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Preface

In October 1990, eight rabbis and Jewish communal leaders traveled to the Indian city of Dharamasala in order to discuss with the XIV Dalai Lama intersections and points of contact between Buddhism and Judaism. It was their intention to create and promote an inter-religious dialogue. In his bestseller, "The Jew in the Lotus" (1994), Rodger Kamenetz recorded this historical event and popularized the notion of "Je(w)Bu" (or "BuJews," or "BuJus"), which at that point had already existed for several decades: Je(w)Bus have a Jewish background, yet, practise, for the most diverse reasons thinkable, aspects derived from Buddhist spiritualism.[1] The various names that are in use for this phenomenon reflect the variety of identities constructed out of the encounter, entanglement, hybridity, or syncretism of Judaism/Jewishness and Buddhism (and other Asian cultures and religions): Some put the Jewish aspect first, while others stress the Buddhist. One identity can serve as the background to the foregrounded other(s); many "JewBus" do not see contradictions between the two.[2]

Not coincidentally, such encounters between Judaism/Jewishness and Asian cultures and religions has a broad appeal particularly in the United States, where a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society have facilitated them with the lowering of social barriers between different groups. The validation of difference particularly since the 1960s, the declining retention rates of large, established religious institutions, the fascination with exotic "others" as alternatives to mainstream religious ideas and practices, and the increase in religious subjectivity have all contributed to a contemporary openness to hybrid

[1] Rodger Kamenetz: The Jew in the Lotus: A Poet's Rediscovery of Jewish Identity in Buddhist India. San Francisco 1994.

[2] Buddhist teacher Sylvia Boorstein's book illustrates this point in its title: That's Funny, You Don't Look Buddhist. On Being a Faithful Jew and a Passionate Buddhist. San Francisco 1996. The vast literature on this topic includes Alan Levin: Crossing the Boundary. Stories of Jewish Leaders of Other Spiritual Paths. Berkeley 2015; Alan Lewin / Sherril Jaffe: One God Clapping. The Spiritual Path of a Zen Rabbi. Nashville 2001; Judith Linzer: Torah and Dharma. Jewish Seekers in Eastern Religions. Northvale 1996; Melinda Ribner: New Age Judaism. Ancient Wisdom for the Modern World. Deerfield Beach, FL 2000.

identities, à la carte practices, and loose forms of religious affiliation.[3] This new constellation is based on greater openness and inclusiveness, curiosity, and acknowledgement of spiritual needs compared to only a few decades ago.[4]

Regardless of whether and how these developments will also re-shape the religious landscape of Europe, they raise questions of great importance to those interested in modern religion in general, and Judaism in particular: Universalism and particularism mark a pair of perspectives whose interplay is characteristic of Jewish modernization. For Europe more than for other social and religious contexts, the question of secularism and public religion is relevant; it is part and parcel of some of the phenomena questioning concepts of "religion" as something "private" that have dominated the Western discourse since the Enlightenment. The context of Israel as a "Jewish state," whose Jewish citizens tend to conceptualize their Jewish identity very differently from such European notions, the encounter with Asian forms of spirituality brings yet other questions regarding the place of Judaism (as a religion, spiritual source) into play.[5]

Put in the most oversimplified terms, the overarching question behind these encounters has to do with the nature of Judaism: Can it be seen more as a "religion" in the sense defined by Western (Protestant) ideas, or a broader concept altogether? If a "religion," for lack of a better, or rather more intelligible word in the public discourse, is Judaism a "Western" religion, universalized in its diaspora history, or an "oriental" religion with potentially closer relations to "(Far) Eastern" religions that have been shaped by other historical, social, and ideational forces than "Western" ones?

The current relevance of these issues must not mask the fact that encounters between Judaism and Asian cultures predate by centuries the emergence

[3] Cf., among many other studies: Robert N. Bellah: Habits of the Heart. Individualism and Commitment in American Life. Berkeley 1985; Paul Heelas / Linda Woodhead: The Spiritual Revolution. Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality. Malden 2004; Wade Clark Roof / William McKinney: American Mainline Religion. Its Changing Shape and Future. New Brunswick 1987; Wade Clark Roof: A Generation of Seekers. The Spiritual Journeys of the Baby Boom Generation. San Francisco 1993; Robert Wuthnow: After Heaven. Spirituality in America Since the 1950s. Oakland 1998.

[4] For recent developments within American Judaism that are related to the larger changes in the religious landscape, cf. Steven M. Cohen / Arnold M. Eisen: The Jew Within. Self, Family, and Community in America. Bloomington 2000, pp. 7–12, 191–207.

[5] Cf. Joseph Loss: Buddha-Dhamma in Israel. Explicit Non-Religious and Implicit Non-Secular Localization of Religion, in: Noval Religio. The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religion 13 (2010) 4, pp. 84–105.

of "New Age" forms of posttraditional expressions of Judaism. Every American synagogue whose program for 2017 includes meditation (or even "Torah Yoga"), every European facing a bookstore shelf full of books on "esoteric" topics, and every young Israeli embarking on the almost normative post-army trip to a Far East, continues a long line of encounters, transfers, exchanges, and entanglements of individuals, ideas, and texts that link Asian religion and spirituality to Judaism and other religions.[6]

Historic and current points of contact between Jewish and Asian cultures are naturally quite diverse and emerged long before the 1990s. This is why it is assumed that, for example, the Bene Israel have been living in India since antiquity, yet not later than the Middle Ages. Scholarship has established that these groups share several similarities with Rabbinic Judaism, but have also adopted numerous customs and notions from their Hindu environments.[7] The origin of former Jewish communities in China can be traced back to the ninth and twelfth centuries respectively. Yet, their cultural and religious identity too was significantly influenced by their surrounding cultures.[8]

The post-Middle Age encounters between European-Jewish and Asian cultures started with the Early Modern Age and reached well into the beginning of the twenthieth century as a result of colonialization, as merchants, missionaries,[9] and explorers shared their accounts of these Asian countries, religions, and populations. Motivated by these texts, Jewish intellectuals too began to take interest in these Asian cultures, or even traveled to these regions.

In the nineteenth century, encounters of a different kind took place in the context of colonial trade and cultural connections in Asia. This influence was more specifically established at the end of the nineteenth century as part of a cultural search for new sources of art, philosophy, ethical thought and lifestyles; such as the Japanism in post-Impressionist painting or the interest in pedagogical elements of Buddhist monastic initiation in the texts of German

6 Diane Bloomfield: Torah Yoga: Experiencing Jewish Wisdom through Classical Postures. San Francisco 2004.

7 Cf. among others Shalva Weil (ed.): Indian Jewish Heritage. Ritual, Art and Life-Cycle. Mumbai 2002; Monique Zetlaoui: Shalom India. Histoire des communautés juives en Inde. Paris 2000.

8 Cf. among others Sidney Shapiro: Jews in old China. Studies by Chinese scholars. New York 1984; Tiberiu Weisz: The Kaifeng Stine Inscriptions. The Legacy of the Jewish Community in Ancient China. New York 2006.

9 Cf. among others William Charles White: Chinese Jews. A Compilation of Matters related to the Jews of Kai-Feng Fu. New York 1966.

thinkers from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the second half of the twentieth century, the dominance of this process shifted to the United States and became evident mainly in the cultural mergers of the Beat Generation and the Hippies who followed it. It continued in various adaptations, though with changing emphasis, into the twenty-first century. The contemporary stage of Jewish-Asian cultural contact coincides with the New Spirituality movements, in which ethnic, religious, and medical Asian tradition are fused with an individual's in order to create a new unity. [10]

The objective set by the publishers of the current *PaRDeS* issue was to focus on Jewish relationships with Asian cultures in order to close existing gaps in research. The contributions, which were commissioned by an international call-for-papers and subsequently reviewed, reflect the current interests of researchers working in this broad field. The articles are divided chronologically into two large groups: Four articles concentrate on the ninetheenth century and deal with various views on Hindu and Buddhist cultures as held by Jewish intellectuals. In contrast, the five articles of the second group focus on the fin de siècle, the early twentieth century and contemporary phenomena in which hybrid forms of Jewish and Asian cultures are addressed.

The first article of the current *PaRDeS* issue by Richard G. Marks distills a common Jewish view of Hinduism from the ways in which rabbis traveling to India interacted with it. Marks discusses the works of rabbis David d'Beth Hillel and Jacob Sapir Halevi; both studied the scholarly tradition of Vilna Gaon, immigrated to Palestine and afterwards set forth on a journey to India in order to learn about Hinduism. Both Hillel as well as Sapir were fascinated by Hindu temples, statutes, and rituals, which they considered as curiosities. Although both ascribed to the understanding and notion of sacrality to the Hindus, they also described their beliefs and practices as an "abomination"; an expression derived from biblical terminology characterizing the forbidden and horroric.

Sebastian Musch's article introduces little-known author Friedrich Korn (1803–1850), who claimed that the Jewish people descended from India. Musch situates Korn in intellectual debates of the first half of the nineteenth century and discusses his attempt to establish a genealogical connection between

[10] Cf. for example Helen Kiyong Kim; Noah Samuel Leavitt: JewAsian. Race, Religion, and Identity for America's Newst Jews. Lincoln 2016.

Indians and Jews. Korn, a convert, invited his former co-religionists to follow his example, arguing that Judaism had fulfilled its historical role and that its sister religion would thus continue the tradition of monotheism. Ultimately, he argues in favour of an astrotheology, which is of greater universality, since each human being, regardless of his/her religious affiliation, is assumed to be equal before celestial bodies.

Hans-Michael Haußig outlines the attempts of two representatives of Reform Judaism – Salomon Formstecher (1808–1889) and Samuel Hirsch (1815–1889) – to incorporate Judaism within the framework of a general history of humanity. Both authors believed that Judaism was the only religion next to which only paganism could exist. In the context of their theses, which Formstecher and Hirsch presented in 1841 and 1842 respectively, they responded differently to the Indian religions, allocating them specific places in the overall trajectory of religious development.

Arthur Schopenhauer's conception of a "pessimistic" Buddhism and "optimistic" Judaism as the two most distant religious ideas was proudly appropriated by many Jewish thinkers. Aleš Weiss shows that these Jews portrayed Buddhism as an anti-worldly and anti-social religion of egoistic individuals seeking their own salvation, the most extreme form of pessimism and asceticism which negates all beings, social structures and transcendence. Analyzing texts by Ludwig Philippson, Ludwig Stein, Leo Baeck, and others, Weiss shows how the image of Buddhism as an antithesis to Judaism helped German Jewish reform thinkers to define the "essence of Judaism" and to prove to both Jewish and Christian audiences its enduring meaningfulness and superiority for their modern society.

Emily Sigalow's article about Julius Goldwater (1908–2001), scion of a prominent American Jewish family, introduces the group of contributions exploring more recent and contemporary encounters between Jewish and Asian cultures. After encountering Buddhism in Hawaii and being ordained as a Buddhist ministerin Kyoto, Goldwater moved to Los Angeles in the 1930s to become one of the first European-American Jodo Shinshu ministers in America. He thus belongs among the first US-American Jews, who built Buddhist communities and took on the role of spiritual leadership.

Yaakov Ariel's analysis of the spiritual path of Allen Ginsberg (1926–1997) revolves around one of the most colorful personalities of the Beat Generation. While identifying as a Jew, Ginsberg wished to transcend beyond his parents'

orbit and actively sought to create an inclusive, tolerant, and permissive society in which persons such as himself could live and create at ease. Toward this ideal, he selected elements from the Christian, Jewish, Native-American, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions, weaving them together into an ever-growing cultural and spiritual quilt. He saw no contradiction between his enchantment with Buddhism and his Jewish identity.

Rachel Albeck Gidron's article is a historiographical study of the contacts between Asian thought and Modern Hebrew literature in Europe and Israel from the late nineteenth century to the present day. It defines three stages of such contacts. The first stage is marked by the influence of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Buber on Hebrew literature in Europe and later in Palestine. In the second stage, the Beat Generation and the Hippie movement influenced Hebrew writing in Israel. The third stage sees the participation of Hebrew writing in the global process of the New Age. The article explores the theoretical possibilities for cultural linguistic symbiosis in literature as a basis for discussing the symbiosis between East Asian thought and Western thought within Hebrew literature, illustrating its findings through the work of contemporary Hebrew writer Joel Hoffman (born 1937).

The article by David Landau and Nina Rageth explores Indian Sufi influences in the music of Shye Ben Tzur, a Jewish Israeli musician who combines Sufi poetry in Hebrew with traditional North Indian Sufi music. The idea of India as a spiritual land subsumes references to Islam and renders it part of the "mystical East" allowing Ben Tzur's audience to engage with Muslim themes outside of Middle Eastern politics.

Mira Nicolescu's contribution argues that "JewBus" do not constitute the continuous phenomenon that many scholars have addressed them. With the help of ethnographic field research, conducted since 2009, she demonstrates that individuals as well as entire communities are subject to dynamic change. She divides the latest developments into three "eras": the age of challenging, the age of claiming, and the age of re-claiming. Nicolescu points out that today Buddhist and Hindu-based practices are no longer seen as counter-cultural, but have rather become legitimate elements of Western cultures.

The study by Hiroshi Ichikawa is a unique historical document. The author is a member of a team of Japanese scholars entrusted with translating the Talmud into Japanese. The author unfolds the historical circumstances in which the project came about, as well as a number of issues that arose during

the translation which demanded cross-cultural thinking in order to achieve optimal translations of expressions and concepts from Hebrew and Aramaic into the cultural space of the Japanese language. The extreme cultural and linguistic difference between the two languages required a pioneering mediation system as demonstrated by the review of examples presented in this article.

The current issue of *PaRDeS*, whose cover is graced by artist Siona Benjamin's image "Tikkun ha-Olam," concludes with conference reports, book reviews, and a list of selected new publications in the fields of Jewish studies.

The publishers would like to thank the peer reviewers as well as the translators and editors Melanie Waha, Dr. Sigrid Senkbeil, Jeffrey Green, and Daphny Cassel. We would also like to cordially thank Marco Winkler of the Universitätsverlag Potsdam and Frank Schlöffel for the thoughtful layout without which the current issue would not have taken from.

Nathanael Riemer, Rachel Albeck-Gidron, Markus Krah

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David d'Beth Hillel and Jacob Sapir: Their Encounters with Temple Hinduism in 19th Century India

*by Richard G. Marks**

Abstract

Two 19th century rabbis born in Vilna and educated in its traditionalist rationalism interacted with India's temple Hinduism in different ways. Both were fascinated with Hindu worship and images, but David d'Beth Hillel entered temples and disputed with priests, while Jacob Sapir observed from outside, composing written pictures of Hindu images using a biblical vocabulary of abomination. D'Beth Hillel employed Hebrew linguistics to uncover secret meanings of Hindu words. However, both travelers interpreted Hindu religiosity similarly, as idolatrous worship. They explained this Hinduism historically as a survival of Judean idolatry brought to India by Jewish migrants, or as a survival from an ancient culture of idolatry that once filled the world. Both rabbis also perceived Jewish elements in Hinduism, which they explained from Jewish migrations of the past. The similarities in their conceptualizations of Hinduism point to a common Jewish worldview that constructed the world as opposing realms of revelation and idolatry, and also to common theories about how cultural change occurs through survivals, corruptions, and diffusion.

1. Introduction

One rabbi entered Indian temples and spoke and argued with Hindus; the other observed with curiosity from outside. But both sorted what they saw into similar Jewish categories and histories. Both were born in Lithuania in the early 19th century and immigrated to Palestine before departing on their travels eastward. The first, Rabbi David d'Beth Hillel, arrived in India in 1828,

* Special thanks to Professor Timothy Lubin, who discussed temple Hinduism with me, and to Arlene White, for editorial suggestions.

and the second, Rabbi Jacob Sapir Halevi, arrived in 1859. Hindu images and rituals fascinated each of them.

They shared a similar intellectual and cultural background in the rationalist Orthodoxy of Vilna as represented by the Gaon, Rabbi Eliyahu (1720–1797), and some of his students. This form of Judaism viewed the world through the categories of the Talmud and its later legal interpreters, reinforced by a limited knowledge of sciences such as geography, mathematics, and grammar.[1] Yosef Yoel Rivlin in 1940 showed that Sapir (also transliterated as "Saphir" and "Sappir") was educated in Jerusalem by two followers of the Gaon.[2] Sapir's travelogue, *Even Sapir*[3] (The Sapphire, or the Rock of Sapir), reveals that this education was grounded in the Talmud, Midrash, and later legal literature, while extending to Hebrew grammar and poetry, the biblical text, Jewish history and travel writings, and some geography and foreign languages. As for David d'Beth Hillel (henceforth to be called "Hillel"), Abraham Ya'ari in 1939 traced Hillel's family to several generations of scholars and rabbis living in Vilna, and pointed out that he knew six languages besides his native Yiddish.[4] But was Hillel as thoroughly educated in Jewish texts as his forebears? His book, entitled *The Travels of Rabbi David d'Beth Hillel: from Jerusalem, through Arabia, Koordistan, Part of Persia, and India*,[5] exhibits very little of such

1 My understanding of the Gaon's ideology follows the findings of Immanuel Etkes in The Gaon of Vilna: the Man and His Image, trans. Jeffrey Green, Los Angeles 2002. Etkes views the Gaon's study of mathematics and sciences as consistent with a rationalist trend in Ashkenazi Jewry exemplified earlier by Rabbi Moses Isserles of Krakow (1525–72) and Rabbi Judah Lowe of Prague (c. 1512–1609), who studied secular sciences in an auxiliary role that supported traditional rabbinic views (p. 57).

2 The only major study of Sapir was written by Y. Y. Rivlin, "R. Ya'aqov Sapir," in: Moznaim, 11 (1940): pp. 74–81, 385–99. Additional material on Sapir appears in Abraham Ya'ari, Sheluhei Eretz Yisrael, Jerusalem, 1951, pp. 820–22; in the introductory section of Raymond Apple, "Rabbi Jacob Levi Saphir and His Voyage to Australia," in: Australian Jewish Historical Society, 6 (1968): pp. 195–215; and Yehiel Nahshon and Leah Bornstein-Makovetsky, "Saphir, Jacob," in: Encyclopedia Judaica, Berenbaum / Skolnik (eds), 2nd ed., 22 vols, Detroit 2007, pp. 18, 35–36. Noah S. Gerber studied Sapir in a central chapter of his recent book, Ourselves or our Holy Books? The Cultural Discovery of Yemenite Jewry, Jerusalem 2012. My article, "Hinduism, Torah, and Travel: Jacob Sapir in India," in: Shofar 30:2 (Winter 2012), analyzes Sapir's ideas about Hinduism in relation to categories which I call Torah and travel. Professor David Malkiel, at Bar Ilan University, is now studying Sapir and will soon publish his findings.

3 Even Sapir, Vol. I, Lyck, L. Silbermann: 1866, and Vol. II, Mainz, Yehiel Brill: 1874. To be abbreviated as "ES," followed by the volume number and page number.

4 Sheluhei Eretz Yisrael, p. 138.

5 Madras, printed for the author, 1832. Copies of this book are extremely rare. I am using a microfilm of the copy owned by the Bodleian Library of Oxford University. Walter J. Fischel

erudition. While it frequently quotes the Hebrew Bible, it names only four Jewish books and only one time each: "the Jewish Talmud," *Seder HaDorot*, the *Kuzari*, and Eldad's letter about the Lost Tribe of Dan.[6]

This near-absence of post-biblical Jewish books in *The Travels* has to do with its readership. As the Preface and List of Subscribers show, Hillel wrote his book for British officials and clergy living in Madras and Bombay. His book was not, as Walter Fischel claimed, "a condensed version of his Hebrew-written manuscript",[7] but a new work independent of the travelogue that Hillel claimed to have written in Hebrew.[8] Much of *The Travels* comprises very practical travel information to "benefit the public" – such as distances from one town to another, the language spoken in each locale, population numbers, the price of food and quality of the water, the climate, the cost of hiring a boat or a mule, availability of overnight lodging, and bridge-tolls. This major component of the book is not directed to Jews but to British travelers.

Comparison with Sapir's travelogue, which was written in Hebrew for a Jewish audience living in Palestine and Europe, highlights the differences in content, style, and purpose. Sapir wrote at far greater length about the Jewish communities he visited during his travel (which he claimed to be his book's main subject[9]), wrote in a modernized rabbinic style embedded with biblical quotations, spoke of Jews as "our brothers and sisters," and repeatedly referred to Talmudic and later Jewish holy books. He proudly displayed his Jewish erudition and expected his audience to understand his many allusions to Jewish texts. However, Sapir's book also reports on "the natural features of the kingdoms and the ways of the peoples among whom the Jews lived".[10] In fact, forty percent of its chapters on India concerns non-Jewish people and their culture. Here is where Sapir's book is most like Hillel's. *The*

has published an abridged and "improved" (p. 5) edition under the name, Unknown Jews in Unknown Lands: the travels of Rabbi David d'Beth Hillel, New York 1973. Because Fischel revised the book's antiquated English to make it more "accessible" (p. 5) to general readers, this version often does not present Hillel's original words.

6 Seder Ha-Dorot was published 1768 by the Lithuanian rabbi, Yehiel Heilprin. Collated from Renaissance-era Jewish chronologies, it lists historical events structured on a Jewish timeline.

7 Fischel, "David d'Beth Hillel: An Unknown Jewish Traveler to the Middle East and India in the Nineteenth Century," in: Oriens, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Dec. 31, 1957), 241.

8 See the book's Preface, first page.

9 "My story is only about our brothers the Jews, in places that I passed through." From his introduction to Even Sapir.

10 Ibid.

Travels reports on what Hillel learned about the manners and customs of the non-Jewish people he observed and spoke with during his long journey from Jerusalem through Iraq and Persia to India, and across India from Bombay to Madras. His one special preoccupation was identifying groups of people who might be remnants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel – which was a topic that interested Sapir too, but not nearly as much. And Hillel was fascinated with anything "ancient," such as tombs of Israelite prophets built in far-flung locations, and particularly with "pagodas," his term for Hindu temples.

But even where Hillel's and Sapir's books deal with the same topics, Hillel shaped his reports for a British Protestant audience. Hence, he had to teach his readers the meaning of Hebrew words relevant to his interpretations; and he had to limit his proof-texts to the Hebrew Bible and his mention of other Jewish sources to the four listed above and to the oblique terms, "ancient histories"[11] and "a tradition". My investigation into an "ancient history" and a Jewish "tradition," however, led me to the Talmud and medieval commentaries as the probable sources.[12] This demonstrates that Hillel had a deeper education in traditional Jewish texts than first appears when reading his book, and more than Ya'ari and Fischel recognized. Nevertheless, because he shaped his book for the specific Protestant audience who would be buying it, the full extent of Hillel's knowledge of holy Jewish texts will never be known, nor the way he would have written for a Jewish audience.

That our two travelers had learned certain sciences and languages does not mean, however, that they were familiar with any of the philosophical and linguistic discussions about India that were taking place in Western Europe. Nothing of the research and translations of the British "Orientalists" such as William Jones, nothing of Johann Herder's reflections on original Indian concepts of "One Being" and metempsychosis, nothing of Friedrich Schlegel's critique of Indian pantheism – are reflected in Hillel's and Sapir's encounters with India. Nor did these travelers meet there any swamis or yogis, or learn the ideas of Ramanuja or Shankara and their modern interpreters, or study

[11] For example, Travels, pp. 17, 33, 93, 185.

[12] Hillel's story of the Samaritans found "in ancient histories" (p. 185) comes from bT Yoma 69a, and his assertion that "the Israelites have a tradition that Artaxerxes was the son of Esther" (p. 133) appears in Tosafot on bT Rosh Hashanah 3b and in the Talmudic commentary by Yom Tov Asevilli of 13th c. Spain, on the same passage. His reference to Israelite priests performing a difficult form of prostration (p. 149) comes from several passages in the Talmud such as bT Sukkah 53a and from Rashi explaining the word *qidah* in Yoma 19b.

Hindu scriptures or bhakti poetry.[13] They encountered only one type of Hindu religiosity and only on the surface – the devotional temple Hinduism widely practiced at that time and today by a majority of Hindus.

The question for this essay is how these two representatives of rationalist Jewish traditionalism, with their schooling in Lithuanian rabbinic values, encountered this type of Hindu religiosity. I will discuss their encounters first as they occurred through personal interactions with Hindus and Hindu sites, and then how each of them interpreted the religious life that they witnessed. Of course, these two phases, interaction and conceptualization, are intertwined.[14] I study these books through a systematic textual analysis focused on language and concepts.

I have written previously on Sapir's encounter with Hinduism,[15] but a comparison with Hillel will offer further perspective on the subject. The first studies of Hillel by Ya'ari and Fischel took no interest in his encounter with Hinduism. Ya'ari analyzed Hillel's character traits and some aspects of his rationalism.[16] Fischel, an Orientalist who studied Jewish communities in Islamic lands and India, valued *The Travels* mainly as a source of factually reliable reports about the world of Hillel's time, especially about the Jews he included in his population surveys.[17] In contrast, Alanna Cooper, writing in 2004, focused on the book's inaccuracies. She saw Hillel investing his world with a false Jewish presence. In her view, he had used "scanty evidence," "far-fetched information," and "tenuous connections" to discover lost tribes and Jewish traces everywhere, even in Hinduism. He did this, in Cooper's interpretation, because he suffered from "psychic anxiety" caused by meeting foreign worldviews that challenged his own. This anxiety "compelled" him to imagine

[13] Hillel, however, read an English translation of one Tamil classic (Travels, p. 184): the *Thirukkural*, a third-century book of moral advice attributed to Thiruvalluvar.

[14] Neither traveler used the word "Hinduism" but I shall be using it occasionally, in a consciously vague way, to mean the whole complex of doctrines, rituals, and other religious phenomena that Hillel and Sapir encountered.

[15] Richard G. Marks, "Hinduism, Torah, and Travel: Jacob Sapir in India," in: Shofar 30:2 (Winter 2012), and Marks, "Jacob Sapir's Journey through Southern India in 1860: Four Chapters on Indian Life from *Even Sapir*, Translated, Annotated, and Introduced," in: Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies, Vol. 13 (2013), 2, pp. 26–51, particularly the long introduction.

[16] Ya'ari, "The Journeys of Rabbi David d'beit Hillel in the Land of Israel" [Hebr.], in: *Sinai*, Vol. 4 (Jerusalem, 1939), pp. 24–33. Sheluhei Eretz Yisrael, p. 138.

[17] Fischel, "David d'Beth Hillel," in Oriens. "A Hitherto Unknown Jewish Traveler to India," In the Time of Harvest: Essays in Honor of Abba Hillel Silver on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday, Daniel Silver (ed.), New York 1963, pp. 172–85. Introduction to *Unknown Jews in Unknown Lands*.

Jewishness where it did not exist.[18] While I find Cooper's interest in Hillel's mental construction of his world a valuable approach to interpreting his encounter with other peoples and religions, I notice that Hillel's book does not connect most people and places with Jewish history, and I view his theories about Jewish origins in the context of traditions of Jewish thought that approach the larger world through categories and geographies learned from Jewish texts.[19] There remains much more to be studied about Hillel's behavior, reasoning, and concepts.

2. Interactions

Hillel and Sapir interacted with Hindu people and sites in very different ways. Hillel visited six temples during his arduous eight-month journey from Bombay to Madras, and reported on these visits at great length (omitted from Fischel's abridgement). Typically, he began by visually examining a temple's exterior. He would call the structure "curious" and admire the "cunning workmanship" that had produced the temple's statues and pillars. Hillel used the word "curious" frequently in his book, generally referring to things that were ancient and unusual as compared with his European background. The word "cunning" always refers to artistry, which he discovered not only at Indian temples, such as the sculpted animals and pillars of the temple at Alenjapore,[20] but at the many tombs of biblical prophets that he had visited earlier in his journey.[21] Next Hillel would enter the temple grounds and take note of numerous engraved images and statues and the burning of incense. Temples were "full of images," he frequently remarked. Then Hillel would

[18] Cooper, "India's Jewish Geography as described by Nineteenth-Century Traveler David d'Beth Hillel," in: Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies, Vol. 7 and 8 (2004–05). Unfortunately, Cooper based her analysis on Fischel's abridged and revised version of *The Travels*, containing only a small portion of his encounter with Hinduism.

[19] I would think that every society employs similar strategies, as a basic mental process, when it first meets the unknown. For an example of Thai Buddhist students conceptualizing Judaism through the mental vocabulary of Buddhist ideas and local Thai culture, see my essay, "Teaching Judaism in Thailand," in: Approaches to Modern Judaism. Vol. II., Marc Lee Raphael (ed.). Brown Judaic Studies 56, Chico 1984, pp. 67–100.

[20] Travels, p. 172.

[21] For example, the wooden coffins covered with cloth in which Mordecai and Esther were buried in Persia, and Ezekiel near Baghdad (pp. 85 and 93). The word "curious" appears twice as often in the book as "cunning"; examples are pillars "of a curious structure" at a temple in the village of Moorygam, and the many temples "of a very ancient and curious structure" in the village of Candollah (pp. 146, 139).

discover that the most hidden part of the temple, with its most important image, was located in a central room or tower. He would decide to view it as he had earlier viewed the tombs of prophets. But Hindu priests or locked doors barred his way. Although Hillel would argue with the priests, importuning them to allow him entrance, he was always refused. But he "did not listen to them" and tried to look inside.

Hillel, who had learned Hindustani, would then ask questions. He asked what a particular image meant or why people worshiped as they did. Priests or bystanders resisted answering, but finally yielded. When they did, Hillel attacked their answers, usually "laughing very much" or "mocking" them. For example, when Hindu merchants near the temple at Morgaon answered Hillel's question about images in the temple, saying they were gods, or *deva*, Hillel laughed and corrected them: no, there is only one God who created the world, and *deva* itself comes from Hebrew (Isa. 1:5, *davai*) and means sorrow because the first Hindus knew that these gods cause sorrow to their devotees.[22] At the temple at Bayoods, Hillel "was mocking them" for calling Hanuman a *deva* because the statue he "knew" was merely insensate stone. When he heard priests recite "Barahmah," he asked what the word meant. But when they replied, "creator," he "laughed very much" and declared that a lifeless statue cannot create. Hillel was, furthermore, "very sorry to say" that Hindus had derived the word from the Hebrew Bible, because *bara'* in Hebrew means "creator" – which Hindus had misused by applying it to their stone statues.[23] Hillel never tells us how Hindus replied, but they would not have understood his logic or been at all convinced. For this reason, Hillel's expositions might be more usefully interpreted as arguments meant to impress his own readers.

In Hillel's disputations, he uses Hebrew and its antiquity as an ideological weapon to deny local meanings and impose his own. In addition, employing Second Isaiah's polemic against Babylonian worship, he falsely conflated Hindu deities with their material forms (or abodes or mediations).[24] Hillel displayed in these meetings, as elsewhere in his travels, an aggressive,

[22] Travels, pp. 146–47.

[23] Travels, pp. 157–58.

[24] Isaiah 44:9–20, 46:7. In Hindu thought, the relationship between deities and their images is complex and various. See especially Chapter 2 in Diana Eck's *Darsan: seeing the divine image in India*, Chambersburg 1981, and Joanne Punzo Waghorne's introduction to *Gods of Flesh, Gods of Stone: the embodiment of divinity in India*, Waghorne / Norman Cutler (eds), Chambersburg 1985. Thanks again to Timothy Lubin for pointing me to these two books and discussing the subject with me.

determined, and argumentative persona. His interaction with others was narrowly "intellectual" in that he grasped only people's beliefs, not the subtle, non-rational contexts of their beliefs, such as a sense of sacredness, emotional attachment, community, the setting of boundaries. Hillel assumed the right to gaze upon whatever human beings had constructed in the world, but for those priests (I would guess), viewing an image in the inner sanctum was not about seeing a work of human "cunning." It was *darshan*, viewing the deity, which required proper status, purity, and "open eyes."

Sapir, in contrast, never learned Hindustani. He did not argue with Hindus or enter temples. Rather, he wrote at length and with delight about the landscape, produce, and crafts of India. He lauded the fertility of Indian land and the variety of its fruit, and praised at length the Kerala backwaters for their lush, delightful beauty. He wrote admiringly about artisans who produced lovely wooden chests and chairs, the comfort of riding in palanquins, the durability of palm leaves for keeping records, ingenious ways by which Indians cool their houses, the great "wisdom" of elephants and their role in shipbuilding, and ten beneficial uses of the coconut tree. Sapir must have spent many long days quietly observing Indians at their work, perhaps asking his local Jewish hosts to explain further. He tasted coconut juice and toddy, he learned for himself how riding an elephant felt. (Hillel reported on a few of these topics, but far more briefly than Sapir.)

Religion, however, was a different matter. Sapir composed four major descriptions of Hindu practice and images for his book and they express a distinct sense of repulsion. For example,

> "Many of the inhabitants of the land are divided in their beliefs, laws, and opinions, in venerating their idols (*elilim*) and abominations (*to'evot*), of every host of the heavens, of every animal and beast of the earth, of the horn of the ox, of images and all works of delusion (*ta'tu'im*), variety upon different variety, as they were in ancient days. … In every house there is idolatry (*'avodah zarah*), the image of a woman and two children, or male and female, naked and embracing, fashioned in stone, wood, or metal, and positioned on the wall or on the table, and an eternal lamp burning before them. And every morning, before any act or labor, before eating or drinking, they place in front of them a heave offering from their food – this is the offering of idolatry (*tiqrovet 'avodah zarah*) – and then the rest is eaten and they go forth to their labor."[25]

[25] ES II, p. 51.

In an unnamed Tamil city, Sapir was amazed at the array of imagery he saw on temple gateways:

> "Particularly on the roofs of the temples of their illusions (*batei ta'ato'eihem*), all of them covered with graven images (*pesilim*) and false gods (*elilim*) of all kinds of tame and wild beast, bird, loathsome animal (*sheqetz*) and creeping thing (*remes*), and everything that is on the earth."[26]

Sapir's choice of words, which come out of biblical and rabbinic denunciations of idolatry, carries the worldview in which he was raised and conveys his viewpoint. For Sapir, Hindu gods are *elilim*, *gilulim*, and *to'evot*, and Hindu images *pesilim* and *ta'tu'im* – terms usually translated as false gods, idols, delusions, graven images, and abominations. These words echo with sentences from Leviticus, Deuteronomy, the Prophets, and Psalms which harshly condemn the veneration of foreign gods and statues.[27] One term, *'avodah zarah* (literally: strange or foreign worship), used six times by Sapir to describe Hindu worship, appears prominently in the Talmud and Midrash as a general term for idolatry. An entire tractate of the Talmud, called *'Avodah Zarah*, is devoted to prohibitions against contact with idols, idolaters, and objects involved with idolatry.

The second passage, describing a *gopuram* (temple gateway), ignores its human-like figures and applies an animal classification taken from Chapter 11 of Leviticus, especially at the chapter's end, where certain animals are considered *sheqetz* (loathsome) and all animals are either *beheimah*, *hayah*, *'of*, or *remes*, that is, tame beast, wild beast, bird, or creeping thing, just as in Sapir's sentence. The phrase I have translated as "loathsome animal and creeping thing" (*sheqetz veremes*) reflects a phrase found many times in the Talmud, *sheqatzim urmasim*, that connotes "forbidden food." Sapir's choice of words thus turns the complex imagery of south Indian *gopurams* into a Jewish cosmology that divides the world into ritually pure and impure animals and connotes repulsion for impure food. This same sentence about *gopurams* likewise reflects a verse in the Book of Ezekiel appearing in the prophet's

[26] ES II, p. 94.

[27] Consider, as just three examples, Isa. 41:7, "In that day you will reject the *elilim* of silver and the *elilim* of gold which your sinful hands have made"; Jeremiah 10:15, "They are vanity, the work of delusion (*ma'aseh ta'tu'im*)"; and Psalm 97:7, "All who worship *pesilim* are put to shame."

vision of "wicked abominations" (*to'evot*) committed by the Judeans in the temple: "And behold, every form of creeping thing (*remes*) and abominable beast (*beheimah sheqetz*) and all the idols (*gilulim)* of the house of Israel" (8:10). Ezekiel uses the word *to'evot* (abominations) several times in this vision, the same term Sapir uses in this passage and elsewhere in reference to Hindu temples. Thus, the words of Ezekiel's vision augment Sapir's terminology from Leviticus by associating the Hindu images with ancient Judean idolatry.

Why did Sapir refrain from entering Hindu temples? One likely possibility is that he was following Jewish laws of idolatry. Leviticus had warned, "Do not turn to other gods" (Lev. 19:4), which had been interpreted in the Talmud as a prohibition against looking at idols,[28] and later by Moses Maimonides (1135–1204) and Moses Nahmanides (1194–1270) as a ban against even thinking about idolatry.[29] Then how would Sapir have justified his patient observations and long descriptions of Hindu worship? Three codes of law which Sapir often mentioned – *Shulhan 'Arukh* (16th c.), *'Arba'ah Turim*, and *Beit Yosef* – provide clues to his reasoning. According to these law codes, the general prohibition against observing idolatry applies only "if one enjoys (or benefits from) its sight" – which Sapir could deny. Another law, based on the talmudic interpretation of Deut. 18:9, permits possessing images if one's only purpose is to study them and "to understand and to teach"; and Sapir could read this exemption as a counterweight to the general ban against observing idols, so that he was permitted to study them in order to explain idolatry to his readers. Other laws prohibit mentioning the names of foreign deities and approaching closer than four cubits to a temple, but permit mentioning idolatry that specifically appears in the Torah. The *Beit Yosef* permits the disparaging of idolatry and the *Shulhan 'Arukh* permits deriding idolaters and forbids praising them. Sapir broke none of these laws, including the ban against approaching a temple.[30]

Hillel, however, entered temples and named gods such as Hanuman, Vishnu, and Brahma who do not appear in the Torah. He did, however, specify one law that he refused to break. At the temple at Mowlee, in the course of venerating an image, priests had placed "pieces of sugar candy" on the altar, recited

[28] Shabbat 149a.
[29] Nahmanides, Commentary to Lev. 19:4; Maimonides, MT 'Avodah Zarah 2.2.
[30] *Beit Yosef* 147.5. Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'ah 141.4, 142.15, 147.1, 147.5, 150.4, 151.14.

words over the candy, and then passed it out to the onlookers, among them Hillel. But he refused to take the candy and cited Deut. 7:26–27 as his reason. These verses command burning "the graven images of their gods" (*pesilei eloheihem*) and prohibit taking "the silver and gold on them, for it is detestable (*to'avat*) to the Lord your God … You must utterly detest (*shaqetz teshaqtzenu*) and abhor (*ta'ev teta'avenu*) it." Oddly, the verses say nothing of candy or food, but a law from the Mishnah (*'Avodah Zarah* 4.2) prohibits taking "anything offered upon the altar" of an idol, such as "grape-clusters, wreaths of corn, wine, oil or fine flour or anything similar," and the Gemara (51b) to this law connects it to Hillel's verse, Deut. 7:26. (Again we see Hillel thinking of sentences in rabbinic literature. He carefully mentions the situation relevant to the rabbinic law, that is, the altar and offerings in the Hindu temple, but explicitly lists only biblical verses as his source.) Therefore, in Hillel's mind, entering temples and gazing at "graven images of their gods" are permitted, but touching or acquiring anything sacrificed to them is prohibited. The biblical verse he cited ("utterly detest and abhor") expresses the same sense of repulsion that we find in Sapir's writing.

In summary, Sapir's way of interacting with Hindus was mainly one of passive observation shaped by Jewish guidelines for observing idolatry. He was curious and fascinated with most of what he saw in India, disapproving of its religion but delighted with all sorts of other cultural phenomena that did not express attitudes and values. Sapir's encounter with India produced a silent picture of exterior surfaces. Hillel's picture, by comparison, was dynamic, loud, and three-dimensional.

3. Ideas

Hillel's and Sapir's ideas about the temple Hinduism they witnessed needs fuller examination. To begin with Hillel, his view of Hinduism included beliefs ("All Hindoos believe in Brahmah, Vishnoo, and Seva."[31]) as well as worship, but emphasized the latter. *The Travels* portrays Hindu worship as calling upon gods, praying, burning incense, making offerings, blowing on conch shells, and kneeling before images. Hillel especially noticed the objects that were venerated in temples and along the streets: snakes, cows, and trees,

[31] Travels, p. 185.

and images of Hanuman, Rama, and other gods. He used the terms "images" and "idols" interchangeably. (Toward the end of his journey, however, after learning the concept of Brahman as the "one everlasting Being" and "chief of the whole universe" who is never represented by images, Hillel seems to have loosened a little his view of Hinduism as solely idol worship.[32])

Hillel also saw that Hindus held a notion of sacred space: "the natives dwelling near this [temple] account it for a very holy place," and a village, because of its many temples, is "counted by the natives as a very holy place."[33] He noted likewise that Christians "account pictures to be holy" and some Muslims consider a road to the burial site of Ali ibn Talib "their most holy road." For Hillel, however, only one space possessed true holiness, Mount Zion, which he twice calls "the most holy place."[34]

In his first encounter with Hindu worship, which occurred at Cochin as people were "performing Poojah," he described it as "the worship of Images, of all kinds of animals, and creeping thing."[35] The vocabulary chosen here later echoes in Sapir's description of temple gateways teeming with "all kinds of tame and wild beast, bird, loathsome animal (*sheqetz*) and creeping thing (*remes*)." This language, taken from Leviticus 11, connotes repulsion for impure food.

Hillel's lengthy reports about Hindu temples and worship usually conclude with theories about the real meaning of what he has seen, usually introduced by the words "I conceive." His theories are always historical, explaining origins, and this history is always Jewish history. Cooper called Hillel's thought process "investing the world with Jewish presence."[36] Watching the people of Cochin "paying divine honor" to snakes and "worshipping" trees, he "conceives" that the origin of this veneration was the idolatry reported by 2 Kings 18:4. This verse speaks of pillars (*matzevot*) and poles (*'asherah*) that Judeans were venerating, as well as the bronze serpent fashioned by Moses. Hillel further supposed that Hindu "respect for the cow" had "probably originated in the worship instituted by Jeroboam," as found in 1 Kings 12:28. This verse

[32] Travels, pp. 184–85.
[33] Travels, pp. 155, 173. Also, "the cow is considered sacred by Banians" (p. 126).
[34] Travels, pp. 7, 103. Mount Moria: pp. 5, 149.
[35] Travels, p. 126.
[36] "India's Jewish Geography," pp. 31–33.

recounts how Jeroboam "made two calves of gold" and told his people, "Here are your gods."[37]

Hillel applied biblical verses about idolatry to two other Indian festivals. He "compares" the "custom" in Bombay of throwing coconuts into the ocean after the monsoon season with a verse in Habakkuk about Babylonians making sacrifices to their fishing nets.[38] And the rite of walking on coals is not what his Hindu interlocutors told him it was: a commemoration of an ancient act of *sati* performed by a virtuous wife named Nullatanga-deva. To Hillel, the true meaning of the rite was revealed by the name of the temple at which it took place, "Darmarajah." Based on a theory of the corruption of words over time, Hillel "conceived" that the historical meaning of *sati* was worship of the god named in 2 Kings 17:31, "Adrammelekh," known also as Molekh. The Israelites "made a son or a daughter pass through fire as an offering to Molekh" (2 Kings 23:10), hence Hillel's association of Molekh with *sati* and walking on coals. He failed to complete his argument, but he seems to have thought that the name Dharma Rajah derived from Adrammelekh for two (inconsistent) reasons: one, that ʿ*adram* had been corrupted over time into a word with the same consonants scrambled, *dharma* (whose meaning Hillel seems not to have learned), and *rajah* means the same as "melekh" in the word *Adrammelekh*. He explained that the root of *Molekh* is *melekh*, meaning "king." Hillel's complete idea, then, was that from ancient biblical beginnings, the worship of the fire god Molekh had continued in India as *sati* under the name *Dharma Rajah*, a corrupted form of *Adrammelekh*.[39]

This clever dual-language exegesis exemplifies Hillel's theory that Hebrew, as the oldest language in the world,[40] could be employed as a tool for uncovering hidden historical truths about the Sanskrit language and Hindu beliefs. I mentioned earlier his assertion that the Hebrew word *davai* (Isa. 1:5) reveals the true meaning of *deva* (god), namely sorrow, "because they pray to them many times and receive no answer."[41] Thus the Hindu name for gods has built into it – secretly, in its Hebrew origin – the truth of their powerlessness.

37 Travels, p. 126.
38 Travels, p. 137.
39 Travels, pp. 183–84. Hillel cites 1 Kings 11:7 for the name Molekh, but I quoted 2 Kings 23:10 to show the ritual involved in worshipping him.
40 Travels, p. 207: "The Hebrew language was spoken before the confounding of the languages."
41 Travels, p. 147.

(The point of reporting these disputes with Hindus may have been apologetic. As a rejoinder to Protestants who considered Judaism inferior, Hillel's linguistic theories would demonstrate that Jewish scripture and the Jewish holy language, Hebrew, reveal hidden truths about the world because they are very old and influential, being the one revelation to and original language of humankind.)

In the case of the creator god Brahma, however, the name's Hebrew origin reveals the opposite of this theory: a misappropriation that does not reflect the truth. As we saw earlier, Hillel asserted that Hindus had "drawn the word [Brahma] from the Hebrew" word for create, *bara'*, "and they have wronged this word" by applying it to Brahma.[42] A similar misuse of Hebrew appears in the name *Ram*, "who was their ancient king." However, declared Hillel, *ram* really comes from the Hebrew word for "high," and is usually applied to God, "and I conceive that they have drawn this word from there."[43] Hillel would probably call these two cases of Hebrew origins "borrowings." This is the term he used for a celebration in which Muslims carried "figures of men and beasts" through the streets of Bombay and threw them into the sea. He "conceives" that this is a form of "idolatry" opposed by the Quran, "but they borrowed this custom from their idolatrous neighbors."[44]

Some elements that Hillel saw in Hindu worship, however, looked Jewish. Observing an Indian festival that looked like the Jewish celebration of Purim – because Indians played the roles of a king, a queen, and a "curiously" dressed Haman, gave gifts, and dressed in costume – Hillel "conceives" that they "drew" this "feast" from a verse in the Book of Esther (8:9), in which the king's secretaries sent letters to all the provinces in the Persian empire, including India. Hillel probably inferred that these letters told the story of Purim, and that Indians had learned about Purim from them and adopted the celebration. In addition, Hillel identified "a strong resemblance" of Hindu purification and mourning ceremonies "to those of the Israelites" (his English term for Jews), and wondered whether Hindus were "descendants of the long lost ten tribes." But he decided they were not because they did not practice circumcision or

42 Travels, p. 158.
43 Travels, p. 148.
44 Travels, p. 136.

observe the Sabbath.[45] In these examples, Hillel explained Jewish elements in foreign cultures through either historical contacts with Jews or a people's origin as a lost tribe of Israel.

A last example of Hillel's historical explanations appears towards the end of his book, after he wrote, "I have been told by many learned Hindoos that the ancient Hindoos did not worship any idols."[46] How, then, did this worship of images arise? What were the historical causes? Hillel offered two possible theories. One was that idolatrous "Samaritans who came to India in the time of Alexander the great" spread their idolatry to the Indian people. (But Hillel was puzzled by the absence of any surviving trace of the Samaritans.) His other theory was that "wicked Jews who came to India after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar" had brought with them the idolatry described in the Hebrew Bible, and Hindus had adopted it.[47]

On two occasions, however, Hillel voiced an explicit theological judgment about Hinduism. This took expression in the form of prayers. The first one occurred in Cochin when he witnessed people "performing Poojah." He "could not but humbly bless the Lord that He has given us a true law to separate us from such abomination."[48] The second was composed in the course of a long detailed report on the features of several temples at Conjeerveram. After devoting a page and a half to these temples, he suddenly interrupted himself:

> "It would take a long space to explain all of them and besides their vanity is not worthy to lose so much time on: but blessed be the Lord, who separated us from these errors and gave us a true law testifying that He alone is the one true God."[49]

Both prayers construct a world of opposites. On the one side is vanity, error, and everything that "abomination" connotes. This is Hinduism. On the other

45 Travels, pp. 126–27. Fischel, and following him, Cooper, thought Hillel believed that Hindus were lost tribes of Israel. But this mistake comes from Fischel's misreading of Hillel's antiquated English. Hillel wrote, "… so that did they [Hindus] practice circumcision and sanctify Saturday, I should judge them to be the descendants of the long lost ten tribes" (Travels, p. 127). Fischel rewrote this sentence as "since they practice circumcision and sanctify Saturday, I should judge them to be …" (*Unknown Jews*, p. 117). However, he had misunderstood the subjunctive, conditional sense of Hillel's use of the phrase "did they practice," meaning in contemporary English, "if they practiced." Thus Hillel was saying: if they practiced X, I would judge them to be Y.

46 Travels, pp. 184–85.

47 Travels, p. 185.

48 Travels, p. 126

49 Travels, p. 173.

side are truth, God, blessing, law, and "us." Who is this "us"? Because Hillel associates "us" with the "true law," this "us" is the Jewish community, not Hillel's Protestant readers. The word "separation" is reminiscent of verses in Leviticus (20:24–26) that speak of God separating Israel "from the peoples."[50] So, although Hillel was fascinated with Hindu temples and was even tempted to identify Hindus as a lost tribe of Israel, he ultimately envisioned an eternal conflict between the principles of Hindu and Jewish worship.

Sapir's views of Hinduism contain some of the same ideas, but in a more moderate form. First, Sapir never inquired into what Hindus believed – whom their images represented or what their doctrines consisted of – though he occasionally used a vague vocabulary of belief: "the inhabitants of the land are divided in their beliefs, religious laws, and opinions (*'emunoteihem dateihem vedei'oteihem*), in venerating their idols and abominations."[51] Otherwise, he described Hinduism through the external phenomena of what its images look like and what its worshipers do in public. They worship and exalt, make offerings, burn a light before their images, and sing and dance as they carry them. His most common word for Hindu practice is "worship," as in *'avodah zarah*, "foreign worship," idolatry. But like Hillel, he also imagined a Hindu notion of holiness. Speaking of the way that people near Trivandrum treat their cattle, he wrote, "they do not do work with them because they are holy to them (*qedoshim heimah lahem*)." He applied the same phrase to two other Hindu practices.[52] Likewise, he noticed that the town of Tanta was holy to Egyptian Muslims, and certain Torah scrolls and saints' tombs were holy to Egyptian Jews. He was reporting people's subjective feelings about holiness, but when Sapir wrote about the "holy Sabbath," "the holy City," and "the holiness of the religion (*dat*) of Moses," he used the word "holy" in an absolute sense.[53]

I discussed how Sapir's descriptive language conveys his identification of Hindu worship with the idolatry that appears in the Hebrew Bible, particularly the Book of Ezekiel with its priestly vocabulary echoing Leviticus. Two specific Hindu rituals confirmed his belief in Hinduism's ancient Near Eastern

[50] Or see Ezra 6:21, 9:1, and 10:11, which include the idea of separation from pollution and abomination.

[51] ES II, p. 51.

[52] ES II, p. 84; II, p. 113; II, p. 51.

[53] For a fuller discussion of this topic, see the section "Holy to Them" in my article, "Hinduism, Torah, and Travel."

background. One was a sacred car festival that he saw in a Tamil city. He described people gathering together and lifting huge wheels "on their shoulders, because they are an exhausting burden even for hundreds of men, and they move it about the city on every road, with a great tumultuous voice, songs, and dances."[54] The "it" in this sentence is a sacred car, *ratha* in Sanskrit, which, with its "graven images," he associated with a Talmudic sentence about "an image as heavy as a thousand men" fashioned by Manasseh, king of Judah; and also with the biblical story of an enormous gold "idol that Nebuchadnezzar set up." [55] The second ritual was the south Indian practice of raising an ox's horn over one's head as a form of veneration. Sapir identified this rite with the ancient Greek worship of oxen mentioned in rabbinic Midrash.[56]

But unlike Hillel, Sapir's purpose in making these identifications was not to prove the biblical origins of Hindu idolatry. Rather, a sentence elsewhere in *Even Sapir* reveals his idea: "When I reflected on some of their worship and the days of their festivals, I comprehended several sayings, verses, and stories in the Bible and Talmud which I had not previously understood."[57] Sapir was claiming that his observations of Hindu worship could help him and his readers to understand obscure parts of the Bible and Talmud related to idolatry. Why so? A phrase in one of his descriptions of idolatry, "as they were in ancient days" (quoted previously), shows that he thought Indian religion had not changed for thousands of years. Since Sapir believed he was seeing in India some of the same religious practices that had prevailed among ancient Babylonians, Greeks, and those Judeans who had turned to the idolatry of the surrounding nations, Sapir must have assumed that India had once been part of a vast, ancient, and idolatrous civilization that had stretched from Greece to India.[58] This civilization had survived in his time only in India, and that was why Indian culture exhibited the actual living practices of idolatry mentioned in the Talmud.

54 ES II, p. 84.
55 bT Sanh. 103b, Daniel Chap. 3.
56 Midrash Leviticus Rabbah 13.5; ES II, pp. 93–94.
57 ES II, p. 51.
58 We find a similar idea in the commentary of Abraham ibn Ezra (c. 1089–1164), who thought these ancient nations, including the Indians, were all descendants of Ham. All Hammites once shared a common culture and religion. See his comments on Ex. 8.22 and 19.9 (Long Commentary), and Psalms 2.12.

Yet, though Hinduism was essentially ancient and idolatrous, Sapir (like Hillel) identified in it certain Jewish elements and similarities, such as the Purim celebration. Writing about the Parsees of Bombay, who he thought celebrated Purim, he added, "There are other nations in India who also observe Purim."[59] Discovering many biblical names among the Ceylonese, Sapir proposed a theory to explain Jewish customs which he thought he had discovered in India and Ceylon. These customs and names were a "trace," a survival, from Jews who had been exiled to India after the destruction of the first Temple. Sapir thought that additional Jews had immigrated after the destruction of the second Temple, mainly to the area of Cochin, and more Jewish families had come periodically from Europe to Malabar to escape persecution.[60] By calculating the offspring that these many Jews would have produced, Sapir arrived at an "immense" number of Jewish inhabitants in India's past. Nearly all of them, however, had assimilated, "and there remain for a few of them only the names of their fathers which they held onto as a mark of memory, and even a few of the customs, as I related above." So one reason why Hindus observed a festival like Purim, burning an effigy of an evil character, is that as ancient Jews gradually became Hindus, they continued to celebrate Purim and it took on a Hindu form. Sapir noticed a similar process of acculturation occurring, but in reverse direction, in the mourning customs practiced by the Jews of Calcutta: "Thus was added to the essence [of Jewish customs] a number of [Indian] accretions until the root was mixed with a large amount of vanities."[61]

In a chapter on Calcutta, near the end of his journey in India, Sapir openly voiced his theological judgment about Hinduism. This took the form of a sentence that he constructed from four biblical phrases: he hopes that Hindus "will recognize and know that their fathers bequeathed them a lie and that they erred from the path to make silent idols (*elilim 'ilmim*), to burn incense and to sacrifice to nothingness and emptiness, and to worship the work of their hands made of wood and stone."[62] Here Sapir associates the gods of Hinduism with biblical assertions of emptiness, error, and lies. He was astonished, therefore, that Hindus did not convert to the Christianity offered by English missionaries. With all that Hindus suffered from their own religion,

[59] ES II, pp. 50–51.
[60] ES II, Chap. 24.
[61] ES II, p. 102.
[62] ES II, p. 109. Quoting or echoing phrases from Jer. 16:18, Hab. 2:18, Isa 41:12, and Deut. 4.28.

they nevertheless "do not become wise and do not cast away their abominations and idols and their images, to grasp hold of another religion (*dat*) right in front of them, which teaches them knowledge and intelligence to walk in the paths of life."[63] This sentence portrays Hinduism as deathly ignorance and folly.

4. Conclusion

I will now draw some conclusions about the ways in which these two representatives of Lithuanian rabbinic thought encountered temple religiosity in India. There were, first of all, important differences between these two travelers – in the ways they interacted with Hindus, in the readers for whom they wrote, the emphases in their books, and in the Jewish texts they quoted. Comparing the two authors showed me aspects of Sapir's response to India and Hinduism that I had hardly noticed in my earlier studies of him – for example, the passivity of his relationship with Hindus, his great enthusiasm for Indian cultural practices such as finding uses for every part of a coconut tree, and the amount of time it must have taken him to observe the Indian ways of life that he described. Compared with Hillel, furthermore, he seems like a more careful historian than I had earlier thought, but also less informed about non-Jewish peoples and history.

But the similarities between the two authors are more interesting. Both men found Hindu rituals, images, and temples fascinating objects of curiosity. They conceptualized Hindu religion in similar ways, mainly as actions venerating images of a variety of gods; particular beliefs were secondary. Hillel and Sapir also attributed to Hindus a notion of the holiness of their temples and objects of veneration. But the concept of "idolatry" shaped the fundamental view of Hindu worship held by both Hillel and Sapir. Both travelers considered Hindu belief and worship erroneous, futile, and repulsive, and they expressed their repulsion through biblical language of "abomination" and forbidden animals. They themselves took care not to trespass into idolatrous domains: Hillel refused to touch food offered on Hindu alters while Sapir avoided Hindu temples altogether.

[63] ES II, p. 109.

Neither traveler could view Hindu worship without seeking its historical origins in the ancient idolatry described by the Bible and Talmud. Hillel looked for exact correspondences with Judean veneration of trees and animals, and located the source of Hindu idolatry in Jewish idolaters who migrated to India in the distant past; whereas Sapir identified the source in a widespread idolatrous culture of ancient times that included peoples from Greece to India. Hillel, an expert in languages, applied a linguistic theory based on Hebrew as the world's original language, to learn hidden truths about Hindu words and worship. And both rabbis perceived Jewish traces in a few Hindu practices, which again they both explained as traditions that had survived from Jewish immigrants.

These similarities point to a larger worldview that shaped these men's thought. The examples of Hillel and Sapir suggest that people of their particular Jewish culture would encounter this popular temple Hinduism in the range of ways that they did. People of this Jewish culture would ignore the meanings stated by religious adherents, define Hindu devotion as "idol worship," assume boundaries and otherness and feel repulsion, and then try to find the source of this worship in the events of early Jewish history.

Where does this pattern of thought, this way of comparing religions, come from? Much of it seems old; it takes up the narrative of Jews living in a dangerous world of idolatry and impurity, and extends this narrative to Asia in modern times. It applies and amplifies the barriers and assumptions of the laws of *'avodah zarah*.[64] For Hillel and Sapir, the conflict between idolatry and revealed truth had not changed since biblical and classical times, even though there had been a mixing of secondary elements between the two sides, borrowings and corruptions. I would guess that this last component in their theories – cultural change that occurred through borrowings, corruptions, accretions, and survivals, or the diffusion of culture over time, especially through migration – was new for their stream of rabbinic thought, although I do not know enough about the sources of Lithuanian Judaism to be sure. Interestingly, these ethnological ideas were to appear in the writings of E.B. Tyler toward the latter part of the 19th century. Research into the intellectual

[64] Alon Goshen-Gottstein writes insightfully about *'avodah zarah* as a "mental attitude and approach to the other … scorn, mockery, and contempt." See p. 25 and Chapters 4 and 5 in *Same God, Other God: Judaism, Hinduism, and the Problem of Idolatry*, Basingstroke 2016.

and cultural sources of Hillel's and Sapir's ideas about Hinduism is needed. In addition, comparing their ideas with the ways that 19th century British missionaries conceived of Hinduism – calling it devil worship, idolatry, sin, and superstition – would provide an interesting perspective.

Linking the Jewish People to India: Friedrich Korn (1803–1850) and His Theory of Universal Revelation through Astrotheology

by Sebastian Musch

Abstract

This article explores the little-known author Friedrich Korn (1803–1850). Korn developed a theory of universal revelation which, among other things, claimed that the Jewish people descended from India. His theory is an amalgamation of the Romantic ideas about India, the historical criticisms as expounded by David Friedrich Strauß, and the desire to see his own conversion from Judaism to Protestantism as congruent with the historical progress of religion. Situating Korn in the intellectual context and theological debates of his time allows us to take a closer look at how he tried to reconcile many opposing stances, namely arguing for a genealogical lineage between India and the Jewish people, while calling for the conversion of the Jewish people to Christianity, and steadfastly believing in universal revelation, while holding on to the tools of historical criticism. These different positions made Korn an untimely author, out of sync with his peers and the scholarly attitude towards Judaism, India, and religion in general.

