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ALIENATION AND FAITH

INTRODUCTION

Of all the phenomena, spiritual and social, that characterize contemporary existence, centrality of significance belongs to alienation. The distance at which the individual stands from an easy immediate and innocent identification with nation, society, his physical environment, and other people is a distinguishing mark of the age; and one which has its obvious spiritual reflection. For the relationship between man and God is not independent of that between man and the world. When man is prised off the surface of the world by his technical mastery of natural forces; when this succeeds to self-consciousness and reflection; and this gives way in turn to loneliness and despair of innocence regained, then, in parallel, we can trace a widening gap between man and God, from the Thou of revelation, to the He of the Halakhah, to the It of the philosophers, and to the hidden and unreachable God of the crisis theologians, who begin, in His absence, to turn to other consolations.

We must distinguish the ontological condition of loneliness, from the occasional mood of estrangement that comes on men even in the heart of a period of direct relationship. For ours is not the loneliness of the Psalmist: "I am[1] become a stranger to my brothers and alien to my mother's children," for he can still speak the Thou and expect an answer: "For the Lord hearkens to the needy."[2] Nor do we face the God of Isaiah: "In truth you are the God who hides Himself."[3] Intentional concealment is concealment for a purpose, part of the dialectic of revelation, a gesture understood by the lover of God. The Zohar speaks of this in the famous allegory of the maiden in the castle:

> The Torah lets out a word and emerges for a little from its concealment, and then hides herself again. But this she does only for those who understand and obey her.[4]

Our isolation, in contrast, belongs to our times, a time when, it would seem, even the hiddenness is hidden. A story about the Baal Shem Tov explains the nature of double concealment. It is said that one day on the way he met a child who was crying, and when he asked him why, the child said: I was playinig with my friends, and I was to hide. But I have hidden myself so well that they cannot find me. This, it is said in the name of the Baal Shem Tov, is God's situation. To hide one's face is to seek to be found; but when one is so hidden that even the fact that one exists in hiding, is hidden,[5] then the separation is of a tragic order.

Together with a separation of man from God and the world goes an estrangement of man from himself. If, as Buber says, "All real living is meeting," then the absence of real meeting means the absence of life, in its wholeness and integrity. Identity is given in relation; a man whose meetings are distant encounters does not even possess himself.

This, of course, is a universal phenomenon and a central datum of our political and social philosophy, psychology and theology. The question I want to pose in this essay is: what place does it have in the inner history of Judaism? Must we as Jews participate in this movement of the soul? Is the attempt to stand aside from it an act of bad faith; a misinterpretation of our proper stance towards our location in time; or simply one which, however intentioned, is bound to fail? Do we have a refuge from alienation, or must a *Baal Teshuva* expect to inhabit the same locus of existential doubt as he did before his return?

I

Obviously our answer to these questions will help to define Judaism's relevance to one of the secular crises of the day. But there is a preliminary point to be made about this constant de-

mand made of Judaism that it be *relevant*. And that is that there are two modes of relevance: one might label them the empathetic or concessive, and the redemptive. One can relate to someone else's problems by entering into his situation, seeing it with his eyes; or by addressing his problems from one's own unchanged perspective. By the first method one wins the advantage of fully understanding his problem, at the risk of losing all that might have enabled one to solve it, even at the risk of being infected with the same problem oneself. Because one's situation is now the same as his, it now afflicts both. The second preserves a way of escape, the possibility of new and unforeseen perspectives, but at the cost of an unmediated distance between the one who asks and the one who answers. Both forms of relevance embody a paradox. But what must be remembered is that neither has an intrinsic priority over the other. And that the possibility that Judaism might stand diametrically opposed to a contemporary movement of consciousness does not, eo ipso, entail its irrelevance to, or its independence from, its context in secular time.

II

Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik, in his justly famous article, "The Lonely Man of Faith,"[7] belongs in effect if not in intention to the stance of empathetic relevance. For the Jew, as he conceives him, is (in the paradox of sacrifice) doomed to and at the same time blessed by an existence which is divided, alienated and lonely .This is not to say that for him, Jewish experience is a paradigm of the modern consciousness in its mood of existential despair. In at least three ways the experience he depicts differs from the secular condition:

(i) The alienation of the man of faith is not a consequence of a sense of meaninglessness, but rather the opposition of two sharply sensed and incompatible meanings. His self is not so much distanced from the world as divided within itself. A sense of two realities prevents each aspect of the Jew from making its home in any one of them.

(ii) Whereas the secular man's alienation is born of a sense of being left alone without a God, the alienation of the Jew is God-given, for

it arises out of the tension between two fundamental Divine commands. Indeed to feel alienated is to have *succeeded* rather than to be forlorn; it is to have demonstrated the fidelity of one's response.

(iii) Lastly this religious alienation is not a phenomenon conditioned by time. Rabbi Soloveitchik finds its source in the two aspects of Adam; and it was a tension felt by the prophets. Modern secularism may make it more acute, but it is part of the permanent condition of the Jew.

Rabbi Soloveitchik is not writing for the unbeliever, to provide him with a mode of re-entry into commitment; nor does he write detachedly, making comparisons. He speaks subjectively, seeking response. But here is a point in time where a defining mood of Judaism finds an echo in the prevalent mood of the secular world, a time when the two might share a vocabulary of the emotions.

I want, in contrast rather than disagreement, to describe an alternative phenomenology of the Jewish self, one which arises equally naturally from the traditional sources, and one in which the divided self occupies a different and impermanent place. There is a sense, strongly present in the account of Adam's creation, persisting through the Torah, explicit in the Psalms, and analyzed often enough in Kabbalistic and Hassidic sources, that alienation and loneliness are defective states, the consequence of sin, and that the religious man of any age transcends divisions, subsumes contrasts into harmonious emotion, and exists in unmediated closeness to God, the world and other Jews. In short, I want to argue that Judaism stands to contemporary alienation in a redemptive rather than an empathetic relation.

