jonathan Littell's novel *Łaskawe [The Kindly Ones]*, trans. by M. Kamińska-Maurugeon, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie 2008.

V. After the war – heritage and memory

Holocaust (Genocide, Shoah), which was caused by Germany during the Second World War, brought an end to the existence of Central European community of Ashkenazi Jews, the creators and recipients of the Yiddish culture. After the year 1945, the memory concerning the events and experiences, both individual and group ones, of wartime, became the central frame of reference in the relationships between the Jewish and non-Jewish inhabitants of the region, and often the topic of a heated argument, which has not become any weaker with time.⁴¹ The majority of those who had survived the Holocaust mostly chose to move to Erec Israel and became the architects of the new state. Those who remained made an attempt for some time at reconstructing certain elements of their former lives, but they were not successful in any of the countries under Communist rule. However, even in these cases it is possible to notice some slight differences in terms of the functioning of some Jewish, non-political and almost exclusively secular institutions, such as schools, the press, associations, theatres, research institutes or the one exceptional rabbinic seminary. Still, what cannot be omitted is a group of high-level functionaries of the Communist system in “people’s democratic republics,” who were of Jewish background but became attracted to the Marxist ideology. As time passed, they evolved from being fervent supporters of Stalin to the position of revisionists, and finally, in some cases, became dissidents who defied the choices they had made in their youth.⁴²

The echoes of the Six-Day war, as well as the anti-Israeli (officially anti-Zionist) political position of Moscow and its satellite states caused an even further deterioration in the conditions for public cultivation of Jewishness.⁴³

⁴¹ More information on that topic can be found in T. Gaśowski, *Polaków i Żydów spór o pamięć* [*The argument concerning memory between Poles and Jews*], in A.P. Bieś SJ, B. Topij-Stempińska (eds.), *Pamięć wieków. Księga jubileuszowa dedykowana księdzu profesorowi Ludwikowi Grzebieńowi SJ z okazji 70. urodzin* [*The Memory of Ages. A Jubilee Book Dedicated to Priest Professor Ludwik Grzebień on His 70th Birthday*], Kraków: Wydawnictwo “Ignatianum” – Wydawnictwo WAM 2010, p. 171f.

⁴² Cf. M. Shore, *Kawior i popiół: życie i śmierć pokolenia oczarowanych i rozczarowanych marksizmem* [*Caviar and Ashes: A Warsaw Generation’s Life and Death in Marxism, 1918–1968*], trans. by M. Szuster, Warszawa: Świat Książki 2008, also: J. Nalewajko-Kulikow, *Obywatel Jidyszlandu* [*The Citizen of Yiddishland*], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton, Instytut Historii PAN 2009.

⁴³ Cf. B. Szaynok, *Z historią i Moskwą w tle: Polska a Izrael 1944–1968* [*With History and Moscow in the Background: Poland and Israel 1944–1968*], Warszawa: IPN – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu – Wrocław: Uniwersytet Wrocławski 2007, passim.

With the exception of Romania, all diplomatic relations with Israel were terminated and any ground for dialogue between the cultures disappeared. For that reason, it is not surprising that a phenomenon characteristic for these places and times appeared: in the new, after-war reality, an undefined number of Jews who survived the Holocaust never returned to their past identity. Some of them chose to do that only towards the end of their lives; and in some cases, the hidden identity is only discovered and adopted by their children or even grandchildren.

For nearly forty years after the Second World War, societies in Central European countries (officially called “people’s democratic republics”) were living and functioning as if no Jews had ever inhabited the area. The groups or circles of “The Last Ones” who received the permission to exist from the authorities were again in a situation which resembled the ghetto.⁴⁴ Living in constant fear, they tried not to attract anybody’s attention. Anyway, actually nobody was really interested in them, except for times when negative emotions were running high, as was the case e.g. in Poland in the year 1968. The traces of Jewish cultural heritage which survived in some areas, such as e.g. Jewish cemeteries, synagogues or other public buildings were treated as ownerless objects, were slowly falling into ruin, and in some cases were purposefully destroyed. The remains of the Jewish culture in this region which are the most impressive are Jewish districts or quarters, including the most beautiful and best-preserved Jewish quarter in the Prague. For years, they were deserted and slowly went into ruin. The matter of Jewish existence was not mentioned in schools, and generations of students were educated in total unawareness of the past presence of Jews and their current absence. Only rarely were some anniversaries celebrated in a formulaic manner, mainly the anniversaries of the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto.⁴⁵ Virtually no action was taken to remember the Holocaust, which is proven by the exhibitions in the Auschwitz museum at the time. Only a small number of people felt the void and cultivated the memory of people and places who were no longer there, of their world which was irrevocably destroyed.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Cf. T. Tomaszewski, M. Niezabitowska, *Ostatni: współcześni Żydzi polscy* [*The Last Ones: Modern Polish Jews*], Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe 1993.

⁴⁵ R. Kobylarz, *Walka o pamięć. Polityczne aspekty obchodów rocznicy powstania w getcie warszawskim 1944–1989* [*The Struggle for Memory: Political Aspects of Celebrating the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Anniversaries 1944–1989*], Warszawa: IPN. Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu 2009, p. 430f.

⁴⁶ See M. Pollack, *Po Galicji. O chasydach, Huculach, Polakach i Rusinach. Imaginacyjna podróż po Galicji Wschodniej i Bukowinie, czyli wyprawa w świat, którego nie ma* [*After Galicia. On Hassidic Jews, Huculis, Poles and Russians. An Imaginary Trip around East-*

The first signals of oncoming change in these terms appeared in the 1980s. The mechanisms and circumstances of the gradual revival of the memory of the Jewish citizens in Central Europe were also complicated and heterogeneous. In Catholic societies, a considerable role was certainly played by the change in the attitude of the Church, which finally took place during the pontificate of John Paul II. However, an important role was also played by the new political attitude of the leaders of some Communist states. The first countries to adopt the new attitude were Romania and Hungary, which were followed by the People's Republic of Poland at the time of the rule of general Wojciech Jaruzelski.⁴⁷ There is no doubt that some role was also played by the fact mentioned at the beginning, the revealing of the identity of Central Europe by the Czech, Hungarian or Polish intellectuals, who defied the Communist reality. What is more, Poland was also experiencing the Solidarity movement revolution, which caused profound changes in the minds and hearts of many millions of Poles, opening the door to the previously forbidden or concealed memory, as well as knowledge concerning the past. The topics which were reintroduced, and in many cases discovered, were also those concerning the Jewish citizens of Poland, the neighbours or past friends of one's parents. All societies of the region entered the new reality following the collapse of the Communist system with a full awareness of the existence of the complicated problems of Jewish fate, history, pre-war relationships frequently characterised by anti-Semitism, the matter of the Holocaust and Poles' reaction towards the genocide, as well as the difficult co-existence after the war. It was not yet knowledge, but rather a kind of curiosity and a certain feeling of readiness to face that past. Research conducted by historians, but also by specialists from other scientific disciplines in the 1990s, activities aimed at popularising the topic, as well as research conducted by a rising number of amateurs interested in the subject matter only managed to reveal the scale and the complicated nature of the problem and provided guidelines for the direction of future activities.⁴⁸ They also revealed the difficulties on the road towards

ern Galicia and Bukovina, or Travelling into a World which is not], trans. by A. Kopacki, Wołowiec: Wydawnictwo Czarne 2001, p. 175, 193, 203.

⁴⁷ The circumstances for starting the Polish – Jewish dialogue are described by A. Polonsky, *Stosunki polsko-żydowskie od 1984 roku: Refleksje uczestnika* [*Polish-Jewish Relationships since the Year 1984: Thoughts of a Participant*], Kraków – Budapest: Wydawnictwo Austeria 2009.

⁴⁸ The gradual development of post-war research on the history of Jews is described in T. Gaśowski, *Dzieje Żydów w polskiej historiografii (do roku 2000)* [*The History of Jews in Polish Historiography (until the Year 2000)*], in K. Ślusarek (ed.), *Polska i Polacy w XIX–XX*

bringing closer the viewpoints of both the Polish (and not only) and the Jewish parties and start a more intensive discussion. The process of revealing the pieces of the past showing the fate of Jews during the war or during the later years is sometimes very difficult or even painful, which is proven for example by the heated discussions concerning the books of Jan Tomasz Gross, Jan Grabowski or Barbara Engelking published almost simultaneously at the beginning of the year 2011,⁴⁹ but also in numerous artistic, literary, film or television statements made in various places of the globe on the theme of the Holocaust.

After all these tensions and emotions, it seems that the process of reviving memory in Poland could be on the most advanced stage among all countries from the region of Central Europe. As a result, more and more care is taken of the process of protecting the Jewish heritage. The process is sometimes initiated and conducted by the state authorities (e.g. in the case of existing and newly created museums and education), but in many cases, the idea is initiated by local communities, which in my opinion is particularly valuable. Good examples of such initiatives are the activities aimed at the renovation and revitalisation of old Jewish quarters, such as the one in the Cracow district of Kazimierz, as well as in other places in this part of Europe.⁵⁰ Moreover, in many small towns their forgotten shtetl character is rediscovered, synagogues are being renovated and Jewish cemeteries are being tidied up. What is more, various elements which bring back the memory of the former inhabitants are being introduced.⁵¹ A matter which is

wieku. *Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Mariuszowi Kulczykowskiemu w 70. rocznicę Jego urodzin [Poland and Polish Citizens in 19th and 20th Centuries. A Study Offered to Professor Mariusz Kulczykowski on His 70th Birthday]*, Kraków: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze "Historia Iagellonica" 2002, p. 431-453

⁴⁹ I. Grudzińska-Gross, J.T. Gross, *Złote żniwa. Rzecz o tym, co działo się na obrzeżach Zagłady Żydów [The Golden Harvest. A History of what happened on the Fringes of Holocaust]*, Kraków: Znak 2011; J. Grabowski, *Judenjagd. Polowanie na Żydów 1942–1945. Studium z dziejów pewnego powiatu [Jugenjagd. The Hunt for Jews 1942–1945. The Study of a District]*, Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów 2011; B. Engelking, *Jest taki piękny pogodny dzień. Los Żydów szukających ratunku na wsi polskiej 1942–1945 [It is such a Beautiful Sunny Day. The Fate of Jews Searching for Help in Polish Countryside 1942–1945]*, Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów 2011.

⁵⁰ M. Murzyn-Kupisz, J. Purchla (eds.), *Reclaiming Memory. Urban Regeneration in the Historic Jewish Quarters of Central European Cities*, Kraków: International Cultural Centre 2009, p. 121f.

⁵¹ E.g. Brańsk. See E. Hoffman: *Sztetl [Shtetl]*, trans. by M. Ronikier, Warszawa: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza 2001; A. Sabor, *Sztetl: śladami żydowskich miasteczek: Działoszyce, Pińczów, Chmielnik, Szydłów, Chęciny [Shtetl: in the Footsteps of Jewish Towns: Działoszyce, Pińczów, Chmielnik, Szydłów, Chęciny]*, Przewodnik, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Austeria

of great importance is the introduction of the topic of Jews into the education curriculum, also on a local scale.⁵² Another important form of reviving the memory of the murdered Jews are Memorial Marches organised in a number of towns and cities on the anniversary of liquidating the ghetto. A form which is taking a wholly different direction is the attempt made at the second reconstruction of the Jewish lifestyle after the Second World War. These activities are supported by a number of foundations, schools, publishing houses, new Jewish communities are being created and some signs of religious life are finally returning.⁵³ Finally, the subject matter is more frequently, and, what is more important, somehow naturally, present in the public discourse. The memory of the Central European community of Ashkenazi Jews, the people and the places which used to be their “little homelands,” the small towns whose disappearance was bewailed in the elegy of Antoni Słonimski⁵⁴ also remains present in Israel, where the survivors found shelter. One form of activity present here are the Jewish Memorial Books.⁵⁵

There is no doubt that the time of restoring the memory continues. The starting point for this process is becoming aware of the void left after the disappearance of five million people who had been living in this part of Europe for ages.⁵⁶ Interest in Jewish culture has ceased to be a fashionable novelty and become a permanent component of the scientific and intellectual life in probably all countries of Central Europe, which is probably most spectacularly proven by the Cracow-based Festival, which is now matched by similar events in Warsaw, Poznań and Łódź. During each of these events, an attempt is made or at least suggested, as is the case e.g. in Lithuania, the

2005; M. Adamczyk-Garbowska (ed.), *Kazimierz vel Kuzmir: Miasteczko różnych snów* [*Kazimierz vel Kuzmir: A Town of Various Dreams*], Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS 2003.

⁵² M. Adamczyk-Garbowska, *Dziedzictwo kulturowe Żydów na Lubelszczyźnie: materiały dla nauczycieli* [*The Cultural Heritage of Jews in the Lubelszczyzna Region: Materials for Teachers*], Lublin: Ośrodek “Brama Grodzka-Teatr NN” 2003.

⁵³ Cf. the interview with the Polish Head Rabbi Michael Schudrich, M. Petrov, Michael Schudrich: *Mam takie czuć* [*I Have This Feeling*], “Malemen. Life Style and Everything in Between” 1 (2011), p. 41-43.

⁵⁴ A. Słonimski, *Elegia o żydowskich miasteczkach* [*An Elegy for Jewish Towns*], in idem, *Nowe wiersze* [*New Poems*], Warszawa: Czytelnik 1959.

⁵⁵ M. Adamczyk-Garbowska, A. Kopciowski, A. Trzeciński (eds.), *Tam był kiedyś mój dom... Księgi pamięci gmin żydowskich* [*This used to be My Home... Memorial Books of Jewish Communities*], Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS 2009. Also J. Boyarin, J. Kugelmass, *From a Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry*, New York: Schocken Books 1985.

⁵⁶ T. Rolke, S. Schramm (eds.), *Tu byliśmy. Ostatnie ślady zaginionej kultury* [*This is where we were. The Last Traces of a Lost Culture*], Berlin – Warszawa: Edition.foto Tapeta 2008, p. 9.

Ukraine or Hungary, at making a very difficult examination of conscience concerning the relationships between Jews and non-Jews, particularly during the Second World War. Fortunately, Auschwitz and the Holocaust are no longer the only ground on which such an attempt is made. What returns is the memory of eight centuries during which the groups coexisted – if not together, then at least near one another, a time which after all was characterised by a lot of happy and bright moments.

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Sephardi Jews in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Tradition and the Present

The eternal wanderers – this is what they say about Jews. Living in dispersion, constantly in search for their place in the world. Historically, the main centre of their existence was Europe, but even there they did not constitute a coherent ethnic group. The Jewish Diaspora consists of two factions: Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi Jews living in Central and Eastern Europe; and the Sephardim, originally inhabiting the area of the Iberian peninsula and using *Ladino* language, a dialect of Spanish. For several centuries, these two groups of Jews formed a large part of the population of Europe, which became their new homeland, however not always very welcoming to them.

In the late 15th century Sephardi Jews migrated to the Balkans from the Iberian Peninsula, where they had lived for fourteen centuries and they had become the creators of great culture and wealth of these lands. When Spain fell under the political and cultural influence of Arabs in the second half of the 8th century, the Arab world became an inspiring factor for Jewish culture, especially literature. Not only did those two cultures, the Arab and Jewish one, not compete with each other, but they coexisted, mutually enriching one another without losing their own peculiarity. Jewish culture in Spain was experiencing its “golden age” in the 13th century, but soon its fate was to be much worse.¹ This was related to the initiative of Reconquista policy launched by the Catholic Spain and based on a purge of foreign elements. The Sephardi Jews suffered a big blow being exiled from their homeland

¹ J. Osti, *Żydzi w Bośni i Hercegowinie*, “Krasnogruda” 7 (1997), p. 52.

by the Spanish edict of 1492 issued by King Ferdinand, ordering Jews to convert to Catholicism or leave the country. Of course, the vast majority chose the exile and started seeking a new homeland. This was the time of a significant dispersion of the Sephardi Jews and decline of their culture. Predominantly, they headed east, often seeking refuge in areas under the influence of the Ottoman Empire.

The history of the Jewish settlement in the Balkans

What caused the Jews to settle among Muslims, whom all Europe feared so much in those times, rather than in Catholic countries? In the case of the Sephardis, they certainly kept in mind their good memories drawn from the period of coexistence with the Arabs back in the Iberian Peninsula. Besides, Muslims in the Ottoman Empire kept to the so-called Zimm law, which protected “the peoples of the Book,” including Jews, from the forced conversion to Islam. It allowed the Jews to maintain their administrative, legal, educational and religious autonomy. They were permitted to create their own administrative units, municipalities and also to have their own judiciary. They could use their language and did not have to assimilate culturally, but in return they were obliged to pay taxes and they could not perform conversions to their own faith. The Jews who came to the Balkans, or more precisely to the areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, were subordinate to the Turkish Empire and quite favorably received by Sultan Bayezid II, who welcomed them with these words: “Can I call wise and prudent a king who impoverishes his country and enriches my empire?”² This proves recognition of the new ethnic group that joined the multinational empire, mainly because of their merits in the field of science and culture and out of respect for their devotion to religion and tradition, in the interests of which they were ready to choose exile rather than quiet and prosperous life. Josip Osti, a representative of the Jewish people living in Bosnia, a writer and poet, stated many centuries later:

Jews had to choose between threefold evils: to embrace Catholicism, burn at the stake or leave Spain. Those who chose to emigrate and seek a new homeland, became guardians of the faith, morals and culture.³

² K.-M. Gauß, *Umierający Europejczycy*, trans. by A. Rusenau, Wołowiec: Czarne 2006, p. 7.

³ J. Osti, *Żydzi w Bośni i Hercegowinie*, p. 53.

Jews were not a totally unknown ethnic group in the Ottoman state, as small groups of Ashkenazis and Romaniotes had already settled in Sarajevo, Travnik, Istanbul, Izmir and Sofia. At first they did not look very favorably upon the newcomers who, in addition, predominated over them in terms of their origins, tradition and culture. In the Spanish State, before the exile, the Jews had formed one of the most respected and well-off groups in the society. Here, their fate was about to deteriorate, but the sense of national pride and honour remained and accompanied them for many years. Although, as already mentioned, the Sephardim were a wealthy group, they could bring with them only as much as they were able to carry. However, as emphasized by scholars of the Jewish culture in Bosnia, they retained their most valuable treasure – the Ladino language, a Judeo-Spanish dialect which survived the long journey. Thanks to that, as well as the Hebrew books, liturgical rituals and ceremonies, they managed to preserve their national and religious identity. They determined the Sephardi spiritual superiority over the earlier groups of Jews residing there, and soon led to their assimilation.

The historians are not unanimous as to the exact date of arrival of the Sephardim to Bosnia, mostly to Sarajevo. It can be approximated on the basis of the books and documents that are fortunately extant. It is known that the first Sephardi Jewish community was established in 1565 and the first synagogue was built in Sarajevo after 1581, with the consent of the Sultan (it burnt down in the great fire of 1697 during the siege laid by Eugene of Savoy). The sources of these data are various kinds of historical documents, not necessarily Jewish ones, since the majority of them was destroyed during the wars in Bosnia in the 20th century. One of the pioneers of the historiography of the Jews in Bosnia was their compatriot Moritz Levy, a high school teacher in Sarajevo. He was the author of the 1911 first large-scale comprehensive publication entitled *Sephardim in Bosnia*. He reconstructed the history of his nation on the basis of documents preserved in Bosnia such as the records of a Koran court, which resolved disputes within the non-Muslim population of Sarajevo, or Pinakes – registry books of the Sephardi community in Sarajevo, which contained important information about the activities, revenues and expenditure of the municipality. Every Jewish community was obliged to keep that kind of books, so they could serve as a kind of chronicle of the community. The registries also contained vital information about institutions, charitable and cultural societies, as well as Jewish press.⁴

⁴ K.-M. Gauß, *Umierający Europejczycy*, p. 39.

The Jews who settled in Bosnia reluctantly came into contact with the native Slavic and Turkish population and resided in a separate district Sarajevo – Velika Avlija. The main reason for the cultural isolation of the Jews was the lack of knowledge about the languages spoken in Bosnia in those days: Turkish, Arabic and Slavic languages. They missed out on a lot because of that, but on the other hand, they kept their own language – Ladino, which stayed unchanged until the late 19th century, when it began to adopt vocabulary of other languages: Slavic, Turkish, and later also German. Maintaining Ladino unchanged facilitated contact between the Sephardi communities scattered in the Mediterranean, like Dubrovnik, Split or Skopje, as well as with the Jews settled in East Africa and the Middle East. This language was known to all Jewish residents of the area as a specific form of *lingua franca* used while establishing new trade relations. Interestingly, the Jews did not limit themselves to using the language only in temples or during religious rituals (that sphere belonged rather to Hebrew), but they used it in their everyday life. Ladino was also a language of oral and written poetry (romance). However, with the passage of time, the knowledge of Ladino started to disappear as a result of advancing assimilation processes, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, development and dissemination of education, as well as a large extermination of its users during World War II. Today Ladino is already a relic, used to a small extent by Jews settled in Israel. In Bosnia one could perhaps meet a few people familiar with the language, able to read it and sing it, but they wouldn't use it in their everyday communication anymore.

A kind of cultural and social revolution were for the Sephardi Jews the events in Bosnia in 1878, when as a result of the decreasing power of Turkey, there was a change from the Turkish occupation to the Austro-Hungarian one. Along with their domination in these areas, Austria-Hungary introduced in Bosnia their own administration, attended by many officials, and then there came a second wave of Jewish population, but this time they were Ashkenazi Jews from Central Europe. They were largely well-educated people, of course, and initially aroused suspicion or even fear of the local Jewish community, as they did not know their language and they differed in dress, demeanor and manners. The natives even wondered whether they were real Jews. Initially, both groups lived side by side, without assimilating tendencies. In 1879, there was the first Ashkenazi community founded in Sarajevo. Still, the majority were Sephardim and the Ashkenazi population never exceeded 15% of Jewish population in Bosnia. Wealthy and educated Ashkenazim also built their own synagogue in Sarajevo in

1902, which is currently the only active synagogue in all Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁵ The positive side of the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina were the changes in the consciousness of the inhabitants of these areas that led to “Europeanization.” It also stimulated the contact with other ethnic groups, the processes of assimilation and the desirability of greater participation in social, political and cultural life of the country. Changes to the education system contributed a lot to this state of affairs, particularly the widespread education, which included the Jewish children, previously attending the Jewish elementary school known as Meldar, or were taught at home. Jewish girls, most of whom were unable to read and write, were also taken into consideration in the education system, and so as of the beginning of the 20th century could attend school. The opening of public high schools allowed Jews to learn the Serbo-Croatian language and gave them an opportunity to develop and maintain contact not only within their own community or municipality, but also in the nationwide forum. Since then Sephardim became full citizens of the city, which, combined with their traditions and culture, greatly raised their status. At the turn of the century bilingualism was a common thing among the Jews. On a daily basis the younger people used Serbo-Croatian, and at home, or among the elders, they spoke their traditional language, exalted from Spain, knowledge of which was continuously disappearing. It was also rather archaic language, since it had barely changed since the fifteenth century.

The period of World War I, as well as the interwar years, were a period of relative peace and even prosperity for the Jews in Bosnia. During World War I, Sephardi Jewish organizations received a major boost from the international community and they were engaged in distributing gifts among different ethnic groups in Bosnia, often in dispute with each other. Unlike other nations living in Bosnia, the Jews tried to live in peace with Serbs, Croats and Muslims, so they were rather a respected and accepted group. Sometimes some of them even succumbed to partial assimilation.

Soon, however, came the most tragic period in the history of the Jews – the times of World War II and the Nazi policy of the Holocaust. The extermination of the Jews, also in Bosnia and Herzegovina, took place through the mass deportation to concentration camps, looting of property, closing down places of worship (synagogues), and the seizure of the most valuable works of art. In Sarajevo, the great Jewish library was destroyed, the archives were burned, and the temples looted in search of valuable manu-

⁵ J. Osti, *Żydzi w Bośni i Hercegowinie*, p. 48.

scripts of the Sarajevo Haggadah, a religious book that Jews brought with them from Spain in the 16th century. For Sephardim it had great spiritual value and was a souvenir from the old homeland, but for the Nazis it had only a material value (manuscript, rich illustrations). The book was finally rescued from pillage by a Muslim employee of the National Museum.

In the whole of Yugoslavia there were about 76 000 Jews before the war period. In Bosnia there were 14 000 of them, mostly the Sephardis (about 3/4), and nearly all of them were murdered in concentration camps in the villages of Jasenovac, Stara Gradiska, Jadovno, Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz. The ones who survived were mainly those who fought in the communist guerrilla army led by Tito, and after the war most of them emigrated to Israel.⁶ Currently, about 700 people are said to identify themselves as Sephardis in Bosnia, 70 of which at the most observe Judaism.

The post-war fate of the Jewish community is the fate of a community sentenced to slow extinction. The destruction was effected by the latest war in Bosnia in 1992–1995. It was in the first year of the war, 1992, that Bosnian Sephardim were about to celebrate the 500th anniversary of their exile from Spain and their settlement in Bosnia. The war riots prevented them from celebrating the anniversary, and here the tragedy of history and the tragic fate of the Sephardi community are again brought to the fore. Many Jews were once again forced to abandon their land and leave Bosnia and Herzegovina in specially organized convoys. Interestingly, owing to that, as people not engaged directly in the conflict, they avoided the atrocities of warfare. It is estimated that about 1,500 people left Bosnia, only about 50 of whom were actually Jewish. Many people used the opportunity of leaving, some of them “became Jews quite recently, others tried to find their Jewish roots,” says one of those Jews who stayed in Bosnia, David Kamhi, who has been the chief rabbi of Bosnia since the day the previous rabbi left in panic. He did not allow the fleeing rabbi to take abroad sacred liturgical objects from the only active synagogue in Sarajevo.⁷ The fact is that many of the Jews that remained in Bosnia, joined the ranks of the Bosnian army, standing alongside the Muslims, as it was the only political option they were ready to support. Perhaps it was a token of gratitude towards the Muslims for the asylum provided by them 500 years before, when the Catholic Europe was not too hospitable for the Sephardim. The vast ma-

⁶ A. Dukanović, *Wstęp*, in I. Samokovlja, *Kadisz, modlitwa za umarłych i inne opowiadania*, Warszawa: PIW 1991, s. 30.

⁷ K.-M. Gauß, *Umierający Europejczycy*, p. 44.

majority of people of the group that decided to remain in Bosnia, however, are now older people who just want to stay there until the end, and rest on the neglected, partly destroyed Jewish cemetery. They no longer engage in wars or politics, but are focused more on matters of religion.

The tragical fate of the Sephardi Jews from Bosnia complements the fact that they are indeed doomed to slow extinction as the knowledge of their language, Ladino, is already almost extinct. This sad fact was noticed many years ago by Ivo Andrić, a writer from Sarajevo and a Nobel Prize winner. Looking at the readily destroyed old tombstones of the Sephardi cemetery on one of the hills of Sarajevo, he said: “The ones who lie in those graves are doubly dead and alone, since among the living they have no one who could visit them....”⁸

Spiritual and cultural activities of Jews in Bosnia

The Sephardi Jews in Sarajevo attached great importance to the tradition. They cultivated the language of Ladino and the native, mainly oral, poetry. They also collected books by gathering them in libraries. One of those great collections existed in Sarajevo and there were various books gathered in the library: bibles, Talmuds, Kabbalahs, Midrashim, written in Hebrew or Ladino, and many of them had the form of manuscripts. The library was torched by Serbs during the war in Bosnia and utterly destroyed, like the Bosnian National Library.

The Jews in Bosnia used to gather very eagerly in various societies, mainly cultural ones. J. Osti in his essay writes that in Bosnia there were 24 Jewish associations, mostly Sephardi ones (mainly in Sarajevo),⁹ and the leading one was *La Benevolencija*. The others were: *La Lira*, *Matatija*, *La Glorija*, *Tarbut*, *Jewish Club*. In particular, *La Benevolencija* made a huge contribution to the development and promotion of the Jewish culture. It was founded in 1892 and was the oldest and longest-operating association of humanitarian-charitable character. It supported the promising Jewish young people in acquiring knowledge in universities abroad. It had its own library, supported the development of the theatre in Sarajevo and helped publish books by Jewish writers, e.g. Isak Samokovlji. It discontinued its activity in 1941 and was reactivated in 1991 to support the Bosnian Jews as a char-

⁸ A. Dukanović, *Wstęp*, p. 3.

⁹ J. Osti, *Żydzi w Bośni i Hercegowinie*, p. 49-50.

ity organization. During the recent war in Bosnia it helped not only Jews, but also Bosnian Muslims. *La Lira* Society was founded in 1902. The association cultivated the musical traditions of Sephardis such as religious and secular songs and dances. *La Glorjia* provided a financial support for poor girls, thus helping to organize soirées, folklore, theatre and dance. The *Jewish Club* had one of the largest reading rooms in Sarajevo, subscribed to magazines and journals in different languages, and organized lectures. The activity of all these associations was brutally interrupted by World War II.

There was also Jewish press available in Bosnia. However, it appeared only in the time of the Austro-Hungarian occupation in the late 19th century. The first journals were written in Hebrew and Ladino, and later, along with the diffusion of the knowledge of Slavic languages among the Jews, in Serbo-Croatian. The first Jewish newspaper in Bosnia was "*La Alborada*" ("Northern Lights") and was published from 1900 to 1901 in the language of Ladino. 30 issues of the magazine were published. A significant development of the Jewish press took place in the inter-war period when a few newspapers began to come out, including issues published in various languages. Many of them were in Serbo-Croatian, which indicated a significantly long time the Jews took to assimilate. The best-known titles were: "Jewish Consciousness" – a cultural and political weekly, "Voice of the Jews" – a literary and cultural magazine, "National Jewish Consciousness" and "Jewish Life." There was also a growing sense of bond with the lost homeland of the Sephardi Jews – Spain, which could also be expressed with the aid of the above-mentioned magazines.

The community of Sephardi Jews came out of isolation, but did not forget about its ancestors and the history of its nation. Moritz Levy, the first author of the aforementioned history of the Jews in Bosnia, claimed that the Sephardi Jews expelled from their homeland bore in their hearts an enduring longing for the lost home of Spain. He quotes a beautiful, romantic legend of some huge keys that the Spanish Jews closed their houses with and took with them while fleeing from Spain. The keys were handed down from generation to generation, along with the legend and the dream of return and opening the doors of their old houses.¹⁰ For many generations Jews did not abandon the hope that they did have where to go back, but the truth is that they also loved the new homeland, calling it their "Slavic Jerusalem."

Therefore, the expression of the bond between the Jews and their Spanish homeland was Sephardi literature, created in Ladino in the earliest pe-

¹⁰ K.-M. Gauß, *Umierający Europejczycy*, p. 40.

riod of their residence in Bosnia. One of the traditional forms of poetry, sung or recited, was the Spanish romance. They passed on the memory of the loved but ungrateful Spain. In the course of time, these songs began to acquire local folk elements, i.e. Slavic and Turkish ones. They began to resemble the structure and theme of Slavic Muslims songs, the so-called *sevdalinkas*, where the love of country is alternated with the feelings for a beloved person (*Sevdah* – the longing of love). The characteristic feature of these songs is their fragmentary nature, the ability to improvise and the simplicity of style. The authors of these songs were mostly men, but the songs were addressed to and for women. They were passed on from generation to generation. The love songs were usually sung by younger women. At the end of the 19th century, Jewish intellectuals began to collect the texts of these songs and gather them in various anthologies, but most of them were destroyed during World War II. Nowadays, new collections of songs are appearing, but they often need to be translated into Serbian and Croatian, as Ladino is almost unknown today.

An oral folk tale known as *konsea* and *kuento* was also quite popular among Bosnian Sephardim. These forms were also carried over from Spain. Proverbs are an important part of the tradition. These are the repository of collective knowledge about the Jews. One of the best-known collectors of proverbs was Rabbi Daniel Danon, who personally gathered 845 proverbs. Unfortunately, he died in a camp for Jews in Jasenovcu in 1941, and his collection was destroyed.

Sephardim in Bosnia can boast about rich literature and tradition, though there are not many outstanding authors. This was due to the long isolation of the literature and the Jewish community from the Slavic environment, thus creating a kind of a “mental ghetto.” This state lasted until the late 19th century. Among the most prominent artists there are two mostly worth mentioning: Laura Papo-Bahoreta and Isak Samokovlja. Laura Papo-Bahoreta (1891–1941) is said to have been the most distinguished Sephardi playwright to use Ladino. Her best known play was *Esterka*. She is also an author of several short stories. Samokovlja Isak (1889–1955) was an author of short stories, best known for his prose. He was a doctor by profession. While organizing the mass extermination of Jews in Yugoslavia, Croatian fascists spared him because of his occupation. In his stories Samokovlja reveals “a world that no longer exists” – the vanishing world of Sephardi Jews and the great drama of the Jewish people. The tragedy was intensified by the extermination of the Jews during World War II, after which there were so few of them. The writer invests his stories with the atmosphere of

the environment of the Jews in Bosnia, but mostly the poor, suffering and humiliated ones, not only because of their poverty, but also because of their physical disability or infirmity. He writes about their daily lives, dramas, small joys and the dreams that gave meaning to their sad lives. Often the heroes of his stories are women and children. His characters are psychologically complex, as he was interested in the state of consciousness and psychological drama of the characters. In 1967, *Collected Works* of Samokovlji was issued in Yugoslavia. In Poland he is known for his volume of short stories entitled *Kaddish, the prayer for the dead* published in Warsaw in 1991 and translated by Alija Dukanović. Samokovlji's prose is full of touching scenes, realism, truth and constitutes a beautiful and imperishable monument to the Jews in Bosnia and Balkans.

Sarajevo Haggadah

The biggest treasure of the Sephardi community in Sarajevo has been till this day the *Haggadah* (also called *Sarajevo Haggadah*, as Sarajevo is the place where it has been kept for years). It is a wonderfully decorated medieval manuscript, richly illuminated and gilded, written in Hebrew on calf skin. It is probably the oldest existent Sephardi Haggadah. It comes from Catalonia, Spain, and was created around 1350 as a wedding gift, designed for reading at home during the Jewish Passover, celebrated to commemorate the liberation from Egyptian slavery. It is a collection of prayers, stories, songs, pictures (34 illustrations depicting scenes from the Bible) from the "golden age" of Arab-Jewish culture in Spain between 10th and 12th centuries. This kind of books was intended for home use, and its splendour proves that it came from a wealthy family.¹¹ The book consists of 142 pages; some of them are stained with wine, which is an indication that it was used during the Passover Seder (the first night of Passover). Today it is regarded as a relic of the Sephardi Jews, kept at the National Museum in Sarajevo, and it has a great spiritual and material value which is currently estimated at 700 million dollars.¹²

The history of the *Sarajevo Haggadah* is extremely interesting. After the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492 it went along with the owner, first to Italy and then, after a long journey, to Sarajevo. There it stayed with

¹¹ J. Osti, *Żydzi w Bośni i Hercegowinie*, p. 46.

¹² See <<http://jakov.wordpress.com/2008/11/13/hagada-sarajewska/>>.

a wealthy Sephardi family of Kohen, where it was treated with due respect, as a souvenir of the Jewish ancestors from Spain. When the family got into financial trouble, the manuscript was sold to the museum in Sarajevo, which took place around 1894. It was closely guarded and was not shown publicly. The fact of the high value of the book was well known to the Nazis, who, during the war in 1941, searched the entire museum, but did not find the Haggadah and burnt down the whole building. Fortunately, it had been previously saved by the director of the museum, a Muslim Dervish Korkut, and hidden in a safe place (probably in rural areas). After the war he returned the manuscript undamaged. During the war in Bosnia between 1992–1995 Haggadah, for the second time, was miraculously saved from destruction. It was hidden in an underground vault of one of the banks and, as previously made, it was saved by the director of the museum, Dr. Enver Imamović, also a Muslim. There have been rumours that the government of Bosnia had sold Haggadah to buy weapons. To quench the speculation Haggadah was shown publicly at the time of Passover in 1995. After the cessation of hostilities Haggadah again returned to its original place in the National Museum in Sarajevo. Since December 2002, visitors have been able to see it in an especially adapted room. In 2006 there was a special edition of the Sarajevo Haggadah (reprint) issued in the quantity of 613 copies. The cost per copy was €1700.¹³ The turbulent history of the Haggadah has been thoroughly investigated and described by professors Kemal Bakrsic and Mohammed Karahmedovic, Bosnian Muslims. The fact that the history of the Sephardi Haggadah and the Sephardi community is of such great interest for researchers in Bosnia shows that they treat it as rich and diverse part of their own culture. They do not dismiss it as a foreign tradition, taking into consideration their language, culture and religion. Sephardi Jews have been important part of the multicultural Sarajevo. Even in the recent period of mutual hatred between the warring factions of Serbs, Croats and Muslims in Bosnia, and the birth of ethno-nationalism, Jews stayed out of the boundaries rather than engage in the conflict. Jewish charities provided assistance to all in need, mainly the civilian population of Bosnia. Many Jews and citizens identifying themselves as Jews left Bosnia in humanitarian convoys. This small group of Jews still remaining in Bosnia, numbering around 700, shows that they consider this small Slavic country their homeland, but for many years longed for, and remembered, their former homeland of Spain, called the “mother and stepmother.” Today the Sephardi Jews in Bosnia

¹³ Ibidem.

are considered a “dying nation.” The Jewish tradition is being cultivated mainly by the eldest generation. However, we must believe that as long as there are books, literature, songs, tradition, the synagogue and the Jewish cemetery in Sarajevo, there will be a memory of the Sephardi Jews.

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On the History of Traditional Jewish Education in the Russian Empire: the Volozhin Yeshiva

The system of Jewish education has existed for more than three thousand years. It has played the most important role in preserving the Jewish people and in the development of their culture. There is perhaps not a single denomination, except for Judaism, that has paid so much attention to education. In the Middle Ages education was perceived not only as a means of preservation of religious life, but as a purpose in itself. Just like in the Victorian English society or the traditional Chinese culture, education was one of the signs of membership in the “aristocracy” of the Jewish society. An educated man had a high status in the hierarchical structure of the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe, including Russia. Following the education in primary religious schools – *Hadarim* (where almost all Jewish boys and sometimes girls aged 4-5 studied), and then in *Talmud-Torah*, youths and married men turned to the study of the Talmud. There was a *batei midrash* (literally, “the house of interpretation”) in every synagogue, located in every city where Jewish people lived. Poor students were usually supported by their well-to-do fellows, who provided them with food and shelter. Such support was considered by the Jewish community a traditional benefaction or donation. In theory, the existing system of education offered equal opportunities for achieving a high level of religious education both to well-to-do and poor Jews. But actually the conditions on which children obtained primary education varied. Boys from rich families got better education, since they had domestic schooling, which was very expensive, in comparison with *hadarim* with numerous students, poor sanitary conditions, and the *melamedim*, primary school teachers, who didn’t possess a high status in

the traditional society. So it's not a mere coincidence that there was a proverb stating that "you'll always have time to die and to become a *melamed*." Elementary religious education received by children from well-to-do families provided matchless advantage. The Israeli historian Shaul Stampfer wrote: "Studying in *beit midrash* promoted the formation of the education elite of the nation."¹

The 19th century, and especially its second half, brought about great changes in the Jewish community of the Russian Empire. The number of students in traditional Yeshivas began to decrease. The attractiveness of the traditional Jewish education among young people diminished. The events of that period evidently called for a cardinal reform in the system of traditional education.

Yeshivas existed in almost every town within the Pale of Settlement. The Yeshiva in the town of Volozhin (The Vilna Governorate, now this town is a district center of Minsk region), which was established in 1803 by Rabbi Hayim ben Isaac (known as Hayim of Volozhin), became the first Jewish educational institution of a new type. Rabbi Hayim (1749–1821) was one of the closest students and followers of the Vilna Gaon (Eliyahu ben Shelomoh Zalman, 1720–1797). After his death, Rabbi Hayim became one of his closest associates and successors. Rabbi Hayim decided what books, based on the teaching of the Gaon, should be published. He also participated in the organization of *aliya* – the ascent/migration of a part of the Gaon's students to Eretz Israel – the Land of Israel.

The establishment of the Volozhin Yeshiva turned out to be an important event in the history of the Jewish education of the time. There are several explanations of the foundation of the Volozhin Yeshiva: an opposition to the spreading of Hasidism; a reaction to the crisis in the traditional education. Shaul Stampfer tends to explain the foundation of the Yeshiva with Rabbi Hayim's desire to change the entire approach to the study of the Talmud. He wished (probably, under the influence of his recently deceased teacher – the Vilna Gaon) to construct the analysis of the Talmudic texts on the logical method, and to point out the direct relation between the act of learning and the divine service. This idea was later developed in Rabbi's basic work called *Nefesh Ha-Hayim*, which was published by Rabbi's son in Vilna in 1824, only after the death of Rabbi. This publication was an ethi-

¹ I am grateful to Professor Shaul Stampfer for the opportunity to get acquainted with his doctoral thesis *Three Lithuanian Yeshivot in the Nineteenth Century*, Hebrew University 1981. When I was writing this article, Dr Stampfer's monograph *Lithuanian Yeshivas of the Nineteenth Century. Creating a Tradition of Learning* was in print and I had no access to it.

cal Kabbalistic work, which proved the groundlessness of the antinomian tendencies of Hasidism. Hayim of Volozhin supposed that the ceremonial aspect of Judaism is the only reflection of religious life. Rabbi Hayim recognized the value of the Hasidic doctrine of the significance of religious feeling while serving God, and this was reflected in the original sources of Judaism – in the Talmud, the Midrash and in Kabbalistic works. But he still thought that this doctrine deserved to be understood by the selected few, not by the whole nation. He was sure that the religious feeling was a substance of extremely vague nature, so it couldn't become the cornerstone of the religious and moral life of the nation. Rabbi Hayim insisted that the rite should be the foundation of religious life; even if it was simply performed without thinking of Him Who has commanded to perform it, it still had an important meaning.

Since the moment Moshe brought Torah to people on earth, Torah has not been in heaven, so even a great man with outstanding wits shouldn't interpret it in a wrong way, saying: I perceive the secrets and motives of commandments together with the highest forces and worlds, that's why I have the right to violate one or another commandment, or to neglect an insignificant part of it, or to postpone its fulfillment. If all the wise men of Israel got together and combined their minds and understandings in one for the purpose of changing one of the insignificant trifles while fulfilling the commandments, we wouldn't listen to them, because the most important thing in a commandment is to fulfill even the smallest things.²

Since the moment of its foundation, the Volozhin Yeshiva was different from many similar establishments. The money for it was collected not only in Volozhin, which was a small place, but in its environs. Thus, the Yeshiva remained free and independent of any local influence and pressure. Moving from place to place, special representatives or collectors – *shadarim* – collected money for the Yeshiva. The importance of the new establishment was also reflected in the fact that there was a special building for students (they were called *Yeshiva-boherim*). Local youth continued to study in the *beit midrash*, but the role of the Volozhin Yeshiva grew far beyond the vicinity. In the Volozhin Yeshiva the process of education, during which groups of students changed, continued 24 hours a day and could never be interrupted for a minute. This was a reflection of the views of its founder, who thought that the existence of the Universe itself was directly connected with the study of the Torah. At first, the number of students in the Yeshiva was

² Quoted from *Еврейская энциклопедия в 16 томах*, Санкт-Петербург: Издание Брокгауз-Ефрон 1908–1913, vol. XV, col. 505.

only 10, but later the number of *Yeshiva-boherim* started to increase rapidly. Young people, competent in the Talmud, were attracted primarily not by the pragmatic approach, connected with the chance to get the position of Rabbi, but by the possibility of obtaining traditional knowledge. *Smicha* (the license of getting the rank of Rabbi) was issued to competent rabbis who passed the oral examination. Studying in the Yeshiva was not a prerequisite for obtaining this license. Young people who wished to study in the Volozhin Yeshiva were attracted by the personality of the Yeshiva's headmaster Rabbi Hayim, by his lectures and by his method of interpreting the Talmudic texts – *pshat* (literal interpretation of the meaning of a biblical or Talmudic text). This method was opposite to *pilpul* (sophisticated casuistic interpretation). The Rosh-Yeshiva (the head of the Yeshiva) Rabbi Hayim of Volozhin wasn't the only teacher in the Yeshiva, as mentors were accepted from other Yeshivas in Russia. The Yeshiva's popularity continued to grow, and all the guests at the Yeshiva were deeply amazed by the number of students. Quite often the number of people present at the *Rosh-Yeshiva's* lectures was about a hundred. The Volozhin Yeshiva obtained a leading position among the similar establishments in the founder's lifetime. The view that the Volozhin Yeshiva was established by Rabbi Hayim in his struggle to oppose Hasidism is contradicted by a number of facts. In his main work his criticism of Hasidism is particularly careful and tolerant. Such an approach was different from the polemical works of the time, with their harsh assessments. Moreover, Rabbi Hayim contributed to the establishment of peaceful relations between the *mitnagedim* and the *hasidim*. Rabbi Hayim met Rabbi Shneur Zalman in Minsk, and during their conversation Rabbi Hayim admitted that the opponents of Hasidism were often unfair in their struggle against *hasidim*.

Rabbi Hayim died in 1821, and his position was taken by his son Rabbi Isaac. The number of students increased to 200 people. The building of the Yeshiva was enlarged. But in 1824 the Yeshiva was officially closed by the government for unknown reasons, though in fact it continued to work and develop. It was also unusual that, unlike students in similar establishments, every *Yeshiva-boher* from the Volozhin Yeshiva obtained a modest scholarship, which was enough to satisfy the unsophisticated needs of a student. Rabbi Isaac managed to legitimate the existence of the Yeshiva in 1843, when he was invited to the first Rabbinic commission in Saint Petersburg. During the *Rosh-Yeshiva's* frequent visits to the capital of the Russian Empire, the Yeshiva was governed by his sons-in-law – Rabbi Eliezer – Isaac and Rabbi Naftali Yehuda Berlin (known under the acronym of *Netsiv*).

In the 1850s, some students of the Yeshiva began to show their interest in secular knowledge. Shaul Stampfer suggests that the students who came to the Yeshiva after obtaining some knowledge of the secular subjects, could have been a source of such an interest.³

In 1854 Rabbi Naftali Berlin became the rector of the Volozhin Yeshiva. He was an energetic leader, whose main goal was to develop the Yeshiva and to increase the number of its students. He sent his representatives to the Jewish communities of different countries to collect donations. The Yeshiva received very substantial financial support from America. By the end of the 1870s the number of students was 300, and in the 1880s it was more than 400. The highest reputation of the Yeshiva attracted students from different parts of the world: Western Europe (Great Britain, Germany, Austria-Hungary) and North America. Those accepted to the Yeshiva kept their first names unchanged, but their last names were changed according to geographical areas they came from.

In his method of teaching, Rabbi Berlin followed the steps of the Vilna Gaon and the founder of the Yeshiva Rabbi Hayim. As it has been stated above, this method included the clarity of text interpretation and the negative attitude to *pilpul*.

The usual schedule of the Yeshiva was as follows: every student had to attend *Shacharit* (the morning prayer) at 8 a.m. After this, a *Yeshiva-boher* had breakfast. At the same time, some students remained in the building of the Yeshiva while the *rector* was reading a weekly chapter from the Torah with commentaries. From 10 a.m. till 1 p.m. every *Yeshiva-boher* had to study the Talmud, choosing any of the Talmudic texts for reading. During those hours, the students were closely watched by a supervisor. During the first half of the week the *Rosh-Yeshiva's* assistant gave a lecture (*shiur*) from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., and during the second half of the week lectures were read by the head of the Yeshiva himself. From 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. was dinner time. At 4 p.m. there was a prayer, after that the lessons continued till 10 p.m. The supper followed the evening prayer *Maariv*. Some students continued their studies till midnight. Others slept until 3 a.m., and then studied again until morning.

In the Volozhin Yeshiva the ability to work with a text on one's own was highly appreciated. The attendance at lectures wasn't considered compulsory. A *Yeshiva-boher* had no formal exams to pass. From time to time, the *Rosh-Yeshiva* had conversations with his students, so he could form an

³ Sh. Stampfer, *Three Lithuanian Yeshivot in the Nineteenth Century*, p. VI.

opinion about their progress. There was no division into classes or groups at the Yeshiva, though the students were people of different ages and knowledge. Despite insignificant conflicts, there predominant atmosphere was that of one big family at the Yeshiva. The habit of studying together was widespread, though it was accepted in the majority of similar establishments. Usually, there were two students participating in such a class. Sometimes a junior student obtained the right to study together with the senior *Yeshiva-boher*, often paying money for that. From time to time, students got together for discussions of the texts studied at school. Sometimes special discussions over a lecture of the rector of the Yeshiva were held, which gave the students an opportunity to formulate new interpretations and to explain some vague issues.

Every student was left to himself, and his success primarily depended on his abilities and assiduity. At the same time, all the students were imbued with the spirit of their school, by the feeling of total spiritual unity. This unity was revealed in their everyday life too: students gave each other material support... The maintenance of the school and the students was one of the prerogatives of the head of the yeshivot.⁴

In the time of Rabbi Berlin the first clash for leadership in the Yeshiva took place. Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveitchik became his opponent. Some of the students weren't satisfied with the methods of teaching and organized a group under the leadership of the latter. Because of the danger of the split, four rabbis from other Yeshivas formed a special commission and arrived at Volozhin. They managed to settle the conflict. By a special decree they forbade rabbis to give lectures to the students of the Yeshiva in their houses, noting that such an activity could lead to the split in the students' community. Rabbi Soloveitchik got the position of the *Rosh-Yeshiva's* assistant. But this agreement didn't last long. In 1864 Rabbi Soloveitchik abandoned his post and became the Rabbi of Slutsk. Meanwhile, the Yeshiva continued to grow. Remaining the head of the Yeshiva, Rabbi Berlin built a new three-storey building and a library.

The Volozhin Yeshiva, being very popular and authoritative among the orthodox circles, became the centre of disputes among the supporters of enlightenment. Some of the students, who supported *Haskalah*, openly expressed their disagreement with the rules set up at the Yeshiva. They de-

⁴ А. Менес, *В мире еврейских религиозных исканий. Ешиботы и течение "мусарников,"* in *Книга о русском еврействе. От 1860-годов до революции 1917 г.*, Иерусалим: Гешарим – Москва: Мосты культуры – Минск: Мет 2002, p. 333.

manded a new course of secular subjects, as well as the establishment of a new system of education. In 1879 a deletion against Rabbi Berlin was submitted, charging him with anti-governmental activity. Though an investigation carried out by specialists from St. Petersburg revealed that the deletion was false, the Yeshiva was closed by the local authorities.

Meanwhile, calls for reforming the Yeshiva according to the example of Jewish seminaries in Germany began to appear in the Jewish press. First of all, it was suggested that a course of secular subjects should be introduced. In the meantime, not only did interest in Haskalah among the students begin to grow, but pre-Zionistic circles started to appear as well. The first organization of this kind was a secret circle *Nes Ziona*. Its activity was disclosed by the police, and it was dissolved by the command of the head of the Yeshiva. But soon a new circle appeared – under the name *Netzach Israel*. Rabbi Berlin wasn't opposed to such movements; on the contrary, he quite often supported another powerful pre-Zionistic organization – *Hibbat Zion*. Newspapers made by students, in which they discussed issues concerning the living conditions of the Yeshiva students and expressed dissatisfaction with the attempt to appoint the son of Rabbi Berlin, Rabbi Hayim head of the Yeshiva, were distributed in the Yeshiva. The issues addressed in these publications were those that bothered the Russian-Jewish society at the moment. Revolutionary sentiments were quite popular among some of the students as well.

Recognizing the tremendous value of the Yeshiva as an important and popular educational institution, with a high level of teaching of the Talmud, the Editor of *Ha-Melits* newspaper Aleksandr Tsederbaum nevertheless pointed to a very abnormal situation connected with a complete alienation of future rabbis from secular sciences, and their lack of knowledge of even the official language of Russia.⁵ However, Rabbi Berlin was irreconcilable. He wrote an open letter stating his views, and it was published in the influential daily St. Petersburg paper *Ha-Melits*.⁶ Rabbi Berlin paid special attention to the decline of rabbinic knowledge in Germany, which at that time was recognized as one of the leading centres of Jewish scholarship, even in Russia. As Rabbi Berlin pointed out, in Russia there were no Talmudic rabbis in the full sense of the word. In fact, the only place of their education was the Volozhin Yeshiva. The fear of any “innovations” obviously was not the only reason for the reluctance of the head of the Yeshiva to make

⁵ “Ha-Melits” 38 (1880).

⁶ “Ha-Melits” 9 (1885).

concessions. The Volozhin Yeshiva operated on donations from orthodox circles, which considered the Yeshiva to be a stronghold of Talmudism. He believed that the introduction of various innovations would be a severe blow to the glory and prestige of the Yeshiva, and that the income of donations would be greatly reduced. Basically, the donations came from North America, but in the second half of the 1880s their amount began to decrease. The financial assistance submitted by the Russian Jewish notables, including the informal leader of the Russian Jewry Baron Horace Gintsburg, was negligible. And it meant that their influence on the leaders of the Yeshiva was minimal. In 1886 the Yeshiva building burnt to the ground, and its restoration required significant financial support. However, the financial position of the Yeshiva and the problems related to it were not mentioned in the text of the published letter. The letter didn't satisfy some radical *maskilim*, who demanded that the Yeshiva be closed as the hotbed of "obscurantism," which represented danger to the education of the younger generation. The more moderate supporters of education, recognizing the need for the existence of the Volozhin Yeshiva as the alma mater of traditional Talmudic scholars, considered it abnormal that future rabbis were completely isolated from the study of secular subjects and did not even learn the language of the country in which they lived. In order to solve this problem, the Congress of the most prominent rabbis of Russia was convened in St. Petersburg in 1887, under the initiative of a renowned scientist, writer and Jewish social activist Nikolai Bakst. After long and heated debates, the protocol signed by the Rabbi Yitchak-Elhanan Spektor from Kovno, Rabbi Berlin and other prominent rabbis, was adopted. It was stated that henceforth in the Volozhin Yeshiva, as in all of the other Yeshivas of the Russian Empire, the students would study Russian and arithmetic, though not within the walls of the Yeshiva, but in separate buildings. However, the decision of the Congress was never carried out.

In 1891 the Minister of Education Ivan D. Delianov approved the rules of the Volozhin Yeshiva, according to which the Yeshiva students should study not only the Talmud and Jewish religious texts, but also Russian and arithmetic according to the course of those subjects in Jewish public schools. The teaching of general subjects had to be done between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., and overall the studies could not last more than ten hours a day. Night classes in the Yeshiva were prohibited. The teachers of Jewish subjects were only people who spoke Russian and had certificates of finishing courses in not less than district (*uyezd*) schools. "The Rules" were preceded by an explanation that "the existence of the Yeshiva [was] dependent on the

exact observance of all the directives, laid down in the rules, and that any deviation from their observance [would] be immediately followed by the closure of the educational institution.”⁷ The editor of the influential newspaper *Ha-Melits* Aleksandr Tsederbaum reacted positively to these “rules” and recommended their immediate acceptance, thereby saving the famous Yeshiva from being closed. However, Rabbi Berlin didn’t change his decision. He didn’t comply with these rules and on January 22, 1892 the Yeshiva was closed down by the authorities. Rabbi Berlin and all of the students were banished from Volozhin. These actions of the authorities were painfully accepted in the orthodox Jewish circles.

The great future Jewish poet Hayim-Nahman Bialik (1873–1934) spent two years in the Yeshiva of Volozhin. Novelist, publicist, translator, and one of the most striking Zionist public figures Vladimir Jabotinsky stated in the introduction to his translation of the first edition of poems of Bialik in Russian:

(...) He (the young Bialik – A.L.) grew increasingly fonder of the books with “educational” content. Beth HaMidrash (where Bialik studied, along with most of the Jewish boys – A.L.) became too small for him. He was obsessed with going to Berlin, he dreamt of the rabbinical seminary there and of the title of the Doctor of Philosophy. But it was impossible even to say a word of Berlin in the presence of his grandfather (who had brought up the boy, and was an avid follower of Hasidism – A.L.). The boy decided at least to go to Volozhin, a Lithuanian place where the famous Yeshiva has been established – the higher School of Judaism. Someone told him that in Volozhin not only Jewish subjects were taught, but secular sciences too – the “seven wisdoms and seventy languages.” The grandfather decided: Volozhin was better, because only God knew where it could all lead.

The fifteen-year-old Bialik found himself in Volozhin. Of course, he was mistaken: none of the seven wisdoms and none of the “seventy languages” were taught there. About four hundred young people sat there over the Gemara (one of the parts of the Talmud, this term is often used in relation to the Talmud as a whole – V. Jabotinsky). Everything began and ended with the Gemara. He was very disappointed, but yet began to study the Gemara and soon became obsessed with it. His success soon became evident even in the environment where the general level of Jewish knowledge was very high, since one accepted into the Yeshiva had to meet high requirements. A few months later, he was able to send his grandfather a letter of praise from the head of the Yeshiva, Rabbi Berlin, who was very popular even with the Hasidim. In a few months the young Bialik became (...) a masmid – a hermit of the Teaching, for whom the world

⁷ Quoted from С. Цинберг, *Воложинский ешибот*, in *Еврейская энциклопедия в 16 томах*, vol. V, col. 729.

and all of its riches were nothing compared to the square letters of an old book, dimly illuminated by a candle.⁸

The Atmosphere in the Volozhin Yeshiva was described by Bialik in one of his earliest poems, *Ha Masmid (Hermit)*, written in 1893–1895:

There are abandoned corners of our Exile,
Remote, forgotten cities of Dispersion,
Where still in secret burns our ancient light,
Where God has saved a remnant from disaster.
There, brands than glimmer in a ruin of ashes,
Pent and unhappy souls maintain the vigil –
Spirits grown old beyond the reckoning of time,
Grown old beyond the numbering of days.

(...)

Thine ear will catch the murmur of a voice,
Thine eye will catch the twinkle of a light
Set in a window, and a human form –
A shadow, like the shadow of death – beyond,
A shadow trembling, swaying back and forth,
A voice, an agony, that lifts and falls,
And comes toward thee upon the waves of silence.
Mark well the swaying shadow and the voice:
It is a *Masmid* in his prison-house,
A prisoner, self-guarded, self-condemned,
Self-sacrificed to study of the Law...

Within these walls, within this prison-house,
Six years have passed above his swaying form:
Within these walls the child became the youth,
The youth became the man, fore-ripened swift;
And swift as these went, swifter yet were gone
The cheek's bloom and the luster of his eyes.
Six years have passed since he set his face
To the dark corner of the inner walls; (...)
He knows that Jews have studied thus of old,
He knows the fame and glory they have won.
(...)

In the Yeshiva is a holy silence
Which he, the holy youth, is first to break;
For there, in the dark corner, wait for him –
Faithful companions since the day he came –

⁸ В. Жаботинский, *Введение*, in X.-Н. Бялик, *Стихи и поэмы*, Иерусалим: Библиотека-Алия 1994, p. 18.

Three friends: his stand, his candle and his Talmud. (...)

He hastens to his place and takes his stand,
And like a pillar stays from morn till night.
Still standing he will eat his mudday crust,
Still standing he will half out-watch the night.
Granit is yielding clay compared with him,
A Jewish boy unto Torah vowed.

(...)

The hungry childhood and the bitter manhood,
And my heart weeps for my unhappy people...
How burned, how blasted must our portion be,
If seeds like this is withered in its soil...
Surely the day will come, when, all foregone
With calling unto thee in vain, the soul,
Shriveled and starved, will fall asleep forever.
Never will she have known the joy that slakes
The deep thirst of desire; neither have loved
Nor have been loved; those eyes of thine, so apt
To see the fullness of the teeming earth,
In darkness lose their aptitude, and close
In blindness – with the light of life unseen.
Nay, life itself will be a lightless shadow
And thou upon its tangled road shalt be
Like a blind spider in a web decayed.
Why, then, wert thou created? To what end
Was a soul fashioned, only to be lost?⁹

“A personality perishes in this feat of the Nazarene of ancient science, but thanks to such devotees, the nation was able to save itself”¹⁰ – the Jewish historian Shimon Dubnov commented on these words of the poet.

Despite the closure the Yeshiva of Volozhin by the authorities and the establishment of a number of other Jewish seminaries – the Yeshivas in Slobodka (near the city of Kovno, the current Kaunas, Lithuania), Telshah, (now Telshai, Lithuania), the influential Hasidic Yeshiva *Tomchei Temimim* (the departments of the latter were situated in Mogilev and Minsk regions, and in Lubavitch – now a village in Smolensk region, Russia), the emergence of reformed communities (including the Odessa Yeshiva, which was

⁹ Bialik Chaim Nachman, *Selected Poems*, trans. by S. Maurice, New York: The Union of American Hebrew Congregation 1972, p. 54, 56, 64, 78, 80, 92.

¹⁰ С.М. Дубнов, *Новейшая история еврейского народа. Эпоха антисемитской реакции и национального возрождения. 1881–1894*, Москва: Мосты культуры 2002, vol. 3, p. 283.

turned into the High School of Judaism in 1906), it is the Volozhin Yeshiva that in many cases served as a model for the majority of other similar educational institutions of the Russian Empire and Palestine.

At the end of the 1890s the Volozhin Yeshiva was reopened and the classes continued until the First World War, when with the approach of the battlefront the classes were cancelled. After the war the Yeshiva turned out to be on the territory of Poland, and the classes in Volozhin resumed.

Overall, the Volozhin Yeshiva operated for about one hundred and forty years, until 1939, when World War II began. During the war the last sixty-four students were killed by the Nazis and their accomplices.

After the Revolution in October 1917, the activities of Yeshivas on the territory of the Soviet Union, which was formed in 1922, were officially banned, but still for quite a long time they continued to operate illegally.¹¹

¹¹ See D. Fishman, *Judaism in the USSR. 1917–1930. The Fate of Religious Education*, in Yaacov Ro'i (ed.), *Jews and Jewish Life in Russia and the Soviet Union*, London: Frank Cass 1995, p. 251-262.

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The Mythologem of the Promised Land in the Soviet Culture

*Now the Lord had said unto Abram,
Get thee out of thy country, and from
thy kindred, and from thy father's
house, unto a land that I will shew thee*

(Gn 12:1)

The achievement of the Promised Land, the land of milk and honey, has been the dream of the humankind for centuries. The image of a happy paradise land is archetypical. It is one of the fundamental universal mythological motifs and is represented in folk traditions, in utopic constructions and in the literature of different countries and epochs. So, in Russian folklore there are legends about the land Belovodie (White Waters), a country which is free from serfage. In Russian tales the myth (one wonders if not under the influence of the Old Testament's patterns?) was transformed into the land with milky rivers and honey coasts. The country, where such an abundance reigns, was imagined in folk consciousness as a true paradise.

One of the most prominent representations of the mythologem of the paradise on earth in the world culture is the Biblical image of the Land of Canaan. "The glory of all lands" (Ezk 20:6), "a good land and a large (...) land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex 3:8) – as such it is pictured in the Old Testament. God promised this land to Abraham for his faith: "And the Lord said unto Abram (...). Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (Gn 13:14-15).

The Promised Land is the territory which is known nowadays as Palestine. Today Palestine resembles a desert rather than a paradisaical land of abundance. However, in the Bible this territory appears as “a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it” (Dt 8:7-9). The Promised Land is a land which God blessed “for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills” (Dt 33:13-15), “a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew” (Dt 33:28).

The Promised Land of Canaan in the Old Testament, represented as a kingdom of abundance and God’s blessing, is opposed to the image of the Promised Land of the Heavenly Kingdom – “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rv 21:2). Both these images – that of Canaan and that of the New Jerusalem, born in the Jewish culture, have become universal cultural mythologems, on the basis of which a number of myth-utopies about a happy country have been created.

The mechanism of creating such myths was described by a French scholar Roland Barthes.¹ According to Barthes, the culture and its phenomenon are coded in semiotic systems. Barthes regarded a myth as a semiotic system, appealing to a famous model of the sign by Ferdinand de Saussure, who distinguished three principal elements: “signifier,” “signified,” and the “sign” itself, which comes as a result of binding the first two elements. However, if the sign represents a primary semiotic system, then a myth, using the primary sign as a form and conferring a new meaning upon it, is the secondary semiotic system. Its third element is the myth (the result of binding the “signifier” and “signified” in secondary semiotic systems). It is formed by means of transforming the relations between the “signifier” and “signified.” The meaning of the myth represents a lasting alternation of the sense of the “signified” and its form. Namely, this duality, in the philosopher’s judgment, defines a peculiarity of the meaning in a myth.

The New Testament myth of the Promised Land of the Heavenly Kingdom was accepted by the Russian culture in the period when Kievan Rus

¹ See P. Барт, *Мифология*, trans. by С. Зенкин, Москва: Издательство Сабашниковых 2000.

was taking over Christianity from the Byzantine Empire. The formation of this myth in Byzantium itself took place against the backdrop of the opposition of the “ascetic” and “humanistic” traditions. This opposition represented a confrontation “of the whole complexes of opposed ideas and views and in addition to that, of the social positions.”² The representatives of the humanistic traditions aspired to synthesize the Christian experience and the universalistic imperial consciousness. The representatives of the ascetic tradition considered Constantinople the centre of the spiritual traditions preservation – a peculiar New Jerusalem.

As a result of Christianization the ascetic tradition along with the view of the Christian country as the Promised Land of the Heavenly Kingdom was brought over to Rus. Having become an important part of this myth, the New Testament symbolism found its embodiment in the architectural images and names of different places in Rus. As the archpriest Lev Lebedev has remarked, “any more or less developed ancient Russian city, with its churches dedicated to the name of Christ, Mother of God, or any saints, contains an architectural image of the Heavenly Church, of the Heavenly City”³ (though subsequently a notion of Moscow as the Third Rome was formed, and the Russian capital began to acquire a secondary meaning of an ecclesiastical and political centre). Patriarch Nikon’s Podmoskovnaya Palestine exemplifies the embodiment of the myth of Russia as a New Jerusalem, as represented in architectural forms. The concept was to recreate holy places in the image of those in Palestine, and which are linked with the earthly life and feats of Lord Jesus Christ.

Up to the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries the myth of Russia as the Promised Land of the Heavenly Kingdom had been valid in the national culture. However, at the beginning of the 20th century it underwent considerable transformations. These were connected with the change of the sociocultural situation, as well as secularization and political processes, the result of which was the dawn of a new Soviet culture.

The Soviet myth of a happy country was being constructed on the basis of the Old Testament mythologem of the Promised Land, where milk and honey flow. Abundance is the leitmotif of the culture and arts in the USSR – in the cinema (for example, the film “Kuban Cossacks”), in art (numerous

² В.М. Живов, *Разыскания в области истории и предыстории русской культуры*, Москва: Языки славянской культуры 2002, р. 74.

³ Л. Лебедев, *Богословие Русской земли как образа Обетованной земли Царства Небесного (на некоторых примерах архитектурно-строительных композиций XI–XVII веков)*, <www.portal-credo.ru>.

sculptures and paintings depicting flourishing kolkhozes), in architecture. The pavilions of republics and regions, situated on the VDNKh underground train system, became one of the means of naturalization of the myth. The naturalization is a mechanism of embodying a myth in reality, which makes it function according to the laws of discursive formations. As an example of the naturalization of the Soviet myth of a happy country one can name apartment buildings erected both in the capital of the USSR (apartment buildings at the Prospect Mira built by the architect I.N. Sobolev) and in other urban centres. Commonsensically, this mythologem was built on the absolutely absurd premise: it was supposed to be suggestive of a peculiar climate in the country – everlasting summer. As V. Paperny remarks,

in the conditions of the continental climate, summer can be hot (and short), and winter – cold (and long). Culture 2 (the Soviet culture – auth.) seems to forget it. Its world-view seems to creep down some tens of degrees southward, from 60 degrees of latitude to, at least, Mediterranean latitudes.⁴

The aim of “warming,” formed within the framework of discourse, provides for “physiological changes” in the body of the Soviet man: in the conditions of a severe Russian winter he was supposed to behave as if it was 40 degrees above zero. They began to build houses with open terraces. The house at Prospekt Mira was designed and built as if it was situated on the Mediterranean coast; its architectural analogies can be found all over the country, from the Black Sea to the northern regions. These terraces, which made for coolness in the freezing zones, became peculiar architectural “leit-motifs” in the 1930s–1950s.

It must be remarked that the myth of the Soviet country as the earthly paradise is complicated, voluminous and polyphonic. The basis of this myth was laid down not only with the Old Testament image of the Promised Land but also with the reflections of ideo-mythological constructions (e.g. “Moscow is the Third Rome”), in accordance with which Moscow was regarded as the universal imperial centre and Russia as a sacral, holy territory. By analogy with the Old Russian culture we distinguish sacral places of the Soviet culture. M.N. Zolotonosov singles out several such places: VDNKh, Moscow underground railway, the channel “Volga – Moskva,” Gorky Central Park of Culture and Leisure.⁵ One can designate as sacral such objects

⁴ В. Паперный, *Культура “Два,”* Москва: Новое литературное обозрение 1996, p. 171-172.

⁵ М.Н. Золотоносов, *Философия общего тела. Садово-парковая скульптура 1930-х годов*, in В. Сажин, Н. Пакшина, Н. Школьный (eds.), *Хармиздат представляет. Со-*

as railway stations in bigger cities (Kharkov, Sochi, Kursk, etc.), “*Stalinskie Vysotki*” (Stalin’s high-rises), high streets of capital cities, Soviet republics developed according to the projects of Soviet architects (Gorky street in Moscow, Khreshchatyk in Kiev, etc). These objects are places of rituals (park of culture, “main streets of cities,” etc.), places having a special status in mythologized life, or places coming across as metaphors of the myth (e.g. railway stations as a metaphor of the gates, canals as a metaphor of the water myth, etc).

One of the most complete symbolic embodiments of the myth of paradisaical life was the image of a palace. Palaces used to be inhabited by people who didn’t know trouble, and whose lives one could envy, for such a life was always one of abundance. The Soviet culture “exploited” this image for the naturalization of the myth. First, the functions of former palaces were changed: the palaces of the royal family, as well as the estate belonging to the nobility were transformed into art museums, sanatoriums, public buildings (one can remember, by the way, that this image was very often used in Soviet films which portrayed the life of most working people and representatives of the Soviet intelligentsia would take place in palaces. They would have a rest there, receive treatment, and study in the former estate of the noble. Thus, the palace became a symbol of the new social order. Additionally, the country of the Soviets witnessed “a boom” of palace construction; numerous palaces of culture, sports and pioneers were built. Those buildings were endowed with habitual – for the mass consciousness – features of “palaceness” – luxurious ornamentation, classical order, rich décor, sculpture and painting, symmetry, large scale of forms, monumentality. For millions of Soviet people these features characterized buildings of peculiar importance.

The palaceness was emphasized by means of using a transformed classical order, columns, monumentality, in an unprecedented way, using expensive decoration materials, plenty of painting, sculpture paintings of the Soviet symbols. The stylistic features of the Soviet palace can be observed on the building of Lenin’s library (today the Russian State Library) in Moscow. The project was carried out in simplified forms of classicism, schematized and freely interpreted. “*Zatushenie*” of multi-storied bridges between floors makes for the perception of flatness, at height, as a comprehensive whole. This method develops the motif of a gigantic order, and saturates

facades with festiveness. The enablature features bas-reliefs depicting the working class, peasantry, and the intelligentsia.

The underground train stations for the first lines, finished in 1935–1938, received a peculiar status. The underground featured the images portraying “the golden century,” the dream of which was associated with a stabilized, regulated life. Therefore, the underground in the Soviet culture couldn’t be implemented only as part of a technical infrastructure of a city. It was to be a cult place resembling a palace or a temple. The underground represented the image of an ideal being which was imagined as existing in reality. Ideally, the architecture answered the essential demand of the masses in tangible authenticity of the myth embodiment. For instance, the station “Komsomolkaya Koltsevaya” still represents not so much a modest basilica but a gorgeous temple of the Soviet myth. The station vault is divided into huge fields and triangles. Within every hexahedron and triangle there are pictures and reliefs, laced rosettes, and chandeliers hanging from them. The station “Oktiabrskaya” built at the beginning of the 1950s also served to express ideas of triumph of the post-war decade. It is characterized by luxurious decoration of the interiors, high vaults evocative of byzantine temples, abundance of décor expressing themes of war, as well as richness of materials intended to decorate the station. The classical order used while erecting most of the buildings got on top of the atmosphere of the everlasting city.

The work of art in the Soviet cultural-semiotic system served as a form whose aim was to fill reality with ideological content, that is to simulate authenticity, e.g. to recreate the structure of a happy and abundant world (paradise on earth) filling it with different ideological senses.

So the Biblical myth of the Promised Land born in the Judaic culture was taken up by Rus along with Christianity. It underwent a number of transformations and became fundamental in the Soviet culture. The USSR was regarded as a country of the embodied utopy, of eternal summer came, satiation and abundance, where there was no sorrow or trouble, but only happy peaceful work. The myth of the USSR as a paradise on earth represents a secondary semiotic system, in which as a “signified” came reflections of the Old and New Testament mythologems of the Promised Land, images of the Russian country as a holy sacral place (taken over from Byzantium), as a conception of Imperial Magnificence of Russia (formed on the basis of a reference to Rome). These “signifieds” became a form on the basis of which the myth of the USSR was being created as the Promised Land.

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The Contribution of Scholars of Jewish Origin to the Development of Selected Fields of Study and Academic life, based on the Example of the Jagiellonian University in Cracow in the Day of the Galician Autonomy

The 19th century was the time when scholars of Jewish origin joined the European scholarly life as they had never before, becoming its full-fledged participants after centuries of restrictions. Furthermore, Jews often exerted a tremendous influence on the development of modern science, as proved by such a figure as the well-known creator of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud.

The same phenomenon could also be observed at the oldest Polish university – the Jagiellonian University (JU). Due to the peculiar socio-political conditions of the Austrian partition, the beginning of the increased Jewish scholar activity dates back only to the Galician Autonomy; it was then that members of the so-far constrained Jewish community could begin to enjoy the effects of the gradual democratisation of the Habsburg Monarchy. The Jagiellonian University had a particular Polish character and it functioned in Cracow, at the time considered the “stronghold” of the Polish culture. Thus, a group of scholars of Jewish origin who decided to work there is especially interesting. Yet, so far neither the group nor its scholarly achievements have been subject to thorough analysis, even though numerous studies have been devoted to the Cracow university, the history of the Polish sciences, and finally to the history of Galicia and the city of Cracow

itself.¹ There are also studies which aim at shedding light at the impressive achievements of Polish scholars of Jewish origin.²

The tradition of Jewish students at the Cracow Alma Mater is not a long one. For centuries the university doors were practically closed for Jews. The demands made on the university to open up to “followers of any religion,” as prof. Rafał Czerniakowski put it during a meeting of the College of Physical Sciences, were to appear as late as in the 1790s, however there is no information about their effects. Salomon Wolf from Wolbrom, who was only accepted at the Jagiellonian University in 1802, remains the first known Jewish student. Later on, the number of Jewish students gradually increased, although it did not exceed several students a year (according to very incomplete data, the Medical Department in the first half of the 19th century received only 52 Jewish students of medicine and 14 Jewish students of the so-called “lower surgery”). Also, several decades had to pass by before the first M.D. degrees were earned. The first ones of many to earn an M.D. degree were the two accomplished Cracow medics: Józef Oettinger and Jonatan Warshauer.³

It was only after 1867 that there was a dynamic growth in the number of Jewish youth. In the academic year 1856/57 there were 18 Jewish students in the whole of the Jagiellonian University (comprising 8% of all students), and during the second semester of the academic year 1913/14 the number

¹ Among the newer publications note L.T. Sroka's, *Żydzi w Krakowie. Studium o elicie miasta 1850–1918*, Kraków: WN Akademii Pedagogicznej 2008; one of the chapters is devoted to the academic community (p. 140-148). Several biographic entries devoted to professors from Cracow were also included in the book A. Kutylak (ed.), *Krakowianie. Wybitni Żydzi krakowscy XIV–XX w.*, Kraków: Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa 2006; *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* also lists many scholars of Jewish origin. Other extremely useful sources include: M. Kulczykowski, *Żydzi studenci Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w dobie autonomii Galicji*, Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka 1995, or U. Perkowska, *Kształtowanie się zespołu naukowego w Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim (1860–1920)*, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków – Gdańsk: Ossolineum 1975.

² Z. Borzymińska, R. Żebrowski, *Po-lin. Kultura Żydów polskich*, Warszawa: Amarant 1993, p. 111-127; N.M. Hanecki, *Udział lekarzy i przyrodników pochodzenia żydowskiego w rozwoju nauk lekarskich w Polsce ostatniego stulecia*, “Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytut Historycznego,” 1970, p. 85-96; 1971, p. 43-64; 1972, p. 99-115; M. Mieses, *Udział Żydów polskich w nauce (wiek XIX i początek XX w. do 1918 r.)*, in I. Schipper, A. Tartakower, A. Haffika (eds.), *Żydzi w Polsce Odrodzonej*, Warszawa 1933, vol. 2, p. 24-59.

³ J. Bieniarzówna, *Studenci-Żydzi na Wydziale Lekarskim UJ w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku*, “Krzysztofory,” 1988, p. 33-39. The situation was a little better in the Habsburg Monarchy. In 1781 Joseph II ruled that Jews be allowed to study at universities, although even after that they were subject to certain restrictions, e.g. until mid-19th century they were banned from Canon law classes.

was up to 529 students (over 16% of all students). The increase resulted from the socio-political changes in Austria-Hungary, e.g. the abolishment of restrictions for practising the legal profession, as well as the gradual emancipation and modernization of the Jewish community. There was diverse interest in majors offered at the university. Medical and legal studies were the most popular among the Jewish students, while the philosophy department attracted them the least. For obvious reasons there were no Jewish students at the Theology Department, teaching the future clergy for the Catholic Church.⁴

A natural consequence of the growing number of Jewish students was the formation of a Jewish group of academics and university professors. In the case of the Jagiellonian University the process was particularly slow, however, and the Jewish scholarly community affiliated with this university was at that time very small.

At that time, habilitation was the entry point to an academic career, as the university education system was organized in a way that provided for very few assistant positions. The habilitation was introduced at Austrian universities in the middle of the 19th century.⁵ The Jagiellonian University, subject to germanization pressures, was then in a complicated situation, which did not facilitate its development nor, the more so, the development of individual academic careers. As a result, a whole decade had passed before the first associate professor titles were awarded in Cracow. The first group of scholars honoured by the title in 1862 included also Jews; the Ministry of Education and Religious Denominations on the 29th March 1862 approved the habilitation of Antoni Rosner in venerology and dermatology.⁶

The changes of the time were symbolised by the above-mentioned Józef Oettinger M.D., who remained faithful to his ancestors' religion till the end of his life. His efforts to obtain the associate professor title and the right

⁴ M. Kulczykowski, *Żydzi studenci Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w dobie autonomii Galicji*, p. 26-66. It was also consistent with the general trends of the time; according to the data gathered by M.J. Adamczyk, in 1851 in the Austrian part of the Habsburg Monarchy Jewish students comprised a little over 16% of all medicine students, and as many as 27.1% in 1904. Next, there were students of law: in 1851 they comprised 2.8% of all law students, while in 1904 – as many as 18.2%. M.J. Adamczyk, *Edukacja a przeobrażenia społeczności żydowskich w monarchii habsburskiej 1774–1914*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 1998, p. 74.

⁵ The rules for granting *veniam legendi* were described by U. Perkowska, *Kształtowanie się zespołu naukowego w Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim (1860–1920)*, p. 38-39.

⁶ Ibidem, p. 41; P. Szarejko, *Rosner Antoni*, in S. Kieniewicz, E. Rostworowski, H. Markiewicz (eds.), *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Kraków – Wrocław – Warszawa: Ossolineum 1989–1991, vol. XXXII, p. 105-106.

to hold lectures began as early as 1862. Although the procedure was successful in the Collegium Medicum, he had to wait another six years for an approval by the authorities in Vienna. (It must be mentioned that it was not the first habilitation of a Jewish scholar in Galicia; habilitations had already been awarded at the University of Lviv during the short time of liberalization in 18507). The Ministry's reluctance to confirm Oettinger's habilitation was not motivated by his religion, but rather by his social and political activity.⁸ Nevertheless, his habilitation, and then the nomination for an unpaid professor extraordinarius in 1873,⁹ as well as the academic careers of two other scholars: Leon Blumenstock's (Halban), (1838–1897) (forensic medicine specialist, *veniam legendi* in 1869, professor extraordinarius since 1869, and professor ordinarius since 1881)¹⁰ and Józef Michał Rosenblatt's (1853–1917), (a lawyer, habilitation in criminal law in 1878, professor extraordinarius since 1884, and finally, professor ordinarius since 1893¹¹), opened a new chapter in the history of the Polish-Jewish relations at the Jagiellonian University.¹² There had been cases of academics of Jewish origin already belonging to one of the Christian churches, who had been nominated heads of departments – as proved by the case of Antoni Rosner, mentioned above.

The number of Jewish habilitations, just like the number of Jewish teaching staff members at the Jagiellonian University, was not impressive throughout the Galician Autonomy. The data gathered by Urszula Perkowska shows that among 300 associate professor titles awarded by the University between 1848 and 1920, only 12 were awarded to Jews. Compared to the large number of Jewish students recorded at the University, the figure may prove that the decision to pursue an academic career, and to do it in

⁷ The scholars who obtained the title then were: Efraim Izrael Blücher (1813–1882) and Łazarz Elias Izrael Igel (1825–1892), <[http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=1181&letter=B&search=Austrian rabbi](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=1181&letter=B&search=Austrian%20rabbi)>; <<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=87&letter=I>>.

⁸ U. Perkowska, *Kształtowanie się zespołu naukowego w Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim (1860–1920)*, p. 47–48.

⁹ Like other so-called private associate professors he did not receive a fixed remuneration, and received only small pay from the fees paid by the students.

¹⁰ L. Wacholc, *Halban Leon*, in K. Lepszy (ed.), *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Kraków – Wrocław – Warszawa: Ossolineum 1960–1961, vol. IX, p. 245–246.

¹¹ J. Malec, *Rosenblatt Józef Michał*, in S. Kieniewicz, E. Rostworowski, H. Markiewicz (eds.), *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XXXII, p. 69–71.

¹² Cf. the opinion of M. Kulczykowski in idem, *Żydzi studenci Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w dobie autonomii Galicji*, p. 330.

Cracow, was not an easy one.¹³ It was even more difficult seeing that one's efforts in this area were not always successful. The attempts to obtain the associate professor title were futile even in the case of eminent scholars. The case of Ludwik Gumplowicz (1838–1909), one of the pioneers of modern sociology, remains one of the best-known examples. A graduate of the Jagiellonian University (Ph.D. at the Department of Law in 1862), he began to work towards obtaining *veniam legendi* in general history of law in the early 1868, based on his two publications: *Wola ostatnia w rozwoju dziejowym i umiejętnym* (*Last Will in the History and Development*), and – currently better known – *Prawodawstwo polskie względem Żydów* (*Polish Legislation Towards Jews*), Cracow 1867. However, the application that Gumplowicz filed was rejected. It was not so much his origin or religion that raised objections, but his anti-clerical views transparent in both works; they were particularly ill-received in the conservative community of Cracow scholars. Seeing that his attempts to appeal against the decision were unsuccessful, discouraged Gumplowicz and ultimately he moved to Graz. There, although not without certain difficulties, he took over the department of political law.¹⁴ Unfortunately, later at the turn of the 20th century, the Jagiellonian University, so far dominated by conservatives approaching Jews with reserve, but without any particular animosity, was seeing the rise of new political powers. They included National Democrats, very ill-disposed towards Jews. As a result, the careers of many young people were warped by common prejudice.¹⁵

Therefore, the group of Jewish members of the JU teaching staff remained small until the end of the Galician Autonomy. The situation was fairly constant during the inter-war period. Precise figures are difficult to obtain due to incomplete biographies, known cases of religious conversion (e.g. prof. L. Blumenstock, mentioned before, baptised in 1881), and the people who came from completely assimilated families and who identified themselves with Polishness (for example, the respectable physicist Władysław Natanson (1863–1937), Cracow University president in the academic year 1922/23).¹⁶ Nevertheless, at the beginning of the period under discussion –

¹³ U. Perkowska, *Kształtowanie się zespołu naukowego w Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim (1860–1920)*, p. 48.

¹⁴ W. Biękowski, *Gumplowicz Ludwik*, in K. Lepszy (ed.), *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. IX, p. 150-153.

¹⁵ U. Perkowska, *Kształtowanie się zespołu naukowego w Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim (1860–1920)*, p. 47-51.

¹⁶ J. Hulewicz, T. Piech, *Natanson Władysław*, in S. Kieniewicz, E. Rostworowski, H. Markiewicz (eds.), *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Kraków – Wrocław – Warszawa: Ossolineum

that is in the academic year 1866/67 – there was not one Jew among the professors working at the University (only A. Rosner was of Jewish origin).¹⁷ And among the 105 professors during the second semester of the academic year 1913/14, only two were Jewish.¹⁸ In any case, in the period under discussion the number of Jewish staff members – professors, associate professors, assistants and lecturers – did not exceed several persons. Yet, it was a group of people very much distinguished for the Cracow Alma Mater. It included Józef Oettinger, Leon Blumenstock, Józef Rosenblatt and his son Alfred, Leon Sternbach and Rafał Taubenschlag, Władysław Natanson, Antoni Roser and his son Aleksander. Most of them represented medical sciences and law, although there were also such outstanding representatives of other fields of study as Leon Sternbach, a classicist, Alfred Rosenblatt, a mathematician and the physicist Władysław Natanson. A number of eminent Jewish graduates of the University continued their academic careers in other institutions, e.g. at Jan Kazimierz University in Lviv. They were i.a. the renowned physicist Stanisław Loria (1883–1958), linguist Gerson Blatt (1858–1916) or the world-famous neurophysiologist Adolf (Abraham) Beck (1863–1942), who was even the University president in the academic year 1912/13.

It seems that at least three figures from the group should be described in more detail: Józef Oettinger, a specialist in the history of medicine, Leon Sternbach, a classicist. Their academic careers were in many respects different; what they had in common was their devotion to the Cracow University.

Józef Oettinger, mentioned here several times, is regarded as the first Jewish professor of the Jagiellonian University. He was born in Tarnów in 1818 as a son of a Jewish merchant. Having lost his parents very early, he was brought up by his uncle in Cracow and remained attached to the city for the rest of his life. He completed his high school there, and then in 1836–1843 he studied medicine. Financial hardships forced Oettinger to give private lessons. He then obtained his M.D. degree in 1843 with the dissertation about Józef Struś (*Josephii Struthii medici posnanensis vita et duorum ejus operu...*, Cracoviae 1843), after which he started to work in the Jewish

1977, vol. XXII, p. 611-615. The dilemmas in this area are well demonstrated by the publications quoted above: the work by M. Mieses and the book *Krakowianie*; while the author of the first one mentions Antoni i Aleksander Rosner and Władysław Natanson among Jewish scholars, the other does not.

¹⁷ *Skład cesarsko-królewskiego Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w Krakowie oraz wykaz odczytów tamże odbyć się mających...*, 1866/67.

¹⁸ *Skład cesarsko-królewskiego Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w Krakowie...*, 1913/14.

hospital. In 1851 Oettinger was appointed to give lectures in the history of medicine, as a replacement for prof. Fryderyk Hechel. In 1862, as mentioned earlier, he applied with the Collegium Medicum to obtain the title and position of associate professor in “the history of medicine and medical literature.” His application was accepted for the paper *Umiejętności lekarskie wobec szkół, a w szczególności wobec urojonej szkoły dawnej i nowej (Doctor's Abilities and Training, Particularly the Imaginary Training of The Past and Modern Findings)*, Cracow 1863. Oettinger had to wait another six years, however, for the Ministry of Education and Religious Denominations to approve the nomination. It is noteworthy that it was the first habilitation at a Polish university in this field of study. In 1871–1873, the authorities of the Collegium Medicum made efforts to nominate Oettinger professor extraordinarius and the chair of the History of Medicine Department. These efforts were only partially successful: on 18th February, 1873 he was nominated unpaid professor extraordinarius. The negative attitude of the authorities in Vienna towards this accomplished scholar and social activist, for years blocking the development of his academic career, were caused – as it was mentioned earlier – by his political activity and democratic beliefs (e.g. in 1861 he was a member of a delegation to Vienna which demanded equal rights for discriminated Jewish citizens of the Monarchy).

