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TOWARDS A GENUINE JEWISH PHILOSOPHY: *HALAKHIC MIND*'S NEW PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

> It is not so much the particular form that scientific theories have now taken . . . as the movement of thought behind them that concerns the philosopher. Our eyes once opened, we may pass on to a yet newer outlook on the world, but we can never go back to the old outlook.
>
> —Sir Arthur Eddington[1]

Halakhic Mind,[2] written by the Rav, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, in 1944 (but only published in 1986), proposes a new philosophy of halakha which emerges through a critique of traditional religious philosophy as well as its scientific and philosophical antecedents. *Halakhic Mind* is a difficult and arcane work, but it provides an intellectually exciting, challenging, and ground-breaking discourse on the integration of quantum physics, philosophy of religion, and halakhic methodology. This essay presents an explication of the Rav's basic themes: the interrelationship of physics and epistemological theory, the development of quantum physics and the neo-Kantian theory of knowledge, and the emergence of a new philosophy of religion to replace that which had been shown to be outmoded by these new scientific and philosophical developments. After elaborating a practical application of the Rav's philosophy to halakha (the specific mitsvah of *shofar*), the essay explores how the Rav carried through this philosophy in his later works—particulary his "*Kol Dodi Dofek*"—in addressing the problem of evil.

It is worth mentioning at the outset that though a critical evaluation of *Halakhic Mind* is surely a desideratum, the Rav's philosophical oeuvre has to a great extent been lost on a potential readership. Even more urgently than critical evaluation, readers need elucidation.[3] This essay is an attempt to provide such elucidation while also demonstrating the connections between one of the Rav's more popular works—"*Kol*

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Dodi Dofek"—and the more complex articulations of the philosophical writings examined here. Though the elaboration of the links between these genres of the Rav's writings is preliminary and perhaps skeletal, it will, I hope, demonstrate the value of bringing the various writings of the Rav into fuller conversation.

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The discipline of philosophy of religion had for centuries been dominated by the methodology of first Aristotelian and then Scholastic philosophy, and afterwards by classical Newtonian science. In *Halakhic Mind*, the Rav proposes that the very paradigms which governed the inquiry of the religious philosopher were themselves outmoded. Thus, where the traditional philosophy of religion, like many of the contemporary human sciences, had been dominated by a search for rationalist explanation, the Rav radically undermines this project by arguing that the scientific and philosophical models that governed this quest had become untenable. While for centuries the Jewish philosopher had been forced into the posture of an apologist, defending religious experience in relationship to the apparently stronger truth claims of science or philosophy, the Rav, in *Halakhic Mind*, argues for the priority of halakha as the unique and automonous source of religious meaning.

For the Rav, however, the false detour that Jewish religious philosophy had taken through Greek philosophy, Medieval Scholasticism, and Enlightenment science, could be rectified only through those very languages of science and philosophy. That is, though the Rav affirms in *Halakhic Mind* that a Jewish philosophy of religion will ultimately emerge only from the halakha itself, the re-grounding of religious philosophy in Jewish Law is first and foremost a *philosophical* and *scientific* enterprise. In order to establish the priority of halakhic modes of consciousness and interpretation (as opposed to those modes promulgated by Enlightenment philosophy and science), the Rav turned in *Halakhic Mind* to what may seem to us unlikely sources of inspiration: the neo-Kantian philosophy of Paul Natorp and the emerging scientific languages of the quantum physicist. From out of the new scientific epistemology implied in quantum mechanics, and with help from Natorp's philosophical concept of "reconstruction," a Jewish philosophy based upon the halakha could finally emerge.

In demonstrating the poverty of traditional religious philosophy—which was driven by the search for cause and the desire for rationalization—the Rav confronts on the one hand the explanatory arguments of

Rambam in the *Guide*, and on the other, the explanatory arguments of liberal theology. Both posit an ideal outside of the halakhic process, a telos towards which the mitsvot themselves tend and under which they may ultimately be subordinated. In this, the arguments of *Halakhic Mind* parallel those of the *Nineteen Letters* of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, which explicitly associated the world-view implied in the *Guide* with that implied in the works of Moses Mendelssohn.

Hirsch saw both Rambam in the *Guide* and Mendelssohn in *Jerusalem* as taking their standpoint outside of Judaism, finding external reference points through which to explain and rationalize the halakha.[4] The liberal theologian, taking his cue from the rationalist philosopher, claimed to understand the *reasons* for the mitsvot and was thus able to reject their observance. In presupposing an independent realm of Truth or Reason, liberal theologians like Mendelssohn understood the law to be merely a formal mechanism subordinated to—and in the service of—a higher ethical ideal. As Hirsch explains, Mendelssohn's philosophical and aesthetic view of the Bible ultimately had its roots in the methodology of Rambam in the *Guide*.

In *Halakhic Mind*, the Rav joins a well-established tradition of anti-Maimonist argument: the author of the *Guide* was engaged in an "explanatory quest" by means of which "both mechanistic and teleological concepts of causality" explain religious phenomena "through the existence of an alien factor" (pp. 92, 93). Rambam of the *Guide* understood the mitsvot, especially the *hukim*, as themselves subordinate to an external principle. Such a methodology emptied the particular mitsvah of any positive content, relegating it as a mere means to a higher end. For example, the Rav writes:

> Should we posit the question: why did God forbid perjury? The intellectualist philosopher would promptly reply, 'Because it is contrary to the norm of truth.'

Such a response, the Rav continues, "would explain a religious norm by an ethical precept, making religion the handmaid of ethics"—as halakha gets pressed into the service of an abstractly defined Truth. The result of this rationalization is that religion no longer operates "with unique autonomous norms, but with technical rules, the employment of which would culminate in the attainment of some extraneous *maximum bonum*" (p. 93). Thus Rambam of the *Guide* erases particular halakhot under the sign of a higher ethical end (Truth, for example) to which they themselves are subordinated. To sanction the dietary laws on

"hygienic grounds," or to see the Sabbath "against the background of mundane social justice" is to turn to an objective order outside of the halakha in order to justify it (p. 93).[5] In the formulae of the *Guide*, halakha is subordinated to Reason.

Rambam of the *Guide* had been dominated by a philosophical methodology, one "detrimental to the philosopher of religion" that continually asked what the Rav calls the "why question" (p. 98). Instead of focusing on the meaning of the mitsvah, Rambam of the *Guide* focused on its causes and was thus never able to penetrate into the meaning of the religious act for the Jewish consciousness.

