

In recent years, Professor Abraham Joshau Heschel has emerged as one of the most influential Jewish theologians of our times. Understandably, the reactions to some of his bold conceptions have been varied, cutting across all denominational lines. A number of articles in previous issues of TRADITION stressed the positive contributions of Dr. Heschel's thought. In this controversial essay, which has evoked sharp differences of opinion among the members of our editorial board, Dr. Eliezer Berkovits, Professor of Jewish Philosophy at the Hebrew Theological College in Skokie, Illinois addressed himself to what he views as crucial defects in Dr. Heschel's approach. Dr. Berkovits is a renowned thinker and prolific writer, whose analyses of various contemporary theologies have commanded widespread attention. A frequent contributor to TRADITION, his most recent article was "An Integrated Jewish World View" in the Fall 1962 issue.

DR. A. J. HESCHEL'S THEOLOGY OF PATHOS

Pathos and Sympathy

In his latest English work, *The Prophets**, Dr. A. J. Heschel has undertaken the task of analyzing and interpreting the prophet's consciousness of God. He distinguishes between two aspects of the prophet's awareness of God: an objective one and a subjective one. The objective aspect is due to the reality of God, that the prophet meets and which in its objective quality of givenness transcends the prophetic consciousness. By the subjective aspect Dr. Heschel means the individual response of the prophet to the reality of God as he encounters it. The investigation of the objective side of the prophet's understanding of God is the theme of prophetic theology, its subjective nature may be called prophetic religion.

The reality of God known to the prophet is, of course, not the idea of God discussed by philosophers. The prophet's knowledge of God is not derived knowledge, something acquired by the logical methods of syllogism and induction. The prophet knows God from direct confrontation with the divine presence; he knows Him from "fellowship" with Him, by "a living together" with Him. His knowledge of God is intuitive. It is not knowledge about God but rather an intuitive understanding of God, the kind of understanding that binds a lover and his beloved to each other. God in Himself, in His Being, is the subject matter of metaphysics. God is encountered by the prophet in "His directedness to man." Because of the nature of the prophet's understanding of God, the prophet does not teach us ideas about God but reveals to us God's relatedness to man. The reality of God is experienced by the prophet as God's care and concern for His creation. "Man stands under God's concern" is the basic message of all prophecy.

These are, of course, familiar thoughts, well understood by all who have some knowledge of biblical theology or religious philosophy. The originality of Dr. Heschel consists in expanding these ideas into, what he calls, a theology of pathos. God is not only concerned about man, He is also affected by man. God is involved in the human situation, He is involved in the history of mankind. "Whatever man does affects not only his own life, but also the life of God insofar as it is directed to man."¹ God is passible; he is affected by what man does and He reacts according to His affection. He is a God of pathos. He is "emotionally affected" by the conduct of man.² In his customary eloquent manner, Dr. Heschel declares: "To the prophet . . . God does not reveal Himself in an abstract absoluteness, but in a personal and intimate relation to the world. He does not simply command and expect obedience; He is also moved and affected by what happens in the world and reacts accordingly. Events and human actions arouse in Him joy or sorrow, pleasure or wrath . . . Quite obviously in the biblical view, man's deeds may move Him, affect Him, grieve Him or,

*New York, Harper and Row, 1962.

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on the other hand, gladden and please Him. This notion that God can be intimately affected, that He possesses not merely intelligence and will, but also pathos, basically defines the prophetic consciousness of God."³

Divine pathos, thus conceived, is presented as a theological category *sui generis*.⁴ It is a mystery, which cannot be grasped rationally, that the Creator of heaven and earth, the transcendent God, should be concerned about man and that He should be affected by the conduct of man. But only in the light of the mystery may one fully appreciate "the theological connotations" of the prophetic insight of the divine pathos, the essential significance of God's involvement in history.⁵ Because God is the God of pathos, the concept of God as the Wholly Other must be rejected. "The Holy is otherness as well as non-otherness . . . To the prophets, the gulf that separates man from "God is transcended by His pathos. For all the impenetrability of His being, He is concerned with the world and relates Himself to it." Pathos is "togetherness in holy otherness".⁶

In the subjective aspect of prophetic consciousness Dr. Heschel discovers prophetic religion. He calls it religion of sympathy. It is the pathos of God that is communicated to the prophet in the encounter with the divine presence. The mission of the prophet is to convey God's pathos to man. It is not conceivable that the prophet should be able to do that in inner detachment. He is aware of the divine pathos. But he cannot be aware of it merely intellectually. For one cannot have merely intellectual awareness of "a concrete suffering or pleasure." The very fact that the prophet fulfills his mission of intimating God's pathos to the people implies "an inner identification" with such pathos. He feels God's feeling. The prophets react to the divine pathos with sympathy for God. In contrast to the stoic sage, who may be defined as *homo apatheticos*, the prophet is *homo sympatheticos*. Sympathy is "a feeling which feels the feeling to which it reacts." The prophet is so deeply moved by the divine pathos that "his interior life" is transformed by the pathos of God. The prophet is "theomorphic." He is aware of "God's cares and sorrows"; he communes with the divine "in experience and suffering." In solidarity with "the

pain of God," his communion with God is one of compassion for God. Because of his sympathy, the prophet "is guided, not by what he feels, but rather by what God feels. In moments of intense sympathy for God, the prophet is moved by the pathos of God."⁷ We may express the essence of Heschel's theory in one sentence: According to his theology of pathos, human action evokes divine pathos; according to his religion of sympathy, divine pathos evokes prophetic sympathy. Man affects God and God affects the prophet. In the dialogue between God and man, God responds with pathos; in that between the prophet and God, the prophet responds with sympathy.

The Problem of Anthropopathy

It is not difficult to see that the boldness of Dr. Heschel's thought consists, first, in taking literally all biblical expressions that ascribe to God emotions of love and hatred, joy and sorrow, suffering and pleasure; secondly, in letting the prophet share in these emotions of God and feel them as God's feelings. One may of course wonder what becomes now of the age-old problems of Jewish theology and philosophy. Most of them are ignored by Heschel's affirmations. There is, however, one that he does not venture to ignore. It is the question of anthropomorphism or rather, since it is the pathos of God that comes under scrutiny, anthropopathy. The question of course is: by ascribing emotions to God, by allowing Him to be affected by man, by conceiving Him as capable of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, don't we form Him in the image of man?

Wrestling with the problem, Dr. Heschel observes that there are four rules by which one may ascertain the presence of anthropomorphic concepts in a religion or theology. The "equivalence of imagination and expression; the unawareness of the transcendence and uniqueness of God; the adjustment of God's moral nature to the interests of man; the endeavor to picture or to describe God in His own existence, unrelated to man." The Bible is well aware of the transcendence and uniqueness of God. There was, therefore, no danger that the anthropomorphic expressions might be taken literally and, thus, bring about

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an equation between expression and imagination. He who attempts to describe the essence of God in its absoluteness is trying the impossible in human language. The prophets, however, speak of God always in His relatedness to the world; it is divine acts that they picture, not divine substance. Needless to say that in the Bible God is not made to subserve the selfish interest of man. On the contrary, biblical expressions of pathos are always morally determined and convey "a sense of superhuman power, rather than resemblance to man." In spite of the anthropomorphic expressions, God in the Bible is quite obviously not thought as being anthropomorphic.

What then is the significance of the anthropomorphic presentation of the divine pathos? All expression of pathos in the Bible "are attempts to set forth God's aliveness." However, in this undertaking we should recognize "the greatest challenge to the biblical language," which has to reconcile God's transcendence with "His overwhelming livingness and concern." Confronted with such a challenge all words are of necessity inadequate. Any attempt at adequacy of expression is mere pretension or delusion. On the contrary, by consciously making use of inadequate language, one "drives the mind beyond all words." "The prophets had to use anthropomorphic language in order to convey His non-anthropomorphic Being." Pathos is "a thought that bears resemblance to an aspect of divine reality as related to the world of man;" it is not "a personification of God, but . . . an illustration or illumination of His concern." Expressions of pathos should be understood "as allusions rather than descriptions," as "understatements rather than adequate accounts." As such they are "aids in evoking our sense of His realness." In truth, however, "the nature of divine pathos is a mystery to man." In reality, Isaiah's declaration concerning the thoughts of God applies equally well to God's pathos, so that we may paraphrase it as: "For my pathos is not your pathos, neither are your ways My ways, For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My pathos than your pathos."

