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### ***Deutsche Zusammenfassung des englischen Aufsatzes\*:***

## **JÜDISCHE ANSICHTEN ÜBER DAS CHRISTENTUM: EINIGE ÜBERLEGUNGEN**

***Von Raphi Jospe***

*Dr. Raphael Jospe war bis zu seiner Pensionierung Professor für jüdische Philosophie an der Ariel-Universität und lehrte davor an der Bar-Ilan-Universität und der Hebräischen Universität Jerusalem. Er promovierte an der Brandeis University und hat 22 Bücher und Dutzende von Artikeln in hebräischer und englischer Sprache verfasst oder herausgegeben. Zu seinen interreligiösen Aktivitäten gehörten Vorträge im Vatikan für das israelische Außenministerium und beim Ökumenischen Rat der Kirchen. Er und seine Frau leben in Jerusalem und haben sieben Kinder und (zurzeit) 22 Enkelkinder und 1 Urenkel. Dr. Jospe ist Leutnant und Oberst in den israelischen Streitkräften (Reserven). Sein Vater, Dr. Alfred Jospe, war von 1936-1939 Rabbiner der Synagoge Neue Oranienburgerstraße in Berlin.*

Jospe beginnt seinen Artikel mit einer Übersicht jüdischer Einstellungen zum Christentum im Laufe der Jahrhunderte. Dabei bezieht er sich auf Eugen Korns Kapitel „Das Christentum überdenken -- Rabbinische Positionen und Möglichkeiten“ in *Jüdische Theologie und Weltreligionen*.<sup>1</sup> Diesen Betrachtungen folgen persönliche Reflexionen im Lichte seiner eigenen Studien und Erfahrungen in der interreligiösen Lehre und Begegnung.

Er beginnt mit einem kritischen Punkt, nämlich der gemeinsamen Schrift. Vereint oder trennt sie die beiden?

*(\*Den englischen Originaltext finden Sie ab Seite 5)*

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<sup>1</sup> *Jewish Theology and World Religions*, herausgegeben von Alon Goshen-Gottstein und Eugene Korn (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012), ch. 8, "Rethinking Christianity: Rabbinic Positions and Possibilities."

Hierzu schreibt er: „Aber gerade die gemeinsame Schrift ist das Problem, denn zum einen haben die beiden Gemeinschaften diese Schrift häufig so radikal unterschiedlich interpretiert, dass sie zu einem weiteren Streitpunkt wurde und über die Jahrhunderte hinweg ein wesentlicher wunder Punkt in der jüdisch-christlichen polemischen Beziehung war. Auf der anderen Seite gab und gibt es zwar sicherlich erhebliche Meinungsverschiedenheiten über die Bedeutung der gemeinsamen Schrift, aber allein die Tatsache, dass beide Gemeinschaften die gemeinsame Schrift definieren und sich auf sie stützen, bedeutet, dass sie eine besondere und einzigartige Beziehung haben, die keine der beiden Gemeinschaften zu einer anderen hat. Papst Johannes Paul II. hatte wahrscheinlich Recht, als er das Christentum nicht als "Tochter"-Religion des Judentums bezeichnete, sondern die jüdisch-christliche Beziehung als "ältere und jüngere Brüder" bezeichnete. .... In zunehmendem Maße, und sicherlich seit der Entdeckung der Schriftrollen vom Toten Meer und der sich exponentiell ausweitenden Forschung über das jüdische Leben in der späten Zeit des Zweiten Tempels, können Juden aus dem Neuen Testament und anderer nichtkanonischer frühchristlicher Literatur viel mehr über die reiche Vielfalt des jüdischen Lebens in dieser Zeit und die Entwicklung dessen lernen, was zum normativen rabbinischen Judentum werden sollte. Kurz gesagt, sowohl im historischen als auch im existentiellen Sinne: Je mehr wir nicht nur **über** den anderen, sondern auch **mit** dem anderen lernen, desto mehr werden wir letztlich auch über uns selbst lernen.“

Jospe fährt fort zu beschreiben, wie er anfangs das Verhältnis der Katholischen Kirche zum Judentum, wie es in Nostra Aetate beschrieben wird, missverstanden, später aber, zu einer vollkommen neuen Interpretation fand. Hier seine Worte: „Jahrelang fand ich diese organisatorische Anomalie beleidigend und verstand sie so, dass die katholische Kirche den Islam als eine unabhängige Religion anerkennt, diese Anerkennung aber nicht auf das Judentum ausdehnt. In den letzten Jahren jedoch, insbesondere mit dem phänomenalen Einsatz von Papst Johannes Paul II. für das jüdische Volk im Allgemeinen und für den Staat Israel im Besonderen, was umso bedeutender ist, als er im Grunde ein durch und durch konservativer Papst war, wurde mir klar, dass das, was ich als Beleidigung aufgefasst hatte, in Wirklichkeit vielleicht als Kompliment gemeint war: In christlichen Augen, zumindest in solchen christlichen Augen, die die jahrhundertealte Substitutionstheologie ablehnen, ist das Judentum keine fremde Religion; vielmehr besteht zwischen beiden eine besondere, ja einzigartige Beziehung, die auf die gemeinsame Schrift (wie unterschiedlich sie auch immer verstanden und gelebt wurde) und die einfache Tatsache zurückgeht, dass Jesus ein Jude war.“