If Rambam of the *Guide* had sought a justification of halakha through philosophical categories, then the modern philosophy of religion, which had emerged as a discipline in the wake of the triumph the sciences, was even more indebted to rational modes of explanation. To transcend this philosophy of religion, which—more obsessed than ever with the "why question"— had stultified in the sociological and anthropological explanations of liberal theology, the Rav turned toward the methodological innovations of contemporary science. The modern philosopher of religion who would explore the content of the religious act (asking "what?" and not "why?") would have to turn to an unlikely mentor, the quantum physicist.

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In *Halakhic Man*, the *homo religiosus*, with his mystical, other-worldly tendencies, acted as a foil to the *ish ha-halakha*.[6] In *Halakhic Mind*, it is the Newtonian man of science who takes on the role of the adversarial anti-type. Aristotelian and Medieval Scholastic philosophy had privileged the objectivity of an independent and abstract Reason; the Newtonian scientist had come once and for all (it seemed) to announce the age of Enlightenment and the objectivity and rationality of a transparently ordered and quantified universe. Newton thus transformed a philosophical principle into a cosmic one, rationalizing the universe. As the Rav explains, the Newtonian interpretation of reality of the eighteenth century, as the Aristotelian and Scholastic interpretations before it, "both adopted a scientifically purified world as the subject matter of their studies" (p. 7). Both of these world views (though especially the latter) assumed the possibility of constructing a "purified" objective world coordinated through "abstract concepts and symbolic relational constructs." The philosopher, inheriting the objective world bequeathed to him by the traditional Newtonian scientist, was thus forced to

inhabit the world that classical science had constructed. The philosopher was left to "roam a universe of quantitative relata and mathematical interdependencies"—a realm of quantified relations and causality (p. 7). The Newtonian cosmos worked like clock-work; it was left to the scientist and philosopher to explain its mechanisms.

Starting in the nineteenth century and continuing through the early decades of the twentieth, physicists like Max Planck, Niels Bohr, and Arthur Eddington began to question the foundations of traditional Newtonian epistemology. The Newtonian philosopher, as we have seen, posited the existence of a universe which was rationally quantifiable and objectively given. The quantum physicist, by contrast, argued against the prevailing Newtonian notion of scientific objectivity. For one, the modern physicist, with new technical methods at his disposal, began to discover quantum—microscopic—phenomena which were unassimilable to the rigid and objective schemes of the Newtonian. That is, new technologies enabled the discovery of atomic and subatomic phenomena which did not conform to the Newtonian's rationalist map. The German physisict Werner Heisenberg coined his "uncertainty principle" to account for the uncertainty or indeterminacy in a world that had been presumed to be completely ordered, rational, and quantifiable.[7] And even worse, not only was the specification of the exact nature of objective reality rendered problematic, but quantum physics placed the ostensible objectivity of scientific observation in doubt. Indeed, a new generation of scientists were busy affirming that there was no such thing as the innocent observer standing outside or above an ostensibly pure objective reality. The scientist, practioners like Niels Bohr demonstrated, was part of the expermimental frame. As the experiments of the quantum physicist demonstrated time and again, the scientist helped to create his experimental "reality"; there was no such thing as purely objective data. The quantum revolution had therefore succeeded on two fronts: it assaulted the Newtonian belief in a rationally ordered objective world, while at the same time it questioned the Newtonian scientist's belief in his own methodological objectivity.

But, as the Rav demonstrates, the methodology—not to mention the ideology—of the classical physicist remained extremely durable. This Newtonian methodology is epitomized for the Rav in what he calls (following Max Planck) "atomization and piecemeal summation"—a method which "integrates the whole out of its components" (p. 56). The method applied by the Newtonian scientist "is the so-called explanatory method, which is concerned primarily with interrelations and interdependencies of successive phases in the objective order."

Given the scientist's construction of the objective order out of "an aggregate of simple elements" (p. 31), it is left for him to search for a governing principle or cause which will account for their interrelation.

The Newtonian scientist thus "searches for order and regularity, for a causal nexus and a systematic sequence." "Knowledge," for classical science, is not concerned with content, but form. The scientist eschews investigations into the "thickness" of an object, and instead explores the "surface" of relationships, turning to an external source to order a disparate set of phenomena (p. 31).

In the Rav's explication, the methodology of the classical scientist does not "investigate A and B *in themselves*," but instead "attempts to determine the interedependencies" *between* A and B. These are nothing more "than ideal points which serve the scientist as a means to the examination of inter-relations, just as the single term in a series serves the mathematician in determining the character of that series" (p. 31). The classical Newtonian man of science who asks for the "relational necessity" between different phenomena "merely dots the path of appearances," constructing an "ideal order" which is coordinated with but never penetrates into the "anonymity and mystery" of the "cosmic process" (pp. 31-32). Similarly, the traditional religious philosopher, who in an "act of surrender" inherited the method and explanatory telos of the Newtonian scientist, bound himself to a causal analysis which could never penetrate into the inner meaning of religious forms (pp. 7, 34). Burdened by the methods of the traditional scientist and the quantitatively constructed universe which he had bequeathed, "the philosophy of religion could not progress," and was left as a kind of disciplinary apologist for the cold calculus of the Newtonian (p. 39).

In response to the quantification of the world by the scientist and the philosopher, the humanist rebelled, throwing off the yoke of rationality, and cultivating, like the poet William Blake (an earlier rebel against Newtonian science), "impulse" and not "rules." But if the Newtonian scientist had erred in seeing the priority of the objectively quantified world (his world of fact), the humanist would err in his emphasis on subjectivity (his world of the mind and its constructs). Since science had claimed reason as its exclusive province, contemporary humanists were forced to take refuge in various "mystical" (sometimes irrational) movements—whether Henri Bergson's biologism and intuitionism, phenomenological emotionalism, or modern existential philosophy. Bergson, for example, in arguing that "biological and psychical phenomena" resist "a purely mechanistic explanation," sought to elaborate aspects of reality which Newtonian science—with its causal networks—

had succeeded in occluding. Against the quantifying tendencies of the Newtonian man of science, Bergson advocated a kind of "intuition" or "intellectual sympathy" through "which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible" (cited on p. 35). Where the classical scientist had created a rationalist and quantified universe, the modern metaphysician, as a corrective, sought to give voice to those subjective experiences and insights which had eluded "conceptual abstraction" (p. 35).