We are inclined to believe that Dr. Heschel has not succeeded in the solution of the problem. No student of the Bible who

was ever willing to take the anthropomorphic expressions literally ever imagined that God was human. Those "greater and better men" than Maimonides, to whom the *Ravad* refers in a famous passage, who believed that God existed in bodily form, knew Him of course as the Creator of heaven and earth, super-human and transcendent. If God had bodily form it was of course divine and not human, just as, in Dr. Heschel's defense of anthropopathy, God's pathos is divine and not human. It is only now that we have reached the threshold of the problem. Those "greater and better men" did not see what was logically implied in the fact that the distinction between the Infinite and the finite, between the Creator and the creation, was an absolute one. They imagined that by refining and elevating concepts derived from human experience one could reach the Infinite, that by idealizing aspects of creation one can think or imagine the Creator. The essence of Maimonides' criticism of the positive attributes of God is that all our concepts are derived from our finite experience; we can associate with them only finite meanings. No matter how much we might magnify or purify them in trying to apply them to God, we either associate some positive meaning with them, in which case we shall be describing something finite that will have no relevance to God, or else we shall be using words without any meaningful positive contents. A very good example to illustrate the point is provided by Dr. Heschel himself when he maintains: "Absolute selflessness and mysteriously undeserved love are more akin to the divine than to the human."⁸ Now, we know what is meant by selflessness — something quite human. Absolute selflessness may of course mean a superlative form of selflessness. We still know what is meant by it and it is still quite human. If, however, we take the phrase literally as the selflessness of an absolute being, we no longer are able to associate with it any meaning, unless we take recourse to a theory of negative attributes. To say that absolute selflessness is more akin to the divine than to the human is of course true, but it is a meaningless tautology. Since absolute selflessness and "the mysteriously undeserved love" — whatever that may mean in its absolute sense — are divine by definition, they will of course be divine and not human. According

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to Dr. Heschel divine pathos "consists of human ingredients and a superhuman *Gestalt*."⁹ It is, however, just because of it that it is either anthropopathy or it is a word with which no meaningful positive contents can be associated. We either see the human ingredient and the superhuman *Gestalt* will be an idealization of the human and, thus, remain human after all; or else, we shall concentrate our attention on the superhuman *Gestalt* and the human ingredient will dissolve into incomprehension.

How little successful Dr. Heschel was in explaining away anthropopathy may be seen by the fact that his major proposition, that of a religion of sympathy, makes sense only on the basis of anthropopathy. We saw that sympathy is the prophet's response to the divine pathos. At times he feels for God, at others he feels with God. He feels God's feeling and he shares in it. It is even said that "the true meaning of the religion of sympathy" is "to feel the divine pathos as one feels one's own state of the soul."¹⁰ In the light of such interpretation of sympathy can one take seriously Heschel's statement that the divine pathos is superhuman? If it were indeed so that, as concerning the thoughts of God, one may also say concerning His pathos that His pathos is not man's pathos just as man's ways are not His ways, could the prophet indeed feel the pathos of God as his own state of soul? Can man grasp the thoughts of God, can he make God's way his own? Since Heschel, paraphrasing the words of Isaiah, maintains that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God's ways higher than man's ways and so is God's pathos higher than man's pathos, how can he, in presenting his religion of sympathy, also affirm that the "prophet is the person who holds God's love as well as God's anger in his soul"?¹² Could any man hold God's love and anger in his soul, if God's pathos were as removed from human emotions as "the heavens are higher than the earth" and as God's ways are higher than man's? Divine pathos, according to Dr. Heschel's theology is a mystery as well as a paradox. (In fact it is a mystery in a twofold sense, which we need not elaborate here.)¹² Yet, according to his religion of sympathy, he is compelled to declare that "pathos, far from being intrinsically irrational, is a state which the prophet is able to comprehend morally as well as

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emotionally."¹³ Without such comprehension the religion of sympathy is lost completely. But if God's pathos were as different from man's as God from man, the mystery of the divine pathos would remain morally as well as emotionally incomprehensible. In Dr. Heschel's presentation, God's pathos is much more sublime than that of man; it is — as he says — "always morally conditioned and required,"¹⁴ which of course is not quite human. The difference, however, is only one of degree — that is why the prophet may feel it as his own — and not one of kind. It is exactly what is meant by anthropomorphism and anthropopathy.

The Dilemma of the Divine Wrath

There is, however, at least one specific form of divine pathos that not even Dr. Heschel is able to accept in its literary sense as he does with the other manifestations — it is the pathos of divine wrath. It appears that while he finds it quite in order that "God's participation in history finds its deepest expression in the fact that God can actually suffer,"¹⁵ he recoils somewhat from the idea that God can be very angry. He seems to feel that anger is a somewhat surprising emotion for God and, thus, he is not satisfied with what he says in the general analysis and interpretation of pathos, but singles out the *Ira Dei* for an elaborate separate treatment. (Another specific form of pathos which is discussed separately is God's concern for justice.) In its explanation, he proceeds essentially along two lines. First, he desires to show us that anger is itself an expression of God's concern for man; second, he tries to explain the meaning of divine anger so that it may not be morally objectionable.

Along the first line of approach toward the solution of the problem Dr. Heschel argues cogently that without God's responsiveness to man anger would be impossible. If God would not care for man, if He were indifferent toward him — and especially toward the evil inflicted by man on his fellow — His anger could not be kindled against man.¹⁶ It is of course correct that divine concern for man is the *conditio sine qua non* for the possibility of divine wrath. If God would not consider man, the

possibility of responding to him would never arise. This in itself, however, does not justify the outburst of anger in God, if we understand by anger what the word is normally assumed to mean. Even in man, anger is not too laudable a quality. According to the Talmud, he who is angry is like one who serves an idol. Is it conceivable that God should indulge in it! All the eloquence of Dr. Heschel is of little avail on this point. "The anger of the Lord is a tragic necessity, a calamity for man and a grief for God. It is not an emotion He delights in, but an emotion He deplores."¹⁷ Almost as much may be said of human anger as well. The average human being does not delight in his fits of anger, he deplores them; they are a source of grief to him and, if his specific situation is such that he cannot learn to control them, he may well regard them as "tragic necessity." Nor does it help very much to say that the "intrinsic significance" of anger is "pain in the heart of God."¹⁸ Pain is not anger. Pain may at times cause a person to get angry; but God too? One will find no solution that way. More important is what Dr. Heschel says about what is meant by divine wrath. Divine anger is not an uncontrolled outburst, as in man. God controls His anger, He is its master. It is not "anger for anger's sake," it has a meaning. It is a warning to man, when he is guilty. Its purpose is to bring about repentance. Its desired consummation is its own disappearance. It is "instrumental," it is applied in the best interest of man himself in order to guide him. "His wrath can be unbearably dreadful, yet it is but the expression and instrument of His eternal concern."¹⁹ The idea is also formulated differently by describing anger as "suspended love." One may say that to God wrath means "suspended mercy or love withheld;" it is only to man that it becomes manifest as "doom, destruction, agony."²⁰ Finally, the theological significance of this interpretation is summed up in the words: "Just as God is absolutely different from man, so is divine anger different from human anger."²¹

This part of the argument does make sense. One is, however, rather surprised to find it in a discussion of the theology of pathos. What Heschel says now is that divine anger and wrath are neither anger nor wrath. "Instrumental anger" is but an educational gimmick. A father, who in complete mastery of

his anger, by its consciously controlled manifestation toward his son, guides him in the son's best interest, is not angry but loving. "Instrumental anger" is a pretense of anger and an act of love. Nor is "suspended love" anger. In fact, in keeping with his interpretation, there is no need whatever for Dr. Heschel to call divine anger "love withheld." Since the suspension is motivated by God's "eternal concern" for man, the suspension itself becomes an act of love and compassion. This need not surprise us. Since God is absolutely different from man, His anger too will be absolutely different from man's anger. It could very well be that what is absolutely different from human anger is God's love. One cannot help wondering however what would become of the entire theology of pathos and the religion of sympathy if one would apply the same method of interpretation to the other emotions of God. What if one applied to it the principle of God's absolute difference from man?

It is worth noting that both the theology of pathos and the religion of sympathy are based on the insight that the prophet "refers to God, not as absolute, but always as related to the people." The prophet does not interpret "divine Being" but "divine interaction with humanity."²² This is fundamental for the thesis of Dr. Heschel. One must not relate divine pathos to divine Being. One cannot connect pathos with divine Essence or Substance. "It seems inconceivable that the Supreme Being should be involved in the affairs of human existence."²³ Yet, it is so. The relationship between pathos and Being is a mystery and a paradox. Pathos is, therefore, not an attribute of God; it is divine action directed to man. In fact, only because pathos cannot be rationally connected with divine Being is the prophet able to respond to it with sympathy, comprehending it— as we saw — "morally and emotionally." This is affirmed for every other form of pathos except for the pathos of anger. Dr. Heschel does not say: "It *seems* inconceivable that the Supreme Being should be involved in the affairs of human existence angrily. Yet, it is the experience of the prophet and it is a mystery and a paradox." What he says concerning anger is that it is inconceivable that God should be angry. He now becomes a rationalist and refers to the absoluteness of divine Being in order to explain

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what is meant by the pathos of anger. How can any one imagine that with God anger could mean anger. Is not God absolutely different from man! To God His anger is really love, an instrument of His care and concern for man.