In diesem Zusammenhang erzählt er folgende Geschichte: „1972 flog ich von Israel in die USA, um in einer Synagoge in Boston Rosch ha-Schana- und Jom Kippur-Gottesdienste zu feiern. Zu dieser Zeit hatte es bereits Entführungen von Flugzeugen gegeben, aber die vielen Geräte und Röntgenapparate, wie sie heute auf jedem Flughafen zu finden sind, waren noch nicht erfunden, und alle Taschen wurden von Hand geöffnet und kontrolliert. Auf dem Flughafen von Boston wartete ich in einer Schlange auf die Kontrolle meines Gepäcks. Da ich im Handgepäck ein in ein Tuch gewickeltes Shofar mitbrachte, das ungefähr die Größe und Form einer Pistole hat, warnte ich Sicherheitsbeamten, es waren zwei, davor, sich nicht zu erschrecken, denn es war keine Pistole, sondern ein Widderhorn. Nun tragen natürlich nicht allzu viele Reisende Schafbockhörner bei sich. Also erklärte ich ihnen, dass ich Jude bin und zum jüdischen Neujahrsfest aus Jerusalem gekommen war, und dass wir im Rahmen unserer Zeremonien in das Widderhorn blasen. Ein Beamter schien interessiert zu sein und erwies mir Respekt. Das Problem war, dass der Inspektionstisch nicht im richtigen Bereich platziert war und die Toiletten außerhalb des Sicherheitsbereichs lagen. Ich hatte noch etwas Zeit vor meinem Flug und musste auf die Toilette gehen. Da ich nicht noch einmal durch die Sicherheitskontrollen aufgehalten werden wollte, fragte ich den Beamten, ob ich meine Taschen bei ihm lassen könne - was natürlich ein Verstoß gegen die elementarsten Sicherheitsvorkehrungen ist. Er sagte mir, dass dies streng verboten sei, aber dass er für mich (einen Juden aus Jerusalem mit einem Widderhorn) eine Ausnahme machen würde. Als ich ein paar Minuten später zurückkam, stritten sich die beiden Männer - von denen einer ein spanisches und der andere ein irisches Namensschild trug, so dass beide eindeutig Katholiken waren - beide sagten:

"Frag' ihn." Schließlich sagte der ältere von ihnen zu mir: „Mein Kollege sagt, dass ihr Juden nicht an Jesus glaubt, und ich denke, dass die Juden natürlich an Jesus glauben, weil Jesus ein Jude war. Wer hat also recht?" Ich informierte ihn, dass der andere recht hatte und dass Juden nicht an Jesus glauben. An diesem Punkt hoffte ich, endlich zu meinem Flug gehen zu können. Aber der Ältere sagte dann zu mir: "Warten Sie einen Moment. Warum nicht?" Darauf antwortete ich: "Man muss keinen Grund haben, etwas **nicht** zu glauben; man muss einen Grund haben, etwas **zu glauben**. Sie haben wahrscheinlich nicht viel Zeit damit verbracht, darüber nachzudenken, warum Sie nicht an Buddha oder Mohammad glauben, aber Sie haben offensichtlich darüber nachgedacht, warum Sie an Jesus glauben. An diesem Punkt dachte ich, ich könnte nun endlich zu meinem Flug gehen, aber er sagte erneut: "Warten Sie einen Moment, da ist ein Unterschied." Ich fragte ihn: "Was ist der Unterschied?" worauf er antwortete: "Was ist der Unterschied?" Buddha und Mohammad kamen nicht aus meinem Land und kamen nicht von meinem Volk, also kann ich nichts über sie wissen, aber Jesus kam aus Ihrem Land und von Ihrem Volk, also wissen Sie über ihn Bescheid. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt war ich mir nicht mehr sicher, ob ich meinen Flug überhaupt noch schaffen würde. Aber plötzlich hatte einen Geistesblitz und sagte: "Sie sind in Boston. Wenn Sie ein paar Stunden nach Westen fahren, sind Sie in der Gegend, in der Joseph Smith vor 150 Jahren seine neue Religion predigte, aber Sie sind offensichtlich kein Mormone und glauben nicht, dass Smith ein Prophet war - aber er kam aus Ihrem Land und gehörte zu Ihrem Volk. An diesem Punkt lachte der Wächter und sagte zu mir: "Guten Flug."<sup>2</sup>

Der Punkt ist klar: Selbst dieser einfache christliche Gläubige, der vielleicht keine höhere Bildung hatte, wusste, dass Jesus ein Jude war und dass er und ich in gewisser Weise eine Beziehung hatten, die nicht mit Muslimen oder Buddhisten oder anderen geteilt wird. Diese Beziehung ist jedoch ein zweischneidiges Schwert: auf der einen Seite die Nähe, die gemeinsamen Texte und die gemeinsame Sprache, auf der anderen Seite die potenzielle Spannung und Feindseligkeit gegenüber diesen gemeinsamen Texten und dieser gemeinsamen Sprache, mit dem impliziten - aber historisch allzu oft expliziten - Streit über die Annahme oder Ablehnung von Jesus als dem Messias, eben weil Jesus Jude war.“

