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# JEWISH APPROACHES TO PLURALISM: REFLECTIONS OF A SYMPATHETIC OBSERVER.

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It is always perilous for an outsider to write about the perspectives of another religious tradition. The problem becomes even more fraught with difficulty when it is a matter of a Christian reflecting on Judaism, given the historic intolerance manifested by Christianity towards the Jewish People for centuries. Moreover, the devastating experience of the Holocaust, to which the Christian tradition contributed, has been the context for a significant amount of recent Jewish thinking on politics and nationhood. On the other hand, with appropriate caution, such an analysis can also make a distinct contribution because it is relatively free of the tensions commonly found among internal expositors. It can state strengths and weaknesses with a certain measure of objectivity not always possible in in-house commentaries. That is why I chose to accept the task of offering some reflections on Jewish self-definition insofar as they touch upon the general theme of this volume. I do so with a background of years of study in Judaism and extensive contact with a wide spectrum of contemporary Jewish opinion. But I also do so with the full realization that it is not for me to define the most appropriate political expression of Judaism for Jews. After centuries of persecution and homelessness, after the searing trauma of the Shoah, I must ultimately leave that decision to the Jewish People and its leadership. Overall reflections are proper; attempts to stamp this or that option as preferable when one is not directly affected by the life and death decisions that may be involved are not.

One more disclaimer needs to be put forth. In an essay this brief there is no possibility of offering a comprehensive look at Jewish thinking on a particular topic. Hence I shall only discuss a few representative authors in order to illustrate what one Christian commentator believes are some of the principal questions with which Judaism must continue to struggle in relation to the thematic of this volume. I would like to focus on four of them: (1) religious pluralism; (2) Zionism and the Jewish land tradition; (3) power; amd (4) the rise of Oriental Jewry.

Over the years Judaism has had little need to worry about a theology of religious pluralism based on its tradition. For it lacked the sovereign state power to impose anything on anyone. Its principal preoccupation was simply staying alive in the face of frequent conversionist onslaughts. For some Jews, especially in Eastern Europe, this often meant withdrawal

into a rather closed world where life could be organized in an entirely Jewish manner. For many Jews in the West a high degree of accommodation with the prevailing culture became the more common answer. These latter Jews usually accompanied this "assimilationist" tendency with a strong commitment to the notion of church-state separation. Where Jews thought it hopeless to protect their religious ethos through legal means retreat into a ghetto seemed the best solution. In countries with a strong sense of religious pluralism Jews were often in the forefront of legal challenges to any incursion of religious perspectives into state affairs. Their dominant attitude, at least on the leadership level, was the more religiously neutral the public sphere the better off for Jews.

With the emergence of the State of Israel a new set of problems faced Judaism, ones that had not been present for merely two millenia. Now in possession of the power to shape a national state Jews had to deal with the question of minority religions in that state.

I do not wish at this point to enter into an evaluation of the ways in which Israel has handled this issue legally since 1948. Let me focus rather on the attempts to wrestle with the issue on a theoretical plane. It is no accident that two of the most significant attempts in this regard have come from Israeli scholars David Hartman and Shemaryahu Talmon. Their viewpoints, insofar as they filter down into public policy perspectives within the government, will directly impact on the question of faith and political pluralism.

For Hartman an exaggerated stress on truth remains the primary reason for past and present examples of interreligious conflict. Truth, he insists, does not serve as the primary religious category for Judaism. He calls for a new pluralistic spirituality rooted in a radical, all embracing abandonment of previous claims to absolute truth on the part of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. He rejects any "intermediate" position which regards the commitment to pluralism as at best a temporary position by a religious group as it awaits without hesitation final confirmation of its faith perspective with the advent of the eschatological age. These are his precise words:

> We cannot in some way leap to some eschaton and live in two dimensions; to be pluralistic now but to be monistic in our eschatological vision is bad faith. We have to recognize that ultimately spiritual monism

> is a disease. It leaps to the type of spiritual arrogance that has brought bloodshed to history. Therefore we have to rethink our eschatology, and rethink the notion of multiple spiritual communities and their relationship to a monotheistic faith. 1

It is Hartman's firm conviction that the heritages of Judaism and Christianity will survive only if Christians and Jews recapture a basic principle that is of divine origin--through the way you live, I will be known. Intimately involved with any serious commitment to this principle is the willingness of Jews, Christians and Muslims to acknowledge that their specific faith stances and religious visions are of equal stature. Abandonment of any and all claims for the superiority of any one religion stands at the heart of such a pluralistic perspective for Hartman. He is not naive, however, in recognizing the radicality of what he is proposing. It represents a definite break with the biblical tradition which even in its more universal moments still remains far more absolutist. This biblical absolutism has been in large part responsible, he argues, for the massive injustice against outsiders frequently perpetrated by religious groups through the use of coercive state power.