One can see that Dr. Heschel does not relish the idea of an angry God but — at least intellectually — he rather appreciates the thought of a suffering God.

A Theology of Pathos?

At this stage of our inquiry, we have to pay some attention to the reasons that in the past have prevented the rise of a theology of pathos. We recall the great intellectual struggle of Maimonides against the idea of ascribing any emotions to God. God could not be affected from without; nor could He be moved by emotions. "All affection is evil," he declared. There was also the problem of divine events and actions. The concept of God as complete actuality excluded the possibility of any change in God. Change implies always the realization of a potentiality. How could one conceive of a change of mind in God, if everything within God was actual and perfect? Maimonides discusses at great length and with great ingenuity the question of the act of creation. If God ever existed without a world, then the act of creation was the result of a decision in God. But what could have moved God to create the world when He did what was not present within Him in all eternity? What new consideration could have arisen within Him, if His Being is absolute and perfect?

One cannot help remembering with a high grade of uneasiness the great mental struggle of Maimonides with such and related problems as one follows Dr. Heschel's description of the form in which divine communication to the prophet takes place. Its most important aspect he identifies as inspiration. Inspiration is the form of the act of communication, pathos is its contents. Where there is inspiration, there must also be an inspirer. "Inspiration happens to the Inspirer as well as to the human person." Actually, inspiration is an event that occurs *in* God before it can be experienced by the prophet. God is normally

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silent and aloof but inspiration is communication directed by God toward man. Therefore, in order to communicate, God must turn "from the condition of concealment to that of revelation." But before He turns, He has to reach a decision to turn in order to communicate. So that the event that must take place within God before any prophecy is possible has two phases: the phase of decision and the phase of turning. But why should God desire to turn? The answer may easily be "inferred from the act itself, from the character of eventuation." God has "an inclination to tropos." Because of his inclination to turning, He has a need to reveal His pathos to the prophet. The "tropos tendency of the Eternal" is the ultimate ground of prophecy. What makes possible the prophetic act within the prophet's consciousness "is an act that happens beyond his consciousness, a transcendent act, an *ecstasy* of God . . . In its depth and intensity the act takes place in the transcendent subject but is directed toward the experiencing prophets." Therefore, inspiration is not something that happens to the prophet; "inspiration is a moment of the prophet's being present at a divine event."²⁴ Is Dr. Heschel able to lift the veil from the intimate details of the private life of the Almighty and allow us to glance at the depth and intensity of the drama of divine ecstasy? What has become of those theological problems of old that beset a Saadia Gaon, a Yehuda Halevi, a Maimonides? Dr. Heschel does not overlook them altogether. According to him, they had their origin in certain Greek concepts that are alien to the Bible. In Greek thought emotions are a disturbance in the soul. Even a man had to strive to master them. If they were unworthy of man, how much less could they be attributed to God! Not so, however, in the Bible. There we do not find the dichotomy between body and soul. The spirit and the passions are integrated. The heart is the seat of the emotions as well as the intellect. Far from disparaging the emotions, in the Bible great deeds are performed by "those who are filled with *ruach*, with pathos." It is, therefore, not unbecoming to God to have pathos, to feel emotions. As to the problem of divine involvement in actions and events, it arises from an ontological presupposition that is also typically Greek, i.e., the idea that God was "true being," which — by definition — is

unchangeable. It is the basis of the Jewish and Christian scholasticism of the Middle Ages, which — following the Eleatic premise — conceived God as perfect and, because of it, immutable. Not so the God of the Bible. “The God of Israel is a God who acts, a God of mighty deeds. The Bible does not say how He is, but how He acts. It speaks of His acts of pathos and of His acts in history . . . Here the basic category is action rather than immobility . . .”²⁵

We readily agree with the main burden of these thoughts. What Dr. Heschel presents here as insights of his “depth-theology” is of course the well-known distinction between the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the God of Aristotle; between the personal God of Judaism and the philosophical idea of the Absolute. It is correct to say that the conception of God as detached from the world and from man is “totally alien” to the biblical mind. What Dr. Heschel is seemingly unable to realize is that by simply proving this point one has not formulated a theology. The historic origin of certain concepts of philosophical thought are interesting and informative but, nevertheless, beside the point of discussion. That the notion of God as a perfect Being is not of biblical origin, that it “is not the product of prophetic religion, but of Greek philosophy”²⁶ only beclouds the basic issue. The truth is that, even though the Bible calls perfect “only” His work and it never refers to God as the Absolute, implied in the biblical concept of God is absoluteness as well as perfection. If Dr. Heschel thinks otherwise, let him say so. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not the God of Aristotle, but certainly includes the concept of absoluteness of the philosophers. The personal and living God of Israel is not so at the expense of perfection or true being; it is personal and living, even though it is perfect and all-transcendent. No doubt Dr. Heschel agrees with that. He ought to realize that merely to contrast the personal aspect of the biblical concept with the philosophical concept of the absolute is no Jewish theology. Jewish theology begins when one realizes the implications of the presence of both aspects, that of the Absolute and of the Personal, in the biblical concept of God. As we have learned earlier in his discussion of anthropopathy, Dr. Heschel observed

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that "the greatest challenge to the biblical language was how to reconcile in words the awareness of God's transcendence with His overwhelming livingness and concern." Paraphrasing his own words we might say that the fundamental challenge to Jewish theology through the ages has been how to reconcile the awareness of God's transcendence with the awareness of God's livingness and concern, which are one in the Jewish concept of God. It is this challenge that gave no rest to the outstanding Jewish philosophers and theologians of the Middle Ages; it is this challenge that is completely ignored by Dr. Heschel. Until he is able to render the presence of pathos in the Absolute meaningful or sensible he cannot speak of a theology of pathos.

It is true that he does not emphasize the basic irrationality of emotional engagement on the part of the Creator of heaven and earth. He calls it a mystery and a paradox. But to call something a mystery and paradox is no theology either. Occasionally, Dr. Heschel tries to make the mystery more palatable. He explains the prophet's "theology" in the following manner: "His presence pierced the impregnable walls of His otherness. The dilemma was overcome by abstaining from any claim to comprehend God's essence, His inmost being, or even to apprehend His inscrutable thoughts, unrelated to history, and by insisting upon the ability to understand His presence, expression or manifestation. The prophets experience what He *utters*, not what He *is*."²⁷ It is for this reason that pathos must not be seen as an attribute of God. An attribute would be describing the divine essence in detachment. Pathos does not reveal anything about divine nature in itself. It is an "attitude," an act, a relationship, a divine situation, which is changeable as the divine essence could not be.²⁸ We do not agree that it is possible to overcome the dilemma in this way. Assuming that indeed the prophet experiences only what God utters, what He does in relationship to man, only His manifestations directed to man, the question of what He *is* remains inescapable. What He does and utters is of vital importance to man only because of what He is. The "overwhelming livingness" of God that touches the prophet in the relationship is overwhelming only because it is God who enters into the relationship. The words and acts of a mountain spirit — assum-

ing there be such creature — will count for very little, notwithstanding their being directed to man, because of what mountain spirits are in their essence. The life-giving significance of God's relatedness to the world is not in the act of relatedness but in the fact that it is God who relates Himself. It is the very essence of God, God as He exists in His absoluteness and perfection, that determines the value of His care for man. It is not possible to separate the essence of God from His pathos. The prophet does not have sympathy with pathos; experiencing God's pathos, he sympathizes with God, the Absolute and Perfect, the Supreme Being, the Creator of heaven and earth. The theological dilemma is therefore inescapable. It cannot be overcome by abstaining from any claim to comprehend God's essence. Of course, one may well take the position that it is all a mystery, but one should not speak of a *theology* of pathos.