Weiter beschreibt Jospe was das besondere Verhältnis von Juden und Christen charakterisiert, aber auch wo seine Grenzen sind. Anbei ein Auszug aus seinen Überlegungen: „Jüdische Denker, die mit Begeisterung den Dialog mit Christen führen, müssen sich davor hüten, sich von ihrem Enthusiasmus (den ich teile) mitreißen zu lassen. Für Christen ist es sowohl fortschrittlich als auch ein grundlegender Schritt in der christlich-jüdischen Versöhnung und einer wachsenden positiven Beziehung, eine Art Theologie des doppelten Bundes aufrechtzuerhalten, mit der sie die fortdauernde Gültigkeit des jüdischen Bundes bekräftigen und die jahrhundertalte Substitutionstheologie und die "Es gibt nur ein Weg zu Gott"-Theologie ablehnen, die so viele christliche Haltungen gegenüber Juden und Judentum charakterisiert haben. Für Juden eine Art doppelten Bund aufrechtzuerhalten, wie es seinerzeit von Rosenzweig und in jüngerer Zeit von Denkern wie Irving "Yitz" Greenberg<sup>3</sup> aufrechterhalten wurde scheint mir völlig ungültig und unrechtmäßig zu sein. Jüdische Beziehungen zum Christentum mögen einzigartig sein, aber sie können nicht exklusiv sein, und wir Juden haben kein Recht zu behaupten, dass das Christentum für Nichtjuden eine bessere Wahl sei, geschweige denn die einzig legitime Wahl. Wenn wir Juden nicht wollen, dass sich Nichtjuden in unsere inneren Angelegenheiten und Entscheidungen einmischen, können wir uns sicherlich nicht in die inneren Entscheidungen anderer einmischen.“<sup>4</sup> Anknüpfend an diesen Gedanken betrachtet Jospe die Begriffe: „exklusivistisch“ „universalistisch“ und „partikular“ aus dem Selbstverständnis der Juden und Christen heraus. „Ansprüche auf religiösen

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<sup>2</sup> “ Unter Berücksichtigung der Entwicklung engerer Beziehungen in Religionsfragen zwischen der katholischen Kirche und dem Judentum und der katholischen Kirche und dem Islam hat der Heilige Vater beschlossen, zwei Kommissionen für die Beziehungen zu diesen Religionen einzusetzen.

<sup>3</sup> Siehe Irving Greenberg, *For The Sake of Heaven and Earth: The New Encounter Between Judaism and Christianity* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Dies ist eine der vier Grundbedingungen für die demokratische Konfrontation der Religionen, die Joseph B. Solowetschik in seinem Aufsatz "Konfrontation" postuliert. Joseph Baer Soloveitchik, "Confrontation" in *Tradition* 6/2, Spring-Summer 1964, pp. 5-29.

Exklusivismus bleiben ein wunder Punkt in den interreligiösen Beziehungen. In mancher Hinsicht mag der Exklusivismus jedoch im Auge des Betrachters liegen. Das Judentum wurde von Christen oft als partikularistisch und exklusivistisch dargestellt, im Gegensatz zum christlichen Universalismus und Inklusivismus: " Hier ist nicht Jude noch Grieche, hier ist nicht Sklave noch Freier, hier ist nicht Mann noch Frau; denn ihr seid allesamt einer in Christus Jesus. (Galater 3:28, RSV). Das Judentum ist sicherlich partikularistisch und exklusivistisch in Bezug auf diese Welt, in der die Bundesverpflichtungen der Thora nur für das Volk Israel gelten, während Nichtjuden durch die "sieben Noachidischen Gebote" verpflichtet sind. Wenn es jedoch um das zukünftige Reich geht, gibt es eine breite jüdische Akzeptanz des Prinzips, dass die Rechtschaffenden aller Nationen der Welt einen Anteil an der zukünftigen Welt haben. So neigt das rabbinische Judentum dazu, partikularistisch und exklusivistisch in Bezug auf diese Welt und universalistisch und inklusiv in Bezug auf die kommende Welt zu sein. Das Christentum dagegen beansprucht und hofft eindeutig, "katholisch" zu sein, d.h. universell und inklusiv in dieser Welt, hat aber während eines Großteils seiner Geschichte eine partikularistische und exklusivistische Sicht der zukünftigen Welt beansprucht, da "Jesus zu ihm sagte": Ich bin der Weg und die Wahrheit und das Leben; niemand kommt zum Vater als nur durch mich" (Joh 14,6, RSV)."

Da Jospe sich bisher nur mit dem Wandel in der Katholischen Kirche seit Vatikan II beschäftigt hat, fährt er fort den Wandel in den Protestantischen Kirchen näher zu betrachten. Für deutsche Leserinnen und Leser überraschend zitiert Jospe in dieser Frage nicht die Rheinische Synodal-Erklärung sondern einen Baptisten Pfarrer, Jerry Falwell: „Mehrere Hindernisse stehen einem offenen Dialog zwischen konservativen, protestantischen Christen und der jüdischen Gemeinde im Weg. Die Juden betrachten die protestantischen Verpflichtungen der Konservativen Kirche sehr verständlich als widerwärtig. Gleichzeitig haben Protestanten und Fundamentalisten das Gefühl, dass wir einen Auftrag des Herrn Jesus Christus haben, das Evangelium mit jedem Menschen unserer Generation zu teilen. Meiner Meinung nach können diese Hindernisse ohne theologische Kompromisse überwunden werden, wenn beide Parteien bereit sind, die andere Partei so zu akzeptieren, wie sie sind und nicht, wie wir sie gerne hätten. . . Wir müssen bereit sein, uns als Bürger des Universums, deren beider Zukunft klar miteinander verwoben und voneinander abhängig sind, und zu entscheiden, dass wir entweder zusammen oder getrennt hängen“.<sup>5</sup>

Der Artikel schließt mit einem gewissen Appell an die Juden die Art und Weise zu überdenken, in der so viele Juden Christen und das Christentum gesehen haben und immer noch sehen. „Lasst uns die besondere und einzigartige - aber nicht ausschließliche - Beziehung zwischen Judentum und Christentum hegen und pflegen, nicht in der Hoffnung, unsere Unterschiede zu beseitigen, sondern sie durch größeres gegenseitiges Verständnis und Respekt zu verstärken.