III

Rabbi Soloveitchik's analysis is too well known to require more than a brief recapitulation here. It is that the two kinds of command given to Adam in the two versions of his creation (Genesis I and II) define two typological responses. There is Majestic man, formed "in the image of God" and commanded to "subdue" the world; and Redemptive or Covenantal man, made "from the dust of the earth" and charged to "guard and

keep" the creation. Majestic man is creative, technological, functional, dignified in his mastery over nature and existing in the realm of victorious activity. Redemptive man, on the other hand, is non-functional, receptive, loyal, submissive, separated from nature not by his de facto dominion but by the covenant by which he is entrusted to redeem the world by bringing his actions under the will of God. Majestic man lives in the assertion of the will; redemptive man in its extinction. But both live in uneasy co-existence within each Jew, for he has been given both commands. On the one hand he has to master the world, and on the other, he has to offer it in humble dedication to God.

Not only is the Jew an intrinsically divided self, but also ineluctably, a lonely one. For each uniquescent element of his being defeats the attempted consummation of the other. Majestic man, that figure of will and conquest, is vulnerable not to loneliness but to being alone. For "dignity" — his mode of being — is a social category, presupposing recognition by others; and practical power — his objective — requires the co-operation of others. In "natural communities" (functional combinations rather than empathetic unions) he finds his completion. Redemptive man, however, is open to loneliness, for his existence lies neither in the co-operation nor the recognition of others but in his relation, qua solitary being, with God. He can transcend this only in the "covenantal community," one forged not by identity of interests but by identity of relationship towards God — a triadic encounter, whose paradigms are prayer and prophecy. Each might find community but for the insistent claims of the other. Majestic man is wrenched from his functional involvement by a sudden awareness of personal encounter with a God who transcends nature; and the Redemptive man is forced at times to relinquish his community of faith by the exigencies of practical labour, and the cognitive categories in which this must be conducted. Neither can be reduced to the other, and thus neutralized. Majesty requires the redemptive vision to give its creative enterprises ultimate validation; and the content of this vision cannot be completely translated into functional concepts. This internal rift is given added poignancy in our time which is an age primarily of techno-

logical achievement. Faced with a community of Majestic men the man of faith is bound either to betray himself or be misunderstood; and all that faces him is a retreat into solitude.

This typology, reminiscent in many ways of Hegel's Master/Slave dichotomy, defines a tension which many Jews undoubtedly experience in their oscillation between secular and Jewish involvements, and throws a critical light on the easy assumptions of synthesis and compatibility made, for example, by S. R. Hirsch. But it is clearly of great importance to know whether this is a contingent or a necessary phenomenon — whether Judaism contains within itself the means of transcending this dichotomy without on the one hand retreating from the creative endeavours of majestic man; and on the other, of excluding all but the atypically righteous (the Patriarchs and Moses according to R. Soloveitchik's concession) from this transcendence.

What makes one suppose that there *is* such a transcendence, accessible as the *natural* consequence of a righteous life, is the constant reiteration of just this claim, particularly in the Psalms. If we take as an example Psalm 1, it is immediately striking that R. Soloveitchik's picture of the restless, wandering, unquiet soul is exactly that of the *unrighteous* man of the Psalm, who is "like the chaff which is blown by the wind" — one is tempted to continue in T. S. Eliot's extension of the metaphor: "driven this way and that, and finding no place of lodgement and germination."[8] The righteous, in contrast, flourish in two dimensions. They are *rooted,* "like a tree planted by streams of water"; and they are possessed of *progress,* for "the Lord regards the way of the righteous" while the movement of the wicked is stultified (graphically conveyed by the order of verbs in v.l. from "walking" to "standing" to "sitting"). Rootedness and progress stand as opposites to alienation on the one hand and nihilism and anomie on the other. These dimensions can be correlated with R. Soloveitchik's typology, for the tree is the image of covenantal man, flourishing in passive receptivity to the source of its life, the "streams of water" being a familiar image for Torah; while progress, "the way", is the symbol of independent and mobile activity.

The significant word in this context is *Ashrei* — the state

of the righteous man. Though this is normally translated as happiness, it is neither *eudaemonia* nor *hedone;* it embodies precisely those two aspects mentioned in the development of the Psalm. For its linguistic affinities are with:

> (i) the verb *Ashar,* meaning to go straight or to advance (as in Prov. 96: *Ve-ishru be-derech binah,* "and go straight on in the way of understanding");
>
> and (ii) the *Asherah* (mentioned in Deut. 16:21), the "sacred grove" of Canaanitic worship, a tree which flourished under the benign influence of a deity and which was therefore an object of pagan rites. Asher, the son of Jacob and Zilpah (Gen. 30:13) is clearly so-called because of the connotation of fertility implicit in the word.

So that, in the dense poetic logic of the Psalm, the first word contains in association, the two themes which it proceeds to develop — the image of the tree and of the way. And, significantly, these majestic and covenantal aspects are fused in a single unified felicific state.

If we doubted this, we need only remember the connection between *Ashrei* and that other predicate of the righteous, *Temimut;* as in Psalm 119:1 — *Ashrei temimei derech.* The cluster of meanings gathered round *Tamim* stand in polar opposition to the divided self: complete/finished/entire/innocent/simple/possessing integrity. The concept is clearly related to the subsequent verse (119:10) "With my *whole heart* (*bekol libi*) I have sought thee."