Oettinger's scholarly achievements comprise around 50 publications. As a researcher he was most interested in the issues related to historic medicine; e.g. in 1878 he published *Rys dawnych dziejów Wydziału Lekarskiego UJ (A Summary of the Old Times of the Jagiellonian University Collegium Medicum)*, and prepared a comprehensive *Rys historii medycyny powszechnej (A Summary of the History of General Medicine)*, the manuscript of which survived till this day. Oettinger's lexicographic activity is also noteworthy from the point of view of the Polish medicine. He co-created several specialist dictionaries (the most important of them being *Słownik terminologii lekarskiej polskiej (Dictionary of Polish Medical Terms)*, prepared with A. Kremer and S. Janikowski, published in Cracow in 1881¹⁹). Oettinger also had great influence on Polish medicine, working as the editor of “Przegląd Lekarski” (“Medical Review”) and being a member of “Towarzystwo Le-

¹⁹ In the Warsaw journal “Medycyna,” G. Fritsche praised the Dictionary, writing: “It is a work in all respects exceeding our expectations. The authors clearly understood their task, knew how grave the undertaking was, to provide knowledge so profound-linguistically and scientifically, that they devoted years of their efforts, creating a monumental work, which is testament to both their knowledge and their citizenship.” G. Fritsche, “*Słownik terminologii lekarskiej polskiej*,” “Medycyna”, 1881, p. 648.

karskie” (“Medical Association”). Although both his scholarly and educational achievements remained limited,²⁰ one cannot deny that he was very involved, generous, and finally a patriot, which earned him true respect in Cracow, as proved by the festive celebrations of his 70th birthday.²¹ He passed away in 1895 and scholars of the history of medicine still keep his achievements in memory.²²

The other scholar mentioned above, Leon Sternbach represented the next generation of Jewish professors of the Jagiellonian University, and remains a much more eminent figure: he is considered one of the most prominent Byzantinists of his time. Sternbach was born in Drohobych in 1864. He grew up in a family of wealthy Jewish elite; his father was a bank clerk, who had a passion for Hebraic studies, and his maternal grandfather Leon Goldhammer was the mayor of Drohobych. The scholarly tradition of the family was preserved by the next generation: his brother’s sons, Leon – who made a name as the inventor of Valium, and Ludwik – an indologist. Thanks to the support from his family, Sternbach could afford to study with such scholars as Otto Ribbeck and Wilhelm von Hartel at the universities in Leipzig, Dresden and Vienna (1882-1885). The scholar received his Ph.D. in 1886 in Vienna with the dissertation *Melemeta Graeca*, published in Vienna in 1886 (with an award from the Leipzig University in 1885). In 1889 Sternbach obtained his habilitation at the Lviv University, and he moved to Cracow in 1891. There, thanks to the personal support of his master, Hartel (who was at the time the Minister of Education and Religious Denominations), he became chair of the third Department of Classics that was established especially for him. In 1892 he was awarded the title of professor extraordinarius, and finally, five years later, he became professor ordinarius. Sternbach enjoyed general respect at the Jagiellonian University. In the academic year 1904/05 he was the dean of the Philosophy Department,

²⁰ Jerzy Strojnowski summarized it as follows: “Oettinger’s unquestionable merit as a teacher lies in his enthusiastic and selfless work with students; he told them about the history of their field, and as if by chance – about the history of Poland. Full of good will, he did it as best he could, and he was truly irreplaceable: after he passed away, the Jagiellonian University did not offer lectures in the history of medicine until 1910.” J. Strojnowski, *Józef Oettinger pierwszy habilitowany docent i profesor historii medycyny na polskim uniwersytecie (1818-1895)*, “Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki” 1 (1970), p. 63.

²¹ L. Blumenstock, *Uroczystość jubileuszowa Prof. Józefa Oettingera*, “Przegląd Lekarski”, 1888, p. 267-268.

²² J. Strojnowski, *Józef Oettinger pierwszy habilitowany docent...*, p. 57-69; A. Kutylak (ed.), *Krakowianie. Wybitni Żydzi krakowscy XIV–XX w.*, p. 100-103, A. Bodzoń, J. Lisiewicz, *Oettinger Józef*, in S. Kieniewicz, E. Rostworowski, H. Markiewicz (eds.), *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Kraków – Wrocław – Warszawa: Ossolineum 1978, vol. XXIII, p. 584-586.

and in 1918 he received the *honoris causa* doctorate. He was attached to the Cracow scholarly community to such an extent that he did not accept the offer to become chair of a department at Vienna University, or a proposal to take up a permanent research position in Rome. In the meantime, prof. Sternbach was also entrusted with other important positions: in 1905–1919 he was a member of the National School Board as the representative of the Jagiellonian University, and from 1916 to 1935 he was the head of the High School Teacher Examination Committee. Altogether he worked at the Jagiellonian University for 44 years and retired in 1935.

Sternbach was a member of several associations and scholarly organizations, e.g. the Polish Academy of Learning (since 1893), the Vienna Institute for Archaeological Science, and the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies in London. The scholar's achievements included numerous papers, published both in national and international journals, and important editions of source documents.²³ He was regarded as one of

(...) the most eminent experts in manuscripts. He had a unique gift for discovering yet unpublished texts; his interests were very versatile and his erudition was unparalleled. Sternbach saw his main research mission in textual criticism and interpretation. The works he edited became a canon of the research of Greek and Byzantine literature.²⁴

Apart from Sternbach's scholarly publications, his educational work also greatly influenced the development of Polish science. Among his students were such outstanding figures as Kazimierz Kumaniecki, Władysław Madyda, Ludwik Piotrowicz, Tadeusz Sinko, and Jan Sajdak. Together with other professors in Cracow, Sternbach was arrested on 6th November, 1939, during Sonderaktion Krakau, and he died on 20th February, 1940 in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp.²⁵

Recalling just these figures of Jewish scholars suffices to prove the huge contribution of the small group into the development of both the Jagiellon-

²³ A reprint of Sternbach's *Gnomologium Vaticanum e codice vaticano graeco 743* was published in Berlin in 1963, which is proof of how important his work was. The publication was noted by specialist journals (e.g. F.H. Sandbach, *Leo Sternbach Gnomologium Vaticanum e codice vaticano graeco 743, Berlin 1963*, "The Classical Review," vol. 14, no 2 (1964), p. 216; "The Journal of Hellenic Studies" 64 (1964), p. 243).

²⁴ K. Korus, *Sternbach Leon Samuel (1864–1940)*, in B. Leśnodorski, E. Rostworowski (eds.), *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, Kraków – Wrocław – Warszawa: Ossolineum 1973, vol. XLIII, p. 475.

²⁵ S. Hammer, *Leon Sternbach jako filolog i bizantynista (ur. 1867, um. 1940)*, "Eos," 1940–1946, p. 9–53; A. Kutylak (ed.), *Krakowianie. Wýbitni Żydzi krakowscy XIV–XX w.*, p. 122–124; K. Korus, *Sternbach Leon Samuel (1864–1940)*, p. 473–475.

ian University and the Polish science. They initiated new research, worked towards opening new departments, and finally, by holding the most important academic positions, actively participated in the academic life. In many cases, as proved by the example of L. Sternbach, their achievements secured them a well deserved place in the history of their respective domains. Their influence on the masses of young people who attended their classes and lectures for years is equally important, if more difficult to estimate. All of it makes this particular group deserve special attention.

Moreover, the importance of the Jewish scholars in Cracow, still very much restricted during the Galician Autonomy, grew stronger as time went by. Among the students and graduates of the Jagiellonian University during the interwar period were such renowned scientists as e.g. Leopold Infeld, the world-known theoretical physicist and co-worker of Albert Einstein.

PHILOSOPHICO-THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE



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The Russian and Polish Existentialism as mirrored by the “Jewish Problem” (the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries)

Both in Russia and Europe the “ethnic/national problem” for a number of reasons did draw a wide response. One of the major reasons was an epoch-making *transition process* that is understood as a destruction of logocentric (Euro-)worldview and formatting of the polyphonic World image, that is the formation of dialogics of Culture in the discourse of Another, the quest for the dialogic nature of comprehension and mutual understanding. Two kinds of ethnic stereotypes were being formed broadly and intensively. Those were, on the one hand, ethnic self-stereotypes, the complexes of ideas of one’s own ethnic community; on the other hand, stereotypic ideas of “other” communities, those ideas being compared to and related to the self-stereotypes. Self-identification implies a presence of the image of “Another,” “alien” enabling one to discern a specific character of one’s own culture.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries those overtones became apparent in “the Jewish problem,” but they did not take the form of the “We vs. Them” historical mythologem presenting the Jews as eternal opponents of Christian Nations. The overtones rather took the form of a view of the Jews as “Another,” as someone positioned in the existential and cultural space to which the Slavic peoples belonged as well.

The dialogue demonstrates not only one’s differentiation from Another, but the closeness, the propinquity with Another as well. In the case in question it is spiritual closeness of the ways of the Slavic (Polish and Russian) cultures and the Jewish culture that were coupled by their mutual historical

inferiority and eternal secondariness of these peoples' images in the Eurocentric mentality of the 17th–19th centuries. The accentuated opposition of the Slavic cultures to the Western civilization spiritual impoverishment (as they saw it) against the background of the fresh rise of ethnic self-awareness was another feature that tied those cultures with the Jewish one. The persistent Slavic mythologem of the West deprived of the spiritual ties between man and God, of their relations being transformed into “sapless legalistic account,” was emerging. In this context the fate and destiny of the Jewish people became a kind of a “mirror” for the Slavic people, helping them to recognize their Chosenness, messianic destiny they had acquired anew.

On the one hand, the competition between the two Slavic peoples for spiritual, that is messianic leadership in the Christian World began; on the other hand, they were united in their common fight against the Jews for absolute spiritual leadership and for intimate terms, for the place of the Chosen they had established in their relations with the Supreme One. Poles are a unique people with a double cultural code, being both Slavs by their geographical location and their roots, as well as Europeans by their education and culture. They saw themselves as redeemers of Western Catholicism from its spiritual impoverishment. Similar claims for leadership of Russian Orthodoxy in the all-Slavic world rose, as represented by its well-known apologists like Nikolai Danilevsky, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Konstantin Leontyev.

The transition era demonstrates an ambivalent representation of the similarity between the three messianic peoples. The similarity of their religious claims for spiritual supremacy and leadership was presented in the form of the ethnic/national exceptionality and chosenness. Alternatively, one can present that both as confrontation (conscious, self-aware ethnic nationalism and resentment) and as some mutual tendency towards inter-denomination dialogue leading to All-Unity, which was Vladimir Solovyov's ideal.

But there is yet some community in all three peoples' existential fate. One could describe it in metaphorical terms as a *non-ethnic anti-Messianic resentment* of the entire World towards all the three peoples.

Anti-Semitism, being by its nature rejector and rejection of all the Jewish, acquires here some unique and quite an original modification: here it is opposition against any *Human spirit of pure breed* that is embodied in the prospect of the Universal All-Unity. It means that the fact of rejecting Saint and Spiritual things, rejecting of the things that are divine or that are sacred by the Law should be ranked along with anti-Semitism as well. For example, the murder of Solomon Mikhoels, the great Jewish actor, is an undeniable act of anti-Semitism; and so is killing the imprisoned great Russian scientist and academic Nikolai Ivanovich

Vavilov is another act of anti-Semitism, as well as the poisoning of the great Greek Socrates.¹

This subtle reflection is valid for the peoples under consideration as well in spite of a rather broad interpretation of the nature of anti-Semitism (for the issue in question it is more relevant to describe the latter as anti-Messianism).

Only from this perspective can one comprehend the nature of resentimental and repressive position of the authorities towards their own people and other peoples and to see some adequate base for “Universal All-Unity.” The peoples who are Chosen are tied by their common destiny that can be designated as *being chosen for dolour*. The similarity of their spiritual destiny, based on their “mutual theocratic ground,”² does not eliminate their ethnic and national specificity or difference, but it does doom those people to a never-ending return to the origins of their spiritual history, to Golgotha, to the repetition of Messiah’s road of sorrows; for it is the anticipation of Him and confrontation with Him that all the history and life philosophy of Poles, Russians, but first of all Jews is impregnated by. The Chosen one is the Saint one, the one living and acting by the rules prescribed by one’s faith – “God’s own Saints enjoying eternal glory.” It is the eternal suffering of those people that is their Chosenness and their sanctity: far away from eternal glory they are. And all the three were the living realization of religious existentialist philosophy.

To reveal the Nation’s existential fundamentals, one has to look at its religiousness from the perspective of its essence. The Jews among the three Chosen Nations are a standard of immediate and sensual communion of the Supreme One with His own people.

Abraham the Forefather, while living among the heathens and not having had a direct revelation from the true God yet, did not contend himself with the worship of pseudo-gods; that worship that was so attractive to all the peoples was a burden for him. It was repulsive for the Jewish soul to worship elemental and daemonic natural forces. The Father of Israel could not worship anything that was lower than the Human; he was seeking the God that was personal and moral, the God that was not degrading for the Human being to believe in. And that God did appear to him and summon him and gave Promise to his kin.³

¹ Г. Грузман, *Еврейское сияние русской философии (снова о русском еврействе или ямы на дороге)*, НАГАРИЯ 2010, < http://lit.lib.ru/g/gruzman_g/ehudy.shtml>.

² В.С. Соловьев, *Еврейство и христианский вопрос [Jewishness and the Christian Question]*, in idem, *Сочинения в 2-х томах*, vol. 1, Москва: Мысль 1989, p. 209.

³ Ibidem.

God constantly appears to His prophets, visually produces His wondrous essence. The Jews are accustomed to touching Him, smelling Him, living according to His literal directions. It's the olfactory experience of God that has a special place in Judaism: "All the while my breath [is] in me and the spirit of God⁴ [is] in my nostrils" (Jb 27:3-4). According to contemporary scholars, this mode of perception is linked in the closest way to a memory and archetype of perception in alien eyes.⁵ The Jews present a model of obvious and corporeal union between God and man. Being eternally un-rooted both in geographical and historical space, the Jews got used to encoding their identity in "corporeal codes." Probably, that's why their history is represented as the most pronounced embodiment of "*corporeal dimension*" of suffering in its entirety. There are few peoples that could follow the way of the Jewish people: there was a permanent threat of extermination withstood by the zest for life, as well as the anguish of the body and mind being overcome by ineradicable faith and thirst for Haven.

The Christian peoples' communion with God is more abstract and metaphysical. But just because of it the nature of this communion appeared to be still more existential. The depth and measure of their suffering depends mostly not on fleshliness but rather comprehension of the suffering as an attribute of their own souls. It is a suffering of the soul and spirit. "A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit" (Ps 50:19). Those are their own passions that are declared to be people's fiends. It's not corporeal circumcision that is needed but a cordial and spiritual one as well as an ascetical communion with God. The existential basis of the relationship with God was revealed still more obviously after the God-man had come into the World. He em-

⁴ In the King James Bible. Or "the breath of God" in more recent translations.

⁵ See T. Engen, *Odor Sensation and Memory*, New York: Praeger 1991. In fiction it was Marcel Proust who described it in a very impressive way; there is even a notion of "Proustian phenomenon," which is used when one is referring to an associative impact of odours. The perception of Jews via the olfactory code is a rather commonplace and vulgar way of describing and characterization of the members of this people. It's hard to find any other people that would be associated with specific smells as persistently as the Jews are (it's not the food associations that are meant here). "One of the most persistent stereotypes of the folk culture is the *smell* of the 'alien'... The ideas of the smells of 'non-Russians' reflected in some Slavic proverbs: *Yid always stinks yid* (Ukrainian)... What do Slavs identify the smell of Jews with? Usually, one speaks just of an 'odour' (...) but if one is to compare it to something one usually mentions the odour of animals... The 'Jewish odour' may be associated with the odour of onion and garlic as well..." (О.В. Белова, В.Я. Петрушин, "*Еврейский миф*" в славянской культуре [*"The Jewish myth" in Slavic culture*], Москва: Мосты культуры – Иерусалим: Гешарим 2007, p. 277-278.

bodied the religious-existential principle that is the will for suffering presented as a Cross, as the way, as a supreme spiritual and religious value.

By the 19th century this cross was taken up by Poles – a very specific Nation that, in its history, embodied the suffering of the God-chosen ones in its entirety; and by Russians as well, who claimed the cross and the messianic role too. The history of God-chosen Christian people was repeated: again messianic hopes and universal ambitions rose on the periphery of civilization. Against the backdrop of their mutual hatred both towards the well-off Europe and another God-chosen people, that is Jews, the burden of their misery gave rise to religious resentment and jealousy towards each other, as well as the lust for power in the World. An ideological struggle began for the right to be a greater sufferer for Faith and the Cross. It took the form of the competition for spiritual leadership in the all-Slavic world (as well as in the European World).

The Slavic messianic peoples perceived themselves “impeded” by a “powerful Jewish idea” (Dostoyevsky) in their strive to feel chosen; that idea stood in the way of the Slavic ideas, thus barring them from reign.

Let us assume that it’s very difficult to get to know the fourth-century history of such a people as Jews. But for one I do know at least the fact that there is hardly any other people that complains so much of its fate; every minute, for every move and every word complaining of its disparagement, suffering and martyrdom. (...) I can’t quite believe the Jews’ cries saying that they are so intimidated, so tormented, so disparaged. I think that the Russian *muzhik*, well, any Russian commoner is burdened arguably more than a Jew.⁶

I think Dostoyevsky could not even imagine how tragically and appallingly right he would appear in his efforts to establish the fact that the Russians were as miserable, homeless and as oppressed as the Jews were, but they did endure it all and kept silent (as the sufferers of Christ are apparently supposed to do) while the Jews did not endure it, but cried out, which once more highlights the “corporeal” dimension of their suffering,⁷ which

⁶ Ф.М. Достоевский, *Дневник писателя*, in idem, *Полное собрание сочинений: В 30-ти тт.*, Ленинград: Наука 1972–1991, p. 77 (Chapt. 2: “Jewish Question”). The most compassionate Russian writer is reasoning here under the framework of the binary opposition “Us vs. Them” and because of it shows his commitment to neither dialogics or polyphonism but rather to a mythology of the most “primordial” sort.

⁷ In the Silver Age these cries of pain and dolor made it possible to build a mythologem of “womanish” and “mannish” peoples and to reckon the Jews among the “womanish” ones (V. Rozanov). But Russian people were also treated often in the same way (the eternal womanish element in the Russian soul – N. Berdyaev) as opposed to “violent” European peoples with their “mannish” behavior pattern.

is “not as significant” as the spiritual silence of the Russian sufferers. He experienced a similar aversion towards Poles. In the eyes of the Russian ethnic nationalism Poles are a kind of European “Jews.” The great Russian author would not sympathize with the cries of pain if those were rapped out by “defamed” peoples, by “bloodsuckers” “accustomed to hard drinking,” Russian or some Baltic drunkards. And meanwhile the great psychologist-writer is willing to justify any Russian villain, for the latter has “the image of God in his soul.”

One might wonder whether in the 20th century Dostoyevsky would measure the scale of suffering and spirituality of the Russian “she-commissar Vavilova” or lack of corporeal restraint of Haim-Abraham Leibovich Magazinik⁸ or try to answer in whose hands the violin sounded more tragic and cried more miserably: was it in the hands of Rothschild, a tiny downtrodden Jew, or in the hands of a poor, unhappy Russian sufferer Yakov Bronza. Would he today bring himself to build up a “hierarchy of life suffering” and compare the patience Of Slavic and Jewish peoples that have experienced “Night of Broken Glass,” Katyn massacre, Gulags, Nazi ghettos, Babi Yar and all the horrors of 20th-century Holocaust.

Our opponents note that the Jews are, quite the contrary, poor, and especially so in Russia; that it’s only the very top people among Jews that are rich: bankers, money changers, while nearly 90% of all the rest are literally paupers, who rush about for a piece of bread, offering brokerage, who look out for a penny to snatch to buy some bread. *Yes, all this seems to be true* (italics added – S.K.). But what does this mean? Does this not mean that in the labour of the Jews itself (or, at least, of the vast majority of the Jews) there is something wrong, something abnormal, unnatural, something self-penalizing? A Jew offers brokerage; he trades in other people’s labour. Capital is labour accumulated, and a Jew likes to trade in other people’s labour! But it still neither makes nor changes anything; but then the ruling top-level Jews get stronger and stronger, harder and harder set in above Mankind and strive to form the World in their own shape and their own essence. And Jews keep clamouring that there are good people among them as well. O, dear! Is it the matter? And it is not *good* people and *bad* people at all that we are talking about. And aren’t there good people among those Jews as well? Was the late James Rothschild of Paris not a good man? We are talking of the whole and of its idea; we are talking of Yiddishness and the Yiddish idea that is spreading over the World instead of Christianity that has “failed”....⁹

A joint crusade along with Germany against the international capital (huckster Jews making drunkards of Russian people) and against hateful

⁸ From the story *In the town of Berdichev* by V.S. Grossman.

⁹ Ф.М. Достоевский, *Дневник писателя* (Chapt. 2: “Jewish Question”), p. 78.

Catholicism (that is the Polish Catholicism and the French socialism) almost becomes a quintessence of the “Russian idea.” After the advent of Nazism a totalitarianism Dostoyevsky’s words sound as some terrifying revelation of the future he called his compatriots for:

Anyway, one thing seems to be quite clear: Germany needs us even more than we ourselves think.

And it needs us not for a momentary political alliance: it needs us *forever*. The idea of Germany reunited is large, stately and it looks into the centuries. (...) It assigned the Western World to itself (...) and it leaves the East to Russia. So the two great peoples are designated to change the shape of this world.¹⁰

Those words are the best corroboration of the evident truth: *there is less than a step from ethnic nationalism to Nazism and chauvinism*.

Vladimir Solovyov was much more accurate when addressing an economic oppression of any people not as an ethnic/national phenomenon but as an objective historical and economic one. He indeed explained the causes of economic stratification of Nations as well as of their propensity for some or other line of activity, in quite a Marxist way.

The problem lies in neither Jews nor money, but in the supremacy of money, in its omnipotence. These were not Jews who made profiteering and enrichment a goal of any economic activity; these were not Jews who separated the economic domain from the religious and moral ones. The enlightened Europe was set up according to social economy principles that are godless and inhuman, and now it reproaches Jews for their following those principles.¹¹

His arguments are in line with the historical analysis of the “Jewish question” by Karl Kautsky who argued that

among the traits Israelites had inherited and retained from the nomadic era there is the propensity and skills for trade. (...) Trade is exceptionally strong in the development of national feelings.¹²

In this context the book by A.I. Solzhenitsyn is rather exemplary.¹³ The author writes about a number of Russian government attempts to “integrate” Jews into the Russian Nation, e.g. by engaging them in agriculture or drawing them away from money lending and trade. But for some reason

¹⁰ Ibidem (Chapt. 3: “Talks of the peace”), in Ф.М. Достоевский, *Полное собрание сочинений: В 30-ти тт.*, vol. 26, p. 91.

¹¹ В.С. Соловьев, *Еврейство и христианский вопрос*, p. 209.

¹² К. Каутский, *Происхождение христианства* [*Origins of Christianity*], trans. by Н. Рязанов, Москва: Политиздат 1990, p. 187, 201.

¹³ А.И. Солженицын, *Двести лет вместе: В 2 т.*, Москва: Русский путь 2001, <<http://sila.by.ru/2.htm>>.

(the author is not too articulate in the explanation) Jews would not become Russians: the men did not want to plough the soil; oxen were eaten up and implements were broken; while their wives demanded their perquisites and determined to sit out at home nursing the kids. As if our contemporary Orthodoxy did not understand the clash between the notions of “a Jew” and “a peasant” or never heard of mentality, archetypes, etc.:

So throughout the quarter of a century of reign of Alexander I the fight against distillery and tavern businesses by displacing Jews from villages was indeed at a complete standstill. (...) The idea proved hopeless just because agriculture is a great craftsmanship and it takes generations to foster it. So one cannot but fail to settle people on the land against their will or under their indifference.¹⁴

The most astonishing is the fact that the author does not see any connection between the Nation and the religion. He confines himself with “everyday life,” with dates and documents. But he does sympathize with Dostoyevsky...

Poles and Jews are the two poles of the Russian anti-Semitism and xenophobia. Both deliberate ones (F. Dostoyevsky, Aksakovs brothers, A. Suvorin, K. Leontiev), and everyday ones (pogroms, impairment of rights, linguistic and geopolitical abasement, etc.). Both are the reflection of the servile state of the Russian people who sees other peoples exposed to political, economic, geographical servility experience resentment towards those who have managed to retain their spiritual independence (Jews' rootlessness and piety, Poles' European education and culture). Poles and Jews, being absolutely different peoples melted in a “single enemy image,” whose existence in itself aggravates the resentment of Russians who were always spiritual serfs of their authorities and their State. Those two peoples “were always in the way” and thus barred Russians from the status of the “sufferer people,” God-chosen people, from thinking and conceptualizing in the mythological and binary way and, at last, from being a subject of “universal responsiveness” (Dostoyevsky). The Russian spirituality could not eliminate similar claims of other peoples for being God-chosen and spiritual in spite of being able to retain their local circumscribed cultures against repression and against being absorbed by either “Great Germany” (Europe) or the “Great Russian culture.”

But the Russian thought of that epoch knows still another deployment of this theme. The history of Jews – that rootless, homeless, persecuted, myth-driven people – becomes one of the fundamental existential elements in the

¹⁴ Ibidem.

Russian Silver Age philosophy (Vasily Rozanov, Lev Shestov, Mikhail Gershenson, Vladimir Solovyev): on the one hand there is loneliness, homelessness, fear, horror, dolour; on the other hand, it is all about the feeling of being chosen, the religion of family and everyday life, salvation and faith. The peoples considered overcame an abstract belief and formality in the relationship between man and God and became active subjects of an existential dialogue with God, a side in the “I and Thou” formula that embodies a personal intimate relationship between man and God. There is one more thread in existentialism that Lev Shestov demonstrated in a very pronounced way. It is alienation from other people, including other people’s suffering; escape into one’s dolorous chosenness, one’s loneliness and rootlessness in the world, one’s being cast out (pulled off the road?) of the universal progress. Existentialism is focused on the quest for historical autonomy, the quest for the opportunity to realize one’s creative nature; it seeks to estimate and affirm the measure of humanity of the Nation that for some or other reason appears to be “excluded” from the objective historical process. As if against the dominating Nations (European, Christian) those Nations behave as rootless, extra-territorial. Their behavior is messianic, as if they had a mission to seek for Universal All-Unity.

Having cast away all that is not “authentic” s/he [person] appears confronted tête-à-tête with his/her being, with the bottomless abyss of “nothingness,” that is senselessness and unattainability of the whole lot. One may take fright of it and rush back into one’s previous unauthentic state (and by this, according to existentialism, become eliminated as an individual and as a personality); or one may bring oneself to retain that tête-à-tête. Anyway that “self-identity” that the individual is doomed to search for is always void, changeable and beyond expression. Meanwhile, it’s the ontological base for “self-identity,” for one’s strictly proper Self, which, according to existentialism, is to be the drive and source of development and the building of the really Individual; the base for the Human individuality’s autonomy and uniqueness in the process of historical activity.¹⁵

A similar reasoning is quite typical of the Nations living existentially.

It would be easy for me to leave all the bounty of Spain. – As it is precious for me to behold the dust of the desolate sanctuary [The Temple – S.K.] (Yehudah Halevi).

¹⁵ М.К. Мамардашвили, *Категория социального бытия и метод его анализа в экзистенциализме Сартра* [*Category of social being and the method of its analysis in Sartre’s existentialism*], <www.philosophy.ru/library/mmk/sartre.html>.

Existentialism as a combination of subjective Chosenness and Universal All-Unity reverberates through the images that are fundamental for the Russian, Polish and Jewish cultures.

Don't think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them (Mt 5:17).

The appearance of Christ before people was the fulfillment of the Old Testament, a hint of All-Unity that Mankind is never tired of believing in.

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“The Jewish Question” in *Writer’s Diary* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky

The Jewish question is one of the crucial problems considered in *Writer’s Diary* of 1877. The discussion was a logical sequence of the “Oriental question” which had been developed in the *Diary* during the previous year. In 1876 Dostoyevsky, in great detail, analyzed “the three universal ideas” – Catholic, Protestant, and Slavic – as “the three possibilities to resolve the fates of humans and Europe.” The discussion of “the Slavic question” turned out to be the most heated one. The interpretation of this question had a direct relevance to Dostoyevsky’s own ideals of Orthodox conciliarism in public life, all-humanity, and unification in Christ, the Russian people as the holder of the complete Orthodox Christian truth. (“It is neither Slavic nor slavism that is the essence of the Slavic question, but Orthodoxy”). With Dostoyevsky, “Orthodoxy,” “conciliar unity,” and “all-humanity” became the concepts of the same semantic code.

In his *Diary* of 1877 the author once again referred to his fundamental idea of unity, search for its accomplishment, and finding ways to overcome separation. Now, the Jewish question arose as a component part of the problem of unity being treated by Dostoyevsky in close connection with the ideas of all-humanity and Russian messianism, which provoked some strong resistance from the antagonists of the “Russian idea.” In their attempt to compromise his judgment, the *Writer’s* opponents would blame anti-Semitism upon him and rank him among those who “hate Jews as a people, as a nation,”¹ among the “foes of Jews.”²

¹ Ф.М. Достоевский, *Дневник писателя*, in idem, *Полное собрание сочинений: В 30-ти тт.*, Ленинград: Наука 1972–1991, vol. XXV, p. 75.

² Ibidem, p. 86.

In the second chapter of his March issue of the *Writer's Diary* ("European question"), answering his correspondent A.U. Kovner, Dostoyevsky persistently disproves his reproaches concerning "national egoism and arrogance," laudation of "ethnic superiority of the God-bearing people," "blind love for one people and beastly hatred for the other." "There has never been a hatred like that within my heart"³ and, further, "(...) among our laymen there is no *a priori* prejudiced, obstinate – in any way religious – hatred for the Jew of the 'Judas sold Christ,' see type (...) all of our people consider the Jew without any, let me repeat this, of such prejudiced hate."⁴ He proves that by facts of his own experience: in barracks, jail, convict prison. Without a trace of irony, Dostoyevsky characterizes Jews as "an enduring people, such an immensely strong and energetic people, such an unparalleled people," "a great tribe."⁵

Still, trying to remain unbiased, the author also points out that "(...) the motives of our separation from the Jew are probably not the fault of the Russian people alone and those motives, of course, have piled up on both sides, so it is yet to be seen which side has accumulated more of them."⁶ He is perfectly aware of both the peoples' ugly traits and hence is quite correct in his opinion that the portrayal of the archetypical Jewish traits cannot be dubbed anti-Semitism. However, Dostoyevsky realized that "the Jewish question" is an ideological rather than an ethnical one. Already in his *Writer's Diary* of 1876 he frankly wrote about "Yids of Jewish and Orthodox religion," about "Russian Yids in Orthodox guise" and criticized them brusquely, boldly, and soberly. He combined the Jewish ideology (as a "concept, trend, and a characteristic of the century"⁷) with the Jewish faith and noted that "the Jewish idea" can even replace "the unsuccessful Christianity."⁸

The author opposed the "Russian idea" to the idea of the chosen people in the Jewish messianism. Whereas Jewish messianism consists in the idea of supremacy of one nation over the others, Russian messianism, on the other hand, is marked by a conscious responsibility for the Truth in the face of the world.

The two types of messianism are incompatible according to Dostoyevsky. The Jewish messianism opposes itself to the idea of all-humanity and cul-

³ Ibidem, p. 75.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 80.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 81.

⁶ Ibidem, p. 77.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 75.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 85.

tivates segregation. The Russian messianism does not tend to dominate the world. It is an idea of a global unity based on vivid love.⁹ The truth lies in conciliar love, in Orthodoxy as a base for universal, all-human unity:

All of the Russian people is within Orthodoxy and its idea. It has nothing closer than that and, actually, nothing else is needed because Orthodoxy is everything

– he would write later on in his preliminary notes to the *Writer's Diary* of 1881. Spiritual elevation on the way to the truth has nothing to do with pride.

The idea of messianic service of the Russian nation to the whole humanity is based on Dostoyevsky's conception that the Russian people holds the complete Orthodox truth received from above. Being the chosen people is responsibility, not a privilege.

Messianism is still one of the most disputable points of Dostoyevsky's Weltanschauung. His opponents tend to simplify the problem ascribing to him things like the disparagement of other nations and contradictions allegedly rooted in his idea of universal love and brotherly unity. In fact, Dostoyevsky did explicitly proclaim things like “Long live brotherhood!”¹⁰ “(...) and so shall we get together in one spirit, as brothers, to mutual aid.”¹¹ However, he always considered Orthodoxy as the base for such a brotherhood and spiritual unity. It is only in Christ that brotherhood is possible. No such brotherhood can be built upon Judaism.

But the Russian nation is the one you can vouch for: oh, it will accept a Jew in the brotherhood lock, stock and barrel in spite of the difference in religion and with due respect to the historical fact of this difference, but still for the sake of brotherhood, and complete brotherhood *there should be brothers on both sides*.¹²

Thus, Dostoyevsky's point in “the Jewish question” is not anti-Semitism, but anti-Judaism.

Working out from the sense of universal love and Christ's commandments Dostoyevsky twice advanced one and the same idea of “total and final equalization in rights”¹³ of the Russian and the Jew. First, answering A.U. Kovner: “Sure enough all that humanity and justice demand, all that

⁹ See *ibidem*, p. 61.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 86.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 87.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 86.

humaneness and Christian law demand – all of this should be done for the Jews.”¹⁴ And then in answer to his correspondent S.E. Lourie, he quotes himself: “I am just saying and writing that ‘all that humanity and justice demand, all that humaneness and Christian law demand – all of this should be done for the Jews’.”¹⁵

However, it is not the problem of emancipation and equalization in rights that was the core of “the Jewish question” for Dostoyevsky. Outside of the all-humanity ideal “the Jewish question” could not be of any philosophical interest to the author.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 83.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 86.

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Dialogue of Cultures: the Role of the Philosopher (based on the Interaction between the Jewish and Russian Cultures in the 19th century)

Meaningful discourse assumes the presence of “common ground” and an existence of clear and acknowledged/valid definitions. In the 19th century, despite active and diversified interaction between the Jewish and Russian cultures, there was no said common ground in the public sphere of the Russian Empire. The problems which N. Leskov faced when he was assigned were, i.a. the need to understand the “issue” of existence of Jews in Russia, and the interaction peripeteias of the two cultures clearly demonstrated that. There were no definitions/words necessary for such a discourse and Leskov had to clarify some basic concepts.

The “Jewish issue” is one of major and most discussed matters in the Russian culture of the reviewed period, because as a matter of fact it related not so much to the Jewish culture, but to the Russian one. A reference to discussions of the “Jewish issue,” an analysis of the nature of the influence of the Jewish culture on the Russian culture and perceptions of such influence by contemporaries, all facilitate deeper understanding of the specificity of the Russian inner cultural and intellectual sphere. The influence of the Jewish culture on the Russian culture is a part, *just a part* of difficult and multi-faceted processes of interaction of these two cultures; interactions in the process/as a result of which both the Russian and Jewish culture were transformed. Having said so *in general* none of these cultures can be considered as a culture-donor or as a culture-recipient in relation to the other, though in separate aspects such a positioning is quite appropriate.

The discourse about the influence of the Jewish culture on the Russian culture shall be inevitably divided into a discourse about the influence of the real Jewish culture (i.e. the influence of specific “live” representatives/carriers of this culture), and a discourse about the influence of *virtual* Jewish culture, *imagined* Jews (i.e. images generated inside the Russian culture). In the second case the Jewish culture and Jews were only a news topic for conversation about something else, about internal social and cultural problems. Within the framework of sense/myth-making process, inherent to Russian culture, the Jews were not a nationality but an idea, a complex of ideas, thought-provoking in the designed frameworks. In the Russian culture of the 19th century it is possible to find many examples of similar myth-making.

Formally, the scientific analysis of specified discourses concerning the “Jewish issue” shall only adjoin, shall be on the periphery of philosophical, culturological or historical study of the Jewish culture, but in reality without such an analysis it is possible to describe neither the interaction between the Jewish and Russian cultures, nor a historical outline of the development of Jewish culture in Russia itself. Although a specified “discourse” concerning “*Jewry*” had vague relation to reality (and sometimes wasn’t related to it at all), the results of this “discourse” directly (and frequently negatively) affected the real Jewish culture and changed conditions, as well as the environment of its development.

The value of studying mechanisms and consequences of the transformation of real Jewish culture into virtual culture, which functions within the limits pertaining to the Russian culture of the given period and corresponding texts, and which prevails in the “heads” of contemporaries is obvious: actual, empirically-fixed influence on the Russian culture was rendered by both the “real” Jewish culture and “virtual” Jewish culture. Given that, due to the historical circumstances the “virtual” images of the Jewish culture generated in the Russian culture became an important factor in the fate of the Jewish culture in the Russian Empire.

The process of designing and appearance of the “virtual” Jewish culture within the Russian culture alone is not something unique; e.g. according to neo-Kantian traditions within the whole range of authoritative philosophical and culturological approaches, being relevant in the present time, such a model of interaction is reasonably quite natural and uncontested, but the actual substance of this process is quite specific and deserves thorough research. All of it at different theoretical levels and in different forms has been realized by a number of Russian thinkers as early as in the 19th century, nevertheless, till now there has been no further development of their ideas in

Russia. We will review two particularly interesting examples of the “Jewish issue” *decoding* by Russian thinkers: Nikolai Leskov’s research *The Jews in Russia. Some Notes on the Jewish Question* and Vladimir Solovyov’s manifesto *The Jews and the Christian Question*.

N. Leskov’s book *The Jews in Russia* is surprisingly interesting not only because of its content, but also because of its history. From the substantial point of view it represents a comparison of the “real” Jewish culture with mythical images, which existed in the semiosphere of the Russian culture. The book was intended not for the “general public” (i.e. not for society, outside/without consideration of the dominating cultural tradition), but for “experts,” for the governmental commission, which had practical tasks and needed real information about its “object.” The book was written and published in 1883, but it started entering the world and the Russian culture only in 1919, when the former “world of senses” in Russia had already been half destroyed. But subsequently despite favorable political conjunction in Russia during the Soviet period it was still on the periphery of culture and was actually “again opened” only at the end of the 20th century, but indeed even in the modern Russian culture the influence of Leskov’s text raises serious doubts.

Throughout the entire book Leskov shows in different forms that there is basically no internal conflict between the Jewish and Russian cultures and that there is no internal incompatibility. At the same time Leskov ascertains permanent conflict based on myths within the frameworks of particular, artificially created ideologemes, within the frameworks of the existing semiosphere of the Russian culture.

According to Leskov in the age of Enlightenment and secularism between the Judaism-based Jewish culture and the Christian-based Russian culture, on religious ground, cooperation is more reasonable than opposition. The hypothetical conflict of Judaism with Christianity “leads” each of the parties not into the sphere of religion, or religiousness as such, but into the sphere of the mythology contained in each religious system, i.e. inevitably leads to weakening of the religious component of both the Russian and Jewish cultures, promotes secularism of culture and society. In the religious context, Leskov reasonably estimates the influence of the Jewish culture on the Russian culture as positive: contrary to popular belief proselytism is not inherent in Judaism as a national religion:

in the religious context, all attention of Jews is aimed at saving themselves in the Cult of Jehovah, and not at dangerous and for-their-tribe unbeneficial propagation of the Old Covenant amongst people of other tribes, (...) to be afraid

of Jews as destroyers of the Christian faith, is the most obvious and doubtless groundlessness.¹

At the same time, high religious spirit and personal religiousness inherent in the Jewish culture can positively affect Russian culture and interfere with its secularism.

The otherness of the Jewish culture, according to Leskov, does not represent a threat to the Russian culture. Moreover, the analysis of an example with “P” shows the positive, humanizing influence of the Jewish culture (“there are such circumstances in the demotic Christian life in which even a service to a Jew is rescue from death”); the otherness of the Jewish culture makes one think, allows one to understand more deeply the specificity of the Russian culture, and promotes the overcoming of own superstitions and wildness.

According to Leskov the “Jewish issue” is a result of purely Russian problems, a consequence of misconceptions and self-deception (“the religious fear of harm from Jews lost sharpness during the reign of Peter the Great, who did not like illusive fears”²). Leskov writes that the “Jewish issue” is an indicator of weakness of imperial consciousness in the Russian Empire:

in the places where Jews are allowed to live in Russia, there live just the same Christians as in any other places, (...) it is impossible to see either sequence or justice in that they keep Jews only here. (...) [U]niform Russian nation of course does not wish and shall not have a separate attitude towards Russians, Ukrainians or Byelorussians as if ones are own children and others are foundlings or stepsons.³

This is an evidence of the under-development of the philosophical thought in Russia.

In western Catholic and Protestant countries philosophical thought had overcome medieval prejudices and provided Jews with inalienable human rights to be in every respect what any other citizen of the given state was entitled to. In Russia it was all different (...). The philosophical thought in Russia worked poorly, shyly and dependently. Even if Russians addressed the fate of the Jews, they did not care at all about the improvement of their lives, and only tried to discover means to be preserved from them.⁴

¹ Н.С. Лесков, *Еврей в России: несколько замечаний по еврейскому вопросу* [*The Jews in Russia: Some Notes on the Jewish Question*], Санкт-Петербург 1884, <<http://www.vehinet/asion/leskov.html>>.

² Ibidem.

³ Ibidem.

⁴ Ibidem.

Leskov's analysis of the "superficial religious fear of Tsar Aleksey Mikhailovich" indicates the main reason for the "Jewish issue:" it is "specificity" of our view which sees not somebody Another, and what it wishes/fears to see. Noted by Leskove, the besieged fortress mentality, which is typical for the majority of Russians, itself generates enemies to it, dictates character and direction of interaction with any other culture, and renders negative opinion to any influence from outside. Thus, Leskov underlines that by creating virtual enemies, designing opponents in one's own consciousness we generate them in real life too: "just defame a person as a rascal, treat him as a rascal, and something rascally will actually appear in him."⁵

Leskov's book is a fine example of *theoretical* refutation, a destruction of myths which are at first rationalized, from which all "emotional stratifications" are at first cut, and rationalized "myths" are further compared with reality and during this comparison "myths" open their inconsistency and groundlessness. But as it has already been noted, Leskov's theoretical refutation of myths about Jews and the Jewish culture went down weakly in practice; the text was on the "deep periphery" of the Russian culture. The article *The Jews and the Christian Question*, written a bit later – but actually at the same time as Leskov's book – by Vladimir Solovyov, who was personally familiar with Leskov, represents another variant of the elimination of barriers between the Russian and Jewish cultures.

First of all, it is necessary to note that Solovyov's *The Jews and the Christian Question*, as well as the majority of his works, besides the analysis of problems and clarifying of pressing issues contains a manifestation of Solovyov's ideas. The nature and matter of this manifestation are interesting in and of themselves, but within the limits of our topic it is permissible to make some short remarks: Solovyov considered struggle against misconceptions one of the main goals of his philosophical activity (Solovyov takes Socrates's views: the truth is blessing, a misconception is harmful and dangerous). Making comments on his involvement in a polemic struggle with contemporaries, Solovyov noted: "I have lately accepted voluntary 'obedience' to clear out that printed rubbish and garbage with which our Orthodox patriots are trying to shower the great and vital issue of religious freedom in public consciousness."⁶ V.K. Kantor noted that "as a real Christian thinker Solovyov became aware of the price of ideological temptation;

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ В.С. Соловьев, *Собрание сочинений* [Collected Works], vol. 4, Санкт-Петербург: Промисвещение 1905, p. 442.

he understood that even something that seemed absurd could suddenly become infectious,⁷ and so he was struggling with “evil:”

I know that any transformation shall be made from within – from the minds and hearts of humans. People are governed by their beliefs; hence, it is necessary to work with beliefs, to convince people of the truth.⁸

The Jews and the Christian Question is within the framework of Solovyov’s designated philosophical strategy. The philosopher clarifies and correctly raises the issue: the Jewish issue is an issue of Christianity, problem is not in the Jewish culture; it is in ours.

They speak about the Jewish issue, but virtually all the matter is reduced to the single fact causing an issue not about Jewry, but about the whole Christian world. (...) Jews always treated us as Jews; we, Christians, on the contrary, hitherto have not learnt to treat Judea as Christians. They never broke their religious law towards us, we were constantly breaking and are breaking precepts of the Christian religion towards them.⁹

Solovyov designates temptations, deadlock ways of interaction of the two cultures: “Instead of directly confessing it, we are searching for somebody to blame,”¹⁰ and shows ways of solving this issue: “we’re separated from Jews, because we’re not yet quite Christians, and they are separated from us because they are not quite Jews.”¹¹ Certainly, the said quote contains “Solovyov’s philosophical program,” but if we were to put it on the sidelines, we would find a field and the cause of the observable conflict of the two cultures: the high/utopian ideals of each culture are compared not with similar ideals of other culture, but with “sad everyday life” of the “interlocutor.” Based on such a false foundation, even a formal one, speculative conclusions are drawn. These are pernicious for everyone. Solovyov clearly pronounces that if we start with the real (but within the limits of Solovyov’s philosophy, i.e. by no means “ideal”) state of affairs, then there will be no issues:

modern relations of the advanced Europe to Jewry represent themselves as a kind of parody of one prophetic image: ten gentiles are trying to catch a flap of one Jew’s clothes so he can lead them in, but not into the temple of Jehovah

⁷ В.К. Кантор, *Русский европеец как явление культуры* [*The Russian European Culture as a Phenomenon*], Москва: РОССПЭН 2001, p. 539.

⁸ В.С. Соловьев, *Письма* [*Letters*], vol. 3, Брюссель: Жизнь с Богом 1970, p. 88.

⁹ В.С. Соловьев, *Еврейство и христианский вопрос* [*The Jews and the Christian Question*], Санкт-Петербург 1884, <<http://www.vehi.net/Solovyov/solovevr.html>>.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ Ibidem.

and into the temple of Mammon; and they generally don't care about Jehovah as well as about Christ.¹²

The issue of interaction of cultures is always an issue of understanding/misunderstanding, and the philosopher is a person who can and shall resolve it.

¹² *Ibidem.*



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The Kabbalistic concepts in Vladimir Solovyov's Philosophy: Philosophical Tools and the Creative Development of Ancient Tradition

1. Once more about Solovyov's interest in Kabbalah

It is well known that Solovyov took an interest in Kabbalah. Most likely he found out about the Jewish mysticism during his investigations of ancient mythological systems, religions, and religious-philosophical movements. In his first article entitled *The Mythological Process in the Old Paganism* (1873) he analyzed “the religious consciousness” of the old Indian Vedas and ancient Greek myths. He wrote in his letter:

I am writing *The history of the Religious Consciousness of the Old World*.¹ The main aim of this work is to explain the old religions, because without it one cannot comprehend the history of the whole world or Christianity, in particular.²

We know that the publication of this article was not completed, but it is obvious that Solovyov was ready to consider other old religions. It is important for us that he proceeded with another article entitled *The Idea and Personality in the Old Paganism and Jewry*. He proposed it to “Russky Vestnik” (“the Russian Herald”) journal in late 1873 (unfortunately, the manuscript is lost). The editor M.N. Katkov rejected the article. He told the young philosopher: “it is too abstract and is not connected with any actual

¹ The beginning of it is at the printer's “Pravoslavnoje Obozrenije” (“The Orthodox Review”), 11 (1873) – V.K.

² A letter of Solovyov of 1873, in В.С. Соловьев, *Полное собрание сочинений и писем в двадцати томах*, vol. 1, Москва: Наука 2000, p. 256.

problem.” Solovyov recollected that good-naturedly in his memoirs *Some Private Recollections about Katkov* (1897).³

And why was our young philosopher at the beginning of his career involved with the problem of the Jewish consciousness? We can probably find the answer in his rough copy of the manuscript *Sophie*, entitled “Chapter 3. Historical process.” He considered this process to be a development of “the religious consciousness,” and so divided the old mythology into three stages: uranian, solar, and phallic; here he described Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism. He wrote:

In Judaism God is recognized as the universal will, the beginning of the true anthropomorphism; but there is no true inner attitude in Judaism; there is neither love no reason in God. Just a soul which recognized the Divine Logos, as love was able to join inwardly with Logos, and it was Christ’s soul; why is Christ a Jew? Jews are the most religious and most egoistic people. – If Logos acted on the Jews as will in their religion, at the same time it had an effect upon the Greeks as a reason in their philosophy.⁴

We can see a promotion of this idea in Solovyov’s mature work *Russia and the Universal Church* (1889) (Ch. 9: “The Messianic Preparation of the Greeks, the Hindus, and the Jews”). In this late work the Russian philosopher wrote about Jews the following:

Life and the religious history of mankind were concentrated in this only nation because there were Jews who searched for a living God, the God of history in the Absolute: the ultimate future of mankind had been prepared and revealed in this nation (...) through their religion of revelation the Jews received the living source of the Holy essence in its complete and final truth.⁵

Solovyov stressed the special role and all-historic significance of the Jewish religious consciousness, so it is obvious that he had to be interested in the Jewish mysticism, including Kabbalah, because Solovyov was not a philosopher only; he himself had a calling for mysticism.

We can join in K. Burmistrov’s competent view that in Solovyov’s youth his interest in Kabbalah was built on the paradigm of the late Christian Kabbalah, mainly on Paracelsus’s, Böhme’s, Pordage’s and Swedenborg’s works, as well as the occult books of E. Levi, Papus, H.P. Blavatsky, and others.⁶

³ В.С. Соловьев, *Сочинения в двух томах*, Москва: Правда 1989, vol. 2, p. 626.

⁴ В.С. Соловьев, *Планы и черновики*, in idem, *Полное собрание сочинений и писем в двадцати томах*, vol. 2, Москва: Наука 2001, p. 167.

⁵ В.С. Соловьев, *Россия и Вселенская церковь*, Москва: Путь 1911, p. 396-397.

⁶ К. Бурмистров, *Каббала в русской философии: особенности восприятия и истолкования*, “Вестник еврейского университета,” Москва – Иерусалим, 4 (22) 2000, p. 40.

Undoubtedly, Solovyov had a Masonic-Kabbalistic bias, and he craved for some “Kabbalistic orders” in Egypt, which, he thought, like the ancient Gnostic sects of Orphics, retained the mystic knowledge.⁷

In witness of this statement we pay attention to a paper from Solovyov’s archive entitled *Masonic Manuscripts from Lanskoj’s Library*, where the Masonic scripts alternate with the Kabbalistic ones.

Solovyov’s main purport of life was to create a new mystical-theurgical “theoretical philosophy,” which had its beginning in his manuscript of *La Sophia* (1875–1876) (hereafter referred to as *Sophia* – V.K.), primarily inspired by Sophia the Maid of Heaven.⁸

This unfinished (and unpublished in Solovyov’s lifetime) manuscript reflects and personifies Solovyov’s original mystical experience; it is an attempt to “translate” into philosophical terms his inner mystical intuitions on the beginnings and foundations of the Universe. Then he worked on *The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge* (1877) [hereafter referred to as *PPIK* – V.K.], which was based on the materials from *Sophia*, and which Solovyov intended to turn into his dissertation work. He was planning to create his original philosophical system, with its specific philosophical terms and concepts, but he failed, and *PPIK* was not completed. But the sophiological ideas left their marks on all of Solovyov’s late works.

Christianity was the immutable core of Solovyov’s Weltanschauung, and for him it was the top of mankind’s spiritual development. We know Solovyov’s unorthodox ideas about a possible “future theocracy,” combining the Eastern and Western Churches, transformations in the inner life of the Orthodox Church, etc.

So some statements about his preferences for Judaism and the Jews, or that he preferred Kabbalah to Christianity, which were expressed in his times and are nowadays, are incompetent and provocative.⁹

It was only Christianity that Solovyov sought to expand and enrich by the results of his religious, mystical, and philosophical activity.

His indisputable interest in Judaism, the Jewish culture and spiritual legacy can be accounted for with the aid of his views on the history of

⁷ For Solovyov’s mystical quest see my monograph: В.В. Кравченко, *Вестники русского мистицизма*, Москва: Издатцентр 1997, p. 84-97.

⁸ See my monograph: В. Кравченко, *Мистицизм в русской философской мысли XIX – начала XX веков*, Москва: Издатцентр 1997, p. 120-134 (paragraph “The mystic-philosophical analysis of *Sophia* manuscript”).

⁹ See about it in Burmistrov’s article: К. Бурмистров, *Владимир Соловьев и Каббала. К постановке проблемы*, in М.А. Колеров (ed.), *Исследования из истории русской мысли. Ежегодник за 1998 г.*, Москва: Объединенное Гуманитарное Издательство 1998, p. 87.

mankind and a special role of the Jews in the whole “world process.” As we saw above, it was the main historical fact that the Jews and Judaism gave Jesus Christ to Earth, and founded the first principles of Christianity. He stressed positive Jewish features – their deep and true devotion to God, “religious materialism” and an active religious stance in everyday life. He was positive that these qualities were of great use to the whole world. Solovyov admitted the fact of blending of the Russian and Jewish cultures, which exposed a number of brilliant examples of collaboration. His close friends Baron Horatio Ginzburg, his son David, his Hebrew teacher Fivel Hez, a journalist I. Cantor, as well as other representatives of the Jewish intelligentsia, shared Solovyov’s creative quests and morally supported him for many years. Solovyov realized a turnaround in the character of the Jewish people, as well as their shortcomings, as every people had. But he made a protest against the prosecution of Jews in Russia of that time; he became indignant and was really ashamed of that policy in the Russian state.¹⁰

In his theory of “All-Unity” and the Godmanhood, Solovyov planned that not only Christian Churches had to combine, but the Jews had to join them as well. The Russian philosopher maintained a friendly relation with the Joseph Rabinovitch of Kishinev,¹¹ a founder of the Judeo-Christian prayer-house “Bethlehem.”

The “messianic” and spiritual-historical succession from the Jewish culture to the Russian one was substantiated in his *Russia and the Universal Church*, as well as other works. This was a peculiar line in his investigations. He was in fact interested in the mass mystical tradition in Judaism and the Jewish culture.

Our task is to find out: what was in the Kabbalah teaching consonant with Solovyov’s mystical-philosophical searches? Why did he prefer some Kabbalistic terms instead of ones from other old teachings and philosophical systems? And what influence did Kabbalah ideas, concepts, and constructions exert upon some aspects of Solovyov’s theoretical philosophy?

Solovyov was interested in Kabbalah throughout all his life, though his attitude to it varied depending on his knowledge of the Jewish mysticism. He studied Kabbalah against the background of a number of old mystical

¹⁰ To find out about Solovyov as a defender of Judaism and his influence on the modern Jewish thought and literature see H. Bar-Yosef, *The Jewish Reception of Vladimir Solovyov*, in J. Sutton, E. von Zweerde (eds.), *Vladimir Solovyov: Reconciler and Polemicist*, Lewen: Peeters 2001, p. 363-392.

¹¹ See Solovyov’s article *The New Testament Israel* and obituary notice in Rabinovitch’s memory (В.С. Соловьёв, *Сочинения в двух томах*, vol. 2, p. 189-202, 651-656).

schools and religious-philosophical trends; he saw in it a result of the mystical and religious-philosophical development in the old times. The Russian philosopher connected Kabbalah with the old Babylonian and Persian influences, and he also drew a parallel between Kabbalah and Brahmanistic and Buddhist religious-mystical sources. He wrote in his late article entitled *Kabbalah for Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary*:

We can say with certainty that Kabbalah came into existence between the Babylonian captivity and the time of the last Asmonians. As from the clash of the Jewish religious thought with the Greek philosophy, Philo of Alexandria's genuine speculations came into existence as to the earliest interactions of that thought with the Babylonian-Persian magic and theosophy, which were supposed to have given birth to Kabbalah. We can not exclude further Greek, Greek-Judaic, Greek-Egyptian and Christian influences on Kabbalah's development, but they were secondary, and the strong foundation was indeed laid in Babylon and Persia.¹²

In his rough copies of the manuscript *Sophia* we find his initial attitude to Kabbalah in the midst of other "theosophical systems:" "Long before (before me) the theosophical systems, which had had the spiritual basis, had not had the true idea of the world process: some of them ignored it (e.g. neo-Platonism, Swedenborg), and others assumed an element of accident or fate (e.g. the Fall) in it – Kabbalah, Böhme..."¹³ And then Solovyov adduced the summary of his conception:

Böhme's and Swedenborg's teachings are a complete and ultimate theosophical expression of the old Christianity. Schelling's positive philosophy is the first, weak and incomplete embryo of a new Christianity or a universal religion of the eternal testament.

Kabbalah and Platonism.

Böhme and Swedenborg.

Schelling and me.

Neo-Platonism – Kabbalah Law The Old Testament

Böhme – Swedenborg The Gospel The New Testament

Schelling – me Freedom The Eternal Testament.¹⁴

From the first steps to his "theoretical philosophy," and appreciating the old teachings, Solovyov placed the philosophy of Schelling at the top stage,

¹² В.С. Соловьев, *Каббала*, in *Энциклопедический словарь Брокгауза и Ефрона*, Санкт-Петербург 1894, vol. 26, p. 152.

¹³ В.С. Соловьев, *София*, in *idem*, *Полное собрание сочинений и писем в двадцати томах*, vol. 2, p. 176.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 177.

and named him “the true precursor of universal religion.” In fact, Solovyov showed to us the origin of his future “theoretical philosophy.”

There is no evidence to support the view that from the beginning of his work Solovyov preferred Kabbalah to other old teachings. For in his late encyclopedia article, he connected Kabbalah with Persian teaching.

But why did he stress, ponder and even use some Kabbalistic terms from the very beginning of his work? Though he corrected their initial content, but took into account the original sense in Hebrew.

2. Solovyov admits some Kabbalistic terms

From the beginning, let us consider the general problem of the philosophical terminology from Solovyov’s point of view, which he felt deeply while constructing his new mystical-philosophical system. The Russian philosopher examined a potentiality of different languages to adequately expose the fundamental philosophical concepts.

His major early work *ПРК* concluded with a very significant commentary devoted to the nuances in Russian philosophical notions and terms which one can hardly translate into some other languages.

For example, Solovyov pointed to the radical difference between the philosophical notions *real’nost’* and *dejstvitel’nost’*, which can be termed only in Russian and German (*Realität* and *Wirklichkeit*), and cannot be conveyed in any other European languages. In English and French there are *reality* and *réalité* only, and nothing more or beyond the “real” exists.

He exposed a “coarse realism” in the English language, because it’s impossible to adequately translate from Russian a term *nichto* (now in modern philosophical English “no-what”) as “nothing” = “no thing,” without any spiritual notion which cannot be connected with matter.

As a result, Solovyov claimed that English and French minds are philosophically shallow and incapable of the Russian and German speculative profundity.¹⁵

We need this philological-philosophical digression because of the fact that Solovyov sought for new terminology to be suitable for his new philosophical tasks. And he did his search not in modern unspiritual languages, but in old religious and mystical-philosophical systems.

¹⁵ В.С. Соловьев, *Философские начала цельного знания*, in idem, *Полное собрание сочинений и писем в двадцати томах*, vol. 2, p. 307-308.

The notion of “Absolute” (*absolutnoje pervonachalo* = “the absolute origin”) was the most important term which Solovyov brought into his system and the Russian metaphysics of the 19th century.

From the beginning of his work Solovyov used in the original manuscript (written in French) the notion *principe absolu*, and when he characterized it as “the positive origin” he used the Latin *super-esse, plus quam esse*. But he further considered “the absolute origin” as “the absolute totality,” “a pure spirit,” “the direct possibility or necessity of being,” and the last notion he identified with the Greek ερος. Then, considering the descending steps of the “absolute origin,” Solovyov easily used common philosophical terms such as *Logos, nous*, etc.

The Kabbalistic term “Ein Soph” emerged in *Sophia*. It was connected with the Father, the First Person of the Christian Trinity. There is a marginalia drawing in which – in a way that eludes understanding – Solovyov duplicated the First Name of the Christian Trinity with the Kabbalistic term.

But in *PPIK* “Ein Soph” is directly connected with the notion of “the origins (principles),” but in *Sophia* they were equivalent to the French *les principes*. Modern researchers interpret them in the sense of the Alexandrian theological school.

Our question is: why did Solovyov introduce the Kabbalistic term for “the absolute” next to well-established Greek, Latin and German terms?

We can understand that Solovyov saw Kabbalah as close to the Early Christianity, and so “Ein Soph” is a duplication of the Name of the Supreme God. In *Sophia* we find a paragraph beginning with the following words: “The Essence as it is (*potentia absoluta*)...,” and ending with:

Ein Soph, Logos, Sophia
The First triad.¹⁶

We can find the same triad in the epigraph for the text of *Praying for Enclosing of the Great Secret*:

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Ain-Soph, Jah, Soph-Jah.

This prayer was found in the philosopher’s papers by his nephew Sergey Solovyov, who noted: “probably, Solovyov derived it from the Gnostic or Kabbalistic sources, or composed it on the basis of those sources.”¹⁷

¹⁶ В.С. Соловьев, *София*, р. 99.

¹⁷ С.М. Соловьев, *Владимир Соловьев. Жизнь и творческая эволюция*, Москва: Республика 1997, р. 97.

But in his thorough investigations Solovyov exposed the deep mystical-philosophical potentiality of Kabbalah. He saw its monism, similar to his “mystical monism,” which did not oppose the sacred to the profane, the highest to the lowest, and the ideal to the material. He examined the Kabbalistic terms which could not appear in other, dualistic teachings. Solovyov gave up his investigations into the old mythology and ancient religions, and he saw the term “en soph” in its technical sense, not only as the name of God. He saw in it an important philosophical notion loaded with some deep and complicated meanings.

Let us trace back a transformation in Solovyov’s examination from the Kabbalistic term “Ein Soph” to the “technical” term “en-soph” on the ground of his archives.

Some rough materials for the article on metaphysics attract our attention (dated ca. the 1870s–1880s). One passage begins with the words:

Philo’s Idea of God
 God as incognizable
 Negative theology
 God as *nihil* =
 God as he who possesses the wholeness of the totality.

The next page:

Nirvana
 Persian teaching of Zeruane-Akarene = Nirvana Ahura-Mazda
 Angro-Maynyus. 7 Amesha Spent
 Feruaros (Fravashi) Izedos or Yacatos. Mithra. Soziot,

Kabbalah, Its outer history.
 Soharim. Sohar Sepher Jezirah.
 Merkaba. The beginners of Kabbalah (Simon pious, r. Akiba,
 Ieguda Gakadot)

Medieval kabbalists
 Izhak Ben Luria

Christian kabbalists –
 Pico de Mirandola, Reihlin (de arte Kabbalistica), Guillom Postel,
 Robert Fludd

The main points of Kabbalah

En Soph (= Nirvana) s\s parorum v.tenebrous

10 spirits 4 worlds
7 main spirits Metatron.¹⁸

In this abstract the Kabbalistic “Ein-Soph” appeared after the discourse on God in the theology of Philo of Alexandria – one of the figures held in respect by Solovyov – and just after “nirvana,” Zoroastrian terms and the consideration of the main Kabbalah historical stages, or, strictly speaking, that facts and persons involved with it which Solovyov found interesting.

Amongst the Medieval Kabbalists Izhak ben Luria stood out and it was no mere accident. It is known that Luria was a man of vision (a visionary), a mystic and the founder of the “practical Kabbalah” movement, who studied in Egypt (!). Moreover, he was a poet, an author of three mystical hymns to the Shabbat meal. These hymns are considered by G.G. Sholem to be the most outstanding works on Kabbalistic poetry, and they were included in all prayer books of the East Jewry.¹⁹

It should be noted that for Solovyov Kabbalah was not really a specialty, because in search of “Ein Soph” Kabbalistic meanings he had to pay attention to Luria’s adversary in Zfat School – Moshe ben Yakov Kordovero. He was a prominent theoretician in Jewish mysticism, a true mystical philosopher and a very prolific writer, who devoted his special works to the “Ein Soph” problem, etc. It was he who formulated the following: “God is all being, but not all being is God.” Schelling related this formula to Spinoza’s Pantheism.²⁰ (And we can remark here, with a feeling of deep appropriateness that such a formula was related to Solovyov’s mysticism in E. Radlov’s book²¹).

But Solovyov took a great interest in Indian mystical teachings and religious-philosophical systems. Elsewhere I have written about his vain aspiration to visit India in his youth.²²

In spite of the fact that Solovyov’s encyclopaedic article *Indian philosophy* is far from real competence,²³ the Russian philosopher was deeply involved with the Brahmanistic and Buddhist philosophy. In fact, his “absolute principle” from “Sophia” was similar to the Indian “Brahman.” Be-

¹⁸ РГАЛИ (Российский государственный архив литературы и искусства), ф. 446-2-18 (з. 69-70).

¹⁹ Г. Шолем, *Основные течения в еврейской мистике*, Москва: Мосты культуры, Иерусалим: Гешарим 2007, p. 318.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 316-317.

²¹ See Э.Л. Радлов, *Владимир Соловьев. Жизнь и учение*, Санкт-Петербург: Образование 1913.

²² В.В. Кравченко, *Вестники русского мистицизма*, p. 130-132.

²³ В.С. Соловьев, *Индийская философия*, in *Энциклопедический словарь Брокгауза и Ефрона*, Санкт-Петербург 1894, vol. 25, p. 97-98.

sides, he used with good effect the concept of “Brahman-Atman” in his own terms: “the eternal sense – the personal man reason.”

But Solovyov did not use the term “Brahman,” because, as he wrote in the rough materials to *Sophia*,

(...) in Brahmanism (the religion of Upanishads) God is accepted as a pure spirit, an absolute substance, the whole, in contrast to a multitude of visible world forms, which is considered to be an illusion. But this absolute substance, being free from all notions, proves to be “*nichto*” [no-what] (if Brahma is not some-thing, he is obviously *nichto*) – a result we can see in Buddhism. But God, who is *nichto* in himself, must be the beginning of this Universe.²⁴

He is interested in Buddhism as a religious-philosophical system, and refers to the Buddhist “nirvana” in his papers and works; evidently, he was thought it over for a long time. But in the end Solovyov renounced this term. As he wrote in *The Religious Principles of Life* (1885): “Buddhism said the last word of the Indian consciousness – all being that exists and does not exist is an illusion and a dream only.”²⁵

It was Solovyov’s point of view that Indian wise-men came to a stop at the incomplete truth – the negative notion of the Absolute, and a way of comprehending the positive totality they associated with the individual consciousness. Solovyov’s conception assumed the whole world process, which determines the development of all mankind. He elaborated the new ideas: a Godmanhood, as a whole living organism, and Sophia, who is a living tie between mankind and the Absolute.

Parallel with the Buddhist “nirvana” Solovyov examined Old Persian and Zoroastrian conceptions of God. As we can see in his rough manuscript, he identified “nirvana” with the Persian “Zeruane-Akarene.” It is known that in Iranian mythology, Zurvan Akarana is an endless Time and Androgyny, who has existed from the very beginning, when the world was an embryo. After the thousand years of sacrifices he gave birth to Ahura Mazda and Ariman.

We can find evidence in Solovyov’s papers that he considered an idea of God as the endless time. There is a paper from the spiritual séances of ca. 1876, which feature the following:

6. The clock shows time, and what instrument can show us eternity? Madman! Turn on to yourself, and in the midst of your being you will find this instrument.

²⁴ В.С. Соловьёв, *Планы и черновики*, p. 167.

²⁵ В.С. Соловьёв, *Религиозные основы жизни*, Москва 1885, p. 78.

7. If we were wandering for two or three hours, we would be tired; so how tired must Time feel after so many centuries since the creation of the world?

8. Time walks, sometimes it runs, and so Time becomes weak; the eternity stands still, and it resides imperishable.²⁶

It is clear that the mythological sacred image and the name of the Iranian-Zoroastrian deity was really interesting to the researcher, because of its androgyny and as a personification of Time and eternity in one object, but it was impossible to imagine this name in the capacity of philosophical notion.

And we can see that, having identified “nirvana” with Zurvan Akarana, Solovyov equated “nirvana” with the Kabbalistic “Ein Soph”! But is it possible even for the young Solovyov that one notion could be fully associated with another one? He could easily see the great difference between them in the occult literature (H.P. Blavatsky, E. Levi, etc.).

But Solovyov was solving his own problem. On making a careful study of Kabbalah he saw “Ein-Soph” to be something that could be neither in the “abstract principles” of the Western metaphysics nor in Eastern “nothingness.”

Let us return to his manuscripts of *Sophia*. Evidently, he tried to avoid a strict apophatic tradition and to find the most exhaustive possible notions of God. He wrote:

God is non-existing, the non-existing is a will
 God is existence, the existence is idea.
 God is the unity of existence and non-existing = [free] spirit
 God is a subject. God is an object. God is a subject-object (ego).
 God is [love] necessity; God is freedom, God is bliss.
 God is a wish, God is a mean, God is a task.
 God is [all] total, God is a quotient, God is single and total (...).²⁷

He was seeking for a term to combine at least half of these ideas. But it is obvious for us that he distinguished between the two main notions – God in the religious consciousness and “the absolute principle” in the mystical-philosophical (and metaphysical) consideration of the origins of the Universe.

In a script to *Sophia*, entitled *The Theological Principles* he noted for himself: “Father – the absolute [creature] super essence, a spirit in itself, an absolute totality and freedom (*superessence*).”²⁸

²⁶ РГАЛИ, ф. 446-1-40, п. 9.

²⁷ В.С. Соловьев, *Планы и черновики*, р. 162-163.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 176.

In *Sophia* and *PPIK* the Kabbalistic “Ein Soph” coexists with a Greek $\tau\omicron\ \omicron\ \nu\tau\omega\varsigma\ \omicron\ \nu$, the German *wahrhaft Seiende*, and the Buddhist “nirvana.”

In Kabbalah “Ein Soph” means “the absence of border, endlessness,” so in Solovyov’s papers we can find the Greek $\alpha\pi\epsilon\iota\omicron\ \nu$. At last, in the final text of *PPIK* Solovyov examined the Absolute as “nothing and all” at the same time, and added an important footnote: “This positive *nichto* (no-what), or the Kabbalistic *en-soph*, is a straight opposition to Hegelian negative no-what = a pure being, which appeared from a plain abstraction or exclusion of all the positive notions”²⁹.

And below in that text he considered difference in Absolute in the eternity between two poles – the first pole was “a positive no-what (*ein-soph*)”, and the second pole – “the essence of Absolute, or *materia prima*.” So Solovyov affirmed the Kabbalistic term in the capacity of an important ontological-metaphysical and mystical-philosophical term, which could expose the fundamental notion in Solovyov’s new system.

Then Solovyov made it more exact: “En-soph is the absolute as it is before its manifestation; the Holy Spirit is the absolute as it is after manifestation (assuming, ‘before’ and ‘after’ are in essence, not in time); Logos is the absolute not in itself, but in manifestation...”³⁰

Thus, the Kabbalistic term in Solovyov’s system lost some initial meanings. It became a fundamental instrument in a new mystical philosophy, in which the Russian philosopher tried to combine theology, metaphysics, and ontology on the ground of mysticism. Considering the “organic logic” principles and the Absolute notion, Solovyov wrote:

The super-being Absolute, which in itself is a positive *nichto* [no-what] (En-soph), realizes or exposes in its Other. (...) We can consider any thing in relation to the absolute initiality of all being in three ways: firstly, in the substantial, radical and initial unity with the super-being, i.e. in the pure potentiality or the positive *nichto* (in En-Soph, or the Father [the First Hypostasis of Trinity]); secondly, in discerning from the super-being, or in the act of its realization (in Logos, or the Son), and at last, thirdly, in a free, i.e. mediated unity with the super-being (in the Holy Spirit).³¹

So “en-soph” in Solovyov’s theoretical philosophy was correlated with the hypostasis of the Trinity – the Father. But it designated an important philosophical notion – “the positive *nichto*” (no-what), which was a meta-

²⁹ В.С. Соловьев, *Философские начала цельного знания*, p. 263.

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 270.

³¹ Ibidem, p. 283.

physical “definition” of God, contrary to the apophatic approach in the Orthodox theology.

And to what extent did Solovyov examine the Kabbalistic concept of “Ein-Soph”? And did it exert a true influence upon Solovyov’s original view?

3. The importance of the mystical potential of Kabbalah for Solovyov’s philosophy

While elaborating his own system and, at the same time, considering the Jewish mysticism against the background of the old mythology and ancient philosophical schools, Solovyov found in Kabbalah the main concept of God which corresponded to his mystical experience.

Let us pay attention to a manuscript from Solovyov’s archive:

Seven chief spirits. Metatron
hierarchical order of the world.
The third world as worlds of the spirits.
The human soul, its 3 parts
analogies
*The philosophical content of Kabbalah
lacks philosophical shape
Necessity of the latter*
Plato’s Idea of God
The Good total (like contradiction
to indeterminable plurality)
Difference from the Eleates
The ideas’ relation to nature.
Demiurge.
Aristotle’s idea of God.
Teaching about 4 reasons or
principles. God as
causa finalis, causa efficus.
Της νησευς νοησίς
Necessity of causation between
transcendental God and the world.
The Stoics’ Λογος and
Λογος σπερματικός.³²

³² РГАЛИ, ф. 446-2-18, п. 9, 9 rev. (italics mine – V.K.).

Solovyov's italicized words *The philosophical content of Kabbalah lacks philosophical shape. The necessity of the latter* is of great significance for us. We propose the following interpretation: Solovyov had already made a careful study of Kabbalah, but it seemed to him to be too far from philosophy, and closely connected with mythology and "theosophy." Probably, he was interested in "7 chief spirits" and "Metatron" in considering the universal hierarchy which he did not use in his own system.

We can guess what "philosophical content of Kabbalah" Solovyov would be interested in according to his encyclopaedic article on the subject. Solovyov wrote:

The speculative Kabbalah teaching issues from the idea of the concealed, ineffable God which is higher than all definitions and restriction, and could only be named *en-soph*, or *nichto*, or *Endlessness*. In order to give some place in itself to the eventual being, *en-soph* had to limit itself. This is the "secret of tightening" (*sod zimzum*) in Kabbalah; it is in this way they named self-restrictions or self-definitions of the Absolute, which gave birth to the worlds. These self-limitations could not change the ineffable in itself, but gave it an opportunity to manifest itself, i.e. to be for the other. The first basement or condition of that "the other," according to the image-bearing expression of Kabbalists is that empty place (at first it was a point) which was formed inside the Absolute, because of its self-limitation or "tightening." Thanks to this emptiness, the endless light of "en-soph" had the opportunity for "radiation" or emanation (because it is a place where it is possible to emanate). This light was not perceptible, but rationally perceiving, and its initial rays were the principal forms or categories of being – there were 32 "ways of wisdom," i.e. 10 figures of spheres (*sefirots*) and 22 letters of the Jewish alphabet (3 main, 7 double, 12 common), and every one of them corresponded to a special name of God. Using the 10 figures, one could calculate any thing one wished to, and 22 letters were enough to write all books, as in the 32 ways the ineffable God enclosed all his endlessness. Not surprisingly, the difference between the *sefirots* and the letters of God's names in this revelation was that the first expressed the essence of God in "the other," or the objective emanation (straight rays of the divine light), while the names in letters were caused by that emanation to be subjective self-definitions of God (the reflected rays).³³

We can assume that Solovyov considered the Kabbalistic concept of the Absolute "tightening" ("*sod zimzum*"), which could serve as an explanation of the way the "Other (inner)" could appear in the Absolute. And moreover, it might explain what relations between the Absolute and the "Other" in It could be. He deliberated this complicated problem with the aid of Sophia

³³ В.С. Соловьев, *Каббала*, p. 783.

in his youth. Then this concept we can find in the chapter of A. Pisemsky's novel *The Masons*, which was written by Solovyov anonymously.³⁴

In that novel at the beginning of a church marriage ceremony a one of the personages, an Orthodox priest (and an undercover mason) preaches an unusual sermon, in which we can see Solovyov's mystical conception. The first words are: "This mystery is really great." And then:

And verily since time immemorial God has been in closest alliance with being i.e. nature, and this union could only exist on the basis of mutual selflessness or pure love; because giving birth to all being, God put his will in this being, but not for himself. So all the created nature must affirm its existence in God, not in itself (...).³⁵

Obviously, we can find such an idea of close connection between the Absolute (God, the First Principle, etc.) in the Indian Isha-Upanishad; in Daoism, which Solovyov knew very well. And he also knew the Gnostic version of the creation of the world.

In order to compare Solovyov's approaches to the Gnostic cosmogony, we should refer to a fragment of his encyclopaedic article about Simon Magus (Simon the Sorcerer), the last one written in his life. Solovyov examined Simon's theosophical work *The Great explanation*, and exposed its main ideas as follows: "The first act of the absolute principle was an all-embracing thought (επινοια), and in this birth the absolute determined itself as Nous and the Father (...)."³⁶

In Solovyov's philosophy, as he expressed his view in the manuscript of *Sophia*,

"the Other" is only a possibility of being or the eagerness to be. The real accomplishment must to be contained in the first principle, because it produces the true being or determines the first matter to its being; it is called Logos and generates the middle principle, the eternal mediator.³⁷

After his philosophical "translation" of this mystical intuition into *PPIK*, Solovyov explained the appearance of "the Other" through the fact of the Absolute's inner necessity. In other words, he tried to attach to this process a strict objective and theoretical characteristic. He wrote in *PPIK*:

³⁴ See my monograph: В. Кравченко, *Мистицизм в русской философской мысли XIX – начала XX веков*, p. 118-120.

³⁵ В.В. Кравченко, *Владимир Соловьев и София*, Москва: Аграф 2006, p. 345-354.

³⁶ В.С. Соловьев, *Симон Волхв*, in *Энциклопедический словарь Брокгауза и Ефрона*, Санкт-Петербург 1900, vol. 58, p. 936.

³⁷ В.С. Соловьев, *София*, p. 99.

A pure reserved-in-itself actuality, as one-sided and exceptional status of the absolute being, contradicts its very essence. Because of it the absolute has to obtain a potentiality, *to give a place to the other one*, but reserving its own reality and its positive strength.³⁸

Then the philosopher built some hierarchies, which were very far from Kabbalah, and they are as follows:³⁹

I	I	III
Exact reality as it is (God)	Essence (content or idea)	Being (a way or modus of being, the nature)
1. Spirit	Good	Will
2. Mind	Truth	Representation
3. Soul	Beauty	Sense.

In the next chapter he proposed to consider a system of logic notions in a Hegelian dialectic style:

From the opposite and relative definitions we will consider nine pairs under three categories: creatures, organisms, and persons. The oppositions in every pair of definitions are solved in the third term, which is an idea as a reflection of the truth: it is the synthesis following a thesis and antithesis, a shape of any dialectics. So, we will consider 27 logical definitions in all, among them 9 synthetic; every one of them will be some particular truth, and the last one will convey the idea itself or the truth.⁴⁰

Therefore, as we can see, Solovyov denied the concept of emanation, which was a middle ground between Kabbalah and neo-Platonism; and he did not use the hierarchy of Sefirots from Kabbalah or the Gnostic concept of “the fallen Sophia” who gave birth to the upper world. He stressed the organic unity of the Absolute and the Other.

In fact, Solovyov grasped the Kabbalistic Sefirots, which he neglected in his own philosophy. We can see it in his *Russia and the Universal Church* where he studied the source more relevant to the Christian Kabbalah – the beginning of the Book of Genesis. And he commented on it falling back on his knowledge of the ancient Hebrew. He wrote: “(...) the Eternal Wisdom is Reshit, the feminine principle or the head of all the being, as Jehovah (Lord of Hosts), Yahweh Elogim; the Triune God is a Rosh, his active principle or the head.”⁴¹

³⁸ В.С. Соловьев, *Философские начала цельного знания*, р. 281.

³⁹ Ibidem, р. 282.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, р. 290.

⁴¹ В.С. Соловьев, *Россия и Вселенская церковь*, р. 342.

As I have demonstrated with the examples, Solovyov saw in Kabbalah only one version of the human interpretation of the God Wisdom, which in its core is the same for all mankind. But only in the Kabbalistic methods, in the instruments of the Kabbalistic symbolism, in its developed abstract-logical system, he found the universal language system which was of great use for him to interpret his own mystical experience adequately.

Considering Kabbalah as a definite entirety and synthesis of the ancient religious-mystical teachings, Solovyov had to “translate” the Kabbalistic wisdom into a modern language of philosophy and logic, all the more so historically Kabbalah was already closely linked with the philosophical Gnosticism and neo-Platonism.

4. On “the School” value of Kabbalah to Solovyov

The Kabbalistic influence of Solovyov was very significant, but it could be hard to trace it in his philosophical texts only. Because they are mere “translations” from the intuitive into the logical, from mystical comprehension into philosophical observation.

The main significance of Kabbalah lies in its pro-philosophic and systematized character, its succession over centuries (!). There was not such a continuity of mysticism in Russian culture. As a mystic, Solovyov lacked just such a mystical tradition, the spiritual and theoretical connections, that fundamental basis which the Jewish visionaries had taken so much care of, with their schools, companions-in-arms and enemies, interpreters and followers.

In his spiritual search, in his vital and creative problems, Solovyov was absolutely isolated and lonely. He sought a mystical refuge in *starchestvo* (spiritual eldership, a specific moral and mystical trend in the Russian Orthodox monasticism), in vain. He looked for mystical orders in Egypt. Solovyov was involved in spiritism (a practice of spiritualism), most likely out of despair, because his teacher P.D. Jurkevitch, a dean of the Historic-Philological Department at Moscow University, who was interested in mysticism as well, died suddenly, and a spirit under name “Pamphil” left some messages for Solovyov during his spiritualistic séances.⁴²

How did Kabbalah affect Solovyov? Was it of paramount importance to Solovyov’s creative work?

⁴² For Solovyov’s search in detail, see my monograph: В.В. Кравченко, *Вестники русского мистицизма*, p. 79-111.

1) The Kabbalistic “theory” was an affirmation of “mystic monism,” which was immanent in the Russian philosopher-mystic. As he constructed his actual philosophical system, the Kabbalistic concept of “Ein Soph” had a substantial role. He understood that it had been elaborated and calibrated over centuries. So, it was not mere import of the term “en-soph” into his system, but for Solovyov this concept was a background of his own conception of “*vseedinstvo*” (All-Unity). Of course, Solovyov’s All-Unity had absorbed Kabbalistic “Ein-Soph,” but there is a rhetorical question – what could Solovyov’s system be without the apprehension of the main Kabbalistic terms.

2) The idea of “tightening” (*sod zimzum*) in the Absolute, the appearance of the Other and the organic, we could now say – the genetic connection between them. There is a real possibility of an ulterior development of the considerations of the alive, a constitutional All-Unity, which for Solovyov was more viable than the Hegelian abstract-logical construction of “the absolute idea – its other being in nature,” or the Brahmanist concept “Brahman-atman,” etc.

3) Solovyov’s teaching of Sophia, the Idea of the Everlasting God, who is a living and individual being. It is closely connected with the Kabbalistic notions of *reshit*, *malhut*, *hohma*. Solovyov comprehended the spiritual-material essence of the Wisdom of God in his mystical experience and then he used the most relevant in his intuitions of the Kabbalistic terms.⁴³

4) We can only mention the unrevealed problem of the influence of the Kabbalistic image and concept of Adam Cadmon upon Solovyov’s anthropology, cosmology, and eschatology. There is a definition problem in K. Burmistrov’s article only.⁴⁴

5) Like other Kabbalistic mystics (e.g. Abulaphia, Luria, and others), Solovyov saw different people’s different “levels of access” to the ultra-mundane knowledge. In fact, it is typical of all the mystical schools and trends to keep the underlying understanding of the abyss between the esoteric knowledge intended for “the privileged” by God and the exoteric one for all others. Solovyov accepted the ideas of the circles of the initiated, teachers and their disciples that were central to Kabbalah as well as all the mystical schools and movements all over the world and ages. Obviously, Solovyov was devoted to the ancient Jewish teachers; he was a disciple of the Kabbalistic tradition “by correspondence.”

⁴³ See the paragraph “Kabbalistic Sophia” in my monograph: В.В. Кравченко, *Владимир Соловьев и София*, p. 287-306.

⁴⁴ К. Бурмистров, *Владимир Соловьев и Каббала. К постановке проблемы*, p. 30-34.

On the other hand, the inartificial and honest asceticism of Solovyov, his inconceivable spiritual pureness, whole-hearted devotion to his eminent mission, amazing courage in defending his mystical and moral ideals – all of it evoked respect and admiration of the famous rabbis of that time. For most of Solovyov's contemporaries, including Jews, the Russian philosopher-mystic was a genuine prophet.

6) We must take into account Solovyov's presentiments of the apocalypse in his late years (see his famous work *The Three Conversations*, his letters to Anna Schmidt, etc.) At that time he deeply considered the Testament in Hebrew and was going to translate it once again into Russian. In the aspects of his mystical insights into God's purpose and future catastrophes, we must underline his deep interest in Talmud, especially Tosefta, and their parallels to The Book of Enoch.⁴⁵

Thus, Solovyov's Weltanschauung and his mystic-philosophical teaching of All-Unity – from the universe creation to the apocalypse – were closely linked with Kabbalah. It was a permanent spiritual "shouting" between the lonely Russian mystic and the living and well-established mystical tradition. He had to search beyond his own absent or disrupted national tradition, and it was brilliant evidence of the total spiritual solidarity of mankind in its highest ideals and best aspirations.

We could endlessly argue over the influences of the Schellingian freedom, Hegelian dialectics, Böhme's or Swedenborg's intuitions, or, at last, the Kabbalistic ideas on Solovyov's teaching. As a result we will come to the conclusion about the genuine originality of the Russian philosopher-mystic. He brought to light a specific Russian *vselenskaja otzyvchivost'* (universal sympathy). Allowing for the best decisions of the world philosophy and mysticism, Solovyov created an outstanding and innovative universal philosophical-mystical system.

⁴⁵ В.С. Соловьев, *Талмуд*, Варшава: Правда 1906.



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Judaic Motifs in the Works of Vladimir Solovyov and his “Logic of the Absolute”

There are a lot of works devoted to the influence of Judaism on the philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov today. Vladimir Solovyov took an active interest in the fortunes and achievements of the Jewish people, and so this theme came up repeatedly and came to be expressed significantly in a number of his works.

In 1881 Solovyov became acquainted with F. Getz (1853–1931), who became his teacher in the study of Hebrew. Within three years, Solovyov was reading the Bible and the Talmud in the original, was engaged in Jewish history and literature, studied German books on the Talmudic literature.

In 1884 Solovyov published a big article entitled *The Jews and the Christian Question* the title of which emphasizes that, in the author’s opinion, this question is not Jewish one, but Christian; it is a question about the attitude of the Christian world to the Jews. The Jews, says Solovyov, always refer to Christians as prescribed by their religion. Christians, on the contrary, have not learned to treat the Jews as Christians.

To understand the Jews, according to Solovyov, we must answer three questions: why Christ was a Jew, why most of the Jewish people did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah, why the most Jews, stable in their religion, live in Russia and Poland, on the frontier of the Graeco-Slavic world.

Solovyov sees the reason for the religious choice of the Jewish people in the three main features of the Jewish national character: (1) deep religiousness, devotion to God with complete self-sacrifice, (2) deep feeling and consciousness of the national, familial and personal self, (3) a kind of “religious materialism,” which consists in the fact that Jews were never

able and did not want to separate the higher spiritual principles from their material expression.

Because of these properties the Jews, according to Solovyov, are the most appropriate environment for the realization of God's word. Solovyov believed that the Jews had rejected Christ, because they had not been able to understand the idea of Christian self-denial.

Christians can show the Jews their Christian truth, only by consistently pursuing the idea of a Christian life and thereby refuting the inherent Jewish view of Christianity as unworkable, thus proving it to be a false idea.

In 1885 Solovyov wrote an article entitled *The New Testament Israel*, where he very sympathetically appreciated the attempt to combine Judaism and Christianity, which however caused strong condemnation on the part of Russian Jews, and so turned out unsold.

Solovyov's active reaction to the Talmud polemic of the 19th century in Austria-Hungary is also well known. Solovyov answered to it in 1886 with his famous work *The Talmud and Contemporary Polemical Literature about it in Austria and Germany*. In this paper, Solovyov strongly rejects the anti-Semitic ideas about the link between the commitment of Jews to the Talmud and their isolation, which is an alleged obstacle for the provision of civil and social rights for Jews. Solovyov denies any fundamental contradiction between the ethical principles of the Talmud and New Testament.

In the article *When did the Hebrew Prophets Live* (1896) Solovyov sees the peculiarity of the Jewish religion in relation to all others not in the abstract idea of monotheism, but in the living consciousness and a feeling that the national God of Israel is the God of the World, the God of power and truth. This implies "a belief in a golden age in the future, in historical progress, or in the meaning of history, in the exclusive triumph of truth."

Solovyov not only defended the Jews in his philosophical writings, but – as a writer and a Russian citizen – he also fought against the persecution of Jews in Russia. In letters to F. Getz, Solovyov denounced riots and assured that his pen was always ready to protect Israel in times of disaster.

In 1890 Solovyov suggested that Tolstoy write a manifesto protesting against anti-Semitism. He himself made the text and gathered the signatures. In a foreword to the book *Word of defendant* (1891) F. Getz placed a long letter from Solovyov, which denounced anti-Semitism. The book was immediately confiscated by censors.

Until the end of life, Solovyov kept a passionate interest in the fate of the Jewish people, sincere love for them and confidence in their future. He was an honorary member of the Society for the dissemination of education

among Jews in Russia. Solovyov wrote a review of the book *Jews, their Faith and Morality* (1891) by S. Diminsky, a substantial article *Kabbalah* in the *Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary*, the foreword to the paper *The Kabbalah, a Mystical Philosophy of the Jews* by D. Ginsburg in the magazine “Questions of philosophy and psychology” (Book 33, 1896).

F. Getz wrote in his article *On the Relation of Vladimir Solovyov to the Jewish Question* (1901) that since the death of G. Lessing there had not been a Christian scholar and literary figure who would have enjoyed such a popularity and love among the Jewish people, and predicted that in future Solovyov’s name would be mentioned by thankful Jewish people with reverence, love and appreciation, along with the names of other noble Christian defenders of the Jews.