Im letzten Abschnitt kommt Jospe auf Hermann Cohen und Martin Buber zu sprechen und das Gegensatzpaar *Nebenmensch* und *Mitmensch* und hier endlich hat das Wort *Mitmensch* eine Bedeutung, dem zeitgenössischen Reden von *Mitmenschen* völlig abgeht. Hier ist der letzte Abschnitt dieses interessanten und lehrreichen Artikels.

„Für Martin Buber müssen sowohl Gemeinschaften als auch Individuen in einer Beziehung leben, in der das "Ich" und das "Du" einander gleichberechtigt begegnen, ohne die wesentliche Distanz zwischen ihnen und ihren unterschiedlichen Identitäten aufzuheben. Vor Buber verstand Hermann Cohen in Anlehnung an Moses Mendelssohn in Levitikus 19,18, "liebe deinen Nächsten wie dich selbst" nicht im Sinne von „liebe Deinen Nächsten wie dich selbst“, sondern "liebe deinen Nächsten, weil er kamokha ist, wie du", ein nach dem göttlichen Bild geschaffener Mensch.<sup>6</sup> Diese Einsicht ermöglichte dann Cohens Herausforderung, dass wir den *Nebenmensch*, die Person neben uns, in den *Mitmensch*, die Person mit

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<sup>5</sup> Zitiert nach: Merrill Simon, *Jerry Falwell and the Jews* (New York: Jonathan David, 1984), p. 54.

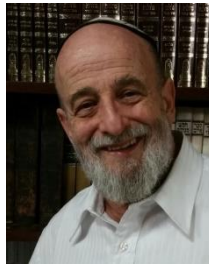
<sup>6</sup> Siehe: Eva Jospe (Hrsg. und Übersetzerin), *Reason and Hope: Selections from the Jewish Writings of Hermann Cohen*, in Raphael Jospe and Dov Schwartz (eds.), *Encounters in Modern Jewish Thought: The Works of Eva Jospe*, Volume Three: Hermann Cohen (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013), pp. 29, 81, 218.

uns, verwandeln. Und wenn wir dies als Individuen tun können, dann sollten wir dies auch als Religionsgemeinschaften und als Nationen tun können.“

Übersetzt von Eva Schulz-Jander

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## JEWISH VIEWS OF CHRISTIANITY: SOME REFLECTIONS



**Raphi Jospe**

*Dr Raphael Jospe was until his retirement a professor of Jewish philosophy at Ariel University, and previously taught at Bar Ilan University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He received his Ph.D. from Brandeis University, and has written or edited 22 books and dozens of articles in Hebrew and English. Prof. Jospe also served as editor of the Jewish philosophy division of the Encyclopaedia Judaica (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). His inter-religious activities have included lecturing at the Vatican for the Israeli Foreign Ministry and at the World Council of Churches. He and his wife live in Jerusalem and have seven children, and (at this time) 22 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild. Dr. Jospe is a Lieut. Colonel in the Israeli Defense Forces (reserves).*

Much has been written in recent years on Jewish-Christian relations, including developments in Jewish attitudes towards Christianity. One excellent survey is Eugene Korn's chapter "Rethinking Christianity: Rabbinic Positions and Possibilities" in *Jewish Theology and World Religions*<sup>7</sup> which presents a well-documented overview of Jewish views of Christianity over the centuries, some theological, but primarily in terms of *halakhah* (Jewish law). To this growing body of historical literature and religious statements I wish to add some personal reflections, in light of my own studies, perspective (which is philosophical rather than halakhic), and my experience in inter-religious teaching and encounter.

Korn's essay presents Rambam (Maimonides; 1135-1204) and Menaḥem Meiri (1249-1310) as two poles of halakhic opinion. Rambam – who lived in Islamic countries and who can have had little if any direct contact and interaction with Christians – clearly ruled that Christianity, contrary to Islam which is fully monotheistic and prohibits even more strictly than Judaism any form of images in worship, constitutes *`avodah zarah* ("foreign worship," but in this context idolatry).<sup>8</sup> Meiri, on the other hand, who lived in a Christian environment, denied that Christianity is idolatry, despite its Trinitarianism and use of images in

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<sup>7</sup> *Jewish Theology and World Religions*, edited by Alon Goshen-Gottstein and Eugene Korn (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2012), ch. 8, "Rethinking Christianity: Rabbinic Positions and Possibilities."