In Psalm 8 the paradox of the two aspects is stated explicitly: "What is man that you are mindful of him?" yet, "You have made him little lower than the angels" — this is clearly the "dust of the earth" become "image of God." But the tone is one of thanksgiving rather than tension, and this is the normal expression of the paradox in Judaism: wonder that a transcendent God should seek a *Dirah be-tachtonim,* a dwelling in the lowest sphere of existence, and should entrust a physical being with His redemptive work. Of particular interest is the verb used to denote this charge, *Tamshilehu* (v. 7). This is neither the "subdual" commanded to Majestic man, nor the "serving and guarding" of Redemptive man, but a clear synthe-

sis of the two. *Mashal* — to have dominion over — is something which is both *entrusted* to one (its first occurrence in Genesis is in 1:16 where the sun and moon are entrusted with dominion over the heavens) and a position which involves *dominance* and supremacy. The sense that dominion is something held in trust, or by covenant, is enforced by the linguistic association of the verb *Mashal,* a word which also means, "to represent, or be like" as in an apposite verse from Job (41:25): *Eyn al-afar mashlo,* "There is none on the dust of the earth like him"; and so by extension *Mashal* comes to mean a parable or example, something which reproduces the form of that which initiated it. Significantly, the word "represent" embodies the same ambiguity: to be entrusted as a delegate; and to picture or resemble.

In the light of this, when we turn to the accounts of Adam's creation in Genesis I and II, the natural reading (and that taken by Rashi, for example) is to regard the second as a qualification or explication of the first, rather than to see them as essentially opposed. Cassutto[9] explains it in this way: "As for the repetition of the story of man's creation, it should be noted that such repetitions are not at all incongruous to the Semitic way of thinking. When the Torah described man's creation (twice) the one in brief general outline as an account of the making of one of the *creatures* of the material world and the second at length and in detail, as the story of the creation of the *central being* of the moral world, it had no reason to refrain from duplicating the theme, since such a repetition was consonant with the stylistic principle of presenting first a general statement and thereafter the detailed elaboration . . ." This is itself an echo of Rashi's explanation: "Should you say that the Torah has already stated (In Genesis 1:27) 'And He created the man . . .' etc. then (I say that) I have seen the *Beraita* of Rabbi Eliezer . . . dealing with the thirty-two interpretative rules by which the Torah can be interpreted, and the following is one of them: when a general statement (of an action) is followed by a detailed account (of it) the latter is a particularization of the former . . . He who hears (the second account) might think that it is a different account entirely, whereas it is

nothing but the details of the former general statement."[10]

This account still leaves unanswered the question, how are we to resolve the apparent contradiction (or at least contrast of emphasis) between man as "dust of the earth" and as "image of God"; between "serving and guarding" and "subduing," and between a narrative which invokes the Tetragrammaton and one which does not?

The contrast between the Tetragrammaton and E-lohim as names of God is usually seen in the context of metaphysical categories — transcendence as against immanence, mercy as against justice — but even at the level of grammar we can see, as Cassutto[11] points out, an immediate difference. The Tetragrammaton is a proper name, denoting an individual — the God of Israel; while E-lohim, as its plural form suggests, is the name of a class, the totality of all gods. As a consequence it is used to refer even to heathen deities ("You shall have no other E-lohim besides me"),[12] and can be extended to mean "judges" or "angels." The appearance of synonymy between the two is explicable in terms of the fact that in Jewish belief the class of gods has only one member, so that E-lohim often appears to be a proper name. Cassutto's conclusion is that wherever E-lohim is used, the context is one where what is spoken of is in some sense *universal* (for example, the Wisdom literature), whereas the use of the Tetragrammaton indicates that a *particular* relation between God and Israel is being presupposed (as in the halakhic passages).

Having made this distinction, we can use it to understand the different perspectives from which Adam's creation is seen in the two accounts. The first, using the name E-lohim alone, is a *universal* description not only in the sense of being less detailed, more *general* than the second, but in the important sense of being intelligible (and addressed) to all men irrespective of the value-systems in which they stand (This could in any case be inferred from Rashi's comment on Gen. 1:1, that the Torah begins with an account of the creation of the world so that Israel should be able to justify their inhabiting the land of Canaan to the "nations of the world" when the latter complained that they had no territorial right to it. This clearly supposes

that Genesis 1 was addressed to "the nations of the world" and not to Israel alone). But the second, invoking the four-lettered name of the God of Israel, describes the special relationship between man and God, the relationship that can only exist between man and the *unique* God. In other words, the first articulates the nature of *homo sapiens;* the second, of *homo religiosus.*

The first version tells us that man was created "in the image of God," and Rashi interprets this to mean, "in understanding and intellectual power." This is *homo sapiens,* man *qua* rational being. And this is his distinguishing feature as a *biological* phenomenon, that which divides man "sharply and importantly from all other known species."[13] But in the second passage we are told that man was formed "of the dust of the earth" and that there was "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul," on which Rashi comments, "He made him of both lower (material) and higher (spiritual) elements, a body from the lower and a soul from the higher." Man as an embodied soul is specifically a religious conception, one which cannot be explicated in naturalistic terms. And so this perspective could not be admitted into the earlier account, speaking, as it does, to all "the nations of the world." "In the image of God" — this is a *state;* "He breathed into his nostrils" — this is a relation. The state is independent of the religious life; the relation is its very essence.