A second proposal for a Jewish theology of religious pluralism is to be found in the writings of Shemaryahu Talmon. In a presentation originally delivered to a multilateral dialogue sponsored by the World Council of Churches' Commission on Dialogue with Peoples of Living Faiths and Ideologies[2] he sets out several principles he believes must undergird such a theology.

The first principle is that such a theology must draw upon the particularistic resources of each faith community. He has little regard for any approach to the question that would try to formulate it through the search for common bases among all religious traditions. He insists that each religion should contribute its own distinctiveness to the joint search for such a theology. Only the conclusions of each group, not the reasons for them nor the method of arriving at them, shouldbe considered in the dialogue. Though the positions of Hartman and Talmon seem quite far apart, they appear to coalesce at least on one point--the only legitimate way of judging another group is by how it acts on what it thinks.

Talmon's second principle for a theology of religious pluralism stands in sharp contrast to Hartman's viewpoint. As Talmon sees it, we cannot pretend that most religious traditions do not harbor in varying degrees dreams of universal acceptance whether by force or less objectionable forms of

persuasion. He writes:

> The utopian views of Christianity and Islam have traditionally envisioned the ideal state of mankind as the embracing by all humans of their respective prophets of dogma. Judaism, at the very least, looks forward to the obliteration of idolatry, and the universal acceptance of the one God and His moral code.... If such ultimate aims are denied, we are false to these individual outlooks. 3

Talmon then turns to what he believes to be the crucial question. How can the various faiths construct a theology of religious pluralism if each really yearns for universal adherence to its particular spiritual truth. While the dilemma may at first appear hopeless, Talmon holds there is a way out. It hinges on the development of a shared mentality among the world's major religious groups. Having placed their respective eschatological goals on the table, each faith community will subsequently agree to consider the task of building world community as fundamentally non-eschatological or, at best, pre-eschatological. This will involve emergence of a firm resolve by all religions that the process of building interdependence must never become the occasion for activist eschatological realization and for the proselytization that it implies.

Talmon thus clearly differs from Hartman in this perspective. For him, one cannot insist on the abandonment of eschatological truth claims as a pre-condition for the development of authentic religious pluralism on a worldwide scale.

The questions raised by Hartman and Talmon will prove crucial in my estimation for Jewish perspectives on religious pluralism in North America and Western Europe, but in a particular way for the policies of the State of Israel. I wish to make it quite clear that I am not speaking here simply of individual religious liberty, but of the very ethos of the nation situated in a region where religious identification remains extremely crucial. What I am saying is not meant to be particularly critical of Israeli policy up till now, but rather to look to the future. We face here problems that have by no means been totally solved in the United States or other Western nations. Especially pertinent to the discussion will be the future <u>character</u> (not merely status) of Jerusalem.

Both Talmon's and Hartman's perspectives would seem to imply that any Israeli state must make greater room in its national ethos for minority religious viewpoints. It would seem that the spirit of world community

for which Talmon explicitly calls, and which is implicit in Hartman's perspective as well, involves definite dialogue among the three religious traditions represented in the region. As chief political force it would seem that Judaism has the obligation to promote such dialogue. This is especially the case relative to Jerusalem. Again, let me repeat that I am not speaking about the political status question[4] nor merely about access to holy places or the freedom to worship. Even under unified Israeli political rule in Jerusalem, which the overwhelming number of Israelis desire, the question of Jerusalem's spirit would remain an issue for discussion and negotiation. If Jews are to take Talmon's clear advocacy of building world community seriously, obviously Israel, and especially Jerusalem, is the place to begin.

It seems to me, however, that Hartman's position would move us even beyond Talmon's unquestioned commitment to community building. For Hartman's call for the end to any notion of religious superiority, eschatological or pre-eschatological, would profoundly affect how Jews might envision the ethos of both Israel and Jerusalem. His view would seem to imply less dominance of the Jewish perspective and more sharing of the national ethos with Muslims and Christians. And this he would argue is necessary not just for the sake of a viable political community in Israel and worldwide, but for the spiritual growth and development of Judaism (as well as for Christianity and Islam). As I interpret the consequences of his thought, Islam and Christianity need to be seen as vital resources for the spiritual well-being of a Jewish nation, not simply as tolerated minority groups existing somewhat detached from the life core of the state.