1. Introduction

In 1850 on his way from Leipzig to Vienna, Friedrich Korn, an indefatigable and prolific writer, died close to the town of Teplice at the young age of 47.[1] Born in 1803 in Prague to Jewish parents, Korn from early on engaged in literary efforts. Although destined by his parents to become a salesman like his father, Korn continued to write in his spare time. During his life he produced an erratic oeuvre that covered many of the fashionable genres of his time. When he perished, Korn, who almost exclusively published under *noms de*

[1] Biographical information following Richard Hoche: Nork Korn, Friedrich, in: Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, Vol. 24, Leipzig 1887, p. 16.

plume such as Friedrich Nork, Spiritus Asper, and Spiritus Lenis, had not only traversed much of central Europe, but had also crossed the boundaries among the many genres, which he blended into idiosyncratic new ones. He published a variety of voluminous and eclectic works, from fiction to (pseudo-) scientific treatises, satires, and dictionaries that engaged (quite often polemically) with coeval debates.[2] Yet his contributions were rarely taken seriously by his peers and were often ignored or, worse, ridiculed.[3] As the author of a biographical entry in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (General German Biographical Encyclopedia) from 1887 notes, Korn's literary and satirical works "were rightfully soon forgotten," and his mythological and scientific writings "convey a high amount of dilettantism, and did not find him approval."[4] On the few occasions that Korn is actually cited (mostly in the second half of the 19th century), it is mostly as a prime example of wild and unscientific speculation.[5] Today, scholarship on this surely controversial but highly interesting figure is virtually non-existent. Yet his oeuvre is worth studying, not just because of its scientific or philological value (many of his assessments are in fact amateurish and ludicrous), but because it offers us a new insight into a Jewish author's quest for a scholarly reputation and for a theological underpinning of his own path of life in a predominantly Christian Europe.

Central to understanding Korn's life and his writings is the fact that the social constellation of his time forced him to convert to Christianity in order to gain access to the higher strata of society that were otherwise barred. (The exact date of his conversion is unknown, but it was some time after the death of his parents and before the publication of his religious works in the mid-1830s.) The intertwining of his biography and his theories is evident throughout his writing. Moreover, as I will argue, his attempts to connect Judaism with ancient India stem from his desire not only to counter contemporary

2 Cf. Hoche, Nork, Korn Friedrich, p. 16.

3 Maybe most famously by Friedrich Engels in his early fragmentary tragicomedy *Der gehörnte Siegfried*. Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Gesamtausgabe, Abt. 3: Briefwechsel, Bd. 1: Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Briefwechsel bis April 1846. Berlin 1875, p. 121.

4 "Die sehr zahlreichen Schriften satirischen Inhalts, die er zum Theil auch unter dem Pseudonym 'Spiritus Asper und Lenis' veröffentlichte […], sind mit Recht bald vergessen worden. […] Auch die mythologischen und sonstigen wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten, welche das Gepräge des Dilettantischen in hohem Maße tragen, haben ihm Anerkennung zu verschaffen nicht vermocht." (Hoche, Nork, Friedrich, p. 16).

5 Cf.: Richard Gosche: Wissenschaftlicher Arbeitsbericht über das Jahr 1857, in: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 11 (1857), p. 267.

discourses on an Indo-European link (that often excluded Jews), but also to justify and give historical significance to his own path of life, i. e., his conversion. Thus he engaged quite obsessively with Judaism's historical and religious value, and even though he was mostly negative about contemporary Jewry, he attempted to find a common, universal core to both Judaism and Christianity that would place his personal choice to convert in line with the historical development of universal religion.

For this purpose, Korn built a world history of revelation and a genealogy of religions around his own life story and thereby offered a counter-myth to the prevalent ideas on India and revelation. This quest ultimately alienated him both from his Jewish upbringings and from the Christian establishment he was so eager to join. His aspiration to claim respectability for his descent, his life choices, and his farrago of philological and philosophical theories was crushed by the particularity (or narrowness) of the Christian theological discourse of his time. The story of Friedrich Korn is ultimately one of failure, but it is also an illuminating and important attempt to connect Judaism with Indian religions.

2. Universal Religion from the Source of India

So where did Korn's quest for universal religion begin? Well, at the beginning, i. e., the origin of religion itself, which, following a discourse that was already popular during German Romanticism, Korn found in India.[6] He saw India as the cradle of humanity, philosophy, and religion, and his quest would subsequently not only involve Judaism and Christianity, but also ascribe theological value to Brahmanism and Buddhism. Throughout his oeuvre, he continuously equated Judaism with Brahmanism and, as the two reformatory sides of the same coin, Buddhism with Christianity. His speculations on the relationship between these four religions at times ran wild, goaded by the enticing plausibility of the common etymology of Sanskrit and Hebrew, in

[6] Cf. Friedrich Nork: Braminen und Rabbinen oder: Indien das Stammland der Hebräer und ihrer Fabeln. Eine Beweisführung für Bibel-Exegeten und Geschichtsforscher. Meissen 1836, p. 30 f. And cf. as well: Friedrich Nork: Vollständiges Hebräisch-chaldäisch-rabbinisches Wörterbuch über das alte Testament, die Thargumim, Midraschim und den Talmud, mit Erläuterungen aus dem Bereich der historischen Kritik, Archäologie, Mythologie, Naturkunde etc. und mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Dicta messiana, als Bindemittel der Schriften des alten und des neuen Bundes. Grimma 1842, p. 8.

which he heavily engaged.[7] His productivity and his inability to set limits to his pompous sense of speculative conjecture resulted in evermore fantastic hypotheses that breached the boundaries of what was considered good scholarly (and theological) practice at the time. In his two books, *Der Prophet Elias – Ein Sonnenmythus* and *Die Weihnachts- und Osterfeier erklärt aus dem Sonnencultus der Orientalen*, published respectively in 1837 and 1838, Korn argued that the Prophet Elias and both Christmas and Easter were quintessentially residues of an ancient heliolatrous cult.[8] Following the historical criticism most prominently represented by David Friedrich Strauß, Korn read the Bible as a mythologization of natural occurrences related to the sun, other celestial bodies, and the change of the seasons. For example, he equated the arrival of evil, as embodied by the snake in the Garden of Eden, with the dawn of winter and the concurrent receding of the sun.[9] The figure of the Messiah then corresponded to the eagerly awaited return of spring and the reappearance of the sun, which offered a ray of hope during the dark time of year. Both Judaism and Christianity had their theological origins in the sun, which was the quintessence of Korn's astro-theological investigations. These were, of course, outrageous remarks for that time, especially as they were intended (and accordingly understood by his opponents) as a contribution to one of the fiercest theological battles that the 19th century would witness.

3. Christian Reactionaries and the Battle Over Jesus

Benedict Welte, the then rising star of Catholic theology at the University of Tübingen, derided Korn's books in his reviews and cheerfully pointed out their logical shortcomings.[10] He particularly emphasized the blasphemous content that, according to Korn, the fundamental tenets of Judaism and in

[7] Cf. Vorbemerkung in: Nork, Vollständiges Hebräisch-chaldäisch-rabbinisches Wörterbuch, pp. 1–16 and Nork, Braminen und Rabbinen, p. 170 ff.

[8] Cf. Friedrich Nork: Die Weihnachts- und Osterfeier erklärt aus dem Sonnencultus der Orientalen – Etwas für die Besitzer der Strauss'schen Schrift: "das Leben Jesu". Leipzig 1838, and Friedrich Nork: Der Prophet Elias – Ein Sonnenmythus. Leipzig 1837.

[9] Cf. Nork, Weihnachts- und Osterfeier, p. 13. Korn argues from this reading that the biblical story of creation and of the Garden of Eden stems from Persian mythology.

[10] Cf. for information on Welte: Heinrich Reusch: Welte, Benedict, in: Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, Vol. 41, Leipzig 1896, p. 692. For the two reviews, cf. Benedict Welte: [No Title], Theologische Quartalsschrift, 1 (1838), pp. 119–135 and [No Title], Theologische Quartalsschrift, 3 (1838), pp. 536–548.

Christianity were based on the ancient tradition of worshipping the sun.[11] Welte therefore asked sarcastically if Korn had only become a Protestant so he could worship the sun and mock scripture, and if he could not have done so before his conversion.[12] Welte took particular offense at the last paragraph of *Die Weihnachts- und Osterfeier* which as a culmination of the book's main hypothesis, equated the Christian doctrine of Christ as the redeemer with the first rays of the sun in spring and then concluded with the plain statement that "this Christ is the Sun."[13]

While the kernel of his argument was theological, Welte nevertheless excoriated Korn's books rather on philological and logical grounds, which situated his reviews in the midst of the battle over the Straussian legacy. Published in 1835, a few years before Korn's contributions, David Friedrich Strauß's *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet* proved to be a huge challenge for Christian theologians, both rationalist and suprarationalist. Strauß readily deployed the historical-critical methodology of the rationalist school and argued that there was not any more philological evidence to attribute historical truth to the Bible than to the myths of the Koran or of the Hindus.[14] The Bible was mythology, Strauß claimed; it did not have any historical value, but was fiction like Homer's *Odyssey*. This was the outcome of taking historical criticism to an extreme, which also repelled many rationalists. In his book Strauß also offered a (very short) positive Christology, where he outlined a theology of the divine relation between God and humanity beyond reason, yet based in history.[15] But the damage was done, Strauß was immediately fired from his position as a lecturer in Tübingen and, after a short stint in Ludwigsburg, could never again secure academic employment. In Strauß's mind, the demythologization of basic Christian tenets and even of Jesus himself was supposed to build a bridge in the ongoing debate between rationalists and suprarationalists; yet in

[11] Ibid. 547.

[12] Ibid. From the Protestant side Korn was also attacked along the same lines by Heinrich Leo, who was furious that Korn was given entrance into the Protestant community through baptism, supposedly one day after having mocked Christianity. Cf. Heinrich Leo: Sendschreiben an J. Görres. Halle 1838, p. 59.

[13] Nork, Weihnachts- und Osterfeier, p. 79.

[14] Suzanne Marchand: German Orientalism in the Age of Empire – Religion, Race and Scholarship. Cambridge 2009, p. 109.

[15] Cf. George Williamson: The Longing for Myth in Germany – Religion and Aesthetic Culture from Romanticism to Nietzsche. Chicago 2004, p. 164.

the end, it alienated both sides. He tried to accommodate rationalists through method and suprarationalists through his Christology, but was nevertheless mostly seen and judged as an ardent rationalist, who fervently ventured to destroy faith in Jesus.

Among the numerous irate responses to Strauß, one is especially important in regard to Korn's endeavor, not only because of his vigor and venom, but because of its theological implications for Korn. Carl August Eschenmayer was a professor of medicine and philosophy in Tübingen and one of Schelling's last followers in the medical realm. He was prone to occultism, had a vivid interest in animal magnetism, and had apparently been a friend of Strauß before they engaged in a public feud over the latter's alleged abuse of the Bible.[16] In his book *Der Ischariothismus unserer Zeit*, Eschenmayer charged Strauß with betrayal of Jesus and depicted him as the new Judas.[17] For Eschenmayer, Strauß epitomized the general tendency, which he called "Iscariotism" after Judas Iscariot, to controvert the "clear meaning and letters of the Gospels."[18] While in the end the "difference is quite marginal, whether one plainly negates the facts, or just veils them in a mythical fog," Strauß was guilty of the second transgression.[19] Not even Strauß's appeasement of the suprarationalists found mercy, as his Christology was seen by Eschenmayer as abolishing the centrality of Jesus to the Christian faith and was consequently heretic. Eschenmayer sharply condemned Strauß's vision of a direct relationship between God and humanity that circumvented the historical figure of Jesus. "After he had taken the piece of bread, Satan entered him," he quoted in reference to Strauß from John 13:27, where Judas first assumed his role as the betrayer of Jesus. After Strauß answered with his own *Streitschrift*, in which he claimed that Eschenmayer was "a sanctimonious romancer", Eschenmayer published a response in his *Conflict zwischen Himmel und Hölle an den Dämonen eines besessenen Mädchens beobachtet*, a case study on the exorcism of a girl possessed

16 Carl August Eschenmayer: Conflict zwischen Himmel und Hölle an den Dämonen eines besessenen Mädchens beobachtet, Nebst einem Wort an Dr. Strauß. Tübingen / Leipzig 1837, p. 214. Cf.: Hermann Zeltner: Eschenmayer, Adolph Carl August, in: Neue Deutsche Biographie, Vol. 4, 1959, p. 644.

17 Cf. Zeltner, Eschenmayer, p. 644.

18 Carl August Eschenmayer: Der Ischariothismus unserer Tage. Eine Zugabe zu dem jüngst erschienen Werke: Das Leben Jesu von Strauß, I. Theil. Tübingen 1835, p. III.

19 Ibid.

by a demon, which also included an appendix directed at Strauß.[20] Here Eschenmayer, who was convinced the world would end soon, listed several phenomena that supposedly demonstrated the arrival of the servants of Satan on earth, as predicted by the possessed girl (or by the demon).[21] Beside ghost sightings and demonic possessions, Eschenmayer enumerated the writings of Strauß, who had, maybe even unwillingly (since he was spoiled by "Hegelian materialism"), befriended Satan. By linking him to Satan and thus trying to ostracize him, Eschenmayer, himself a Schellingian, lead a proxy war against rationalism, which he saw as the offspring of Hegel's philosophy.

This is the intellectual context in which Korn tried leave his mark, always oscillating between the grandiosity of his universal ideas and the caution of an outsider. For a recent convert like Korn, these skirmishes, which could easily destroy one's reputation and career, were also a cautionary tale of treading lightly in the heated realm of theological discussions, as his Jewish descent made him particularly vulnerable to attacks by the old Christian guards.

4. Progress through Conversion

How could Korn counter this challenge while maintaining the validity of his hypothesis? His answer: by diluting historical criticism with the idea of the historical progress of religion.

In the foreword to *Prophet Elias – Ein Sonnenmythus*, Korn appealed to Eschenmayer, not to charge him with Iscariotism. Even though he adopted the historical-critical method from Strauß, historical criticism had its merit if used in the right way, Korn maintained; especially for the explicit goal to convince the Jews of their false messianic beliefs and consequently to instigate Jewish conversion to Christianity.[22] Korn even urged Christian missionaries to

[20] "In der Eschenmayer'schen Schrift macht sich der Ärger eines frömmelnden Phantasten Luft […]" David Friedrich Strauß: Streitschriften zur Vertheidigung und zur Charakteristik der gegenwärtigen Theologie, Bd. 1, Zweites Heft. Tübingen 1838, p. 10. Cf.: Eschenmayer, Conflict zwischen Himmel und Hölle, p. 214.

[21] Eschenmayer, Conflict zwischen Himmel und Hölle, p. 210.

[22] Korn, Der Prophet Elias, p. VII f. The influence of Eschenmayer on Korn is further illuminated by the fact that a few years later Korn published two works that engaged with demonic possessions, ghost sightings, and animal magnetism, directly referencing Eschenmayer. Cf. Friedrich Nork: Die Existenz der Geister und ihre Einwirkung auf die Sinnenwelt; psychologisch erklärt und historisch begründet. Weimar 1841, p. III. And cf. also Friedrich Nork: Über Fatalismus oder Vorherbestimmung der menschlichen Schicksale, erwiesen in 222 Beispielen für das

distribute his *Prophet Elias* along with the New Testament to the "lost sheep of Israel" to eradicate any messianic hope among the Jews.[23]

In his efforts to find respectability for his ideas of universal religion, Korn dismissed his Jewish heritage and called for conversion. Yet Judaism preserved some of its value in Korn's work, as he was eager to rehabilitate Judaism as a landmark for the dissemination of progress towards universal revelation. He therefore presented his personal story of conversion as a narrative of historical dimensions, basically crafting a new myth in the guise of the theological discourse of his time. This new myth erected a new order that would provide his life with a teleological justification.[24] Korn's attempts to extract the universal out of the particular, and his conflation of the fictitious and the scholarly, followed the Romantics' programs of a new mythology, without actually being romantic. Korn posed a counter-myth against Romanticism while his methodology is steeped in Left Hegelian philology. In the guise of a myth, combining a genealogy of the past and a vision of the future, Korn could both make the case for his conversion and his special insight into universal revelation, and also argue that his Jewish descent was actually an asset in understanding the universal revelation as epitomized by Christianity.

Essentially, for Korn Judaism became (just) a necessary step in a historical progress of universal proportions.[25] Like David Friedrich Strauß, who tried to balance his scathing historical-critical dissection of the life of Jesus with his Christology, Korn ultimately offered a positive vision for the future of Christianity.

5. Astrotheology and the Sons of the Sun

To find an Archimedean point for his venture, Friedrich Korn turned to the sky: as holy scripture had lost its place at the core of religion, an alternative, a cornerstone on which to build, was needed. While many others turned inward to find this cornerstone for religion (or rather: faith), Korn turned upwards to

Vorhandenseyn des Divinationsvermögen nebst psychologischen Erklärungsversuchen jenes erhöhten Seelenzustands. Weimar 1840.

23 Korn, Der Prophet Elias, p. VII.

24 In my understanding of myth, I follow Manfred Frank: Der kommende Gott. Vorlesungen über die Neue Mythologie. I. Teil. Frankfurt a. M. 1982, p. 110.

25 Friedrich Nork: Ethymologisch-symbolisch-mythologisches Real-Wörterbuch zum Handgebrauche für Bibelforscher, Archäologen und bildene Künstler, Vol 3, Stuttgart 1845, p. 188.

the sky. Hadn't the Indians, the Israelites and the early Christians looked at the same sky spanning earth? Was not the position under the sky the one constant that united all humans and all revelations through time and space? Rather than basing religion on individual experience, the sky should be the starting point for Korn's inquiry into religion and revelation. The ambitious Korn, never shying away from grand aspirations, hoped to lay the foundation for a new field: astrotheology. While he was not the first to look to the stars for theological implications, he viewed astrotheology as both a logical consequence of the historical-critical turn and as an answer to its shortcomings.

Korn's quest for universal religion through astrotheology was thus based on three considerations. First, to not stray from the Straußian path of historical criticism. Second, to ground his own conversion inside a narrative of historical progress of religion. Third, to avoid the charge of Iscariotism, i. e., the accusation of treason against Jesus.

To reconcile these three aspects, Korn developed his theory of the solar origin of messianic beliefs into a full-blown account of the genesis of religion. However, he did not embark on the irrational road Eschenmayer paced up and down, but rather took a conciliatory approach by bringing together historical criticism and (at times, occultist) Christianity. His work *Das Leben Mosis aus dem astrognostischen Standpunkte betrachtet* was a broadening of the theoretical groundwork laid in his works on Elias and Jesus.[26] Moses is identical to the sun, as are Abraham, Bacchus, and Osiris, to name just a few of a rather long list of religious and divine figures. However, Korn expanded his theory to all celestial bodies. So, for example, he asserted that the 600,000 Israelites Moses led out of Egypt correspond to the 600,000 stars in the sky.[27] Korn concluded that most myths were based on renderings of the Indian zodiac and thus gave a foundation to the bottomless mythologization in the Straussian endeavor that would tear religious conviction apart until no foundation was left to stand on. Coming from the stars, Korn instead arrived at a first act in the history of religion, namely original revelation (*Uroffenbarung*). Before the beginning of history lay a revelation that cannot be touched by historical

[26] Cf. Friedrich Nork: Das Leben Mosis, aus dem astrognostischen Standpunkte betrachtet. Leipzig 1838.

[27] Nork, Das Leben Mosis, p. 14.

criticism, even though the subsequent historical development after this original revelation should rightfully be scrutinized critically.

A key moment for our inquiry is of course Korn's powerful rendition of a trope that became a constant in Europe's approach to India. Starting with Friedrich Schlegel, it became popular to argue for a linguistic, metaphysical, and spiritual affinity between Germany and India, while Jews (or all Semites) were excluded from this "invented tradition."[28] With the German fascination with India as a background, Korn's explicit goal was to turn the steering wheel around, and to prove that the Jews also shared a special relation with India. Judaism, he asserted, is "a graft of Brahmanism, because the Hebrews not only through their religious kinship, but also through their language and facial features reveal their Indian descent."[29] Following a genealogical chain from the Hebrews who descended from the Egyptians, who descended from the Ethiopians, who descended from the Indians, an affinity between Indians and Jews is established, which is nonetheless affirmed through a continuous decline. The original true message of monotheism was tainted through codification by brahmins and rabbis. The establishment of "often ridiculous ceremonial laws" turned these once-pure religions into unrecognizable systems.[30]

The anti-rabbinic stance in Korn's work was hardly original but rather a commonplace in anti-Jewish writings. It garnered special popularity among German thinkers of the time, both Jewish and gentile, at least since Johann Gottfried Herder. As historian Frank Manuel observed, "[a]cceptance of primitive Israel and disdainful rejection of post-biblical rabbinism" could go hand in hand.[31] In a period so historically minded as the first decades of the 19th century, still charged with the Romanticist obsession with origins, elevating the past through a narrative of historical decline, especially in regard to biblical

[28] Cf. Eric Hobsbawm: Introduction: Inventing Tradition, in: The Invention of Tradition. Eric Hobsbawm / Terence Ranger (eds), Cambridge 1983, pp. 1–14. Cf. Friedrich Schlegel: Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier, in: Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe. Ernst Behler / Ursula Struc-Oppenberg (eds), Vol. 8, München 1975.

[29] "Ein P[f]ropfreis des Bramaismus sey, weil die Hebräer durch religiöse Verwandtschaft nicht nur, sondern auch durch Sprache und Gesichtsbildung ihre Abkunft aus Indien verrathen." Nork, Braminen und Rabbinen, p. VII.

[30] Nork, Braminen und Rabbinen, p. IX.

[31] Cf. Frank E. Manuel: The Broken Staff. Judaism through Christian Eyes, Cambridge 2014, p. 252. Also Cf. Marchand, German Orientalism, p. 45.

as opposed to rabbinic Judaism, was a common trope.[32] Elevating the biblical Hebrews almost always came at the expense of rabbinic Judaism in general and of present-day Jewish communities.

Korn followed the trail Herder blazed. For him, universal religion still found its residues in Judaism, which played the historically significant role of establishing revelation at the brink of Europe. Yet its historical significance now lay in Christianity, as Korn himself tried to epitomize through his conversion. His imperturbable belief in the historical-critical method, however, would not let him negate the inherent symbolic truth of Judaism as expressed in the Tanakh. Reading it as a mythologization of the original revelation allowed Korn to regard names, plants, and even specific narrative details such as Esau's lentil soup as allegories or mythologizations of concealed symbols that were universal in nature.[33] Korn postulated one (historical) original revelation that was transmitted through a universal symbolism, in which the symbols assumed different shapes according to the specific circumstances *ad locum*.[34] Here, again, the constructed parallelism to Korn's own life becomes evident: his quest had led him from Judaism to Christianity and would now open the door to universal revelation, a theological revolution that could only originate from someone who could himself claim insight into the Indian art of astrotheology via his Jewish descent. He was a son of the sun like all his fellow Christians, but he could also claim that he was closer to the source.

6. A Jewish Outsider goes to India to find a Home

In Korn's vast *Ethymologisch-symbolisch-mythologisches Real-Wörterbuch*, Brahmanism played a distinctive role in the connection between particular religion and original revelation.[35] Here Korn further fleshed out his thesis of Brahmanism as the well of all religions by quoting Friedrich Creuzer, the

[32] Not coincidently this period also produced the first modern attempt at Jewish history writing, by Isaak Markus Jost in the 1820s, who would also deploy the narrative of post-biblical, rabbinic decline of Judaism. Cf. Salo Baron: I. M. Jost the Historian, in: Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research, Vol. 1 (1928–30), pp. 7–32, pp. 8 f. and 19 f. Cf. David Sorkin: The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840. Oxford 1987, p. 135.

[33] Friedrich Nork: Ethymologisch-symbolisch-mythologisches Real-Wörterbuch zum Handgebrauche für Bibelforscher, Archäologen und bildende Künstler, Vol. 1, Stuttgart 1843, pp. V–IX.

[34] Nork, Ethymologisch-symbolisch-mythologisches Real-Wörterbuch, Vol. 1, p. VIII.

[35] Cf. their respective entries in Nork, Ethymologisch-symbolisch-mythologisches Real-Wörterbuch, Vol. 1 and Vol. 3.

Heidelberg iconoclast in a Classicist guise, who argued that compared "to it all later religions are like pale and broken rays to the full light of the sun."[36] Creuzer was the author of the trailblazing S*ymbolik und Mythologie der alten Völker*, in which he argued for the origin of mythical symbols in India.[37] This publication triggered the so-called *Creuzer-Streit*, a dispute that rattled the exclusive circles of Weimar classicism with the bold claim that the ancient (classic) myths and religions descended from a primordial Indian religion, that was also monotheistic. This was almost a full-blown attack on Weimar classicism and its philo-Hellenism on the one hand, and Christianity and its role as the torchbearer of monotheism on the other.

Creuzer's iconoclasm obviously stirred up some controversy and soon entered a more general discussion raging during this time, namely, whether and to what extent Christianity was the sole foundation of European culture and its achievements.[38]

Korn expanded Creuzer's theses, which he had already picked up in his early works. The basic tenets were that, first, India was the cradle of religion, and that second, religion was the offspring of astronomy. Combined with historical criticism, this belief in universal revelation was an uneasy amalgamation. To soften the sharpness of his message, Korn had to add another element, namely monotheism.

"All theology was originally astrotheology," he affirmed; since the Indians were the first to assign meaning to celestial bodies, they thus also invented religion.[39] However, the impulse to do this was based on their exposure to revelation, because "man can only reach an idea of God through God", and not through meditation, contemplation, or, he wrote quite contradictorily, observing the stars.[40] Yet meditation, contemplation, and observing stars were the instruments that the Indians used to synchronize their astronomic knowledge with their revelatory experience, which elevated them above other nations.[41]

[36] Nork, Ethymologisch-symbolisch-mythologisches Real-Wörterbuch, Vol. 1, p. 290. Cf. Friedrich Creuzer: Symbolik und Mythologie der Alten Völker: besonders der Griechen – Zweite völlig umgearbeitete Ausgabe. Leipzig 1819, p. XI.

[37] Cf. Raymond Schwab: The Oriental Renaissance. Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680–1880. New York 1984, p. 215 f.

[38] Cfr. Marchand, German Orientalism, p. 68.

[39] Cf. Nork, Ethymologisch-symbolisch-mythologisches Real-Wörterbuch, Vol. 1, p. 290.

[40] Nork, Ethymologisch-symbolisch-mythologisches Real-Wörterbuch, Vol. 1, p. 305.

[41] Cf. Nork, Ethymologisch-symbolisch-mythologisches Real-Wörterbuch, Vol. 1, p. 189.

Thanks to their pioneering insight into the true nature of God, the Indians were the first to adopt the truth of monotheism. Korn reverted to his earlier unmasking of an undetected relationship between Indians and Jews, not only in regard to their holy languages of Sanskrit and Hebrew, but also in their historical-religious development. An inverted parallelism subsisted between Indians and Jews for centuries. While the Indians unveiled monotheism to the world, over time and through the efforts of the Brahmins, they nevertheless degenerated into polytheism, while the Israelites shifted from polytheistic inclinations to monotheism.[42] However, Korn seemed to hide the consequences that follow from his assertion that the original revelation took place in India and that the Garden of Eden might be located there, behind a quasi-impermeable wall of etymological and mythological annotations. The charge of Iscariotism was certainly looming over Korn's head.

7. Conclusion

Korn's ideas about the connection between Judaism and India, revelation and the history of religion, were obviously anchored in the intellectual milieu of his own time. The innovative part in his theory of universal religion was the incorporation of his personal story into history. However, Korn's method of picking only those ideas that were suitable to his overall endeavor brought him out of step with the intellectual developments of his time.

Part of Korn's uneasy position lay in his Jewish descent, or rather in his attempt to salvage Judaism while ostensibly debasing it. In light of his own conversion, Korn conveyed the message that Judaism had its historical role, but now Christianity carried the torch of monotheism. He claimed that Christianity (and maybe also Buddhism, though he shied away from that conclusion) turned the monotheism inherent to Brahmanism and Judaism into a universal message by overcoming the doctrines of the cast system and of the exclusionary chosenness of the Jewish people, respectively.[43] Korn bashed Judaism's supposed particularism in an attempt to argue for the universality that underlies all religions. In the end, astrotheology is universal because the celestial bodies look the same to everyone, independent of their religion. Judaism is not inherently particular but shares the universal monotheism of

[42] Nork, Ethymologisch-symbolisch-mythologisches Real-Wörterbuch, Vol. 1, p. 188.
[43] Nork, Ethymologisch-symbolisch-mythologisches Real-Wörterbuch, Vol. 1, p. 308 f.

all religions. It has just outlived its historical function. Consequently Korn himself becomes the historical figure that turns the universal message of Christianity into a universal religion. Given his comprehensive knowledge, this mission can be read as a story about *Bildung*, of regeneration and emancipation through education and knowledge, an idea internalized by many middle-class Jews of Korn's generation.[44] In Korn's case, the story of Jewish *Bildung* took a twist, as he argued for a Jewish conversion to Christianity. For Korn, this succession from Judaism to Christianity was a necessary outcome of historical consciousness. As revelation progressed, so did the individual. After David Friedrich Strauß deflated the centrality of Jesus, Christianity was now, in this moment in history, ready to embrace the universal message of the sun without tying it to a historical figure. Korn could thus argue that he himself as a descendant of Indian original revelation, via Judaism then converting to Christianity, epitomized the universal trajectory of religion. It was his own personal history that thus underlay his quest for universality. Via the universality of religion and inherent truth he, the outsider, would claim his own path in life.

[44] Sorkin, Transformation of German Jewry, p. 84 ff.

Indische Religionen als Gegenstand religionsphilosophischer Entwürfe. Salomon Formstecher und Samuel Hirsch über indisches „Heidentum“

von Hans-Michael Haußig

Abstract

During the 19th century, for the first time Jewish thinkers, influenced by philosophical currents of their time, tried to give a new interpretation of Judaism by contextualizing it in general history. Especially two representatives of Reform Judaism, Salomon Formstecher (1808–1889) and Samuel Hirsch (1815–1889) presented two works pursuing this direction. Both authors aimed for a scientific approach of Judaism and agreed that there exist only two religions in the world: Judaism and Heathenism. Both religions are in fundamental opposition to each other. Within their works, Formstecher and Hirsch dealt in a different manner with Indian religions. The paper will investigate the presentation of Indian religions in both works in the frame of their conceptions on Heathenism.

Zusammenfassung

Im 19. Jahrhundert erschienen erstmalig grundlegende theologische bzw. religionsphilosophische Entwürfe, die sich darum bemühten, unter dem Einfluss der maßgeblichen philosophischen Systeme ihrer Zeit das Judentum neu zu deuten und in den Rahmen der allgemeinen Menschheitsgeschichte einzuordnen. Es waren insbesondere zwei Vertreter des Reformjudentums, Salomon Formstecher (1808–1889) und Samuel Hirsch (1815–1889), die im Abstand von nur einem Jahr (1841 bzw. 1842) zwei dementsprechende Entwürfe vorlegten. Beide Autoren streben eine wissenschaftliche Sichtweise auf das Judentum an und weisen darin eine Gemeinsamkeit auf, dass es ihrer Ansicht nach neben diesem als einzige Religion praktisch nur das Heidentum gibt. Judentum und Heidentum stehen in einem grundlegenden Gegensatz zueinander. Im Rahmen der Ausführung ihrer These gehen sowohl Formstecher als auch Hirsch in unterschiedlichem Maße auf die indischen Religionen ein. Der Aufsatz will die Behandlung der indischen Religionen im Rahmen der Auffassungen beider Autoren über das Heidentum untersuchen.

1. Einleitung

Das 19. Jahrhundert stellt für das neuzeitliche Judentum in Deutschland eine entscheidende Zäsur dar. Es kam zu einer allmählichen rechtlichen Verbesserung, in deren Folge zahlreiche Beschränkungen, denen die jüdische Minderheit ausgesetzt war, abgebaut wurden. Von jüdischer Seite wurde dieser Entwicklung mit einer verstärkten Öffnung gegenüber der Kultur der Mehrheitsgesellschaft begegnet. Dies führte auch dazu, dass die religiöse Überlieferung einer Neubewertung unterzogen wurde. Es kam zur Entstehung unterschiedlicher Auffassungen über das Judentum, die langfristig auch die Grundlage für die Entwicklung der unterschiedlichen Strömungen bilden sollte, die bis heute das Judentum insbesondere in den USA prägen. Die Neubewertung der religiösen Überlieferung führte nicht nur zu einer Reform religiöser Riten, sondern auch zu grundlegenden theologischen bzw. religionsphilosophischen Entwürfen, die sich darum bemühten, unter dem Einfluss der maßgeblichen philosophischen Systeme ihrer Zeit das Judentum neu zu deuten und in den Rahmen der allgemeinen Menschheitsgeschichte einzuordnen.

Es waren insbesondere zwei Vertreter des Reformjudentums, Salomon Formstecher und Samuel Hirsch, die im Abstand von nur einem Jahr (1841 bzw. 1842) zwei dementsprechende Entwürfe vorlegten.[1] Beide Autoren streben eine wissenschaftliche Sichtweise auf das Judentum an und weisen darin eine Gemeinsamkeit auf, dass es ihrer Ansicht nach neben diesem als einzige Religion praktisch nur das Heidentum gäbe. Judentum und Heidentum werden dabei in einer grundlegenden Antithese zueinander verstanden. Was hingegen die Auffassungen über das Zustandekommen dieses Gegensatzes sowie die Bewertung beider Religionen angeht, unterscheiden sich Formstecher und Hirsch grundlegend voneinander. Hierbei lassen sich bei ihnen allerdings zwei Tendenzen erkennen, die auch die entstehende religionsgeschichtliche Forschung in der Folgezeit charakterisieren sollten: Entwicklungsgedanke und Dekadenztheorie. Während der entwicklungsgeschichtliche Ansatz von

[1] Salomon Formstecher: Die Religion des Geistes, eine wissenschaftliche Darstellung des Judenthums nach seinem Charakter, Entwicklungsgange und Berufe in der Menschheit, Frankfurt am Main 1841; Samuel Hirsch: Die Religionsphilosophie der Juden oder das Prinzip der jüdischen Religionsanschauung und sein Verhältnis zum Heidenthum, Christenthum und zur absoluten Philosophie dargestellt und mit den erläuterten Beweisstellen aus der heiligen Schrift, den Talmudim und Midraschim versehen. Leipzig 1842.

einer schrittweisen Höherentwicklung der Religionsgeschichte der Menschheit ausgeht, in „primitiven“ Religionsanschauungen, wie etwa in der Vorstellung von Macht oder belebten Seelen, den Beginn der religionsgeschichtlichen Entwicklung sieht und den Monotheismus als Gipfel der religiösen Entwicklungsgeschichte annimmt, vertritt die Dekadenztheorie das umgekehrte Modell. Für sie steht der Monotheismus am Anfang der Religionsgeschichte und alle weiteren Religionsformen stellen einen Abfall vom Urmonotheismus dar. Formstecher vertritt die Ansicht von einer langsamen Ausschaltung der Naturreligion und einer Höherentwicklung zu einer Religion des Geistes, als die das Judentum bei ihm aufgefasst wird. Freilich hat dieses nicht mehr allzu viel mit dem Judentum in seiner historisch empirischen Form gemein. Demgegenüber liegt für Hirsch die Entstehung des Heidentums im Abfall von Gott, der im Paradies mit der Ursünde begonnen hat, begründet. Allerdings schwenkt auch Hirsch im Laufe seiner Ausführungen zu einem entwicklungsgeschichtlichen Modell um, denn in der Folge handelt es sich bei ihm nicht um eine fortwährende Dekadenz, die zur Entstehung von immer „primitiveren“ Religionsformen führt, sondern die religionsgeschichtliche Entwicklung nimmt bei ihm dahingehend ihren Lauf, dass sich der Mensch allmählich des defizitären Charakters seines Heidentums bewusst wird und es zu überwinden trachtet. Beide Autoren gehen nun im Rahmen ihrer Werke auf die unterschiedlichen Ausprägungen des Heidentums ein und beschreiben in diesem Zusammenhang nicht nur die Religionen des klassischen Altertums, sondern nehmen auch auf die indischen Religionen Bezug.[2] Während Formstecher dabei aufgrund seines entwicklungsgeschichtlichen Ansatzes zu einer differenzierteren Bewertung des Heidentums gelangt, kann Hirsch infolge seiner dekadenztheoretischen Ausgangsbasis nur zu einer überwiegend negativen Sichtweise der heidnischen Religion kommen. Auch in der formalen Aufbereitung der religionsgeschichtlichen Fakten zu den indischen Religionen weisen beide Autoren grundlegende Unterschiede auf: Während Formstecher nur beiläufig einzelne Sachverhalte aus den indischen Religionen erwähnt, die ihm zusammen mit Faktenmaterial aus der klassischen Antike, der germanischen Religion, Zoroastrismus und vereinzelt Stammesreligionen zur Erläuterung seiner

[2] Wenn hier von „indischen Religionen“ gesprochen wird, so ist damit auf den Entstehungsort dieser Religionen verwiesen und daher werden auch die Ausführungen beider Autoren über den Buddhismus außerhalb Indiens miteinbezogen.

Ausführungen zum Heidentum dienen, widmet Hirsch sowohl dem Hinduismus als auch dem Buddhismus umfassendere, in sich geschlossene Kapitel.

Ergänzend sei hier noch bemerkt, dass Formstecher und Hirsch auch hinsichtlich ihrer Biographie merkbare Unterschiede aufweisen.[3] Formstecher, der um sieben Jahre ältere, hat nahezu sein gesamtes Leben in seiner Geburtsstadt Offenbach zugebracht, unterbrochen nur von der Zeit seines Studiums im nicht allzu weit entfernten Gießen, das er 1831 mit der Promotion abschloss, um sodann wieder nach Offenbach zurückzukehren, wo er zunächst als Religionslehrer und 1842 nach dem Tod seines Vorgängers Rabbiner wurde. Samuel Hirschs Leben ist demgegenüber durch zahlreiche Orts- und Positionswechsel gekennzeichnet. Geboren in Thalfang bei Trier, studierte er in Bonn und Berlin, erhielt daneben eine rabbinische Ausbildung in Metz und Mainz und war ab 1839 als Rabbiner in Dessau tätig. 1842 wurde ihm von der Universität Leipzig für das erste Kapitel aus seinem Hauptwerk die Promotionswürde verliehen. Von 1843 bis 1866 war er dann für immerhin 23 Jahre als Großrabbiner des Großherzogtums Luxemburg tätig und nahm während dieser Zeit auch aktiv an den Rabbinerkonferenzen der Reformbewegung teil. 1866 erhielt Hirsch einen Ruf, als Nachfolger von David Einhorn die Stelle des Reformrabbiners in Philadelphia anzutreten und entschloss sich daher zur Auswanderung in die USA. Auf der Stelle in Philadelphia sollte er dann 22 Jahre bleiben. Nach seiner Pensionierung im Jahre 1888 zog Hirsch zu seinem Sohn nach Chicago, der dort ebenfalls als Rabbiner tätig war, starb jedoch kurze Zeit danach.

Es mag aus heutiger Zeit befremden, dass sowohl Formstecher als auch Hirsch eine Fülle unterschiedlicher Religionen unter der einzigen Kategorie des „Heidentums“ zusammenfassen. Die meisten der mit diesem Begriff bezeichneten Religionen haben keine gemeinsamen inhaltlichen Grundlagen und stehen zu einem großen Teil auch nicht in historischen Beziehungen zueinander. In dieser Hinsicht müssen beide Autoren jedoch als Kinder ihrer Zeit gesehen werden, die auf die allgemeine bis in die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts übliche Einteilung der religionsgeschichtlichen Welt zurückgreifen. Wie die amerikanisch-japanische Religionswissenschaftlerin Tomoko Masuzawa aufzeigen konnte,

[3] Zur Biographie von Formstecher, vgl. Bettina Kratz-Ritter: Salomon Formstecher. Ein deutscher Reformrabbiner, Wissenschaftliche Abhandlungen des Salomon Ludwig Steinheim-Instituts 1, Hildesheim u. a. 1991.

kannte man bis in die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts im Prinzip nur vier Religionen, nämlich: Judentum, Christentum, „Mohammedanismus“ und Heidentum.[4] „Heidentum“ war also als Sammelbegriff zur Bezeichnung alles dessen etabliert, was nicht zu den anderen drei genannten Religionen gehörte.

Im Folgenden sollen nun zunächst separat die Grundauffassungen von Formstecher und Hirsch in Bezug auf das Heidentum referiert und dabei der Frage nachgegangen werden, wie sich diese auf ihre Beschreibung der indischen Religionen auswirkt. Am Ende soll dann ein Vergleich zwischen den Anschauungen beider vorgenommen werden. Zunächst sei der ältere der beiden Autoren, Salomon Formstecher, behandelt.

2.1. Salamon Formstecher

Formstecher geht in seiner Religion des Geistes davon aus, dass es im Prinzip nur zwei Religionen, Judentum und Heidentum, gibt.[5] Beide stehen zwar in einem polaren Gegensatz zueinander, sind jedoch absolut notwendig, denn der Mensch muss im Laufe seiner Entwicklung sowohl sein Ideal im Universalleben als auch im Individualleben realisieren. Die Ideale manifestieren sich nun in zweifacher Hinsicht, nämlich zum einen in der Einwirkung des Geistes auf den Bereich der Natur, wodurch diese vervollkommnet und das Ideal des Schönen realisiert wird, und zum anderen in der Selbstbewußtwerdung des Geistes und seiner Entgegensetzung gegen das Streben der Natur, wodurch das Ideal des Guten verwirklicht wird und der Mensch zur Freiheit gelangt.[6] Die Realisierung der jeweiligen Ideale des Guten und des Schönen wie auch ihre Zusammenführung zu einer höheren Einheit geschieht nun mittels der Religionen, von denen das Heidentum den Naturdienst darstellt und das Judentum den Geistdienst realisiert.[7] Der Naturdienst wird „nur als Gegensatz

[4] Tomoko Masuzawa: The Invention of World Religions, Chicago and London 2005, 47.

[5] Formstecher, Religion, S. 64. Die Grundauffassungen Formstechers bezüglich des Verhältnisses zwischen Judentum und Heidentum können hier aus Platzgründen nur fragmentarisch behandelt werden. Für weiteres, vgl. Hans-Michael Haußig: „Heidentum“ und „Judentum“ in der jüdischen Religionsphilosophie des 19. Jahrhunderts. Zu Steinheims „Offenbarung nach dem Lehrbegriffe der Synagoge“ und Formstechers „Religion des Geistes“, in: Von Enoch bis Kafka, Festschrift für Karl E. Grözinger zum 60. Geburtstag, hg. v. Manfred Voigts, Wiesbaden 2002, S. 43–53; Karl Erich Grözinger: Jüdisches Denken, Band 3. Von der Religionskritik der Renaissance zu Orthodoxie und Reform im 19. Jahrhundert, Frankfurt/New York 2009, S. 538–577.

[6] Formstecher, Religion, S. 46–52.

[7] Formstecher, Religion, S. 64–65.

vom Geistesdienste, aber dennoch als in und durch Gott seiend, betrachtet werden müssen".[8] Das Judentum musste dem Heidentum jedoch den Krieg erklären, um rein zu bleiben. Judentum und Heidentum sind feindliche Pole, aber beide sind absolut notwendige Erscheinungen in der Selbstentfaltung des menschlichen Geistes. Da das Heidentum die Natur vergöttert und es daher nicht in der Lage ist, sich ohne diese zu manifestieren, kann es auch niemals zur Erkenntnis eines von der Natur unabhängigen, sich selbst bestimmenden geistigen Wesens gelangen.[9]

Trotz ihrer Gegensätze weisen Judentum und Heidentum gewisse Gemeinsamkeiten auf, die letztendlich den Grund darstellen, warum Formstecher sie beide als „Religion" bezeichnen kann. Beide bieten „als Manifestationen eines und desselben Geistes ähnliche Züge dar". Die „Entstehungsquelle" beider sieht Formstecher in dem Moment, „an welchem der Geist sein Ideal erkennt"; darum erzählen uns beide von einer Zeit, „in welcher ein übermenschliches Wesen ihre Lehren und Vorschriften mittelbar oder unmittelbar offenbarte, von Personen, deren sich diese Gottheit als der Gesandten bediente, um den göttlichen Willen zu erklären".[10] Beide zeigen als ihren Entwicklungsgang „ein Streben von dem Unvollkommenen zum Vollkommenen". Derartige „formelle Ähnlichkeiten" zwischen Judentum und Heidentum lassen sich deshalb aufstellen, „weil in beiden ein und derselbe Menschengeist nach seinen logischen und psychologischen Gesetzen sich manifestirt, dagegen erscheinen beide als strenge Gegensätze wenn sie ihrem Wesen und Inhalte nach verglichen werden".[11] Formstecher führt im Rahmen seiner Beschreibung der Entwicklungsgeschichte des Judentums nun zahlreiche Beispiele aus den einzelnen „heidnischen" Religionen an, die er jedoch meist nicht im Einzelnen diskutiert, sondern nur listenweise als Beispiel für die Gegensätzlichkeit des heidnischen Naturdienstes gegenüber der Geistesreligion des Judentums anführt. Insofern findet sich bei ihm keine geschlossene Darstellung der indischen Religionen, sondern nur eine gelegentliche Erwähnung einzelner Fakten.

Seine Ausführungen beginnt Formstecher mit den Quellen der Religionen. Sowohl das Judentum als auch das Heidentum besitzen heilige Schriften, so etwa auch die „Wedas", die Formstecher neben dem Zend Avesta, der Edda

8 Formstecher, Religion, S. 69.
9 Formstecher, Religion, S. 67–69.
10 Formstecher, Religion, S. 64.
11 Formstecher, Religion, S. 65.

und anderen als Beispiel dafür aufzählt, dass beide Religionsformen auch über prophetische Quellen verfügen.[12] Hier werden seitens Formstecher die ältesten Religionsquellen der indischen Religion, die Veden („Wedas"), den heiligen Schriften der jüdischen Religion parallel gestellt. Unterschiede, die zwischen beiden bestehen, werden nicht diskutiert bzw. waren Formstecher vermutlich nicht bekannt, wie auch die spätere Religionswissenschaft die bestehenden Unterschiede zwischen den heiligen Schriften der abrahamitischen Religionen und den Texten der östlichen Religionen häufig ignoriert hat.[13]

Neben die Schrift tritt im Judentum nun die Tradition, deren Ursprünge Formstecher im Prophetismus verortet. Auch das Heidentum verfügt über Tradition, doch zeigen sich gerade hierin die Unterschiede zum Judentum. Das Judentum hat Formstecher zufolge die Aufgabe, sich über das Naturleben zu erheben, doch muss es diesem den lokalen und temporären Umständen entsprechend gewisse Zugeständnisse machen. „Es zeigt deshalb einen conservativen Charakter, welcher die stabilen Raum- und Zeitformen aufrecht zu erhalten strebt, und einen progressiven Charakter, welcher diese Formen, sobald sie ihre relative Wahrheit verloren hatten, zu entfernen hatte".[14] Dazu bedurfte es zweifacher „Corporationen", welche sich als Priester und als Propheten darstellen. Die Aufgabe des Priesters war es dabei, die vorgefundene Religionsform aufrecht zu erhalten und zu verteidigen, denn er stand unter dem Einfluss des Raumes und der Zeit, klammerte sich an die Vergangenheit und wollte diese stets in seine Gegenwart fortpflanzen. So fragte er nie danach, ob die ererbte Form noch eine wahre Geltung haben konnte und war Feind einer jeden weiterschreitenden Bewegung.[15] Ihm entgegen stand der Prophet, der die Gegenwart nicht mit der Vergangenheit verband, sondern mit der Zukunft und darum streng den Priester tadelte, der mit „seinen veralteten und abgestorbenen Lehren seine Zeit nicht kannte". Der Priester stellte insofern an dem Volksleben „mehr die Seite der Naturnothwendigkeit, als die der Geistesfreiheit" dar, was auch darin zum Ausdruck kam, dass er nicht „durch seinen freien Geistesschwung", sondern durch die unfreie Geburt Priester geworden ist. Der Prophet hingegen erhebt sich als Repräsentant des

[12] Formstecher, Religion, S. 92–93.
[13] Vgl. dazu William A. Graham: Beyond the Written Word. Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion, Cambridge u. a. 1987, S. 67–77.
[14] Formstecher, Religion, S. 96.
[15] Formstecher, Religion, S. 97.

progressiven Elements über die gegebene Form und zeigte durch seine Erscheinung schon „seinen Beruf zur schaffenden, freien Geistesthätigkeit, weil ein jedes Glied des Volkes durch seinen Aufschwung zur Ekstase als Prophet auftreten konnte“. Im „progressiven Element“ sieht Formstecher nun beim Judentum das Vorherrschende. Daher musste der Prophet höher als der Priester stehen. Später trat dann die Tradition an die Stelle der Prophetie, während die Priester durch das Verlassen des ursprünglichen Wohnortes fast alle Bedeutung verloren.[16] Auch das Heidentum verfügt Formstecher zufolge über Tradition, doch während sich in der Tradition des Judentums die Herrschaft des Geistes manifestiert, der hier „aus der Sphäre des prophetischen Gefühls in die des reflektirenden Nachdenkens“ tritt, zeigt sich in der Tradition des Heidentums „klar die Herrschaft der unfreien Natur“. Der Träger der heidnischen Tradition ist nämlich nicht „der durch seine Geistesfreiheit sich emporschwingende Prophet, der Gegner des nach Stabilität strebenden Priesters, sondern der Priester selbst, welcher durch seine unfreie Geburt in der Priesterkaste, somit durch den bewußtlosen Willen des Fatums, höher als seine Zeitgenossen, so wie ein Naturgeschöpf höher stehend als die übrigen, betrachtet wurde“.[17] Auch wenn Formstecher hier nur beiläufig den „Braminen“, den Dalai-Lama und andere Beispiele erwähnt, die in sich die Rolle des Priesters und des Propheten vereinen, so zeigen seine Ausführungen, dass er hier wohl vor allem an das Beispiel des hinduistischen Brahmanen gedacht hat, der sein Amt durch Geburt ererbt.

Im weiteren Verlauf seines Buches setzt sich Formstecher nun mit der Gotteslehre des Judentums auseinander und behandelt in diesem Zusammenhang auch die heidnischen Gottesvorstellungen. Diese sieht Fomstecher ganz und gar als an die Natur und die sinnliche Vorstellungskraft gebunden an. Sie macht zwar eine eindeutige Entwicklung durch, kann aber niemals höher als zum „physischen Monotheismus“ kommen. Dieser steht freilich unterhalb des „ethischen Monotheismus“ des Judentums, denn er ist immer noch an die Vorstellung der Natur gebunden. Die Natur selbst gilt nicht als Gott, aber die ganze Natur wird als Offenbarung Gottes angesehen. Die Vielzahl wird hier jedoch als höhere Einheit verstanden. Hierfür führt Formstecher die Trimurti-Vorstellung des Hinduismus – die Bezeichnung taucht bei ihm allerdings nicht

[16] Formstecher, Religion, S. 96–97.
[17] Formstecher, Religion, S. 99.

auf – an, wo ein unsichtbarer Gott unter verschiedenen Formen erscheinen kann: „Bramatma in seiner Erscheinung durch das Oum (Logos) als Brahma, Wischnu und Schiwa“. Auch dies ist nur eine Auflistung, bei der Verweise aus anderen Religionen mit aufgeführt werden,[18] doch passt das von Formstecher verwendete Motiv aus dem Hinduismus zu seinem Interpretationsschema, wonach im Heidentum die Vielheit als eine höhere Einheit angesehen wird.

Auch in den folgenden Ausführungen über den Charakter des Heidentums wird über die indischen Religionen nur fragmentarisch berichtet. So ist die Natur im Heidentum ein ewiges Drama, das das Lebensschicksal der Götter mit ihren Freuden und Leiden darstellt. Die Erde, die von den Indern Prithivi genannt wird, ist dabei eine ewig kreisende Gewinnerin.[19] Insofern scheint es auf dieser Basis logisch, dass Formstecher den Dualismus in allen Phasen des Heidentums ausfindig macht; so hat der Inder „seine guten und bösen Dweta's“ wie auch der Perser seine Jzeds und Divs besitzt“.[20]

Etwas intensiver setzt sich Formstecher mit den indischen Religionen bei der Diskussion über die Metempsychose auseinander, die er als ein grundlegendes Charakteristikum des Heidentums ausmacht und die gerade in den indischen Religionen eine besondere Ausformung erfahren hat. Da ihm zufolge nach heidnischer Auffassung die Natur Gott ist, kann Gott nichts Unvollkommenes hervorbringen. Die Wirklichkeit bietet aber „dennoch unvollkommene Erscheinungen dar“. Diesen Widerspruch vermag das Heidentum nur dahingehend aufzulösen, indem es annimmt, dass ein Teil seiner Gottheit abgefallen ist, sich selbst als Gott negiert und von dieser Negation der Gottheit alles Unvollkommene des Daseins ausgehen lässt. Neben vielem anderen, wie giftigen Pflanzen und Tieren oder Krankheiten, wird dazu auch der Mensch als Träger des moralisch Bösen gerechnet. Die Lehre vom Abfall finden wir etwa auch im Schasta – damit meint Formstecher offensichtlich die Rechtsbücher des Hinduismus. Um nun zum ursprünglichen Zustand der Reinheit zurückzukehren, müssen die Menschen die leidensvolle Körperwelt durchwandern, „bis sie durch Büßungen geläutert und gereinigt ihre ursprüngliche Reinheit wieder erlangt haben und der Wiederaufnahme in die Gottheit würdig sind“.[21] So sind etwa auch dem Lamaiten „Menschen unreine Götter, welche durch

[18] Formstecher, Religion, S. 106–107.
[19] Formstecher, Religion, S. 121.
[20] Formstecher, Religion, S. 123.
[21] Formstecher, Religion, S. 128–129.

die Seelenwanderung ihre ursprüngliche Vollkommenheit erstreben sollen".[22] Die sündenvolle Menschenseele muss dazu ihre Wanderung „oft an der Stufe des niedrigsten Naturgebildes" beginnen und „erscheint bei ihrem Eintreten in die Menschengestalt noch so befleckt und unrein, daß sie von der Tiefe eines Parias bis zu der Höhe eines Brachmanen noch gar vieler Durchgänge und Reinigungen bedarf".[23] Die Kasteneinteilung ist nach Formstecher insofern „die nothwendige Folge der Metempsychose, sie ist die vom geistigen Universalleben consequent durchgeführte Fortsetzung der aufsteigenden Reihenfolge der Naturgebilde".[24] Der Gedanke eines Abfalls von Gott, wie ihn das Heidentum kennt, ist hingegen dem Judentum völlig fremd. Die Übel der Welt werden „nur in einem relativen Verhältnisse als solche betrachtet, nach ihrem absoluten Werthe müssen sie als Wohlthaten erkannt werden, welche in der weislich durchdachten Oekonomie Gottes unentbehrlich und segenbringend sind".[25] Insofern ist auch das Böse relativ zu sehen: „Ist der Mensch böse, so tritt er aus dem Gebiete des Geistes in das der Natur, jedoch auch die Natur ist ein Werk Gottes und insofern kann der Mensch zwar gegen seine Bestimmung handeln, aber nie von seinem Gotte abfallen".[26] Es ist daher nicht nötig, „daß das physisch und moralisch Böse von einem dem höchsten Wesen feindlichen Principe ausströme".[27] Die Sünde ist die Folge der menschlichen Freiheit und Zurechnungsfähigkeit, und daher „kann sie nicht als die Wirkung der Erbsünde betrachtet werden und der Mensch hat dann nicht nöthig, wegen des sündigen Abfalls seiner Ahnen ein mühevolles Leben unverschuldet zu durchwandern".[28] Dementsprechend sind dem Judentum auch jegliche

[22] Formstecher, Religion, S. 128. Mit den „Lamaiten" meint Formstecher offensichtlich die Anhänger des tibetischen Buddhismus. Eine eindeutige Zuordnung der Tibeter zum Buddhismus war im Westen zu Formstechers Zeit offensichtlich nicht bekannt. Vgl. dazu etwa den Artikel Tibet (Thibet) im Converstations-Lexikon oder kurzgefaßtes Handwörterbuch für die in der gesellschaftlichen Unterhaltung aus den Wissenschaften und Künsten vorkommenden Gegenstände mit beständiger Rücksicht auf die Ereignisse der älteren und neueren Zeit, Amsterdam 1809, Bd. 6, S. 171, in dem zwar „die Religion der Lamas" referiert wird, sich jedoch kein Hinweis darauf findet, dass es sich dabei um eine Variante des Buddhismus handelt. Demgenüber wird bei Hirsch der Lamaismus eindeutig als Teil des Buddhismus dargestellt. Vgl. Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 206.

[23] Formstecher, Religion, S. 129.

[24] Formstecher, Religion, S. 129.

[25] Formstecher, Religion, S. 129.

[26] Formstecher, Religion, S. 129.

[27] Formstecher, Religion, S. 129.

[28] Formstecher, Religion, S. 130.

Vorstellungen der Apotheose oder der Inkarnation „gänzlich fremd“ und „auf seinem Gebiete wäre ein Minos und Romulus niemals Gott, noch ein Wischnu jemals Mensch, oder gar ein untermenschliches Wesen geworden“.[29]

Formstecher weist auch auf die Ähnlichkeit von Zeremonien der Hebräischen Bibel mit denen der „Wedas“ hin. „Man könnte der Parallelen zwischen Moses einerseits, und Manu … andererseits gar viele aufstellen“, doch trotz Ähnlichkeit der Wege sind die Ziele beider grundlegend verschieden.[30] Dem Heiden dient die Ausführung seiner Zeremonien dazu, wie Gott zu werden. Der Heide will physisch einen Gott schaffen. Ein jedes Opfer, das er seinem Gott darbringt, bringt ihn eine Stufe höher seinem Gott entgegen, „ist eine nöthige Verbessserung an seinem Kunstwerke“. Der Jude dagegen will nur den vollkommenen Menschen, aber nicht einen Gott produzieren. Darum sind ihm seine Zeremonien und Werke nicht wirkliche Stufen zur Vollkommenheit, „nicht Zwecke an sich, sondern nur Mittel, welche ihm zur Verwirklichung seines Ideals verhelfen sollen“.[31]

Ein weiteres Beispiel für die Unterschiede zwischen Judentum und Heidentum sieht Formstecher in den geographischen Bezugspunkten beider Religionen. Das Heidentum lässt seinen Gott ausschließlich in seinem Vaterlande residieren; „fern vom Ganges konnte weder der Indier noch fern vom Nil der Aegypter seinen Gott finden“.[32] Der Gott des Judentums ist jedoch erhaben über die Natur und findet nirgends im Dasein einen ihn fassenden Wohnsitz.[33] Dem möglichen Einwand, dass das Heilige Land, Jerusalem und der Tempel ja für das Judentum eine ähnliche Funktion haben könnte wie der Ganges für die Inder, begegnet Formstecher dahingehend, dass das Land Canaan nur wegen seiner physischen Vorzüglichkeit gelobt wurde und das Judentum des Bodens „zur Behauptung und Realisirung seines Ideals“ bedurfte.[34] Sein „Particularismus“ gewinnt deswegen nicht wie der des Heidentums eine wesentliche, sondern nur eine „relative und transitorische Bedeutung“.[35]

[29] Formstecher, Religion, S. 130.
[30] Formstecher, Religion, S. 161–162.
[31] Formstecher, Religion, S. 162.
[32] Formstecher, Religion, S. 67.
[33] Formstecher, Religion, S. 137–138.
[34] Formstecher, Religion, S. 138.
[35] Formstecher, Religion, S. 139.

Der Überblick hat gezeigt, dass Formstecher nur beiläufig über die indischen Religionen spricht. Diese nur fragmentarische Behandlung liegt darin begründet, dass er ihnen kein grundlegendes Eigenleben zuzusprechen vermag, denn sie unterschieden sich nicht grundsätzlich von anderen Formen des Heidentums, wie sie Formstecher bei Germanen, Griechen oder Persern vorfindet. Insofern dienen ihm seine Informationen darüber nur als kurzes Beispiel, um die grundlegenden Unterschiede, die er zwischen Judentum und Heidentum ausgemacht hat, zu erläutern.

2.2. Samuel Hirsch

Auch Hirsch sieht wie Formstecher einen grundlegenden Gegensatz zwischen Judentum und Heidentum.[36] Während bei Formstecher das Heidentum einen notwendigen Teil der menschlichen Entwicklung und somit eine relative Wahrheit darstellt, die schrittweise durch das Judentum überwunden werden muss, bis der Mensch zur Erkenntnis der vollen Wahrheit und der Realisierung der Geistesreligion gelangt, stellt es für Hirsch die Quelle jeglichen Irrtums dar. Dieser beginnt bereits im Paradies und setzt sich in der Folge immer wieder fort. Hirsch liefert also im Gegensatz zu Formstechers entwicklungsgeschichtlichem Modell eine Dekadenztheorie. Dies betrifft allerdings nur die Entstehung des Heidentums. Im Folgenden schwenkt auch Hirsch zu einem entwicklungsgeschichtlichen Modell um, das bei den nach seiner Ansicht einfachsten elementarsten Religionsformen, wie Fetischismus und Schamanismus, seinen Ausgangspunkt nimmt und dann schrittweise, wie bei Chinesen, Indern, Persern, Griechen und Römern, höhere Religionsformen entwickelt. Im Folgenden soll zunächst kurz erläutert werden, wie Hirsch die Entwicklung des Heidentums beschreibt und anschließend auf seine Behandlung der indischen Religionen eingegangen werden.

[36] Im Gegensatz zu Formstecher hat Hirsch eine etwas eingehendere Beachtung in der einschlägigen Sekundärliteratur erfahren. Vgl. etw. Gershon Greenberg: Religionswissenschaft and Early Reform Jewish Thought: Samuel Hirsch and David Einhorn, in: Modern Judaism and Historical Consciousness. Identities, Encounters, Perspective, ed. by Andreas Gotzmann and Christian Wiese, Leiden and Boston 2007, S. 110–144 und die dort angeführte Literatur. Vgl. ferner: Judith Frishman: True Mosaic Religion: Samuel Hirsch, Samuel Holdheim and the Reform of Judaism, in: Redefining Judaism in an Age of Emancipation. Comparative Perspective on Samuel Holdheim (1806–1860), Studies in European Judaism 18, Leiden / Boston 2007, S. 278–305.