<sup>8</sup> *Commentary on the Mishnah*, `Avodah Zarah 1:3-4: "Know that this Christian community, in all its different sects, who make the claim about the messiah, are all idolaters (*`ovdei `avodah zarah*) . . . Therefore one must know that any of the Christian community's cities in which they have a high place (*bamah*), namely . . . one of their houses of prayer, which is undoubtedly a house of idolatry (*`avodah zarah*), it is forbidden deliberately to pass through such a city, let alone to live in it." And *Mishneh Torah* (Code of Law), Book of Knowledge, `Avodah Zarah 9:4: "The Edomites (i.e., Christians) are idolaters (*`ovdei `avodah zarah*) . . . Therefore it is forbidden to have dealings with them in the Land of Israel."

worship, and regarded Christianity as well as Islam as constituting *ummot ha-gedurot be-darkhei ha-datot*, “nations constrained by the ways of religion.”<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, Rambam, for whom religion ultimately has to do less with cult than with affirming the truth,<sup>10</sup> ruled that one may teach Torah to Christians, who accept the biblical text and affirm it as divinely revealed, but not to Muslims, who reject the text and deny its revealed authority.<sup>11</sup>

This brings us to a critical point: shared Scripture, which is the basis of what is often referred to as “the Judeo-Christian tradition,” although there is probably as much rejection of this concept of a common tradition (at least on the Jewish side) as there is affirmation of it. But it is precisely shared Scripture which is the problem, because on the one hand the two communities have frequently interpreted that Scripture so radically differently that it became yet another point of controversy, and was a major sore point in the Jewish-Christian polemical relationship over the centuries. On the other hand, although there surely was and remains significant disagreement regarding the meaning of the shared Scripture, the mere fact that both communities define and base themselves on shared Scripture means that they have a special and unique relationship that neither has with any other community. Pope John Paul II was probably correct when, instead of referring to Christianity as a “daughter” religion of Judaism, he referred to the Jewish-Christian relationship as “elder and younger brothers.” It is not merely that Jews and Christians can learn valuable insights from each other’s tradition of exegesis, nor is it merely that Christians can and need to learn about Jesus the Jew in order to understand better their own belief in Jesus as Christ. Increasingly, and certainly since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and exponentially expanding research into Jewish life in late Second Temple times, Jews can learn from the New Testament and other non-canonical early Christian literature much more about the rich diversity of Jewish life in that period and the eventual evolution of what was to become normative rabbinic Judaism. In short, in both historical and existential senses, the more we learn not only **about** the other but **with** the other, the more we will ultimately learn about ourselves.

In that context, let me state a *mea culpa*. There is an anomaly in how the Roman Catholic Church relates institutionally since Vatican II with Judaism and with Islam. The Commission for relations with Islam comes under the Pontifical Secretariat for Non-Christians, whereas the “Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews” comes under the “Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity.”<sup>12</sup> For years I found this organizational anomaly insulting, and understood it to mean that the Catholic Church recognizes Islam as an independent religion, but does not extend such recognition to Judaism. In more recent years, however, especially with the phenomenal outreach of Pope John Paul II to the Jewish people in general, and to the State of Israel in particular, which is all the more significant for the fact that he was fundamentally a thoroughly conservative pope, I came to understand that what I had taken as an insult may actually have been intended as a compliment: in Christian eyes, at least in such

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<sup>9</sup> See the sources and extensive discussion in Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times* (New York: Schocken, 1962), Chapter 10: Men of Enlightenment.

<sup>10</sup> See various studies on aspects of this point by Menachem Kellner, most recently in his masterful *Maimonides’ Confrontation With Mysticism* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> *Teshuvot Ha-Rambam*, Arabic text with Hebrew translation by Joshua Blau (Jerusalem, 1958), Responsum #149, pp. 284-285. In Islam, the charge of *tahrif*, forgery is maintained, namely that since the prophets of Israel must have predicted Muhammad, who is not mentioned in Scripture as we have it, the text must have been forged or corrupted. See “Tahrif” in *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), pp. 560-561.

<sup>12</sup> The on-line site of the Roman Curia states:

“Taking into account the development of closer relations concerning matters of religion between the Catholic Church and Judaism and the Catholic Church and Islam, the Holy Father has decided to create two commissions for relations with these religions.

“The two Commissions come under, respectively, the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and the Secretariat for Non-Christians.

“Having been instituted as a distinct organism but joined to the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, this Commission was created by the Holy Father with the scope of promoting and fostering relations of a religious nature between Jews and Catholics.”

Christian eyes, which repudiate age-old supersessionism, Judaism is not an alien religion; rather, there is a special, indeed unique relationship, between the two, going back to shared Scripture (however differently understood and lived), and the simple fact that Jesus was a Jew.

Permit me to recount a story from 1972, when I flew from Israel to the U.S.A. to conduct Rosh Ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur services in a synagogue in Boston. At that time there had already been hijackings of airplanes, but the kind of electronic and x-ray devices now found at every airport had not yet been invented, and all bags were opened and checked by hand. In the Boston airport I waited in line for my bags to be inspected. Since my carry-on bag had a *Shofar* wrapped in a cloth, and it is roughly the size and shape of a pistol, I cautioned the guard not to be alarmed, because it wasn't a gun but a ram's horn. Now of course not too many travellers carry ram's horns with them. So I explained to the guard that I am a Jew and had come from Jerusalem for the Jewish new year, and that we blow the ram's horn as part of our ceremonies. He seemed to be interested and showed me respect. The problem was that the inspection desk wasn't placed in the right area, and the restrooms were outside the restricted security area. I still had some time before my flight, and had to go to the bathroom. Not wanting to be delayed once again by the inspection, I asked the guard if I could leave my bags with him – which of course is a violation of the most basic security precautions. He told me that this was strictly forbidden, but that for me (a Jew from Jerusalem with a ram's horn) he'd make an exception. When I returned a few minutes later, the two guards – one of whom had a Spanish name tag and the other an Irish name tag, so they were both clearly Catholics – were arguing, each one saying: "You ask him." Finally, the older of them said to me: "He says that you Jews don't believe in Jesus, and I said that of course the Jews believe in Jesus, because Jesus was a Jew. So who is right?" I informed him that the other guard was right, and that Jews do not believe in Jesus. At that point I hoped to proceed to my flight. But the older guard said to me: "Wait a minute. Why not?" To which I replied, "You don't have to have a reason not to believe something; you have to have a reason to believe something. You probably haven't spent a lot of time thinking about why you don't believe in Buddha or Muḥammad, but you obviously have thought about why you believe in Jesus." At that point I thought I could go to the gate, but he said again: "Wait a minute; there's a difference." I asked him: "What's the difference?" To which he replied: "Buddha and Muḥammad weren't from my country and weren't from my people, so I don't have any way to know about them, but Jesus was from your country and from your people, so you know about him." At that point I wasn't sure I'd make my flight. But I had the inspiration to point out to him: "You're in Boston. If you drive a few hours west to northern New York State, you'll be in the area where 150 years ago Joseph Smith was preaching his new religion, but you obviously aren't a Mormon and don't believe that Smith was a prophet – but he was from your country and was one of your people." At which point, the guard laughed and said to me: "Have a nice flight."<sup>13</sup>

