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## REMEMBERING AND HISTORICAL AWARENESS— Part II: PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF A HALAKHIC STATE OF MIND

### I

In an earlier article, I examined the various *zakhor* imperatives in biblical literature, where the critical demand or task involves one's remembering key episodes in Jewish history.<sup>1</sup> The topic was approached partly as an epistemological inquiry: how does one obtain philosophically valid knowledge of past events which supposedly can no longer be known immediately? The school of historical positivists, resigned to the belief that the past is, indeed, past, consider non-immediate, second-hand knowledge of history satisfactory. Yet certain aspects of the *zakhor* imperative—such as “Each individual is obligated to envision that he, himself, left Egypt”<sup>2</sup>—suggest the need for truly immediate historical knowledge. Thus, I presented the hypothesis that certain historic data are given in consciousness as archetypes or inherited memory traces for which there is support in biblical and aggadic literature (e.g., Ramban's category: “*Ma'asei avot siman la-banim*”<sup>3</sup>). *Zakhor* had to include some mechanism similar to the idealists' notion of re-living historical data. That is, the process of knowing or remembering history is one of re-enacting in the here-and-now the contents of these memory “traces” in such a way that they become temporally *similar* to and structurally *identical* with the original historic event.<sup>4</sup>

This past *Purim*, while engaged in the elementary, verbal fulfillment of the biblical commandment to “remember and not forget” God's eternal war with Amalek, I began to rethink some unfinished aspects of the hypothesis of archetypal re-living of history, such as

the nature of the relationship between the hypothetically given memory traces, the psychological processes of experiencing re-lived events, and the halakhic parameters of historical remembering. If, as expressed in the earlier essay, that archetypal re-living should actually facilitate, if not make possible, the observance of *mitsvot* involving *zekhirah*, then there is great relevance in refining the relationship between ritual and the subjective experience of remembering. These are the foci of the present essay.

## II

Let us briefly review the halakhic obligations to remember certain historic events, the institutionalization of these remembrances, and the didactic-theological scope of the concept of remembering.

The exodus from Egypt is encountered as an obligatory remembrance, in the biblical command, "Remember this very day that you left Egypt . . . in order that you shall remember the day of your leaving the land of Egypt all the days of your life."<sup>5</sup> Ramban bases the precept of recounting the story of the exodus on the key term *zakhor*.<sup>6</sup> The additional phrase, ". . . in order that you shall remember" (*le-ma'an tizkor*), is the operative for the separate biblical requirement to recall this episode during the recitation of the *shema* credo.<sup>7</sup> The fulfillment of this remembrance must be verbal in addition to being intentional.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, if one were in doubt whether one had mentioned the relevant references in the "*Emet ve-yatsiv*" portion of the *shema*, obviously indicated a lack of appropriate concentration on that portion, it must be repeated.<sup>9</sup> Most authorities maintain that the biblical obligation includes a daily recall of *yetsiat Mitsrayim* (Rambam does not tally this additional aspect as a separate precept).<sup>10</sup> As R. Shlomo b. David notes in his glosses to *Shulhan Arukh*, while the idea of the exodus is not specifically related to the *mitsvah* of *tsitsit*, or the *kiddush* over wine, the Torah "cared for it" and the rabbis included it in the daily recitation of *shema*.<sup>11</sup> The holidays of *Sukkot* and *Pesah*, however, are designated for remembering this event, and, thus, the *Tur* first expands on the essence of *yetsiat Mitsrayim* in his discussion of these festivals.<sup>12</sup>

Remembrance of God's sworn, eternal battle with Amalek for their offensive attack on the wandering Israelites is a twofold biblical obligation: a commissive act to remember (*zakhor*) and a "passive" obligation to not forget (*ve-al tishkah*).<sup>13</sup> This remembrance, too, is reified in a verbal fulfillment (or an aural one: listening to an other fulfilling it verbally) and is instituted (biblically, to some<sup>14</sup>) in the

reading of the relevant Torah passages on the Sabbath before *Purim*, and in the Torah reading for the morning of *Purim*.

The episode of *akeidat Yitshak*, the binding of Isaac—considered by the Talmud to have been an actual sacrifice notwithstanding the literal biblical narrative<sup>15</sup>—is also enumerated as deserving of remembrance and is institutionalized in the Torah readings for *Rosh Hashanah*.<sup>16</sup> R. Joseph Karo, in his *Bet Yosef* commentary to the *Tur Shulḥan Arukh*, writes,

It is worthwhile to recite the portion of the *akeidah* in order to remember the merits of the patriarchs and in order to mold one's inclination, as Isaac gave [sic] over his life.<sup>17</sup>

This event is also alluded to in the *tahanunim*, the supplication prayers recited on Mondays and Thursdays: "See before You the binding of one individual for the sake of Israel." It is of interest that there is no specific biblical reference to remembering the *akeidah*, which I will deal with in a later section.

Other historic events are deemed worthy of recollecting, though not by biblical obligation. Ramban, specifically, considers it a biblical precept to not forget the episode of Revelation because it is written: "Do not forget that which your eyes saw . . . the day you stood before God at Horeb."<sup>18</sup> He also views the episode of Miriam's affliction<sup>19</sup> with *tsara'at* for speaking disrespectfully of Moshe as a "completely biblical positive commandment" to enhance one's distance from slander and gossip (Rambam accepts this didactic concept when discussing the laws of *tumat tsara'at* and its causes but does not enumerate it as a *mitsvah*<sup>20</sup>).