Die Entstehung des Heidentums beginnt nach Ansicht von Hirsch bereits im Garten Eden. Hirsch unterscheidet dabei mehrere Stufen der Sünde. Die erste Sünde besteht in dem Gedanken, der Aufforderung der Schlange Folge zu leisten und von der Frucht des Baumes zu essen und somit Gottes Gebot zu übertreten.[37] Es handelt sich jedoch noch nicht um die Tat selbst. Diese findet in der ersten Tatsünde ihren Ausdruck, bei der der Mensch nun tatsächlich das göttliche Gebot übertritt.[38] Daran schließt Hirsch nun die zweite Tatsünde an. Diese setzt er mit der Geschichte von der Nacktheit in Verbindung, in der sich Adam und Eva befanden, nachdem sie vom Baum der Erkenntnis gegessen hatten. Obwohl sie nun während des Genusses der Sünde von der Nichtigkeit derselben erfuhren, zeigten sie keine Reue, sondern machten sich Schürzen, um ihre Nacktheit zu bedecken. Hierin sieht Hirsch nun „ein ewiges Moment des Geistes, das täglich wiederkehrt", denn die Erkenntnis eines Fehlverhaltens führt seiner Erfahrung nach nicht zur Buße, sondern vielmehr dazu, die Sünde zu verdecken und nicht daran erinnert zu werden.[39] Hieran schließt sich nun die dritte Tatsünde an, die in der „gewaltsamen Wiederholung seiner Sünde besteht". Doch immer noch ruft Gott zur Umkehr auf und der Mensch begreift, dass er seine Schuld nun nicht mehr leugnen kann. Aber anstelle sie zu bereuen, begeht er einen weiteren verhängnisvollen Schritt: Er gesteht zwar seine Sünde ein, aber die Schuld derselben versucht er von sich abzuwälzen. „Die Sinnlichkeit der Versuchung war zu stark; ich konnte ihr nicht widerstehen, das ist das verhängnißvolle Wort. Die Frau, die Schlange brachten mich zum Falle."[40] Hiermit ist nun Hirsch zufolge „die große Kluft übersprungen, die zwischen der Wahrheit und der Lüge mitten inne liegt. Hiermit hat der Mensch die wahre Religion verlassen und sich zu ihrem Gegentheil, zum Götzendienst gewendet".[41] Die Schuld seiner Sünde verlegt der Mensch somit in ein anderes Wesen, das damit zum absoluten Herrn wird, dem er nicht mehr zu widerstehen vermag. Dieses andere Wesen, das Gefallen an der Sünde hat, setzt Hirsch mit der Sinnlichkeit gleich. Die Sinnlichkeit, die Natürlichkeit ist Hirsch zufolge hier „absoluter Herr, absolut schlechterdings. Nicht einmal Gott steht über dieser Sinnlichkeit; sie zwingt mich ja, Gott zu widersprechen

[37] Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 71–72.
[38] Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 73–74.
[39] Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 95.
[40] Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 97.
[41] Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 97.

und Gott muß sich ja diesen Widerspruch gefallen lassen. Die Natürlichkeit ist der höchste Gott und das ist das Heidenthum“. Sünde gibt es nun überhaupt nicht mehr, denn wie könnte das Sünde sein, wozu einen Gott zwingt.[42]

Hier ist nun der Punkt, wo Hirsch von der Dekadenztheorie zu einem entwicklungsgeschichtlichen Modell umschwenkt. In dem Moment, wo der Mensch sich seiner selbst bewusst wird, befindet er sich nicht mehr in einer Einheit mit der Natur, sondern in einem Zwiespalt mit derselben. Im Menschen steigen verschiedenste Wünsche und Begierden auf, von denen sich die wenigsten realisieren lassen. Dies ist dem Menschen wesentlich, „denn seine Freiheit soll gerade darin bestehen, daß er seine Begierden beherrscht“ und sich nicht dem Naturzustande überlässt. Da aber der Mensch seiner Natürlichkeit die Herrschaft einräumte, sich für ihren Sklaven ausgab, so machte er sich dadurch Götzen.[43] Die religionsgeschichtliche Entwicklung des Heidentums wird nun bei Hirsch in diesem Spannungsverhältnis zwischen der Unterwerfung unter die Sinnlichkeit und seiner Selbstbewusstwerdung gesehen. Dabei ist zu sehen, wie der Mensch in zunehmendem Maße eine Distanz zur Vergötterung der Sinnlichkeit entwickelt.

Im Folgenden gibt Hirsch dann einen Überblick über die Entwicklung des Heidentums. Im Gegensatz zu Formstecher werden hier die Informationen über die indischen Religionen nicht beiläufig eingestreut; vielmehr bietet Hirsch eine in sich geschlossene Darstellung der religionsgeschichtlichen Fakten. Hirsch widmet den heidnischen Religionen dabei immerhin über 300 Seiten. Hierzu zählt er Fetischismus und Schamanentum, chinesische Religion, Indien, Buddhismus, persische Religionen, Ägypten, Griechenland, Rom und die „heidnische Philosophie“. Den Religionen Indiens werden dabei insgesamt 44 Seiten, dem Buddhismus 18 Seiten eingeräumt, so dass er dabei auf eine Behandlung von insgesamt 62 Seiten für die indischen Religionen kommt. Das ist vom Umfang her deutlich geringer als die Ausführungen zu Griechenland, Rom und zur heidnischen Philosophie, die zusammengenommen mehr als 160 Seiten ausmachen. Diese Diskrepanz hat sowohl formale wie inhaltliche Gründe. Einerseits standen Hirsch in der Mitte des 19. Jahrhundert deutlich weniger Möglichkeiten zur Verfügung, sich Kenntnisse über

[42] Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 98.
[43] Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 110–111.

indische Religionen anzueignen, andererseits sah er, wie noch zu zeigen sein wird, die Beschäftigung mit den indischen Religionen als wenig nützlich an.

Obwohl Hirsch sich der außerordentlichen Mannigfaltigkeit der indischen Religion bewusst ist, wird sie – mit Ausnahme des Buddhismus – dennoch als ein einheitliches Phänomen behandelt. Hirsch spricht dabei immer nur von den „Indern" oder „Indien" und verwendet keinen Eigennamen zur Bezeichnung der beschriebenen Religionsformen. Die Bezeichnung „Hinduismus" konnte Hirsch wie auch Formstecher nicht bekannt sein, denn sie war zur Zeit der Abfassung ihrer beiden Werke weder in der Sekundärliteratur noch als Selbstbezeichnung gebräuchlich.[44] Die Informationen, die Hirsch zu Indien gibt, sind recht vielschichtig. Er referiert sowohl religionsphilosophische und mythologische Auffassungen als auch die gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse unter den Hindus vergleichsweise umfangreich. Dabei greift er im ersteren Fall wohl hauptsächlich auf das Werk von Johann Gottlieb Rhode zurück.[45] Ansonsten führt er, wie auch in den übrigen Teilen des Buches, gelegentlich Aussagen von Reisenden heran, ohne dabei allerdings eine präzise Quelle zu nennen.[46] Ein wenig umfangreicher als auf andere Primärtexte nimmt Hirsch auf Erzählungen des indischen Epos Ramajana Bezug, wobei er sich auch dabei hauptsächlich auf Rhode gestützt haben dürfte. Ansonsten interessieren ihn die Vorstellungen von Diesseits und Jenseits, Kosmogonie, Emanationslehre, Seelenwanderung, die Rolle der Brahmanen und das Kastenwesen, das relativ breit erläutert wird. Nur in geringem Maße scheinen Hirsch die einheimischen Begriffe der indischen Religion bekannt zu sein. Begriffe wie *samsara* oder *varna* kennt er nicht; stattdessen spricht er von Seelenwanderung oder Kaste, um nur zwei Beispiele zu nennen. Es fällt aber auf, dass sich Hirsch auf weiten Strecken mit Wertungen zurückhält. Nur an einigen Stellen

[44] Allerdings nennt Hirsch als eine der benutzten Quellen das Buch Johann Gottlieb Rhode: Ueber religiöse Bildung, Mythologie und Philosophie der Hindus, Bd. 1, Leipzig 1827 (Mehr ist offenbar nicht erschienen). Vgl. Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 153. Die Zitierung des Titels bei Hirsch ist allerdings unvollständig. Bei Rhode taucht die Bezeichnung „Hindu" zwar im Titel auf, ist jedoch synonym mit „Inder" zu verstehen und nicht als Bezeichnung für den Anhänger einer bestimmten Religionsgemeinschaft. In diesem Sinne ist der Begriff „Hinduismus" erstmalig 1858 bei Friedrich Max Müller als Bezeichnung für die Religionen Indiens belegt. Vgl. dazu Richard King: Orientalism and Religion. Postcolonial Theory, India and "The Mystic East", London and New York 1999, S. 100. Ferner: Brian K. Pennington: Was Hinduism Invented? Britons, Indians, and the Colonial Construction of Religion, Oxford u. a. 2005.

[45] Vgl. die vorige Anm.

[46] Etwa Kapitän Milford. Vgl. Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 189.

kommt seine oben erläuterte Religionsauffassung explizit zum Ausdruck. So sieht er etwa in der indischen Religion gegenüber der chinesischen eine Fortentwicklung, denn im Gegensatz zu dieser beschränkt sich die indische nicht auf die Anerkennung der Naturordnung, vielmehr lässt sich in ihr auch der Widerspruch gegen sie feststellen und somit führt sie einen notwendigen Schritt in der Entwicklungsgeschichte der Menschheit durch.[47] Eine „empörende Sitte" stellt für ihn allerdings die Praxis der Witwenverbrennung dar.[48] Grundsätzlich sieht Hirsch die indischen Religionen als widersprüchlich an. Einerseits will der Inder über die Natur und alles Natürliche Herr werden und versenkt sich daher ins Nichts, wobei er sich „den ungeheuersten Büßungen mit übermenschlicher Standhaftigkeit und grausenhafter Selbstverleugnung" unterwirft, doch in diesem Wüten gegen sich und gegen seine Natur stürzt er sich gerade der Natur in die Arme, was sich etwa daran zeigt, dass er sich zu Ehren des Gottes Siwa „allen Ausschweifungen der Wollust und der Sinnlichkeit" hingibt.[49]

Auch die Ausführungen zum Buddhismus unterscheiden sich in ihrem Charakter nicht grundlegend von denjenigen zu den anderen indischen Religionsformen. Hier interessieren Hirsch vor allem Themen, wie Kosmogonie, die Gebote des Buddhismus und das Nirvana. Insgesamt sind seine Ausführungen jedoch sehr allgemein gehalten. Von den verschiedenen Schulen des Buddhismus scheint er nur fragmentarische Kenntnisse zu besitzen. Gelegentliche Hinweise finden sich allerdings zum tibetischen Buddhismus, der als „lamaisches System" bezeichnet wird.[50] Selten werden einschlägige Begriffe des Buddhismus selbst genannt, wie bei der Erläuterung der Mythologie oder des buddhistischen Erkenntniswegs, wo er bei der Beschreibung der „göttlichen Dreifaltigkeit" die-Begriffe Buddha, Dharma und Sangha erwähnt. Die beiden letztgenannten werden von ihm als „das Gesetz oder die Lehre" bzw. als „der Verein der Geistlichkeit" übersetzt.[51]

Während sich Hirsch im Rahmen seiner Darstellung des Hinduismus und Buddhismus mit Wertungen weitgehend zurückhält, kommt er an späterer Stelle seines Werkes jedoch noch einmal zu einer Gesamteinschätzung, aus

47 Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 152.
48 Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 176.
49 Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 191.
50 Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 203, 206–207.
51 Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 203–204.

der ein eindeutig negatives Urteil über die indischen und anderen heidnischen Religionen hervorgeht. So widerspricht er der Auffassung, dass wir von den Chinesen, Indern und anderen orientalischen Völkern nur deswegen sehr wenig gelernt haben, weil ihre Literatur oder Monumente erst in neuester Zeit zugänglich geworden seien: „Wären sie uns auch seit frühester Zeit in ihrem vollen Umfange bekannt gewesen", so hätten sie Hirsch zufolge „dennoch keinen wesentlichen Einfluß auf unsere Geistesbildung haben können", denn „jene Völker sind in die Natur versenkt; ihre Anschauungen sind nur Anschauungen des Natürlichen; das geistige Leben ist für sie ein völlig unbekanntes Land".[52] Insofern stellt sich die Frage, wie aus ihnen etwas für „die Erkenntniß des Geistes, welche doch den Mittelpunkt und die Peripherie unser ganzen Bildung ausmacht", zu gewinnen sein sollte? Das Wissen aller Völker kann sich seiner Ansicht nach „vermöge ihrer Grundanschauung höchstens, wie bei den Indern, bis zu den Abstraktionen des Geistes, bis zu trockenen grammatischen Regeln, bis zu künstlicher, aber nicht zur Einheit der Kunst sich erhebenden Poesie versteigen". Derartiges „stehet aber viel zu tief unter unsern geistigen Interessen, um auf dieselben von Einfluß sein zu können".[53] Unter den heidnischen Völkern gesteht Hirsch lediglich den Griechen und Römern die Rolle von Lehrmeistern zu, denn sie stehen „viel höher und unserer Bildung viel näher als jene Völker".[54]

Obwohl Hirsch im Vergleich zu Formstecher einen relativ umfassenden Überblick über die indischen Religionen gibt, steht dem jedoch eine eindeutig negative Bewertung derselben gegenüber. Letztendlich haben auch die indischen Religionen wie das übrige Heidentum eine „lügnerische Grundlage" und können daher nur als „falsche Religionen" angesehen werden.[55]

3. Fazit

Formstecher und Hirsch behandeln die indischen Religionen in unterschiedlichem Umfang. Dieser quantitative Unterschied hängt auch mit ihrer unterschiedlichen qualitativen Bewertung des Heidentums zusammen. Beide erkennen im Grunde genommen nur zwei Religionen, Judentum und Heidentum,

[52] Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 441.
[53] Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 441–442.
[54] Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 442.
[55] Hirsch, Religionsphilosophie, S. 98.

an. Beide fassen das Judentum als eine Religion des Geistes auf und sehen im Heidentum einen Naturdienst. Während Formstecher aber lediglich eine einzige Form des Heidentums anerkennt, hat Hirsch diesbezüglich eine differenziertere Sichtweise. Für ihn gibt es im Heidentum unterschiedliche Stufen, die von der primitivsten Form, dem Fetischismus, bis zu den höchsten Ausdrucksformen, die wir bei den Griechen und Römern finden, reichen. Da es für Formstecher zwischen den unterschiedlichen Manifestationen des Heidentums keinen wesentlichen Unterschied gibt, muss er dessen Varianten auch nicht detailliert erläutern. Es genügt, die einschlägigen Fakten beiläufig zu erwähnen. Für Hirsch stellen die indischen Religionen zwar einen Fortschritt gegenüber dem Fetischismus und der chinesischen Religion dar, wobei hier noch einmal zwischen dem Hinduismus und dem auf einer etwas höheren Entwicklungsstufe stehenden Buddhismus zu differenzieren wäre. Sowohl die Religionen Indiens als auch der Buddhismus sind im Vergleich zu den Errungenschaften des antiken griechischen und römischen Heidentums seiner Ansicht nach immer noch von einem so niedrigen Rang, dass sich aus ihnen keine positiven nutzbaren Erkenntnisse gewinnen lassen. Letztendlich stellt aber für Hirsch das Heidentum insgesamt eine Fehlentwicklung dar, so dass er zwangsläufig zu einer negativen Bewertung kommen musste. Demgegenüber fasst Formstecher das Heidentum als einen notwendigen Teil der menschlichen Entwicklung auf und insofern lassen sich bei ihm auch weniger kritische Bemerkungen darüber finden.

Die religionsphilosophischen Systeme von Formstecher und Hirsch müssen in unserer heutigen Zeit obsolet erscheinen. Sie sind eindeutige Erzeugnisse des 19. Jahrhunderts, das noch von einem gewissen Geschichtsoptimismus getragen war. In den entwicklungsgeschichtlichen und dekadenztheoretischen Ansätzen beider Autoren lassen sich daher nicht zufällig Tendenzen erkennen, die auch die frühe Religionswissenschaft prägen sollten. Insofern können sie hier in einem gewissen Sinne als Vorreiter angesehen werden. Bedeutsam sind beide Ansätze jedoch auch dahingehend, dass sie erstmalig eine Bewertung der gesamten menschlichen Religionsgeschichte aus einer jüdisch-theologischen Perspektive unternommen haben.[56]

[56] Nicht unerwähnt bleiben sollte jedoch in diesem Zusammenhang noch ein ganz anderer Ansatz, der sich in ähnlicher Weise wie die genannten Autoren auch mit den nichtjüdischen Religionen auseinandersetzt und ebenfalls beiläufig auf Hinduismus und Buddhismus eingeht: Elie Benamozegh: Israël et l'Humanité, Livorno 1885 (Ndr. Paris 1961).

Buddhism as a Tool of Polemic and Self-Definition among German Rabbis in the 19th and early 20th Century

*by Aleš Weiss**

Abstract

This paper describes an almost forgotten chapter in the relatively short history of Jewish-Buddhist interactions. The popularization of Buddhism in Germany in the second half of 19th century, effected mainly by its positive appraisal in the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer, made it a common referent for both critics of Judaism and Christianity as well as their defenders. At the same time, Judaism was viewed by many as a historically antiquated religion and Jewish elements in Christianity were regarded as impediments to the progress of European religiosity and culture.

Schopenhauerian conception of "pessimistic" Buddhism and "optimistic" Judaism as the two most distant religious ideas was proudly appropriated by many Jewish thinkers. These Jews portrayed Buddhism as an anti-worldly and anti-social religion of egoistic individuals who seek their own salvation (i. e. annihilation into Nothingness), the most extreme form of pessimism and asceticism which negates every being, will, work, social structures and transcendence. Judaism, in contrast, represented direct opposites of all the aforementioned characteristics. In comparisons to Buddhism, Judaism stood out as a religion which carried the most needed social and psychological values for a healthy modern society: decisive affirmation of the world, optimism, social activity, co-operation with others, social egalitarianism, true charitability, and religious purity free from all remnants of polytheism, asceticism, and the inefficiently excessive moral demands ascribed to both Buddhism and Christianity.

Through the analysis of texts by Ludwig Philippson, Ludwig Stein, Leo Baeck, Max Eschelbacher, Juda Bergmann, Fritz-Leopold Steinthal, Elieser David and others, this paper tries to show how the image of Buddhism as an antithesis to Judaism helped the

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German Jewish reform thinkers in defining the "essence of Judaism" and in proving to both Jewish and Christian audiences its enduring meaningfulness and superiority for the modern society.

1. Introduction

The contemporary prevalence and prominence of Jewish Buddhists may suggest a natural affinity between Judaism and Buddhism. To the first European rabbis and Jewish thinkers who encountered Buddhism, however, the two religions had hardly anything in common. As early as the last quarter of the 18th century, references to Buddhism or "Lamaism" in Jewish texts began to appear in intra-Jewish polemics. Whether the target was Sabbateanism as in the anonymous text *Me'ora'ot Tzvi* (1814)[1] or Hassidim as in Menahem Mendel Lefin's *Essai d'un plan de réforme* (cca 1791–1792),[2] Josef Perl's *Uiber das Wesen der Sekte Chassidim* (1816),[3] or Samson Bloch's *Shvile 'Olam* (1822),[4] Jewish authors asserted the religious proximity of their target movements to Buddhism in order to delegitimize them. The derogatory parallel drawn between *lama* and *tzadik* among the East European maskilim and their heirs[5] became an easily understandable cultural shortcut for expressing the exalted

1 Me'ora'ot Tzvi, fol. 15a–b. This foliation is to the Jehudit Rozanis edition, Lemberg, 1835 alias 1804.

2 Mendel Lefin: Essai d'un plan de réforme ayant pour objet d'éclairer la Nation Juive en Pologne et de redresser par là ses moeurs, in: Arthur Eisenbach et al.: Materiały do dziejów Sejmu Czteroletniego, Wrocław 1969, p. 419.

3 Josef Perl/Avraham Rubinstein (ed.): Uiber das Wesen der Sekte Chassidim. Jerusalem 1977, pp. 90, 124–125.

4 Samson Bloch ha-Levi: Shvile 'Olam. Zolkiew, 1822, fol. 107a–108b; fol. 120a–120b. The anti-Hassidic pin in Bloch's description of the cult pertaining to the Dalai Lama notices already Joseph Klausner. See Joseph Klausner: History of Modern Hebrew Literature [Hebrew]. Vol. 3, Jerusalem 1960, p. 359.

5 See i. e. Samuel H. Peltyn: Zwichnięta kariera (z życia), in: Izraelita, 11 (1876) no. 13, p. 103. Henryk Lichtenbaum: Z piśmiennictwa, in: Izraelita, 46 (1911) no. 3, p. 9. Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liady (1745–1813), the founder of Chabad Hassidism, is called here a "Hassidic Dalai Lama […] and once an extremely influential tzadik and fanatic". See Alfred Lor: Z teatru, in: Izraelita 35 (1900) no. 28, p. 329. By an anonymous author from the same journal see Odgłosy. Potęga ciemnoty, Izraelita 47 (1911) no. 48, pp. 3–4. All these authors wrote for the Polish journal Izraelita which was a platform for Polish Jewish Reformists. Though the younger generation did not share the militant anti-Hassidic attitudes of their fathers their view of *tzadikism* was in many ways similar. See Marcel Wodziński: Haskalah and Hassidism in the Kingdom of Poland. A History of Conflict, Oxford 2005, pp. 249–255. I would like to thank to Marcel Wodziński who drew my attention to these authors. In a certain way, among the post-maskilic polemical uses of Buddhism, this time against Christianity, can be included also Judah David Eisenstein's

irrationality of a cult around a morally corrupted religious leader who abuses his religious authority and intentionally deceives religiously naive masses. In using Buddhism as a "mimetic Other", East European maskilim in the beginning of the 19th century were following the lead of 18th century critics of Catholicism. Protestant authors and other critiques of Catholicism had explained ostensible parallels between Catholicism and a derided "Lamaism" as the necessary result of the Catholic distortion of Christianity into a form of institutional and cultic idolatry.[6] Relying on the popular view of Buddhism developed by 17th century Jesuit missionaries and their scholarly adaptations, these authors could take one thing for granted: to their readers, the absurdity of Buddhism, both in its religious ideas and cult, was self-evident.

In the 19th and early 20th century the relationship of German Jewish thinkers to Buddhism began to change, paralleling a general reappraisal of Buddhism in Germany.[7] This period saw first serious academic studies on Buddhism, and, more importantly, widely-read treatments of the religion by G. F. Hegel[8] and in the philosophy of A. Schopenhauer.[9] For Schopenhauer's followers and sympathizers, the "original" Buddhism became the most mature form of religion, in contrast to Judaism. This Buddhism was more a European fantasy.

relating to Buddhism in his introduction to the Anthology of Debates [Hebrew]. See Judah David Eisenstein: Otsar vikuhim, New York 1928, pp. 16–17.

6 For a general context of the anti-Catholic usage of "Lamaism" see Donald S. Lopez Jr.: Prisoners of Shangri-La. Tibetan Buddhism and the West, Chicago, London 1998, pp. 29–30. Attacks on Catholicism accompany Thomas Astley's famous description of Buddhism in *A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels* (1745–1747) literally on every page and he rarely misses an opportunity to mention the parallel between the two "degenerated" religious forms. See especially the subchapter "The Religion of Tibet, and its surprising Conformity with the Romish". In Thomas Astley: A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels. Vol. 4, London 1747, pp. 458–460; see also pp. 461, 464, 465.

7 All the following phenomena have already been in detail described elsewhere. Due to the lack of space we cannot bring them here, however, the reader can find the relevant literature in the footnotes.

8 Hegel's treatment of Buddhism has been dealt with by several authors. See Roger-Pol Droit / transl. David Straight and Pamela Vohnson: The Cult of Nothingness. The Philosophers and the Buddha, Chapel Hill, London 2003, pp. 59–72; Heinrich Dumoulin: Buddhism and Nineteenth-Century German Philosophy, in: Journal of the History of Ideas, 42 (1981) no. 3, pp. 460–463; Henk Oosterling: Avoiding Nihilism by Affirming Nothing. Hegel on Buddhism, in: Bart Labuschagne / Timo Slootweg (eds): Hegel's Philosophy of the Historical Religions, Leiden 2012, pp. 51–77.

9 See Droit: The Cult of Nothingness, pp. 91–103; Viz Urs App: Schopenhauers Begegnung mit dem Buddhismus, in: Schopenhauer-Jahrbuch 79 (1998), pp. 35–58; Dumoulin: Buddhism and Nineteenth-Century German Philosophy, pp. 463–468.

In particular, many European intellectuals saw the idea of conscious heading towards Nothingness, self-annihilation and total negation of Being, as the ultimate goal of Buddhism, and this fascinated and repulsed them. Nonetheless, Buddhism had left the realm of silly idolatry and entered the serious field of philosophy of religion where its "central religious idea" had to be scrutinized and placed next to other established religions. It is precisely this Buddhism, Buddhism as the "projected Other", that we will meet among the authors to be dealt with.

Judaism was portrayed by German philosophers in terms that were nearly as biased and imaginary as their contemplation of Buddhism. Important German philosophers like Kant and Hegel[10] deemed it to be a historically antiquated religion[11] which had to be given up, at least as a corporate identity, so that society could attain a higher level. Judaism and Jewish elements in Christianity were by many viewed as one of the main impediments to the progress of European religiosity and culture. Among many German theologians, church historians, and biblical scholars, there was a significant movement intended to de-Judaize Christianity[12] as well as growing interest in looking for the authentic Christianity outside of the realm of its original Jewish background. Sometimes Christianity's original influences were located in Buddhist thought.[13] Thus, Buddhism was not a neutral subject in the discussion of the meaningfulness of Judaism in modern German society. As we will see later in this chapter, it is precisely these treatments of Buddhism that drove Jewish religious thinkers to deal with the religion.

[10] See Nathan Rotenstreich: The recurring pattern: studies in anti-Judaism in modern thought, London 1963, pp. 23–75; Eliezer Schweid / transl. Leonard Levin: A history of modern Jewish religious philosophy, Leiden 2001, pp. 117–151. Emil Fackenheim: Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy, Northvale, New Jersey, London 1994, chapters „Abraham and the Kantians" and „Moses and the Hegelians", pp. 33–77 and 81–169.

[11] See also Amy Newman: The Death of Judaism in German Protestant Thought from Luther to Hegel, in: Journal of the American Academy of Religion, 61 (1993) no. 3, pp. 455–484.

[12] See Susannah Heschel: Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus, Chicago 1998; Christian Wiese / transl. Barbara Harshav: Challenging Colonial Discourse. Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany, Leiden, Boston 2005.

[13] There were several important authors who theorized the Buddhists origin of Christianity in Europe in the last quarter of the 19th and in the beginning of the 20th century. Among them were Eduard Grimm, Ernest de Bunsen, Rudolf Seydel and Arthur Lillie. For Seydl, who was a passionate defender of Prussian Protestantism and was especially influential in Germany, see Perry Myers: German visions of India, 1871–1918. Commandeering the holy Ganges during the Kaiserreich, New York 2013, pp. 35–51.

2. Ludwig Philippson

One of the important Jewish thinkers of the 19th century to respond to the views of Judaism presented by Kant and Hegel was Rabbi Dr. Samuel Hirsch (1815–1889).[14] As a religious philosopher Hirsch reasserted Jewish religious particularity and tried to draw firm lines among Christianity, Judaism, and paganism. Though Hirsch devoted one sub-chapter of his book *Die Religionsphilosophie der Juden* (1842) to Buddhism, he does not compare it to Judaism in a way that would explicitly single it out and turn it into a tool of defining the Jewish religious uniqueness.[15] However, precisely this strategy was employed nearly thirty years later by another key figure in the German Reform movement, Rabbi Dr. Ludwig Philippson (1811–1889).

Philipsson was a proponent of moderate reform, a community rabbi in Magdeburg, preacher, and for a long time an editor of the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums*. Into his collection of essays relating to religion and the comparison of Judaism to other religions he includes a chapter entitled *Buddhism and its relation to Judaism and Christianity* (1868).[16] As he reminds the reader in his foreword, it is the first comparison of this kind.[17] My initial research has not uncovered any earlier examples. If the earlier Jewish thinkers sufficed with "paganism" as the model antithetic referent to the Jewish self-definition, Philippson introduces into Jewish religious thought the Schopenhauerian idea that Buddhism is the opposite of Judaism.

> "We can say that in the religious world of humankind there are two great world-outlooks that fully conflict with one another, and that their tremendous chasm can only be bridged through practical modification (*Gestaltung*): The Israelite world-outlook, which has its trunk in Judaism, [and] in Christianity and Islam its branches, and the Buddhist."[18]

[14] See Michael A. Meyer: Response to modernity. A history of the Reform Movement in Judaism, Detroit 1995, pp. 72–74; Eliezer Schweid: A history of modern Jewish religious philosophy [Hebrew], Vol 2., Tel Aviv 2002, pp. 50–64.

[15] Samuel Hirsch: Die Religionsphilosophie der Juden, Leipzig 1842, pp. 190–208.

[16] Ludwig Philippson: Der Buddhismus und sein Verhältniß zum Judenthume und Christenthume, in: Ludwig Philippson: Weltbewegende Fragen in Politik und Religion, Leipzig 1869, pp. 119–151.

[17] Philippson: Weltbewegende Fragen in Politik und Religion, unnumbered foreword.

[18] Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 120.

However, in a direct opposition to Schopenhauer, for Philippson this opposition was to Judaism's credit. What constitutes this essential difference between Judaism and Buddhism for Philippson? The answer to this question can be divided into two parts: 1) comparison of their religious ideas and 2) the implication of these religious ideas for the realm of social ethics.

> "The fundamental theory of Buddhism is: nothingness (*das Nichts*), emptiness (*das Leere*), insubstantiality (*das Wesenlose*), an atheism without God, but also without Nature… The second fundamental theory is accordingly: everything derives from evil, everything is pain."[19]

In accord with the common understanding of Buddhism in his time,[20] Philippson depicts it as a religion which has only one ultimate goal: to direct the whole world and mankind towards total annihilation. He assert that Buddhism views life as a meaningless wandering through existences,[21] with Nothingness (Nirvana) as the only alternative to the inescapable cycle of metamorphosis of meaningless suffering. Buddhism is presented as an extreme pessimism which attributes no value to the world and the realm of inter-human relations. Its highest religious value is an absolute apathy towards the life of the individual, and more importantly, the life of society. The social reality produced by Buddhism is thus only a necessary consequence of its religious fundaments.[22]

> "When the only redemption for people is to bring all of their inner voices to silence, to dissolve their entire thinking and feeling worlds such that nothing left of them remains, and to conjure some state of unconsciousness, and when the approach towards such a state already offers at least hope for the attainment of salvation, i. e.

[19] Philippson, Der Buddhismus, pp. 125–126.

[20] Karl Friedrich Koeppen (1808–1863), whose two volumes of *Die Religion des Buddha* (1857) were an important source of information about Buddhism for many German intellectuals including Philippson, describes Nirvana as a "total annihilation of the soul, annihilation in nothingness, pure destruction" and Buddhism as "the gospel of annihilation." See Koeppen: Die Religion des Buddha, Vol. 1, Berlin 1857, p. 306. This understanding of the concept of Nirvana – i. e. total annihilation as a telos of religious life – was shared also by other scholars like Burnouf, Cousin or Saint Hilaire, and became a key concept determining the perspective on Buddhism at least until the third quarter of the 19th century. See Droit: The Cult of Nothingness. See also Robert G. Morrison: Nietzsche and Buddhism, New York 1997, pp. 52–59.

[21] Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 137.

[22] The asocial consequences of Buddhist "quietism" were pointed at already by its Jesuits interprets in the 17th century. See Jürgen Offermans: Debates on Atheism, Quietism, and Sodomy. The Initial Reception of Buddhism in Europe, in: Journal of Global Buddhism 6 (2005), p. 30.

> of non-existence (*Nicht-Dasein*) – then all of the ties must be broken which bind people to earthly things: the family must be dissolved, possession and acquisitions must be given up, and the relationship between man and wife destroyed." [23]

For Philippson, the egoistic ideology of Buddhism which stands at the root of its asocial worldview creates only „laziness, dirt, emptiness, and spiritual effeminacy".[24] Buddhism is described as a religion of isolated individuals where each one looks only for his own goal – i. e. self-annihilation. Other people, far and near, serve only as instruments on the way to this goal.[25] These values create a society that stands in sharp contrast with the one which Reform Judaism understood as truly Biblical. What makes Judaism an absolute opposite to Buddhism is its resolute insistence on the idea of a positive value of the world and the mundane dimension of human life. "Thus", writes Philippson, "lies already herein the fundamental difference between the worldviews of Buddhism and Judaism, as well of the religions that arose from them."[26] A decisive acceptance of the mundane and a perception of the world as "originally blessed" by all-loving God is for Philippson a religious fundament which underpins Judaism's efforts of creating a value system in which the benefits of the society and of an individual are not separated.[27] The social superiority of Judaism vis-à-vis Buddhism is demonstrated for Philippson in the comparison of its *ethical minima*: i. e. the Biblical Decalogue and Five ethical precepts (*Pañcasīla*).[28] Unlike the Biblical Decalogue, the Five ethical precepts of Buddhism lack three important values: 1) Rhythmical change of work and rest, which is foreign to Buddhism because of it absolutely does not value work. 2) Honoring one's parents and the value of a functioning family, as a fundamental building block of society. This value is absent in Buddhism because of its soteriological egoism and its general world-denying attitude. 3) Biblical religion commands suppression of *destructive* desires only, while Buddhism wants its adherents to suppress *all* desire. That creates exaggerated and

[23] Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 138.
[24] Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 138.
[25] Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 150.
[26] Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 126.
[27] Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 149.
[28] Philippson, Der Buddhismus, pp. 141–144.

unrealistic demands on individuals and the society which lead, eventually, to the opposite results then those intended.[29]

Philippson asserts that Judaism treats work as the highest value due to the necessity to co-operate in the hard living conditions of the Land of Israel.[30]

> "[Mosaism] wanted occupation, the faithful fulfillment of labor obligations, and called upon all of its adherents equally, 'Six days will you work, the seventh day shall be a day of rest, so as to make it holy.' – It thus places work before rest, whereas Buddhism wills no form of work but rather only rest."[31]

Philippson was among the first Jewish thinkers who tried to formulate a *Soziallehre des Mosaismus*, a social teaching based on the interpretation of Biblical Judaism.[32] The comparison with Buddhism allows its qualities to stand out clearly. If Judaism can be characterized by a bias toward action, the highest work ethics, social cohesion and continuous endeavors for a just society rooted in the theology of God's blessed creation, Buddhism is a paradigm of religion of social indifference, indolence, world denial, asceticism and asocial egoism.

Until now, we intentionally avoided any reference to Christianity. Philippson, like many other early Reform Jewish thinkers regarded responding to Christian objections as an integral part of the process of the Jewish religious self-definition,[33] and he deals with Christianity on various places in his work.[34] As shown by George Y. Kohler, according to Philippson, these three features essentially belong to Christianity: 1) Christianity ascribes a small value to the innerworldly living and, therefore, escapes to the otherworldy. 2) Christianity has unrealistically exaggerated demands and creates an ideal

[29] Among these Philippson lists the prohibition of killing any animal, prohibition of eating meat, prohibition of consuming alcohol, or a demand to view every sentient being as the Biblical „neighbour".

[30] Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 121.

[31] Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 139–140.

[32] See Uriel Tal: German-Jewish Social Thought in the Mid-Nineteenth Century. In Werner Mosse (ed.) et al.: Revolution and Evolution. Tübingen 1981, pp. 320–327; Christhard Hoffmann: Analyzing the zeitgeist. Ludwig Philippson as historian of the modern era, in: Lauren B. Strauss/ Michael Brenner (eds): Mediating modernity: Challenges and trends in the Jewish encounter with the modern world. Essays in honor of Michael A. Meyer, Detroit 2008, pp. 114–117.

[33] See George Y. Kohler: Ein notwendiger Fehler der Weltgeschichte. Ludwig Philippsons Auseinandersetzung mit dem Christentum, in: Görge K. Hasselhoff (ed.): Die Entdeckung des Christentums in der Wissenschaft des Judentums, Berlin, 2010, pp. 61–62.

[34] See Kohler: Ein notwendiger Fehler der Weltgeschichte, pp. 33–62.

according to which passivity is better than fighting for justice and humiliation better than true moral consciousness. 3) Christianity is a religion for individuals, not for the society as a whole. It has never succeeded to exert its influence on the whole of society.

This account of Christianity sheds light on Philippson's account of Buddhism. Philippson establishes Judaism and Buddhism as the two poles of religious *Weltanschauungen* expressing the ultimate religious ideal and its opposite and locates Christianity between these poles. Philippson highlights the parallels between Christianity and Buddhism in order to critique Christianity by clearly showing its deficiencies in terms of theology and, especially, social ethics, and thus demonstrating the superiority of Judaism. Among them are the teaching about original sin, which fails to formulate true individual responsibility,[35] the suppression of corporeality and contempt of the world,[36] monasticism, shared by both religions, which in effect separates elites from the rest of the society and devalues social life,[37] absolutist religious institutions,[38] and unrealistic moral demands which end up tolerating injustice, despotism and tyrannical bureaucracy.[39] These demands, while portrayed as moral qualities,[40] eventually effectuate passive obedience and make any endeavor for justice and social engagement impossible.[41]

Buddhism was for many modern opponents of Christianity a great example of a religion without God, a religion which attained the highest humanistic standards even without morality transcendentally anchored in revelation. As such, it played its role in the European discussion of nihilism and atheism in the second half of the 19th century.[42] Philippson was well aware of atheists' sympathy for Buddhism, but he refutes this argument made by some European critiques of monotheism as thoroughly false:

35 Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 133.
36 Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 135.
37 Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 141.
38 Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 135.
39 Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 145.
40 Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 145.
41 Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 144.
42 See Droit, The Cult of Nothingness, pp. 166–168.

> "It is thus only sheer arbitrariness, when modern nihilists invoke Buddhism and treat it like a welcome favored child. With the first sharp criticism, the sword turns around in their hands and fatally wounds them."[43]

The historical development of Buddhism, writes Philippson, „has shown in the most persuasive way, that on atheism no religious system can be founded".[44] In order to create an ethical society Buddhism had to give up nihilism, acknowledge the existence of matter and change its attitude towards human activity. Its ethics thus contradicts its fundaments, atheism and nihilism.[45]

Among positive features of Buddhism, according to Phillipson, are its emphasis on endeavoring to overcome one's negative character traits, emphasis on compassion,[46] and, especially, a great religious tolerance stemming from the idea that all religions are manifestations of the same religious truth.[47] Religious tolerance and a vision of universal salvation for all moral individuals, says Philippson, is a point where Buddhism meets Judaism, in sharp contrast with Christianity and Islam.[48] It is not hard to see who the addressee of these statements is. Even a religion which has a much worse starting position than Christianity in terms of religious tolerance and general morality was able to incorporate the value which has for centuries been absent in Christian societies. In spite of all the differences, there is an essential difference between Buddhism and Christianity, i. e. the Jewish heritage of the latter. Both Christianity and Islam carry the Mosaic heritage, and therefore, despite all their deformations represent religions of social activism and creative human development.

> "Nevertheless, these extravagances and the shift of focus to the beyond must not prevent us from recognizing that the worldview that has its root in Judaism and which branched out into Christianity and Islam, includes an *idealism* which recognizes God and is bonded to him, [and which] finds its substance in the development of people and of humankind. Buddhism, rather, is pure naturalism, which sees in the world only an uncountable number of creatures, of which each for itself either ascends or descends, now up and then down, and in the highest moment falls into nothingness."[49]

43 Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 148.
44 Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 146.
45 Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 146.
46 Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 143.
47 Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 145.
48 Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 145.
49 Philippson, Der Buddhismus, p. 151.

Phillipson's thematization of Buddhism is closely connected with the polemical and apologetic agenda which aims to justify to both German Jewish and non-Jewish audiences the moral and social value of Judaism. Judged in terms of its religious "essence", Judaism represents the antipode of Buddhism. This schematic opposition becomes for Philippson a ready-made illustration of the moral and social assets of Judaism, namely its active, socially creative, egalitarian, optimistic and world-accepting nature. Philippson's analysis of Buddhism and its utilization for the Jewish case in the last third of the 19th century Germany became mostly forgotten, however, motivated by the same agenda, many of its arguments were repeated by Leo Baeck in his famous book *Das Wesen des Judentums* (1905) nearly four decades later.

3. The "Essence" of Judaism in the Buddhist Mirror

As Michael A. Meyer points out, for Jewish Reform it was important to establish a view that Judaism is "closely related to Christianity in religious and moral terms, though separate from Christian dogma".[50] The idea of Judaism as a source of an authentic Christian ethics was crucial for the defense of Judaism in modern German society. It is precisely this notion of continuity which was attacked by many German scholars including Adolf Harnack in his famous lectures about the "essence of Christianity" in 1899/1900.[51] The rabbinic legacy in Judaism, and, to some, the whole of post-exilic Judaism, were viewed as steeped in suffocative legalism and thus incompatible with the demands of a modern society. Baeck's *Essence of Judaism* was an outstanding attempt to formulate a Liberal interpretation of Judaism which could provide German Jews with a well arranged and meaningful re-reading of some fundamental ideas of Jewish religion. Just as Philippson did, Baeck uses Buddhism as a negative example to define the essence of Judaism.[52] In both editions of

[50] Meyer: Response to modernity, p. 202.

[51] See Christian Wiese / transl. Barbara Harshav: Challenging Colonial Discourse. Jewish Studies and Protestant Theology in Wilhelmine Germany, pp. 164–169.

[52] A few authors briefly describe Leo Baeck's view on Buddhism. See Miriam Dean-Otting: Hugo Bergman, Leo Baeck and Martin Buber. Jewish Perspectives on Hinduism and Buddhism, in: The Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies, 1 (1999) no. 2, pp. 8–10; Alan Brill: Judaism and World Religions. Encountering Christianity, Islam, and Eastern traditions, New York 2012, p. 242; Sandra B. Lubarsky: Leo Baeck: Practical Tolerance, in: Lubarsky, Tolerance and Transformation. Jewish Approaches to Religious Pluralism, Cincinnati 1990, pp. 38–39. Among the three, Lubarsky

his *Essence of Judaism* Buddhism is brought up as often as Christianity. The following passage comes from the 1905 edition:

> "As long as religion is essentially about the position of people in the world – and science today has returned to this old prophetic outlook – there are only two foundational forms of religion: The Israelite and the Buddhist. The first means to affirm the moral relationship of the will and the deed, and the second calls for its negation through will-less-ness in its inward sinking contemplation. The first, the religion of altruism, which is predicated on the perfection of people, found the all-embracing path to God and therewith the path to others. The other, the religion of the ego, which beholds perfection in people, developed the exclusionary path into the self…"[53]

In the reworked edition from 1922,[54] Baeck slightly reformulates the text quoted above and elaborates further on the idea of the fundamental opposition between Judaism and Buddhism:

> "The first means morally to affirm this relationship to the world through will and deed, it shows the field of tasks in the world; the other establishes as its goal to negate it, in will-less self-contemplation to be devoted only to the self. One is the expression of the commandment to act and create; the other of the need for rest. One leads to the wish to work for the benefit of God, to establish the Kingdom of God, in which all are to be found; the other to the demand to sink into the one, the nothingness and therein to win for the 'I' its rescue and its holiness. This one demands an ascent, a becoming, the long way to the future; the other proclaims return, cessation, the futureless being in silence. This one wills to reconcile the world with God; the other wants only to be delivered from the world. This one yearns for embodiment, new people, and a new world; the other for 'extinction,' an exodus from humankind, and exodus from the world."[55]

Judaism and Buddhism are, according to Baeck, two opposite poles of the human religious spectrum and "The entire history of the religions aside from them is that they tended towards one or the other of them."[56] All the religions of the world can be located somewhere between Judaism and Buddhism, the

is the only one who analyses Baeck's depiction of Buddhism in the context of his demonstration of the ethical character of Judaism.

53 Baeck: Das Wesen des Judentums (1905), p. 40.

54 For basic contours of this shift see Meyer: Response to modernity, pp. 207–208.

55 Baeck: Das Wesen des Judentums (1922), pp. 55–56.

56 Baeck: Das Wesen des Judentums (1922), p. 56.

two irreconcilable religious worldviews.[57] The absolutization and essentialization of this dichotomy can already be found in the writings of philosopher, sociologist, publicist, and originally an Orthodox rabbi, Prof. Ludwig Stein (1859–1930),[58] whose teachings were certainly known to Baeck.

> "Here, since the existence of high culture two elementary opposites struggled for world domination: optimism, which affirms life in itself, e. g. as of intrinsic value and as an end in itself; and pessimism, which denies life in general as a value and in particular human life; the typical representative of the religion of optimism in world-history is Mosaism and its continuation, Christianity; [the typical representative] of the religion of pessimism is Buddhism."[59]

As a result of culture exchange during the times of Alexander the Great, according to Stein, these two fundamental religious worldviews do not appear in their pure forms, but every religion in the world – including Judaism and Buddhism themselves – contains an ingredient of its counterpart.[60] The goal of Christianity and Judaism – which was affected in the smallest measure – is to get rid of all the contamination by Buddhism, the presence of which he so pungently felt in European culture. His language is even stronger than Baeck's and shows how loaded the image of Buddhism was in the Jewish culture at the turn of the century:

> "Therefore, into the fire with all that in Judaism and Christianity still recalls elements of Buddhism! The pessimistic whims of Schopenhauer, the philosophical Buddhist par excellence, should no longer absorb more of our best marrow and paralyze our future-happy creativity. Asceticism and retreat from the world are

[57] When Alfred Jospe (1909–1994), in the early 1970's, wanted to define the key framework of the fundamental value orientation of Judaism he used the example of Baeck's antinomy of Judaism and Buddhism. See Alfred Jospe: The Jewish Image of the Jew, in: Eva Jospe / Raphael Jospe (eds): To Leave Your Mark. Selections from the Writings of Alfred Jospe, Hoboken, New Jersey 2000, p. 99. See also responsum on Buddhism by one of the key spokesmen of Australian Judaism, Rabbi Raymond Apple. Raymond Apple: Let's Ask the Rabbi. Replies, Responses & Reflections, Milton Keynes, 2011, p. 34.

[58] See Jacob Haberman: Ludwig Stein: Rabbi, Professor, Publicist, and Philosopher of Evolutionary Optimism, in: The Jewish Quarterly Review, 86 (1995) no. 1/2, pp. 105–111. Stein came from a long line of rabbis. Later in his life, he moved away from orthodoxy and halakhic observance, however, he never ceased to be Jewishly engaged. See Haberman: Ludwig Stein, pp. 91–125.

[59] Ludwig Stein: An der Wende des Jahrhunderts. Versuch einer Kulturphilosophie, Freiburg im Breisgau 1899, p. 333.

[60] Haberman: Ludwig Stein, p. 113.

> pathological degenerations, hypochondriac tumors of overwrought nerves. Therefore, out from the historical religions all hostility to life and pathology!"[61]

Stein, like Philippson, critiques one element of Buddhism that was presented by its defenders as especially developed in comparison to its Biblical correlate, Buddhist ethics. Its extreme demands are perceived as leading, in effect, to the extinction of mankind.[62] Similarly, Leo Baeck writes about the exaggerated moral demands of Buddhism and the dysfunctionality of social ethics based thereon. The example of Buddhism enables Baeck to demonstrate clearly the functionality of Jewish ethics, working with a realistic social psychology.

> "The human kindness of Buddhism and Judaism has occasionally been compared. Buddhism had its doctrine of love; it preached intimate compassion and benevolence towards all that lives. But this, its intimacy, is rather sentimentality and melancholy. It lacks – and this is the difference from the teachings of Judaism – reverence for [one's] fellows; it lacks an emphasis on positive justice and, with it, the clear demand for, the resoluteness of moral duty. It lacks the great 'You shall,' the pressing and the demanding, the social and the messianic – these properties of Judaism. Buddhist morality has remained with feelings. That gives it the negative and passive character for which it is known; as the warmth of sentiments without specific duty is in moral hindsight nothing other than inactivity, idleness; to take part in the fate of [one's] fellow only with the mind means fundamentally being apathetic. Buddhism has been called the religion of indolence. This is a blunt judgement, but one thing is true, that it is, with all of its ideal virtues, the religion of deedless sentiment [and] of moral indolence. And for it to be redeemed is everything; [for it] the question of 'I' is life's only question."[63]

Egoistic immersion into the depths of oneself and the social passivity stemming from it is, according to Baeck, a subversion of the Jewish values fully oriented to the construction of a just society permeated by the consciousness of God's moral calling. However noble and lofty Buddhist ethics might have seemed, their primary source was repeatedly identified in sheer egoism. As another Reform rabbi, Dr. Fritz Leopold Steinthal (1889–1969), writes in his article *Buddhismus und Judentum* (1924):

[61] Ludwig Stein: Die soziale Frage im Lichte der Philosophie. Second ed., Stuttgart 1903, p. 512.
[62] Ludwig Stein: An der Wende des Jahrhunderts, p. 335.
[63] Baeck: Das Wesen des Judentums (1922), p. 241.

> "Doubtless each must recognize the level and purity of the Buddhist ethic. But the foundation of the Asiatic desires and will is not authority and the love for the Godly Lawgiver, not the categorical imperative, not the good in itself, rather egoism. The goal of all pursuits, the motivation for good is nothing other than the wish to be liberated from existence, to become released from the constraints of reincarnation." [64]

As we have already seen in Philippson, work for the sake of the whole society was presented as one of the central values of Judaism, going back to its biblical beginnings. The comparison to Buddhism is designed to allow the reader to see this idea very clearly. Thus, Elieser David (1857–1910), an Orthodox rabbi and at the time the rabbi of the Vienna Leopoldstädter Tempel, comments in his Viennese lecture on "Buddhismus und Judentum" (1906) on the Psalm 128:

> "As you see, alongside family happiness, this beautiful psalm praises the blessing of work, and that too constitutes a great virtue of Judaism over Buddhism, which completely misjudged the moral meaning of work."[65]

In the same vein a Reform rabbi Max Eschelbacher (1880–1964) writes in 1923 that the decline of Buddhism may be traced back to the monks who "fell into idleness, because their life-ideal, indifference, called them to it. Judaism never knew such a phenomenon. It has honored work as highly as the Torah and Torah-study."[66] Whether formulated in terms of Samson R. Hirsch's *Torah im Derech Eretz* or in terms of Reform social ethics, modern German Judaism was internally perceived and externally presented as the ideal symbiosis of religious and social commitment beneficial to the whole society. The example of Buddhism could again bring its qualities to the fore.

4. The Perils of Indo-Germanic Pessimism

The philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer, the key interpreter of Buddhism for Europe nearly until the middle of the 20th century, provided essential context for the negative assessment of Buddhism among Jewish religious thinkers, beginning with Philippson. The refusal of Schopenhauer's pessimism was an

[64] Fritz Leopold Steinthal: Buddhismus und Judentum, in: Religionen (Schriftenreihe der Vereinigung für das Liberale Judentum e. V.), no. 2, Berlin 1925, p. 22.

[65] Elieser David: Buddhismus und Judentum, in: Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur, 10 (1907), pp. 62–63.

[66] Max Eschelbacher: Thora. Studium und Berufsarbeit, in: Der Jude, 7 (1923) no. 3, p. 138.

important feature of modern Jewish religious idealism, be it Reform or Orthodox. At the same time and in spite of Schopenhauer's antisemitism, his philosophy was not unattractive to many German Jews. As Rabbi Dr. Fritz Leopold Steinthal mentions in 1924, many of those for whom this field of thought was altogether foreign started to be interested in Buddhism through Schopenhauer.[67] From the times of the records of Jesuit missionaries nearly until the middle of the 20th century Buddhism was known as a religion with the highest number of adherents in the world – and as such a religion with significant attractiveness. Its translation into the language of modern thought in times of spiritual and cultural crisis gave rise to fears of its attractiveness in Europe and Germany especially. These fears were famously articulated by Friedrich Nietzsche,[68] but also troubled Jewish religious thinkers. Rabbi Dr. Elieser David explained the need to clarify the relation between Judaism and Buddhism by citing the influence of Schopenhauer on Jewish freethinkers in his Viennese lecture in 1906:

> "What, however, especially draws our attention to Buddhism is the fact that also modern philosophers like Schopenhauer, Feuerbach, and others draw close to certain Buddhist teachings, and that through their influence it has found entry en masse into the educated circles in Europe, that in Leipzig in the year 1903 a Buddhist mission society was formed and a Buddhist publishing house established, and [that] there from April of last year a Buddhist monthly has begun to appear. Under such circumstances, it seems by no means unbelievable that Buddhism should have not a few adherents among the Jewish freethinkers in Vienna, as I have been told. Thus even more justified is the attempt to expose the Buddhist worldview even from the standpoint of Judaism; and this is precisely the task that I have set before myself for my lecture today."[69]

Similar fears about the infiltration of Buddhist ideas into Judaism were articulated three years before David's lecture by Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865–1935).[70] These fears were not just a mere projection, at least not

[67] Fritz Leopold Steinthal: Buddhismus und Judentum, pp. 19–20.
[68] For the context see Morrison: Nietzsche and Buddhism, pp. 7–21.
[69] David: Buddhismus und Judentum, p. 50.
[70] Abraham Isaac Kook: Shemonah Kevatsim. Vol. 1, Jerusalem 2004, p. 167. For Kook, as for many of his contemporaries, Buddhism is closely connected with the thought of A. Schopenhauer whose pessimism he found directly antagonistic to Judaism. See Shalom Rozenberg: R. Abraham

in Germany where Elieser David spent most of his life before moving to Vienna.[71] Indeed, as Martin Bauman points out, approximately one third of the early German Buddhists were born Jewish.[72] The Jewish theological fight against Schopenhauer, intensified by his anti-Semitism, and against nihilism in general, was a significant reason for expressing a Jewish view on Buddhism. Schopenhauer's evaluation of religions based on the criteria of their optimistic or pessimistic attitude to the world was accepted by many Jewish thinkers. Many of them proudly proclaimed the optimistic nature of Judaism, which disparaged it in Schopenhauer's eyes, and used this as an argument for Judaism. Pessimism was caused by the absence of the notion of one God, the main guarantor of the creative and moral society. This relationship is clearly depicted in the previously mentioned article by Elieser David:

> "In this lack of a concept of God lies also the foundation of the gloomy, pessimistic notion, which casts its shadow over the entire Buddhist worldview, of the notion that all life is suffering, and that therefore the only salvation lies in nothingness. This Buddhist pessimism has Schopenhauer famously translated into philosophy, and he has already indicated that Christianity reveals a congenial direction into it, [and] that, however, Judaism, in direct antithesis to it, represents an optimistic standpoint. And with this we must completely agree. Only we do not see with him in this optimism a weakness of Judaism, rather much more its strength and one of its substantial merits." [73]

Buddhism appears increasingly as a negative referent serving to establish the ideological content of modern Judaism in many articles in Jewish newspapers and in lectures about Buddhism hosted in Jewish precincts.[74] Most of them reverberate with the same image: Schopenhaurian opposition of religious optimism and religious pessimism embodied in the opposition

Kook and the Blind Alligator [Hebrew], in: Hayim Hamiel (ed.): In His Light. Studies on the Doctrine of Rav Abraham Hacohen Kook, Jerusalem 1986, pp. 317–352.

71 For David see Michael Brocke / Julius Carlebach (eds): Die Rabbiner im Deutschen Reich 1871–1945. Vol. 2., Berlin 2009, pp. 147–148.

72 Martin Bauman: Deutsche Buddhisten: Geschichte und Gemeinschaften. Marburg 1993, p. 242. Baumann's account is based on the analysis of 128 profiles of early German Buddhists contained in Hellmuth Heckers: Lebensbilder deutscher Buddhisten. Konstanz 1990 and 1992.

73 David: Buddhismus und Judentum, pp. 62–63. Compare also an article by Rabbi Dr. Baruch Seligkowitz: Der Wert des Lebens in der jüdischen Weltanschauung, in: Ost und West, 18 (1918) no. 9, pp. 321–324.

74 See advertisements in Frankfurter Israelitisches Gemeindeblatt, 8 (1930) no. 11, p. 454.

Judaism-Buddhism, Buddhist anti-worldly orientation versus Jewish love for life and the world,[75] Buddhist solipsism, egoism and indifference to the problems of the society versus Judaism's fights for a creative moral society and the idea of a transcendent, moral God.[76] There is also frequently a reference to Buddhism in texts dealing with orientation of modern Jewish culture. Buddhism thus appears next to Christianity and Islam with a firmly defined identity.[77] Jewish religious elites were well aware of the demonstrative potential of the Jewish-Buddhist anti-thesis in the search for the definition of the "essence of Judaism". As a prominent member of the Frankfurter Orthodox community Dr. Gustav Löffler (1879–1963) said in his address to the *Vereinigung israelitischer Lehrer und Lehrerinnen zu Frankfurt a.M.* in 1931:

> "The question regarding the *essence of Judaism* demands, above all else, an answer. The sustaining Jewish personalities of a forefather Abraham and the great prophet Moses, a Hillel, Maimonides, Amos, etc., can illuminate the meaning of Judaism for young doubters by means of deduction. The occupation with the writings of Buber,[78] the antitheses of Judaism – Christianity (on the basis of Dienemann's books)[79] and

[75] See Seligkowitz, Der Wert des Lebens in der jüdischen Weltanschauung, p. 321.

[76] A. Coralnik: Das jüdische Kulturproblem und die Moderne, in: Ost und West, 4 (1904) no. 5, p. 299; Friedrich Thieberger: Jona, Hiob und das Problem der Gerechtigkeit, in: Der Morgen. Monatsschrift der Juden in Deutschland, 2 (1926) no. 2, p. 130; Arno Nadel: Die Bibel als methaphysisches Dokument, in: Neue jüdische Monatshefte 3 (1919) no. 19/20, pp. 433–435;

[77] See Arno Nadel: Der erste Satz der Bibel, in: Der Jude, 2 (1917/1918) no. 1/2, p. 89; Julius Oppert: Bibel und Babel, in: Ost und West, 3 (1903) no. 5, p. 301; Leo Winz: Die Judenfrage im kuenftigen Europa, in: Ost und West, 19 (1919) no. 7/8, p. 172.; Max Eschelbacher: Mose, in: Ost und West, 7 (1921) no. 8, p. 170.

[78] Unfortunately, we cannot deal here with the question of Buber's rather favorable view of Buddhism. At its core lies Buber's view of Judaism as essentially belonging to the Orient. How irritating Buber's idea of spiritual kinship of Judaism with the Orient was for some German Jews is demonstrated in Elias Hurwicz: Der Dualismus der Judenfrage, in: Jüdische Monatshefte, 3 (1918) no. 3/5, p. 77. According to Hurwicz, the idea that Judaism is in the same camp as Buddhism is the peak of absurdity. See also Martin Buber: Der Geist des Orients und das Judentum, in: Buber: Vom Geist des Judentums. Leipzig 1913, pp. 9–48; Jeffrey S. Librett: Orientalism and the Figure of the Jew, New York 2014, pp. 209–218; Paul Mendes-Flohr: Fin-de-siècle Orientalism and the Aesthetics of Jewish Self-Affirmation [Hebrew], in: Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought, 3 (5744/1984) no. 4, pp. 623–681. The positive inclination of some Zionist thinkers to Buddhism should be understood in the context of the positive reinterpretation of the idea of a Jew as an Oriental.

[79] The book of a Liberal rabbi Dr. Max Dienemann: Judentum und Christentum. Frankfurt a. M. 1914.

> Judaism-Buddhism can make inductively clear the character of Judaism and demonstrate its sense and purpose."[80]

The purpose of this paper was to show this "inductive clarification of the essence of Judaism" and its "meaning and purpose" through „the anti-thesis Judaism-Buddhism" for the modern German Judaism. Before my concluding remarks, let me close with a final paragraph of the article *Buddha und Moses* written by the Reform rabbi Dr. Juda Bergmann in 1923. The text contains nearly mytho-poetical images of the Jewish-Buddhist antithesis, with pathos, a feeling of urgency, and the almost mysterious touch of eternity present in the idea of the absolute essential opposition between the two religions.

> "World history, according to Goethe, is a battle between belief and unbelief; but times of belief are the greatest in world history. For the souls of mankind two men continually struggle: Buddha and Moses. There come times of hardship and decline. Through the world sounds the lament: life is suffering. Buddha captures the souls. These times pass and must pass. Not through our tears but by the drops of our sweat will the land become fruitful. Culture will not be created by world-renouncing hermits and ascetics. Victory belongs to those that choose life.
>
> We too are living in a time of hardship. The poet sings of the agony of being. The wise speak of the decline of culture. Buddhist wisdom is called out from India to help us solve the puzzle of life. We stand before a choice: shall we direct our efforts towards overcoming the world or improvement of the world? Is it true that life is just suffering or does life remain, with its suffering, a precious gift and joy of God? We Jews raise up the Torah and proclaim: Moses's teachings are true. We from the tribe of Job the sufferer, we choose life."[81]

It should be mentioned that the same binary opposition left its mark on the Jewish philosophy of culture, particularly through Ludwig Stein and his student David Koigen (1879–1933). For Koigen religion was an independent realm of culture, central for its creation. Therefore, he strongly criticized an apotheosis of Buddhism and European "neo-Buddhism" in German culture

[80] Julius Flörsheim: Wie erwecken wir der Jugend Freude am Judentum?, in: Frankfurter israelitisches Gemeindeblatt, 9 (1931) 7, p. 214.