The point is clear: even this simple Christian believer, who may not have had any higher education, knew that Jesus was a Jew and that he and I, in some way, had a relationship that is not shared with Muslims or Buddhists or others. That relationship, however, is a double-edged sword: on the one hand, proximity and shared texts and language; on the other hand, potential tension and animosity over those shared texts and language, with the implicit – but historically all too frequently explicit – argument over the acceptance or rejection of Jesus as the Christ, precisely because Jesus was a Jew.

And so Judaism and Christianity have a unique – although by no means exclusive – relationship. In that regard, I believe that Franz Rosenzweig was fundamentally in error in his *Stern der Erlösung* (*Star of Redemption*), when he posited Judaism as the "eternal life" of the core of the star, and Christianity as the rays of the star lighting the pagan darkness, and therefore the "eternal way" for non-Jews. It is not the prerogative of Jews to determine that Christianity is the only and eternal way for non-Jews. Yes, we have a special and unique relationship – but no, non-Jews have to find their own way, and if increasingly today Christians themselves are re-evaluating the classical claims of "one way" and "no one comes to

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<sup>13</sup> Latter Day Saint audiences are always intrigued when I introduce this story by saying that "Joseph Smith once saved me."

the father except by me” and even “*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*,” Jews obviously cannot grant exclusive recognition to Christianity.<sup>14</sup>

I first studied Rosenzweig’s thought with Nahum Glatzer, who had been a young associate of Rosenzweig, and who continued to admire his thought and heroic struggle with increasing paralysis from A.L.S.<sup>15</sup> One day, as Glatzer and I walked across the campus, I asked him whether there was any logic to Rosenzweig’s exclusive view of Christianity, or whether it merely reflected his biography (and his earlier flirtation with conversion to Christianity). Glatzer responded unequivocally that it was merely a biographical quirk. Conversely, some current Rosenzweig scholars understand Rosenzweig’s view of Christianity as “the eternal way” in a negative sense: Whereas Judaism is eternal life with God, Christianity is always on the way, meaning that it never reaches its goal.

Whoever is correct about Rosenzweig – whether my understanding, in light of Glatzer, is correct, that Rosenzweig assigned an exclusive, positive role to Christianity, or whether his assessment of Christianity was fundamentally negative – it seems to me that contemporary Jewish thinkers who enthusiastically engage in dialogue with Christians, need to be careful not to be carried away by their enthusiasm (which I share) and fall into Rosenzweig’s trap. For Christians to maintain some kind of dual covenant theology, by which they affirm the continued validity of the Jewish covenant and repudiate the centuries-long supersessionism and “one way” theology that characterized so much of Christian attitudes towards Jews and Judaism, is both progressive and a fundamental step in Christian-Jewish reconciliation and a growing positive relationship. For Jews to maintain some kind of dual covenant, as maintained in his day by Rosenzweig and more recently by such thinkers as Irving “Yitz” Greenberg,<sup>16</sup> seems to me to be totally invalid and illegitimate. Jewish relations with Christianity may be unique, but they cannot be exclusive, and we Jews have no right to suggest that Christianity is a better choice, let alone the only legitimate choice, for non-Jews. If we Jews do not wish non-Jews to interfere in our internal affairs and choices, we certainly cannot interfere with the internal choices of others.<sup>17</sup>

Non-interference was a central point made by the late Rabbi Joseph Baer Soloveitchik (1903-1993), perhaps the outstanding leader of what is often called “modern” or “centrist” Jewish Orthodoxy (as opposed to “sectarian” or “ultra-Orthodoxy”), and who may well have ordained more rabbis than any other rabbi in Jewish history. In 1964, he published an essay “Confrontation,” that has widely been understood by his followers as limiting Jewish-Christian relations to matters of practical cooperation and as opposing theological dialogue.<sup>18</sup> However, as at least one of his students involved in Jewish-Christian theological dialogue has testified, their teacher knew and approved of their activity.<sup>19</sup> More important,

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<sup>14</sup> For a fascinating study of Christian exclusivity, see *Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* by Francis Sullivan, S.J. (New York: Paulist Press, 1992). When I delivered an earlier version of the paper on pluralism published in *Jewish Theology and World Religions* at Boston College, I was privileged to have Fr. Sullivan respond to the paper.

<sup>15</sup> See, *inter alia*, Nahum Glatzer’s classic (although by now somewhat dated) *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought* (New York: Schocken Books, 1953).