Ramban also designates obligatory status to remembering the tragic worship of the golden calf and God's subsequent wrath. The obligation to remember includes an obligation upon all generations to confront personal and interpersonal deficiencies. He reasons *a fortiori* that if we must recall the misdeeds of our forefathers, surely it is incumbent to constructively recall our own misdeeds.<sup>21</sup> In fact, two other, more general biblical passages suggest the same need: "Remember the days of old; consider the generations"<sup>22</sup> and "If they shall confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers. . . . Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob. . . ."<sup>23a</sup> Thus, we have here a concept of cross-generational responsibility through memory.

The kabbalist, R. Isaac Luria (d. 1572), instituted the custom of reciting four of these *zakhor* imperatives at the end of daily prayer (*Mitsrayim*, *Horeb*, *Amalek*, *Miriam*) "to assure one a portion in

the world to come." Others have added the recitation of *zekhirat Shabbat*, the golden calf incident, and the *manna* that fell in the wilderness.<sup>23b</sup>

The phenomenon of *Shabbat*, while unique as a historic event, must also be remembered daily according to some authorities,<sup>24</sup> based on "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."<sup>25</sup> It, too, is remembered verbally in the Sabbath *kiddush*.<sup>26</sup> This remembrance serves in an additional capacity: "Said R. Isaac, 'Do not count as others count. Rather, count toward the Sabbath.'" <sup>27</sup> Thus, weekdays are numbered "the first day of the Sabbath," "the second day of the Sabbath," and so forth. The school of Shamai taught that one must orient one's weekly pursuits toward the Sabbath and in that fashion remember it.<sup>28</sup> The *Shabbat* is, thus, a concept whose relevance is preserved by anticipation; it is, as R. Shlomo Y. Zevin rightly categorized it, a *zekhirah le-atid*.<sup>29</sup>

The glory of the Temples and the trauma of their destruction are remembered through numerous rabbinic institutions:

observing the quasi-mourning period concurrent with the *s'firat ha-omer*;<sup>30</sup> circling the *bimah* (symbolic of the great altar) on *Hoshanah Rabah*;<sup>31</sup> requiring two breads at each *Shabbat* and festival meal;<sup>32</sup> the *seder* rituals of *korakh*, *z'roa* and *beizah*, and *afikoman*;<sup>33</sup> fasting on all Jewish fasts;<sup>34</sup> refraining from excessively joyous song;<sup>35</sup> leaving unfinished a portion of one's house;<sup>36</sup> discontinuing the use of ornamental crowns and gold in-lay in the prayer shawls of grooms;<sup>37</sup> obligating one to tear one's clothes upon seeing the hills of Judea and the city of Jerusalem in their ruin.<sup>38</sup>

As Samson Raphael Hirsch emphasized, every prayer, every Sabbath, and every festival draws symbolic richness from Israel's historic past. The acquisition of immediate knowledge of the past would seem then to be unquestionably desirable. Yet, is the remembering we engage in toward this goal merely ratiocination or can the individual in the process of remembering somehow converge with the past?

### III

What is the scope and function of the imperative to remember? To be sure, the elemental fulfillment of those actually biblical obligations is achieved by producing the specified verbalization (e.g., reciting the relevant Torah passages) or by executing the specified action (e.g., eating *matsah*). Yet, how, by so doing, is *remembering* actually taking place? To put the issue in other terms, what *state of*

*mind* is required of the individual engaged in fulfillment of a *zakhor* imperative?

To Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik the fulfillment of *zakhor* involves the ability to experience history as an ontical mode of time-in-the-present.<sup>39</sup>

Experiential memory . . . recalls experiences by evoking the feelings of the past event . . . whatever was horrible and frightening should be remembered as horrible and frightening, no matter how much time has elapsed since the event transpired. . . . In short, when remembering the past, the Jew relives the event as if it were a present reality.

Rabbi Soloveitchik does not use the term archetype which I proposed as a mechanism for re-living, yet he is emphasizing the same point.

Elsewhere, using the Bergsonian notion of "qualitative time", Rabbi Soloveitchik states:<sup>40</sup>

Upon this phenomenon of an historical continuum was founded the strength of *Masoreh*, conceived as an historic stream of Jewish spirit whose tributaries of past, present, and future *merged in each other*. This is real historic consciousness. *This is qualitative consciousness*. Quantitative time creates but archeological consciousness of periods gone by that do not infiltrate into one's own ego existence.

The following points can be distilled from this description: (1) remembering or historical awareness is an experience of re-living; (2) it is a process of re-enacting the past in the present—a merging of subjective presentness and an experience of pastness (this phenomenology basically characterizes the contents of archetypal memory); (3) the goal is an experience of inter-esse with past personalities, enhanced by empathic relating to past experients, similar to the way psychotherapists attempt to experience, and thereby *know* their patients' experiences. Consider, for example, Greenson's description, "I have to let part of me become the patient, and I have to go through his experiences as if I were the patient, and to introspect what is going on inside me as they occur."<sup>41</sup> Thus, (4) this process of re-living involves a qualitative and subjectively experienced change in ego state (or "ego existence," in Rabbi Soloveitchik's words). As Abraham Joshua Heschel put it, "We live in the Jews of the past with the Jews of the present."<sup>42</sup> These elements, then, characterize an authentic fulfillment of, for example, the obligation to "envision oneself" as having had actually participated in and as also currently historically participating in the exodus from Egypt.