[81] Juda Bergmann: Buddha und Moses, in: Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur, 25 (1923/1924), pp. 30–31.

and philosophy.[82] He, like Stein, Baeck and many others, was aware of a recent alliance of these streams of German thought that located an authentic Christianity into the Indo-Germanic spiritual heritage in opposition to the Jewish monotheism.

5. Conclusion

For all of the instances mentioned in this article, the topic of Buddhism was on the periphery of the interests of German rabbis in the period considered. Buddhism was a curiosity many talked about, but few were interested enough to appreciate its complex philosophical and religious depth. When references to Buddhism or articles and studies comparing Buddhism and Judaism appear, it happens in a particular context and with a clear agenda of the "inductive clarification of the essence of Judaism", to borrow the words of one of our authors. Their interest went only as far as the comparison was useful to demonstrate the assets of Judaism. It goes without saying that hardly any Buddhist would recognize himself in the Buddhism they imagined and juxtaposed to Judaism. Using Schopenhauerian coordinates of pessimistic and optimistic religions, these authors portrayed Buddhism as an anti-worldly and anti-social religion of egoistic individuals who seek their own salvation (i. e. annihilation into Nothingness), the most extreme form of pessimism and asceticism which negates every being, will, work, social structure and transcendence. Judaism, in contrast, could boast of being in direct opposition to all the aforementioned characteristics. In comparison to Buddhism, Judaism stood out as a religion which carried the most needed social and psychological values for a healthy modern society: decisive affirmation of the world, optimism, social activity, co-operation with others, social egalitarianism, true charitability, and religious purity free from all remnants of polytheism, asceticism, and the inefficiently excessive moral demands ascribed to both Buddhism and Christianity. There were other reasons which made Buddhism an especially good case for this demonstration. It was connected with several themes endangering the position of Judaism in German society. Buddhism was allied with the

[82] For the context of Koigen's usage of Buddhism see Martina Urbach: Theodicy of Culture and the Jewish Ethos. David Koigen's Contribution to the Sociology of Religion, Berlin 2012, pp. 35–51. See also David Koigen: Ideen zur Philosophie der Kultur. Munich and Leipzig 1910, pp. 117–121; 215–217.

Schopenhaurian philosophy with its contempt for Judaism as well as with atheism and nihilism that used an argument from Buddhism to demonstrate the achievability of a legal framework independent of a transcendent God and ethics independent of the Bible. Sometimes sympathy towards Buddhism was accompanied by the refusal to accept Judaism as the foundation of Christianity. The Jewish-Christian context is crucial. Weakening the link between Judaism and Christianity served to devalue Judaism in German society. Presenting Judaism as its ultimate religious source was therefore of central importance to both Reform and modern Orthodox rabbis. They tried to show that the more de-Judaized Christianity is the less compatible it is with the values of modern society. The external and internal identification of the Jews with the Orient, so irritating for those German Jews who felt as fully belonging to the German culture and into German nation, gave another reason for this specific thematization of Buddhism. It was not only modern European *Christian* culture which needed its "Orientals". Those thinkers of German Judaism who distanced themselves decisively from the identification with the Orient presented their own image of the religious essence of the latter. Its source was often found in Indian thought, with Buddhism representing the furthest extreme. These authors tried to show not only that Judaism as a religion does not belong to the Orient, but that it represents the sharpest antithesis to the ultimate essence of Oriental religiosity and, even more then Christianity, can self-confidently claim to be the very foundation of the modern European society.

At Opposite Ends of Asia – Contact between East Asian Culture and Modern Hebrew Literature from the Late Nineteenth Century until Today. A Historiographical and Linguistic Study

by Rachel Albeck-Gidron

Abstract

This article deals with contact between East Asian thought and modern Hebrew Literature from the late nineteenth century through the twentieth century, until today.

In the first part, the article suggests that from a historiographical perspective, one may outline three waves of contact between these two cultural phenomena, at opposite ends of Asia. In the first wave, which began in the early twentieth century, Asian influence on Hebrew literature written in Europe was mediated mainly through the philosophers Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The second wave, which emerged in the 1950s, relates to the influence of the leaders of the Beat Generation, who, in turn, were influenced by modernist poetry in English, which was colored by contact with Asian poetry. The third wave is part of the glocal New Age phenomenon and its appropriation of certain Buddhist traits.

The second part of the article presents several theoretical possibilities of symbioses between cultures, as they appear within language.

The third part presents the symptomatic example of the work of contemporary Hebrew writer Yoel Hoffmann, who appears to be a representative of the second wave; however, his work maintains dialogue with the first wave, and its current popularity is part of the third wave. Hoffmann's work serves as an example of how to apply the theoretical possibilities presented in the second part of the article, as an instance of literary contact between two cultures and their respective languages.

In 2014 an issue of the academic journal, *Iyunim Bitqumat Yisrael* was published, entitled, *Beyond Halakha, Secularism, Traditionalism and "New Age" Culture in Israel.*[1] The articles in this volume, which contains more than 600 pages, describe deep cultural processes that have taken place in Israel in the past decades. Among these processes is a change in the monistic center of gravity of culture, from Western influences to neo-Orientalism – mainly the influence of the Jewish culture of Islamic countries via the second and third generations of immigrants from these countries.[2] The articles also describe changes in orthodox thought, the establishment, and way of life, moving toward the softening of traditional codes, and the introduction of multi-cultural elements as part of the rituals. Some authors point out that new influences on ritualistic ways of life have been made possible, leading to the creation of a new sphere combining secularism and traditional religiosity, as a world view and as praxis.[3] Finally, they discuss the dimension of Western New Age culture, which is present in communal and personal patterns of behavior.[4]

Immediately after the section on New Age in its Israeli guise, a short section called "Changes in the Mirror of Art" is included containing two articles, in symptomatic and interesting fashion. The first of these discusses gender and ritual in video-art,[5] and the second is about the author Yoel Hoffmann and his affinity with Zen-Buddhist thought.[6] Discussion of Yoel Hoffmann in this section is symptomatic, since he is neither a political nor an ideological writer. He has never published an op-ed piece about current events, nor does he touch upon them in his literary work. In general, he avoids appearing in the

1 Gideon Katz / Shalom Ratzabi / Yaacov Yadgar (eds): Iyunim Bitequmat Yisrael, Thematic Series, Vol. 7, Beyond Halacha: Secularism, Traditionalism and "New Age" Culture in Israel, Sde Boqer 2014 [All articles are in Hebrew].

2 These include Arie Kizel: Secular and Traditional Mizrahi Caught in the Israeli Narrative Struggle, pp. 401–433; Hadas Shadar / Liat Vardi: The Baba Sali Facility in Netivot as a Reflection of Society, pp. 371–400.

3 Among these see Asaf Shar'abi, "Soft" Religion and "Strict" Religion: The Teshuva Movement in Israel, pp. 434–460; Asaf Leibovitch: Spiritual Traditionalists: A new Social Movement and the Israeli Identity Today, pp. 461–497; Anna Prashizky: Inventing Jewish Rituals: Non-Orthodox Marriage and Funeral Rites in Israel, pp. 283–242; Rachel Werczeberger: The Identity Narrative of the Proponents of Jewish-Spiritual renewal in Israel, pp. 55–579.

4 Marianna Ruah-Midbar: A Channeler, A Healer, and a Shaman Meet at the Rabbi's: Jewish Israeli Women in the New age, pp. 498–528.

5 Yael Guilat: Gender, Ritual and Video Art, pp. 580–612.

6 Dror Burstein: An Introduction to Zen-Buddhist Reading in Yoel Hoffmann's Writings, pp. 624–612.

media to an extreme degree, refusing to give interviews or to express himself on communal affairs, social or ethical issues, and similar public issues. Nevertheless, the editors of the volume deemed this article, written by writer Dror Burstein and dealing with poetics, as relevant to its topic, since it expresses a process within the new Israeli culture with which it is concerned. Hence, the context of this article indicates that Hoffmann's work, which contains Zen Buddhist elements, reflects something of the changes undergone by the Hebrew-reading society in the past decades.

I

Indeed, East-Asian thought, mainly that of India, China, and Japan, has appeared in various currents of modern Hebrew literature, from the turn of the twentieth century to the present. In many ways, these currents may be regarded as part of the influence of what is known as "the Far East" on European culture in general. That is to say, the influence of Asian religions and thought on Hebrew writers and thinkers may be seen as part of European and American influence on these authors over various periods. This is a genealogical matter. However, beyond the genealogy of these influences, one may also speak of the various ways in which Hebrew – partly as a result of this genealogy but also as a matter with independent substance and character – has created various connections with East Asian culture, over what the present paper describes as *three waves* of influence, each of which has a slightly different character.

The First Wave is marked by the influence of Schopenhauer and, later, Nietzsche on the intellectual climate of the turn of the twentieth century in Germany and Central and Western Europe in general, an influence which markedly seeped into Hebrew literature and art.[7] This can be viewed as part of the process of modernization of Hebrew and of European Jewish culture, for these influences arrived via young people who had left the traditional

[7] See for one example among many, the comment on Nietzsche's influence on Hebrew literature in the authoritative literary lexicon by Avraham Shaanan: Dictionary of Modern Literature, Special "Dvir" Edition, Tel-Aviv / Yavneh 1959, p. 515, in the margins of the entry of Nietzsche as indicative of conventional collective knowledge of the matter as summarized and presented in lexicons [Hebrew]. Regarding the influence of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer on Hebrew literature at the turn of the nineteenth century, see, for example, Hamutal Bar-Yosef: Decadent Trends in Hebrew Litarature: Balik, Berdychevski, Brener, Beersheba 1997, pp. 222–233 [Hebrew].

Jewish realm and gone to study in European universities, or had moved to the large cities of Western Europe to partake in their intellectual discourse, either as part of the emerging community of modern Jewish discourse, or in mixed European communities of discourse. The most prominent indication of Nietzsche's influence and cultural significance for Hebrew literature, can be found in the work of Micha Berdyczewski (1865–1921), especially in his quest for new vitalism in the overly textual Jewish culture.[8] In this respect he followed Nietzsche himself, who sought to imbibe alternative vitalistic sources following what he defined as "the Death of God," finding them in Zoroastrianism, that is, in cultures viewed by Europe as Oriental. In contrast, perhaps the writer most decidedly influenced by Schopenhauer was Uri Nissan Gnessin (1879–1913), whose temperament and artistic personality were well suited to Schopenhauer's theory of will, which was influenced by Hindu thought, and, indeed, in his work one can find the Hindu-Buddhist spirit of denial of will, as it appeared in the writings of Schopenhauer.[9]

This wave is closest of all to the sense of the Jewish community transitioning into modernization that new sources of creativity and cultural life had to be found outside of traditional Judaism, which had reached an overly abstract level. In this respect the influence of East Asia was indirect,[10] and part of Western influence on these writers, which included Asian influence. Here Hebrew literature partook in the phenomenon of Asian influences on all of high modernism, such as the influences of visual and textual art on modernistic painters like Degas[11] and on authors like T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Hermann Hesse, and others.[12] Moreover, it should be viewed as part of the tendency in the West to seek vitalistic or primordial sources, out of an awareness of its own cultural decadence, as can be seen in the work of

8 A pronounced example of such influence can be seen in M. Y. Berdychevski: The Book and Life, in: The Collected Writing of Yosef Bin-Guryon [Berdychevski] – Articles, Tel Aviv 1960, pp. 30–31 [Hebrew].

9 See Leah Goldberg: Around 'Etsel, in: Uri Nissan Gnessin / Lily Rattok, A Selection of Critical Essays on his Literary Prose, Tel Aviv 1977, pp. 97–99 [Hebrew].

10 There was also more direct influence. See, for example, the case of Avraham Ben Yitshaq Sona, who traveled to China. He was a Sinophile and learned Chinese, according to Leah Goldberg in: Meeting with a Poet (on Avraham Ben Yitshaq Sona), Tel Aviv 1952, pp. 20–23 [Hebrew].

11 Jill DeVonyar / Richard Kendall: Degas and the Art of Japan, New Haven / London 2007, pp. 10 ff.

12 See for example Lawrence Normand / Alison Winch (eds): Encountering Buddhism in Twentieth-Century British and American Literature, London / New York / New Delhi / Sydney 2013, pp. 1–22.

Paul Gauguin, who sought primitive inspiration in Tahiti, and Pablo Picasso, who was influenced by African art. Buber's *Ecstatic Confessions* (1909)[13], and the introduction he wrote to Chinese tales[14], are further examples of this trend.

We may suggest an interesting dimension that distinguishes the influence of cultures such as that of Asia on Europe from its influence on Hebrew. Whereas the deep interest of the West in ancient non-European cultures, including that of India, China, Japan, Algeria, Egypt, and others, was intricately bound up with Western colonialism, that is, with objects, aesthetic principles, ideas, kinds of spices, textiles, ritual customs, and linguistic phenomena, which Europeans took home from the colonies, this interest, when it appeared as philosophical influence on Hebrew literature, was entirely different. In fact, to use Marxist terminology, one can see the colonial influences as a concern of the aristocracy and the high and middle bourgeoisie, which absorbed these abstract and material items as part of their lifestyle. An example of this can be found in the architecture and interior design of the Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles, which included ancient Egyptian objects, inspired by English archaeological excavations in Egypt (sometimes these were actual objects from excavations), or textiles and screens imported from East Asia, which were included in the design of architectonic spaces. This trend was present even earlier, as in the Napoleonic Empire style, and it continued well into the twentieth century, as exemplified by Freud's collection of small, ancient Egyptian sculptures, which are known to have decorated his desk in Vienna, among other ethnic items. This phenomenon can, of course, also be observed in earlier periods, such as the eighteenth century, when Chinese objects were a popular item in the collections of German palaces,[15] and so on. All of this was part of cultural and material exchanges, whose ethical legitimacy is suspect today, as they sometimes had a tinge of cultural hierarchy and colonial proprietorship, yet at other times, these were truly the result of admiration or adulation of the achievements of distant and foreign civilizations.

However, writers and readers of Hebrew literature usually had nothing to do with colonialism, and, using the same Marxist categories, they can be seen as distinct representatives of the petite bourgeoisie or craftsmen – though in

[13] Martin Buber: Extatische Konfesionen, Jena 1909.
[14] Songling Pu / Martin Buber: Chinesische Geister- und Liebesgeschichten. Frankfurt am Main / Berlin 1920.
[15] Such as Schloss Charlottenburg, Berlin.

its Jewish version this class also possessed broad textual education and knew at least three languages – Yiddish, ancient Hebrew, and Talmudic Aramaic – which is to say that they were representatives of a class that was not implicated in colonial power, which was not part of their conscious everyday life. In the case of Hebrew, Asian influence was exercised within the philosophical tradition and in styles of writing, as they passed through the academies of the West into the emerging canon of Hebrew literature.

While there might have been exceptions, such as the Sephardic Jews of Amsterdam, who were deeply involved in international trade in the seventeenth century, this was not true of the authors mentioned above, for they had nothing to do with the Europe of colonial acquisition.

The entire issue of colonialism can also mark the decided difference between the first wave in the entire West and the second wave, which is in fact American in origin, and whose roots and spirit are entirely different.

The *second wave* passes through the 1950s–1970s in America, in what is known as the revolution of the Beat Generation. This phenomenon is different from the earlier one, and it concerns shifts in spiritual authority, changes in models of freedom, adolescent rebellion, and the exchange of transcendental European or romantic religiosity for spirituality and the search for enlightenment. One might view this trend as a variant of existentialism, which replaced idealism on the continent, and perhaps also a return to Cartesianism and the search for truth within consciousness, but without the Cartesian-Freudian focus on the ego, and rather as an act without a center. To a certain degree, it can also be viewed as a continuation of the modernistic literary project of the English stream of consciousness school and of the French surrealism of André Breton and others. In fact, the link that connects these two waves, among other possibilities, is the work of Ezra Pound, as testified by one of the leaders of this trend, the poet Gary Snyder.[16]

This trend is expressed in the lives and works of Jack Kerouac, Gary Snyder, Allen Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs, and others,[17] who created literature using, among other things, surrealistic techniques similar to those proposed by André Breton in his two *Manifestes du surréalisme* (a fine example of this is

[16] Interview with Gary Snyder, by Matt Jechke: cuke.com/Cucumber%20Project/interviews/gary-snyder-mj.html. (23.12.1994).

[17] On Ginsberg's connection to Buddhism, see the article by Yaakov Ariel: A New Kind of Jew: Allan Ginsberg and Asian Spirituality, in the present volume, pp. 133–148.

Kerouac's *On the Road*, which was written directly on a roll of paper as a single draft, typed at high speed in just three weeks).[18] Although Kerouac knew French from home and even wrote fiction in French, so he might well have read Breton and the other French surrealists in their original language, *On the Road* seems to be influenced more by the English writing tradition of stream of consciousness, which emerged in the 1920s in the work of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, among others. The Beat writers developed a strong affinity with Buddhism and with various Asian philosophical schools. Each was influenced in his own manner but in a common system of discourse, and they included this affinity in their work. In contrast to Gary Snyder, who tended more toward Zen Buddism (first the Sōtō then the Rinzai Zen school), Kerouac introduced his Buddhist attitudes, in the Mahayana tradition, in the words he placed in the mouths of his characters, modeled on himself and his friends in *The Dharma Bums* (1958), whose title testifies to this influence.[19] Kerouac, Ginsberg, and Snyder all engaged in various forms of Buddhist meditation at various times and defined themselves as Buddhists of one kind or another.[20]

Their enormous influence on the literary culture, lifestyle, ideology, and Zeitgeist of America was manifested, as they themselves state, and as scholarship shows, in the Hippie movement of the late 1960s, whose followers regarded the Beat Generation as their spiritual fathers.[21]

Of the three, Gary Snyder can be seen as the primary and deepest force in this question, as he spent about ten years in Japan, where he underwent training as a Zen monk and studied Japanese and Chinese.[22] He translated texts from these languages and maintained his monastic practice upon returning to America. He reported that his affinity with Zen began with the reading of Ezra Pound's translations of Chinese poetry and haiku.[23] Although Kerouac did not undergo such deep training or undertake systematic study of the subject, he wrote about Buddhism and about characters who were immersed in Buddhism as a recurring theme in his work, and, in parallel, he wrote about a

18 Jack Kerouac: On the Road, New York 1957.
19 Jack Kerouac: Dharma Bums, New York 1959.
20 Interview with Allen Ginsberg, at the beginning of Gary Snyder: "The East West Interview", in: Gary Snyder, The Gary Snyder Reader: Prose, Poetry and Translations 1952–1998, Vol. I, Berkeley 2000, p. 1236 ff.
21 See n. 19.
22 Gary Snyder: "The East West Interview."
23 Gary Snyder: "The East West Interview."

thousand "Western" haiku poems, which he imbued with a poetic logic akin to English (he did not restrict himself to seventeen syllables, but he did retain the simplicity of three short lines, etc.).[24] Allen Ginsberg, who was influenced by Buddhism in a slightly different manner, can be seen as the prototype of the Bu-Jew, though he has stated that Judaism, in contrast to his Buddhism, was a matter of identity and self-definition for him, rather than praxis.[25]

This trend, which began in the 1950s, reached Israel during the 1960s and 1970s in various ways[26]. Among other things, during the 1970s small, somewhat marginal, Buddhist centers were established in Israel, where one could learn and practice Buddhist meditation,[27] and a number of translations became available, notably of the work of Allen Ginsberg, especially his long poem, "Kaddish," which is a variation on the Jewish text, and through him the influence of the climate of the entire Beat Generation was felt. However, Israeli interest in Zen Buddhism that belongs to the second wave did not necessarily obey chronological rules. For example, the work of Yakov Raz, a professor of Japanese at Tel Aviv University, who has introduced and commented upon classical Buddhist texts and meditation practices, belongs to the second wave, which continues to this day.

In addition to the influence of books, during the 1960s and 1970s, after the Six Day War, many backpackers came to Israel from the United States and Europe as part of a spiritual journey like that of the Beats and their followers. They were part of the landscape in Jerusalem, on kibbutzim, and around the country in general, and thus helped this trend seep into Israeli culture.

One of the leaders in the academic study of Asian philosophy and a founder of the philosophy department of Tel Aviv university in 1955, was Ben-Ami Scharfstein (b. 1919). In the new department that he helped establish, as part of the introductory studies in philosophy, he introduced systematic study of Eastern philosophy. The main emphasis was the study of this system among other (Western) philosophical systems in a non-hierarchical manner, that is to say, not as a distant, esoteric matter, but as part of the comparative study of philosophy, in which both Western and Eastern philosophies were studied

[24] Jack Kerouac / Regina Weinreich: Book of Haikus, New York / London / Victoria 2003, p. ix.
[25] Interview with Ginsberg, in: Gary Snyder: "The East West Interview", and see Ariel, New Kind.
[26] See Ariel, New Kind.
[27] Personal conversation with a member of the audience at one of my lectures.

as part of a single human endeavor.[28] Scharfstein himself immigrated to Israel from New York in 1950, and in that respect he may be seen as part of the spirit of the Beat Generation, which was imported to Israel by this immigration. Although his discourse, behavior, and academic authority are different from those of the Beat Generation, still the spirit of new possibilities that the Beat Generation introduced affected his work and is embodied in it, in accordance with the Zeitgeist of those years.

Yoel Hoffmann, with whom this article is concerned as an example of the symbiosis between Hebrew and Buddhism, studied with Ben-Ami Scharfstein at Tel Aviv University and wrote his doctoral dissertation in comparative philosophy under his direction. In collaboration with Hoffmann and two other young scholars, Shlomo Biderman and Dan Daor, Ben-Ami Scharfstein published in 1978 a book on comparative philosophy entitled, *Philosophy in the East and Philosophy in the West*. This volume contains extensive academic introductions to Asian philosophy, chapters devoted to various comparisons between canonical Western philosophers, and chapters making various comparisons between these Western philosophers, mainly of the continental school, and Hindusim, Buddhism, Taoism, and more. Scharfstein sent Yoel Hoffmann to the University of Kyoto to supplement his studies of Asian culture and to complete his doctorate. In this respect, one may view Hoffmann as part of this second wave, especially in that he was a disciple of a decided exemplar of that generation such as Scharfstein.

Thus Hoffmann lived in Japan for a number of years in the early 1970s, studying Japanese and Chinese there, and translating classical Buddhist and Taoist writings, including haiku poems and Zen tales, from those languages into Hebrew and English.[29] He attended the Zen university, Hanazono, where he underwent monastic training under the Zen master, Hirano Sojo, with whom he remained in contact for many years after his sojourn in Japan, until Hirano's death in 2002. Hoffmann's literary work, which began to be published after his return to Israel, is deeply influenced by his work in Kyoto, and it might be said that in his training and work he embodies a model akin to

[28] Shiri Lev Ari: A Negative Philosopher in the Positive Sense (Interview with Ben-Ami Scharfstein), in: Galeria, Haaretz (16.03.2005) [Hebrew].

[29] For an overview of Yoel Hoffmann's work, including his translations from Japanese and Chinese, see Rachel Albeck-Gidron: Exploring The Third Option: A Critical Study of Yoel Hoffmann's Works. Beer Sheva 2016, pp. 178–179 [Hebrew].

that of Gary Snyder, though about twenty years later. In this sense one may see Hoffmann as an Israeli exemplar of the Beat Generation. He was also a frequent visitor to a Buddhist temple that was established in Haifa during the 1970s, and it was from there that his spiritual journey to the East began.

However, Hoffmann's literary writing, as well as his translations of Asian classics, found only a small, elite audience in Israel, and, although Hoffmann was part of the phenomenon of this wave of Buddhist influence, he never gained great popularity or influence in Israel, similar to the influence gained by the founders of the Beat Generation in America from the 1950s onwards. This is mainly because of the cryptic, esoteric, and highbrow nature of his main body of work, and because of the abstract and esoteric dimension of the works he translated. His main reception can be attributed to the third wave of Buddhist and East Asian influence in Israel[30].

The third wave is a New Age phenomenon, which developed in the early 1970s in America, as an extension of trends that began in the 1950s and continued throughout the 1960s and early 1970s through the anti-establishment Hippie movement.[31] By the 1970s and 1980s, it was already regarded as a milieu and a broad cultural trend, so much so that by the 1990s it was already described in academic literature as a period with distinctive features.[32] In Israel, it began to take root during the 1980s,[33] and is present to this day.

Its characteristics in Israel, in the United States, and as a global phenomenon, tend to be formulated by etic criticism, whose goals are not emic (describing a culture in terms of its internal elements and their functioning), with caution and reservations, very often by saying what it is not (for example: it is not a religion, but rather a leaning toward religiosity,[34] and the like). This is due to its scattered and eclectic nature, and its resistance to both academic definition and conceptual control. Researchers agree that it is a tendency toward individualistic spiritual quest, with perennialistic, ritual, cultic, religious,

30 Paul Heelas: The New Age Movement – The Celebration of the Self and the Sacralization of Modernity, Cambridge 1996–2003, pp. 1–2.

31 Wouter J. Hanegraaff: New Age Religion and Western Culture – Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought, New York 1998, p. 23 ff.

32 "The New Age began to be present in Israel only at the end of the 1990s, though it is possible to point to its global dispersion (without any clear local distinction)." Ruah-Midbar, A Channeler, n. 4, p. 505.

33 Ruah-Midbar, A Channeler, p. 525.

34 Ruah-Midbar, A Channeler, pp. 525 ff.

semi-religious or sacral characteristics, often leading to alterations, on one level or another, of the ritual and cultural source from which the praxis or conceptual network is drawn, in order to adapt it more softly to the individual's spiritual needs.[35] Some even see it as a consumer trend, because of the iconic and magical dimension given to objects such as stones and crystals, incense sticks, prayer beads, and the like, and because of the tendency towards ecological conceptions aimed at ecological consumerism, and refraining from consumption which is not of that kind. Pagan and magical practices (channeling, for example), and tribal ceremonies, are held according to personal choice and adhesion, for the purposes of personal growth. Thus, it may be said that what distinguishes the New Age movement from the Hippie movement that preceded it – both as a global movement and as a glocal one, as the literature has it[36] – is that New Age is not a social protest, and is not bound up with collective responsibility, nor is it connected with scholarly, performative, or conceptual responsibility toward the ancient sources from which it draws its terminology, ceremonies, and meanings. Rather, the responsibility it embodies is toward the spiritual development of the acting and experiencing individual. Thus, one may identify affinities between shamanic praxis from South America, the channeling of Christian, Jewish, and Sufi entities, and Buddhist recitations of mantras. Moreover, all these practices may be performed by a single individual, or a group resembling a small tribe.

It may be said, for the purposes of the present article, that in Israel, as in the entire global New Age movement, the question of Buddhism is not posed as an intellectual, monistic, comprehensive matter that requires learning languages such as Sanskrit and Pali, Chinese, Tibetan, or Japanese, as it was possible to see it in the two earlier waves described here. At the same time, since this Age tends to prefer in principle the mystical and enigmatic over the rational and the clear, and it tends to prefer the esoteric, the ancient, and the eclectic, it provides, suprisingliy, a natural haven for the absorption of texts like those of Hoffmann, although by no means can one view Hoffmann himself or his writings as part of the New Age. It may be said that his reception in New Age fashion is what enables him to reach a broad readership, despite the distance between the period's tendencies and those of the author and the

[35] Ruah-Midbar, A Channeler, pp. 521–522.
[36] Ruah-Midbar, A Channeler, p. 500.

meaning that he himself ascribes his text. Because of New Age readers' tendency to accept dimensions of texts that are not comprehensible to them, and to seek a kind of soft, imprecise, and intuitive understanding, they are capable of reading complex and cryptic works like those of Yoel Hoffmann not as an elitist message for the initiates, and not as a game or a riddle, but as exotic esotericism, which does not require deciphering but rather an experiential, imprecise reading connoting mood and environment of meaning.

Thus we find that the influence of Hoffmann's contact with Indian, Chinese, and Japanese Zen Buddhism on his work is an extension of European influence. This influence is part of the sphere of influence of the beginning of the twentieth century on Hebrew culture, including English and French stream of consciousness, and the Asian influence on it. It may also be said that Hoffmann is the heir of modern Europeanism dating back to the seventeenth century, and of the exotic influences on it, including those of the early twentieth century, for he ridicules that culture in his writings, and negates its power to provide meaning to human life and its adversities. This ridicule is part of the Zen Buddhist practice, which he performs by means of his poetics.

Hoffman is thus both an heir of the first wave and subversive of it. He is part of the second wave, that is, part of the Beat generation's cultural project, and as I suggested, can be viewed as a kind of Hebrew Gary Snyder.[37] However, his current acceptance by a growing readership is part of the third wave, that of the New Age, in its contact with what it views as the religions of the East. His growing presence in Israeli culture can be seen in public discourse, in blogs on the Internet and in posts on Facebook, in scattered and random fashion, and as shown by the fact that the Cameri Theater chose to devote an evening to him, on January 1, 2017, in honor of the first monograph to be published about him, written by me.[38]

[37] I am grateful to Professor Carl Bielefeldt of Stanford University for making me aware of the possibility of making this comparison in our conversations on the subject in 2007, while I was a visiting professor there during a sabbatical year.

[38] See n. 28 above.

II

Let me focus now on the phenomenon of Hebrew-Buddhist symbiosis in the work of Yoel Hoffmann, in the context of what I have called the Second Wave of influence of East Asian systems of thought on European-American-Hebrew writing. As noted, Hoffmann's years of initiation in Kyoto during the 1970s had a decisive influence on the creation of this new possibility within literature, which he established and activated in his poetic work after returning to Israel and beginning to publish literature. One may view his literary works as a kind of Bu-Judaism, that takes place within language itself, or, more precisely, as creating a Bu-Hebrew.

The years of initiation in Kyoto included Hoffmann's unofficial years of study at the University of Kyoto during the days of its student revolution. Hoffmann studied in the company of Japanese students with socialist ideals and cosmopolitan and inter-cultural thinking (for example, Katsumura, one of his student friends, later became one of the translators of the Song of Songs from Hebrew to Japanese. Katsamora and Hoffmann taught one another while they were both students at the University of Kyoto – regularly exchanging lessons in Hebrew and Japanese over a long period. Another student friend, Professor Yoshiko Oda, is a recognized scholar of Islamic culture, and a professor of monotheistic religions at the University of Kansai[39]). Hoffmann's writing in Hebrew was deeply influenced by his intensive study of Chinese and Japanese and his translation of classical texts from those languages into English and Hebrew, as well as by the long introductions to these texts that he composed and by his comparative work in philosophy and poetry. His monastic training with Zen master Hirano Sojo of the Rinzai school also influenced his work, as did his stay in Kyoto with his family for several years, during which his children attended Japanese schools, and his collection of Japanese texts such as death poems. These texts required efforts both as a collector and a linguist, such as, specific expertise in this literature in the original language, and the ability to hold conversations and correspondences in Japanese with antique stores and book dealers[40].

[39] I am grateful to Professor Yoshika Oda and Professor Hitoya Katsumura for their important and illuminating conversations on Hoffmann's studies at the University of Kyoto, which we held during my sabbatical year in Kyoto in 2012.

[40] Following the lecture by Jenine Beichman, "Yoel Hoffmann's Japanese Death Poems," at the ninth CISMOR Conference on Jewish Studies: Judaism and Japanese Cultures: Encountering

Next, I will discuss these influences and the deep and innovative symbioses Hoffmann created with their inspiration on his Hebrew writing, as a Buddhist-Hebraic phenomenon, which is not bound up with praxis or with a collective or religious identity. Rather, it is a matter of language, literature, and art, which is made possible within the textual boundaries of the art of poetry.

III

One may speak of an inter-cultural connection that is effected within languages on six strata. Each of these is present in Hoffmann's work, and their combination makes it possible to speak of Zen-Hebrew, or Bu-Hebrew, as a phenomenon that merits definition.

For example, the use of Hebrew to describe the city of Kyoto, its Zen and Shinto temples, its landscape, objects made in typical Japanese style, characters in Kyoto, remarks about components of the Japanese language, and so on. In this respect, it is reminiscent of Rudyard Kipling's descriptions of the Indian space in his novel *Kim*. Kipling uses English to describe the matters of the Indian colony, its political networks, the Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim religious ceremonies there, the languages spoken there, the various types of people common there, and so on. However, Kipling's English did this under the metaphysical and linguistic umbrella of English colonialism, with its ethical, social, and aesthetic markers, and with the hegemonic consciousness it exemplifies. Of course, there are also examples in which the imperialist character is less marked.

The second stratum is that of the changes that take place within *language* itself as part of the contact with other languages. These changes may be syntactic, lexical, stylistic, rhetorical and so on. Here one may offer the pronounced example of the modern Hebrew language, which adopted during the twentieth century several characteristics of other languages as it learned them in the various ways of translation from them. Thus, it has been influenced by translations from Russian, French, German, American English, and other languages. One can point to certain decades in which modern Hebrew was influenced mainly by one language, while at other times a different language influenced it. One may also offer the example of the influences of Aramaic

Judaism and Buddhism in Hebrew Literature, Conference in Honor of Yoel Hoffmann's Writings, Translations and Beyond, Kyoto (28.11.2016).

and Greek on post-biblical Hebrew, or of Arabic influences during the Middle Ages in Spain.

The third stratum is what might be called the *metaphysics of language*, that is to say, the core values embodied in the various invisible mechanisms of language. Therein lies what might be the greatest difficulty in translation. Here one may speak of issues such as the way the subject is conceived, according to each language's preference regarding its place in the sentence (for example, some languages tend to say, "he thought about the spring," as opposed to those that tend to say, "spring was thought about by him," or "the thought of spring arose in his mind," and so on; some express a tendency to bring out the abstract, as opposed to the tendency to bring out the subject, or the action, and so on). These factors are bound up with deep cultural preferences. For example, it is possible to regard the language of the preceding century as embodying Freudian psychology, or the Cartesian *cogito*, by means of its syntax, as shown by the literary style of stream of consciousness. One may point to Japanese Zen's struggle against abstract concepts and its quest for "Suchness", as a presence within Japanese, as a preference for the palpable over the abstract within language itself. One may point to the work of Heidegger or Derrida on the deconstruction of language, as thinkers who introduced the possibility of inner deconstruction into the grammar of their languages, for the sake of precision in meaning and breaking away, as it were, from language into the "real" phenomenon. One may also speak of the perception of language as a holy tongue, and thus about the precise hermeneutics of the dotting of an "i", and so on.

The fourth stratum is the *performative aspect of language*. This is the case of speech as ritual: for example, prayers, mantras, meditation, focusing on the present, focusing on an object, by means of language and speech, as part of linguistic usage. One may speak of a text as performing a ritual or a mental process in the very act of its writing, reading, or recitation. This is the case with speakers of modern languages, who repeat verses of their culture's prayers in ancient, foreign languages such as Sanskrit, Latin, Aramaic, or ancient Hebrew, without being able to translate them fluently, as part of a ritual. One may also speak of the recitation of texts in the language of one culture as performing a ritual in another culture. Contrariwise, borrowed expressions from a foreign culture, devoid of their content, may be included idiomatically in speech, thereby nullifying their performative and ritual aspect.

The fifth stratum of connections between languages moves within the sphere of language as *embodying values* – social, personal, aesthetic, and so on. These values can be embodied in one language, though their source is in another language and culture. This also pertains to differences in the semiotic dynamic of languages, such as denotative semiotics as in the West versus contextual semiotics, as in Japanese, which is bound up in hierarchical and obligatory social structures, which are embedded in the grammar and syntax. Even components such as a tendency toward emotional neutrality of a linguistic culture, or a tendency toward economy, precision, or the opposite – to bathos and sentimentality – are all a matter of action within language. A language that tends toward one pole can host within it the tendency to the other pole. An example of this can be seen in the work of immigrants who write in their mother tongue within an absorbing culture, such as Russian writers within English culture, Arabic writers within French culture, Polish writers within Hebrew culture, and so on.

The relation between languages can also be effected on a sixth stratum, which is that of *language as material object*: typography, the material space of ink and paper, and so on. Here enter matters such as writing from left to right, or from right to left, or up and down, writing in emphatic capital letters, writing in ink, by hand, writing as drawing, or writing as a symbol, and the like.[41]

Up to now Hoffmann has written twelve literary works. The first was a children's book. The second was a collection of stories, but not until the third did his distinctive language crystallize in a characteristic way, which was innovative and controversial, and decidedly individual. In this work, features brought into Hebrew from the author's work on the thought and poetry of Asia, and from his years of residence in Kyoto, are evident.

The first critics to review his literary writings, which were published after his Hebrew translations of Chinese and Japanese classics, were quick to point out this fact. However, the first pioneering work that dealt with this specifically and in a well-argued manner was "Poetiqat haperspektiva shel Yoel Hoffmann," (Yoel Hoffmann's Poetics of Perspective) by Hannah Hertsig, which appeared in the semi-academic avant-garde quarterly, *Siman Qri'a* in 1991. Her article, written close to the time of publication of *Kristos shel dagim*

[41] See the discussion of this topic in Ben-Ami Scharfstein / Shlomo Biderman / Dan Daor / Yoel Hoffmann: Philosophy East / Philosophy West, Jerusalem 1978, pp. 20–31.

(1991) and after *Bernhardt* (1989) and *Sefer Yosef* (1988), called attention to some of the principles of Zen thought that were reflected in the language and composition of Hoffmann's work. She pointed out "the rejection of every principle" as the principle governing the text, as in Zen thought, and spoke of a poetics which describes experience in a manner "escaping intellectual analysis," as also being Zen in spirit.[42] She referred to what she called Zen "madness," according to the pattern of dialogues between master and disciple, the purpose of which is to be absolutely simple and at the same time to accomplish "the departure from ordinary mind."[43] She also pointed to phenomena of mingling the abstract and the concrete, to the deconstruction of language into categories according to Zen thought, and to the manner in which the "wonder" of Taoist thinker Zhuangzi permeates Hoffmann's text. She sought to retain the enigmatic nature of the text, which, she claimed, contains a mixture of simplicity and strangeness. Hertsig's article was groundbreaking in that it provided a basis and a preliminary systematization of the general feeling that prevailed in criticism regarding Hoffmann's writing. It therefore pointed out the thematic, metaphysical, performative, and stylistic features of Zen Buddhism and of Taoism in Hoffmann's rhetoric and poetic language, and in fact in his Hebrew itself, according to the categories laid out at the beginning of this discussion.

Another fundamental, comprehensive article that can serve as an introduction to any article on Hoffmann, is Nili Gold's "Bernhardt's Journey: The Challenges of Yoel Hoffmann's Writing," published about two years after Hertsig's article.[44] Quite possibly the insufficient influence of this excellent, erudite, and comprehensive article on the discourse regarding Buddhist thought and Japanese aesthetics in Hoffmann's works derives from the hidden but palpable barrier between scholarship on Hebrew literature in Hebrew and that published in English. It appears that a sort of competition regarding the Lingua Franca of scholarship on Hebrew literature has created separate discussion groups, between which the flow is usually unidirectional, and Israeli scholars seldom refer to criticism in other languages. It is interesting to note this fact

[42] Hannah Hertsig: "Poetiqat haperspektivot shel Yoel Hoffmann," Siman Qri'a: Riv'on Me'orav Lesifrut, 22 (July 1991), pp. 169–181.

[43] Hertsig, Poetiqat, p. 170.

[44] Nili Rachel Scharf Gold: Bernardt's Journey: The Challenges of Yoel Hoffmann's Writing, in: Jewish Studies Quarterly, 1 (1993–1994), pp. 271–287.

when discussing matters of interconnections between languages and the cultures signified by them. Literary criticism in Israel utilizes theories imported from various languages that are regarded as hegemonic in paradigms such as the humanities, the arts and literature – and it even participates in the formation of these theories. Yet despite this fact, there is still the thought, not unexplained and certainly contemporary in its non-universalistic character, that the Lingua Franca of literary scholarship in national literatures ought to be that of each particular nationality, a thought which runs contrary to the very idea of a Lingua Franca.[45]

In any event, Gold's article covers almost all the core issues of the matter at hand by means of a close reading of *Bernhardt*.[46] Gold addresses a number of issues typical of Asian thought (Hinduism, the various branches of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism) and reexamines the dimension of "wonder" Hertsig wrote about. She also points to the focus on death as a typical theme of that thought, and to the metaphorical conventions that set it apart (such as transient entities like the seasons of the year, blossoming, and the momentariness of fleeting moments), as well as to death as a concrete matter in the form of its introduction into Hebrew writing at Hoffmann's hands. As aesthetic principles, Gold points to suggestion and indirection as central characteristics of Japanese poetics,[47] and regards them, along with other processes, as Buddhist practices of liberation from suffering. Gold speaks of haiku and the homage paid to this form in Hoffmann's work, especially in giving attention to the present, to the epistemology of granting autonomy to the individual moment within the continuum of times and phenomena. Gold was also the first to point out the typography of Hoffmann's writing, features such as leaving the right page blank, and the minimalistic printing of several groups of short lines on an empty page, as an homage to Zen thinking, and as part of the haiku tradition. She also speaks of the aspiration for enlightenment and the subject as a non-self in his work. Moreover, she mentions the Japanese genre of Zuihizu[48] as a possible source for some components of the unique style of Hoffmann, who has created a genre of his own within Hebrew and

45 Gold, Bernardt's Journey, p. 274.
46 Yoel Hoffmann: Bernhardt, Jerusalem 1989.
47 Gold, Bernardt's Journey, p. 274.
48 Gold, Bernardt's Journey, p. 275.

Western writing. Thus, she brings up issues that touch upon every one of the categories raised at the beginning of this discussion.

Another important paper on the affinity between Hoffmann's Hebrew writing and Zen and Asian thought in general is that of Dror Burstein, published in 2016. Burstein translated Hoffmann's book, *Radical Zen*, from English to Hebrew.[49] His paper, mentioned at the beginning of the present article, overlaps with Gold's work on certain matters and adds new dimensions to it. The main one is the Zen idea of the Indra-network, that is, understanding the world of phenomena as a network of inner connections among all phenomena, so that nothing is irrelevant to the overall conception of the universe. Here he develops other directions of the idea that arose in the articles by Hertsig and Gold about lack of hierarchy (conceptual and hegemonic hierarchies, among others) in Hoffmann's descriptions as part of his poetics, which represents this metaphysic. Burstein goes on to develop the idea of Buddhist compassion as part of the character of Hoffmann's text.

I might add that my own research also dealt with this aspect at length over the years.[50]

The studies mentioned here therefore point to traditions that Hoffmann imported into his poetics from Kyoto, traditions of metaphysics and the metaphysics of language and fiction, traditions of aesthetic and rhetorical conventions, linguistic-ritualistic practices, typography, and its meaning-bearing qualities, and so on, which is to say they encompass every aspect of the list presented above. To this one must add the thematic issue, which appears in some of Hoffmann's works describing the life of the protagonist in Japan, mainly in *Gutta-percha* and *Curriculum Vitae*, which depict the daily life of the protagonist, a linguist who has arrived in Kyoto with his family to investigate linguistic phenomena, and who has relations with figures in various spheres such as the Japanese academy, temples, streets, household, and so on. Various linguistic phenomena which are woven into the fiction are also described there, as the protagonist studies the local language as a scholarly effort and a day to day concern.

[49] Yoel Hoffmann: Radical Zen: The Sayings of Jōshū, Cambridge 1978. (Translated with a Commentary).

[50] Albeck-Gidron, Exploring the Third Option, extensive discussion in chapters 1, 2, and 5.

Hoffmann's work was ultimately consolidated in a typography of numbered fragments of partially vocalized Hebrew, which includes visual elements of photographs and drawings. It is written in enigmatic language, mingling in non-hierarchical fashion cosmic phenomena and the minor events of daily life. Moreover, it presents in a compassionate manner, without bathos, the distress of its protagonists, and can be seen as a novel or novella, but also as a chain of apothegms of riddles and as a rhetorical practice of estranging the familiar. One may therefore say that his work embodies a kind of Japanese within Hebrew, with its transmittable markers. Nowadays, whether as a genre, a typography, or a manner of description, it has begun to influence writing in Israel and to accrue a kind of belated charisma, because of its alien charm. As noted above, Hoffmann's growing presence in Israeli culture is evident in the increased attention paid to his work.

In closing, let me discuss an example from Hoffmann's work, showing how all the elements that the critics have mentioned, as well as other elements from the world of Japan, are brought into it to demonstrate the new phenomenon of Zen, Israeli, and Japanese Hebrew, evident in recent decades in Israel. At present, it is the project of a single artist, but it already extends its field of influence to generations of new possibilities within Hebrew.

The various aspects that have been mentioned above can be exemplified using an excerpt from Hoffmann's *Gutta-Percha*. This is one example of many, in fact rather a random example, for almost every paragraph of Hoffmann's oeuvre can serve as at least a partial example of the claim every line displays this cultural symbiosis. Here, the protagonist, Franz, who has come to Japan to improve his Japanese and to extend his research on isoglosses, meets a Japanese professor of linguistics at the University of Kyoto and leaves his baby in his house, formerly an ancient temple but no longer in ritual use. This information is not given to the reader sequentially, as facts, but as a collection of numbered fragments like the one below, from which the reader must deduce the development of matters and the space and time of the fiction, the plot and the physical and social background underlying it.

"186

When Franz goes to Professor Takaotsi the baby

Remains with the statues.

It is very hard to know whether there are any thoughts in him. Maybe

He is looking at the curtains and thinking about light [which is
The end of the sun]. Maybe it shines by itself.
Franz in any event finds it very hard to understand
The word *shujako*. If it's explained to him, he'll understand.
But will it be explained to him?"[51]

We may start by first pointing out the somewhat archaic register of the Hebrew here, embodied in Hoffmann's use of the preposition "*etsel*," in the expression "*etsel hapesalim*" [with the statues], which in Modern Hebrew would be "*bein hapesalim*" [among the statues] or "*leyad hapesalim*" [near the statues]. In modern Hebrew "*etsel*" is used mainly like the French "chez": for example, "*etsli*" would be the equivalent of "*chez moi.*" "*Etsel hepesalim*" [with the statues] not only has an archaic ring, it also suggests that the place where the baby has been left is the home of the statues, linking them to the paganism of Mediterranean lands, to transgression, and actual ritual, as attributed to them by biblical Hebrew. The simple fact that the baby has been left at home, a home in which there are various Buddhist statues, is presented here as a matter invoking an ancient Hebrew paradigm, which is an entirely different possibility. The reader must perform these two alternative manners of deciphering simultaneously.

However, before the ancient Hebrew expression, the reader encounters the Japanese name of the professor, which for him has no context and is mute, because of the basic mutual estrangement of the two languages. This estrangement is a result of the fact that migration between the two countries has barely existed, and therefore Japanese words (except for the names of certain foods served in sushi restaurants) and the proper names of Japanese people are not familiar to the Hebrew reader from his daily life.

For this reason, the reader also feels unsure regarding which of the two adult figures is the antecedent of: "It is very hard to know whether there are any thoughts in him." Indeed, this phrase might even refer to the infant, whose thoughts are also indecipherable. It could be the Japanese professor, who is so alien, of whom it is difficult to know anything, or Franz, the protagonist of the event, regarding whom the reader is accustomed to have the narrator create a meta-poetic attitude, tending to present him as someone

[51] Translated from the Hebrew source.

who stands beyond the range of full knowledge, and therefore, the narrator himself finds it hard to "know" his thoughts.

One of the two, Franz or the Japanese scholar, is thus the object of a conjecture as to his thoughts. However, the conjecture extends beyond immediate reality, to a broad theoretical question. That is, the infinite and the immediate are equally possible. Someone is looking at the curtains, that is, at something nearby and concrete, and thinking about light, that is, something abstract and general. An identity statement is placed in square brackets: "[which is / The end of the sun]." This could be interpreted as a poetic or metaphorical statement, or as a philosophical or optical matter, presented as a quotation from an unknown classic of one of the two cultures, or of some third culture. For the reader, this remains an unsolved riddle. But suddenly the possibility is introduced into the reader's conceptual vocabulary that light is "the end of the sun," whatever that might mean. The other possibility that is presented here, "Maybe it shines by itself," verges on borderline of nonsense, as often happens in Hoffmann's text, but perhaps it is a possibility recounted in some culture, as an explanation for the experience of seeing light. In any event, the attention placed on the curtains, which have suddenly become a point from which several explanations are drawn regarding that experience, is akin to an act of Zen focusing, which the text preforms via the situation. That is, it is the praxis of focus meditation.

The following line contains a Japanese word, "shujako." For the reader as well as for the character, as the text claims, it is meaningless. It is a collection of sounds that is immediately recognized as Japanese, but, as such, it remains a riddle. Unless they happen to know Japanese or are able to consult a Japanese dictionary, neither the reader nor the character can know that the word means "scholarship," and that is a technical term relevant to the academic situation in which the character is placed. But, since it is unknown, it could be anything, huge or small, sacred or quotidian, a ritual mantra or the name of a food, and the lack of explanation hangs in the air as a fact.

Indeed, the fact that the meaning of the word is not explained to the protagonist is conveyed with a sort of rhetoric drawn from Yiddish: "If it's explained to him, he'll understand / But will it be explained to him?" The reader familiar with this rhetoric understands that it won't be explained to him, and that this is annoying, thanks to the Yiddish mode of deciphering this form of a rhetorical question.

Formalistically speaking, this is not a particularly important or prominent fragment in Hoffmann's work, nor is it of particular importance for deciphering the plot, but it is typical in that it crosses languages, cultures, types of national character, and local material culture, and out of this it creates a kind of vain riddle, in the spirit of Koan enigmas, and even in their didactic nature: the presentation of a series of concepts in an absurd or ridiculous manner to the point of their total abstraction. That is, it responds in various ways to the categories that were presented above as a kind of theme, praxis, meta-language, metaphysics, and typography, borrowed from Japanese language and culture and introduced into Hebrew.

Hoffmann's text, in this book as well as in others, is accompanied by various images, which are always placed outside of the textual context, thus immediately generating a ridicule of dichotomies, affinities, and thoughts of wholeness. In their appearance, they are decidedly influenced by Zen, a subject which demands a separate research, and with which I have dealt elsewhere. Some of them are whole photos by photographers August Sander and Wynn Bullock, some are photographic fragments of the work of André Kertész, which appear reduced and in irregular repetition alongside the text. They always create a sensation of unusual affinities between objects in the world and between them and the text, and they embody an adaptation to the non-hierarchical nature of the Zen demand, as well as practice and implementation of it. Other images appearing in the text are drawings by the author himself. These drawings are created using a long continuous line, drawn with the eyes closed, as Hoffmann testifies, and may actually be viewed as the result of an act of Zen meditation. They are part of the Zen tradition of calligraphy and meditative drawing, though different from it in content. The humorous mood of some of the Chinese and Japanese Zen works is also present in these drawings by the author.

The enigmatic way in which the story is told, the surprising context into which the details of concrete realia lead, the use of questions and answers in the tradition of monastic training and the hierarchies it seeks to institute, the theme itself, the meta-linguistic question, the unusual transition from that which is experienced to that which is thought, and from the concrete to the inferred, the unique typography of the page, and the presence of all of these within Hebrew and its shifting strata – all these form the intersection I sought to exemplify in this article.

Hebrew and Japanese were never in a situation of siblinghood. Hoffmann creates this situation for the first time in the history of these two languages, and he does so within language itself and as part of his linguistic art.

The physical presence of objects from Japan in the space of Israel has already been manifested in various forms, such as the Tikotin Museum of Japanese art, which was established in Haifa in 1959. However, this siblinghood that languages have the capacity to create was formed for the first time by Hoffmann in the 1980s. Tracing the development of this possibility within Israeli culture is a subject for further research. It requires a historical perspective, since this influence has only just begun to be felt, following the introduction of new possibilities for absorption of enigmatic texts from the East, and it is still too early to know the abilities and power it holds.

From Jewish Prominence to Buddhist Prominence: Julius Goldwater and the Jewish-Buddhist Encounter from 1924–1958

by Emily Sigalow

Abstract

The 1920s witnessed a growing appearance of individual American Jews – largely from wealthy and prominent families – who received training by Asian teachers and pursued Buddhist practices in Asian-founded Buddhist groups. Some of these American Jews gained prominence and leadership status in Buddhist communities and also ran their own semi-established Buddhist groups, with limited success. The social position and material success of these Jewish Buddhists allowed them the time and means to study and practice Buddhism. This paper illustrates these developments through the story of Julius Goldwater, a member of the prominent German Jewish family that included Senator Barry Goldwater. After encountering Buddhism in Hawaii and being ordained in Kyoto, Goldwater moved to Los Angeles to become one of the first European-American Jodo Shinshu ministers in America. This paper demonstrates how he was an early convert, teacher, and wartime proponent of American Buddhism.

1. Introduction

In the aftermath of the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, Charles Theodor Strauss (1852–1937) – a wealthy haberdasher of Jewish descent – became the first person ever to be initiated into Buddhism on American soil. Strauss's turn to Buddhism marked the first time in history when converting to Buddhism became a serious religious possibility for Jews in America.[1] His conversion to Buddhism is the nineteenth century's most noted

[1] Before this point, there were no Buddhist teachers in America from whom Jews could have taken these precepts. I use the word "conversion" here in the way other Buddhist Studies

example of Jewish involvement in Buddhism, yet it is also indicative of a wider turn in the late Victorian era toward a Jewish interest in the Buddhist tradition.[2] As accounts from popular late nineteenth and early twentieth century Jewish newspapers made plain, Buddhism captured the interest of many Jews just as it had of other Americans during this period, though it largely remained an armchair fascination for most Jews during those years.[3]

Beginning in the 1920s, the engagement between Judaism and Buddhism both persisted and changed in America.[4] While the late nineteenth-century America saw Buddhism emerge as a new and alluring liberal religious movement, especially on the East coast, that Buddhist vogue waned in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Antipathy towards Asians – particularly the Japanese – gripped America in the decades leading up to World War II, which lessened if not diminished the popular Jewish interest in Buddhism.[5] On the West coast in particular, the strength of anti-Asian sentiment and the desire for social acceptance discouraged Jews from identifying with or publicly promoting Asian culture or religions.[6] While Jewish newspapers from the late nineteenth century were replete with articles romanticizing Buddhism and reports of Buddhist teachers speaking in synagogues packed with attendees, I did not find a single newspaper article in the mid-1920s that painted

scholars use it: it its original sense of turning one's heart or mind towards the teachings of Buddhism.

2 Thomas Tweed: The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844–1912, Chapel Hill 2000, p. 39.

3 I describe the extent and breadth of this nineteenth century engagement in: American JUBU: Jews, Buddhists, and Religious Change in America, under contract, Princeton University Press.

4 Looking beyond U.S. borders, it is important to note that this period is also when the first Jews are ordained as full monks in Asia. This includes the major twentieth century promoter of lay meditation Nyanaponika Thera (a German Jew who ordained in Sri Lanka in 1936, and whose book *Heart of Buddhist Meditation* achieved virtual canonical status) and several other German Jews who also ordained and trained with the (non-Jewish) German ex-pat monk Nyanatiloka.

5 Antipathy towards Asians began in the nineteenth century with the Chinese exclusion movements but increased in force leading up to WWII. First the Chinese and later the Japanese came to be seen as the chief racial threat on the West Coast where Asians were the primary targets of nativist and racist groups. Anti-Asian sentiment in America culminated in the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924, which severely restricted the annual number of immigrants who would be accepted into America and outright banned the immigration of Asians.

6 Ellen Eisenberg demonstrates how the strength of anti-Asian sentiment and the centrality of Asian otherness to white self-definition in the West discouraged Jews from identifying with or publicly supporting Asians. See Ellen Eisenberg: The First to Cry Down Injustice? Western Jews and Japanese Removal during WWII, New York 2008.

Buddhism in a positive light or discussed any romantic or popular Jewish interest in Buddhism.[7]

Replacing the broader armchair Jewish interest in Buddhism of the previous century was the appearance of solo American Jews – mostly from wealthy and prominent families – who received training by Asian teachers and pursued Buddhist practices in immigrant Buddhist groups. Several of these American Jews gained prominence and leadership status in Buddhist communities and ran their own semi-established Buddhist groups (though with limited success). Some of these Jewish Buddhists in the first half of the twentieth century were also advocates and allies of the Japanese during a time in America when Asians were under suspicion if not attack. While Jewish Americans largely remained silent in the face of the federal policy of removal and incarceration of Asians, these Jewish Buddhists notably spoke out against the wartime policies in support of Japanese Americans.[8] This paper illustrates these developments in the Jewish-Buddhist relationship through the story of Julius Goldwater (1908–2001), a member of the prominent Goldwater family that included Senator Barry Goldwater, and an early convert, teacher, and wartime proponent of American Buddhism.[9]

2. From Prominent Goldwater Family to Jodo Shinshu Leader in Hawaii

Julius Goldwater was born in Los Angeles to one of the most prominent Jewish families in the American West. Goldwater's paternal family arrived in California in the mid-1800s, just after the Gold Rush of 1849 that brought many Jews to the state for the first time.[10] Shortly thereafter, the discovery of gold in Arizona in the 1860s attracted his grandfather and great-uncles to the Arizona territory where they set up small-business enterprises around the

[7] The last article I found that positively spoke of Buddhism was an untitled article in *The American Hebrew* in 1920. The American Hebrew and Jewish Messenger, 1920 (10.12.1920), p. 144.

[8] Nationally, the silence of Jewish groups in the face of the federal policy of removal and incarceration has been explained by the allegiance and investment these groups had towards the Roosevelt administration and the war effort. See Eisenberg, First to Cry Down Injustice.

[9] This is the period between the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act and the publishing of *The Dharma Bums* in 1958, a novel by Beat Generation author Jack Kerouac. By 1958, Buddhism was no longer under threat and had come back in vogue.

[10] See Reva Clar: Los Angeles Jewry: A Chronology, Los Angeles 2002; Robert Goldberg: Barry Goldwater, New Haven 1995.

sites of new mines. These small trading and mercantile businesses grew in size and influence eventually to become the Goldwater's Department stores, founded by Julius Goldwater's great-uncle Michael Goldwater. These stores remained in family hands until 1962, when they were sold to Associated Dry Goods Corp. of New York.[11]

Before immigrating to America, Julius Goldwater's grandfather and his family lived in Konin, a Jewish shtetl in Russian Poland. The son of Jewish innkeepers Elizabeth and Hirsch Goldwasser, he – like his brothers before him – left Poland fleeing the Revolution of 1848 and the onerous restrictions placed on Jews by the Russian tsars. Once in America, the Goldwassers anglicized their name to Goldwater. In addition to their success as merchants, the Goldwater family also achieved political prominence in America. Most famously, Julius Goldwater's second cousin, Barry Goldwater, who was born in 1909, just a year after Julius, served five terms as a U.S. senator from Arizona (1953–65, 1969–87) and the Republican party's nominee for the President of the United States in the 1964 election.

On his maternal side, Julius Goldwater's family came from Germany. His mother, Ray Etta (possibly Rayette) Goldwater (nee Michaels) intended to raise him an observant Jew following her family tradition.[12] She died when he was only two-and-a-half. His father, Benjamin Goldwater, enrolled him Jewish Sunday school for a few years, but Julius Goldwater reported in an interview that "it didn't take."[13] During his early years living with his father in Los Angeles, Goldwater took an interest in mysticism and Eastern religious philosophies. He was particularly close to and influenced by the Manly P. Hall, a charismatic writer, philosopher, and preacher who took over leadership of the Christian Church of the People in Los Angeles in 1923.[14] A world-traveler and prolific author, Hall served as a figurehead for the Los Angeles subculture comprised of mystics, artists, faith healers, and spiritual visionaries.[15] He took Goldwater under his wings, mentoring him, inviting him to services at his

11 Bart Barnes: Barry Goldwater, GOP Hero, Dies, in: Washington Post, 1998 (30.05.1998), p. A0.

12 Rayette Goldwater. Ancestry.com. 1910 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2006; Stephen Prothero: The Good Shepherd, in: Tricycle. The Buddhist Review 7 (1997) 2, pp. 44–48.