<sup>16</sup> See Irving Greenberg, *For The Sake of Heaven and Earth: The New Encounter Between Judaism and Christianity* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> This is one of the four basic conditions for democratic confrontation of religions posited by Joseph B. Soloveitchik in his essay “Confrontation.” See below.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Baer Soloveitchik, “Confrontation” in *Tradition* 6/2, Spring-Summer 1964, pp. 5-29.

<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that whereas, a generation ago, many if not most of the Jews involved in inter-religious dialogue came from the Reform and other liberal Jewish movements, today many of the Jewish representatives come from the Orthodox/traditional camps. One example of this phenomenon is the publication in December, 2015 of a document “To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven: Toward a Partnership Between Jews and Christians: Orthodox Rabbinic Statement on Christianity,” signed by some 50 rabbis and published in *Jewish-Christian Relations* of the I.C.C.J.



his own seminal theological essay, "The Lonely Man of Faith,"<sup>20</sup> was originally delivered to a Roman Catholic audience at St. John's Seminary in Brighton, Massachusetts in 1964.<sup>21</sup>

In "Confrontation" Soloveitchik laid down four conditions he considered essential for a democratic confrontation of religions that would preserve their equality and individuality:

1. Faith communities are totally independent. On the level of faith, they are incommensurable, and their inherent worth cannot be measured by external standards.
2. The "logos," the word of religious experience, is unique and incomprehensible to those outside (and all too often to those inside) the faith community. To use the other's language is to lose one's individuality and distinctiveness.
3. Faith communities must maintain a policy of non-interference with each other, and refrain from suggesting to the other changes in ritual or emendation of texts.
4. Finally, history has not authorized us to make revisions for the sake of our relations with others.

At roughly the same point in history, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972), who actively played an advisory role at Vatican II, published a very different approach to dialogue in his famous essay "No Religion Is An Island," originally delivered as the inaugural address at Union Theological Seminary in 1965.<sup>22</sup> The very title of the essay speaks for itself.

As mentioned above, Jewish relations with Christianity may be unique, but they cannot be exclusive. Claims of religious exclusivism remain a sore point in inter-religious relations.<sup>23</sup> However, in some regards, exclusivism may be in the eye of the beholder. Judaism has often been portrayed by Christians as particularistic and exclusivistic, in contrast with Christian universalism and inclusivism: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28, RSV). Judaism certainly is particularist and exclusivist regarding this world, in which the covenantal obligations of the Torah apply only to the people of Israel, whereas non-Jews are obligated by the "seven Noahide commandments." However, when it comes to the future realm, there is wide Jewish acceptance of the principle that *hasidei umot ha-`olam yesh la-hem heleq la-`olam ha-ba* – the righteous of all the world's nations have a portion in the world to come.<sup>24</sup> So rabbinic Judaism tends to be particularistic and exclusivist regarding this world, and universalist and inclusive regarding the world to come. Christianity, by contrast, clearly claims and hopes to be "catholic," i.e., universal and inclusive in this world, but has claimed for much of its history a particularistic and exclusivist view of the world to come, since "Jesus said to him: I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the father but by me" (John 14:6, RSV).

Fortunately for Jewish-Christian relations, such passages have been subject to rethinking and reinterpretation by many believing Christians, especially since Vatican II (which also spurred many

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<sup>20</sup> Joseph Baer Soloveitchik, "The Lonely Man of Faith," in *Tradition* 7/2, Summer 1965.

<sup>21</sup> See Reuven Kimmelman, "Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik and Abraham Joshua Heschel on Jewish-Christian Relations," in *The Edah Journal* 4/2 (2004), and Eugen Korn, "The Man of Faith and Religious Dialogue: Revisiting 'Confrontation'," in *Modern Judaism* (October, 2005).

<sup>22</sup> Abraham Joshua Heschel, "No Religion Is An Island," in *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 21 (1966). The title, of course, is a play on John Donne, Meditation #17, "No Man Is An Island" (in "For Whom the Bell Tolls"). Heschel came from a Hasidic background, but for much of his career taught at the (Conservative) Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

<sup>23</sup> See the distinctions between exclusivism, inclusivism, universalism, and pluralism in Alan Brill, *Judaism and Other Religions: Models of Understanding* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> See *Tosefta*, Sanhedrin 13:2 (ed. M.S. Zuckerman and Saul Lieberman (Jerusalem: Wahrman, 1970), p. 434, and Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 105a. Cf. the discussion in my "Concept of the Chosen People: An Interpretation," in *Judaism: A Quarterly Journal* 170/43 (Spring, 1994), pp. 127-148. On the use of this passage by Moses Mendelssohn, and problems in Maimonides' use of it, cf. my "Moses Mendelssohn: A Medieval Modernist," in my *Jewish Philosophy: Foundations and Extensions, Volume Two: On Philosophers and Their Thought* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2008), pp. 205-242, and the textual discussion in note 56.

Protestant churches to re-examine their doctrines), and among Evangelicals, especially since Israel's reunification of Jerusalem in the 1967 Six Day War.

In that context, and having referred above to the changes brought about in Roman Catholicism by Vatican II, we need to consider two Protestant statements on Jewish-Christian relations which, in turn, should challenge contemporary Jews to rethink their own attitudes towards Christianity.

Konrad Raiser, a former General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, summarized the issue of shared Scripture vs. supersessionism concisely:<sup>25</sup>

The obvious question [is] whether the **appropriation** of an important part of the Torah by a Christian assembly, particularly outside its Jewish and specific historical context, is legitimate, and how such reinterpretation can be done without continuing the history of Christian **expropriation** of the traditions of the Jewish people.