Although the humanist (or modern metaphysician) sought to go beyond "the path of appearances" posited by the Newtonian scientist, there was nonetheless a "Janus-face" to his enterprise. For while the Newtonian scientist amalgamated the whole from out of its components, the "modern metaphysician" found the "whole" even before he had "apprehended the components." Indeed, the modern metaphysician, so taken with the subjective constructs of his own imagination, altogether denied the existence of the parts (p. 61). Though the humanist might vaunt his ability to explore the "mystery of phenomenal reality," his subjectivism was "pseudo-scientific," leading to both "scientific laxity" and "moral corruption" (pp. 46, 54). Without the "piecemeal contact with reality," presupposed in the world of the classical scientist, the modern metaphysician in his "romantic escape" from reason was left to wander in the "wilderness of intuitionism," falling into the trap of "excessive philosophical hermeneutics" (pp. 52, 60). For where "reason," the Rav writes in a more minatory tone, "surrenders its supremacy to dark, equivocal emotions, no dam is able to stem the rising tide of the affective stream" (p. 53).[8]

Having internalized the paradigms of Newtonian physics, the philosophy of religion had found itself trapped in the causal webs of the scientist—providing the same merely functional explanations of the spiritual world that Newtonian science had provided for the material world. As if to escape these causal webs, humanists and modern metaphysicians had abandoned the objective world of science and sought to found an "impregnable fortress" of "subjectivism"—abandoning any pretense of objectivity and claiming as their own the subjective and spiritual world which the Newtonian had abandoned (p. 77).

Thus, on the one hand, the Newtonian man of science needed to be rescued from his simplistic view of the universe and the notions of causality which it implied. On the other hand, the humanist, who had come to describe aspects of reality which were impenetrable to the Newtonian scientist (even obscured by his methodology), needed to be rescued from the temptations of anti-intellectualism and irrationalism.

The humanist, locked in his subjective constructs, denied the existence of objectivity; the Newtonian scientist, assured of the existence of his objectively posited world, altogether denied the importance of subjectivity.

The quantum physicist, in many ways the "hero" of *Halakhic Mind*, comes to reconcile these two opposed intellectual tendencies and to provide a true model for the religious philosopher by first redefining the assumptions and methods of classical science. The classical physicist had assumed a "purified" objective world and had manifested a faith in what the Rav calls a "copy realism" in order "to photograph reality." The physics of this century, however, began "to regard itself as a postulated discipline of pure constructs and symbols correlated with the given" (pp. 31-32). The classical scientist maintained his faith in the objective world; the modern physicist acknowledged that the paradigms and structures of science were themselves merely constructs—artifacts which Eddington himself compared to symbolic or poetic forms.[9] As Planck wrote in the *Philosophy of Physics*, the physicist "merely creates an intellectual structure" which is "to a certain extent arbitrary" (cited on p. 111). If the Newtonian philosopher had assumed a perspective of objectivity, the quantum physicist would acknowledge that the scientist and his experimental paradigms help to create the reality which he surveys.[10]

Niels Bohr's work, in particular, demonstrates the way in which subjective constructs determine the nature of the objective world. Bohr's understanding of the "reciprocal relation of phenomenon and experiment" emphasized that the relation between subject and object must come up for reconsideration, and that the "claim of the natural sciences to absolute objectivity must undergo a thorough revision" (p. 25).[11] Subjectivity and objectivity were not—as both the Newtonian scientist and modern metaphysician had agreed—independent realms. They were instead reciprocally determining. If the humanist (celebrating subjectivity) and the Newtonian scientist (celebrating objectivity) had gone on their own paths, the Rav claims that their methodologies are in fact complimentary. The epistemology of the quantum physicist comes, then, to perform two functions: for one, it corrects the Newtonian view that the world is exhausted by objective description and causal analysis; secondly, it comes to correct the humanist view that the world is completely subordinate to subjective constructs.

The "mosaic" (or piecemeal approach of the Newtonian) and the "structural" (or wholistic approach of the humanist) are not then "two disparate methodological aspects which may be independently pursued." Rather, they form one organic whole. The quantum physicist applies both methodologies, beginning with the Newtonian frame of ref-

erence, and then reconstructing from the objectified world "structural patterns that enable him to describe the behavior of the simple elements which the atomistic method postulated" (p. 60). While the mechanist of old was content with a merely quantified and ostensibly objective physical world, his modern successor sought to reconstruct 'subjective' structural aspects which would make sense of the objective order. Thus, where the classical physicist looked outside the system for external causal factors to explain the relationships between components, the quantum physicist acknowledged that the "objective order" could only be understood through reconstructing a subjective "structural aspect" through which, paradoxically, that very objective order is configured.

It is here, the Rav writes, that the humanist and philosopher of religion finally found his "mentor."[12] For just as the quantum physicist acknowledges that subjective structures are part of his epistemological equipment (there is no absolute objectivity), so the modern philosopher of religion would have to acknowledge that the objective phenomena of religious experience must be coordinated with the subjective or qualitative spheres. Indeed, for the philosopher of religion who seeks the meaning of religious phenomena, the subjective stratum is primary: "any kind of relational postulation between the end-products of the series," the Rav observes, "must begin with the subjective phases of the process" (p. 72). The philosopher of religion cannot look outside the system. In order to understand a given objective order, he must understand "the subjective aspect of religiosity" by means of which external religious norms gain their significance. As opposed to "classical science," which "performs an act of construction to determine causality," the philosophy of religion, with its emphasis on "subjective aspects," performs what the Rav calls "an act of reconstruction." The religious philosopher, the Rav suggests, "is powerless to interpret his data unless he traces a positive set of beliefs, dogmas, norms and customs to the subjective sphere" (p. 73). To understand objectified religious norms ("those beliefs, dogmas, norms and customs"), one must penetrate into that subjective sphere through which that objective order has its being and meaning.