This in itself need not weigh too heavily in the scales against associating God with pathos. Perhaps it is a mystery; and there is no possibility for formulating a theology of pathos. Even though pathos may not be considered a theological category *sui generis*, it may still be regarded as a basic religious category. Only that one may call something a mystery after one has established unequivocally its rationally inexplicable existence. What is the basis of Dr. Heschel's affirmation that God is a God of pathos? As far as we are able to ascertain, it seems to be based on — at least — one point of deductive reasoning and on the biblical text. The logical deduction runs like this. According to the Bible, the greatness of God is seen in the fact that "man is not an abstraction to Him, nor His judgment a generalization." God knows man, the individual human being, and judges Him as an individual. "Yet in order to realize a human being not as a generality but as a concrete fact, one must feel him, one must become aware of him emotionally."²⁰ This would make sense if God's pathos could be explained logically. But since what we gain by the argument must be called a mystery, why don't we call for a mystery a step sooner? Why not reason in the following manner: It is inconceivable that the Supreme Being should be passible. Therefore, there could be no such thing as divine pathos. At the same time, God realizes man as

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“a concrete fact.” However, in order to do that one must feel him, one must become aware of him emotionally. But God is free of pathos. Ergo, God’s realizing man as a concrete fact and not as an abstraction is enrapt in mystery. We believe that our way of reasoning is much more valid than that of Heschel. For Dr. Heschel commits the unforgivable fallacy that he equates the human way of realizing a fellow man as a concrete fact with the way of God. Man’s way of “knowing” a fellow being as a person depends on feeling and emotion. Could not conceivably God’s way be different from that of man? Surely, our mystery is much more logical than Dr. Heschel’s.

However, there are also biblical texts. In numerous passages the Bible does associate love and hate, anger, sorrow, joy with God. If we take the references to God in those passages literally, the Bible does seem to speak of a God of pathos. This, however, raises the question of biblical interpretation. Shall we say that, whenever the literary meaning of a text does not make much sense, we — who acknowledge the book as divine revelation — are confronted with a mystery? This has not been either the *halakhic* or the *aggadic*, either the philosophical or the theological tradition of Judaism. Whenever the literal meaning was logically or morally unacceptable, the text was interpreted so as to yield meaningful teaching. In a single case Dr. Heschel does follow this well-trodden path. In our analysis of his interpretation of the wrath of God, we were able to show how “anger” became “suspended love,” an “instrument of God’s eternal concern.” By implication, he also seems to reject any actual anthropomorphism. But why? How come he does not equip the Almighty with a body too? The anthropomorphic references to God in the Bible are hardly less conspicuous than the anthropopathic expressions. Using Dr. Heschel’s own method of reasoning, it should not be difficult to prove that God has a body. We shall first quote a rather significant passage from the discussion of anthropopathy.

“We are inclined to assume that thought and sympathy, because they are found in man, are limited to man. However, with the same logic it may be maintained that being, because it is characteristic of man and matter, is limited to them. Sight, be-

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cause of its being a faculty of man, is not to be denied to God. Yet, there is an absolute difference between the sight and the thought of God and the sight and the thought of man. God compared with man is like the potter compared with the clay. [Quotation from Isaiah follows.]

“The nature of the divine pathos is a mystery to man. What Isaiah (55:8f.) said concerning the thoughts of God may equally apply to His pathos: For My pathos is not your pathos, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord, etc.”⁸⁰

Let us now replace the word pathos, or its equivalent, by the word body and see what we get.

We are inclined to assume that body, because it is found in man, is limited to man. However, with the same logic it may be maintained that being, because it is characteristic of man and matter, is limited to them. Sight, because of its being a faculty of man, is not to be denied to God. Yet, there is an absolute difference . . . (as above).

The nature of the divine body is a mystery to man. What Isaiah said concerning the thoughts of God may equally apply to His body: For My body is not your body, neither are your ways My ways.

There is hardly anything in Dr. Heschel's arguments for the divine pathos that could not be used in pleading for a bodily form of divine existence. Yet he rejects the literal interpretation of anthropomorphic expressions just as he interprets away the literal meaning of anger, in relationship to God. This makes sense. But until such time that he is able to show that the passibility of the Supreme Being, the One God, Absolute and Perfect, makes good sense too, his profusely eloquent dissertation on God's “emotional engagement to man” cannot be taken seriously.

A Religion of Sympathy?

It is not easy to decide what is more objectionable, the “theology of pathos” or the “religion of sympathy.” The very idea of the prophet's feeling the feelings of God, of his establishing emotional harmony with God, of his feeling the divine pathos

as he feels his own state of the soul, consummated by the insight that "in sympathy man experiences God as his own being," notwithstanding the dignified mystical connotations of the thought all this seems so foreign to Jewish religious teaching and experience.³¹ Even if one could accept the theology of pathos, one would have to reject most emphatically this religion of sympathy.

However, let us see what the proofs are for Dr. Heschel's theory. As in the case of the theology, so with sympathy too, there is an indirect argument and there are also biblical passages, which are adduced; and as in the case of the theology neither forms of the argument prove anything. As to the indirect deductive reasoning, it is maintained that it serves the purpose of solving the riddle of the ruthless wrath with which the prophets often castigate and condemn their own people, whom they love so much. How could Hosea, for instance, ask: "Give them, O Lord — What will Thou give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts?" How is the, at times, unbridled fury of Jeremiah against his own people to be understood? It is the prophet's pathos of wrath that Dr. Heschel desires to explain. It is sympathy with the divine pathos that fills the prophet with anger of such intensity that he is unable to control its outburst. The psychological process is explained in the following manner: ". . . sympathy derives from an understanding of the situation and pathos of God. The divine evokes a similar pathos in the prophet."³² Because of his "personal concern for God" the prophet focuses all his emotions on the given pathos of God. When he absorbs God's pathos of anger, he becomes filled with anger against the people who caused pain to God. Dr. Heschel maintains that sympathy is the key to the psychological understanding of the prophet. "It enables us to understand the zeal of the prophet who knows himself to be in emotional harmony and concord with God; and the power of his anger, which motivates him to turn away from his people whom he loves so dearly."³³ In other words, you cannot blame the prophets. In God's anger, which is communicated to them, they recognize God's suffering. They feel God's suffering as their own. They are unable to control their wrath against their people who caused such suffering to God. Once again Dr. Heschel explains a lesser

mystery with a far greater one. Granted, the limitless wrath with which the prophets often face their people is a riddle. But it is much more logical to bear with this riddle than to try to explain it with the far greater riddle of a mysterious divine pathos that is intuited by the prophet so that he can feel it as his very own. There are also many more reasons why this psychological key of sympathy opens no doors to the understanding of the prophet. There is, for instance, this question. If the prophet's anger by itself is inexplicable, even more so must be God's anger. Or are we to assume that the prophet loves his people more dearly than God does? And now we recall that Dr. Heschel is of the opinion that above God's anger is His love. God is not really angry. His anger is only suspended love. If then the prophet is filled to overflowing with God's suspended love, what he feels with God is God's instrumental care and concern. The prophet's anger must, therefore, not be taken literally. Somehow, it has to be interpreted as suspended love, suspended out of love. But if we succeed in this, there is no riddle at all. We can solve the riddle directly and say that the prophet is not really angry; out of his great love, he only suspends his love momentarily. There is no need for us to seek an explanation in the mystery of divine pathos which is so mysteriously experienced by the prophet as his very own state of the soul.

Let us now consider the biblical "proofs" for the religion of sympathy. Dr. Heschel interprets the concept of *Daat E-lohim*, "usually rendered as knowledge of God," as sympathy for God. The passages he quotes to prove his point do prove the well-known truth that "in Hebrew *yada* means more than the possession of abstract concepts." *Yada* does certainly not mean merely intellectual knowledge. But Heschel's conclusion that it means sympathy, a sharing of an inner experience, is the fruit of imagination. We shall not deal with every one of the passages which he quotes. A few observations will suffice. Quoting the verse from Exodus: "You shall not oppress a stranger; you *know* the heart of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt," Dr. Heschel remarks: "The correct meaning is: "You *have sympathy*, or a *feeling*, for the heart of a stranger." And now let us read the verse again, correcting at the same time the

strange oversight of Heschel in dropping the English equivalent of the letter *vav* in front of the word *atem* of the Hebrew text. We get this: "You shall not oppress a stranger; for you have sympathy, you have a feeling for the heart of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." No, certainly not. *To know* most definitely does not mean sympathy here. It does not make sense to command anyone not to oppress a fellow man, since he anyway already sympathizes with him. Neither does *to know* stand here for conceptual knowledge. It clearly means understanding gained by personal experience. You shall not oppress a stranger. You ought to know better. You ought to be able to appreciate his plight, since you experienced it yourself. You cannot say you are not fully aware of the significance of oppressing another man. You *ought* to feel with him, because you *know*.