Solovyov’s interest in the Judaic mysticism is also well known. We can assume an influence of Judaism on early Solovyov. For example, in his dialogue *Sofia* there are some signs implying that Solovyov had read *Kabbalah Denudata* by Rosenroth in his youth, although it is likely that Solovyov had learnt elements of the Kabbalistic thought from Spinoza.

We have been able to delineate a set of Solovyov’s reactions to Judaism, its social, philosophical and theological aspects.

For example, in the preface to the article *The Kabbalah, a Mystical Philosophy of the Jews*¹ by David Ginsburg, Solovyov notes some similarities and differences between neo-Platonism and the Kabbalistic tradition, highlighting the following differences between them.

The 1st difference: in neo-Platonism, movement from the unity to its aspects is a purely negative, weakening of the unity; Kabbalah presents here a more positive understanding:

While in neo-Platonism a gradual transition from the super-being Unity or Good through the world of minds and ideas to the world of souls and bodies is understood only from the negative side, as the descent, dizziness, falling, Kabbalah sees here a positive side: completion, the full embodiment of the truth, the implementation of the fullness of being.

The 2nd difference: the man, “human form,” is considered by the Kabbalistic tradition as a “single, all-embracing form.”

The man in heavens corresponds to the man on the ground, and all the basic human elements and relations are carried out harmoniously in various degrees of the universe, in which, as on Jacob’s ladder, the heavenly forces descend and

¹ Д.Г. Гинцбург, *Каббала, мистическая философия евреев. С пред. Вл.С. Соловьева*, “Вопросы философии и психологии,” vol. 3 (33) 1896, p. 377-300, preface, p. 277-279.

ascend. This idea of man as an absolute and global form, totally alien to Greek philosophy, is the biblical truth, transmitted to the Christian world by St. Paul the Apostle.

As a result, Solovyov gives the following short formula of the Kabbalistic tradition:

The real-mystical connection of all existence, as the embodiment of the unitary absolute content – that’s the starting point or fundamental principle of Kabbalah; a conscious and systematic anthropomorphism – that is the final point. Mysticism of numbers, letters, and names is included here as a subordinate element that is not separated from the guiding anthropomorphic ideas.

The early works of Vladimir Solovyov contain explicit kabbalistic motifs: these are ideas of true existence belonging to God, integrity of the world, and All-Unity of creation (“world soul”) and Creator, where the soul of humanity, Adam Kadmon, is a “thinking center, and the inner connection of all beings...”²

Solovyov formulates his view on Kabbalistic themes as follows:

(...) Kabbalah is neither a product of the Middle Ages, nor the Alexandrian thought. We see an indelible stamp of its Hebrew origin, and a significant difference from the neo-Platonic doctrine, in a special primitive realism and integral monism of this kind of thinking. The antithesis between the world of intelligible essences, the domain of true, authentic life, and the world of material phenomena, characteristic of all Greek philosophy and preserved in neo-Platonism, is a dualistic antithesis which is completely absent in the Kabbalah (where the material world is only the latest extreme degree of implementation and realization of the Absolute).³

It is common knowledge that some time after the defense of his Master’s thesis Solovyov taught at the Moscow University, and in 1875 he received a scholarship for training abroad. He went to London to study mystical literature and theosophy. In the library of the British Museum, he read the works of the Gnostics and mystics, among them – the famous kabbalistic work *The Zohar*, which led him to an extraordinary inspiration. He got a Latin translation of this text, made by von Knorre Rosenroth at the end of 17th century, in his book *Kabbala Denudata, seu Doctrina Hebraeorum Transcendentalis et Metaphysique atque Theologica (The Kabbalah Unveiled, or The Transcendental, Metaphysical, and Theological Teach-*

² В. Соловьев, *София*, trans. by А.П. Козырев, “Логос” 2 (1991), p. 189.

³ В. Соловьев, *Каббала*, in *Энциклопедический словарь Брокгауза и Ефрона*, Санкт-Петербург 1894, vol. 26, p. 782-784. Also see idem, *Собрание сочинений*, Санкт-Петербург: Просвещение 1907, vol. 9, p. 111-116.

ings of the Jews), which also includes translations of the later Jewish mystical writings.

Having left London, Solovyov spent several months in Egypt, by his own admission, “on the secret call of Sofia.” According to his French friend, A.M. de Bogusse, Solovyov wanted to find a tribe which had descended from King Solomon and which kept secret mystical writings, both Kabbalistic and Masonic ones. According to another witness, speaking on his return to Russia about what had happened to him in Egypt, Solovyov said that he had wanted to see the secret light of Mount Tabor, and he succeeded. Solovyov himself wrote in his unpublished essay *Sophia* (1875–1876) that the purpose of his trip to Egypt had been to find a linking thread, which would help him connect the modern life with the life of the prehistoric man. In the poem *Three Meetings*, written shortly before his death, Solovyov described his mystical meeting in Egypt with Sophia, the highest wisdom, which he regarded as the “soul of the world,” eternal good and eternal truth.⁴

After his return to Russia (via Sorrento, Nice, Paris), Solovyov began to systematize own ideas. In autumn 1876 he read a course of logic and history of philosophy at the Moscow State University. At the same time, he was working on the text *Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge*, which he intended to defend as a doctoral dissertation, and publish it in parts in periodicals. The work remained unfinished. In 1877 in the journal “Russian Gazeta,” Solovyov began to publish a new work *Critique of Abstract Principles*, which after three years he defended as a doctoral dissertation.

Therefore, the two early philosophical and theoretical works of Vladimir Solovyov, *Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge* and *Critique of Abstract Principles* are under particular influence of Solovyov’s studies of the Kabbalah in the library of the British Museum.

In my book *The Logic of All-Unity*,⁵ I explore the structure of logic of the Absolute in some works of Vladimir Solovyov, especially in *Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge*. The analysis of this logic (using a number of new designs developed by the author’s version of philosophical logic, the so-called *Protectively Modal Ontology* – PMO⁶) allowed me to come to the following basic conclusion: *the logic of the Absolute is built by Solovyov as a multi-level system of more and more differentiated ontologi-*

⁴ See У. Фузайлов (Паз), *София и Талмуд: Владимир Соловьев в еврейском контексте*, <<http://www.lechaim.ru/arhiv/189/paz.htm>>.

⁵ В.И. Моисеев, *Логика всеединства*, Москва: Пер Сэ 2002.

⁶ В.И. Моисеев, *Логика Открытого Синтеза*, vol. 1: *Структура, Природа и Душа*, Book 1, Санкт-Петербург: Мирь 2010, p. 221-308.

cal definitions, on the basis of which lies the appearance of unconditional moment in the earlier conditional being. In terms of the PMO, this means that those elements of the logical-philosophical framework which acted as a predication of being at a higher level, become sources of new predications at lower levels.⁷

Such a multi-level logic of the Absolute in Solovyov's system can be compared with the conception of levels of high principle (*Ein-Sof*, or *Ayn Sof* (Hebrew אֵין סוֹף)) in Judaism. The transition from a higher level to a lower one is expressed in this case with the metaphysical concept of "Tzimtzum" (Hebrew תְּצַמְצֵם – *šimsūm*), the self-compression of the Divine light.

Therefore, we see many expressions of Judaic themes and subjects in the works of Vladimir Solovyov, and owing to the logical-philosophical analysis, we can obtain additional possibilities of studying the influence of the metaphysical ideas of Judaism on the philosophical constructions of V.S. Solovyov's metaphysics.

⁷ В.И. Моисеев, *Логика всеединства*, р. 75-99, 344-349.

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Philo of Alexandria and Vladimir Solovyov: Two ways of sophiology

In recent years an active discussion of the problem which may be called “Vladimir Solovyov in the Jewish context”¹ has been in progress. Some main issues have been crystallized in the discussion, such as Vladimir Solovyov and Kabbalah; Solovyov’s articles in defense of the Talmud and Jewish culture in its entirety; a Jewish reception of poetry and religious philosophy by Solovyov and others.

At times in these debates a statement is expressed about the influence of the ideas of Philo Judaeus (Philo of Alexandria) on the genesis of So-

¹ In May 1999 an international conference “Vladimir Solovyov and the Jews: a problem of the relations between the Russian intelligentsia and Jews at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries” was organized by Petersburg Jewish University and Ben-Gurion University. The issue is also discussed in W.G. Moss, *Vladimir Solovyov and the Jews in Russia*, “The Russian Review” 29 (1970), p. 181-191; H. Bar-Yosef, *Sophiology and the Concept of Femininity in Russian Symbolism and in Modern Hebrew Poetry*, “Journal of Modern Jewish Studies” 2/1 (2003), p. 59-78; H. Bar-Yosef, *The Jewish Reception of Vladimir Solovyov*, in W. van den Bercken, M. de Courten, E. van der Zweerde (eds.), *Vladimir Solovyov – Reconciler and Polemicist*, Leuven: Peters 2001, p. 363-392 (2nd volume in the series “Studies in Eastern Christianity”); J.D. Kornblatt, *Vladimir Solovyov on Spiritual Nationhood, Russia and the Jews*, “The Russian Review” 56 (1997), p. 157-177; K. Burmistrov, *Christian Orthodoxy and Jewish Kabbalah: Russian Mystics in the Search for Perennial Wisdom*, O. Hammer, K. von Stuckrad (eds.), *Polemical Encounters: Esoteric Discourse and Its Others*, Leiden – Boston: Brill Academic Publishers 2007, p. 25-54; P.L. Michelson, *Freedom, Faith and dogma: Essays by V.S. Solovyov on Christianity and Judaism*, “Canadian Slavonic Papers,” March – June 2010, <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3763/is_201003/ai_n55488140/>; K. Бурмистров, *Владимир Соловьев и Каббала. К постановке проблемы*, in М.А. Колеров (ed.), *Исследования по истории русской мысли. Ежегодник за 1998 год*, Москва: ОГИ 1998, p. 7-104.

lovyov's sophiology.² The textual analysis demonstrates that the name of Philo is found in Solovyov's writings rather often – beginning with the early *Lectures on Godmanhood* (1878)³ and up to the series of articles written for *Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopaedic Dictionary* (1891–1893)⁴ and *The Justification of the Good* (1895). We may arrive at that conclusion that for Solovyov, Philo is one of the key figures in the history of human thought. So Solovyov calls the Alexandrian Hellenistic Jews – “such as Philo” – the first real descendants of Plato;⁵ and in *The Justification of the Good* he characterizes Philo as “the last and major thinker of the ancient world,” since two roads to “the idea of God's Realm and to the ideal of Godmanhood” (prophetic inspiration and speculative philosophical thought) agreed in his mind.⁶ But for once Philo is never mentioned by Solovyov in the specific, “sophiologic” context (and we have all evidence to claim that Solovyov was acquainted with the “sophiologic” texts by Philo, such as *De congressu eruditionis gratia*, 2-14, 74-76; *Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat*, 54, 115-117 and others). The significance of this author for Solovyov consists first of all in realizing the synthesis of philosophy and religion (an aim which was so important for Solovyov himself); and especially in the elaboration of the teaching on Logos as a special hypostasis mediating in the relation of God to the world and to the human. At the same time, however, we may see that some aspects of Solovyov's and Philo's teachings on So-

² See В.С. Соловьёв, *Философские начала цельного знания*, in idem, *Полное собрание сочинений и писем в двадцати томах*, vol. 2. Москва: Наука 2000, p. 380-381 (А.А. Nosov, the author of footnotes to Solovyov's *The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge* in this edition, maintains that V. Solovyov has borrowed the concepts of “inner or hidden Logos,” *λόγος ἐνδιάθετος*, and “revealed Logos,” *λόγος προφορικός*, directly from Philo); У. Фузайлов, *София и Талмуд: Владимир Соловьёв в еврейском контексте*, “Лехаим” 1 (2008), <<http://www.lechaim.ru/ARHIV/189/paz.htm>>; *Vladimir Solovyov (philosopher)*, an article from the Wikipedia, <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Solovyov_\(philosopher\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Solovyov_(philosopher))>.

³ В.С. Соловьёв, *Чтения о Богочеловечестве*, in idem, *Собрание сочинений*, ed. by С.М. Соловьёв, Э.Л. Радлов, Санкт-Петербург: Просвещение 1911–1914, vol. III, p. 80-81.

⁴ See the following articles: *Мистицизм (Mysticism)*, *Платон (Plato)*, *Ориген (Origen)*, *Провидение (The Providence)*.

⁵ В.С. Соловьёв, *Платон*, in idem, *Собрание сочинений*, vol. X, p. 479.

⁶ В.С. Соловьёв, *Оправдание добра*, in idem, *Собрание сочинений*, vol. VIII, p. 215. Also see a similar judgment in *Lectures on Godmanhood*, VI: “Philo, in his concept of the Logos as expression of God in His relation to the world, realized the synthesis of philosophical teaching of God as the absolute idea and the prophetic relation to God as the absolute Person.” Solovyov supposes that Philo's teaching of Logos is the common source both for Christian and for neo-Platonic triadology (*Чтения о Богочеловечестве*, p. 80-81).

phia reveal extraordinary resemblance, and it would be very interesting to explore the causes of this.

The aspects of Solovyov's Sophia

It's generally acknowledged that the idea of Sophia was the central intuition in the poetry and philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov. For many decades the problem of the definition of sources and contexts of this sophiology has baffled scholars. We can see that the thought of Solovyov grew in the wide field of images, problems and concepts that, for two and a half thousand years, have formed in the western (in the very wide sense) tradition concerning the main issue of expression and presence of the absolute being in the being of the world and human (or, which is the same, the issue of bond, embeddedness of the relative being in the absolute); we can call this problem field "the sophian." Among the contexts important for Solovyov's sophiology we can point to, first of all: (1) the dialectics of the three primordial ontological essences and especially the issue of intelligible matter in *neo-Platonism* (vide *The Lectures on Godmanhood*, VII: definition of Sophia as "the matter of God imbued with the principle of divine unity"⁷); (2) *The Old Testament* texts devoted to Sophia (*Hokmah*): Scriptural imagery of Sophia the Wisdom of God features prominently in Solovyov's poetry, and in *Russia and the Universal Church*, Vol. III we come across a sophisticated philosophical exegesis of The Proverbs 8 and 9; (3) *Gnostic sophiology*, and first of all the one by Valentinus, who – according to Solovyov – was "the most important gnostic philosopher and one of the greatest thinkers of all times,"⁸ philosophic sequences from a basic gnostic "myth of Sophia" in some Valentinian systems (e.g. in *The Gospel of Truth*) are very similar to some of Solovyov's thoughts in *The Lectures on Godmanhood*, VIII and IX; Solovyov's general intuition of Sophia as captivated and suffering in the world corresponds to the gnostic one too;⁹ (4) *Kabbalah* is also often mentioned among the sources of Solovyov's sophiology;¹⁰ (5) lastly, some

⁷ В.С. Соловьёв, *Чтения о Богочеловечестве*, p. 115.

⁸ В.С. Соловьёв, *Валентин и валентиняне*, in idem, *Собрание сочинений*, vol. X, p. 285.

⁹ See А.А. Каменских, *Трагедия космогонической объективации в валентинианстве и в русской религиозной философии*, in Н.В. Пожарская, И.Н. Потылицына, Т.Б. Всехвятская (eds.), *Россия и Гнозис. Материалы конференции*, Москва: Рудомино 2004, p. 22-29.

¹⁰ К. Бурмистров, *Владимир Соловьёв и Каббала. К постановке проблемы*, p. 7-104.

European mystics (Paracelsus, J. Böhme, E. Swedenborg) and *philosophers* (B. Spinoza, F.W.J. Schelling) of *modern times*.¹¹ This syncretic variety of the contextual framework of Solovyov's sophiologic texts is a cause of the extraordinary difficulty of their interpretation for a historian of philosophy. One of the successful attempts to reveal, in the complex of these texts, a consistent system of views was undertaken by Aleksei Losev,¹² a brilliant Russian philosopher.

Having supposed that the essence of the sophian issue in Solovyov's thought is "the dialectic teaching about the indissolubility of idea and matter, whereby the idea acts only being in matter and matter acts only being self-moved by its nature,"¹³ Losev emphasises in Solovyov's teaching on Sophia a number of aspects: 1st) *absolutely divine* — non-created pre-earthly and extra-earthly (here Sophia is "the body of God, the matter of God imbued with the principle of divine unity"¹⁴); 2nd) "*Godhuman* Sophia, presupposing the embodiment of the absolute Sophia in the material world, and hence *both created and non-created*" (presumably Losev means here passages from *Russia and the Universal Church*, III, 7, where Solovyov writes about the primordial unity of the Creator and creation, featuring in the thought of God and emerging in the cosmological and historical process. He finds it the fullest expression in the threeness of Christ, the Mother of God and the Church); 3rd) and 4th) "*purely created* Sophia in the image

¹¹ See Solovyov's famous words from a letter to S.A. Tolstaya (April 27, 1877): "В библиотеке не нашел ничего особенного. У мистиков много подтверждений моих собственных идей, но никакого нового света, к тому же почти все они имеют характер чрезвычайно субъективный и, так сказать, слюнявый. Нашел трех специалистов по Софии: Georg Gichtel, Gottfried Arnold и John Pordage. Все три имели *личный опыт, почти такой же, как мой*, и это самое интересное, но собственно в теософии все трое довольно слабы, следуют Беме, но ниже его. Я думаю, София возилась с ними больше за их невинность, чем за что-нибудь другое. В результате настоящими людьми все-таки оказываются только Парацельс, Бэм и Сведенборг, так что для меня остается поле очень широкое" (В.С. Соловьёв, *Письма*, ed. by Э.Л. Радлов, Санкт-Петербург: Общественная польза 1909, vol. II, p. 200). See also: K. Burmistrov, *Christian Orthodoxy and Jewish Kabbalah: Russian Mystics in the Search for Perennial Wisdom*, p. 25-54; П.П. Гайденко, *Гностические мотивы в учениях Шеллинга и Вл. Соловьёва*, "Знание. Понимание. Умение" 2 (2005), p. 202-208; 3 (2005), p. 220-229.

¹² А.Ф. Лосев, *Владимир Соловьёв и его время*, Москва: Прогресс 1990.

¹³ Ibidem, p. 258. Also see a definition of "sophia" in Losev's work *The History of Antique Aesthetics. The Totals of the millennial development*: "sophia is a principle which functions not merely as such but also actively develops in all other, actively gives birth to it, dwelling itself nevertheless immutable." А.Ф. Лосев, *История античной эстетики. Итоги тысячелетнего развития*, Book 2, Москва: Ладомир 1994, p. 166-232.

¹⁴ В.С. Соловьёв, *Чтения о Богочеловечестве*, p. 115.

and likeness of the first and second Sophias.” She is either an “intelligent spiritual amenity of the cosmos in its entirety” (3rd one, *cosmic aspect*), or “the same amenity in the humankind which, taken as a whole, is also the created likeness of the first and second Sophias” (4th one, *anthropological aspect*). These four main aspects are complemented by six more: 5th) *universally feministic* (“a species of the fourth”); 6th) *intimately romantic* and 7th) *aesthetically-creative* (both suited to the third and fourth aspects); 8th) *eschatological*; 9th) *magic*; and 10th) *nationally Russian*.¹⁵ Thus, for Solovyov Sophia is the principle of the identity of ideal and real, the presence of God in “His other,” and conceived and experienced besides as the absolute person. It’s not always possible to clearly distinguish these aspects in Solovyov’s texts, but an obvious merit of Losev’s approach is the possibility of systematizing the multiformity of texts and views and – at the same time – of realizing the phenomenological description of all shades of meaning surfacing in this system.

As a detailed exposition of Solovyov’s sophiology is not the task of this paper, I would like to draw attention to those aspects of the system which reveal the most intriguing resemblance to some aspects of Philo’s teachings.

Some aspects of Philo’s sophiology

In the works of Philo of Alexandria, a famous philosopher and theologian and a Hellenistic Jew, once named “the founder of religious philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam”¹⁶ (20BC-50AD), we encounter the same issue (a kind of “philosophy of revelation”) with similar methodological principles (to justify philosophically the creed of fathers) which are so characteristic of Solovyov’s attitude.¹⁷

¹⁵ А.Ф. Losev, *Владимир Соловьёв и его время*, p. 209-260.

¹⁶ See H.A. Wolfson, *Philo. Foundations of the Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, vol. 1-2, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1948.

¹⁷ These principles are concisely characterized by an unconditional belief in the very possibility of such an employment of philosophy to express religious contents. Neither for Philo nor for Solovyov the problem of “Athens and Jerusalem” seemed insoluble. For both thinkers a similar premise acts as ground for this belief: for Philo it is a conviction that the wisdom of Torah and that of philosophy have the same source – once the Greek philosophers while travelling through the East borrowed the biblical wisdom and now there is nothing to be ashamed of in that restitution of the legacy to the chosen people. For Solovyov religion and philosophy (on an equal footing with science and art) in their isolated condition are only “abstract principles;” only having been integrated do they become the aspects of all-encompassing truth.

The similarity of the systems becomes the most evident if we take but a quick look at the main aspects of Philo's sophiology. It's obvious that Philo's dialectics of Logos and Sophia (categories at times undistinguished in his texts) is the dialectics of the theophania. We, partly after H.A. Wolfson, can stress in Philo's Logos/Sophia *four main aspects*: (1) In *the first*, upper aspect of its being, Logos (or Sophia) may be defined as the immanent mind of God Himself or the principle of presence of one God in a variety of powers;¹⁸ it's the principle maintaining the relation of all manifoldness of powers to the one absolute subject.¹⁹ (2) In *the second* aspect Logos/Sophia in Philo is *the expression of God Himself taken as single*: it is the *topos* containing all plenitude of God's thoughts – ideas for subsequent creation; so Logos (or Sophia) here is the intelligible world itself as essentially single and moreover – conceived as a person. According to Philo, bringing many names appears as God's creative power which opens in His relation to the world by a variety of special powers or as the primordial Torah letters, which are put together in the grammatical cloth of the universal law. It is the Angel of the Lord and individual angels are its particular manifestations and it is the celestial Jerusalem, the city-mother (μητρόπολις)²⁰ from which the "colonies" (particular creative λόγοι and powers organizing the created being) led out. (3) Through these λόγοι, with which the being is sown, Logos/Sophia becomes embodied in the material body of the universe, becomes immanent in it (*the third* aspect). In this aspect it is interpreted by Philo as the connection of all being in the universe and the cause of the laws of nature, "a cutter" segmenting the things and a mediator which reconciles the opposites. (4) Finally, *the fourth* aspect of Logos (Sophia) in Philo is connected with its relation to the human logos-reason and with mutual likening of Logos and the human. The creation of the human "in God's image" means that the human mind resembles the mind of the Creator and the place of the human on the earth resembles the place of God in the universe.²¹ On the other hand, the divine Logos itself may be interpreted at times anthropomorphically – as "the Human in His image" and even as "Israel."²²

Now I'd like to discuss a rather specific aspect of sophiology which we find both in Philo and in Solovyov. Above we have already seen an aspect in

¹⁸ It's very interesting in this reference to compare two texts of Philo: *De Cherubim*, 27-31; and *De sacrificiis Abeli et Caini*, 59-60.

¹⁹ See in *De Cherubim*, 27-28, 30 Philo's analogy of the divine Logos with the human logos-reason as a principle of unity of all (inner and external) manifestations of the human ego.

²⁰ *De fuga et inventione*, 18, 95.

²¹ *De opificio mundi*, 134-135, 139, 146.

²² *De confusione linguarum*, 146.

sophiologic views of Solovyov which Aleksei Losev names “intimately romantic,” and emphasizes that a “*purely noumenal, already cordial, but also already chaste* understanding of Sophia” radically distinguishes Vladimir Solovyov from any known forms of Gnosticism.²³ In the famous *Meaning of Love* this aspect of Sophia turns out closely related with the issue of human, individual love in the discussion of which Solovyov, relying on Gn 1:27, includes the theme of androgynism. This theme also appears in *Russia and the Universal Church*, III, 7 already directly in a sophiological context.

We find something similar in Philo. In a number of treatises he discusses matrimonial images of the Old Testament giving them, as it were, “a categorical interpretation.” All biblical images are viewed by Philo as living categories, intelligible faces – identity of ideal and personally-real. Matrimonial images in the light of this “categorical interpretation” are conceived by Philo as androgynous. All male images in Philo are particular modes of mind: e.g. Abel is described in his essence as “a mind elevating all to God” (*De sacrificiis Abeli et Caini*, 2; see *Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat*, 32); Cain – a pattern of thought admitting that the human mind is self-sufficient; Joseph is here a mind sticking to eclectic teachings (*Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat*, 6) etc. But the interpretation of female images corresponding to the male ones is much more complicated. A “wife” of that or another personage-mind may be described by Philo as a soul,²⁴ sensation,²⁵ a virtue suited to this mind,²⁶ or – on the contrary – a vice;²⁷ a mode of life; a subject of mind’s intention and the very intention itself. Besides that Philo often speaks about the possibility of a soul (or virtue) to become pregnant from God and to bear “a gift” for its mind-husband.²⁸ Is there any theoretical concept or are we only dealing with an example of Philo’s notorious eclecticism? I think that the variety of these particular meanings in Philo’s interpretation of female images in the Scripture may be conceived in the definition of a soul as the notional element of mind’s other-being which involves all the vast sphere of personal expression. Moreover, a wife (or soul) is interpreted by Philo as notional energy of the mind which mediates

²³ А.Ф. Лосев, *Владимир Соловьёв и его время*, p. 250 (italics in the reference is Losev’s).

²⁴ *De sacrificiis Abeli et Caini*, 59.6.

²⁵ *De Cherubim*, 41 (“wife is a sensation presented as an image”), 57-61.

²⁶ *De sacrificiis Abeli et Caini*, 59.3, *De posteritate Caini*, 62, *De Cherubim*, 41, 47, *De congressu eruditionis gratia*, 26 etc.

²⁷ *Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat*, 50, *De posteritate Caini*, 75, 79, 112, *Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat*, 178 etc.

²⁸ For the discussion of this subject see *De Cherubim*, 40-61, 106; particularly 43-52.

between the mind and the “other” (the world or God – in the dependence on the general direction of the mind): without a wife-soul the mind is blind, deaf, helpless – “a defective part of itself” (*De Cherubim*, 58-59).

In this quality a soul is viewed by Philo in two ways: as “passive” and as “active:”

1) The “passive aspect”: a soul is viewed as perception, either an intellectual one – turning to God (that is intellectual intuition – Leah,²⁹ Sarah³⁰) or a sensual one – turning to the world (Eve,³¹ Rachel³²); it is “eyes” and the pregnant bosom of the mind. The “intellectual soul” may accept God’s seed in ecstatic contemplation and in the following meditation bear “a gift” for its mind-husband. But in the union with a soul-sensation immersed in material things a mind may acquire only false opinions (just so does Philo describe the fall of mind-Adam seduced by sensation-Eve³³).

2) The “active aspect” of the soul: here a soul comes over as an objectivation of the mind, its active, practical expression.³⁴ As an objective manifestation, *πᾶξις* of mind, a soul influences it and even defines it.

Making an attempt to define the place of Philo’s “dialectics of expression” in the general context of the late antiquity we may presuppose, first of all, that the conceptual framework for such an interpretation of the Scriptural texts is the Platonic teaching about the soul as an emanation or expression of the mind. Thus, the description of the process in the terms of emanation: *μονή* (a mind dwelling in itself) – *πρόδος* (a soul: procession of a mind in “other,” other-being of mind) – *ἐπιστροφή* (a soul bringing to a mind “a gift” of its procession) may seem acceptable enough.

But here the thought of Philo does not completely correspond to the logic of the (neo-) Platonic triad, according to which the soul is ontologically lower than the mind, nearer to matter and therefore only the mind but not the soul may ascend to the One. But in Philo it is actually the soul the “ascends to the source of the celestial wisdom” and “becomes pregnant from God.”

Here the thought of Philo comes in contact with the Old Testament Judaic tradition. So the image of the soul as God’s bride, which Philo describes in *De Cherubim*, 49-52, 98-106, occurs already in the rabbinic exegesis of

²⁹ *De Cherubim*, 46.

³⁰ *De sacrificiis Abeli et Caini*, 59.

³¹ *De Cherubim*, 60 and subsequent.

³² *De congressu eruditionis gratia*, 25-27; *De posteritate Caini*, 135.

³³ *De Cherubim*, 58-65.

³⁴ *De congressu eruditionis gratia*, 26-33.

the Song of Songs. But the connection of female images in Philo's texts with the ideas of the biblical "wisdom literature" is the most interesting. For example, Philo affirms that "wives" of righteous sages are virtues granted by God and they belong not to the earthly but to the heavenly world. Such a virtue is not so much an objectivation of intellectual contents of the sage's mind as an object of intense intellectual and moral aspirations given to his contemplation; it is the divine Sophia herself in one of her aspects or in one of her images revealed in humankind. Just such is the meaning of Sarah (the "imperishable virtue," named by Philo σοφία – wisdom), who gradually prepares righteous men for comprehension of herself, giving them her maidservants as concubines – particular sciences symbolized by Hagar.³⁵ Sarah's long-lasting childlessness means that Abraham who already in his youth chose her as his lady and beloved was for many years unable to comprehend her (which is not a sum total of secular erudition) and to accept a child – a gift of righteous and happy life from her arms.

It is very interesting that Philo himself speaks about Sarah-Sophia as his own beloved (*De congressu eruditionis gratia*, 74-76). We may affirm that the mentioned texts of Philo are nothing else but paraphrases of numerous texts of the biblical "wisdom literature," in which the same divine Wisdom who is referred to as the beloved and consort of God Himself is also referred to as a celestial beloved and even a consort of a righteous sage. "I loved her, and have been looking for her since my youth, I desired to make her my spouse, and I was a lover of her beauty" – says the author of the Wisdom of Solomon.³⁶ In other words that wisdom-virtue (σοφοσύνη) which becomes the expression of a perfect, righteous mind is extremely close to the Wisdom of God Himself, becomes a kind of locus where the mystic and intellectual meeting between God and a human takes place.

In conclusion, we might say that the similarity between sophiological systems of Vladimir Solovyov and Philo of Alexandria along with common tasks and shared sympathies with Platonism are also dependent on the common tradition of the Scriptural, Old Testament sophiology. In these texts as well as in philosophical systems of Philo and Solovyov we may not always be able to distinguish the non-created and created aspects of Sophia; in the language of the authors of Sophia's speeches in the Book of Proverbs (Ch. 8) or in Ben Sirah (Ch. 24) we don't find the dogmatic or philosophical strictness. It was far more important to express an immediate intuition: all

³⁵ This is the central theme of the treatise *De congressu eruditionis gratia*.

³⁶ See also: Si 51:18-29.

sacred and beautiful, tending to harmony and concord in nature and among humans have *eternal divine source and ground*, and this source connecting the world and the human with God – *alive and wise, having his own personal being, own – and besides female – face*.

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The Symbol of Torah as Wisdom and Light reflected in Eastern European Culture

I

In this presentation I am offering a conceptual reading of Jewish and Christian cultures in Eastern Europe, by paying attention to the continuous reinterpretation of the foundational biblical concepts and the development of the symbol of Torah¹ as wisdom and light. In one of my previous papers I showed, by analyzing the texts of late antiquity, how the Torah, the foundational symbol of Jewish culture, although strongly rejected by surrounding nations, was emerging as a messenger from earlier cultural eras. On the other hand, the Torah was actively relating to and interacting with the cultural context of its time, receiving a new interpretation and becoming itself a formative cultural factor. This time we will turn to Eastern European Hassidism and the development of Russian religious philosophical thought in the 19th–20th centuries CE.

Let me start by turning your attention to the beginning of Genesis:

When God began to create heaven and earth² – the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweep-

¹ Traditionally the term Torah (or Law) refers to the Five Books of Moses or the Pentateuch. The term Torah derives from the root *y-r-h*, “to shoot (an arrow),” and thus etymologically refers to that which “hits the mark.” See *The Jewish Study Bible (JSB)*, A. Berlin, M.Z. Brettler (eds.), Oxford: Oxford University Press 1999, p. 1.

² A tradition over two millennia old sees 1.1 as a complete sentence: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” In the 11th century, the great Jewish commentator Rashi

ing over the water³ – *God said*, “Let there be **light**”; and there was **light**⁴ (Gn 1:1-3).

It was the general perception of Alexandrian Jewish thought, as was shown by Schnabel that both the Torah and Wisdom are related to creation and are considered to be universal.⁵ Though unquestionably devoted to the Temple cult in the 2nd century BCE, ben Sirach (author of the Wisdom book of that name, also called *Ecclesiasticus*) linked Torah and Wisdom with prayer. Already in the late Second Temple period in a Hellenistic context the author of the *Letter of Aristeas* argued that the Jewish law (the Torah) is true wisdom since it enables man to live a morally perfect life (130-171). A further development of Aristeas’ thought we find in the works of Philo: the Law (Torah) is introduced as the first creation, originating in the mind (*Logos*) of the Creator and embodied later as an architect’s plan (*De Opificio Mundi* 4:17-22).⁶

The same idea was shared by emerging Christianity in which tradition Jesus is presented as the New Torah – the perfect revelation of God, as was pointed out by G.F. Moore (1851–1931), the famous Old Testament scholar, theologian and orientalist, whose knowledge and understanding of the Rabbinical sources was extraordinary for his contemporaries.⁷ One of the best regarded New Testament scholars of the last century, W.D. Davies (1911–2001) emphasized that in Judaism in Paul’s day and elsewhere the identification of the Torah with Wisdom was a commonplace.⁸ This might be seen from the very beginning of the Gospel of John and its obvious reflection of Gn 1:

made a case that the verse functions as a temporal clause. This is, in fact, how some ancient Near Eastern creation stories begin – including the one that starts at 2.4b. Hence the translation, *When God began to create heaven and earth*. See *JSB*, p. 13.

³ To the ancient people, the opposite of the created order was something much worse than “nothing.” It was an active malevolent force we can best term “chaos.”

⁴ New Jewish Publication Society Version of 1985. All citations are from NJPSV unless otherwise stated.

⁵ E.J. Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom from Ben Sira to Paul*, Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck 1985.

⁶ О. Запрометова, *Идея атемпоральности Торы в ранних раввинистических текстах: свидетельство Берешит Рабба* [*The Idea of Atemporality of the Torah in Early Rabbinic Texts: a Testimony of Bereshith Rabbah*], “Вестник Московского университета. Серия 13. Востоковедение” 4 (2008), p. 117-134.

⁷ G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim*, vol. 1. Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1927, p. 269-270.

⁸ W.D. Davies, *Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, Abingdon: Fortress Press 1980, p. 170.

In the beginning (αρχη) was the Word (λογος), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the **light** of men (Jn 1:1-4, NKJV).

Early Rabbinic Judaism developed the tradition of interpretation already known to us from Hellenistic Jewish exegesis. In *Bereshith/Genesis Rabba (BR)*, the great Midrashic commentary on the book of Genesis, Rabbi Hoshayah (c. 3rd century A.D.) opens with a discussion of Pr 8:30, where Wisdom stands in the central place (*BR* 1:1-3). This is an example which represents the earliest tradition of midrash:

R. Hoshaya commenced [his exposition thus]: Then I was by Him, as a nursing (*amon*); and I was daily all delight (Prov. VIII, 30). “Amon” means tutor; “amon” means covered; “amon” means hidden; and some say, “amon” means great. “Amon” is a tutor, as you read, As an omen (nursing father) carrieth the sucking child (Num. XI, 12). “Amon” means covered, as in the verse, Ha’emunim (they that were clad-i.e. covered) in scarlet (Lam. IV, 5). “Amon” means hidden, as in the verse, and he concealed (omen) Hadassah (Est. II. 7). “Amon” means great, as in the verse, Art thou better than No-amon (Nah. III, 8), which is rendered, Art thou better than Alexandria the Great, that is situate among the rivers? Another interpretation: “amon” is a workman (*uman*). The Torah declares: “I was the working tool of the Holy One, blessed be He.” In human practice, when a mortal king builds a palace, he builds it not with his own skill but with the skill of an architect. The architect moreover does not build it out of his head, but employs plans and diagrams to know how to arrange the chambers and the wicket doors. Thus God consulted the Torah and created the world, while the Torah declares, IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED (I, 1), BEGINNING referring to the Torah, as in the verse, The Lord made me as the beginning of His way (Prov. VIII, 22).

Here we see the example of Jewish Rabbinic exegesis which is developing the concept of Torah as *wisdom*, comparing the Torah not with the plan in the architect’s mind (as was earlier presented by Philo) but rather the architect himself. The conclusion of this midrash is bringing us back to the creation of the world as in John 1.

The additional unifying concept for Jewish and Christian interpretations of the time might be seen in presenting the Torah/Wisdom as a *tutor* (“*amon*”) and *nursing father* (“*omen*”)⁹ by the early Rabbinic tradition

⁹ *Nursing father* might be translated as *pedagogue*. See B. Herbert, *In the Margins of the Midrash. Sifre Ha’azinu texts, commentaries and Reflections*, Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press 1990, p. 43.

and by Paul as a *pedagogue*.¹⁰ The same view is shared by modern Jewish scholars, who consider Wisdom's playing before God as a representation of the "play" of the wise, which is the study of the Torah.¹¹ From the very beginning there was an ongoing theological discourse between Christianity and Judaism. According to Rivkin, Rabbi Hoshayah was compelled by his Christian environment to concentrate on the text of Scripture in order to parry and expose Christian exegesis and thus Jewish midrash was developed to offset Christian midrash.¹²

II

Following the pattern given in the creation narrative in which the creation process starts with Light, the Gospel of John connects *Logos/Wisdom* (the New Torah) with Light as well. This is in accord with the ancient biblical tradition of presenting the Torah as the light: *Your word is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path* (119:105, NKJV) and *Shine Your Face upon Your servant and teach me Your laws* (Ps 119:135, NKJV).¹³ As it is seen through the parallelism of the famous Torah-Psalm, the Light (God's shining face) is inseparable from his Torah. According to Mays, the Torah in Ps 119 is presented as the central theologoumenon, which is valued beyond all else because in all its forms Torah is the medium of the Lord, the means by which the Lord deals with human beings and they with the Lord.¹⁴ The psalmist's exaltation of Torah is in fact his exaltation of the Almighty, what he has come to know is that in dealing with the teaching one deals with the teacher.

Light is inseparable from creation and the mission of Jesus according to the Gospel of John is to bring the divine light (the self-revelation of God

¹⁰ Ga 3:23 – 4:31. The closeness of *tutor* and *pedagogue* underlines Kovelman in one of his recent essays. See A. Ковельман, *Как писать эссе?*, "Лехаим" 3 (215) 2010.

¹¹ *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1462.

¹² E. Rivkin, *The shaping of Jewish History. A Radical Interpretation*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons 1971, p. 104.

¹³ There are eight main words used for "torah" (their English translations include: *word, law, commandment, rules, decree, precepts, teaching*), corresponding to the eight-fold alphabetic acrostic of this Psalm, the longest in the Bible. The psalmist's depiction of "torah" is unique and verges on the mystical. He *clings* ("d-b-k") to it – a very strong term, often with sexual connotations (Gn 2:24; 34:3; etc.) that was developed later in the Jewish conception of "devekut" ("clinging" to God). In this Psalm a close relationship to Torah replaces a close relationship with God (vv. 50, 93, etc.). See *JSB*, p. 1415-1416.

¹⁴ J.L. Mays, *Psalms. Interpretation. A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, Louisville: John Knox Press 1994, p. 383.

the Father), the Truth that will make people free (Jn 1:1-4; 8:12-32). The conversion of Saul starts with an encounter with the divine Light as well (Ac 9:3-5), that might be viewed as a parallel with a tradition that is already established. This concept was developed later in the Theology of Light by one of its creators, Gregory the Theologian and those who followed him.¹⁵

Are there parallels in the early Rabbinic tradition to the same understanding of the Torah? Not just the Torah as wisdom, but its presentation as light as well? Yes, there are. After the loss of the Temple in Jerusalem in the process of the first Jewish revolt (66–70 CE) and the humiliation of the Jews after their defeat in the two other revolts that followed,¹⁶ the Torah is coming to take a central place in Jewish thought, and is becoming the foundation for its rich tradition of interpretation. Earlier we have shown the development of the idea of the a-temporality (eternity or pre-eternity) of Torah in the Rabbinic literature.¹⁷ The Torah in Judaism (and Jesus as the New Torah in Christianity) was identified with Wisdom and was involved in the process of creation, as we have seen earlier. Alongside this line of interpretation one might also find the other idea, the presentation of the Torah as the Light. In the same exegetical midrash *BR* (3:5) it is written:

R. Simon said: “*Light*” is written five times [in this paragraph], *corresponding to the Books of His Torah*. Now GOD SAID: LET THERE BE LIGHT corresponds to Genesis, in which is recorded that the Holy One, blessed be He, engaged in the creation of His world; AND THERE WAS LIGHT, to Exodus, in which it is told how the Israelites went forth from Egypt, out of darkness into light; AND GOD SAW THE LIGHT, etc., to Leviticus, which is filled with numerous laws; AND GOD DIVIDED THE LIGHT, to Numbers, which divides between those who departed from Egypt and those who entered the [holy] land; AND GOD CALLED THE LIGHT [DAY], to Deuteronomy, which is filled with numerous laws.

In the later tradition preserved by the Babylonian Talmud it is stated that:

In the world to come there is neither eating nor drinking, no marital relations, no business affairs, no envy, hatred or quarrelling; but the righteous sit with their garlands on their heads, enjoying **the splendid light** of the Divine Presence (Shekinah)... **b. Ber. 17a.**

¹⁵ O. Zaprometova, *Searching for an Analogy in Missions: Russian “Enthusiasts” and the Eastern Church Fathers’ Spirituality*, “Acta Missiologiae” 2 (2009), p. 27-53.

¹⁶ Kitos War (115–117 CE) and Bar-Kokhba’s revolt (132–135 CE).

¹⁷ See O. Zaprometova, *Идея атемпоральности Торы в ранних раввинистических текстах: свидетельство Берешит Рабба.*

III

Now let me turn your attention to the mystical tradition in Judaism, a complex and by no means completely unified movement (a multifaceted phenomenon) whose early roots reach back to the time of the Rabbis. Mysticism can be identified “as the quest, either by individual adherents of a religious tradition or by groups of the like-minded, to experience the presence of God directly.”¹⁸ However we have to remind ourselves that “there is no such thing as a universally recognized phenomenon of mysticism or notion of mystical experience.”¹⁹ Already during the Second Temple period the concept arose that the God of Israel had no visible form and in the later tradition a belief was expressed that body is letter, and letter body. The kabbalistic tradition of the 13th century and its most influential mystical writing, *Sefer ha-Zohar* (*Book of Splendor*), identifies the name of God (the Tetragrammaton, YHVH) with the Torah. According to Wolfson, a unique feature of Jewish mysticism in all of its historical manifestations has been the convergence of light and the letter symbolism.²⁰ One work that specifically had a deep and lasting influence of the development of the Jewish mystical tradition is *Sefer Yetzirah*, *Book of Creation* (or *Book of Formation*, the title is derived from the verb *yatsar*, “form,” in Gn 2:7-8.19) which is dated anywhere from the third to the ninth century and has to be mentioned.²¹ God contains various attributes, even opposites, including both male and female. The female aspect is the *Shekhinah* or “Presence” of God; this Presence is where the divine realm and creation meet.²²

None of the phases in the development of Jewish mysticism has been analyzed as well as the last one, the Hassidic movement. The Hassidic movement started in the 1700s (CE) in Eastern Europe in response to a void felt by many average observant Jews of the day. The founder of Hassidism,

¹⁸ E.R. Wolfson, *The Bible in the Jewish Mystical Tradition*, in *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 1976.

¹⁹ P. Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2009, p. 1.

²⁰ See E.R. Wolfson, *The Bible in the Jewish Mystical Tradition*, p. 1979.

²¹ Tantlevskij considers it to be, most probably, of the third century. Jewish tradition attributes the authorship to Abraham. According to *Sefer Yetzirah*, the creation of the world is based on the *thirty-two ways of Wisdom* (1.1). See И.П. Тантлевский, *Книги Еноха. Арамейские фрагменты из Кумрана. Еврейская книга Еноха, или книга небесных дворцов. Сефер Йецира – книга Созидания* [*The Books of Enoch. Aramaic fragments from Qumran. The Hebrew Book of Enoch. Sefer Yetzirah. The Book of Creation*], Москва: Мосты культуры 2002, p. 286-287.

²² See E.R. Wolfson, *The Bible in the Jewish Mystical Tradition*, p. 1978.

Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov (referred to as the “Besht,” an acronym of his name) was a great scholar and mystic, devoted to both the revealed, outer aspect of Torah, and the hidden, inner aspect. Once he asked himself where is the Light of the Almighty, the light that was created first (Gn 1:3)? And he answered: “it is in the Torah, and the one who is able to look properly into the Torah, will be able to see that Light.”²³ This kind of practical mysticism, which Gershom Scholem considered to be a dialectic mixture of old and new elements, was the fruit of religious experience with all its spontaneity.²⁴ The main way to approach God was considered by the Besht to be prayer. The spirit of enthusiasm, one of the emotional values of Hassidism, *deveikut* (see footnote 13, “clinging to God”) in prayer/worship was in the center of the fulfillment or the study of the Torah by the faithful Hassid. This is a description of a person having such an experience:

(...) his body is becoming the throne for his soul (...), and the soul the throne for the light of Shekinah, (...) and the Light is shining, (...) and he is sitting in the midst of the Light and is rejoicing with trembling.²⁵

Moshe Idel is quoting the Hassidic primary sources in which the prominent leaders of the movement express the way of *deveikut* as approaching and abiding in the divine, uniting with the En-Sof,²⁶ lightening a person with the light of holiness.²⁷ Some sources bear witness of visions of *Shekinah* as an image of a young woman.²⁸ The chief practical principle of Hassidism is communion with God for the purpose of uniting with the source of life. This communion is achieved through the concentration of all thoughts on God, and consulting Him in all the affairs of life. The Besht emphasized a constant focus on attachment to God and to Torah no matter what one is involved with.

The Hassidic movement, which was of special concern mainly for Poland and Ukraine, nevertheless did not go unnoticed by Russian religious

²³ A. Shteinsalz, “The Light” in *The Philosophy of Hasidism*, Jerusalem: Institute for the Studies of Judaism in the CIS 1998, p. 6.

²⁴ Г. Шолем, *Основные течения в еврейской мистике* [*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*], trans. by Н. Бартман, Н.-Э. Заболотная, Москва: Мосты культуры 2004, p. 419-427.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 412.

²⁶ Hebrew **רֵיז אֵין סוֹף**, may be translated as “no end,” “unending,” “there is no end,” or Infinite. Hence a term like En Sof Aur (רֵיז אֵין סוֹף אֵין אֵין) means endless light. En-Sof is the divine origin of all created existence. *En-Sof*, the Infinite God, has no static, definable form. See <<http://www.newkabbalah.com/einsof.html>>.

²⁷ М. Идель, *Каббала. Новые перспективы* [*Kabbalah: New Perspectives*], trans. by К. Бурмистров, Е. Левин, К. Александров, Москва: Мосты культуры 2010, p. 132-133.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 159.

thought. It is a well-known fact in the history of Russian religious philosophy of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that a number of prominent Russian thinkers were drawn to Judaism, its history and primary sources, and to a reevaluation of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism and the place of Jews in world history.²⁹ A number of Russian philosophers tried to incorporate some kabbalistic ideas (such as *En-Sof*, *Adam Kadmon* etc.) into a philosophical system of their own. Vladimir Solovyov (1853–1900), the father of Russian *sophiology*, considered his work not as an innovation but rather as a devotion to setting forth *a restatement* of central Christian beliefs. The goal of his philosophy of *All-Unity* was “to justify the faith of the fathers [by] raising it to a new level of rational consciousness, and to show how this ancient faith, freed from the bonds of national pride, coincides with the eternal and universal truth.”³⁰ One of my previous papers was dedicated to the witnesses of the Rabbinic motifs of the “sophiological” ideas of Russian religious philosophy, in which I analyzed the shared ideas of the Torah as the eternal Wisdom/Sophia.³¹ The most profound and detailed analysis of the Kabbalah’s perception by Russian religious thought was done by Burmistrov, to whose publications one may turn to get more information (especially about the influence of Kabbalah doctrines and their possible influence on the philosophical systems of Solovyov, Bulgakov, Florensky and Losev).³²

Spirituality nowadays has become one of the most widely discussed areas within popular philosophy, especially in the United States, but increasingly in Europe.³³ Our selection of topics – Torah (self-revelation of God)

²⁹ This might be seen from the collection of writings of F. Dostoyevsky, V. Solovyov, D. Merezhkovsky, V. Ivanov, N. Berdyaev, L. Karsavin, V. Zenkovsky and G. Fedotov on the subject of fate and purpose of the people of Israel in the world history. See *Тайна Израиля. “Еврейский вопрос” в русской религиозной мысли конца XIX – первой половины XX века* [*The Mystery of Israel. “The Jewish Question” in the Russian Religious Thought of the end of 19th – first half of 20th centuries*], Санкт-Петербург: София 1993.

³⁰ В.С. Соловьев, *История и будущность теократии* [*The history and future of theocracy*], Загреб 1887, p. iii. Quoted from J. Sutton, *The Religious Philosophy of Vladimir Solovyov. Towards a Reassessment*, London: Macmillan Press 1988, p. 30.

³¹ О. Запromeтова, *Раввинистические мотивы в софиологических идеях русской религиозной философии* [*Rabbinic motives in the Sophiological ideas of Russian Religious Philosophy*], in В. Порус (ed.), *Софиология*, Москва: ББИ 2010, p. 233-240.

³² К. Бурмистров, *Каббала в русской философии: особенности восприятия и истолкования* [*Kabbalah in Russian philosophy: Some Features of Its Understanding and Interpretation*], “Вестник еврейского университета,” Москва – Иерусалим, 4 (22) 2000, p. 37-70.

³³ В. Chilton, J. Neusner, *Comparing Spiritualities. Formative Christianity and Judaism on Finding Life and Meeting Death*, Harrisburg: Trinity Press International 2000, p. 135.

as a symbol of Wisdom and Light – has been guided by the frequent reference to all three in this type of discussion. Commonly, these topics are taken to be typical of human experience, the call to encounter God. Each of the topics has been addressed on the basis of the writings of Judaism and Christianity, and although the topics are stable as one moves from one religion to the other, and from one period of time to another, what has been said has proved to have a lot in common.

I may conclude with a reference to Seth Schwartz who underlines that the predominant Hellenistic culture of late antiquity gave the Near East a new face, which strengthened both Judaism and Christianity and made both more creative and fruitful.³⁴ Beginning with the LXX we have to remind ourselves that translation does not merely involve comparison between two languages but also the interpretation of two texts in two different languages. At the beginning of this presentation I tried to show the development of Torah as a symbol rather than the set of commandments (the Law of Moses) or the body of text (the Pentateuch) by giving examples from the Christian and Rabbinic traditions of interpretation. A **symbol** is something such as an object, picture, written word, or particular mark that represents something else by association, resemblance, or convention. All language consists of symbols that serve to help us in understanding the most difficult concepts or ideas. Old symbols become reinterpreted, due perhaps to environmental changes. Later in history (I skipped the medieval Kabbalah and German Hassidism) the concept of *Torah/Law* will appear at the center of the discussion within both Judaism and Christianity, functioning, according to Lotman, as a “semiotic condenser,” emerging as the mediator between textual synchrony and cultural memory.³⁵

The late decades of the 19th century were marked by unusual spiritual unrest in Europe. Solovyov’s idea of *All-Unity*, considered by some scholars as a syncretic attempt, was used to show that the Church’s teaching on the mystery of the Trinity itself *expresses* the notion of God’s all-comprehensive, all-unifying nature.³⁶ Solovyov’s encounter with the Divine is well known and is described by him in his poems. In the most famous, *The Three*

³⁴ S. Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 BCE to 640 CE*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 2001, p. 291.

³⁵ Ю. Лотман, *Символ в системе культуры* [*Symbol in the System of Culture*], in idem, *Статьи по семиотике и топологии культуры*, Санкт-Петербург: Академический проект 2002, p. 211-225.

³⁶ E. Munzer, *Solovyov. Prophet of Russian-Western Unity*, London: Hollis & Carter 1956, p. 66.

Conversations, he wrote about his *seeing* and *feeling*: “(...) I came to see the incorruptible royal purple and felt the shining of the Divine (...)” (1898). The complete spiritual fulfillment of humanity was the subject of the philosopher’s third and final mystical vision, in which harmony prevailed and past, present, and future were reconciled. Mystical theology, which had directed Solovyov’s mind to the great secret of Divine manifestation, also taught him how the individual, when in a state of grace, may be able to commune with his Creator. It was the philosopher’s elaboration of European culture (including the Jewish mystical tradition) that gave him the impulse to start an original system of thought known as *sophiology* which stirred up so much discussion.

Thus the Torah is becoming the symbol which transfers the text of the ancient (biblical) culture with its plot and its traditions from one cultural level to another, performing at least two major functions: the adequate conveying of meaning and the creation of new meanings as I attempted to show in the second part of my presentation. This example of the transposition of meaning of the key symbol of Jewish culture (the Torah as Wisdom/Sophia and Light) into different cultures (at first the Hellenistic culture of late antiquity and then the Russian culture of the 19th and 20th centuries) shows us how beneficial this encounter has been for our culture in recent times. Multiculturalism gives more freedom for plural interpretations. It was a challenge for 20th century religious-philosophical thought and still remains a challenge for us today.

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On some features of the concepts of “Dialogue” and “Communion”: through Negation to All-Unity

The essence of this research is to develop a new look at what is now a long-standing problem. It is important to understand the meaning of the concepts of dialogue and communion¹ on the basis of two traditions, two different positions that are not absolutely contradictory or mutually exclusive; they do not have any irresistible contradictions. It's about Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue (Jewish-existential position) and Metropolitan John's theology of communion (Zizioulas) (Orthodox Eucharistic tradition, with emphasis on ecclesiology). We try to link the named traditions with the concept of “we-being” by Semyon Frank, to build a third path, characterized by synthesis and based on the idea of negation and All-Unity.

Let us begin by taking a look at the study of *Ethics of communication* (2006) by the Kiev philosopher Viktor Malakhov, in which he examines, from a historical perspective, the philosophy of dialogue, mostly in its ethical dimension. V. Malakhov indicates that through *dialogue* we look for meaning, and *communication* is a common relationship between subjects, particularly without delving into their structure and semantic content. Offering a slightly different interpretation of the etymology of the concept of dialogue, the Ukrainian thinker says:

(...) the narrow interpretation of the dialogue gets the erroneous reading of the Greek prefix, which begins the word διάλογος, as δι, i.e., “double”, “twice”. In

¹ We will mainly use the concept of communion in this study; it corresponds to the theological discourse and means “communication,” the community and the communion of the holy sacraments. The concept of communication is used for M. Buber's philosophy and V. Malakhov one and corresponds to the philosophical discourse. S. Frank's position also appears close to the notion of communion in itself and it reflects its integrity.

fact, we have not $\delta\iota$, but $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}$ – the prefix which means through traffic, reciprocity, distribution of traffic, so there is a reason to understand the “dialogue” rather as *distributed logos* (distributed language, word, meaning), or as something that crosses borders of a separate logos, associating it with the other(s).²

Thus, the dialogue, which is not just a *conversation* between two subjects in it, as the amount is not determinant. The dialogue is a search for meaning, or even is the meaning itself, but such a meaning that is capable of transcending their own boundaries and discovering for itself (and in this he was called) the meaning of the Other.

In such a situation, the visible demarcation of the concepts of dialogue and communication is considered: “if the dialogue is distributed *logos*, a communication means the *integrity of the subjects*,” and it is “typical of the dialogue in this subject fixing of its values to solve a complex problem, gaining understanding....”³ The solution of a more complex problem, such as overcoming loneliness is not possible for a dialogue, it requires a holistic communication. Also for V. Malakhov it is an important thesis that a dialogue is possible outside communication, as well as communication with no dialogue is possible.

One might get the impression that the Ukrainian philosopher does not draw a clear line of demarcation, and he often uses these concepts either as synonyms of a communication act, or as a general concept, depending on the chosen context. There is a need for other demarcation, which will refine and expand the position of Malakhov.

If we examine the history of the concepts of dialogue and communion closely, it offers a remarkable picture. The first concept is often found in philosophical texts, and so it is enough to remember the dialogues of Plato and Socrates and the “maieutic” method; the second is the concept that belongs mainly to theology; it is found in the Bible and the writings of the Holy Fathers. It is possible to see an emerging disciplinary differentiation of the concepts, showing mental-ideological features, and ontological ones. In this connection there is another issue – the construction of transdisciplinary knowledge, which can provide a third way⁴ for the meaning sought.

The intermediate conclusion is as follows: the dialogue makes sense, opening a way for other meanings; the communion is an integrity of entities (personality). The original demarcation line passes through etymology

² В.А. Малахов, *Етика спілкування: навчальний посібник*, Київ: Либідь 2006, р. 11.

³ Ibidem, p. 14.

⁴ This issue is addressed in the book *The Logic of the Open Synthesis* by a Moscow philosopher V. Moiseev.

and disciplinary knowledge. However, if you try to impose on one another a designated position (philosophy and communion as the meaning of dialogue, theology as the integrity of the subjects), it turns out that the chosen demarcation is not enough, or more precisely, they infringe upon the contents of concepts, put it in a certain framework, which itself still looks quite controversial, because a true dialogue and a true communion presuppose freedom and absence of rigid frames. So how to get out of this situation, how to keep the disciplinary identity of concepts and at the same time transmit them to freedom? To answer this question, we consider a situation in which the dialogue and communion are in different discourses, and then we build a model in which the two concepts constitute a certain unity.

M. Buber and Metropolitan John (Zizioulas): dialogue and communion

The main ideas of the Jewish philosopher M. Buber are fairly well known. We need to emphasize that in his works on the philosophy of dialogue, the notion of communication is almost never used, and in those cases where M. Buber still uses it, it is mentioned with different contents.

In *I and Thou* (1923) the eponymous relation unfolds on three levels: a relation to nature, the human and spiritual beings. The repetition of the concept of communication relates mainly to the sphere of nature, “I can feel it (the tree – V.M.) as a movement: juices flowing through the vessels, which surround the core, gently restrain and escort impatiently running currents of living roots, absorb moisture, respiration of the leaves; endlessly communicate with earth and air – and the secret of its vegetation.”⁵

In the essay *Dialogue* (1930) the philosopher says: “The dialogue is not limited to communicating with one another, it is, as we have seen, the ratio of men to one another, reflected in their communication.”⁶ The dialogue is not confined only to a communication, but it is an attitude among the subjects, which is expressed in our communication. Dialogue and communication are not mutually exclusive, and they act as complementary units. So it is not only casual that the phrase “dialogical communication”⁷ is mentioned in *Dialogue*. On the one hand, it points to the unity of the two concepts;

⁵ М. Бубер, *Я и Ты*, in idem, *Два образа веры*, trans. by П.С. Гуревич, С.Я. Левит, С.В. Лезов, Москва: АСТ 1999, p. 27.

⁶ М. Бубер, *Диалог*, in idem, *Два образа веры*, p. 129.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 142.

however, on the other hand, a concrete analysis does not reveal such a possible unity.

In the apparent preference for dialogue, the communication does not go to the periphery of philosophical works of M. Buber – a philosopher who took steps to let both concepts converge, for they obviously contain openness to each other. But in general, M. Buber is a supporter of the concept of dialogue and we have enough detail to analyze what can be said for the concept of communication. Dialogue features existential-philosophical connotations and it is associated with this particular religious coloration at the base of his Jewishness. In an explicit or implicit form of dialogue presented in all works of the thinker and philosopher, there is an essence of creativity. A certain understanding of the dialogue of M. Buber intersects with the ideas of V. Malakhov, but the first notion of dialogue includes the semantic content of the dialogue and communication shared by the Ukrainian thinker.

Next, we turn to the concept of “being-as-communion” of the modern Orthodox theologian, the metropolitan of Pergamon John (Zizioulas). We emphasize the basics. Metropolitan John continues to develop the ideas of his predecessors, Fr. Nikolai Afanasyev, Fr. Alexander Schmemmann. One of his main works on this subject is *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (1985),⁸ where “Eucharistic ecclesiology” plays a major role. The Eucharist is not one of the sacraments of the Church, but the Church itself – the sacrament in which the mystery of the entire Christ became actualized (the Head and Body) in history, as a general matter of the whole Church, revealing Her very existence and mission. Metropolitan John focuses on the Trinitarian and anthropological dimensions of the Eucharist by adding idea of communion.

In the context of communion and mainly for Metropolitan John the thesis holds that being a person and the Church is not possible without a communion. Furthermore, the existence of God is impossible without communion. It is inconceivable to talk about “one God” without also talking about God who is “communion” (but does not depend on communion), the Holy Trinity. The Holy Trinity is an original ontological concept, not a concept that is attached to the notion of the divine essence, or following out of it. The divine essence has no ontological meaning (content), no true existence outside communion.⁹

⁸ It is noteworthy that the met. John does not use the notion of *κοινωνία*, a communion, which means more than intercourse and *communio*.

⁹ Й. Зізіулас, *Буття як спілкування. Дослідження особистісності і Церкви*, trans. by В. Верлока, М. Козуб, Київ: Дух і Літера 2005, р. 17.

Communion is an ontological concept. The current can not be taken by itself, as an individual, as “that’s” because even God exists as an event of communion. However, communion is not an attitude that is necessary to understand the self-in-itself as an existential structure which eliminates the “nature” or “essence” in its primary ontological significance. Here Metropolitan John enters into a polemic with M. Buber regarding the role of existence. Like the “essence,” “communion” does not exist by itself. The cause of “communion” is God the Father. This means that the higher ontological category, which allows you to really be, is not impersonal and not able to communicate the “essence,” not the structure of communion that exists by itself, and personality.

The true existence comes only from the free personality of the person who loves freedom, from the one who freely asserts its existence, its identity through the event to communicate with other individuals.

For Metropolitan John there is no true existence without communion. Nothing exists as an “individual,” which must be perceived by itself. Communion is an ontological category. Communion, which is not derived from the “hypostases” of a concrete and free person, and does not lead to “hypostases” of a concrete and free person, is not an “image” of God’s existence. A personality cannot exist without communion, but any form of communion that denies and/or interferes with a person, cannot be accepted.¹⁰ Communion – this event is God, the Church and the individual.

Metropolitan John’s understanding of communion is fundamentally different from that of V. Malakhov: communication (communion) is not only a holistic attitude of subjects, but also meaning. Community unites connotations of dialogue and communication (communion) given by V. Malakhov.

It is logical that M. Buber’s views differ from those of Metropolitan John. This is due to a different religious affiliation, and different discourses. Hence, the commitment to a specific lexicon. Metropolitan John often uses the notion of dialogue, only in the context of *ecumenical dialogue*; the works of M. Buber and his notion of communication give way to dialogue.

S. Frank: negation, All-Unity

As a result, we have explained the basic concepts of the position of communion and dialogue in various discourses in an attempt to answer the question whether it is possible to save the disciplinary identity of concepts and

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 18.

the assertion of their freedom. Building a model of synthesis (All-Unity) is feasible, in particular through the idea of the “unknowable” by the famous Russian philosopher Semyon Frank.

Next, we will outline the general structure of the concept of the unknowable by S. Frank and analyze its specific epistemological framework – namely, transcendental logic and antinomistical monodualism.

Unknowable are complex structures, which find their place in various aspects or applications of life, showing thereby the application of the unknowable. According to S. Frank the unknowable consists of three parts and can be traced in three layers of life: the unknowable in the field of objective knowledge; the unknowable as self-opening reality and the absolutely unknowable (“Shrine” or “Deity”). And it can also be subdivided into two kinds: the “unknowable for us,” which is incomprehensible, because of the limitations of our cognitive abilities; and the “unknowable in essence,” which is incomprehensible as such by virtue of the antinomian nature of reality. It was the most peculiar. The unknowable has such features as metalogicality, irrationality, individuality, transfiniteness, becoming, potentiality and freedom. The knowledge of the unknowable is provided by the use of *docta ignorantia*, transcendent thinking (and transcendental logic) and its principle of antinomistical monodualism.

Transcendent thinking is possible only on the basis of the “critique of reason,” treatment of thought in relation to the conditions of thinking – the principle of certainty. This approach coincides with the “potential negation” (“negation of the negation”) of the principle of certainty.¹¹ The logic of transcendental thought is a transcendental logic (*docta ignorantia*). It is ontologically beyond the principle of certainty, while remaining logic.¹²

Transcendental logic – the logic of the unknowable – combines “potential negation,” is inconsistent and only through this can be avoided by limiting the denial, to give it actual infinity. According to P. Gaidenko the unknowable is logically expressed in “antinomism” as an “adequate means of comprehending the incomprehensible, [for it] is responsible for ignorance; the unknowable can not be squeezed in a proposition, because [of] the judgment as a form of rational knowledge.”¹³ Antinomism can not be

¹¹ С.Л. Франк, *Непостижимое. Онтологическое введение в философию религии*, in idem, *Сочинения*, Москва: Правда 1990, p. 292.

¹² В.И. Моисеев, *Логика всеединства*, Москва: ПЕР СЭ 2002, <<http://www.vsu.ru/~vsu-e3e06/Page2.htm>>.

¹³ П.П. Гайденко, *Метафизика конкретного всеединства, или Абсолютный реализм С.Л. Франка*, “Вопросы философии” 5 (1999), p. 134.

overcome by any “higher concepts:” “transrational truth lies precisely in *the middle* of the ineffable, the *ineffable* unity between these two judgments, not allowing any logical fixation communication between them.”¹⁴ For the expression of this state of thinking must ease itself on its borders, let itself in its objections of the boundary.¹⁵

Developing the views of Nicholas of Cusa¹⁶ and the apophatic tradition in general, S. Frank proposed the principle of learning and characteristics of existence – antinomistical monodualism, which is the ontological expression of the antinomic filled with certainty (*docta ignorantia*). On this occasion, the thinker said:

(...) we will always stand before the relation which is logically separate, based on mutual denial, together with the internally fused, which permeate each other – the *one* does *not* have another and at the same time there *is* another, and only with it and through it, which is truly in its final depth and fullness. This is antinomistical monodualism of all things, and in its face every kind of monism, as well as every kind of dualism is false, which simplifies and distorts the abstraction, which can not express the fullness of concrete structure of reality.¹⁷

In his paper *The Unknowable. An ontological introduction to the philosophy of religion* (1939), being “We” (being in communion) is revealed as a transcendence of the self “in-out” and, simultaneously, a transcendence of the “in-mouth.” Being “We” is an internal party relation of the “I – Thou,” while it is a particular genus of being, a manifestation of what may be its ability of self-existence alienated from the “I” defined as a “distance” from the outside. This is possible thanks to the ability of “I” to distinguish its immediate self-existence of spheres of existence. “We,” “if I have the experience that the “I” stand *relates* not only to the “Thou,” but also to “*We*’ *as such*.”¹⁸ S. Frank positions human life as split into two components: (1) “intimate,” “isolated,” “lonely” life of “I;” (2) social design of “I” as part of the unity of “we.” According to this position, S. Frank considered the idea of *the third* “as a *whole*, consisting of ‘I’ and ‘Thou,’ which seems to have a kind of existence for themselves, *along* with the two isolated human be-

¹⁴ С.Л. Франк, *Непостижимое*, p. 312.

¹⁵ В.И. Мойсеев, *Логика всеединства*.

¹⁶ It is interesting to note that the works of Nicholas of Cusa and Jakob Böhme influenced not only S. Frank, but also M. Buber, who was the author of the study *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Individuationsproblems (On the History of the Problem of Individuation: Nicholas of Cusa and Jakob Böhme)*.

¹⁷ С.Л. Франк, *Непостижимое*, p. 315.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 381.

ings, its members.”¹⁹ The private “I” does not exist before the “We.” “We” does not arise as a result of combining several “I’s” existing before “We.” “We” is the ultimate reality with respect to any individual “I.” “I” is rooted in being “us,” not “We;” or for “We,” there would be no “I.” The value of “I” and “Thou” means that first there must be something as a whole, so that it could differentiate one and the other opposite side. The unity of “We” is precisely such an original integrity, within which it may itself constitute the “I” and “Thou.” As noted by S. Frank:

“We” is not the first person plural, not “many selves,” neither the unity of the plural first and second person, as the unity of “I” and “Thou.” (...) “We” is, therefore, some primary category of personal human and therefore social existence.²⁰

So, being “We” is an internal base of “I-being.” Being “We” includes and allows for the antinomy between themselves and being “me” as an internal self-existence. “Being ‘We’ is like an irresistible tendency to become alienated from me and turn into the material world, to act toward me as foreign, in itself sheer reality – and from outside to *define* me and *master* me.”²¹ For Semyon Frank being “We” was not external, corporeal reality of individuals making up society; it wasn’t an invisible, disembodied unity “We” that would encompass and capture us as a supratemporal unity, not dedicated to a single human life.²²

“We,” as alienated from the “I” area may be reduced to the impersonal “It.” “It” is a substantive “We.” This reduced “We” represents a moment of irrationality of space beginning, natural disasters or “objective ‘We’.” As an example of the reduced “We,” S. Frank invoked the action provisions of the law or government regulations. A case of “We” is not only irrational, but rational; it is a unity of the rational and irrational; being “We” is transrational. “Being ‘We’ does not have elementary space, a natural unity of life, but there is nevertheless a rational order and unity *sharing* the common *goal* of life.”²³ That is an example of being “We,” the observed deployment of transcendental logic and the Frank’s principle of antinomistical monodualism.

“We-being” appears in two forms: external (objective “We”) and internal (initial depth of life “We”). Between these two forms of “We-being,”

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ С.Л. Франк, *Духовные основы общества. Введение в социальную философию*, Москва: Республика 1992, p. 51.

²¹ С.Л. Франк, *Непостижимое*, p. 382-383.

²² Ibidem, p. 383.

²³ Ibidem, p. 384.

constant friction and alienation can be observed, while they there is an inextricable link between them. One form is unthinkable without the other; they are responsible for each other. Being “We” is subject to S. Frank’s antinomistical monodualism principle. “There being ‘We,’ like any reality at all, it is *unknowable* as *transrationality*; it is therefore beyond any pure rationality and irrationality, and has all antinomistical completeness and specificity of what we mean by “transrationality.”²⁴ Also, “We-being” is *sobornost*, as outlined in S. Frank’s work *Spiritual Foundations of Society. An introduction to Social Philosophy* (1930).

M. Mamardashvili once said that “we are attending being absent.” There is no statement which could better convey the meaning and atmosphere of what we have decided to designate as the idea of “denying oneself,” through which the knowledge and understanding of dialogue, communion and human rights in general becomes possible. An important question here is the identification, valuation of oneself, one’s status or social role. For example, some people call themselves philosophers, theologians, or just persons. The identity denies identification. Once a person gives himself the value (of theology, philosophy), s/he ceases to be it. The determination compresses personality. No more feeling of lightness, or ease. All the time there is a fear of not seeming to be what you define and represent. The paradox of this boils down to the question whether we are actually the ones who ourselves (or else we) will identify or is it an empty sound, a simulacrum? The issue is extremely complicated. We will try to answer it using the achievements of S. Frank.

Simulating Frank’s ideas on the analyzed issues, we note the following. In order to come closer to understanding, the essence of the concepts of dialogue and communion must go beyond the antinomies and overcome the beginning of the “either-or,” “first through the principle of ‘*something, and another,*’ and then – in an even more intimate way – through the principle of ‘*neither one nor the other*’ (and most appropriately, however, only through the *combination* of both of these latter principles – through the *overcoming* of denial).”²⁵ The denial manifests itself mainly through the apophatic method – understanding who we are not, which leads us to the statement of who we are. This path is permanent; the valuation of oneself never ends in content, in meaning. The denial of oneself does not resolve the individual. Personality is a person staying/being in denial. This is his/her way of nega-

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 385.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 310.

tion. The denial of myself (my status, my social role) brings me to another. But only if and when one refuses himself. The Equality of dialogue and communion should be equal.

The path of denial is the main way of understanding the essence of the dialogue and the communion concepts. This preserves their freedom and individuality. For the path of denial to become clearer, let us turn to such concepts as *perihoresis* and *synergy*. Both terms refer to the field of theology, but this is by no means an obstacle to their introduction into philosophy or cultural studies. For the two concepts (dialogue and communion), penetrating each other is not necessarily a form of mixture or fusion, but interpenetration, mutual transparency, mutual openness (i.e. *perihoresis*), combined with preservation of its own specificity. *Perihoresis* is directly related to *synergy*, which is a co-existence of communion and dialogue, or its All-Unity.

The fact that S. Frank brought up antinomistical monodualism and “We-being” is directly connected with the idea of denying oneself and a combination of dialogue and communion, as these concepts in different sections of life pointed to the same thing: people, culture, society, singleness, coherence. This integrity must be expressed in terms of concepts (dialogue and communication). The full expression is not possible, as there is always something unspoken (unknowable), due to the fact that people simply are not able to pass through the notion of the depth of the world. However, that which gets adequate transfer in concept, implemented by the principle of antinomistical monodualism and reconciliation of opposites in unity is All-Unity. Following the path of denial, we arrive at the meaning of concepts, which are able to perceive, and perceive holistically, keeping in mind the variety.

Thus, disciplinary and semantic separation of concepts of dialogue and communion has a tendency to withdraw as early as the works of M. Buber and Metropolitan John. This trend manifests itself in a meaningful integration of concepts with the emphasis placed on one of them (the principle of “first among equals”). For V. Malakhov both concepts, or synonyms of communication receive broader interpretation in comparison with the dialogue. The way of synthesis is possible thanks to the concept of the unknowable of S. Frank, which is an updated *docta ignorantia*, the path of denial and “We-being” (All-Unity). The path of denial is supplemented and clarified by the concepts of *perihoresis* and *synergy*. The knowledge of dialogue and communion is possible through its denial, in which it remains their disciplinary identity and freedom.

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The Personalistic Philosophy of Semyon L. Frank (1877–1950)

The historian of philosophy V.V. Zenkovsky referred to Semyon Lyudvigovich Frank (Семён Людвигович Франк) as “the greatest Russian philosopher.” *The Object of Knowledge* as “probably the most important book of Russian philosophical literature in the 20th century.”

The philosopher was born in 1877 in a Russian Jewish family. The father, a military physician, died when the son was five years old. The grandfather on his mother’s side was the cofounder of the Jewish community in Moscow. From him the boy got his first religious impressions. But for a short time afterwards he was more enthusiastic about socialist ideology. From 1899 he studied at the University of Berlin, among others with Georg Simmel. In the decade before World War I Frank wrote a number of articles, which record his philosophical development. He dealt with questions of cultural and religious philosophy, with Kant, German Idealism, the Neo-Kantianism. He studied Bergson’s and Dilthey’s philosophy of life and adopted impulses from the vitalism und personalism of William Stern. He studied Schleiermacher’s conception of religion and critically assimilated William James and pragmatism. To a collection of essays, called *Vechi*, edited by critical Russian intellectuals in 1909, he contributed an article titled *Ethics of Nihilism*, in which he demanded the philosophical foundation of a “creative religious humanism.” In 1912 Frank converted to Orthodox Christianity.

During World War I in 1915 he published in St. Petersburg his fundamental work *The Object of Knowledge*. Still in Russia, in 1917, Frank was

able to publish his philosophical psychology *The Soul of Man*. After his expulsion through the Bolsheviks in 1922 he had to publish as emigrant the following works: his social philosophy *The Spiritual Foundations of Society* (Paris 1930), his philosophy of religion *The Unknowable* (Paris 1939; also translated: *The Unfathomable*), finally *Reality and Man* with the subtitle *An Essay on the Metaphysics of Human Being* (Paris 1956 posthumously). From Frank's spiritual works should be mentioned *God is With Us*, written during World War II. Frank lived with his family up to 1937 in Berlin, then he moved to France and in 1945 to London; there he died in 1950.

Frank's philosophy belongs entirely to the 20th century. Arguing with Kant's scepticism and with pragmatism, Frank justified the reality of the concept of being. The condition for the possibility to know something determinately and to distinguish it from others – i.e. the condition of the possibility of conceptual knowledge – is the indeterminate, unlimited being. Important further steps in his philosophical career were the reception of personalism (M. Buber, F. Ebner, F. Rosenzweig) and of E. Husserl's phenomenology. Both dominate his thinking deeply. It is possible, but not directly verifiable, that the idea of "self-being" (*samobytie*), which he chose as the starting point for the onto-phenomenological analysis in his philosophy of religion, was inspired by M. Heidegger. Without doubt Frank followed Kant's turn to the subject, of course, without adopting Kant's subjective idealism. Nevertheless the philosopher to whom Frank referred as his most important master is Nicholas of Cusa. Actually he is, Frank says, "in a certain sense my only teacher in philosophy"¹. The integration of personalism into the ontology of the All-Unity can be regarded as Frank's outstanding contribution to the philosophy of the 20th century. His personalistic ontology culminates in a philosophical anthropology about man as God-man.

I will try to characterize Frank's philosophy by presenting an idea which is both central and typical for Frank. From this his methodical procedure will become obvious as well. I will take this idea from his anthropology and social philosophy. Nevertheless in this context it will be impossible to render the systematic form of his thinking. I restrict myself to a very brief delineation, which neither presents the genesis nor the argumentative steps of Frank's philosophy. I want to make that abundantly clear.

As soon as he began his philosophical career Frank recognized the one-sidedness of the individualism which since Descartes dominated the think-

¹ S.L. Frank, *The Unknowable. An Ontological Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, trans. by B. Jakim, Athens: Ohio University Press 1983, p. XI.

ing of the modern age. Descartes was not able to give reasons for a philosophy of society and for moral philosophy. The individual for him was the epistemological subject, to which everything else, including any other consciousness, is only opposed to him as object of knowledge.

To conciliate the claims of society with the rights of the individual (as Marx in connection with Hegel and Feuerbach had tried), had failed and had strengthened the necessity to found a philosophy which does justice both to the individual and to the collective. This new philosophy would help to overcome the self-centeredness, in which European intellectuals lived in spite of their humanistic proclamations, and constrain spiritually the collectivism to which the individual would be surrendered without any rights.

It was Kant's philosophy which had made Frank acquainted with transcendental thinking that asks for the condition of the possibility of experience. This method, which had proven its fruitfulness already in epistemology, Frank also used in his social philosophy and anthropology. He learned from it that the condition to know another man – the so called "other consciousness" – in his property as personal being and not only as "not-I" or object consists in a "primordial unity" of "I" and "Thou." This unity, grammatically designated as "We," is not the sum of a number of "egos," formed through aggregation. "We" as a simple aggregation of many "egos" would not be able to overcome individualism because it would be subsequent and derivative. On the other hand thinking the "We" as unity which precedes the "I" and from which the many "I" would be derived, would make collectivism inevitable. For Frank "I never exists and cannot be conceived except in relation to 'Thou':" "I itself is first constituted by the act of differentiation, which transforms a certain fused primordial spiritual unity into the correlative connection of 'I' and 'Thou'."² In this unity "We" ontologically is as primordial as "I." It is

just as indecomposable and immediate a unity as "I." It is as much a primordial ontological root of our being as our "I." "I" is just as inconceivable except as a member of "We" as "We" is inconceivable except as the unity of "I" and "Thou".³

The separation of "I" and "Thou" is possible only on the basis of the higher unity of "We." "We" is a real ontological unity in which "I" and "Thou" keep their independence and primordality. This unity is essentially

² S.L. Frank, *The Spiritual Foundations of Society. An Introduction to Social Philosophy*, trans. by B. Jakim, Athens: Ohio University Press 1987, p. 49.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 51f.

more than the consciousness of being related to the other. The consciousness itself is present only in each *one* of the members of the relation as an individual.

Frank answers the question of reality or universality in the sense of *Ideal-Realism* (by this concept he characterizes his own philosophy):

The universal as a real unity is given concretely in social life in the primordial unity of “We” – a unity which does not lie outside the multiplicity of the individual members of communion and which itself does not have the aspect of a personal all-embracing subject (the aspect of a collective “I”). Rather the unity of “We” lies in the primordial unity of multiplicity itself, in the fact that the very multiplicity of individuals can live and act only as the self-revelation of the unity which embraces and pervades this multiplicity.⁴

Wherever another human being is perceived not only as object, i.e. as “It” or “He,” but as “Thou,” i.e. as subject, even most casually and minimally, he is perceived in the unity “We;” his reality as a person is acknowledged and at least in this minimal way respect is paid to him.

Because the unity “We” is not an aggregation, but the condition of the possibility of “I” and “Thou,” it does not belong to the reality of the many; it is accessible only to transcendental thinking. That means we do not have an objective knowledge of the reality of We, because it is no object opposite to our cognition (one should not confuse the “We” as unity of “I” and “Thou” with a crowd. The crowd, which stands opposite to me, is like an object, as “It” or “They”). Our knowledge of the reality “We” is knowledge in action, with Frank’s word “living knowledge” or “understanding experience.” Frank in this regard could follow the insight of Descartes: The reality of the thinking “I” is absolutely certain, because this reality is not opposed to the subject as something else, but is immediately evident. According to Descartes being is not limited, but limitless. Much earlier St. Augustine had found this insight.

His discovery of the self-evidence of the thinking Ego revealed to him, as Frank remarks, a new dimension of being, unnoticeable from our usual point of view – namely, the primary reality which lies beyond the confines both of infinite space and even of the human soul understood as a special component of the world.⁵

What Plato and Plotinus had understood only to some extent, St. Augustine saw in full clarity and in its whole significance: “the self-evidence of

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 52.

⁵ S.L. Frank, *Reality and Man. An Essay in the Metaphysics of Human Nature*, trans. by N. Duddington, London: Faber and Faber 1965, p. 13.

the super-cosmic, trans-objective reality.” “This reality is not a dumb, passive conglomeration of facts confronting our thought and revealing itself to it from without, but the self-subsistent, immediate life revealing itself to itself.”⁶ It is the

primary essence of our own being, it is seen by us to be the primary essence of reality as such. In other words, it is a reality which transcends the supposedly all-embracing system of objective existence and lies at the basis of it. It does not confront us from without, but is given to us from within as the ground in which we are rooted and out of which we grow.⁷

Frank prefers the concept “reality” instead of “being” to make clear, that consciousness also belongs to reality in this sense.

Reality is not the sum of the many known and knowable by means of concepts. This manifold (the sum of the many) Frank calls *dejstvitel'nost'* (“actuality,” *Wirklichkeit*). Reality just as little is an instance beyond the many; as such an instance it would be distinguishable from the manifold and therefore limited and only relative. Reality is the All-Unity in the sense of Nicholas of Cusa.

We know, or more accurately, we experience reality – not limited being – by phenomenologically illuminating our own self-being. Through our self-being we know reality itself as unlimited and unfathomable.

With His actual *forma essendi* God is present in each being in a concrete, determinate way by bringing it to reality. In a unique way this applies to man. Man is the manifestation of the living actual unity of reality, in other words with his soul man is the “living image” of this unity. (Frank follows Nicholas of Cusa, according to whom the human “*mens*” is the *viva imago* of the divine actual reality). We get the knowledge of God by deepening the knowledge of our human self-being. More than once Frank cited the phrase which St. Augustine had focussed on as the way to know God: *viderim me – viderim te*.

God’s relation to reality is the relation of the creativeness of the primordial ground to the created being. Frank intends to think the relation of Creator and creature as unity without blending them, i.e. without cancelling the essential difference between them. All-Unity in this meaning does not resemble amalgamation, but means the transcending unity of otherness and sameness. For transcendental thinking, the “otherness” of God “is more than separation and division,” it is

⁶ Ibidem, p. 13.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 13f.

also a positive relation which unites and makes kindred – a relation that emanates from higher transrational unity and expresses the unity. God as the absolute primordial ground is the total unity outside of which nothing is conceivable. (...) If we say of the world's being that the world possesses being that is different from God's being and in this sense is autonomous, we must not forget that this difference, this autonomy, is itself a relationship that emanates from and abides *in God*.⁸

The radical otherness of the Divine united transrationally with God's immanence becomes accessible not to abstract thinking but only to the *docta ignorantia*, which accepts the *coincidentia oppositorum*, in which the coincidence does not exclude the simultaneous difference. Generally speaking Frank's idea is the same one which the theologian Karl Rahner later put in this way: "to overcome the dilemma of God's 'immanence' or 'transcendence,' without sacrificing the one or the other."⁹

Finally I will present in a very short way the idea of Godmanhood, which is central for Frank's anthropology and metaphysics, because Frank's thinking is focussed on the foundation of "religious humanism." The divine power of reality, which awakens each creature to being, abides in it and preserves it. In a very special way this applies to man, who is the "living image" of God. God gives him through creation the possibility to answer freely to God's creative call. Man, who partakes in God's own reality, is invited to encounter God as Thou. God as primordial subject, who from eternity wants to create the "other," is the condition of the possibility for man to establish an "I – Thou" relation with another person. Society therefore is perfect when the other is taken as God's image, i.e. bearer of an infinite value or as person. This perfection is to be understood as the "mystical church," for which mankind is destined. Frank knows very well, that this ideal aim will not be accomplished under terrestrial conditions. Nevertheless it is already put into the human condition by creation.¹⁰

⁸ S.L. Frank, *The Unknowable*, p. 270f.

⁹ See K. Rahner, *Grundkurs des Glaubens. Einführung in den Begriff des Christentums*, Freiburg: Verlag Herder 1976, p. 94.

¹⁰ See P. Ehlen, *Russische Religionsphilosophie im 20. Jahrhundert: Simon L. Frank. Das Gottmenschliche des Menschen*, Freiburg: Verlag Karl Alber 2009.

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Judaic Motifs in the life and works of Semyon Frank

Along with “the Russian question,” “the Jewish question” was one of the major subjects raised by the thinkers of the Silver Age, first in Russia, later on in emigration.¹ It is worth mentioning that the interest in both cultures was not only peculiar to Russians, but also to Jews; Zionists in particular had great admiration for the Russian nation as a nation searching for God, which came to be expressed in novels by outstanding Russian writers.² This

¹ See T.P. Terlikowski, *Bogobójcy czy starsi bracia. Myśliciele rosyjskiego prawosławia wobec judaizmu [Theocides or Elder Brothers. The Russian Orthodox Thinkers' Stance on Judaism]*, Warszawa: QLCO. Agencja Reklamowo-Wydawnicza 2004. The book is a Polish anthology of texts by Russian authors (Vladimir Solovyov, St. John of Kronstadt, Mikhail Gershenzon, Pavel Florensky, Sergei Bulgakov, Nikolai Berdyaev, Georg Fedotov, Archbishop John of San Francisco (Shakhovskiy), Alexander Men' and Alexy II): *Tajemnica Syjonu. Rosyjskie prawosławie o Żydach i judaizmie [The Mystery of the Zion. The Russian Orthodox Outlook on Jews and Judaism]*, trans. by T.P. Terlikowski, Warszawa: Fronda 2007, as well as the Russian anthology (including essays by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Vladimir Solovyov, Vasily Rozanov, Dmitry Merezhkovsky, Vyacheslav Ivanov, Nikolai Berdyaev, Sergei Bulgakov, Leo Karsavin, Vasily Zenkovsky, Georg Fedotov and Mikhail Gershenzon): *Тайна Израиля. “Еврейский вопрос” в русской религиозной мысли конца XIX – первой половины XX века [The Mystery of Israel. “The Jewish Question” in the Russian Religious Thought of the end of 19th – first half of 20th centuries]*, Санкт-Петербург: София 1993. Also see П. Берлин, *Русские мыслители и евреи. Вл. Соловьев, Н. Бердяев, С. Булгаков, П. Струве, В. Розанов, “Новый журнал” 70 (1962), p. 223-270*; М. Акао, “Еврейский вопрос” как русский (общественное движение русских писателей в защиту евреев в последние десятилетия царской России), in Т. Mochizuki (ed.), *Beyond the Empire: Images of Russia in the Eurasian Cultural Context*, Sapporo: SRC 2008, p. 215-236; N. Struve, *S. Bulgakov et la question juive*, “Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique,” vol. 29 (3-4), 1988, p. 533-540.

² See А. Шапира, *Русско-еврейская субкультура в Палестине*, in О.Г. Пересыпкин (ed.), *Православный Палестинский сборник*, vol. 31: *Материалы международного научного симпозиума “Россия и Палестина: культурно-религиозные связи и контакты*

issue was especially significant for Russian philosophers of Jewish origin such as Lev Shestov or Semyon Frank. In this article I will bring up some facts from Frank's biography; they are relevant to the eponymous subject. Then I will address the question of how the philosopher perceived his Hebraic roots after his conversion, and I will point to his inspirations from Jewish authors, as well as to his polemic with them.

Semyon Frank was born in 1877 into a Jewish family. His father Lyudvig Semyonovich was a doctor, decorated for participation in the Russo-Turkish war with the Order of Saint Stanislaus – the only award granted to Jews. Moses Rossiyansky, the grandfather on the mother's side, was a rabbi and founder of the Jewish community in Moscow. He spoke poor Russian and couldn't write it at all, but he taught the little Semyon to read the Hebraic Bible and the Talmud, and took him to synagogue. Years later the philosopher reminisced:

The feeling of reverence in which I kissed the Bible cover when the Scrolls of the Law were being paraded around the synagogue has become – in the genetic-psychological order – the foundation of the religious feeling which came to define all my life with the exception of non-believing youth (roughly from 16 to 30 years of age). The stories told by grandfather about the history of the Jewish nation and of Europe served as the first basis for my intellectual world view. On his deathbed, he asked me – and I was 14 then – not to give up studying the Hebraic language and theology. I did not follow his advice literally. However, I think that in a general sense, and having converted to Christianity and having lost touch with Judaism, I am still faithful to the religious fundamentals that he instilled in me. I have always viewed my Christian faith as a natural development in the religious life of my childhood.³

At 35 Semyon Frank was christened in the Orthodox Church (earlier he married Tatyana Bartzeva, who, not being allowed to marry a Jew, converted to Lutheranism). Frank's family was shattered by his decision, not so much for religious reasons, but for nationalist ones. Quoting Leo Zak, his step-brother:

The parents were not Jewish believers. One needs to be in the know about the position of Jews in Russia in those times and about the role the Orthodox

в прошлом, настоящем и будущем,” Москва: Издание Императорского Православного Палестинского общества 1992, p. 48.