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Where much of *Halakhic Mind* has its intellectual pedigree in quantum physics, the Rav's emphasis on the concept of "reconstruction"—the recovery of "subjective aspects" through attention to the objective sphere—has its pedigree in the philosophical work of the philosopher

Paul Natorp. Natorp, with Hermann Cohen (about whom the Rav wrote his dissertation at Berlin in 1933) and later Ernst Cassirer, became affiliated with the school of Marburg Neo-Kantianism. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, in reaction to the excesses of Hegelian philosophical idealism and Marxian materialism, Cohen and Natorp turned their critical attention back to Kant—but they qualified Kant's approach in many respects. For one, where Kant's theory of "the thing in itself" seemed to imply a dichotomy between thought and being, Natorp and Cohen argued that thought and being only "have meaning . . . in their constant mutual relation to one another."[13] This emphasis clearly anticipated the relationship between subject and object posited in quantum physics. In *Halakhic Mind*, the Rav turns to Natorp for his articulation of the process of "reconstruction," which is an outgrowth of the general Marburg skepticism towards the distinction between subject and object.[14]

Quantum physics rescued the philosopher of religion from his slavish attachment to the objectivity of Newtonian science. Natorp's method of reconstruction ensured that such an attitude would not result in the subjective irrationalism of the modern metaphysical school. For though the Rav is emphatic that modes of description must follow the "subjective track" (p. 72), he is equally emphatic that the path towards subjectivity begins in the objective order itself. Just as the Rav, in his scientific register, acknowledges the priority of Newtonian "atomization" (though acknowledging its limitations), in a more strictly philosophical language, he also acknowledges the priority of what Natorp calls "objectification." In each field—physics and philosophy—"subjective aspects" can only be *reconstructed* from out of the objective data.

The Neo-Kantians, who, unlike Kant, "envisaged experience as moving from the objective to the subjective order," provide a groundwork for the Rav's philosophy of religion, where religious experience and consciousness must be understood through their antecedent in the objective world (and *not* subjectivity, as the avatars of reform theology continue to claim).[15] "Subjectivity," the Rav affirms, "cannot be approached directly." It "is impossible," the Rav continues, "to gain any insight into the subjective stream unless we have previously acquired objective aspects" (pp. 73, 75). As Natorp himself writes more explicitly:

> The constructive objectifying achievement of knowledge always comes first; from it we reconstruct as far as possible the level of original subjectivity which could never be reached by knowledge apart from this reconstruction which proceeds from the already completed objective

construction. In this reconstruction we, so to speak, objectify subjectivity as such . . .[16]

For Natorp, as for the Rav who follows his methodology, subjectivity (and by this term the Rav means to include all aspects of religious consciousness), is in and of itself unavailable to the philosopher of religion and can only be *reconstructed* retroactively through attention to the objectified world. Subjectivity, as Natorp relates, can only be "reached" through objectivity. There are no short-cuts to religious subjectivity and religious consciousness.

Though the Rav, following Natorp, emphasizes the precedence of objectivity, such an emphasis is of "theoretical value only" (p. 66). Pure subjectivity and pure objectivity, in this model, are simply limiting abstract cases (p. 66). Accordingly, the Rav claims, "we do not find two different components, the subjectively given and the objectively constructed, but one unified phenomenon" (p. 66). The religious philosopher, like the scientist, finds that "subjective" constructs and paradigms at once produce and are a product of the already constituted object, and as a consequence, religious knowledge can only be inferred—that is, reconstructed—through reference to that which is already given, the field of objectification. In modern physics, the objectification of reality is the necessary antecedent for exploring qualitative or subjective aspects. Similarly, the religious philosopher—no longer indulging in the excesses of the modern metaphysician—relies upon the objectification of experience before analyzing the subjective or structural constructs which in turn lend them meaning.

The emphasis upon subjectivity finally allows the religious philosopher to penetrate beyond the causal framework which had heretofore been the domain of the traditional humanist. That is, where the Newtonian scientist and the philosopher of religion who had followed his causal methodology had been able to construct "abstract general interdependencies" between the data, the new philosopher of religion—freed from the concept of objectivity enshrined in classical science—turned towards what the Rav calls "penetrative description" (p. 98). The new philosopher of religion, understanding that it is "impossible to discover final causation in the spiritual realm" (p. 74), embraces a form of "penetrative description" which leaves causal certainty for the "thickness" of varied descriptions.[17]

Taking up the ostensible causal relation in the history of philosophy between Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas, the Rav elaborates a process of reconstruction by which the "causal nexus" between the two

thinkers is rendered "nonsensical." Out of their "philosophical systems," one can reconstruct both their different "philosophical temperaments" and the kinds of "methodological reasoning" which they employed. "Our exploration of the subjective route," the Rav continues,

> does not stop with this phase but proceeds to penetrate further into the complicated and mysterious sphere of subjectivity. Through the individual subjective philosophizing the clandestine ego emerges from its involuted and ramified recesses. Yet, however far the regressive movement continues, we are never quite able to fathom subjectivity. What we call subjectivity is only a surface reproduction which still needs exploration (p. 73).

The traditional philosopher of religion finds a causal relation of necessity which once and for all unifies a series of disparate objective phenomena. For the modern philosopher of religion, however, the method of reconstruction leads only to an infinite regress. Descriptions become thicker, but they never exhaust the object. There is no decisive endpoint to this analysis, for "any subjective stage to which we may point with satisfaction can never be ultimate." "We may always," the Rav writes, "proceed further and discover yet a deeper stratum of subjectivity" (p. 74). But for the Rav, the fact that "reconstruction" never yields definitive explanations and proceeds infinitely to different levels of description, is not a methodological liability, but rather an advantage. Though it does not yield the certainty of explanation provided in the traditional human sciences, it does, however, offer "a multidimensional religious outlook to the *homo religiosus*" (p. 88). No longer "limited to causal designs," the philosopher may survey those subjective aspects in a process of interpretation, which will always require "further exploration."

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It is no surprise that Natorp's emphasis upon objectivity was of such great appeal to the Rav. For with a shift in emphasis, the Rav could transform Natorp's affirmation of the primacy and priority of the objectification of *a priori* mental categories to the primacy and priority of the objectification of halakha.[18] Jewish religious subjectivity, then, is accessible only through an examination of the objectified religious norms—an objectification that "culminates in the Halakhah" (p. 99). For the Rav, the "canonized Scriptures," or what he calls the "*Deus dixit*," serve as "the most reliable standard of reference for objectivity." Through the

method of reconstruction, which begins with the objectified world of halakha, "God's word, 'the letter of the scriptures, becomes an inner word, a certainty, insight, confession' of the God-thirsty soul." By attending to the objective forms as a point of departure—here the halakha—one may gradually "*reconstruct* underlying subjective aspects," and arrive at that "inner word" of the "God-thirsty soul" (p. 81).