13 Prothero, The Good Shepherd, p. 45.

14 Prothero, The Good Shepherd, p. 45.

15 Louis Sahagun: Master of the Mysteries. The Life of Manly Palmer Hall. Port Townsend, Washington 2008, pp. 20–28.

church, and granting him access to his extensive library about parapsychology, mysticism, and Eastern religions.[16]

In his late teens, Goldwater left Hall's mystical world to follow his father to Hawaii, where he first encountered Buddhism.[17] The dominant tradition of Buddhism in Hawaii in the 1920s when Goldwater arrived was Shin Buddhism, also known as Jodo Shinshu (True Pure Land), practiced by the island's Japanese American population. These Japanese immigrants had come to Hawaii to replace the Chinese laborers who were banned entry by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.[18] These first-generation Japanese immigrants (called *Issei*) mostly worked on plantations, but, like the Chinese before them, faced significant legal discrimination.[19] They could not become naturalized citizens, were forbidden from certain occupations, and were subject to miscegenation laws.[20] By 1924, the total population of Japanese in Hawaii had reached over a hundred thousand people.[21]

Recognizing a need for Buddhist ministers to serve the *Issei*, the Jodo Shinshu leadership in Japan sent Buddhist missionaries to Hawaii in 1889. For protection and mutual aid, the missionaries and the *Issei* established a network of new Shin Buddhist temples on the Island, which served as community centers as well as places of worship. By the mid-1920s, there were more than 170 Buddhist temples in Hawaii.[22] Up until the 1920s, the services that these missionaries conducted in these new temples were in Japanese, catering to the *Issei*. Few if any Americans of non-Japanese descent attended these Japanese-language services. In an effort to adapt Buddhism to its new

16 Prothero, The Good Shepherd, p. 45.

17 Tetsuden Kashima: Buddhism in America. The Social Organization of an Ethnic Religious Institution, Westport, CT 1977, p. 98–101; Prothero, The Good Shepherd, p. 45.

18 Taitetsu Unno: The Pure Land in the New World, in: Tricycle Magazine, 2001. Accessed online on 25 June 2016. http://tricycle.org/magazine/pure-land-new-world/

19 Duncan Ryuken Williams: Camp Dharma: Japanese-American Buddhist Identity and the Internment Experience of World War II, in: Charles S. Prebish / Martin Baumann (eds), Westward Dharma. Buddhism Beyond Asia, Los Angeles 2002, p. 192.

20 Unno, The Pure Land in the New World; Tiffany Hill: Hawai'i's Japanese Buddhist Temples Are Struggling to Keep Ancient Traditions Alive, in: Honolulu Magazine, 2013. Accessed 25 July 2016: http://www.honolulumagazine.com/Honolulu-Magazine/July-2013/Buddhism-in-Hawaii-Fading-Tradition

21 Michihiro Ama: Immigrants to the Pure Land: The Modernization, Acculturation, and Globalization of Shin Buddhism, 1898–1941, Honolulu 2011, p. 32.

22 Hill, Hawai'i's Japanese Buddhist Temples. The person most credited with establishing Buddhism in the Islands is Bishop Emyo Imamura.

environment and to minister to the English-speaking second generation Japanese Buddhists, Honolulu's Honpa Hongwanji Temple began to offer services and study classes in English, which opened the door for non-Japanese participation in the Temple.[23]

Goldwater attended one of these English-language Buddhist study classes as a teenager in 1924 at the recommendation of a friend.[24] At this study class, Goldwater met Reverend Ernest Hunt, a British-born teacher of Buddhism. About this experience, Goldwater later explained:

> "I didn't understand a thing and he [Ernest Hunt] spoke in perfect English, and I heard every word he said. I couldn't cognate his usage of words but it was very exciting, you know, and there were just a few people, about eight of us gathered, and of course I was the only kid. And gradually … I became more and more seduced."[25]

The seduction that Goldwater described came from Hunt's moral lessons drawn from the teaching of the Dharma, or the Buddha's teachings, about love, charity, kindness, respect, and service.[26] Hunt emphasized that Buddhism and true Americanism had much in common, both advocating for absolute religious freedom and equal opportunity for all people irrespective of race, color, or creed.[27] Hunt also championed the creation of a broad, ecumenical Buddhist movement focused on active goodwill.

Captivated by Hunt's teachings, Goldwater became one of his serious and committed students. In Honolulu in 1928, Goldwater, along with eight others in his study group, took the Buddhist vows of *pansil* in front of Bishop Yemyo Imamura and Ernest Hunt to "become publicly the first group of Occidentals to become Buddhist under the American flag."[28] As to why Goldwater took these Buddhist vows (in a ceremony called *tokudo*), he later noted, "I began to realize that the doctrine, as well as the way of life of my English teacher, conformed exactly with my ideas of how a true gentleman should conduct

[23] Ama, Immigrants to Pure Land, p. 91; Prothero, The Good Shepherd, p. 46; Kashima, Buddhism in America, pp. 69–112.

[24] Goldwater attended the class with Carl Scheid, a German-American student of Buddhism, who had moved to Hawaii after his wife's death. See Ama, Immigrants to Pure Land, p.76.

[25] Kashima, Buddhism in America, p. 99.

[26] Ernest Shinkaku Hunt: Buddhist Sermons, Honolulu 1955; Ernest Hunt: Essentials and Symbols of the Buddhist Faith. Honolulu 1955.

[27] Ama, Immigrants to Pure Land, p. 56.

[28] Ama, Immigrants to Pure Land, p. 99. On July 8, 1928, Imamura and Hunt "initiated" nine members of the forum.

himself." He continued, "The vital thing that is furnished by Buddhism, and lacking in other religions, is genuineness." Even after the initiation ceremony, Goldwater did not see himself as a Buddhist convert, but rather felt that becoming Buddhist was a process and "a true believer is determined by the way he lives" rather than the lines he recites or the ceremonies in which he participates.[29]

Three years after the initiation ceremony, Goldwater married Pearl Wicker, a Lutheran, in a Jodo Shinshu ceremony in Hawaii. Both Imamura and Hunt officiated at the wedding.[30] Shortly thereafter, at the urging of his wife, Goldwater returned to Los Angeles. He joined the Nishi Hongwanji Los Angeles Buddhist Temple affiliated with the Buddhist Mission of North America (the early Jodo Shinshu governing body in North America), marking the period of his service to and leadership in the Buddhist community.[31]

3. Goldwater: A Buddhist Minister, Wartime Advocate, and Religious Reformer

At Nishi Hongwanji in Los Angeles, Goldwater played an important role in promoting and explaining Buddhism to second-generation Japanese immigrants and Americans of European ancestry. He delivered sermons about the Dharma in English and held study classes for English-speaking people. He also attended officiated at funerals and weddings and fought to allow the Japanese children to participate in American youth dances that the *Issei* did not find culturally acceptable.[32] As part of his mission to help disseminate Buddhism, he introduced and interpreted the Tannisho, the best-known text in Shin Buddhism, to European-Americans.[33] Goldwater's work extended beyond the temple as well. He visited Japanese-American agricultural settlements on the

[29] American Jew Says Buddhism Best Religion, in: The China Press, 1937 (03.04.1937), p. 9.

[30] Prothero, The Good Shepherd, p. 45.

[31] Prothero suggests that Goldwater was the only Caucasian member of the Temple but Ama argues that Bishop Masuyama, who assumed the BMNA office in July 1930, started "initiating" Caucasians into the Nishi Honganji in 1933, including Robert S. Clifton. See Prothero, The Good Shepherd, p. 46, and Ama, Immigrants to Pure Land, pp. 73–74.

[32] Kashima, Buddhism in America, p. 100; Richard Seager: Buddhism in America, New York 2012, p. 100.

[33] Ama, Immigrants to Pure Land, pp. 76, 228.

West Coast, conducting outreach work that he saw as akin to "preaching the gospel."[34]

In the 1930s and early 40s, Goldwater received three different Buddhist ordinations. Although he had been ordained (*tokudo*) in Honolulu in 1928, he accepted ordination a second time in 1934 from Bishop Kenju Masuyama in Los Angeles at the Nishi Hongwanji temple. This ordination gave him formal recognition as a Buddhist "missionary" and American minister. Masuyama, the head of the Buddhist Mission to North America, was strict about who he would ordain. He would only consider ordaining students if he supervised their practice and study for one year and found them satisfactory, a test that Goldwater passed.[35]

In taking this ordination at Nishi Hongwangji, Goldwater became the first European-American to become a Buddhist priest or minister in Los Angeles.[36] The novelty of the ordination attracted the attention of *Los Angeles Times*. In an article titled "Buddhists Ordain American," the newspaper described Goldwater's ordination ceremony in considerable, even flowery, detail, noting that, for example, "Buddha sat cross-legged … and with immutable gaze saw a fair-haired American don the robes of priesthood in one of the earth's oldest religions." The article described the scene of the ceremony as well as the nature of the vows and chants that Goldwater performed.

A few years later, Goldwater traveled to Kyoto, Japan, to take ordination in a tonsure ceremony like other Japanese priests. This ordination came at the urging of the leading Japanese priests in Los Angeles who wanted him to have the authority of an Asian Buddhist ceremony in order to better serve as a role-model and leader to the Japanese youth back in Los Angeles.[37] In an interview, Goldwater later explained that "I couldn't have been less interested in the priesthood … but their [the Los Angeles Japanese community's] need was so great."[38] Goldwater also took a third ordination in in Hang Chow, China in 1937.[39]

[34] Prothero, The Good Shepherd, p. 46.
[35] Ama, Immigrants to Pure Land, pp. 74–77.
[36] Buddhists Ordain American, in: Los Angeles Times. 1934 (18.06.1934), p. A5.
[37] Prothero, The Good Shepherd, p. 46.
[38] Prothero, The Good Shepherd, p. 46.
[39] Date uncertain but an article in *The China Press* describes his trip to Hang Chaw taking place in 1937. American Jew Says Buddhism Best Religion, in: The China Press, 1937 (03.04.1937), p. 9.

Goldwater rose to a position of increased significance in the Buddhist Mission to North America after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941. President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 in response to this bombing, removing Japanese Americans from their homes and incarcerating them in internment camps. Following this internment order, nearly all of the Japanese-American Buddhists from Goldwater's Los Angeles temple were sent to camps. Goldwater became the sole resident minister and volunteer caretaker at the Temple during this time. He was also given power of attorney and full control over three other Los Angeles temples.[40]

Concerned about the plight of his fellow Buddhists, Goldwater became a war-time Buddhist advocate and ally. He encouraged Japanese Americans to store their belongings and possessions in the Temple so that he could safeguard them during the incarceration era. He traveled to every internment camp, including centers in Wyoming and Arizona, distributing coffee, candy, and Buddhist service materials, including devotional and liturgical books and shrines.[41] He also watched over internees' homes, even preventing the illegal sale of one home by alerting the FBI. Advocating for Buddhism during the war also meant that he wrangled with the police and federal authorities to try to make them understand that Buddhism was autonomous and not connected with the Japanese government.[42]

During the war, Goldwater raised funds for the Buddhist community by leasing the temple to black war workers and the Providence Baptist Church. When the Japanese internees were released at the end of World War II, Goldwater ousted the black church to turn the temple into a hostel, where Japanese Americans could find temporary housing as well as assistance obtaining a job, a driver's license, and gas rations. Goldwater loaned his car to his fellow Buddhists, and when anti-Japanese grocers refused to sell them food, he would buy it for them.[43]

40 Kashima, Buddhism in America, p. 101.

41 Julius Goldwater, Wartime Buddhist Liturgy, in: Thomas Tweed / Stephen R. Prothero (eds): Asian Religions in America. A Documentary History, Oxford 1999, pp. 172–178; Prothero, The Good Shepherd, p. 47.

42 Buddhists Ordain American, in: Los Angeles Times, 1934 (18.06.1934), p. A5

43 Kasima, *Buddhism in America*, p. 102; Buddhists Ordain American, in: Los Angeles Times, 1934 (18.06.1934), p. A5.

In terms of Goldwater's approach to Buddhism, he is perhaps best known for his commitment to promoting an ecumenical, non-sectarian, and Americanized Buddhism. In Japanese Buddhism, sectarian differences have great importance. Different lineages in Japan have their own founders, histories, and traditions. Following in the footsteps of his teacher Reverend Ernest Hunt, Goldwater strove to free Buddhism in the United States from its sectarian traditions – specifically the three broad traditions of Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana that have historically structured Buddhist thought and practice – in order to promote a broader and more inclusive Buddhism.[44] During the incarceration era, he founded the Buddhist Brotherhood of America (BBA), a nonsectarian Buddhist organization designed to create an ecumenical American Buddhism. In a statement about the organization, Goldwater explained:

> "In this endeavor there can be no thought of discrimination in sect, race, or color; the teachings must be paramount, combining the best of both Hinayana [i. e. Theravada] and Mahayana School, and in doing so, reaching that equilibrium so necessary for completeness and growth."[45]

In addition to seeking a common ground among different Buddhist lineages, Goldwater also strove to Americanize Buddhism in order to validate it in the eyes of the wartime nation. Aware of the pervasive anti-Japanese sentiment in America during the war, Goldwater felt convinced that Buddhism needed to conform to the expectations and the norms of American Protestantism in order to be recognized as an acceptable American religious tradition. Goldwater likely had considerable knowledgeable about Christianity from his time in Hawaii, a territory that experienced tremendous Christian missionary activity since the 1820s, and from his teacher Reverend Hunt (who was born Anglican and who also sought to adapt Buddhism to the norms of American Protestantism).

During the war, Goldwater created and disseminated Buddhist worship materials in English that resembled Christian creeds and hymns in form and structure in order to make Buddhism appear less foreign and more American.[46] Among the books that he distributed at the internment camps was *A Book Containing an Order of Ceremonies for Use by Buddhists* which contained

[44] Kashima, Buddhism in America, p. 56.
[45] Kashima, Buddhism in America, p. 55.
[46] Tweed / Prothero, Asian Religions in America, pp. 172–178.

two catechisms, responsive readings, numerous hymns, a liturgy for Buddha's birthday, and even a history of Buddhism in which Jodo Shinshu founder Shinran is likened to Martin Luther.[47] At Goldwater's urging, the Buddhist Mission of North America changed its name to Buddhist Churches of America in 1944, in an attempt to better assimilate into and become accepted by white, Protestant America.

The work that Goldwater did to Americanize and Protestantize Buddhism met with resistance from some of the Temple elders after the war. These Japanese-born Buddhists were not fond of Goldwater's assimilationist efforts and even sued him for the mismanagement of temple funds during the war.[48] The court ended up ruling in Goldwater's favor arguing that he only used those funds to the benefit of the Buddhist community. Although Goldwater kept close ties with the Buddhist movement after this lawsuit, he stopped actively participating in the ministerial ranks of the Buddhist Churches of America. From the 1960s to the 1980s, when new waves of immigration brought Buddhists from Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Korea and other countries to the U.S., Goldwater helped them to get settled and establish temples, often with money from his own pocket. He also helped to establish the Buddhist Sangha Council in the 1980s that drew together diverse representatives of the Greater Los Angeles' growing Buddhist community.[49]

As he aged, Goldwater came to a different and broader understanding of the teachings of the Buddha. His Buddhist practice became increasingly eclectic, incorporating elements from Indian, Chinese, and Japanese Buddhism. Although he led a weekly Buddhist study group in his home up until his last year of life, he became disillusioned with the religious and ritualistic aspects of Buddhism. In his view, the purpose of Buddhist teachings was to give people effective and practical tools for living, not religious rites and moral commandments. By the end of his life, Goldwater – the Buddhist minister, organizational leader, political advocate, and ecumenical promoter – felt that "Buddhism is

47 Tweed/Prothero, Asian Religions in America, p. 172.

48 Prothero, The Good Shepherd, p. 47; Kashima, Buddhism in America, p. 101.

49 Elaine Woo: Rev. Julius Goldwater. Convert to Buddhism Aided WWII Internees, in: Los Angeles Times, 2001 (23.06.2011), accessed online 29. June 2016 http://articles.latimes.com/2001/jun/23/local/me-13844 (13.11.2017).

more American than America," by which he meant that while America talks about freedom, Buddhists actively practice it.[50]

4. Conclusion

The story of Julius Goldwater's engagement with Buddhism signals a distinct change in the Jewish-Buddhist relationship from the late nineteenth-century to the first half of the twentieth. Whereas nineteenth-century America witnessed a popular Jewish interest in Buddhism (mirroring the larger American interest in Buddhism occurring at that time), the first half of the twentieth century saw the decline of the popular, armchair interest in Buddhist and the emergence of a small number of Jewish-born Buddhist leaders like Goldwater who were ordained as Buddhist ministers / priests, led their own Buddhist groups, and advocated for Buddhist rights in America. As part of their advocacy work, these leaders deliberately "Americanized" Buddhism to make it acceptable and palatable to wartime society, which meant bringing it more in line with the spirit and form of Protestantism (in much the same way that other minority religious traditions, like Judaism, adapted to America).

From where did this early Jewish proclivity for and identification with Buddhism arrive? Michael Alexander has argued that American Jews identify with minority groups and participate in the group life of and / or support the rights of marginalized groups – a behavior he calls *outsider identification* – due to a "theology of exile," a belief that Jews felt culturally obliged to mark themselves as different.[51] In the case of Jews who turned to Buddhism, it does not seem that they were somehow theologically primed for participation in Asian religious traditions differently than non-Jews. Albeit in small numbers in the first-half of the twentieth century, European-Americans – Jews and non-Jews alike – studied and practiced Buddhism, and I have found no evidence that Jews were disproportionately interested in Buddhism or Asian culture in contrast to the developments in the second half of the twentieth-century. However, those Jews who turned to Buddhism in the first half of the twentieth century were distinctive in that they notably came from wealthy

[50] Prothero, The Good Shepherd, p. 48.
[51] Michael Alexander: *Jazz Age Jews*, Princeton 2001.

and prominent Jewish families.[52] It seems, therefore, that these Jewish Americans who pursued Buddhism did so in a search for human meaning beyond what could be found in material comfort. Their material success allowed them to integrate so thoroughly into American society, and to achieve an "insider status," that they then, paradoxically, felt secure enough in their American-ness to adopt the outsider status of another religious tradition.

In the postwar period, Buddhism grew in popularity in America. In particular, it loomed large among the anti-conformist, liberal- left subcultures of the 1950s. Buddhism had a strong foothold in these circles both as an alternative form of spiritual expression that emphasized the authority of the individual over conventional religious institutions and as an act of anti-conformist protest against the middle-class values of the 1950s. Because American Jews have historically trended to participation in countercultural circles, they were overrepresented in the segment of society – namely the left-leaning subcultures – to which Buddhism appealed most strongly. This countercultural embrace of Buddhism led to a period of intensive Jewish-Buddhist engagement that began within the American Left in the early 1960s and has continued until today.

[52] However, we might not know less prominent and financially successful Jews who explored Buddhism during this time period because they might not have become as visible.

A New Kind of Jew: Allen Ginsberg and Asian Spirituality

by Yaakov Ariel

Abstract

The article examines Allen Ginsberg's spiritual path, and places his interest in Asian religions within larger cultural agendas and life choices. While identifying as a Jew, Ginsberg wished to transcend beyond his parents' orbit and actively sought to create an inclusive, tolerant, and permissive society where persons such as himself could live and create at ease. He chose elements from the Christian, Jewish, Native-American, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions, weaving them together into an ever-growing cultural and spiritual quilt. The poet never underwent a conversion experience or restricted his choices and freedoms. In Ginsberg's understanding, Buddhism was a universal, non-theistic religion that meshed well with an individualist outlook, and worked toward personal solace and mindfulness. He and other Jews saw no contradiction between enchantment with Buddhism and their Jewish identity.

1. Introduction

Americans remember the countercultural movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s as pivotal to the development of social norms, cultural practices, and spiritual expressions in turn of the twenty-first century America. One of the most inspirational figures, of that period, was a prophet-looking poet with a bird and long hair, singing mantras and calling for non-violence.[1] Many remember Allen Ginsberg's promotion of peace, freedoms to express and experiment, and advocacy of new cultural and spiritual venues. While he epitomized the new interest of Jews in Asian religions, few have thought about Ginsberg as a forerunner of a new kind of Jew.

[1] Todd Gitlin: The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage, Toronto: Bantam Books, 1987; John Schultz: No One Was Killed: the Democratic National Convention, August 1968, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1999.

Allen Ginsberg's interest in spirituality started early, in the 1940s–1950s, alongside his growth as a literary figure of avant-garde poetry, and the rise of the Beat group, whose fame and legend he helped create. Among other engagements, he became a major activist of freedom of artistic as well as sexual expressions.[2] He wove those activities and meshed them with his spiritual engagements, which for him, and others, reflected universal values and an agenda of inclusivity. Ginsberg came to represent a new wave of interest among educated Americans, and Westerners in general, in alternative, imported, and innovative forms of spirituality, helping to bring Hindu and Buddhist practices into the American mainstream. For Jews, and non-Jews too, he stood for a new model of individual in post-modern society. One who builds his or her life in diverse and inclusive environments, chooses at ease his or her cultural interests and spiritual pursuits, and creates a freer and more complex identity than modern society had previously allowed. Jews have ventured out of their quarters long before Ginsberg's outstanding example, but there was a new element in the Beat poet's agenda. He wove his different interests, discoveries and affiliations together, without negating one another. He did not give up or ran away from his Jewishness, but rather re-interpreted it and added numerous spiritual layers to it, creating his own intellectual, cultural, political, and religious niche. This article wishes to explore the spiritual choices and venues of Allen Ginsberg, and examine how they mesh with and reflect his larger world views and social and cultural agendas. It will grapple with the nature of religious affiliations in the Beat Generation and the counter-culture, taking into account Ginsberg's iconic standing within his literary, artistic and spiritual circles. To do so, one must explore Ginsberg's Jewish home, the cultural and spiritual journeys he took, and the agendas that motivated him along the way.

2. A Jewish Strive for the Universal

Ginsberg's personality and life choices as well as his intellectual, political, literary and spiritual pursuits were not typical to persons of his era and background. Most men of his generation turned up very differently than him, led a life far removed from his, and pursued careers and activities with little

[2] Ginsberg's book *Howl* brought about a ground breaking obscenity trial that became something of an ethos and a symbol. Howl: The Obscenity Trial that Started a Revolution, Oscill Scope 2010.

resemblance to his own. Still, the poet's actions and style had their roots in a particular environment, and upbringing.

Ginsberg's parents, Naomi and Louis, were not run-of-the-mill Americans of the 1920s–1940s. Both children of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, they advanced through the public school system and higher education, moving away from the working class world, in which they grew up, into a more educated, albeit frugal, middle class environment.[3] Louis was a teacher and a poet. But the Ginsbergs did not function like a run of the mill American family. Their political views and affiliations were more radical than those of most Jews (and non-Jews) at the time. Looking upon America as potentially a land of promise, they considered their country to be in dire need of social reform. Naomi was a card-carrying communist, who took Allen and his brother to events and summer camps organized by the party. She also advocated nudism and vegetarianism, both utterly eccentric by the standards of the time.[4] Yet, while the Ginsbergs were first and foremost Americans, and both Louis' ambitions as a poet and Naomi's political and cultural advocacies were far from tribal, the ethnic divides of the generation imposed limitations on their mobility, and their social milieu was composed mostly of secular Jews like themselves.

Although he did not follow closely his parents' political affiliations and ventured way beyond their geographical and cultural orbits, Ginsberg was influenced by his parents' values and visions. "America I used to be a communist when I was a kid I am not sorry," he wrote many years later in "America," a poem in which he aired his complains and feelings about his country.[5] He pursued what many of his contemporaries considered a radical, culturally progressive, and socially oriented, worldview, and he often looked upon American society and government as betraying the country's true values and goals.

Throughout his life, Ginsberg would demonstrate a large measure of defiance or disregard for mainstream society's rules and regulations. As a poet and cultural spokesperson, Ginsberg gave voice to his heart and mind in a direct, undiluted manner, even when the content, or style, did not correspond to social conventions. His constant advocacy, in different times and ways, of an open, tolerant and inclusive society that transcends tribal and parochial

[3] Naomi Ginsberg was born in White Russia, but grew up in America.

[4] For an exploration of Allen Ginsberg's family and childhood see Bill Morgen: I Celebrate Myself: The Life of Allen Ginsberg, New York: Penguin 2006, pp. 4–32.

[5] Allen Ginsberg: Howl and other Poems, San Francisco: City Lights Books 1959, p. 40.

boundaries also had its roots in his early life encounters. This outlook corresponded to his spiritual pursuits, and the manner he acted on and viewed his religious choices.

As far removed from his background as Ginsberg would journey, he ultimately remained the child of East European immigrant Jews who were eager to acculturate, and his personal agenda was to transcend his original cultural surroundings, which he considered limited and unfulfilling. Likewise, he remained the faithful son of the radical and unconventional Naomi Ginsberg, albeit, unlike his mother, and against many odds, gained much appreciation in the social circles into which he wished to be admitted. Remarkably, and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, Ginsberg served as an icon and leader for a large movement of cultural change, and new spiritual expressions, while remaining unabashedly the neurotic, non-conformist, East-Coast intellectual Jew that he was. The fact that Ginsberg became a hero and a prophet for people who came from very different backgrounds, some of whom grew up distrusting people such as he, signified a new chapter in American social, cultural, and religious history. A generation earlier, a person like Allen Ginsberg would, almost certainly, been shunned, marginalized and censored.

3. Creating Inclusive Environments

During his undergraduate years at Columbia, Ginsberg began venturing beyond the social circle in which he grew up, often attracted to creative 'on the edge' characters. His early life experiences, especially his mother's unstable mental health, brought him to look upon unconventional behaviors as acceptable human traits, and view eccentric, or tormented, people as inspiring and righteous.[6] One of his most powerful, as well as acclaimed poems, *Howl*, relates to, and tells the story of friends and acquaintances who had demonstrated erratic behavior, on account of traumas and mental suffering, thus normalizing and legitimizing their personalities, and stirring sympathy and compassion for their actions.[7] Aiming at the spiritual, Ginsberg added an

[6] Bill Morgan, I Celebrate Myself, p. 13.

[7] On the poem and its effects, see Michael Schumacher: *Dharma* Lion: A Biography of Allen Ginsberg, New York: St. Martin's Press 1992, p. 207; Howl for Now: A Celebration of Allen Ginsberg's Epic Poem, edited by Simon Warner, Pontefract: Route 2005.

element of mysticism to his poetic manifesto, depicting the tormented figures as martyrs.

Most of Ginsberg's new friends came from middle class white Protestant backgrounds. Many possessed physical, athletic, and social gifts, which provided them with, at least potentially, better standing in society, and more confidence at making connections than himself.[8] Yet, Ginsberg would soon become the leading figure of a growing circle of creative yet unconventional artists and writers.[9]

This position was not self-understood. As a rule, Jewish students in the 1940s befriended other Jews, and for many of his new acquaintances Ginsberg was the first Jew with whom they became close.

This is particularly remarkable when one considers the fact that Ginsberg was not trying to 'pass', by adopting ways and mannerism that were not his own, or fabricating a false background or lineage. Such occurrences were not unknown among Jews of his generation.[10] While he was at times uncomfortable with some aspects of his being, such as his sexuality, the young poet did not pretend to be someone he was not, and his openness about himself was, at times, striking.[11] Likewise, while he strived to venture out of parochial constraints and obtain recognition, he did not befriend people for their social standing, money or political power, but rather for their creative and outstanding personalities. He also made acquaintances with men and women with strong positions in the world of arts and letters, and was enchanted by leaders with ability to guide him on spiritual paths. He was also taken by sexual appeal and good looks. Ginsberg in effect was struggling to create what the historian Jacob Katz called a neutral society, in which Jews like himself could work and study as well as love and live with non-Jews as a matter of course.[12]

As a young man, Ginsberg struggled to complete his studies, make ends meet, fulfill his military duty, and fight a series of emotional demons, including struggling against, and then gradually coming to terms with, his sexual

8 David Meltzer: "The Poem and I are Fifty," p. 21.
9 I Celebrate Myself, numerous pages.
10 Tobias Wolff's father was one of many such Jews who 'crossed' at that time. Tobias Wolff: In Pharaoh's Army: Memoirs of the Lost War, New York: Knopf 1994.
11 See, for example, Ginsberg's letter to Wilhelm Reich of March 11, 1947, in: The Letters of Allen Ginsberg, edited by Bill Morgan, Philadelphia: Da Capo Press 2008, pp. 16–17.
12 Cf. Jacob Katz: Out of the Ghetto, Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1985, 195.

preferences. His leadership position within a group that would attract national, as well as international, attention would become more evident in the 1950s and reached its full bloom in the 1960s, with Ginsberg laboring actively towards the creation of the movement's aura.[13] His tolerance of his friends' weaknesses proved to be a great asset, placing him in a central position within the emerging group of Beat writers and artists. To begin with, he was the one person on friendly terms with everybody else in his circle of un-Orthodox avant-garde writers, artists, and musicians, serving as a connecting link. They would not have otherwise cooperated with each other and created the Beat group as an identified cultural-literary movement. At times, he offered refuge in his home, or financial support, to needy friends and colleagues. Ginsberg often recruited fellow writers and artists to appear in different events, including poetry readings, concerts, summer schools at the Buddhist Naropa University, which he helped establish, and series of lectures at Brooklyn College, where he became an instructor.

Among the beneficiaries of Ginsberg's efforts was Jack Kerouac, who was to become the most popular novelist of the Beat generation. Ginsberg tirelessly advocated the publication of Kerouac's most known novel *On the Road*.[14] Kerouac, however, did not always reciprocate the love his Jewish friend bestowed on him. The relationship between the two points to a sore element in the otherwise seemingly surprising acceptance of Ginsberg in many cultural circles in America. Friendly in the early years of their acquaintance, Kerouac, who came to represent the open and liberated values of the Beat Generation, retreated from the open adventurous life of the early times, and expressed prejudice against Ginsberg's ethnic affiliation. While Ginsberg did not seem traumatized by such incidents, they were a reminder of the novelty of the spaces he was trying to curve for himself and others in America that only started lifting its social and professional restrictions on Jews and other

[13] "The Birth of the Beat Generation" by Steven Watson, https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1560139550926388&set=gm.766448850137225&type=1&theater (13.11.2017).

[14] The index in Morgan's biography of Ginsberg, *I Celebrate Myself*, which includes a special entry "Ginsberg's promotion of" [Kerouac's writings], referencing to 20 different pages in the biography. Kerouac's biographer, Tom Clark, plays down Ginsberg's contribution, Jack Kerouac: A Biography, New York: Marlowe and Company 1984.

minorities. In spite of Kerouac's bigotry, Ginsberg named the Naropa School of Disembodied Poetics in memory of his friend.[15]

By the early 1960s, interest in the literary styles of the Beat writers grew considerably, and their publications were soon to become part of the generation at large. This development affected Ginsberg's growing fame and prestige. In the late 1960s, Ginsberg assumed a more influential cultural and political role, coming to play a father figure for the much larger countercultural audiences that came about during that time and adopted many of the Beat generation's values and styles. These ranged from more daring expressions in literature to explorations of new spiritual venues. Ginsberg's spiritual choices became more publically significant, with many paying attention to his moves and he often acted as a moderator and peace maker.[16]

One of Ginsberg's ventures, which he helped finance was the Committee on Poetry, which he founded in 1966. It offered material and legal support to fellow poets and colleagues, as well as cultural rebels such as Timothy Leary, the advocate of LSD, who became entangled in legal battles. Like his friend, Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, Ginsberg experimented with hallucinating drugs, advocating their usage as a means for spiritual and intellectual growth. [17] He was Leary's friend and associate and offered moral and public support. In this realm, as well, Ginsberg served as a prophet for a new age, in which, for many, the rights to individual fulfillment and spiritual growth have become legitimate values. As with other spiritual ventures, he saw such drugs as connected to a larger worldview and cultural agenda.

4. Kaddish, Jewishness and Israel

Alongside literary, cultural and political activities, Ginsberg became a pioneer of new venues and forms of spiritualty that Americans have adopted, since the 1960s, more than before. He came to signify an era in American religion, which has been marked by greater freedom to pick-and-choose, move from

[15] https://www.naropa.edu/academics/jks/ (13.11.2017).

[16] See the transcript of "The Houseboat Summit," February 1967, reprinted in Conners, White Hand Society: The Psychedelic Partnership of Timothy Leary and Allen Ginsberg, San Francisco: City Lights Bookstore 2010, pp. 271–301.

[17] Jay Stevens: Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream, New York: Grove Press 1987; Conners, White Hand Society. On Ginsberg's thought in this realm, see his correspondence with Timothy Leary at Green Library, Stanford University.

one community and spiritual system to another, and, either continue the journey, or settle in a spiritual and communal niche of one's liking.[18]

Ginsberg grew up in a secular Jewish home. However, even this seemingly spiritual void, left a deep mark on him. The family followed Jewish rites of passage, including Jewish funerals and the reciting of *kaddish*, the traditional Jewish mourner's prayer. The Beat poet was absent when his mother, Naomi, died and he did not attend her funeral. The few mourners who did participate refrained from reciting the kaddish, and pained Ginsberg wrote an epic poem, *Kaddish*, in lieu of the kaddish not recited for his mother. When writing *Kaddish* in 1960, Ginsberg was far from leading a traditional Jewish life and had no affiliation with Jewish congregations, or groups, although he took some interest in Jewish mysticism and thought and related to Jewish history and symbols.[19] Still, it was important for him to commemorate his mother by reciting, in a literary form, an individualized version of the Jewish traditional prayer recited in honor of family members who died. Ginsberg's *Kaddish* follows the rhythm, but does not repeat the words of the traditional prayer. The mostly Aramaic prayer exalts and affirms the majesty of God in the face of loss and grief, without actually relating to the deceased individual and the specifics of his or her life. Ginsberg personalized it, tailoring its content to his mother's life experiences, while maintaining its powerful effect and its connection to realities beyond the deceased's life. The poem appealed to many Jews of Ginsberg's generation, who appreciated, in addition to its poetic elements, its personalized commemorative value. Perhaps unwittingly, Ginsberg served as a Jewish reformer, giving a voice to many Jews of his generation who considered the traditional Jewish prayer to be too remote and abstract.

Kaddish was a hit among educated Jews everywhere and could be found, during the 1960s–1980s, on almost every bookshelf of Jews who read poetry in any form. Without realizing it, Ginsberg opened the way for a number of Jewish writers to place new spiritual meanings on the traditionally recited

[18] Louis Rambo: Understanding Religious Conversion, New Haven: Yale University Press 1993; Thomas A. Tweed, Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion, Cambridge: Harvard 2006.

[19] When outside of the United States, Ginsberg made efforts to visit sites with Jewish historical meaning. See, for example, Allen Ginsberg's letter to Nicanor Parra, of August 20, 1965, in: The Letters of Allen Ginsberg, edited by Bill Morgan, Philadelphia: Da Capo Press 2008, p. 303.

kaddish.[20] While not acting on behalf of the Jewish community, or groups or sections within it, and while Jews who were officially associated with Jewish establishments failed to recognize him as an avant-garde explorer of new Jewish venues and identities, Ginsberg served as a forerunner of a new type of Jew in the Post-Modern world. Amazingly, it was Jack Kerouac, who did not care much for Jewishness, who recognized his friend's pioneering role in molding a new kind of Jew. Kerouac's prejudiced remarks notwithstanding, Ginsberg's social circle was one of the first of its kind to open up to Jews and look upon them as colleagues, friends and lovers, with little or no stigma attached. Kerouac insightfully recognized this avant-garde reality, identifying in Ginsberg's stand within the larger cultural scene a sign of a new phase in the position of Jews within American society, as well as in what it means to be Jewish. He lamented, in Christian terms, the Jewish community's lack of recognition of Ginsberg's role.[21] "It's most important for you to realize that… the Jews are bound to neglect their own best Ginsberg Jesus, the prophet is without honor…"[22]

Somewhat surprisingly, *Kaddish*, and Ginsberg's work in general, were well-received in Israel, at that time a highly ideological society, where literature often endorsed the Zionist outlooks of the mainstream, and where most of the cultural elite would have rejected Ginsberg's Jewish agenda. However, the anti-establishment bohemian left embraced the Beat poet's style and messages wholeheartedly. Nathan Zach, a literary *enfant terrible* and an icon of a new individuality in Israel, translated Ginsberg's poetry into Hebrew, acquainting Israeli audiences with the American poet.[23] HaBimah, Israel's national theater, staged a production of a play version of the poem, with Lea Koenig, a leading actress, playing Naomi Ginsberg, and running naked on the stage.[24] Dan Omer, another cultural rebel, came up, in 1966, with a compilation of Beat poetry

[20] For example, Leon Wieseltier: Kaddish, New York: Knopf 1998. The book, which explores the history and meaning of the ancient prayer, intermingles with the author's experiences during his year of mourning his father; See also. Kate McLoughlin: "Dead Prayer? The Liturgical and Literary Kaddish," in: Studies in American Jewish Literature 25 (2006), pp. 4–25.

[21] Jack Kerouac to Allen Ginsberg, May 11, 1955, in Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg: The Letters, edited by Bill Morgan and David Stanford, New York: Viking 2010, pp. 287–289.

[22] Ibid, p. 288.

[23] Am Oved published Natan Zach's translation of Kaddish and Other Poems (1958–1984) in Hebrew in 1988.

[24] On the staging of Kaddish in HaBimah, see Rivka Raz: "Mourning an Unbalanced Mother," in: *Seven Days* (1972), pp. 12–13, 21.

in Hebrew, *Nahama: Shira Beatnikit Americayit* (*Howl: American Beatnik Poetry*).[25] The small anti-establishment segment of Israeli culture embraced the Beat writers as a means of giving voice to their own yearning for a more open and inclusive society.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Ginsberg's attitude towards Israel was different than that of most American Jews of his generation, and was closer to that of his Left-Wing Israeli admirers. He was no Zionist, but rather an advocate of integration of all individuals into a tolerant pluralistic society. He initially saw, in Israel, a reflection of the Jewish parochial milieu, which he had long left behind. His reply to Gershom Scholem, the leading scholar of Jewish mysticism, who asked him about the prospect of building his home in Israel tells it all. "If I wished to settle in the Bronx, I would have done so in the Bronx near me [in America]," Ginsberg asserted.[26] The Bronx at that time claimed a Jewish population of about 600,000, and symbolized, for Ginsberg and others, a heavily Jewish ethnic concentration that lacked sophistication and imagination, the opposite of an open multi-cultural environment to which he aspired.[27] Still, he was interested in Israel, travelled to that country, and spent two months there in 1961–62, meeting thinkers, writers and artists and visiting relatives and sites. He did not fall in love with Israel, noticing its various issues with penetrating eyes, but he also did not condemn, at this stage, the place and its people.[28] He realized that it was not a home or culture where he would want to settle.

His evaluation of Israel turned more negative after his visit to the country in 1987–88. Arriving during the First Intifada, twenty years after the 1967 War and the beginning of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, he paid close attention to the political views of different segments of the population, and the realities of the country. He made efforts to meet with Palestinian writers and editors of newspapers, heard their complains, and came to identify with

[25] An Anthology of American Beat Poetry, edited and translated by Dan Omer, Jerusalem: Marcus 1967.

[26] On the exchange between Ginsberg and Scholem, see BBC Face to Face Interview, 1994 (ASV#21).

[27] On New York Jewry at that era, see Jeffrey Gurock: Jews in Gotham: New York Jews in a Changing City, 1920–2010, New York: NYU Press 2012.

[28] On Ginsberg's visit to Israel, see his journal in Green Library, Stanford University.

their point of view.[29] He also met with Israeli journalists, such as Uri Avneri, and politicians, including Ehud Olmert. His investigation of the country this time was more political than the in the previous visit, and his conclusions more critical of Israeli policies. Upon returning to America, he tried to muster PEN, the association of poets, to a campaign in favor of the Palestinian cause. In one, conversation with Jewish spiritual leaders, including Zalman Schachter-Shalomi and Roger Kamenetz, he projected his alienation from what he saw as tribal skirmishes of the Middle East, and what he considered to be less-than-generous Israeli treatment of the Palestinians. If being an American Jew meant support for Israeli policies, he was not Jewish.[30] In distancing himself from Israel and those who supported it, Ginsberg was a forerunner of others in the American Jewish intelligentsia, who became disappointed with Israel at the turn of the twenty-first century, at the same time that they have continued to take interest in the country and its issues. His, and others, universal values trumped parochial concerns.

Ginsberg refused to limit himself to Jewish cultural, social or religious venues. Instead, he wove his Jewish identity into a broader, ever-growing, quilt, consisting of numerous cultural, religious, and aesthetic influences, and situated in a pluralistic and inclusive social milieu. In all of these aspects, Ginsberg served as an avant-garde example to a new kind of Jew, who explores and chooses, at times, new spiritual homes, or amalgamations of different layers of experience and culture. Famously, he served as a catalyst and symbol for a relatively large number of Jews who have become practitioners of Americanized Asian spiritual groups, or other New Religious Movements, while often maintaining their Jewish identity.

5. Buddhism as Part of the Quilt

Until 1962, Ginsberg's spiritual interests remained mainly in the Jewish-Christian path. His poetry invokes the Jewish-Christian God time, and time again, albeit transforming and revolutionizing the meaning of righteousness and holiness. "Holy Holy Holy," which accompanies *Howl*, is a good illustration

[29] On the schedule of Ginsberg's visit, the people he met, and his impressions, see his journals and correspondence, Green Library, Stanford University.

[30] Roger Kamenetz: The Jew in the Lotus: A Poet's Rediscovery of Jewish Identity in Buddhist India, New York: Harper Collins, 1994, pp. 235–241.

of such deeply religious poetry, which is at the same time defiant, calling for a new understanding of humans, their emotional needs, and their personal rights. Starting during his studies at Columbia University, Ginsberg took interest in Christian spirituality, showing attraction to the mysticism of Francis of Assisi and William Blake. Blake, in particular, influenced Ginsberg and affected his poetry. Writing in a very different time, place, and cultural environment, Blake offered an example of mystical religious poetry and apocalyptic imagery that were, at least in theory, non-theistic. This infatuation did not bring about a change of loyalties or adoption of new communal affiliations. Ginsberg rather added elements of Christian spiritualty, English Protestant and Medieval Catholic mysticism, into what would become a growing amalgam of spiritual pursuits. In this regard, Ginsberg was a forerunner of a postmodern religious era, in which individuals pick, choose, and combine their spiritual, cultural, esthetic, and communal interests. A constant pilgrim, Ginsberg, and many who followed in his footsteps, have come to search and select paths, religious affiliations and cultural networks, shifting and re-arranging them along the way, or amalgamating different traditions, practices and identities to suit their spiritual, emotional, and communal needs. Remarkably and tellingly, the religious images and themes in Ginsberg's poetry remained Western, American, Jewish, and Christian, even as he adopted Hindu or Buddhist practices. Deborah Baker suggested that Ginsberg's visit to India was a spiritually transforming journey in his life.[31] He and his companion, Peter Orlovsky, followed the poet Gary Snyder, and his wife Joanne in visiting India, in 1962, and staying for a few months. In a manner that would become a pattern, Ginsberg did not become a devotee of a particular Hindu deity, or follower of gurus. In fact, he hardly sought Swamis or Holy Men, and, although his experience had a strong spiritual component, his visits to temples were more tours than pilgrimages.[32]

[31] Deborah Baker: A Blue Hand: The Tragicomic, Mind Altering Odyssey of Allen Ginsberg, a Holy Fool, a Rebel Muse, a Dharma Bum, and His Prickly Bride in India, New York: Penguin 2008. See also, Ginsberg's poetry and letters of the period. Allen Ginsberg, Collected Poetry, 1947–1980, New York: Harper Perennial 1984, pp. 290–322; The Letters of Allen Ginsberg, pp. 256–287. The references to Ginsberg's writings include poems and letters from Japan, which was also an important station along the way.

[32] On visits to temples, see Allen Ginsberg: Indian Journals March 1962–May 1963, New York: Grove Press 1996.

Following his visit to India, Ginsberg advocated Hindu practices, as he understood them. These consisted mostly of pacifism, a teaching or standing that helped build his aura as a prophet for the Vietnam Era generation, as well as the chanting of mantras. However, merely a few years later, Ginsberg shifted his major spiritual attention to Buddhism. He did not undergo a conversion experience, did not follow any orthodoxy and did not tie himself for a lifetime to one Buddhist school or interpretation. His was a 'tailor it for your needs' Buddhism, alternating between teachers, and choosing elements of the systems that suited him best. Ginsberg however was more systematic about Buddhist practices and affiliations than Hindu ones. He consulted with teachers and carried exercises almost daily. Still, his Buddhist practices notwithstanding, Ginsberg remained intellectually and spiritually independent. He maintained Hindu practices, related to Jewish ethnic and religious symbols, such as the Wailing Wall, and his poetry continued to reflect Jewish and Christian imagery.[33] Moreover, while mostly following one school of Buddhism, he also found merit and consulted with masters of other branches of the tradition.

In the early 1970s, Ginsberg became a follower of Chögyam Trungpa (1939–1987), a Tibetan Buddhist meditation master, who studied in England, and moved to the United States in 1970. The charismatic Buddhist leader related to Ginsberg with particular respect as a dear supporter and friend, and although the Beat poet became a devotee, he remained independent. The choice of Trungpa as a spiritual instructor and friend suited Ginsberg, who benefited from the peace and serenity the Buddhist exercises offered, but did not wish to follow a spiritual master on other aspects of his life. Trungpa did not interfere with Ginsberg's choices. For example, he did not wish to curtail Ginsberg's sexual life, or other personal or cultural choices Ginsberg made. Ginsberg's sexuality meshed well with his choice of Buddhism. Many of the leaders of Asian-American New Religious Movements condemned gay and bi-sexual behavior, but Buddhist masters often condoned it. This placed a number of Buddhist groups on the progressive side of the American religious spectrum, and allowed spiritual seekers, such as Ginsberg, to feel that their religious affiliations went hand in hand with their universal values, and meshed with their

[33] The multi-faiths effects on the thoughts and practices of Ginsberg came up amazingly in the Chicago Seven Trial (December 11–12, 1969), where he was a witness for the defense. Note his answers about his faith practices, Allen Ginsberg: Spontaneous Mind: Selected Interviews 1958–1996, edited by David Carter, New York: Perennial 2001, pp. 201–204.

social, political and cultural views.[34] So while Buddhism turned into a central part of Ginsberg's spiritual quilt, it did not overshadow other components of his extensive and varied activities, social engagements, cultural interests and intellectual and spiritual pursuits.

While maintaining his independence, Ginsberg became devoted to Buddhist causes as he saw them. Wishing to support his teacher, and Naropa, the university Trungpa founded in 1974, Ginsberg utilized his position within a large circle of avant-garde American writers and established the Jack Kerouac's School for Disembodied Poetics. He recruited and brought over a number of distinguished poets to teach in the program, and raised funds for its finances.[35] Amazingly, such instructors, including known men of letters, were not paid. The school merely provided dormitory space. It took Ginsberg's extensive network of friendships and gifts of persuasion to bring this gallery of accomplished poets to Naropa every summer. No less important was the aura Ginsberg offered the larger Buddhist-American movement, associating it with the counterculture and with the growing emphasis on individuality and self-fulfillment.

Ginsberg amalgamated his Buddhist practices with the movement of return to nature and the building of agricultural communes.[36] In this, relatively short lived, experiment, Ginsberg was the initiator, fundraiser (mostly his own income) and community leader. Gordon Ball tells the saga of East Hill Farm, in upstate New York, as a story of both triumph and failure.[37] Ginsberg wished to create a Buddhist spiritual retreat, among other aims as means of rehabilitation for friends, among them his partner Peter Orlovsky, who were struggling with drugs and other addictions. There were other resourceful personalities involved, but the commune was dependent on Allen's leadership and finances for survival, and he was the one capable of navigating between the different characters, offering a sense of unity and purpose. Ginsberg was, however, a very busy poet, performer, lecturer, crusader for free speech, and

[34] On Asian New Religious Movements and sexuality, see James Lewis and Henrik Bogdan: Sexuality and New Religious Movements, Palgrave-Macmillan 2014.

[35] On Ginsberg as a leader in Naropa, see San Kashner: When I was Cool: My Life at the Jack Kerouac School, New York: Harper Collins 2004.

[36] On the movement see Timothy Miller: The 60s Religious Communes: Hippies and Beyond, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press 1999.

[37] Gordon Ball: East Hill Farm: Seasons with Allen Ginsberg, Berkeley: Counterpoint 2011.

impresario, as well as an anti-war activist and founder of a center at Naropa, to name only some of his central activities. The East Hill Farm commune was Ginsberg's creation and it died when it became evident that he did not have the time and resources to continue leading the place.[38]

6. Conclusion

Ginsberg was a forerunner and set an example for a new era in both Jewish, and non-Jewish, American culture and religion. Although he did not create a new group, or turned himself into a guru, his spiritual pilgrimages served as a model and an inspiration. A number of his friends, including Richard Alpert, aka Ram Das, or Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, the founder of Jewish Renewal, led specific groups. However, with all their influence they have not epitomized the era in the manner Ginsberg did. It was not merely his prominent involvement with so many aspects of the counterculture, from the political to the literary, that made his religious choices more important. Ginsberg's spiritual path was not tied to one idea or system and was rather eclectic and multi-faceted. And his more symbolic than actual leadership style meshed well with the countercultural norms and suited the spirit of the generation for which Ginsberg served as an icon and a spokesperson.

Serving as a symbol for Western Americans, who joined, in the 1960s–1970s, Western forms of Asian religions, Ginsberg was a forerunner of a growing movement. Buddhist groups in America attracted at that time many members of the educated middle classes who aspired to move beyond their older territories. These included Jews in disproportionate numbers, which was no coincidence. While in East, or South-East, Asia, Buddhist groups were often associated with specific ethnic, linguistic, and cultural traditions, its Western proponents, perhaps especially Jews, have viewed their newly acquired faith as universal and as transferring parochial divides. They have often interpreted that faith in almost abstract, non-theistic, terms, relating to it as a philosophical and meditative system. Most Jewish practitioners have viewed Buddhism as a tradition that did not negate their origins and heritage. Jews who joined Buddhist groups were not *meshumeds*, apostates who have turned their backs on their ancestral tradition, and defected to Christianity, just as for Catholics

[38] See also Morgan, I Celebrate Myself, pp. 432–504.

joining Buddhism were a far cry from Catholic turning to Protestantism. In fact, Ginsberg, and others, did not have to think long and hard about the relationship between their Jewish identity and their Buddhist practices. As far as they have been concerned there was little difficulty involved. The Beat poet certainly viewed the practice of Buddhism as meshing well with his universal values, and his inclusive social and cultural aspirations. He saw it as bringing into completion a long and variegated quilt.

JewBus Are Not What They Used to Be. A Call for a Diachronic Study of the Phenomenon of the "Jewish Buddhists"

by Mira Niculescu

Abstract

The success of Buddhism in the West, and in America in particular, since the middle of the twentieth century, gave birth to a new hyphenated religious phenomenon: the Jewish-Buddhists. While a growing number of scholars have been addressing this phenomenon, all of the studies published so far speak of "Jewish-Buddhists" as if they could be described in the same way it was in the seventies. In this paper, I take issue with the monolithic, reified approach towards the phenomenon of the "Jewish-Buddhists", and will try to show their evolution from their early days at the dawn of the emerging Counter Culture until today. Following findings derived from diachronic and ethnographic fieldworks, conducted since 2009, I will suggest that this evolution has undergone three main phases, which I call the three "ages": the age of challenging, the age of claiming, and the age of re-claiming.

1. Introduction

A Jewish mother takes a trip to the Himalayas. She is looking for her son and she knows exactly where to find him. When she finally reaches the gate of a large Buddhist monastery in the heart of Nepal, the monk, who opens the door, finds a little plump American woman with a strong Brooklyn accent planted right in front of him. She seems both quite upset and quite determined. She hurls at him defiantly with her chin up: "I want to see the Head Monk." "Well it is not so simple to see our venerable teacher, dear Madam", he replies. "He is on a silent retreat right now and he has private consultations only once a month. But you are lucky, the next one is next week, and I can put you on the list for an interview. Are you ready to wait here until called?"

"Yes, I will wait", replies the mother. She has just travelled the world to see him, and has already been, ever since she passed the Hudson River, way out of her comfort zone anyway; So waiting a week at the gates of a Buddhist monastery (*chas v'shalom*[1] – that her late father would see her there!) is not going to stop her now. She came to find her son, so she will. After ten days or so, she receives the message that the teacher *will* see her. They introduce her to all of the formalities, how to be dressed, what offerings to bring, the required greeting etiquette and what not. They finally usher her into a large reception room. Freshly shaved Buddhist monks are sitting on cushions in peaceful silence all around the walls. In the middle, on a beautifully sculpted wooden throne, seated on a cushion in a saffron robe, still and quiet, his body displayed in the customary cross-legged lotus position so foreign to the West, presides the Head Monk. Upon seeing him, our Jewish mother drops her bags and all the formalities she had just acquired, and runs towards him, shouting: "*Nu*,[2] Michael, enough already, come back home!"

This joke has been circulating in many versions and in many places for a few decades now, but Rosie Rosenzweig tells it much better than me. Rosenzweig is an American journalist and a Jewish mother who, just like in the story, took a trip up to the Himalayas because of her Buddhist son. However, in her case, she did it *together with* her son, in order to better understand what journey he had embarked on. The autobiographical book she drew from this experience, *A Jewish Mother in Shangri La*[3], was intended, alongside other autobiographies already famous in the Jewish world, such as Boorstein's *That's Funny you don't Look Buddhist*[4] or Lew's O*ne God Clapping*,[5] to help give better understanding, from the inside out, to the "Jewish-Buddhist" phenomenon.

The "Jewish-Buddhist" phenomenon emerged in the aftermath of World War II, at the dawn of the Counter Culture in America in the fifties,[6] at a time

1 "God forbid", in Hebrew.

2 A colloquial expression equivalent to "come on!"

3 Rosie Rosenzweig: A Jewish Mother in Shangri La, Boulder, Shambala, 1998, p. 1.

4 Sylvia Boorstein: That's Funny, you don't Look Buddhist. On being a faithful Jew and a Passionate Buddhist, San Francisco, Harper 1997.

5 Alan Lew / Sherril Jaffe: One God Clapping. The Spiritual Path of a Zen Rabbi, Woodstock, Jewish lights, 2002.

6 Although Jewish interest in Buddhism has been noticed at the beginning of the 20th century. See Martin Baumann: Creating a European Path to Nirvana. Historical and Contemporary Developments of Buddhism in Europe, in: Journal of Contemporary Religion Vol. 10, No. 1 (1995), pp. 55–70.

when Asian Buddhist Masters were bringing their teachings to the West. In this context, American Jews seemed particularly taken by the message of Buddha, and their presence in the emerging Western Buddhist circles was soon noticed. Studies published in the nineties estimated that Jews made up 16[7] to 30 % of Buddhist practitioners and up to 50 %[8] of Buddhist scholars.

Since the publication of *The Jew in the Lotus*[9] in the mid-nineties, the first book to popularize the expressions "Jewish-Buddhists" and also "*jewbus*", popular interest as well as academic scholarship have progressively increased. Since the late nineties, studies from various countries and from various disciplines have endeavored to understand this phenomenon from the perspectives of religious circulation and return[10], New Age ritualism[11], and identity[12], the anthropology of conversion to Western Buddhism[13], interreligious dialogue,[14] Jewish spirituality and the New Age movement[15], the notion of hyphenated religion and dual belonging[16].

However, within all of these discourses, the "Jewish-Buddhists" seem to be systematically described as a monolith both in kind and in time. Yet, can we talk about Jewish-Buddhists today the same way we could in the seventies, or even in the nineties? Can we talk about this phenomenon as if nothing has changed since the counterculture? Arguably no. Yet, Vallely, who hints

7 James W. Coleman: The New Buddhism. Some Empirical Findings, in: James William Coleman, in Duncan R. Williams / Christopher S. Queen (eds) American Buddhism. Methods and Findings in Recent Scholarship, Richmond, Surrey, Curzon 1999, pp. 91–99, p. 95.

8 Judith Linzer: Torah and Dharma. Jewish seekers in eastern religions, London, Johnson Aronson 1996, p. xxii.

9 Roger Kamenetz: The Jew in the Lotus. A poet's rediscovery of Jewish identity in India, San Francisco, Harper 1994.

10 Linzer, Torah and Dharma.

11 Cia Sautter: Chochmat: Rhymes with Spirit Rock, in: The Journal of Religion and Popular Culture 1.1 (2002), pp. 5–15.

12 Anne Vallely: Jewish Redemption by Way of the Buddha, in: Celia Rothenberg / Anne Vallely (eds), New Age Judaism, London: Vallentine Mitchell 2008, pp. 19–33.

13 Lionel Obadia: Shalom Bouddha. Judaïsme et bouddhisme une rencontre inattendue, Paris: Berg International 2015.

14 Yonatan Gez: The Phenomenon of Jewish Buddhists in Light of the History of Jewish Suffering, in: Nova Religio. The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions, Vol. 15, No. 1 (August 2011), pp. 44–68.

15 Marianna Ruah-Midbar: Current Jewish Spiritualities in Israel: A New Age, in: Modern Judaism, 2012, pp. 102–124.

16 Mira Niculescu: I the Jew, I the Buddhist. Multi Religious Belonging as Inner Dialogue, in: Crosscurrents, September 2012, pp. 350–359.

in her article at a change in "generation"[17] of Jewish-Buddhists, remains an exception. Scholarship on the topic generally concurs to speak about the phenomenon in a-temporal terms. Talking about Jewish-Buddhists synchronically bares the risk of discarding both the complexity of such an individual religious posture, and its evolution throughout the years.

This is why in this paper, I take issue with a monolithic, reified approach towards the phenomenon of the "Jewish-Buddhists". I argue that this phenomenon cannot be assessed socio-anthropologically as a single or stable object, since it is unified neither in kind – as shown by the variety of individual postures it speaks of, nor in time – as shown by its evolution since the Counter Culture. I would like to take further Vallely's hint of a generational layering, and suggest that the "Jewish-Buddhist" phenomenon has to be looked at diachronically in order to fully see its processual dimension.

I draw this analysis from ethnographic multi-site and transnational fieldworks based on a combination of in-depth interviews of 200 individuals involved both in Buddhism and in Judaism, textual analysis from internet websites and articles, and from popular literature on the phenomenon as well as participant observations during transnational fieldworks conducted since 2009 between Israel, Western Europe (France and England), and America (New York and San Francisco).

I suggest that the phenomenon of the Jewish-Buddhists has evolved in three distinct phases, and I call them "ages": first, in the seventies, the age of challenging; second, in the nineties, the age of claiming; and last, in the 2000s, the age of re-claiming.

2. The Seventies: The Age of Challenging

The Jew in the Lotus was published in the Unites States in 1994. The book, written by the American writer Roger Kamenetz, recounts the encounter between a delegation of American rabbis and the Dalaï Lama in Dharamsala. Kamenetz sought to understand why so many Jews of his generation had become Buddhists. Indeed, already within the first generation of Western Buddhist teachers were many Jews. Among the three Buddhist schools attracting Westerners in America – successively, Japanese *Zen*, Indian *Vipassana*, and Tibetan *Vajrayana* –he names of the first and most prominent American Buddhist

[17] Vallely, Jewish redemption, p. 19.

teachers were telling: in *Zen*, Weitzman, Hartman, Fischer, Maguid, and Merzel; in *Vipassana*, Kornfield, Goldstein, Salzberg, and Schwartz; in Tibetan Buddhism, the spiritual names of Thubten Pemo, Tubthen Chodron or Surya Das hid those of Landsman, Green, and Miller.

None of the previously mentioned estimations of Buddhist Jews provide sources and thus their accuracy can be called into question. However, the significance of the phenomenon of "Jewish-Buddhists" is more of a qualitative nature than of a quantitative one. For Ram Dass (formally known as Richard Alpert), a former Harvard Professor and a New York Jew turned Hindu teacher, the percentage of Jews involved in the early boom phase of Buddhism was "inordinate" and "outlandish"[18]. And indeed, the Jewish presence in emerging Western Buddhist circles in America was so noteworthy that its observers, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, have been joking about it: late rabbi Alan Lew recalls that when he started practicing Zen meditation in Berkeley in the sixties, so many of those who came to the morning meditation were Jewish, that they used to joke about them being almost "enough for a *minyan*"[19]. American writer Roger Kamenetz in his best-seller *The Jew in the Lotus*, reports that in the eighties, Buddhist Tibetan teacher Chogyam Trungpa, soon started interspersing his talks with *Yiddish* words, while jokingly calling his newly founded circle the "*Oy Vey*[20] School of Buddhism.[21]" Wes Nisker, a Jewish Buddhist teacher of Insight Meditation,[22] jokes that the founders of "one of the first large Buddhist meditation centers in America" in the nineties, "Goldstein, Kornfield, Salzberg and Schwartz, (…) sounded more like a law firm than a Buddhist teaching collective"[23].

[18] Kamenetz, The Jew in the Lotus, p. 9.

[19] The Quorum of Ten Mn (and Women in Liberal Circles) traditionally required to pray. In: Lew / Jaffe. One God Clapping, p. 63.

[20] A very famous Yiddish expression akin to an exclamation of worry/sadness, that Ashkenazi Jews use today in a lighter way, and often to make fun of themselves.

[21] Kamenetz, The Jew in the Lotus, p. 9.

[22] An American version of the South East Asian Vipassana school of Theravada Buddhism. See Gil Fronsdal: Insight Meditation in the United States. Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness, in: Charles Prebish / Kenneth Tanaka (ed.), The Faces of Buddhism in America, Berkeley, University of California Press 1998, pp. 165–180.

[23] Wes Nisker: The Big Bang, the Buddha, and the Baby Boom. The Spiritual Experiments of my Generation, San Francisco, Harper 2003, p. 116.

However, not everyone in the Jewish community found this funny. According to Kamenetz himself, "where I came from, leaving Judaism for another religion seemed like a big betrayal"[24].