³ С. Франк, *Предсмертное*, “Вестник русского христианского движения” 1 (1986), p. 109-110. Also see А.М. Мучник, *Семен Франк – еврейске походження та християнська філософія. Біографічний критерій*, in Г. Аляев et al. (ed.), *Колізії синтезу філософії і релігії в історії вітчизняної філософії (до 180-річчя Памфіла Юркевича та 130-річчя Семена Франка)*, Полтава: АСМІ 2007, p. 119-125.

Church played in the government-steered anti-Semitism. Also, one needs to know the age-old roots of Judaic psychology in order to understand the blow dealt to his Jewish parents by the son who married a non-Jew.⁴

Although Frank's family were well assimilated into the Russian (and German) culture (the father even received a knighthood, which was a rarity among Jews), the fact that his brother Mikhail and later Semyon himself embraced the Orthodox faith was a cause for mother's concern.

Some would level accusations against him, claiming that he had become Christian to pave the way for his career. Among these was Nina Struve, the wife of Peter Struve, Frank's friend who was a brilliant politician and thinker. Indeed, hardly a month went by when Frank became a Privatdozent at the chair of philosophy at Saint Petersburg University. Even though Frank's conversion was long-lasting,⁵ sincere and free of any pretensions to landed property, he frequently stressed that despite being a Christian, he was far from dogmatism and blind faith in authority figures. The profundity of Frank the Christian is in a much-telling manner addressed by the historian Anton Kartashev, who on St. Simeon day (Frank's nameday) happened to witness Frank contemplating the icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Theological Seminary in Paris:

I felt a little ill at ease, watching him at that moment. I walked off but was long impressed by what I had seen – to be precise on the outside of the overcoming of the Old Testament by the New Testament, unseen but happening since time immemorial. Back then during the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Simeon “joyously received” from Mary's hands the One who was a never-ending “glory of the people of Israel” and a “light for revelation to the Gentiles.” Forty years later it was a thunderbolt and blindness that transformed zealous Saul into Paul. Now

⁴ *Воспоминания Льва Васильевича Зака о Семене Людвиговиче Франке, его брате*, in М. Пархомовский (ed.), *Евреи в культуре русского зарубежья. Статьи, публикации, мемуары и эссе*, vol. V, Иерусалим 1996, p. 441. About anti-Semitism in tsarist Russia see bibliography in G.D. Hundert, G.C. Bacon (eds.), *The Jews in Poland and Russia. Bibliographical Essays*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1984, p. 170-172.

⁵ At the beginning of the 20th century Frank interested in marxism and fascinated “the great Nietzsche,” his “only friend and the teacher of all poor, secluded and seeking peoples” (С.Л. Франк, *Дневник*, in idem, *Саратовский текст*, ed. by А.А. Гапоненков, Е.П. Никитина, Саратов: Издательство Саратовского университета 2006, p. 40; note dated 1902-01-02). In Frank's diary we can also find the next note: “I have read the Gospel (...), but instead of getting a strong impression I have to get disappointment. The fact is, I can feel the moral greatness of Christ, but it is covered by the curtain. (...) Sokrates, Bruno, Spinoza, and even the latest Russian heroes, as well as all martyrs for an idea, are no worse than Christ. This evident truth appears to be terrible only for the religious prejudice” (ibidem, p. 42; note dated 1902-01-04).

the new Simeon is walking down the bright way of the old one, with no visible shocks, “receiving” from the image of the icon akin to him through Virgin Mary’s body her Son as God.⁶

After the baptism Frank did not disavow his Jewish nationality. In a letter of 1924 written to A.I. Braude he mentioned that at the Berlin University (probably at the Institute of Russian Studies) there were 8 Jews (according to religion or nationality); those were professors and members of the council, which added up to 1/3 of the staff. He counted his own name in.⁷ In 1926 he delivered a lecture entitled “New Barbarism” at the Association of Russian Jews in Berlin. In it he spoke about the vulgarization of contemporary culture. Later on his Jewish origin was to make him leave Germany in 1938 and hide away in southern France throughout the second World War.

At the same time Frank would say that as far as his religious beliefs were concerned, he felt he was more of a Greek than a Jew.⁸ Most probably the above-quoted statement is to be understood literally; that is to mean that Frank valued the achievements of the Greek-Hellenic, Hellenist and Christian intellectual culture, not being able to find a solid metaphysical foundation in the Old Testament (it’s no sheer coincidence that his favorite philosophers were Plotinus and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite).

As I have already mentioned, Frank would perceive his Christianity as an outgrowth of Judaism. In many of his publications and following the example of Saint Paul, he confronted the order of the Old Testament with the one of the New Testament: the sphere of the law and the sphere of grace,⁹ or the Judaic idea of the Kingdom of God as a transcendent, apocalyptic reality with the Christian concept of the Kingdom of God as already present in the world.¹⁰

⁶ Quoted from Н. Праг, *Исполнил ли С.Л. Франк завещание деда?*, in М. Пархомовский (ed.), *Евреи в культуре русского зарубежья. Статьи, публикации, мемуары и эссе*, vol. II, Иерусалим 1993, p. 148.

⁷ See S. Frank’s letter to A.I. Braude of 17 August 1924; The Archive of the Russian Diaspora House, f. 4 (оп. 3, ед. хр. 4, p. 1).

⁸ See *Воспоминания, размышления С.Л. Франка, записанные Т.С. Франк перед его смертью*; The Archive of the Russian Diaspora House, f. 4 (оп. 5, ед. хр. 1; note dated 1941). In Leo Zak’s recollections, it was in 1913 the thinker stated that he preferred the Greek temple to the Gothic cathedral (see Ф. Буббайер, *С.Л. Франк. Жизнь и творчество русского философа*, пер. Л.Ю. Панфиной, Москва: РОССПЭН 2001, p. 97).

⁹ See e.g. С.Л. Франк, *Церковь и мир, благодать и закон (К проблеме “оцерквления”)*, “Путь” 8 (1927), p. 12-120; idem, *Свет во тьме. Опыт христианской этики и социальной философии*, Москва: Факториал 1998, p. 152-153.

¹⁰ See С.Л. Франк, *Свет во тьме...*, p. 76-77; Ф. Буббайер, *С.Л. Франк...*, p. 95, 273.

In 1934 in the German periodical “Eine heilige Kirche” Frank published the article entitled *Religiöse Tragedie des Judentums* (*The Religious Tragedy of the Jewish Nation*). He did not sign it with his name, but only annotated with “Written by a Jewish Christian.” The posthumous bibliography compiled by Leo Zander and Frank’s wife Tatyana bears out the fact that the article had indeed been penned by Frank.¹¹ The article merits particular attention, as it is actually there that in the most pronounced manner Frank expressed his attitude towards both Judaism and Christianity. He emphasized that the religious guilt of the Jews that follows from original sin as well as from the betrayal of God and thus their own vocation can only be evaluated by a Jewish Christian.¹² “Christianity,” writes Frank, “was born out of the ultimate depths of the Jewish religious movement, but the Greek spiritual heritage came into play in later stages of faith teaching.”¹³ The fact that the Jewish nation did not accept Christ shall remain a mystery, and all manifestations of anti-Semitism only testify to the incomprehension of this mystery. In the Christian era Jews are faced with a formidable alternative – a veritable religious antinomy: “either give up their own nationality (whose only foundation is the Old Testament faith) and so in defiance of the prophetic pronouncements precipitate ultimate perdition, or reject the Messiah and the Epiphany that came through him.”¹⁴ It is all the more difficult to overcome this antinomy the more fully one comes to realize the truth that being baptized means for a Jew a way of achieving worldly goods (e.g. attaining a better social status), while the very essence of baptism means readiness to accept suffering for the sake of Christ. And so “the religious tragedy of the Jewish nation is closely related to the tragic course of the historic Christianity.”¹⁵ The socio-political situation of the time – the persecution of Christians in the communist Russia as well as the persecution of Jews in the Nazi Germany – paradoxically eliminates the antinomy. As Frank writes,

1. From now on each abuse of baptism that displeases God must not be used to achieve worldly goods; only the Jews who have embraced the Christian faith can be baptized; 2. Currently, the Jewish Christian can remain faithful to his own nation despite his Christian faith.¹⁶

¹¹ See O. Назарова, *От переводчика*, “Вторая навигация” 5 (2005), p. 276-277.

¹² See С.Л. Франк, *Религиозная трагедия еврейского народа*, trans. by O. Назарова, “Вторая навигация” 5 (2005), p. 285.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 286.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 288.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 290.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 291-292.

The demarcation line between the Christians and the Jews seems to be shifting towards the borderline between truly religious people (irrespective of national affiliation) and those who value their own safety and worldly goods the most.

It is fairly easy to notice that in the article in question Frank directly intimates that having been baptized, not only did he not give up his affiliation with the chosen people, but he also contributed to the accomplishment of its mission, awaiting the moment when “all Israel will be saved” (see Rm 11:26).

As I have pointed out, Frank the Jewish Christian did not always meet with the understanding of his environment, including the philosophical circle. Following Isaiah Berlin, Philip Boobbyer describes the meeting Frank had with a well-known Kantist Hermann Cohen, who in 1914 was invited to Russia by the Jewish Society for the Support of Higher Learning.¹⁷ “No other contemporary philosopher exerted such a profound influence on the self-awareness of Jews.”¹⁸ When this Marburg school representative learnt that Frank had converted to Christianity, he immediately expressed his antipathy and ostentatiously turned his back on him.¹⁹

Frank engaged in dialogue with Jewish thinkers many a time. In 1915 he published an article entitled *Cohen’s religious philosophy*²⁰ in a periodical “Russkaya mysl,” describing the neo-Kantist’s thought as thoroughly Judaic-apocalyptic, directed towards the future. In 1929 an émigré periodical “Put’” featured Frank’s critical review of Oscar Goldberg’s book *Die Wirklichkeit der Hebräer. In das System des Pentateuch*, where the author attempted a reconstruction of “the Pentateuch metaphysics,” preaching the Judaic concept of “God-materialism.”²¹ A bit earlier (in 1926) he wrote a review of Franz Rosenzweig’s renowned book entitled *The Star of Redemption*, whose aim – in Frank’s opinion – was to mystically reveal and substantiate Judaism.²² Unlike Cohen, not only did Rosenzweig not

¹⁷ Cohen delivered a series of lectures entitled “Moral contents of the Jewish religion” and “The essence of Jewish religion” in cities belonging to Russia at that time (Saint Petersburg, Moscow, Riga, Vilnius and Warsaw). See В.Н. Белов, *Философия Германа Когена и русское неокантианство*, in Н.В. Мотрошилова (ed.), *Историко-философский ежегодник 2003*, Москва: Наука 2004, p. 342.

¹⁸ К. Seeskin, *Neokantyzm żydowski: Hermann Cohen [Jewish Neo-Kantism: Hermann Cohen]*, in D.H. Frank, O. Leaman, *Historia filozofii żydowskiej [The history of Jewish Philosophy]*, trans. by P. Sajdek, Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM 2009, p. 813

¹⁹ See Ф. Буббайер, *С.Л. Франк...*, p. 95, 273.

²⁰ See С.Л. Франк, *Религиозная философия Когена*, “Русская мысль” 12 (1915), p. 29-31.

²¹ See С.Л. Франк, *Философия ветхозаветного мира*, “Путь” 19 (1929), p. 109, 113.

²² С.Л. Франк, *Мистическая философия Розенцвейга*, “Путь” 2 (1926), p. 139.

condemn the Jews who were baptized, but for some time himself intended to convert, ultimately remaining within the Jewish community and claiming that “Christianity lacked ‘being rooted,’ which was a feature peculiar to Judaism.”²³ Frank understood Christianity differently. In his opinion it was only this religion that was capable of overcoming the distance between God, man and the world, of attaining harmony between the work of creation, revelation and redemption. The Old Testament does not know the idea of Godmanhood, which is indispensable if one wants to remove the tension. Consequently, Rosenzweig “seeks redemption in an unattainable mystical star of divine light, which is transcendent towards everything that is human”²⁴ and does not notice that “true redemption does not consist in external, yet-to-happen triangle unification of three points: God, the world and man, nor in their idle intensification in the star, but in the already realized, true and inseparable unity of man and God, who through his sacrificial death on the cross conquered the world.”²⁵ At the same time, Frank appraises Rosenzweig’s thought highly, writing that his book is “an awoken voice of Judaism,” expressing “an immemorial dissonance in the Jewish soul.”²⁶

Finally, Frank drew inspirations from Martin Buber’s philosophy of dialogue, developing his thought in the Christian perspective. The author of *I and Thou* wished to stress the value of interpersonal relations, and particularly relations between man and God. Frank, on the other hand, was looking for “a profound, ontological substantiation of those relations.”²⁷

A comparative analysis of Buber’s and Frank’s thought would surpass the scope of this article. However, it’s worth drawing attention to several points where their views intersect. Namely, the Russian philosopher explains that the relation “I – Thou” means exceeding oneself, transcending in the direction of the other “am,” and hence the *revelation* of “thou,” “another.” It’s only owing to this relation and the meeting that “I” comes into being. Seen in this way, the relation “I – Thou” is primal in relation to “I,” and as such constitutes the fundamental form of being. “I” and “Thou” denote not only and not as much as separated moments, but a unity, mutual permeation, the “we” that creates being.²⁸

²³ O. Leaman, *Egzystencjalizm żydowski: Rosenzweig, Buber i Soloveitchik* [*Jewish Existentialism: Rosenzweig, Buber and Soloveitchik*], in D.H. Frank, O. Leaman, *Historia filozofii żydowskiej*, p. 830.

²⁴ С.Л. Франк, *Мистическая философия Розенцвейга*, p. 147.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 148.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 147.

²⁷ Н. Прат, *Исполнил ли С.Л. Франк заветы деда?*, p. 153.

²⁸ More on this in П. Элен, *Философия “мы” у С.Л. Франка*, пер. Н.Н. Трубниковой,

Frank's "We-philosophy" is more radical than the dialogic of the Jewish thinkers. While Buber distinguished the "I – Thou" relation from "I – It" relation, the Russian author assumed that "he" (that is "not-you") can potentially be "you" offered in the sphere of "it."²⁹ It is possible because all beings are rooted in the absolute – All-Unity. The implications of this idea are not only metaphysical, but also religious: such an understanding of the structure of being also justifies Saint Paul's teaching about the Church as a mystical body, a living organism.³⁰ It is obvious that this idea was alien to Buber. Developing the motif also picked up by Rosenzweig, Frank writes not only about the bi-unity of "I – Thou," but about the tri-unity of "God, I and the world."

For Frank, God is always "Thou," and not "He" (much less "It"); God is the God of true mystical experience, and not the philosophers' God. At the same time the thinker makes it clear that identifying such a God with the Old Testament "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" does not give justice to the God who is love, and not only a strict authority demanding absolute obedience.³¹

Stressing the value of a personal experience of God, which probably made Frank choose to be baptized, he was far from reducing Christianity to a mere system of moral principles or articles of faith. Already at the outset of his intellectual and spiritual way he was opposed to any kind of dogmatism, blind attachment to a specific denominational tradition. He felt he was Orthodox "in this broad, mystical sense in which the Orthodox faith coincides with the one, holy Church," not taking too much care about "which denomination or direction he belongs to."³² Some years later he will

"Вопросы философии" 2 (2000), p. 57-69; idem, *Введение в специфику философского мышления Франка*, trans. by О. Назарова, "Логос" 1 (2004), p. 191-193; idem, *С.Л. Франк – философ христианского гуманизма*, trans. by О. Назарова, "Вторая навигация" 10 (2010), p. 245-248; Е.Н. Некрасова, *Семен Франк*, "Вече," vol. 2 (1995), p. 119-129; И. Крекшин, "Мы-философия" *С.Л. Франка в аспекте его социального учения*, "Точки – Рунста" 1 (2001), p. 165-172; О.И. Шахалова, Н.В. Казанова, *М. Бубер и С.Л. Франк: великое таинство непостижимого Ты*, in Г. Аляев et al. (eds.), *Колізії синтезу філософії і релігії в історії вітчизняної філософії...*, p. 223-231.

²⁹ See X. Куссе, *Диалогическая модель культуры Ф. Степуна и С. Франка*, in Е.А. Тахо-Годи (ed.), *Античность и культура Серебряного века*, Москва: Наука 2010, p. 506-507.

³⁰ See С. Франк, *Непостижимое*, in idem, *Сочинения*, Минск: Харвест – Москва: АСТ 2000, p. 536.

³¹ See С.Л. Франк, *С нами Бог. Три размышления*, in idem, *С нами Бог*, Москва: АСТ 2003, p. 514.

³² S. Frank's letter to S. Bulgakov of 30 October 1935, in Н.В. Струве (ed.), *Братство Святой Софии. Материалы и документы 1923–1939*, Москва: Русский путь – Париж: YMCA-Press 2000, p. 260.

make a shocking statement: “I am pondering a new philosophical system of Christianity, which is completely heretical, and so I stand out against all dogmas” and “Christ shall always be a protest against all orthodoxy; he is always fraught with paradox.”³³ The religious authority, e.g. the Pope in Catholicism, the Koran in Islam or the Torah in Judaism, must not have the final word in practicing faith. In his book *God with Us* (written in 1941 and published posthumously in 1946), Frank – anticipating the resolutions of the Second Vatican Council – writes:

All great religions of humanity include elements of the truth, which we not only can, but also must accept. Moses, Jewish prophets, the Buddha, the author of the Upanishads, Lao Tse, religious wise men of the Antiquity as well as Muhammad can and must be our teachers – actually in this respect in which they adequately expressed the authentic truth, God’s voice.³⁴

However, the above statement does not mean that Frank was not keenly aware of himself as a Christian. He stressed that the trust in the authority of the Christian Church must be based on unmediated religious experience, otherwise faith will become perverted.

I am a Christian, I believe in Christ and the teaching revealed by him, not because I feel obliged to hold in reverence the Gospel Word or the Church authority, which teaches me the faith. On the contrary, I believe in the Gospel, because it is through the image of Christ comprised in it that I see God, and learn truths which themselves are such that I perceive them as the voice of God. I revere the Church because in the words and deeds of its great masters, believers, saints and wise men I can discern in all credibility the truth and wisdom of God.³⁵

A Jew of origin and a Christian of choice, Frank (like his master, Nicholas of Cusa in his treaty *De pace fidei*³⁶) advocated the view that the inter-religious dialogue is possible and it is supposed to be conducted in the atmosphere of mutual respect and appropriately understood tolerance. This thought of Frank’s still remains relevant these days.

Tłumaczenie Łukasz Malczak

³³ See *Воспоминания, размышления С.Л. Франка, записанные Т.С. Франк перед его смертью*; The Archive of the Russian Diaspora House, f. 4 (оп. 5, ед. хр. 1; the last note from August 1940).

³⁴ С.Л. Франк, *С нами Бог*, p. 454.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 455.

³⁶ See В.А. Ойлер, *Николай Кузанский как провозвестник межрелигиозного диалога и основоположник теологии религий*, trans. by О.А. Коваль, in О.Э. Душин et al. (eds.), *Coincidentia oppositorum: от Николая Кузанского к Николаю Бердяеву*, Санкт-Петербург: Алетей 2010, p. 259-280.



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The “fraudulent” place of Lev Shestov in Russian Culture

Lev Shestov is one of the strangest and most remarkable figures of Russian philosophy. Born Yehuda Leyb Schwarzmann (1866–1938) into a Jewish family, he became an organic part of Russian as well as European spiritual space, an author of radiant paradoxical philosophy. The uniqueness of Shestov’s thought caused numerous suppositions about the roots of Shestov’s thought. One of the widespread suppositions refers to the Jewish spiritual legacy. In fact, Shestov’s father was a Jewish antiquity connoisseur and a convinced adherent of the Jewish religion. Shestov himself always wrote “Hebrew” in the column “faith” in any documents. The family’s straight adherence to Judaism led to a private tragedy of Shestov’s life – for many years the philosopher had to hide his marriage with Anna Berezovskaya because of her Orthodox convictions. It’s very tempting to explain Shestov’s singularity with the aid of his Jewishness. The very same idea motivated the author of these lines at the moment of preparation of the application for the conference on the Jewish influence on Eastern Europe. Being an admirer of Shestov’s philosophy, the author didn’t hesitate much in the choice of a theme, because it seemed absolutely clear that Shestov is a definitive representative of the influence issue. But the first attempt at the clarification of suppositions led to a mental chaos. We can scarcely determine the Jewish elements in Shestov’s legacy without hesitation. And this point needs some explanations.

Being a Jew doesn’t directly mean belonging to the Jewish culture. It’s hard to determine the percentage of influence of a specific national mode of life or of the cultural impact of the country in which an individual lives. The

case of Jews is a particularly telling one. The nation which has not had its own state for many centuries inevitably joins in the culture of the country of residence. And in the resulting amalgam it is very hard to determine the elements of one's own and the acquired culture. As regards the Jewish culture we can't even determine which writer could be specified as Jewish. For example, the famous writer Isaak Babel, whom most of Russian-speaking readers recognize as a Jewish literature classic, could be regarded as a Russian writer from the perspective of Hebrew literature. He was a Jew who wrote about Jews, but he wrote in Russian. Was he a Russian writer? It's a question resembling the quarrels about the national accessory of Nicolay Gogol's oeuvre – is he a Russian or Ukrainian writer? The question of blood is empty in the case of national culture. Pushkin's Ethiopian roots don't make him an Ethiopian poet.

Next we try to explain the role of a thinker in the tradition of a certain direction of thought, while his national accessory appears to be the question of minor importance. But when we undertake to speak about the influence of some nation on the culture of a certain region, we ought to see clearly, where the specific national feature and the common cultural matrix lie. Shestov's case has stumped the author of these lines. At the level of spiritual impression there were no hesitations concerning the Jewishness of Shestov's spirit. But from the point of view of the specific Jewish culture, Shestov appears to be a "citizen of the world." But such an expression can hardly be the ground for scientific analysis.

This somewhat long preamble appears in this text due to the widespread opinion about the Jewish roots of Shestov's singularity. Sometimes it seems to the author of these lines that that is a simple explanation of the nature of Shestov's paradoxical theory. Hence, who knows? Reading Shestov's oeuvre, one feels the presence of two worlds, of which the philosopher is an inhabitant. It's not necessarily caused by philosopher's belonging to two cultures. One of the most prominent images used by Shestov is the image of "alien" eyes, given by an angel of death to a person, whom he decided to leave among the living. Shestov knows a lot about this double seeing and all his theory appears to be directed by this strange and paradoxical sight-related concept. We'll try to analyze the theoretical roots of Shestov's concept and to reveal Shestov's image in the Russian spiritual space of the first decades of the 20th century, within the context of the philosopher's origin.

The features that place Shestov on the sidelines of Russian philosophy are the non-systematic character of his theory, personalism, and anti-rational strife. Nevertheless the non-systematic thinking is a distinctive feature

of Russian philosophy in general. We remember Gustav Shpet's definition of Russian philosophy as "philosophizing." Another instance of non-systematic philosophy that is comparable with the one of Shestov is Vasily Rozanov's oeuvre. However, Rozanov is only the most brilliant instance. It must be emphasized that Russian philosophy is not systematic in the sense of German philosophy, for instance. Anyway, Shestov is not so unique in his non-systematic intentions. We can even say that in his non-systematic intentions he follows the mainstream of Russian philosophy, thus creating an expressly non-systematic theory. It's not only a natural feature of accessory to Russian philosophy but a deliberate form which appears to be an only form of the theory of futility. A system can only be created by Ratio, but Shestov declares a war on the power of Ratio and its satellite – Necessity. Therefore, speaking about the non-systematic character of Shestov's philosophy as a distinctive feature, we ought to keep in mind the general spirit of Russian philosophy. We can say that Shestov hasn't moved in the mainstream of Russian philosophy. But this doesn't mean that he creates opposition to the general line of Russian philosophy.

The metaphorical saturation of Shestov's texts with nearly prophetic intonations leads the reader out of the traditional mainstream of European Classical philosophy. We'll not find here the lucidity of Kant's or Hegel's explanation of the world. The Old Testament might of Shestov's accusations and questions creates a potent temptation to explain the philosopher's position by Hebrew influence. Shestov's childhood, spent in the home of a Jewish antiquity connoisseur supports this supposition. But we know that the philosopher never shared his father's passion. Lovcky,¹ a German who spent his youth in Kiev and remembered Schwarzmann's family, noted that Lev's father provided the teaching of Hebrew for all his children, but Lev had no special interest in it and in time forgot Hebrew completely. Lev Shestov grew up in a family with strong Hebrew traditions. His father Isaak Schwarzmann was a freethinker, but not a libertine. He spoke about the deepest reverence which reached far beyond the Torah. The young philosopher liked to listen to the ancient tales told by his father. But was this environment enough to create a foundation for Shestov's concept? The analysis of Shestov's texts can't support our enthusiasm in suppositions of the Hebrew spiritual roots. The references to the Old Testament which we observe in Shestov's texts might as well be written by a Christian or secular scholar.

¹ Г. Ловцкий, *Лев Шестов по моим воспоминаниям*, <<http://www.vehi.net/shestov/lovcky.html>>.

References to properly Hebraic texts are absent from Shestov's works. With equal passion, Shestov speaks about Martin Luther and Plotinus.

Let's try to look for an image of the Jew in Shestov's works. For example, in *Potestas Clavium* Shestov juxtaposes the well-educated Hellene with the ignorant Hebrew within the context of the opposition of Ratio and Faith. Shestov makes a reference to Ernest Renan, who noted that Judea was the most ignorant country of the world of that time, and Galilee was the most ignorant part of Judea; the carpenters and fishermen who became the first devotees of the new teaching were the most ignorant people. Shestov asks how the *lumen naturale*, cultivated in the space of Hellenic education, became available for ignorant Galilean carpenters and fishermen? How could the Hellene acknowledge the Hebrew *ratio supernaturalis*?, rhetorically asks the philosopher. How could the Hellene believe that the ignorant Hebrew cried out from the depths (*clamabat ex profundis*) and God answered him, but the educated Hellene pondered and his ponderings led him nowhere?² It's obvious that such a usage of the image of the Hebrew is not tinged with a specific Jewish view. Here we see a specifically Shestovian (as well as Nietzschean) contradistinction of Ratio and Faith (or undifferentiated Life in the Nietzschean case). Such a discourse could appear in the concept by a Christian, Hebrew or secular thinker. The Old Testament pathos saturates Shestov's texts, but one can scarcely find here traces of specifically Hebrew thinking. This pathos is very far from religious reasoning – it is a pathos of religious philosophy, and a pathos of philosophy above all.

There is a great temptation to join the concept “all is possible” with, for example, the Lurian doctrine, a medieval Hebrew mystical teaching. Such explanations appear, for instance, in the investigations of the Philosophy of History by Walter Benjamin.³ The Lurian teaching begins with viewing the Creation as revealing space for Life in the formerly undivided space of God. Through a universal catastrophe an unpredictable progress of the world begins, creating a possibility of its breaking at any moment. So the history of the world appears not as a programmed process, determined by some kind of Necessity, but as “granular” time which might be broken up with Eternity at any moment. In Walter Benjamin's theses on the sense of history we find the described understanding of time and this makes it possible for Lutz Neuber to indicate the links between Benjamin's and Lurian doctrines.

² Л. Шестов, *Potestas Clavium*, <<http://magister.msk.ru/library/philos/shestov/shest18.htm>>.

³ Л. Нойбер, *Разорвать Непрерывность Истории!* (Lutz Neuber, *Das Kontinuum der Geschichte aufsprengen. Walter Benjamin's geschichtsphilosophische Thesen*, “Schwarzer Faden,” no 69), <http://zhurnal.lib.ru/m/magid_m_n/benjamin.shtml>.

The understanding of History is very similar in the thought of Shestov and Benjamin. The linear-determined History as a perverse merciless power appears to be one of the main objects of accusation in Shestov's and Benjamin's works. If we refer to the image of History in *Athens and Jerusalem* (1938), we'll understand that History embodies the figure of Ratio – an object of Shestov's criticism. Can we suppose the dependence of Shestov's theory on the same line of thinking and so suppose a connection with medieval theoretical sources. But such an argument seems to be represent an indiscriminate usage of external similarity. The Lurian doctrine emerges in the construction of Lutz Neuber only due to Benjamin's Hebrew origin and to the author's desire to reveal Benjamin theory's hidden sources. The similar theoretical technique we see in Eugene Rodin's article *Lev Shestov on the way of Gnostic libertarianism*.⁴ Referring to Shestov's interpretation of the Biblical passage “vengeance [is] mine; I will repay, saith the Lord,” Eugene Rodin asserts that the analogy between Shestov's understanding of God and Gnostic Demiurge is obvious. The author asserts that in Shestov's text we do not see the New Testament God but the jealous Old Testament God. But this norm, placed in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, originates from Deuteronomy, so there is nothing odd about the Old-Testament shade of God's image cast in the words of *Anna Karenina*'s epigraph. Shestov analyzed Tolstoy's intention as a desire to be a Judge – hence the idea to find any “ancient” roots (including Gnosticism) of Shestov's concept is rather artificial.

The impact of the accusation of Ratio appears to be a commonplace of the European philosophy since the second half of the 19th century. “Futility,” rejection of “universal truths,” decision to stay apart from “omnitudes,” “All-Unity,” etc. appear to be the features of Nietzsche's philosophy. The principle “All Things are Possible” refers us to Kierkegaard and Dostoyevsky. Shestov had a possibility of obtaining all the main themes of his philosophy from the Russian and European spiritual traditions. As for the direction of philosophical issues Shestov is absolutely Russian. After all it was not in vain that the main influences of Shestov's thought came from Dostoyevsky. The philosopher spent a great deal of his life in Europe, but felt Russia to be his home. Living in Paris and being a wanted theorist, he felt he was an exile there. No wonder then that in recent speeches of Russian Orthodox hierarchs Shestov has appeared as an Orthodox thinker of

⁴ Е.В. Родин, *Лев Шестов на пути к гностическому либертизму*, <<http://gnosticism.com/articles/shestov.htm>>.

Jewish origin. He appears such natural part of the Russian cultural tradition that it seems absolutely easy to proclaim him Orthodox without hesitation.

We'll see the same link between Shestov and the European philosophy. Nietzsche's influence is obvious here. Shestov himself acknowledged that his works were in consonance with Kierkegaard's ideas. Living in Paris, Shestov appears a remarkable part of the European spiritual tradition. Thus, he wasn't only a "Russian" thinker, whose mode of philosophizing would be desirable only in his motherland. We know about the friendship between Shestov and Husserl, and about Shestov's intellectual impact on Emil Cioran and Maurice Blanchot.

To his contemporaries and compatriots Shestov seemed an enigmatic person. His Jewish origin appeared an object of attention time and again. Leo Tolstoy's reaction to Shestov's essay which juxtaposed Tolstoy's and Nietzsche's thought is worth mentioning here. Tolstoy didn't believe his interlocutor who said that Shestov was a Jew; "a Jew can't be an atheist!" exclaimed the great Russian writer. It is not our goal here to treat of Tolstoy's adequacy in understanding Shestov's text, though the situation is demonstrative of the fact that for Tolstoy and his the starting point in the understanding lies in the author's national accessory.

Some more light is shed on the issue in Aaron Steinberg's memoirs,⁵ where the problem of Shestov's origin is an object of constant attention. Aaron Steinberg compared Nikolai Berdyaev's and Ivanov-Razumnik's attitude with Shestov's Jewishness. The basis of this interest is a significant point, meriting attention.

Nikolai Berdyaev paid special attention to Shestov's origin in his essay *Lev Shestov and Kierkegaard*.⁶ In Berdyaev's opinion, Shestov's position is an "absolute heresy" (the word "heresy" in this context has no religious shade, but appears to be used in the sense of "bullshit," or "nonsense"). In Shestov's book about Kierkegaard Berdyaev revealed the shade of enmity towards Christianity for the first time. As Berdyaev said, Christianity gets into the line of accusations along with Socrates, stoicism, idealism, that is in line of Serpent, line of nonexistence which is embodied in Ratio and Morality. The miracle of Redemption is absolutely alien to Shestov; Redemption is an invention of reason for him, exclaims Berdyaev. The Divine Victim of love communicates nothing to Shestov, to him the Crucifixion appears

⁵ А. Штейнберг, *Друзья моих ранних лет (1911–1928)*, <<http://nivat.free.fr/livres/stein/00.htm>>.

⁶ Н. Бердяев, *Лев Шестов и Киркегор*, <http://www.vehi.net/berdyaev/shestov2.html#_ftn1>.

as a limitation of God's freedom and omnipotence. Berdyaev is sure that such an incomprehension reveals itself in Shestov's thought due to his Hebraic legacy. Further reasoning seems strange in this context, however it is designed to explain the conclusion. Clarifying his thought, Berdyaev says that Shestov is not a man of the Bible – he is a man of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. And so Nietzsche is closer to him than the Bible is, and thus remains a major influence throughout his life. In Berdyaev's opinion, Shestov only made a biblical transcription of the Nietzschean theme, of the Nietzschean struggle with Socrates, with Ratio and Morality in the name of Life. For him the Bible is bounded by the Legend of the Fall, by Abraham and Job. It seems, says Berdyaev, that Shestov forgot, that the main figure of the Biblical Revelation is not Abraham but Moses, who had spoken with God. The Biblical Revelation which takes place through Moses, and which forms the basis of the Hebrew and Christian Old Testament is a Revelation of Law. Berdyaev notes that Moses isn't for Shestov's liking and in this context would be placed alongside Socrates by the philosopher. As we see, the assertion about Hebrew roots remains unresolved. How could Nietzsche's influence (which is the real object of accusation) be provoked by Shestov's Hebraic legacy? Nobody knows. And the noted words are not the only sample of Berdyaev's conviction about the roots of Shestov's thought.

Aaron Steinberg notes that it was a constant point of Berdyaev's rhetoric. The common anti-Semitic conviction of that time contained the assurance about the Jewish desire to destroy the world – the Christian, Social, Cultural one, etc. Steinberg remarks that such a stance immediately results in a struggle to exclude the Jewish People from the World History. Shestov's accusation of History as an “unjust judge,” as a process of deployment of human foolishness and villainy (*Athens and Jerusalem*) provides very convenient theoretical grounds for searching of the Hebrew roots. Aaron Steinberg was especially interested in this issue connected with Shestov's Jewishness. He wrote in his memoirs that he had spoken a lot with N. Berdyaev, R. Ivanov-Razumnik, A. Blok and L. Shestov himself. Shestov usually noted that all those people “heavily exaggerate[d],” and were not completely free from anti-Semitic inclinations.

Steinberg's comparison of the stances adopted by those “exaggerating” people is interesting. In his opinion, Berdyaev's standpoint is close to the described common anti-Semitic view of the Jewish struggle for the destruction of all the organized world – here are the roots of Shestov's apology for groundlessness. In Steinberg's construction, Ivanov-Razumnik creates a paradoxical variety of Hebrew-*philia*. Ivanov-Razumnik, says Steinberg,

was a spiritual revolutionary. The destructive spirit was a creative spirit for him. He saw Shestov as a typical Jew. He is unlike those Jews who abandoned their roots and were terrified to feel antiques! – exclaimed Ivanov-Razumnik. They are ridiculous, trying to prove their non-Jewish origin. Ivanov-Razumnik was sure that genuine literature, music, philosophy could only be national. And so for him Shestov was a great figure as a person with the deepest roots. His groundlessness is not without ground! He has a Jewish ground – a wisdom of millennia! In support of his assertion Ivanov-Razumnik referred Steinberg's attention to Shestov's father – Isaak Schwarzmann. Ivanov-Razumnik was captivated by old Schwarzmann's mind. An ordinary rich Kiev merchant, hardly speaking Russian, but how much wisdom you can see behind his lispng pronunciation! Ivanov-Razumnik was sure that speaking with Shestov's father, one could see both the roots and threads of his wisdom. Ivanov-Razumnik told Steinberg about the brilliant aphorism that Isaak Schwarzmann invented in the field of philosophy and theology. "Lev Isaakovich has a brilliant natural talent but his father surpasses him in thoughtfulness," stated Ivanov-Razumnik enthusiastically.

It is with astonishment that Aaron Steinberg concludes that Berdyaev's and Ivanov-Razumnik's views of Shestov coincide in detail, and so these thinkers were polar opposites. In both their stances Lev Shestov appeared as a Jewish Prophet. Nikolai Berdyaev was unswervingly convinced about the Hebrew (anti-Christian) roots of Shestov's apology for groundlessness. Remaining close friends with Shestov, Berdyaev was nevertheless in sharp opposition to his concept, which he considered anti-Christian and Jewish. Ivanov-Razumnik admired the "ancient wisdom" and Schwarzmann's roots of Shestov's thought. They coincided in extremes.

This coincidence in extremes merits special attention. The implied dialogue between Nikolai Berdyaev and Ivanov-Razumnik delineates some ambivalent phenomenon, as well as contains features of ultimate condemnation and ultimate admiration. We can see that the most dangerous and most interesting in Shestov's thought comes to be explained by both the authors with the aid of his Jewish origin. Such a conjunction of the best and worst features in one figure is typical of the image of the Alien in culture. The Alien is ambivalent in the image of the Own. Ambivalence as an integral feature of the Alien has been an object of analysis in philosophy and culture studies. Bernhard Waldenfels, in particular, notes that the experience of the Alien is naturally ambivalent; it appears attractive and threatening at the same time.⁷ Plato was the first to notice the ambivalent nature of

⁷ Б. Вальденфельс, *Топографія Чужого: студії до феноменології Чужого*, Київ: ППС-

the Alien – notes Bernhard Waldenfels in this context. The author of these lines has referred to the problem of the ambivalence of the Alien and traced this phenomenon in the European culture of the Middle Ages and Early Modern times.⁸ We can compare the perception of the Hebrew culture in Russian context of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries with the European (English and Dutch in particular) spiritual situation of the 17th century. We deliberately compare such distant periods, for the situation here is quite common: a perception of the Hebrew as a medium of hidden wisdom and deadly danger. Both were the periods of the transformation of the Jew from an object of indulgence into a common part of the space of Own.

The influence of Shestov as a Jew on the Russian culture appears mediated by the perception of Shestov's thought in the Russian culture. Shestov's theory creates no special variety of Hebrew thought. It appears as a specific, but natural part of the Nietzschean line of European philosophy and the Dostoyevsky line of the Russian spiritual space, a brilliant sample of the philosophy of existentialism. We don't want to deny the influence of the Hebrew culture on Shestov's mode of thinking; we only want to call for a responsible analysis of theoretical material.

2002, 2004, p. 35.

⁸ О.А. Довгополова, *Другое, Чужое, Отторгаемое как элементы социального пространства: Монография*, Одесса: СПД Фридман 2007, p. 80-90.



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Jews and the implications of Judaism in the life and thought of Nikolai Berdyaev

1. Introduction

The Jews in East-Central Europe had their established socio-political position since the Middle Ages. One should remember it was in Poland that they found refuge after the tragic persecution and exodus from Spain in 1492. Here they had a distinct and rather peaceful world of their own, which was driven to a collapse only as a result of political events.¹

Turning towards the East, we can see that tsarist Russia at the turn of the 20th century was a place where the followers of Judaism frequently fell victim to attacks, which caused them to become citizens of the lowest social class.²

The experience of life of the Jewish faith followers in such socio-political space was a very complex phenomenon. On the one hand, a marvellous time for the expansion of trade and industry, both of which they had dealt with for a long time. On the other hand, the increasing restrictions imposed by the state administration, which were one of the most elaborate in Europe.

¹ It is related to, among others, the assassination of Tsar Alexander II which took place on 13 March 1881, and for which the general public *en masse* blamed the Jews, which in historical account in historical account cannot be proved in any way, besides the fact that one person of Jewish descent took part in the conspiracy, namely Hesia Helfman. See G. Przebinda, *Między Moskwą a Rzymem [Between Moscow and Rome]*, Kraków: PAU 2003, p. 69.

² Grzegorz Przebinda writes about it very interestingly: “The Jews became the lowest-class citizens in Russia. At that time in the Russian legislation there were about six hundred and fifty anti-Jewish acts, for instance prohibition of settlement, prohibition of migrating, discrimination in education. In 1891, in accordance with the letter of the law, most of the Jewish residents were expelled from Moscow.” Ibidem, p. 70.

Parallel to these events, the intellectuals of Jewish descent are searching for their identity in the world that surrounds them. Some of them decide on assimilation, like for instance Lev Shestov. There are also thinkers who create their own religious philosophy rooted in Judaism, like for example Martin Buber, and do not undergo conversion to any Christian denomination. There is also a part of the Jewish community who, drawing on the achievements of Judaism, create mystic movements which subsequently become the subject of numerous narratives showing the exceptional world that disappeared due to the tragedy of the Holocaust.³

It is in such space of development of the Jewish thought and culture that Nikolai Berdyaev, one of the most outstanding Russian thinkers, was raised. He encounters Judaism and its exponents. To him, they are in many cases the initiators of intellectual and social activities. Berdyaev is also the one who endeavours to comprehend their distinctness and craves a spiritual community with them. Thus, the Russian thinker stands shoulder to shoulder with other eminent thinkers of the time; for instance Vladimir Solovyov,⁴ who unified with the confessors of the Old Covenant and searched for the roots of Christianity in the texts of the Old Testament.

2. Encounters

Berdyaev, despite living in a relatively isolated environment, which a family belonging to the upper social strata made, was a man exceptionally sensitive to others. He mentions in his book *Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Autobiography*, that when his family and the milieu he socialized with became loathsome to him, he used to meet his Jewish friends. He writes about it as follows:

I broke up with the aristocratic environment which I descend from and where everything was unpleasant to me, and too many issues perturbed me. When I enrolled at the university, it even happened that I found the company of the

³ See E. Wiesel, *Pieśń umarłych* [*The songs of the dead*], trans. by M. Tomicka, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków: Ossolineum 1991.

⁴ Prof. Grzegorz Przebinda cited above writes the following about V. Solovyov's attitude to the Jews: "Solovyov's friend [S. Trubetskoy – K.D.] – recalls the last moments of V. Sergeevich: 'He prayed both in full consciousness, and half-conscious. Once he addressed my wife: 'Please do not let me fall asleep, force me to pray for the Jewish nation, I have to pray for them' and he started to recite the psalms in Hebrew.'" Three years after his death, in 1903, another pogrom of the Jews took place in the Russian empire – this time in Chişinău (Kishinev)." G. Przebinda, *Między Moskwą a Rzymem*, p. 83.

Jews more enjoyable, because at least I was in no doubt they were not noblemen and were not relatives. When a Jewish friend visited me, my mother asked a traditional question: *Est-ce monsieur ou ce n'est pas un-monsieur?* I used to terrorize my mother to such extent that she did not use the word *Jew*, she did not decide to say *a Hebrew* and she used *Israelite*.⁵

In the context of this statement, it should be mentioned that in Russian the word “Jew” has a pejorative connotation, differently than in Polish where it was colloquially employed, without a conspicuously negative overtone.

Such youthful encounters resulted in subsequent friendships. The most durable of them was the one with Lev Shestov (born Yehuda Leyb Schwarzmann), who on the one hand became an inspiration for Berdyaev, while on the other hand was a persistent polemicist of his philosophy. Both philosophers were on very intimate terms with each other, which manifested itself for instance in the very personal correspondence they kept up with each other, where Shestov criticises Berdyaev e.g. for overreliance on Jacob Boehme in his understanding of God. Therefore, in the letter from 9 May 1930, he writes as follows:

In relation to God one should not ask the question whether he is good, since all that is good comes from him. So the Scripture teaches – we do not understand it – but one should not understand it. One should only learn the freedom of thinking without any *a priori*, and should not assume that the truth is only what appears possible to our reason. However interesting Boehme might be (according to me, his importance does not consist in the fact that he prepared the ideas for the German idealism, but because the ideas are his own...) the truth is in the Holy Scripture.⁶

Berdyaev highly valued Shestov for his sincerity and friendship which the latter bestowed on him, although their first encounter was not exactly pleasant,⁷ though it soon bore seminal fruit. In his *An Essay in Autobiography* he puts it into the following words:

⁵ M. Bierdiajew, *Autobiografia filozoficzna* [*Self-Knowledge: An Essay in Autobiography*], trans. by H. Paprocki, Kęty: Antyk 2002, p. 98-99.

⁶ L. Szestow, *Gnoza a filozofia egzystencjalna. Eseje filozoficzne* [*Gnosis and existential philosophy. Philosophical essays*], trans. by C. Wodziński, Warszawa: Myśl 1990, p. 77.

⁷ Berdyaev and Shestov met while welcoming the year 1900, when Shestov, celebrating too merrily, pestered Berdyaev. Later, as Olga Volkogonova writes, “Shestov realised that Berdyaev might feel offended (which was actually the case!), so he apologised to him and invited – as a token of agreement – to be his guest. Berdyaev came. The friendship was established this way, which was to last nearly 40 years, till Shestov’s death.” O. Волкогонова, *Бердяев* [*Berdyaev*], Москва: Молодая гвардия 2010, p. 33-34.

Before the exile I met a man, who remained my lifelong friend. I am talking about Lev Shestov, who originated from Kiev as well. (...) We always disputed, we had a different world view, but in the issues Shestov dealt with there was something familiar. It was not only an interesting intellectual contact, but also an existential one, a quest for the meaning of life. The contacts were also interesting in Paris, until Shestov's death.⁸

The picture that emerges on the basis of these brief accounts indicates an authentic attachment of both thinkers, which is marked by a serious research approach to the issues related to human existence. Both thinkers were established in the current of religious thought. Such perspective gave them the opportunity of uninhibited exchange of thought, but also was, probably through the cultural dissimilarities they matured in, a platform for the exchange of beliefs along with scientific and existential disputes.

Nevertheless, if we examine the commentaries on their thought, we will corroborate a statement of Sławomir Mazurek, who expresses belief that "both thinkers focused on the anthropological issues, were sensitive to the tragic quality of the human condition and the paradoxes of freedom."⁹ Their reasoning was similar, however they did not fix on themselves, since it would not stand in accordance with the line of thought they adopted as their way of living and philosophising.

Obviously, Shestov was not the only thinker deriving from the Judaic circle whom Berdyaev had the occasion to meet. However, in the case of other encounters we cannot speak about the intimacy which bound him with Shestov.

Out of different encounters, the most significant and inspiring one was the encounter with the thought of Martin Buber, whom he met in person, and took over quite much from him as well. The philosophy of dialogue seems to be what provided response to the questions posed by Berdyaev. Jewish thought based on the Bible and Hasidism, being close to both of them, became a new perspective of reasoning. However, not the people,

⁸ M. Bierdiajew, *Autobiografia filozoficzna*, p. 110.

⁹ S. Mazurek, *Rosyjski renesans religijno-filozoficzny. Próba syntezy [Russian religious and philosophical revival. An attempt at synthesis]*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN 2008, p. 156. Mazurek is convinced both thinkers failed to escape the influence of gnosis on their thought which, existential by nature, was contaminated with this current (see *ibidem*, p. 156). G. Grzmot-Bilski presents a different viewpoint; he writes that "Shestov turned out to be a fierce opponent of the tyranny of reason – intellectual gnosis closed to the world of Revelation (faith), and we find this specific message in Berdyaev's philosophy." G.J. Grzmot-Bilski, *Bierdiajew i problem wolności [Berdyaev and the question of freedom]*, Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego 2010, p. 61.

but the words revealed in the Bible become an inspiration to Nikolai Alexandrovich. To him, they bear greater significance than reason. Thus, let us briefly examine the biblical inspirations underlying Berdyaev's thought.

3. The Bible and the truth about Creation

The truth about the creation of man – Adam, paradise and original sin – becomes to Berdyaev one of the most significant elements of his thought. The words of the revealed text grant Berdyaev the certainty that world was created by God, therefore the realism of existence is established in God's absolute existence which results from the pre-creational freedom of God who, being good by nature, also created the world. This world itself is not divine any more, because as a consequence of original sin it begins to drift apart from its Creator. In Berdyaev's understanding, the Creator is the living God, God from the Bible,¹⁰ not from Aristotle's thought. He writes about it in the following way:

The intellectual, rational teaching about God as a pure act which plays such role in the Catholic scholasticism, is not adopted from the Bible, from the Revelation, but from the works of Aristotle. This teaching reputed to satisfy the abstract reason, transfigures God into a stone, deprives of any internal life, any kind of dynamism. Whereas, God is life, life and existence, if by the term of existence one means the rationalist notion of it. Existence is something secondary, not primeval, it becomes apparent after the division into subject and object, and is the fruit of thought and rationalisation.¹¹

It is discernible from the very beginning that the conception of God for Berdyaev becomes a biblical conception which fundamentally differs from the conception of unmoved mover from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* later modified for the needs of Thomism. Nevertheless, such reasoning does not exclude the understanding of God as the First Cause, although it sets his

¹⁰ By the Bible Berdyaev understands both the Old and New Testament. Berdyaev's Christology based on the New Testament is very profoundly and comprehensively elaborated on. Although the judgements expressed by him have the character of speculative theology, and even Kabbala, still they are worth acquainting with, even with regard to their reference to the sources they derive from. For instance, Berdyaev comments on the Holy Trinity in his book *The destiny of Man*. See M. Bierdajew, *O przeznaczeniu człowieka. Zarys etyki paradoksalnej* [*The destiny of Man. An outline of paradoxical ethics*], trans. by H. Paprocki, Kęty: Antyk 2006, p. 32-33.

¹¹ M. Bierdajew, *Egzystencjalna dialektyka Boga i człowieka* [*Existential Dialectics of the Divine and the Human*], trans. by H. Paprocki, Kęty: Antyk 2004, p. 18.

relationship with the created world quite differently, and certainly presents the relationship between God and man in a different way. While in Thomism the transcendence of God bears great significance, for Berdyaev it is the immanence which determines the community of God and man. However, Berdyaev does not dwell on the level of the Old Testament, and his reasoning about God fits into the category of a fulfilled promise and he accomplishes this idea in the Christological context.

A crucial element of this reasoning is yet one more aspect associated to the Old Testament, namely the conception of Adam – the first man. The understanding of him follows the kabbalistic line, which Berdyaev clearly confirms himself. That is, he says:

the birth of a man in God is a theogonic process. The man, from his eternal idea is rooted in Godmanhood and related to Godmanhood. Thus it should be stated, that in God there is a primeval humanity, there is a primeval Man, whom the Kabbala calls Adam Kadmon. The humanity exists in eternity and should be realised in time. It is the mystery of the paradoxical relationships between eternity and time.¹²

This citation directly indicates that to the Russian thinker it was not unfamiliar to reflect on God in the categories employed by the scholars studying the Old Testament. Still, the conception of time was extremely significant to him, if only with regard to the coming of the Divine Kingdom. It is worth remembering in this context, that Berdyaev associates the first man – Adam with the conception of *Androgyne* taken from Plato, which produces an original, yet controversial conception of theological anthropogenesis.¹³ The influence of the Bible seems to be crucial for Berdyaev, since he makes reference to it, talking both about the man and the universe. The category of creation is important for him, even because of the fact that while inventing his conception of freedom seeming to be one of his central ideas, he continues to mention the former as the one, out of which every-

¹² Ibidem, p. 81.

¹³ This conception is criticised e.g. by Piotr Przesmycki. He writes as follows: “The Russian was a supporter of the view, that the first man – Adam, created in the image of God, in his beginnings was neither a man, nor a woman. It was due to original sin that the *differentia* of the male and female element emerged. The disintegration of the Androgyne produced a deforming result on God’s image in man. In spite of that, man remains an adrogynic creature in his primordial origin. According to Berdyaev, Christ was also the Androgyne, who re-united man and woman into one adrogynic image. However, such view is both nonsensical and naïve.” P. P. Przesmycki, *W stronę Bogoczołowieczeństwa. Teologicznomoralne studium myśli Nikołaja Bierdiajewa [Towards Godmanhood. Theological and ethical study of Nikolai Berdyaev’s thought]*, Łódź: Ibidem 2002, p. 67.

thing was conceived. Freedom, as a divine attribute, is the fundament of the universe. God's freedom is the precondition for the capabilities of the universe. Thanks to it, in the *creatio continua* process, the man discovers the element of divine nature in himself, which is exactly freedom, a non-creational beginning of creation. The philosopher writes about it as follows:

As a being similar to God, belonging to the kingdom of freedom, man possesses a vocation to reveal his creative power. It is the reverse side of the duality embedded in human nature, focused not on redemption, but on creativity.¹⁴

Creativity becomes the feature which – apart from freedom – man has in common with God. Man enters the divine horizon when he, in a free act, creates a new reality, extending the space not formed by nature, the human world turned to God.

Commenting on Scheler's approach and classifications made in philosophical anthropology, Berdyaev is convinced that out of four types of humanities distinguished by him, only the Judeo-Christian learning reveals the truth about man.¹⁵ Only this kind of learning based on revelation becomes, according to Berdyaev, what gives a man support and what becomes a reality of hope for a person's enduring after death.¹⁶ In conclusion, we may state that as far as understanding of man is concerned, the Russian thinker has an internal conviction that "the only eternal and unsurpassed knowledge are the Judeo-Christian teachings of man as a being created by God, bearing the picture and resemblance to the Creator."¹⁷ Admittedly, neither Judaism nor Christianity entirely understood man's destination, nevertheless their superiority over other anthropological viewpoints is much more visible and gives man the chance for the revelation of the truth about himself.

It also seems that the conception of paradise is something that Christianity, and Berdyaev after it, took over from the Old Testament. This concep-

¹⁴ M. Bierdajew, *Sens twórczości [The Meaning of the Creative Act]*, trans. by H. Paprocki, Kęty: Antyk 2001, p. 85.

¹⁵ M. Berdajew, *O przeznaczeniu człowieka*, p. 54.

¹⁶ Ireneusz Ziemiński comments on Berdyaev's approach to the issues of further enduring of a person after death and the eschatology associated to it. He writes about it as follows: "According to Berdyaev it is not enough to refer to the hypothesis of the immortality of the soul, which – negating death – remains blind to the tragic nature of human fate. The paradox of death as the gate of eternal life should be solved in a different way, taking into consideration the actuality of dying; however, reason is powerless here. (...) The Creator liberates us from the power of death by the cross, while indicating the only route to resurrection – death. (...) The extreme evil becomes transformed into the hope for the good, nothingness into the hope for life." I. Ziemiński, *Metafizyka śmierci [The metaphysics of death]*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM 2010, p. 322-323.

¹⁷ M. Berdajew, *O przeznaczeniu człowieka*, p. 56.

tion was very significant to him, since the person was to become perfected in the reality of paradise. He presents the conception of paradise very interestingly, and it is generally divergent from what Christianity of both denominations would like it to see. He expresses it as follows:

paradise is not in the future at all, it is not in time, paradise is in eternity. Eternity, though, is achieved in the moment of the present, eternity occurs not in the presence which is the part of time torn apart, but in the present which is the exit from time. But eternity is by no means bringing motion to a halt, ceasing of creative life, eternity is a creative life of different order.¹⁸

Such and other conceptions relating to the understanding on man, create his dynamic vision in eternity. In Berdyaev's thought one can still find many other references to the Old Testament, however, listing them is not the objective of this brief introduction.

4. The philosophy of dialogue and the question of God

In his understanding of man, Berdyaev also appeals to the philosophy of dialogue. The greatest influence on Berdyaev's thought was exerted by – already mentioned at the beginning – Martin Buber.¹⁹

Berdyaev, inspired by Buber's thought, includes it in his understanding of community. The "I – Thou" relationship, which is fundamental for Buber, for Berdyaev becomes significant not only in the context of people's community, but also the community of man and God.²⁰ Referring to the

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 290.

¹⁹ Experts of Jewish thought, H. Simon and M. Simon write the following about Buber: "His popularity mainly consisted and consists in the new reading of the Bible, through the translation of its text reconstructing the original commenced together with Franz Rosenzweig." H. Simon, M. Simon, *Filozofia żydowska [Jewish philosophy]*, trans. by T.G. Pszczółkowski, Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna 1990, p. 188.

²⁰ The problems arising with the word "the dialogue of God and man" are aptly commented on by Marcin Lisiecki. He does it in the following words: "In the attempt to determine the 'God-sided' part of the dialogue, Berdyaev postulates the image of God awaiting man. God summoning man and expecting he will 'hear' His call and will undertake the effort of turning to Him. Here, occurs – Berdyaev believes – an internal yearning for His own Other which, for God, may be the object (*sic!*) of boundless love, God's yearning and the love for Other, together with the boundless desire for Other's mutual love, to be loved. It is an internal tragedy of God's love to His own Other, and expecting mutual love is the hidden mystery of divine life." M. Lisiecki, *Myślenie dialogiczne Mikołaja Bierdiajewa [Dialogic reasoning of Nikolai Berdyaev]*, in M. Szulakiewicz, Z. Karpus (eds.), *Dialog w kulturze [Dialogue in culture]*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo UMK 2003, p. 168. Berdyaev clearly distinguishes Divine Person from the human one. As Tomáš Špidlík writes about it: "Berdyaev strongly

foregoing discussion it should be stated that the reasoning of the dialogue between God and man is purely biblical in character, since there is no such conception in the history of philosophy. There, the Absolute is always the Absolute, and not part of dialogic relationship. Berdyaev firmly dissociates from such understanding of God. He writes as follows:

One cannot pray to the Absolute, and a dramatic meeting with Him is also impossible. We call the Absolute all that has no relation to other and has no need for other. The Absolute is not a being, is not a person, which always implies leaving yourself and encountering other. The God of revelation, the God of the Bible is not the Absolute, there is dramatic life and motion in Him, there is a relation to another man and the world. It is due to Aristotle's philosophy, that the God of the Bible was converted into a pure act and was deprived of internal motion or any principle of drama. The Absolute cannot leave Itself and create the world, It cannot be attributed motion and change.²¹

Obviously, leaving aside Berdyaev's beliefs expressed in the first part of the assertion, which can be considered an analysis of a religious act, the second part of the statement yet seems completely mistaken, as it is an accusation similar to the one that Gaunilon made against St. Anselm. The reply to it is clear. The Absolute, being the Absolute, is capable of anything. A question also arises how appropriate it is to combine philosophy with religion. It is actually an allegation which the author himself raised in the preceding sentence, without realising it is a double-edged weapon that would hit him as well. Berdyaev considered himself to be a philosopher, which he frequently expressed.

It appears, though, that in the approach to the question of God, Berdyaev becomes a man of faith and such act of faith bears great significance to him. Faith²² and prayer become elements differentiating his reasoning about God from others. He writes:

Living God to whom a man prays, is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, not the God of philosophers, and in this case he is not the Absolute of philoso-

emphasises the divine Person, who can be only 'agapic,' and the human person, who does not only give in the relationships with other people, but also wants to receive." T. Špidlík, *Mysl rosyjska. Inna wizja człowieka [Russian thought. A different vision of man]*, trans. by J. Dembska, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Księży Marianów 2000, p. 27.

²¹ M. Bierdiajew, *Niewola i wolność człowieka [Slavery and freedom]*, trans. by H. Paprocki, Kęty: Antyk 2003, p. 64.

²² Elsewhere, Berdyaev writes: "Scheler believes that if philosophy submitted to faith, it would become the mistress of sciences. It should be definitely emphasized; submitting to faith, not to theology, not an external authority of the Church, not to religion as a social institution. Faith is an internal spiritual experience and spiritual life, it is the revival of the

phers. The issue is though more complex than it seemed to Pascal, as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is not only the everlasting, personal God, but also the God of a primitive shepherd tribe with all the restriction of cognition and its social life. One who has awoken to learn, always experiences the conflict with the ones asleep in the traditional world.²³

This reference to religious experience thus makes Berdyaev an existential thinker. The Russian is a thinker who encompasses not only the issues of reason, but also of faith, and dignity of a human as a person and culture, in this thought.

He appears to be the researcher of the human fate who is trying to discover the sense of the changing world. Berdyaev in his reasoning about God is the one who discerns God everywhere and is not afraid to speak about it. His religiousness seems to be the keynote of his whole philosophy.

5. Conclusion

Berdyaev was indeed fascinated by the fate of the Jewish nation, even though the notions of race, nation and nationality were alien to him. Apparently, he made an exception here, which was not the sole case in his existential reasoning. This exception was investigated in the historical context. It is the history which constitutes the tragic space for the Hebrew. Berdyaev expresses it in the following words:

The historical fate of the Jews is a mystery. The survival of the nation is beyond comprehension and one cannot rationally explain this fact. From the perspective of customary historical explanations, the Jewish nation should cease to exist. None of the nations would withstand a similar historical fate. The Jewish nation is *par excellence* the nation of history, it has contributed the category of historicity to the history of the human consciousness. History was yet merciless for this nation (...). Nevertheless, of God's will, this nation is to be preserved to the end of time. It is impossible to explain the historical fate solely from the viewpoint of materialistic understanding of history. We touch the secret of history.²⁴

Such presentation of the Jews' fate and their influence on history directed by God's hand, causes that the influence of Judaism – according to Ber-

soul and may not enslave philosophy, it can only feed it." M. Bierdajew, *Rozważania o egzystencji. Filozofia samotności i wspólnoty [Solitude and Society]*, trans. by H. Paprocki, Kęty: Antyk 2002, p. 12.

²³ Ibidem, p. 16.

²⁴ M. Bierdajew, *Głoszę wolność [I preach freedom]*, trans. by H. Paprocki, Warszawa: Fundacja Aletheia 1999, p. 198.

dyaev – bears great significance to every person who seriously treats his or her being in the world and the relation to the Absolute. The Absolute, which is the Absolute Thou in relation to my I. I always remains in reference to the Absolute Thou, out of which the source of my existence derives.

Our, European way of thinking is thus imbued with Judaism and Judaist thought, and Christianity – by nature originating from Judaism – ought to recognize its roots. For this is where the idea of messianism and the Messiah derives from. “It is exactly the contribution of the Jewish nation to the universal history.”²⁵ Such was the belief expressed by Berdyaev and it is hardly possible to disagree.

In the very end, Berdyaev’s attitude to fascism and Nazism ought to be mentioned. It is distinctly expressed by Marek Styczyński, who comments on Berdyaev’s intellectual attitude in the following words:

The condemnation of anti-Semitism belongs to the most beautiful pages of Berdyaev’s prose. In 1938, on the eve of the Holocaust, he wrote a magnificent essay, demonstrating that “German anti-Semitism transforms into anti-Christianism,” and that in fact “the Jewish issue is not whether Jews are good or evil, but whether we – Christians – are good or evil.”²⁶

Such attitude imposes ethics based on the values, the most important of which is love, the love of the fellowmen. The message Berdyaev carries becomes a challenge which we should live up to, for our own sake, as the people living among fellowmen.

Tłumaczenie Łukasz Malczak

²⁵ M. Bierdiajew, *Zarys metafizyki eschatologicznej* [*The Beginning and the End: Essay on eschatological metaphysics*], trans. by W. Paradowska, A. Paradowski, Kęty: Antyk 2004, p. 137.

²⁶ M. Styczyński, *Umiłowanie przyszłości albo filozofia spraw ostatecznych. Studia nad filozofią Mikołaja Bierdiajewa* [*Love of the future or the philosophy of ultimate things. Studies on the philosophy of Nikolai Berdyaev*], Łódź: Ibidem 2001, p. 160. Tomasz Terlikowski expresses similar belief, writing: “Despite numerous traces of what Isaac Jules defined as teaching despise, Nikolai Berdyaev had always rejected any active anti-Semitism. He disgusted the pogroms, racial or national hatred. In his essays he stated that Hatred towards other nation is a sin and one ought to confess it. Expressing the issue even fiercer: ‘hatred for a different nation is a guilt, like murdering a man.’ And it does not matter whether it has any justified foundation, whether the nation for which it is felt is really characterised by the vices it is attributed. There are no, even the smallest reasons to seek reciprocity in these issues. As Berdyaev advocates, the relationship of the Christian love does not have to be mutual.” T.P. Terlikowski, *Bogobójcy czy starsi bracia. Myśliciele rosyjskiego prawosławia wobec judaizmu* [*Theocides or Elder Brothers. The Russian Orthodox Thinkers’ Stance on Judaism*], Warszawa: QLCO Agencja Reklamowo-Wydawnicza 2004, p. 69.



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From the Profane to the Sacred: the Dialogue between I and Another in Poetry and Everydayness

*...Now I have only everydayness (...).
I don't know another fullness
except the fullness of every mortal hour
with its claims and responsibility...*

Martin Buber

*...Не сущность вещей, а вещественность сути.
Не сущность вещей, а существенность вещи...*

Марина Цветаева

This paper is aimed to disavow the usual opposition between poetry as the sphere of sense-creation and everydayness as the despicable “prose of life” – the space where the sense is profaned. Moreover, poetry and everydayness may be (and sometimes are) very close to each other, being the spheres where the authenticable dialogue with the Transcendental becomes possible.

Therefore, we'll try to create an imaginary dialogue between three philosophers (Martin Buber – Vasily Rozanov – Mikhail Bakhtin) and three poets (Osip Mandelstam – Marina Tsvetayeva – Boris Pasternak).

Obviously, these triads are not accidental, but they cannot either be a banal illustration of the famous statement of M. Bakhtin that the dialogue is never a duet but a trio. In spite of the fact that M. Bakhtin did not give a definite interpretation of this figure of the “third” in the dialogue (he may

be “noticed” in Bakhtin’s works as “an ideal super-addressee” or as “a primary author” who gives the legitimacy to the author’s voice), the “third” is always regarded as the necessary ontological background that makes the dialogue possible, that produces the dialogue as the sphere of understanding. Remembering the origin of the word “dialogue,” one may state that the both parts of the word (*dia* and *logos*) have an equal significance. Moreover, in the epoch of monologue-thinking the Greek prefix *dia* must be strongly emphasized. *Dia* means “between” and helps us to comprehend that the main goal of the dialogue is mutual understanding which cannot be the result of separate “logoses” but becomes possible only within and on the basis of something like special space that arises between them. (Merab Mamardashvili shows this fact in the paradox: we can understand if we have already understood; but if we do not understand as yet, we’ll never understand).

In my opinion, there is a vivid sense-tension between the above mentioned thinkers. In other words, they have this necessary common ontological background (“the space between”) that makes the dialogue possible. What brings them together? What may be indicated as this background? All of them are near contemporaries (Vasily Rozanov, 1852; Martin Buber 1878; Boris Pasternak, 1890; Osip Mandelstam, 1891; Marina Tsvetayeva, 1892; Mikhail Bakhtin, 1895), but at the same time they are so different in their lives and their works. In the case of Rozanov and Buber we even cannot definitely confirm that they read each other. Moreover, M. Buber is well known as a precisely Jewish thinker, while V. Rozanov was simultaneously marked by two contradictory names: an anti-Semite and a pro-Semite.¹ Buber and Rozanov are symbolically connected by Bakhtin, who indicated the influence of these two authors on his own works. Bakhtin’s philosophy of the dialogue has much in common with Buber’s ideas; the influence of Rozanov on Bakhtin is not so evident, but it has very complex and deep character. When young Russian philosophers “reopened” M. Bakhtin in the 1970s, they often asked him how he had managed to preserve such a manner of thinking and writing in the Soviet times marked by total unification and political engagement of philosophy. Bakhtin answered this question with only one phrase: “Read Rozanov.” Bakhtin’s works may obviously be studied as the “place of meeting” of Rozanov’s and Buber’s ideas, but in my

¹ It is one of the widespread mistakes in the evaluation of Rozanov’s works, which takes its roots from the fact of the special manner of Rozanov’s philosophical thinking and writing that stands out from the classical oppositions with their ideological stamps. Rozanov was neither an anti-Semite nor a pro-Semite, but he was a very deep thinker with good knowledge and deep understanding and appreciation of the Jewish tradition.

opinion their own texts have a lot of lines of interaction with each other.² The vivid similarity of these three thinkers is their dialogism, their appreciation of the dialogue between I and You (I and Another) that lies in the foundation of the new mode of subjectivity overcoming the anthropocentric arrogance of the New European subject. But at the same time this similarity itself may be understood as the result of the dialogue between the Jewish and Christian traditions, which takes place in the framework of the Eastern European cultures. One of the most fruitful outcomes of this dialogue is the specific ontological understanding of everydayness, which marks the conceptions of these three authors (especially Rozanov and Buber).

These thinkers come to this topic not at once, but having followed different and difficult ways. Buber starts his movement from the argument for the authenticable human existence and from the estrangement of mystic experience; Rozanov – from the epistemology of his first great book *On Understanding*. All of them look for the mode of obtaining the self that prevents the objectiveness of the western culture and sooner or later find it in the sphere of everyday life. Besides Martin Buber's famous words that became the epigraph to this paper we may invoke the words of Vasily Rozanov:³

– Народы, хотите ли, я вам скажу громовую истину, какой вам не говорили ни один из пророков... – Это – что частная жизнь выше всего...⁴

But their main contribution is not the opening of the topic of everydayness as itself (the interest in the sphere of daily life marks the theories of several philosophers of that time), but the specific (ontologically positive) interpretation of this phenomenon.

It is known that the problem of everydayness was marginal for classical philosophical tradition.

One can note that the beginning of the discussion of this problem chronologically coincides with the crisis of the New-European type of subjectivity and with the aspiration to recomprehend its basis. In the classical paradigm, the subjectivity was understood as a definite rationally grasping essence without any empirical layers. Everyday life was understood as a sphere which dispersed the self and prevented it from obtaining the essence. It is rather interesting that even the name of the sphere of daily life

² This situation is well illustrated with the help of quotation from M. Heidegger: “The essential thinkers always tell the same, but it doesn't mean that they speak in the same manner.”

³ Due to the specificity of Rozanov's texts, which makes them close to the poetry, I dare to quote his words in the original.

⁴ В.В. Розанов, *Уединенное*, in idem, *Сочинения: В 2-х т.*, Москва: Правда 1990, vol. 2, p. 237.

– “everydayness” – underlined its non-authentic character. The name “everydayness” shows us not only the ordinary time, but first of all a specific ordinary way of being. However, due to the newest cultural transformations the very possibility of existence of the self as something unique and original becomes quite problematic. The so-called post-classical thinking, caused by the *crisis of identity*, tries to comprehend the phenomena ignored by the classical tradition as a new basis of the self. Everydayness is obviously one of them.

The classical point of view states that to identify myself (or anybody else) means first of all to answer the question “*Who am I?*,” but it also means to define and to comprehend my own boundaries, to learn *what I am not*. The second step of this comprehension is to answer the question who the Other is in comparison with me, i.e. to find the Other as somebody external to me, someone who marks my boundaries, i.e. my identity, my uniqueness and completeness. Therefore, some external bodies (or objects) define my borders. These borders may be created by any definite object, finally – by power strategies defining the specificity of every cultural space. This situation is rather close to and depends on the specific mode of forming the self (or subjectivity) that is formed as a “fold of power” in the space of western cultures.⁵ Regarding the origin of western culture, one can state that the immanent character of power in the framework of ancient Greek democracy defines the subjectivity with the help of self-governing experience. The agonistic relations among the citizens of the Greek State bore the subjectivity as a point of resistance to power by cultivating power inside the self. So subjectivity is a fold of power, but the contours of this fold become the border and the form of the subjectivity. Subjectivity formed by the power, closed in and defined by its borders, creates in turn another phenomenon – *the power of borders* – typical of the western culture. The most vivid manifestation of this feature of the western culture is found in the practice of community building. The symbol of this community is the agora as a political, sacral and commercial centre of the state. First of all, the agora is a square, i.e. it is an open, public, common space. The unity also takes its origin in the public character of power. This type of unity presupposes the *form (norm)* and the *distance* as its necessary conditions. But the distance between the Self and the Other transforms into the distance inside the Self, into the distance between the open and the hidden, the public and

⁵ For more detailed description see I. Nalivaiko, *Everydayness: “In search of Lost Time,”* “Filosofija. Sociologija” 1 (2006), p. 43-47.

the private. Everything concealed from the light of public has a doubtful value. That is why everydayness as the sphere of private life was understood as a non-authentic mode of human being, because it dispersed the self as the point of resistance, as a definite identity – the form, the border of which can be “touched” by the glance of a distant observer.

This mode of subjectivization and identification brings one to the supremacy of visual perception of the world, to the cult of *eidos*. *To be* means *to be “visible,”* to have a definite form and border. It is a distinguishing feature of western thought that takes its origin in the antiquity and develops in the New European period. This thought is based on the proofs and definitions, it is the thought predetermined by the distance between the observer and the object (between I and It, as Buber states), the thought of the person principally distancing from the world.

This mode of thought and the mode of existence correlating to it give us something like the illusion of universality. What do I mean? The classical New European culture tries to find the border of any phenomenon as something defined by an extremely wide viewpoint. The glance that set these boundaries is the position of an observer who is at the top of bell-tower. This observer sees the reality from in a bird’s eye view. One can think that there is the position of the Absolute Observer and the Absolute Master (Owner) of the vision and the visible – the position of God. Such a state of affairs sooner or later brings us to the desire to occupy the place of God. We consider our viewpoint, i.e. our eye to be the Eye of God. This mental position has its own name – campanellism. The most vivid illustration of such pretensions of the human mind was the famous Towers of the World Trade Center in New York. This position first of all gives us the illusion of power over space. We catch the space with our glance, we track the lines in this visible area from the viewpoint of our distant position, we see the space as something homogeneous and universal, but at the same time as something that may be caught and defined with my glance, which pretends to be the Eye of God.

But such a visible Universe has its strict borders (though we don’t want to accept this truth), the borders, defined by the capacity of the eye. So in the case of campanellism we consider the local as the universal; we extend our locality to the size of the universality. The reason for this mistake (or better to say, illusion) is the attempt to take some finite, terminal things (images) as orienteer for identification and self-identification. None of them are eternal; they disappear sooner or later and the person should seek for new ones. That’s why the classical European tradition creates the only one

border that may be the last and unique (absolute) – the border between the transcendent and the immanent, between the human being and God. It is the last step of identification. But the problem is that a person has a habit of judging everything from his own local viewpoint. So one very often tries to think about God as a definite object. Sometimes it even means replacing the transcendent with the immanent. Therefore, undoubtedly it is the case of the idol. And so Nietzsche meant that very case in his famous note about the death of God. God as a value, the so called moral God, God as an object in the chain of other objects cannot be this final orienteer. The sphere of the sacred becomes the empty form. So in this aspiration to self-definition and universality, the European subject loses himself; he falls out of the dialogue with the being and finds himself in totality of *emptiness*.

It is rather interesting that the dialogical approach of the three person-ages of this paper starts from the sharp critique of the emptiness. M. Buber criticizes the emptiness of the philosophy replacing faith, as well as the emptiness of distant and abstract moral obligation (“All of them catch the emptiness...”). M. Bakhtin evidently shows the emptiness of the monological cultural forms, created by the person falling out of the place-in-being. But the most tremendous picture of the emptiness of the contemporary culture is given by V. Rozanov in his famous critique of the power of public literary forms, the so-called “*literaturnost*.”

– Что такое литературная душа?

Это Гамлет.

Это холод и пустота⁶.

According to Rozanov, the emptiness is a proper name of the main ideal of western culture –freedom:

...а свобода есть просто пустота, простор...

– Эта квартира пустует, она *свободна*.

– Эта женщина *свободна*. У нее нет мужа, и можешь ухаживать.

– Этот человек *свободен*. Он без должности.

Ряд отрицательных определений, и “свобода” их все объединяет...

– Я *свободен*, не занят.

От “свободы” все бегут: работник – к занятости, человека – к *должности*, женщина – к *мужу*. Всякий – к чему-нибудь...

К этому-то милому идеалу, “обнимая воздух,” Франция и рванулась.

И разбилась в пустоте.⁷

⁶ В.В. Розанов, *Опавшие листья. Короб второй*, in idem, *Сочинения: В 2-х т.*, p. 565.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 590.

Thus, the emptiness is something non-human and lifeless; it pushes the person to loneliness and unrequitedness, actually to non-being.

The productive way out of this emptiness is found by all the three thinkers in the concreteness and fullness of fluent “live life,” i.e. in everydayness.

All the above-mentioned thinkers carry out something like “the justification” of everydayness, i.e. religious-ontological turns from the public sphere of human being (which for a long time was understood as the main sphere of subjectivity creation) to the intimate and sacral space of private life, the home. It is in that very space that new subjectivity is born. This subjectivity is predetermined by the dialogue with Another, understood (1) as sympathetic openness to the original existence of the world of things, (2) as a compassionate meeting with another individuality and (3) as the experience of communication with God – the highest ontological reality.

So they return to everydayness its necessary ontological status (which was originally present in the Russian word “быт”), regarding it as the sphere where a real meeting with the sacred is still possible. But it doesn’t mean the pure sacralization of the daily life in all its forms and phenomena. It is the attempt to show the sphere opened to the sacred and the profane simultaneously, the space *between* them, which corresponds to the finite character of human existence.

This new image of everydayness breaks up the traditional understanding that considered the daily life as a poor profane sphere of human existence. Such a consideration is sound even in the name “everydayness.” The word relates to fluent, disappearing time, i.e. to profane time in its opposition to eternity. But indeed it is the proper name of Time itself, because for the human being time is given only as numerous instances of “now,” as a concrete every day that the Self lives in. Eternity is given to terminate a person only in the stream of fluent moments, as the “eternal now.” So the Sacred is also open to the person in the singularity of here and now, in *everyday existence*. This truth was well known to Heraclitus, who told the guests surprised by the non-presentable image of the philosopher, standing near the kitchen range: “Come in. Here are Gods.”

In his *Dialog* Buber emphasizes that *faith is in the stream of singularity*. And when I say that everydayness is between the sacred and the profane, I mean not only that everydayness contains both of them but that it may be the link between them, that it itself may change one of them into the other.

Let us refer to the Greek roots of the word “profane.” “Pro-fane” means to distort the sacred in the chatter. How to avoid this distortion? It is impossible if we continue former rational = eidetical approach to daily life, if

we try to “grasp” everydayness in our thinking. The only one possible way of such grasping is to comprehend everydayness through its more or less definite structures – through the “images” of everyday life. First of all the image is something that may be “touched” with the glance, that has borders. Therefore, in our case there may be, for example, everyday language, corporal practices, some behavioral habits, etc. One can observe these structures as “the images” of everydayness, with the help of which everydayness becomes visible. Can we be sure of this sacredness? May they be recognized as sacred objects? According to the definition, sacred is something belonging to the transcendent; in the religious sense, it is a predicate of God. May any finite objects be regarded as sacred? Definitely *not* if we separate them from the stream of all created being, if we close them by definite borders and images, when we take them as objects of studying and observation.

All the three thinkers reject such an attitude to the world of things as non-dialogical, mortal vision of reality. Buber speaks about the depth and the necessity of specific non-figurative feeling of reality, the specific dialogical unity with the created world. Bakhtin criticizes the objective attitude to life, within which the “dead thing” becomes the limit of knowledge and even the human being is perceived and studied as such a dead thing. But we find the deepest and most “poetic” overcoming of the objective approach to the things in Rozanov’s texts. He shows that everydayness opens another truth, the “truth seeing with the eye.” He jokes that “the secret of the world is in its inspiration to be buttoned up with all the buttons and not to show its inner pockets neither to the reporter, nor to Newton.” Rozanov suggests that we avoid the power of image, of external form of the things and feel the mystery of non-figurative things that share with human beings the ultimate and short-term earthly being. The Russian thinker pays attention to very simple, even primitive things, but in this simplicity the highest complicity is hidden – the complicity of understanding one’s own ontological status of all that exists. Let us quote one of the most poetic fragments of his works:

Мне печально, что все несовершенно: но отнюдь не в том смысле, что вещи не исполняют какой-то заповеди, какого-то от них ожидания (и на ум не приходит), а что самим вещам как-то нехорошо, они не удовлетворены, им больно. Что вещам “больно,” это есть постоянное мое страдание за всю жизнь. Через это “больно” проходит нежность. Вещи мне кажутся какими-то обиженными, какими-то сиротами, кто-то их мало любит, кто-то их мало ценит. “Неженья” же все вещи в высшей степени заслуживают, и мне решительно ни одна вещь в мире не казалась дурною... Поэтому через некоторое “воспитание” (приноровление, привыкание) я мог доходить до влюбления в прямо безобразные или отвратительные вещи, ес-

ли только они представляются мне под “симпатичным уголком,” с таким-то “милым уклоном.” Мне иногда кажется, что я вечно бы с людьми “воровал у Бога”... не то золотые яблоки, не то счастье, вот это убавление грусти, вот это убавление боли, вот эту ужасную смертность и “окончателность людей,” что все “кончается” и все не “вечно.” Это мое ворованье у Бога какой-то другой истины вещей, чем какая открывается *глазу* не было, однако (отнюдь!), восстанием против Бога... Тут туманы (души и мира) колеблются, и мне это “ворованье с людьми” представлялось чем-то находящимся под тайным покровительством Божиим, точно Бог и сам хотел бы, чтобы мир был разворован, да только строг закон....⁸

This new approach to everydayness overcomes the drawbacks of objective *eidetic* cognition and opens a fluent individual being of everything that exists. This understanding of the mystery of the created world, through which God talks to us, is very close to the spirit of the biblical *emuna* (which Buber dreams to revive) – the faith without attempts at verification of the mystery of God.

This approach also overcomes the distance between Me and Another, and makes our existence indeed *sensible*, i.e. involved in the dialogue with the Sacred, the dialogue that presents to us the “otherness of the other” (Buber) and opens our own place-in-being (Bakhtin). Now it is about time to clarify the understanding of the word “sense.” One of the deepest definitions of this concept belongs to Bakhtin, who writes that the “sense” is a response to the questions that we address to the being. So the problem of *response* becomes basic for our discussion, because it focuses this existential movement from the visual, from the image (*eidōs*) to the voice, the language that articulates the dialogue with the sacred, with God of the Voice-Unité (Buber). It is important to emphasize two points. First of all, this response has not only one origin and only one addressee. It is the situation of mutual questioning and mutual response. We answer it, hoping to hear the response that breaks our loneliness and isolation, but also “the word demanding a response is addressed to me” (Buber). And the second point concerns the problem of the nature of the “language” of these questions and responses. According to all dialogical thinkers this language cannot be understood literally as verbal speech; it breaks the borders of verbally articulated words. Moreover, the language of the “ready word,” the word with a definite form of world-comprehension is something very close to a finite image, something leading far away from understanding. Buber makes a great invention when he indicates

⁸ В.В. Розанов, *Опавшие листья. Короб первый*, in idem, *Сочинения: В 2-х т.*, vol. 2, p. 360-361.

that “the sounds of this speech are the *events of everydayness, of private life.*” There is no alphabet in this language, and every sound of it is a new creation. Moreover, the perception of this language leads out of the borders of hearing and verbal understanding, out of the borders of mental cognition and the response is effected by “all the pores of my body” (Buber). This corresponds with Rozanov’s words about our corporal perception as an open door between the human person and the world. Our body becomes the condition and the way of dialogue between me and the world; it pursues our mutual openness. And only in this openness we have a chance to get a response and to produce a response. Such a response cannot be a pure statement, it is out of the limits of formal logic; it pushes one to choice and deed; it presupposes responsibility. Buber and, later on, Bakhtin provide a brilliant philosophical justification of the ontological character of responsibility that must be returned from the sphere of ethics, from “flying in the air” duty to the living life. Real responsibility is possible only there where, according to Buber, the possibility of response is, i.e. where the dialogical openness to the “eventness” of all the existing is. The works of Rozanov almost avoid such strict theoretical statements, but they manage to represent this fluent and event-full “living life,” the world of everydayness, the private life in the space of home where a new “dialogical” subjectivity “lives and breathes” – the subjectivity open to the own being of things, to the friendly otherness of another person and to the real sacredness of the sacred that is given only through the events of concrete (up to the smallest details) and passing life.

Thus, everydayness with its “fullness of every mortal hour” is almost a single opportunity to enter the sphere of response and responsibility, to “hear” the sounds of the dialogue with the main ontological background. According to Buber these sounds are the events of our daily life. We live them through, they are the facts of our fluent personal experience, which is mostly unspeakable, non-verbal, but the person always tries to save and articulate these passing moments. He seeks for a possibility of sharing them with another, of getting “a bit” of eternity in his finite life. This is the task of poetry, which sometimes can transform this unspeakable into words without losing the sense. Even more – being, at first glance, far from everydayness, poetry is too close to it as the sphere of sense-birth, the sphere connecting the usual with the unbelievable, the profane and the sacred. It is an “eternal” feature of poetry as well, but poetry of the time we are speaking about is marked by special attention to details and concreteness of daily life. It overcomes the border between “high” and “low” spheres of life reopening its ontological background.

The three poets mentioned at the very beginning of the paper are in my opinion the most vivid example of such masterly work with the word. They are three persons whose lives were marked not only by personal talent but also by the time and place (“*khronotop*”) they lived in. One may notice in their works not only reflections of great social transformations of the time, but also the dialogue of the Jewish and Christian traditions they were influenced by.

Frankly speaking, we can find in their works a poetical illustration of every philosophical statement that we have discussed in the paper. Their “way” can also be found in the emptiness of the public culture forms (“Читатели газет – глотатели пустот” – М. Tsvetayeva) as well as in the saving warmth of the home, and whatever comes in between. It is rather interesting that being the most “homeless poets” in Russian poetry they give great poetical justification of the home, the place I live in, my place-in-being, marked by numerous intimate and at the same time cosmological details:

Я вернулся в мой город, знакомый до слез,
До прожилок, до детских припухлых желез....⁹

Москва! Какой огромный
Странноприимный дом!
Всяк на Руси – бездомный.
Мы все к тебе придем....¹⁰

They know, by the knowledge of the eye and ear, the mystery of the details of concrete daily life. This mystery dwelling in the space of poetry shows us, according to Marina Tsvetayeva, “Не сущность вещей, а вещественность сути, не сущность вещей, а существенность вещи.” That’s why Pasternak’s definition of poetry reads:

Это – круто налившийся лист,
Это – щелканье сдавленных льдинок,
Это – ночь, леденящая лист,
Это – двух соловьев поединок.¹¹

And in full agreement with M. Buber, who says that the voice which talks to us in fluent life is God of the given moment, B. Pasternak writes:

⁹ О. Мандельштам, *Стихотворения*, Ленинград: Советский писатель 1979, p. 150.

¹⁰ М. Цветаева, *Сочинения. В 2 т. Стихотворения; Поэмы; Драматические произведения*, Минск: Народная асвета 1988, vol. 1, p. 56.

¹¹ Б. Пастернак, *Избранное. В 2-х т.*, vol. 1: *Стихотворения и поэмы*, Москва: Художественная литература 1985, p. 88.

Ты спросишь, кто велит?
– Всесильный Бог деталей, Всесильный Бог любви
Ягайлов и Ядвиг.¹²

His texts are full of hymns to everyday and the usual that opens us to the sacred (or – better to say – opens the sacred to us):

Что в мае, когда поездов расписание
Камышинской веткой читаешь в купе,
Оно грандиозней Святого Писанья
И черных от пыли и бурь канаве....¹³

And even the essence of the greatest event of the Christian history – the Nativity – is revealed with a help of details of daily life and it is, in my opinion, one of the greatest Christmas poems and one of the greatest poems in the world poetry as well.

И странным виденьем грядущей поры
Вставало вдали все пришедшее после,
Все мысли веков, все мечты, все миры,
Все будущее галерей и музеев.
Все шалости фей, все дела чародеев,
Все елки на свете, все сны детворы.
Весь трепет затепленных свечек, все цепи,
Все великолепье цветной мишуры...
...Все злей и свирепей дул ветер из степи...
...Все яблоки, все золотые шары.¹⁴

¹² Ibidem, p. 111.

¹³ Ibidem, p. 74.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 411.

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The Image of Judaism and the Problem of Synthesis of Religions in the Philosophy of “New Religious Consciousness”

The turn of the 19th and 20th centuries in Russia was marked by an intensive comprehension of the “decline of Europe,” and the crisis of the new European rationalism. To find new cultural landmarks, a group of intellectuals began to develop a model of a “new religious consciousness.” It was a complex social and cultural religious-philosophical idea; they accepted secular intelligence, and so they created conditions for “a religious public,” thus reviving Russia and all European culture to a new life. The article dwells upon the features of comprehension of Judaism in the context of a “new religious consciousness” on the material of V.V. Rozanov’s philosophical heritage (1856–1919).

“New religious consciousness” as a thought theme

It is not necessary to reduce a “new religious consciousness” only to D. Merezhkovsky’s or N. Berdyaev’s ideas, historico-sophical or socio-political ones. Various modalities are possible in it. Using V.V. Rozanov’s words, it is a certain *theme* (“I am untalented but my theme is brilliant”), united with versatile quests and reflections of a whole galaxy of thinkers. In the given article we will concern ourselves with the anthropological turn of this theme: the historical Christianity is “incompletely true” about the person, because of being incorporeal and ascetic. The supporters of a “new religious consciousness” are different from Christian criticism included in

Nietzsche's works – the aspiration to reconcile religion and culture, to “fill” Christianity with ideas of other religions.