The Jewish religious philosopher who seeks to penetrate into the "thickness" of religious phenomena will turn away from elegant patterns of relation and causality, and towards the subjective aspects through which the objective phenomena derive their meaning. "To analyze the mystery of the God-man relation," for example, "it would be necessary that we first gather all the objectified data at our disposal: passages in the Holy Writ pertaining to divinity . . . , all forms of cult, liturgy, prayer, Jewish mysticism, rational philosophy. . . , etc." Only after examining this "enormous mass of objectified constructs" can the "underlying subjective aspects . . . gradually be reconstructed" (p. 91). The complex explication of quantum physics and Marburg Neo-Kantianism thus leads to an elaboration of religious subjectivity which begins in the realm of objectivity—the halakha itself. Where in the past, halakha, to adjust Philo's phrase, had been the "handmaiden of philosophy," in *Halakhic Mind*, philosophy and science become the handmaids of halakha.

Which leads us back to Rambam. For though Rambam of the *Guide* anticipated the explanatory methodology of the contemporary human scientist, privileging cause over description, Rambam of the *Code* pursued an entirely different methodology. In the *Guide*, to use the vocabulary that the Rav developed in the first sections of *Halakhic Mind*, Rambam was obsessed with the "explanatory quest": instead of describing, he explained, and instead of reconstructing, he constructed (p. 92). But Rambam "the halakhic scholar," the Rav argues, "came nearer the core of philosophical truth than Maimonides, the speculative philosopher" (pp. 93-94). To the Rav, for whom the core of philosophical truth lies (paradoxically) within the halakha itself, the *Code*, which attempts to "reconstruct" the "subjective correlative" of the commandments, is far superior to the "causal method of the philosophical *Guide*" (p. 94). In contrast to the methodology of the *Guide*, in which Rambam "objectifies the datum and subordinates it to a superior order," Rambam of the *Code*, by "exploring the norm retrospectively," preserved the unique structure and autonomy of the religious act (p. 95).

To demonstrate the differences in these methodological approaches, the Rav turns to an analysis of the mitsvah of *shofar*, quoting Rambam of the *Code*:

> Although the blowing of the *shofar* on *Rosh Hashana* is a decree of the Holy Writ, nevertheless there is a hint to it, as if saying, "Ye that sleep, bestir yourselves from your sleep, and ye that slumber, emerge from your slumber. Examine your conduct, return in repentance and remember your Creator" (p. 94).

By stressing the "reservation that the sounding of the *shofar*" is a decree of the Holy Writ (a *gezerat ha-katuv*), Rambam, the Rav writes, means to exclude any possibility of "causal interpretation." The very fact that it is a *gezera* makes it unassimilable to causal analysis (in the same way that a *hok* is unassimilable to such analysis). But when he points to "a hint" in the commandment ("*remez yesh bo*"), Rambam leaves, the Rav explains, "causality and teleology" behind, and "leads us into a new realm of philosophical heremeneutics" (p. 95).

Where Saadia, "entrapped" in the same kind of "causal maze" that Rambam had constructed in his *Guide*, explained that the sounding of the *shofar* "is reminiscent of an ancient nomadic period when it served as a signal for alarm or as a summons to joyous celebration," Rambam of the *Code* avoids such causal explanation. Saadia's explanation is "based upon a two-valued logic which entails necessity." Which is to say that the "mechanistic relation" between the mitsvah of *shofar* and the ancient nomadic custom is, for Saadia, "unique and necessary" (p. 95). Once understood in this fashion, the philosopher's work is done, and he is left only to admire the elegance of his construct. But for Rambam of the *Code*, who turns from such construction to reconstruction, there is no "relational necessity" that governs and limits interpretation.

Indeed, the new "philosophical hermeneutics" to which Rambam leads us does not end in a singular interpretation derivative from an external cause (a kind of anthropological necessity, as in Saadia's description of *kol shofar*). But rather, in opposition to Saadia, for Rambam of the *Code*, the *shofar* merely "*alludes*" to "repentance and self-examination" (p. 95). In this analysis, "it does not follow that the sounding of the *shofar* is a necessary and sufficient means for the end of inspiring man to penitence and conversion" (p. 95). In contrast to Saadia, who constructs a relationship of necessity, for Rambam, "the call to repent could have been realized in many ways and there is no necessary reason why the Torah selected the means of the *shofar*" (p. 95).

The fact that there is no "necessary reason" opens the way up for a hermeneutics which is freed from the schematic simplicity of an older philosophical tradition, and is able, through an analysis of the mitsvah itself, to discover those "subjective correlates" which help make sense of

what the mitsvah entails. In turning from the "why" question (which, we recall, is "detrimental to religious thought") to the "what" question, Rambam finds a way to grasp "the general tendencies and trends latent in the religious consciousness" (pp. 98, 99). In Rambam's "descriptive hermeneutics" (p. 98), there is no necessary relationship between cause and effect, but a call for continuous description and interpretation.[19]

A cause is determined once and for all; a "hint" or "allusion" demands continued interpretive vigilance. "The reconstruction method," the Rav writes, "neither claims that the subjective counterpart would only be crystallized in one particular way, nor does it explain how it was finally reflected in its objective form" (p. 96). The speculative philosopher whose hermeneutics are governed by such a necessity may provide philosophical certainty. The "profound religious mind," however, is "averse to the platitudes" which the philosopher constructs to "circumscribe the religious act." For in this process of circumscription, he also deprives it of its "meaningful content" and "essential significance" (p. 97). Though the halakhic mind eschews certainty in interpretation, his triumph is in proving that the quest for meaning in interpretation is unending. Herein lies the (perhaps paradoxical) superiority of the *ish ha-halakha*: it is a superiority that begins with the knowledge of a demand. Where the philosopher dispenses with his obligation to interpret in a single interpretive stroke, the *ish ha-halakha* can never free himself from that obligation. For him, the continuing demand for interpretation is the guarantor for a total engagement and immersion in the mitsvot themselves.

Singer and Sokol, in their radical critique of *Halakhic Man*, have perhaps underestimated the extent to which interpretation, for the Rav, entails total individual engagement. For them, the Rav of *Halakhic Man* must have been rebelling against a "Litvak tradition" simply "too cold, too rational," and "too unyielding to the emotions."[20] But, if the Cartesian model for man is the man who thinks, then the Rav's model is clearly the *ish ha-halakha*—the man who interprets.[21] Though it may be true that the "'book' of Halakhah, replete with triangles, circles and squares," seems separated—by "an enormous distance"—from its "subjective counterpart" (p. 85), the interpretation of this objectified realm is not a *merely* rational activity obsessively compelled by the details of intellectual geometry (as Singer and Sokol seem to imply).