One further implication that emerges from the Talmon thesis has to do with the use of political power to combat proselytizing. This has traditionally been an extremely sensitive area for Jews, and with good reason. Legislation has been passed by the State of Israel to prohibit it, resulting in a cry of dismay from many Christian groups because of the vagueness of the law. But despite the political controversy it has engendered, the issue remains an important theoretical one for the subject matter of this volume. Is it a violation of religious pluralism to use state power to prevent proselytizing if it is considered a religious duty, as it has been by both Christians and Muslims? If so, are there any distinctions to be drawn regarding the

form that missionizing may take? Obviously, the ultimate answer to this problem is for all groups to adopt Talmon's non-proselytizing principle. But short of such consensus, is IT not a violation of the spirit of religious pluralism to prevent such activity by political restraints?

My personal viewpoint is that given the great danger for indiscriminate application of such legislation it is better to seek an end to such proselytizing through extra-legal means that will lead to voluntary compliance. Let me add that this problem is even more acute in many Islamic states. This may be one area where the Christian experience, especially the kind of reflection that led up to the passage of II Vatican's Declaration on Religious Liberty and the individual writings of Christian theologians such as John Cortney Murray, S.J. who were directly involved with the authorship of that Declaration, may provide a useful challenge for both Judaism and Islam.

Moving on now to the second issue which I deem significant for our theme, i.e., Zionism and the Jewish land tradition, we enter a complex world which few Christians understand with any degree of sophistication. Far too many Christians approach Zionism in very simplistic terms,[5] when in fact there has always existed a wide variety of understandings of what Zionism should mean. And this has been true not only on the level of political theory but also in terms of the actual shape of the national ~~shape~~ STATE Zionism has parented.[6] Even to approach the question, it is imperative to comprehend the almost mystical Jewish attachment to Zion that is quite pervasive.

Israel (and it is very difficult to separate the theological ideal from the concrete state) and the city of Jerusalem in particular which is practically synonymous with Israel are absolutely pivotal for Jewish self-definition. Abraham Heschel captured well how deeply Israel as spiritual/physical entity and its heart the city of Jerusalem permeate Jewish consciousness in his volume ISRAEL: AN ECHO OF ETERNITY:

> Jerusalem is more than a place in space...a memorial to the past. Jerusalem is a prelude, an anticipation of days to come.... It is not our memory, our past that ties us to the land. It is our future.... Spiritually, I am a native of Jerusalem. I have prayed here all my life. My hopes have their home in these hills.... Jerusalem is never at the end of

> the road. She is the city where waiting for God was born. 7

And the noted Israeli ecumenist R.J. Zwi Werblowsky underscores Heschel's point about the virtual interchangeability of Zion and Jerusalem:

> The meaning of Jerusalem as it subsequently determined Jewish self-understanding and historic consciousness is spelled out in the prophets and in the book of Psalms. Jerusalem and Zion are synonymous, and they came to mean not only the city, but the land as a whole and the Jewish People (viz. its remnant) as a whole. 8

As sympathetic as a Christian outsider might be to the profound attachment to Zion/Jerusalem that is at the center of Jewish tradition, certain questions invariably arise when we place it in the context of the theme being addressed in this volume. Will such a deep attachment to Zion ever allow for a distinction between land and State that can adequately provide for political and cultural expression by the Christian and Muslim minorities who share the land? And how and where do you place curbs on political activity that claims to have its roots in this Zionist ideal?

Many Jews, mostly Israelis, have struggled with this problem. Regretably far too few American Jews or Jewish organizations, despite the professed centrality of Israel for their self-identity, have ever confronted the issue in anything more than a minimal sort of way. The election of Rabbi Meir Kahane to the Israeli parliament brought the question to the attention of the world press. In this extreme case American Jews and Israelis have reacted in a highly commendable fashion. But the deeper question still remains virtually untouched, at least as an outsider views the Jewish scene. Small steps have recently been taken. One example was the selection of an Arab citizen of Israel to kindle the official national lights for Independence Day 1984. But the overall significance of such a step for the meaning of Zionism and its relation to the State has not been discussed very much. In fact, coupled with the growing nationalist identity of Palestinians living in Israel, the situation seems to be deteriorating at present.