From the very beginning the representatives of a “new religious consciousness” are engaged in discovering a universal layer of experiences, which underlies any form of religiousness. The definitions of such experiences and their clear comprehension allows, from their point of view, releasing religion from the centuries-old “stratifications” and giving belief a crystal mystical cleanliness and freedom. It also allows proving it with the help of that which is absolutely fundamental in our consciousness and in our life and doesn't depend on abstract structures. Religious dogmatics was such abstract structures for them that the spontaneity of live experiences disappeared. The withdrawal from the Church took place owing to that, as if Orthodoxy had been unable to contain a difficult inward world of a modern person.

Looking for possibilities to consecrate that which is represented just (live dialogue with God, live religious experience, sensuality, sexuality and the female body) has drawn attention to Judaism.

History of Religion in the Context of Spiritual Life in Russia at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries

V.V. Ivanov's research on the history of religion of this period can be defined as straddling the border of wisdom and reason (“the division of wisdom accepted by Russian philosophers was assumed as a basic”)¹. V. Ivanov's research devoted to Dionysus in his correlation with Christ came under such a heading. Another representative of the “new religious consciousness,” P. Florensky, in his dissertation considered the issues connected with history and the value of the image of Sophia in Orthodoxy. Thereupon a lot of new things have been done for research of such ancient parts of the Old Testament as the “Wisdom Hymn.” “Their interpretations are also connected with the discovery of a great amount of new data concerning the background of female images of Wisdom in ancient cultures of the Middle East, as well as scientific experiences (archaeological, historical and cultural).”²

¹ В.В. Иванов, *Первая треть двадцатого века в русской культуре: мудрость, разум, искусство*, <<http://www.ruthenia.ru/folklore/ivanov3.htm>>.

² Ibidem.

The revival of interest in the Old Testament is connected not only with Sophia. In the period described studying the Russian Bible made a step forward, so the “new Russian Bible research” appeared. It became less dogmatic and began to be based upon more careful criticism of the sacred texts. The edition of theological books on these themes developed fast. There appeared theological magazines concerned with such a genre as a “scientific-theological journalism” (G. Florovsky). The Russian spiritual journalism prepared the public opinion for perception of reforms in the Church, promoted emergence of interest in religious issues in the Russian society. Among the most considerable of magazines such as the “Orthodox Review” (published between 1860 till 1891) uncanonical books of the Old Testament, translated from the Greek, were published.

The translations of individual books of the Old Testament regularly appeared in other theological magazines. The intention was to prepare the definitive edition of the versions of the Old Testament in free discussion in the press. It is worth noticing that it was a question of the discussion of the Jewish text (edition by Masoret), which was never in the Church use. Orthodox seminary students actively compared and discussed the Slavic and Jewish Bibles.

The Jewish studies also developed beyond divinity. For many years scholarly collections known under the name of *Еврейская старина* were published. They addressed the issues of the history of the Russian-Jewish relations, historiography and source studies, a consecration of activity of the first centres on the study of the Jewry. In Russia major Russian-language biblical research devoted to Hebraism, the history of the Jewish people, and their philosophy was published.

Thus, the Bible ceased to be a text for experts only; active interest in biblical tradition was shown. With the progress of historical knowledge, researchers’ interests changed too. Many opened up oriental religions, e.g. the Egyptian one, Judaism, etc. In this context the philosophy of a “new religious consciousness” was created.

It is remarkable that the aim of this movement concerned with the synthesis of contrasts has allowed to approach the issue of the Judaic sources of Christianity in a new fashion. The theme of the Judaic sources of Christianity can’t be put aside because of the dualistic culture.

The religious thought of the Silver Age departs from the Enlightenment discourse, and from a negative attitude to the Judaic heritage. Rather than philosophers’ aspiration to break off the ties between the Old and the New

Testament³ in the 18th century, there is a search of deep roots of generality in Russia.

However, some barriers to such views existed. Jews in Oriental Slavic cultures were considered “our strangers” (acquaintances) or simply “others,” who were basically predictable. It is possible to track essential differences in iconography of the stranger in the East and West of the Christian world. In the West the Jews were represented as demons, animals or plague. Incidentally, the metaphorical images of Jews developed in the Middle Ages lost none of its relevance in Europe in the 20th century and still caused horror and hatred.⁴ The oriental naturalistic forms of representations of Another had no implied obvious “malicious” senses. Jews weren’t considered demonic beings: they could be rescued by the conversion to Christianity.

Among the supporters of the “new religious consciousness” the ideas of the German researcher Julius Wellhausen were popular. In Judaism he distinguished the early period (Israeli religion) and the late period (Judaic religion), and tried to establish connections between the first Israelis and Christians. As J. Wellhausen believed, the aspiration to freedom, originality and naturalness were common among Christians, while Jews were identified with dogmatism and artificiality.

With neo-Christians the history of religion became the testing ground for modernist ideas and searching for any allies. However, the knowledge about ancient religions is scarce due to the absence of sources or our inability to read them (see M. A. Korostovtsev’s remark that the history of the Egyptian religion hasn’t been written yet⁵), and so room for creative imagination remains. V.V. Rozanov referred to the facts as to texts which need interpretation and can be re-interpreted.

V.V. Rozanov’s Judaism

Let us try to understand the reason for the Russian philosopher’s attention to deep psycho-physiological sources of religion. Rozanov himself makes comments on the awoken interest in “*юдаизм*.”

³ P. Gay, *The Enlightenment. The Science of Freedom*, New York: Norton 1977, p. 391; J.H. Brumfitt, *The French Enlightenment*, London: Macmillan 1972, p. 151; J. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews. The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism*, Ithaca: NY 1983, p. 171-91.

⁴ P.C. Вістріч (ed.), *Демонізація іншого: Антисемітизм, расизм і ксенофобія*, trans. by Г.С. Краснокутський, Одеса: АО БАХВА 2006, p. 73-74.

⁵ М.А. Коростовцев, *Религия Древнего Египта*, Москва: Наука 1976, p. 6.

Here my family history and in general all relation to “my friend” has also played a great role (...) everything has grown from one pain (...). The personal has poured in the universal.⁶

Due to its origin, both this interest and Rozanov’s philosophy of the sex are deeply personal. At the heart of his philosophy – clarifying of initial intuition: the sex in the person is a universal principle of life; it doesn’t need any consecration; on the contrary, only it is capable of consecrating all the rest. It is not a return to paganism; Rozanov’s view of life is based on the flesh. All things are suffused with biblical motifs. The sex is considered in the context of all human life – both personal and public.⁷

V.V. Rozanov opens his Judaism counter to history, the Church, and the right. Rozanov is “an assiduous reader of historical literature and sharp observer of the present”⁸ – and so gives the following estimation of the event:

What can be sadder, (...) more terrible than the newest historians of religion who state these themes and argue with them, without having any single kernel of religious faith, religious feeling, or any understanding of religion. But the reason is one: that in the West there are no connections with “historical monumental religiousness,” i.e. with the actually praying Church. The show is really awful as well as the show is precautionary for Russia.⁹

He sees Judaism through a prism of sacred things – a house, a centre, a family, human life. Belief in God’s inseparables is linked with the endured experience of relation to parents, wife, children. “Sometimes it seems to me that I understood all history as though I was holding it in my hand, as though I had created my history, with the same feeling of relationship (*уроднения*) and complete comprehension.”¹⁰ And once the personal philosophy of Rozanov turned into “the scream which can’t be constrained” (М.К. Мамардашвили).

Checking the initial intuition, he finds some support in Judaism. He treated the Old Testament as a hymn of flesh. Critics find Rozanov to have represented Judaism in the absolute extreme. According to G. Florovsky,

⁶ В.В. Розанов, *Опавшие листья. Короб второй*, Петроград: Суворин 1915, p. 363.

⁷ See analysis of Rozanov’s judeophobia-judeophilia in connection with his idea of the sex by Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness. Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siecle Russia*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1992.

⁸ А. Эткинд, *Хлыст (Секты, литература и революция)*, Москва: Новое литературное обозрение 1998, p. 180.

⁹ Н.А. Бердяев, *Мутные лики*, Москва: Канон 2004, p. 354.

¹⁰ В.В. Розанов, *Смертное*, <http://krotov.info/libr_min/17_r/roz/anov6.htm>.

he finds in the Bible only legends of sorts and births, only passion and love song. He reads this antiquated book not with biblical eyes, but with faster eyes of an oriental pagan, an attendant of an orgiastic cult.¹¹

At the same time, the unilateral interpretation of the Old Testament allowed Rozanov to synthesize Judaism and Orthodoxy. He saw in Orthodoxy a return to the Old-Testament and pagan attitude.

For Rozanov the religion of Jews is the average “imperial” way on which a person feels God as an absolute and powerful person and at the same time he doesn’t lose consciousness of his participation in deity. Apart from the active relation to God, he is attracted to Judaism by its attachment to the world, love of its material aspect. In the articles on “юдаизм,” published in the magazine “Novyi Put’” (1903), V.V. Rozanov opens a sense of mysterious trimming, pays attention to the value of Jewish marriage. Under the influence of his brilliant works about Judaism the group of neo-Christians will initiate the introduction of sacrament of the wedding night in Christianity.

But the return to the Old Testament gives philosophy a chance to address a real person, especially a human being in “flesh and blood.” In the biblical tradition the word “flesh” means “human nature” in general. In Rozanov’s biblical attitude the person has an unconditional value. *My flesh* in all its forms – the born, enjoying, suffering, sick and dying – is given to me ingenuously. Owing to its finiteness it is divine. At the beginning of the 20th century few agreed with this thesis. The necessity of change of the human nature didn’t raise any doubts. Against this backdrop the philosophy of Rozanov looks anti-utopian.

“I endured the Talmud.” V.V. Rozanov sees a way to an original understanding of the person studying religion. Who didn’t know burning, doesn’t know religion either.

“To hell ratio” (*Мимолетное*). The pain resists logos. It is necessary to understand a sense of that which informs pain.

Who is homesick, the native land, closeness (*укрытости*), should sacrifice oneself to belief. The same one who keeps spirit, doesn’t come back.¹²

This view of the eternal groundlessness of the person belongs to the German philosopher Helmuth Plessner. In anthropology he recognizes that between culture (the spirit sphere) and religion (the belief sphere) there is

¹¹ Г.Флоровский, *Пути русского богословия*, Paris: YMCA Press 1983, p. 466.

¹² Х. Плеснер, *Ступени органического и человек: Введение в философскую антропологию*, trans. by А.Г. Гаджикурбанов, Москва: РОССПЭН 2004, p. 293.

an absolute enmity. For him religion is returning home. By means of belief a person takes roots in life.

The search for sources of ideal religion doesn't end with Judaism. Rozanov wrote his last book about Ancient Egypt.



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The religious roots of the Aesthetic Principles (V. Ivanov on the Sublime)

Actualization of the sublime in philosophical discussions of the second half of the 20th century defined the Jewish “origin” of this category and its opposition to the ancient system of aesthetic values. In the book *Heidegger and “the Jews”* by the French philosopher J.-F. Lyotard this opposition is depicted within the context of the humanitarian catastrophe of Auschwitz and conceived in the categories of the beautiful (rationally cosmic world order) and the sublime (non-rational memory of non-imaginable). Lyotard describes the essence of Jewry, referring to Kant’s “Analytic of the sublime” and Freud’s theory of “secondary displacement.” The theoretical conclusion of the philosopher’s meditations is the statement that the issues of the sublime are like those of the unaesthetic – inexpressible and non-representable; they came into the European culture “not from the Greek, but from the Jewish and the Christian.”¹

But the tradition of the Russian aesthetic thought proposed an absolutely different approach: the sublime appears to be a sphere of intense interaction of the Hellenic and the Jewish worlds. Thus, Sergei S. Averintsev regards Pseudo-Longinus’s treatise *On the Sublime* to be a cultural-historic paradox, which commemorated the “meeting” of two creative principles. The ancient Greek’s appeal to “Genesis” is an attempt to perceive absolutely non-Greek problems of emotional intention and impulse. The sublime “is the incredible of the vital element, those slopes and depths of the spiritual world, which are too high and deep to fit the scopes of ‘the beautiful’.”²

¹ Ж.-Ф. Лиотар, *Хайдеггер и “евреи,”* trans. by В.Е. Лапицкий, Санкт-Петербург: Аксиома 2001, p. 59.

² С.С. Аверинцев, *Греческая “литература” и ближневосточная “словесность”* (про-

We suppose that Averintsev's concept, which is opposed to Lyotard's, has grown on the philosophical grounds of the Russian symbolism and in particular on V. Ivanov's issues of aesthetic principles. The reference to the poet-thinker's works will allow clarifying the aesthetic peculiarity of the sublime, the essence of the sublime and the dialogic trends in understanding cultural interaction.

Ivanov's article *Symbolism of aesthetic principles* combines the sublime with the spiritual dynamic of human self-affirmation and a desire for "the highest existence." Commenting on Ivanov's article, Bakhtin wrote:

Ascension is pride, severity, not only towards others, but to oneself. And if it is severe, it is painful. It is a tragic way to the height, breaking with the Earth, death. If the ascent does not result in a descent, it is unsuccessful, because it is over-universal (*nadmirno*).³

Here the researcher misses one of the main components of the ascent: the inner triumph of human self-affirmation bears a religious heroism of theomachy, embodied in the Biblical patriarch Jacob. The sublime ascent contains a "hidden symbolism of a theurgical mystery and mystical antinomy, whose sacred formula and mysterious hieroglyph, 'God-bearer (*bogonosets*) – *theomachist*...' a righteous theomachy of Israel expels blessing."⁴

The sublime, Bakhtin notices, is "over-universal" (*nadmirno*), but it is not fruitless. Postulating the unaesthetic character of the sublime, Ivanov thereby reinforces its meaningfulness in the spiritual sphere: "The sublime in aesthetics, as far as it is represented by the ascent, is in essence outside the borders of the aesthetics, as a religious phenomenon."⁵ Religiousness thus appears to be the origin of creativity of the "beauty proper," actualized by the descent. However, the impulse of elevation is valuable itself, and its importance lies exactly in its religious character, with the emphasis placed on understanding religiousness as a connection,⁶ the relations of a human

тивостояние и встреча двух творческих принципов), in *idem*, *Типология и взаимосвязи литератур древнего мира*, Москва: Наука 1971, p. 244.

³ М.М. Бахтин, *Эстетика словесного творчества*, Москва: Искусство 1986, p. 395.

⁴ В.И. Иванов, *Символика эстетических начал*, in *idem*, *По звездам. Борозды и межи*, Москва: Астрель 2007, p. 40.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ Ivanov persistently pursues the idea of religion as a connection, and the word "religion" derives from the Latin verb *religare*: "to bind, to connect." On this ground the underlying closeness of the symbolic art and religiousness is established: "(...) true symbolic art touches the sphere of religion, as far as religion is first of all a sensation of the connection between all the existing and the sense of life of any kind." В.И. Иванов, *Родное и вселенское*, Москва: Республика 1994, p. 143.

with the Other, imminent for him, a divine You. Religiousness of the sublime gives him a sense of the relation, opening in the “mystical energetism” of Jewry. For the Jews the world appeared “to be a form of interaction of the will that gives and the will that accepts, as the mutual duty and obligation of the Creator and the created.”⁷

Thus, unaesthetic issues of the sublime appear to be a ruling sphere as far as the art is concerned, determining not its artistic, but ontological regularities. In this view, the idea of rejecting the world in the form of its due condition and the place of the human within it becomes meaningful. The idea of the sublime determines Prometheus, Tantalus and Job, the expulsion of Cain and his posterity, “the relationship (*sud’bishche*) between God and Job,”⁸ the struggle of Jacob with the Invisible, and in the redivision it is the ideal of “new Jerusalem” in the Apocalypse and “Harmony” of Dostoyevsky. The ecstasy of theomachism is the desire to see “the world ‘transformed,’ i.e. the world, in the attitude to which our free ‘No’ becomes a free ‘Yes’.”⁹

We perceive the integrity of philosophic motives of the articles *Symbolism of aesthetic origins* and *On reflection of the world*; the unity, fastened by the image of Jacob-Israel and the issues of theomachism – God-acceptance. Such an extension of the context helps to interpret the sublime as a demonstration of the “persistence” with which the Jews “proclaimed a human right to free self-affirmation,” making him “the judge of the world and the claimant against God.”¹⁰ It is not the idea of cultural inventiveness, but Ivanov’s universalism of thought that is most important; it makes it possible to unite in theomachism the ancient titanism and “Ivan Karamazov’s denial of the world in his soul and on his lips.”¹¹ The sublime, transformed by the idea of theomachism is the realization of the inner drama of the human soul, which distinguishes between the dynamic religious creativity, and “motionless devotion to the religious doctrine locked in itself (...).”¹²

The righteous theomachy includes a tragic component of the sublime, establishing the principle, proclaimed in the *Symbolics of aesthetic origins*: “In every ascent there is *incipit Tragedia*.”¹³ So Jacob, having snatched the blessing, remains lame;

⁷ В.И. Иванов, *О неприятии мира*, in idem, *По звездам. Борозды и межи*, p. 93.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 92.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 93.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 92.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 93.

¹² Ibidem, p. 91.

¹³ “The tragedy begins” (Lat.). В.И. Иванов, *Символика эстетических начал*, p. 41.

Prometheus wins. But how many theomachists were routed! Titans, Giants, “equal to Gods,” who dared to struggle against Gods (...).¹⁴

The theomachist initiative colours the tragic “Russian soul,” which “incessantly hears a mysterious voice which says *yes* to life and accepts it; at the same time, there is another voice which whispers *no*”¹⁵ [here and hereafter italics are the author’s – O.K.]. So, the sublime can be constituted by the anti-nomian motion of denial and acceptance, and by the giving of tragic, signifying “external death and inner triumph of the human self-affirmation.”¹⁶

The logical principle of movement from denial to affirmation, from “No” to “Yes” is expressed in cooperation with the aesthetic origins of the sublime and the beautiful. The sublime is unaesthetic, but is involved in aesthetic growth; due to its tragic, self-sacrificingness and religiousness, the sublime is a proof of understanding the beautiful: “the impression of the beauty is achieved by reconciliation, as well as by contraposition of the heavenly and the earthly, a smiling joint gladness and unity of the separated and the native.”¹⁷ The sublime results in the descent of the beautiful, in adopting “the earth.”¹⁸ The religiousness of the sublime is revealed as a bond of especial character: both the unaesthetic and the aesthetic. So, we can speak about the sublime as a comprehensive principle, absorbing the double impulse of both ascent and descent. This idea was developed by the propositions of R. Feiguth, who stated that “we have a right to identify Ivanov’s all theory of ascent and descent as the theory of the sublime.”¹⁹ In the article *On the borders of art* the sublime is established by Ivanov as a premise of the whole: “the life integrity equally requires the ascent and descent.”²⁰ It is also important for us to underline that the consolidated energy of the sublime is foreseen in the figurative system of “Symbolic of aesthetic principles.” Here the theomachy of Israel is set off by “Jacob’s ladder,” opening the opposing motion of the spirit: from the earth to the sky, and from the sky to the earth. The sublime comes to the mystical enlightenment of its harmonic grounds from the idea of the denial of the world: “It is the ascent

¹⁴ В.И. Иванов, *О неприятии мира*, p. 91.

¹⁵ В.И. Иванов, *Родное и вселенское*, p. 373.

¹⁶ В.И. Иванов, *Символика эстетических начал*, p. 41.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 41-42.

¹⁸ Ivanov illustrates the continuity of connection between the ascent and descent with V. Solovyov’s words: “The wings of the soul rise above the Earth / but they do not leave the Earth.” *Ibidem*, p. 43.

¹⁹ R. Feiguth, *К вопросу о категории “возвышенного” у Вячеслава Иванова*, “Cahiers du Monde russe,” vol. XXXV (1-2), janvier – june, 1994, p. 159.

²⁰ В.И. Иванов, *О границах искусства*, in *idem*, *По звездам. Борозды и межи*, p. 408.

and descent, the ladder Jacob dreamt of; and the mutual sacrament of the opposite spirits, movers and restorers of the earth and mountain sphere, exchanging the water carriers of the world moisture, Faust contemplated in the internal outline of Macrocosm (...).²¹ The moment of connection between the sublime and the beautiful of the theomachist images of Jacob and Faust is especially important in this fragment. The “superpersonal” potential of the sublime is transformed into “non-personal” beauty through them: “The spirit rises from the individual borders to come down into the personal sphere that lies out of the narrow I.”²²

Jacob’s visions find characteristics of the myth in Ivanov’s realistic symbolism. “The pathos of the mystical aspirations to *Ens realissimum*”²³ is opened in it.²⁴

The mythological truth about the real as a universal macrocosmic connection also predetermines Ivanov’s real historic position in the discussion of the “Jewish question.” The poet suspects the development of the “modern ideology of spiritual anti-Semitism” in the universal tendency of rupture: “This ideology was to deprive the Hellenic culture of Aphrodite, who came to the Hellenes from the Semites; it was also to undercut the roots of Christianity, i.e. the faith in the ‘transcendental’ or living God.”²⁵ Establishing “mystical energetics” of Jewry, which “became the soul of Christian culture,” Ivanov determines the symbolism of this soul. In this sense “the mystical energetics” is energetics of love, because in Ivanov’s logic “I am not a symbolist, if (...) my thoughts are not moving the energy of love in him [in the listener – O.K.] to something he could not love before, because he did not know his love, how many abodes it had.”²⁶

²¹ В.И. Иванов, *Символика эстетических начал*, p. 44.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 43.

²³ “To the most Real Existing” (Lat.).

²⁴ В.И. Иванов, *Родное и вселенское*, p. 156.

²⁵ В.И. Иванов, *Собрание сочинений*, Брюссель: Foyer Oriental Chrétien 1971–1987, vol. 3, p. 308.

²⁶ В.И. Иванов, *Родное и вселенское*, p. 194. Ivanov’s ecumenic pathos predetermined the content of response to Martin Buber, a Jewish religious philosopher, the author of the book *I and Thou* (1923). In the letter to his children dated 27 March 1927 the poet writes about the meeting with him: “He is absorbed by one idea, which composes the content of the mental movement led by him; it is an idea of belief in God, the Creator and the view of the world and the human being as God’s creation. It must unite, not making concessions to each other, religions existing in Europe. According to S. Averintsev, after the war Buber asked a European reporter: ‘Is Ivanov alive? Where is he? I want to write to him?’” Quote from: С.С. Аверинцев, “Скворещиц вольный гражданин....” *Вячеслав Иванов: Путь поэта между мирами*, Санкт-Петербург: Алтейя 2001, p. 32.

The historic aspect of the theme “Ivanov and Jewry” is widely represented in the studies of S. Markesh,²⁷ K. Lappo-Danilevskiy,²⁸ S. Averintsev.²⁹ We chose to go not from a concrete historical fact, but from Ivanov’s symbolic mythology, overgrowing into a general cultural mythology, whose unique poetic manifest seems to be in the seventh May poem from *Roman diary in 1944*:

Кому речь Эллинов темна,
Услыште в символах библейских
Ту весть, что Музой внушена
Раздумью струн пифагорейских.

Надейся! Видимый нестрой –
Свидетельство, что Некто строит
Хоть преисподняя игрой
Кромешных сил от взора кроет

Лик ангелов, какие встарь
Сходили к спящему в Вефиле
По лестнице небес, и тварь
Смыкая с небом, восходили.

А мы не знаем про Вефиль;
Мы видим, что царюет Ирод,
О чадах сетует Рахиль,
И ров у ног пред каждым вырыт

(You, who are not aware of the Hellenic, hear in the Biblical symbols, the news, inspired by Muse to the thoughtfulness of the Pythagorean strings.
Hope! A visible disstructure is a witness of Someone building, though Hell is hiding it from sight by a play of dark forces,
The community of angels that in Ancient Times came to the Sleeping in Bethel down the heavenly stairs, and binding a creature to Heaven, ascended.
We do not know about Bethel; We can see Herod reigning, Rachel mourning of her offspring,
And a ditch dug in front of everyone).

At first sight the poem is an illustration of Ivanov’s idea about the sublime in its universal understanding as the ascent and the descent. The biblical im-

²⁷ See S. Markish, *Vjaceslav Ivanov et les Juifs*, “Cahiers du Monde russe et sovietique,” vol. XXV (1) 1984, p. 35-47.

²⁸ К. Лаппо-Данилевский, *Набросок Вяч. Иванова “Евреи и русские,”* “Новое литературное обозрение” 21 (1996), p. 182-190.

²⁹ С.С. Аверинцев, “Сквореиниц вольный гражданин....”. *Вячеслав Иванов: Путь поэта между мирами.*

age of Jacob's ladder is intensified by the ancient context of world harmony ("thoughtfulness of Pythagoreans' strings"). The thought of complementarity of the Hellenic speech and Biblical symbols bears the idea of the continuity of cultural memory of the universal system. The first stanza proves S. Averintsev's observations concerning the Pythagorean basis of Ivanov's works: "The Pythagorean images of the world order were perceived by the poet to be stronger, taken to the heart more keenly, expressed in the world more extraordinarily than romantic images of the world chaos."³⁰ In this case the poet's pythagoreanism is supported by the Biblical topic. Prophetic intonations of calls ("Hear...", "Hope!") realize the strategy of hieratic speech: poetic news about inviolability of the world system, particularly implemented in the rhythmic constant of the first stanza (the variation of the iambic tetrameter with the stress missed in the third stress foot).

Sharing S. Markesh's idea that "Episode of Jacob's dream realizes the main philosophic concept or symbol of the ascent and the descent,"³¹ we also want to emphasize that this symbol is implemented not declaratively, but poetically, so the poem itself is arranged on counter-directional energies of theomachy and God-acceptance, being an event of their harmonic solution.

The cultural scale which was established in the article *On the ideology of the Jewish question* is actualized in the poem. The ancient and Jewish ideal of the world system is represented here as the "moving power of the Christian soul."³² We may say that the "I" in the poem appears as a theomachist who denies "thoughtfulness of Pythagoreans' strings" and "the community of angels:" "And we do not know about Bethel..." However, the denial of the world system which turned into the Kingdom of Herod is not of an absolute character. Herod is confronted by Rachel, all the mourning ones standing near the ditch, as her own babies. Rachel's image poetically predestines the interconnection between Judaism and Christianity. Rachel is a progenitress of the Israeli nation, Lavan's daughter, Jacob's wife, Joseph and Benjamin's mother, being at the same time an image of Jeremiah's prophetic vision. In the Gospel of Matthew, Rachel appears as Herod's inconsolable victim: "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more" (Mt 2:16-18).

³⁰ С.С. Аверинцев, *Поэзия Вячеслава Иванова*, "Вопросы литературы" 8 (1975), p. 169.

³¹ S. Markish, *Vjaceslav Ivanov et les Juifs*, p. 44.

³² В.И. Иванов, *О неприятии мира*, p. 94.

In the existential tragedy of the man standing by the ditch, the saving principle will not be a faith in the world system, but complaints of inconsolable Rachel, who cries not for a “creature,” but for her “children.” The New Testament of love and sonship, known neither to Moses nor to the Law, is affirmed by Rachel’s tears.

The poetic logic of the poem is close to the Christian denial of the world, expressed in Christ’s antinomian position: he

orders “not to love the world, and everything in the world,” while he himself loves the world in its clearness, the world of “neighbors,” the surrounding and very close world (...). He is sad in the world, because “the world lies in the evil,” but every moment he removes the evil and restores the true world (...).³³

But at the same time, Rachel’s image not so much denies “Pythagoreans’ strings” and Bethel’s angels, but “grows out of them,” recreating a unity of the “European soul.”³⁴ The principle of this unity is formulated by Ivanov in his article *On the ideology of the Jewish question*: “He who is in the church loves Mary; he who loves Mary, loves Israel, like mother, whose name sounds solemn with the names of the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets in liturgical glories.”³⁵

In his dialogue with M. Altman V. Ivanov noticed:

Now it is the “epoch of virtuosi,” while there used to be the others. The writer used to be the salt of the earth.³⁶

Similarly, in the article *On Jewish question* he negatively characterizes “Christians, who do not know their roots” and “Jewish atheists who are ashamed their roots, and who are like the salt which lost its power.”³⁷ The Biblical image of “the salt of the earth” clarifies Ivanov’s understanding of a poet-prophet, preserving the ideal of “Jacob’s ladder” as a perpetual statute of “the salt testament.”³⁸

Thus, the cultural universalism is the essential characteristic of Ivanov’s aesthetic system. This prospect allows for speculation of the sublime as

³³ Ibidem, p. 93-94.

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 92.

³⁵ В.И. Иванов, *Собрание сочинений*, vol. 3, p. 309.

³⁶ М.С. Альтман. *Из бесед с поэтом В.И. Ивановым. Запись от 20 января 1921 г.*, “Ученые записки Тартусского государственного университета,” vol. 209 (1968), p. 312.

³⁷ В.И. Иванов, *Собрание сочинений*, vol. 3, p. 308.

³⁸ Е.М. Сморгунова, “Соль” в *Ветхом и Новом Завете и ее семантические трансформации*, in Р.М. Капланов, В.В. Мочалова, Л.А. Чулкова (eds.), *Еврейская цивилизация: проблемы и исследования. Материалы V международной ежегодной конференции по иудаике*, Москва: Центр “Сэфер” 1998.

well as of the synthesizing cultural movement, which lies in the base of art. We come to the conclusion that the religious sense of Ivanov's sublime is not confined by "pride, cruelty (...) not only to oneself, but also to others" (M. Bakhtin), but carries antinomy, implemented by the "right theomachy of Israel" and the vision of Jacob's ladder. The sublime combines the denial of the world and establishment of the order of "heavenly existence." Ivanov postulates the idea of ontological dynamics (theomachic initiative) in the sublime and puts forth the harmony of culture as an eternal significance of its sacral principles. The symbolic concept of the sublime differs from its postmodern interpretation. Unlike Lyotard, Ivanov postulates the "Jewish" content of the sublime as a spiritual root, bearing a unifying, but not separating principle.



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The Influence of Kabbalah Ideas on Analyses' Methodology Formation of Symbolic Units (based on V. Shmakov's works)

*When one page
of the world's history ends,
another begins.¹*

*The Jew, acquainted with the Kabbalah
from Jewish sources will meet a lot of new,
perhaps, unexpected things in this book.²*

The interest in the research of the cultural mutual influence

It's difficult to overestimate the importance of the research into the mutual influence of cultures in today's globalized world. The global culture is a complex mosaic of local cultures which are in continuous interaction, and hence the analysis of this culture is quite a difficult task. Nevertheless, such difficult interactions are based on the pair integration, the analysis of which is a special research area.

The investigation of a mutual *influence* of cultures, as well as of a mutual *interaction* is preceded by a "soft" analysis, namely the research into the individual influence, in which we can observe an intersection of different

¹ В. Шмаков, *Священная книга Тота. Великие Арканы Таро*, Москва: МСМХVЙ 1993, р. 19.

² Папюс, *Каббала или наука о Боге, Вселенной и Человеке*, trans. by А.В. Трояновский, Санкт-Петербург: Перепеч. Издания В.Л. Богушевского 1910, р. 4.

cultural traditions represented in the works certain thinkers. Every concrete precedent of cultural adoption has a special methodological value, which is very important for the development of methods in the cultural analysis.

The purpose of this study is to draw attention to Vladimir Shmakov, one of the most interesting thinkers of the beginning of the 20th century. He displayed a sample of the new attitude, connected with the consolidation of different philosophical and esoteric traditions in one research field, without mixing them, but with the maximum use of the proper world outlook potential. V. Shmakov didn't show preference for any of the esoteric systems or philosophical schools. In his works we can observe excerpts from some famous Kabbalah texts alongside quotations from medieval mystics, philosophers or scientists.

At first sight such a method seems to be an inadmissible cacophony, but as a result of more attentive research we can observe very interesting methodological concepts.

The methodological complexity in the organization of philosophical and esoteric matching is rather evident. First of all, it is connected with the definition of a cultural status of esoteric *knowledge*, along with the acceptance of unscientific knowledge. But, if we assume such a possibility, and recognize the right of religious, esoteric and scientific coexistence, then we can observe a lot of methodological questions of great importance. In total, they can be reduced to the subject of interdisciplinary research, which can be observed in context of the multidimensional method. The author's more elaborate positions are represented in the monograph.³

From a general point of view, the present research can be defined as an examination of different Kabbalah ideas, along with the symbolic analysis of 22 Tarot Arcana in the works of the Russian thinker V. Shamkov. The methodological analysis of the conducted research helps to plan a further investigation route of symbolic series of various origin. Besides, we get a possibility of reconsidering the Jewish esoteric doctrine in a modern intelligent cultural context.

Vladimir Shmakov among the Russian thinkers of the 20th century

While considering the topic of the Jewish influence on the east Slavic culture, we can't help mentioning such an outstanding figure as V. Shamkov.

³ Л.Н. Богатая, *На пути к многомерному мышлению*, Одесса: Печатный дом 2010.

Unfortunately, there are no exact biographical facts about Vladimir Alekseevich Shmakov. It is known that he was born at the end of the 19th century (according to some sources, in April 1887). His father, A. Shmakov, was a famous lawyer, public figure, and writer. Vladimir Shmakov received an education as a railway engineer. In some sources we can find information about his participation in the circle of A. Bely, and his acquaintance with P. Florensky. It is also known that in 1924 he had to emigrate to Argentina (according to different accounts – to Switzerland) under an alias surname, because of the Bolshevik repression. Most probably, in 1929 he died of tuberculosis in emigration. It seems to be puzzling that no biographical data have been preserved, but the main works by Shmakov have been through a lot of hardships along with Russia and the Russian nation and were republished at the end of the 20th century.

V. Shmakov is the author of the following texts:

1. *The Holy Book of Thoth. The Major Tarot Arcana*, Kiev: Sofia, 1993 (the first edition of the book was published in Moscow in 1916);
2. *The law of synarchy and teachings about the monad and sets of dual hierarchy*, Kiev: Sofia 1994 (published for the first time);
3. *The Bases of Pneumatology. Theoretical mechanics of spirit formation*, Kiev: Sofia: 1994 (first edition – Moscow in 1922).

One more publication by V. Shmakov is known – *The main laws of the world's architectonics. Unity – biner, turner, kvarterner*. According to various accounts this article was published in the German language before 1916.

Unfortunately, none of the contemporary scholars have consistently researched the philosophical heritage left by V. Shmakov. However, two exceptions are known – the works by A.R. Gevorkian and V.I. Eremin. There has been some passing mention of a certain tradition to relate Shmakov's philosophy to the Russian trend of philosophical esotericism of the first quarter of the 20th century.

We can hint at several causes to explain the persistent inattention to Shmakov's works on the part of professional philosophers.

First of all, the name of the first and fundamental work by Shmakov – *The Holy Book of Thoth. The Major Tarot Arcana* – is not of philosophical subject matter at all. The appearance of such a work in the era of the flourishing symbolist culture is very significant. If we assume that the fundamental understanding of the symbol has not been effected yet, then the above-mentioned work by Shmakov shall be rediscovered.

The second cause of Shmakov's oblivion can be explained by the fact that Shmakov had never positioned himself as a follower of philosophical

trends or schools of that time. But it doesn't mean that his thoughts developed apart from the mainstream of philosophical methods. Moreover, given the beginning of the 20th century, Shmakov showed a completely uncommon method of dealing with the existing philosophical works.

This method partly consisted of the methods widely used in the post-modernist creation of theoretical schemes in the last quarter of the 20th century. In particular, Shmakov's works feature quotations from F.W. Schelling, which intertwine with quotations from N. Hartmann; ideas by P. Florensky correlate with ideas by G. Cantor and Plato. It seems that everything is mixed here; the fundamental historical principle is broken. Nevertheless, it is in this amazing cacophony that the author's strong and distinctive standpoint was developed. In the formation of the original conceptional creation of theoretical schemes Shmakov persistently referred to the thoughts of the philosophers from the past, trying to find in them the support and confirmation of the correctness of the chosen line of reasoning.

The third and most important cause of ignorance of Shmakov's works in philosophical circles is his open references to the source of his inspiration. This source was called esoterism by him.

If we consider the fact that the development of Shmakov's concepts took place in severe historical period, i.e. the times when esoterism was considered to be a historically harmful doctrine, and most of scientists tried to avoid any mentioning of it, Shmakov's open references to esoterism could be considered an obvious challenge.

Back to the topic of the reasonability of consistent comprehension of the philosophical heritage left by Shmakov, we can suggest the following facts in favour of this reasonability.

First of all, a mere enumeration of subject areas made by V. Shmakov, including *consciousness, hierarchy, chaos, multitude, groups, different social structures*, can immediately be associated with the cutting edge of modern philosophical and natural-science development of the thought.

The second reason is that Shmakov presented a unique conception of *consciousness*, the research of which can lead, during the investigation, to an essential promotion of such a difficult phenomenon.

And the third reason lies in the fact that finally the time has come for the reconsideration of the heritage of the world philosophical thought, which was made by Russian scientists, and V. Shmakov among them.

By common efforts of various modern researchers of the European cultural tradition we can observe more and more distinctly the heritage of the Russian cosmists, e.g. N.F. Fedorov, K.E. Tsiolkovsky. Unfortunately, the

modern assimilation of the Russian philosophical thought is complicated because of certain methodological difficulties, among which, we should first of all name the absence of definite terminology. Every philosophical system is a unique world of philosophical senses. So we have to construct a certain terminological foundation to explain these senses. At present time, in the post-Soviet philosophical area, we can speak about the dominance of the so-called "*crust*" of *special terms* (this smart expression was coined by the Russian philosopher F.I. Girenok), which were borrowed from the western European philosophy. First of all, this *crust* should be transformed and overcome, and once this has been done, a living tissue of the language can be shaped, mainly for the acceptance of new philosophical intuitions. These new philosophical intuitions reflect all the inimitable things furnished by the Russian philosophical thought.

Thinking about the creative development by V. Shmakov, an inevitable question arises: what made the thinker refer to the immersion in esoteric knowledge? The inclusion of esoteric sources in the philosophical material or scientific concepts is rather a risky matter.

Firstly, these sources very often represent a reflection of ancient esoteric knowledge, but it is next to impossible to find scientific evidence for this. The world of esoteric studies is the world of numerous variations, in which the perception of the initial theme is lost.

Secondly, every esoteric source is an example of a special way, comprehension of which is not an easy task. Hence, a simultaneous correlation of different esoteric traditions seems to be arduous toil, which can eventually turn out to be incompetence or dilettantism.

And nevertheless, in spite of all the above-mentioned difficulties, the introduction of esoteric knowledge into a generally cultured intellectual context seems to be a very topical task.

We can point out the differentiation of knowledge, which has strengthened over the modern times as one of the causes of the cultural crisis. Our survival in such crisis situations is mostly possible owing to the overcoming of this destructive differentiation, and effected by means of knowledge synthesis.

V. Shmakov himself explained the reasonability of his reference to the esoterism, invoking the main problem besetting modern intellectual circles, namely the problem of private knowledge.

Since the Renaissance "all efforts of mankind have been aimed at the investigation of *separate* phenomena, *separate* questions, and at the cre-

ation of *separate* fields of human knowledge.”⁴ As a result of this marked singularity, it was found out that “everything was known, everything was explained, but everything was equally incomprehensible.”⁵ This was Shmakov’s understanding of the résumé of the past epoch. Such getting stuck in “details” didn’t provide a chance to make cognitive synthesis, in which the *whole* could be seen. Mankind has erected a building on the sand, and it consisted of disjointed single data. Man was involved in constant oscillation between *positivism* and *mysticism*. And according to Shmakov *positivism* is “human’s spirit aspiration for realizing itself in synthesis, external experience in the world of facts”⁶, while *mysticism* is the way of internal consecutive identification of “the individual aspects of one’s Ego with the facts from the internal world, and affirming them as phenomena which result from the noumenon spirit, thus having only illusive being as to the laws of the environment.”⁷ According to Shmakov’s thought, both ways of cognition complement each other, and each of them has only relative independence. Moreover, both ways of cognition have the same origin, which Shmakov termed *occult philosophy*, which he considered to be the wet-nurse or God mother of all religions, the key to all Divine sacraments.⁸ Unfortunately, the question of the source of occult religion is a great secret. Shmakov affirms that this source is the world itself, which is based on fundamental principles

these principles are known to people under the name of Major Arcana. Arcanum is a symbol, superior to any sacraments and mysteries... Arcanum is the lowest limit, to which the divine being descends.⁹

Principles laid in the Arcana translate into the system of absolute perfect laws, which create the essence of the nature.

It is understood that the given words should be proved or denied. But in such a case we face another question: what is their importance?

From our point of view, the Arcanum can be defined as a *hypothetic onto-gnoseological* formation, the importance of which is as follows.

Firstly, the Arcana are a complete *system of principles*; they form the aim for a potential possibility of its existence. The acceptance of the system existence as the initial principle is the most importantgnoseological

⁴ В. Шмаков, *Священная книга Тота. Великие Арканы Таро*, p. 3.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 5.

⁶ Ibidem, p. 8.

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 13.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 38.

assumption. Such an assumption made its way into philosophy rather implicitly, trying to expose the full system of fundamental categories. As it is known, such attempts failed, but at the same time they became very important philosophical experience, which attracted scholars' attention.

Secondly, the existence of the Arcanum before the outbreak of the letters to the inception of certain religions can testify to the following:

1. *The system of principles* has universal value and does not depend on the characteristics of a particular cultural tradition.

2. *The system of principles* is in some way connected with the letters. The very idea of such a connection is most clearly reflected in the Kabbalah. Thus, the study of letters, comprehension of Kabbalistic tradition, taking into account also the contemporary intellectual capabilities, turned out to be an important task, the solution of which must help to understand the principles better.

3. *The restoration* of a complete principles system is not possible only with the unity of religion, philosophy, science, art. This is because the differentiation of cognitive areas has historically been a later formation, and therefore only synthetic studies may shed light on the mystery of the completeness of principles.

Thirdly, the Arcana, presenting themselves as a symbolic system, allow penetrating into depths of the understanding of a special cultural symbol status as such. All attempts to comprehend the nature of the symbol have always failed due to the fact that the symbol was comprehended beyond the source in which it was ingeniously originated (or was given). A concept of symbol based on philosophical, religious or esoteric sources has always been incomplete, as they tried to explain the *whole* by its *parts*. To comprehend the nature of the symbol it is important to approach the understanding of the system of principles.

Fourthly, the study of the Arcana or a complete system of principles can become the exact research task which is able to unite efforts of philosophers, scientists, religious leaders, representatives of various esoteric traditions. It is the research area which may become a precedent of cultural consolidation, as such a consolidation is possible only by adding up common activity-related efforts.

If we accept the given arguments as persuasive, and thus allow mentioning any Arcana system, then we can resume the analysis of Shamkov's examination of fundamental principles.

Symbol, Arcanum, Source

Taking into account the fact that Arcana themselves present a system of symbols, we are inevitably faced with the question of the definition of symbol.

According to Shmakov

the symbol as such – owing to the strength of its constitution in the mind of a person – gives rise to the system of ideas, and in the same sequence which was provided by the author. But, at the same time every person apprehends a symbol in tonalities, only in as much as his own nature allows; he colours it, understands it in different details, but nevertheless the essence of the symbol is permanent for everyone who comes across it. Thus, the language of symbols is a true, universal, human language, equally fair to all times and nations.¹⁰

The main function of the symbol is to raise the system of ideas, fixed in a definite sequence. The underlined facts seem to be a very important gnoseological statement, but the specification needs to define the way of conception (the author's complete position is elaborated in the monograph). Shmakov points out that the symbol is "the most static form for depicting thoughts and the most flexible cognition method for different people."¹¹ Therefore, on the one hand the symbol is a static form of thought, on the other it is a cognition method. Both statements are very important and deep, but they do need a special analysis.

Each Arcanum is a group of *symbols*. The conclusion following from the fact that the symbol is a form of thought depiction opening in a certain consecutive presentation is that we can say that the Arcanum is an extremely difficult formation from the point of view of gnoseology.

According to Shmakov, "every Arcanum is both a part and a whole, it encloses itself and all other Arcana; a perfect man in full capacity of synthesis can comprehend both an individual Arcanum as well as Arcana in different combinations."¹² The present idea seems to be contradictory. On the one hand, Arcana are organized in one certain sequence and the place of this sequence is very principal for the understanding of the Arcanum substance. On the other hand, Shmakov affirms that every Arcanum encloses in itself other Arcana and that is why in the process of their use we can choose one Arcanum or any of their combinations in cognitive practice. The

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 34.

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Ibidem, p. 46.

information given below can be understood only if we speak about *time*. Arcana (principles) exist out of time. Maybe they present another way of time expansion, which is different from the usual one. The gnoseological value of the underlined consists in the fact that we can also affirm the cognitive principles. Each of them can be used and observed in isolation, but at the same time it can enclose in itself a potential completeness of the whole system of principles.

Shmakov affirms that in its totality the system of Arcana presents the Supreme Synthetic Doctrine, which consists of a group of doctrines, and they express "separate periods of the consecutive process of Single Reality Self-affirmation, (...) which opens the totality of ways, laws and principles, according to which man's creative spirit, making its own world, recreates its once broken unity, then it confirms itself in it, as a realized part in the Whole."¹³ According to Shmakov it is very hard for a man to understand the completeness of the Arcana system; he alternately finds support in one, then in another Arcanum, and choosing one after another he is moving in a spiral.¹⁴ From here we draw a representation of the Arcanum as an original "philosophic machine" which allows to one to get one's bearings in new questions, to compare, evaluate, "dispose and synthesize; plan the future of one's life and the course of its development."¹⁵

If you take everything that has been said above about the Arcana seriously, then quite naturally a question arises: does a tradition of studying such an interesting cultural artefact exist in human history? Shmakov answers this question in the following way:

the doctrine of the mystical meaning of ancient Jewish letters is a Hermetic Science about the Arcana in all its purity. Each letter corresponds to an Arcanum.¹⁶

Besides, the decimal numeral system, through the introduction of the concept of zero, giving one a new meaning and a new order comes directly from the system of Arcana, and the birth of Kabbalah (in the narrow sense of the word), the symbolism of letters is represented by the first consequence of this connection.¹⁷ The confirmation of this can be found in other sources. In particular, Marquis Saint-Yves d'Alveidre, a well-known researcher of the Jewish Kabbalistic tradition, stated in a letter to Papius that the source of

¹³ Ibidem, p. 43.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 49.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 51.

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 44.

Kabbalah has its roots in antiquity. He wrote about the resemblances in thinking by Jewish Kabbalists, which could be traced to Egyptian theories, and which connected the Kabbalists with Chaldean priests, as well as with the systems of the Pythagoreans and neo-Pythagoreans. The Chaldeans, as well as Egyptian priests presented Kabbalah as a synthesis of arts and sciences, reduced to a general principle. This principle was the Word, or the Verb.

Unfortunately, the source of wisdom common to all humanity was lost. Many researchers agree that this fact is noted in the book of Moses as the act of the “confusion of tongues.” However, owing to the Kabbalistic tradition, the memory of the ancient knowledge was, somehow, implanted in the European cultural tradition. Kabbalah itself does not mention the Arcanum directly; the main research object of Kabbalah is the *letter*. According to the Kabbalistic teachings the letter is the instrument with which the entire real world was created, the world which consists of essences and forms. The letter is a property of light. The light acquires its property only after passing through the letter, having a certain influence on the person. The letters represent a kind of *spiritual vessels*, through which the light affects the world. More precisely, the letter is a **property** of *the spiritual vessel*, which became like light in order to feel it. A word created out of letters has an enormous creative potential. To speak means to create.

If we assume that the teachings of Kabbalah are really based on the synthetic knowledge of the ancient Arcana as a system of fundamental principles, the comprehension of this system is possible, primarily due to the understanding of the Kabbalah teachings. Thus, Kabbalah becomes attractive for a more profound philosophical attention.

About symbolic lines. Normative symbolic lines

Irrespective of how to relate to a system of the Arcana as a cultural artefact, the method of solving the problem of analyzing the symbolic number, which is represented by twenty-two images, fixed on the Tarot cards is of indubitable interest. The information about 22 Arcana was maintained in the culture due to the existence of 22 images of Tarot cards.

The procedure of considering the Arcana implicated by Shmakov was as follows. Each Arcanum was analyzed in four directions. Firstly, the name of the Arcanum was studied in detail. Secondly, each Arcanum corresponded with a letter of the Jewish alphabet (the number of the letter coincided with the number of the Arcanum). Thirdly, the symbol of the Arcanum number

that represents the Arcanum was analyzed. And fourthly, a symbolic mark of the Arcanum was considered. Thus, the two of the four studies are related to kabbalistic tradition (the correlation of symbol with the *letter* and *number*).

The method used by Shmakov could be defined as a correlation method of the investigated line with a normative symbolic line. It should be noted that the philosopher himself never used the expression “a symbolic line” or “normative symbolic line,” but the introduction of such terms seems to be appropriate to organize the subsequent analysis. In fact, each Arcanum correlates with a number, corresponding to the Arcanum number or a Jewish letter. Letters (alphabet) and numbers were considered by Shmakov as normative lines.

In such a case, a question naturally arises: how should we understand the *normative expression of the symbolic line*? The answer to this question may lie in the following. The normative symbolic line is a number of symbols for which the law of the evolvent of elements is clarified. The appearance of each subsequent element is not random, but is subordinated to certain regularity. This clarification of the pattern occurrence is the basis for other symbolic series analysis.

If we admit the very existence of normative lines, then we immediately face a number of problems. The first is to agree about the ranks which should be considered normative. These ranks, as it has already been noted, should reasonably include the alphabet, the natural line of numbers, or at least the first ten natural numbers including 0. But then the logical question arises: where, in what esoteric or exoteric tradition is the law of the series deployment fixed? Should we look for it, for example, in the studies of the Pythagoreans, or rely on the Kabbalistic tradition? Or do we have to admit that both the traditions have common cultural roots? Perhaps it is necessary to consider other approaches that allow identification of the relevant law on a completely new basis. It is obvious that the above-mentioned issues stimulate a number of endless debates, and the involvement in these does not inspire optimism. In addition, there appears a problem related directly to the formulation of the law itself. In order to formulate the law strictly, it must be represented by means of terms that are accepted and understood by modern cultural community. But what if among these terms appears, for example, “*Sephiroth*?” What words can explain the idea of Sephiroth to a modern man? This explanation requires an introduction of terms such as *light*, *spiritual vessel*, *overflowing*, and, finally, *the letter* which is no less difficult to understand.

Even the two above-mentioned problems are sufficient to take the path of non-clarification of relevant knowledge. But this raises another question: whether such a position is rightful in the contemporary cultural situation, in which a significant predominance of exclusively scientific knowledge has clearly led to a gnoseologic dead end.

In addition, symbols catch man at every turn. But how are they supposed to be understood and how to interpret the whole symbolic lines that arise in different cognitive situations? The actualization of the symbolic lines may occur, for example, while we analyze the symbolic spaces. Symbolic elements of the lines are the symbols which no longer appear in their privacy, but in the form of a sequence of their arrangement, represented by the line. Symbolic rows could be otherwise defined as symbolic series. The sequence of symbols can be initially pre-set; variants of the spontaneous formation of symbolic sequences in the process of cognitive act (symbols “stretch” in time by the will of the knowing subject) are also possible. Regardless of the nature of a character sequence, the subject of cognition reveals the problem of understanding not of a single character, but of the symbolic line as a certain holistic combination. Perhaps the review of the symbolic line in the whole integrity is the way in which conditions for understanding of the peculiarities of holistic thinking are formed. E. Moren thinks about them a lot.

Synarchy as a method

The method of the Arcana analysis used by Shmakov can also be considered from the viewpoint of synarchy. The term *synarchy* is one of the fundamental conceptual elements with the aid of which Shmakov thought about consciousness in the first instance (it is necessary to stress once again that Shmakov is the author of the original concept of consciousness). He himself pointed out that from the philological point of view the term synarchy, perhaps, is not the proper one:

Expressing just co-management – σὶνάρχιá – *synarchy* was generally understood only as the political aspect (...) without any intention to invent any barbaric word. I took this term and gave it a deeper meaning, which shall be explained.¹⁸

¹⁸ В. Шмаков, *Закон синархии и учение о двойственной иерархии монад и множеств*, Киев: София Ltd 1994, p. 301.

With the aid of the term synarchy we rather specifically introduce not only the idea of management to the system of developing conceptions, but also the idea of co-management, as it will be shown below. In all fairness, it should be noted that the original idea of synarchy was learnt by Shmakov, most likely from a number of earlier esoteric sources. In particular, Papus refers to the law of synarchy in the works of the Marquis of Saint-Yves d'Alveidre. However, Shmakov's main achievement, in our opinion, lies in the fact that the law of synarchy turns out to be included in the groundwork of contemporary cultural thought.

Shmakov's interpretation of synarchy was consistently deployed by clarifying the essence of the synarchy law, which the philosopher regarded as one of the fundamental laws of the universe.¹⁹

Shmakov calls the synarchy law as the *given one*; it is taken for granted, unconditional and worldwide.

Now, if we turn to the method used by Shmakov in the analysis of the Arcana, one finds the following. In the analysis of the symbolic number of two symbolic series a co-management takes place. On the one hand, there is a normative symbolic series (numbers or letters of the Jewish alphabet) with all the meanings fixed in it, on the other one the studied symbolic series in Shmakov's work – the Arcana series. The main objective of synarchy is to organize the interaction between co-managers.

The adjustment to the tested symbolic series is carried out due to the fact that the human mind is capable of changing its synarchy level, that is, as noted by Shmakov, it "may implement its *entire* capability into the private organic divisions both actively and passively."²⁰ However, the features of the synarchy tune up are the theme of different studies.

Shmakov's method itself, used in the Arcanum investigation process, may be called a method of *synarchy* or the method of *co-adjustment* by means of correlation, the hierarchy co-organization of the elements of symbolic meanings of the correlated symbolic series. It should be noted here that while considering the separate series elements, the actualization of the whole series in all its meaning takes place.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 14.

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 211.

Summary and questions

Summing up the present investigation, it is very important to underline the following points.

1. Principles represented in any philosophical conception or scientific theory can be considered as elements in the general system of principles, which represent some onto-gnoseological base. That is why the principle of “addition” stated by N. Bohr is of high crucial importance, as it draws attention to the importance of the “addition” operation which can be considered as applicable to the principles. Every new principle can be examined as a part of a unified system. The understanding of principles in their totality is a very important gnoseological task which unites the efforts of many philosophers, scientists, religious figures and representatives of esoteric traditions. Exactly this object of research (principles in their totality) can become a precedent for cultural consolidation, as consolidation is only possible with the aid of general efforts.

2. Comprehension of symbols is possible in the first instance, as a result of penetration into the essence of the system of principles. Thus, a deeper understanding of the principal ontological nature stimulates comprehension of the nature of symbols.

3. The mastering of the principle system is closely connected with the comprehension of the normative symbolic line essence. In this relation the further examination of letter and number phenomenon is of great interest. Familiarization with Kabbalah principles can play its important role.

4. While investigating the different normative series special attention should be paid to the synarchy method, which consists of the parallel consideration of the two symbolic lines. The aim of this method is the hierarchy co-organization of the meanings resulting from the corresponding correlations. A mastery of a more consecutive synarchy method is possible at large after a thorough research into Shmakov’s philosophical heritage.

The present investigation leads to a number of evident questions which are suggested for general discussion.

1. If every letter is connected with one of the fundamental principles, what can the appearance of various languages and different letter systems be? Could the System of Principles be corrected in some historical period? Or was the System of Principles represented by separate sub-systems?

2. Should we consider the possibility of the New System of Principles in that unique period of modern humanity development, which is generally

called the fundamental cultural shift? Or does the system remain unchanged under such transformations?

It's clear that such questions can be answered only by common efforts, undertaken not by one man or by this or that research school, but it must be the result of all mankind's intellectual effort.

Some words about the translation

In conclusion, we consider it reasonable to make some notes as to the translation. The translation of Shmakov's texts into English seems rather difficult for us, as a lot of grammatical constructions used by the author are too complicated even for the modern Russian language, to say nothing of the efforts to render these constructions in English. A similar problem arises when translating Kabbalah texts into Russian or any other European language. The translation turns out to be a new text, which demands a new interpretation due to the new linguistic context.

However, such situations should not discourage the researcher as they stimulate further intellectual development. All the possible misunderstandings due to the translation imperfection can turn into productive precedents for subsequent interpretations.

Given the above, we are inclined to agree with J. Derrida. When his Japanese colleague asked him to comment on the possible translation variant of the term *deconstruction* into Japanese, he answered as follows: a translation is not an action secondary in relation to the original language. A translation is a risk of loss and at the same time a chance of finding some new beauty. A translation is an evident deconstruction which results in a number of new forms. Only time can show whether these forms will become a new language acquisition.



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The Seminal Idea of Dialogue in the Work of Martin Buber and Mikhail Bakhtin

The idea of dialogue had been developing in Western Europe long before its penetration into Russia. In Russia the theory of dialogue is primarily associated with the name of M.M. Bakhtin (1895–1975). Thus, I.V. Arnold says that “the concept of dialogue formulated by Bakhtin has remained the dominant of his creative work.”¹ And not only in Russia: Julia Kristeva eloquently uses the word “dialogue” in the title of her work “Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman.”² But it is also known that Bakhtin read and admired the works of European dialogists in the early twenties of the 20th century.³ In this connection the following names should be mentioned: the founder of Marburg School for Neo-Kantian studies, Hermann Cohen (1842–1918), Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy (1888–1973), Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929) and Martin Buber (1878–1965). It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that namely Martin Buber, a Jewish-German philosopher, did a lot to deepen and also to popularize the concept of dialogue. Some information about him would suffice.

Martin (Mardochei) Buber was born on the 8th of February 1878 in Vienna. The setting of his childhood and youth was the Austro-Hungarian Empire with its multiethnic population. After Buber’s parents separated in

¹ И.В. Арнольд, *Проблемы диалогизма, интертекстуальности и герменеврики*, in idem, *Семантика. Стилистика. Интертекстуальность: Сборник статей*, Санкт-Петербург: Издательство СПбГУ 1999, p. 389.

² J. Kristeva, *Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman*, “Critique,” vol. 23 (1967), no 239, p. 438-465.

³ See e.g.: М.М. Бахтин, *Человек в мире слова*, ed. by О.Е. Осовский, Москва: Издательство Российского открытого университета 1995, p. 65.

1882 Martin for ten years lived with his paternal grandparents in Lemberg (L'vov). His grandfather Solomon Buber produced the first modern editions of rabbinic midrash literature. His reputation opened the doors for Martin when he began to show interest in Hasidic literature. Buber became a multilingual bookish aesthete, and his languages were Hebrew, Yiddish, German, Polish, Greek, Latin, French, Italian and English. Hence, as it is considered, his lifelong obsession with words and meanings. He first studied at the Franz Joseph Gymnasium in Lemberg and later in Vienna, Leipzig, Berlin and Zurich, where his subjects were history of art, German literature, philosophy and psychology. In Vienna he absorbed the oracular poetry of Stephen George which influenced him greatly, in Leipzig and Berlin he developed an interest in the ethno-psychology of Wilhelm Wundt, the social philosophy of Georg Simmel, the psychiatry of Carl Stumpf, the philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey. In Kant he found answers to his concern with the nature of time. If time and space are pure forms of perception, then they pertain to things only as they appear to us, to *phaenomena*, and not to things-in-themselves, *nooumena*. Thus time primarily concerns the way in which we experience the Other. But can the Other be experienced at all or is it necessarily reduced to the scope of our phaenomenal knowledge, to what Buber later called the I – It relation? Buber managed to infuse Kantian distinctions with an immediate sense of reality. First, however, he leaned towards Nietzsche's enthusiastic endorsement of the primacy of life in its immediacy. Buber developed a close intellectual companionship with Franz Rosenzweig. After the First World War Rosenzweig recruited Buber as a lecturer for Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus, a centre for Jewish adult education, Rosenzweig also persuaded Buber to take a lectureship in Jewish religious studies and ethics at Frankfurt University. Rosenzweig became Buber's chief collaborator in the project to produce a new translation of the Bible into German. Buber lived and worked in Frankfurt, then since 1933, in Switzerland, until his emigration to Palestine in 1937. The remainder of his life he lived and taught philosophy mostly in Jerusalem, where he died on the 13th of June, 1965.

M. Buber popularized the idea of dialogue primarily in his most famous book *Ich und Du* (*I and Thou*) which was first published in 1922 in Berlin, and then in 1923 in Leipzig. In it M. Buber says that to a man the world is twofold in accordance with his twofold attitude, contrasting the two main pairs of categories, concepts, or basic pairs of word combinations, *I-Thou* and *I-It*. The I does not exist by itself, but only as the I of the word *I-Thou* and the I of the word *I-It*. The word *I-Thou* establishes actual, actualizing,

live, personal, dialogic approach, whether this be a relation to objects, to people, or to God. Whereas with the *I-It* approach we enter a daily utilitarian relationship. Buber says:

The one, while being in relationship, participates in real existence. (...) Every reality is activity in which I am participating, but which I cannot own. Where there is no participation there is no reality. Where there is owning there is no reality. The participation is all the more complete the more immediate the contact with Thou is. I becomes real through its participation in reality. It is the more real the more complete is the participation.⁴

According to Buber:

Whoever says Thou does not have something for his object. For wherever there is something there is also another something; every It borders on other Its (...). But where Thou is said there is no something. Thou has no borders. Whoever says Thou does not have something; he has nothing. But he stands in relation. (...) The world as experience belongs to the basic word I-It. The basic word I-Thou establishes the world of relation. (...) [I]n all the seriousness of truth, hear this: a human being cannot live without It. But whoever lives only with It is not human.⁵

Buber always insisted that the dialogic principle, i.e., the duality of primal relations that he called the *I-Thou* and the *I-It*, was not a philosophical conception, but a reality beyond the reach of discursive language. He strove at changing the human way of thinking and substantiating the belief in God as the ultimate sense of existence. To treat a thing, a living being, God as Thou is to enter into an ontological dialogue.

According to Martin Buber, there are three spheres in which the world of relation is built. The first one is the life with nature, where the relation is mute on the threshold of language. The second one is the life with people, where the relation takes the form of speech. The third is life with spiritual essences, where it is silent but where it's giving birth to language.⁶ Namely in the sphere of the life with people the language is realized consecutively in speech and in replying speech. Only here the word in the form of speech acquires its answer. Only here the basic word is moving in both directions, in the same language there live the words of address and reply, I and Thou are not only in the relation, but they have a firm standing. Here, and only here the moments of relationship are joined by the element of the language

⁴ М. Бубер, *Я и Ты*, in В.И. Мудрагей (ed.), *Квинтэссенция: Философский альманах 1991*, Москва: Политиздат 1992, p. 333-334.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 295-296, 315.

⁶ See ibidem, p. 358.

into which they are submerged. Here the confronting blooms into complete reality of Thou.⁷

The dialogue is understood as the radical experience of otherness, acceptance of this Other as “one’s Other,” the recognizing of the Other, having their voice, under which silence can be understood as well. Buber says also:

The relation to man is the direct likeness of the relation to God: the true address receives the true answer. But only in God’s answer everything – the whole universe – discloses itself as the language.⁸

This embraces the dialogue of a more sublime form, as Buber is writing:

God embraces the whole universe, but He is not the whole universe, God embraces myself, but He is not myself. This unspoken lets me, in my language, and everyone in their language, say Thou, because of this and for the sake of this I and Thou exist, the dialogue exists, the speech exists, the spirit exists (and speech is the very primary act of spirit), the Word in eternity exists.⁹

In several places of the book Buber mentions an important paradox: the I cannot encounter Thou through seeking, but it is impossible to meet Thou without seeking, or the inner striving to meet Thou. Thou meets us through Grace, it is not I who gets at Thou looking for Thou. Grace is with us when we come to meet it and are in its Presence, it’s not our object.¹⁰ Relation means to be chosen and to choose activity and passivity (or passion) at once.

God cannot be found while staying in the world, He cannot be found while leaving the world. He who comes out to meet Thou with one’s whole being (...) finds Him – the One whom it’s impossible to seek. (...) You need God more than anything in the world, and you always know it in your heart; but don’t you know that God also needs you in His eternal completeness? How could a human exist if he were not needed by God, and how could you exist? You need God to exist, and God needs you – for the very thing that is the sense of your life.¹¹

In this the influence of Hasidic tradition on Martin Buber is to be seen, according to which God needs man. With the help of the two great servants, prayer and sacrifice, a man sacrifices his little will to God’s great will. “Thy will be done!” says the man, and the truth says also “through me whom

⁷ See *ibidem*, p. 359.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 354.

¹⁰ See *ibidem*, p. 341.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 343, 345.

Thou need.”¹² The prayer and the sacrifice fulfill the basic word which denotes reciprocity. “They pronounce Thou and hear the answer.”¹³

Buber, as a religious philosopher sees the root of the estrangement of Man in his remoteness from God. God as the eternal Thou is the source of all I-Thou relations in the world. Consequently, the oblivion of I-Thou relations and staying in the world of It is the result of the departure from the initial source of all I-Thou relations.¹⁴

Thus is the dialogue treated by Martin Buber. Let us now address the treatment of this concept in the writings of Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin. To do so it is necessary to say first a few words about Bakhtin and his life.

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin is an outstanding man of letters, science and culture of the 20th century who had beyond doubt greatly influenced humanitarian thought of our time. His place and role in the development of ideas of the second half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the 21st century is yet to be defined. Bakhtin was born on the 5th (17th) of November 1895 in Oryol. His father belonged to Russian gentry and served at a commercial bank. As a boy Bakhtin learned several languages, he knew German so well that he read Kierkegaard in German translations at the age of fourteen. After gymnasium he became a student of classical philology at Novorossiysk University (Odessa) and since 1916 he continued his studies at the historical-philological faculty of Petrograd University. In 1918, with the war, famine and revolution, the need arose to leave Petrograd and young Bakhtin went to the South, to Nevel and later in 1920 to Vitebsk, where a lot of men of culture and art were active at the time. Their intellectual circle included a literary critic Pavel Nikolaievich Medvedev, a future musical critic Ivan Ivanovich Sollertinsky and Matvey Isayevich Kagan, a philosopher, a representative and follower of the Marburg school of Neo-Kantian studies, who had returned from Germany in 1918. The latter was a pupil of Hermann Cohen. M.I. Kagan became Bakhtin’s friend and “alter ego” for many years to come. It is through Kagan that the most powerful influence of philosophy of the Marburg Neo-Kantian School could be exerted on Bakhtin.¹⁵ Kagan is called “an undeservedly forgotten Russian Neo-Kantian

¹² Ibidem, p. 346.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ Т.П. Лифинцева, *Философия диалога Мартина Бубера. Диалог как структура*, <<http://www.philosophy.ru/iphras/library/lifinceva.html>>.

¹⁵ See about it in В.С. Библер, *Михаил Михайлович Бахтин, или поэтика культуры (на путях к гуманитарному разуму)*, Москва: Гнозис 1991, <<http://www.bibler.ru/index.php?sec=bakh1>>.

philosopher, literary critic and economist,” whose position was very close to that of Bakhtin. It is obviously thanks to Kagan that Bakhtin gets acquainted with the works of H. Cohen and other Neo-Kantians.¹⁶ Bakhtin was interested in Neo-Kantian studies already as a student, then he took part in a Kantian circle in Nevel and Vitebsk and led a Kantian seminar in Leningrad. In the beginning of the twenties he develops a critical attitude to Neo-Kantian philosophy as a methodology, though he recognizes its undoubted achievements in the realm of applied tasks. He never lost interest in Kant however.

From 1924 to 1928 Bakhtin lived in Leningrad where his famous books on F. Dostoyevsky, S. Freud and on contemporary Western philosophy were published. But in the end of 1928 he was arrested for “the membership in an anti-Soviet organization” and exiled to Northern Kazakhstan. Bakhtin’s health meanwhile was constantly growing worse. Yet he was constantly working on new books and completed a dissertation on François Rabelais which was defended in Moscow in 1946, but it was only in 1951 that he finally got his candidate degree. During these years Bakhtin was working in different towns, mostly in Saransk. In 1963 a revised version of his book *The Problems of Poetics of Dostoyevsky* was published. Bakhtin’s books get published, cause heated discussions and become rarities. The final years of his life Bakhtin spent in Moscow, where he died on the 7th of March 1975. So Bakhtin’s ideas were recognized rather late in Russia, only in the end of the seventies his “word gets known, answered and rethought,” as he himself predicted.

Since his earliest texts Bakhtin had been a very individual philosopher, though it can be seen from his works whose texts he was reading at the time (among them are the works of I. Kant, A. Schopenhauer, F. Nietzsche, V. Solovyov, R. Hirzel, E. Husserl, H. Cohen and M. Buber). Bakhtin’s language, especially in his earlier works, is hard, sometimes unimaginably difficult. His friend M.I. Kagan accounted for this by the German language of the philosophical texts which fascinated him.¹⁷ It is the tragic finale of the twenties that unwillingly brought Bakhtin to his author – Dostoyevsky, the author whose word sounds polyphonically, that is, the hero’s word is as weighty as the author’s word. As Bakhtin says, the hero’s word is not subjugated to the objective image of the hero, but at the same time it is not the author’s mouthpiece. These voices are independent and are in a dialogue. (Dostoyevsky’s dialogue is contrasted to the monological form of cogni-

¹⁶ See about it in M.M. Бахтин, *Человек в мире слова*, p. 65.

¹⁷ See *ibidem*, p. 19.

tion reflected in the novels of Leo Tolstoy and the European novel of the time). These ideas were formulated in the end of the twenties of the 20th century in Bakhtin's book *The Problems of Creative Work of Dostoyevsky*. V.S. Bibler says that Bakhtin is not to be explained away from the stream of "likenesses," "influences" or "borrowings," Bibler says: "Ideas of others, immersed in the caustic essence of Bakhtin's thought – are rethought so drastically (and are coming from such an unexpected, purely Bakhtin's intention) that it is most dangerous to be tempted in our analysis by their outward similarity 'to' (...)"¹⁸ – and yet Bibler himself mentions those authors who, albeit differently, treated the concept of dialogue; and H. Cohen, R. Hirzel (who is alluded to by Bakhtin in Bakhtin's work), and M. Buber with the dialogism of *I and Thou*, whose books Bakhtin read and admired in 1923, are among them.¹⁹

To have a closer look at Bakhtin's theory, one must remember that it was developed with special reference to Dostoyevsky. It is considered by Bakhtin that Dostoyevsky had made three discoveries: the first one is the new image structure of a human being with the consciousness having the full-blooded completeness and equality to the consciousness of the other. The consciousness of the other is not introduced into the frame of the author's consciousness, it's disclosed from within, standing outside and close by, and the author is in dialogue relations with it. The second discovery is that the self-developing idea, inseparable from the personality, becomes the object of art. The third discovery of the artist according to Bakhtin is "the dialogism as a specific form of interaction between the consciousnesses of equal rights and equal significance."²⁰ Bibler says:

I am not sure that these three discoveries belong to Dostoyevsky alone. Rather there is a co-authorship here. These are Dostoyevsky's-Bakhtin's discoveries.²¹

Bakhtin constantly resorts to the idea of dialogue, he speaks of dialogic relation as the only form of relation to a man of a personality, preserving his liberty and endlessness, of the dialogic nature of life itself, he said: "(...) it is possible to say that for Dostoyevsky everything in life is dialogue."²²

¹⁸ See in В.С. Библер, *Михаил Михайлович Бахтин, или поэтика культуры (на путях к гуманитарному разуму)*, <<http://www.bibler.ru/index/php?sec=bakh1>>.

¹⁹ See *ibidem*.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² М.М. Бахтин, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, Москва: Художественная литература 1972, p. 307.

[T]o live is to participate in a dialogue: to question, to perceive, to respond, to agree, etc. In this dialogue a human being participates with his whole self and with his whole life. (...) He endows his word with his whole self, and this word enters (...) into the world symposium.²³

Bakhtin often uses the terms, sometimes in German, which are redolent of the German philosophical texts of Buber, e.g.

To see and to understand the author of the work means to see and to understand the other, foreign consciousness and its world, that is the other subject (*Du*). In explaining – there is only one consciousness, one subject; in understanding – two consciousnesses, two subjects. (...) Understanding is always (...) dialogic.²⁴

According to Bakhtin “One man, remaining only with oneself, cannot make both ends meet even in the deepest and innermost spheres of his spiritual life, cannot do without the other consciousness.”²⁵ And another quote: “The human being really exists in the forms of *I* and *Other* (‘thou,’ ‘he,’ ‘man’).”²⁶ And still another quote: “The limit is not *I*, but *I* in the relationship with other personalities that is *I* and the *Other*, *I* and *thou*.”²⁷

Thus, it can be seen that the idea, the concept of dialogue is seminal for both these thinkers, Buber and Bakhtin, though, as a matter of fact, Buber does not use the word “dialogue” as often as Bakhtin does. It can also be observed that in Buber’s text the concept covers a wider scope of existence and embraces the relationship of a human being and the whole: inanimate things, feeling creatures, other human beings, spiritual essences and God.

²³ В.С. Библер, *Михаил Михайлович Бахтин, или поэтика культуры (на путях к гуманитарному разуму)*, <<http://www.bibler.ru/index/php?sec=bakh1>>.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ М.М. Бахтин, *Проблемы поэтики Достоевского*, р. 306.

²⁶ М.М. Бахтин, *Человек в мире слова*, р. 12. The last word in this Russian extract is spelt namely thus, man, that is, as the German word.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, р. 136. In Russian: “я и другой, я и ты.”

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“Jewish issue” in the Russian immigration discourse of 1930th–1940th: some reflections on the Witness of Mother Maria (Skobtsova)

“Son of David is crucified now together with all who didn't accept him...”

Mother Maria (Skobtsova)¹

The subject proposed includes a whole lot of the complicated and inter-related issues, still waiting for the proper academic investigation, so that in this article we would like to limit ourselves with some preliminary observations concerning the peculiarities of understanding of Jewish issues in theology and life activity of one of the most prominent personalities in the history of Russian diaspora in 20th century, it goes about Mother Maria (Skobtsova). Russian Orthodox nun, spiritual writer, gifted icon-painter and poet, she was sent by Nazis to Ravensbrück concentration camp for helping Paris Jews in all possible ways, and died there on March 31, 1945, some months before the end of the war. The choice of this figure is far from being arbitrary. In further reflections we would like to show that by the very quality of her thought and life she has shown the New Testament Church the clear perspective of the overcoming centuries-old, theologically and liturgically enshrined stereotypes of guilt and hostility, and reflecting the relations with the Old Testament Church in terms of “without confusion, without division” unity in God, “alien” for this world and in the “madness of love” dying for

¹ Магъ Мария (Скобцова), *Размышления о судьбах Европы и Азии*, in eadem, *Жатва Духа*, Санкт-Петербург: Искусство-СПБ 2004, p. 495.

it. However for showing, even in broad lines, the prophetic sense and the challenging novelty of the vision she has proposed, we would like to present it on the background of the positions towards Jews evidently manifested in the Russian émigrés milieu of 30th–40th of the last century. The article is based on Mother Maria's writings, published in Russia and abroad,² on periodicals preserved in the library and archive of the Russian Diaspora House (Moscow), and on the memoirs of the Russian émigrés in Paris.

In the article *Религиозная судьба еврейства* (*Religious fate of Jewry*) published by the Kiev newsletter “Христианская мысль” (“Christian Thought”) in April of 1916 Nikolai Berdyaev wrote that “Jewish issue is a Christian issue, is a Russian issue, finally, it is a human issue.”³ For Russian émigrés, mostly inheriting the myths about Jews, feeding Russian “return to the soil” ideology (*pochvennichestvo*) and national-patriotism, this thought developed by Berdyaev in his famous article *Christianity and anti-Semitism* (1938)⁴ becomes especially significant, even challenging on the eve of and during the World War II, when the question of the attitude to the Jews ceased to be just a subject of the abstract political or national-religious speculation and became, in fact, the question of the readiness to confess the Goodmanhood of Christ in the face of the both humanless and Godless ideology.

World War II has split Russian émigrés.

As the war begins, wrote a chief editor of the “Новый град” (“New City”) Iliia Fondaminsky in the editorial for the 14th issue of his magazine, Russian émigrés are taking the opposite battle lines. Any unity of immigration ceases to exist now. The gap between Russian Nazis and us is the same as the gap between us and Communists.⁵

² See Мать Мария (Скобцова), *Жатва Духа*; eadem, *Равнина русская*, Санкт-Петербург: Искусство-СПБ 2001; eadem, *Воспоминания, статьи, очерки*, vol. 1-2, Paris: YMCA Press 1992. Hereinafter all writings of Mother Maria (Skobtsova) are quoted from the mentioned Russian editions and given in our translation unless noted otherwise.

³ See Н. Бердяев, *Религиозная судьба еврейства*, “Христианская мысль” 4 (1916), p. 123

⁴ Cf. “Для нас, христиан, еврейский вопрос не есть вопрос о том, хороши или плохи евреи, а есть вопрос о том, хороши или плохи мы, христиане. (...) Еврейский вопрос есть испытание христианской совести и христианской духовной силы” (“For us, Christians, Jewish issue isn't a question of whether Jews good or bad, but it is a question of whether Christians good or bad now. (...) Jewish issue is a test of our Christian conscience and Christian spiritual power”). Н. Бердяев, *Христианство и антисемитизм*, <<http://www.vehi.net/berdyaev/ant2.html>>.

⁵ “Новый град” 14 (1939), p. 4. Cf. in Zinaida Shakhovskaya's memoir: “большинство (...) симпатизировали немцам. (...) Эмигранты продолжали верить, что Гитлер сокрушит Советы и что победа Третьего рейха откроет им путь к возвращению на Родина”

Against this background the extreme polarization of the already existing positions towards Jews became evident. The first of them, most clearly expressed in the monarchic emigrant circles, partly in the ideology of “Euro-Asians,” and constituted later in the documents of the Russian Nationwide Peoples Sovran Union⁶ (*Российский общенациональный народно-державный союз*) can be defined as “political anti-Semitism.” The adherents of it incriminated Jews Bolshevik ideology, the victory of revolution in 1917, the triumph of militant atheism altogether with atrocities of Stalin’s regime, were sure that “Hitler’s Germany defends ‘good,’ i.e., sacred national principles, from the dark and evil international Judeo-Masonic powers, occupying Russia.”⁷

The second, more sophisticated and refined trend, popular mainly in the Church and in some literary circles, could be described as “metaphysical anti-Semitism,” in the spirit of the *Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion*, republished in 1927 by the monarchic Publishing House “Off with Evil!” established in Paris by Prince Gorchakov, and the similar pseudo-mystical and “conspiracy” literature. To imagine this phenomenon in its entirety, it would be useful to analyze in details both cultural roots and inner logic of it, all the more so it is, being marginal itself, still alive and influent in the certain part of the Russian Orthodox Church, but it would require a special research. While in the frames of the present article we would like just to state that followers of this trend were thinking the Jewish issue within the frameworks of the quite popular in the Russian grass-roots religious con-

ну. Среди русских были и такие, кто, при всей неприязни к немцам, соглашались на них работать, чтобы выжить; они нанимались на незначительные должности – переводчиками, секретарями, кладовщиками, прислугой... А совсем немногочисленная зловещая группа пошла гораздо дальше – их отряды не отличались от фашистских формирований коренных жителей оккупированных стран. Во Франции – это Жеребков, ставший фюрером русской колонии” (“The majority were sympathizing to Germans. Emigrants still believed that Hitler would smash Soviets and the victory of the Third Reich would open for them a way back home. There were among Russians also those, who having personal dislike to Germans, nevertheless just to survive agreed to work on them. They worked as interpreters, secretaries, stockmen, maidservants... And there was also innumerable, although horrible group who went further, creating their own brigades, similar to the Nazi organizations of the ingenious citizens of any occupied country. In France the head of them was Zherebkov, a real führer of the Russian colony.” З. Шаховская, *Таков мой век*, Москва: Русский путь 2005, p. 407-408.

⁶ Spectacular examples of it are published by Russian Nationwide Peoples Sovran Union brochures *Jewish Issue* and *National Issue*, kept now in the archive of the Russian Diaspora House (f. 6).

⁷ В.С. Варшавский, *Незамеченное поколение*, New York: Издательство им. Чехова 1956, p. 308.

sciousness of the end of 19th – the beginning of the 20th century “bloody libel” ideology, a “secret of Jewry,” *a priori* hostile to Christianity and the secret “plot,” understood however not politically, but rather in religious terms as a threat for Christianity, a hidden “provocation”, aimed to “replace” Church with synagogue. The plain fact is that they also would welcome the “final solution,” linking with it their hopes for the revival of the traditional nationally-oriented Church life in Russia, while the most “extreme” were inclined to treat Hitler nearly as a “messiah.”

Finally the third position, represented by “*Novyj Grad*” and “*Pravoslavnoe delo*,”⁸ as well as by Nikolai Berdyaev, Ilia Fondaminsky, Konstantin Mochulsky, Mother Maria (Skobtsova), Rev. Dimitry Klepinin, Vera Obolenskaya, Boris Vilde and many other Russian members of the *Resistance* in the most concise and convincing way was expressed by Mother Maria, who said that day when Paris Jews were ordered to put on “stars of David:” “If we were true Christians we would all wear the Star.”⁹

A friend of the famous Russian poet Alexander Block¹⁰ and a participant of Nikolai Gumilev’s “*Tsekh poetov*” (“Guid of Poets”) in her youth, a mayor of southern Russian town of Anapa during the Civil War,¹¹ in Paris, where future Mother Maria, while that time Elizaveta Skobtsova. Came in 1923, she couldn’t get a foot in the door either of literary, or political circles, while was staying in contact with both. Significant enough that for the Church milieu “the nun with cigarette” (as some called her) also remained rather questionable figure.¹² As Fr. Sergei Hackel puts it,

(...) her existential monasticism that she considered the most necessary form of the monastic, moreover, Christian ministry, irritated nuns, committed to the

⁸ It was the organization, created by Mother Maria together with Fr. Diminry Klepinin, Nikolai Berdyaev and fellow-coworkers in Paris in 1934, and designed to help Russian immigrants in France.

⁹ К. Мочульский, *Мать Мария*, “Третий час” 1 (1946), p. 75.

¹⁰ See, for instance Mother Maria’s essay: Монахиня Мария, *Встречи с Блоком (к 15-летию со дня смерти)*, “Современные записки” 62 (1936), p. 211-228.

¹¹ This period of life she described in the essay *Как я была городским головою*, published under the pseudonym Ю.Д. (Yury Danilov). See “Воля России” 4 (1925), p. 63-80; 5 (1925), p. 68-80.

¹² See in Igor Krivoshein’s memoirs: “Образ жизни и даже облик самой матери Мария были часто соблазном для окружающих... Мать Мария была одиозна в глазах ревнителей так называемого ‘классического’ монашества” (“The way of life and even the very figure of Mother Maria... often were a serious temptation for those who met her. Mother Maria was quite odious for the zealots of the ‘classical’ monasticism.” И. Кривошеин, *Мать Мария (Скобцова)*. *К 25-летию со дня кончины*, “Журнал Московской патриархии” 5 (1970), p. 30-42. .

traditional monastic devotion and rules. (...) While the traditional monastic piety and the way of life were to such an extent strange for her that she was even going to leave the house where they were living together with other sisters. (...) It explains the desperate words in her notebook: “I suffer feeling the wall separating me from the dearest ones. Piety, piety, but where is love that moves mountains? More and more I realize and accept that it is the only measure of all things.”¹³

It is obvious that not only the “cigarette” altogether the her way of life, significantly differed from the traditional “image of piety” were the point, but her radical understanding of Christianity and the calling of the Church that determined also her vision of Jewish people and attitude to them.

As better these ideas that can be traced in all her writings are presented in the articles *Types of Religious Lives* (1937), *Mysticism of Union with Man* (1936) and *The Second Gospel Commandment* (1939). Briefly, and so inevitably in a simplified form they can be presented the following way: (1) “self-denying love for God and for one’s fellow man,” (2) “mysticism of human communion,” (3) “Divine Liturgy beyond church walls,” (4) “calling to outcastness.”

1. “Self-denying love for God and for one’s fellow man”¹⁴

In fact, all Christianity “fits” for Mother Maria into two commandments, i.e. love to God and love to one’s fellow.¹⁵ The denial of the first commandment brings to the “horizontal” philanthropy, that puts the good action itself above the “addressee” of it; the denial of the second, that is loveless faith, brings to the spiritual comfort, spiritual self-satisfaction, extremely dangerous, from Mother Maria’s point of view, drawing away from the “fire”¹⁶ reality of the Incarnation into the domain of the secure religious abstrac-

¹³ Прот. Сергей Гаккель, *Мать Мария и ее “Религиозные типы,”* <<http://www.anti-raskol.ru/pages/546>>.

¹⁴ Mother Maria (Skobtsova), *Types of Religious Lives,* <<http://www.incommunion.org/2005/01/20/types-of-religious-lives-6-two-types-of-love>>.

¹⁵ Cf. “Christ gave us two commandments: to love God and to love our fellow man. Everything else, even the commandments contained in the Beatitudes, is merely an elaboration of these two commandments, which contain within themselves the totality of Christ’s ‘Good News.’” Ibidem.

¹⁶ Cf. Mother Maria’s words, written by K. Mochulsky: “Now it is clear for me – either Christianity is a fire, or there is no it at all.” К. Мочульский, *Монахиня Мария,* p. 71.

tions.¹⁷ Love for her is above any religious feelings, including faith, or, being more exact we would say, that for her love, understood as unreserved and unconditional “spending” oneself for the other, is the faith itself in the most complete and profound expression. That is her “gospel maxima,” explaining ecclesiology, liturgy and the very sense of the Christian being. She sees divinity of Christ first of all in His extreme lowering, in his *kenosis*, in “his spit-upon, battered, humiliated and crucified humanity,”¹⁸ in his “unwantedness,” “outcastness,” voluntarily accepted for love, in total denial of “power and glory.” In the most complete and perfect form it was revealed on the Cross, and the “madness of Cross” (one more cross-cutting issue of Mother Maria’s writings), understood as the madness of totally self-giving, self-spending love is the only logic a Christian and the Church are called to live by, if they want to be faithful to their name. In comparison with the traditional, popular, “household,” while, in fact, childish religiosity the vision of Christianity, proposed by Mother Maria is rather risky. It doesn’t leave any earthly props, any guarantees, except of one, i.e. if we want to be with God, we need to be in that point where He is staying. While God, speaking the words of the younger contemporary of Mother Maria, Elie Wiesel, “is hanging here on this gallows,”¹⁹ or, as Mother Maria puts it, “in all possible forms of human sufferings, fallings and desolations,”²⁰ i.e., in the extreme point of the human vulnerability – and in the Divine, but available for humans response to it.

¹⁷ Cf. in *Мистика богообщения*: “есть известная возможность на основании любви к Богу ущербить любовь к человеку. Любовь к Богу – это главное и единственное. Всё остальное только ‘послушание,’ только подделка, которая ни в коем случае не должна умалять главного. Получается так, что у человека есть свой монастырь в его духе, за высокими белыми стенами. Там он пребывает в полноте и чистоте богообщения и оттуда в порядке некоторого снисхождения, некоторого патронирования спускается в грешный мир. Он выполняет свой долг послушания, долг, имеющий очень строгую и четкую границу. Оно не должно нарушать ритма его жизни в Боге, некоего священного комфорта, оно не должно захватить его до самой глубины его духа.” (“There is a certain possibility caring about love to God to forget about love to a fellow man. Love to God, they say, is the only valuable and important. It looks like such person has his own monastery, in his spirit, behind the high white walls. There he is spending his days in the perfect and pure communion with God, and only sometimes stoops to care about this sinful world. For him it is just a duty of obedience, strictly and clearly limited duty. It hasn’t to break the saving rhythm of his life with God, to destroy his sacred comfort, to possess him up to the innermost deepness of his spirit”). See Мать Мария (Скобцова), *Мистика богообщения*, in eadem, *Жатва Духа*, p. 114.

¹⁸ Mother Maria (Skobtsova), *Types of Religious Lives*.

¹⁹ E. Wiesel, *Night*, New York: Bantam Books 1982, p. 62

²⁰ Мать Мария (Скобцова), *О монашестве*, in eadem, *Воспоминания, статьи, очерки*, vol. 1, p. 116.

2. Mysticism of Human Communion

Radicalism of this response, both in matter and in forms, revealed in the life witness of Mother Maria, determines the feature of true Christianity defined by her as “*mysticism of human communion*.” This concept, covering the typical for the traditional religiosity dualistic “gap” between communicating with God and communicating with a fellow man is working out in the eponymous article, first published in almanac *Круг* (*The Circle*) in 1936, and later included into the more extensive essay *On Monasticism*. Neither “good deeds,” nor the “duty of obedience,” or the “measure of the rigorous kindness” understood as justice are able to draw outside one’s own “self” into the unprotected (in the sense that any religious, ideological and cultural “protections” don’t work there) “endless space of eternity, where the only thing is firm, certain and real, and that thing is cross;”²¹ to that only space, where human being can communicate with true God, but not with his (or her) own selfishness or illusions. The only option to enter this space and to stay in it was given by Christ, revealed by him as measureless “giving of oneself to the world.”²² So, it is no coincidence that the verb “to give” obtains so special significance in Mother Maria’s language.²³ It is understood radically as a synonym of the total self-denial, forgetting about oneself:

Keep nothing for yourself. Lay aside not only material wealth but spiritual wealth as well, changing everything into Christ’s love. (...) Here (...) there is no room for looking after one’s own spiritual treasures. Here everything is given up.²⁴

In other words, the only way to stay with God is to give up yourself to a fellow man, in whom God in this moment comes to us, “reaches” us, needs is. To give up totally, nothing reserving for oneself, and all the more, nothing waiting in return. That is a paradox of Incarnation, the “inverse

²¹ Мать Мария (Скобцова), *Прозрение в войне*, in eadem, *Стихотворения, поэмы, мистерии. Воспоминания об аресте и лагере в Равенсбрюк*, Paris: La Presse française et étrangère 1947, p. 459.