Similarly, the passage from I Sam., 2:12, where concerning the sons of Eli it is said: "They were base men; they knew not the Lord," can hardly be used in support of the thesis of sympathy. Dr. Heschel remarks: "Knowledge in the sense of information they must have had; what they lacked was inner commitment or an emotional attachment." The conclusion is a *non sequitur*. It is true that the passage shows that *to know* is not just to have information, which of course is no proof that it is inner commitment or an emotional attachment. In fact, it is most unlikely that it could be meant. Sympathy would be the highest form of religious life. To say, therefore: They were base men; they knew not the Lord, is stylistically about as appropriate as to say of a person: He was a villain; he was no saint.³⁴

It is not our task to offer here a thorough discussion of the term *Daat E-Lohim*; that was Dr. Heschel's responsibility. We shall only illustrate the central use *he makes* of the term in his interpretation of the prophet Hosea. Contrasting the prophet Amos and Hosea, he maintains: "To Amos, the principal sin is *injustice*; to Hosea, it is idolatry. Amos inveighs against evil *deeds*; Hosea attacks the absence of *inwardness*."³⁵ In order to underline the point, he juxtaposes a saying of Amos with one of Hosea. Amos said:

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"I hate, I despise your feasts . . .
I will not accept your sacrifices . . .
But let justice roll down like waters,
And righteousness like a mighty stream." (Amos 5:21-24)

Hosea, however, put it this way:

"For I desire love (*chesed*) and not sacrifice,
Attachment to God (*Daat E-Lohim*, i.e., sympathy) rather than burnt
offerings." (Hosea, 6:6)

This seems to show that whereas Amos contrasted a soulless, sacrificial form of cult to justice, Hosea held up before it the ideal of emotional attachment to God. According to Hosea then God turns to the people and says to them: What I really want from you is that you love me, that you feel for me. No, no, no! Not like that are the prophets! As is well known, *Daat E-Lohim* is often associated with ethical action and social justice. Who does not remember the words of Isaiah:

"They shall not hurt nor destroy
In all My holy mountain;
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord,
As the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11:9)

In fact we have a prophetic definition of *Daat E-Lohim*, placed on record by no less a man than Jeremiah. It is found in chapter twenty-two of his book:

"Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness,
And his chambers by injustice;
That useth his neighbour's service without wages,
And giveth him not his hire;
That saith: I will build me a wide house
And spacious chambers? . . .
Shalt thou reign, because thou strivest to excel in cedar?
Did not your father eat and drink, and do justice and righteousness:
Then it was well with him.
He judged the cause of the poor and needy;
Then it was well.
Is *not this to know Me?* saith the Lord." (Jeremiah 22:13-16)

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It is exactly in this association with doing justice that Hosea himself uses the concept of *Daat E-Lohim*. The words are:

“Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel!
For the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land,
Because there is no truth, nor mercy (*chesed*; love, in H.’s rendering)
Nor *knowledge of God* in the land.
Swearing and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery!
They break all bounds, and blood toucheth blood.” (Hosea, 4:12)

We see that in this passage not only does Hosea mean by *Daat E-Lohim* the fruits of justice, but *chesed* for him is mercy and love between a man and his neighbor. The two passages quoted by Dr. Heschel to illustrate the distinction between Amos and Hosea prove the very opposite. It shows a point of exact agreement between the two. The love that God desires rather than sacrifice is not love for Himself but love and mercy practiced between man and man. And asking for “the knowledge of God,” he is not pleading for sympathy with himself, but exactly for those acts of justice which Isaiah and Jeremiah connect with the concept.

The words of Hosea:

For I desire love (*chesed*) and not sacrifice,
Knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings;

are the exact parallel to the words of Amos:

I hate, I despise your feasts, . . .
I will not accept your sacrifices . . .
But let justice roll down like waters,
And righteousness like a mighty stream.

We shall not continue with the detailed illustration of the inconclusiveness of Dr. Heschel’s exegesis and its numerous misunderstandings. Jeremiah’s exclamation, “I am full of the wrath of God” (6:11) does not mean that “his being filled with divine wrath was his sympathy with it.”³⁶ Nor can his, “For Thou hadst filled me with indignation” (15:17), be interpreted as “the pathos that evoked in him an anger of sympathy.”³⁷ His

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midrashic *diyuk* on the words, "Because of the Lord, and because of His holy words" (Jeremiah 23:9) is too thin to prove anything. Notwithstanding Dr. Heschel's dissertation on the meaning of the word *ruach*, the phrase, "But as for me, I am filled with power with the *ruach* of the Lord" (Micah 3:8) definitely does not mean that "the prophet describes himself as a person filled with divine pathos."³⁸ "*Ruach* of the Lord" means as little divine pathos here as, for instance, in the case of the encounter between Samson and the lion, where it is said: "And the *ruach* of the Lord came upon him, and he rent him (the lion) as one would have rent a kid." (Judges, 14:6) There is no need for multiplying examples. Normally, "*ruach* of the Lord" in the Bible means strength, courage, authority. This is its meaning in Micah too. The full passage runs as follows:

"But as for me, I am filled with power,
With the *ruach* of the Lord,
And with justice and might,
To declare to Jacob his transgressions,
And to Israel his sin."

It is not an easy matter to declare to a people its transgressions and sins. It requires strength, courage, authority. It is of these that Micah speaks and not of divine pathos that he made his own through sympathy.

It is not possible to conclude this part of our analysis without paying some attention to Dr. Heschel's interpretation of Hosea's marriage. God commanded the prophet: "Go, take unto thee a wife of harlotry and children of harlotry; for the land doth commit great harlotry, departing from the Lord" (Hosea, 1:2). Hosea did as he was commanded. He married such a woman and soon was betrayed by her. Normally, the marriage is understood as a symbol. It was meant to convey the idea of the people's faithlessness, of the temporary rejection of Israel, of God's abiding love for His people, who was taking them back in spite of their betrayal. Dr. Heschel rejects this interpretation and offers us a most original one. According to the imagery of Hosea's language, God is the Consort of Israel. The covenant between God and Israel is like that between a husband and his

wife. Thus, Hosea, marrying "a wife of harlotry," went through an experience similar to the experience of God with Israel. By means of this marriage the prophet was able to feel the divine pathos; he and God shared in a common experience. Whereas the other prophets were able to feel God's feelings without the help of actual sympathetic experience, with Hosea it was different. He had to place himself into God's situation in order to be able to sympathize with God. In order to make sure that we do not misunderstand Dr. Heschel, we shall quote him:

"As time went by, Hosea became aware of the fact that his personal fate was a mirror of the divine pathos, that his sorrow echoed the sorrow of God. In this fellow suffering as an act of sympathy with the divine pathos the prophet probably saw the meaning of the marriage which he had contracted at the divine behest . . . Only by living through in his own life what the divine Consort of Israel experienced, was the prophet to attain sympathy for the divine situation."³⁹

One cannot help wondering what concept of God a person must have in order to be able to appreciate this kind of an interpretation.

The God of Pathos

Although we have heard Dr. Heschel state that the relationship between the pathos of God and the essence of God is a mystery for man and the prophet is only concerned with God in His relatedness to man, quite obviously some concept of God must be implied in the God of pathos, in the God with whom the prophets sympathize. As we had occasion to observe earlier in our discussion, the pathos is significant because it is God's pathos; nor does the prophet sympathize with the pathos but with God. *Nolens volens* some concept of God is present here. We shall now inquire what kind of an idea of God must be associated with this theology of pathos and religion of sympathy. We have shown that what Dr. Heschel calls his theology of pathos does not deserve that name. Implied in his thesis is, however, a theology which he does not care to acknowledge explicitly.

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A God of pathos, who is affected by man's behavior and responds to it emotionally — is he not a person? Dr. Heschel defends himself against such an interpretation of his theory by saying: "The idea of divine pathos is not a personification of God but an exemplification of divine reality, an illustration of His concern. It does not represent a substance, but an act or a relationship."⁴⁰ Similarly in his concluding remarks: "It is in this limited sense that we speak of God as a personal being: He has concern for non-divine being."⁴¹ Yet, he also says with great emphasis: "God is all-personal, all-subject,"⁴² and with even greater intensity of conviction he insists: ". . . it is because God is absolutely personal — devoid of anything impersonal — that this ethos is full of pathos."⁴³ We maintain that this latter is the true position of Dr. Heschel, because only if we keep in mind that according to him, God in his essential nature is "all-personal", "all-subject", "devoid of anything impersonal", can he be understood.