Before proceeding further, I think it appropriate to add the relevant reflections of a secular observer. Writing on the contemporary affliction of the sense of "existential outcastness" in members of modern society, Robert J. Lifton considers that a contributing factor to the sudden interest in religious observance (manifested in the healthy searching of *ba'alei teshuvah* as well as in the misguided attraction of modern youth to pseudo-religious cults) has been the weakening of "traditional modes of continuity" between past and present, persons and achievements, and the sense of symbolic immortality.<sup>43</sup> By this he means something quite similar to the theme of this paper: the presentness of an individual is always inextricably related to a psychologically healthy sense of both the immediate and historic past, enhanced by symbolic paradigms which mediate reality and lend significance to certain intangibles, fantasies, aspirations, and fears and paradoxes of everyday living. Contemporary man, however, in attempting to replace the symbolic and the transitional with "understanding" has, in retrospect, lost both! Hence, the religio-psychological significance of *zakhor* imperatives.

#### IV

Psychology has much of relevance to our discussion of the state of mind apparently advocated in the preceding view. Initially, I will focus on salient observations which suggest an inherent danger in or the pathological nature of such a state of mind.

The growth and development of the normal personality involves the relative unimpairment of basic abilities ranging from accurate perception, reality-testing, and the exercise of judgment to the more popularly recognized "psychological" processes of impulse control, synthetic-integrative functions, autonomy of the ego from instinctual demands, etc. (Certainly, environmental variables such as innate disposition, the influence of family and social system, etc. are also involved, but I mean to focus on psychological processes.) By far, one of the most critical requirements for the successful operation of any of these other variables is the establishment of distinct "reality frames"; that is, maintaining the distinctions between dream, illusion, and reality; animate and inanimate; inner and other realities; past and present; self and other; and concrete and metaphor. Searles, Winnicott, Fast, and others have pointed out that problems in maintaining these distinctions count significantly in the nature of some of the more severe psychopathologies such as borderline conditions and frank psychosis.<sup>44</sup>

An important contribution of both Searles' and Winnicott's

analyses is that during early stages of development, reality frames are not rightly considered confused or dedifferentiated, but rather as not yet existent, such that for the infant, until approximately one year, "illusion" is reality—self and other, past and present, inner and outer, concrete and metaphor are identical. Early developmental stages, such as the transitional phase of infancy, is an intermediate time, "the root of symbolism," along the journey from pure subjectivity to objectivity. Symbolism proper is employed when an individual already clearly distinguishes between fantasy and fact, inner and outer realities, etc. And, as Searles puts it, the differences between these aspects of objective reality could never develop if there had not been once a *lack* of such distinctions, as there is during infancy. Only in psychopathology—or, temporarily, in the creative mystical or artistic state of mind—are these distinctions, previously established to one degree or another, actually *dedifferentiated* or fused.

Searles illustrates the dedifferentiation of concrete and metaphor as follows:<sup>45</sup>

What we call fantasy, a product of the imagination, is experienced [by dedifferentiated patients] as an actual and undisguised attribute of the world around him, . . . and concrete is seen only as a symbol [e.g., one schizophrenic patient remarked, "Whenever you see a Yale lock or a Schlage lock, it's part of the Chain System"]. *Memories of past events are experienced not as "memories," but rather as literal reenactments of those events.*

Indeed, gaps of consciousness wherein past and present are indissolubly merged is a frequently encountered characteristic of severely disturbed patients. Reality testing and its adjuvant functions are severely compromised when reality frames are characteristically dedifferentiated or confused, or were never appropriately established during the early stages of human cognitive development.

While Searles' analysis is clinically oriented, Winnicott, as Freud before him, suggested that his notion of the transitional period (with cognitive or psychological features similar to Searles' description of dedifferentiation) also applies to certain social institutions.<sup>46</sup>

I am staking a claim for an intermediate state between a baby's inability and his growing ability to recognize and accept reality. I am studying the substances of *illusion*, that which is allowed to the infant, *and which in adult life is inherent in art and religion*, and yet can become the hallmark of madness. . . . It is assumed that the task of reality-acceptance is never completed, that no human being is free from the strain of relating inner and outer reality, and that relief from this strain is provided by an intermediate area which is not challenged (arts, religion, etc.). . . .

Against this background, it would seem that to re-live the past in such a way as to undergo a qualitative change in "one's ego existence"—to subjectively experience the past as present, to fuse the metaphoric or symbolic reality of *matsah* with an experience of actually partaking in the pascal offering, to contemporaneously experience the fast of *Tishah b'Av* with the identical agonies and sensations of loss experienced by the original historic personae—is a regression to a dedifferentiated state of mind, a state of mind which can be characteristic of psychic imbalance. Perhaps this sort of experience was involved in the destructive consequences shared by three of the four talmudic scholars who dared to enter *Pardes*, the realm of the innermost cognitive and spiritual depths of Torah. Save R. Akiva, the fusion of earthly and heavenly knowledge, of past and present, of this-worldliness and other-worldliness caused ben Azai to go beserk, ben Zoma to die, and confused Elisha ben Abuyah to the point of apostasy.<sup>47</sup>

Indeed, the *zakhor* imperative of *sipur yetsiat Mitsrayim* was institutionalized without a blessing precisely because its fulfillment is without limit—*kol ha-marbeh harei zeh me'shubah*.<sup>48</sup> If this *mitsvah* optimally involves the state of re-living the past, then the danger of becoming lost in a dedifferentiated state is paramount. And one again speculates that perhaps such fusion of reality frames caused R. Eliezer and his colleagues, while engaged in the telling of *yetsiat Mitsrayim* one well-known Pesah, to lose track of time, to be found by their students still involved in the telling well into the next morning.<sup>49</sup>

If, on the other hand, dedifferentiation of reality frames—specifically, between past and present and between own experience and others' experience—in the fulfillment of required religio-historic experience is to be considered an intermediate zone of creative experience, and not merely some transitional psychotic episode, certain parameters must be respected which allow such dedifferentiation to occur productively and with minimal risk. I believe such parameters can be discerned in the larger halakhic system surrounding the process of *mitsvah* fulfillment.