Several Israeli analysts have spoken of such deterioration. Moshe Gabai, director of the Institute for Arabic Studies at Givat Haviva, has spoken

of the absence of integrated social frameworks in Israeli national life:

> The cultural and social differentiation between Arabs and Jews has become institutionalized. To this very day there are no integrated or common frameworks. The basis of Arab identity, from the point of view of ethnic origin, language, religion and nationalism, guarnatees a separate Arab existence--the concentration of Arab populations in specific territorial enclaves and separate institutions such as schools, media and voluntary organizations. All this hinders the creation of an overall Israeli culture and identity, and common social frameworks.[9]

And Dr. Haim Gordon who has developed a project in peace education over the years at Ben Gurion University in Beer Sheva based on the Buberian dialogue model concludes that "The relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel have gone from worse to terrible in the past five years, and few persons have the courage to swim against the tide."[10]

Admittedly the integration of the Arab minority into Israeli life is not a one-way street. The Arab community will have to decide to what extent it wishes such integration. And that response is not yet fully clear. Should it be a virtual rejection of any integration, a new dilemma will result. Can a state remain healthy with two totally separate political communities?

One Israeli response to the above promblematic is to argue for an end to Zionist ideology as the process of normalization of Jewish life in Israel cotinues. Writing in DISSENT magazine Menachem Brinker argues that the crucial problems facing Jewish history today are primarily "Israeli-civic," and only secondarily "Zionist-ideological." For him, Zionism, though important, was only a means to an end--the safety of the Jewish people:

> The Zionist movement had one simple goal: to bring a majority of the Jews to an independent state. Once this is done, the Zionist idea and the Zionist movement earn a place of honor--in history. The continued existence of a Zionist movement is on the way to becoming not only superflous but harmful.... The pressing issues of today are no longer issues for which Zionism has answers. 11

For Brinker, it would seem, the religious perspectives of Heschel and Werblowsky hinder the genuine resolution of Israel's current problems, including the creation of a cultural and political ethos in which minorities enjoy the fullest possible equality.

The debate in Israel will go on for some time to come. My suspicion is that the kind of radical, non-Zionist solution to the current dilemma proposed by Brinker will not win the day among the vast majority of Jews, including those who style themselves as Progressive Zionists as well as the members of religious-based Zionist peace groups such as Oz veShalom. And discussion will likely intensify in American Zionist circles where thus far it has been minimal. David Polish, a long-time proponent of Zionism, has written of the need for Jews to continue to wrestle with the full implications of Israeli state sovereignty. The mere fact of such sovereignty has not answered all the relevant questions, especially in the religious sphere.[12]

Though to a large extent this is an intra-Jewish debate which non-Jews can merely watch with great interest, there would be appropriate moments for Christians to raise some questions and engage in actual dialogue with Jews. The same holds true for Muslims. On the Christian side, I have argued that attitudes towards the sacredness of the land constitute one of the primary differences between Christianity and Judaism.[13] This is not to claim that Christianity ought not have regard for the land and fully implant itself in history. Rather it is the assertion that for Christianity, though it may consider the Holy Land of special significance, every place is as "holy" as the next in an ultimate sense because of the Incarnation. In that sense one cannot speak of a "disapora Christianity" in the same manner as "diaspora Judaism". But a useful, mutually enriching discussion can result nonetheless from an interchange between this viewpoint and the mystical attachment to Zion as a special place of salvation articulated by Jewish theologians such as Heschel.

An equally profitable discussion would result from comparing Jewish attempts to relate the spiritual vision of Zion to the problems of a multi-ethnic state and the way in which the Western churches have solved the problem, strongly influenced by the spirit of the Enlightenment. The perspectives laid out by the II Vatican Council's Declaration on Religious Liberty and by one of its chief architects Fr. John Cortney Murray, S.J. in his own personal writings need to be interfaced with Zionist perspectives, religious and secular. Many Christians in the West will no doubt feel uncomfortable with the seeming overidentification of state and religious vision in the writings of Heschel, Werblowsky and many others who would share their general outlook. The Brinker proposal would resonate with

these Christians.[13] But as one who basically identifies with the church-state separation model as the ideal for Catholic theology and not merely as pragmatic accommodation, the encounter with Zionism will challenge many assumptions of those of us who share this perspective. And in light of events such as the Holocaust we in the West need to confront some serious questions about the role of religious symbols in our own general cultural ethos. There is danger that we may limit religion far too much to the sphere of the individual, allowing the public realm to be stripped gradually of any sense of transcendence. And if that happens, can personal religious commitment survive? I suspect that in many ways Muslims are much more in tune in principle with the vision of religious Zionism than are most Western Christians. I doubt that either Israel or most Islamic states will adopt in full the Enlightenment answer to this dilemma that has found favor in the West and is espoused by such Israelis as Brinker.[14] And I would personally feel that Brinker's perspective as well as those of the civil libertarians in Israel are too simple. They raise many important questions about the rights of both non-observant Jews and Arabs in Israel. But their humanistic state model does not so easily resolve the pluralism problem facing Israel as they contend.