The halakhic mind, who in his interpretation of the Sabbath, for example, turns from a merely functional interpretation of the Sabbath (as leading towards a goal of "mundane social justice") to a "symbolic strain," is able, the Rav affirms, to penetrate "infinity itself." When

Rambam of the *Code* envisages the Sabbath "as the incarnation of the mystery of creation," he is able to discover in the objective world, in "dead matter and mechanical motion," the "fingerprints of a Creator." In a moment that reveals the extent to which the Litvak ostensibly immersed in the rationalism of halakha celebrates the pleasures of interpretation, the Rav confides, "it is superfluous to state that the *homo religiosus* finds delight in such an interpretation" (p. 98). Though it is a moment of understatement, the Rav reveals here that though interpretation is surely a cognitive act, it is the beginning of (perhaps even the prerequisite for) a total relation—cognitive, emotional, and spiritual—to the mitsvot.

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Halakhic Mind is not, despite its difficulty and arcane intellectual debts, a mere eccentricity in the Rav's canon of writings. To the contrary, the Rav's later works are steeped in the religious philosophy articulated in *Halakhic Mind*. In his *Kol Dodi Dofek*, for example, which includes an extended meditation on the *Shoa* and the existence of evil, the Rav extends the arguments of *Halakhic Mind* to their most radical conclusion. Where the Rav had earlier argued for a religious philosophy which would face up to the demands of individual mitsvot, in *Kol Dodi Dofek*, he demonstrates how this religious philosophy—which, like *Halakhic Mind*, assiduously avoids causal explanations—requires man to face up to evil. Although this is not an exhaustive analysis of *Kol Dodi Dofek*, it should, however, anticipate a fuller study in which the Rav's various works can be understood as forming a more complete whole.

Kol Dodi Dofek begins with a type whom we can recognize as a not-too-distant descendant of the philosopher of religion of *Halakhic Mind*. Faced with the existence of evil in the world, the speculative philosopher

> tracks the intellectual foundations of suffering and evil, and seeks to find the harmony and balance between the affirmation and negation and to blunt the sharper edge of the tension between the thesis—the good—and the antithesis—the bad—in existence.[22]

Such speculations, the Rav continues, permit the philosopher to develop "a metaphysics of evil." But this metaphysics, by means of which the philosopher is "able to reach an accommodation with evil," in actuality only succeeds in covering it up. For the sufferer (following his own spec-

ulative tendencies) utilizes his capacity for intellectual abstraction to the point of self-deception—the denial of the existence of evil in the world.[23]

Though the Torah provides the testimony "that the cosmos is very good," this affirmation, the Rav writes, "may only be made from the infinite perspective of the Creator." Therefore, though the Rav, of course, does not argue against the implicit telos in history, he does claim nonetheless that the consolations that such an end of history may provide are for man—as a temporal creature—irrelevant. "Finite man, with his partial vision, cannot uncover the absolute good in the cosmos." This epistemological limitation is thematized in the story of Job, whose insistent desires for metaphysical explanation and consolation—his desire to transcend the limitations of human knowledge—are repeatedly rebuffed by God: "If you do not even know the ABC of creation, how can you so arrogantly presume to ask so many questions regarding the governance of the cosmos?"[24]

When Job engages upon his quest for *philosophical* answers to the metaphysical problem of evil, he is fulfilling the role of what the Rav calls Job's character as a "man of fate." Fashioned as he is by a wholly "passive encounter with an objective, external environment," Job, as the man of fate, confronts the evil of his external environment with a sense of astonished and helpless disbelief. Job's passivity before an evil which he cannot comprehend leads him towards philosophy—to the question of "why?" Job, as the first philosopher of religion, "relates to evil from a nonpractical standpoint and philosophizes about it from a purely speculative perspective."[25]

This philosophical attitude may, as we have seen, seem to contain its own consolations: the man of fate can attempt to view his current sufferings retroactively from a hypothetical future which he knows to be wholly good. But the attempt "to deny the existence of evil and create a harmonistic worldview" from a perspective ostensibly external to history will always end in "complete and total disillusionment." The man of fate who sees his own existence as a function of a providential narrative may look to the end of History to justify a world which seems to depart inexplicably from its promised telos, but this is just a ruse—a recipe for self-deception. The Rav's refusal of metaphysics implies, then, an utterly uncompromising view of history in which the afflictions of the present historical moment do not open up gracefully to a future which guarantees bliss and consolation. Just as the mitsvot in *Halakhic Mind* retain their individual autonomy, so here evil remains "an undeniable fact," wholly unassimilable to any philosophical or theological visions of the future.[26] If the mitsvot of *Halakhic Mind* cannot be circumscribed and

explained, so evil in *Kol Dodi Dofek* cannot be contextualized and understood.

We might say that evil, in the Rav's religious philosophy, has the status of a *hok*; it exists without apparent reason. No amount of philosophical explanation or speculation can erase this existence. Though the philosopher works tirelessly to develop a perspective which will explain evil and nullify its force, the "man of destiny" (who stands, in *Kol Dodi Dofek*, at the opposite end of the spectrum from the "man of fate") experiences evil without recourse to the benevolent backward glance of an already fulfilled History. He does not experience such a moment as intrinsically meaningless. That is, he does not view history as recapitulating endlessly the "tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" of Shakespeare's Macbeth, or the "gray on gray of history" which Hegel associated with a meaningless *seculum*. There is no despair of a loss of a sense of purpose to history, because for the Rav, purpose or telos is never the proper concern of the subject faced with the complexities of the historical process.