²² Мать Мария (Скобцова), *О монашестве*, p. 116. This thought appears in Mother Maria’s writings quite early. Already in the book of essays *Жатва Духа. Жития святых* (*Harvest of the Spirit. Life Stories of Saints*), written in 1927, when she little by little came to her understanding of monasticism as motherhood, later developed in the essays on the Mother of God, she tells about saints totally giving themselves not only to their own brethren, but to the external world.

²³ Cf. Mother Maria’s words, written by in K. Mochulsky: “I would like to give up myself totally, reserving nothing. There are no happy people at all, all are miserable....” К. Мочульский, *Мать Мария*, p. 70.

²⁴ Mother Maria (Skobtsova), *Types of Religious Lives*.

logic of Cross” – only forgetting about oneself, being ready to reject for the other not only visible, material comfort and goods, but the eternal good that is salvation, we enter into the mystery of God unceasingly giving Himself, and share not only the knowledge *about* Him, but His eternal being, partake in it:

he who gives away his human soul, receives in return eternal bliss, the divine gift of possessing the Kingdom of heaven. (...) By absenting himself from Christ in an act of the uttermost self-renunciation and love, he offers himself to others. If this is indeed an act of Christian love, if this self-renunciation is genuine, then he meets Christ himself face to face in the one to whom he offers himself. And in communion with him he communes with Christ himself. (...) That from which he absented himself he obtains anew, in love, and in a true communion with God. Thus the mystery of union with man becomes the mystery of union with God.²⁵

Let’s notice here the word “true.” It was doubtless for Mother Maria that the care about one’s inner life, personal piety and the prosperity of “our own community” gives mainly a pleasant, self-satisfying feeling of the spiritual well-being. Although being religiously colored, that is a life in “horizontal dimension only,” worshiping to the same pagan gods, but just with other names, while true God, spending himself, emptying himself can be recognized and met only in a human act of the God’s nature, that is unreserved spending up, total and unconditional self-giving.

3. Divine Liturgy beyond church walls

Thus mysticism of human communion, epigrammatically described by Mother Maria in imperative formulation: “the way to God lies through love to man – and there is no any other way”²⁶ grows into the mysticism of communion with God. It happens, first of all, through those, as Mother Maria puts it, “hardly grasped and even more hardly described”²⁷ relations, always present in every event of communion, solidarity and “causeless” compassion that she calls *Divine Liturgy beyond church walls*. The importance of this notion for Mother Maria’s theological thought becomes evident already from the fact that it is through it she defines the very essence of Christiani-

²⁵ Ibidem.

²⁶ К. Мочульский, *Мать Мария*, p. 70.

²⁷ See Мать Мария (Скобцова), *Воспоминания, статьи, очерки*, vol. 1, p. 256.

ty.²⁸ The concept doesn't carry in itself any polemic opposition of the social activism and contemplative life centered around the Church worship and sacraments, but, as Anna Shmaina-Velikanova has rightly mentioned, “the same communion with Christ, the unity into His Body, can happen both in the church and in the open market, if humans are able through their relations with each other to turn the market into the place where the Church is coming true.”²⁹ Church “comes true” not in the religious rhetoric, even not in the missionary activity, and surely, not in the institutional structures, but in the Liturgy, that is in the common, uniting “gathered together” in the act of offering and thanksgiving. In other words, if any inner opposition in the concept of *Divine Liturgy beyond church walls* does exist, it is opposes inclusive liturgical relations open to the world in its variety to the causative, pragmatic secular ones. In fact, it goes about sacrifice that being both offered “from all and for all” and offering itself, opens out church walls, thus revealing Eucharistic dimension of all, including those “non-church” in their form, connections between people:

the whole world becomes the single altar of a single temple, and for this universal Liturgy we must offer our hearts, like bread and wine, in order that they may be transubstantiated into Christ's love, that he may be born in them, that they may become “Godmanhood” hearts, and that he may give these hearts of ours as food for the world (...), so that in this way we may be one with him, not so that we should live anew but so that Christ should live in us, becoming incarnate in our flesh, offering our flesh upon the Cross of Golgotha, resurrecting our flesh, offering it as a sacrifice of love for the sins of the world, receiving it from us as a sacrifice of love to himself.³⁰

Thus “liturgical space” is spread all over the world, in and for which the sacrifice is offered, while the human life, every moment, word and act of it at least potentially becomes the liturgical offering and mystery. Misleading opposition of the “profane” and “sacred,” “church” and “secular” is sublated here; the quality of any act is determined not by its form, however religious or pious it would be, but by the “vector of self-giving” – it was

²⁸ Cf. “Here it is possible to speak of the whole of Christianity as an eternal offering of the Divine Liturgy beyond church walls.” Mother Maria (Skobtsova), *Types of Religious Lives*.

²⁹ See A. Шмайна-Великанова, *Внехрамовая литургия матери Марии*, <http://archive.sfi.ru/lib.asp?rubr_id=303&art_id=2619&print=1>.

³⁰ Mother Maria (Skobtsova), *Types of Religious Lives*. Cf.: “внехрамовая литургия и есть наше жертвенное служение в храме мира, украшенного живыми иконами Божиими” (“it is Liturgy beyond church walls that is our sacrificial ministry in the temple of the world, decorated with the living God's icons”). See Мать Мария (Скобцова), *О монашестве*, p. 119.

that exceptionally important inner motive of Mother Maria's behavior that wasn't felt and understood by those who blamed her for wearing monastic robe just for to enter easily to prefecture. In the situation, when the world is on the threshold of catastrophe, and Church isn't able to stop it, the idea of the *Divine Liturgy beyond church walls* becomes of the special significance. It is no just by coincidence in all Mother Maria's writings it introduces the final reflections about Church vocation in the "terrible times," and the concept itself is elaborated first of all in the articles written in those years when it became more and more obvious that Church has no former "safe place" in the world, while the world itself isn't an antonym to the Church, but "a new Golgotha" where in millions of the anonymous, unknown victims God is crucified. It suggests the way of breaking the existential deadlock, where the Christian community came to, being unable, despite all individual sacrifices, to stand against godless and man-hateful power, destroying all seemingly inviolable ideas about God and human being. When the concentration of meaninglessness, evil and indifference is so high, that it seems, God has abandoned this world (the common feeling of "philosophy after Shoah," the response to which Mother Maria has given long before this philosophy started to realize itself), a face of the other asking for compassion becomes God's icon. Further we would try to show that it was that vision shaping Mother Maria's attitude to Jews – for her helping them and sharing suffering with them was also *Divine Liturgy beyond church walls*, but per excellence, bringing the New Testament Church back to its initial calling – while now, following Mother Maria's thought dare to generalize: as soon as to meet God in a fellow man is possible under any circumstances, any human act of sharing, partaking, openness and compassion can be a liturgical offering uniting us with other "in Christ's sacrifice and love," i.e. can be the Church act in proper sense of the word.

4. Calling to outcastness

This changes significantly the very understanding of the Church, not only of the frontiers and "periphery" of it, but also of its nature and mission. The ecclesiological vision, presented by Mother Maria, requires special research, while here we would like to emphasize those key ideas that explain, on our opinion, the turn of her reflections on Jewish problematic into the tideway of the relations between Old Testament and New Testament Churches. It was clear for her: if the Church is built and fulfills its vocation

in the mystery of human communion, i.e. *through* the relations between humans and *in* the relations,³¹ in the interconnection of the Divine Liturgy inside the church walls and beyond them, its position in the world is determined completely by vulnerability and insecurity of these relations, revealing, in fact, vulnerability of human nature of Christ and his kenosis. If in the heart of the Church life there is the Eucharistic sacrifice of self-giving love, uniting “us (...) who become partakers of the one Bread and the Cup (...) in love unfeigned,”³² it means that Church by its very nature can’t pretend to any stability and security, any power in this world, and still less to the earthly triumph. On the contrary, “we are called to be poor in spirit, to be fools for Christ, we, who are called to persecution and abuse – we know that this is the only calling given to us by the persecuted, abused, disdained and humiliated Christ.”³³ In other words, for remaining faithful to its own nature and calling Church has to show those suffering and seeking consolation not the golden domes and the splendor of the altars, not the comfort of the religious life, and even not a well-elaborated theological and ethical system (“doctrine”), but the “outcastness” of Christ – his glory in lowering himself. However the in-depth tragedy of the Church is that it makes head against this calling, constantly looking, as Mother Maria says, for “abnormal and unnatural union”³⁴ with state, and thus, accepting the welfare provided by state altogether with conditions set forth by it, substitutes the suffering and merciful face of Christ with sweet or frightening pious picture, while eschatology with institutionalism. Even now, when being deprived of any earthly foundations, such as “traditional Orthodox culture,” state support etc, it is “free to live only by its own intrinsic laws,”³⁵ it still prefers not a freedom, although risky and hard, providentially opened in persecutions and visible ill-being, but an earthly prosperity and power, holding so firmly onto the sanctity of the exterior religious forms like a rites, canons, rules and nostalgically longing after “Golden Age” of church-state *symphonia*. Mother

³¹ Cf. the words from the poem *Человек (A Man)* by the older contemporary of Mother Maria and one of her companions at the religious-philosophical encounters in Petersburg, Vyacheslav Ivanov: “Свершается Церковь, когда друг другу в глаза мы глядим” (“Church accomplishes when we are looking into eyes of each other”). See В. Иванов, *Человек*, Paris: Дом книги 1939.

³² *The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great*, <http://www.goarch.org/chapel/liturgical_texts/basil>.

³³ Mother Maria (Skobtsova), *Types of Religious Lives*.

³⁴ Мать Мария (Скобцова), *Размышления о судьбах Европы и Азии*, p. 494.

³⁵ Мать Мария (Скобцова), *Настоящее и будущее Церкви*, in eadem, *Воспоминания, статьи, очерки*, vol. 2, p. 236.

Maria says it, first of all, about the Russian Orthodox church in diaspora, however, as it follows, for instance, from the article *Thoughts on the Fates of Europe and Asia* (*Размышления о судьбах Европы и Азии*), written in 1941, this disease has cankered the New Testament Church as whole – it is also follows the worldly paths, accepting the “monstrous compromise with the state”³⁶ and being irresistible to the temptation of the spiritual comfort of all possible denominational “colors.” In this sense, Mother Maria suggests, the present situation, when not just one of the local Churches, but Christianity itself as a message about the Incarnation, is endangered by two equally godless and humanless systems (Nazism and Bolshevism in this regard aren’t differ from each other), is rather healing for the Church. It is put into the question now, but if it would agree to hear in this question not a human threat only, but God’s call, it would come out of it “maybe weakened, humiliated, bloody and persecuted, but inwardly free,”³⁷ i.e., it would be able to come back to itself. However, for this return would happen, it has to restore itself not as an institution but as a “living personality” through the meeting on the paths of “outcastness” with the Old Testament Church, preserving that personal feeling of the personal God³⁸ as Mother Maria in *Thoughts on the fates of Europe and Asia* states, and in this sense the present situation of persecutions can be seen as providential for both Churches.

Here is the starting point for Mother Maria’s “Jewish discourse.” However, before presenting some features of it few preliminary remarks have to be done. First, it has to be mentioned, that the vast majority of researchers discuss “Jewish issues” in Mother Maria’s writings and life experience only in the context of her social activity, as one more manifestation of her “universal compassion” to all persecuted and abused, and only in few works³⁹ the attempt is made to see the theological dimension of it of her position, although as applied to the life and activity of Mother Maria, any division into “theological reflection” and “practice,” distinctively or implicitly present

³⁶ See Мать Мария (Скобцова), *Размышления о судьбах Европы и Азии*, p. 495-496.

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 496.

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 489.

³⁹ See, for instance: А. Шмайна-Великанова, *Внехрамовая литургия матери Марии*, <http://archive.sfi.ru/lib.asp?rubr_id=303&art_id=2619&print=1>; Е.Д. Аржаковская-Клепинина, *Мать Мария и судьба еврейского народа*, “Христианос” VIII (1999), p. 103-112; Г. Беневич, *Мать Мария и ее вышивка “Житие царя Давида,”* <<http://www.mere-marie.com/217.htm>>; А.И. Шмайна-Великанова, *Эсхатологические предпосылки экклезиологического учения прмц. Марии (Скобцовой)*, <<http://theolcom.ru/doc/day3.sect2.07.Shmaina-Velikanova.pdf>>; Н. Ликвинцева, *Мать Мария (Скобцова) и Эдит Штайн: мысль о святости и святость* (in manuscript), and some other works.

in the scholars’ approaches to her heritage, is deeply mistaken. Her “practice” is theologically rooted, while her theology is very “practical.” Any theoretical or artistic reflection is inseparable from the action, checking and confirming the authenticity of what was said or painted, and in this identity of saying and action, where action is seen as an “incarnated” image or word, she finds the meaning of any creative act.⁴⁰ The second, the word “compassion” in Mother Maria’s life context, also needs some clarifications. It goes not only about immediate compassionate impulse of heart responding to the other’s misery and pain, but compassion can be named her “methodological principle.” Any of her writings aren’t abstract speculations; if she writes, she always does it only from both the impossibility to distance yourself and the inner necessity to meet the challenge of time or respond the direct question of it. It explains, why before World War II has began, she didn’t interested in Jewish issues at all, although the image of king David, central for her reflection on Jewish fates during the wartime, as well as the idea of calling to the compassion and “outcastness” appeared in her writings rather early.⁴¹ While to the direct artistic⁴² and religious-philosophical reflections on fates and destiny of Jewish nation she addresses only in the beginning of 1940th, when the fates of the concrete Jewish people were endangered. As Konstantin Mochulsky wrote, Mother Maria immediately recognized in the persecutions of Jews not only suffering that calls for self-denying help, but the same as Berdyaev, saw in them an hour of new crucifixion a challenge to the whole Church:

There is not only a Jewish question, but a Christian question. Don’t you realize that the battle is being waged against Christianity? (...) The age of confessors has arrived.⁴³

She responds to this challenge in three interrelated ways: *practically*, hiding Jews in the church houses on rue de Lurmel, and in Noisy-le-Grand, arranging false documents for them, bringing food and water to Velodrome

⁴⁰ See, for instance: Мать Мария (Скобцова), *Истоки творчества*, in eadem, *Жатва Духа*, p. 189-202.

⁴¹ As Russian researcher of Mother Maria’s writings Natalia Likvintseva suggests, it can be traced already in her articles for the emigrant newspapers of the end of 1920s. See, for instance: *Герань и Иван Калита*, “Дни,” no 1353 (1928), March, 9, p. 3, or *Два события*, “Дни,” no 1387 (1928), April, 12, p. 2. Both articles are signed “E. Skobtsova.”

⁴² Thus in 1939–1940 she makes the magnificent embroidery “Life of King David,” presented the figure of Psalmsinger surrounded by eight scenes from his life. See Г. Беневич, *Мать Мария и ее вышивка “Житие царя Давида.”*

⁴³ К. Мочулску, *Монахиня Мария*, p. 75.

d'Hiver sports stadium where on the night of 15/16, June, after the mass battue about 13000 Paris Jews were gathered before sending to the concentration camps Dransy and Auschwitz, smuggling children out of the Nazi ghettos in trashcans, together with Fr. Dimitry Klepinin issuing baptismal certificates;⁴⁴ *theologically* – by the article *Thoughts on the Fates of Europe and Asia*; *poetically* – by echoing with the *Thoughts on the Fates of Europe and Asia* mystery drama *Soldiers (Солдаты)*, written in the second half of 1942 and by the poem *Star of David*, principal for the understanding of the Jewish motives in Mother Maria's heritage:

Two triangles, a star,
The shield of King David, our forefather.
This is election, not offense.
The great path and not an evil.

Sign of Yahweh, of Lord of hosts,
The unity of God and creation,
The mysterious revelation
That you have seen.

Once more in a term fulfilled,
Once more roars the trumpet of the end;
And the fate of a great people
Once more is by the prophet proclaimed to us.

Thou art persecuted again, O Israel,
But what can human malice mean to thee,
who have heard
the thunder from Sinai?

And let thou art, who sealed by seal,
That seal of six-angle star,
Learn to respond with free, unbounded spirit
To the sign of bondage⁴⁵

⁴⁴ More detailed story see in S. Hackel, *One of Great Price. The life of Mother Marie Sko-btsova. Martyr of Ravensbrück*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd Limited 1965.

⁴⁵ “Два треугольника, звезда, // Щит праотца, царя Давида, – // Избрание, а не обида, // Великий путь, а не беда. // Знак Сущего, знак Егвы, // Слиянность Бога и Творенья, // Таинственное откровенье, // Которое узрели вы. // Ещё один исполнен срок. // Опять гремит труба Исхода. // Судьбу избранного народа // Вещает снова нам пророк. // Израиль, ты опять гоним, // Но что людская воля злая, // Когда тебя в грозе Синая // Вновь вопрошает Элогим? // И пусть же ты, на ком печать, // Печать звезды шестиугольной, // Научись душою вольной // На знак неволи отвечать.” See <http://azbyka.ru/tserkov/svyatyte/sviatie_na_karte_miral/parigskie_sviashtnomucheniki-all.shtml>.

First, third and fourth stanzas are given in the translation by Jim Forest. See <<http://www>>.

Written on June, 7, 1942, a day, when Paris Jews were ordered to put on yellow star, this poem may sound too declarative, that the more so unusual, knowing about Mother Maria’s strong dislike of any “declamation.” Not a poetical masterpiece, especially comparing with her other poems, it came out as an immediate response to the “non-poetical” situation, and the immediacy of it made impossible any special care about the literary form. It is built as an extensive antinomy – the same antinomic was Mother Maria’s vision of the fates both of the chosen people and the “branch” grafted to it:⁴⁶ “evil” becomes “*the great path*,” “sign of bondage” turn to a challenge to the “*free, unbounded spirit*.” The same antinomically the traditional cultural symbols of Jewry are interpreted: “*the shield of king David, our forefather*” in the present historical circumstances becomes a target, a mark, pointing to the victim, and the same time it is a true shield, “separating” people, pointing to their election; “a seal” is both a symbol of bandage, blaze, slavery, “curse of Cain,” by which those outcast are recognized, and eschatological “imprinting,” sealing by God; finally, the age-long, non-stop persecutions and “outcastness” turns out to be a new Exodus. This “outcastness,” however, associated by Mother Maria with the fate of Jewish nation (thus, in the mystery drama *Soldiers* it is represented by the old man Ahasver), is neither a cultural constant of its destiny, nor a predestination, within the strict frameworks of which this destiny can be understood, and the more so, not “evil circumstances” that can be “corrected” by clinging to something more safe and stable, but a challenge, a call addressed to the nation, a visible “sign” of the election and simultaneously a sign of the witness the New Testament Church needs so much. Finally, it is a question to the nation, “*have heard the thunder from Sinai*.”⁴⁷ God asks – people have to answer. For Israel (and for the Church as a new Israel), this is, Mother Maria believes, a universal situation, doesn’t depending on the particular historical circumstances. God asks even when he is silent – while his people have to

incommunion.org/2004/10/18/saint-of-the-open-door/>; the second and the last one are in our translation.

⁴⁶ Cf. in *Soldiers* mystery drama: “Тогда обрублены все ветви были // еще в раю нам выросшей маслины // И дикую маслину к ней привили. // Весь мир своей листвою осенила – // И имя ей – Христово тело, Церковь.” (“Then all the branches // of olive that has grown already in Paradise were cut // and wild olive was grafted to it // The name of it Christ’s Body // That is Church”). See Мать Мария (Скобцова), *Солдаты*, in eadem, *Равнина русская*, p. 335.

⁴⁷ In the Russian text this idea of questioning is expressed even more clearly: “Когда тебя в огне Синая вновь вопрошает Элогим” (“When in the thunder of Sinai thou art asked by Elohim”), in eadem, *Равнина русская*, p. 220.

respond even when they are unable to find words. What can be the answer in the situation of the tragic wordlessness, especially now, when Jews are, in fact, between two questions – one is of God, about the very being and faithfulness of his people, and the second is of history, about the survival of them? For Mother Maria, taking into account the whole complex of her ideas concerning election and special place of the nation in history,⁴⁸ presented already in her writings since the end of 1929th it is clear:

*to respond with free, unbounded spirit
To the sign of bondage.*

So, it goes about the inner freedom, but where would it come from in the situation of the total persecutions? Mother Maria's answer is following: it is in the very fact of election, mentioned in the opening stanza (*"This is election, not offense"*). The last stanza, thus, echoes with the first one, interlocks with it, while the first – isn't an ethically risky assertion anymore, but a reminder about the "source" of this freedom: it is rooted in the election that always carries in itself outcastness, "strangeness" to this world.⁴⁹ Moreover, the abrupt change of the pronoun of the addressee in the third stanza from the second person (*"The mysterious revelation // That you have seen"*) to the first one (*"Once more is by the prophet proclaimed to us"*) emphasizes that this reminder about the "root" of the freedom is directed to the New Testament Church too: those exodus and outcastness are common both in the sense of solidarity with Christ, crucifying now in those persecuted (*"All Israel carries the Golgotha Cross now"*⁵⁰) and in the sense of the common vocation.

E. Arzhakoskaya in her analysis of the mystery drama *Soldiers*⁵¹ considers that for Mother Maria that path of Jewish outcastness, began since "cross has cut universe"⁵² will successfully end with "re-unification of two

⁴⁸ See, for instance, her article *Герань и Иван Калита*, "Дни" no 1353 (1928), March, 9, p. 3; "Шуба от северного ветра." See "Дни" no 1376 (1928), April, 1, p. 2; *Испытание свободой*, in *Мать Мария* (Скобцова), *Жатва Духа*, p. 227-430 etc.

⁴⁹ Maybe partly it was inherited by Mother Maria common intuition of the election as outcastness, typical for the for the Silver age culture. See, for instance in Marina Tsvetaeva's *Poem of the End*: "Ghetto of God's chosen! // The divide And the ditch: // Expect no mercy! // In your most Christian of worlds // Poets – are Jews!" The evident poetical "echoing" between Marina Tsvetaeva and Mother Maria, requires, on our mind, special detailed research.

⁵⁰ *Мать Мария* (Скобцова), *Размышления о судьбах Европы и Азии*, p. 496.

⁵¹ See Е.Д. Аржаковская-Клепинина, *Мать Мария и судьба еврейского народа*, p. 106-112.

⁵² *Мать Мария* (Скобцова), *Солдаты*, p. 335.

sisters, Christ’s Church and Old Testament one... in the name of love that is crucified, and she (i.e. Mother Maria) is ready to participate in this miracle, sharing the fate of the chosen people.”⁵³ Really, such thought can be found in the mystery:

Bless, bless, o Lord
Tell that a daring hand would help two sisters to conjoin each other
In the name of crucifying love....⁵⁴

Twice, i.e. in *Thoughts on the fates of Europe and Asia* and in *Soldiers*, it is proved by the allusion to the famous statues on Strasbourg Cathedral, symbolizing Synagogue and Church. One of them, that is presenting Synagogue is with blindfold, and reflecting on this allegory, Mother Maria says that “Church has to be able to remove a blindfold from her sister’s eyes,”⁵⁵ thus bringing her back from her “outcastness.” But here it has to be mentioned that in Mother Maria’s language such concepts as outcastness, exodus, and homelessness are rather positive, especially as applied to Church. They are opposite to self-sufficient sluggishness, attachment to the “secular rules – keep, preserve, hoard, save up”⁵⁶ and spiritual comfort, so following this logic we are dare to assume that it goes about the reciprocal re-unification. It isn’t only a time for the Old Testament Church “to meet with Messiah sometime unrecognized, thus creating Christian Church of Israel,”⁵⁷ but the New Testament Church also has to unite with Old Testament one, joining it in deliberating exodus, accepting its path of outcastness in this world as “the only natural in a time of the Church history.”⁵⁸

Thus, the tragedy of Jewry, having no political, no economical explanation (and justifications all the more so), is “read” by Mother Maria as a fate of the Old Testament Church, asking Christianity for help and protection, and the same time providentially revealing its New Testament sister the hard paradox of election. If New Testament Church witnesses that “Cross is both a friend and guard, the source of living springs, the source of strength,”⁵⁹ the Old Testament by its very fate reminds symbolically what does this “friendship with Cross” means. If New Testament Church has to “remove a blindfold from her sister’s eyes,” the calling of the Old Testa-

⁵³ Е.Д. Аржаковская-Клепинина, *Мать Мария и судьба еврейского народа*, р. 109.

⁵⁴ Мать Мария (Скобцова), *Солдаты*, р. 335.

⁵⁵ Мать Мария (Скобцова), *Размышления о судьбах Европы и Азии*, р. 497.

⁵⁶ Мать Мария (Скобцова), *Под знаком гибели*, “Новый град” 13 (1938), р. 150-151.

⁵⁷ Мать Мария (Скобцова), *Размышления о судьбах Европы и Азии*, р. 497.

⁵⁸ Мать Мария (Скобцова), *Настоящее и будущее Церкви*, р. 236.

⁵⁹ Мать Мария (Скобцова), *Солдаты*, р. 336.

ment Church is to liberate her “sister” from the bandages of the earthly comfort and establishment, to remind her that it is called to the “otherness,” that it is not a “structure,” but a “stranger,” called to the same “great path,” the only place where not political or religious, but eschatological encounter of the sisters, recognizing each other in persecuted God is possible:

Liberated from the union with state, persecuted Church sees now nearby the erstwhile defeated sister, Old Testament Church, the same persecuted, but keeping on to be a living personality. They are nearby to each other now, looking straight to the face of the same tormentors. By the will of the outside world a new, mysterious union is born between them now. Maybe this union is the most valuable and significant of all that happens in the world today.⁶⁰

In her article *Внехрамовая литургия матери Марии* Anna Shmaina-Velikanova suggests that Mother Maria’s position towards Jews – both practical activity and theoretical reflection on the Jewish issues⁶¹ has anticipated to a large extent and in some sense has annulated the post-war Jewish-Christian dialog. It would be more properly to say, on our opinion, that it has set for the Christian Church the clear and authentic coordinates system for this dialog – “mysticism and mystery of human communion” revealing in the other the image of the living God; “Divine Liturgy beyond Church walls” as the act of the unconditional and non-pragmatic compassion and ecclesiology of election as outcastness, giving both churches the joyful possibility to see true self in the other.

⁶⁰ Мать Мария (Скобцова), *Размышления о судьбах Европы и Азии*, р. 496.

⁶¹ А.И. Шмаина-Великанова, *Внехрамовая литургия матери Марии*.

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Wittgenstein and Hasidism: Some Remarks

Introduction

The available literature does not furnish any statements directly concerned with Hasidism on the part of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951). Nevertheless, it is possible to identify some features of the philosopher’s life that would justify the supposition that he did have, at the very least, a passing acquaintance with the main ideas of this religious movement, as well as with the distinctive approach to spirituality and everyday life of its representatives, and that he encountered something of the latter in both Galicia and Vienna, albeit only in the form of casual street encounters.

We cannot know whether, for Wittgenstein, the impressions formed by such experiences served as a reference point for serious reflection on the nature and implications of Hasidism. Hence this article will be limited to giving a short description of Hasidism and its religious and social positioning within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and to illustrating, against this background, how particular places in Galicia and Vienna where he stayed were connected to Hasidic communities, the character of his relations with his Jewish friends, and the nature of the reading matter about Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the movement, that he would have had at his disposal.

1. The Hasidim

Hasidism (Hassidism, Chassidism) is a popular religious movement led by several dynasties of spiritual leader or *Rebbe*. The spiritual founder of

Hasidic Judaism is considered to be the Jewish mystical rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, frequently referred to as Baal Shem Tov (or by the acronym “the Besht”).¹ He was born 1698, in the small, Ukrainian village of Okopy. In 1730 he came to Międzybórz (today in the Ukraine), where he died in 1760. In his teachings he emphasized the role of religious spirit, as distinct from the forms of religion. The being of religion is not to be constituted from the results of speculation but from study of the Torah and the approach to everyday life. Besht preferred a strong pious dedication to serving God to human institutions constructed to commodify a supreme being. As one pair of commentators point out, “Given the extent of Baal Shem Tov’s influence it is perhaps unsurprising that the growth of this new movement engendered considerable hostility on the part of rabbinic authorities.”² For example, the rabbinic leadership of Vilnius issued an act of excommunication, charging the Hasidim with permissiveness in their observance of the commandments, laxity in the study of the Torah, excess in prayer, and preference for the Lurianic rather than the Ashkenazic prayer book. In subsequent years the Hasidim and their opponents, the *Mitnagdim*, bitterly denounced one another. In our time the best-known Hasidic group is the Lubavitch. The Lubavitcher Rebbes can be traced back directly to Besht and Rabbi Dov Ber, the Maggit. When Dov Ber died in 1772, Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745–1813) became the third Rebbe, and the first Rebbe of the Lubavitcher succession.³ His son and successor, Dov Baer of Lubavitch, put great stress on meditation as a form of spiritual life.

Based in New York since 1917, the Lubavitcher, with a charismatic leader whom many have come to regard as the Messiah, actively seek to draw all Jews into stricter observance of the commandments and the pursuit of wisdom and understanding. Although the early Hasidim were criticized by their contemporaries for laxity in observance, innovations in prayer and study and alleged magical powers, their present-day successors are known for their stringency and conservative lifestyle.

Some of the more assimilated Galician Jews found, and continue to find, the Hasidic lifestyle embarrassingly anachronistic. According to one scholar, “Traditionalist rabbis and Talmudic scholars (the *Mitnagdim*) and, most

¹ Cf. D. Cohn-Sherbok, L. Cohn-Sherbok, *Jewish & Christian Mysticism. An Introduction*, New York: Continuum Publishing Company 1994, p. 61-63.

² Ibidem, p. 61. Cf. J. Bloomberg, *The Jewish World in the Modern Age*, Jersey City: KTAV Publishing House 2004, p. 123-124.

³ Cf. J. Feldman, *Lubavitchers as Citizens. A Paradox of Liberal Democracy*, New York: Cornell University Press 2003, p. 23, cf. p. 28.

especially, the Hasidim, rejected assimilation into the larger society.”⁴ We should also mention that despite the prominent Jewish presence in the economic and political life of the “Imperial and Royal” Habsburg Monarchy, the vast majority of Galicia’s Jews lived in conditions of poverty.⁵

1.1. Mysticism

The Hasidim popularized mystic teachings which, until then, had been the preserve of small groups of initiates. Rabbi Dov Baer, the *Maggid* (preacher) of Mezritch (1772–1827), was persuaded to join the movement. He was one of the leaders of the Hasidic movement and a follower of the founder, Baal Shem Tov (“the Besht”). Rabbi Dov Baer expounded on the verses of the Torah: “You shall make teshuvah ad Adonai Elohecha. You should repent unto the LORD your God” (Dt. 4:30).⁶ Dov Baer instigated a tradition of charismatic itinerant preachers.

1.1.1. Devekut

The strength of the Hasidic movement lies in the institution of the *Saddik* (*Tsadic*, *Zaddik* or *Rabbi*, “the proven one” or “righteous one”). “According to Hasidism, the Saddikim were spiritually superior individuals who had attained the highest level of *devekut*” (cleaving, adhering to God).⁷ It is possible for every Jew to reach *devekut*, and all areas of life present opportunities for it. *Devekut* is

(...) the initial rung on the spiritual ladder of ascension, which should be maintained constantly during the ordinary Hasid’s daily life and work. Thus the Hasidic concept of *devekut* is regarded as replacing the messianic endeavour that was central to Lurianic and Sabbatian conceptions of worship.⁸

⁴ P.R. Magosci, *Galicja. A European Land*, in C. Hann, P.R. Magosci (eds.), *Galicja. A Multicultural Land*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2005, p. 11.

⁵ See <<http://www.jewish-guide.pl/sites/36>> (Internet quotation: 28.01.2011).

⁶ P. Steinberg, *Celebrating the Jewish Year*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society 2007, p. 82. Teshuvah (repentance) is an important process of spiritual cleansing and healing. Teshuvah is a method of examination of the self and its relationship with the entire universe. “The Jewish conception of God is one of immanence and transcendence – what is inside, outside and beyond” (p. 81).

⁷ D. Cohn-Sherbok, L. Cohn-Sherbok, *Jewish & Christian Mysticism. An Introduction*, p. 62 (Devekut).

⁸ Cf. J. Dan, *Hasidism*, <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Hasidism/Teachings_and_Literature>.

Two roads lead to *devekut*:

1) The Hasid's own efforts: he studies the Torah, fulfils the sacred duty to observe God's commandments and obligations to other human beings (*mitzvod*), engages in prayer – all with the aim of acquiring *devekut*. For some Hasidim, *devekut* was understood as the annihilation of selfhood and the ascent of the soul to divine light. The study of the Torah is the sort of existential practice where the question "How is this text changing me?" inevitably arises, rather than a historical practice in which objective detachment from the text can be maintained.⁹ The observance of God's commandments should be joyful, the prayer heartfelt, the love for God and the world He created boundless. The critics of Hasidism placed the study of the Torah at the centre of Jewish religious life, while Hasidism itself elevated prayer, enthusiasm, and spiritual devotion to prime importance.

2) Guidance from the Saddik. The Saddikim were like spiritual directors, mystics who could guide their followers and elevate their souls to the divine light. It is necessary to pursue the two roads together. Some of the Hasidim have no opportunity to do *mizvod* or study the Torah, while others have the chance but are unable to achieve an unchanging state of *devekut*. In such cases the Saddik must become involved. The Saddikim were attacked for assuming the powers of mediators between God and ordinary people. As it developed, the movement split into local groups, each with a Saddik who was revered as a leader, and perhaps as a miracle worker, which was a further source of concern to critics of a more rationalist bent.

1.1.2. G-d and the world

The Besht and his followers declared the omnipresence of God. He is present at every place:

the doctrine of *tzimtzum* was interpreted by Hasidic sages as only an apparent withdrawal of the divine presence. The divine light, they believed, shines everywhere. As the Besht himself explained: "in all of man's troubles, physical and spiritual, even in such trouble, God Himself is there."¹⁰

Tzimtzum concerns the ontological presence of God in the process of the creation of the universe. When God wanted to create the world, He reduced Himself (R.I. Luria) in order to create an unoccupied space for creation. The Besht underlined the psychological presence in individuals of "sparks

⁹ Cf. M.-A. Ouaknin, *Chasydzi*, trans. by K. i K. Pruscy, Warszawa: Cyklady 2002, p. 87-97.

¹⁰ D. Cohn-Sherbok, L. Cohn-Sherbok, *Jewish & Christian Mysticism. An Introduction*, p. 62.

of the Divine” (“sparks of holiness”), which everything is infused by. “The Hasidic revolution consists of the personalisation of these sparks.”¹¹ Everybody is supposed to search for them, everywhere: in trees, stones, in all of man’s actions. Everybody plays a part in the majestic presence of G-d (*Shekinah*) in the physical world. This participation enables him to be a co-worker with God in the process of perfecting the world that is supposed to lead it towards redemption.

On the one hand this pantheistic mysticism – the view of man’s surroundings that professes to see elements of God in everything – should not be confused with Spinoza’s pantheistic theory to the effect that God and nature are identical. The latter is a kind of alternative natural religion that culminates in the “intellectual love of God” (love through knowledge).¹² On the other hand there is the fact that mysticism and pantheism are naturally related to one another: all mysticism inclines towards pantheism. If the mystical union constitutes a plenum, then there is nothing else but God, in whom all is rescued. One of the ways of avoiding pantheism proposed by the Hasidim is to distinguish between “G-d” (God) and “that which is “G-dly” (G-dliness). Each of us possesses a Godly soul, which is a spark of pure G-dliness. As such the soul – if it is not obscured by our own ego – is equipped with infinite abilities.¹³ The Hasidic emphasis on the immanence of God is to be regarded as a form of panentheism (the whole is in G-d) rather than pantheism (G-d is the whole). The G-dly in the world must be brought through our action to ever greater and purer perfection.

2. The Hasidim in Austrian Galicia

As a place, Galicia came to represent something important within the history of all elements of the Jewish Diaspora. During the 19th and 20th centuries Galician Jews made up the majority of subjects of the Mosaic faith within the territories of the “Imperial and Royal” Habsburg Monarchy. At

¹¹ M.-A. Ouaknin, *Chasydzi*, p. 81.

¹² The first to see the similarity between Spinoza’s pantheism and that of the Besht was the philosopher Solomon Maimon. Cf. E. Schweid, *The Philosophy of the Bible as Foundation of Jewish Culture*, Brighton/MA: Academic Studies Press 2008, p. 9. Cf. M. Idel, *Hasidism. Between Ecstasy and Magic*, Albany/NY: State University of New York Press 1995, p. 17.

¹³ “Chassidus teaches us that it is only through the physical performance of an act that the ‘spark’ of G-dliness is revealed. When a physical object is used in the fulfilment of a mitzvah, it becomes holy.” J. Feldman, *Lubavitchers as Citizens. A Paradox of Liberal Democracy*, p. 23, cf. p. xiv, 122, 134.

the same time, they formed a cultural bridge between the so-called *Westjuden* (Western Jewry) and *Ostjuden* (Eastern Jewry). At a time when Zionist and Jewish socialist movements were flourishing, numerous outstanding Jewish political figures and scholars were born or raised in Galicia (e.g. Karl Radek, Isaac Deutscher and Martin Buber). The specific style of life of a Galician Shtetl was recorded in Hasidic tales, in the books of Bruno Schulz, Emil Franzos, Manes Sperber and others. However, scholarly studies of Jewish Galicia have so far tended to be outdated and relatively brief, with scholars mainly treating information about Galicia as supplementary data of secondary importance. This means that Galicia remains, even for educated Americans and Western Europeans, a land of mystery.

A large majority of West-Galician Jews were concentrated in the eastern parts of this region, mostly in the towns. In 1910, Jews constituted 21.3% of the entire population in Cracow, 14.7% in Biała, 17.7% in Wadowice, 16.1% in Wieliczka, 19.2% in Bochnia, 27.9% in Podgórze, 32% in Nowy Sącz (all these towns are located in the western or central parts of Western Galicia) and 41.2% in Tarnów, 37.1% in Rzeszów, 22.3% in Jasło, 28.2% in Krosno, 51.2% in Gorlice (these towns are located in eastern parts of the region).¹⁴

Galicia was well known for being the principal site of the Hasidic movement. The name of the Besht – already mentioned here – is closely associated with the Galician cities of Brody and Tlost. His pupils were named after cities in Galicia: for example, Rabbi Yitzchak of Drohowice, Rabbi Avraham Gershon of Kitow, Rabbi Nachman of Horodenka.¹⁵ The centre of Hasidism during its early years was in Eastern Galicia. The Besht had numerous students, among them many from Galicia.

2.1. The shtetl

The majority of Jews in the Galicia region lived in the numerous “Jewish Streets” or *shtetls* to be found there. “Shtetl”¹⁶ means “small town,”¹⁷ but

¹⁴ Cf. P. Wrobel, *The Jews of Galicia under Austrian-Polish Rule, 1867–1918*, in *Austrian History Yearbook*, 25, 1994, p. 101, <www.jewishgen.org/galicia/html/jews_of_galicia.pdf>.

¹⁵ Cf. <<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O101-NamanofHorodenka.html>>.

¹⁶ Cf. B. Schulz, “Die Zimtläden” (1934), a childhood narrative about the “immersed” world of *shtetls* in Galicia.

¹⁷ Cf. G. Cohen, *Shtetl Finder. Gazetteer. Jewish Communities in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries in the Pale of Settlement of Russia and Poland, and in Lithuania, Latvia, Galicia, and Bukovina, with Names of Residents*, Westminster (Maryland): Heritage Books Inc 2007.

not any small town was a *shtetl*. A *shtetl* contained all the elements needed to sustain a community: streets, houses, public buildings, places for trade, for study and for worship, but to qualify as a *shtetl* a small town also needed to possess a certain intangible quality: a mixture of religion, philosophy, style of life, sum of beliefs and historical fate, which taken together made the place in question into something unique. Moreover, a *shtetl* could only ever be a small town in Eastern Europe – one inhabited mainly by Jews, and exhibiting all the complexity of their religious, social and political life.¹⁸ In the centre of a *shtetl* there was always a marketplace, with a well in the very middle. The houses of wealthier Jews were situated around the marketplace. On the ground floor there were shop-windows with large signs in Yiddish – the language that the Jews had brought with them from Germany and which had very quickly evolved into a conglomerate of German, Hebrew and Polish elements. At the same time, Hebrew, as a sacred language, was strictly reserved for prayers and religious practices.

J. Roth gives a vivid description of a *shtetl* when he writes that:

The little town lies in the middle of a great plain, not bounded by any hill or forest or river. It runs out into the plain. It begins with little huts and ends with them. After a while the huts are replaced by houses. Streets begin. One runs from north to south, the other from east to west. Where they intersect is the marketplace. At the far end of the north-south street is the railway station. A passenger train calls in once a day. A passenger train pulls out once a day. And yet, many people spend their entire day at the station. They are traders. Their interest legitimately extends to freight trains... The town has 18,000 inhabitants, of whom 15,000 are Jews.¹⁹

One of the better-known Jewish communities in the western part of East Galicia (Western Ukraine) and, amongst Eastern European cities, the second

¹⁸ See <<http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Shtetl>>. “For all their diversity, these *shtetls* in Eastern Europe were indeed markedly different from previous kinds of Jewish Diaspora settlement in Babylonia, France, Spain, or Italy. In those other countries, Jews had lived scattered among the general population or, conversely, inhabited a specific section of town or a Jewish street. Rarely did they form a majority. This was not true of the *shtetl*, where Jews sometimes comprised 80% or more of the population. In many *shtetls*, Jews occupied most of the town, especially the streets grouped around the central marketplace. Poorer Jews would live further from the centre and the frequently agrarian gentiles would often be concentrated on the peripheral streets, in order to be closer to the land that they cultivated”.

¹⁹ J. Roth, *The Wandering Jews (Juden auf Wanderschaft, 1927)*, cited from: J. Evans, *Melodies of Melancholy. J. Roth, master elegist of the Hapsburg Empire*, <<http://www.newstatesman.com/200102120046>>.

largest, was that of Brody.²⁰ With the highest proportion of Jews amongst the population (88%) it served as the home town for Baal Shem Tov.

2.2. The Hasidim in Cracow

Similar changes to those occurring in Vienna's Jewish community took place in Cracow's smaller and more conservative one. Since the 1840s, several modern Jewish institutions had been created. Some of them were politically pro-Polish, in spite of the fact that the older generation of its members did not speak Polish. Both reformed and orthodox Jews stood in the 1848 parliamentary elections. In 1862, and later in 1868, a larger temple replaced the small reformed synagogue that had been founded in the 1840s. The preachers in the temple spoke in German and Polish, while Galician enthusiasts of *Haskalah*²¹ helped to disseminate the ideas and principles of the movement across Russia. For various reasons, the conservative Galician Jews found themselves unable to stop the modernization and growing influence of the relatively small number of *Maskilim*. Conservative forces were divided: rabbinical orthodoxy had to fight against Hasidism. In 1785, the *Misnagdim*,²² as "opponents" of Hasidism, fiercely attacked Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Epstein of Cracow. In "Maor ve-Shemesh," Epstein had sought to describe both his own ecstatic experiences and those of others. "Through humility, he argued, it is possible to be stripped of one's corporeality so as to attain a spiritual state; in this way a person can ascend to the heavenly heights."²³

²⁰ J. Roth was born in Brody. "In der Zeit von Joseph Roths Kindheit war Brody bereits eine heruntergekommene Stadt, und Reiseberichte zeigen es als einen Inbegriff des ostjüdischen Elends." M. Müller, *Zu Joseph Roths erster Galizien-Reportage "Leute und Gegend,"* in T. Eicher (ed.), *Joseph Roth und die Reportage*, Heidelberg: Mattes Verlag, 2010, p. 179.

²¹ The 18th century "Haskalah" ("Jewish Enlightenment") movement was an expression of a more sympathetic attitude among Jews towards the secular world of their gentile neighbours, characterised by opposition to Hasidism, adoption by Jews of agricultural and handicraft practices, and a desire to keep in touch with the times. Its adherents are commonly called *Maskilim*. Cf. <<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=350&letter=H#ixzz19ncEi2EV>>.

²² "Misnagdim" gained a common usage among European Jews as the term used to refer to Ashkenazi Jews who opposed the rise and spread of the early Hasidic movement, particularly as embodied by Rabbi Baal Shem Tov. Most prominent among the Misnagdim was Rabbi Elijah (Eliyahu) ben Shlomo Zalman (1720–1797). Cf. J. Bloomberg, *The Jewish World in the Modern Age*, Jersey City: KTAV Publishing House 2004, p. 124.

²³ D. Cohn-Sherbok, L. Cohn-Sherbok, *Jewish & Christian Mysticism. An Introduction*, p. 74-76.

Kalonymus's son, Aron, founded the first Galician Hasidic synagogue in Cracow. Hasidism spread despite efforts to stop it on the part of the Austrian government and the excommunication of Hasidism by the rabbinical authorities in Cracow.²⁴ The area around Cracow was divided among local Saddikim: in 1816 Shalom Rokeah founded the Belz dynasty, while in 1830 Haim Halberstam established the conservative dynasty of Nowy Sącz (Zenz or Sandz in Yiddish). The struggle between Haskalah and the Hasidim reached its peak in the years 1815–1848, and by the middle of the 19th century the Hasidim dominated Galicia, where six out of every seven Jews adhered to this version of the Jewish faith. Numerous Saddikim started to occupy rabbinic posts. In the 1830s, a new trend appeared among Baal Shem Tov's admirers: a group of *Chidushim* (innovators) sought to amalgamate Hasidism with the rules of the rabbinical orthodoxy. This unification proved to be very important in the period of modernization, when the Hasidim and the orthodox Misnagdim were engaged in fighting together against the Maskilim. In 1882 a conference of orthodox rabbis and Hasidic Saddikim excommunicated all progressive Jews in Galicia. With all its denominations, ranging from the Orthodox to the Hasidic and the Reformist, Cracow was thus clearly an important centre of Jewish spiritual life in the region. In the period between the First and Second World Wars there were at least ninety synagogues active in the area.

3. Jewish communities in Vienna

The first mention of the presence of Jews in what is now Austria dates from the period of the Charlemagne dynasty, appearing in the so-called Raffelstätter customs regulations (*Raffelstätter Zollordnung*) from the mid-10th century, where Jewish merchants are mentioned as "lawful merchants."²⁵ In 1849, Emperor Franz Joseph stated in the official constitution that the enjoyment of civil and political rights was independent of religious confession: the constitution thus continued to retain the principle of religious liberty, and the administrative authorities continued to interpret the laws in a liberal fashion, with both the right of the Jews to acquire real estate and the

²⁴ Cf. P. Wrobel, *The Jews of Galicia under Austrian-Polish Rule, 1867–1918*, p. 110, <www.jewishgen.org/galicia/html/jews_of_galicia.pdf, p.10>.

²⁵ Cf. H. Adam, *Das Zollwesen im fränkischen Reich und das spätkarolingische Wirtschaftsleben*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 1996, p. 165. Cf. *Wiener Synagoge – Die Stadtempel von Wien*, <<http://bda.at/text/136/1244/6957/>>.

abolition of the restrictions on marriage expressly acknowledged. The path had opened up for Jews to be admitted into the bourgeoisie, and they were soon allowed to join clubs and societies of a cultural and charitable nature. In 1858, the construction of the largest synagogue in the Jewish Quarter of Vienna (in the 2nd District) – the Tempelgasse – was completed.²⁶ Jewish emigration to Vienna continued, and a year later so many new orthodox Jews had arrived that they established their own synagogue. Full citizenship rights were given to Jews in 1867, leading to a large influx of immigrants from the Eastern part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, especially from Bukovina and Galicia. Jewish people became predominant in all spheres of life and contributed to Vienna's cultural and scientific achievements: by the turn of the 20th century, Jewish businessmen, merchants, traders, and entrepreneurs were making a major contribution to the prosperity of the city. In 1878 the journalist Theodor Herzl came to Vienna from Budapest, and in 1896 he published the *The Jewish State (Der Judenstaat)* – a book that provided the foundations for political Zionism. Herzl treated the Jewish question as a political issue to be settled by a world council of nations. The families of Strauss, Freud, Mahler, Schnitzler, Herzl and other major cultural figures well known to Wittgenstein all spent time living in the 2nd District at some point or other, before transferring to the city's richer suburbs as they moved up in the world.²⁷

3.1. The Hasidim in Vienna

During the First World War, the Russian Army surged deep into the territories of Galicia and Bukowina. Many Jews were forcibly transported to Russia. In these circumstances many Jewish people – among them the Hasidim and their Rebbes – chose to flee to the western part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and, above all, to Vienna. At the end of 1918, about 35,000 Jewish refugees from Galicia were staying there. Some of them lived together and formed a “ghetto within a ghetto.”²⁸ They chose the Jewish Quarter (the 2nd District) as their place of residence.²⁹ The war thus brought Hasidim to

²⁶ Cf. C.H. Krinsky, *Synagogues of Europe. History, Architecture, Meaning*, Cambridge/MA: MIT Press 1985, p. 191-194. Cf. <<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=2152&letter=A#ixzz19mUhOdu>>.

²⁷ Cf. *Wien*, <<http://www.360d.de/urlaub/reise/austria-vienna.htm>>.

²⁸ Later J. Roth was to write in his essay *Juden auf Wanderschaft (The Wandering Jews, 1927)*: “It is terribly hard to be an Ostjude; there is no harder lot than that of an Ostjude new to Vienna” (W 3:324).

²⁹ Cf. J. Karniel, *Der Chassidismus in Wien und die Beziehungen zwischen polnischer und*

the Austrian capital where, before 1914, there had been none. During the war many Galician Hasidic courts were founded there. In Heinestrasse, the Czortkower Rebbe re-established Czortkow in miniature. It was not easy for the Hasidim to acquire the habits and customs of the Viennese Jews, most of whom were inclined towards assimilation. The Hasidic newcomers were thus seen as a rather abnormal cultural phenomenon – one that tended to make Jewishness look ridiculous. Nevertheless, it quickly emerged that the new element was also responsible for rejuvenating and renewing the existence of those trying to adapt to life in the Jewish Quarter. Many Jews domiciled in Vienna took a genuine interest in the Hasidic way of life, but their primary concern remained their own particular versions of Jewish life. The situation of the Rebbes was initially very complicated, the refugees having lost everything and being very poor. Some of them resigned from their rabbinic positions and began to work as traders. Thanks to their abilities they were very successful in their new social role.

The refugees did not want to go back to their impoverished homelands, so they became a burden on the city and its authorities tried to get rid of them. It was impossible, however, to force citizens to leave Austria at that time. There was still a war going on in Poland, and only after its end, in 1920, was it possible to sign an agreement with the Polish Republic in which the latter promised to accept returnees. Several thousand Jews, mainly from the poorest districts of Vienna, decided to return. They went back, not to their *shtetls* but to the big cities. The net result of war and dislocation was that, comparing censuses carried out in 1910 and 1921, we find that the number of Jews in Galicia decreased by 20%.³⁰

4. Wittgenstein's places in Vienna and Galicia

4.1. Wittgenstein's places in Vienna

Ludwig Wittgenstein was, of course, born in Vienna. His father's palatial house on the former Argentinierstrasse (the 4th District) was one of the most imposing residences in the aristocratic district of Vienna. Its in-

ungarischer Orthodoxie, <<http://www.misrachi.at/index.php/geschichte-der-juden-in-wien>>.

³⁰ Cf. P. Wrobel, *The Jews of Galicia under Austrian-Polish Rule, 1867–1918*, p. 114, <www.jewishgen.org/galicia/html/jews_of_galicia.pdf>. A. Janik describes Jewish life in Vienna, but does not specifically mention the Hasidim; see his book *Wittgenstein's Vienna Revisited*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers 2001.

ternal décor was grandiose, while the external facade featured nine-fluted pilaster. The 4th District is not that far from the Jewish Quarter (the 2nd District). In November 1925, Wittgenstein's sister, Margarethe Stonborough, asked the architect and friend of Ludwig, Paul Engelmann, to project and build a large town house – a typical aristocratic residence – in the Viennese Kundmanngasse (the 3rd District).³¹ Ludwig took an active interest in Engelmann's design, and his suggestions convinced Engelmann that Wittgenstein could fulfil Margarethe's intentions considerably better than he himself. He proposed to Margarethe that she ask Ludwig to take on the role of architect of the project. Wittgenstein agreed and began work on the house. It is surely worth noting that the 3rd District adjoins the 2nd District, with the Kundmanngasse extending right to the Donau Canal, just on the other side of which stood the Jewish Quarter, with many Hasidim already resident there at that time.

4.2. Wittgenstein in Cracow and Tarnów

When Wittgenstein volunteered for the “Imperial and Royal” Habsburg army on August 7th, 1914, he was sent to Cracow to serve with an artillery unit, the 2nd Cracow Festungsartillerie Regiment. On 10th August he received his uniform and was posted to a military ship, the “Goplana,” on the River Weichsel. He returned to Cracow on November 5th, 1914. In the multinational “Imperial and Royal” army there were, of course, Jewish soldiers. They fought on all fronts in the First World War, perishing alongside their comrades-in-arms from other nationalities and regions. During the period of the ship's forays into enemy territory, Wittgenstein was stationed at the military barracks in Zabłocie (at the edge of Cracow Podgórze). Zabłocie is situated just over the Vistula from Kazimierz, the old Jewish town in Cracow. In the Second World War, Oskar Schindler's *German Enamelware Factory* was also located in Zabłocie, having been established there in 1937 by three Jewish businessmen.

During his stay in Galicia, Wittgenstein visited Tarnów, where he purchased Tolstoy's *The Gospel in Brief*. Tarnów – now a small town near Cracow – was a site for Hasidism in Galicia. Apart from these Hasidic influences, it was also rather better known as a strong centre for Haskalah, and later for Zionism.³² The centre for conservative Hasidism near Tarnow was

³¹ Cf. N. Last, *Wittgenstein's House: Language, Space and Architecture*, New York: Fordham University Press 2008, p. 3-5.

³² Cf. *Tarnow*, <<http://www.jewish-guide.pl/sites/26>>.

Bobowa, where a famous Hasidic synagogue, and Rebbe Bencjon Halberstam (1873–1941), known as the “Bobower Rebbe,” were both to be found.

4.3. Wittgenstein in Sokal

After his return to Cracow, Wittgenstein was sent, probably in August 1915, to a workshop train at Sokal (Yid. *Sikal*), north of Lvov – a railhead station for the Austro-Hungarian railway network.³³ We have an account of Wittgenstein’s life there in the form of a letter from a Dr. M. Bieler, who came to be on familiar terms with him. In one of their animated conversations, Dr. Bieler reports being told by Wittgenstein that “You will become a great disciple but not a prophet.” He himself then continues:

I could say of him that he had many of the traits of a prophet but absolutely not the traits of a disciple. He was sometimes snappy but never overbearing.³⁴

What does it mean to be a prophet? Several years later, on 1st December, 1951, the American philosopher Oets Kolk Bouwsma wrote about Wittgenstein:

What is a prophet like? Wittgenstein is the nearest to a prophet I have ever known. He is a man who is like a tower, who stands high and unattached, leaning on no one. He has his own feet. He fears no man.³⁵

The question of what a prophet could proclaim with authority within the Jewish tradition greatly occupied Wittgenstein, both in Sokal and later: one prophet authoritatively proclaims the Good, only to be followed by another, a reformist, who lays down another law and wins a following – then comes another, and another, and so on, and in the course of this the authority of the original law is weakened.³⁶ There are some evident similarities here to the situation of the Hasidim, who in many cases are obliged to ask the *Sadikim* for guidance as to what to do.

Wittgenstein spent seven months in Sokal, transferring to the 4th Battery of the 5th Field Artillery Regiment on 21st March, 1916. Sokal was a small town, but with a very sizeable Jewish community, so Wittgenstein would certainly have had enough time and opportunity to observe their style of life,

³³ Cf. B. McGuinness, *Wittgenstein. A. Life. Young Ludwig 1889–1921*, London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. 1988, p. 234–238 (Howitzer Regiment).

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 235.

³⁵ O.K. Bouwsma, *Wittgenstein. Conversations, 1949–1951*, Indianapolis: Hacked Publishing Company 1986, p. xv.

³⁶ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 40.

and perhaps even to enter into conversation with some of its members. Communicating in Yiddish would not have been much of a problem for him.

Sokal is listed in the register of Polish and Ukrainian *shtetls*.³⁷ The first Jewish community there dates back to the 16th century, and over the course of the 16th and 17th centuries a fortified synagogue was erected in the Jewish quarter of the town in order to strengthen the latter's defences. Jews apparently came to Sokal from the small nearby town of Belz, and from the early 19th century on it was the Hasidic court at Belz that set the tone of Jewish life in Sokal itself. The founder of the Hasidic dynasty of Belz was Rabbi Shalom of Belz (1779–1855), a distinguished Torah scholar and legendary miracle worker.

In the 19th and 20th centuries Jews made up over 40% of the population of Sokal. (In 1921, the population measured 10,183, with 43% Jews, but another source gives an even higher estimate, at approximately 50%). In 1931, the Jewish population was estimated to be 5,450. According to Isaak Babel's *1920 diary*, Sokal had a three-hundred-year-old Hasidic synagogue, as well as another synagogue that was two hundred years old.³⁸ The Jews established themselves as an urban class, trading mainly in farm produce. During the period of Austrian rule, from 1772 to 1918, they mainly dealt in small-scale commerce, crafts, and transportation. In the early 20th century, five of the six brickyards in Sokal were owned by Jews, as well as plywood, soap and candle factories, sawmills and printing presses. Hasidism had considerable influence within the Jewish community. Later, between the two world wars, Zionism continued to play an important role in community life.

Shloyme-Zanvl Ansky, the Jewish playwright and journalist, spent the war trailing the Russian army throughout the Pale of Settlement, organizing relief for Jewish populations, who were often forced to become refugees as they fled from areas where battles were being fought. He documented what he saw, describing the effects of the war on Sokal and its region:

Even though Jews in the Austrian Empire enjoy equal rights, with equal access to all professions and government jobs, those in Galicia are very poor and unsophisticated... Galicia has the highest death rate among Jews and the highest rate of emigration to America. (...) Galician Jews clearly lag behind other communities in cultural terms as well... Galicia's Hasidism degenerated into blind faith in

³⁷ Sokal is mentioned as a "Shtetl" in C.G. Cohen, *Shtetl Finder. Gazetteer...*, p. 95. Cf. S. Spector (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust*, New York: New York University Press 2001, p. 1211. Cf. *Memorial Book of Sokal, Tartakow and Surroundings* (1968), <<http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/sokal/sokal.html>>, cf. *Ukrainian Cities and Shtetls*, <www.aegenealogy.co.cc/Ukrainian%20shetls.pdf>.

³⁸ Cf. D. Abraham, *Sokal*, <<http://www.danielabraham.net/tree/places/sokal/default.asp>>.

wonder rabbis, while Orthodoxy waged an especially savage and relentless war against the Enlightenment, and assimilation here has been a poor joke....³⁹

Over the course of his stay in Olmütz (1916), Wittgenstein would have found himself moving for the first time in Jewish social circles: the town was small and the intellectuals were mostly of Jewish origin.⁴⁰ Moreover, as the events of the First World War unfolded the town became a haven for hundreds of Jewish refugees from Galicia.

5. Wittgenstein and the Jewish character

Wittgenstein was raised as a Christian but counted as a Jew by Nazi standards. He himself has been accused of anti-Semitism on account of his remarks concerning the Jewish character. Of course he had, first and foremost, himself in mind, so that "(...) they should be taken as self-deprecatory in character rather than anti-Semitic."⁴¹ He refers to Jews as having an "intellectualistic" character. "The Jew is a desert region, but underneath its thin layer of rock lies the molten lava of spirit and intellect" (p. 13e). Less positively, he suggests that "genius" (the quotation marks are his) is found only in holy men, and that the greatest Jewish thinkers are merely talented (p. 18e). Here he refers specifically to himself as an example. The parenthetical qualification in a sentence from later in the same passage is worth noting, though: "It might be said (rightly or wrongly) that the Jewish mind does not have the power to produce even the tiniest flower or blade of grass."⁴²

5.1. Wittgenstein and Oswald Spengler

Wittgenstein read Spengler's two-volume opus, *The Decline of the West* (*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*).⁴³ At pages 312 and 396-298 in Volume

³⁹ Cf. *ibidem*. Ansky's book is *The Enemy at His Pleasure: A Journey Through the Jewish Pale of Settlement During World War I*, New York: Metropolitan Books 2002.

⁴⁰ Cf. B. McGuinness, *Approaches to Wittgenstein*, London: Routledge 2002, p. 31-32. Cf. J. Klenovsky, *The History of the Jewish Community of Olomouc*, <http://kehila-olomouc.cz/rs_english/history-2/history/>.

⁴¹ D. Richter, *Historical Dictionary of Wittgenstein's Philosophy*, Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc. 2004, p. 26.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

⁴³ O. Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes (The Decline of the West)*, München: Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, vol. I, 1920, vol. II, 1930. I would like to thank J. Rothhaupt for bringing this book to my attention.

Two, Spengler acknowledges Baal Shem Tov – “founder of the Hasidic sect, in whom the original Messiah has been revived.”⁴⁴ Spengler was extraordinarily interested in and empathetic to the Jews in general and to the Hasidim in particular, in spite of his right-wing political orientation. He was thoroughly acquainted with Jewish scripture. He speaks of Baal Shem-Tov with the deepest affection, and refers to the Jewish people as a special consensus (*idjma*), without a land of their own and thus free from all geographic limitations. This consensus, in his view, is not based on rational or measurable criteria, but just deeply believed.⁴⁵ Spengler’s prognoses for the Western European and American elements of Judaism are, however, negative: they are, he believes, destined to disappear along with Western civilization itself.⁴⁶

According to R. Chatterjee, “From his close reading of Spengler he [Wittgenstein] obtained enough references to pursue one or two Talmudic works, such as Salomon Funk’s book *Die Entstehung des Talmuds*, 1910.”⁴⁷ Chatterjee also gives a short list of names and concepts used by Spengler that, among other things, point to the Hasidic tradition (Baal Shem-Tov, Saddikism, mysticism).

Spengler quotes Martin Buber, the well-known propagator of Hasidism who was connected to Galicia. Buber was born in Vienna in 1878. After his mother left the family he was sent, as a three-year-old boy, to live with his grandparents in the Galician city of Lvov. His grandfather Salomon was a noted Jewish scholar with a wide-ranging interest in the various religions of the world, who taught Hebrew to the young Martin and introduced him to Jewish mysticism. The Hasidic community of Galicia had a tradition of Kabbalah: the interpretation of scriptures via numerology and symbolic substitution. Kabbalism fascinated him – especially the notion that God could be understood by individuals through the dedication of their think-

⁴⁴ Ibidem, vol. II, p. 395. Spengler quotes pages from P. Levertoff’s *Die religiöse Denkweise der Chasidim* (1918), p. 128 et al. (see M. Buber, *Die Legende der Baalschem*, 1907). “We know that he [Wittgenstein] did follow up by reading some of Spengler’s references.” R. Chatterjee, *Wittgenstein and Judaism. A Triumph of Concealment*, New York: Peter Lang 2005, p. 114.

⁴⁵ “Ist ein consensus erzielt, so steht die Wahrheit fest. ‘Idjma’ ist der Sinn aller frühchristlichen, jüdischen und persischen Konzile” (O. Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, vol. II, p. 86). “Eine Nation magischen Stils ist die Gemeinschaft der Bekenner, der Verband aller, welche den rechten Weg zum Heil kennen und durch das idjma dieses Glaubens innerlich verbunden sind” (ibidem, p. 208; cf. p. 389).

⁴⁶ Cf. ibidem, p. 398.

⁴⁷ R. Chatterjee, *Wittgenstein and Judaism*, p. 114.

ing. Buber came to Judaism through Hasidism: “But when I [Buber] saw the Rebbe striding through the rows of the waiting, I felt ‘leader’ and when I saw the Hassidim dance with the Torah I felt, ‘community’.”⁴⁸ Buber’s real conversion took place when he read a passage from the testament of Baal Shem Tov. At the age of 26, he gave up his other activities and devoted his efforts to collecting Hasidic literature. According to Buber, true religiosity consists of life lived within social frameworks, where relationships are not based on usefulness but on profound and authentic exchanges and interactions. He found Hasidism and its communal approach to living to be a marvellous and fascinating contradiction, with individual dedication to God bringing about collective involvement in the community.

Because Hasidic literature was rather unknown outside of the Hasidic communities, Buber took the decision to translate all of the major Hasidic works into modern German. It is largely thanks to his efforts that these texts became available to scholars outside of the Jewish community. In 1906 he translated *The Tales of Rabbi Nachman*, and two years later *The Legend of the Baal-Shem*.⁴⁹ Buber’s translations found their way into Spengler’s *The Decline of the West*.

5.2. Wittgenstein and mysticism – but which one?

The Zionist Paul Engelmann suggests that Wittgenstein, in contrast to the logical positivists, derives his logic from his mysticism and not – as is usually suggested – his mysticism from his logic: Wittgenstein “(...) passionately believes that all that really matters in human life is precisely what, in his view, we must be silent about.”⁵⁰ The mysticism comes first, the philosophy and logic second. To confirm Engelmann’s thesis, Nieli gives a list of authors whose works Wittgenstein had read: St. Augustine, Kierkegaard, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, William James and Meister Eckhart. According to

⁴⁸ D.J. Moore, *Martin Buber. Prophet of Religious Secularism*, New York: Fordham University Press 2001, p. 27. Moore quotes from M. Buber, *Mein Weg zum Chassidismus*. During summers spent near Sadagora in Bukovina the young Buber met a Hasidic “wonder Rabbi.” Cf. W.M. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind. An Intellectual and Social History – 1848–1938*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1972, p. 214.

⁴⁹ “Gradually during World War One, Buber transformed pantheistic mysticism into a philosophy of dialogue, which he expounded in *Ich und Du* (1923).” W.M. Johnston, *The Austrian Mind...*, p. 215.

⁵⁰ R. Nieli, *Wittgenstein: From Mysticism to Ordinary Language. A Study of Viennese Positivism & the Thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein*, New York: New York University Press 1987, p. xii-xiii.

Engelmann, logic and mysticism came, for Wittgenstein, from one and the same root, and he was engaged in drawing conclusions of a logical nature from his underlying mystical attitude to life and the world. The Jewish tradition defines mysticism as “that aspect of the Jewish religious experience in which man’s mind is in direct encounter with God.”⁵¹ The first thing to note about this general characterisation of mysticism is that it is consistent with what has already been said here about Hasidic mysticism, allowing us to state more fully that mysticism may be understood as the experience of direct contact with G-d, expressed by the term *devequt*. Secondly, we may observe that in this context Engelmann’s assertion about Wittgenstein characterises the latter in terms that are remarkably close to the Hasidic understanding of mystical experience. Hasidism – as an aggregate of multiple streams, and much like other forms of mysticism – adopts a variety of theological positions, and in so doing contributes to the emergence of a more comprehensive view of the world. Each *shtetl* had its own Saddiks, legends, stories, and klezmer music. The Hasidic Jews inhabited scores of *shtetls*, with many of these communities simultaneously supporting several distinct Hasidic religious groupings. The list of authors read by Wittgenstein that Nieli proposes should, therefore, be extended to include the likes of Baal Shem-Tov, Martin Buber and others. At the same time, it is clear that further investigation to determine more precisely the level of Hasidic influence on Wittgenstein’s mysticism is called for. Wittgenstein was given to making real-life observations of Hasidic communities and their shared forms of religious life.

The term “panentheism” (the universe exists in God) was coined by Karl Kraus (1781–1832), who sought to reconcile theism with pantheism. God is the primordial being, containing the universe but apart from and superior to it, standing in a relation of whole to part.⁵²

Wittgenstein admired Kraus as he admired no other writer of his time. It was a case of elective affinities.⁵³

His friend Engelmann was also much taken with Kraus’s works and way of life. As Elazar Benyoëtz observes:

⁵¹ R. Chatterjee, *Wittgenstein and Judaism*, p. 25.

⁵² Cf. S.S. Godfrey, *The Nature of Man and God. A New Look*, Victoria: Trafford Publishing 2003, p. 109.

⁵³ T. Szasz, *Karl Kraus and the Soul-Doctors*, London: Routledge and Kegan 1977, p. 67. Cf. J. Bremer, J. Rothhaupt (eds.), *Ludwig Wittgenstein – “przydzielony do Krakowa”/“Krakau zugeteilt,”* Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM 2009, p. 307-309.

Dass er [Engelmann – J.B.] sich hingegen die Rolle eines Rebbe im Leben seiner Hassidim gut ausmalen konnte, stelle ich mir lebhaft vor. Karl Kraus war ja eine Art Rebbe, und spielte diese Rolle auch im Leben Engelmanns – sein Leben lang. Er [Engelmann – J.B.] war ein selbständiger Mensch, den hohen Geistern seines Lebens blieb er ergeben, so auch seinem Freund Ludwig Wittgenstein.⁵⁴

Benyoëtz adds further that “Wahrgenommen hatte die Hassidim aber auch Trakl in Wien, dem sie – nach Engelmanns Zeugnis – gefallen haben; ‘mit ihnen,’ soll er gesagt haben, ‘würde er sich gut vertragen können.’”

6. Attempt at a summary

The geography and chronology of Wittgenstein’s time in Galicia during the First World War suggest that he would have been in a position to witness the life of some Hasidic communities, and perhaps also encounter some of their representatives, “on the street,” if he had so wished. We do not have testimony to the effect that he actually spoke with this or that Hasidic Jew, or that he actively sought to make contact with them. It is more likely that any occasional, casual encounters he had were of the kind that would have aroused impressions in him, perhaps prompting some fairly nonspecific reflections about such matters as the importance of a closed community of confessors for religious life, the importance for a religious community of possessing its own language, the importance of the Rebbe, where in some of the Hasidic communities they were viewed as “prophets,” and the importance of “miracles.” As Hilary Putnam asserts,

(...) for Wittgenstein, religion, at its best, was not a theory. He was aware, of course, that religion often includes belief in miracles, or in an afterlife, or both.⁵⁵

That these beliefs were not similar to scientific beliefs is something that Wittgenstein would have been able to observe even from sporadic encounters during which he maintained a distance from the Hasidic Jews themselves. But it is conceivable that such impressions were also, for him, associated with a silently nurtured desire for something beyond what he was already familiar with.

⁵⁴ E. Benyoëtz – in private correspondence (12.01.2011). E. Benyoëtz lived in Israel together with Engelmann till his death and is a recognized expert on Engelmann’s literary estate.

⁵⁵ H. Putnam, *Jewish Philosophy as a Guide to Life. Rosenzweig, Buber, Levinas, Wittgenstein*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2008, p. 13.

These considerations suggest that there is certainly a need to explore the traces left in Wittgenstein's correspondence and remarks by his mysticism and by the particular form of pantheism put forward by him.

As regards the influence upon Wittgenstein of Hasidism, understood not as mysticism but as a form of teaching, a doctrine, an approach to reading and to ideas, Elazar Benyoëtz has this to say:

Es bleibt der Hassidismus als Lehre, Ideengut, Lektüre, und das meint zweierlei: Bubers Übersetzungstätigkeit und Vermittlerrolle, und die hauptsächlich aus dem Jiddischen übersetzte Literatur, wie z. B.J.L. Perez. Bei Wittgenstein nehme ich diese Lektüre nicht an, bei Engelmann war sie selbstverständlich, er war ein großer Leser, ein Allesverschlinger, und die "heißen Themen" waren ja alle in den großen zionistischen Zeitungen aufgenommen und besprochen, ich meine "Die Welt" in Wien, die "Jüdische Rundschau" in Berlin, "Die Selbstwehr" in Prag. Dass Engelmann hassidische Werke im Original gelesen, glaube ich nicht. Er konnte zwar Hebräisch, aber nicht dieses, auch wäre ihm diese Denkweise fremd, dazu muss man einen ganz anderen Bildungsweg einschlagen.⁵⁶

Wittgenstein's stay with Engelmann in Olmütz, as well as his cooperation with Engelmann on the project of Margarethe Stonborough's house, opened him up to the sort of philosophy which could be understood – as the title of Putnam's book puts it – as "a guide to life."

The following passage from the conversations between Wittgenstein and Maurice O'Connor Drury can strengthen our motivation to study the topic – Wittgenstein and Hasidism:⁵⁷

I told Wittgenstein I was reading some of the early Church Fathers, at the moment Tertullian.

Wittgenstein: I am glad you are doing that. You should continue to do so.

Drury: I had been reading Origen before. Origen taught that at the end of time there would be a final restitution of all things. That even Satan and the fallen angels would be restored to their former glory. This was a conception that appealed to me – but it was at once condemned as heretical.

⁵⁶ E. Benyoëtz – in private correspondence (12.01.2011). "Daß Wittgenstein Bubers Übersetzungen/Überarbeitungen gelesen hat, ist – soviel ich weiß – nicht belegt, möglich wäre es durchaus: sie schlugen ein wie der Blitz, und traten mit dem – auch sprachlich beglaubigten Anspruch auf, Weltliteratur zu sein. Bei Rütten & Loening erschienen, war der Anspruch offenbar. So wurde er auch angenommen, die Wirkung war enorm. Ich kann mir nicht denken, daß Buber Wittgenstein *nichts* sagte, wohl aber, daß ihm JÜDISCHES verschlossen, fremd oder unlieb gewesen. SICHER unzugänglich war ihm, was ich für Engelmann als selbstverständlich bezeichnete." E. Benyoëtz – in private correspondence (09.02.2011).

⁵⁷ M. Drury, *Conversations with Wittgenstein*, in R. Rhees, *Recollections of Wittgenstein*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1984, p. 161.

Wittgenstein: Of course it was rejected. It would make nonsense of everything else. If what we do now is to make no difference in the end, then all the seriousness of life is done away with. Your religious ideas have always seemed to me more Greek than biblical. Whereas my thoughts are one hundred per cent Hebraic.

Drury: Yes I do feel that, when, say, Plato talks about the gods, it lacks that sense of awe which you feel throughout the Bible – from the Genesis to Revelation.⁵⁸ “But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth?”

Wittgenstein: [standing still and looking at me very intently] I think you have just said something very important. Much more important than you realize.

⁵⁸ Now that Simone Weil has taught me how to understand Plato, I would bite my tongue out than make such a remark.



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Revelation in the philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig and Józef Tischner

Introduction

The relations between Jewish culture and the culture of Eastern Europe are very extensive, thus at the beginning the scope of the undertaken research should be determined. Even if we assume, for the needs of this article, that the most interesting issue in the relations of the Jewish culture and the culture of Eastern Europe is the impact of the philosophical thought, it will still be too broad. Therefore I will limit the subject matter by demonstrating, by means of this text, the influence of the thought of Franz Rosenzweig, one of the chief Jewish exponents of modern philosophy of dialogue, on the reflection of Józef Tischner, an outstanding Polish continuator of this current. Hence, I will perform an analysis of the relations between Rosenzweig’s “new thinking” and Tischner’s philosophy of drama.¹

Dialogic thought, as a separate philosophical current, appeared in the 20s of the 20th century. Its exponents expressed various religious views, nevertheless the shared inspiration for their philosophical reasoning is the Bible. In the sphere of inspiration, a significant issue is also their critical attitude to the philosophical idealism and the influence of existential experience, including the trauma of both the First and the Second World War as well as the experiences of totalitarianism associated to them, on the philo-

¹ Cf. J. Tischner, *Filozofia dramatu. Wprowadzenie* [*The philosophy of Drama. An introduction*], Paris: Éditions du Dialogue 1990; T. Gadacz, *Historia filozofii XX wieku. Nurty* [*The history of 20th century philosophy. The currents*], vol. 2: *Neokantyzm, filozofia egzystencji, filozofia dialogu* [*Neokantism, the philosophy of existence, the philosophy of dialogue*], Kraków: Znak 2009, p. 550, 632.

sophical theses formulated by them.² The interrelations between the exponents of dialogics are the object of separate, detailed analyses.³ Here, I wish to focus merely on the relation between the conception of revelation in Rosenzweig's and Tischner's thought, since the notion of revelation seems to be crucial in the former's philosophy of religion, and is among the chief categories of the latter thinker's philosophy of drama. My objective is the investigation of the influence that Rosenzweig's writing exerted on the understanding of revelation by Tischner.

Revelation in the "new thinking" of Franz Rosenzweig

Although the philosophical thought is usually studied regardless of its author's life history, in the case of Franz Rosenzweig, like in the cases of numerous other thinkers dealing with existential matters,⁴ the biography carries philosophical implication. The thinker in question, brought up in a Jewish family that assimilated into German culture of the early 20th century, initially considered religion merely as a cultural value.⁵ However, he gradually arrives at the recognition of the religious reasoning as equal to historical and philosophical reasoning.⁶ Thus, what he called the "new thinking" is developed.⁷ This standpoint was possible owing to the change

² Cf. T. Gadacz, *Historia filozofii XX wieku. Nurty*, p. 503.

³ It was already performed by T. Gadacz; cf. *ibidem*, p. 503-638; a detailed analysis with reference to the relation of the thought by Rosenzweig and Lévinas is to be found in his work entitled *Wolność a odpowiedzialność. Rosenzweiga i Levinasa krytyka Heglowskiej wolności ducha* [*Freedom and responsibility. Rosenzweig's and Lévinas's criticism of Hegelian Freedom of Spirit*], Kraków: WN PAT 1990.

⁴ Cf. O. Leaman, *Egzystencjalizm żydowski: Rosenzweig, Buber i Soloveitchik* [*Jewish existentialism: Rosenzweig, Buber and Soloveitchik*], in D.H. Frank, O. Leaman (eds.), *Historia filozofii żydowskiej* [*The history of Jewish philosophy*], transl. by P. Sajdek, Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM 2009, p. 827, where the author counts Rosenzweig among the exponents of the "Jewish existentialism."

⁵ Cf. A. Żak, *Punkt wyjścia filozofii Franza Rosenzweiga* [*The departure point of Franz Rosenzweig's philosophy*], in Z. Brzeziński et al. (eds.), *Zawierzyć człowiekowi. Księdzu Józefowi Tischnerowi na sześćdziesiąte urodziny* [*Trusting in man. To Rev. Józef Tischner on his sixtieth birthday*], Kraków: Znak 1991, p. 467. Cf. J. Tischner, *Zarys filozofii człowieka dla duszpasterzy i artystów* [*An outline of the philosophy of man for priests and artists*], in *idem*, *Myślenie w żywiole piękna* [*Thinking in the element of beauty*], ed. by W. Bonowicz, Kraków: Znak 2004, p. 145, 462-465.

⁶ Cf. T. Gadacz, *Wolność a odpowiedzialność*, p. 119.

⁷ Cf. F. Rosenzweig, *Nowe myślenie. Kilka uwag "ex post" do "Gwiazdy Zbawienia"* [*The New Thinking. A Few Supplementary Remarks to "The Star of Redemption"*], in *idem*,

which took place in philosophy and in Rosenzweig's life.⁸ It was generated by the crisis, whose stake was the question about the historical truth. The philosopher states that this question should receive an answer which does not result from theoretical study, but from the experience of dialogue, and which emerges from the real, personal, and not methodical doubting. The dialogue – held mainly with Rosenstock,⁹ who as a thinker did not hesitate to accept the standpoint of faith, and subsequently also with Hermann Cohen, liberating himself from the fetters of idealism in order to reflect philosophically on the religion of revelation – caused that Rosenzweig poses the question about the possibility of revelation.¹⁰ It is a fundamental question, since it is a reaction to the thought of Hegel, whose system leaves no space for revelation, as an event independent of history¹¹.

While for Hegel the revelation of God takes place within the sphere of history, Rosenzweig writes that “it is necessary God saves man not by history, but actually (...), as ‘God in religion’.”¹² History ceases to be the place of the revelation of God, who, though remaining in relation to the world and history, is identical neither with the world nor with history. Divine Providence is not, as Hegel maintained, a self-realisation of God in history, but His love for man which is expressed by revelation.¹³ This idea was developed in *The Star of Redemption*, Rosenzweig's chief work which was written in the trenches of World War I, as a response to the experience of the violence of war that carried the terror of death and made an individual become an ephemeral element of the whole.¹⁴ The traumatic experience of

Gwiazda Zbawienia [*The Star of Redemption*], transl. by T. Gadacz, Kraków: Znak 1998, p. 676-679.

⁸ Cf. T. Gadacz, *Wolność a odpowiedzialność*, p. 121: “The fact of conversion caused a fundamental turn not only in the religious life, but also in Rosenzweig's philosophy.” The thinker, who intended to convert to Christianity under the influence of his friends, eventually remained a Jew conscious of his faith (“converted” from secularity); cf. T. Gadacz, *Wstęp* [*Introduction*], in F. Rosenzweig, *Gwiazda Zbawienia*, p. 22; A. Żak, *Punkt wyjścia filozofii Franza Rosenzweiga*, p. 466; O. Leaman, *Egzystencjalizm żydowski...*, p. 828; S. Mosès, *L'Ange de l'Histoire. Rosenzweig, Benjamin, Scholem* [*The angel of History. Rosenzweig, Benjamin, Scholem*], Paris: Gallimard 2006, p. 55-58.

⁹ Cf. S. Mosès, *L'Ange de l'Histoire...*, p. 55-58.

¹⁰ Cf. A. Żak, *Punkt wyjścia filozofii Franza Rosenzweiga*, p. 464-467; T. Gadacz, *Historia filozofii XX wieku. Nurty*, vol. 2, p. 518-519.

¹¹ Cf. O. Leaman, *Egzystencjalizm żydowski...*, p. 828.

¹² Quoted from T. Gadacz, *Wolność i odpowiedzialność*, p. 119. The same quotation: T. Gadacz, *Wstęp*, p. 20-21; cf. S. Mosès, *L'Ange de l'Histoire...*, p. 83.

¹³ Cf. T. Gadacz, *Wolność i odpowiedzialność*, p. 120.

¹⁴ Cf. F. Rosenzweig, *Gwiazda Zbawienia*, p. 267-336; S. Mosès, *L'Ange de l'Histoire...*, p. 57; S. Mosès, *Au-delà de la guerre. Trois études sur Levinas* [*Beyond the war. Three*

war and the critical attitude towards Hegel's thought, especially in relation to the idea of man's salvation in the world, cause that Rosenzweig sympathises with the belief in revelation understood as the orientation for the human "here" and "now" and at the same time for the world, which was advanced by Rosenstock.¹⁵

Since then, revelation has been the central category of the "new thinking."¹⁶ However, it cannot be enclosed within the immanence of the world, which is simultaneously the immanence of history. The system of totality associated to the Hegelian idea of the rational history does not allow, according to Rosenzweig, for the revelation which would liberate man from the fear of death that constitutes the beginning of genuine cognition.¹⁷ Only the revelation which comes from beyond history, and at the same time from beyond philosophy as a system of absolute knowledge, may thus liberate man¹⁸ from his enclosure within his own Self.¹⁹ Only the revelation of God who calls the man by his name, can cause that "the monadically impenetrable Self" will become "the open and speaking human soul."²⁰ This metamorphosis can occur merely in the relationship of revelation identical with God's love for man. Since it is in the dialogue of love and God that the Self can become "the soul awoken by God and beloved."²¹

Rosenzweig presents love, making reference to the biblical *Song of Songs*, which he considers to be the central book of Revelation.²² The verse taken from the *Song of Songs* "Love is as strong as death"²³ is for the philosopher a figure of transition from the Creation (the first revelation) to the Revelation in the strict sense.²⁴

studies on Levinas], Paris – Tel Aviv: Éditions de L'Éclat 2004, p. 10, 20-21; T. Gadacz, *Wstęp*, p. 24.

¹⁵ Cf. T. Gadacz, *Wolność a odpowiedzialność*, p. 121.

¹⁶ Cf. A. Żak, *Punkt wyjścia filozofii Franza Rosenzweiga*, p. 467.

¹⁷ F. Rosenzweig, *Gwiazda Zbawienia*, p. 51: "From death, it is from the fear of death that all cognition begins (...). Philosophy has the audacity to cast off the fear of the earthly"; cf. S. Mosès, *L'Ange de l'Histoire...*, p. 57.

¹⁸ Cf. T. Gadacz, *Wolność a odpowiedzialność*, p. 123-124.

¹⁹ Cf. F. Rosenzweig, *Gwiazda Zbawienia*, p. 144: "The Self is entirely enclosed within itself."

²⁰ Cf. M. Bardel, *Mocna jak śmierć. Zagadnienie miłości w antropologii filozoficznej Franza Rosenzweiga* [*As strong as death. The issue of love in Franz Rosenzweig's philosophical anthropology*], Kraków: Universitas 2001, p. 66-67.

²¹ F. Rosenzweig, *Gwiazda Zbawienia*, p. 328.

²² Cf. *ibidem*, p. 332.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 267; Cf. Song of Solomon 8:6: "for love is as strong as death"

²⁴ Cf. S. Mosès, *Système et Révélation. La philosophie de Franz Rosenzweig* [*System and revelation. The philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig*], Paris: Bayard 2003, p. 98-99.

For God – the thinker writes – Creation is not merely Creation of the world, but it is also an event which takes place within himself, as the hidden one. In this sense, we had to mark Creation already as a Revelation of God. And indeed he does reveal himself in Creation as Creator, that is to say in the multiple works which no longer grow and which no longer increase; on the contrary, they are in the beginning and hence once and for all, and so, as far as this concerns God, they are attributes and not acts.²⁵

God's creative act is the first revelation.

However, such kind of revelation is not a total revelation of God. It requires complementing, since the first revelation, speaking about God as Creator, conceals Him behind His work. Thereby, the thinker emphasises:

God seemed to become mere "origin" of Creation, and hence to become again the hidden God, just what he had ceased to be in creating. From the night of his obscurity something other has to emerge than his mere creative power, something that would keep visible the vast infinity of the creative acts of his power, such that God could no longer once again take refuge in the secret, behind these acts.²⁶

The first revelation which occurred in the Creation demands another revelation, which, according to Rosenzweig, "is nothing but Revelation, (...) a Revelation in the stricter sense of the word, or rather in the strictest sense."²⁷

Revelation fulfilling the above-mentioned condition is determined by openness and dialogue, that is by the word expressing what is concealed. The Creation, defining any created object, is already this kind of revelation in some way. "But just because it is a created thing from all eternity – we read – this fact that it is testimony of a Revelation that has already occurred remains behind it, in the darkness of a first beginning."²⁸ The full revelation is not a part of the past enveloped in darkness, it does not belong to the order of what already came into being and at the same time passed, but always occurs at the present time. For each thing created may be "liberated" from its "mere createdness" when it is "illuminated by the rays of a Revelation that has not taken place once and for all, but which takes place at the moment."²⁹ It is the only way for what was created to step out of the past into the living present. Revelation, which neither "establishes" nor creates anything,

²⁵ F. Rosenzweig, *Gwiazda Zbawienia*, p. 270-271.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 273.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 273-274.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 274.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

must occur in the present. “So, God is present – Rosenzweig emphasises – present like the moment, like every moment.”³⁰ The One who becomes the Creator is not entirely the One, who reveals Himself. Only revelation that is love meets, according to the thinker, the criteria of the total revelation. As we read in *The Star of Redemption*,

all the demands put on the concept of the Revealer converge towards love: the love of the lover, not that of the beloved. Only the love of the lover and this giving of self once again in every moment, only this love gives itself in love; the beloved receives the gift; her receiving of it is her return gift, but in the receiving she does not remain any the less close to herself and she becomes complete serenity and a blissful soul in itself.³¹

Thus for the thinker, revelation has the structure of a love relationship, whose description he draws from *The Song of Songs*. Love is dynamic. Every day, the lover loves in every moment and every day his love transforms. It is strengthened day by day. Since it must always love at present, love is forced to deny every moment, apart from the present one. Thus, it is seemingly unfaithful. Its permanence consists in the constant increase.

Each new day – we read – it learns again that it has never loved as much as today the part of life which it loves; every day love loves a little more that which it loves. This constant increase is the form of permanence in love, in that and because it is the most extreme non-permanence and its fidelity is devoted solely to the present, singular moment: from the deepest infidelity, and from this alone, it can thus become permanent fidelity; for only the non-permanence of the moment renders it capable of living every moment as new and thus of carrying the flame of love through the vast nocturnal-and twilight-kingdom of created life. It increases because it does not want to cease being new; it wants always to be new in order to be able to be permanent; it can only be permanent by living entirely in the non-permanent, in the moment, and it must be permanent so that the lover may be not merely the empty bearer of an ephemeral emotion, but living soul. This, too, is the way God loves.³²

God’s love for the soul, described by the thinker, is not any kind of attribute of God, such as the power of creation. Love is an event. It is present. The philosopher writes:

Whether it is going to love, or even whether it has loved – what does love itself know of this? It is enough for it to know one thing: that it loves. (...) God’s love is always wholly in the moment and at the point where it loves; and it is only

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 275.