The issue of irreconcilable differences between Jews and Christians in relation to the need for dialogue and mutual respect from an Evangelical perspective was raised in a remarkable statement by Jerry Falwell, a Baptist pastor and founder of a conservative political movement, "The Moral Majority," whose religious and political views were often opposed by the largely liberal American Jewish community:<sup>26</sup>

Several obstacles hinder an open dialogue between Conservative, Evangelical Protestant Christians and the Jewish community. The Jews very understandably look at the Evangelistic commitments of the Conservative Church as obnoxious. At the same time, Evangelicals and Fundamentalists feel that we have a commission from the Lord Jesus Christ to share the Gospel with every person in our generation . . . In my opinion, these obstacles can be overcome without theological compromise if both parties are willing to accept the other as they are and not as we wish they were . . . We must be willing to sit down as citizens of the universe whose futures are clearly interwoven and interdependent, and decide that either we hang together or we hang separately.<sup>27</sup>

And if we Jews have been witnessing in the last generation fundamental changes in the ways many Christians view Jews and Judaism, we should also reconsider the ways in which so many Jews have viewed, and still view, Christians and Christianity. Let us recall that Judah Halevi, whose fiercely nationalist and Zionist Jewish philosophy remains both inspirational and troubling nearly 900 years later, adopted (perhaps consciously) Paul's parable of the olive tree (Romans 11) in reference to Christianity and Islam: "The original seed produced the tree bearing fruit resembling that from which it had been produced. In the same manner, the religion of Moses transforms each one who honestly follows it, even if he apparently rejects it. **These communities are a preparation and introduction for the hoped-for messiah.**"<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, Rambam, whose thought in many respects is the antithesis of Judah Halevi's, and who clearly ruled that Christianity is idolatrous, and that Islam, though monotheism, is erroneous, could also write at the end of his *Mishneh Torah* (Code of Jewish Law): "All these matters relating to Jesus of Nazareth and the Ishmaelite (Muhammad) who came after him, only served to clear the way for King Messiah, to prepare the whole world to worship God with one accord."<sup>29</sup>

What we need, then, is to cultivate the special and unique – but not exclusive – relationship between Judaism and Christianity, not with the hope of eliminating our differences, but of enhancing them by

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<sup>25</sup> Konrad Raiser, "Utopia and Responsibility" in Hans Ecko (ed.), *The Jubilee Challenge: Utopia or Possibility* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1997), p. 16.

<sup>26</sup> Cited, in Merrill Simon, *Jerry Falwell and the Jews* (New York: Jonathan David, 1984), p. 54.

<sup>27</sup> Falwell here is paraphrasing Benjamin Franklin at the signing of the American Declaration of Independence, 4 July 1776: "We must all hang together, or assuredly, we shall all hang separately."

<sup>28</sup> Judah Halevi, *The Kuzari* 4:23. See Daniel Lasker's discussion of this parable in "Proselyte Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the Thought of Judah Halevi," in *Jewish Quarterly Review* LXXXI, Nos. 1-2 (1990), pp. 86-87.

<sup>29</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, Sefer Shofetim (Book of Judges), Hilkhot Melakhim (Laws of Kings), ch. 11, in the uncensored version.

greater mutual understanding and respect, while at the same time rejecting a “dual covenant” applicable only to our two communities. In short, what we need is pluralism.

Finally, in Jerome Chanes’ review of *Jewish Theology and World Religions*,<sup>30</sup> he argues that our use of the term “pluralism” is ambiguous, misused and misapplied, because “pluralism, a uniquely American phenomenon, is the calibrating and balancing of the needs of majorities, minorities, individuals and the state. . . Pluralism does not characterize the condition of world religions.” Instead, he refers to “the desired co-existence of differing traditions.”

Since I am one of the Jews who actively argues for religious pluralism (both external and internal, i.e., both inter-religious and intra-religious), I beg to differ. But of course the question also comes down to what is meant by “co-existence.” In its negative sense, “co-existence” was used to describe the tense relationship in the Cold War between the Communist countries and the western democracies, a co-existence guaranteed by the doctrine of “Mutually Assured Destruction” (M.A.D.) by nuclear weapons.

However, there is also a positive sense of “co-existence,” which is quite compatible with and even essential for the kind of religious pluralism people like me advocate. For Martin Buber, communities as well as individuals must live in relation, in which the “I” and the “You” encounter each other as equals, without eliminating the essential distance between them and their distinct identities. Prior to Buber, Hermann Cohen followed Moses Mendelssohn in understanding Leviticus 19:18, *ve-ahavta le-re`akha kamokha* not as meaning “love your fellow as yourself” but “love your fellow because he is *kamokha*, like you,” a human being created in the divine image.<sup>31</sup> This insight, then, made possible Cohen’s challenge that we convert the *Nebenmensch*, the person next to us, into the *Mitmensch*, the person with us. And if we can do this as individuals, we should also be able to do this as religious communities and as nations.

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<sup>30</sup> Jerome Chanes, “Does Jacob Hate Esau?” in *Jewish Ideas Daily*, 29 October 2012.

<sup>31</sup> See Eva Jospe (ed. and trans.), *Reason and Hope: Selections from the Jewish Writings of Hermann Cohen*, in Raphael Jospe and Dov Schwartz (eds.), *Encounters in Modern Jewish Thought: The Works of Eva Jospe*, Volume Three: Hermann Cohen (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013), pp. 29, 81, 218.