The man of destiny, disburdened of the old philosophical assumptions, faces up to the stark demands which reality makes upon him. Indeed, for the "man of destiny," the evil and suffering in history stand, like the *hukim* of the Torah, as a form of demand. Just as "asking 'why' God issues certain commandments is seeking to comprehend the unfathomable," so the question about the existence of evil, to him, "remains obscure and sealed, outside the domain of logical thought."[27] That is to say, *hukim*, for the man of destiny, neither provide occasions for rationalizations (we do not ask, for example, why God instituted the *para aduma*), nor, however, do they provide a justification for a stupefied silence before God's law.[28] Though we may not ask "why" in relation to these *hukim*, it is incumbent upon us, as the Rav's analysis of Rambam in *Halakhic Mind* reveals, to inquire into what these *hukim* might mean. In the light of the Rav's reclamation of religious philosophy in *Halakhic Mind*, the *hukim* of the Torah, and the *hok* of evil, become invitations to interpretation, what Pinchas Peli has called "*derush*"—but *not* to philosophical explanation.[29] In other words, there is no escape into ostensibly *objective* causal networks that come from outside to explain away evil (or a seemingly irrational mitsvah like the *para aduma*), but there is instead a constant demand upon the *subject*—for cognitive engagement and interpretation. The *hukim*, the Rav writes, must be "interpreted in terms of their subjective meaningfulness to us even if their objective rationale eludes us."[30]

Man's obligation, according to the Rav, in regards to evil and the

suffering it imposes, is not to resolve (and here we can hear distinct echoes of the earlier philosophical work) "the question of the causal, or teleological, explanation of suffering in all of its speculative complexity but rather the rectification of suffering in all of its halakhic simplicity."[31]

Evil, like the *hukim*, contains its own imperatives: "The halakhah teaches us that the sufferer commits a grave sin if he allows his troubles to go to waste and remain without meaning or purpose." Suffering is pulled out of the 'nightmare of history' not through reference to a perspective *external* to it, but through "subjective interpretation"—a personal appropriation and "rectification" of suffering. The question, according to the Rav, is not, "how is this suffering resolved in History?", but rather, "What does this suffering mean to me?" The "man of destiny," equipped with a philosophy of religion that has its genealogy in *Halakhic Mind*, leaves the passivity of the "man of fate" through a form of engagement—that is, *interpretation*—which makes his history his own.

In the stark and demanding arena of the halakhic mind, there is no consolation of metaphysics. Every aspect of reality resounds with a call—a demand. In asking "why?" the speculative philosopher refuses such a demand, remaining satisfied with his impeccable causal schemes and the consolations that metaphysics affords. In contrast, the halakhic mind, in asking "what?" (what is this suffering?; what is this mitsvah?) responds to the continuous demands of life through an unending journey into the "mysterious spheres" of interpretation.[32] This is not, however, *merely* a cognitive process (*pace* Singer and Sokol), but a process that ultimately transforms and elevates the individual from "object to subject, from thing to person."[33] In transcending a philosophical and scientific legacy which turned away from the matters of existence—whether it be the objective religious forms, or evil in all of its unassimilable waywardness—the halakhic mind, with his own religious philosophy, finds an infinite opportunity for individual engagement and self-transformation. Indeed, the halakhic mind responds to this opportunity, foregoing the passive rationalization of the traditional philosopher, and making the choice (albeit the sometimes painful one) for a perspective that leads towards the rectification of the world—not the deceptive consolations of an outmoded philosophy.

NOTES

1. A.S. Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), p. 318.

2. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Halakhic Mind* (London: Seth Press, 1986). All page references are to this edition.
3. For early review essays of *Halakhic Mind*, see Michael Gillis, "The Halachic Mind," *L'Eylah* 24 (1987): pp. 37-40, and Jonathan Sacks' more thorough, "Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik's Early Epistemology: A Review of The *Halakhic Mind*," *Tradition* 23:3 (Spring 1988): pp. 75-87. For a more recent—and less orthodox—approach, see "Joseph B. Soloveitchik's 'The Halachic Mind': A Liberal Critique and Appreciation," *CCAR Journal* 41 (1994): pp. 55-63. Lawrence Kaplan, "Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik's Philosophy of Halakhah," *Jewish Law Annual* 7 (1988): pp. 139-197, articulates the contours of the Rav's legal philosophy, and demonstrates, among other things, the ways in which the Rav's methodology was indebted to the methodology of the mathematical sciences. Kaplan, in his otherwise comprehensive consideration of the Rav, only briefly comments on *Halakhic Mind*, what he calls "a highly technical and abstract philosophic monograph" (p. 143). Kaplan's approach, it should be emphasized, stresses that the Rav's radically new articulation of halakhic methodology paralleled the revolution achieved in the sciences through the works of Galileo and Newton. This essay, focusing as it does on *Halakhic Mind*, argues that the Galilean-Newtonian revolution only provides part of the groundwork for the Rav's halakhic methodology, while the quantum revolution in physics establishes the other part of that ground.
4. "Moshe ben Maimon, Moshe ben Mendel—are they in fact Moshe ben Amram?", Hirsch caustically asks. Of Rambam of the *Guide*, Hirsch writes: "His trend of thought was Arab-Greek, as was his concept of life. Approaching Judaism from without, he brought to it views that he had gained elsewhere, and these he reconciled with Judaism . . . he delved into speculations about the essence of God and considered the results of these speculative investigations to be fundamental axioms and principles of faith binding upon Judaism." *The Nineteen Letters*, Joseph Elias, trans. (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1995), p. 265. On Hirsch's complex relation to Rambam, see Elias's notes to "Letter Eighteen," pp. 284-291.
5. Perhaps the *locus classicus* for this kind of anthropological explanation is the sacrifices. In the *Guide*, the Rav writes, Rambam describes the sacrificial service as "just an educational method of elevating the Jew above such forms of worship." "In order to direct the Jew towards worship of God," the Rav writes, "the Torah made the concession of animal sacrifice." On Rambam of the *Guide*, and the Rav's critique of this of Maimonidean rationalization, see p. 131.
6. R. Joseph Soloveitchik, *Halakhic Man*, trans. Lawrence Kaplan (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1983), *passim*.
7. In Heisenberg's own experiments, he demonstrated that it was impossible to identify both the position and momentum of subatomic particles (electrons). As a recent popularizer of quantum physics explains, in the new Heisenbergian world, "we pay a price for our acts of observation. Each act is a compromise. The more we atttempt to measure the position of an electron, the less we can determine its momentum, and vice versa. . . . This uncertainty meant that no matter how accurately one tried to measure the classical quantities of position and momentum, there would always be an uncertainty in the measurement." Indeed, it is this uncertainty that lies at

the very foundations of the quantum world. See Fred Alan Wolf, *Taking the Quantum Leap* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), pp. 114-115.