³¹ Ibidem.

³² Ibidem, p. 276-277.

in the infinity of time, step by step, that it reaches one point after the next and permeates the totality with soul. God's love loves whom it loves and where it loves.³³

It is exactly such kind of love that is stronger than death since, being eternal, it overcomes death.³⁴ Only love may become the revelation of God to a man. For revelation neither discloses any truth about God, nor conveys any knowledge about him, but it is the experience of His love. It is not a topic given for contemplation, and also any thematic or objectified cognition is out of the question here. This is why Rosenzweig, describing the movement of revelation, God's turn towards man, employs the metaphor of love.³⁵

The philosophy of revelation presented by the thinker is the "speech thinking," since it concerns the cognition arising in the dialogue event, in the mutual opening of God onto man and of man onto God, taking place in the here and now of the moment. Revelation has the character of a dramatic event of a relationship between man and God who reveals to a man in the call, in the appeal of the Commandment: "Thou shalt love...." It is the Commandment which can only be enunciated by the lover. It indicates that man's response to God's love occurs in the present. Love relationship between God and man is the relationship of dialogue, since both in the lover's commandment and in his question, speech plays the central role.³⁶

Speech is, first of all, conversation – Gadacz comments on Rosenzweig's thought – thus I does not exist as long as You gives response to the summoning word. The truth of the word (*Wort*) is the response (*Ant-wort*).³⁷

God, addressing man, turning to him with a question, does not ask about the universal being, but about the individual human I. Rosenzweig writes:

"Where are you?" This is nothing else but the question about the You. Not a question about the essence of the You: for the moment it is not even within our range of vision; and we are asking only about the "Where?" Where, then, is there a You? This question about the You is the only thing that we already know about it. But the question is enough for the I to discover itself; it does not need to see the You; by asking about it, and by testifying by means of this question that it believes in the existence of the You, even when it is not within sight, it addresses

³³ Ibidem, p. 278.

³⁴ Cf. ibidem, p. 279.

³⁵ Cf. S. Mosès, *Système et Révélation*, p. 102-103.

³⁶ Cf. T. Gadacz, *Historia filozofii XX wieku*. Nurty, p. 548-549.

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 549.

itself and expresses itself as I. The I discovers itself at the moment where it affirms the existence of the You, through the question about where it is.³⁸

So, God's love for man proves to be the choice. Since it is exclusive and it is an entirely gratuitous act, it is a grace which meets no human needs.³⁹

Thus, the dialogue between man and God is what binds the lover and the beloved with each other. Exactly in this dialogue man, thanks to the summoning from God, becomes himself, matures to being himself. Facing God's question, facing His appeal, man remains primordially mute, he hides. He is still, as Rosenzweig writes,

(...) the Self as we know it. The answers that God finally gets to his questions are not answers; the answers to the divine question of the You are not an I, not an "It is I," nor an "it is I who did it;" rather, instead of the I, it is a He-She-It that comes out of the answering mouth; the man objectifies himself in order to become "the male human;" the woman, for her part, totally objectified as woman who is "given" to the man, is the one who did it, and she then throws the guilt on the last It: it was the serpent.⁴⁰

The Self will not respond, but the call which God directs at it, does not allow it to hide behind the woman or the serpent. No objectification, no general notion or universal being can resist summoning by name, from which there is no escape. The relevant issue here is, as the philosopher writes, "The proper name, which is not exactly a proper-name, not a name which was given arbitrarily to the man, but the name that God himself took for him and which for this reason only – to be a creation of the Creation – properly belongs to him."⁴¹ Man, remaining silent in the face of God's question "Where are you?," was an obstinate Self enclosed within itself. However, summoned by name, called as an individual, he replies "Here I am." The response demonstrates that it is heartfelt, and uttered with absolute openness and readiness to listen.⁴²

Man, responding to God's love which he experiences in revelation, by accepting it, acknowledges the dependence on the divine creative act. It means the passiveness that is not equal to inactivity, but most accurately defines what Rosenzweig understood as the soul. It is the awareness of being dependent on what is outside the Self and what is present in it in certain way. It is the moment when man is entrusted with his own existence. When

³⁸ F. Rosenzweig, *Gwiazda Zbawienia*, p. 293-294.

³⁹ Cf. S. Mosès, *Système et Révélation*, p. 103.

⁴⁰ F. Rosenzweig, *Gwiazda Zbawienia*, s. 294.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

⁴² Cf. *ibidem*, p. 295.

man opens to the radical otherness of God, he questions his independence and identity. At the same time God denies his existence for man's sake. It happens as if God's existence originated from its confirmation in man's faith. It does not mean the belief in the existence of God, but the faith causing that God exists.⁴³

The faithful belief of the beloved – the philosopher writes – acquiesces to the love of the lover, bound to the moment, and reinforces it so far as to make it a lasting love. This is the counterpart of love: the faith of the beloved in the lover. The faith of the soul testifies, in its faithfulness, to the love of God, and it gives to it permanent being. If you testify to me, then I shall be God, and otherwise not – these are the words that the Master of Kabbalah puts into the mouth of the God of love. The lover who surrenders himself in love is recreated in the faithfulness of the beloved, and from then on, it is forever.⁴⁴

Such God is, however, completely detached from man.

Mutual confirmation in their existence by God and man, or rather the lover and the beloved, which is the case here, takes place in the order of existence, and not in the totalising conceptual system. The event of revelation is experienced as dialogue fulfils itself in language. Word is always directed at the interlocutor, that is at the absolute other. Revelation is a relationship, in which two detached beings open at each other through the word. Entrusting of God to man takes place in the word of the Commandment: “Thou shalt love....” On the other hand, the word which is not understood as a product, but as opening to what is different, defines man who enters the state of existence.⁴⁵ For the dimension of existence is built onto the primordial detachment of God, man, and the world, as fundamental substances which enable the Creation (relation of God and the world), Revelation (relation of God and man) and Redemption (relation of man and the world). The dialogue between man and God, as the relationship of revelation, is identical with existence, if the latter is understood as transition from the separation of fundamental substances to the world of the relations between them.⁴⁶

The primordial world enclosed in itself – Tadeusz Gadacz writes – experiences Revelation. What has been separated so far, opens and enters mutual relationships.⁴⁷

⁴³ Cf. S. Mosès, *Système et Révélation*, p. 103-104.

⁴⁴ F. Rosenzweig, *Gwiazda Zbawienia*, p. 287.

⁴⁵ Cf. S. Mosès, *Système et Révélation*, p. 104-105.

⁴⁶ Cf. F. Rosenzweig, *Gwiazda Zbawienia*, p. 165: “The mythical God, the plastic world, tragic man – we are holding the pieces in our hands. We have really shattered the All.” Cf. S. Mosès, *Système et Révélation*, p. 97-98.

⁴⁷ Cf. T. Gadacz, *Wstęp*, p. 38.

The relationship between the elements irreducible to each other, having no common foundation which previously was the identity of Existence and Thought, can have neither the character of participation (like in the classical thought) nor of dialectic (like in Hegel). It can only be a dialogue event, which is provided exclusively by the relationship of revelation.⁴⁸ “Due to the power of Revelation, what has previously been closed – Gadacz emphasizes – becomes open, reality takes place; what happens is experienced, and the experience is verbalised.”⁴⁹ In the world of revelation everything must become a word, since what cannot be a word, is outside this world. The response of the soul to God’s question (“Where are You?”) is also expressed by a word. It is a love confession, which is an admission one has never loved before.⁵⁰ Rosenzweig writes:

So the soul is ashamed of confessing its love for God, who calls out to it his commandment of love; for it can acknowledge its love only by acknowledging its weakness, and by replying to God’s “Thou Shalt Love:” I have sinned.⁵¹

The confession of sin about love can come into being only when the soul has opened to God’s summoning contained in the paradox of the commandment of love. “Where are You?” is the question about the only deed forbidden to Adam which merely expresses the autonomous dimension of freedom. Thus, it is a question about man’s birthplace that more primordially is responsibility than freedom bound to autonomy. For it is the sense of guilt that makes Adam hide from God.⁵² The emergence of man as I to God, in response to His question, is related to accepting the Commandment. The love for God, as a response to God’s appeal, is the acceptance of the Commandment whose essence is the imperative of love⁵³

Revelation, as a notion defining the present of the love relationship between man and God, has its visible form in the communities where it assumes historical shape, for instance Judaism and Christianity. The history of these communities outline the proceeding towards the moment when the super-world of Redemption comes, and thus “the new All” ensues.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Cf. *ibidem*.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁰ Cf. F. Rosenzweig, *Gwiazda Zbawienia*, p. 298-300.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 300.

⁵² Cf. S. Mosès, *Système et Révélation*, p. 111.

⁵³ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 113.

⁵⁴ Cf. T. Gadacz, *Wstęp*, p. 40.

Revelation in Józef Tischner's "philosophy of drama"

While Rosenzweig analyses the concept of redemption standing on the coordinate constituted by Judaism, Tischner, also placed in the Judeo-Christian tradition shared by both of the philosophers, examines this issue from the perspective of Christianity. The influence of *The Star of Redemption* on the reflection of the Cracow phenomenologist over revelation, is discernible both in *The Philosophy of drama*⁵⁵ and *A dispute about man*.⁵⁶ It is significant that Tischner's reflection, as he considered himself, does not go beyond the scope of philosophy. For philosophical reasoning owes much to the religious tradition. It is not grounded on the authority of revelation, but it can neither disregard it, nor stay indifferent to it. Revelation is, according to the thinker, a reservoir of wisdom that philosophy ought to maintain relation to, as it is the expression of the most profound experiences of the human race. The aim of the philosophical reflection is making the thought about man more profound by employing religious thought.⁵⁷ Thus, it comes as no surprise that Tischner makes reference to the philosophy of dialogue as the current relying on biblical inspirations. It is in such kind of reflection that he discerns the renewal of philosophical reasoning, especially of the Christian thought.⁵⁸

The thinker writes:

The departure point of our understanding of man is undoubtedly Christianity. In Christianity, man emerges as the participant of the drama of redemption, whose participant is also God.⁵⁹

If God and man are to be the participants of the drama, they cannot be understood differently than as persons. The dramatic history of the relations between God and man have the sense, in which the concept of Revelation, examined by us in Rosenzweig's thought so far, occupies a significant place.⁶⁰ Tischner asks:

Why has God created man? He created man in order to reveal to him. Why did he want to reveal to man? To be able to save him.⁶¹

⁵⁵ Cf. J. Tischner, *Filozofia dramatu*, p. 79, 85-86.

⁵⁶ Cf. J. Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka [A dispute about man]*, Kraków: Znak 1998, p. 173-174.

⁵⁷ Cf. J. Tischner, *Zarys filozofii...*, p. 146.

⁵⁸ Cf. J. Tischner, *Światło "Gwiazdy Zbawienia"* [*The light of "The Star of Redemption"*], in idem, *Ksiądz na manowcach [A priest astray]*, Kraków: Znak 2001, p. 277-279.

⁵⁹ J. Tischner, *Zarys filozofii...*, p. 144.

⁶⁰ Cf. J. Tischner, *Światło "Gwiazdy Zbawienia"*, p. 290; idem, *Zarys filozofii...*, p. 144.

⁶¹ J. Tischner, *Zarys filozofii...*, s. 144.

Revelation is one of the acts of the drama between God and man.

According to the Cracow thinker, the drama of man and God is the fundamental drama, in which the subject participates. It can be said that

in fact, there is only one drama – the drama with God. Any other drama – writes the thinker – and any other dramatic plot is merely a part of this drama. If so, the Ideal of drama in general is the religious drama. Is it every drama of every religion? No, not every – the only religion which is dramatic in the full meaning of this word is Judeo-Christianity.⁶²

The religious drama in question is above all the drama resulting from the fact man is set between salvation (being rescued) and damnation (being lost).

Taking part in the drama – Tischner emphasises – man more or less clearly realises that both doom and rescue are in his hands. Being a person – a dramatic being – means to believe one has doom and rescue in one's hand.⁶³

What is more, man can be unaware of the essence of rescue and doom, but he is still aware of his dramatic setting and he guides himself with it in life.⁶⁴ Religious drama is closely related to the personal dialogue and, above all, with the interpersonal meeting which is the beginning of the drama realising between people.⁶⁵

In the reflection over dialogue, Tischner makes reference to three models of questions: the philosopher's, the inquisitor's and God's question. The last one is the most interesting, since it defines the model of the dialogue which describes the relationship of revelation. Tischner's analysis of the question directed by God to man is based on the well-known fragment of *The Star of Redemption*, where Rosenzweig depicts the dialogue between God and Adam in Paradise. For Tischner, God's question is the reflection of the attitude to the dialogue in which the differences are not erased, but are accepted.

Who asks – the philosopher writes – allows to be. Who replies, acknowledges the value of the one who has asked him. Where dialectic discovers the universal character of pure conscience, dialogics discerns particular living people.⁶⁶

According to Tischner, the dialogue between God and Adam concerns only the nature of I. However, at the same time, it presents the way the dialogue establishes I and You. As the philosopher writes,

⁶² J. Tischner, *Filozofia dramatu*, p. 22.

⁶³ J. Tischner, *Zarys filozofii...*, p. 149.

⁶⁴ Cf. *ibidem*.

⁶⁵ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 146.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 152.

My I is the gift from the one who calls me You, and reversely. From the dialogue not only We of the dialogue is derived, but also its foundation – I and You.⁶⁷

However, the question “where are you?” directed to man by God in paradise, is at the same time the call of longing. In Tischner’s interpretation,

Adam reduced God to the only “misery” that can afflict the almighty and perfect being – into the misery of rejected love. The one who has chosen – emphasises the philosopher – was rejected. Despite the rejection he did not cease to love. Love misses and searches for. Not finding the beloved beside it, it calls: “Where are you?.” If it were not for the “misery” of God who loves, there would not be any question, summon or request. And exactly because of the fact that God’s call is a request, the obligation arises in Adam’s soul, to break the silence and provide the reply.⁶⁸

The notion of revelation in Tischner’s conception is closely related to the notion of chosenness which appears in the interpersonal dialogue that starts from a question. The philosopher writes:

Choice is the underlying premise of dialogue. The dialogue between God and Abraham begins with God’s call: “Abraham, Abraham!” The call means that God has chosen. What will Abraham do? Will he reply with choice, or will he escape like Adam?⁶⁹

To choose is to be open to what the other has to say. The dialogue is thus conditioned by a question which involves the choice and being open to the otherness of the other. It assumes the difference of opinions and the necessity to exchange them. In such a way, the self emerges, the self that has peculiar value drawn from the encounter, from the dialogue with the other.

Chosenness means that the choosing one is ready to listen, and to listen – means to put oneself in the situation which the speaker experiences. Due to such exchange of position and point of view, understanding and communication can occur. Naturally, there would not be any choice or exchange of positions if it were not for the mutual acknowledgement: by choosing I acknowledge that the other is a value to me; the other, who provides response, acknowledges I am a value to him.⁷⁰

These significant statements draw the attention to the fact that the subject of the dialogue is always and simultaneously a value, and the one who accomplishes values. And as such, the subject substantiates himself in eve-

⁶⁷ Ibidem, p. 153.

⁶⁸ J. Tischner, *Filozofia dramatu*, p. 79.

⁶⁹ J. Tischner, *Zarys filozofii...*, p. 151.

⁷⁰ Ibidem.

ry choice made by himself, but at the same time he is substantiated by the Other, with whom he enters the dialogue.⁷¹

The drama of man and God has a dual sense: the ontological one and the agathological one. The existential sense of the drama consists in the awareness of being created, possessed by the subject of the drama. The fact of creation is the basis for the awareness of revelation, identical with the fact of chosenness, as Tischner emphasises. On the grounds of the chosenness, the consciousness of salvation is built.⁷² The drama in question, always takes place within the horizon of good and evil, as an internal drama of the consciousness. The human I is related to the experience of good which is the basis of the consciousness of the man participating in the drama.

The internal space of consciousness – Tischner writes – has agathological sense and organises according to the order of relevance. It basically means it is sensitive to the possibility of evil. (...) The sensitivity to evil and good indicates that the internal space of the consciousness has agathological character.⁷³

The agathological dimension of the subject provides the possibility to discover the absolute Good, that is, God. While analysing the argument of St. Anselm who convinces us about the existence of a being beyond which one cannot think anything greater, Tischner suggests to talk about the absolute Good.

Is it possible that the absolute Good – the philosopher asks – does not exist? The Good, so to speak by itself, “demands” existence. The Absolute Good demands its existence in an absolute manner. And what demands its existence in an absolute manner, is not capable of non-existence. Its existence must be like its demand for existence. God – as the absolute Good – exists.⁷⁴

The knowledge of the fact that The Good demands its existence, is given to us in an internal experience which has the agathological sense. This is exactly why we can say that good is the foundation of the consciousness participating in the drama.

I am a being-for-myself. As a being-for-myself I want myself. However, I wouldn't be a being-for-myself and I wouldn't want myself if it were not for the intuition of good that can constitute me. I want to exist up to good that either I have my part in or I can have my part in.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 327.

⁷² Cf. J. Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, p. 167.

⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 278.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 270.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 271.

The subject of the drama is thus one who craves the participation in the Good, although he is not good yet.

The ontology of God and man becomes subdued to agathology in Tischner's thought, and the logic of existence to the logic of good. Thus, we can state, "God bestows the existence on himself and the world according to the laws of the 'drama of good'."⁷⁶ For his existence transforms into the absolute good. The dramatic "logic of good" encompasses the issue of revelation as well. While searching for the agathological sense I have to ask: "What for, why have I been created? Why have I been chosen? Why saved?"⁷⁷ Thanks to the answer to these questions, the place of revelation in our drama becomes clear.

God created me – the philosopher writes – in order to reveal to me; God wants to reveal to me in order to save me. Everything happens in the name of good and on the grounds of good.⁷⁸

Such kind of drama structure is dependent on the dramatic subject's structure. Man, who would not be a free and rational I, probably could be saved without this element of drama which is revelation. However, as a dramatic being, as a person, he looks for the sense of his existence, turning towards good.

It is not enough for him that he is, but he needs reason in order to understand the sense of his "is." But also neither sole reason will be sufficient, nor the understanding of the sense of his being, but he needs heart to unite with what is his happiness. The person is not concerned about the "existence" or "being," but about the quality of existence which transcends the "being." The person's ontology becomes subdued to the laws of agathology. (...) His "being" is no longer about "being." It concerns the "justification," the "salvation" in which or thanks to which the human existence reaches its "truth."⁷⁹

Revelation is thus the necessary stage of the drama of salvation. One cannot omit it, as it would mean passing over the possibility of man's participation, as a conscious, free and rational person, in the act of his own salvation. For revelation directs itself to the conscious being, to its freedom and rationality. God, by saving man without revealing to him, and thus not choosing him, would not bind to him by reason and free choice, but somehow externally, by the acts that are appropriate for objects. "Man – Tischner

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 273.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 167.

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 168.

writes – ‘would worship God by mouth,’ but his ‘heart would be far from God’.⁸⁰ Accepting the “necessity” of revelation means acknowledging the structure of the subject of the drama. “The concept of the human drama – the Cracow phenomenologist writes – as the consequence of creation, revelation and salvation, includes *implicite* the concept of the subject of the drama – the person who not only is, but is his freedom and reason as well.”⁸¹ For what Tischner means in the thought concerning revelation, is

making the understanding of good as a grace more profound, by the phenomenological analysis of the experience of revelation and chosenness. Revelation and chosenness are the announcement of salvation. Salvation is the pure experience of the Good.⁸²

Revelation within the horizon of love and good

Comparing the conceptions of revelation in Rosenzweig’s “new thinking” and in Tischner’s “philosophy of drama” allows to discern close relationships between these approaches, as the meaning of revelation is shared in them. Revelation consists in the disclosure of what is concealed. Making a direct reference to Rosenzweig, Tischner concentrates on revelation occurring between a person and a person. The dialogic paradigm of the studies allows to depict in appropriate way the revelation taking place between God and man. For, as the Cracow thinker writes,

only a person (a man, God) can “reveal” himself. The topic of revelation can only be the message to which there is no access like through confession or by confiding.⁸³

The objective cognition directed, from the observer’s position, at someone’s confessions evokes the impression of their contingency. One cannot see, from the external positions, for what reasons a confession of this kind is made. We do not know why the particular, and not other man has been chosen as the confidant.

Both approaches share the conditions for the possibility of revelation. For at the beginning it assumes the separation of the participants of the dialogue, on which Rosenzweig put so much emphasis in his conception of fundamen-

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 169.

⁸² *Ibidem*, p. 170.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, p. 171.

tal substances. Subsequently, some event has to occur as the beginning of the persons' encounter. Finally, the condition for revelation as chosenness is freedom, the lack of any kind of compulsion in the relationship.

A person confides, although he or she does not have to – Tischner writes. In spite of that, confiding is not a caprice. It not only assumes something, but also aims at something. Three words fit into a logical whole: revelation-confiding-entrustment. "Who confides, entrusts himself".⁸⁴

God's entrustment to man at the moment of revelation has its significant, if not fundamental, place in Rosenzweig's thought. According to Tischner, this entrustment constitutes the common root of the Judeo-Christian revelation.⁸⁵

The separation conditioning revelation means that I cannot demand from the other the same thing that he has the right to expect from me. Tischner draws such conclusion, making reference to one of the most prolific continuators of Rosenzweig's "new thinking," namely Emmanuel Lévinas.⁸⁶ The difference between I and the other is the "ethical difference." I am always late while responding to the appeal of a widow, an orphan or a stranger. Hence, I am evil, because I do not respond to their appeal by a total devotion to them. The same difference separates me, the evil one, from God, who is the Good. Therefore, Tischner writes:

Separation is the situation in which revelation-confiding-entrustment become necessary. Separation conditions revelation; revelation substantiates the separation and makes the awareness of it more profound. It was not until you confided in me that I know how far apart we used to be.⁸⁷

Revelation makes more profound the awareness of separation existing between man and God, and at the same time establishes a relationship between them. The only possibility of surmounting the distance of separation is revelation, interpreted as the relationship between persons. Only the dialogue, the word articulated by God and the word as man's response, can bind without forming a self-contained whole out of the poles of the relationship.⁸⁸

Rosenzweig's lesson on the interpersonal dialogue and the role played in it by word, which fundamentally influenced Lévinas, remains cardinal for Tischner as well.

⁸⁴ Ibidem, p. 172.

⁸⁵ Cf. J. Tischner, *Światło "Gwiazdy Zbawienia"*, p. 294.

⁸⁶ Cf. J. Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, p. 172.

⁸⁷ Ibidem.

⁸⁸ Cf. ibidem, p. 172-174.

In revelation – the Polish philosopher writes – the significant value is not as much what is said, as the fact that something is said at all and how it is said. (...) What is said, “illuminates” and presents an object, the manner of speaking introduces in the participation, it allows to solve the mystery of who speaks and who illuminates. (...) The revelation, in which the manner of speaking dominates over the expressed content, establishes the new order between the persons. Here, the words rather have the “significance” than “meaning.” Words “weigh.” They reveal the dimension of good. Simultaneously, they give a hint that there is a dimension of evil, in which there is no light, and no one who illuminates.⁸⁹

The words uttered by the participants of the dialogue are both the testimony and the substantiation of the person who stands opposite, as the partner of the dialogue. The word that crosses the separation is a question. For God directs a question at man, which expresses the acknowledgement, the acceptance of the human capability of listening, receiving questions.

The question – Tischner emphasises – is the acknowledgement of freedom – the rational freedom, as the second power of receiving questions is reason. The concept of reason and freedom appeared in the question as such, that is not in its “what,” but exactly in its “how” – in the quality of asking.⁹⁰

The influence of Rosenzweig, who made the speech the vehicle of the love relationship between God and man, is not subject to doubt here.

The dialogue between God and man also transforms the sense of human freedom which is grounded on its close relation to responsibility. The “quality” of being asked does not relate us to the abstract freedom, but to the freedom of chosenness, which is always associated to the dialogic relationship. This kind of freedom implies the chosenness occurring in revelation that is not attached to any necessity.

Revelation – Tischner writes – bears in itself certain traits of coincidence, but it is not a “pointless” coincidence. It is a coincidence “by choice.” In order to call “Adam” or “Abraham,” it is necessary to choose. There are so many grains of sand, so many names under the sun... Why I? Why exactly I?⁹¹

The answer to such question is attached to the premonition of someone else’s freedom, which stands behind the choice. The choice means that the Other, in his freedom, has accepted the questioned one, and has not rejected him. However, it is obscure why and what for he has chosen. For the logic

⁸⁹ Ibidem, p. 173.

⁹⁰ Ibidem, p. 175.

⁹¹ Ibidem.

of the existence, connected with the necessity characteristic of the sphere of objects and the cause-effect relations existing in it, does not stand behind the choice. The choice is free. The reasons for it are not available in the light of clear and distinct cognition. Choice is the essence of revelation, which is corroborated in the approaches of both philosophers. “The primordial, dramatic experience of freedom – Tischner writes – is not the experience of one’s own ‘I want – I don’t want’ or ‘I can – I can’t,’ but the experience of chosenness by a question.”⁹²

The chosenness comes from the Other. It is not I who chooses, but I am being chosen in the question directed at me by the Other. Thus, the primordial experience of freedom, both for Tischner and Rosenzweig, is not the freedom of the I as the autonomous subject, but it is the freedom of the Other.

The original freedom – the Cracow philosopher writes – is the freedom of the Other, who asks and “confides himself” by the act of asking. What shall I do with this confession? This is the question to my freedom, the “awoken” freedom.⁹³

In this sense, freedom awakes in me thanks to the appeal directed at me by the Other. The dialogic dimension of revelation consists in the fact that God, choosing a man by a question, thereby acknowledges the good that the man is. “God, who calls Abraham, acknowledges at the same time, Abraham is some kind of ‘good’”⁹⁴. Good has the character of election that arouses good in a man.

Good “gives birth to” good. The chosenness “isolates” the summoned from the rest of the world. It makes him become “the absolute good,” good “with no consideration for the circumstances.” If he chooses and asks, he chooses and asks “with no consideration for the All.”⁹⁵

It may be said that the relationship of God’s revelation to man is the relation whose inseparable horizon is love and good. Rosenzweig emphasises love, while Tischner accentuates good. Nevertheless, these two aspects of the relationship of revelation are in fact one whole.

⁹² *Ibidem*.

⁹³ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 176.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*.

Conclusion

What meaning does the encounter with the Jewish thought, whose example is the dialogists' "new thinking," have for the contemporary culture and philosophy, and also for the philosophy and culture in Poland? Although in this article only the relationships between Rosenzweig's and Tischner's philosophy have been examined, one can see that the most important issue in the conception of revelation proposed by the dialogic thought, is the emphasis on the interpersonal encounter. "The personal domain – Bernhard Welte emphasises – is the easiest, and the most abundant at the same time."⁹⁶ In the contemporary culture, dominated by science and technology, the human understanding is objectified and has the form of the functional reference to the reality.⁹⁷ Whereas the issues that are the most significant and profound in man's experience, that is his personal existence and the relation to the personalistic God, are sometimes reduced to the purely objectified relationships between the issues that remain in the cause-effect relationships driven by necessity. Man, however, as numerous contemporary thinkers including the philosophers of dialogue argue, cannot be himself outside the interpersonal relationships. Only in these relationships he realises himself as a person.⁹⁸ From this point of view, Rosenzweig's and Tischner's conceptions of revelation contribute to the contemporary culture not only the new vision of the relationships between God and man, but at the same time they make a contribution to the development and the strengthening of the personalistic vision of man.

Although for Tischner man is not good in the full until he answers the call of chosenness, the choice itself makes the chosen aware of the fact that by remaining in separation he cannot fulfil his aspiration of uniting with the absolute Good that is felt as the origin of Salvation. One can become "complete" good only when – as the Cracow philosopher writes – one replies to the choice by the choice, and when summoned – by the confession "I am here."⁹⁹ Good in ourselves can only be born after encountering the absolute Good that calls us by name, respecting our freedom, or rather inspiring it in us. Therefore, it can be said that

Good has its name and not a label. He is not an object, thing, or a system of structures. He is: Adam, Eve, Abraham. The name is "other" – different than the

⁹⁶ B. Welte, *Filozofia religii* [*The philosophy of religion*], transl. by G. Sowinski, Kraków: Znak 1996, p. 128.

⁹⁷ Cf. *ibidem*.

⁹⁸ Cf. *ibidem*, p. 123.

⁹⁹ Cf. J. Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, p. 176.

world in which it works. Names have their tasks defined by values. However, their good nature always exceeds and surpasses the tasks they have here to be fulfilled. It is less significant what one does in the world, what is relevant is the appeal, chosenness, the awoken good.¹⁰⁰

The kindness, and freedom at the same time are born in the encounter of man and God who is the absolute Good. Thus, one can state that a person is born outside this world in a way. Although he or she is within the world, they are radically different from it. It is not a part of the objectified world, but it emerges from the participation in the relationship with the personalised Good, the relationship which “is questioning, choosing, acknowledgement in the good, establishing a ‘non-objectified’ community.”¹⁰¹

In the theses about the birth of the person in relation to the absolute Good, Tischner consents with Rosenzweig’s writings about the soul which wakes up in relation to Divine love and achieves its existence by becoming God’s beloved.¹⁰² The contemporary culture needs this solidarity in the defence of a human being, open to God and to others. Thanks to the influence of the Jewish philosophy on Tischner’s Christian dialogics, we have received a description of human existence, opening new horizons of thinking that touches upon the subject matter of dialogue: interpersonal dialogue, dialogue across religions and cultures. However, let us not forget that the inspiration for dialogic thinking is actually ancient, as it comes from one of the oldest sources of our culture, that is, the Bible.

Tłumaczenie Łukasz Malczak

¹⁰⁰ Ibidem, p. 176-177.

¹⁰¹ Ibidem, p. 177.

¹⁰² Cf. F. Rosenzweig, *Gwiazda Zbawienia*, p. 303.



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The Significance of Gershom Scholem for Christians

Gershom Scholem (1897–1982) is one of the greatest representatives of Judaism in the 20th century. His impact and meaning is connected above all with the discovery and presentation of the Jewish mysticism, its history and its theology. His works have contributed to and enlarged our understanding of the Western culture, reminding us of its religious roots that reach to the Revelation presented in the Bible. This is the reason why Scholem's research is so interesting for Christians as well, and especially for Christian theologians. Some of these interesting issues are the focus of the present article. First, we focus on the context of Scholem's reflexions in his life. Then, we present his major contributions to theology, posing a question about their relationship with the Christian vision.

1. A Dialectic View

At the outset of Scholem's concern for Judaism lay his critical attitude to the "assimilation" of his family, like so many other Jews in Germany, into the rational-liberal bourgeois culture which was a consequence of the European "Illuminism."¹ For the young Gerard, as he was called in German, the alleged assimilation was an illusion. For him the proof was the fact

¹ The details of Scholem's life are to be found in his interview of 1970s; after: *Rozmowy z Gershomem Scholemem* [*Conversations with Gershom Scholem*], in G. Scholem, *Żydzi i Niemcy. Eseje – Listy – Rozmowa* [*Jews and Germans. Essays – Letters – Conversation*], trans. by M. Zawadowska, A. Lipszyc; ed. by A. Lipszyc, Sejny: Pogranicze 2006, p. 19-71.

that German Christians never visited his family, so they still lived in a kind of ghetto. Therefore, he rebelled against the illusion of assimilation and, at the age of 15, he informed his astonished parents that he would be a Jew. He began to study Hebrew and joined the Zionist movement, where he looked not for political goals but for a renewal of Judaism in its specific values. He changed his object of study from mathematics to Kabbalah, which became the subject of his dissertation at the University of Munich. After the First World War he settled in the land of Israel. There he dedicated all his life to the scientific study of Kabbalah and other aspects of the Jewish mysticism.

The life in Israel was for Scholem a practical lesson of dialectics. As he said, "I learnt dialectics neither from Hegel, nor from the Marxists, but thanks to the experience of, and the reflection on, the intricacies of Zionism, i.e. the attempt of making it reality."² Initially, Zionism meant for him simply "Jewishness"³ in its religious aspect, for the definition of it was contained according to him in the biblical word of God addressed to his people: "you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation" (Ex 19:6). Later he admitted his understanding was "naïve, not dialectic," because his concern was a "vision of a holy nation."⁴ His view changed when the state of Israel was established after the Second World War. He realized that from the historic point of view an "immediate, undialectic return to the traditional Judaism is not possible." He wrote, "even I personally did not succeed in doing this." Thus, for him it is not only "holiness," but also a secularization of Judaism that is necessary as "part of the process of our entering into history."⁵

This dialectic tension between the holiness of religious life and the secularization as a consequence of life in the world was for Scholem also a hint in his relationship to Kabbalah and, more generally, to the religion as an object of his scientific study. He states about his works and lectures, "I addressed all. I tried to speak so that nobody could guess whether I am a religious man, or not." He further explains,

I do not consider myself to be an unbeliever. My unbelief crushed at the very ground, in a decisive point: I am a religious man, because I am sure of my faith in God. My secular attitude is not secular.

² Ibidem, p. 56.

³ Ibidem, p. 29.

⁴ Ibidem, p. 56.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 54.

He continues his explanation saying that he taught Kabbalah “not only as a chapter of history, but from the dialectic distance, by identification with it and by departing from it as well.”⁶

Scholem evaluates the cultural-religious situation of the world at that time from the point of view of Judaism in a similar dialectic way. At the end of his life he predicts that “Judaism will undergo a crisis, and so it will be changed.” Theoretically, it is possible that the crisis will lead “either to a renewal, or to a total loss and destruction.” The second eventuality is connected with the phenomena he found only later in Israel, i.e. “the barbarization of the so-called new culture.” His hope also has a dialectic form: “One has to fall in order to rise.”⁷ He believes Israel is not like other nations and so “in our case a total secularization is not possible and will not succeed.”⁸

Scholem’s evaluation of human reason as the main means of constructing a secular culture is similar. He stresses that the function of reason is criticism, so its achievements in construction are rather small. “Reason is a dialectic instrument which can serve with both construction and destruction, but its achievements are significantly greater in destruction.” He adds, “I know it is a very painful point, and numerous supporters of reason (I also reckon myself among them) can hardly listen to such opinions.” In order to construct we need more, something that reaches beyond reason, “something moral.” He spells it out that he does not only think of morality, since “morality as an edifying force is impossible without religion.”⁹

Scholem’s position distinguishes him from other important representatives of Jewish thought in the 20th century, with whom he stayed in critical contact. One of them was Martin Buber. After the initial admiration for the elder philosopher, later Scholem showed an ambivalent attitude towards him. On the one hand, he acknowledged Buber’s contribution to the renewal of Judaism, since he was “the first Jewish thinker who recognized an essential and ever living aspect of Judaism in mysticism.”¹⁰ However, it was in Buber’s works on Hasidism that Scholem missed a scientific approach, and so criticized him for identifying the Hasidic message with his own existentialist philosophy. On the other hand, Scholem accused Buber

⁶ Ibidem, p. 67f.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 41-42.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 54.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 51-52.

¹⁰ G. Scholem, *Martin Buber i jego koncepcja judaizmu* [*Martin Buber’s Conception of Judaism*], in idem, *Żydzi i Niemcy. Eseje – Listy – Rozmowa*, p. 149. Cf. *Martin Buber i jego interpretacja chasydyzmu* [*Martin Buber’s interpretation of Hasidism*], in ibidem, p. 107-131.

of his more visible distance from religion, which was allegedly the case later on. He observed that in the period of nearly thirty years which Buber spent in Israel, “nobody saw him in a synagogue.”¹¹ Buber reduced religion to an inner experience, so his attitude might make the “impression of an atheistic mysticism.”¹² Scholem’s own position looked different against the above-outlined background. In Israel, he confessed,

I fully identified with its secularism, and its religiosity. Nothing Jewish was alien to me.¹³

Scholem’s attitude to Franz Rosenzweig, another great Jewish thinker, was more positive. He very much appreciated *The Star of Redemption*, his main work. Its conception, however, which goes beyond both “the world of orthodoxy and the world of liberalism,”¹⁴ made it seem, according to Scholem, “bold and almost blasphemous”¹⁵ from the orthodox point of view. Rosenzweig’s conclusion resulting from the comparison of Judaism and Christianity was especially problematic for Scholem. It read that both religions are “only two shapes of the one, eternal Truth.”¹⁶ Thus, it was hard to imagine that “this important work would ever be accepted as a Jewish theological system.”¹⁷

Scholem’s long-standing friendship with the nowadays influential Walter Benjamin as well as their exchange of ideas were most important for him. Thanks to him Scholem learnt to seek for theological ideas, in the face of the failure of the rational-liberal theology, in the literary works of such modern writers as Marcel Proust and Franz Kafka. Scholem also admitted that thanks to his friend, “I learned what really means thinking,”¹⁸ and we could add – dialectic thinking. However, he remained critical of the later Benjamin’s evolution, for he became seduced by the Marxist dialectics and its vision of history as a “secularized version of the Jewish apocalyptic.”¹⁹ It is noteworthy, however, that it was to Benjamin that Scholem dedicated

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 134f.

¹² Ibidem, p. 153.

¹³ *Rozmowy z Gershomem Scholemem*, p. 63.

¹⁴ G. Scholem, *O nowym wydaniu “Gwiazdy zbawienia”* [On the 1930 Edition of Rosenzweig’s “*The Star of Redemption*”], in idem, G. Scholem, *Żydzi i Niemcy. Eseje – Listy – Rozmowa*, p. 201.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 203.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 201.

¹⁷ *Rozmowy z Gershomem Scholemem*, p. 43.

¹⁸ G. Scholem, *Walter Benjamin*, in idem, *Żydzi i Niemcy. Eseje – Listy – Rozmowa*, p. 207.

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 227.

his main work about the Jewish mysticism – to the one “who had a genius to combine the depths of a metaphysician with the perspicacity of a critic and the knowledge of a scientist.”²⁰

2. A Mystical Reinterpretation of Revelation

The path of Scholem’s life led through a dialectic equidistant both from the illuministic impact on the Jewish attempts of assimilation connected with a liberal theology, and from the orthodox Judaism with its fixation on the Rabbinic tradition. It led him towards a conception “of which both the liberal, and the orthodox, the secularized and the religious Jews were so afraid that they escaped it in all possible ways lest they should hear of it: the Kabbalah.”²¹

At the beginning of his studies Scholem had to break the prejudices of the liberal theology, which in its rationalistic approach would not open up to the mystical world of Kabbalah, which was deemed to be an irrational – i.e. absurd – one. Starting his work, Scholem noticed, “it does not give justice to us [Jews] that ideas and opinions showing a veritably deep insight into this world [of Kabbalah] come for the most part from mystically inclined Christian scientists.”²² At the end of his life, he confessed, “I suppose I have some predilection for the world of mysticism.”²³ Unlike Buber, however, to whom he ascribed also such “inclinations”²⁴ too, but who seemed to him lacking in a scientific approach, in his study of the Jewish mysticism Scholem was determined “to apply to it the rigorous criteria of a historical study.”²⁵

²⁰ G. Scholem, *Mistyycyzm żydowski i jego główne kierunki* [*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*], trans. by I. Kania, Warszawa: Czytelnik 1997, p. 17. Here, Scholem added about Benjamin, “who died in Port Bou (Spain) on the way to freedom,” omitting to mention that it was suicide.

²¹ G. Scholem, *Franz Rosenzweig i jego “Gwiazda Zbawienia”* [*Franz Rosenzweig and his Book “The Star of Redemption”*], in idem, *Żydzi i Niemcy. Eseje – Listy – Rozmowa*, p. 183.

²² *Rozmowy z Gershomem Scholemem*, p. 25. Scholem adds, “as the Englishman Arthur Waite in our times, or the German Franz Josef Molitor a hundred years ago.”

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 39.

²⁴ According to Scholem, in his interest in Hasidism, Buber “already had undoubted inclinations towards mysticism (...) he sought for Jewish mysticism and therefore he was able to find it, i.e. to see it while meeting it.” (G. Scholem, *Martin Buber i jego koncepcja judaizmu*, p. 147). This also applies to Scholem himself!

²⁵ G. Scholem, *Mistyycyzm...*, p. 27.

The focus on the history of the Jewish mysticism matches Scholem's subtle and deep theological reflection, which further attracts our attention.

Reflecting on the "Jewish theology in our time,"²⁶ he begins with the question of "authoritative sources" of such a theology. In Scholem's opinion the admissible sources, i.e. the Bible and the Rabbinic tradition have to be extended to include the Kabbalistic tradition.²⁷ This third and last tradition is an "original, new stream born out of the foundation of the two former strata."²⁸ The growing of the second one, the Rabbinic tradition, was understood in Judaism as the "oral *Torah*" based on the biblical *Torah* as the written one. For Scholem, this relationship of both the strata shows "a striking similarity to the *Catholic concept of tradition*, which is also familiar with the oral message coming from God," whereby "of course the tradition of the Church refers to the Christian Revelation, just like the Rabbinic tradition refers to the Synaic Revelation."²⁹

This extended concept of revelation in the Rabbinic tradition resulted in the opinion that all the contents of the oral *Torah* which was elaborated by the Rabbis has the same source as the written *Torah*. This common source was supposed to be the Synaic revelation which, in its unfathomable fullness, could be recognized only gradually thanks to the commentary by tradition. Thus, the tradition was understood as an ever-growing insight into the "eternal presence of the Synaic revelation." Its contents was unfathomable, because it was God himself who revealed here in his inscrutability. This concept was already open to "mystical theses concerning both revelation and tradition."³⁰

It was Kabbalah that was to formulate these mystical theses explicitly. The kabbalists assumed that the essence of the *Torah* was the revelation of God himself, and the revealed God's word is his divine name. It means that the *Torah* does not intend to communicate a particular content or sense, but wants to express the divine power concentrated in God's name. The

²⁶ G. Scholem, *Rozważania o teologii żydowskiej w naszych czasach* [*Reflections on Jewish theology in our Time*], in idem, *Żydzi i Niemcy. Eseje – Listy – Rozmowa*, p. 337-372.

²⁷ Apart from the above-mentioned article, we further use the following texts: *Objawienie i tradycja jako kategorie religijne w judaizmie* [*Revelation and Tradition as Religious Categories in Judaism*], in G. Scholem, *Judaizm. Parę głównych pojęć* [*Judaism. Some Main Concepts*], trans. by J. Zychowicz, Kraków: inter esse 1991, p. 115-151; *Autorytet religijny a mistyka* [*Religious Authority and Mysticism*], in idem, *Kabala i jej symbolika* [*On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*], trans. by R. Wojnakowski, Kraków: Znak 1996, p. 9-39.

²⁸ G. Scholem, *Rozważania o teologii żydowskiej w naszych czasach*, p. 337-339.

²⁹ G. Scholem, *Objawienie i tradycja jako kategorie religijne w judaizmie*, p. 124.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 126-127.

written *Torah* is only a medium in the communication of an inexpressible “absolute word” which “communicates itself in its fullness, but remains for us incomprehensible.”³¹

The consequence of this mystical concept of revelation was that also the written *Torah* as a communication of God’s unfathomable name contains an “infinite number of possible interpretations.” The revelation, which has “no specific content, thus communicates an infinite richness of content in its words.” This richness continually reveals in the tradition. It just made Kabbalah, which in Hebrew means “tradition,” so indispensable. The later kabbalists believed that the *Torah* revealed to every Jew “its particular, only for him understandable face;” thus the mission of every believer was “to discover this particular face of the *Torah* and to place it in the tradition.”³²

In another place Scholem indicated later consequences of this “astonishing loosening of the concept of revelation.” He calls it a subjectivist view and observes that it was taken up by the Jewish theologians in the 20th century, when they began to “speak of revelation in a soft, subjectivist way.” Instead of the Synaic revelation, they “spoke of the *ruach ha-kodesh* [the Holy Spirit] as an instrument of revelation which is basically possible in every instant.” This kind of revelation “no longer has a binding character for the community,” but only has a “subjectivist character.” Scholem adds that from such a “subjectivist concept which places revelation in the human heart there is but a step before one reached a secular-humanistic concept.”³³

At this point, we can add some observations from a Christian perspective. The mystical reinterpretation of revelation is also open to a Christian view of the Old Testament. It is noteworthy that the observations about the revelation of the Holy Spirit in the human heart have not only possible “secular-humanistic” consequences, as Scholem indicated, but they can also be understood as a fulfillment of the prophetic promises about the New Covenant (cf. Jr 31:31-34; Ezk 36:25-28). Thus, the mystical concept of revelation in Kabbalah has more to do with the Christian vision than Scholem is ready to see or admit.

Furthermore, Scholem noted that “the mystic finds the experience to be expressed in the sacred text.”³⁴ Thus, a question poses itself why to deny St. Paul Apostle such a reinterpretation on the basis of his experience? Scholem is ready to admit that St. Paul is “the most distinguished example

³¹ Ibidem, p. 136.

³² Ibidem, p. 136-140.

³³ G. Scholem, *Rozważania o teologii żydowskiej w naszych czasach*, p. 344-349.

³⁴ G. Scholem, *Kabala i jej symbolika*, p. 20.

of a revolutionary Jewish mystic that we do know.” He appreciates the Apostle’s mystical experience, and adds that it let Paul “read the Old Testament, so to say, ‘against the grain’.”³⁵ The question arises, however, why not to admit that the *Torah* also revealed to Paul its particular face, not just a merely subjectivist one, but as an important hint of the Holy Spirit for all community of believers?

3. The meaning of the creation of nothing

The kabbalistic reinterpretation of revelation in the light of mysticism was connected with a new view of the revealing God. This new vision was also due to the impact of the neo-Platonist philosophy which influenced formulations of the Christian mysticism as well. It was through the contact between the Rabbinic gnosis and the medieval neo-Platonism, mediated by Christian and Islamic sources, that the Kabbalistic theology arose in the 13th century.

The place of the neo-Platonist *One*, which was neutral and hidden, took the hidden and inexpressible *En-Sof*, literally: Infinity. It was beyond all expression, neither existing nor non-existing, thus at the same time unifying all contrary attributes. In reference to the Bible, God’s revealed attributes were connected not immediately with *En-Sof*, but with its *sephirot*; they were more than the neo-Platonist emanations, since they were not “lower” in respect to *En-Sof*, but they represented the dynamics and life of itself in its aspect turned towards creation.

The kabbalists offered different descriptions of the relationship between *En-Sof* as the hidden Divinity and the *sephirot* as its revealed attributes. Since *En-Sof* as transcending all attributes was supposed to be also neither personal nor non-personal, therefore its personal aspect was to be connected with the first *sephira*. According to Scholem, the essence of the kabbalistic concept is a “particular role of the will in the passage from the hidden God to the revealing one.”³⁶ This will, which also by Plotinus could be determined as the only attribute of the One, participates in the “indeterminity” of *En-Sof*, so it could also be called “nothing” as transcending all other determinations. Among different descriptions, Scholem prefers the one in

³⁵ Ibidem.

³⁶ G. Scholem, *Rywalizacja między Bogiem biblijnym a Bogiem Plotyna we wczesnej kabale* [A Rivalry between God of the Bible and God of Plotinus in the early Kabbalah], in idem, *Judaizm. Parę głównych pojęć*, p. 50.

which the relationship between *En-Sof* and its first *sephira* as will or nothing is a dialectic one. It means that there is a differentiated unity between *En-Sof* and will or nothing, so that the “unpersonal and personal moment are unified.”³⁷

It was this vision of a “nothing” as the first aspect of *En-Sof* that led to a reinterpretation of the traditional concept of the creation of nothing.³⁸ The traditional understanding of it served to protect the monotheism against the mythic conception of some “material” independent from God, and used by him in creation. Although the creation of nothing appeared expressly only late in the Bible, it became a “fundamental thesis of official theology” in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It also served to object to pantheism, where creation as proceeding from God himself was identified with Him. Scholem adds that in the Catholic Church the creation of nothing is opposed to the immanent origin of the Son who in a confession of faith is said “to be born from the Father, and not created.”³⁹

Just at the same time when the idea of the creation of nothing was commonly accepted, its mystical reinterpretation began. The new interpretation “annihilated” the traditional understanding, because “nothing” was no more opposed to God, but became a “part” of him. As we have seen, in the Kabbalah “nothing” was connected with God’s first *sephira* as part of his own life, whereas creation began only with the second *sephira*, called “the Divine Wisdom, *Chochma*,” which contained “primeval patterns of all created beings in God.” This second *sephira* indicated the passage between nothing and being, and thus was called a “source of being.”⁴⁰

A further step in this direction was taken in the later Kabbalah by Isaak Luria. His question was of the possibility of existence of the things which are not God. In answer he proposed the idea of *cimcum* (literally “contraction”), which meant God’s “self-limitation.” A created thing which is different from God can only arise where God limits himself in order to make free space for creation. Thus, the first act of creation consists not in God’s acting “outside” (*ad extra*), but in “his entering in himself, which opens an *a priori* possibility for the world” – as an “act evoking nothing.” A proper creation follows in the next act, when God sends his light into the primeval space evoked in the act of *cimcum*.⁴¹

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 54.

³⁸ Further reflections from: G. Scholem, *Stworzenie z niczego i autoredukcja Boga* [*Creation of Nothing and Self-reduction of God*], in idem, *Judaizm. Parę głównych pojęć*, p. 70-114.

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 73-74.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 98.

⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 104-105.

Luria and his followers were conscious of the boldness of this vision which contradicted the orthodox idea of “no movement in God.” Scholem, however, defends the new vision; he points out that the orthodox formula has its source in Aristotle’s concept of the “immobile” God, and not in the biblical vision which presents God as a being full of life and dynamism. Thus, the kabbalistic vision might serve to overcome the formula where the “biblical monotheism became dominated by the Greek way of thinking.”⁴² Yet, in another place, Scholem observed that the kabbalistic attempts to combine their “dynamic” vision of God with monotheism left “something not fitting the rational calculation” and were “somehow difficult to be contained within the limits of the monotheistic doctrine.”⁴³

Let us observe that Scholem’s last remark once again indicates an open way from the mystical reinterpretation of Judaism towards the Christian vision. Instead of the ten *sephirot* as living “spheres” in one God, the Christian vision assumes three “spheres” connected with the persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The crucial point is that also the Christian vision intends to maintain the monotheistic doctrine although the personal “spheres” are – not unlike the kabbalistic *sephirot* – “somehow different” to be contained in this doctrine. And furthermore, the kabbalistic attempts to combine the personal and impersonal aspects in one God bring to mind similar attempts of the Christian mysticism. For example, Simone Weil, who was undoubtedly mystically “inclined,” observed that the key to an insight into the Trinitarian mystery is to think God “as personal and impersonal at the same time, and not once as threefold, once as unique.” She added that only very few mystics such as “St. John of the Cross did comprehend at the same time and with equal force the personal and impersonal aspect of God.”⁴⁴

The Trinitarian vision of one God also allows a mystical reinterpretation of the creation of nothing. Scholem himself pointed out a problematic feature in the idea of *cimcum* which is supposed to “disturb the balance of *En-Sof* resting in itself,” and therefore just this act of God’s self-limitation contains the “roots of all evil,” since after *cimcum* “there can be no harmony of *En-Sof*.”⁴⁵ It means that the price of the new conception is an unbiblical, gnostic idea of creation as the beginning of evil.

⁴² Ibidem.

⁴³ G. Scholem, *Mistyycyzm...*, p. 279-280.

⁴⁴ Quoted from J. Bolewski SJ, *Nic jak Bóg. Postacie iluminacji Wschodu i Zachodu [Nothing like God. Forms of Illumination from East and West]*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Jacek Santorski S-ka 2007, p. 187-188.

⁴⁵ G. Scholem, *Stworzenie z niczego i autoredukcja Boga*, p. 84.

A deeper and more satisfactory possibility is hidden in another kabbalistic assumption. It concerns the idea that all *sephirot* as images of God's life form a "mystical man," called *Adam Cadmon*, a Primeval Man. This idea is rooted in the biblical vision of a "Son of Man" (cf. Dn 7:13), who is shown as a divine person.⁴⁶ Instead of the idea of *cimcum*, for which there is no biblical reference, it is this divine Son of Man who can be seen as an "*a priori* possibility" of the created world where the divine Son will become incarnated as the Son of Man.

Christianity develops this Old Testament vision in the light of the mystical reinterpretation of the revelation by St. Paul, obviously as a consequence of the mystical experience of Jesus. There is no need for a "nothing" in God as a sign of his "self-limitation." It suffices that in God himself there is a "place" for a Son who is not only divine, but can also reveal himself in creation as a Son of Man. Therefore, creation, which was accomplished "in Christ,"⁴⁷ can express the "self-limitation" of God, since in the created Son of Man "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Col 2:9).

4. Tensions in the Messianic idea

Scholem's reflection about the Messianic idea begins with the following remark:

The complex problems of Messianism concern a subtle matter. It is just in this area that the basic conflict between Judaism and Christianity was born, and still exists.⁴⁸

Therefore, his reflections are invariably polemical against Christianity, and consequently, need an immediate response.

In Scholem's opinion the main difference between Judaism and Christianity consists in a different understanding of redemption. Judaism proclaims Messianism as a process which takes place "in the visible world." In contrast, Christianity "sees, in the redemption, a process in the 'spiritual,' invisible sphere, taking place in the soul, in the world of each individual man, and

⁴⁶ Cf. G. Scholem, *O mistycznej postaci bóstwa. Z badań nad podstawowymi pojęciami kabały* [On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah], trans. by A.K. Haas, Warszawa: Aletheia 2010, p. 42. Another similar biblical vision is Ezk 1:26, which was also referred to in the Jewish mysticism, cf. *ibidem*, p. 10-12.

⁴⁷ 1 Co 8:6; cf. Col 1:15f.; Jn 1,1f.

⁴⁸ G. Scholem, *O rozumieniu idei mesjańskiej w judaizmie* [The Messianic Idea in Judaism], w: *idem, Judaizm. Parę głównych pojęć*, p. 152.

effecting a mysterious transformation, to which something in the external world does not necessarily correspond.” What for Judaism “was necessarily situated at the end of history, and externally,” for Christianity “stayed in the very centre of the historical process, which now, by the way, was understood in a strange way as a ‘history of salvation’.” Moreover, the Christian reinterpretation of the prophetic promises by referring them “to the sphere of the inner life” appeared to Jewish thinkers “as an unjustified anticipation of something that in the best case could mean an inner side of the process which takes place in the external sphere and never without it.”⁴⁹

It must be noted that the three elements which are ascribed here to the Christian vision are presented in a way that corresponds neither to the teachings nor to the work of Jesus as Christ-Messiah.

First, for Jesus it is true that human redemption begins in the inner sphere, but not as a “transformation, to which something in the external world does not necessarily correspond.” The inner transformation also has external effects, not only in physical healings (cf. Mk 2:9-12), but above all in a new community whose life testifies to God’s kingdom in the world (cf. Jn 17:20f.).

Second, the event of Jesus as Christ-Messiah, as the “centre” of salvation history, does not oppose its “end,” but rather initiates the fulfillment of its coming, since it is with Jesus that “the time is fulfilled” (Mk 1:15), or “the fullness of time” has begun (Ga 4:4). In addition, Jesus breaks the apocalyptic expectations of his time, in which the beginning of a new era was expected only after the end of the present one, in a universal end of the world. The novelty of Jesus’s Good News rather indicates that in Him the expected beginning is already present, in the “old” world, whose ultimate end essentially depends on the human answer to Him – in accepting or rejecting Him.

Third, the argument against Christianity about its “unjustified” reference of prophetic promises to “the sphere of the inner life” is itself insofar unjustified as it does not take into account the variety of prophetic expectations. Scholem seems to suppose that all of them proclaim a final catastrophe of the world. He recalls prophecies of Amos and Isaiah about the coming of the Day of the Lord, which will be the “day of catastrophe,”⁵⁰ and he does not account for the fact that its fulfillment was in the first destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, and the following in Israel’s captivity. It was then that,

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 152-153.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 162.

by Jeremiah and Ezekiel, prophecies of a new covenant appeared, and those were not connected with a new catastrophe, but with a pouring out of the Holy Spirit and the resulting transformation of human hearts (cf. Jr 31:31-34; Ezk 36:25-28). Surely, also these prophecies presaged a return from the captivity and an external renewal of Israel, though – so to say – not automatically, but as an external consequence of the inner transformation under God's action. It is to these prophecies that Jesus and Christianity referred in the conviction that the pouring out of the Divine Spirit thanks to Jesus, and the following transformation of human hearts should effect an external transformation as well (cf. Ac 2).

Scholem's further reflections about the Messianic idea can lead to conclusions that are opposed to his own conclusions. He analyzes Messianic tendencies in the Rabbinic Judaism, and the way an impact of restorative and utopian forces appears in them. Both kinds of forces are strictly interconnected in a "dialectically intertwined tension," since the expectations as to the restoration of a past state were mostly mingled with utopian images of a "new world which should be made real on the Messianic way." Scholem adds that these "new" elements are "something transformed in a dream under the influence of the utopia's rays."⁵¹ He further observes "something clumsy" in this utopian vision, which lets it fall victim to an "unbound phantasy."⁵² Interestingly, when Scholem admits the impact of human dreams and fantasies on shaping the images of a Messianic era, does he not provide an explanation of why the Messianity of Jesus has to be rejected as different from this kind of dreams and fantasies? But instead of rejecting the reality of Jesus, are we not rather supposed to reject images of our "unbound fantasy"?

Scholem insists on the apocalyptic understanding of Messianism which is, and "it must be emphasized, a theory of catastrophe."⁵³ This aspect, however, is matched by the consolation which is connected with the expectation of a new world. An example can be found in Judaism, where the "thought of a hidden Messiah who is somewhere from old" appears; Scholem points to a "moving legend," in which the Messiah "was born on the day of the Temple's destruction." Thus, "from the moment of the greatest catastrophe there is also a chance of redemption."⁵⁴ In the further development of

⁵¹ Ibidem, p. 156-157.

⁵² Ibidem, p. 171.

⁵³ Ibidem, p. 162. Scholem admits later that an anti-apocalyptic understanding is "quite of an equal validity" as well (cf. *Martin Buber i jego koncepcja judaizmu*, p. 164).

⁵⁴ G. Scholem, *O rozumieniu idei mesjańskiej w judaizmie*, p. 168.

both aspects of Messianism, the catastrophic and the utopian one, it came to a duplication of Messiah in two persons: a Messiah from the house of Joseph and a Messiah from the house of David. The first one is a dying one, perishing in the Messianic catastrophe. He fails, but does not suffer. Scholem stresses that the prophecy of Isaiah about the suffering Servant of the Lord is never applied to this Messiah. Hence, “all utopian interest”⁵⁵ is focused on the other Messiah, the one from the house of David.

Given such reflections, a question arises whether they do not actually confirm the Christian vision of Messianism. Instead of departing from the Bible in “duplicating” the person of Messiah, it is simpler to affirm that different biblical descriptions treat of one person in which the element of “failure” in people’s eyes is more important than the utopian features which result from fantasy and in fact make Messiah’s earthly failure “necessary,” for he does not fulfill these fantastic expectations as to himself. And Scholem emphasizes that the fact that in Judaism the failed Messiah has never been associated with the suffering God’s Servant of Isaiah can be explained as the effect of the rejection of Christianity where this prophecy is applied to Jesus.⁵⁶

Oddly enough, Scholem’s most voluminous book written in Hebrew was dedicated to one of the “failed” Messiahs, i.e. Sabbatai Sevi, who lived in the 17th century.⁵⁷ In the light of the documentary sources the scholar discovered that this tragic figure had actually suffered from a mental disease, and that the movement called sabbataism was originated only thanks to the theologian Nathan of Gaza, who provided it with a theological foundation after Sabbatai Sevi’s final apostasy from Judaism to Islam. Thus, sabbataism arose at the time when through the incomprehensible end of the supposed Messiah, a cleft arose between this end and expectations connected with his beginning. Scholem adds,

it is quite natural that we find a far-reaching and significant analogy between the religious world and evolution of sabbataism on the one hand, and the early Christianity on the other hand. Both go extremely far in their interpretation of the old Jewish paradox of the suffering God’s Servant.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, p. 171-178.

⁵⁶ In another place Scholem stresses that Isaiah’s prophecy refers to all Israel (cf. ibidem, p. 200). However, we must add that this is but partly true, since there is also a clear reference to a single person.

⁵⁷ Cf. English translation: G. Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi, The Mystical Messiah 1626–1672*, Princeton: NY 1973.

A further similarity consists in the tension in both movements connected with the expectation of a return of “their temporarily absent savior.”⁵⁸

Apart from these and other similarities Scholem also recognizes significant differences. According to him “the weakness of Sabbatai Sevi’s personality is striking in comparison with Jesus.” Also the paradoxical ways in which both saviours end up are different: “Jesus’s death by crucifixion and Sabbatai’s apostasy.” Although the shock was similar in both cases, “unlike Jesus’s death, Sabbatai Sevi’s decisive act does not imply any new values.” In sabbataism, the fascination for the savior was connected with a glorification of “treachery and apostasy,” which was absurd for Judaism, and therefore “had to lead right towards nihilism.”⁵⁹

The “mystical” formula of a “holy sinner” which was applied by Nathan of Gaza to Sabbatai Sevi in order to explain his last act of apostasy as a step necessary for redemption was for Scholem an expression of an absurd and “heretic” claim of sabbataism. Scholem rightly rejects this significance of the formula, without noting its possible deeper significance which is offered in Christianity. It is right here that an additional and basic difference between Judaism and Christianity appears. St. Paul said once about Jesus that God for our sake “made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Co 5:21). It means that Christ himself was without sin, but was allowed by God to be “made to be sin” through those who accused him to be a sinner, and thus condemned him to death. We do not have here a paradox, but a mystery: only the One who is innocent and who accepts human sins can overcome them.

Thus, the difference between being a “holy sinner” in the case of Jesus and of Sabbatai Sevi consists in – in the Christian perspective – in the fact that the former remained holy although he was esteemed to be a sinner, whereas the latter – on the contrary – was esteemed to be holy although he became a sinner.

The aim of the above and previous remarks is not to defend Jesus from Judaism. The scope of the reflection presented against the background of Scholem’s presentation of Jewish mysticism was to indicate that his presentation contains elements which can serve to understand deeper the Christian viewpoint. In other words, the particularities of the Jewish mysticism which are discovered and partly defended by Scholem are open to Christianity, where they can find their fulfillment. So Christians can be grateful to

⁵⁸ G. Scholem, *Mistycyzm...*, p. 373-374.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 375-376.

Scholem for his disclosing of Jewish mystics, and for introducing it to the revealed sources of theology. This leads to the conclusion that the mystical Jewish intuition is more open to Christianity than the Rabbinic Judaism. Therefore, it is important to ask further for a deeper sense of mystical intuitions, without prejudices, and above all in becoming more and more open to the experience of the living God who is the One worthy to be looked for.

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Israel and the Church: The Unity of the Community of Election in Karl Barth's Interpretation

In this article I will present the doctrine of Karl Barth (1886–1968) on the unity of Israel and the Church. And at the very beginning I would like to point out that Barth's concept is strictly Christian and theological rather than general religious or a philosophical one.

It is not feasible to describe here in detail the political and religious context in which the thought of this most significant Swiss Reformed theologian of the 20th century was formed. However, some introductory notes seem to be necessary. Barth lived and worked in Germany in 1922–1935. When the Nazi regime came to power, Barth was a professor of theology at the University of Bonn and a member of the German Social Democratic Party. Immediately he got involved in the “struggle for the Church” in Germany. When in 1933 the majority of protestant ecclesial communities was organized into one *Reichskirche* that sported the ideology of “German Christians,” Barth and his friend Eduard Thurneysen founded the journal “Theologische Existenz heute,” where they fought against such Nazi, “Aryan” Christianity. In December 1933 Barth delivered a sermon on Jn 4:22 (“Salvation is of the Jews”) and sent its text to Hitler. In this sermon he proved that the Jewishness of Jesus Christ is the integral part of the Church's faith. Together with Martin Niemöller, he was one of the main organizers of the First Synod of the Confessing Church (*Bekennende Kirche*) in Barmen and the author of its *Barmen Declaration*. During the preparation for the Synod, Barth was disappointed by the reluctance of the German pastors to take part in the political struggle. The majority of the Confessing Church believed that it must fight for the separation of the Church from the

state, and not defend humans against the unjust Nazi state. In 1935 Barth declined to swear allegiance to the Führer as a university professor, and was exiled from Germany. In the same year he took the position of the professor of theology in his native Basel. After the *Kristallnacht* in 1938 he began to call upon the Swiss government upon to renounce its neutrality and join the anti-Nazi coalition. During the War he continued his political struggle against the Nazi Germany.¹

In its core, Barth's doctrine concerning the relation between Israel and the Church is the theology *before* the Holocaust. Barth learned about the genocide of Jews only in July 1944. Yet his systematic doctrine on the subject was developed around 1940, during the preparation of the second part of the second volume of *Church Dogmatics* (published in 1942). After the war he referred to the event of the Shoah, but it did not change essentially his previous understanding of the Israel-Church relationship.² The tragedy of the Holocaust affirms the earlier vision of these relations. In many points, as we will see, Barth's theology anticipates the Holocaust theology; I believe that it is an expression of his prophetic gift. In any case, Barth's theology on this point specifically is not widely known. So it seems important to present the thoughts of this leading Christian theologian on the subject, the thoughts that can be helpful in finding new paths through the complexities of the Jewish-Christian dialogue.

This presentation will be structured around five points. First, I will provide the wider context of the doctrine of election of community in the overall framework of the doctrine of the eternal election in Jesus Christ. Secondly, I will demonstrate the unity of the elected community as the community mediated by God's election. Then I will proceed to presenting the differentiation of Israel's and Church ministry to the world as the one community mediating the Word of God's election to the world. Lastly, I will attempt to prove the unity of Israel and the Church in their mutual ministry to themselves, and the perspective Barth's doctrine provides for the modern Jewish-Christian dialogue will be revealed.

¹ Cf. E. Busch, *The Covenant of Grace Fulfilled in Christ as the Foundation of the Indissoluble Solidarity of the Church with Israel: Barth's Position on the Jews during the Hitler Era*, "Scottish Journal of Theology," vol. 52 (1999), 4, p. 477-482.

² Cf., e.g.: K. Barth, *Dogmatik im Grundriß im Anschluß an das apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis* (1947), Berlin: Evangelische Verlags-Anstalt 1948, p. 83-85.

1. The Eternal Double Election in Jesus Christ

The context in which Barth places the doctrine of the unity of Israel and the Church is significant. The second volume of the *Church Dogmatics* is devoted to the doctrine of God, of God's being in Himself for us in God's act, in the loving in freedom, in God's decision to be *for* the human. According to Barth, the doctrine of the elected community is part of the doctrine of the eternal election of grace, about God's being in His decision.³

Barth believes that "the doctrine of election is the sum of the Gospel," "the election of grace is the whole of the Gospel, the Gospel *in nuce*."⁴ He stresses the double election, which is characteristic of the Reformed tradition. But the terminology of the double predestination he utilizes cannot mislead us: Barth criticizes the traditional Augustinian-Calvinistic doctrine of the pre-temporal predestination by God of all humanity for the just damnation and of the election of some part of the *massa damnata* in order to express through it the gracious mercy. According to Barth, in this standard version God's rejection and election are treated at the same level: the God's "No" and the God's "Yes" addressed to the human are equal, and God in His decision is not determined by anything with the exception of God's own free, proper, and – alas – arbitrary decision. Conceived this way, God remains the absolutely hidden One for us in His decision of justice and mercy: the predestination is considered as the *decretum absolutum Dei absconditi*. Barth completely denies this Calvinistic dogma as entirely unchristian. There is no other god beyond or behind, some "God above God"⁵

³ K. Barth, *Die kirchliche Dogmatik*, II/2 (1942), Zürich: Theologische Verlag 1980, p. 215-335 (farther – KD). The English translation: *Church Dogmatics*, II/2, trans. by G.W. Bromiley, J.C. Campbell, I. Wilson, J. Strathearn McNab, H. Knight, R.A. Stewart, Edinburgh: T&T Clark 1957 (farther – CD). The fact that Barth includes the doctrine of predestination into the doctrine of God is the very original solution. He made this during his first course of lectures of dogmatics in Göttingen in 1924–1925 (cf. *Unterricht in der christlichen Religion. II: Die Lehre vom Gott/Die Lehre vom Menschen* (1924–1925), Gesamtausgabe II, 20 – Zürich: Theologische Verlag 1990, p. 166-212). Traditionally the doctrine of election is either the part of the dogmatics which connects the doctrine of God and the doctrine of creation, or the part of the doctrine of creation (as a cause of the Providence), or as the part of soteriology. Barth reflects all these possibilities in KD II/2, p. 82-100; CD II/2, p. 76-93.

⁴ KD II/2, p. 1; p. 13; CD II/2, p. 1, 13-14.

⁵ The expression of Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1952, p. 182-190. "God above God" is the concept which overcomes the traditional theism; it removes the God's existence and courageously accepts the sense even in its radical non-existence, even without God as existing.

of the Word. Since God is the Subject, or, as Barth prefers to speak in the *Church Dogmatics*, the Lord, every legitimate cognition must be grounded in his Word. Otherwise one reduces God to an object.⁶ So, the cognition of God *in se* out of his Word is an illusion. If we cognize God in His inner life, we do this only if and to an extent He will speak to us about Himself “in Himself.” But in such an event we also know God without a transgressing of the Word. Thus, only God’s self-expression in Jesus Christ as the Subject of the *Dei loquentis persona* could be the starting point, the midway, and the finish line of theological cognition.

Positively, one can present Barth’s doctrine of gracious God’s election in the following way. God’s election is the Word of God, the decision of the totally Other. This Word of God is not an abstract and empty “X,” but the concrete One – Jesus Christ, God in His humanity. “In Him God stands before man and man stands before God,” and not only in the time of the Revelation, but eternally.⁷ God from the very beginning and to the ultimate end is the One who determines Himself as the bearer of this name, not only qualitatively but also existentially and in content. God is what He is in Jesus Christ eternally. God elects in Him as in God’s own Word, first of all, Himself. By electing the human Jesus of Nazareth, God elects Himself, His own being in the act for the sake of the human. God “comes to be” God exactly in this concrete human person, and it is in such a principal and ultimate way, that there is no any other God than God, the God who have been realized in the eternal decision to be and to act through Jesus Christ. In the election of Jesus God is “God-with-us,” Emmanuel (לאֱמָנוּעַל). Thus, by electing Himself, God elects the human at the same time. And this elected human being is not only that man who lived in Palestine and was killed under Pontius Pilate, but each and every human being as the environment of Christ. But this “other election” is not executed in an instrumental way.

⁶ The reality of the God’s speech and hearing, the reality of Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit is the unconditional premise of the Christology and Pneumatology. Since the abstract cognition of God besides the Event of Christ is impossible, a “transcendental” Christology and Pneumatology become impossible too. According to Barth, it is nonsense to speculate about the conditions of the human and God which must be observed in order that the reality their encounter would come into existence. In an abstract speculation we have to do with the double illusion, because we know neither the demands of God, nor the requirements of the human. If we begin from the question about the possibility, the conditions of the revelation, we put ourselves between God and the human. Our conditions and requirements make God in His possibilities and demands conditional. So, in such a case we do not have to do with God in His revelation, but with our desires. But really it is God and His goodness to us, not we, gives a measure of the revelation. Cf. KD I/1, p. 114-123; CD I/1, p. 111-120.

⁷ Cf. KD II/1, p. 101; CD II/2, p. 94.

The first gracious election in Jesus Christ could be synthetically expressed in the phrase “Jesus Christ is the subject and the object of God’s election.”⁸ Jesus Christ is the Subject of election first of all as God, and He is the object as human. But the aspect of being chosen is important also for Christ as God, who is the object of the choice of himself, as God and the human; similarly, it is an important qualitative and existential characteristic of Jesus as God-man to choose God. Though it is impossible to speak of the election of the human Jesus without his human decision to do the God’s will in history,⁹ it is not this human decision that determines God’s election, but the choice of Jesus Christ as God of the human Jesus Christ. So, in its proper sense, Jesus Christ as God is the subject of the gracious election, and as the human He is its object.

The eternal election in this sense is a doubled choice, *praedestinatio gemina*. The election as decision presupposes the idea of rejection of an unrealized possibility, which is not God’s possibility; the “Yes” of the gracious election casts a shadow of negative predestination – God’s “No.” But since God’s election in Jesus Christ is principally and ultimately the decision of God to be God in relation to humans, God’s “No,” eternal damnation, rejection revealed in Jesus Christ, is taken by its Subject as a constitutive decision for God’s being. In Jesus Christ God graciously and eternally receives the whole damnation, the wrath, which is justly deserved by humans. God does this to give to the object (the human) the election the glory in Jesus Christ – the election that is not justly deserved by the human. God in Jesus Christ mercifully chooses, accepts the human, and rejects Himself as an abstract *Deus absconditus*. God takes upon Himself the responsibility for the human and the world, and thus takes upon Himself the whole of “No” and brings the whole of “Yes” to the human. In such a way God eternally elects Himself as God for, with, and in us.

The only One Elected and the only One Rejected paradoxically is the same Jesus Christ – the elected human and rejected God. On the cross he is rejected, forsaken by Himself forever and ever, and in the resurrection He is accepted from eternity and forever exactly as the rejected one. Jesus Christ

⁸ This statement distinguishes the Barth’s doctrine of election from the traditional one, where Jesus Christ is usually recognized only as the *exemplum* of the election, as the *speculum praedestinationis*. In the traditional vision of election as *decretum absolutum* it follows from the underestimating of the revelation of deity of Jesus Christ in His humanity. Electing God is as if not Jesus Christ. Christ appears already in the context of the arbitrary decision of the hidden God who stands “before,” “above” and “besides” the revelation.

⁹ Cf. KD II/2, p. 204; CD II/2, p. 185.

is the culmination of God's judgment and of God's mercy, revealed on the cross and in resurrection. The double predestination in Jesus Christ in this sense is "the primal act of the free love of God in which He chooses for Himself fellowship with man and therefore the endurance of judgment, but for man fellowship with Himself and therefore the glory of His mercy."¹⁰

2. The Election of the One Community of Jesus Christ

The election in Jesus Christ presupposes the "other" election, viz. the election of the fallen human. "It is to this man, to the plurality of these men, to each and all, that the eternal love of God is turned in Jesus Christ."¹¹ Jesus Christ as God and the human, and the relation between these two poles, does not give rise to a soteriological "short circuit" (Bernad Sesboüé¹²); it is exactly the self-determination of God in the election of Jesus Christ that constitutes God as the One who wholly exists "for us," for the other, as the One who is open for the human in his tragic situation of sin and fall-away from God. Continuing the metaphor of Sesboüé, the "current" begins to go in the "electric circuit," coming to us, because of the immense "voltage" of the double election is the "source of the current" – in Jesus Christ, the eternally Electing and Elected One, Rejected and Forgiven.

However, Barth points out that the Holy Scripture, when talking about this "other" election, speaks first of all not about individuals but rather about the humans in the community of Jesus Christ. "The community is the human fellowship which in a particular way provisionally forms the natural and historical environment of the man Jesus Christ."¹³ The election of Jesus Christ has the center (the primal eternal event of Christ) and the ultimate limit to which it tends – the "other" election of each and all. The community is the inner circle of this "other" election. Its existence is mediated (the community exists for the sake of Christ) and mediating (its ministry of transmitting the "current" of love of election to everybody). "If the community tries to be more than His environment, to do something more than

¹⁰ KD II/2, p. 217; CD II/2, p. 197.

¹¹ KD II/2, p. 215; CD II/2, p. 195.

¹² Cf. B. Sesboüé, *Jésus-Christ l'unique médiateur*, Paris: Desclée 1988, p. 62. Sesboüé thinks that the soteriological "short circuit" is characteristic for the protestant theology, because the whole salutary act of God in the protestant thought is directed to Christ principally and ultimately.

¹³ KD II/2, p. 216; CD II/2, p. 196.

mediate, it has forgotten and forfeited its election,” it’s being mediated. It also betrays its mission in the world when it sees itself as the end of all the ways of God.¹⁴

“Just as the electing God is one and elected man is one, i.e., Jesus, so also the community as the primary object of the election which has taken place and takes place in Jesus Christ is one.”¹⁵ Since the primal election is a double one, i.e., it includes both judgment and mercy, these two aspects presuppose obedience to the promise of election of humans (the obedience to the Law), and the faith in the fulfillment of the promise (the faith in the Gospel). Such a duality is realized in the duality of the elected community – correspondently in Israel and the Church.

Jesus Christ determines the community through what and who He is in relation to it. On the one side,

he is the promised son of Abraham and David, the Messiah of Israel. And He is simultaneously the Head and Lord of the Church, called and gathered from Jews and Gentiles. In both these characters He is indissolubly one.¹⁶

Lord of the Church is the Messiah of Israel and *vice versa*. The duality of the eternal election in Christ, the God’s “No” and His “Yes,” is reflected in the duality of the elected community. Jesus Christ as the crucified Messiah of Israel is an authentic witness of the judgment that God takes upon Himself by choosing fellowship with man. As the crucified Messiah of Israel He is also the secret Lord of the Church, and as the Risen One he is the authentic witness of the mercy. He is the triumphant inaugurator of His Parousia, and precisely as such He is the revealed Messiah of Israel.¹⁷

Correspondingly to the double relation of God in Christ to the community, the community is double one in itself: it is Israel and the Church simultaneously, the community of obedience and that of faith. It is a community that mediates to the world the love of God in the form of “No” received upon God, and in the form of the “Yes” given to the human. This community is “indissolubly one,”¹⁸ and similarly indissolubly one are God’s “No” and God’s “Yes.” Transcendentally, the affirmation of the human is the primordial and ultimate condition of the negation, the “Yes,” makes the context of the “No;” the “Yes” embraces the “No.” Hermeneutically, cognitively, the

¹⁴ Cf. KD II/2, p. 216-217; CD II/2, p. 196-197.

¹⁵ KD II/2, p. 217; CD II/2, p. 197.

¹⁶ KD II/2, p. 218; CD II/2, p. 197.

¹⁷ Cf. KD II/2, p. 218; CD II/2, p. 198.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

“No” always contains a positive moment: it exists only in its relation to the “Yes,” and is only a hermeneutical key to the “Yes;” also, the “No” indicates the positive attitude of God towards the human; in addition, the negation is not a goal in itself but rather serves to affirm and justify the human.

This way, in spite of the fact that the Synagogue and the Church are two different religious communities, each further divided inside, from the point of view of God’s eternal election they both are one community, uniquely elected as the mediated one, viz. concerning Jesus Christ, the center of the circle of election. So,

by delivering up its Messiah, Jesus, to the Gentiles for crucifixion, Israel attests the justice of the divine judgment on man borne by God Himself. Encountering the fulfilled promise in this way, it remains only its hearer without pressing on to faith in it.¹⁹

In another aspect, Israel became the origin of the Church’s faith as the pure hearing, simple obedience, in which the human passes from an old to a new stage. On its part, the Church, the community of Jews and Gentiles gathered by the election, is community in so far as this community has to deliver to the sinful man the good will of God. The Church proclaims the new human accepted by God, and not only the rejected one. The Church is also the determination of Israel, something which gives sense to Israel,²⁰ similarly to the way the eternal decision of God’s being the “Yes” determines the “No;” the who, how, and what is God in His choice of being establishes the who, how, and what God is not.

So it is not possible to contend that the Jerusalem Sanhedrin delivering Christ into the hands of Gentiles betrayed the vocation of Israel, and that the Synagogue which identifies itself with this act of rejecting the Messiah was rejected from God’s election. The sense of Israel’s mission as mediated by Jesus Christ is to proclaim to the human God’s “No” which was received by the divine Subject of this human being. If Jews have not “crucified Christ,” or, strictly speaking, have not delivered the Son into the hands of the sinners according the will of the Father, then Israel as the people of the Messiah would not fulfill its mission. The tragedy of Israel as Synagogue does not consist in that it did not recognize the “incarnation” of the Word in history. On the contrary, the Synagogue obedient to the Word of the Law clearly confirmed the limits of the human, broadly constituted in God’s eternal “No:” the human is not God, the human is rejected by God.

¹⁹ KD II/2, p. 219; CD II/2, p. 198.

²⁰ Cf. *ibidem*.

Of course, here Barth argues as strictly Christian theologian. The starting point for him is the reality of the faith in the risen Lord as the crucified Messiah. This unity of the community is knowable only by and through the Church in the light of faith. It is precisely the faith in Jesus Christ is the reason why the Church cannot forget about its unity with the Synagogue.²¹

3. The Mission of Israel to the World

Israel and the Church together are the mediating object of the divine election, testifying to the world about God who elects the humans.²² This mission of one community to the whole of humanity is remarkably dualistic in accordance with the duality of the predestination in God.

The specific service to which Israel is destined is to reflect the judgment from which God has rescued man in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Israel as a part of the community that *r e s i s t s i t s e l e c t i o n* reveals the unworthiness of the human to receive the proposition of “God-with-us” given in Jesus Christ. In such a way Israel discloses who is the human addressed by God. It is the human in his obstinacy, not the ideal human being, but the real one in his fall and suffering.²³ The Israelite form of God’s community reveals what it means for God to elect the fellowship with man. He chooses for Himself something unworthy of Him, He chooses to take upon Himself the fragility, the suffering, and the death, and to give to the human His own glory. In the destiny of Israel from its suffering in Egypt to the final fall of Jerusalem and beyond that down to the present day, in weakness and vanishing, in the fate of Job the depth of the human fall shows up – the depth to which corresponds the distance God needs to descend to rescue the human.²⁴

The resistance of Israel to God’s election expressed in the lack of belief in the resurrection of the Messiah is an integral part of the witness of Israel to the world. If Israel were obedient to its election, it would have meant that its testimony would become identical with the testimony of the Church, and the testimony of the God’s judgment would be lightened. However, the world needs to hear specific witnessing of a community about the cross, rejection, and the wrath of God; about God’s transcendence and about the

²¹ Cf. KD II/2, p. 221; CD II/2, p. 201.

²² Cf. KD II/2, p. 222; CD II/2, p. 201.

²³ Cf. KD II/2, p. 227; CD II/2, p. 206.

²⁴ Cf. KD II/2, p. 287; CD II/2, p. 260-261.

hidden God. The world needs to hear about the estrangement of human from God, as well as the testimony of the obedience to the sentence of this Totally-Other God, God of the Law. In short, the world has to hear the witness of the God's "No" in the election of the human in Jesus Christ. Such a witness is born by Israel. The promised Messiah has come and in accordance with His election was delivered up by Israel and crucified for Israel. Here Israel was obedient to the promise and the Law; it fulfilled the obligation of the community of the Law – to defend the otherness of God, to affirm that human is not God. In the event of resurrection many people, even Gentiles believed in this rejected One, but Israel as such and as a whole did not put its faith in Him. The tragedy of the Jewish people as the bearer of the God's "No" consists in the fact that it did not recognize its promised Messiah in His resurrection, did not meet the promise in its fulfillment. It resists its election at the very moment when the promise given with it passes into fulfillment. This event creates a schism, a gulf, in the midst of the community of God between the community of obedience and the community of faith.²⁵

Yet even in this way, – Barth writes, – it cannot effectively resist God, but must serve His will and the work of His community, delivering the testimony required of it. The Synagogue cannot and will not take up the message "He is risen!" But it must still pronounce all the more clearly the words "He is not here!" It must still put all the more pertinently the question "Why seek ye the living among the dead?"²⁶

Even if Israel does not proclaim that "all things are become new," but is still attesting that "old things are passed away" (cf. 2 Co 5:17).

It seems that the suffering of the Jewish people in history, the fate of Ahasuerus, "the wandering eternal Jew," is not random. The destiny of the people, according to Barth, becomes the witness, similarly to the Christian martyrs attesting the faith in resurrection. The Jews of the ghetto, and now we must add – of the concentration camps, give this demonstration involuntarily, joylessly, and ingloriously, but they do give it as the testimony of the shadow of the authentic cross, though without the testimony of the resurrection. But this historical suffering cannot be a punishment of God to His people for the rejection of the Messiah, because God Himself took the whole responsibility for the rejected human person in the person of Jesus Christ. If this tragic destiny of Israel were to be a punishment, it would have

²⁵ Cf. KD II/2, p. 229; CD II/2, p. 208.

²⁶ KD II/2, p. 289-290; CD II/2, p. 263.

meant that Israel was not a true witness of God but a false witness against God's mercy in Christ. The Jewish people cannot withdraw the promise, and it – as whole and as its every member – is under the authentic sign of the God's mercy. Israel remains to be the people of the Messiah even outside the context of the faith in fulfillment of the promise of Messiah's coming.²⁷ The promise still refers to Israel, because God "kills only to give the life." The Jewish people is not an "eternal wanderer," because the eternal is only the mercy of the God's life, revealed by the Messiah dying on the cross.²⁸

So the suffering of Israel experienced as the "rejection" by God follows not from the real rejection which was already received upon God in Jesus, but from the fact that Israel listens to God, is obedient to God, but ultimately does not hear the Word, does not believe in the grace of overcoming in Christ of the infinite diastase between the Lord and His people. "God-with-us" of the Birth of the Messiah and the reconciliation of the human with God on the cross are not to be heard without hearing the Word of resurrection. Thus I want to run a few steps forward and mention here that Israel (as part of the world) requires to receive the testimony from the Church of the God's mercy. From another angle, God's "Yes," the main content of Church's proclamation, is not readable and could not be heard without the proclamation of God's "No." Because of this, the Church (also as a part of the world) needs to hear the witness of Israel about God's justice as well.

4. The Mission of the Church to the World

The Synagogue testifies to the world about the electing God as the far, hidden, and just One; and about the human as the alienated, passing away, and unworthy. Hence, the specific task of the Church as the same community is to give witness of God's "Yes," to proclaim to the world the Gospel of the divine mercy.

The Church's form of the community ministry is testifying about the election of grace in selflessly self-giving love of God for the human. It reveals that even the wrath of God is sustained and surrounded by God's mercy and love.

If the judgment that has overtaken man (according to Israel's commission) forbids us to seek any refuge except in the mercy of God, even more strictly does

²⁷ Cf. KD II/2, p. 230-231, 260; CD II/2, p. 209, 235-236.

²⁸ Cf. KD II/2, p. 291; CD II/2, p. 264.

the mercy of God laying hold of man (according to the Church's commission) forbid us to fear His judgment without loving Him as Judge, without looking for our justification from Him.²⁹

The testimony of the Church follows from the encounter with the promise given to the elected community and heard in Israel, the encounter which has happened and is happening through the faith in the resurrection of the crucified Messiah. The Church is founded upon the faith in the resurrection of Jesus, and this is its only reason to believe in the mercy of God. Though Israel believes that God can raise the dead to life, the central point of the Church's faith is that the God of Israel has resurrected the Messiah of Israel who is the Lord of the Church.³⁰ The Church is the community of Jews and Gentiles who believe in the word of the fulfillment of the promise stating that Jesus is the Lord. The form of the community of God that is Church hears and proclaims that when God elects man for communion with Himself in His eternal election of grace, He promotes him to the position of His child and brother, His intimate and friend.³¹

“The Church form of the community reveals the scope of what God wills for man when in His eternal election of grace He elects him for fellowship with Himself.”³² In electing him from all eternity, He elects him for eternity, for the salvation; He reveals Himself as the Guarantor and the Giver of eternal salvation of the human. The death and the hell are surrounded by the Life and the Kingdom of the Son of God. If it is futile (according to Israel's commission) to refuse to suffer and die as a sign of divine judgment, it is even more futile (according to that of the Church) to fear death itself as the beginning of the merciful eternal life.³³

Yet, if the testimony of Israel is kenotic in its nature (it is reflected in the destiny of the Jewish people, as we saw), it does not mean that the form of witness of the Church must be, on the contrary, triumphalistic. God's “Yes” to the human in the resurrection of Jesus, proclaimed by the Church, does not remove God's “No” but rather surrounds, embraces and includes it. For this reason, the Church requires the kenotic witness of the Synagogue to accept it to its inner life and service as the testimony of the cross of its Lord. Israel needs the consolation from the Church, compassion for those who in that period of history especially (we speak about 1940s) found themselves

²⁹ KD II/2, p. 232-233; CD II/2, p. 210-211.

³⁰ Cf. KD II/2, p. 264; CD II/2, p. 240.

³¹ Cf. KD II/2, p. 261-262; CD II/2, p. 238.

³² KD II/2, p. 292; CD II/2, p. 265.

³³ Cf. *ibidem*.

in the depth of “rejection;” Israel requires from the Church the Word, the being and the act of God who is with us.

I must turn now to the more careful reflection on their mutual relation and ministry.

5. The Mutual Ministry of Israel and the Church to Each Other

According to Eberhard Busch, the fact that Israel is the authentic community of God’s election and the real witness of the choice of the human in Jesus Christ, for the Church means the prohibition of missionary activities among the Jewish people.³⁴ I believe that it is an anachronism to ascribe to Barth the later compromise which came into being as a result of the Jewish-Christian dialogue. This settlement consists in closing the mission of the Christian Church to the Jews.³⁵ The question of the relations between the Church and Israel as the relationship inside one elected community was for Barth the principal question of ecumenism.³⁶ It is obvious that more is required to resolve an ecumenical question than simply abandoning of some activity and preserving the *status quo*. Below I want to show that in the *Church Dogmatics* Israel requires the word of the Gospel of God’s mercy just like the Church needs be the object of mission of the Synagogue. Instead of mutual closure, Barth proposes the openness of the Church to the witness of Israel without ceasing of bearing witness towards the Synagogue. However, such a requirement of a mutual openness follows from the real presence of the Church in Israel and of Israel in the Church.