Jacob Agus and a contributor to this volume Manfred Vogel have in somewhat differing ways taken an approach to the Zionist question that has definite similarities and elicits the same sort of questions from the outsider. For Agus the "theological dimension" of Israel can only be used to project a vocation. The re-emergence of the State has made it possible for the Jewish people to transmit more easily certain divine-human values internally and to the rest of humankind. But there is always the danger that "the state, reflecting the ethnic base of Jewish consciousness, may become a surrogate for the superstructure of the faith. The beginning may be viewed as an end, the opportunity as a fulfillment."[15]

Agus goes on to assert the need for Jews to see Israel as a part of the universal messianic vision. But Christians also have the obligation to acknowledge the indispensable role the concept of a Jewish homeland plays in the historic problem of Jewish survival and in the building of the Kingdom of God:

> They have to accept the necessary existence of the state as a realm of opportunity for the realization of Jewish and universal values. 16

Central to Vogel's perspective on the land question is the sense of peoplehood. Land, while important, is in fact secondary and derivative in terms of Judaism's basic faith stance. But land remains vital for the realization of Israel's redemptive vocation. Minus a land in which meaningful sovereignty can be exercised, the very workings of the redemptive vocation are impossible. It cannot be denied that Jewish faith has survived the absence of land. Such faith preservation would have been impossible with the disappearance of the sense of peoplehood. But such survival constituted a mere shadow of authentic Jewish existence. In Vogel's words,

> In disapora existence Judaism could only mark time. It could only, so to speak, hold the fort. For the resumption of the active pursuit of its redemptive vocation it had to await and hope for the restoration of the land. 17

The common thrust in both Agus and Vogel is a functional approach to Jewish state sovereignty. A Jewish state and its consequent political power are not so much ends in themselves as they appear to be in the writings of the spiritual Zionist but only means to an end. One could perhaps term Agus and Vogel moral Zionists. Neither has, however, spelled out the full implications of their viewpoint in terms of the pluralism problematic. Does their moral Zionism prevent, for theological reasons, even the consideration by Jews of any abrogation of state sovereignty (.e. some new federation of peoples in the Middle East). I do not see this happening in the forseeable future because of the current lack of peace and trust in the region. And maybe it will never become a live possibility. But, put another way, the question as to whether state sovereignty is "de fide" for Jewish theology as the moral Zionists interpret such theology is an issue worth pursuing on the theoretical level.

The above might become an especially critical point relative to Jerusalem. It would be interesting to learn Agus' and Vogel's reaction to the spiritual Zionists' claim that Jerusalem and Zion are synonymous. Does this mean that Jewish faith at this moment could not countenance any concept of shared sovereignty in Jerusalem? I am not speaking of a redivision of the city along its former lines, but rather the possibility of a new creative plan that would accord a measure of real sovereignty to the various groups in Jerusalem in the context of a comprehensive peace

agreement. Again this is not possible at the moment. But could it be entertained as a proper political response by a Jewish believer as they see it?

There are additional questions that can be put to Agus and Vogel, particularly in light of the reflections of Talmon and Hartman. To what extent do the Christian and Muslim understandings of kingdom fulfillment become important for the achievement of Judaism's redemptive vocation? If to any degree, then does Christian and Muslim access to state sovereignty become a critical issue? Agus' position seems somewhat more expansive than Vogel's in this regard. Agus speaks of Israel becoming a means of fulfilling "universal values" while Vogel seems to focus only on the Jewish redemptive vision. But each still has to grapple with the question whether Christian and Muslim particularity has anything to contribute to the fulfillment of Israel's redemptive vocation which for both of them seems to be the primary justification on the theological level for the exercise of Jewish state sovereignty.

In concluding this section let me issue a warning to my Christian brothers and sisters. The above questions from an outsider are in no way meant to be an indictment of Israel's overall treatment of its minorities. While certain deficiences do exist, and some of these I deem to be serious, Israel has still done a far better job in ensuring a measure of pluralism and minority rights than any other Middle Eastern state. And many of the problems I have raised for consideration have not been resolved fully either by Christianity or Western political thought. The questions are raised in a spirit of dialogue with the invitation to my Jewish colleagues both in Israel and in the West, to counter with questions of their own with respect to Christian teaching on faith and political pluralism.