When he is on the defensive, Dr. Heschel maintains that pathos has nothing to do with divine substance; it is an act, it is not an attribute. This, of course, he has to say in order to justify his other statement that God in His essence is not the divine reality given to the consciousness of the prophet. The fact, however, is that Dr. Heschel tells us much too much about the nature of God, for one who disclaims any comprehension of it. Pathos is at times identified as "God's inner acts." Of the prophets it is said that "they not only sense God in history, but also history is God."⁴⁴ Things are happening within God, *before* they are directed to man. We have heard him describe the transcendental aspect of inspiration as an event within God, consisting of the phase of decision and that of turning. Before it is directed to him, the prophet witnesses it as taking place within the divine life. Surely, if pathos were indeed nothing but a divine attitude in relationship to man, the nature of God itself remaining wrapt in mystery, it would be impossible to speak of history and events with God. If Dr. Heschel really meant to say that pathos was unrelated to divine essence, he could not have written as he did: "The decision to communicate is an event *in the life of God*. It arises directly from divine motiva-

tion; for it belongs *to the very nature* of God to declare His thoughts to the prophets. Inspiration as a crucial event is conditioned both by the history of man and by the *character of God.*"⁴⁵ This is not just an attitude, an act *in* history in response to man. The Eternal's "inclination to tropos" is discovered beyond history, and beyond any relatedness, in the very nature of God. Dr. Heschel also calls pathos "the essence of God's moral nature," he speaks of "the *nature* or the *pathos* of God."⁴⁶ Most enlightening is what he has to say about justice. Discussing the meaning of divine justice in relationship to God's mercy and love, he declares: "No single attribute can convey the nature of God's relationship to man. Since justice is His nature, love which would disregard the evil deeds of man, would contradict His nature."⁴⁷ But if pathos is only a divine act, a changeable divine attitude,⁴⁸ how can the pathos of justice be called divine nature? We know of it only by the act of its manifestation in history? Why is it not, then, conceivable that it should not be manifested? Quite obviously, pathos does represent in all the passages quoted divine substance and it is — indeed — referred to in our last quotation as an attribute. In all these passages pathos is inseparable from the essence of the Divine Being and reveals it as "all-personal," "all-subject," "devoid of anything impersonal." These are not just occasional lapses of style. They are much too consistent, much too meaningful, and some of them occur in the key passages of Dr. Heschel's dissertation.

The truth is that passibility is of logical necessity an essential attribute of the Divine Being. We shall once again consider one of the most important statements on the meaning of pathos. It is maintained:

The prophets never identify God's pathos with His essence, because for them the pathos is not something absolute, but a form of relation. Indeed, prophecy would be impossible were the divine pathos in its particular structure a necessary attribute of God. If the structure of the pathos were immutable and remained unchanged even after the people had "turned," prophecy would lose its function, which is precisely so to influence man as to bring about a change in the divine pathos of rejection and affliction.⁴⁹

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One should note that what is said here applies only to “pathos in its particular structure,” to pathos in its actual, specific manifestation. All pathos, revealed in the relation, has particular structure or specific quality. Actual pathos is always a response to human conduct of a particular nature and as such it is particular and changeable as man’s behavior itself. But every form of actual pathos has its origin in an aspect of the divine essence itself, i.e., God’s passibility. Human action may evoke pathos in its particular structure only because God is turned toward man, because He can be reached by man, because He can be affected by what man does. Pathos in its specific historic form, pathos in time, in a given situation, is always a response, it is a relation; but the relation comes about because God, prior to the moment of response in time, prior to all human action, makes Himself accessible for man, because He may be affected by man. This quality of God’s passibility is timeless, is above all history; it is a genuine attribute of God, it is of the very essence of God, it is absolute. If God were not passible in His very essence, pathos could never arise, for He would never be affected by man. Only because pathos has its source in the very essence of Divine Nature may Dr. Heschel say, for instance:

“New is the prophetic conception that mercy or anger are not sporadic reactions, but expressions of constant care and concern. The divine pathos embraces all life, past, present, and future; all things and events have a reference to Him. It is a concern that has the attribute of eternity, transcending all history, as well as the attribute of universality, embracing all nations, encompassing animals as well as human beings.”⁵⁰

Only the specific form that pathos takes in specific situations is an act and not an attribute, changeable and not eternal, a divine situation and not representing divine substance. However, pathos in its historic and specific manifestations is due to the *constant care and concern* of God, which is not a response, but is timeless and universally unconditional, which is God’s original approach to man, motivated altogether by His Divine Being. This is what makes God “all-personal” and “all-subject.”

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How is this to be understood? Dr. Heschel knows the answer: "The fact that the attitudes of man may affect the life of God, that God stands in an intimate relationship to the world, implies a certain analogy between Creator and creature."⁵¹ This, of course, is the corner-stone for the understanding of Dr. Heschel's position. If on one or two occasions he does mention that the difference between God and man is absolute, it is not to be taken literally. What he means is that although there is a certain analogy between God and man, yet God is still very much different from man. But the analogy remains. That is why God may be affected by man and that is why the prophet may feel the feelings of God, when God happens to be so affected. One may agree that a God conceived on the basis of a certain analogy to man may very well possess the attributes required by Dr. Heschel for his God of pathos. It is a God essentially shaped in the image of man. In order to escape the dilemma, Dr. Heschel occasionally resorts to the familiar idea of anthropomorphic theology of declaring that God is not anthropomorph but man, theomorph. It is of little use. The idea, which is of kabbalistic origin, may have its proper place in a kabbalistic system of thought. In a non-kabbalistic context, however, a god-like man still implies a man-like god.

ADDENDUM*

There is, of course, anthropomorphic and anthropopathic imagery in kabbalistic literature. Their true significance still awaits thorough investigation. Rabbi Hayim Vital, for instance, warns against all anthropomorphism and anthropopathy. In the *Shaar Hakadmut*, quoted in some editions of the *Eitz Chayim* in *Heikhal Adam Kadmon*, at the end of Chapter 1, he writes:

It is well known that there is on high neither a body nor any bodily force. All these images and descriptions must not be taken literally, God beware. They are expressions attuned to the human ear, so that man may grasp these super-natural spiritual realities, which otherwise could not be understood by or impressed on the human intellect. Only because of this is it permissible to speak in symbols and images as it is done in the Zohar. The verses of the Bible themselves testify to this method [of using anthropomorphic terminology to convey non-anthropomorphic meaning] . . . If the Bible itself speaks in this manner, we too may follow its method.

*The author inserted this addendum in an attempt to answer the criticisms by several members of our Editorial Board who pointed to the many similarities between Professor Heschel's views and basic kabbalistic and hasidic doctrines.—Ed.

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A statement of this nature indicates that the great interpreter of Lurianic Kabbalah could never have called God, a God of pathos. Such was also the position of Rabbi Moshe Hayim Luzzato. In *Choker u'Mekubbal* (p. 12, Mosad Horav Kook, 5712) he declares:

Know that all the wisdom of the Kabbalah only clarifies His "law," blessed be He, and that He is One in ultimate true oneness, and that there is neither any change nor any bodily attribute within Him, God beware.

In another passage again (*ib.*, p. 16):

. . . But know that we may only speak of His will, for that is nearer to us and it is permissible (to interpret it), because in this way we are not touching His blessed essence at all.

Luzzato elaborates his point of view in *Daat Tevunot*: At the conclusion of a striking passage (pp. 70-74; edition Mosad Harav Kook) he says:

. . . Perfection [God's] is utterly unrelated to these *Middot* (ways of God). These are specific *Middot*, instituted by His will, finite and limited in accordance with the measure He wanted. However, since the Blessed One, who is perfect in His perfection, acts according to these *Middot*, we call Him by these names and attributes (of the *Middot*) . . .

This is, indeed, a position not too far removed from that of Maimonides' attributes of action. There is little doubt in our mind that neither Vital nor Luzzato would ever have dared speak of God as being passible. Man's actions, according to the Kabbalah do have an effect in the "higher world," but not on God Himself. If there is pathos in the system of Kabbalah, it is certainly below the world of *Atzilut*, in the realms of creation, finite emanations, and *Tzimtsumin*. It is most unlikely that any Kabbalist ever ventured to maintain, as Professor Heschel does, that "events and human actions arouse in Him joy or sorrow, pleasure or wrath . . ."

Most important, however, is the consideration that Dr. Heschel does not give us a tractate on Kabbalah. He offers us a theology of pathos, outside the system of the Kabbalah. But apart from the concept of the various levels of the *Sephirot* and *Tzimtsumin*, a "God of pathos" is only tenable, if one can show how it may be philosophically and theologically reconciled with the idea of an infinite, perfect Being.