## V

There are several halakhic parameters in an observance of *zakhor* which serve to modulate the quality and extent of the qualitative change in ego state characteristic of re-experiencing historic events.



The first relevant parameter is that each *zakhor* imperative is reified in the form of precisely delimited rituals, such as reading a specific portion of the Torah, reciting the three words “*zekher li-ytsiat Mitsrayim*,” eating a specific amount of *matsah*, whose appropriate enactment must occur within the constraints of specified times for performance, proportion of performance, criteria for fulfillment in the first place (*le-khathilah*) or after the fact (*be-de'aved*), of who is and who is not obligated by the *mitsvah*, and so forth. *Zakhor* obligations must be fulfilled through the required verbalizations or acts before they are broadened by subjective experience. Thus, the ritual itself serves as a consensually validated frame of reference.

Related to the delimitation of rituals is the issue of whether intentionality and subjective understanding (*kavanah*) are necessary in order to basically fulfill *mitsvah* obligations. While many obligations are considered fulfilled even where the performer does not exercise *kavanah*, following the view that *mitsvot einom tsrikhot kavanah*, all *mitsvot* require at least the elemental, objective understanding that one is involved in fulfilling the word of God; that one is, in fact, doing a specific *mitsvah*. In still other cases, even where *kavanah la-tset*, strictly interpreted, is absent, certain inferred experiences of “ownership” of the *mitsvah* (such as the gustatorial pleasure experienced while consuming *matsah*)<sup>51</sup> are acceptable for basic fulfillment.

In other words, consciousness of the contemporaneous fulfillment of a *mitsvah* through a specifically defined enactment *whose essential nature is symbolic* (“*Matsah—al shum moh?*”) and temporally non-transferable, serves to anchor the religionist in the world where symbol and concrete, history and current experience are differentiated.<sup>52</sup> If partaking of the *sukkah* experience promotes re-living the Israelites’ wanderings in the desert under the protective glory cloud, this experience is delimited by the category *taishvu ke’ain taduru*: i.e., insofar as the fulfillment of one’s obligations is concerned, the *sukkah* is a ritual structure of wood and bough, not a glory cloud, and must satisfy the requirements of a contemporary dwelling.<sup>53</sup> Dedifferentiated as one might be, halakhah considers one who remains in the *sukkah* during a rainstorm a *hedyot*, a simpleton. Cognizance of having to be *yotseh*, of having to discharge one’s obligations, can only take place while in the yet differentiated ego state; where the actor knows that it is he, in the present, who fulfills the obligation and not his alter-ego as a re-lived historic personification. Regression to the experience of dedifferentiation can occur around the rituals, but only in addition to the awareness, necessary at

some point, that the root of the experience begins and ends in the differentiation of the objective act *as symbol* from subsequent psychological experiences. For, unlike his historic forebears for whom the experience in question was pristine, the contemporary religionist's experience is an obligation.

It should already be obvious that a third parameter serving as a reality-preserving constraint is the religionist's ability to oscillate freely in and out of the dedifferentiated state that follows the enactment of a *zakhor* imperative. The religionist methodically prepares for such qualitative changes in ego existence prior to the experience, sometimes "thirty days preceding the festival."<sup>54</sup> He is, in other words, not overtaken by sudden lapses into dedifferentiation, but rather anticipates these as momentary opportunities for shared experiences. He readies himself with the proper appurtenances and knowledge of the details attendant to the optimal performance of the *mitsvah*. Understood, too, is that he must eventually forsake these dedifferentiated, intermediate zones of experience so that other obligations can be fulfilled: at 11:30 P.M. Passover eve, he may be on the road from Egypt, staff, sack, and *matsah* in hand, but by the next morning he must be capable of attending to the daily prayers for the first day of Passover. And thus did R. Eliezer and his colleagues return to the differentiated state by confronting the urgent halakhic demand of *z'man k'riat shema*.

Poets or artists, in the production of their most significant and creative works, cross or fuse the distinctions between various reality frames, yet within an overriding or prevailing conscious sense of controlling such dedifferentiation so that it produces a consensually meaningful product, and with the ability to oscillate freely in and out of the undifferentiated state. Such states, then, are temporary regressions in the service of creativity. To the degree that this latter quality is compromised by independent psychological conflicts does the artist or poet, or the religious mystic, experience actually destructive psychic breakdown. Thus did R. Akiva partake of *Pardes* unscathed—"ve-Rabi Akiva nikhnat ba-shalom ve-yatsa ba-shalom," he was able to regress adaptively into and then differentiate out of the intermediate zone of the innermost depths of Torah.<sup>55</sup>

Finally, the *zakhor* experience is not a defense. It may imply a dissatisfaction with the continuous turning of history, and surely can express a yearning for the future or a need to rework the present through the past, but it does not disguise an *inability to function* in the present world, nor is it a neurotic repetition.