³⁴ Cf. E. Busch, *The Covenant of Grace Fulfilled*, p. 491. Busch writes directly: “*Mission to the Jews is thus excluded, since both together are witnesses of the electing God*” (ibidem).

³⁵ Cf., e.g.: World Council of Churches, *Ecumenical Considerations on Jewish-Christian Dialogue* (1982-07-16), 4.5: “There are those who believe that a mission to the Jews is not part of an authentic Christian witness, since the Jewish people finds its fulfillment in faithfulness to God’s covenant of old.” Among later documents of such understanding cf. *A Sacred Obligation. Rethinking Christian Faith in Relation to Judaism and the Jewish People*. (A Statement by the Christian Scholars Group on Christian-Jewish Relations, September 1, 2002), nr 7: “In view of our conviction that Jews are in an eternal covenant with God, we renounce missionary efforts directed at converting Jews. At the same time, we welcome opportunities for Jews and Christians to bear witness to their respective experiences of God’s saving ways,” <<http://www.jcrelations.net>>. Also on this subject cf. in a chrestomathy H.P. Fry (ed.), *Christian-Jewish Dialogue*, Exeter: University of Exeter 1996.

³⁶ Cf. M. Welker, *Karl Barth: From Fighter against the “Roman Heresy” to Leading Thinker for the Ecumenical Movement*, “Scottish Journal of Theology,” 57 (2004), 4, p. 440.

1. The real presence of the Church in Israel and of Israel in the Church. The Church and Israel are not two separate communities, but only two distinct aspects of one community of election. Historically, Israel is older than the Church, but the Church as the community of the faith pre-exists in Israel. For this reason there was, is, and will be Gospel in Israel – from the very beginning to the end of its existence. Present in such a way in Israel, the Church confirms the election of Israel positively.³⁷ The Church was revealed in a special way in the event of Pentecost, but it endured and still endures in Israel as the community of faith in the God's mercy towards the human.³⁸ Hence, Israel does not testify about the judgment negatively. "With Israel's election in view God has, according to Scripture, acted among men from the beginning of the world in the form of election."³⁹ God as the electing One acts among the humans on the basis of the election of Israel. God does not reveal just a wrath in the history of Israel, but the wrath as the devouring flame of love to the human.

On the other hand, the revelation of the Church does not and cannot nullify the Israelite form of the service of the community inside itself. The Church in its own ministry the specific service of Israel as the ministry of the community. Thus, Israel lives in the Church, as the Church lives in Israel.⁴⁰ Because of this, the negative proclamation of the judgment, of the cross, must remain in the Church up to the end of the world. The annunciation of God's "Yes" does not remove from Church's proclamation the tragedy of human's alienation; God's mercy does not remove the harsh "No" of God's Law towards the human being. The Church has to recognize that the Gospel is precisely the response to the tragedy of the history of Israel. One cannot exclude Israel from the Gospel, because in this case the Gospel itself loses its object.⁴¹

2. The mission of the Church to Israel. The Christ brought to the world by the Church is neither the Christ of the Church nor the Christ of the world, but the Christ of Israel. Hence, the proclamation of Jesus Christ to Israel is not an optional decision of the Church but the demand of the Lord of the Church who is the crucified Messiah. The Church simply must proclaim Christ to Israel as to a part of the world, and Israel

³⁷ Cf. KD II/2, p. 263, 293; CD II/2, p. 212, 266.

³⁸ Cf. KD II/2, p. 233; CD II/2, p. 211.

³⁹ KD II/2, p. 234; CD II/2, p. 212.

⁴⁰ Cf. KD II/2, p. 232; CD II/2, p. 210.

⁴¹ Cf. KD II/2, p. 294; CD II/2, p. 267.

needs to hear the Gospel of the resurrection of its Messiah which is the good message about the mercy of God upon His people. The Church does not “take the place” of Israel. In spite of the fact that the Jewish people as a whole did not accept its election, it is anyway the witness of Jesus Christ, and it is God’s goal that Israel should become obedient to its election, that it should enter the Church and perform this special office in the Church.⁴² The fact that Israel should come to faith and into the Church is founded on the election of Israel by God, and not on the optional missionary decision of this or that human community.⁴³

From the anthropological point of view, the mission of the Church to Israel, the witness which wants to be accepted as a true one and not just be acknowledged in sharing, is motivated by the essence of the proclamation of the Church – by the mercy towards the human. More than others, Israel that experiences God’s judgment in its fullest requires the word of consolation through the God’s presence in the crucified Christ. The history of Israel without the consolation of the, similarly to the history of Jesus Who ended on the cross, is nonsense, and it is enlightened, fulfilled by the resurrection.⁴⁴ The Holocaust that is not a sign of the cross is just the silence of God, though actively addressed to the human and not a stupid God’s non-existence. But such a silence as a sentence of God is unbearable for the human. The obedient testimony of Israel about the judgment on the dying human, the witness without faith, grace, and resurrection is not just incomplete, but it is above human strength to bear it. Israel could find the full vision of itself in the light of Jesus Christ, the One who is the past, the future and the aim of Israel. But only Church can show Israel this perspective.⁴⁵

The issue is not the mission as the activity directed to the religious or cultural conversion of the Jewish people. If the Jews as a people will receive the Gospel of the resurrection of the Messiah, they will receive it as their own, as the Word of God which was conserved by the Gentiles mostly, but they will receive the Word in a special, proper, particular, and of course not the “heathen” mode. It will mean another theology, different structures, and a special liturgy; in other words, it will be another form of realization of the community. The Church acknowledging the eternal covenant of God with Israel may not aspire to remove the national and moreover – the religious identity of the Jewish community.

⁴² Cf. KD II/2, p. 228-229; CD II/2, p. 207.

⁴³ Cf. KD II/2, p. 288; CD II/2, p. 261.

⁴⁴ Cf. KD II/2, p. 294; CD II/2, p. 267.

⁴⁵ Cf. KD II/2, p. 234; CD II/2, p. 212.

3. *The mission of Israel to the Church.* As the Church has the commandment to proclaim to Israel the risen Messiah, so it has the deep natural need to hear the testimony of the Synagogue. I wish to stress it once more: precisely the faith in Jesus Christ is the reason why the Church cannot forget about its unity with the Jewish people.⁴⁶ The Church needs to accept the sentence of the Court, must be obedient, has to recognize the transiency of the human to proclaim God's "Yes" to the human in Jesus, its risen and nevertheless crucified Lord authentically and faithfully.

First of all, the Church needs to hear the Word of Totally-Other God. In this sense the Church requires to be the object of Israel's ministry. The faith that is the essence of the service of Church's community mediating God's election is impossible without the obedience to the Word, without recognition of the Word as the Word of God. The faith is just the active hearing of the Word. The Jewish regard for the letter must continue in the Church. "A Church that becomes antisemitic or even only a-semitic sooner or later suffers the loss of its faith by losing the object of it."⁴⁷ Precisely the "Jewish" element in the Church defends the faithfulness of the Church to its nature.

The Church is the perfect form of community because the message which the community has to transmit to the world is the whole Word, the "No" and the "Yes," the Law and the Gospel, the prophetic promise and the apostolic proclamation of its fulfillment.⁴⁸ Because of this, the Church requires the witness of the Synagogue with its special service of the judgment, the Law and the God's promise.

Finally, the Church needs to hear the kenotic testimony of Israel because it puts the Church into the shadow of the cross in a special way. Such a dark proclamation shields it from the temptation of triumphalism. The Church recognizes in Israel its prototype. Moreover, the election of the Church and of the whole world (including Israel) is analogical to the election of Israel: it is the Pass-over from death to life, and it is conditioned by the unprecedented mercy of God which becomes comprehensible only in the context of human helplessness before God proclaimed by the community of the Law.

To be sure, the Church waits for the conversion of Israel. But it cannot wait for the conversion of Israel to confess the unity of the mercy that embraces Israel as well as itself, the unity of the community of God.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Cf. KD II/2, p. 221; CD II/2, p. 201.

⁴⁷ KD II/2, p. 257; CD II/2, p. 234.

⁴⁸ Cf. KD II/2, p. 292; CD II/2, p. 234.

⁴⁹ KD II/2, p. 235; CD II/2, p. 213.

This unity cannot fail to be in the destiny of the persecuted, wandering, murdered, and forsaken by God. If the Church wants to be the community proclaiming to the world not the election of the *Deus absconditus* but the choice of Jesus Christ, it has to maintain the place near the cross and the empty grave, permanently hearing the already the Easter-like proclamation of the Synagogue: “He is not here!,” waiting for the encounter of the Lord who goeth before us (cf. Mk 16:6-7).



LITERARY PERSPECTIVE



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Borrowed Metaphysical Splendor. On the Possibility of an Aesthetic Theodicy after the Disruption of the Epoch (1914–1918) in the Example of Joseph Roth’s *Job. Novel of a Simple Man*¹

As in few other texts from the decade of the 1920s, Joseph Roth’s preface to his 1925 *Southern France-Feuilletons*² reveals the self-image and the world view of the generation which escaped being among the millions who died in the battles of matériel of the First World War, and now the generation of survivors incurably traumatized by the memories of the war. Seven years after the end of the world war Roth characterizes his generation as the “resurrected dead.”³

Before I had begun to live, the whole world was open to me. But as I began to live, the open world was ravaged. I destroyed it myself with my contemporaries.⁴

On the one hand, “we,” “the resurrected dead,” on the other hand the generation of the fathers or grandfathers, who had not understood that the war catastrophe really meant “the end of the world,”⁵ as well as the end of the generation who held onto things eternally past. “For we are [still] at

¹ J. Roth, *Werke, 6 Bde*, Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch 1989–1991, vol. V, p. 1ff.

² First published out of the estate under the title *Die weißen Städte (The White Cities)*. See J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. II, p. 451f.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 455.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 451f.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 455.

war, we know it, we who are confirmed experts of the battlefield, we have immediately realized that from a small battlefield we have returned home to a large one.”⁶ What counted in the world of the 1920s was “We are the sons.”⁷ “We knew more than our elders, we were the unfortunate grandsons, who took our grandfathers onto our lap to tell them stories.”⁸

What also belongs to these stories is that no “moral basis for a new world”⁹ exists:

We have experienced the relativity of naming things and have even experienced the relativity of things themselves. In one single minute, which divided us from death, we broke with all of tradition, with language, science, literature, art: with everything in the cultural consciousness.¹⁰

The whole of Joseph Roth’s literary work, his journalism as well as his novels, among them *Job, Novel of a simple man*, can be understood as a confrontation with the terror and pain of the First World War and its results, as an attempt to process this traumatic experience. The fate of Job is no longer a matter of a solitary, significant man as in the Hebrew Bible and cannot be portrayed as such. It is instead the psychic and spiritual suffering in the soul of the masses. The subtitle of the novel refers to this fate; the eastern Jewish Torah teacher Mendel Singer, the Job – protagonist of the novel, can only be understood as one among “a hundred thousand.”¹¹

The conscious and subconscious condition of those who have internalized the pain of the world war experience is especially dramatic, because this war resulted all at once in the destruction of all the patterns of therapeutic processes which had been available thousands of years for equally painful experiences. It became clear with the world war that the theodicy question – generally formulated as the question into the ultimate meaning of the metaphysical purpose for unbearable suffering and evil in the world,

⁶ Ibidem, p. 456.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 455.

⁸ Ibidem, p. 452.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 631f. In his Feuilleton *Russland geht nach Amerika (Russia goes to America)* which appeared on November 23, 1926 in the “Frankfurter Zeitung,” Roth orients himself toward the “great cultural achievements of Europe,” which are for him “classical antiquity, the Roman Church, the Renaissance and Humanism, a large portion of the Enlightenment and all of Christian Romanticism.” In contrast to this tradition stands, in the present, “our decadent banality,” the “fresh, red-cheeked banality” of post-war Russia as also “the fresh, clueless, gymnastic-hygienic rational intellectuality” of America including the “hypocrisy of the Protestant sectarianism” there (ibidem, p. 630f).

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 455.

¹¹ J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. V, p. 3.

not recognizable on the surface – took on a fully new urgency, but it had lost its answerability forever, at least as a metaphysical question. The First World War had more or less democratized, that is, brought to the attention of the mass consciousness of the “simple folk,” what had already appeared as decided for intellectuals since Nietzsche: the knowledge that “God was dead,” at least, that which was referred to as the end of all speculative, metaphysical efforts at healing or saving.¹²

Since it is too hard to bear the absence of a satisfying answer, substitute answers are desirable from now on: ideology, myths, and how they are dealt with privately and politically, as attempts at an “Algodicy:”¹³ Horrors and the pain experienced through them become “justified” as such.

In the 20s of the 20th century, a major portion of the literature sees itself as a self-sufficient, authentic means to encounter horrors and as a decisive objection to all the myths and ideological attempts at vicarious satisfaction. However, this is not a competitive concept to religious attempts still undertaken, not as a parareligious salvation from evil, but still as a probably only pointwise release from the spell of the experienced horror, in the face of the dawning, deeply fearful “possibility that in the end everything is after all nothing” (Adorno), as a reference to reconciliation in the realm of irreconcilable nothingness. I understand Joseph Roth’s *Hiob* novel as an attempt in this direction. For one thing, this shows itself on the level of the language in the novel. The author speaks a language – he calls it “*biblical music*”¹⁴ in

¹² This is stated from different approaches, for example by the Jewish philosopher Hermann Cohen in his book *Religion und Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums* (*Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism*) in 1919, and by Max Weber in his systematic major work *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (*Economy and Society*) in 1920, there in the chapter “Das Problem der Theodizee” (“The Theodicy Problem”). Both authors assign the question of suffering in the world as a question of evil once and for all to the area of ethics, that is, to a theory of intersubjective action.

¹³ P. Sloterdijk, *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft. Zweiter Band* [*Critique of Cynical Reason. Second Volume*], Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 1983, p. 815f. “Algodicy means a metaphysical interpretation of pain that bestows meaning” (p. 815). It has replaced the “position of Theodicy” since the 1920s, according to Peter Sloterdijk, and has become its “reversal:” If it can no longer be about justifying an authority – God or the godlike understanding of reason – as responsible for horror and suffering, then seemingly there only remains the attempt, as with Ernst Jünger, to justify pure horror for its own sake or to categorize it under ideological concepts of values and political aims, which derive from the principle of the will to power.

¹⁴ In 1930 Roth speaks of the “melody” of *Hiob*, which is “a different one than that of New Realism by which I came to be known” (D. Bronsen, *Joseph Roth. Eine Biographie*, Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch 1974, p. 381). As Roth expresses it in 1937 in his conversation with Viktor Kelemen, the writer of a theater version of *Hiob*: he had been afraid that some “horrible dramatist” would wipe out all of the poetry in his favorite work and would only portray

a later interview with a French literature critic – a language which had been considered traditionally as a showcase of transcendence, and which many of his contemporaries still consider it to be: Again and again the language of the German Luther Bible is recognizable, artfully mixed with the lyrical, musically-magical language style in the tradition of German Romanticism, to be heard for example in the prophecy that the wonder-working Rabbi pronounces over the epileptic “terribly crippled” Menuchim,¹⁵ the little son of the Protagonist:

Menuchim, Mendel’s son will get well. There will not be many of his kind in Israel. The pain will make him wise, the ugliness kind, the bitterness mild and the illness strong. His eyes will become wide and deep, his ears bright and reverberating. His mouth will be silent, but when he opens his lips, they will announce good tidings.¹⁶

“*Biblical music*” means in another way that Joseph Roth composes his novel from the first to the last page as a complex meshwork of mythical, biblical “configurations” which have traditionally functioned as parables for redemption and transcendent salvation. Not only the eastern Jewish Torah teacher Mendel Singer is a Job-figure, but also and primarily his little epileptic and physically handicapped son Menuchim.¹⁷ As another Job Me-

the barest plot in a dramatization of the novel and he gives this reason for his misgivings: “The plot of the novel alone is a totally everyday story. The novel’s major values lies in its lyricism. The novel is basically a lyrical work” (V. Kelemen, *Joseph Roth’s “Hiob,”* in the exile magazine “Aufbau,” London (March 29, 1940). In a conversation with the French literary critic Frédéric Lefèvre in 1934 relating to the “biblical music” of *Hiob* (ibidem, p. 381) Roth says: “The essential element of a novel is neither its anecdotal nor its sentimental content” (ibidem, p. 381), translates “plot” and “moments of emotion”), instead it is its rhythm. I always have a musical motif in my ear. In *Hiob* it was spiritual music (thus translated in J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. III, p. 1035). Joseph Roth describes the effect of yiddish theater similarly, as he experienced it in the Viennese Leopoldstadt: “Behind the content, not next to it, the melody sounded. The words and the occurrences lay in *the melody*. That is why one sensed behind them the great destiny of which they were a small part. That is why a world, dense and misty, stretched far behind them which one knew would be a tragedy, which had sent the song and dance only as far as the stage set and had not yet given itself away” (*The Moscow Jewish Theater*, in J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. II, p. 676).

¹⁵ J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. V, p. 14.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 11. The prophecy builds a bridge from the beginning to the close of the plot (ibidem, p. 11, 84, 130). Regarding its meaning, especially the “pain” announced in it as a leitmotif in the text of the novel, see below.

¹⁷ Father and son have principally the same name: Mendel is the short form of Menachem/Menuchim (“the comforter”). Menuchim is referred to 8 times in the novel as a “cripple” and is described: “His big skull hung heavily like a pumpkin on his thin neck” (ibidem, p. 6); in this way he looks like “the most shocking of the shocking,” like the world war cripple which Roth describes in a report in 1924, “whose neck was long like a harmonica that had been

nuchim represents in the novel the inexplicable, fundamental suffering of the world. And it is exactly in this sense – “pain,” “ugliness,” “bitterness,” “illness” (see above) – that the wonder-working Rabbi von Kluczysk assigns the designation of the biblical Job through Jahwe to *him*: “there is not one of his kind in his own country.”¹⁸ Differently, though, from the biblical Job, differently from his father Mendel Singer, Menuchim in his silence caused by suffering, in his refusal to speak¹⁹ is *from the beginning the godless Job*: “his voice scratched over the holy sentences of the Bible.”²⁰ Significantly, the Rabbi did not predict that GOD would make the “cripple” well and of special importance “in Israel,” instead – personified – “the pain” would accomplish this, a very worldly phenomenon. Consistent with the kabbalistic Golem-myth,²¹ Menuchim is at the same time another Adam, the lump of earth before God breathed life into his soul: “a piece of dirt, he (Menuchim) cowered in the corner.”²² The father tries to fulfill the godly act of creation, takes his son out of the “corner”²³ and intones three times the magical first sentence of the Bible: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” The attempt fails, the son remains “religiously unmusical” (see below). From “pain” to “wisdom” – on this secular basis Menuchim is brought by the words of the wonder-working Rabbi into connection with the messianic redemption figure of the “suffering servant of God” in Isaiah²⁴ – his epilepsy is comparable to the archaic understanding

pulled apart,” and the head on it “a heavy pumpkin on a thin chain of drooping skin flaps” (J. Roth, *The Cripple. A Polish burial of an invalid*, “Frankfurter Zeitung,” November 23, 1924; idem, *Werke*, vol. II, p. 289f. Quote: idem, *Werke*, vol. II, p. 291). Roth reports here a burial of an invalid in East Galicia, formerly the Polish Lemberg; he sees the “Polish Jews” which form the burial procession, as “the representatives of all the war cripples of the world.”

¹⁸ Jb 1:8.

¹⁹ J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. V, p. 28f.

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 5.

²¹ For the Golem-myth compare Gershom Scholem, *The concept of Golem in its telluric and magic relationships*, in idem, *On the Kabbala and its Symbolism*, Zürich: Rhein-Verlag 1960–1966 (Frankfurt am Main 1989, p. 209-259).

²² J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. V, p. 13.

²³ Ibidem, p. 27.

²⁴ “Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee – his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men – (...). He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief (...). Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows” (Is 52:13f.; 53:3f.) *The Bible*, King James Version, Cleveland – New York: The World Publishing Company, no date. Cf. the German text of the *Luther-Bibel*: “Siehe, mein Knecht wird weislich tun und wird erhöht und sehr hoch erhaben sein. Gleichwie sich viele an ihm ärgern werden, weil seine Gestalt häßlicher ist denn anderer Leute und sein Ansehen denn der

of a *morbus sacer*. The son enters as a true redeemer at the end of the novel during the Seder festival of the New York Jews, meanwhile grown, healthy and famous as a musician – he comes instead of the ritually invited figure of the Messiah’s predecessor Elias as an actual saviour of his father, who, after the blows fate had dealt him, despairs of God and the world. The young man belongs to the generation of “sons” who take their fathers “onto their lap,” to explain to them the ways of the world, he is *the Son*,²⁵ and he saves his father literally and unambiguously within the 15th chapter, the miracle chapter.²⁶

The son who redeems the father – next to the Job story there is evidently also a Joseph-story. That could be shown in many individual elements of the novel’s plot. There is also no lack of references to Moses and to Jesus and his mother Maria.²⁷

The metaphysically splendid speech and the imagery of the narrator borrowed from tradition – this method belongs essentially to the poesy of Roth after his departure from the goals of New Realism²⁸. This does not mean, however, that *Hiob* lapses back into the disruption of the epoch with the realities after the First World War and should be understood as a traditionally religious novel – “every person in my generation is (...) ‘sceptical’,” writes Roth in 1925.²⁹ Instead it means that Roth tries to take a small step to approach the psychological strain and yearning for myth of the “sceptical”

Menschenkinder. (...) Er war der Allerverachtetste und Unwerteste, voller *Schmerzen* und *Krankheit*. (...) Fürwahr, er trug unsre *Krankheit* und lud auf sich unsre *Schmerzen*.”

²⁵ The absolutism of the term “the Son” as a designation for Menuchim comes nine times in the five last pages of the novel (and only there) – a secularized allusion to the Christian redeemer figure, the “Son” of God? (At the same time to the composer “Mendelssohn”?)

²⁶ After Menuchim has his father rise again (resurrected), he “lifts him high and sets him on his lap like a child” (J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. V, p. 130).

²⁷ The return home of Deborah (Menuchim’s mother) from her visit to the wonder-working Rabbi is noted thus (in a dactylic two-liner): “Grace in her heart, she returned home.” This sentence probably alludes to verses in the Christmas story in Lk 1:30 and 2:19: The annunciation angel tells Maria she has “found favor with God;” at the end it says that Maria “kept all these things, pondering them in her heart.” In this way an indirect parallel is established between the pronouncements of the wonder-working Rabbi and the Christian annunciation angel – an example of Roth’s virtuoso, freely poetic (not religious!) treatment of biblical material.

²⁸ This method connects him with the artistic concepts of his contemporary Otto Dix (born in 1891), who – as in the triptych *The War* (1932) – “borrows,” of all things, the varnish-like technique of the old German masters to depict the most terrible, horror-arousing contents in his painting, choosing the sacred genre of the triptych and alluding to the “Crucifixion” in the Isenheimer Altar of Matthias Grünewald.

²⁹ J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. II, p. 454.

millions and at least in the moment of reading tries to let redemption shine through and let the reader sense it in a way that was once believed in.

That famous Christ, whose cross was shot to pieces by a sarcastic shot, still stands in the small East Galician village, so that only the stone redeemer remained, the bloody feet nailed onto the stump of a cross and the arms spread wide in desperate incomprehension of God's silence and the shooting world, a redeemer who is crucified without hanging on a cross, the symbolic result of a martial happenstance. They were right to leave this miracle standing that way.³⁰

This text comes from one of the three feuilletons which Roth had brought for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* from a journey through East Galicia.³¹ The most visible thing in the foreground becomes of course a "symbol," although a symbol which – like the figure of the cripple Menuchim in Schemarjah's, his brother's, view – "which does not offer any answer."³² Crosses, those crucified, cripples, torture – they do not supply any answer to the Theodicy question judging from their covert salvation. The crucified one is a "redeemer," a "saviour" – Roth lets these statements of tradition stand as they are, but he sees that the piece between the "crucified" and the "redeemer" has been brutally shot away in the world war. The cross, for Roth here obviously with the meaning of a symbol of Christian salvation, is lacking for the East Galician Christ as for all those crucified since. The "redeemer," "nailed only to a stump," has lost his last footing, he hangs fully in the air, in him is only clear to be seen the "incomprehension of God's silence and the shooting world."

"They were right to leave this miracle standing that way" – "they", that is the people of East Galicia. They had perceived the improbable as something that transcended itself, suffering and death and thereby shows something like "redemption." Everything depends on the eyes of the beholder: only a creative vision will allow the "dead to rise again."³³ The people in East Galicia have recognized the crucifix, with not only its concrete but also its metaphysical footing stolen and yet not ultimately destroyed, as a work of art, and have thus left it "standing." It becomes a literary symbol at the latest in Joseph Roth's feuilleton, which in its lack of answer opens up a modern, aesthetically realizable answer: Precisely this crucified one,

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 282.

³¹ In November, 1924 with the title *Reise durch Galizien (Journey through Galicia)* appearing in this newspaper. See ibidem, p. 281f.

³² J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. V, p. 33.

³³ Cf. the wording "We are the resurrected dead." J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. II, p. 455.

from whom even his cross is taken, is a redeemer and can be a redeemer for anyone who perceives him in this work of art.

The same also applies for the cripple Menuchim in the *Hiob* novel. Contrary to all probability, also without the support of his family, armed only with a small spark of a will to live does he survive. However, it is not the father, but strangers³⁴ who recognize salvation in the radical helplessness of the cripple, the musical genius which will lead him from the original condition of his deep “pain” finally to “wisdom” – to wisdom, which enables him to accomplish with his father in New York what the father had not been able to accomplish with his suffering son in the little village of his homeland.

Mendel Singer had to take the hard blows of fate in his home village. His family broke apart both through the bitter poverty and the seductions of the non-Jewish surroundings. All of that is a difficult test for the “pious, God-fearing Jew.”³⁵ Based on the logic of the deed-reward-connection he has to view his suffering as a “punishment from God for his ‘sins’,”³⁶ he does not understand God, he protests, but the family catastrophes do not shake him to the core of his being, in the village he remains even in the face of the misfortunes heaped upon him the rabbinical, true-to-the-law Jew, in contrast to his wife Deborah, who wants to force help to come with magical practices in the tradition of Hasidism.³⁷ He does not let the real pain, the deepest despair get to him and closes himself off from it by becoming “wise.”

That is shown in the way he relates to Menuchim: While the Russian Doctor Soltysiuk immediately sees “the life in his (Menuchim’s) eyes” and wants to heal him,³⁸ Mendel is not capable of perceiving adequately the “little light” in the “big, gray, welling-over eyes” of his son or of exercising

³⁴ J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. V, p. 126.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 29.

³⁷ It seems to be a crude and faulty interpretation from a specifically pious, Christian standpoint when Dietmar Mehrens in his interpretation of *Hiob* devalues Deborah’s Hasidim-oriented piety as “of little faith” as opposed to Mendel’s attitude, which supposedly is comparable to that of the Christian “Jesus” (D. Mehrens, *Des Gerechten Lohn: Hiob (1930)*, in *idem, Vom göttlichen Auftrag der Literatur. Die Romane Joseph Roths. Ein Kommentar Vorwort von Helmuth Nürnberger*, Hamburg: Books on Demand 2000, p. 174f.) and even suggests that one could see in the wonder-working Rabbi “a temptation figure like that of the respective agent of temptation” (the devil) (*ibidem*, p. 177). Roth creates two different types of eastern Jewish piety in contrast to each other, with two diverging concepts about how Menuchim could be helped. In the end Deborah and the wonder-working Rabbi both are right in that after the wonder of a reunion with Menuchim, Mendel remembers the prophecy that Deborah had transmitted to him from the Rabbi (J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. V, p. 130).

³⁸ J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. V, p. 7.

that creative vision that could conjure up the hidden redemption. Although Menuchim's musically enthusiastic reaction to the "wonderful ringing"³⁹ of a teaspoon and to the sounds from the belltower point the right way, Mendel remains dogmatically fixed on the Torah rituals. In a critical feuilleton with the title *Psychiatrie*,⁴⁰ published in 1930, the same year as the *Hiob* novel, Roth writes on the basis of his own observation and experience: "As long as you cannot heal lunatics (!) with the help of the natural sciences, you can contemplate whether they might be healed through religion, music, magic, philosophy."⁴¹ The "religion-therapy" which Mendel Singer applies and which – according to Roth's opinion – would have been one of the worthwhile non-scientific methods, does not suit this patient – a "music-therapy" would have been the only suitable one. The mother had tried "magic" in vain.

Only after his emigration does Mendel Singer, in New York, go through the deepest depth of the "pain," most of all because America is involved in the world war. He loses both his sons in the war, his wife cannot bear that and dies, his daughter becomes insane, it is assumed that Menuchim, who was left in Europe, is no longer alive. In this Job-situation, it is said of Mendel Singer: "His Majesty, the Pain (...) has entered this old Jew."⁴² The pain reaches its peak when Mendel, contrary to his concept of life up to this point, radically revokes his relationship to God: "I have already suffered all the tortures of Hell. The devil has more goodness than God."⁴³ As a "pitiable witness to the terrible power of Jehovah," in the "holiness" of a godless "delusion" he becomes a "chosen one" for the other Jews in New York.⁴⁴ He becomes "a different human being" only through an unusual event, through (in the broadest sense) an artistic perception process, an "*aisthesis*."

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 28.

⁴⁰ Joseph Roth, *Psychiatrie*, published in "Das Tagebuch" ("The Diary") June 28, 1930; idem, *Werke*, vol. III, p. 215f.) and *Erwiderung (Response)* to the position of a physician specialist (August 2, 1930; idem, *Werke*, vol. III, p. 225f.). In both texts Roth grapples with the intolerable conditions in the mental hospitals of his time, which he is familiar with from his own experience since 1928, after he had desperately attended to a cure for his wife's mental illness. Two years' experience with psychiatrists and "insane asylums" bring him first to accusation and then to a search for alternatives. Roth had read the standard psychiatric works of his time ("Bumke, Jaspers, Kretschmer, Birnbaum, Bonhoeffer." J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. III, p. 227).

⁴¹ J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. III, p. 227.

⁴² J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. V, p. 100.

⁴³ Ibidem, p. 105.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 107.

Just as the people in East Galicia and with them the author Joseph Roth perceive, in spite of its clearly visible impossibility of redemption, the invisible reality of redemption in the East Galician crucifix, Mendel Singer has the same impossible “vision,” or rather “inspired hearing” of “the whole world” when he hears on the last day of the war in 1918 a Yiddish folksong on a totally common grammophone record. It causes him “for the first time in a long time (...) to weep”⁴⁵ and gives him release from his intolerable suffering. What he hears is “Menuchim’s Song,” and what he does not know is that his son Menuchim is the composer and orchestra conductor. Mendel senses how at this stage his hearing the “blue and silver melody” of the “little silver flute” and of the “velvet violin” makes the earlier piteous whimpers of the the cripple Menuchim come to him again.⁴⁶ The all-in-one hearing of the sounds has a redeeming effect, it makes Mendel – as his friend Skowronnek notices – “a different human being.”⁴⁷

“Music is already metaphysics,” writes Joseph Roth from Marseille to Benno Reifenberg⁴⁸ in the summer of 1925, and he means serious music, music as an art form in the specific sense. Evidently, though, “Menuchim’s Song” is popular music. Mendel’s reception of it is trivial reception and his oral repetition in the novel has a corresponding sound:

(...) there has never been a song like this. It ran like a little trickle of water and murmured gently, then became as big as the sea and swept by.⁴⁹

Shortly before his death in 1939, Joseph Roth expressed the opinion that the *Hiob* novel was “too virtuoso, as the tones of a Paganini violin.”⁵⁰ But I think that he intended that from the beginning. For him what it was about becomes clear in the juxtaposition of Mendel’s original and new behavior: Where at night in his little home village “he had prayed for the third time,”⁵¹ now at night he listens to the record “for the third time.”⁵² Where he had earlier called out to God with “monotone,” “hoarse singing” and with ham-

⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 112.

⁴⁶ Ibidem, p. 113.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 114.

⁴⁸ J. Roth, *Briefe 1911–1939*, ed. by H. Kesten, Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch 1970, p. 58.

⁴⁹ J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. V, p. 112.

⁵⁰ N. Oellers, *Literatur in der Überredung – Überzeugung durch Poesie. Bemerkungen zu Joseph Roths Roman “Hiob,”* in S.H. Kaszyński (ed.), *Galizien – eine literarische Heimat*, Poznan: WN UAM 1987, p. 153.

⁵¹ J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. V, p. 3.

⁵² Ibidem, p. 112.

mering fists,⁵³ now he does not pray any more, instead he sings “with his hoarse voice” and “drums with hesitating fingers” “Menuchim’s Song.”⁵⁴ The folkloristic record takes the place of Torah and prayer book – simultaneously a process of secularization, of aethetization and popularization.

Theodicy through literature, art, music? The transcendent, theistic God, “who rules over everything so magnificently” (first line of the second stanza of the popular Protestant hymn *Praise ye the Lord*), might still exist. As proof that “a miracle has happened,” Menuchim’s “automobile” stands in front of the door.⁵⁵ What remains is to let oneself go into the deepest “pain” and to let oneself, as Roth describes this attitude in the *Psychiatrie* feuilleton, “love as a believer those who are beaten down and obsessed.”⁵⁶ Besides that, what also remains is the character of those who somehow believe, the need of millions of “simple people,” to whom the “simple man” Mendel Singer also belongs, for solace. Roth understands this devout belief of the people – with sympathy – as following the pattern of eastern European Judaism or of the Roman Catholic Church from the viewpoint of “form,” by which are meant the rituals and their underlying stories and images.⁵⁷ “Myths” would be our term for that today. That is what Mendel Singer can take with him in his little sack out of the narrow world of the Skowronnek back room into the open hotel world “of his son.”⁵⁸ Theologically or dogmatically “strict form” has become popular-aesthetic form without any connection to legal content:

The strict form loosens through popularisation (...) The laws are numerous. Their transgression highest law, although unwritten.⁵⁹

So it is that the “form,” for example the mythical Job-prototype, does not have to be handled strictly any more. Basically we are dealing with the same prototype as the “form,” the mythical prototype of the Joseph story

⁵³ Ibidem, p. 46f.

⁵⁴ Ibidem, p. 112.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, p. 130.

⁵⁶ J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. III, p. 221.

⁵⁷ “Even the sacred becomes popular here.” Roth sees a prime example of this in east Galician Lemberg (*Lemberg, the City*, “Frankfurter Zeitung,” November 22, 1924; J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. II, p. 288: “The big, old churches leave the reserve of their holy purpose and mix in with the folk. And the folk are believers. Next to the big synagogue Jewish trading flourishes.” Such a city “makes things democratic, uncomplicated, humane,” and expands to be “cosmopolitan”).

⁵⁸ J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. V, p. 132.

⁵⁹ J. Roth, *Werke*, vol. II, p. 288.

or of the Moses story, or even though strongly transformed, the Christian faith's image of the redeeming Son. What is decisive is: The "form" is the solace – "biblical music" – "the melody sounded behind the content"⁶⁰ – borrowed metaphysical splendor.

⁶⁰ On "Form" compare also the description of the effect of the Yiddish Theater, see Note 6. – Also the recognition scene in the 15th chapter of the novel is an artistic event, theatrically staged in the "form" of a traditionally religious ritual, at the same time in the varied "form" of a classical *anagnorisis*.

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Does Joseph Roth's *Hiob* Have a Happy Ending?

The following topic was announced in the program for the winter semester 2009/10 Studium Generale lectures series at the University of Tübingen: "Job. A Pious Silent Sufferer or an Angry Rebel?" These lectures are meant for a public from all the faculties and also for anyone outside the university who is interested. The closing lecture for the *Hiob* series was delivered by the Catholic theologian Karl-Josef Kuschel.¹ He spoke about "Job figures in novels of the 20th century," among them the novel by Joseph Roth. When he let me know about his lecture he asked me if he could count on my attending, to which I gave him the answer: "Only if you leave Mendel Singer alive!" That he promised me, and he kept his promise.

Was the theologian merely accommodating me, when as an interpreter he forswore a blessed ending of the novel's hero? From his Christian point of view Mendel's passing over to the other side would still no doubt have been a "happy end," and the trivial clichés of the American way of life in the consciousness of the simple, dying man would have been illusory advertisement images. But according to the narrative, Mendel drove to the beach with his son Menuchim "where the soft sand was yellow, the wide ocean blue and all the houses white." The simple man perceives the reality as clichés, a different picture of America than before. It awakes in him "the forbidden desire (...) to let the sun shine on his old skull" and to bare "his head of his own free will."²

¹ Unpublished lecture. About Roth see K.-J. Kuschel, *Joseph Roth und der Glaube an Gottes "Wunder,"* in idem (ed.), *Vielleicht hält Gott sich einige Dichter... Literarisch-theologische Porträts*, Mainz: Grünewald 1991, p. 164-202.

² J. Roth, *Hiob. Roman eines einfachen Mannes*, Amsterdam: Verlag Allert de Lange – Köln: Verlag Kiepenheuer & Witsch (KiWi-Taschenbuch 6), 1974–1982, p. 215. Sebastian Kiefer

Whoever wants to understand Mendel's behavior as an act of self-liberation, however, sees his interpretation repudiated through the following commentary: The uncovering of his head "could be an indirect indicator of Mendel Singer's death, since in the Jewish imagination the uncovered head under open sky symbolizes that direct meeting with God that is only possible by dying."³

In this spot you can't speak in terms of "direct," however. Quite the opposite: the narrator comments on the gesture of his character with an atmosphere of change.

A spring wind stirred the sparse little crinkly hairs on his bald head (...). Thus Mendel Singer greeted the world.⁴

In my deliberations about writing death in for the main character of a narration, I want to approach the reasons first with the aesthetics of literature and not from a perspective of a worldview. The English literature professor and novelist David Lodge makes the following point in the chapter in his *Theory of the Novel* which deals with "Endings:" "atavistically strong – is the human desire for certainty, resolution and closure."⁵

So if the end of a main character's life coincides with the ending of a story, one can scarcely tame the drive to make the person die. Mendel's death at the end of the novel would strengthen the widespread literary historical judgment that Joseph Roth as a narrator continued the tradition of the 19th century.

David Lodge – with a quotation from Henry James – states that for the 20th century is "the 'open' ending characteristic of modern fiction."⁶ On this point, I would like to count a narrator like Joseph Roth, who grappled with Expressionism and New Realism, among the moderns.

The "happy end" in Roth's *Hiob* has occupied critics since the time of one of the earliest reviews to an essay from the year 2001. The reviewer of the *Neue Rundschau* with the finding that the novel contains the ending fit-

places this scene of Mendel's head-baring with Menuchim's entrance on the Seder evening but without any text proof. Cf. S. Kiefer, "Braver Junge – gefüllt mit Gift." *Joseph Roth und die Ambivalenz*, Stuttgart – Weimar: Metzler 2001, quoted from Christine Schmidjell, *Joseph Roth. Hiob. Erläuterungen und Dokumente*, Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun. 2004, p. 126.

³ Ch. Schmidjell, *Joseph Roth. Hiob. Erläuterungen und Dokumente*, p. 70.

⁴ J. Roth, *Hiob. Roman eines einfachen Mannes*, p. 215.

⁵ D. Lodge, *The Art of Fiction. Illustrated from Classic and Modern Texts*, London: Penguin Books 1992, p. 228.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 224.

ting a legend,⁷ the critic of our glorious millenium with the observation, that Roth's image of America paradoxically turns into "something completely different."⁸ In both cases the author is accused of a lack of unambiguity. By his contemporary of switching between genres, by the essayist of our times for the paradoxes in Mendel's behavior, who makes peace with his God in the middle of American circumstances.

Taken from the history of film and mass entertainment, the negative meaning of the catch word "happy end" serves only to denounce the end of the novel. But to expect unambiguity from the narrator Roth denies once again the modernity of the author.

It's not in a Roth-like transfiguration that America appears at the close of the novel, instead it is from the vantage point of the narrator figure, who through the experiences he is telling builds sympathy as well as critical and ironic relativity. Yes, Mendel remains an old Russian Jew in his fairy-tale good fortune of having found his son, but he isn't any longer in his little home village and he is no longer subject to the norms of the ghetto.

Also where interpretations of Roth's novel are more strongly interested in the biblical background and Jewish religious tradition, they still maintain that Mendel experiences a change of character. We find this with Hans Otto Horch, who regards *Hiob* in the context of German-Jewish literature history: "The real miracle is not Menuchim's rationally explicable healing and his career success explained by his industry and talent, no, it is Mendel's transformation."⁹

"Menuchim was cured in a Russian hospital, precisely there where Mendel had refused to take his son out of religious-Jewish beliefs."¹⁰ This sentence from the Dutch dissertation of Thorsten Juergens was preceded by almost half a century by a Dutch article on Roth's *Hiob*. The Amsterdam Zionist Siegried van Praag, who in the 1930s supported the founding of a department for German exil literature at Allert de Lange Publishers, writes in his review:

⁷ H.A. Joachim, *Romane für sich*, "Die Neue Rundschau," vol. 1 (42) 1931, p. 556, quoted from Ch. Schmidjell, *Joseph Roth. Hiob. Erläuterungen und Dokumente*, p. 95.

⁸ S. Kiefer, "Braver Junge – gefüllt mit Gift." *Joseph Roth und die Ambivalenz*, p. 83, quoted from Ch. Schmidjell, *Joseph Roth. Hiob. Erläuterungen und Dokumente*, p. 127.

⁹ H.O. Horch, *Zeitraum. Legende. Palimpsest. Zu Joseph Roths Hiob-Roman im Kontext deutsch-jüdischer Literaturgeschichte*, "Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift" 39 (1989), p. 210-226, quoted from M. Eisenbeis, *Joseph Roth. Hiob. Lektüreschlüssel für Schüler*, Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun. 2006, p. 59.

¹⁰ Th. Juergens, *Gesellschaftskritische Aspekte in Joseph Roths Romanen*, Leiden: Universitaire Pers 1977, p. 125.

The ghetto doesn't know fresh air any more. People warm themselves on each other. You give in to your fate. And that is why I admired the psychological feeling that the author creates when he makes Mendel sin, and eat pork, and lay a fire (...). Repressed expressions of rebellion and sacrifice are ghetto. And thus Roth has really created a new prototype: the Job of the ghetto.¹¹

Notes which can't be overlooked in Roth's *Juden auf Wanderschaft* portray this isolation effect of the ghetto.¹² And so the thought suggests itself that in Joseph Roth with his breakthrough as a novelist there is also a social critic at work. He had already applied himself to the fate of ordinary people in his beginnings in Vienna, and with the novel character Mendel Singer he joins the ranks of the authors who, at the end of the 1920s, told typical stories about lower class or proletarian lives. The title *Kleiner Mann – was nun?* is proverbial for Hans Fallada's epic reworking of the sociological Feuilleton by Siegfried Kracauer about employees of the Weimar Republic. The novel appeared in 1932, and the editor of this feuilleton, Siegfried Kracauer, was Roth's colleague at the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. In 1928 Ludwig Renn had published his novel *Krieg* in the form of a fictitious diary, with descriptions of experiences and thoughts of a simple soldier who is proud to have made a career in the lower ranks during the First World War. His simple character is disclosed – as with Roth's *Hiob* – by means of a pretext. The diary-text is based on the novel *Simplicius Simplicissimus* by Grimmelshausen, who makes

his unheroic hero stagger and reel around in the Thirty Years' War. To analyse Roth's *Hiob* from the standpoint of social and literary history in the contexts of the Weimar Republic was the aim of a collection of materials which were added in 1991 as the third book of the two humanistic and culturally historical interpretation principle works by Dieter Schrey. As novels of ordinary people (common man) I chose to include next to Roth's *Hiob*, Fallada's *Kleiner Mann*, and the pseudo-*Simplicius* by Ludwig Renn also the peasant colonist in Karl Heinrich Waggerl's *Brot* (1930), a confessed plagiarism of Knut Hamsun's *Segen der Erde*. Likewise *Das kunstseidene Mädchen* (1932) by Irmgard Keun, who has her chattering big-city-stray

¹¹ S. van Praag, *Het boek Job Anno 1930*, "Critisch Bulletin," Amsterdam, May 1931, p. 142-145, quoted by Hans M. Würzner, *Joseph Roth in den Niederlanden. Ein Beitrag zur Wirkungsgeschichte*, in M. Kessler, F. Hackert (eds.), *Joseph Roth. Interpretation. Rezeption. Kritik*, Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag 1990, p. 440.

¹² The essays *Juden auf Wanderschaft* were used widely by Schmidjell for her commentaries (Ch. Schmidjell, *Joseph Roth. Hiob. Erläuterungen und Dokumente*).

confide all her yearnings, wishes and adventures as a first-person narrator in a diary, and who offers her readers lusty participation in her chit-chat.¹³

My deliberations also pertained to the readership of Roth's *Hiob*, about who the prominent journalist originally meant to write his novel for, when it appeared as a serial in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. He confronted the citizens of the Weimar Republic with the origins, traditions and lifestyle of an immigrant group who were cut off from middle European civilisation through their poverty and appearance. How much these "Eastern Jews in Germany" fell victim to hate-filled antisemitism can be read in a comprehensive Tübingen dissertation.¹⁴ But Roth's novel belongs to the attempts of this time to find understanding and empathy for these same foreigners who had also gained the attention of his fellow authors Alfred Döblin and Arnold Zweig.¹⁵ With regard to his reading public Roth mixed the boundaries between Jewish and German customs, Jewish and German terms, named the "melamed" a "Kinderlehrer" (children's teacher) or the "matzes" "Osterbrote" (Easter rolls).¹⁶ And in the end he arranged for his simple, ordinary man – no, not a collective path to freedom.¹⁷ But a glimpse of an individual one.

¹³ F. Hackert, *Romane von kleinen Leuten. Hiob in literarischen Kontexten der Weimarer Republik*, "Materialien Deutsch" 784 (Landesinstitut für Erziehung und Unterricht, LEV), Stuttgart 1991.

¹⁴ T. Maurer, *Ostjuden in Deutschland 1918–1933*, Hamburg: Hans Christian Verlag 1986.

¹⁵ Döblin's portrayal of the eastern Jews in his *Reise in Polen* was reviewed by Roth in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* on 31.1.1926. Cf. J. Roth, *Werke*, 6 Bde, Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch 1989–1991, vol. 2, p. 532–535. Arnold Zweig, together with the portraitist Hermann Struck, had already published in 1920 a study of the eastern Jews *Das Ostjüdische Antlitz* in the Berlin Welt-Verlag.

¹⁶ See F. Hackert, *Romane von kleinen Leuten. Hiob in literarischen Kontexten der Weimarer Republik*, p. 52–53.

¹⁷ Cf. R. Frey, *Kein Weg ins Freie. Joseph Roths Amerikabild*, Frankfurt am Main – Bern: Peter Lang 1983.



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Jewish Tradition in Anna Akhmatova's Poetry

The characteristic of the poetry of the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries is the “nostalgia for the world culture” (O. Mandelstam) – openness to the wide literary and cultural context, to myth and tradition. This phenomenon is characterized by a sense of in-depth presence of texts created earlier in the text being created now. Also, while the new poetic world is created, a certain semantic perspective is constructed for recreating artistic worlds already existing. In this context, the world of Tanach becomes the source of texts which are renewed and recreated in the new poetic word.

The actualization of Jewish tradition in the Russian poetry of the turn of the centuries is probably connected with the deep similarity of the cultural situation – the necessity to confront the growing desolation and fragmentation, when one of the main centralizing elements is the word. Since Judaism is the religion of text, of the word not spoken but written, of the text that constitutes the spiritual unity of the nation, it remains unchanged when the life changes and is the basis of endurance and stability of the people connected with it. Text in Judaism has a universal, magical, transcendent meaning (“Only he is free who occupies himself with the Torah” – Avot, 6-2; “God occupies himself with the Torah for the first three hours of the day” – Avoda Zarah, 3-5). For this very reason, for a Jew the text of the Torah precedes reality, it is a certain ideal reality by which reality is checked. The treatise *Sanhedrin* says:

The city of idolaters has never existed and never will. Why then is it mentioned in the Torah? Learn and you shall receive a reward for this! A leprous house has

never existed and never will. Why then is it mentioned in the Torah? Learn and you shall receive a reward for this (*Sanhedrin*, 71a).

And as J. Soloveitchik writes,

when a person of Halakha addresses reality, he has the Torah given to him on the mount of Sinai in his hands. (...) He begins with ideal construction and ends up with the real and true one.¹

In the same manner, the poetry of the silver age is characterized by the precedence of the word, when for everyone who enters the literature the word about an object exists before the object itself. This is exactly what O. Mandelstam wrote about in *The noise of times*: “An intellectual does not need memory. It’s enough for him to speak about the books he has read.”² A. Akhmatova felt this initial literariness just as clearly. She put it as a paradox:

Не повторяй – душа твоя богата –
Того, что было сказано когда-то,
Но, может быть, поэзия сама –
Одна великолепная цитата.

This is about the dialectics of uniqueness and repetition understood as the law of existence of the artistic text.

For this reason, the magic of the word, the hypostasis of the word is one of the cross cutting themes of the silver age poetry:

Молчат гробницы, мумии и кости –
Лишь слову жизнь дана
(I. Bunin);

Солнце останавливали словом,
Словом разрушали города
(N. Gumilev).

But probably only A. Akhmatova makes the word be the life-creating foundation of both the life of a poet and the life of the world. Everything that doesn’t exist in reality any more, appears from nothingness by the power of the poetic word, dwells and is preserved in it, already independent of the passage of time. When in the *Ode to Tsarskoe Selo* it is said:

Как мне хочется, чтобы
Появиться могли

¹ Й.Д. Соловейчик, *Человек Галахи*, in idem, *Катарсис*, Иерусалим: Амана-Маханаим 1991, p. 20.

² О.Э. Мандельштам, *Шум времени*, in idem, *Египетская марка*, Москва: Панорама 1991, p. 152.

Голубые сугробы
С Петербургом вдали –

it all immediately appears:

Здесь ходили по струнке,
Мчался рыжий рысак,
Здесь еще до чугулки
Был знатнейший кабак.

Everything in this poem is created by the word, just like in the poems *Russian Trianon* and *Petersburg in 1913*.

Since the text precedes everything and it creates the world, then it is necessary to look for new senses, interpretations and comments in it. Of course, these senses have originally been in the text, just like the necessity of finding them. J. Soloveitchik writes about the commentary principle of the Jewish tradition:

When the Torah was given to the man of Halakha on Mount Sinai, he was not only the recipient but the creator of the worlds, the participant in the act of creation. The very basis of the tradition transferred from mouth to mouth is the ability of man to come up with new creative interpretations (Hiddush).³

Similarly, in the works of Akhmatova and some other silver age poets, the text comes into existence in interaction with the texts already created. The formation of the new meaning takes place in recreating the meanings already embodied; a poem is not only the birth of a new meaning but also the interpretation of meanings already existing.

For this reason, in the situation of conscious literariness, addressing the sacred context becomes so relevant. Therefore, when a poet appeals to the sacred text with realization of this literariness, he not only represents it but also re-creates, not only comprehends but also re-interprets. This pattern is characteristic of Akhmatova's cycle of poems *Biblical themes*. Certainly, the plots that Akhmatova chose are common to two world religions, but the approach to the texts is particularly interesting. The way of interpreting the Biblical text reminds of Midrashim and the commentary tradition that constantly refers to them – from Saadia Gaon to Malbim: searching for some problem or difficulty in the text and then solving it by adding to and remodelling reality. For example, why did Lot's wife turn into the pillar of salt? She didn't give the strangers even salt (this Midrash is given by Rashi). It is interesting that the very situations that take centre stage in Akhmatova's

³ Й.Д. Соловейчик, *Человек Галахи*, p. 42.

poems attract the attention of Jewish commentators (“seven years like seven days” – Rashi, Rambam, Lot’s wife – Rashi, Maimonides, Aba ben Kahana, “she will be the net for him” – Rashi, Rambam, Malbim).

The choice of Tanach heroines is determined by the interest in overcoming time characteristic of the turn of the centuries. The destinies of the three women – forgotten, replaced by others, lost in the passage of time – are recreated in the initial point of choice causing all the following course of events. In this very point they remain alive and imperishable in the newly created text. The original situations of Tanach are completely reconsidered in Akhmatova’s text. The epigraph of the poem *Rachel* in the comments of Rashi has the following sense: “Seven years of work seemed a negligibly low price: in his eyes the possibility to marry her was worth much more.” Consequently, love is stronger than time – love overcomes time. In Akhmatova’s poem, seven years, even turned into “seven brightening days,” are described in successively unfolding temporal intervals. The difficulty of overcoming time and the necessity of doing it is the meaning of Akhmatova’s text.

The story of Michal is transformed even greater. It is very characteristic that of all the images of David – king, warrior, poet – only the one of poet was chosen. And of all the twists and turns in the story of Michal – state plots, war considerations – only one thing was taken and enlarged – the love of Michal for David, the poet. Since this feeling is free from all the accompanying circumstances, everything that happens is inevitable. Love is taken out of the ordinary time (“Как тайна, как сон, как прама-терь Лилит”), and the experience of love overlaps with the experience of death (“А солнца лучи... а звезды в ночи... / А эта холодная дрожь...”).

The poem *Lot’s Wife* is particularly interesting in the aspect under consideration. It is the compositional centre of the cycle and the quintessence of its meaning. While the first and the third poem represent only one event, one experience of all the events described in Tanach, in *Lot’s Wife* the reality described in the past coincided with the reality being described by the poet: in both cases we are dealing with the same event. In Tanach there is only one phrase used about Lot’s wife, quoted also in the epigraph of the poem (“But Lot’s wife, from behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt”), but Akhmatova puts the feelings of Lot’s wife into the centre of the poem.

The punishment of Lot’s wife according to Rashi resulted from the fact that she “refused to give the strangers even salt,” and according to hakhamim – from the fact that it is prohibited for humans to look at the

sight of destruction. According to Akhmatova, Lot's wife is punished for looking back, but this looking back was special. In the reality of Tanach, when she looked back she couldn't see anything but death and destruction: "Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven (...) and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the valley, and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land ascended like the smoke of a furnace" (Gn 19:24, 28). Akhmatova writes:

Не поздно, ты можешь еще посмотреть
 На красные башни родного Содома,
 На площадь, где пела, на двор, где пряла,
 На окна глухие высокого дома,
 Где милому мужу детей родила.

This way, the new motivation arises: Lot's wife is punished because in her imagination she saw something already destroyed by God as if it was still there, thus violating his will. This new meaning is seen in the new poetic word. At the end, this very poetic word rebuilds what God destroyed and it becomes the only place where "the red towers of the native Sodom" exist. And Lot's wife remains alive in the author's poetic memory and in her participation in the martyr's destiny.

However, here we see a reverse transformation as well. In this case, it is not the author's word that transforms the Tanach story, but it is the Tanach story that transforms the author's destiny. Indeed, it is completely obvious that Sodom and Gomorrah's destiny is the prophesy of the destiny of Akhmatova's generation and all her era (it is not by chance that in the harlequinade of the *Poem without a hero* appear *Lots of Sodom* – criminals, who not only shared the disastrous destiny of their time, but who didn't look back, didn't remember). Besides, the deathly look back of Lot's wife is also a deathly look back of the poet. (We'll remark that Akhmatova's all self-portraits are side-face, looking back: "А в зеркале двойник бурбонский профиль прячет...", "А над ним тот профиль горбатый..."). The main thing is not even that she was punished and became a pillar of salt, but that in each poem which returns the past destroyed by the passage of time, she turns into a pillar of salt and goes through the suffering of this transformation.

This suffering is the suffering of a poet whose heart experiences the passing of time, moment after moment, from the times of the Torah till her own past. At the same time, it is the suffering of the poetic word formation, in which is seen not only direct, but also a reverse course of time, from her

own past till the times of the Torah. Thus, the poetic word merging with the passage of time overcomes it by the overlapping of related destinies.

In light of the above mentioned, we can come closer to the understanding of her cycle of poems *Menorah*, perceived as hermetic. It is connected with the Jewish tradition first of all by the fundamental symbol. The Menorah is the embodied connection of different eras in Jewish history, the memory of the destroyed Temple. At the same time, the candle light is a symbol of the poetic art common in the contemporary literature (it would suffice to remember Pasternak's "Свеча горела на столе, свеча горела..."). Thus is established the area of mutually enriching interaction of the Jewish tradition and literary context.

Naturally, the theme of light constitutes the unity of the cycle. In the first poem, the light of Menorah belongs to the present ("горит семисвечник"), in the second one – to the past ("сиял семисвечник"). On the other hand, the intensity of light intensifies from poem to poem, acquiring another quality in the third poem – fire ("по самому жгучему лугу"). The light of Menorah is thought to represent some ideal perspective whose significance increases the farther back it is removed in time.

This explains a peculiar time structure. The first quatrain addresses the Temple. This Temple is destroyed and removed in time ("тень иудейской стены"). But according to the Jewish tradition, a Menorah can burn only in the Temple, so the Temple is preserved, and since a Menorah burns "behind the shoulder," the time gap is eliminated.

This is possible only where all the opposites are merged in the primeval chaos, where time has not begun yet, and all times – both when the Temple existed and when it was destroyed – are kept as undeveloped opportunities at the bottom of the vortex, where all the past is, which, like the town of Kitezh, was buried in water (it is described in the poem *The way of all the earth*).

Both in this poem and in a number of other works of Akhmatova, the point of junction and of time generation is crime and guilt:

То меня держал ты в черной яме,
 То я голову твою несла (...)
 Оттого, что был моим Энеем, Олоферном, Иоанном ты (...)
 Римлянином, скифом, византийцем
 Был свидетелем я срама твоего...

In the same way, in this cycle of poems the plunging into the depth of time leads to "the sub-consciousness of the pre-eternal guilt," i.e. guilt is

something that existed before consciousness and eternity, or rather, before the division into time and eternity.

This guilt, obviously, is not some specific wrong doing, but the feeling of one's own original sinfulness and a vast distance separating man from God. This notion includes both the Christian concept of the original sin and the logic of the Jews blaming themselves for the destruction of the Temple. Therefore, the author's individual relationship with time naturally leads to the symbols of Jewish tradition as the closest to the "fundamental basis of life" (O. Mandelstam), and this relationship allows the incorporation of the values of the Jewish tradition into some universal spiritual structure.

All the more so, the symbol of the Menorah in the Jewish tradition is the reflection of some absolute source – the first day of creation: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day" (Gn 1:3-5). In the Torah, the order of events is as follows: the combining of the opposite elements, their division and then their separate existence. The same is seen in the cycle of poems, but in the reverse order: there is both light and darkness in the first poem, in the second one "светит темнота" – the opposites are combined, and in the third one there is neither darkness nor light. So, there is a movement in both directions – from beginning to end and from end to beginning.

In these circumstances, obviously, the person loses his natural form. This is seen in the last lines of the first poem: "Многоженец, поэт" – these are fully human characteristics. But later – "...и начало / Всех начал и конец всех концов" – making us recall the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Who has performed and accomplished it, calling forth the generations from the beginning? 'I, the LORD, am the first, and with the last. I am He'" (Is 41:4), "Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done" (Is 46:10), "I am the first and I am the last" (Is 44:6). The attributes of God not only turn out to be applicable to man, but a man finds himself in a position which only God could occupy, clearly realizing the discrepancy, the wide gap between him and this position.

The double reflection of Akhmatova's statement indicates that it is not just a cycle (*In my beginning is my end* (T.S. Eliot), one of the epigraphs to the *Poem without a hero*. This is a zero cycle of cycles, all beginnings and ends have merged at one point of a person's position surpassing his human boundaries. The light of the Menorah, the memory of the destroyed Temple makes "an invisible sinner" turn into "the beginning of all beginnings."

But between these two entities of the human personality there is one more – “многоцен, поэт.” This characteristic is undoubtedly applicable to King David, especially considering the fact that the next poem contains an allusion to his words: “Где алмазный сиял семисвечник, / Там мне светит – одна темнота” – “For You light my lamp; The LORD my God illumines my darkness” (Ps 18:28). Certainly, the situation in the cycle is not identical to the one in Tanach. In Tanach, the darkness is inside the man, and the light comes from God. In modern times, there is no light, the Menorah is out. In this situation, the outward darkness becomes light.

But the most important thing is that an allusion to King David’s words is related to a different object – to the lyrical hero. The explanation is not only in the profound affinity of the poets, but first of all in the in-depth affinity of times being revealed in the word. Against this affinity, the differences are seen more clearly: even in the times of David, in the times of wars and suffering, there was light from God, but now darkness became light. And it is in this way, the passage of time becomes evident and tangible.

It is in the passage of time that the relationship of the characters is revealed. This is a fatal, forbidden passion originating from the primeval chaos and having all its characteristics (a similar situation is found in the drama *Enuma Elish*). This cycle of poems is not so much about passion, but about parting, and this parting is as irreversible and final as passion. At the same time, the memory about “том заповедном луге,” “том жгучем луге” comes back both in the second and in the third poem.

Thus, the symbol of the Menorah organizes the sacred space in which the characters are both as separated as they can be and as close as they can be. In this space, on the one hand, the destroyed Temple is rebuilt, and on the other – the memory of its destruction is renewed. It is possible that this is an attempt to understand the creation as such, and perhaps, the cycle is not finished because the destruction and the building are joined together as one process.

The analysis of Akhmatova’s works connected with the Jewish tradition, leads to the conclusion that in the new cultural situation, Judaism is a centre creating cultural realities, and although they change and are re-thought, they still keep their profound inalterability. In addition to that, neither the laws of religion, nor the laws of art dominate in this comprehensive dialogue. What happens is the interaction: the religious principles give the poetry an ontological dimension; and literature gives the religious system a personal interpretation.

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Particular characteristics of the Kabbalistic Idea of the Invisible Word Representation in Daniel Kharms' Carnival Art

The famous Russian avant-gardist writer Daniel Kharms was deeply concerned with Judaism and ancient Jewish culture, and studied Hebrew. He probably inherited his fondness for Hebrew from his father I.P. Yuvachev, the author of religious and mystical works and preaching articles which were published under the pseudonym of Miroljubov. Kharms routinely added ancient Hebrew words and names in his literary texts and notebooks: Малгил, Лигудим, Шибейя, Ламмед-Вов, Алаф, “Ахóхм – остряк / Ахóсм – жених / Азохн – вей,”¹ etc.

M.V. Yampolsky in his book *Беспамятство как источник* considered Kharms' certain techniques and characters which descended from Judaism and were related to medieval Jewish philosophy and religious symbolism.² But in general, as N. Buks suggests in her article *Имя как прием: К загадке псевдонима Даниила Хармса*,³ the Jewish mysticism undertone in Kharms' works is hardly outlined; its role in the writer's artistic skills is yet to be understood. N. Buks researches Kharms' poetics written under the pseudonym in relation with his interest in religious mysticism, Talmudic

¹ Д. Хармс, *Записные книжки. Дневник: В 2-х кн.*, Book 1, ed. by Ж.-Ф. Жаккар, В.Н. Сажин, Санкт-Петербург: Академический проект 2002, p. 144. N. Buks noticed: “The last pair is an exclamation of sorrow in Yiddish. Three paronyms make a cosmic plat in small” (Н. Букс, *Имя как прием: К загадке псевдонима Даниила Хармса*, in О. Буренина (ed.), *Абсурд и вокруг: Сборник статей*, Москва: Языки славянской культуры 2004, p. 377).

² See М.Б. Ямпольский, *Беспамятство как источник (Читая Хармса)*, Москва: Новое литературное обозрение 1998.

³ See Н. Букс, *Имя как прием*, p. 375.

literature and the language of the Torah.⁴ N. Buks remarks that Kharms' notebooks reflect his interest in the history of the Talmud and in the genres of rabbinic literature and the Haggadah. Kharms' notes reflect the special interest in Zohar, the main Kabbalistic text, and in the works on Kabbalah, his interest in Hebrew and Yiddish literature, and in studying ancient Hebrew. Moreover, there are samples of equivoque in Ancient Hebrew in his notebook.⁵

M.B. Yampolsky, A.T. Nikitaev, K.A. Kedrov and other researchers have already noticed Kharms' enthusiasm for words deformation and symbolical transformation, tone painting, cryptogram and anagrammatism a long time ago. M.B. Yampolsky in his book *Беспмятство как исток* proposed the way of puzzling out Kharms' many riddles, cryptograms and anagrams. Following the researches of M.B. Yampolsky, J.-Ph. Jaccard, A.A. Aleksandrov and V.N. Sazhin, N. Buks noticed that "the technique of meaning encoding by letters transposition is one of the most frequent in Kharms' poetics."⁶ Mentioning Kharms' inclination to encode his notes, the variety of encoding techniques used (ranging from astrological symbolism of dating to ideograms) A.T. Nikitaev reconstructed the cryptographic alphabet invented by the poet and proposed a precise way of decoding the texts.⁷ It's important to notice, in the light of Kharms' practice with cryptograms that the poet was born on December 30th the Old Covenant Prophet Daniel's Day. The prophet Daniel is believed to have been a magician. Kharms was named after him and "consciously identified himself with the Biblical Daniel."⁸ According to M.B. Yampolsky, in Kharms' emblematic text *Daniel's Prophecy on Nebuchadnezzar*, Daniel was supposed to read the enigmatic words, positioned as an anagram. The prophet could read the pun-based text using an anagrammatic dissection principle. As M.B. Yampolsky suggests, the prophet Daniel, and, respectively, Daniel Kharms, constructed "the text of interpretation as a successive division of indivisible."⁹

Kharms' many contemporaries recalled him being fond of pranks, tricks and games (particularly linguistic ones). Kharms personally mentioned his fondness for anagrams in the speech of his character from *Факиров. Моя*

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 375-376

⁶ Ibidem, p. 383

⁷ А.Т. Никитаев, *Тайнопись Даниила Хармса: Опыт дешифровки*, in Ю.С. Александров (ed.), *Рисунки Хармса*, Санкт-Петербург: Издательство Ивана Лимбаха 2006, p. 237-247.

⁸ М.Б. Ямпольский, *Беспмятство как исток*, p. 258.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 258-259.

душа болит... (1933–1934) sketch. Like Kharms, his character, with the eloquent name of Fakirov, likes Bach, wisdom, number magic and letter collocations:

А я всю жизнь, минуту каждую
 премудрость жду, коплю и жаждую
 то в числа вглядываюсь острым взглядом,
 то буквы расставляю друг за другом рядом.¹⁰

In 1931 Kharms mentioned in his notebook his observation on “word machines,” which can be interpreted in various ways, particularly as a covert estimation about the anagrammatical “word strength research technique:”

The strength with which the words are marked must be set free. There are some word combinations which make the effect of this strength more visible. It’s no good to think that this strength will make the objects move. I believe that the strength of words can do this too. But the most valuable effect is almost undefinable. We retrieve the rough idea of this strength from the rhymes of metric poetry. These complex ways such as the help of metric poetry in moving any body parts are not to be considered fake either. This is the roughest and at the same time the most refined word strength manifestation. The following actions of this force we are probably unable to understand with our common sense based minds. If we need a technique to investigate this strength, then it should probably be something fully different from the techniques which are used in science nowadays. Here, first of all, the fact or experience cannot be evidence. I can hardly imagine how we would prove and verify the saying. We know four types of word machines nowadays: poetry, praying, song and spells. The machines are constructed not by calculations or reasoning, but by a completely different thing which is called the ALPHABET.¹¹

Among the “word machines” the author mentions poetical and sacral writings that have some special sound and number magic derived from letter and sound combinations such as “poetry, praying, song and spells.” Works by F. de Saussure, V.N. Toporov, V.V. Ivanov and other linguists confirm that there was a special anagram technique of the poetical ritual text composition (particularly sacral anthems) which was common for all ancient Indo-European cultures.¹²

¹⁰ Д. Хармс, *Малое собрание сочинений*, Санкт-Петербург: Азбука-классика 2003, р. 590-591.

¹¹ Д. Хармс, *Записные книжки. Дневник: В 2-х кн.*, Book 2, ed. by Ж.-Ф. Жаккар, В.Н. Сажин, Санкт-Петербург: Академический проект 2002, р. 174.

¹² See В.В. Иванов, *Очерки по предьстории и истории семиотики*, in idem, *Избранные труды по семиотике и истории культуры: В 4 т.*, vol. 1, Москва: Языки русской культуры 1998, р. 617-627.

Having found the basis in the Kabbalistic conceptions which attributed a special strength and inspirational meaning to the Hebrew letters, Kharms projected them onto the Russian alphabet. For example, this idea can be found in Kharms' arguments on "word machines: poetry, praying, song and spells," which have a special strength and are constructed with the use of the alphabet. According to A.A. Kobrinsky, for Kharms the creation process turns into a Kabbalistic estimation analogue.¹³

According to Kharms' notebooks, he was seriously engaged in studying ancient Hebrew and Kabbalah. M.B. Yampolsky and N. Buks distinguished words in Hebrew which were often "sophisticated and thus encoded by vocalization and registration in Russian phonetics."¹⁴ Nora Buks also remarked that in Kharms' writings, because of the ancient Hebrew being unrecognized (due to being sophisticated with vocalization), ancient Hebrew "has the meaning of a secret code, encodes the word, communicates it with a magic strength of a spell"¹⁵ due to its unrecognizability (being sophisticated with vocalization).

While considering the origin of Kharms' pseudonyms, N. Buks came to the conclusion that "Kharms' technique of literary mask composition based on letters and linguistic manipulation descends from Kabbalistic practice where the clandestine and mystical words meaning is obtained by letter composition and transposition."¹⁶

The Kabbalistic idea of the invisible Word which precedes the visible Word originates from the Torah. "The Written Torah" is written in invisible ink made of white fire and can only be seen by God.¹⁷ The cryptogram – the successor of the Torah's Invisible Word – can be found in Kharms' carnival poetry, prose and drama.

N. Buks suggests that

Kharms' reference to ancient Hebrew was determined by these language high religious connotations and it is also by it that there are unlimited possibilities of letter and semantic variation. Evidently, the ancient Hebrew was also interesting as a consonantal language, the one which perplexes the retrieval of the proper word. Kharms knew from Kabbalah that the magic power can be realized only with proper pronunciation.¹⁸

¹³ А.А. Кобринский, *Даниил Хармс*, Москва: Молодая гвардия 2008, p. 195.

¹⁴ Н. Букс, *Имя как прием*, p. 384.

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 379.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 377.

¹⁷ М.Б. Ямпольский, *Беспамятство как исток*, p. 48.

¹⁸ Н. Букс, *Имя как прием*, p. 385-386.

According to N. Buks, the sequence of the consonants r-m-s in the pseudonym Kharms, which is natural for Hebrew, indicates the consonantal origin of this word. In the initial syllable of “kha” the determinantal prefix “ha” can be recognized, which is identified by Kabbalah as the “sound before a sound;” it indicates the “capability of making a sound by itself”¹⁹ and corresponds to the definite article. Hebrew helps to decode Daniel Kharms’ pseudonym as ha-remez, which means Daniel-hint (-allegory).²⁰ One of Kharms’ decoding techniques is the palindrome. In case of Hebrew, the language which is read from right to left, the palindrome acquires additional artistic capacity, which Kharms used when he created his pseudonym. As N. Buks suggests, the palindrome alteration of the word *remez* – *zamar* (singer, performer, the one who plays musical instruments, related to Orpheus).²¹

Daniel Kharms was fond of the anagram and cryptogram composition, as were a lot of other Russian poets at the beginning of the 20th century. The nature of carnival, alogism and absurdity in Kharms’ work is somehow determined by the cryptographic undertones.²² Probably, the issue of intentional or unintentional anagrammatical structures emerging in the texts was popular among oberiuts. It can be indicated, for example, by N. Zabolotsky’s poem *Читая стихи* (1948):

Нет! Поэзия ставит преграды
 Нашим выдумкам, ибо она
 Не для тех, кто, играя в шарады,
 Надевает колпак колдуна.²³

K. Vaginov’s poems of the 1920s also often reveal cryptographic and anagrammatical intensions:

Под чудотворным, нежным звоном
 Игральных слов стою опять (...)
 Так сумасшедший собирает
 Осколки, камешки, сучки,
 Переменясь, располагает
 И слушает остатки чувств.
 (*Под чудотворным, нежным звоном...*, 1924).

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 386.

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 386-387.

²² See И.Н. Шатова, *Криптографический карнавал М. Кузмина, К. Вагинова, Д. Хармса*, Запорожье: Издательство КПУ 2011.

²³ Н.А. Заболоцкий, *Собрание сочинений: В 3-х т.*, vol. 1, Москва: Художественная литература 1983, p. 230. There’s a reference to OBERIU poetics here, not only in “колпак колдуна,” but also in “наши выдумки” and “игра в шарады.”

И снова я пытаюсь
 Восстановить утраченную цепь,
 Звено в звено медлительно вдеваю (...)
 Слежу за хороводами народов
 И между строк прочитываю книги,
 Халдейскою наукой увлечен.
 (Да, целый год я взвешивал..., 1924)²⁴ etc.

The main article of OBERIU manifesto – *Поэзия обэриутов* (1928) – produces an impression of metaphorical description of distant and constant anagram creation and searching technique, a veiled indication of the basic stages of anagram construction and analysis, presented in the proper order. At first the poet “scatters the object in pieces,” then “scatters the action in fragments;” “it results in the vision of nonsense;” “the world’s phantasmagoria passes by as if dressed in mist and shiver.” But you feel the object’s proximity and its warmth through this mist.” Then the reader-observer should “try to distinguish the verbal meanings collisions,” “decode completely.” It should be listened to and read “mostly with eyes and fingers.” The final stage: “the object and the action decomposed in it; components emerge being renovated;” “the object doesn’t fractionize, but rather the opposite – it knocks together and thickens completely” “by an observer’s groping hand.”²⁵

An interesting investigation of the anagram as an archaic form of sound structure of the poetic text appeared at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries thanks to F. de Saussure’s quest, but it became widespread only after 1964, when Zh. Starbinsky published anagrammatic notes of the Genevan linguist. Among the most famous works about anagrammatism in the Russian literature of the beginning of the 20th century it is necessary to name V.N. Toporov’s and V.V. Ivanov’s articles, devoted to the analyses of anagrammatic structures in the poetic inheritance of V. Ivanov, O. Mandelstam, A. Bely, in the publications of R.O. Jakobson, A.A. Hansen-Löve, J. Faryno, V.P. Grigoriev, A.E. Parnis about V. Khlebnikov’s poetry and futurists, the article of V.S. Bayevsky and A.D. Koshelev about A. Blok’s poetics.²⁶

²⁴ К.К. Вагинов, *Опыты соединения слов посредством ритма: Репринтное воспроизведение издания 1931 года*, Москва: Книга 1991, p. 26, 30.

²⁵ ОБЭРИУ, <Декларация>, in А.А.Александров (ed.), *Ванна Архимеда*, Ленинград: Художественная литература 1991, p. 458-459.

²⁶ See R. Jakobson, *Subliminal Verbal Patterning in Poetry*, in R. Jakobson, Sh. Kwamoto (eds.), *Studies in General and Oriental Linguistics: Presented to Shirō Hattori*, Tokyo: TEC Co. Ltd 1970; P.O. Якобсон, *Из мелких вещей Велимира Хлебникова: “Ветер – пение...”*, in idem, *Работы по поэтике: Переводы*, ed. by М.Л. Гаспаров, Москва: Про-

Daniel Kharms often invented artistic names, basing them on sound analogy and the language game. In his notes to the *История Сдыгр Анпр* V.N. Sazhin points out that professor *Тартарелин*'s surname is the allusion to the name of *Тартальи* – a character-mask of the Italian commedia del'arte and C. Gozzi's comedy; in Kharms' verse *Радость*, “as it often happens with him,” “transfer of the name of the Greek scientist” *Афинеи* in *Афилей*, *Калдеев* (in the verse *Фадеев Калдеев и Пепермалдеев*) is similar to the surname *Кильдеев* – a yard-keeper of a house in Nadezhdinskaya street, where Kharms lived.²⁷

Testing “the strength of the word,” Kharms often introduced inscribed anagrams of his dear people, first of all – dear women in his analogous or clear texts, beginning with the earliest ones. For example, in his *Первое послание к Марине* (1935) addressed to the poet's second wife, the sound image of her surname became a form-building factor. The anagram is hidden in the very first line:

За то, что ты **молчишь**, не буду
Тебя любить, **мой милый друг** (...)
Молчаньем, злостью **иль обманом**
Любовный кубок пролился,
И молчаливым талисманом
Его наполнить вновь **нельзя**²⁸

(threefold repetition of key related words *молчишь*, *молчаньем*, *молчаливым талисманом* – prompts the surname of poet's wife МАЛИЧ).

Наблюдение can be an example of the language game (1933) in which all the text is filled with the repetition of the consonance of the

гресс 1987, p. 317-323; В.В. Иванов, *Два примера анаграмматических построений в стихах позднего Мандельштама*, “Russian Literature” 3 (1972), p. 81-87; В.Н. Топоров, *К исследованию анаграмматических структур (анализы)*, in Т.В. Цивьян (ed.), *Исследования по структуре текста*, Москва: Наука 1987, p. 193-238; А.А. Hansen-Löve, *Velimir Chlebnikovs Onomatopoeik. Name und Anagramm*, in von R. Lachmann, I.P. Smirnov (eds.), *Kryptogramm. Zur Ästhetik des Verborgenen. Wiener Slawistischer Almanach*, Book 21, Wien 1988, p. 135-224; J. Faryno, *Paronimia – anagramma – palindrom v roétike awangarda*, in von R. Lachmann, I.P. Smirnov (eds.), *Kryptogramm...*, p. 37-62; А.Е. Парнис, *Об анаграмматических структурах в поэтике футуристов*, in X. Баран, С.И. Гиндин (eds.), *Роман Якобсон: Тексты, документы, исследования*, Москва: РГГУ 1999, p. 852-868; В.С. Баевский, А.Д. Кошелев, *Поэтика Блока: анаграммы*, in *Творчество А.А. Блока и русская культура XX века: Блоковский сборник III* (“Ученые записки Тартусского государственного университета”), vol. 459, Тарту 1979, p. 50-75, etc.

²⁷ В.Н. Сажин, *Примечания*, in Д. Хармс, *Малое собрание сочинений*, p. 810, 815.

²⁸ Д. Хармс, *Малое собрание сочинений*, p. 233.

artist's family Alice Poret,²⁹ pointing to the presence of the likely distant anagrams:

два человека в злобном **споре**
забыли все вокруг, но **вскоре**
им стал **противен это спор**
и **вот** они не **спорят** больше с **этих пор** (...)
угасли в них **порывы** **прежней** злости (...)
Порвись порвись моя окова (...)
об **этом** вы до **этих пор** друг другу ни гу гу.³⁰ (Поре...рет, Пор...эт).

The revelation of the cryptonym of the supposed addressee was prepared by the tenfold repetition of *por / nope* and the word consonance *не спорят – Порет*. In the word “угасли” the inscribed anagram АЛИСА can be read.

Cryptography allows specifying the names of the obvious and hidden addressees of Kharms' works. In his early verse *От бабушки до Esther* (1925) the very third word “трестень” keeps the anagram of the name of the poet's beloved first wife ЭСТЕР and the third line keeps the anagram of her surname “рукой саратовской в мыло уйду” (р. 19) (РУСАКОВА or РУСАКОВОЙ). The verse *Вечерняя песня к именем моим существующей* (1930) is marked by the monogram of E.A. Rusakova's name; anagrams open the undercover addressee's name:

открой лиственнице со престолов упавших **тьнь** (...)
или **быстрые** говорят: от движения жизнь
но в покое **смерть** (...)
Начало и Власть поместятся в **ступне** твоей
но не взять тебе в **руку** огонь и **стрелу** (...)
дото **лестница** головы твоей (...)
об вольности воспоем **сестра** (...)
ветер ног своих и пчела **груди** своей

(*сестра* ЭСТЕР, Эст...стер), “пчела **груди** **своей** / **сила** **рук** **своих**”³¹ (РУСАКОВА or РУСАКОВОЙ). The multiple repetition of the sound complexes *ест / рест / стре / сестр*, etc. became the phonetic key to the encoded name of Ester.

The verse *Землю, говорят, изобрели конюхи* (1925) is devoted to the Rusakovs. The anagrams of the name Ester are read through the lines

²⁹ The notes in Kharms' diary (for example, the one on 18th February, 1933) show that the poet was highly enthusiastic about Alice Poret.

³⁰ Д. Хармс, *Малое собрание сочинений*, р. 199-200.

³¹ *Ibidem*, р. 132-134.

“отрок на русси / бусами маланится” (РУСАКОВА), “телеграммою на версты” (АНАГРАММОЮ ЭСТЕР), etc. Other family implications on the same theme: “приоткрыла портсигары (...) телеграммою на версты” (крипто...граммою от криптогра...грамма), “бисирела у заката (...) отрок на русси / бусами маланится” (РеБУСАМИ от ребуса...бусами), “чуть услыша между кресел / пероченье **рандаша**” (ШАРАДА). Possible prompts or key words for finding out anagrammatical subjects: 1) “вертону финикию”, “финикийские пишу,” “финикия на готове / переходы полагаю,” “в море шапка финикии” – the probable reference to the Phoenician consonant letters which were read from right to left, and thanks to the absence of vowels was used by Phoenician merchants for encryption of commercial information; “there is probably an allusion to the Phoenician cryptography;” 2) Graphic Tip – separation of certain words into syllables or selection with a hyphen of one of the syllables: “а лен – ты / дан – ты,” “хоро – ший / пе – реход / твоя колода / пе – региб / а па – рахода / са – поги,” “алексан – дру так и кажется.” Probably, the words

полетели панталоны
бахромой (...)
 и ковшами гычут ладо
землю пахаря былин (...)
отрок на русси
бусами маланится (...)
рыжими калёсами (...)
а па – рахода
са – поги (...)
 и апостола зыда **маслом**
 через шею **опракинул**

conclude an anagram of the poet’s pseudonym ХАРМС, “землю пахаря былин” Хар...мса, Харм...мса; “кумачёвую алёну” (ЮВАЧЁВ or ЮВАЧЁВУ, ЮВАЧЁВА), “за канюшни и удила / фароонами зовя” (ДАНИИЛ or ДАНИИЛУ, зовя ДАНИИЛА). In the verse *Землю, говорят, изобрели конюхи* are possible political implications (the key:

надо кикать черноземом
 и накикавшись втрубу
 кумачёвую Алену
 и руину кабалы;

“руины кабалы”³² is repeated four times): the words “а лен – ты / дан – ты

³² In this Phoenician context the repetition of “кабалы,” “кабалу” can be explain as a prompting, homograph to the word “Kabbalah.”

(...) кумачёвую алёну / и руину кабалу”³³ suggest a probable cryptonym of the deceased party leader’s name УЛЬЯНОВ-ЛЕНИН or УЛЬЯНОВУ-ЛЕНИНУ.

The drama *Гвидон* (1930) is devoted to Ester and starts with the line “ликует серна,” where at the joint of the words one can read the anagram ЭСТЕР or ЛИКУ ЭСТЕР. The entire text is permeated with the sounds of this name: “мне бы лапки не стереть,” “ветер слуга,” “Я перекрестилась,” etc. (ЭСТЕР). In the lines “Смотрите, вечерет / и купол храма рассмотреть нельзя”³⁴ interwinding anagrams clearly sound not only ЭСТЕР, but ХАРМС too; the cryptonym is able to clarify the etymology of the author’s mysterious pseudonym which became poet’s official name. The identification of these anagrams is appropriate because in the guise of the protagonist “вершителя стихов” the undeniable hint of the author can be made out: the relationship between Liza and her “жених из женихов” Guidon is projected onto the relationship of Kharms and Ester. There are lines in the later episode which Kharms intended to include in the complete text of *Гвидон*:

Когда дубов зеленый лист
среди росы,
когда в ушах мы слышим свист
кривой косы,
когда земля трещит в длину
и пополам,
тогда мы смотрим на луну
и страшно нам.
Но лишь в ответ ударит в пень
стальной топор –
умчится ночь, настанет день,
и грянет хор.³⁵

In the absolute correspondence with the context an easy-to-guess cryptogram СТАЛИН has been introduced into the fragment, “ударит топор” СТАЛИНА, which explains why the author didn’t introduce these lines in the main text.

The drama *Лана* (1930) suggests a very interesting and largely significant material. *Лана* is devoted to the poet’s first wife, and her cryptonyms quite naturally appear already in the prologue. The monogram-devotion to

³³ Д. Хармс, *Малое собрание сочинений*, р. 21-24.

³⁴ Ibidem, р. 581-590.

³⁵ А.А. Кобринский, *Даниил Хармс*, р. 190.

Ester Rusakova prompts the emergence of the recognizable anagrams of the beloved wife's names:

подушку спутанных волос
перекрести ключом святым.
 из головы цветок **ворастает** (...)
 я **невеста** земляка (...)
 и отмечу я в **тетради**
встречи статуя с тобой (...)
 ты земля, а я **престол**. (ЭСТЕР, Эст...стер).

О статуя всех статуй
 дням дыханье **растатуй** (...)
 По ударам сердца счёт
время ласково течёт. (ЭСТЕР РУСАКОВА or Руса...сакова).

The cryptonyms of the author are found in the prologue; these match or interweave with the anagrams of the wife's names:

У **храпа** есть концы голос
 подобны **хрипы** запятым (...)
 мне в колодец окунаться
мрамор духа **холодить** (...)
 По ударам сердца счёт
время ласково течёт. (Д. ХАРМС or Д. Харм...армс).

“О статуя всех статуй / **дням дыханье растатуй**”³⁶ (ДАНЯ ХАРМС) etc. The nominal anagrams from the prologue to *Лана* are another reason to relate the main characters of the play *Zemlyak* to the statue with Kharms and Ester.

In the text of the play the words, names and meanings are repeatedly transformed: Ангел Капуста – Копуста – Компуста – Коптуста – Пантоста – Хартраста – Холбаста – Хлампушта – Хлемписта, Мария Ивановна Со сна – Мар. Ив. Сосна, “небо нябо небоби” etc. While Kharms openly demonstrates his anagrammatical principles for bringing together words on the basis of the phonetic correspondences, the names of the characters are inter-anagrammatical АмЕнХОТЕП и ПОДХЕлукОв, ЧИНОВНИК ПОдХЕЛУКОВ and ХЛЕБНИКОВ, the phrase “**Опусти агам к ногам**” and the name АНГел КОПУСТА (or КАПУСТА, КОМПУСТА), and many other words. For example, Utyugov's:

ему казалось буд-то рыбы
глотали воздух.

³⁶ Д. Хармс, *Малое собрание сочинений*, p. 111-114.

Глубь и **голубь** одно в другое превращалось (...)
 О небо небо,
 то в полоску
 то **голубое** как цветочек.³⁷

In *Lana*, written before the author's first arrest, one of the characters, Power, is one of the relevant and recognizable name cryptograms on political themes. For example, in the prologue to *Lana*, there is a context that convey the spirit of the era:

сон ли это или смерть
 зверь тетрадь мою **листает** (...)
 там пух петухов
на Глинкин плац (...)
 О **статуя** всех **статуй**
 дням дыханье **растатуй** (...)
 И медь и **кобальт** и пружина
 в чугуна **проникли** головой
 от туда **сталь** кричит: **ножи на!**³⁸

(sixfold sound repeating and the word *сталь* sing cryptonym Стали...лин, Сталь...лин, the cryptonym КОБА is hidden in the word *кобальт*). And at the end of *Lana*: “Опять глаза покрыл **фисок** и глина. / мы снова спим и видим сны большого / млина”³⁹ (“глаза покрыл” not *фисок*, but ИО-СИФ). Symptomatic words for cryptographic political subtexts: “сон ли это или смерть / зверь тетрадь мою листает”, “сталь кричит: ножи на!”, “Будут тебя мой голубчик / Сосны тогда обнимать,”⁴⁰ “блещут звезды как ножи,” “ты щенок, а я судья,”⁴¹ “Не косайся таких вопросов. Я жить хочу,”⁴² “Сейчас господствует эпидемия брюшного тифа,”⁴³ “Ах, зачем вы его не задержали! Ему прямая дорога в Г.П.У,⁴⁴ Власть “берет земляка за руку и уходит с ним на ледник.”⁴⁵ The key anagram: “Он скакал на **карандаше?**”⁴⁶ (it is said about Khlebnikov) (ШАРАДА). The prompting: “Глубь и голубь одно в другое превращалось.”

³⁷ Ibidem, p. 126.

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 112.

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 131.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 112.

⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 113.

⁴² Ibidem, p. 122.

⁴³ Ibidem, p. 121.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 128.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 130.

⁴⁶ Ibidem, p. 128.

The results of the investigation have shown that Kharm's had his fill of the cryptogrammatical playful, comic, grotesque-carnival texts. There are so many examples of it. Anagrammatical analyses of Kharm's' creativity assure us that the "invisible words" – cryptograms affect the semantics of the text greatly, give it sacred, intimate, political or jocular and playful value.