8. From this subjectivism emerged the "anti-intellectualism" and "cultural decline" which the Rav associated specifically with the emergence of the Third Reich. "It is no mere coincidence," the Rav observes, "that the most celebrated philosophers of the Third Reich were outstanding disciples of Husserl. Husserl's intuitionism (*Wesensschau*), which Husserl, a trained mathematician, strived to keep on the level of mathematical intuition, was transposed into emotional approaches to reality." Without the mathematical (and rational emphasis) implicit in Husserl's own philosophy, Husserl's "disciples" (in a not very well-veiled reference to Martin Heidegger) transformed Husserlian philosophy into a justification for "racial theories" (p. 53).
9. See Eddington, pp. xiii-xv, 318.
10. While the Rav's work in 1944 was already echoing some of the more theoretical work of physicists like Bohr and Eddington, he clearly anticipated important recent trends in the history of science—particularly Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and Paul Feyerabend's *Against Method.*
11. Since "we have to interfere with the atomic processes in order to observe them at all," Bohr observed, it is "meaningless to ask what the atoms are doing when we are not looking at them." "Nothing is real unless we look at it, and it ceases to be real as soon as we stop looking." Cited by John Gribbin, *In Search of Shroedinger's Cat* (New York: Bantam, 1984), pp. 120, 173. Gribbin provides a provides a useful layman's account of the quantum revolution.
12. The Rav was not alone in seeing religion liberated by the new methodology of the quantum physicists. Eddington, for example, went so far as to say that the year 1927, which saw the "overthrow of strict causality by Heisenberg, Bohr, Born, and others," made religion "possible" for a "reasonable scientific man" (*Nature*, p. 350).
13. Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy* (London: Burns and Oates, 1965), VII, p. 363.
14. On the Rav's Neo-Kantian cast of mind, see Kaplan, pp. 146-163 (*passim*), and Aviezer Ravitsky, "Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik on Human Knowledge: Between Maimonidean and Neo-Kantian Philosophy," *Modern Judaism*, 6 (1986), pp. 157-188.
15. Against Kant and the avatars of subjectivism, who argued that qualitative sensation precedes quantitative scientific categorization (*i.e.*, that subjective sense perception precedes organization into the quantitative categories of thought), Natorp asserted the primacy and precedence of intellectual categories. To Natorp, according to the Rav, "even so-called qualitative data are nothing but the product of a spontaneous mental act" (p. 65). From this perspective, there is no such thing as "pure" or unmediated experience, for any "sensational apprehension is conditioned by its antecedent, the act of creative objectification."
16. "On the Objective and Subjective Grounding of Knowledge," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 12 (1981), p. 263.
17. The Rav's language and methodology anticipate the work of the anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who in his *Intepretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic

Books, 1973), sought to challenge a disciplinary practice governed by "functionalism" and replace it with a "thick description" that "takes us into the heart of that which it is—an interpretation." If the social sciences had been dominated by an explanatory methodology, then Geertz himself emphasizes the importance of description and interpretation of "cultural forms." These forms or "symbol systems," Geertz argues, "draw their meaning from the role they play . . . not from any intrinsic relation they bear to one another." Where the traditional anthropologist arranged "abstracted entities into unified patterns," the Geertzian anthropologist describes and interprets the meaning of cultural practices (pp. 17, 18, 453). Here a methodology very much like the one which the Rav articulated in *Halakhic Mind* serves as the foundation for a revolution in anthropological method.

18. David Sokol and Moshe Singer, "Joseph Soloveitchik: Lonely Man of Faith," *Modern Judaism* 1982 (2), have pointed to precisely this shift in regards to *Halakhic Man*. Arguing that in the Kantian scheme, *a priori* refers to a condition of human consciousness, and that for the Rav it refers to a "body of revealed truth such as the Torah," they point to the "far from perfect" mesh between the Rav's philosophy and "talmudism" (p. 236). Without completely rejecting their argument, it is possible to argue that "objectification" for Natorp and the Rav, though differing in kind, both have the status of the "given." As Kaplan suggests, in the Rav's works, "the halakha as the objective order of Judaism is pretty much taken as a given" (Kaplan, p. 144).
19. Rambam's method of the *Code* does not, the Rav argues, permit causal analysis. As the Rav writes, repentance, "which for Maimonides is implied in the sounding of the *shofar*," cannot "serve as the cause of the commandment that would assure it a status of necessity, but it must be apprehended rather as an allusion to a correlated subjective aspect" (p. 96).
20. Singer and Sokol, p. 258. For Marvin Fox's trenchant critique of Singer and Sokol, see Marvin Fox, "The Unity and Structure of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik's Thought," *Tradition* 24:2 (Winter 1989), pp. 44-65.
21. Despite the Rav's emphases on interpretation, it is important to emphasize, as Shalom Carmy has pointed out to me, that as a Brisker, the Rav's primary concern was systematizing the concepts underlying the text. Though I do not fully share Carmy's sense that the Rav did not write about the problems of interpreting texts (and I may be projecting my own concern with hermeneutics onto the texts of the Rav), I nonetheless share the sense that the Rav seemed primarily interested in those conceptual coordinates which produce different interpretations. As Lawrence Kaplan explains, "the concept, the definition, the abstract principle is, then, the light which orders, illuminates, clarifies, integrates and unifes the legal texts and rulings" (Kaplan, p. 165).
22. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "*Kol Dodi Dofek*: It is the Voice of My Beloved that Knocketh," in *Theological and Halakhic Reflections on the Holocaust*, Bernhard H. Rosenberg, ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav), 1992, p. 54.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 59.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 51, 55.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
28. On the Rav's clearly rhetorical suggestion that the *hukim* are "stupefying," see Abraham R. Besdin and Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "May We Interpret *Hukim*," *Reflections of the Rav* (Jerusalem: World Zionist Organization, 1989), p. 91.
29. See Pinchas haCohen Peli, "Hermeneutics in the Thought of Rabbi Soloveitchik—Medium or Message," *Tradition* 23 (1988), pp. 21-43.
30. Soloveitchik, *Reflections*, p. 100.
31. Soloveitchik, "*Kol Dodi Dofek*," p. 58.
32. One does not ask, the Rav writes, " 'Why did God legislate Parah Adumah?' or 'How does it purify the ritually defiled?' but 'What is its spiritual message to me?' or 'How can I, as a thinking and feeling person, assimilate it into my world outlook?' " (Soloveitchik, *Reflections*, p. 95).
33. Soloveitchik, *Kol Dodi Dofek*, p. 58.