Leaving the intermediate zone is depressing, anxiety-provoking; it awakens in us childhood sensations of loss and disillusionment and

exposes us once again to the tension involved in the relentless demands of living in the differentiated, naked, adult, cold, unfantastic, anti-illusory world. It is a pain experienced most poignantly by the recovering schizophrenic who begins to slowly separate concrete from metaphor and relearns their uses and limits. Often, this tension is so great that we feel that the dedifferentiated experiences — the Sabbath, the festivals, etc. — are wrenched from us. Halakhah attempts to soften the blow. It nurses the apprehensive soul, resistantly differentiating itself from the Sabbath experience, with the faint pleasance of spices and the glimmer of light in the *havdalah* ceremony. When the dedifferentiated state has been longer and more intense, such as during the *sheloshah regalim*, halakhah adds an entire semi-holy day, *isru hag* — as a transitional zone for a transitional zone — to absorb both God's loss, as it were, and His people's. *Kasheh alai pr'eidatkhem*,<sup>56</sup> "your departure is hard for me."

## VI

The notion of constraints against possibly destructive dedifferentiation is emphasized in the following. I suggested in the earlier essay that the archetypal contents of the binding of Isaac, reinforced by Jewish group behavior and social policy across the ages, may serve as a disposition for a certain ethnic willingness to sacrifice and to be sacrificed. This psychic state of preparedness was specifically emphasized by the *Bet Yosef*. There are certainly times when self-sacrifice, on the ultimate level, is actually obligatory in Jewish law. Yet, this disposition can quickly turn into a hindering and inappropriate personality trait if it pervades everyday life. How far, then, does one allow or encourage the archetypal tendency for self-sacrifice to influence personality?

The answer may lie in the curious fact that there is no mention of *zakhor* in the biblical references to the binding of Isaac.<sup>57</sup>

Why is *zekhirah* mentioned [with regard to] Abraham and Jacob but with Isaac there is no mention of *zekhirah*? Because [Heaven] sees his ashes [and it is as if he were still] bound on the altar.<sup>58</sup>

R. Yosef Rugezover once observed, "Where there is visual perception, memory is not relevant."<sup>59</sup> That is, when the content of a historic event has sufficient realness or "presentness" to it — the visual "evidence" of Isaac's ashes and the ashes of Isaacs throughout Jewish history — then the event is known immediately rather than by memory alone. This suggests that an archetypal disposition toward self-

sacrifice is limited by two factors: (1) where actual self-sacrifice is necessary, such as in cases of *yaihareg ve-al ya'avor*, it is primarily the biblical obligation rather than personal judgment that is obeyed, and (2) the disposition for sacrifice in other areas, such as in every day living and relating, should not operate unarticulated by reality issues and healthy, more or less objective judgment.

Most significant, then, is this talmudic exegesis:<sup>60</sup>

"That I did not command, and that I did not speak, and that did not come into my mind."<sup>61</sup> 'That I did not command,' this refers to the son of Misha, king of Moab, as it is said, "And he took his eldest son that was to rule under him and brought him up as a sacrifice."<sup>62</sup> 'And that I did not speak'; this refers to the daughter of Yiftah.<sup>63</sup> 'And that did not come into my mind'; this refers to Isaac, son of Abraham.

In other words, though these individuals reflect a range of motivations for self-sacrifice, *none were truly necessary*. Plainly, while one may relate, in a religio-historic sense, to Isaac's willingness to be sacrificed—to be *prepared* to offer one's all—one must not in so doing become so dedifferentiated that one loses touch with the objective demands of the current situation, with whether or not self-destruction is required, or, worse, to unconsciously foster an agenda for psychological self-destruction by manipulating and then impotently surrendering to failure.<sup>64</sup> Thus, there is no imperative of *zakhor* for archetypal Isaac—thereby rendering its memory more constrained or delimited—precisely because a too undifferentiated state of inter-esse in this case may lead to destructive consequences.

## VII

Summarizing the above, the phenomenon of *zakhor* involves the experience of a creative, temporary psychological regression to a dedifferentiated state, a transitional or intermediate zone where past and present, own and others' experiences, concrete (the ritual) and metaphor (its symbolism) are merged. It includes more than mere empathy; it is an existential state of the unity of human experience, developmental as well as historic. The basic fulfillment of the obligation, however, remains an undertaking in the yet differentiated state of mind which then, under the "protection" of the halakhic super-system and its imposed reality constraints, can expand into a deeper, "qualitative change in ego existence." This secondary achievement is probably enhanced by the accessibility to the individual of unconscious dispositions for specific historic behaviors or reactions to

certain historic events. These dispositions are either formulated through subtle learning and socialization processes, including parental education, which occur throughout one's lifetime, or exist as givens in a "racial unconscious" informed by some yet to be understood genetic inheritance. An example of the former would be the midrashic account of R. Yehudah ha-Nasi's differential treatment of Antoninus Pious, consciously acting on the model established by Jacob's similar position toward Esau.<sup>65</sup> An example of the latter may be the oft-noted Jewish tendency for self-sacrifice, the so-called Samson or Masada complex,<sup>66</sup> which, even where this involves a conscious response to the contemporary circumstance, is quite possibly reinforced by a latent, unconscious group tendency. The remaining, unanswered issue concerns the nature of genetically inherited archetypes and their deployment, whose meaningful explication awaits future developments in ethnohistory, genetics, and the biosocial sciences.<sup>67</sup>

It would appear that the conclusion drawn in my earlier essay, that archetypal re-living facilitates if not makes possible the fulfillment of *zakhor*, must be modified. In fact, the basic halakhic parameters governing ritual observance enhance or safeguard the additional achievement of a dedifferentiated psychological state of re-experiencing and any subsequent qualitative changes in ego existence. "Remember the days of old; consider the generations" may be occasionally transformed into an intermediate experience of the type discussed here. Yet such a psychological capability must perforce be moderated by the unarrested demands of halakhic living in our differentiated, non-intermediate world.