A parallel distinction is apparent in the different commands reported in the first and second narrations. In the first, the commands to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" are addressed to man as part of the natural order, mirroring verbatim the blessing given to all other creatures (p. 22). The only difference is that to man it is given as both blessing and *command,* in recognition of man's capacity as rational being to receive and act on imperatives. The two other commands, "And subdue it (the world) and have supremacy" over the other creatures, belong to the realm of description rather than Mitzvah — a word which can only be imperfectly translated as "the command which brings relation." *Va-yetzav* ("and He instructed as a Mitzvah") occurs only in the second version (2:16); the first restricts itself to *Va-yomer* ("and He said"). "Subdue" and

"have supremacy" are stated as activities in which the *telos* — the purpose in the context of Divine-human relation — is unstated. *Kavash,* to subdue, has in Hebrew the connotation of suppressing or treading down, and has a Biblical extension in the word *Kivshan,* which means a furnace, in which the form of that which is placed in it is beaten down and made pliable. *U-redu,* and have supremacy, similarly means to subject, with the connotation of autocratic disregard for the object over which it is exercised. Rashi notes its affinities with the verb *Rud,* to bring low; its meaning is that the rest of creation is brought low with respect to man. Neither verb has the dimension that we noticed in the word used in the Psalms to mean "dominion" — *Mashal* — that of being given in trust as part of a covenant. So that the Genesis I account is a neutral description of man's biological relation with the animal kingdom. The religious dimension appears only in the next chapter, supplying the previously missing *telos,* rather than (as it would appear from R. Soloveitchik's account) propounding an opposing one.

The verbs used in Genesis 2 reverberate in associations with the Divine teleology. *Le-ovdah* — "to serve" the creation: this is the paradigmatic act of the Jew in relation to God. Moses is called the *Eved* of the Lord as the highest term of praise (Numbers 12:7). And Kimchi explains the concept in the following terms (commentary to Joshua 1:1): "Anyone who directs all his powers, intentions and concentration to the Lord (i.e., to that aspect denoted by the Tetragrammaton) *so that even his involvement with the secular world* (literally, 'affairs of the world') is directed to the service of God, is called an *Eved* of the Lord." In other words, the *Eved* is precisely the man for whom the conflict between Majesty and Covenant is not transcended but rather *not perceived* at all (*all* his concentration belongs to the Master). We cannot speak in this context of a *dichotomy* of involvements, nor even of a *synthesis* of two separate elements, but only of a *single* task which involves two relationships: man as servant of God, aligning all his actions to the Divine will; and as servant towards the world as well, meaning that he redeems it in a way that it could not redeem itself. This is not incompatible with "subduing" it: it is merely

subduing it with a purpose, or re-directing it. It will be said that only a few attain the rank of *Eved* (Kimchi mentions Abraham, Moses, David and the prophets); and while this is true it does not follow that all other Jews are condemned to spiritual tension. For the children of Israel as a whole are called "My servants" by God. The contradiction is resolved by distinguishing between a role and a state; or a task and its achievement. Even though not all have achieved a transcendence it is still their role and their entitlement. To be a man of divided attentions is not an ontological destiny but an imperfection. The actions of a man of faith are comprehended under the concept of *Avodah* — a word in which man's dual aspect as part of nature and as a soul is fused in the idea of an act which *sanctifies* nature by bringing it under the scheme of Divine will. The Jew in the process of *Avodah* is a unity; outside of it, he is a divided being.

Adam's other command was *le-shamrah*: to "guard" the creation. This is a specifically covenantal mode, and one cannot miss the verbal allusion in: "And the children of Israel shall guard the Shabbat . . . *as an everlasting covenant*" (Exodus 31:16-17). *Shamor* is an act of withdrawal from majesty and creation; not as an act of separation but as a rededication. The word *Shamor* occurs in relation to *Shabbat* only in the second version of the Decalogue, where it is linked with the remembrance that "You were a servant (*Eved*) in the land of Egypt,"[15] a memory unmentioned in the first account. So that it is clear that *Shamor* is contrasted with a service undertaken in secular terms, under purely human aegis: "You are *my* servants, not the servants of other servants."[16] Guarding is a qualification of serving, not an alternative to it. It is a part of that inner and harmonious dialectic by which the man of faith gathers the inward strength to dedicate his outward works to the task of redemption. The *Shabbat* command begins: "Six days shall you labor," stating at the outset that the *Shabbat* is not a separate realm but part of a continuum which includes creation and withdrawal, in which man is not simply creative but is "a *partner* in creation." And as the Adam narration reminds us, the act of withdrawal, though it has its own special sanctuary in time, is in fact an ongoing process simultaneous with the act

of creation.

To conclude: there is a natural reading of Genesis 1 and 2, enforced by the more explicit testimony of the Psalms, and supported by the traditional commentators, according to which the two accounts of creation do not give rise to a dualistic typology of the man of faith. Instead they describe a state in which an apparent tension is brought within a single harmonious mode of activity whose consequence is at the polar opposite from alienation and internal discord. Admittedly, this belongs to the second narration, but the first is not a contrast but a neutral description, addressed in a wider context, to those who are not themselves men of faith.

IV

There are two difficulties in assessing a typological metaphysic such as R. Soloveitchik proposes. One is in the significance of the qualification that such a schema is "subjective." The other is that its evolution from its textual sources seems to be of a Midrashic order. "Subjectivity" as a predicate of philosophy done in the Kierkegaardian manner can denote either "inwardness" or "non-provability." It can, as it were, either speak *to* the individual in his inner being, or be spoken *by* an individual as the untestable record of his private impressions. Although these may go together (as in poetry), neither entails the other. As long as the distinction between the two is inexplicit, the border between autobiography and philosophy remains blurred, and this is what makes much existential analysis of religious experience so problematic. As far as establishing a criterion for the deducing of a metaphysic from a Biblical text is concerned, this is too large a subject to be mentioned here: all I have tried to do is to show that an alternative reading can be derived from the same textual details, relying on only grammatical and semantic considerations.

Not knowing how much counterargument is rendered otiose by the qualification of "subjectivity," it is worth considering briefly whether the two aspects of the *involvement* of the man of faith in the world, necessarily generate a bifurcation in his

character. If not, then the way is clear for an alternative phenomenology of Jewish consciousness; for we would have severed the typology of character from its roots in the Divine command.