Indeed, when they first became visible, around the late sixties and early seventies, Jews who practiced Buddhism became a source of concern for their families. This angst, which is only hinted at in this article's opening joke, was very real in the seventies.

During our interview in 2014, San Francisco-based Zen teacher Denise recalled how, as a university student who had just joined Zen circles in the sixties, her parents took her to such a "anti-cult clinic". As a child of holocaust survivors from Austria and Poland, she grew up near New York in a house filled with psychological distress and pervasive fear. After a car accident, during her time at university, a strong insight pushed her towards the exploration of the practice of Zen. To her, it was incredibly satisfying. But, she recalled:

> "But my family didn't feel that way; they had me deprogrammed. At that time, a lot of young people would get into cults. And I was 24, so they were afraid. (…)
> So I said I will go voluntarily; so they took me to an office in New York city, where there was a big unit dedicated to that. I was taken to a room, where there was a doctor. A Jewish doctor, who was wearing a kippah. So he was obviously religious. The room was locked, and like he had a big desk and I had a tiny little chair. He had the power to have me locked away".[25]

For Denise, engaging in Buddhist practice as she states herself, "was not in opposition with my Jewish upbringing, but rather in response to a very strong spiritual experience that I didn't find any ways of exploring at the time in the Jewish meditative tradition, which had been decimated by the Holocaust". Studying this deeply led her to ordination in the Soto Zen lineage, and to live in a Zen center, where she teaches. Though for Denise, this commitment was never oppositional, her family was appalled. She recalls: "My parents' generation, including my mother, became afraid and shunned me. Some family members mourned me as if I had died. However, over time, the fear softened, and they trusted me to help them in their old age."

[24] Kamenetz, The Jew in the Lotus, p. 9.
[25] Transcription from a personal Interview, San Francisco, July 2009.

"Cult clinics" are one of the first things Judith Linzer mentions in the introduction of *Torah and Dharma*, the book she drew from a psychology thesis written in Berkeley in 1974.[26] Linzer back then worked in such a clinic and recalls receiving many anxious phone calls from parents whose children were talking about yoga and Buddhist meditation. Indeed, the seventies were the golden age for the flourishing ofvarious New Age and Eastern spirituality groups, from Osho and Hare Krishna to Zen Buddhism, and the mainstream American society frowned upon them. By contrast, today, yoga is a mainstream, if not middle / upper class, activity – even businessman and politicians advocate for. The reception of Eastern practices, at least in the case of Buddhism and yoga, has undergone a 180° turn in less than three decades.

From a normative Jewish perspective especially, with founding principles that strictly prohibit any form of idolatry, Hindu and Buddhist-based practices, seemed particularly threatening: even if presented as "spiritual" rather than "religious" practices to a Western audience, they were offered in frames that systematically involved the presence of statues and images – even if they did not involve actually praying to "foreign" gods.

Rabbis in the seventies severely condemned these practices, as shown in this extract of a letter from the Lubavitcher Rebbe published in 1978:

> "It is well known that certain oriental movements, such as Transcendental Meditation (T. M.), Yoga, Guru, and the like, have attracted many Jewish followers, particularly among the young generation. Insofar as these movements involve certain rites and rituals, they have been rightly regarded by Rabbinic authorities as cults bordering on, and in some respects actual, Avodah Zarah (idolatry). Accordingly, Rabbinic authorities everywhere, and particularly in Eretz Yisroel, ruled that these cults come under all the strictures associated with Avodah Zarah, so that also their appurtenances come under strict prohibition".[27]

The seventies were the age of fear and of condemnation, a time where rabbis, Jewish mothers and synagogue chairs felt very much challenged by what the Jews who had "gone to Buddhism" told them: that Judaism did not provide answers for their own existential angst, did not satisfy their need for "answers",

[26] Linzer, Torah and Dharma, 1996.

[27] http://crownheights.info/something-jewish/12180/yoga-and-meditation-is-it-kosher/, last accessed September 6th, 2017.

but rather imposed on them beliefs that seemed outdated and ritual behaviors that seemed senseless.

When Jewish-Buddhists appeared, they thus seemed to adequately embody the mindset of Counter Culture: a newly-born Western subculture, led by a middle and upper class of students and artists, who were at a point of discontent and rebellion towards their fathers' culture and the world they inherited. They decided to throw it all away while embracing opposite values. So too, with respect to their spirituality and religiosity, they rejected the religions they were brought up with (mainly Christianity and Judaism),[28] and avidly embraced what they discovered in Hinduism and Buddhism, belief systems that were seen as the antipodes of Abrahamic religions.

In short, being a "Jewish-Buddhist" in the seventies thus meant to be an ethnic Jew who practiced Buddhism, and either never really had any religious / spiritual connection to Judaism (in most cases), or had discarded it.[29] It was basically being a Western Buddhist who "happened to be a Jew".

Naturally, the Jewish "soul" would "come out" from time to time. For instance, poet Allen Gingsberg wrote a Kaddish after his mother's death in the late fifties[30]. Yet, for these new Western Buddhists, Judaism was basically being left behind.

3. The Nineties: The Age of Claiming

This type of fear from Jewish families did not stop with the end of the Counter Culture and the impending 21st century. In 1990, Kamenetez reports that when the father of Rabbanit Greenberg, the wife of a New York based orthodox rabbi, heard that she was part of the delegation that would travel to Dharamsala in order to meet with the Dalaï Lama, "he became so upset, that he made a special study of the Talmudic tractate, Avodah Zara"[31]. In the Jewish tradition, people start a special study in extreme cases of illness and life-threatening

[28] See Wade Clark Roof: A Generation of Seekers. The Spiritual Journeys of the Baby-Boom Generation, San Francisco, Harper 1993, and Harvey Cox: Turning East. Why Americans Look to the Orient for Spirituality – And What That Search Can Mean to the West, New York: Simon & Schuster 1978.

[29] See Linzer, Torah and Dharma, p. 24. I gathered the same information during the interviews I conducted in America, in England and in France, between 2008 and 2016.

[30] Alan Ginsberg, Kaddish, in: Poetry Foundation, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/49313, last accessed November 13th, 2016.

[31] Kamenetz, The Jew in the Lotus, p. 11.

situations of their loved ones, hoping the merit of their study will protect them from danger. Not coincidentally did Mrs Greenberg's father choose the Talmudic tractate that expounds on idol worshipping, one of the major prohibitions for Jews, as stated in the foundational "ten utterances" (better known as the "ten commandments").

Likewise, in the nineties, the rebellion of the "Buddhist-Jews" was still alive, as shown by the "list" written by Zen practitioner David Gottlieb and sent to orthodox Rabbi Akiva Tatz, explaining both outlining his choice for Zen and voicing his discontent with Judaism.[32]

However, *Letters to a Buddhist Jew* also shows that this Zen-practicing Jew, who was so clearly discontent with Judaism, was not only willing to exchange with an (orthodox) rabbi, not only willing to be addressed by him, as the title indicates, but was indeed asking for it: he initiated the conversation. He was in need of such a dialogue. Maybe by criticizing Judaism as he did, he wanted to be convinced. And it apparently worked: twenty years later, as he told me in our Skype interview in 2012, Gottlieb had left Zen behind and had become a quite observant Jew – even preparing a doctoral thesis on Jewish thought.

The nineties were the time of claiming being both Jewish and Buddhist, as shown by the publication of other autobiographies of Jewish-Buddhists, such as Boorstein's quoted above *That's Funny you don't Look Buddhist*[33] or Lew's *One God Clapping*[34], but also Fischer's *Jerusalem Moonlight*[35], and Zen translations of Jewish Psalms[36].

Derived from their own personal accounts, it seems that some of these Jews who meditated for many years, had come to terms with their own Judaism, ready to claim being both Jewish and Buddhist. This happened not in spite of their Buddhist practice, but actually *thanks* to it: meditating and inquiring about "who they really were" – a leading Buddhist question, made them realize that their "true nature" was Jewish.

[32] Akiva Tatz / David Gottlieb: Letters to a Buddhist Jew, Southfield, MA: Targum Press 2004.
[33] Boorstein, That's Funny, you don't Look Buddhist, 1997.
[34] Lew, One God Clapping, 1999.
[35] Norman Fischer: Jerusalem Moonlight. An American Zen teacher walks the path of his ancestors, San Francisco, Clear Glass Press 1995.
[36] Norman Fischer: Opening to You. Zen-inspired Translations of the Psalms, New York, Viking Compass 2003.

This is what Insight Meditation teacher Sylvia Boorstein expressed when she recounts that after meditating for a while every day, she realized that Jewish psalms (Tehilim) started popping up in her mind.[37] Similarily, late rabbi Alan Lew recalls in his spiritual autobiography that it was Zen that brought him back to Judaism:

> "Zen meditation, which focused on the present moment, had given me a wide, vibrant view of the world. It laid reality bare. It allowed me to overhear the constant arguments going on in my head. Now I heard something else, underneath, after all the veils were drawn back. I confronted my essence, and my essence was Jewish".[38]

Lew and Boorstein are but two among many examples of Jews who "came back to Judaism" as a result of their Buddhist practice. These two characters reveal the multiplicity of figures that hide behind the unified term "Jewish-Buddhists": one is a Buddhist teacher, the second is a rabbi; yet, both moved closer to Judaism without discarding their Buddhism.

Can Lew, Boorstein, and others, similar to those who returned to Judaism due to the practice of Buddhism, be called "Jewish-Buddhist," just like the first Jewish-Buddhists as described in the "first age" – those who Anne Vallely calls the "first generation" of Jewish-Buddhists?

Lew, when he became a rabbi, did not describe himself as a Buddhist. Buddhism was not his identity; it was a tool he still used. When I interviewed Boorstein in San Francisco in the summer of 2009, she told me about the expression "Jewish-Buddhist" – and even more so "jubu", which made no sense to her, as it does justice to neither Judaism nor Buddhism. She was, as she put it "not half this and half that, but entirely "Jewish" *and* "Buddhist".

It seems to her just as inaccurate, if not symbolically violent, to impose on her such a hyphenated label, as it is for the Jewish-born Tibetan Buddhist nun Thubthen Chodron to be constantly reminded that she is Jewish[39].

So the label of Jewish-Buddhist does not seem to work. It makes sense only when talking about a phenomenon, yet without the hyphen. And in that perspective, *Buddhist Jews*, or *Jewish Buddhists*, can be defined, not as Buddhists who happen to be Jewish, but as Jews who feel connected to both Judaism and to Buddhism.

[37] Boortsein, That's Funny, you don't Look Buddhist, p. 1.
[38] Lew, One God Clapping, p. 59.
[39] Thubten Chodron: In the Land of Identities, http://thubtenchodron.org/2011/06/healing-israel-jewish/, last accessed August 23, 2016.

4. The 2000's: The Age of (Re-)claiming

Homecoming had another consequence: it was not rare that a Jew, who reconciled with his or her Judaism, then set up to help other Jews to also find the way back.

This is why, not long after becoming a congregational rabbi, Lew had joined forces with his old friend and Buddhist teacher Norman Fischer to create what they called a "Jewish Meditation collective": a place where they could integrate the input of what they had learned in their Buddhist training, but within a Jewish context. Through this project, they intended to apply the tools of Buddhism: mindfulness, equanimity, non-judgment, freedom to Torah, Shabbat, and festival. For instance, Pessach was the opportunity to meditate on the importance of freeing oneself, in a Buddhist perspective, from one's own mental patterns.

By creating *Makor Or*, the Zen rabbi and the Jewish Zen priest were offering the benefits of Buddhist practices and teachings to their fellow Jews, yet within a Jewish context. Indeed, they had understood that times had changed, and that, at the turn of the 21st century, Jews who wanted to meditate had reached the age of re-claiming. Yes, they wanted to experience the benefits of meditation, but, as opposed to their predecessors from the seventies, who were willing to discard all heritage and to adopt entirely new cultural and spiritual practices, they also wanted to re-invest in, re-claim and re-appraise their Judaism. In fact, at the same time that meditation had become more and more mainstream and that more and more people practiced it, many Jews expressed a desire for exploring spirituality within Judaism. This explains the success of books written in the eighties and onwards by orthodox rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, starting with his best seller *Jewish Meditation*.[40]

After the age of the Counter Culture and the pessimistic diagnosis of the "disenchantment of the world"[41] in the West, the beginning of the 21st century seemed to become the time of "returns to religion".

In such a cultural context, more and more formerly secular Jews, who meditated in Buddhist circles "returned" to Judaism – often to intrinsically

[40] Aryeh Kaplan: Jewish Meditation. A Practical Guide, New York, Schocken 1985.

[41] Marcel Gauchet / Oscar Burge: The Disenchantment of the World. A Political History of Religion, Princeton, Princeton University Press 1999.

religious types of Judaism.[42] Some, like the former sadhu turned rabbi Dovid Zeller[43], would offer their trajectories as exemplary tales of home-leaving in order to "return" better or *tshuva*[44].

Similarly, Jews, who were raised in religious settings and discarded Jewish practices completely for an intense involvement in Buddhism, eventually came full circle: practicing Buddhism enabled them to come to terms with who they were and to look at their tradition with new eyes. Such was the case with Brenda Shoshanna, born and raised in Borough park, one of the so called "ultra-orthodox" neighborhoods of Brooklyn, who became a Zen teacher and describes in her book *Jewish Dharma* how, in her view, Zen and Jewish values and practices highlight each other.

For the most observant ones, meditating in a Jewish context was a *sine qua none* condition. Such was the case of Len Moskowitz, a born and raised orthodox New Yorker and a Yeshiva university graduate, who used to attend faithfully all the meditation retreats Lew and Fischer offered (he only ever attended theirs). Moskowitz now teaches the meditation practices he acquired at Yeshiva University, the orthodox Jewish university in New York.

But the majority of the new students of Buddhist meditation within Jewish settings did not share Moskowitz's concerns of kashrut and of a religiously "safe" environment; for most of them, it was simply about re-appraising Judaism through an innovative approach.

Lew's passing in 2009 did not prevent Fischer to continue the work of *Makor Or* alone, and today, the Jewish Zen monk collaborates with other rabbis from the Institute of Jewish Spirituality, to co-lead retreats that today are called "Jewish meditation retreats".

The very fact of the creation of an "Institute for Jewish Spirituality", based on the practice of mindfulness and meditation, shows the depth of this re-claiming process: it has turned into an institutionalization of the use of Buddhist tools within a Jewish frame.

[42] As displayed through exemplary discourses regarding the return to Judaism on Religious Jewish Wesbites, which aim and bring closer estranged Jews (what is called "*kiruv*", from "bringing closer"): "From Buddha to Torah" http://www.aish.com/sp/so/From-Buddha-to-Torah.html, Last accessed November 14th, 2016.

[43] David Zeller: The Soul of the Story: Meetings with Remarkable People. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Pub. 2006.

[44] "*Tshuva*", the return to religion, as being one of the most highly praised values in Judaism.

5. Conclusion

In this article, I have tried to show the evolution of the phenomenon of the Jewish-Buddhists since their emergence during the age of the Counter Culture. And I have suggested that this evolution has undergone three main phases, which I have called "ages": the age of challenging, the age of claiming, and the age of re-claiming.

Today, although there are no more cult clinics, there are still, and probably will always be, harsh critics towards Jews, who have taken on Buddhist practices – as seen in internet articles trying to convince the sons of Avraham that Buddhism is "*treif*"[45].

Nonetheless, today, Buddhist and Hindu-based practices are fully part of 'legitimate' Western cultures, as 'Eastern spiritualities' have become tools for well-being and self-actualization, and have even evolved a deep affinity with corporate and consumer cultures. There is nothing "counter cultural" anymore in doing yoga during the week and attending synagogue services on *Shabbat*[46].

So, calling someone a "Jewish-Buddhist" today is certainly very different from what it implied a few decades ago. This is why the diachronic lens seems so important when wanting to appraise this phenomenon, even in such a short time period.

Jewbus "are not what they used to be", indeed.

[45] Kamenetz, The Jew in the Lotus, p.11.

[46] The seventh day of the week, which in Judaism is considered a sacred day of "pause" – literally what "Shabbat" means.

Indian Sufism in Israel: A Musically Orchestrated Interaction

by David Landau and Nina Rageth

Abstract

This paper explores Indian Sufi influences in Shye Ben Tzur's music. Ben Tzur is a Jewish Israeli musician who composes Sufi poetry in Hebrew and plays it to *qawwālī* music, the traditional North Indian Sufi music. Ben Tzur's songs are devotional and there are many Sufi references that invoke Islamic terminology. His music has been reviewed in numerous newspapers and his Jewish identity, coupled with Sufi themes, evokes questions regarding religious belonging. Even though Ben Tzur openly discusses Sufi influences, his music has remained uncontroversial. This article interprets this as a sign that the symbolic repertoire of Ben Tzur's music evokes associations with India and not with Islam and more specifically with India as a spiritual rather than religious space. The image of India as a spiritual land manages to subsume references to Islam and render them part of the "mystical East" allowing Ben Tzur's audience to consume Muslim themes outside Middle Eastern politics.

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Aufsatz fragt nach Einflüssen des indischen Sufismus auf die Musik von Shye Ben Tzur. Ben Tzur ist ein jüdischer Israeli, der auf Hebräisch sufistische Poesie schreibt, welche er zu *qawwālī* Musik, der traditionellen nordindischen Sufi-Musik spielt. Ben Tzurs Lieder haben devotionalen Charakter und spielen mit sufistischen Referenzen und islamischen Konzepten. Obschon die sufistischen Elemente in Ben Tzurs Musik deutlich sind, hat seine Musik zu keinen Kontroversen geführt. Dieser Aufsatz interpretiert diesen Umstand als ein Zeichen dafür, dass Ben Tzurs Musik nicht in erster Linie mit dem Islam, sondern mit Indien, und zwar mit Indien als einem spirituellen Land assoziiert wird. Das Bild des mystischen Indiens schließt dabei islamische Referenzen ein. Diese Spiritualisierung der Musik Ben Tzurs hat einen entpolitisierenden Effekt auf die Musik und ermöglicht damit einer jüdisch-israelischen Zuhörerschaft den Kontakt mit dem Islam außerhalb des Nahost-Konfliktes.

"One look and my soul was imprisoned,
I am not pretending to be the master of my own life.
My religion is lost, and I have no country,
My heart beats by my Beloved's face."
(To die in Love, *lamut ba'ahava*, Shye Ben Tzur, *Shoshan* 2009)

1. Introduction

Shye Ben Tzur is a Jewish Israeli musician who composes Sufi poetry in Hebrew and sings it to *qawwālī* music, the traditional North Indian Sufi music. Ben Tzur is the first musician to combine Hebrew lyrics with the *qawwālī* musical genre on stage and his music is popular in Israel.[1] This paper examines Ben Tzur's musical production in order to discuss the phenomenon of a Jewish Israeli – Indian Sufi interaction. While the interaction between Jews and Jewish Israelis with other Indian or Eastern religions such as Buddhism or Hinduism has received much attention in recent academic debates, the Jewish-Sufi encounter in present time has so far remained an under-examined phenomenon.[2]

The last two decades have seen record numbers of Israelis traveling to India and returning with experiences and messages that have penetrated the Israeli mainstream and played a role in the formation of the New Age scene in Israel.[3] Ben Tzur is an illustrative example of how Indian Sufism is imported into Jewish Israeli society and how this transfer is done via the merging of Sufi and Jewish traditions as it becomes audible in Ben Tzur's musical production.[4]

1 We judge his popularity by the fact that his songs are regularly played on radio and his concerts are routinely sold out.

2 See Marianna Ruah Midbar: Thank God it is Good. A Look at Jewish Israelis in light of the Theory of the Easternization of the West, in: Theory and Criticism, 44 (2015), pp. 409–416.

3 "New Age" is a contested term. We use it here as shorthand for the integration of non-traditional, non-Western schools of thought in modern culture. For a discussion of the term see Wouter J. Hanegraaff: New Age Religion and Western Culture. Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought, Leiden, New York, Köln 1996; Kay Alexander: Roots of the New Age, in: James R. Lewis / J. Gordon Melton (eds): Perspectives on the New Age, Albany 1992, pp. 30–47; Robert Ellwood: How New is the New Age, in: James R. Lewis / J. Gordon Melton (eds): Perspectives on the New Age, Albany 1992, pp. 59–67.

4 Even though Ben Tzur both composes the music, and writes the lyrics for his songs, this paper focuses on his textual production rather than on his bringing together of different musical genres. For a discussion of Ben Tzur's musical innovations and compositions see the magazine article: Simon Broughton: Junun. Shye Ben Tzur and Jonny Greenwood joined forces with the Rajasthan Express, in: Songlines Magazine, 2016 (Jan / Feb), 114, pp. 36–40. For further

The paper starts by providing a short description of the *qawwālī* genre in order to contextualize Ben Tzur's music. It then gives some information about Ben Tzur – and especially about the way in which he is portrayed in newspaper and magazine articles – and about his musical composition. The main part of the paper examines Ben Tzur's music as a novel production of *qawwālī* in Hebrew. It focuses on how Ben Tzur merges Jewish and Sufi traditions in his musical work. We conclude with a discussion of the question how this new genre of Jewish-Muslim devotional music can unproblematically enter the popular music scene in Israel. Our argument is that it is the Indian element in Ben Tzur's music that facilitates the circulation of Muslim references in the Israeli musical scene. We argue that India functions as a catalyst for the transfer of Sufi devotional music into Jewish Israeli society because for many secular Jewish Israelis India constitutes a realm of personal experience outside of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Moreover, in popular perception, India continues to carry the orientalist imagery of being a spiritual zone transcending religious and social differences. Once the idea of India is evoked, it is powerful enough to subsume Islam and remove its potential of threat.[5]

2. A Jewish Israeli performing *qawwālī* music

2.1 *Qawwālī* music

Qawwālī is a musical genre of classical North Indian music. Broadly speaking *qawwālī* refers to Sufi Muslim devotional music. A crucial element of the *qawwālī* music is the text. The texts of the *qawwālī* music are Sufi poems which predominantly revolve around the theme of love which in Sufi theology is considered the basis of the relation with god and a means to "bridge the distinction between Created and Creator, leading to divine union."[6] The importance of the text in *qawwālī* music is reflected in the etymology of the

information regarding *qawwālī* musical structure see Regula Burckhardt Qureshi: Sufi Music of India and Pakistan. Sound, Context, and Meaning in Qawwali, Oxford 2006.

5 We are aware that our argument is based on the assumption that Muslim references evoke negative responses in Israel. A cursory analysis of media reports and mentions of Islam across different disciplines shows that this assumption reflects the current state of affairs.

6 Regula Burckhardt Qureshi: Exploring Time Cross-Culturally. Ideology and Performance of Time in the Sufi Qawwālī, in: David Taylor (ed.): Islam in South Asia. Critical Concepts in Islamic Studies, London 2011, pp. 285–319; here p. 293.

word. *Qawwālī* is Arabic and comes from *qawl* "to speak or say."[7] *Qawwālī* can accordingly be described as "the musical expression of Sufi poetry."[8] It is, as Burckhardt Qureshi says, a "textual-musical idiom" to enunciate Sufi poetry.[9] *Qawwālī* is the central element of *samāʿ*, which is at the core of the Sufi practice. *Samāʿ* literally means listening or audition and refers to an assemblage for listening to Sufi poetry and music that speaks of the joy and pain of the relationship with god.[10] As a member of a Sufi order puts it, a *samāʿ* involves "the hearing of harmonious sounds which move the heart, and kindle the fire of love for God."[11] With this emphasis on the lyrics, they become a central element of the musical genre. However, the recitation of Sufi poetry alone does not create a *qawwālī*. The recitation of the poetry needs to be "clothed in music" in order for it to classify as a *qawwālī*.[12] The tension of the *qawwālī* revolves around, as Kugle neatly phrases it, "book and melody, between the page and the voice."[13] The common composition of a *qawwālī* group is a number of vocalists with a main singer playing the portable harmonium, and a drummer.[14]

The *qawwālī* has different, interrelated functions. First, it should make people listen to Sufi poems via music.[15] Second, it should provide a space for recalling the history of the tradition and the lives of the saints through the recitation of the poems and help the listener identify with it by recalling or reimagining past events.[16] Third, it should increase the effect of the poetry, as it touches the listener on a sensory level which text alone cannot do.[17] Finally, it should put the listener in a frame of mind that encourages entering an ecstatic

7 Regula Burckhardt Qureshi / Hiromi Lorraine Sakata: Music in Pakistan. An Introduction, in: The Concise Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, New York 2008, pp. 1047–1048; here p. 1047.
8 Burckhardt Qureshi / Sakata, Music in Pakistan, p. 1047.
9 Burckhardt Qureshi, Exploring Time Cross-Culturally, p. 290.
10 Regula Burckhardt Qureshi: Sufi Encounters with Music and Love, in: Eranos Yearbook / Annale di Eranos 70. Love on a Fragile Thread, Einsiedeln 2012, pp. 638–652; here p. 638 f.
11 Quoted in Subhan, Sufism. Its saints and Shrines, p. 216.
12 Burckhardt Qureshi / Sakata, Music in Pakistan, p. 1048.
13 Scott Kugle: Qawwālī between Written Poem and Sung Lyric. Or … How a Ghazal Lives, in: The Muslim World, 97 (2007) 4, pp. 571–610; here p. 572.
14 See Burckhardt Qureshi, Exploring Time Cross-Culturally, p. 295.
15 See Burckhardt Qureshi, Sufi Encounters with Music and Love, p. 644.
16 See for a discussion of the aspect of memory in *qawwālī* performances Qama-ul Huda: Memory, Performance, and Poetic Peacemaking in Qawwālī, in: The Muslim World, 97 (2007) 4, pp. 678–700.
17 See Burckhardt Qureshi, Exploring Time Cross-Culturally, p. 300.

trance state (*ḥāl*). This ecstasy brings one closer to the divine. This union with god, temporal in the present and permanent in death, is the main goal of the religious practices in Sufism and the music serves as a vehicle for reaching it.[18]

2.2 Shye Ben Tzur as a composer of Hebrew *qawwālī*

Shye Ben Tzur was born in the US, grew up in Israel and spent most of his adult life in India. It was in India, at the age of twenty, where he started learning classical Hindustani music with the *dhrupad* master Ustad Zia Fariduddin Dagar with whom he studied for over a year.[19] Ben Tzur is in his forties, he is married to an Indian Muslim woman from Ajmer, and they have a daughter together. They live in Israel.[20]

In journalistic writings Ben Tzur is either portrayed with regard to his nationality, to his linguistic background, or to his religious belonging. Descriptions that stress his nationality speak of him as an "Israeli singer", an "Israeli composer", or simply as "an Israeli who plays traditional Muslim music." Depictions that underline his linguistic background refer to him as "a Hebrew Sufi", or a "Hebrew qawwali composer."[21] In portraits that stress his religious

18 Burckhardt Qureshi, Exploring Time Cross-Culturally, p. 293.

19 The term "Hindustani music" refers, broadly speaking, to classical North Indian music in opposition to Carnatic music, classical South Indian music. The term *dhrupad* refers to a classical style of North Indian music for which the "strongly systematized arrangement of music parts" is distinctive (Wim van der Meer: Hindustani Music in the 20th Century, The Hague / Boston / London 1980, p. 30). Its roots can be traced back to the *prabandha* style of the 12th and 14th centuries and it has flowered in the 16th and 17th centuries (see Meer: Hindustani Music in the 20th Century, p. 30). Today it is a rather rare musical style to an extent that leads Van der Meer to speak of its near disappearance (see Meer: Hindustani Music in the 20th Century, p. 164).

20 See Aimee Ginsburg: Song of Moses, in: Outlook. The Fully Loaded Magazine, 07.09.2009 (http://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/song-of-moses/261520, accessed 13.08.2016). The Dagars are the most important family of musicians to continue the *dhrupad* style today. The family originally hails from Jaipur and it is known for providing traditional teaching methods (see Meer: Hindustani Music in the 20th Century, p. 164). Yet, they also introduce new elements one of which is that they welcome anyone who shows some talent and interest as their student whereas in the past the music has been transmitted within the boundaries of the family (see Meer: Hindustani Music in the 20th Century, p. 146). This, of course, was a necessary condition for the acceptance of Shye Ben Tzur as a student in the *dhrupad* tradition.

21 http://www.shyebentzur.com/en/home#!bio (accessed 12.08.2016); Gabe Friedman: The Jew who writes Islamic spiritual music in Hebrew, in: The Times of Israel, 30.01.2016 (http://www.timesofisrael.com/the-jew-who-writes-islamic-spiritual-music-in-hebrew/, accessed 13.08.2016); Pramila N. Phatarphekar: Shye Ben Tzur, in: Outlook. The Fully Loaded Magazine, 05.04.2004 (http://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/shye-ben-tzur/223510, accessed 13.08.2016).

background he is described as a "Jewish composer", or a "Jewish qawwal."[22] However, as we will discuss further down, Ben Tzur is also characterized as a person who identifies with other religious traditions. While maintaining his Jewish identity, as becomes clear in his lyrics which we discuss later, he is also described as a follower of a Sufi order, the Gudri Shah Sufi Order, whose lineage is based in Ajmer and is linked to the Chishtī Order, one of the four main Sufi orders in India.[23] Furthermore, he expresses closeness to the Bhakti tradition.[24]

In portrayals of Ben Tzur, emphasis is generally put on the exceptionality of him as a person as well as on the exceptionality of his artistic work. He is described as "[t]he Jew who writes Islamic spiritual music",[25] "[t]he world's sole Hebrew qawwali composer",[26] or "the world's first Jewish qawwal."[27] Such formulations stylize an image of a Jewish and Islamic tradition as two distinct entities which normally do not intersect except in such rare a figure like Shye

22 Friedman: The Jew who writes Islamic spiritual music in Hebrew; Ginsburg: Song of Moses. A *qawwāl* is a singer of the *qawwālī*.

23 The Chishtī order (the Chishtiyya) exists side by side with the Qādiriyya, the Suhrawardiyya and the Naqshbandiyya orders (see John A. Subhan: Sufism. Its saints and Shrines, New Delhi 1999, p. 175). It was established in India between the 12th and the 14th centuries and is the first important Sufi order to be established in India (see Carl William Ernst / Bruce B. Lawrence: Sufi Martyrs of Love. The Chishti Order in South Asia and Beyond, Basingstoke 2002, p. 14). There is a rich literature on the order (see for example the two monographies: Tanvir Anjum: Chishtī Sufis in the Sultanate of Delhi, 1190–1400. From Restrained Indifference to Calculated Defiance, Karachi 2011; Ernst / Lawrence, Sufi Martyrs of Love). What is relevant for the social formation described in this article, is that firstly the Chishtī Order attributes great importance to music and the recollection of the names of god (*zikr*) in a vocal form (see Ernst / Lawrence, Sufi Martyrs of Love, pp. 27–46), and that secondly it welcomes people from different religious and cultural backgrounds as their disciples, sometimes also without the requirement of conversion to Islam (see Kelly Pemberton: Sufis and Social Activism. A Chīshtī Response to Communal Strife in India Today, in: Clinton Bennett / Charles M. Ramsey (eds): South Asian Sufis. Devotion, Deviation, and Destiny, London 2012, pp. 269–284; here p. 280).

24 Bhakti is a form of personal devotion to God in the Hindu tradition. It is characterized by an emphasis on the unmediated relationship between the devotee with god which places it outside the fold of organized religion (see Karen Pechilis Prentiss: The Embodiment of Bhakti, New York 1999 for an overview of the bhakti tradition). Furthermore, an important characteristic is that the social and religious background of a person is considered irrelevant for the achievement of the religious goal of bhakti practices, that is, the unification of the person with god (see S. R. Goyal: Social Aspects of the Bhakti Movement, in: Ajay Mitra Shastri / Devendra Handa / C. S. Gupta / Vishvambhar Sharan Pathak (eds): Viśvambharā. Probings in Orientology (Volume 2), New Delhi 1995, pp. 431–443; here p. 435). There are many similarities between Bhakti and Sufi worship and many poets and saints are claimed by both traditions.

25 Friedman, The Jew who writes Islamic spiritual music in Hebrew (emphasis ours).

26 Phatarphekar, Shye Ben Tzur.

27 Ginsburg, Song of Moses.

Ben Tzur and/or in the artistic fusion created by him. Interestingly, this perspective stands in stark contrast to how Shye Ben Tzur's worldview is illustrated. In interviews Ben Tzur represents himself as someone who believes in the unity of humanity and as someone who rejects cultural differentiations. For example, Outlook magazine quotes Ben Tzur as follows:

> "If someone says that my music bridges these two cultures, my answer would be that I don't see much need for a bridge because I don't see much of a difference between them. Maybe I am blind, but nothing feels foreign. Whatever differences there are, they are part of the divine harmony, no?"[28]

While journalistic writing foregrounds Ben Tzur's Jewish Israeli, Hebrew speaking background, the Muslim and spiritual character is stressed when it comes to descriptions of his musical production. According to *The Times of Israel*, Ben Tzur plays "traditional Muslim music", "spiritual Muslim Indian music", "Islamic spiritual music", "Sufi Indian Muslim music" or "religious devotional music."[29] Again, as pointed out above, such formulations create, willingly or not, a contrast between Shye Ben Tzur as a person of Jewish origin and his music with roots in the Muslim tradition. If, or rather when, one tells Shye Ben Tzur's story by emphasising his Jewishness and the Islamic aspect of his music, the artistic fusion apparent in his music is likely to be heard as a political gesture. This is especially true in the context of Israel. However, this is not how Ben Tzur describes his art. "I am not making any political statements," he said in the same interview with *Outlook* magazine.[30] Ben Tzur tries to escape politicized interpretations of his artistic work, which tend to place Islam and Judaism as binary opposites. However, due to the political conditions in Israel he seems unable to escape being identified as someone with motives reaching beyond those of "just" creating music.

Shye Ben Tzur has released three albums, *Heeyam (2003)*, *Shoshan* (2009), and *Junun* (2015).[31] The names of the three albums all come from Sufi terminology. *Hīyam* is an Arabic term which translates as supreme or divine love,

[28] Ginsburg, Song of Moses. Ben Tzur's views regarding the commonalities of different religious traditions and hence the lack of a need for a bridging mission will be elaborated in more detail further down.

[29] Friedman, The Jew who writes Islamic spiritual music in Hebrew.

[30] Ginsburg, Song of Moses.

[31] Shye Ben Tzur, Heeyam [CD], Israel, 2003; idem, Shoshan [CD], Chennai/India, 2009; idem, Junun [CD], New York, 2015.

Shoshan, rose, though a Hebrew word, refers to a rose offered at the tomb of a Sufi saint and *Junūn*, madness of love, is a term which refers to a Sufi concept of losing oneself in divine love for god. A characteristic of all three albums is that the majority of the songs consist of Hebrew lyrics written by Ben Tzur himself and the lyrics of the remaining songs are Sufi or Bhakti poems written and sung in Hindustani.[32] Ben Tzur explains his choice of Hebrew thus:

> "[…] while reading a book by Rumi I found a line that says 'A man who does not speak his own language becomes mute even if he learns a hundred songs.' This hit home for me […]. This is where my desire to write Hebrew lyrics and combine them with Indian music came from."[33]

Ben Tzur's debut album *Heeyam* was released in 2003 (on the Israeli label Globalev). Ben Tzur says that while writing the lyrics and music he was "thinking of an imaginary Hebrew speaking community in Ajmer, and was writing for that community."[34] His second album *Shoshan* was released in 2009 (on the Chennai based label EarthSync). Again, Ben Tzur composed all the music and wrote the lyrics of the Hebrew songs. The Hindustani songs were written by Meerabai, a 16th century female Hindu Bhakti saint,[35] and Gudri Shah Baba III, the grandfather of the current head of Ben Tzur's Sufi Order. *Junun* is the most recent album, released in November 2015 (on the well-regarded American label, Nonesuch Records).[36] *Junun* is the result of co-operation between Shye Ben Tzur, a troupe of Rajasthani folk musicians, a brass band, *qawwālī* singers and Jonny Greenwood, the guitarist of the British rock band Radiohead and a composer in his own right.[37] This artistic co-operation results in a unique blend of different musical genres: The Hindustani classical tradition embodied in the Indian instruments and the *qawwālī* singers, the brass band,

[32] In this paper we use the term "Hindustani" to denote the language of the songs in the album, as Hindustani is a mixture between Hindi and Urdu that is not automatically associated with Hinduism or Islam.

[33] Ben Shalev: The Return from India of Shye Ben Tzur, in: Haaretz, 30.04.2013 (http://www.haaretz.co.il/gallery/music/.premium-1.2007801, accessed 13.08.2016; Hebrew, our translation).

[34] Shalev, The Return from India of Shye Ben Tzur; Hebrew, our translation.

[35] Meerabai's poetry is also popular in Sufism and Sikhism.

[36] The album was not recorded in a studio but in the Mehrangarh Fort in Rajasthan. Paul Thomas Anderson filmed the three-week long recording process and created a movie aptly named Junun (2015).

[37] Describing *Junun's* complex sound, Songlines magazine points to the fact that Ben Tzur fuses three Rajasthani traditions which normally do not play together: *qawwālī* singers, a brass band, and *nagara* drums which are usually used in folk music in Rajasthan (see Broughton, Junun, p. 39).

Ben Tzur's guitar and finally there is Jonny Greenwood's multi instrumented musical input. The quality of production marks a contrast to the two previous albums and it is clear that Ben Tzur's artistic confidence has been growing along with his commercial success.

3. Lyrics and Albums: Representing Sufism in Hebrew and English

All of the songs in Ben Tzur's albums have explicit religious messages expressing desire for and devotion to god. Moreover, they use images and tropes that belong to the figurative language of Sufi poetry. The following section provides a close reading of a selection of Ben Tzur's songs and of the information contained in the booklets that accompany his albums. These albums, along with their attached material, are a useful tool for creating a nuanced picture of Ben Tzur's position in the intersection of Jewish, Israeli and Sufi music.

The booklet of his first album *Heeyam* devotes the majority of its pages to discussing the common source of all religion and sacred music as a shared component of different religious traditions:

> "The musical collaboration between the Hindu and the Semitic traditions was not a coincidence. They all travel far back to antique civilizations, and share great respect for the role of sacred music."

Or, a few pages later, we read the following sentence:

> "The Gospel music of Christians in church, the famous Bhajans of Hindus in temples, the music conducted by the Levite Hebrews two thousand years ago in the Temple of Jerusalem, are only a drop in the ocean of ecstasy stormed by sacred music."

In the booklet, Ben Tzur also speaks about his relation as a Jew to Sufism, which he describes in the following words:

> "In composing and arranging the music, I wanted to create an authentic celebration of spiritual *devotion*. I wanted to bring in my own feelings and ancient heritage of the Jews, and unite it with my great love for the *Hindu and Islamic* cultures." (Emphasis in the original)

This need to explain his unique position as a Jew in the realm of Sufi devotional music does not appear in the next two albums. The booklets of the subsequent albums appear in a more standard format, mainly providing lyrics and

listing the names of the composers and the musicians, devoting no space to explicate Ben Tzur's artistic innovation or religious philosophy. It seems Ben Tzur no longer feels forced to justify his musical work as a Jew and an Israeli composing devotional music that is heavily influenced by the North Indian Sufi as well as Hindu Bhakti tradition.

In *Heeyam*, Ben Tzur places Islam and Judaism side by side in novel ways that becomes very clear in the two songs *Tawhid* and *Bacol Atta*. *Tawḥīd* is an Islamic concept which is interpreted by Sufis as the ultimate realization of god's unity.[38] The song is an unorthodox yoking together of the two invocations central to Judaism and Islam: *sh'ma israel adonai eloheinu adonai eḥad* (The lord is our god, the lord alone) and *lā ilāha illā allāh muḥammadur rasūlullāh* (There is no god but god and Muhammad is his prophet). Indian vocalists sing the Hebrew invocation, resulting in a juxtaposition of foreign, non-Jewish accents reciting a core tenant of Judaism. The placing together of the two invocations coupled with the Indian accents in Hebrew force the listener to re-assess his or her preconceived notions of cultural ownership and automatic identification with this or that language and invocation. The song is solely composed of these two refrains that drive the message home clearly. *Bacol Atta*, which is translated as *You are in every thing* (*sic*), again plays with the concept of *tawḥīd*. Ben Tzur talks in this song about the omnipresence of god, which leads him to express his veneration for all elements and artifacts: "I bow to the Sun, I bow to the flowers […], I bow to a statue, a picture and a rock, Because (*sic*) in every thing, you are."[39] These lyrics could not be in sharper contrast to the orthodox interpretation of the concept of *tawḥīd* in both Islam and Judaism with the insistence on the one and true god. This challenge to monotheism, or exclusive interpretations of the concept, questions the received orthodoxy and is Sufi in its rebellious nature. Ben Tzur's defiance of religious norms is multi-layered. In *Tawhid* he challenges the differentiation between Islam and Judaism, while in *Bacol Atta*, he undermines one of the main tenants of monotheism by purporting to worship god through everything, including statues and pictures.

[38] See Alexander D. Knysh: Islamic Mysticism. A Short History (Themes in Islamic studies), Leiden 2000, p. 303.

[39] Translated by Ben Tzur himself in *Heeyam's* booklet (Shye Ben Tzur: Heeyam).

Ben Tzur's second album *Shoshan*, "rose" in Hebrew, is a term which leads us to think of the cover of Ben Tzur's first album *Heeyam*. The image on the cover portrays a basket of roses given as an offering at a Sufi shrine or tomb (*dargāh*), most probably at the *dargāh* of the founder of the Chishti Order in Ajmer. Moreover, the rose is a central metaphor for love in Sufi poetry, divine love being a way to attain god. As in *Heeyam*, the only language in the booklet attached to the album is English. Ben Tzur translates his own songs into English and there is no original for either the Hebrew or the Hindustani lyrics. All the Hindustani songs are mentioned with their original title and the English translation (for example *Dar-e-Yar*, Doorstep of the Friend and *Dil Ke Bahar*, Springtime For the Heart), while only two of the Hebrew songs composed by Ben Tzur are presented with the transliteration of the original Hebrew. This fact leads us to postulate that Ben Tzur gives less importance to Hebrew, or that he was unclear about his intended audience, or perhaps that he was trying to reach out to a new and bigger market.

In contrast to *Heeyam*, the make-up of the booklet of *Shoshan* appears in a more mainstream format. The only unusual component for an album booklet is a dedication placed at the opening of the booklet, aligning himself with the lineage he refers to. The dedication begins with "[t]hanks to almighty God. The source of Love, the source of longing, the source of inspiration!" It continues to deliver expressions of gratefulness first to the "prophets", then to the founder of the Chishti Order, and finally to the Gudri Shahi Sufi Order that Ben Tzur belongs to. He lists several of the Order's saints and embellishes their names with poetically formulated attributions that read as follows:

> "'Thanks to Hazrat Sayeenji Gudri Shah Baba, the garden of inner blossoming inside the torments of life!' Ben Tzur ends the dedication to the current and last heads of the order thus: 'May this work please your souls and become a Shoshan (rose) in the orchard of your bliss – Amen!'"

Dil Ke Bahar (Springtime for the Heart), was written by one of the heads of the Gudri Shah Sufi Order named Hazrat Nawab Khadim Hasan Gudri Shah Baba III (1894–1970). As in many Sufi poems in Urdu and Persian, love for the divine, submission and the state of ecstasy is a central theme in this song.

> "Why should the dust of my grave
> O! Khadim, not dance in ecstasy,
> From the Ka'ba come the echoes
> Of submission to the Almighty" (*Dil Ke Bahar*)

If we take this song as an example of Sufi poetry and if we compare Ben Tzur's own lyrics with it, the similarity between Ben Tzur's poetry and the Sufi poetry becomes clear. Ben Tzur deals in many of his songs with issues central to traditional Sufi poetry such as the relationship with god using Sufi imagery of dancing, ecstasy and submission to the divine (e. g. *Hine ani kuli shelkha* (Here I am all yours, *Heeyam*), *Sovev* (Whirling, *Shoshan*), *Roked* (Dancing, *Junun*)).

Unlike *Heeyam* and *Shoshan*, the songs in the booklet of the double album *Junun*, are presented in three languages: Hebrew, Hindi and English. The Hindi and Hebrew songs are always translated into English and never into each other, which invites the interpretation that the album is meant for an international audience. Interestingly, the script chosen for rendering the lyrics of the Sufi songs is *Devanāgarī* and not *Nastaʿlīq*.[40] The politics of script and language choice in the Hindi-Urdu-Hindustani sphere are extensive and any short explanation would oversimplify the complexity of this issue.[41] However, we do not want to omit the questions relating to the choice of script: Is the use of the *Devanāgarī* script to be read as an attempt to not mark the songs as explicitly Muslim? *Nastaʿlīq* script evokes Islam, both in and outside India. Perhaps the use of *Devanāgarī* serves as an Indian marker? *Devanāgarī* is recognizable as Indian and can evoke the "Mystical East."

Allah Elohim, the eighth song on *Junun*, stands out as it is the only one to combine two, full-length Hindustani and Hebrew songs. The Hebrew lyrics, like all the Hebrew lyrics sung by Ben Tzur, are his own creation and they are the only Hebrew lyrics in *Junun* with unmistakably Islamic, rather than merely religious references, whereas the Hindustani song is, as it is stated in the booklet, "Traditional Sufi." The theme of the song is the already familiar subject of the similarity if not the uniformity between Judaism and Islam:

[40] *Nastaʿlīq* is a modified form of the Arabic script used to write Urdu and Persian among other languages. *Devanāgarī* is the script for numerous languages in North India including Sanskrit and Hindi.

[41] For a detailed discussion about Hindi language politics in India see Christopher Rolland King: One Language, Two Scripts. The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India, Bombay 1994; Francesca Orsini: What Did They Mean by 'Public'? Language, Literature and the Politics of Nationalism, in: Economic and Political Weekly, 34 (1999) 7, pp. 409–416; Alok Rai: Hindi Nationalism (Tracts for the times), New Delhi 2001.

"To the infidels, I'm religious,
to religious law – an outlaw.
My Lord's house is within me
and I have my temple in his heart.
To Jews I am a Jew, to Muslims – a Muslim.
In any tongue I speak
My language is one!"

This, the last stanza of the song, carries a strong message of unity but does not claim at any point that Islam and Judaism are one and the same. Ben Tzur says "my language is one" but this seems to be the wordless language of devotion rather than the language of religious law. Interestingly, in the Hebrew he uses *kofrim* (infidels), the same root and easily recognizable as an equivalent of *kāfir* in Arabic. Rather than choosing a more neutral word, Ben Tzur places himself with this word choice firmly on the side of religion that is intolerant of non-conforming, or secular views. After establishing himself in this orthodox position he immediately retracts and calls himself an "outlaw" or one who has lost the true path (*holekh sholal).* By saying "to Jews I am a Jew, to Muslims – a Muslim" Ben Tzur voices ideas which challenge Jewish and Muslim ideas of belonging by describing a universal religious experience rather than one associated with any specific religion. While many Jewish mystical approaches challenge the institutional version of Judaism, it is rare that the differences between Judaism and other religions are challenged. By repeating "Allah Elohim" together Ben Tzur implicitly dissolves the boundaries between them, which can be interpreted as challenging the boundaries between Islam and Judaism. *Allah Elohim* plays with the listeners' expectations and assumptions, forcing them to stop and think or to accept the proximity of Allah and Elohim as natural and unproblematic. The name *Allah Elohim* immediately raises the question whether this is a linguistic division – Elohim in Hebrew and Allah in Arabic – but the same god, or whether this is a division between the Jewish and Muslim god. The last two lines of the song "In any tongue I speak my language is one!" further blur any stable understanding or division between the language and religion. In our reading, this is the ultimate purpose of the song, to render any boundaries as hopelessly rigid and therefore irrelevant.

Although *Allah Elohim*'s message is very similar to the message in *Tawhid*, in which he placed *sh'ma Israel* and *lā ilāha* side by side, *Allah Elohim* carries

a more complex message since here there is a clear articulation of an identity which is inclusive of both religions rather than exclusively Muslim or Jewish. *Tawhid*, on the other hand, leaves the listener to come to his or her own conclusion regarding the relationship between Islam and Judaism. As mentioned above, *Allah Elohim* is combined with a devotional Hindustani song that carries the title *Hum Bane* (We Become). The theme of the song, similar but not identical to *Allah Elohim*, is religious tolerance, in this case between Hindus and Muslims. The first two lines of the song express this message clearly by saying: "H is for Hindu M is for Muslim, H and M together make Hum (in Hindi Hum means 'us')." The final part, similar to *Allah Elohim*'s ending, talks about god who is ultimately one but who appears in different forms: "You are manifested in the Prophet Muhammad, and you are manifested in Krishna." While the Hindustani song's message can be linked to the discourse of religious tolerance and unity in India, the message of Ben Tzur's song is a new phenomenon in devotional Jewish and Hebrew music. *Hum Bane* serves as Indian color for Ben Tzur's song and the space given to it, both in the booklet and in the track itself, is much smaller. The average listener has no way of knowing that there is a complete Hindustani song here rather than some "Indian language background" which is meaningless to the average listener. If the Hindustani is there for the Indian flavor why are the messages of both songs so similar? This remains an open question. It seems Ben Tzur is positioning himself in the perennialist Sufi vein of unity. In other words, Ben Tzur's lyrics are rooted in an articulated Sufi tradition yet he uses the hazy image of India as a spiritual land in order to deliver the message. The average listener does not read the translation of the lyrics but this does not stop Ben Tzur from maintaining his musical and ideological integrity.

In the song *Ahuvi* (My Beloved), Ben Tzur takes another step in mixing the Jewish and Indian devotional tropes. *Ahuvi* has lines like "the city wears its festive face" (*ha'reḥovot lavshu ḥag*) which is a stock phrase in Hebrew poetry. The beloved here is god and the relationship portrayed is more of a Sufi one than a Jewish one. The song continues with allusions that can be read as both Jewish and Sufi but the ending shows the influence of, or adherence to, Hindustani poetical language. A famous trope in devotional and non-devotional Hindustani poetry is the poet inserting his or her name in the final couplet. Indeed in *Chala Vahi Des* (Let's go to that land, *Junun*) and *Daras Bin* (Without your image, *Shoshan*) by Meerabai, she also inserts her name in the final

couplet. Here, in *Ahuvi*, Ben Tzur plays with his own name's meaning *shye* (present, gift, grace) in order to both identify as the poet and in order to praise god by saying that his presence is a gift. It is hard to capture the word play in the English translation. The booklet renders it as: "for where shall I turn to seek your grace?" (*ana efne bevakshi – shai ḥasdekha).* However, "where shall I seek – Shye your devotee," is an equally precise translation.

In order to better understand Ben Tzur's creating *qawwālī* music in Hebrew, we contrast him with another example of *qawwālī* music in Israel. After Ben Tzur introduced the novel genre of Hebrew *qawwālī* another band has sprung up in Israel. This band, called *Haqawwaliya*, Hebrew for "The *Qawwālī* Band", is led by Yaron Peer, an Israeli musician who used to accompany Ben Tzur from time to time. Unlike the band that usually accompanies Ben Tzur, The Rajasthan Express, *Haqawwaliya* consists solely of Israeli musicians who play Indian instruments and their texts are Jewish liturgical poems (*piyutim*) as well as Yaron Peer's own lyrics. On Peer's homepage he describes the band as "performing ecstatic devotional music" and *qawwālī* is explained as "coming from India and Pakistan, with some claiming that it originated in the temple of Jerusalem."[42] This message can be read as an example of cultural mixture and especially of cultural appropriation. One of the *Haqawwalia's* most popular songs, the song "Ali" provides an intriguing example of cultural fusion and appropriation. The credit for the musical composition is given to Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, a legendary Pakistani *qawwālī* singer while the lyrics are Peer's. However, he makes use of the original lyrics in an ingenious way. The original song is a panegyric to Ali, the Prophet's cousin, and contains the refrain "*Ali maula*" which means master Ali. Peer kept the refrain, slightly altering the pronunciation and wrote the lyrics around it. In the Hebrew version Peer sings "*ali mala*" (go up) as an imperative or request to the soul to rise up and transcend.[43] The result is an amazing cross-cultural pollination which most Hebrew listeners will not be aware of. In both the Hindustani and the Hebrew the refrain serves as the peak of the song's excitement, repeated again and again in ecstatic frenzy. In the Hindustani this serves as prayer or supplication to Ali, and in Hebrew this serves as an entreaty to the soul.

[42] Yaron Peer: Qawaliya, http://www.yaronpeer.com/portfolio-items/the-qawaliya/ (accessed 12.08.2016; Hebrew, our translation).

[43] Ali is the female imperative – rise – in Hebrew and the soul (*nefesh*) is a feminine noun.

This example sheds light on Ben Tzur's project and shows how his lyrics and music are not the result of cross-cultural appropriation but transference of a musical devotional genre from one language and cultural context to a different language and context. We now turn to the reception of Ben Tzur's songs in Israel and argue that Ben Tzur's music manages to enter the mainstream music scene in Israel, despite expressing Muslim references, because it is seen, or more precisely, heard, as Indian and spiritual rather than as Islamic.

4. India and Israel, Islam and Judaism: Concluding remarks

Ben Tzur's reception in Israel raises questions about the conditions that facilitate the consumption of his music. We interpret the fact that Ben Tzur's *qawwālī* music has been accepted without resentment as a sign that the symbolic repertoire applied in the performance of Ben Tzur's music evokes associations with India and not with Islam and more specifically with India as a spiritual and not a religious space.[44] Formulating it in a different way, the Indian markers in Ben Tzur's musical production color the Muslim references as primarily Indian rather than primarily Muslim, which makes it less threatening for an Israeli or more generally Western (or non-Muslim) audience. This allows the listeners to embrace the musical composition in an unproblematic way. With this interpretation we follow the hypothesis formulated by Goldman and Patton in an essay about the phenomena of Israeli's fascination with India. They succinctly say: "Indian culture that is 'Oriental' can be engaged without political threat, and without the burden of territorial claims and counterclaims. Moreover, all that is Muslim can be effectively subsumed into all that is Indian and therefore domesticated."[45] This means, that for Israeli Jews, and perhaps for many Westerners,

[44] This emphasis on the spiritual character of India has its roots in orientalist framings of the mystic east. For a discussion of the development of the conceptualization of India as a mystical space, see Richard King: Orientalism and Religion. Postcolonial Theory, India and 'the Mystic East', London 1999. Today, the differentiation between spirituality and religion is still produced and reproduced in New Age circles, and this differentiation has been widely accepted as a cultural factum. In this binary composition, spirituality refers to an entity that transcends all types of communal, religious and social differences by emphasising an ultimate sameness, whereas religion is understood as a man-made entity that fosters boundaries between different social groups.

[45] Shalom Goldman / Laurie Patton: From All Their Habitations. Indian Love Call. Israelis, Orthodoxy, and Indian Culture, in: Judaism, 50 (2001) 3, pp. 351–361; here p. 361.

India provides a space for engaging with Islam outside of the politics of the Middle East and tensions surrounding Islam in the West.[46]

Ben Tzur's music is understood by his audience as Indian since the instruments and the compositions are recognizably Indian even to an untrained ear. Moreover, design and content of the album booklets, as well as the video clips, emphasize an Indian context over a Muslim one. This is not to say that Ben Tzur consciously hides Islamic references but rather that the image of India as a spiritual land, an image which frames common perception of India and which is being reproduced in New Age discourse, does not take into account its Muslim heritage and even when it does, it portrays an oriental, non-threatening form of Islam.[47] Furthermore, it needs to be mentioned that for the last five years there has been a Sufi festival in Israel. The festival takes place in a center called "Ashram in the Desert" (*ashram bamidbar)* where there are workshops and concerts from various Sufi traditions from across the Islamic world.[48] While there are a few people with Arab names conducting workshops, the language of the website is Hebrew and English only and obviously Arabs or Palestinians are not the intended audience. Both Shye Ben Tzur and the *Haqawwaliya* band have performed there and from video clips it is obvious that India has a profound influence on the reception of Sufism in Israel. Many of the people participating in the festival wear Indian clothes and of course the event is set in an 'ashram', the epitome of Indian spirituality for people with an inclination for India and Indian religious practices. This observation strengthens the argument that Sufism in Israel is mediated through the

[46] Apart from this argument about the effect of the Indian element in Ben Tzur's music, we also want to mention the point raised by Chittick that many people consider "'Sufism' as alien to 'Islam,' however these two terms are defined" (William C. Chittick: Sufism. A Short Introduction, Oxford 2000, p. 3). If we take into account Ben Tzur's audience that does not necessarily associate India with the "mystic East", those listeners perhaps have a more nuanced understanding of Sufism as not being coterminous with Islam.

[47] In an interview for the newspaper Haaretz in 2013 it becomes clear, that Shye Ben Tzur is aware that people tend to mystify – and idealize – India and that he is trying to find a way to work against this tendency. He says: "I write about serious things like my desire for God and my love for him, but when I think about how to pass this message, I realize that if the music and the sound will be as serious and as subtle as the text it might sound too New Age like and even pathetic. This happens often when dealing with Indian culture, there is a tendency to romanticize and idealize it" (Shalev, The Return from India of Shye Ben Tzur; Hebrew, our translation).

[48] Sufi Festival, https://www.sufifestival.co.il/ (accessed 15.08.2016).

perception of India as the mystical orient and this allows for Islamic messages to be accepted.[49]

Once the spiritualized and mystified image of India as the framework for Ben Tzur's musical oeuvre is foregrounded, the Israeli, and perhaps international audience, feel safe to abandon preconceived ideas and are open to new perspectives.[50] This allows people to approach Sufism just as they would try yoga or Buddhist meditation or any other practice that is perceived as intrinsically Indian. The way in which India appears in popular imagery depoliticizes Ben Tzur's music. With this we contradict the argument brought forth by Chen Bram who says, "Sufi spirituality in Israel [...] is not detached from politics."[51] He argues in an article discussing Western Sufi Orders and their relationship with Palestinian ones in Israel that Sufism in Israel, even in New Age circles, can never be non-political because of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.[52] However, because of the strong Indian reference in Ben Tzur's musical composition, Ben Tzur's Sufi *qawwālī* production appears independent of the political realm and Ben Tzur's Sufism manages to remain detached from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Perhaps Israelis are in dire need of a space that is not governed by the conflict and India provides this space for them. Goldman and Patton also hint at this point by saying that "India stands in for the 'others' that cannot be admitted into consciousness, that it is an effective substitute for the Palestinians."[53] Ben Tzur might be creating a space that is distant from the conflict, a space in which people can feel that they are open to other cultures, while at the same time actually ignoring their immediate neighbors.

[49] Here we refer to Sufism as a component of the New Age landscape, as opposed to Palestinian-Israeli Sufi circles.

[50] Marianna Ruah Midbar, a researcher working on the New Age, describes the phenomenon and influences of Israeli interaction with India and how easy it is for Israelis to explore Indian religions without feeling that they have betrayed their own Jewish faith. She argues, simply put, that since Indian religions are viewed as spiritual, they don't pose a threat to one's own religion (see Ruah Midbar: Thank God it is Good, p. 320).

[51] Chen Bram: Spirituality under the Shadow of the Conflict. Sufi Circles in Israel, in: Israel Studies Review, 29 (2014) 2, pp. 118–139; here p. 133.

[52] In this article, Bram specifically looks at the "Sons of Abraham", which is a Jewish Palestinian Sufi order aimed at finding common ground in spite of – or rather because of – the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Bram, Spirituality under the Shadow of the Conflict).

[53] Goldman/Patton, From All Their Habitations, p. 361.

Research Report

Prospects of Japanese Translation of the Babylonian Talmud

by Hiroshi Ichikawa

Abstract

An academic project of translating the Babylonian Talmud into Japanese was initiated by a president of private jewelry company in 1986 and sixteen volumes of it were published with the collaboration of more than ten Japanese scholars of the Bible and Judaism until 2016. In order to make an assessment for possible impacts of this translation on Japanese cultural revitalization, the author tried to perceive the collision and struggles the Talmud has faced in transmitting itself to later generations even to the present days as it has still claimed its universal validity. It will be helpful to envisage Jewish intellectuals of the subsequent generations wondering what it was to live according to the Torah and the Talmud and how they coped with difficulties in facing the collision of foreign cultural impacts especially in the modern era.

As the Japanese people had been profoundly influenced by Buddhism before the modern era, the assumption of the similarity between the Buddhist notion of enlightenment through transmission of the ineffable truth and the similar notion of Rabbinic Judaism will help prospect the possible influence of the Jewish scripture. This Buddhist notion had been most successfully developed in the tradition of Zen Buddhism in Japan. Furthermore this notion was fully and more influentially developed in the sphere of education of Japanese military ruling class and their cultural achievements before the modern era. So we suppose that Jewish endeavors in the Talmudic studies facing collisions and struggles against western impacts will give some insights in considering Japanese struggles against, and responses to, the forceful impacts of the modern West upon our traditional value system.

1. Introduction

An academic project of translating the Babylonian Talmud into Japanese was initiated by a thoughtful president of private jewelry company in 1986 and sixteen volumes of it, thirty six tractates of sixty three, were published with the collaboration of more than ten Japanese scholars of the Bible and Judaism until 2016. As this publication was intended to be a public contribution of private companies, About five hundred copies of each volume were distributed to universities, public libraries and individual scholars who were interested in religion and philosophy for free. With the bankruptcy of the company in 2015 after the decades of Japanese economic deterioration this project forcefully came to an end and about half of the tractates are left unpublished or untranslated. During these years interests in Jews and Judaism have fortunately been aroused in public and academic spheres in the 1990s and young generation began to be interested in Jewish studies. In addition, introductory books on Judaism appeared and especially the books on the Talmudic discourses by Emanuel Levinas have been translated into Japanese by T. Uchida,[1] a scholar of French literature. At such a situation the author of this article as a general director of this project would like to make an assessment of this translation for its possible impact on Japanese cultural revitalization.