## NOTES

1. "Remembering and Historical Awareness," *Tradition*, 1975, 15:3: 43-51; see also Arnold J. Wolf's subjective treatment of this topic in his article preceding mine, "Remember to Remember," *Tradition*, 1975, 15:3: 33-42. The specific *zakhor* imperatives are: Egypt—Exod. 13:3; Deut. 16:3; Horeb—Deut. 4:9-10; Amalek—Exod. 17:14-16; Deut. 25:17-19; Miriam—Deut. 24:9; Shabbat—Exod. 20:8; golden calf—Deut. 9:7.
2. *Hayav adam lirot et atsmo ke'eilu who yatsa mi-Mitsrayim*, *Pesahim* 116b. Rambam, *M.T., Hil. Hamets u-Matsah* 7:6, phrases this as "*hayav adam le-harot et atsmo ke'eliu who yatsa akhshav mi-Mitsrayim*," though his *nusakh ha-hagadah* follows the original talmudic version. Perhaps Rambam is emphasizing in his halakhic code that, before this experience becomes subjective, one must externalize the self-experience through the mechanisms of the *seder* ritual (suggested by Rabbi Shubert Spero, *Shabat ha-Gadol Drashah*, *Pesah*, 1979).
3. Commentary to Gen. 12:6, and a similar version at *Sotah* 34b.
4. As noted in the earlier essay (p. 47n), rather than merely re-enacting a historical event outside of its time, which would violate the event's *historic* essence, the historian actually re-enacts events whose image is retained "in time," *via* the corresponding mental schema, or

archetypes. Historical facts, thus, retain their essential temporality; i.e., *qua* historical event they are time bound, and yet can be relived years after their origination. This amply addresses J.W. Meiland's criticism of the idealist position (*Scepticism and Historical Knowledge*, Random House, 1965, p. 81). Consider also David Hume's belief that one cannot talk of having a memory without experiencing some corresponding mental datum.

I would also note that since the time of the appearance of the original essay, the field of psychohistory, to which such an essay rightfully belongs, has burgeoned, though not without an equal growth in critics and sceptics. The notion that history can influence group or individual psychology and development, and certainly the reverse, is explicated in a theory known as the psychogenic approach to historical and human development. It is well discussed in several essays, the best of which are by its own developer, Lloyd deMause, "The Evolution of Childhood," p. 123-179, in G. Kren & L. Rappoport (eds.) *Varieties of Psychohistory* (New York: Springer, 1976); deMause's own text, *The History of Childhood* (New York: The Psychohistory Press, 1974), and G. Davis, *Childhood and History in America* (New York: The Psychohistory Press, 1976), pp. 13-33.

5. Exod. 13:3; Deut. 16:3.
6. M.T.; Hil. *Hamez u-Matsah* 7:1; *SMaG*, Pos. no. 41; *Hinukh*, no. 21.
7. Ber. 21a; M.T.; Hil. *Kriat She'ma* 1:3, 7.
8. *Torat Kohanim: Behukotai* 26:3.
9. Ber. 12a; Jer. T. Ber. 1:6; Exod. Rabba 22:3; *Tur Sh. A.*; *O.H.* 66:10.
10. Sh. A.; *O.H.* 67; see also *She'elat David*, no. 1; *Or Sameah: Hil. Kriat Shema* 3:1.
11. *TaZ* to Sh. A.; *O.H.* 625 and see *Ber.* 12b.
12. *Tur Sh. A.*; *O.H.* 625; see *BaH*, loc. cit.
13. Deut. 25:17-19; *Ber.* 13a, *Tos.*; *Meg.* 17b, *Tos.*; *Rosh*, *Ber.* 7, no. 20; M.T.; Hil. *Milakhim* 5:3; *Hinukh*, nos. 603, 605; *SMaG*, Pos. nos. 116 and 117; *Sefer ha-Mitsvot*, Pos. 189. The obligation to physically obliterate Amalek is a separate obligation according to most: *Hinukh*, no. 604; *SMaG*, Neg. no. 226, and see commentary *Brit Moshe* ad loc; *Sefer ha-Mitsvot*, Pos. 188.
14. *Meg.* 18a—*Tan'ia: e 'zakhor,' yakhol ba-lev; ke'she-who omer 'lo tishkah,' harei shikhat ha-lev amurah, ha mah ani me'kayem 'zakhor'?—ba-peh.* See *Sh. A.*; *O.H.* 685 and *Magen Avraham*, ad loc.
15. *Ke'dai she-yizkor lanu afro shel Yitshak*, *Taan.* 16a; *Ber.* 62b.
16. *Tiku le-fani ba-shofar shel ayil ke'dai she-ezkor la-khem akeidat Yitshak*, *R.H.* 16a.
17. *Bet Yosef* to *Tur Sh. A.*; *O.H.* 1: no. 13.
18. *Pen tishkah et ha-devarim asher ra'u einekha . . . yom asher amad'ta lifnei Adonai. . .*, Deut. 4:9-10.
19. "Remember that which God did to Miriam on the way as you left Egypt," Deut. 24:9; Ramban to *Sefer ha-Mitsvot: Essen ha-Nosafim* (Additional Positive Commandments), no. 7.
20. M.T.; Hil. *Tumat Tsara'at* 16:9.
21. Ramban, *Essen ha-Nosafim*, no. 7, and his commentary to Deut. 9:7; *Arukh ha-Shulhan: O.H.* 60:65 argues that this only applied to the generation of the wilderness.
22. Deut. 32:7; and see the status given it by Rotenberg, *Toldot Am Olam* (New York, 1967), p. 15.
- 23a. Lev. 26:40.
- 23b. See *Ba'er Hetev* to *Sh. A.*; *O.H.* 60:1.
24. *Sh. A.*; *O.H.* 60.
25. Exod. 20:8.
26. *Pes.* 106a, 117b; *SMaG*, Pos. no. 29; *eiruv tavshilin* also bears this purpose (*Bez.* 16b) though Rambam, M.T.; Hil. *Yom Tov* 6:1 does not cite it.
27. *Mekhiltah: Yisro* 20; see Ramban to Exod. 20:8.
28. *Bez.* 16b.
29. *le-Or ha-Halakhah* (TelAviv, 1964), p. 221-230.
30. *Menahot* 66a.
31. *Suk.* 41a; *Sh. A.*; *O.H.* 664.
32. *Rama* to *Sh. A.*; *O.H.* 494:3.