It is true that talmudic and midrashic tradition does speak of the *Galut ha'Shekhinah* (cf. Megillah, 29a), the exile of the *Shekhinah*; there is even a passage in the Talmud (*Sanhedrin*, 46a), which may indicate that the term *Tzaar ha'Shekhinah*, the sorrow of the *Shekhinah*, has a Mishnaic basis. However, the very fact that the term *Shekhinah* is used, and not that of God, is in itself an indication how strangely rooted in the Jewish consciousness is the thought of God's impassibility. In other places, where the *Shekhinah* is not explicitly mentioned, anthropathic expressions are introduced with the qualifying term, *keve-*

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yakhol, "as it were." (Cf., e.g., the quotation from *Eikha Rabbati* in *Tosafot, Megillah 45a, Ani ve'Hu*; see also *Yalkut Shimoni*, on Jeremiah, ch. 40.) There are, of course, innumerable anthropopathic passages in the Aggadah and the Midrash of a similar nature. In themselves, they are even less to be taken as a theology of pathos than the numerous anthropomorphic phrases of the Bible. Theology demands meaningful interpretation. All these anthropopathic passages of the Midrash have found their kabbalistic interpretation, just as they are capable of interpretation within the context of the anti-anthropopathic tradition of Jewish philosophy and theology. (Cf. the remarkable interpretation of Maimonides in his commentary in the Mishnah, *Sanhedrin*, [6:5], in the phrase: *Shekhinah Ma ha'Lashon Omeret* . . . Even the well-known Midrashic interpretation of the phrase in the 91st Psalm: "I will be with him in trouble," says no more than that God is near the man who calls on Him in times of trouble.) It is not permissible to take the metaphorical language of the Midrash literally and call it a theology of pathos.

Even less acceptable is Professor Heschel's concept of the religion of sympathy. Again, it would be a misunderstanding to compare it to the idea that one should feel the *Tzaar ha'Shekhinah*, so widely spread in all Hasidic literature. On the basis of what has been said about pathos in Kabbalah, it should be obvious that it is not possible to equate the "sorrow of the *Shekhinah*" with Heschel's "pain in the heart of God." The sympathy called for is with a finite manifestation of the divine in the world of creation. It is not sympathy with God, but, as it were, with the cause of God in the world. Most illuminating on this point is the teaching of the author of *Nefesh Ha-Chayim*. In keeping with kabbalistic principles he maintains that, because of the manner in which the various worlds of creation, the highest and the lowest, are connected with each other, all human action produces corresponding effect on high. Human failure is, therefore, a destructive action in "all the worlds" and is the cause of sorrow "on high." It is the task of man, when he approaches God in prayer, to think of the sorrow of the heavens over his failure, rather than his own tribulations. However, the term used is usually "the sorrow on high," but never feeling "the pain of God," (Cf. *Nefesh Ha-Chayim*, Shaar II, chapter 12). This is undoubtedly intentional, for in another striking passage the author insists on the impassibility of divine nature itself on all the levels even of its immanence. (Cf., *ib.*, chapter 6). The author interprets a Midrashic statement, which compares God's indwelling in the universe to the soul's presence in every part of the body. The parallel is summed up in the words: "As the soul neither eats nor drinks, so is there neither food nor drink before the Holy One, blessed be He." The explanation offered is as follows: The soul does not partake of the food which keeps the body alive, yet on the food which sustains the body depends the connection between body and soul. Similar is the relationship between

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God and the worlds. All human action, all the commandments, the Torah and the divine service, *do not affect God Himself in the least*. It is in this sense that we say of Him that He "neither eats nor drinks." It is the will of God to remain in contact with the worlds according to the "sustenance" that man provides for the worlds through his deeds, performed in accordance with the Torah. This is just one among very many statements in a rich kabbalistic literature that are meant to preserve the idea of God's impassibility, notwithstanding His immanence in all creation. Only in their light may we try to interpret the meaning of kabbalistic sympathy with "the sorrow of the *Shekhinah* or "the sorrow on high."

We venture to maintain that not even in the most anthropopathic metaphors of the Kabbalah shall we find the kind of religion of sympathy that is offered by Professor Heschel. It is contrary to Jewish sensitivities to speak of "suffering together" with God, of "sharing an inner experience" with Him. Heschel's "emotional identification with God" is indeed shocking within the context of Jewish tradition, kabbalistic or theological. The Jewish awareness of God's reality must wince at the suggestion that a mere man, be he even a prophet, could be guided "not by what he but rather by what God feels." The suggestion that "in sympathy man experiences God as his own being" is alien to the heart beat of Judaism.

Pathos, Sympathy, and Christian Theology

There is little doubt that, in the context of Jewish thought and religious sensitivity, Dr. Heschel's position is most original. And yet, when he speaks of man's participating in "the inner life" of God and God's sharing in the life of man, there is a somewhat familiar ring about it. When he elaborates in innumerable variations on the prophet's feeling "His heart" and experiencing "the pain in the heart of God" as his own, or when he reveals the secret of sympathy as a situation in which "man experiences God as his own being," it does not take much perspicuity to realize that one has encountered these concepts in one's readings — in Christian theology.

Sympathy with the suffering of Jesus is one of the basic requirements of Christianity. To use Dr. Heschel's distinction between "feeling for" and having a feeling in common, it is no mere feeling for Jesus but actually sharing in his experience, feeling his feelings as one's own. According to Thomas a Kempis, a good Christian is Jesus' "companion in suffering." But while

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this concept is natural to a religion at whose focal point is the passion of a god incarnate, it is unheard of in Judaism, with its belief in the One God, who is in everything unlike man. Dr. Heschel, summing up what he has to say about the prophetic experience, declares:

“An analysis of prophetic utterances shows that the fundamental experience of the prophet is a fellowship with the feelings of God, a sympathy with the divine pathos, a communion with the divine consciousness which comes about through the prophet’s reflection of, or participation in, the divine pathos . . . The emotional experience of the prophet becomes the focal point for the prophet’s understanding of God. He lives not only his personal life, but also the life of God. The prophet hears God’s voice and feels His heart.”⁵²

In exactly the same words one could describe the religious experience of a good Christian in his relationship to Jesus. A Christian, however, would find no meaning in the thought of having sympathy, as defined by Dr. Heschel, with God as He is known in Judaism. Indeed, it makes no sense.

Seen from this angle, we shall take one more look at the theology of pathos. While it is utterly unknown to Judaism, it has a long history in Christian thought. Both Judaism and Christianity had to cope with the intellectual consequences of the confrontation with Greek philosophy and metaphysics. God as immutable, pure Being was not the God of the Bible. The dilemma, arising from the confrontation, was far less serious for Judaism than for Christianity. For Judaism it was a clash between metaphysical ideas and the biblical text. Solution could be found by interpreting the text. For Christianity, however, the conflict was between metaphysics and its faith in a god incarnate, who in human form walked this earth, suffered and died. Anthropomorphic text could be reinterpreted; the passibility of Jesus could not be explained away. It is the very essence of Christian faith that the divine is to be associated with emotions, that it is affected, that it suffers or rejoices, as the case may be. One of the Gifford lecturers expressed it succinctly: “The very truth that came by Jesus . . . may be said to be summed up in the passibility of God.”⁵³ In Christianity God does have pathos,

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in exactly the same sense as Dr. Heschel understands the term — as an emotional affection of the deity. Because the confrontation between Greek metaphysics and Christianity was, indeed, much more serious than that between the Greek Absolute and Judaism in a genuine theology of pathos was produced by Christian theologians.

Already in the second and third century C. E., a theology of pathos was formulated, which comes very close to that of Dr. Heschel. The Anti-Trinitarians or Monarchians, holding on to the strict monotheism of Judaism, were puzzled by the fact that the immutable God should be passible. They reached the conclusion, quite logical on the basis of their assumptions, that God, the Impassible, became passible for the sake of man. They believed in the One God of Israel, but they considered him impassible and invisible in his concealment and passible and visible in his revelation. Because of their theory they became known as the Patripassians.⁵⁴ Strangely enough, it was Tertullian who opposed most emphatically this theology with the weapons of Greek metaphysics. He argued that the consequences of Patripassianism were that the "Incomprehensible" became comprehended, the Immortal mortal. And yet God could not have abandoned His own absoluteness and have remained at the same time the Invisible, the Incomprehensible, the Immutable and the Immortal."⁵⁵ Tertullian had a different solution for the problem. He found it in the Christian concept of Trinity. The first person of the Trinity is the Absolute, incomprehensible and immutable; passibility belongs to the second person in it. This is, by the way, the solution which Thomas Aquinas adopted.⁵⁶ In a sense Dr. Heschel committed an act of intellectual injustice against Aquinas' excellence as a thinker. He evaluates his theology in the following terms: "To Thomas Aquinas, God is *actus purus*, without the admixture of any potentiality. Hence it is evident that it is impossible for God to change in any way. Passion, being a change, would be incompatible with His true Being."⁵⁷ How could Dr. Heschel write of one of the mightiest minds of the Church that for him God's true Being was incompatible with passion, when — in truth — the passion of the God in whom he believed was at the very heart of his faith! Of

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course, Thomas Aquinas had a solution for his problem. He believed in a god incarnate.