The third area for discussion involves the use of power. I raise it because a number of Jewish writers, especially those for whom the Holocaust experience has become a starting point for Jewish faith identity in our time, have stressed its utter centrality for contemporary interpretations of Jewish existence. Richard Rubenstein is one example of this trend, and in a somewhat more nuanced and indirect way so is Emil Fackenheim. But the centrality-of-power thesis has been pursued in a most forceful fashion by Irving Greenberg in particular. A crucial lesson to be gleaned from the trauma of Auschwitz, as Greenberg reflects upon it, is the recognition that all people need to acquire an adequate measure of power to survive.

"Power inescapably corrupts," he writes, but "its assumption is inescapable" after the Holocaust. From the perspective of contemporary Judaism Greenberg claims it would be immoral to abandon the quest for power. The only option in the post-Holocaust world, if we are to avoid further repetitions of the human degradation and evil of the Nazi period, is to combine the assumption of power with what Greenberg calls the creation of "better mechanisms of self-criticism, correction and repentance." Only in this way can we utilize power "without being the unwitting slaves of bloodshed or an exploitative status quo."[18]

As an ethician in the tradition of Reinhold Niebuhr I remain quite sympathetic to the necessity of struggling with the "humanized" use of power to achieve justice in our day. But the power issue does raise problems for our thematic of faith and political pluralism. To the degree that Jews in large numbers subscribe to the "power model" for their post-Auschwitz self-definition (and there are dissenters to this position), the commitment to pluralism and the outreach to minorities may be correspondingly lessened, particularly in Israel. For the power model tends to set up an antagonistic relationship toward the other, rather than a cooperative one. Greenberg himself alludes to this implication of his thought:

> Power must be widely distributed to insure that it will not be absurd. Power must be widely distributed to insure that it will not be abused. This sets up a dialectic of power which must be applied to Israel as well as to all power-wielding nations. The ideal would be maximum self-government for Palestinians and Arabs as a check on Jewish abuse. But such self-government can only be accepted if it does not threaten the existence and security of the Jewish People. 19

The final sentence is a critical one for any Jewish approach to pluralism that would take its cue from Greenberg's power model. Pluralism would remains towards the end of any list of priorities for the exercise of Jewish state sovereignty.

Greenberg's power model would also seem to discourage, both for the Jewish and non-Jewish populations in Israel, the kind of commitment to enhanced integration of Jews and non-Jews in the state discussed earlier on in this essay. Pluralism in the Greenberg perspective would appear to

result from the organized harnessing by each group of its power potential.

Greenberg would also apply the same power model to Jews in the United States. He applauds the increased involvement of American Jews in political lobbying groups. He considers it unfortunate, however, that Jewish power groups still remain too vulnerable and marginal. But what power does exist should be used to the hilt. He quotes with approval the statement of Manes Sperber:

> After the Holocaust, Jews have a moral obligation to anti-Semites to be powerful so as never to tempt them into such evil behavior again. 20

Such an approach, if it carries the day, will undoubtedly mean a significantly modified stance relative to pluralism in America than has been the case up till now, at least for Reform and Conservative Judaism.

It needs to be added at this point that though Greenberg has brought to the fore the Jewish identity question in America in connection with his power model, the issue has been actively deliberated for sometime. The rise of the "new ethnicity" in American life has occasioned this. While no clear consensus has emerged from this discussion,[21] to the observer of the Jewish scene it appears that particularity is in the ascendency.

But let me caution that this conclusion does not necessarily mean a total abandonment of the classical American Jewish commitment to religious and political pluralism. William Cutter and Alan Henkin, for exmple, have argued that the rebuilding of strong particularistic bases in the lives of American Jews may thus allow for a serious fleshing out of a new understanding of, and commitment to, universalism within American Judaism, one that will reach beyond the controversy surrounding the historic liberal Jewish conception of universalism.[22]

It should be noted before concluding with Greenberg's view that while his stress on the power model for Jewish self-identity today may alter the Jewish approach to external pluralism, he himself believes it will give new impetus to Jewish internal pluralism. For in light of the Holocaust previous internal Jewish debates seem not only petty but life-threatening. His model, his is convinced, will help create new forms of Jewish organization that will allow for a wider variety of Jewish belief and practice as they forge Jews into an effective political power base in America and bring about greater social cohesion within the Jewish population of Israel