2. Outline of the Project and Its Results

The idea of this project by Mr. K. Kimura, former President of Miki Corporation, came from his business experience. He showed us his idea at several editorial meetings that he had become acquainted with many Jewish business counterparts in the thirty years of his diamond jewelry transaction and had felt that his brilliant business success was owed much to them because they helped him beyond usual business partnership when he fell into financial difficulties. Touched by their spiritual strength in his intimate friendship, he asked them the reason why Jewish spiritual toughness in spite of their diaspora of many generations. They would often show him the volumes of the

[1] Tatsuru Uchida was born in 1950, literary critic and former professor of French literature at Kobe-Jogakuin Daigaku (The Women's College of Kobe). His translations include *Kon-nan-na Jiyu (Liberte Difficile)* in 1985, *Talumudo Yon-Kowa (Quatre Lectures Talmudiques)* in 1987, and *Talumudo Shin-Go-Kowa (Du sacre au saint, cinq nouvelles lectures talmudiques)* in 1990, all three were published by Kokubun-sha, Tokyo, Japan.

Talmud in their houses. He thought the Talmud seemed to be for Jews what the Confucian Analects would be for Japanese and looked for some venues to introduce Jewish spirit to Japanese people for the token of his gratitude for the goodwill of his Jewish friends. He was advised by his mentor, Professor S. Kanzawa, professor of philosophy in his graduated Waseda University, of an academic project of publishing the Japanese translation of the Talmud as public contribution of a private company, according to which he decided to make Japanese translation of the whole volumes of the Babylonian Talmud. It was when I had just returned from the study of the Talmud from the Hebrew University in 1986, that his agency offered me to help realizing the idea. As I was just junior research associate at Tsukuba University, we invited Professor T. Ishida,[2] a senior Biblical scholar of Tsukuba University, for the general director of this project. Responding to our call, other Biblical scholars gathered, made editorial board and began to convene many meetings to establish the methods of translation. We had to decide many things: who will translate which tractate? From which tractate to start, whether to translate from the original or from an extant English translation of the Talmud like Soncino Version etc.

After meetings of editorial board we reached the conclusion that the first publication would be the tractate Megillah by collaboration of a professional translator with the background of Biblical scholarship and myself in 1992. He prepared a draft of a Japanese translation from the English versions of the Talmud of Soncino and Art Scroll with very minute footnotes and explanation of the technical terms, which were very helpful for me to read the original and revise his draft. Based upon this experience, we established some basic methods of translation.

Firstly, the Japanese version of the Mishnah and the Gemara of the Babylonian Talmud should be in principle a translation from the original text with the help of the translations of European languages. There was another valid idea of translating from some extant English versions insisting that as there were very few Japanese scholars with the knowledge of the Talmud and the project of translating the complete volumes of the Talmud should be

[2] Professor Tomoo Ishida, born in 1931, received PhD in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, taught at Tsukuba University, published *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel* (BZAW 142), Berlin 1977; *Yudayakyo-Shi (History of Judaism)* (in Japanese), Tokyo 1980.

done within a limited term, we were compelled to do the work from an extant English version with the help of the ultramodern automatic English translation system of the printing company responsible for this project. However, all the scholars of the editorial board rejected it, claiming that only an academically trusted translation from the original text will be valued and endured forever.

Secondly, in doing the work we designated passages of the Bible, the Mishnah, and the baraita with the bold-type printing in the layout of the Japanese translation to discern from sayings of the Amoraic sages and the Aramaic sentences. It was sometimes difficult to discern them in some tradition in which the Amoraic sage used the Hebrew language in his saying and even more difficult, though it was very rare, to tell where to end the Tannaitic and where to start the Amoraic statement in which they were intermingled. This method was thought to be crucially important for Japanese readers because the Talmudic passages almost always consist of oral debate and discussions based upon the citation from the Biblical passages and the recital of the Tannaitic traditions.

Thirdly, we devised to put a sign or a space or even to insert editorial explanation in separating one *sugya* discussion from another. As the original text does not put any sign of period at the end of each sentence, extant European translations which are conscious of the separation of paragraph have been very helpful in understanding the content but they are sometimes not so aware or conscious of the sign "Sof-Pasuk" of the original text, i. e. the end sign of the *sugya*. Division of the *sugya* and the paragraph is very important to understand the structure of the logic of the sages.

Lastly, footnotes and explanations of the technical terms and the lexicography of lives of the sages were added in the publication in addition to the introductory explanation of the tractate and we made a booklet of these for further work of translation by our colleagues as a useful side book for the identification of terms and human figures.

Prof. Ishida led the editorial board as general director in the first decade of this project. Though he himself did not translate the text, he watched the results of each publication with rigid eyes on formal aspects of the publication. He left our project after the decade and I took over his task. Late Professor M. Miyoshi was a Catholic scholar of the New Testament and made a huge contribution to our project in translating almost all the volumes of Seder

Nashim, and Tractate Niddah and other Mishnaic tractates of Seder Tohorot, and the Mishnaic tractates of Seder Zeraim except Tractate Berakhot.[3] He made use of the Goldschmidt German translation of the Talmud in understanding the original. He invited his colleague, Professor K. Usami,[4] a Catholic scholar of the Bible, who translated tractates Sukkah, Avodah Zarah, Eduyot and Horayot. Professor S. Nagakubo,[5] a senior scholar of the New Testament and Rabbinic Literature, also made a considerable contribution to us in translating the Pirkei Avot and Avot de-Rabbi Nathan in one volume, and made a monumental translation of Tractate Shabbat. As he was a devout believer of the Seventh Day Adventist, it was an appropriate choice of the texts. My second work was Tractate Makkot, challenging to write a lengthy explanation of the structure and content of the whole text, which was my little contribution to vindicate the spirit and logic of the Talmudic discussion. Each of us talked with colleagues and friends about the project and some scholars agreed to participate and others hesitated. Then the editorial board expanded and added other scholars. Other scholars too had great contribution to our translation, some of their works were published and others not finished by the end of this project. It was ended in the middle of my working on Tractate Sanhedrin. It was the great regret that we could not publish works of several important tractates including Berakhot, Pesahim, Yoma, the first three Tractates of the Seder Nezikin i. e. Bava Qamma, Bava Metzia, Bava Batra, Sanhedrin and all the volumes of Seder Kodashim.

[3] Professor Michi Miyoshi, born in 1931, graduated the master course of Graduate School of Theology, Sophia University in Tokyo in 1963, received Doctor in re Biblica at Vatican Biblical Institute in Rome in 1974. Taught at Nanzan University and at Hirosaki University. Published: Der Anfang des Reiseberichts (Lk 9,51–10,24). Eine Redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung, Analecta Biblica 60, Rome 1974.

[4] Professor Koshi Usami, born in 1939, graduated the master course of Graduate School of Theology, Sophia University in Tokyo in 1965, received Doctor in re Biblica at Gregorian University in Rome in 1980, taught at Sophia University and at Women's University of Sacred Heart, published: Somatic Comprehension of Unity: The Church in Ephesus, Analecta Biblica 101, Rome 1983.

[5] Professor Senzo Nagakubo, born in 1933. PhD of Duke University, participated as a Duke University staff in the excavation at Meron in 1974. President and professor of San-iku Gaku-in College.

3. Some Remarks concerning the Difficulties in Translation

In this occasion I would like to take note on the problems that I felt in reading or translating the Talmud. I will take some examples on the difference in the way of exegesis of the Scriptures as well as the difference in concepts and some technical terms designating the same Hebrew terms as the Ten Commandments and the Faith between Judaism and Christianity and then take some problems on the division of the *sugya* and the division inside the *sugya*.

3.1 Counting the Decalogue

Jews have been accustomed to seeing that the first commandment of the Decalogue should be "I am the Lord thy God, who has brought thee out of the land of Egypt" as is shown in the symbol mark of Two tablets of the Decalogue put on the top of the Holy Ark in the synagogues. So it is easy to read the passage from the Talmud explaining the number of the commandments of the Torah. We have it toward the end of Tractate Makkot of the Talmud Bavli (23b–24a), that the Torah was given to the Israelites mediated by Moses and the total number of the commandments of the Torah was 611 according to the numerical value of each letter of Torah which is less than whole of 613 commandments. What are these two? These two sayings were directly declared by the Lord to the Israelites; the first was "Anokhi Adonay…" and the second one was "Lo yehiyeh lekha elohim aherim…," however after that they could not endure to hear the divine sayings any longer and asked Moses to hear the divine words instead of them. The sages took the first saying as Mizvat Asse, an affirmative commandment for we know that Maimonides took it as the first of 248 affirmative commandments in his Mishne Torah. This tradition, however, seems very hard to grasp for us for we are accustomed to counting the Decalogue unconsciously according to the Christian point of view, taking "You shall have no other gods besides me" as the first commandment. The Hebrew concept of "Aseret ha-dibrot" has been translated into Japanese not as the ten sayings like the Decalogue but as "Jukkai" or "Jikkai," i. e. the ten commandments, so that the saying should be either affirmative commandments or negative commandments.

This is not the only problem of the counting. We have to be aware of the reason why the Talmud took the saying "I am the Lord" as the first commandment. Talmudic tradition presupposes the fundamental idea of "acceptance

of the yoke of the kingdom of heaven," i. e. "Qabbalat 'ol Malkhut Shamaim" in Jewish religion which was totally different from the Christian idea of the kingdom of heaven.[6] This Jewish idea can be seen in such traditions as those of the Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael on the order of the ten commandments of why the saying of "I am the Lord" should be the first and be followed by the "Lo yehiyeh lekha elohim aherim." This question was compared to human affairs in this tradition: After conquering the new territory, the king was demanded by his men to issue an edict of directives over the inhabitants there, however he opposed his men and told them to ask the inhabitants whether they would accept his authority or not, saying if they do it, I will issue an edict but if they don't, why should I issue an edict? This is the idea of the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of heaven, which should be the first act of the people of the Lord followed by their obedience to the divine laws that is the idea of the acceptance of the yoke of the Torah and Mizvot. The difference of the Jewish way of counting the ten commandments from the Christian ones has been firmly connected with the Jewish idea of the kingdom of Heaven which must also differ from the Christian one. I did not know the original idea of the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven that was set behind the Talmudic passage of Makkot. Later I recognized this idea recurred in Rabbinic literature explaining the order of the reading of three passages of the Shema and found it very important for Japanese to know the Jewish way of counting the Decalogue. It may be an impressive and easy way of knowing the difference of theological ideas between Judaism and Christianity.

3.2 Faith or Trustworthiness on Habakuk's "Emunato"

After the aggadah explaining the number of the mizvot around the end of the Bavli Taractate Makkot of 24a, we have a long story related to the reduction of the commandments because of the weakness in the integrity of the Israelites who could not keep all the commandments of the Law for generation after generation. 613 commandments were replaced by 11 principles of the behavior on which all the commandments were based, introduced by king David based upon the verses of the Book of Psalms. And then the number of the precepts was reduced one by one and finally we are led to the conclusion that

[6] Efraim A. Urbach: The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs [Hebrew]. Jerusalem 1982, p. 348.

Jews were permitted to live according to the only one fundamental principle; namely "Ve-Zadik Be-Emunato Ihye" Habakkuk 2:4. This passage reminds us immediately of Paul's remark on the fundamental principle of the Christian faith in the New Testament, in the Letter to the Galatians 3:11. This sentence has usually been translated into English in the following: "But the righteous shall live by his faith" and so does in Japanese. What does it mean by "his faith"? It would be easier to understand the meaning in Christianity for it demands the faith in one God or the faith in Jesus Christ. In spite of that we have to explain the pronoun "his," which suggests subjective faith, but faith should be objective in this connotation. For me it seemed inappropriate to translate it as "his faith." I preferred the meaning of his trustworthiness in both the Habakkuk context and in the Talmudic context. However we translated this sentence as "faith" according to the extant Japanese Biblical translation with the footnote referring to several other meanings.

3.3 Apprenticeship of the Disciples to their Master

Apprenticeship was the most remarkable feature of Jewish sages in Rabbinic literature and we are often taught that the total service of the disciples to their master was complete subjection which was designated by Shimush ha-Rav.[7] It seems that silence was more valuable among the disciples in learning from their master. As this teaching so resembles East Asian traditional social virtue, I used to imagine with comparison with the Japanese tradition of apprenticeship that Masa u-Matan was common only among the same rank of the sages in Jewish tradition too while their disciples concentrated on hearing masters' discussions in silence. However we are also told of the characteristics of the debates and disputes among the master and his disciples. Today most Jews like to talk about their fondness of discussions, saying "Two Jews have three opinions." Which is more desirable for them, silence or discussion?

There were many discussions of Rabbi Johanan and his disciples concerning the halakha in this Tractate Makkot, however here I am concerned with some struggles between fellow disciples. I found two interesting descriptions, which were taken from the ordinary study scenes in the school of Rabbi

[7] Ezra Zion Melamed: Mavo le-Sifrut ha-Talmud. Kiryat Sefer / Jerusalem 1977, pp. 68–70.

Johanan. First example may let us glance at the relation between fellow disciples. We have it in the BT Makkot 5b:

> "Said Resh Lakish: This woman is suspect. Said R. Eleazar to him: 'Assuming she is suspect, are all Israel to be held as suspects?' Once as they were both present at the sessions of R. Johanan, then came such a suit before them and Resh Lakish observed: 'This woman is suspect.' Thereupon R. Johanan replied to him: 'If she is suspect, are all Israel to be held as suspects?' Resh Lakish then turned round and looked askance at R. Eleazar, saying: 'So you had heard this from [Johanan] bar-Nappaha and did not tell me in his name!'"[8]

Rashi commented on this sentence that R. Eleazar had not mentioned the name in citing this teaching to Resh Lakish, and we learn that Resh Lakish was an elder fellow, sitting in the front row, and R. Eleazar, a younger fellow, sat behind him. Though we have many cases in which Resh Lakish already discussed with Rabbi Johanan in equal status as a matured sage, he seemed still a senior disciple sitting before the master this time. He was upset at the attitude of his younger fellow but it was proved that he had not taken his younger fellow's view into consideration and that he should have been attentive to his fellow's opinion which was opposed to his. It seemed that he was ashamed with his boastfulness by his master. In addition, it is hard to imagine in Japanese traditional virtue that the disciple would have called his master by the nickname as Resh Lakish called his master "Bar Nappaha" among the fellow disciples.

In another case we find Rabbi Johanan told his disciple to think for himself without telling the answer. This seems to me a rare case of the master encouraging his disciple. We have it in BT Makkot 16a: "R. Johanan observed: We have only this instance and one other. R. Eleazar asked him: Where? – When you find it [you will know], was his reply. He left him, made careful search and found [the following] etc."[9] This story was included in a long chain of discussions concerning the responsibility and punishment of the special type of the affirmative commandment of Mizvat Asse which includes in it the

[8] BT Makkot 5b, Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud, Seder Nezikin, Shebu'oth, Makkoth, London 1987.

[9] BT Makkot 16a, Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud, Seder Nezikin, Shebu'oth, Makkoth, London 1987.

negative commandment of Mizvat Lo Taase. It is said that even Rabbi Johanan was forced to withdraw his previous judgment by harsh counter arguments.

3.4 A Blind Man May Repeat the Blessing

Of two tractates of my translation most touched discussion was on the dispute between the sages and Rabbi Juda on permission of repeating the blessing before the Shema by a blind man in Tractate Megillah 24b. As I was familiar with a Buddhist parable concerning altruism, comparison in view and situation was attractive. The Buddhist parable was used to praise the charitable act without anticipation of reward, saying that putting a light for the sake of others gives light before me.[10] Though it was not concerned with a blind man in this Buddhist parable, the situation is similar. A parable in Jewish teaching was not concerned with altruism, but it sheds light on the benefit caused by the lighting in the darkness.

In the Mishnah Rabbi Juda was opposed to the majority opinion, declaring that one who has never seen the light from his birth may not recite the blessings before the Shema because he has never got benefit from the light. After the Masa u-Matan between them in the Gemara, the Rabbis won him in the dispute based upon the remark of Rabbi Yose. Rabbi Yose said:

> "I was perplexed by this verse, *And thou shalt grope at noonday as the blind gropeth in darkness (Deu28:29)*. Now what difference [I asked] does it make to a blind man whether it is dark or light? [Nor did I find the answer] until the following incident occurred. I was once walking on a pitch-black night when I saw a blind man walking in the road with a torch in his hand. I said to him, 'My son, why do you carry this torch?' He replied, 'As long as I have this torch in my hand, people see me and save me from the holes and thorns and briars.'"[11]

This *sugya* was interesting too in another aspect. It comprised of three parts, of which the first and the third parts were conducted in Hebrew while the

[10] "Three Virtues of Food" (Shokumotsu Santoku Gosho): Nichiren Daishonin Gosho Zenshu, Hen-nen-tai (Collective Writings of Nichiren Daishonin in one Volume in Chronicled Edition), Soka Gakkai (37th ed.), Tokyo 1984, p. 1466. Nichiren 1222–1282 was a Japanese Buddhist monk, founded mass congregation in the Kamakura period, whose teachings have given rise to New-Religious movements in modern Japan including Soka Gakkai International.

[11] BT Megillah 24b, Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud, Seder Mo'ed, Ta'anith, Magillah, Hagigah, London 1984.

middle one was written in Aramaic. Usually in such a case, the Hebrew parts are looked upon as the baraita and the Aramaic part is taken as the Amoraic explanation. It is true the first Hebrew sentence was introduced by the introductory word Tanya and the third was also led by the *Tanya*. And my translation followed these words of Tanya. However, the second sentence was strange in that it seemed to be a continuation of the first sentence but suddenly in the middle turned into Aramaic when the speaker changed from the sages to Rabbi Juda. It seemed to me the baraita was originally the dispute between the sages and Rabbi Juda, consisting of two parts but in the middle of the sentence Rabbi Juda's saying turned into Aramaic as if it was a part of discussion of the Amoraim. However, it is hard to tell when the baraita ended and when the Amoraim started saying. In addition all of the discussants in it seem to be Tannaim as if they continued to make clear the reasoning of the dispute after reciting this topic of the Mishnah. I guess that the Mishnaic sages were interested in discussing such a crucial issue as this controversial subject including mystical experience so that the tradition of this *sugya* was inseparably transmitted with the teaching of the Mishnah in the Mishnaic period. And then Amoraim could have cited the second part freely in the Aramaic to the effect that this *sugya* resembled to a usual structure of the Gemara.

3.5 Significance of the *Sof-Pasuk*

One of the devices of our translation was to mark the *Sof-Pasuk*. I referred that extant European translations usually do not take it into consideration. I will show a great example that would make me reconsider the significance of this ending sign. It was found in the Talmudic discourse of E. Levinas. It is fortunate for Japanese to read it in Japanese owing to Professor T. Uchida. Levinas did not take this mark into consideration in almost all his discourses and especially interesting was the passage from the Tractate Sanhedrin in discussing the power of magicians. It seems to me he did intentionally neglect the end mark. And we Japanese luckily appreciate that Uchida's translation was accurate and loyal to Levinas in this respect.

In our text we read the saying of Rabbi Johanan and then the end mark of Sof-Pasuk. I quote it according to the Soncino edition; "R. Johanan said: Why are they [sorcerers] called KaShaFYM? Because they lessen [MaKhHiShiN] the power of Divine agencies." The *sugya* ends here, the *Sof-Pasuk* being put

at the end of this sentence. And then comes new exegetical *sugya* with the citation of the sentence from the book of Deuteronomy, "There is none else besides Him (4:35)." The Soncino and other translations followed this reading and I had no problem to do the same. But Levinas included this citation of the Torah into the statement of Rabbi Johanan so that this citation concluded his statement.[12] These two sentences contradict each other. His view on the power of sorcerers contradicts the view of the Torah on the same subject. But who put the end mark here? It was perhaps done by Saboraim, the compilers and editors of the Gemara and then by the editors of the printing text. They had certainly in mind the problem that the statement of Rabbi Johanan contradicted the passage of the Torah. Even more interesting was the fact that the new exegetical *sugya* would endeavor to persuade the view of Rabbi Johanan as a majority opinion among the sages, making the view of the Torah a minority opinion. Levinas's reading dares to suggest us that Rabbi Johanan had already been conscious of the contradiction and would have posed the crucial question to his disciples and following generations. He might have asked himself this problem. In so doing we are inevitably led to the exegesis of this sentence of Deuteronomy. I appreciated the reading of Levinas and learned more that we the reader should not be totally bound with the printed edition of the Talmud.

This experience immediately reminded me of the intellectual influence on him of his master Shushani, the legendary wandering master of the Talmud. Levinas noted that the sayings of the Talmudic rabbis were not doctrinal statements but the intellectual confrontations and the anatomical operation into the structure of human knowledge and categories. Through their debates multiple meanings of the divine revelation were conjured up from the verses of the Talmud. Exegetical acts brought forth new revelations of the Bible. In this manner, I felt a shade of his master behind the discourse of Levinas.

In this respect, remark of Ellie Wiesel on Shushani will be helpful for the study of the Talmud. Shushani's lesson made Wiesel think that everything he had learned till then was as nothing by comparison. Shushani was fond of shaking the conventional faith of people and to scare them. His method of

[12] III Traite Sanhedrin pp. 67a–68a, "Desacralisation et Desensorcellment," Emmanuel Levinas: Du Sacre Au Saint, Paris 1970, p. 84; Emmanuel Levinas: Nine Talmudic Readings. Tr. by Annette Aronowicz, Bloomington 1994, p. 137.

teaching was "to demolish before rebuilding, to abase before recompense." "It is to him," said Wiesel "that I owe constant drive to question, my pursuit of the mystery that lies within knowledge and of darkness hidden within light."[13]

3.6 Toward the Implications of the Study of the Talmud in Japan

Most basic elements of the Talmudic study are such notions as the incessant chain of oral transmission, the disciplined way of living in communion, the intimate personal relationship between master and disciple, the authoritative ordination, and human perfection as the ultimate end. All these elements are interconnected with one another with the value of the study of the Torah for its own sake in the center. The genealogy of the transmission of Zen Buddhism is likely to remind us of the similar notions of Rabbinic Judaism. Here in the end I would like to consider the significance of the study of the Talmud in modern Japanese culture based upon the resemblance of the characteristics of Rabbinic Judaism with those of Zen Buddhism, which were fostered in Japanese cultural achievement.

The Jewish experience in the struggle of modernity seems likely to shed light on the Japanese situation in the modern ages especially after World War II. It is important for Japanese to have an opportunity to read the Talmud in Japanese and perceive the strength of the Jewish tradition of the Talmudic thinking. For that purpose it will not be enough to publish the translation. We have to present a whole history of Jewish intellectual endeavor to live according to the Torah until the present day. Japanese Scholars of Jewish studies are responsible for the task. This is the one thing. Another task is to re-examine modern Japanese intellectual history with modern Jewish perspectives. The question involves how the traditional common value of Buddhism could cope with the struggles of modernity.

The first act of the integrated government of modern Imperial Japan was to sever the Buddhist influence from Shintoism and promulgated the edict of the separation of Shintoism and Buddhism totally denouncing the teaching of the Gautama Buddha and its values. Monks were secularized and Buddhist temples were destroyed and statues and sacred scrolls were burned or ruined. The government wanted to unite Japanese people under the state Shinto.

[13] Ellie Wiesel: Memoirs All Rivers Run to the Sea. New York 1995, p. 128.

Militarism and invasion of neighboring countries was the state policy with the help of Western science and technology facing overwhelming Western Powers. Japan became an arrogant, rude and merciless country with the cost of being deprived of Buddhist value of compassion and non-violence. For the worse the spirit of Zen Buddhist eschatology was adapted to the self-negating Kamikaze Suicide Bombing and the Confucian ethics was abused to the total subjugation to Divine Emperor worship.

In such a state of affairs, intellectual thinkers still endeavored to pursue the Buddhist value serving Zen monks under the regime. We can make mention of the names of Daisetsu Suzuki and some scholars of the Kyoto school of Japanese philosophy for their contribution to regenerating tradition of Japanese Zen Buddhism. Owing to their effort the traditional common value of Buddhism in the intellectual sphere persisted the oppressed era and is still relevant today, or may seem more desirable than before. But weary of the failure of the political enforcement of state Shinto the democratized government after World War II prohibited the general education of the basic knowledge of religion to children and youth in Japan and most Japanese people have been indifferent to religion and even hate it and feel scared by it.

We Japanese still have a crucial question of how to regenerate or establish renewed common values. In what sense can we say that the traditional common values of Buddhism are still relevant today? The end of Buddhist teaching may be said to direct the way to see things as they are. It is to seek the untainted perception and just judgment of how to see and behave. This notion is equivalent to the Jewish concept of purification from idolatry. We still find it very difficult to say that we are caught up with our own preconceptions and prejudices. This perennial question and the quest for the response to it are relevant and thus demanded today. F. Rosenzweig, a favorite philosopher of Levinas pointed out that the contemporary world is full of idolatrous things.[14] Even scientific studies cannot be free from idolatrous traps. In this sense this serious endeavor by Jewish and Japanese intellectuals should be kept on.

[14] The passage of F. Rosenzweig on the influence of idolatry in modern era was cited in her discussions on "Lo ihye lekha" in: Nehama Leibowitz: Yiyunim Hadashim be-Sefer Shemot (13th ed.), Ha-Histadrut Ha-Ziyonit Ha-olamit, Jerusalem [undated], p. 235.

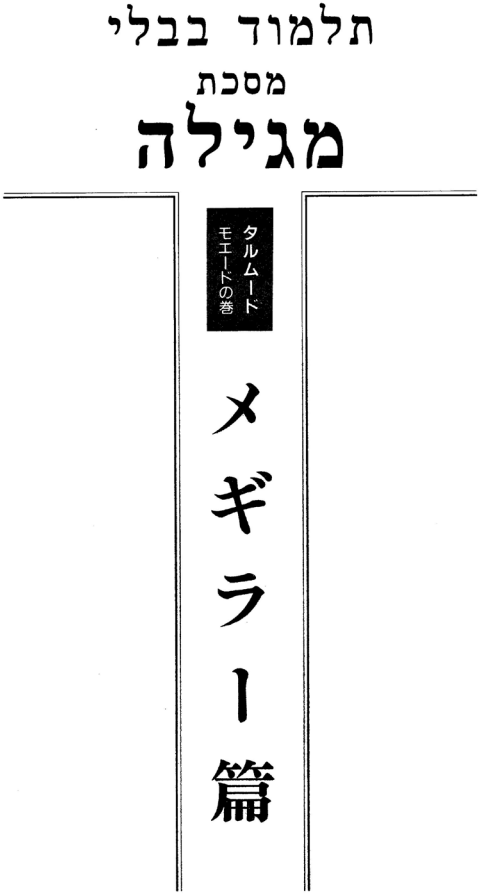

Fig. 1: A photocopy of the title page of the first volume of the Japanese translation of the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Megillah, published in 1993 translated by Yoji Iwashita, directed by H. Ichikawa.

2 a　　　　メギラー　第1章

ミシュナ 1・2

メギラー[*1]は（アダル月[*2]）十一、十二、十三、十四、十五日に朗詠される。決してそれ以前でも以後であってもならない[*3]。

ヌンの子ヨシュア[*4]の時代から城壁に囲まれている都市[*5]は、十五日に朗詠する。村や大きな町[*6]では十四日に朗詠する。ただし、村では市が立つ日[*7]まで繰り上げて朗詠することができる。

どのようにしてか。たまたま、十四日が月曜日[*8]に当たるならば、村や大きな町はその日に朗詠し、城壁に囲まれた都市は翌日に読む。

火曜日または水曜日に当たるならば、村は市が立つ日に繰り上げて朗詠し、大きな町ではその日に朗詠し、城壁に囲まれた都市ではその翌日に朗詠する。

木曜日に当たる場合は、村や大きな町ではその日に朗詠し、城壁に囲まれた都市ではその翌日に朗詠する。

金曜日に当たる場合には、村は市が立つ日[*9]まで繰り上げ、大きな町と城壁の都市はその日に朗詠する。

安息日に当たる場合には、村と大きな町は市が立つ日まで繰り上げ、城壁の都市ではその翌日に朗詠する。日曜日に当たる場合には村は市が立つ日まで繰り上げ、大きな町はその日に、城壁に囲まれた都市はその翌日に朗詠する。

ゲマラ

メギラーは十一日に朗詠される。

［質問者はミシュナの最初の部分の聖書的根拠を尋ねる］

（聖書の）どこからこれが分かるのか[*10]。

［返答者はこの質問に対する驚きを表す］

どこからこれが分かるのかだって[*11]!?。［どうしてそんな質問をするのか。］

これは後で説明する通りなのだが[*12]、賢者たち[*13]は村に対しては規定を軽減し、市が立つ日まで村が朗詠を繰り上げることを許した。それは、村人が大きな町の同胞のために食料や水を供給することができるためであった、ということである。

［初めの質問の意味を説明する］

われわれが尋ねようとしたことはこのことである。ここで考えてみよう。これらの日付はすべて大会堂の人々[*14]によって決められたと考えるべきである。なぜなら、もし大会堂の人々が十四日および十五日のみを（メギラー朗詠の日として）決めたならば、（後代の）ラビたちがやってきて大会堂の人々が決めた規則を無効にすることができようか。

というのは、われわれはミシュナで、**「一つの法廷［ベート・ディーン］は知恵と数において他の法廷に勝っていない限り、他の法廷の裁決を破棄してはならない[*15]」**と学んでいるからである。それゆえ、明らかに、これらのすべての日付は大会堂の人々によって決められたものでなければならない。

［初めの質問を言い換えてもう一度尋ねる］

いったい、（これらの日付は聖書の）どこに暗示されてい

*1　字義通りには「巻物」。エステル記の巻物を指す。

*2　ユダヤ暦の十二番目の月。太陽暦の三〜四月に相当。

*3　字義通りには「（これよりも）少なくても多くてもならない」。

*4　モーセの後継者として、紀元前十三世紀後半にイスラエル民族を率いてカナンに入った人物。ヨシュア記参照。ヨシュアの時代が判断の基準とされたのは、プリムの事件の時代を基準にするならばイスラエルの多くの町はバビロニアに滅ぼされたために城壁のない村や町に分類されることになるためである、とラシは説明している。

*5　原語の「ケラッハ」はタルムード全般では、城壁の有無にかかわらず人口の多い都市を指す。しかし、「メギラー」だけはこの語を城壁に囲まれた都市の意味で使用している。

*6　ゲマラで使用されている「村と大きな町」という表現はただ単に「他の地域」を意味する周辺区域のことを指しているようである。

*7　「集会の日」とも訳される。村人はこの日に町へ行き、売り買いをし、また集会を開いて祈禱を行ったり、トーラーの朗唱を聞いたりした。その地域のベート・ディーン（法廷）も開かれた。月曜日と木曜日であったといわれる。

*8　字義通りには「（週の）第二日」。

*9　すなわち、前日の木曜日。

*10　ゲマラがこのように尋ねるのは、聖書は「毎年アダル月十四日と十五日（にプリム）を祝うように定めた」（エステル記九・二一）と言っているため。

*11　これらの日付は聖書の規定によるものではないが、ラシによると村人のために賢者たちにより十四日、十五日と同様にメギラー朗詠が義務づけられた。

*12　ゲマラ4 a、19 a参照。

*13　原語：ハハム（単数形）、ハハミーム(複数形)。「賢者」と訳されるが、第二神殿時代初期からアラブによって征服された時代までユダヤ民族の生活形成に貢献したラビたちの総称。タンナイーム（ミシュナ完成まで）とアモライーム（ミシュナ完成後からタルムード編集まで）の全学者を包括する名称。

*14　ヘブライ語で「クネセト・ハ・グドラー」。「大集会」とも訳される。伝統的にはネヘミヤ書八〜一〇章の記事が起源であると考えられており、預言者の時代に続いてペルシア時代にイスラエル民族を指導した人々。最初の指導者はエズラであり、最後の指導者は義人シモンであったといわれる。一部の学者は、クネセト・ハ・グドラーが発展して「サンヘドリン」になったと考えている。タルムードによると「エズラ記」は大会堂の人々により、あるいはその指導の下に編纂された。

*15　エドゥヨート（証言集）一・五。

Fig. 2: The first page of Tractate Megillah in the Japanese translation (on details see n.13). The first chapter of the Mishnah 2 followed by the Gemara, which is marked by the squared line and the letters designated with bold type printing.

Conference Reports

Nachwuchsworkshop „Der Centralverein als Teil des deutsch-jüdischen Kultursystems?“ Frankfurt am Main, 7.–8. Dezember 2016

Shulamit Volkovs Ausführungen über das „jüdische Projekt der Moderne“ folgend „[waren] [a]m Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts […] die meisten Juden in Deutschland sicher nicht mehr Teil der alten jüdischen Welt; aber sie waren auch nicht so völlig mit ihrer neuen Umgebung verschmolzen, wie sie oft glauben wollten. Die meisten von ihnen lebten in einer dritten Sphäre, die sich während des Jahrhunderts langsam entwickelte. Sie lebten in ihrem eigenen deutsch-jüdischen Kultursystem.“[1]

Lässt die größte deutsch-jüdische Organisation ihrer Zeit, der von 1893 bis 1938 bestehende „Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens“ (C. V.) sich nicht auch als ein zentrales Element des deutsch-jüdischen Kultursystems von der Wende des 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert bis kurz vor Beginn des Zweiten Weltkrieges verstehen? Befand sich der C. V. nicht auch in dem von Volkov beschriebenen Spannungsfeld von Rückgriff und Neuschaffung? Lassen sich seine Selbstverortung und Tätigkeit mit diesen Begrifflichkeiten nicht näher bestimmen und seine Ideologie besser fassen?

Das waren die Fragen, denen der Nachwuchsworkshop, den Rebekka Denz (Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien e. V.) und Tilmann Gempp-Friedrich (Martin-Buber-Professur für Jüdische Religionsphilosophie der Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main) organisierten, nachging. Er fand vom 7.–8. Dezember 2016 dank der finanziellen Förderung der Vereinigung von Freunden und Förderern der Goethe-Universität, der Alfons und Gertrud Kassel-Stiftung, der FAZIT-Stiftung sowie der Stiftung zur Förderung der internationalen wissenschaftlichen Beziehungen der Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main statt.

Jeweils ein sich gegenseitig kommentierendes Vortragsteam verantwortete eine der fünf Sektionen á 60 Minuten. Diese organisationsstrukturelle Entscheidung ermöglichte die besondere Entfaltung der Werkstatt Atmosphäre, wie auch die sonst sehr detailüberblickende Organisation und transparente

[1] Shulamit Volkov: Die Erfindung einer Tradition, in: Das jüdische Projekt der Moderne, München 2001, S. 118–137, hier: S. 123.

Moderation von Rebekka Denz und Tilmann Friedrich-Gempp wesentlich zur Intensivierung des vernetzenden Austausches der Nachwuchswissenschaftlerinnen und -wissenschaftler beitrugen. Maßgeblich befördern konnte Joachim Schlör (Southampton) die Diskussion. In seinem Abendvortrag erörterte er die Grenzen und Potentiale der in der Leitfrage des Workshops aufgeführten Begrifflichkeit von einem deutsch-jüdischen Kultursystem. Die spannungsgleiche Frage nach dem Verhältnis von Identitätspolitik des C.V. und dem zionistischen Selbstverständnis stellte Christian Wiese in den Mittelpunkt seiner Begrüßungsworte. Er verortete das Thema in verschiedenen Forschungsprojekten des Martin-Buber-Lehrstuhls für jüdische Religionsphilosophie mit dessen interdisziplinären Schwerpunkten im 19./20. Jahrhundert. In ihrer gemeinsamen Begrüßung machten die Organisatorinnen und Organisatoren ihre jeweils unterschiedlichen Auffassungen deutlich. Während für Tilmann Gempp-Friedrich ein deutsch-jüdisches Kultursystem ab 1913 nur eines mit zwei Linien im Zionismus oder im C.V. sein kann, plädierte Rebekka Denz dafür es in dieser Heterogenität Volkovs These nach als ein jüdisches Projekt der Moderne zu begreifen.

Sektion I des Workshops fragte nach den Positionsbestimmungen des Centralvereins im Verhältnis zur nichtjüdischen Mehrheitsgesellschaft. Christian Dietrich (Berlin / Frankfurt Oder) untersuchte die Positionierungen des Centralvereins gegen die Taufe in den Jahren zwischen 1900 und 1910.

Seinerzeit radikalisierte sich der Centralverein in seiner ablehnenden Haltung gegenüber der Taufe. Zentral war Christian Dietrich aufzuzeigen, dass die Protagonisten der Debatte sich in erster Linie innerhalb der Sittlichkeits- und Moralvorstellungen bewegten, die typisch für die Zeit des Wilhelminismus, also nicht spezifisch jüdisch, sondern stark vom Zeitgeist geprägt waren. In der Debatte ist die Mehrheitsgesellschft als potentielles Publikum nicht nur anwesend, die Reaktionen der nichtjüdischen Mehrheit waren ab 1908 auch der soziale Hintergrund vor dem diskutiert wurde.

Johann Nicolai (Berlin) stellte in seinem Vortrag Unterschiede der Rezeption Moses Mendelssohns durch den C.V. zu den Jubiläen 1929 und 1936 heraus. Anhand der Gedenkfeiern zu den Gedenktagen des Philosophen Moses Mendelssohn 1929 und 1936 zeigte er die Veränderungen in der Selbstwahrnehmung des Vereins auf. Während das Gedenken im Jahr 1929 der gleichberechtigenden Akzeptanz der deutsch-jüdischen Minderheit diente, setzte sich Fritz Bamberger in einem anlässlich des Jubiläums verfassten Artikels 1936 mit der Ausgrenzung der deutschen Juden zu Mendelssohns Zeiten auseinander.

Sektion 2 fragte nach den Debatten um Deutschtum und Judentum, indem sie Biographien in den Blick nahm. Hannah Peaceman (Erfurt) beschäftigte sich in ihrem Beitrag mit der politischen Philosophie und Gesellschaftstheorie Constantin Brunners. Sie arbeitete heraus, wie sein Denken durch die politische Lage und durch die Philosophie Spinozas gepägt war. Eine Reflexion seines Begriffs von „Einheit“ führte zu Überlegungen über gesellschaftliches Zusammenleben, dessen Grenzen sich für Juden und Jüdinnen schon in der Weimarer Republik zeigten, wie an vielen Auseinandersetzungen im C. V. zu sehen sei.

Eva Rohland (Berlin) zeigte in ihrem Vortrag anhand einer Quellendiskussion auf wie der C. V. den Lehrer für Geschichte und späteren Schuldirektor der Knabenschule der jüdischen Gemeinde Berlins, Heinemann Stern, in seinem politischen Selbstverständnis bis in sein brasilianisches Exil in den fünfziger Jahren hinein prägte. In der für den C. V. verfassten Streitschrift für deutsch-jüdische Jugendliche „Warum sind wir Deutsche“ von 1926 verhandelte er die wesentlichen Grundgedanken seiner Geschichtsauffassung, die das märtyrerhafte Narrativ zionistischer Geschichtsschreibung kritisieren. Erst in der Abgrenzung zum Zionismus konstatiert Stern, habe der C. V. seine Richtung gefunden, verstehen könne sie sich nur bürgerlich-republikanisch.

Aus zionistischer Perspektive und vor dem Hintergrund der „Ostjudenfrage“ nahm die dritte Sektion die Debatten um Deutschtum und Judentum auf. Albrecht Spranger (Berlin) untersuchte das Verhältnis des Zionisten Theodor Zlocisti (1874–1943) zum Centralverein. Zlocisti war Zionist der ersten Stunde, seine Person beschränkte sich aber nicht in einer national-jüdischen Identität. Obwohl Zlocisti den Bruch zwischen C. V. und Zionisten mit provozierte, engagierte er sich auch mit dem C. V. gegen Antisemitismus. Sein Beispiel zeigt, wie schwer es ist, das Verhältnis einzelner Zionisten zum C. V. in eine eindeutige Formel zu fassen.

Tilmann Gempp-Friedrich (Frankfurt am Main) führte seine eingangs aufgestellte These aus, dass es nicht nur ein jüdisches Projekt der Moderne gab. Während der Weimarer Republik wurde an zwei unterschiedlichen jüdischen Traditionen geschrieben, die eine versuchte deutsch und jüdisch zu sein, der Centralverein, die andere arbeitete daran, nur jüdisch sein zu können, der Zionismus. Sicherlich, so Gempp-Friedrich, lag beiden dieselbe Tradition zu Grunde, aber sie trafen eine jeweils andere Auswahl für ihr spezifisches Narrativ. Konnten die osteuropäischen Juden in das zionistische Narrativ

eingebunden werden und so die Denkfigur des Jüdischen Volkes gestärkt werden, war das dem Centralverein nicht möglich, dafür hätte der Grundsatz seiner angestrebten Synthese von Deutschtum und Judentum aufgeben werden müssen.

Ob diese Synthese tatsächlich angestrebt war, stellte Joachim Schlör (Southampton) grundsätzlich in Frage, in dem er in seinem Vortrag „Deutsch-jüdisches? Kultur? System" Salomon Korns radikales Statement in seiner Rede zur Eröffnung des Neubaus der Hochschule für Jüdische Studien in Heidelberg von 2009 zitierte. Aus jüdischer Sicht, so Korn, seien die Vorstellungen und Bemühungen um eine deutsch-jüdische Kultur doch „stets eine Übergangs- und Auflösungserscheinung auf Kosten jüdischer Eigenart und jüdischer Wesensmerkmale gewesen."[2]

Schlör forderte die Anwesenden anschließend auf, die Wahl ihres Themenbereichs zu reflektieren. Der folgende fruchtbare Austausch machte Schlörs Intention entsprechend deutlich, wie die Faktoren von Selektivität und Perspektivität unsere Einschätzungen historischer Sachverhalte bestimmen. Schlör problematisierte den ihm in seinen naturwissenschaftlichen Implikationen zu technizistisch anmutenden Systembegriff und plädierte für einen lebensweltlichen Kulturbegriff, der das alltägliche gemeinsame aber auch exklusive Handeln von Menschen in einer Gemeinschaft fokussiere. Vorgestellt als Arena, als offenes Feld, Marktplatz auf dem sich „Elemente" verschiedener Kulturen treffen und austauschen, berge schließlich auch Foucaults Heterotopie eine Lesart des „deutsch-jüdischen Kultursystem". Befand sich der „Centralverein" objektiv gesehen an einem ganz anderen Ort, als seine Protagonisten annahmen? Oder ist auch diese wie andere Fragen unzulässig, weil sie von heute ausgestellt werden, nach der Katastrophe, die die damals Handelnden nicht vorausahnen konnten?

Zentral war es Schlör herauszustellen, dass wir die einzelnen Elemente nur in einem offenen und in Bewegung befindlichen „Systems" in ihrer Wechselwirkung aufeinander und so auch unter Einbeziehung neuer Fragestellungen, etwa aus der der Gefühlsgeschichte – „History of Emotions" – des transnationalen Vergleichs oder aus der Geschlechtergeschichte genauer betrachten können.

[2] Salomon Korn: Deutsch-jüdische Kultur? Ein Phantom! Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. 1.10.2009.

Die Geschlechtergeschichte geriet in der vierten Sektion über die Frauen im Centralverein in den Blick. Im Mittelpunkt von Anna Ullrichs (München) Vortrag stand die Aufklärungsarbeit der C. V.-Frauenvereine. Am Beispiel der Mitarbeit in interkonfessionellen Frauenvereinen und Vortragseinladungen zeigte sie, dass vielfach die Möglichkeit bestand, Kontakt zu nichtjüdischen Frauen aufzubauen. Private Aufzeichnungen und interne Berichte der C. V.-Mitarbeiterinnen und -Mitarbeiter dokumentierten jedoch, dass die Erwartung, durch diese Begegnungen eine Verminderung antisemitischer Einstellungen sowohl bei Frauen wie Männern zu bewirken, bewusst niedrig gehalten wurde. Im Vordergrund stand auch der Wunsch jeweils andere C. V.-Gruppen zum Austausch mit der nichtjüdischen Mehrheitsbevölkerung zu motivieren. Rebekka Denz (Braunschweig / Berlin) zeigte in ihrem Vortrag, wie der Anteil des C. V. am „jüdischen Projekt der Moderne“ von im Centralverein tätigen Frauen aktiv mitgestaltet wurde. Grundsätzlich stellte sie fest, dass die bürgerlich-jüdische Organsiation Centralverein in Bezug auf die Handlungsspielräume von Frauen moderner war als sie dies zu Beginn der Forschungen für ihre Dissertation vermutete. Als Motoren der Modernisierung stellte sie Margarete Edelheim, Margarete Goldstein und Eva Reichmann-Jungmann in verschiedenen Tätigkeitsfeldern des Centralvereins heraus. So konnte sie herausarbeiten, dass deutsches Judentum weiblicher war als dies die Forschungslandschaft der jüdischen Geschichte und Studien vermuten lässt.

Prolog und Epilog auch in Hinblick auf die Abschlussdiskussion waren die Vorträge der fünften Sektion. David Hamann (Berlin) referierte über die Entstehung und die Arbeit des ersten jüdischen Abwehrkomitees in Berlin, das am 1.12.1880 gegründet wurde. Dabei stellte er die Zusammenhänge und Wechselwirkungen zwischen der zivilgesellschaftlichen Arbeit gegen die antisemitische „Berliner Bewegung“ und der parallel betriebenen Migrationshilfe für osteuropäische Juden des Kommitees heraus. Im Laufe der 1890er Jahre führten zunehmende Ausdifferenzierungen innerhalb des deutsch-jüdischen zivilgesellschaftlichen Engagements zu einer Arbeitsteilung in der Abwehrarbeit und Migrationshilfe, die sich in der Gründung von Organisationen wie eben dem C. V. und dem „Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden“ manifestierte. Marie-Ch. Behrendt (Potsdam) schlug im Anschluss eine organisationssoziologische Perspektive auf den Verein vor. Sie fragte nach den personalen und kulturellen Kontinuitäten zwischen dem C. V. und den Emigrationsvereinigungen und zeigte, dass es sich bei den in der Emigration gegründeten

deutsch-jüdischen Organisationen nicht nur um einfache Neugründungen von Geflüchtetenorganisationen handelte, sondern diese Vereinigungen auch als Fortsetzung deutsch-jüdischer Vergesellschaftung und Organisationskultur in C.V.-Tradition interpretiert werden können. In Bezug auf die Emigrantenorganisationen ermöglichte ihr Ansatz, die Gründungen nicht nur auf die politische Notwendigkeit zurückzuführen, sondern auch auf ein spezifisches, organisationales Selbstwissen ihrer Mitglieder, das sie jeweils zum weiteren organisationalen Handeln berufen fühlen ließ.

Im Vordergrund der von Christian Wiese gemeinsam mit Rebekka Denz und Tilmann Gempp-Friedrich moderierten Abschlussdiskussion stand die Frage nach dem weiterführenden Potenzial, von einem deutsch-jüdischen Kultursystem zu sprechen, wie das die Hypothese des Workshops gewesen war. Vor allem die in den Vorträgen zum Ausdruck kommende Dynamik der jeweiligen Assimilations- wie Dissimilationsprozesse brachte den Begriff der deutsch-jüdischen Kultursphäre in die Debatte. Auch, ob nicht besser von deutsch-jüdischen Kulturen statt von einem deutsch-jüdischen Kultursystem zu sprechen sei, geriet angesichts des eklatanten Bruches zwischen Zionisten und dem C.V. in der Weimarer Republik in die Diskussion. Für weitere Forschungen befand man einig, gilt es die eigene Wahrnehmung der Protagonisten auf ihre Zeit verschärfter zu fokussieren und Positionen wie die eingangs von Volkov zitierte auch im Kontext ihrer Zeit zu sehen.

Eva Rohland, Berlin

Conference "Re-Framing American Jewish History and Thought: New Transnational Perspectives" Potsdam / Berlin, 20.–22. Juli 2016[1]

Transnationalism is one of the most frequently used terms in recent historiography. Jonathan Sarna, premier historian of American Jewry, described its significance for the field: "A transnational approach would remind us that American Judaism was never 'an island entirely of itself', and would help to restore American Judaism to its rightful place within a global universe."[2] However, Riv-Ellen Prell, another leading scholar, argues that scholarship on North American Jewry "has been somewhat slow to embrace it."[3] In response to this diagnosis, scholars from outside the U.S. have recently started to investigate interactions between American and other Jewries over time and into the present. This conference brought together scholars from the U.S., Europe, and Israel, in order to further transnational approaches and to offer a more nuanced perspective on the American Jewish experience.

In their introductory lectures, Gary P. Zola (Cincinnati) and Markus Krah (Potsdam) made remarks on how a transnational approach can reframe American Jewish history and thought. Zola offered an agenda for transnational research. Transmigrants, people who passed regions on the way to their destination, as well as cultural connections and aesthetical agency are underexplored topics. In addition, he called for greater efforts to define the methodology: "We need to come at some point to a professional agreement what we exactly mean by using a transnational approach." Krah explained that among the various disciplines, Jewish Studies, as an interdisciplinary field, would be most suited to engage the American-Jewish experience, as it looks at Jewishness from a perspective of cultural studies. However, for historical, political, and epistemological reasons, North American Jewry has not attracted a lot of attention from Jewish Studies in Europe. American Studies, on the other

[1] Originally published on H-Net, Clio-online (November 19, 2016).

[2] Jonathan D. Sarna: "Afterword: The Study of American Judaism: A Look Ahead," in: Dana Evan Kaplan (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to American Judaism, Cambridge 2005, pp. 417–421, here p. 420.

[3] Riv-Ellen Prell: "Review of Kahn, Ava Fran; Mendelsohn, Adam, eds., Transnational Traditions: New Perspectives on American Jewish History," H-Judaic, H-Net Reviews (August, 2015).

hand, once quite interested in American Jewry, shifted its focus some twenty years ago to other ethnic groups, apparently regarding Jews as a less distinct subgroup of the white mainstream.

During the following roundtable discussion, Tobias Brinkmann (University Park, PA) and Eli Lederhendler (Jerusalem) engaged transnationalism as a problematic and tricky term. By taking the case of the "German Jew," Brinkmann demonstrated the paradox of talking about transnationalism in the 19th century before even a German national state was established. Lederhendler provocatively asked if we are about to re-invent the wheel. Earlier Jewish historiography was always transnational in the sense that scholars knew the tension between political boundaries or even geography. "We have to be cautious not to take the same road we've been before," he concluded. Miriam Rürup (Hamburg) and Cornelia Wilhelm (Munich) approached the topic from the perspective of their own research. As Rürup explained, because of the diasporic self-understanding and various types of networks Jewish history is per se transnational and does not have to be specified explicitly as such. Furthermore, transnationalism is already fostered by the historians' global search for sources. Similarly, Wilhelm's research traces immigration, careers and professional roles of German refugee rabbis in the US, who embodied the transnational nature of modern Jewish history.

The first panel discussed three important historiographical issues of the 20th century: Antisemitism, Zionism and Jewish continuity. Richard E. Frankel (Lafayette) pointed out that we cannot fully understand the radicalization of modern antisemitism without linking it to the story of globalization. In the 1880s, Congress introduced quotas for Asian immigration, thus factually barring Chinese from entering the U.S. At the same time East European Jewish immigrants experienced the same prejudices that were projected onto the Chinese: their alleged inability to assimilate; shifty business practices; obsession with money; filth and disease; and their strange attraction to white women. Frankel argued for a comparability of the American resentment of Chinese on the West Coast and Jews on the East Coast. Janice Rothschild Blumberg (Atlanta) discussed the correspondence between Theodor Herzl and Rabbi E.B.M. "Alphabet" Browne in 1897. At a time when Reform Judaism strenuously opposed the "anarchist and socialist" ideas of Zionism, Browne sought becoming the link between Herzl's concept of Zionism and American Reform. Herzl did, in the end, ignore Browne's proposed role as middleman

for America. The interrelation between Germanness and life in America also played a role in the presentation by Anton Hieke (Bobbau). In 1851, the New York lodges of B'nai B'rith established the Maimonides Reading Institute and Library, in order to implement the concept of German "Bildung" among Jews in New York. Rather than being merely a tool for the preservation of Germanness, the library was a mediator between German culture and life in America. As Hieke explored, its activities reflected a bi-cultural immigrant society in transition that sought to balance their German and American identities.

What was the mutual impact that European and American Judaism had on each other and on their respective religious environments? The second panel introduced this major question of the conference. Dana Evan Kaplan (Mobile, AL) looked at the development from classical to neo-Reform and the emergence of rival theological camps during the 1950s and 1960s. He argued that Reform theologians were highly influenced by European Jewish and non-Jewish thinkers. Some used European political and social trends to justify their radical breaks with extant theological positions. They turned to Europe as a source for new approaches to spiritual life. Claire Maligot (Paris) investigated Jewish contributions to the Second Vatican Council. The vast majority of the Jewish observers in the deliberations came from the U.S. Maligot argued that not only were American Jewish organizations better organized and connected than European rabbis and agencies, but they also benefited from years of practice, structures and reflections on interfaith dialogue at a local level.

The discussion of European influences, in particular the impact of German-Jewish theology on American-Jewish thought was continued in the third panel. George Y. Kohler (Ramat Gan) introduced Steven Schwarzschild, an American rabbi and philosopher, as a reader of the German-Jewish thinker Hermann Cohen. Because of Schwarzschild's translation, interpretation, and transfer of Cohen into the American Jewish discourse, Cohen's thought influenced Reform Judaism. Moreover, Schwarzschild worked transnationally by presenting his European take in American research journals and by contributing an English introduction to the German edition of Cohen's work. Hans-Michael Haußig (Potsdam) claimed that transnational experiences also influenced one of the most important American Jewish theologians, Abraham Joshua Heschel. As a student in Berlin, Heschel became familiar with contemporary approaches to religion among Christian theologians and in the humanities. He developed his own position to the study of religion, mostly influenced

by the German phenomenological school. Philipp von Wussow (Frankfurt am Main) focused on the German-Jewish emigré scholar Leo Strauss. On the one hand Strauss established within the American academy a style of German Gelehrsamkeit, on the other he modified his project in the new educational and political situation. Wussow placed scholarship on Strauss' hypermodern reading praxis and its impact on American scholars into the larger picture of German-Jewish intellectual migration in the 1930s and 1940s.

The fourth panel moved the conference back to history. Daniel Soyer (New York) investigated how events in the Soviet Union influenced local politics in New York during World War II. As the city's largest ethnic minority Jews played an important role, in particular on the electoral left and through the American Labor Party. Soyer convincingly demonstrated that even local politics cannot be understood without the transnational context. The presentation by Constance Pâris de Bollardière (Paris) focused on the Bund, a political party with roots in Russia. She demonstrated that although integrated, American Bundists remained close to their roots and to European events until the late 1950s. In immediate postwar France they started a relief and reconstruction program to maintain Yiddish cultural life and socialist ideas. Connections through shared place of origin and identity played an important role in maintaining these trans-diasporic relations. Sonja K. Pilz (Potsdam) compared American and German *Yizkor* prayers commemorating Jewish communities destroyed in the Holocaust. Pilz examined radical differences in their social construction, choice of language and perception of the Shoah. As she argued, the immediate communal settings and the broader cultural background of the prayers provide a more nuanced understanding of social and religious identities associated with them.

The keynote by Michael A. Meyer (Cincinnati) analyzed how Jews regarded their place of origin following their arrival in the US. Meyer compared six waves of migration to demonstrate that within the Jewish transnational experience no group was homogenous in how it related to its respective past. For Sephardic immigrants of the 17th and 18th centuries, the past of "glorious" London and "great" Amsterdam retained a powerful sense of attraction. In the next wave, some German Jews in the 19th century regarded their old home as a land of non-freedom, while others looked back with nostalgia even if they succeeded economically in the U.S. Often language, family ties, and news of political events across the borders provided a continuity that made the uprooting

fear less traumatic. For example, *landsmanshaftn* offered East European Jews mutual support and a surrogate home. Refugees from Nazi-Germany faced a different situation as they could not think about a return. However, some turned inward and created a cocoon preserving a "Weimar culture," Soviet immigrants shared a "love-hate" relationship to the old home, as they missed the state fraternalism. Recent immigrants from Israel form a category by itself, as they left a state governed by Jews to live voluntarily in the diaspora. However, as Meyer concluded, one overarching commonality can be established: "It was never possible to leave the old country without looking back."

The last panel of the conference analyzed cultural expressions of the transnational American Jewish experience. Cristina Spinei (Iasi) focused on Sholem Aleichem's writings which responded to both the calamities of the shtetl and individual survival in the new American scenery. Tensions of modernity and tradition, assimilation and gradual loss of Jewish identity marked his ambivalent picture of America. As Spinei argued, these contradictory moments point to the author's displacement from the shtetl and growing alienation from Jewish tradition through the encounter of other Jewries. Klara Szlezak (Passau) showed that Russian-born anthropologist Maurice Fishberg's 1911 book "The Jews" on the Jewish diaspora clearly grew out of an American context. In reference to the growing influence of social science using photography as a tool, Fishberg intended to prove that characteristics of worldwide Jewry derived from environmental and social influences rather than essential racial traits. However, as Szlezak argued, this study heavily drew on the very medium that fostered racial stereotypes in an era of Jewish mass migration. By comparing post-Soviet Jewish literature in the US and Germany Jesper Reddig (Münster) investigated different cultural imaginaries. The trope of a "nation of immigrants" defines American self-understanding. Germany, on the other hand, is historically downplaying ethno-cultural diversity. Reddig argued that such recent authors as Yelena Akhtiorskaya (in New York) and Olga Grjasnowa (in Berlin) are forging critical interventions and write back to their predecessors' approaches and the literature of "migration" and "multiculturalism." Lars-Frederik Bockmann (Berlin) examined how the American Jewish writer Michael Chabon connects structures of Jewish memory with popular forms of serial narration, like detective fiction or film noir. In contrast to the dominant reading as trauma and Holocaust representation, Bockmann saw the genre elements as structural components in the creation of cultural memory.

Therefore, Chabon's writing rediscovers and reinterprets specific medial objects of American popular culture as transnational Jewish memory traces.

A concluding presentation by Zola discussed overarching questions arising from a transnational approach in the writing of American Jewry's history. He made clear that academic collaboration between American and non-American scholars in conferences, research or publication partnerships strengthen a deeper understanding of American Jewry's place in general Jewish history. Although Jewish history and thought are of global concern, distinctive characteristics of individual communities should be acknowledged, without uncritically affirming an ideological American-Jewish exceptionalism.

Although this conference was not the bedrock of a "transnational turn" in the study of American Jewry, and despite the initial voices of cautiousness, the panelists opened rich perspectives to the general discussion on the value of transnational approaches in historiography. This will hopefully inspire and engage more scholars to cross the boundaries of countries, cultures and academic discourses.

Oskar Czendze, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Book Reviews

Alon Goshen-Gottstein: The Jewish Encounter with Hinduism: Wisdom, Spirituality, Identity (Interreligious Studies in Theory and Practice series), New York: Palgrave, Macmillan 2016, IX, 275 S., 80 €.

Alon Goshen-Gottstein: Same God, Other God: Judaism, Hinduism and the Problem of Idolatry (Interreligious Studies in Theory and Practice series), New York: Palgrave, Macmillan 2016. X, 265 S., 80 €.

The book-pair combines several approaches: personal, historical, halakhic, and theological. (The second volume, henceforth *Encounter*, is an extension of what was originally intended as the last section of the first, henceforth *Same God*.) *Encounter* is the author's personal account of his encounter with Hinduism and a reflective account of the modern Jewish encounter with the same. Goshen-Gottstein is a well published academic scholar of Judaism. He presents himself as an orthodox Jew and a spiritual seeker. He selectively appropriates methods from the academic study of religion, avoids the "hermeneutics of suspicion" and distances himself from the objective stance of the field. He tells of being drawn to things Indian since childhood, of discussions with members of "Hare Krishna" (the International Society for Krishna Consciousness), Transcendental Meditation, years of yoga practice, and university study of Hindu scriptures. Later his interest extended to other religions and eventually he founded, in 1996, the Jerusalem-based Elijah Interfaith Institute. He made numerous trips to India where he visited ashrams and held sustained dialogues with gurus, conducted strictly "within halakhic bounds."

His personal journey, we learn, is not unique. After brief chapters on Indian Jewry and on an interesting medieval figure called Sarmad the Jew who played an important role as Sufi master in the Mogul court, he gets to his main subject, namely, the phenomenon of Jews who, beginning with the 20th century, seriously explored Hindu spiritual paths. Some of these even came with orthodox background and learning, some attained guru status. He analyzes the records of interfaith summits which took place in 2007 and 2008, hosting representatives from the Israeli Chief Rabbinate and from the Hindu Dharma Sabha.