When we speak of a pull between a Jew's secular and religious involvements, we are apt to become confused, because there is not one but many things that might be denoted by that contrast. There are at least the following:

(i) the realm of the secular and the realm of the holy;

(ii) a universal *concern* for human welfare and a particularistic concern for Jewish interests;

(iii) *identity* qua man as such, and identity as a Jew;

(iv) a secular *attitude* towards the world and a sanctifying attitude.

These may be related, but they occupy different dimensions. Identity, concern and attitude belong to distinguishable psychological strata. Each contrast deserves extensive treatment, but in this context we are only interested to know (a) does each of these *have to* be internalized by a Jew, are they contingent, or integral, to his destiny? and (b) is each a *genuine* conflict?

(i) is certainly a pseudo-conflict: the secular and the holy are not objectively distinct realms. There is nothing (in the domain of the halakhically permitted) that cannot be redeemed or made holy by a sanctifying use. This is a familiar theme. Less familiar is the *ex post facto* sanctification of the forbidden when in an act of "repentance from great love" the intentional sins of the penitent are added to his merit.[17] Even if we discount this, for it cannot be directly intended (which would amount to the Sabbatian heresy of redemption through sin), the realm of the forbidden is not the proper territory of the Jew and so does not constitute a distinct area of his involvement.

(ii) is not a conflict at all. Concern for human welfare as such is part of Jewish law, if not an entirely unproblematic one. The welfare of fellow Jews, in order of the proximity of their claims ("The poor who are neighbors before all others; the poor of one's family before the poor of one's city; the poor of one's

city before the poor of another city"), is simply part of this general concern; prior but not separate.

(iii) is a spurious opposition. What is to be a man *as such?* A man's identity is given in relation and in the context of some community. Each community has its own culture and vocabulary which give it its distinctive way of allowing its members to see themselves as men. The idea of universal moral truths, not in the sense of those believed by an individual to *apply to* all men, but in the sense of truths *believed by* all men, is a fiction. There are no cross-cultural moral constants, and the search for them has been criticized in much contemporary work in anthropology and philosophy[18] (Chomsky and Levi-Strauss notwithstanding). The man of faith qua Jew *is* a moral man as such, and no more could intelligibly be demanded of him without this being a tacit insistence on his cultural assimilation. Indeed the *cultural* tensions of the American- or Anglo-Jew are contingencies not merely of their spatio-temporal location but of the particular socio-political attitude prevailing within the non-Jewish society as to the proper cultural stance of its minorities. As a tension, it may be real, but it is not part of the essential God-given directive to the Jew. This is not to argue for separatism, for there are ways of entering into a secular society's common concerns without compromising one's religious integrity, and these have been outlined by R. Soloveitchik in his statement on Interfaith Relationships.[19]

(iv) Only here do we approach something in the nature of a real conflict. The Jew has his part to play in the building of a technology designed to ameliorate the human situation, and this necessitates the adoption of "cognitive-technological" concepts and frames of reference. The causal-deterministic framework, the detached subject-object mode of cognition, the mind ever open to the refutation of its hypotheses, are all necessary to a science whose aim is prediction and manipulation. It is not merely that these have their linear contrasts in the religious mind: a non-deterministic schema with place for responsibility and choice, empathetic I-Thou relation with the objects of experience, and a mind unshakably convinced of its moral truths; for these are contrasts between the scientific and the *moral,* and

can be reconciled in purely secular terms. What is irreducible in the *religious* vision is the defining sense of relation with the Transcendent; and this seems to rule out all reconciliation.

We must remember here that what is at stake is not a clash of *empirical claims* between science and religion. How we are to resolve these is a matter of some choice (between qualifying the *Peshat* of the Torah and limiting the epistemological status of scientific extrapolation, for example), and anyway calls for case-by-case analysis. But we are in a position now, in the aftermath of the Victorian chauvinism of science, to regard the clash as essentially resolvable. Instead, what is supposed to remain intractable is the *opposition of attitudes* of the Jew as scientist and as sanctifier of the world. How can a person moving in the nexus of a world-view restricted to the discovery of empirical causes fail at times to lose sight of the God who transcends the observable, the God whom he addresses when he removes himself to prayer, by His four-lettered name?

This, I think, rests on a confusion. Karl Popper[20] has distinguished between what he calls the *essentialist* and the *instrumentalist* views of scientific truth. For the essentialist, scientific laws state simple truths about the world, so that in his view Einstein and Newton are strictly incompatible. Whereas the instrumentalist sees them not as truths at all, in the ordinary sense of the word, but rather as *tools for prediction;* so that Einstein's invention of an instrument which has more extensive predictive application does not *falsify* but instead *restricts the relative usefulness* of Newton's laws. Popper gives a number of reasons for preferring to work under the instrumentalist conception. And if we as Jews adopt it, it becomes clear that the use of scientific hypotheses does not represent the adoption of any alternative world view, any more than does the use of any other instrument, say, the picking up of a hammer to fix a mezuzah. Majestic man is simply covenantal man at work, in perfecting the tools by which he is to gain control over the natural world for the sake of enlarging the range of his halakhic activities, supporting a growing population, removing poverty and disease, and preserving the environment. Only under an essentialist construction of the scientist's search for the truth could we maintain the sem-

blance of an incompatibility between the task of creation and the work of redemption.