There is no doubt in my mind that a dialogue needs to take place between Christians and Jews, and including Muslims as well as far as that is possible, regarding the power model. Christians must enter such a dialogue fully cognizant of their vulnerability in terms of the abuse of power, especially against the Jews. But I remain convinced that Jews, who have not had the experience of power for very long, can profit from the ongoing reflections on power and its ever easy degeneration into brutal force that mark recent Christian theology and church documents such as the American Catholic Bishops' Peace Pastoral.[23]

The final point that seems important to me in any consideration of Judaism and political pluralism is the gradual emergence of Oriental Jewry in Israeli society. These are largely the people who fled from Arab countries during the past several decades. Depending on which researcher you follow, Oriental Jews now constitute, or come close to constituting, the majority of Israel's Jewish population. An increase in intermarriage with Western Jews may make this situation somewhat different in the future. But for now the growing influence of Oriental Jews in shaping Israel's cultural, political and social life will undoubtedly alter its national ethos.[24] Its affect on diaspora Jews remains uncertain. The religious and political experience of Oriental Jews is quite different from that of Jews with Western roots. They are generally unfamiliar with the Western political tradition, including its stress upon pluralism, or with Christianity. And the Nazi Holocaust is not in their lived experience.

At this point it is simply too early to predict how Oriental Jewry may permanently influence Israel's approach to political and religious pluralism. Some in the Jewish community have jumped the gun and argued that because Oriental Jewry has little familiarity with political models other than despotism and has suffered greatly on many occasions under Arab rule it will pull Israeli society away from its present democratic tradition and take a hard line against any accommodation with the Arab community.

This quick assessment of Oriental Jewry's potential influence on the ethos of Israel has been challenged, and rightly so. Former President Yitzhak Navon, himself an Oriental Jew, has consistently warned against

automatically assuming that the Oriental Jewish community will bring about a decided TURN to the right in all phases of Israeli politics, particularly the relationship with the Arabs. Likewise has Inge Lederer-Gibel of the American Jewish Committee, one of the most perceptive writers on this topic in American Judaism. She has forcefully denounced the haughtiness of many Jews, including elements of the Israeli peace movement which she fundamentally supports, for simply dismissing the Oriental Jews in terms of possible contributions to Arab-Jewish rapproachment. In so doing she claims they are pushing the Oriental Jews into league with the radical right.[25]

Dr. Shlomo Elbaz, a lecturer in comparative literature at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and a leader in the East for Peace movement voices the same complaint. He says:

> Even the Peace Now people whom we recgard as our allies say that the Edot Hamizrah are a barrier to peace. Nothing could be further from the truth. 26

There is little doubt in my mind that the Oriental Jewish traditions bring with them a wealth of religious insights with political implications that will have to be digested by Jews, both in Israel and in the diaspora, as well as by sympathethic observers of Judaism. Apart from the richness that may be gained by exposure to a previously untapped source of religious wisdom, incorporating this segment of the Jewish people into the dialogue about religion and political pluralism will force us in the West generally to recognize that our understanding in this area may be too exclusively Western. This is not to play down in any way the positive contributions of Western political thought and experience to the development of this thematic, but simply to say that the whole answer may not lie in Western political wisdom. Dialogue not only with Oriental Judaism but with the entire Oriental religious/political tradition are increasingly necessary if this problematic is not to remain an exclusively Western concern. We in the West have much to give to the East in this realm. But for us to be heard by the East in a constructive way requires that we stand ready to learn from the East as well and not assume the automatic superiority of our current resolutions of the faith/political pluralism issue.

Additionally, encounter with the Oriental Jewish tradition will help

Christians (and Western Jews as well) break through certain stereotypes of Judaism as a Western religion and Jews as particularistic in contrast to supposed Christian universalism. Though far smaller in numbers, Judaism has been as multi-cultural as Christianity, and in some instances has been far more receptive to the notion of adjusting its faith expression to the indigenous religious and political ethos than has been the case with the Christian churches. And Western Jews will have to modify some of their simple equations between Judaism and the Western tradition. In other words, the rise of Oriental Jewry may lead us to an enhanced awareness of internal Jewish pluralism.

Finally, Oriental Jewry may provide an important bridge, both for Western Jews and for Christians, to the world of Islam. Though the relationship between Oriental Jews and the Muslim world has often been marked by repression from the Muslim side, we have also witnessed eras of constructive interchange that are ripe for re-examination by scholars. No one pretends that such a role for Oriental Jewry will come easy in light of recent history. But it is there to be pursued.