33. *Pes.* 114b, 115a, 119b (see Rashi/Rashbam).
34. *Sh. A.*; *O.H.* 549:2, 560, 561; *M.T.*; *Hil. Ta'anot* 5:12-18.
35. *Git.* 7a; *M.T.*; *Hil. Ta'anot* 5:12-19.
36. *B.B.* 60b; *M.T.*, *ibid.*
37. *Sotah* 41a; *M.T.*, *ibid.*
38. *M.K.* 26a; *Sh. A.*; *O.H.* 561; *M.T.*, *ibid.* On the far-reaching effects of the trauma of the destruction of the Temples, see Rashi, s.v. *miyom*, *Sanh.* 75a. There are, however, memories which, *prima facie*, one is not to have or to recall for others. The Bible specifically forbids traumatizing a convert by taunting him through recall of his previous ways or errors. *Exod.* 22:20, 23:9—You shall not intimidate the *ger*, for you *know* the soul of the *ger* . . . —*Levit.* 25:17; *B.M.* 58b, 59b; *Hinukh*, nos. 83, 338; *M.T.*; *Hil. Mekhirah* 14:13; *Sh. A.*; *H.M.* 228:4.)

As Rambam puts it, "If he is a *ba'al teshuvah*, do not say to him, 'Remember your earlier deeds.' If he is the descendant of converts, do not say to him, 'Remember the deeds of your forefathers.'" (*M.T.*; *Hil. Teshuvah* 7:8.) Some feel that this prohibition poses a technical-ethical dilemma for religious psychotherapists who work with disturbed individuals, be they *ba'alei teshuvah* or otherwise, in that psychotherapy undoubtedly encourages the patient to experience oftentimes emotionally painful awarenesses of and confrontations with precisely such past "historic" material. This problem is addressed in my monograph on diagnostic and treatment approaches with psychologically conflicted religious patients. See "The Penitent Personality Type: Diagnostic, Treatment, and Ethical Aspects of a Specific Religious Personality," *Special Monograph Issue: Journal of Psychology and Judaism*, 1979, 4:3.

Briefly, the difficulty can be resolved using the didactic concept established by Ramban with regard to *zekhirat ma'aseh Miriam*; to wit, since the recall of emotionally significant traumata or even non-traumatic but relevant past history is encouraged in the treatment context so as to facilitate growth and in order to free the conflicted individual from the influence of previous pain—and not merely to traumatize the patient—then the psychotherapeutic environment is identical to the context wherein we may remember our forefathers' misdeeds.

39. *A Conspectus of the Public Lectures of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik: Shiurei ha-Rav*, J. Epstein (ed.) (New York: Hamevaser, 1974), p. 55-56.
40. Emphases added, "Sacred and Profane: *Kodesh* and *Chol* in World Perspectives," *Gesher*, 1966, 3:1, p. 5-29, 21. Also, recently ("The Community," *Tradition*, 1978, 17:2, p. 24):

We not only tell stories describing events; we tell stories precipitating the re-experiences of events which transpired millennia ago. To tell a story is to relive the event. . . . Our story unites countless generations; present, past, and future *merge into one great experience*.

Nima H. Adlerblum, in a prosaic essay, gives a similar description of the "collective Jewish spirit" she finds implicit in Jewish philosophy ("The Collective Jewish Spirit," *Tradition*, 1960, 3:1, p. 44-59, 55):

The Jewish whole is the reality expressed through the individual, who *qua* Jew has individuality only insofar as it embodies the whole . . . Every festival is a historical dynamo regenerating and reproducing the past into a living form of our collective spirit. It is a re-living of the whole of history from its very beginning. *The past, the present, the people, the land; memory, and actual experience, are confused together into one spiritual whole* . . . We see in the festivals, as if through a magnifying glass, that the Jewish concept of continuity is not merely that of time and space, but an experiencing of the past *as if it were alive today in the present*.