V

What, then, is the place of alienation and loneliness in the Jewish analysis of the emotions? Of course, there is no single analysis, but we can detect two recurring tendencies of thought, the one in line with R. Soloveitchik, the other which I wish to present here. A classic source for the alternative phenomenology is the famous chapter 32 of the Tanya of Rabbi Schneor Zalman of Ladi:

> Through the fulfillment of (the previously mentioned act of repentance in which the transgressions of the body are distinguished in one's mind from the soul which remains ever in its undisturbed relation with God) . . . by which one's (errant) body is viewed with scorn and contempt, and one's joy is in the soul alone, through this one finds a direct and simple way to fulfill the commandment "And you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (a love which is to be shown) to every Jewish soul, great or small.
>
> For although one's body is despised and loathed, who can know the greatness and depth of the soul and the spirit in their source and origin in the living God? And since all (of the souls of Israel) are related, and all emanate from one Father, all Israel are literally called "brothers": in that the source of their souls is in the One God, and they are divided only by virtue of their bodies. Therefore those who give priority to their body over their soul, find it impossible to share true love and brotherhood except that which is conditional on *some* benefit (and hence ephemeral).
>
> This is what Hillel the Elder meant when he said about this commandment (the love of Israel: "This is the whole Torah; and the rest is commentary." For the foundation and source of all Torah is to elevate and give ascendancy to the soul over the body . . .

Although this passage is written in the context of the practical question of how to achieve the love of one's fellow man, and the theosophical repercussions that an achieved unity has in terms of Divine blessing, it contains a clear statement of the phenomenology of a community of faith.

(1) *Ahavat Yisroel* — the mutual relation of the faith community — is a specifically religious emotion, a distinguishing feature of the men of faith. For it presupposes a metaphysic (man as an embodied soul; the unity of all souls at their source) which is implicit only in the second account of Adam's creation.

How does it differ from other forms of human collectivity? It is not the community of experience adumbrated by Hobbes, a contract founded on mutual self-interest; nor is it the functional community, joined in collective enterprise, to which man belongs in his role as creative or technological being. It is not even the I-Thou encounter with another in which he is known in his full strangeness and otherwise. It belongs to the perception of a real unity, a breaking down of the walls between self and otherness. It is unconditional and untempered by time. It does not lie at the surface of the soul's awareness, but hidden in its deepest reaches. It is gained only by the strictest spiritual self-discipline. If we have a model of it in ordinary life, it is in the mutual bond between parent and child. A metaphorical similarity can be found in Jung's concept of the collective unconscious.

What do we mean by saying that it cannot exist at the level of bodily existence, but only "when the body is despised?" Clearly the Tanya is not advocating asceticism and body-denial. The contrast which is being indicated here is between two *modes of identity*. How are we aware of our individuality? Man as part of nature individuates himself from his environment by the perception that he is *bodily distinct* from others. He feels pain when his body is injured, but not when it happens to another body. This is the genesis of his opposition self/not-self. And this too is the origin of his sense of existential loneliness; he cannot enter into another mind since it is inseparably linked to another body. Natural man is prey to the anguish of solipsism — in which Descartes, for example, is imprisoned until he brings God into his class of certain knowledge. His experiences are bounded by the concepts of opposition/identity/selfhood/loneliness.

The man who is defined by his relation with God is only dialectically aware of himself as a distinct entity. He was made by God, indeed he can reach God by an inward journey to the depths of his soul. He is joined with God in love and separated

from Him in awe. But even the separation is full of the consciousness of God. So his embodiment in the physical world is not his only or his primary reality: he views it teleologically. He is placed here for a purpose, and he can discover this by analyzing his capacities and his environment — this I can effect, this I cannot. His identity is given by his distinctive role in relation to the world, his covenantal mission. But in being himself — in performing his role — he is placing himself in harmonious fusion with the rest of the world, for his role has meaning only in the light of all others. It is said: there are 600,000 letters in the Torah and 600,000 Jewish souls. Each soul is like a letter of the Torah. Each is distinct but meaningful only in the context of the whole. And though they have no independent reality, each is supremely important for if a single letter is missing or malformed, the whole *Sefer Torah* is unfit for use. So for the man of faith individuality belongs to the not-self and to a redemptive function which is of transcendental origin and which embraces the world. Its *reality* is in community, so that the faith community is different in kind from all others: it is not a coming together of initially separate existences, for it is the only air its members can breath.

This is the typology which relates the "life of the body" to loneliness and the "life of the soul" to communion. It is not as if the man of faith, being an embodied soul, must oscillate between them. For his identity is at the level of soul; body is merely the medium through which he does his redemptive work.

(2) How, on this account, does loneliness enter the life of the Jew? It belongs to the triadic process: sin, separation from God, and loneliness amongst men. And it comes about in this way: he who sins opposes his will to the will of God. And the person in whom this self-assertion is the motivating force, cannot tolerate other selves, for they are potential obstacles to his self-realization. So his only mode of relation is conditional and self-interested, and this is not fully to concede the separate reality of others. He is caught in the prison of the self.

In this way we can understand that strange verse: "And the Lord God said, it is not good for man to be alone. I will make him a help-meet opposite him (*ezer ke-negdo*)."[21] Rabbi Solo-

veitchik[22] sees in this the permanent paradoxical condition of human relationship; friendship (*ezer*) and otherness (*ke-negdo*) are inseparable. But Rashi has another reading. "If he is worthy, she shall be a help (*ezer*) to him; if he is unworthy, she shall be opposed to him (*ke-negdo*) to fight him." The man who lives his life in the Torah finds union; he who separates himself from it, separates himself from other men, even those closest to him. Loneliness is the condition of sin.

Indeed, this is demonstrated in the very next chapter, in the narration of the first sin. "And the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked."[23] The consequence of sin was self-consciousness, which is the progenitor of loneliness. And what they noticed, significantly, was their bodily state; what they perceived was its tragic significance for those who make it their reality. Immediately their thinking became embedded in physical space; "And the man and his wife hid themselves from the face of the Lord God, amidst the trees of the garden,"[24] as if relation and hiddenness were spatial categories.