So much then for one outsider's view of how contemorary Judaism is handling the relationship between faith and political pluralism. It is a confusing period, but not necessarily an uncreative one. One thing is certain. Christian self-reflection will be enriched if the churches enter serious dialogue with the Jewish people on this topic so crucial for justice and social harmony in our age.

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## END NOTES

1. "Jews and Christians in the World of Tomorrow," IMMANUEL 6 (Spring 1976 79.
2. "Towards World Community: Resources for Living Together--A Jewish View," THE ECUMENICAL REVIEW, 26 (October 1974), 617.
3. Ibid.
4. I have addressed this elsewhere. cf. "Rethinking the Palestinian Question," WORLDVIEW, 17:10 (october 1974), 41-44; "The Evolution of Christian-Jewish Dialogue," THE ECUMENIST, 22:5 (July/August 1984),65-70; and "Jews and Christians: The Contemporary Dialogue," QUARTERLY REVIEW, 4:4 (Winter 1984), 23-36.
5. For a discussion of the U.N. Resolution on Zionism and Racism, cf. my essay, "Anti-Zionism=Anti-Semitism: Fact or Fable?", WORLDVIEW, 19:1-2 (January/February 1976), 15-19.
6. For a succinct summary of various Zionist trends, cf. Manfred Vogel, "The Link between People, Land, and Religion in Modern Jewish Thought," SIDIC, 8:2 (1975), 15-32.
7. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969, 18ff.
8. "The Meaning of Jerusalem to Jews, Christians and Muslims," The Charles Strong Memorial Lecture (Australia), 1972. Reprinted from JAARBERICHT EX ORIENT LUX, 23 (1973-74), 11.
9. "Israeli Arabs: Problem of Identity and Integration," NEW OUTLOOK, (October/November 1984), 23.
10. "Buberian Learning Groups: Education for Peace in Israel," JOURNAL OF ECUMENICAL STUDIES, 21:3 (Summer 1984), 629.
11. "The End of Zionism? Thoughts on the Wages of Success," DISSENT (Winter 1985), 81-82.
12. "Israel: Some Halachic Theological Perspectives," JOURNAL OF REFORM JUDAISM, XXXI:1 (Winter 1984), 44-59.
13. cf. my volume CHRIST IN LIGHT OF THE CHRISTIAN-JEWISH DIALOGUE. New York/Ramsey: Paulist, 1982, 127-133.
14. For more on this issue, cf. my essay, "The Holocaust: Its Implications for the Church and Society Problematic," in Richard W. Rousseau, SJ, (ed.), CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM: THE DEEPENING DIALOGUE. Scranton, PA: Ridge Row Press, 1983, 97-102.
15. THE JEWISH QUEST: ESSAYS ON BASIC CONCEPTS OF JEWISH THEOLOGY. New York: Ktav, 1983, 230.
16. Ibid., 234.
17. "The Link," 29.
18. "The Third Great Cycle in Jewish History," New York: National Jewish Resource Center (September 1981), 25ff.
19. Ibid., 25.
20. "The Ethics of Jewish Power:I". New York: National Jewish Resource Center (January 1984), 1-2.
21. For a wide-ranging discussion of the pluralism question in American Judaism, cf. the articles by David Ellenson, Irwin M. Blank and William Cutter/Alan Henkin in JOURNAL OF REFORM JUDAISM, XXVI:2 (Spring 1979), 47-82.

22. "Universalism and Particularism: Where Ends and Means Collide," JOURNAL OF REFORM JUDAISM, XXVI:2 (Spring 1979), 74-75.

23. For an amplification of my own views on power and peace, cf. "Power and Peace: A View from the Christian-Jewish Dialogue," THE BIBLE TODAY, 21:3 (May 1983), 184-190 and "Power and the Pursuit of Peace: Some Reflections," in John T. Pawlikowski, OSM, and Donald Senior, CP, (eds.), BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE CHALLENGE OF PEACE. Wilmington, DL: Michael Glazier, 1984, 73-89.

24. For more on the Oriental Jews and Middle East Peace, cf. my essay, "The Evolution", 65-70.

25. cf. "Radical Chic in Israel: Excluding the Sephardim," CHRISTIANITY AND CRISIS, 44:16 (October 15, 1984), 367-373; "Three Israelis--Three Successful Sephardim Speak of themselves, their land, their future," New York: American Jewish Committee, February 1983; "Moroccans in Israel: My Family's Anguish," RESPONSE 23 (Fall 1974), 91-103.

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