41. *The Technique of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. I (New York: International Universities Press, 1967), p. 367.
42. *God in Search of Man* (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), p. 201.
43. Lifton, R.J., *History and Human Survival*. (New York: Vintage, 1971).
44. Searles, H.F., *Collected Papers on Schizophrenia and Related Subjects* (New York: International Universities Press, 1965), chaps. 10, 19; Winnicott, D., "Transitional Objects and

- Transitional Phenomena," in his *Playing and Reality* (London: Tavistock Pubs., 1971), chap. 1; I. Fast & Chethik, M., "Some Aspects of Object Relationships in Borderline Children," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 1972 53: 479-485.
45. Searles, *ibid.*, p. 574-575.
  46. Winnicott, *op. cit.*, p. 2-3, 13.
  47. *Hag.*, 14b; Shir ha-Shirim Rabba 1:28. In *Hagigah, Tos.*, s.v. *nikhnetu* holds that this was a perceived experience rather than an actual one, which enhances the possibility that individual stability and psychic preparedness were relevant aspects of the consequences. See also *Tos., Git.* 84a, s.v. *al minat she-tal'ali le-rakia*, and Maharsha's analysis at *Hag.* 14b.
  48. *Orhot Hayim*, no. 18; *Sefer Avudraham ha-Shalem*, in the name of the *Rashba*, p. 220; *M.T.; Hil. Hamez* 7:1.
  49. *Ket.* 105a, *Tos.* s.v. *de-hasiv*.
  50. *Pes.* 114b; *Ber.* 13b; *Erub.* 95b; *Bet Yosef to Tur Sh. A.; O.H.* 213, 219; *Ba'er Halakhah to Sh. A.; O.H.* 60:4; *Radbaz*, 4:20; *Sedai Hemed*, 4: 61: p. 125-145.
  51. *Sanh.* 62b, Rashi s.v. *she-kein neheneh*; *R.H.* 28a.
  52. For more detailed discussion of the halakhic status of mystic states and the issue of their incorporation into acceptable halakhic practice, see chap. 9 ("Substance Abuse and Alcoholism in Halakhic Perspective") in my *Judaism and Psychology: Halakhic Perspectives* (New York: Ktav-Yeshiva University Press, 1980).
  53. *Suk.* 28b; *Sh. A.; O.H.* 639:7.
  54. *Pes.* 6a; *Meg.* 29b; *Sanh.* 12b; *A.Z.* 5b; (. . . two weeks before) *Bek.* 58a.
  55. Shir ha-Shirim Rabba 1:28; *Hag.* 14b merely states, ". . . *ve-Rabi Akiba yatsa be-shalom*" yet cf. *Hag.* 15b.
  56. *Suk.* 55b; Rashi to *Lev.* 23:36 and *Num.* 29:36. In a related fashion, Rabbi Shubert Spero sees *Sukkot* as a "decompression period" allowing for a let-down following the intense *Yom Kippur* experience (*God for All Seasons*, New York: Shengold, 1967, p. 56).
  57. *Lev.* 26:42—"ve-zakharti et briti Ya'akov, ve-af et briti Yitshak, ve-af et briti Avraham ezkor. . . ."
  58. *Torat Kohanim: Behukotai* 8:1-6.
  59. *Zafnat Paneah: Trumot*, p. 120, "*be-makom she-yesh geder re'iah lo shayakh zekhirah.*"
  60. *Taan.* 4a and see *Maharsha* (see also *Sanh.* 89b). For another perspective on the Jewish tendency for self-sacrifice, see I. Charney, "And Abraham Went to Slay Isaac: A Parable of Killer, Victim, and Bystander in the Family of Man," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 1973, 10:2, 304-318.
  61. *Jer.* 19:5.
  62. 2 Kings 3:27—in this final move in his losing battle against Jehoram, the Moabite king managed to get Israel to end the battle.
  63. *Judg.* 11:29-40.
  64. Consider these recent remarks of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "Majesty and Humility," *Tradition*, 1978, 17:2, p. 36-37, on the existential requirement for self-sacrifice and, in a sense, self-negation:  
 Man must not always be the victor. From time to time triumph should turn into defeat . . . In what areas of human conduct does Judaism recommend self-defeat? Self-defeat is demanded in those areas in which man is most interested, where the individual expects to find the *summum bonum*, the realization of his most cherished dream or vision . . . It is precisely in those areas that God requires man to withdraw. What was the most precious possession of Abraham; with what was he concerned the most? Isaac. Because the son meant so much to him, God instructed him to retreat, to give the son away . . .  
 Despite this despairing picture, Rabbi Soloveitchik eventually depicts the opposite side of the coin:  
 What happens after man makes the movement of recoil and retreats? God may instruct him to resume his march to victory and move onward in conquest and triumph



. . . Abraham was told to withdraw, and to defeat himself, by giving Isaac away. He listened; God accepted Isaac but did not retain him. God returned him to Abraham.

Thus does Rabbi Soloveitchik allow that self-sacrifice need not be terminal. It is (1) in this possibility of oscillation between self-defeat and healthy, appropriate self-esteem, and (2) in the recognition that extreme or continuous (e.g., Job) self-sacrifice can only be demanded by God rather than initiated by man, that a viable philosophy of religious experience emerges here rather than an individualized portrait of psychologically primitive surrender. See also "Catharsis," *Tradition*, 1978, 17:2 p. 53.

65. *Gen. Rabba* 75:6.

66. See my essay, "Samson and Masada: Altruistic Suicide Reconsidered," *Psychoanalytic Review*, 1978, 65:4, pp. 631-640. R. Patai takes this approach to some "typical" ethnic characteristics of Jews, in his *The Jewish Mind* (New York: Scribners, 1977).

67. The scientific validity of the inheritability of memory—or the neurochemical changes which are produced by learning and storage—is recently advanced by G.R. Taylor, *The Natural History of the Mind* (New York: 1979), p. 252-254.