If we needed further proof of the relation between hubris and alienation we could not find a more graphic illustration than in the episode of the Tower of Babel (Genesis II). "And the whole earth was of one language and few words." Language is the medium of communication, yet paradoxically those closest to each other are least in need of words, "One language" — the world was a single community; "of few words" — their community was an empathetic union. But the bond was a false one, belonging to the level of material expediency. "And they said to one another, Come, let us make bricks . . . and build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heaven, and let us make a name for ourselves." They wanted, true to Aristotle's analysis of the creative urge, to make themselves permanent by externalizing themselves in a physical object. Their reality belonged to the material world. In it they saw permanence and in it they thought they could embody themselves in the work of creation. The result was fitting and inevitable; "And the Lord said . . . come let us go down and confuse their language so that they may not understand one another's speech." This is real ontological loneliness, the severing of the lines of communication.

Alienation, then, has its place in the inner life of the Jew: as the corollary of sin. The Jew who returns, the *Baal Teshuvah,* finds refuge and relation restored to him.

(3) Might we nonetheless be mistaken in thinking that *Ahavat Yisroel* and its corresponding community of faith, constituted the central relational mode of the Jew? If we are, then how are we to account for Hillel's dictum, "This is the whole Torah, the rest is commentary." The answer lies deeper than in the idea that the love of the faith community is triadic, that Jew is bound to Jew in the identity of their relation to God, so that only in the context of a whole life of Torah and *mitzvot* does *Ahavat Yisroel* appear. It belongs instead to the explication of the opaque remark of the Zohar: "Israel, the Torah and God are all one."[25] This is not an ethical but an ontological statement, meaning that our very concept of separate existences lies at the level of religious estrangement; and that through a life not merely lived but *seen* through Torah, God's immanent presence, His will (as embodied in the Torah) and the collectivity of Jewish souls are a real (in the Platonic sense) unity. The very idea of *relation* implies that there are two or more distinct things related. What the Zohar is suggesting is that the way of experience in Judaism demands a profound revision in our ontological categories; a move similar in kind though opposite in intention to Spinoza's radicalism about "substance." To put it more mildly, as we have shown, *Ahavat Yisroel* contains its own specific notion of personal identity; this can be acquired only in the life of Torah; so that the life of Torah and the precondition of the faith community are identical. Hillel's dictum is therefore precisely correct; and his existence in the community of faith is the *whole* life of the Jew.

VI

The distance between the phenomenology of the Jew and that of secular man is what allows Judaism to hold out what I earlier called redemptive relevance to the crises with which the Jew is faced when he is alienated from his faith. We can make this clearer by a brief account of the relation between love and the

self as they are related within and outside of Judaism.

1. "A love which is conditional, ceases when the condition is unfulfilled" (Avot 5:19). There are many loves whose nature is tacitly conditional on the satisfaction of the desires of the one who loves. The child loves his teacher because he is dependent on him. The disciple loves his master because he exemplifies the virtues. Because there is an intentional object of desire, when the loved one ceases to satisfy the implicit requirements of that object it ceases to arouse that love. This is a love which is not blind to faults; and also one in which there is a *Yesh mi sh-ohev,* "a self that loves." The Jew who loves God as the creator of the material world and its pleasures, is not yet God-intoxicated; nor is he if his love is one which is in love with itself — which lives on satisfactions of prayer, learning or *mitzvot.* For his desires (and so his self) are still intact. His love lives in the tension between self and otherness.

2. "The love which is unconditional will not pass away for ever" (*ibid.*). Here, he who loves is conscious only of that which is loved. Being oblivious of self, it is unconditional: it is the emotional corollary of the ontological condition of the not-self. This is the love of "Nullify your will to His will" (Avot 2:4) and is the distinctive quality of the man of faith. But we must distinguish between the unconditional love which requires a stimulus and that which does not. The Jewish moralists have all been aware that this love is not a passion but a mode of recognition (that all human existence is continually dependent on God). Meditation and prayer are the necessary preliminaries. But not for all. There are those rare spirits for whom this recognition is an immediate and dominating awareness. So that we should not be led into the mistake of thinking that the difference between the exceptional and the normal Jew is one between unconditional and conditional love, which would be to concede that the normal condition is one of paradox and tension. Rather it lies between immediacy and active arousal, or the achievement and the task, both within the single dimension of the unconditional.

This is the emotional geography of the secular and the religious mind. It is not a paradox to say that the Jew abandons selfhood. Conditional love is potentially promiscuous, it can

take many objects. It could not be the love of which a monotheistic religion speaks when it talks of the love of God. And this transcendence of *Yeshut, "etre pour-soi"* is what removes divisions and ends the loneliness of the man of faith.

VII

I spoke earlier about two tendencies in Jewish thought, the one outlined above and the other in which R. Soloveitchik's analysis is foreshadowed. We can trace this back to a disagreement between Nachmanides and Ibn Ezra on the interpretation of the verse (Deut. 11:22), "And you shall love the Lord, to walk in all His ways and to cleave (*le-davka*) to Him." Is it possible that man should be in intimate relation with God at all times? Or must Majesty sometimes interfere with Covenant?

Ibn Ezra comments, "To cleave to Him: at the end, for it is a great mystery," implying perhaps that it is a communion reached only at death. Whereas the Ramban says: "It is, in fact, the meaning of 'cleaving' that one should remember God and His love at all times, and not be separated in thought from Him 'when you go on your way and when you lie down and rise up'." At such a stage, one may be talking with other people but one's heart is not with (i.e., confined to) them, since one is in the presence of God." The suffusion of man's social existence with his covenantal intimacy with God is for Nachmanides a this-worldly possibility.