It is neither our intention nor our task to indicate even in vague outline the various phases in the history of the theology of pathos in Christianity. Suffice it to say that having started in the second century, some of its rather interesting expressions border practically at our own era. The philosophical-metaphysical foundations of such a theology we may find in Hermann Lotze's major work, *Microcosmus*. He identifies the Infinite with Perfect Personality that is God. He will not allow a mere personification of an idea, not even a personification of the *idea* of God. By the Personal God he means an actually living personality. It is most interesting to follow his argument. He explains that "we have a direct feeling of the wide difference there is between this personification of a thought and living personality." What is this hallmark of a living personality? In the words of Lotze "an essential condition of all true reality" is to be found "in the capacity of suffering." Personality has an "inner core" which cannot be conceptualized, "which cannot be resolved into thoughts, the meaning and significance of which we know in the immediate experience of our mental life, and which we always misunderstand when we seek to construe it — hence personality can never belong to any unchangeable valid truth, but only to something which changes, suffers and reacts."⁵⁸ Lotze's Personal God possesses, indeed, passibility; by his essential nature it is a God of pathos. It is, however, clear that his philosophy is oriented completely by the basic Christian affirmation concerning God. It is a late nineteenth century metaphysics in support of the second and third century Patripassianism. The metaphysics was paralleled by new voices in theology. A. M. Fairbairn, e.g., articulated it in the following manner: "Theology has no falsier idea than that of the impassibility of God. If He is capable of sorrow, He is capable of suffering; and were He without the capacity for either, He would be without any feeling of the evil of sin or misery of man . . . There is a sense in which the Patripassian theory is right . . . The being of evil in the universe was to His moral nature an offence and a pain, and through His pity the misery of man became His sorrow. But this sense of

man's evil and misery became the impulse to speak and to help . . ."59 Dr. Heschel uses practically the same terminology in his theology of pathos. There is, of course, the difference that whereas in Fairbairn's thought God's "impulse to speak and to help" leads to Jesus, with Dr. Heschel it leads to the inspiring of the prophets.

If we now try to relate Dr. Heschel's position to the theology of pathos in Christianity, the outcome will depend on whether we wish to judge him by his explicit declarations or by the theology which is logically implied in his thesis. According to the declaration the relationship between God in His true Being, in His essential Nature, and God in His relatedness to man, is a mystery. But the prophets never refer to the Absolute or the Perfect. Their dealings are with God as He reveals Himself by His pathos, with His earthly manifestations as they are directed toward man. In His relatedness to the world they do comprehend Him morally and emotionally. This position is very much like that adopted by Tertullian: God, the Invisible, the Incomprehensible, the Absolute and Transcendent is impassible; the passibility belongs to His earthly manifestation (as it was understood by the faith of Christianity). And the same criticism that was levelled against Tertullian also applies to Dr. Heschel: the earthly manifestation obscures completely God in His true Being. It is as if there were two gods: one wrapt in mystery, aloof and removed, inaccessible and unconcerned; the other, the related one, comprehensible, loving and caring. In what Dr. Heschel considers his theology of pathos the two aspects of the divine reality, its true Being and its attitudes and acts remain unrelated to each other and thus, indeed, fall apart. The prophets are not concerned with God in His essence. He might as well not exist as far as the theology of pathos or the religion of sympathy are concerned.

We have shown that by the implicit logic of pathos and sympathy this kind of separation is untenable, that pathos — even for Dr. Heschel — must be understood to be an attribute of divine essence, that the God of pathos is "all-personal," "all-subject," "absolutely personal." Accordingly, God must be seen as being passible in his essential nature. This corresponds,

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as we have noted, to the position of the Patripassians in Christian theology.

One must, however bear in mind one important point in order to appreciate fully Dr. Heschel's position. The Christian theologian starts out with a faith whose central affirmation is that God is passible. Given that premise, a theology of pathos is unavoidable. The theology may be good or bad, the faith itself remains unaffected. In the context of Judaism, however, the situation is fundamentally different. Here we start out with a faith that abhors any form of "humanization" of divine nature; the theological climate is determined by a long tradition of affirmation of divine impassibility in face of numerous biblical texts to the contrary. Dr. Heschel, however, decided to take *some* anthropopathic expressions in the Bible literally. In the light of his own interpretation of these passages he formulates a theology; in the light of his theology he then proceeds to offer us a God who is "all-personal" and "absolutely personal," who, since "the attitudes of man may affect the life of God," should be understood with the help of "a certain analogy between Creator and creature." From the Jewish point of view, these are alien and objectionable concepts. To have a faith in a passible God and to proceed from there in order to formulate an adequate theology is one thing; but to conceive of an "original" interpretation of biblical expressions and to proceed from there, by way of a questionable theology, to the formulation of the concept of a God of pathos is something entirely different. Given the Christian premise, a theology of pathos is an intellectual necessity; given the premises of Judaism, Dr. Heschel's theology of pathos and religion of sympathy seem to be offsprings of a theologically oriented fancy.

This episode of a "theology of pathos" in Judaism may, however, serve one useful purpose. It may point to the vital challenge that confronts contemporary Jewish theology. God is Infinite and Absolute and Perfect; yet, according to Judaism, the infinite, absolute, and perfect God is related to the world and cares for His creation. How are the two aspects of Divine Reality to be related to each other? The solution of the problem requires ontological investigations into the nature of Being, undertaken

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— perhaps for the first time — with specifically Jewish religious predilections and intellectual anxieties.

NOTES

1. *The Prophets*, p. 226.
2. *Ib.*, pp. 284, 230 3,20.
3. *Ib.*, pp. 223-4.
4. *Ib.*, p. 229.
5. *Ib.*, pp. 219, 232, 226.
6. *Ib.*, p. 228, 219.
7. This presentation of the thought of sympathy based on *ib.*, pp. 34, 308-9, 319, 311, 314.
8. *Ib.*, p. 271.
9. *Ib.*, *ib.*
10. *Ib.*, p. 319.
11. *Ib.*, p. 312.
12. *Ib.*, pp. 219, 226, 232, 276.
13. *Ib.*, p. 227.
14. *Ib.*, p. 271.
15. *Ib.*, p. 259.
16. *Ib.*, pp. 282-4.
17. *Ib.*, p. 294.
18. *Ib.*, p. 312.
19. *Ib.*, p. 277, see also pp. 286, 294.
20. *Ib.*, p. 295.
21. *Ib.*, p. 294.
22. *Ib.*, p. 485.
23. *Ib.*, p. 232.
24. *Ib.*, for this analysis of the divine event of inspiration cf. pp. 432-8.
25. *Ib.*, cf., pp. 255-8, 260-2.
26. *Ib.*, p. 274.
27. *Ib.*, p. 484.
28. *Ib.*, pp. 231, 272.
29. *Ib.*, p. 257.
30. *Ib.*, p. 276.
31. Heschel is not unaware of the risk to which he exposes himself. In his discussion of anthropopathy, and in obvious reference to his own endeavor, he says: "A sacred venture is always in danger of ending in a blasphemy. The sacred venture of conveying more than what minds could visualize or words could say is always in danger of being a failure" (loc. cit. 273-4.) It is to be regretted that Professor Heschel has succumbed to the dangers of the path on which he ventured out.

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32. *Ib.*, p. 341; for the references to Hosea and Jeremiah, cf. pp. 49-50, 125.
33. *Ib.*, p. 310.
34. For this part of our discussion see *ib.*, pp. 57-8.
35. *Ib.*, p. 60.
36. *Ib.*, p. 115.
37. *Ib.*, p. 116.
38. *Ib.*, p. 317.
39. *Ib.*, p. 56.
40. *Ib.*, p. 273.
41. *Ib.*, p. 486.
42. *Ib.*, p. 218.
43. *Ib.*, p. 225.
44. *Ib.*, p. 277.
45. *Ib.*, p. 437.
46. *Ib.*, pp. 225 and 310.
47. *Ib.*, p. 297.
48. *Ib.*, p. 231.
49. *Ib.*
50. *Ib.*, p. 277.
51. *Ib.*, p. 229.
52. *Loc. cit.*, p. 26.
53. A. M. Fairbairn, *The Place of Chr. in Modern Theology*, N. Y. 1893., p. 483.
54. Cf. F. Loofs, *Dogmengeschichte*, Halle, 1906, p. 185, W. G. T. Shedd, *History of Christian Doctrine*, New York, 1863, pp. 254-5, 402-4.
55. M. Werner, *The Formation of Christian Dogma*, London, p. 240.
56. Cf., *Summa Theol.* III, XIV, 1.
57. *Loc. cit.*, p. 262.
58. *Microcosmus*, Engl. Transl., N. Y., 1856; Book IX, ch. IV, cf. pp. 682-8.
59. Fairbairn, *op. cit.*, p. 483,ff.