But for whom is it possible? Here again the ways divide. One path is taken by Maimonides.[26] By philosophy and meditation a man may reach the rank of prophecy, and this is the highest natural perfection. But it is still the realm of the divided self. "When you have succeeded in properly performing these acts of Divine service, and you have your thought during their performance entirely abstracted from worldly affairs, then take care that your thoughts be not disturbed by thinking of your wants or of superfluous things. In short, think of worldly matters when you eat, drink, bathe, talk with your wife, and little children, or when you converse with other people." *Devekut,* cleaving, is an act of seclusion and prayer is its sanctuary. Emerging into

the mundane, one relinquishes that union. Only at the highest level of prophecy, where Moses and the Patriarchs stand, does this partition dissolve. "When we therefore find them (these few exalted men) also engaged in ruling others, in increasing their property, and endeavoring to obtain possession of wealth and honor, we see in this fact a proof that when they were occupied in these things, only their bodily limbs were at work, whilst their heart and mind never moved away from the name of God." This is a level not to be attained through training. It is a specific act of grace. It cannot be the aim of any spiritual journey: it must always be unexpected.

Strangely enough, we find Maimonides' ideas mirrored in the Kabbalistic tradition. Accepting that *Devekut* was for the ordinary man the product of seclusion, the Kabbalah pursued this to its logical conclusion. He who makes *Devekut* his aim must sever his contacts with the world and practice a meditative retreat.

It is only in Hassidism[27] that we find, as it were, a democratization of Maimonides. Cleaving to God in all His ways is removed from Ibn Ezra's category of "mystery" where it had lain even in the Kabbalah. Once the implication of the unity of God is perceived — that nothing exists except in him — then one can preserve the state of communion and the not-self even when immersed in the world, for by carrying out the Divine imperative one not only realizes but also enters into the reality of God's will. To be sure, there is a distinction to be preserved between normality and grace (Maimonides' lower and higher prophecy), but this is to be conceived, as we have already explained, in terms of the *Devekut* which needs arousal and that which is immediate and ever-present. The normal man of faith still preserves the distinction between *le-ovdah* (practical action) and *le-shamrah* (rededicative withdrawal and arousal) but this is not the opposition of Majesty and Redemptiveness; but the realized and preparatory stages of Redemptiveness itself.

VIII

In summary, not one but two readings of the inner possibilities of the Jew are implicit in tradition; and with them go two in-

terpretations of man's creation, of his stance towards the world and God, and of the nature of his relation to other men. And at a time when loneliness is the condition of the estranged Jew, one reading offers empathy, the other, healing. To state this contrast is not to formulate an opposition; simply to open another gate.

When Moses sent men to spy out the land of Canaan, after their years in the wilderness, they returned with divided reports (Num. 13). Ten said, "We came to the land where you sent us, and truly it flows with milk and honey . . . (but) it is a land which consumes its inhabitants." But Caleb said, "We should surely go up and possess it, for we are well able to do so." What is at first sight unintelligible is how the ten could have uttered a counsel of despair. They were not ordinary men, but were chosen on God's command from the princes of the tribes. They had already been promised (Ex. 3:17) that God would bring them "up out of the affliction of Egypt . . . to a land flowing with milk and honey." They had seen God revealed on Mt. Sinai. They had been delivered victorious in the battle with Amalek.

There is a Hassidic explanation. In the wilderness, the Israelites had no creative or constructive work to do. Their food and water were provided by God; He guided them; His presence dwelt amongst them in the Tabernacle. They were at the height of covenantal withdrawal, the Divine hand surrounded them like a protective wall. Canaan meant emergence, practical responsibility, the work of building up a nation; and the ten feared immersion in the secular and the hiding of the face of God from sight. "It is a land which consumes its inhabitants." They saw Covenant and Majesty, distinct and opposed, and they trembled and held back. Caleb did not see it. He knew that sanctuary is mere preparation and that redemption was its fulfillment, a work which saw no reality in the secular except as the yet-unredeemed. The ten spoke and the people were unsettled: a divided vision confronted them. Caleb spoke and the people were stilled. All the spies were men of faith (they had seen God with their own eyes); not all of them were lonely men.

NOTES

1. Psalm 69:9.
2. *Ibid.*, v. 34.
3. Isaiah 45:14.
4. Zohar II, 94b.
5. The Baal Shem Tov's remark is based on the verse (Deuteronomy 31:18) "And I will surely hide *(haster astir)* My face." The repetition of the verb is taken to refer to a double concealment, that is, when the hiddenness itself is hidden. See *Toledot Yaacov Yoseph, parshat Bereshit.*
6. Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (translated by R. Gregor Smith), 2nd ed., p. 11.
7. In *TRADITION,* 1965.
8. T. S. Eliot, Choruses from *The Rock,* VII.
9. U. Cassutto, *From Adam to Noah,* p. 91.
10. Rashi to Genesis 2:8.
11. U. Cassutto, *The Documentary Hypothesis,* ch. 2.
12. Exodus 20 v. 3; Deuteronomy 5, v. 7.
13. Jonathan Bennett, *Rationality,* p. 5. The whole book is an attempt to characterize the difference in kind between man and the animals without recourse to metaphysical theorizing; simply in terms of the possession of a language with certain logical properties.
14. Leviticus 25:55. See also Rashi's comment on Exodus 21:6.
15. Deuteronomy 5:15.
16. Rashi to Exodus 21:6.
17. *Yoma* 86b. See on this for example the present Lubavitcher Rebbe, Shlita, *Likutei Sichot* (5730) on *parshat Vayikra,* for a remarkable account of the unifying power of the *Baal Teshuvah.*
18. See, as a notable example, Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science.*
19. *Rabbinical Council Record,* Feb. 1966. Reprinted in *A Treasury of TRADITION,* p. 78.
20. In "Conjectures and Refutations."
21. Genesis 2:18.
22. See "Confrontation," *TRADITION* 1964 (Vol. 6, no. 2).
23. Genesis 3:7.
24. *Ibid.*, v. 8.
25. *Zohar Chadash* I 24a; II 60a; III 93a.
26. *Guide to the Perplexed* III, ch. 51.
27. See, for a study of this transformation, *"Devekut,* or Communion with God" in Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism.*