In Goshen Gottstein's view, orthodox Judaism is in a crisis, and this is what drives intelligent and knowledgeable Jews to seek spiritual fulfillment in Hinduism, a religion traditionally deemed idolatrous. Judaism lacks techniques, institutions, and especially a theology adequate to the spiritual needs

of seekers. Rabbis are legal scholars and teachers, not conduits to the divine, there is no place for spiritually realized persons. The exception is Hasidism, which has the *tsaddik* ideal, but the author finds no *tsaddik* worthy of the name after the demise of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook in 1935. This contrasts with his experience among Hindus, where he deems himself fortunate to have met a good number of spiritually accomplished beings. He also recognizes briefly the lack of paths for spiritual growth for women in orthodox Judaism.

A great variety of beliefs and practices goes under the umbrella term Hinduism. Goshen-Gottstein's dialogue partners are the followers of Vedanta theology, which he obviously admires greatly. Within Judaism he feels closest to Hasidism, and, he asserts, dialogue partners should be the intellectuals of each tradition.

The Vedanta (my explanation here) is a theological articulation of the teachings of a corpus of texts called the Upanishads, the earliest of which date to the 7th or 6th century BCE. Vedanta teaches a disciplined life of meditation on the source of all that is, the Supreme Being / Person also called Brahman. Vedanta theologies differ as to how strictly they insist that nothing but Brahman is real, whether they require renunciation of socio-ritual (caste) identity, and whether the religious goal is conceived in terms of a merging into Brahman or as a love-union with the Supreme Person. Vedanta ideas reached a broader public and its goals were made accessible to householders through the teachings of the famous Bhagavad Gita and other devotional texts. Vedanta teachers got along well with the Sufis, because they shared a negative theology and taught that the form of worship or the name one used to address the ineffable One were ultimately unimportant. In modern times Vedanta attracted Western admirers and became the theology of Hindu reform movements, and Western-educated Hindus often articulate their religion in Vedanta terms. It is essential to understand that a Vedanta follower can adore images of many gods and still assert that she is a monotheist. Goshen-Gottstein argues that Vedanta Hinduism should not be counted as idolatrous.

Encounter is an appeal for a renewal of orthodox Jewish theology. The author would like to see a recognition of the possibility of something like saintliness. He wishes that orthodox Jews had the theological sophistication to dialogue on equal terms with members of other religions. This would require giving up the existent strategy of remaining silent on theological matters when talking with non-Jews. In the interfaith meetings, he observes, the

rabbis could agree with the other side on strategic matters but "stuttered" in the face of the well-articulated universalism of Vedanta, unable or unwilling to explain Jewish particularism to non-Jews. Above all, Goshen-Gottstein calls for a revision of the theological and halakhic approach to other religions.

Same God is more halakhic and theological, and the focus is on the concept of idolatry, *avoda zara*, the key term by which Jews think about other religions. The author first reconsiders whether Hinduism is idolatry by prevalent halakhic standards, answers with a qualified negative, then uses the discussion as a jumping board for rethinking of the very concept of *avoda zara*. He begins with an historical overview of the concept, literally "other" or "foreign" worship. In part II he covers the biblical and early rabbinical periods. In the Bible, the Israelites are forbidden to worship gods other than the God of the covenant and to make any images, and there are expressions of contempt towards such gods and towards image worship. The rabbinic sages were not interested in articulating what was wrong with foreign gods and forms of worship, their concern continued to be boundary construction. Only in the medieval period, treated in part III, was the question of idolatry raised by Jewish thinkers in a systematic way, and their thinking was shaped by the historical context: the competitive and hostile relationship between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

A critical term in the medieval conceptualization of idolatry is *shituf*, inclusion, the worship of another being alongside God. Maimonides (12th century), whose writings on the subject remain the most influential, ruled that monotheistic Islam was not idolatrous, but that Christianity involved *shituf*, and therefore, it was idolatry. Nachmanides, his contemporary, opined that *shituf* is prohibited to Jews because of the covenant, but that some degree of it, such as angel worship, is acceptable for non-Jews. In evaluating religions other than Judaism, Meiri (14th century) was not at all concerned with theological or worship-correctness. Rather, he opined that for non-Jews any religion was fine if it ordered their society and supported moral living.

How does it matter if a religion is ruled *avoda zara*? Practically, Halakhah forbids contact with idolatry. For example, one may not enter a place of "other" worship or consume food or use objects which have been involved in it. But as Goshen Gottstein well explains, a ruling that a religion is idolatrous also entails intellectual and psychological attitudes: the inability to take the ideas and practices of that religion seriously, to treat the people who live by them respectfully and to engage in a sincere dialogue with them. His own

positive contact with Hindu scriptures and spiritual practitioners compels him to reevaluate the received halakhic categorization of Hinduism as idolatry. In the past, he argues, Jews knew of Hinduism and other exotic religions only from hearsay. Superficial observers saw only the multiplicity of gods and the iconic worship, and naturally they ruled that Hinduism was idolatrous. Goshen-Gottstein argues (parts IV and V) that now that Vedanta theology is accessible to us we should recognize that Hindus who follow the Vedanta revere the same God as Maimonides and the Hasidic masters. They are not worshippers of "other gods."

He asks, next, under what circumstances is worship idolatrous? He finds (chapter 13) that Jews have something to learn from the Hindu psychology of idolatry, that is, the Hindu understanding that most people need some degree of concrete representation in worship, and that spiritual progress is achieved as one wrestles with this human limitation. Such an attitude to the religious life allows, he says, for more tolerance towards the other both within and outside one's tradition. He proposes (chapter 14) that today the critical thrust of the halakhic and theological category of *avoda zara* should be turned inward. The line should run not between religions but within them, and the category should not be static but dynamic. Any worship, including Jewish worship, is idolatrous when the intention is base, when it is utilitarian.

I find this book-pair sincere, engaging, thoughtful, written with nuance and for an author who is an orthodox Jew, quite courageous. Any time a fellow Jew is willing to get over the habit of considering our religion superior to all others, I say bravo. Intellectually and theologically, I recommend parts IV and V of *Same God* as the most innovative and important.

It is my duty, however, to also point out what I regard as the limitations of the work. First, Advaita Vedanta theology resonates with the author's Hasidic a-cosmistic leanings. This is very well, but it blinds him, in my view, to most of what Hinduism, for better and for worse, has been and is. He is less interested in the Sub-Continent's rich pantheon, sacred narrative and religious poetry, theology of sacrifice, great temple architecture and art and devotional and social-protest movements. He seems equally unbothered by caste, suppression of tribal groups and discrimination against women, problems that are endemic to Hinduism in today's India. The Islamophobia of the Hindu Dharma Sabha does not concern him, neither does he worry that their syndicated Hinduism is a modern nationalist construct that internalizes orientalist ideas.

Second, the author calls for inter-religious dialogue and a Jewish theology of religions for our time. However, his theological and intellectual horizons are essentially pre-modern, as are those of his dialogue partners. There is no historical consciousness, Nietzsche, Freud and Marx, gender studies and post-colonial criticism. Can a theology of religions be contemporary if it avoids the comparative, historical and sociological study of religion? Can one's inter-religious dialogue be contemporary if one has not intellectually engaged the challenges of modernity and postmodernity?

Third, Goshen-Gottstein is so committed to orthodox Judaism that he hardly recognizes the achievements of the Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist and Renewal movements in addressing some of the problems that he himself diagnoses as the crisis of Orthodox Judaism.

Tamar Chana Reich, Berlin

Glenn Dynner/François Guesnet (Hrsg.): Warsaw. The Jewish Metropolis. Essays in Honor of the 75th Birthday of Professor Antony Polonsky (= IJS Studies in Judaica, Bd. 15), Leiden: Brill 2015. 624 S., 130 €.

Festschriften und Tagungssammelbände gehören zu populären Publikationsformen in der modernen Geschichtswissenschaft. Leider gelingt es ihnen nur selten, eine stringente Struktur und einen innovativen Inhalt anzubieten, die das Interesse der Leser von der ersten bis zur letzten Seite halten. Der vorgestellte Band ist so eine gelungene Ausnahme. Die thematische Wahl der Artikel, ihr neuster Forschungsstand und methodische Vielfalt sorgen dafür, dass die Lektüre dieser Festschrift eine faszinierende Reise über die Jahrhunderte jüdischer Geschichte in der polnischen Hauptstadt ist.

Die Herausgeber, Glenn Dynner (Sarah Lawrence College) und François Guesnet (University College London), gehören zu den etablierten Historikern im Bereich der polnisch-jüdischen Geschichte. Außer ihnen beinhaltet die Liste der Autoren wohlbekannte Akademiker aus Polen, Israel und Deutschland, die jeweils ein ihrem wissenschaftlichen Schwerpunkt nahes Thema in Bezug auf Warschau besprochen haben. In der alphabetischen Reihenfolge sind dies: Natalia Aleksiun, Karen Auerbach, Cornelia Aust, Gershon Bacon, Ela Bauer, Robert Blobaum, Nathan Cohen, Havi Dreifuss, David Engel, Gennady

Estraikh, Gabriel N. Finder, Samuel Kassow, Joanna B. Michlic, Kenneth B. Moss, Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikov, Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, Marci Shore, Shaul Stampfer, Michael C. Steinlauf, Scott Ury, Kalman Weiser, Hanna Węgrzynek und Joshua D. Zimmerman.

Der Band – das Ergebnis einer 2010 am University College London veranstalteten Konferenz – besteht aus zwei Teilen, die chronologisch einen Zeitraum von der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts bis in die zweite Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts umfassen. Der erste Teil, „The Rise of the Metropolis," enthält 16 Aufsätze, der zweite, „Destruction of the Metropolis and Its Aftermath" weitere acht. Der abschließende Beitrag von Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern widmet sich Antony Polonsky und seiner Methode der Kontextualisierung der historischen Materie.

Die meisten Aufsätze lassen sich generell den Teildisziplinen der Sozial- und Wissensgeschichte sowie der *intellectual history* zuordnen. Sie schöpfen diese methodischen Ansätze auf unterschiedliche Weise aus. Hanna Węgrzynek analysiert beispielsweise die Einwanderung von Juden nach Warschau im 18. Jahrhundert und die topographischen Aspekte ihrer Präsenz dort. Des Weiteren lotet Cornelia Aust transnationale Netzwerke jüdischer Kaufleute am Übergang zum 19. Jahrhundert aus. Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikov nähert sich wiederum prosopographisch den Mitwirkenden an der zeitweilig erfolgreichsten jiddischen Zeitung in Warschau, *Haynt* (1908–1939). Einen weiteren medienbezogenen Beitrag liefert Natan Cohen, der Buchdruck und -verbreitung in Warschau bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg aus wissenshistorischen und statistischen Perspektiven analysiert. Den jüdisch-christlichen Beziehungen widmen sich etwa Robert Blobaum in Bezug auf den Ersten und Joanna B. Michlic in Bezug auf den Zweiten Weltkrieg.

Einen mikrohistorischen Ansatz bietet ihrerseits Karen Auerbach an, die die jüdischen Erfahrungen in der Nachkriegszeit durch das Prisma der Geschichte eines Gebäudes und ihrer Bewohner erzählt. Glenn Dynner nutzt wiederum geschichtskulturelle Fragen, um die Bekleidungsvorschriften des 19. Jahrhunderts gegenüber Juden im Kontext der halachischen Auslegung und der innerjüdischen Politik zu erörtern. Die Fragen der Organisation der jüdischen Gemeinschaft sowie der internen, religiös und politisch motivierten Auseinandersetzungen gehören im Allgemeinen zu gut in diesem Band abgedeckten Themen. Außer dem Aufsatz von Glenn Dynner machen sie auch einen wesentlichen Bestandteil der Beiträge von François Guesnet

(Gemeindeinstitutionen um die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts), Shaul Stampfer (Ende des Hauptrabbinats im Jahr 1873), Gershon Bacon (Rabbinat in der Zwischenkriegszeit) und Gabriel N. Finder (Rekonstruktion der jüdischen Gemeinschaft nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg) aus.

Die Vielzahl von methodischen Ansätzen sorgt dafür, dass Warschaus Entwicklungsgeschichte im 18. Jahrhundert „von einer mittelalterlichen Stadt zur modernen Metropole" (Węgrzynek, S. 27), dann im 19. Jahrhundert zum Zentrum des osteuropäischen Judentums, über die Katastrophe des Zweiten Weltkriegs bis zum problematischen Wiederaufbau multiperspektivisch und facettenreich dargestellt wird. Die Stadt gilt hier als „die erste wahre Metropole in der jüdischen Diaspora" (Dynner / Guesnet, S. 2). Diesen Ehrentitel verdankt sie einerseits der Größe der Ansiedlung, die sie in der Zwischenkriegszeit zur zweitgrößten jüdischen Stadt nach New York machte. Andererseits bezieht sich der Titel auf die Diversität der hiesigen Judenheiten, wozu polnische, russische (Litwaks) und deutsche Juden, Chasidim und Mitnagdim, Integrationisten, Bundisten, Kommunisten, Zionisten und andere beitrugen.

Natürlich sind in diesem Band nicht alle Schlüsselfragen der jüdischen Geschichte in Warschau besprochen. Dies war gar nicht die Absicht der Herausgeber. Dennoch: Einige Überblicksartikel – wie z. B. die von Hanna Węgrzynek und François Guesnet – ergänzen sich sehr geschickt mit den anderen, auf Spezialfragen konzentrierten Aufsätzen, und somit setzen sie sich alle zu einem Buch zusammen, das sowohl dem Fachpublikum als auch den Einsteigern in die Thematik zu empfehlen ist. Ein Beweis für den konzeptuellen Erfolg dieses Bandes ist der chronologische Überblick über die Geschichte der Juden in Warschau (Dynner / Guesnet, S. 2–16), in dem alle untergebrachten Beiträge elegant einbezogen worden sind. Es ist also eine Publikation über die jüdische Geschichte in Warschau entstanden, die für die weitere Erforschung dieser Thematik unabdingbar ist.

Michał Szulc, Potsdam / Tel Aviv

Carsten Schapkow: Role Model and Countermodel. The Golden Age of Iberian Jewry and German Jewish Culture During the Era of Emancipation, übers. von Corey Twitchell, Lanham / Boulder / New York / London: Lexington Books 2016, 305 S., 70.00 $.

Den Wechselbeziehungen zwischen dem sefardischen und dem aschkenasischen Judentum wird im wissenschaftlichen Diskurs seit vielen Jahren schon eine zunehmende Aufmerksamkeit zuteil. Das hier vorzustellende Buch von Carsten Schapkow stellt die englische Übersetzung des schon 2011 bei Böhlau erschienenen Bandes *Vorbild und Gegenbild. Das iberische Judentum in der deutsch-jüdischen Erinnerungskultur 1779–1939* dar. Die englische Version, die von Corey Twitchell angefertigt wurde, ist gut lesbar, allerdings weist sie hier und da Lücken bei Zitaten oder bibliografischen Nachweisen auf, variierende Schreibweisen von Namen, einige Tippfehler und grammatische Unrichtigkeiten, Wiederholungen sowie an einer Stelle sogar Fehler in der Textreihenfolge (S. 78). Das ist zwar bedauerlich, beeinträchtigt aber die Qualität des Buches nur am Rande. Auf die deutschsprachige Ausgabe, die in dieser Zeitschrift nicht besprochen wurde, sei hiermit ebenfalls hingewiesen.

Ziel des Autors Carsten Schapkow ist es, die Vorbildfunktion, die das sefardische Judentum des Mittelalters für die aschkenasischen Juden im deutschsprachigen Raum im 19. Jahrhundert auf ihrem Weg zur Emanzipation hatte, herauszustellen. Es geht in erster Linie darum, das Geschichtsbild nachzuzeichnen, das als Modell für die politische und soziale Rolle der deutschsprachigen aschkenasischen Juden dienen sollte – wobei dieses nur zu einem Teil den historiographisch belegbaren Realitäten entsprach. Seine Modellhaftigkeit erhielt es erst in der Projektion der Nachgeborenen, die sich in einer grundverschiedenen Lebenswelt befanden. Aus den Nöten und Bedrängnissen der Gegenwart heraus entwarfen sie ein Wunschbild, das sie dann zum Argument ihres politischen Denkens und Handelns machten.

Das christliche Interesse am spanischen Mittelalter schildert Schapkow sehr ausführlich im 3. Kapitel. Bekannte Autoren wie Herder, Fichte, von Arnim, Brentano und Novalis, aber auch weniger bekannte wie Christian Friedrich Rühs und Jacob Friedrich Fries befassten sich in erster Linie mit der Geschichte des Christentums. Eine Ausnahme stellte Christian Wilhelm von Dohm mit seinem Forschungsinteresse dar, der mit seiner Schrift „Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden“ (1783) wesentlich zum öffentlichen

Diskurs über die bürgerliche Emanzipation der Juden beigetragen hat und darin auch die soziale Stellung der Juden in Sefarad ausdrücklich positiv thematisierte. Überwiegend ging es den genannten Autoren jedoch um ein christliches Europa, was, Schapkow zufolge, eine Reaktion auf jüdischer Seite provozierte, den Anteil des iberischen Judentums an der kulturellen Entwicklung herauszustellen.

Im Mittelpunkt des jüdischen Interesses steht, wie Schapkow darstellt, die Zeit, in der die Juden unter arabischer Herrschaft in Al-Andalus, also dem südlichen Spanien gelebt haben, und die aufgrund zahlreicher wissenschaftlicher und literarischer Hervorbringungen sowie der intensiven Auseinandersetzung mit der jüdischen Tradition und hebräischen Sprache allgemein als „Goldenes Zeitalter" bezeichnet wird. Hier spielten die Juden eine gewichtige Rolle als Vermittler zwischen der arabisch-muslimischen und der christlich-romanischen Kultur, nicht zuletzt durch ihre intensive Übersetzungstätigkeit. Zu den berühmtesten Protagonisten dieser großen Zeit zählen Autoren wie Maimonides, Abraham ben Meir Ibn Esra, Ibn Daud, Jehuda Halevy, Issac Abravanel und weitere, deren Leben und Werk von den aschkenasischen Autoren zu Vorbildern stilisiert wurden. Dies geschah nicht nur in historiographischen, literaturhistorischen und sonstigen wissenschaftlichen Publikationen, sondern auch in fiktionalen Texten wie in Romanen und Novellen. Vor allem die neu aufkommenden Periodika boten ein Forum für diese Themen, darunter die in Hebräisch erschienene Zeitschrift *Ha Me'assef*, die deutschsprachige Zeitschrift *Sulamith* (herausgegeben von D. Fränkel) und das von J. Heinemann herausgegebene Periodikum mit dem Namen *Jedidja* (‚Freund Gottes'), einem Beinamen König Salomos. Joseph Wolf (1762–1826), der Mitbegründer von *Sulamith*, stellte ausdrücklich sefardische Vorbilder dar, die seines Erachtens nach sowohl für jüdische wie für nicht-jüdische Leser interessant seien.

Im Rahmen dieser Rückbesinnung und des Versuchs, ein Gegenmodell zur eigenen Gegenwart zu entwickeln, wurden auch Persönlichkeiten aus dem sefardischen Exil nach 1492 zu wichtigen Identifikationsfiguren gemacht. In den Niederlanden hatte sich im 17. Jahrhundert eine selbstbewusste sefardische Gemeinde etabliert, die politisch und wirtschaftlich einflussreich war. Es kam dort zu einer Blüte der sefardischen Kultur und Amsterdam wurde als zweites Jerusalem gepriesen. So gesehen behandelt Schapkow in seinem Buch gleich zwei „Goldene Zeitalter". Ein herausragender Vertreter dieser

niederländisch-sefardischen Exilgruppe war Menasseh ben Israel (1604–1657), der Autor der „Vindiciae Judaeorum“ (1656). Schapkow weist darauf hin, dass gerade bei der Darstellung dieser schillernden Persönlichkeit selektiv vorgegangen wurde: Charakterzüge wurden, je nachdem ob sie in das Bild der aschkenasischen Autoren passten, die sich als vernunftorientierte Aufklärer verstanden, betont oder – wie etwa Menassehs messianische Ideen – verschwiegen (S. 76 f.).

Viele der damaligen Autoren veränderten durch ihre Behandlung der sefardischen Vergangenheit das Bild von den Juden. Wie Schapkow zeigt, betonte etwa der liberale Rabbiner Ludwig Philippson, dass die Juden nun nicht mehr länger nur als Ghetto-Bewohner, sondern auch als Edelleute in Spanien vorstellbar waren. Leopold Zunz nannte die Sefarden „Spanier“ und unterstrich damit, dass sie in seinen Augen gleichberechtigter Teil der Mehrheitsgesellschaft und damit der Universalgeschichte waren. Isaak Markus Jost hieß die Integration der Sefarden in die Mehrheitsgesellschaft gut und war überzeugt, dass dieser Integrationsprozess im Laufe der Zeit schließlich zur Konversion zum Christentum geführt hätte – eine Entwicklung, gegen die er offenbar nichts einzuwenden gehabt hätte. Damit steht er allerdings im Gegensatz zu den anderen Autoren, die von Schapkow vorgestellt und analysiert werden, darunter Saul Ascher und Eduard Gans sowie Heinrich Graetz, der den Sefarden eine „doppelte Kompetenz“ attestierte, einerseits eine hochgradige Integration, ja Assimilation an die arabische Gesellschaft und andererseits die Wahrung und Vertiefung der eigenen jüdischen Identität. Graetz schenkte übrigens, wie Schapkow betont, auch den zeitgenössischen Sefarden seine Aufmerksamkeit, ähnlich wie David Fränkel, der die Sefarden in Livorno als in jeglicher Hinsicht vorbildlich ansah.

Bei den übrigen Autoren überwog aber in Bezug auf die zeitgenössischen Sefarden überwiegend Geringschätzung und Desinteresse. Schapkow referiert hier zahlreiche Meinungen und Einstellungen, allerdings korrigiert er nur selten, was historisch nicht korrekt ist: So etwa Graetz’ These, die Christen in Al-Andalus hätten ihre Sprache – im Gegensatz zu den sefardischen Juden – aufgegeben, obwohl bekannt ist, dass sie weiterhin das so genannte Mozarabische, einen romanischen Dialekt, sprachen; oder Graetz’ Behauptung, die sefardischen Juden hätten alle gut Hebräisch gekonnt, während zeitgenössische Gelehrte in Sefarad, wie Jehuda Halevy, über die fehlenden Hebräischkenntnisse ihrer Glaubensbrüder klagten. Und weiter Graetz’

Behauptung, die Sefarden sprächen noch seinerzeit alle so wunderbar Spanisch, obwohl die meisten von ihnen, die im Osmanischen Reich lebten, Judenspanisch sprachen, das stark vom Kastilischen abwich. Graetz' Ansichten sind auch deshalb kurios, weil er selbst wiederholt auf die sefardischen Juden in den Niederlanden zu sprechen kommt, bei denen aber das Portugiesische eine größere Rolle spielte. Hier hätte man Einwendungen seitens Schapkows erwartet, nicht nur, weil es sich um Aussagen handelt, die nicht korrekt sind, sondern, weil sich gerade an ihnen ablesen lässt, dass Graetz hier die Absicht verfolgte, der Geschichte eine bestimmte Richtung zu geben, die seinem eigenen Idealbild vom aschkenasischen Judentum näherkommen sollte. Die deutliche Benennung dieser Widersprüche zur historischen „Wahrheit" und derjenigen innerhalb der Geschichtsbilder einzelner Autoren hätte den Prozess der Geschichtsmodellierung zugunsten aktuellen Argumentierens noch besser nachvollziehbar gemacht.

Die in Schapkows Buch dargestellte Beschäftigung mit den Sefarden im 19. Jahrhunderte gipfelte bei vielen deutschen Juden schließlich in einer Identifizierung mit denselben, so dass sie sich selbst als die neuen Sefarden betrachteten. Waren die gelehrten sefardischen Juden im Mittelalter Träger des Judentums gewesen, so sah sich nun das aschkenasische Judentum als Verkörperung der neue jüdischen Gelehrsamkeit. Je mehr Glanz die deutschen Juden aber dem sefardischen Judentum der Vergangenheit verliehen und je stärker sie sich mit der Rolle der neuen Sefarden identifizierten, desto mehr verdunkelte sich das Bild von den polnischen Juden, das zu einem regelrechten Gegenbild wurde.

Leser, die darüber hinaus erfahren wollen, welches Bild die Maskilim sich von Sefarden machten oder welche Rolle die Geschichte der sefardischen Juden bei den Zionisten spielte, seien auf die deutsche Ausgabe des Buches verwiesen, das diesen hochinteressanten Aspekt im aschkenasischen Narrativ noch tiefer beleuchtet.

Rafael D. Arnold, Rostock

David Jünger: Jahre der Ungewissheit. Emigrationspläne deutscher Juden 1933–1938 (= Schriften des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts, Bd. 24), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2016, 440 S., 70 €.

In seinem Buch „Jahre der Ungewissheit" untersucht David Jünger die individuellen und kollektiven Emigrationsplanungen deutscher Juden in der Zeit von der Machtergreifung der Nationalsozialisten 1933 bis zum Anfang des Jahres 1938. Er widmet sich vor allem der Frage, wie sich die Haltung zur Auswanderung angesichts der sich radikalisierenden antijüdischen Politik verändert hat. Wie wurde in der jüdischen Öffentlichkeit darüber diskutiert, wie planten und organisierten die großen jüdischen Organisationen den Emigrationsprozess?

Jünger führt in seiner gut recherchierten, detailreichen Darstellung vor Augen, wie unterschiedlich die verschiedenen Gruppierungen innerhalb des deutschen Judentums auf die Situation reagiert haben. Damit macht er auch deutlich, wie wenig die deutschen Jüdinnen und Juden eine homogene Gemeinschaft gebildet haben – folgerichtig spricht er von den „deutschen Judenheiten".

Liberale, Zionisten, Orthodoxe und jüdische Deutschnationale unterschieden sich grundlegend in ihrem Verständnis von jüdischer Identität und fanden ganz unterschiedliche Antworten auf die sich zuspitzende Krise. In den Kontroversen um die Auswanderung ging es unter anderem darum, welcher Stellenwert Palästina in den Emigrationsplanungen zukommen sollte und um die Entscheidung zwischen Gruppen- und Einzelauswanderung. Immer lauter wurden ab Mitte der 1930er Jahren die Stimmen, die eine Zentralisierung der Auswanderungsbemühungen forderten. Doch bis zum Novemberpogrom war den Bemühungen, die Emigrationsplanungen zu bündeln, wenig Erfolg beschieden.

Verglichen mit der Situation der jüdischen Organisationen in Österreich nach dem „Anschluss" (Doron Rabinovici spricht von „Instanzen der Ohnmacht") verfügten jene in Deutschland bis zum Novemberpogrom noch über beträchtliche, wenn auch sich kontinuierlich verengende Handlungsspielräume.

David Jünger versucht, „sich den Jahren 1933 bis 1938 auf eine Weise zu nähern, die in den Forschungstraditionen der zurückliegenden Jahrzehnte unüblich geworden ist" (S. 39). Seit dem Ende der 1960er Jahre seien nämlich, wie er kritisch festhält, die jüdischen Reaktionen auf den Nationalsozialismus sowie die jüdische Emigration aus Deutschland vor dem Beginn des Zweiten

Weltkriegs stets aus der Perspektive der nachfolgenden Geschichte des Holocaust erforscht worden. Diese Herangehensweise habe aber kaum Erkenntnisse darüber geliefert, wie die deutschen Juden selbst die Entwicklungen der 1930er Jahre wahrgenommen, aus welchen Erfahrungsschätzen sich ihre Reaktionen darauf gespeist und mit welchen Mitteln sie versucht haben, den Angriffen der Nationalsozialisten zu begegnen.

Auch Jünger will sich daher dem von ihm untersuchten Zeitraum nicht mit der Brille unseres heutigen Wissens um die Shoah annähern. So kann er begreiflich machen, wie schwierig es für die damalige jüdische Gemeinschaft gewesen ist, auf eine bis dahin unbekannte Situation angemessen zu reagieren: „Sie wussten, dass die Vergangenheit unwiederbringlich verloren war, und hatten doch nichts anderes als eben ihre aus vergangenen Zeiten stammenden Erfahrungen, auf die allein sie sinnvollerweise zurückgreifen konnten." (S. 380)

Tatsächlich war in diesen Jahren weder für die deutschen Juden noch für die übrige Welt absehbar, wie sich die Situation in Deutschland weiterentwickeln würde. Nicht einmal für die Nationalsozialisten selbst war der Weg eindeutig vorgezeichnet.

Problematisch an Jüngers Herangehensweise ist jedoch, dass er verabsolutiert. Wie ähnliche Beispiele zeigen, birgt das Bemühen, demonstrativ mit bewährten Forschungstraditionen zu brechen oder bestimmten Thesen zum Durchbruch zu verhelfen, stets auch die Gefahr eines verengten Blickes. Jünger verführt es zu fragwürdigen Schlussfolgerungen und Verkürzungen. So leitet er aus den von ihm analysierten Dokumenten und individuellen Erinnerungen ab, dass weder die Machtergreifung der Nationalsozialisten 1933 noch die Nürnberger Gesetze von den deutschen Juden als *die* große Zäsur wahrgenommen worden seien, als die wir sie heute sehen. Viele hätten 1935 sogar mit einer gewissen Erleichterung reagiert, weil ein Zustand der völligen Rechtsunsicherheit beendet schien. Das mag für Teile (wenn auch sicher nicht die Gesamtheit) der jüdischen Bevölkerung zutreffen. Doch warum verzichtet Jünger darauf, diesen Befund mit einer wichtigen Erkenntnis der Shoah-Forschung zu verknüpfen? Dem Hinweis darauf, dass es eine besondere Perfidie der nationalsozialistischen Politik gewesen ist, der Verfolgung, Entrechtung und Enteignung der jüdischen Bevölkerung durch ein ausgeklügeltes Regelwerk – eine Flut von Gesetzen, Verordnungen und Erlassen – einen scheinlegalen Charakter zu verleihen?

Auch Jüngers Einsicht, dass „die Geschichte der jüdischen Emigration aus Deutschland in den Jahren 1933 bis 1938 (…) eine Geschichte der Auswanderung und zugleich eine des Bleibens, Ausharrens und Abwartens, bisweilen sogar der Rückkehr" (S. 13) gewesen ist, ist nicht zu widersprechen. Tatsächlich unternahmen noch Anfang 1938 deutsche Juden Erkundungsreisen, in denen sie die Situation in verschiedenen möglichen Zufluchtsländern ausloteten, um sich dann oft gegen eine Emigration zu entscheiden.

Doch obwohl bekannt ist, dass die Entfernung der Juden aus Deutschland von Beginn an ein zentrales Ziel Hitlers und der nationalsozialistischen Bewegung gewesen ist, lehnt es Jünger ab, für die Zeit vor 1938 von Flucht und Exil zu sprechen. Lediglich in Bezug auf jene Jüdinnen und Juden, die auch aus politischen Gründen oder wegen ihrer künstlerischen und intellektuellen Positionen verfolgt wurden, seien diese Termini angemessen. Für alle anderen habe es noch Handlungsalternativen gegeben, und man sei noch nicht von endgültiger Flucht ausgegangen – vielmehr von einer „Verlagerung des Lebensmittelpunktes in ein anderes Land, ohne die persönlichen und geschäftlichen Beziehungen nach Deutschland abzubrechen" (S. 394). Es habe sich also um eine Emigration aus wirtschaftlichen Motiven gehandelt.

Dieser Interpretation muss energisch widersprochen werden. Das Berufsbeamtengesetz vom 7. April 1933 und noch mehr die Nürnberger Gesetze dienten eindeutig rassenpolitischen Zielsetzungen. Die Ausschaltung zumindest eines Teiles der jüdischen Bevölkerung aus dem Berufs- und Wirtschaftsleben und ein Gesetzesbündel, das die Betroffenen zu Menschen zweiter Klasse degradierte, das aus „Reichsbürgern" „Staatsangehörige" machte – genügt das alles nicht, um von Flucht zu sprechen? Auch die „Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden" musste ihren Namen auf „Reichsvertretung der Juden in Deutschland" ändern, womit klargestellt war, dass der jüdischen Bevölkerung kein selbstverständlicher Platz in der Gesellschaft mehr zugedacht war.

Wie zahlreiche Arbeiten zur Exilforschung belegen, ist der Begriff des Exils keineswegs nur auf die Situation jener anwendbar, die alle Brücken zur alten Heimat abbrechen und von vornherein eine Rückkehr ausschließen. Viele deutsche Juden, die anfangs vor allem in die Nachbarländer auswichen, hofften auf ein baldiges Ende des Regimes oder zumindest eine Mäßigung in der antijüdischen Politik, somit auf eine Zukunft in Deutschland. Ein Exil war es allemal. Die Weigerung, in diesem Kontext von Flucht zu sprechen, läuft letztendlich auf eine Verharmlosung der nationalsozialistischen Politik vor

der Shoah hinaus – auch wenn das eindeutig nicht die Intention des Autors ist. Die Argumentation erinnert auf irritierende Weise an den heutigen politischen Diskurs, in dem Menschen, die ihre Heimat verlassen, allzu rasch als „Wirtschaftsemigranten" ohne plausiblen Fluchtgrund abgestempelt werden. Bedarf es der ultimativen Katastrophe, ehe eine Person das Recht hat, anderswo Schutz zu suchen? Zudem schließt ein Leben im Exil keineswegs das Weiterbestehen gewisser Kontakte zur alten Heimat aus, wie viele Studien zu Vergangenheit und Gegenwart belegen.

Auch nach 1938 gab es im Deutschen Reich Juden, die sich trotz des massiven Verfolgungsdrucks nicht zur Flucht entschließen konnten oder sich der (trügerischen) Hoffnung hingaben, als ehemalige Frontkämpfer werde ihnen so Schlimmes schon nicht widerfahren. Daraus lässt sich ablesen, wie bedrohlich für viele die Vorstellung gewesen ist, ins Unbekannte aufzubrechen.

Jünger geht es im Kern auch darum, die leichtfertige moralische Verurteilung der damaligen jüdischen Organisationen in Deutschland angesichts von versäumten Rettungsmöglichkeiten kritisch zu hinterfragen. Was in seiner Argumentation jedoch fehlt, ist die notwendige Differenzierung. Die jüdischen Institutionen in Deutschland und Repräsentanten der „freien" Welt werden in einen Topf geworfen – wo doch ihre Situation unterschiedlicher nicht hätte sein können: Die deutschen Juden befanden sich in den Fängen eines Unrechtsregimes, während die Vertreter anderer Staaten grundsätzlich in der Lage waren, freie Entscheidungen zu treffen, sich etwa zu der moralischen Verpflichtung zu bekennen, Verfolgten Zuflucht zu gewähren.

David Jüngers Thesen bieten hinreichend Stoff für wissenschaftliche Auseinandersetzungen. Empfohlen sei sein gut lesbares Buch, das auch eine Forschungslücke schließt, allemal.

Gabriele Anderl, Wien

Johann Nicolai: „Seid mutig und aufrecht!“ Das Ende des Centralvereins deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens 1933–1938, Berlin: be.bra wissenschaft Verlag 2016, 288 S., 34 €.

Das Jahr 1990 war ein Wendepunkt in der Erforschung des deutschen Judentums und insbesondere der Geschichte des Centralvereins deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (C. V.). Lange als verschollen oder vernichtet geglaubte Dokumente wurden in einem Moskauer Archiv der Öffentlichkeit zugänglich gemacht. Darunter waren auch die umfangreichen, 1938 von der Gestapo beschlagnahmten Akten des C. V. Bis erste größere Forschungsarbeiten auf Grundlage dieser neuen Aktenfunde publiziert wurden, dauerte es noch einige Jahre; eines der grundlegendsten Bücher ist bis heute Avraham Barkais „‚Wehr Dich!‘ Der Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (C. V.) 1893–1938“ von 2002. Inzwischen ist der Zugang zu den Akten des C. V. wesentlich erleichtert worden, da es mehrere Mikrofilm-Kopien an unterschiedlichen Standorten gibt, so in der Wiener Library in London, im Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D. C. und nicht zuletzt in den Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem.

Erfreulicherweise gibt es auch über ein Vierteljahrhundert später immer noch Publikationen, die diese umfangreichen Bestände nutzen und den Centralverein in den Mittelpunkt ihrer Forschung stellen. Johann Nicolais Dissertationsschrift, eingereicht am Historischen Institut der Universität Potsdam, ist eine davon. Sein daraus hervorgegangenes Buch, das unter dem Titel „‚Seid mutig und aufrecht!‘ Das Ende des Centralvereins deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens 1933–1938“ als erster Band der neuen Reihe „Potsdamer Jüdische Studien“ erschien, zeichnet die Arbeit dieser wichtigsten jüdischen Selbstorganisation in den ersten fünf Jahren der nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft nach.

Johann Nicolai setzt sich zum Ziel, unter „gründlicher Auswertung der Moskauer Archivbestände zum C. V. […] die vielschichtigen Aspekte der C. V.-Arbeit im Rechtsschutz bzw. der juristisch-wirtschaftlichen Beratung des C. V. im Rahmen des ‚Zentralausschusses für Hilfe und Aufbau‘, der publizistischen Arbeit der *C. V.-Zeitung* und der Literaturzeitschrift *Der Morgen*, der Auswanderungsvorberatung [sic] und der Auswanderungsschulung in einem Gesamtkontext [zu diskutieren].“ Dabei stellt er die Frage: „Mit welchen Maßnahmen hat der C. V. die Fortsetzung seiner Arbeit gegenüber seinen Mitgliedern begründet, obwohl im Nationalsozialismus die grundlegenden Bürgerrechte

für die deutschen Juden, die er ursprünglich verteidigen wollte, nicht mehr gewährleistet waren?“ (S. 19)

Damit steckt sich Nicolai ein großes Feld ab, welches er, mit den politischen Entwicklungen der Zeit im Hintergrund, im ersten Teil seines Buches chronologisch abarbeitet. Natürlich wird dem Jahr 1933 mit seinen grundlegenden Veränderungen für das jüdische Leben in Deutschland ein großer Raum geboten. Doch nicht nur die Einschnitte wie das Berufsbeamtengesetz oder der „Judenboykott“ werden ausführlich beschrieben, sondern auch die Phase der Verunsicherung und der Aushandlung einer neuen Selbstpositionierung innerhalb der jüdischen Selbstorganisationen, die im April 1933 zur Gründung des Zentralausschusses für Hilfe und Aufbau und ein halbes Jahr später zur Gründung der Reichsvertretung führte. Auch die ideologischen Konflikte zwischen Zionisten und dem C. V. kommen hier zur Sprache, doch leider bleiben die zionistische Seite und ihr Umgang mit den Verhältnissen in Deutschland dabei etwas unterbelichtet. So fehlt ein Eingehen auf Francis R. Nicosias Studie „Zionismus und Antisemitismus im Dritten Reich“ von 2012 ebenso wie ein Hinweis auf das zwar umstrittene aber durchaus erfolgreiche *Ha'avara*-Abkommen leider gänzlich, um die zionistische Position innerhalb des deutschen Judentums besser verständlich zu machen. In die zutreffende Analyse der C. V.-Arbeit mischt sich gelegentlich ein wertender Blick, der eine sehr retrospektive Sichtweise auf die Ereignisse verrät. So mag es den heutigen Leser aus der Post-Holocaust-Perspektive natürlich erstaunen, dass der C. V. „seinen wahrhaft empfundenen Patriotismus“ im Kontext der Verhaftungen nach dem Reichstagsbrand besonders herausstellte und sowohl das Presseverbot wie auch die Inhaftierung kommunistischer Oppositioneller rechtfertigte. Das Urteil jedoch, dass dies in „dieser Situation in keiner Weise angebracht war“ (S. 30), verkennt, dass es Anfang 1933 zur Erschütterung in das Vertrauen der staatstragenden Organe und in die eigene, seit Jahrzehnten erfolgreiche Arbeit mehr gebraucht hätte als die Ernennung Adolf Hitlers zum Kanzler und einen brennenden Reichstag.

Im zweiten Teil seines Buches knüpft Nicolai zwar chronologisch an den vorangegangen an, bricht diese Chronologie aber immer wieder durch spannende Exkurse auf. So werden hier die nichtzionistische Auswanderungsschule im schlesischen Groß Breesen und die beiden Fallbeispiele zur Überseeauswanderung, Südafrika und Brasilien näher behandelt. Die Auswanderung deutscher, nichtzionistischer Juden, die Nicolai vollkommen richtig als Forschungsdesiderat identifiziert, wird aber leider auch hier nur oberflächig

beschrieben. Zwar wird ausgiebig auf die politischen Gegebenheiten in den Zielländern eingegangen, aber nur wenig bis gar nicht auf die jüdischen Organisationen vor Ort oder gar auf eine mögliche Zusammenarbeit zwischen deutschen und im Zielland ansässigen Institutionen. Es wäre spannend zu erfahren gewesen, was der Centralverein – außer Länderberichten und Portugiesischkursen in der C. V.-Zeitung – aktiv getan hat (oder auch nicht getan hat), um seinen Mitgliedern, oder allgemeiner, den deutschen Juden, eine Auswanderung zu erleichtern.

In beiden Teilen seiner Arbeit diskutiert Nicolai nah an den Quellen, zum einen, wie es sein Ziel war, an den Akten des Moskauer Sonderarchivs, aber mehrheitlich an den jeweiligen Publikationsorganen des C. V. oder der Zionistischen Vereinigung für Deutschland. Dabei stellt er keinerlei Systematik oder Methode vor, wie er die *C. V.-Zeitung*, den *Morgen* oder auch die *Jüdische Rundschau* gelesen hat. Gerade für die Zeit nach der Machtübergabe an die Nationalsozialisten wäre es für den Leser hilfreich gewesen, zu erfahren, unter welcher Zensur bzw. Selbstzensur die Periodika standen und wie mit ihnen als Quelle sinnvoll umgegangen werden kann.

Die Stärke von Nicolais Buch liegt darin, dass er es schafft, mit einem weiten Blick und immer im Abgleich mit der politischen Situation, die Arbeit des C. V. in allen Einzelheiten nachzuzeichnen. So erreicht er es, dessen letzte konfliktreiche Jahre anhand der Quellenlektüre in flüssiger Sprache dem Leser näher zu bringen. Die meisten wichtigen Themen, denen sich der C. V. in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus bis zu seiner Auflösung stellen musste, werden angesprochen und das auch in der dem Buch eigenen, angenehmen chronologischen Art. Nur leider fehlt, wenn man es denn als Überblicksdarstellung begreifen will, jeglicher Apparat, um es auch als solche nutzen zu können. Die Kapitelüberschriften sind zum gezielten Auffinden von Informationen wenig hilfreich, und – als wirklich großes Manko dieses Buches und für eine wissenschaftliche Publikation unüblich – es gibt weder ein Personen- noch ein Sachregister. Auch hätte man sich eine größere Sorgfalt beim Satz gewünscht, denn die häufigen Unregelmäßigkeiten bei den Zitateinrückungen erschweren das Lesen unnötig. So hinterlässt das Buch einen zwiespältigen Eindruck, den man mit mehr Liebe für das Detail und die Benutzbarkeit sicherlich hätte vermeiden können.

Tilmann Gempp-Friedrich, Frankfurt am Main

Hans Otto Horch (Hrsg.): Handbuch der deutsch-jüdischen Literatur, Berlin: de Gruyter Oldenbourg 2016, 630 S., 269 €.

Beim Thema deutsch-jüdischer Beziehungen mögen uns oftmals zuerst Bilder von Verfolgung und Vernichtung einfallen. Denn diese historischen Tatsachen haben in der deutsch-jüdischen Literatur tiefe Spuren hinterlassen. Dennoch sind sie nur *ein* Aspekt der deutsch-jüdischen Beziehungen. Die Erkenntnis, dass Juden die deutschsprachige Literatur und Kultur aktiv mitgestaltet und an der wirtschaftlichen und wissenschaftlichen Entwicklung im deutschsprachigen Raum maßgeblich mitgewirkt haben, gehört zum vertrauten Bestand der Geschichtsschreibung. Inzwischen wird die Geschichte von Juden und Deutschen immer häufiger als eine „vielfältige, langfristige, wechselhafte und fragile gemeinsame ‚Beziehungsgeschichte'" (S. 9) verstanden, worauf Achim Jaeger im ersten Beitrag des Handbuchs verweist; eine Auffassung, die von allen Beiträgern des Handbuchs geteilt werden müsste. Die deutsch-jüdische Literatur, deren Anfänge Andreas B. Kilcher zufolge „in der Aufklärung liegen, unter deren gesellschaftlichen, kulturellen und theologischen Bedingungen ein jüdisches Schreiben in deutscher Sprache überhaupt erst möglich wurde" (S. 70), reflektiert diese Geschichte und wirkt aktiv an ihr mit.

In den letzten Jahrzehnten hat sich die Erforschung der deutschsprachigen Literatur jüdischer Autorinnen und Autoren intensiviert. Dabei zeigte die Geschichte der deutsch-jüdischen Literatur unter verschiedenen theoretischen Perspektiven stets neue Facetten. Es fehlte allerdings eine Überblick gebende Darstellung, in der die Erträge dieser Forschung bis in die Gegenwart hinein zusammengefasst und bewertet werden. Das Handbuch zielt darauf ab, diese Lücke zu schließen. Dabei unterscheidet es sich von einem enzyklopädischen Lexikon durch Verzicht auf absolute Vollständigkeit und bemüht sich vielmehr darum, „eine Übersicht über die Vielfalt der historischen und systematischen Erforschung der deutsch-jüdischen Literatur zu vermitteln" (S. 4). Es hat eine Form, die „zwischen dem mosaikartigen Lexikon und einer narrativen diskursorientierten deutsch-jüdischen Literaturgeschichte" liegt (S. 4).

Das von dem emeritierten Professor und ehemaligen Inhaber der „Ludwig Strauß Professur" Hans Otto Horch herausgegebene Handbuch gliedert sich in drei Teile, die aus insgesamt 35 Beiträgen von 30 AutorInnen bestehen. Da die Verfasser der einzelnen Artikel ihre Beiträge im Rahmen der inhaltlichen und formalen Vorgaben frei konzipieren und die theoretisch-methodischen Ansätze frei wählen konnten, liest sich das Handbuch wie ein Sammelband.

Dabei hat jeder Beitrag ein eigenes Literaturverzeichnis. Durch die feingliedrige Unterteilung eignet sich das umfangreiche Werk zum Querlesen ebenso wie zum gezielten Nachschlagen.

Im ersten Teil, der aus 17 Beiträgen besteht und damit der größte Teil des Handbuchs ist, steht die geschichtliche Entwicklung der deutsch-jüdischen Literatur im Mittelpunkt, beginnend mit einem Beitrag zum Judenbild in der Literatur des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit und endend mit Beiträgen zur gegenwärtigen deutsch-jüdischen Literatur und zu ihrem europäischen Kontext. Der Schwerpunkt der geschichtlichen Darstellungen liegt auf der Entwicklung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert. Die in diesem Teil gesammelten Beiträge sind chronologisch geordnet, aber nicht festbestimmten Epochen zugeordnet. So erstreckt sich z. B. die Thematik des zweiten Beitrags „Figurationen des ‚Jüdischen' in fiktionalen Texten seit 1750" von Victoria Gutsche und Gunnar Och von der Aufklärung bis in die Gegenwart. Auch weisen die Beiträge untereinander zeitliche Überschneidungen auf, wobei jeweils verschiedene Aspekte behandelt werden. Insgesamt gehen die Texte Fragen bezüglich der jüdischen Tradition und der jüdischen Existenz nach, die oft als fremd, minoritär und daher oft als eine gefährdet wahrgenommen wird. Neben den zahlreichen Höhen und Tiefen in der deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte lässt sich deutlich erkennen, wie eng politische, soziale und religiöse Umstände mit dem literarischen Schreiben verbunden sind. Die Entstehungssituation der deutsch-jüdischen Literatur am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts unterscheidet sich grundlegend von den Prämissen des 19. bzw. des beginnenden 20. Jahrhunderts, wo Juden in kulturellen und wirtschaftlichen Zentren wie Berlin, Wien und Prag wichtige Positionen innehatten. Noch einmal radikal anders präsentiert sich die Situation jüdischen Schreibens nach der Shoah (vgl. S. 270 ff.).

Der zweite Teil, „Orte und Räume", besteht aus fünf Aufsätzen und widmet sich der Herausbildung deutsch-jüdischer Literatur als räumlicher Erkundung bzw. dem Einflusses der Topographie auf sie. Im Fokus stehen hier kulturell und ökonomisch wichtige Städte wie Berlin, Wien, Prag, Czernowitz und das durch das Jiddische geprägte weitere Osteuropa. Denn während die bedeutsamen Städte als Schauplätze der deutsch-jüdischen Literatur – meistens der modernen Literatur seit dem Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts – fungieren, gilt die Kultur der Juden Osteuropas und ihre jiddische Literatur – zumindest in den Augen der Juden aus akkulturierten Familien in Westeuropa – als ursprünglich und authentisch jüdisch. Vor diesem Hintergrund spielen deutsche

Übersetzungen jiddischer Literatur für das jüdische Selbstverständnis in der Zeit vor dem zweiten Weltkrieg eine wichtige Rolle.

Im dritten Teil (mit 13 Aufsätzen) werden unter der Überschrift „Gattungen, Formen, Medien, Institutionen" Genres, Medien und kulturelle Institutionen dargestellt, die für die deutsch-jüdische Literatur prägend sind. Neben den üblichen literarischen Gattungen wie historischer Roman, Autobiographie, religiöse Literatur, Kinder- und Jugendliteratur, Drama und Theater sowie Film etc. werden hier auch bislang wenig erforschte, typisch jüdische Gattungen wie Ghettoliteratur, aggadische Erzählliteratur sowie jüdische Kalender und Almanache systematisch dargestellt. Einige Beiträge widmen sich Themen wie dem jüdischen Presse- und Verlagswesen, wobei nichtfiktionale Texte eine entscheidende Rolle spielen. Dass das Handbuch einen kulturwissenschaftlichen Akzent setzen will, lässt sich deutlich daran erkennen, dass dem Thema „Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft" ein eigner Beitrag eingeräumt wird.

An die Beiträge schließen sich bibliographische Angaben zu allgemeiner und weitführender Literatur sowie Nachschlagwerken an, die für eine intensivere Beschäftigung mit dem Thema von großem Nutzen sein werden. Dem Band werden darüber hinaus ein Personen- und Werkregister sowie ein Sachregister beigegeben, wodurch sich zahlreiche personelle und inhaltliche Korrespondenzen zwischen den drei Teilen erschließen lassen. Dadurch lässt sich der Überblick über einen weiten Gegenstandbereich gewinnen – „sowohl für interessierte ‚Laien' als auch für wissenschaftlich motivierte Leserinnen und Leser" (S. 5).

Insgesamt greifen die Beiträge des Bands mit großer Sorgfalt und Expertise eine Reihe relevanter Themen auf und bieten unterschiedliche Perspektiven auf einen Literaturbereich an, in dem es an Heterogenität und interkulturellen Konflikten nicht mangelt. Das von Hans Otto Horch herausgegebene Handbuch kann ebenso wie das von Andreas B. Kilcher herausgegebene *Metzler-Lexikon der deutsch-jüdischen Literatur*, das im Jahr 2000 erschienen ist und im Jahr 2012 wieder aufgelegt wurde, als notwendiges Hilfsmittel für literatur- und kulturwissenschaftliche Forschung in diesem Feld gelten. Dass die Werke einander durch ihre jeweiligen Funktionsformen – das eine als Lexikon, das andere als Handbuch – ergänzen, ist offensichtlich. Nicht nur zitiert Horch in der Einleitung zustimmend Kilchers Position, sondern Kilcher wirkte auch ideell an der Planung des Handbuchs mit.

Yongqiang Liu, Hangzhou/China

Michał Szulc: Emanzipation in Stadt und Staat. Die Judenpolitik in Danzig 1807–1847 (= Hamburger Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Juden XLVI), Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag 2016, 352 S., 35 €.

Der Prozess der Emanzipation der Juden verlief in den deutschen Ländern sehr unterschiedlich. Selbst wenn man die eigentliche Geschichte der Emanzipation erst mit der Französischen Revolution beginnen lassen will, wie es Michal Szulc in dem vorliegenden, auf seiner an der Universität Potsdam eingereichten Dissertation beruhenden Buch tut, und damit die Forderungen der französischen Nationalversammlung zum Maßstab für die deutsche Entwicklung nimmt, ist man immer wieder erstaunt, wie sehr sich die Verlaufsformen unterschieden und Gleichzeitiges mit Ungleichzeitigem in Konflikt geriet. Fortschritte und Rückschritte gab es ebenso wie Unterschiede zwischen Stadt und Land, ebenso wie zwischen den Trägern der Emanzipation, die als Zentralbeamte des Preußischen Staates, als Vertreter der französischen Administration oder als Mitglieder einer urbanen Führungsgruppe völlig gegensätzlich agieren konnten.

Wenn das Ziel der vorliegenden Arbeit war, „durch die Untersuchung der rechtspolitischen Prozesse Rückschlüsse auf die Umsetzung der staatlichen Judenpolitik in der Provinz zu erhalten“ (S. 10), so bot sich Danzig als ein in den archivischen Quellen gut dokumentiertes, ideales Fallbeispiel an. Gerade hier, in einer selbstbewussten Handelsstadt, in der sich die Herrschaftsverhältnisse seit dem Ende des Alten Reiches mehrfach änderten, ließ sich demonstrieren, dass selbst klare staatliche Vorgaben nicht ohne weiteres umsetzbar waren: weil es lokal andere Traditionen gab, weil das emanzipatorische Denken trotz eines unübersehbaren französischen Drucks sich noch kaum durchsetzen konnte, und weil man immer noch alter Vorurteile gegenüber den Juden erlegen war.

Um das Problem der Umsetzung von Emanzipationsnormen in den Griff zu bekommen, musste sich der Autor den unterschiedlichsten Diskursebenen, allgemeinen gesetzgeberischen Verhandlungen, gutachtlichen Stellungnahmen ebenso wie den sich aus Einzelanträgen ergebenden Diskussionen zuwenden. Dabei ging es ihm um die Frage der rechtlichen (nicht der gesellschaftlichen!) Gleichstellung von Juden und Christen, „die auf einem politischen Programm mit dem Ziel der Abschaffung des Ständesystems und der Integration von Juden in die Gesellschaft beruhte“ (S. 13). Im Laufe seiner

Analysen wird jedoch deutlich, dass nicht nur das zielgerichtete politische Handeln (einer „Judenpolitik“) betrachtet werden musste, sondern auch eher zufällig und unbeabsichtigt in Gang gekommene politische Prozesse, die auch auf missverstandenen Begrifflichkeiten beruhen konnten. Dass der Staatsbürger (entsprechend dem französischen *citoyen*) sich vom alten Stadtbürger unterschied, war nicht allen von Anfang an klar. So erwiesen sich manche vermeintlich fortschrittliche Stellungnahmen bei näherer Betrachtung als rückschrittliche Vorschläge. Andererseits zeigte es sich, dass selbst in der Zeit der Restauration manche liberale Ideen fortwirkten und die Rückschläge in der Emanzipationsentwicklung überdauerten.

Um das Hin und Her der unterschiedlichsten Akteure und Diskursebenen methodisch in den Griff zu bekommen, bedient sich der Autor des begrifflichen Instrumentariums der in der Politikwissenschaft entwickelten Implementationsforschung. Maßgebend dafür war die Erkenntnis, dass ein „konformer Vollzug“ der Gesetzesvorgaben nicht unbedingt immer gewollt war, da auch Konflikte vermieden, Ressourcen geschont und Folgen des Vollzugs unterschiedlich eingeschätzt wurden. An der Durchsetzung der Emanzipationsgesetze waren die unterschiedlichsten Akteure beteiligt, staatliche wie städtische Amtsträger ebenso wie Betroffene und Adressaten. Ausgehend von der Erkenntnis, dass Herrschaft als Kommunikationsprozess verstanden werden muss, die zur Stabilisierung des regelmäßigen Austauschs von Informationen bedarf, konnte der Autor das Politikfeld „Emanzipation“ in die Gesetzlichkeiten der Administration und der ihr unterworfenen Personen einbinden und so die unterschiedlichen und teilweise gegenläufigen Prozesse herausarbeiten.

Im Rahmen dieser theoretischen Vorgaben, die im Laufe der Untersuchung nicht immer stringent beachtet werden, geht der Autor zunächst unter dem Titel „Die Szene“ auf die Rechts- und Wirtschaftslage sowie Mentalitäten der Bürger von Danzig ebenso wie der Juden ein. Die in einem weiteren Kapitel beleuchteten „Akteure“ in Stadt und Region sind vor allem die preußischen Beamten, die der Autor namentlich für die „Sattelzeit“ vom Ende des *Ancien Régime* bis zum Beginn der neuen Ordnung des Wiener Kongresses betrachtet. Doch schon hier wird deutlich, dass es nicht damit getan ist, die wichtigsten Amtsträger dieser Zeit zu charakterisieren; auch die Entwicklung selbst muss nachgezeichnet werden. Folgerichtig bevorzugt der Autor für die folgenden Kapitel eine chronologische Darstellung, indem er die relevanten Quellen – die er ausführlich in den Anmerkungen zitiert – im Hinblick auf

den Gesichtspunkt der Emanzipationsentwicklung umfassend auswertet. So nimmt er die Zeit des Freistaats in der napoleonischen Epoche, die Zeit der Einführung und Umsetzung des preußischen Emanzipationsedikts von 1812, die Jahre der faktischen Einschränkungen der ursprünglichen Versprechen, die Zeit der Hep-Hep-Unruhen 1819 und 1821, die weiteren Durchsetzungsbemühungen und schließlich die Debatten der 1830er und 1840er Jahre unter die Lupe. Für den Leser sehr hilfreich ist, dass der Autor am Ende der jeweiligen Kapitel „Resümees" präsentiert, in denen in knappen Worten die wichtigsten Ergebnisse zusammengefasst werden.

Es ist dies nicht eigentlich eine rechtshistorische Arbeit, auch wenn die Entwicklung der Normen und ihrer Durchsetzung ausführlich diskutiert wird. Es geht dem Autor eher um den Machtkonflikt zwischen Staat und Stadt, zwischen napoleonischen bzw. preußischen Amtsträgern und städtischen Honoratioren. Die Ausbildung und Stabilisierung des modernen bürgerlichen Staats, die Differenzierung des Verwaltungshandeln, daneben die Veränderung liberaler und konservativer Einstellungen, demonstriert anhand der Emanzipationsdebatte, stehen letztlich im Mittelpunkt der Analyse. Es ist eine sehr wichtige Untersuchung, die das Problem der Emanzipationsdebatte anhand intensiver Quellenauswertung neu beleuchtet.

J. Friedrich Battenberg, Darmstadt

Efrat Gal-Ed: Niemandssprache. Itzik Manger – ein europäischer Dichter, Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag im Suhrkamp Verlag 2016, 2. Auflage, 784 S., 49,90 €.

Man nannte ihn den „Prinz des jiddischen Volksliedes", einen „jiddischen Beaudelaire" und er selbst schrieb nicht ganz unbescheiden über sich: „Die deutschen Juden haben Heine hervorgebracht, die jiddischen Juden Manger." (S. 179) Unbestritten war Itzik Manger einer der ganz großen Dichter jiddischer Sprache. Angesichts seiner Bedeutung für die jiddische Literaturgeschichte ist die Manger-Biografie von Efrat Gal-Ed ein Ereignis, das in der Jiddistik weltweit wahrgenommen wurde. Der große Erfolg des Buches mag jedoch nicht nur einem lange bestehenden Forschungsdesiderat, sondern auch in seiner Gestalt liegen: der minutiösen Recherche, die ihm zugrunde

liegt, dem zugänglichen und überaus ästhetischen Stil und seiner aufsehenerregenden Form.

Die Künstlerin, Übersetzerin und habilitierte Jiddistin Efrat Gal-Ed hat im Leben und Schreiben Mangers zwei Leitthemen entdeckt: Das *hefker*-Sein (d. i. herrenlos / vogelfrei sein, niemanden gehören), das zunächst das Jiddische und seinen Status meint. Und das von Mangers frühsten Texten an präsente Thema „Europa", das für die staatenlose Sprache eine wichtige Perspektive bietet. Die Anerkennung des Jiddischen als Teil europäischer Kultur ist ein großes Ziel der Jahre vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg und der Zwischenkriegszeit, das mit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg in sich zusammenbrechen sollte. Im Exil wird das *hefker*-Sein in ganz anderem Sinne brutale Realität des staatenlos gewordenen Manger. Er erlebt von dort, wie das Land jener Dichter, die er einst so bewunderte, Europa in den Weltkrieg zu stürzt und jene Welt unwiederbringlich vernichtet, in der er zu Hause war. Vogelfrei, immer vom Entzug seiner auf wenige Wochen oder Monate ausgestellten Aufenthaltsgenehmigungen bedroht, irrt er in Paris und London umher und ist über Jahre hinweg völlig abhängig von der finanziellen, logistischen und emotionalen Hilfe seiner Freunde und Freundinnen. Mangers eigenes Leben wird, anders als das seines Vaters und seines Bruders, gerettet. Als Dichter jedoch, schreibt Gal-Ed, überlebte er kaum. (S. 16) Der Titel „Niemandssprache" ist ein Versuch, die *hefker*-Situation des Jiddischen ins Deutsche zu übertragen. Er erinnert auch an ein berühmtes Gedicht jenes im deutschsprachigen Raum weit bekannteren Czernowitzer Dichter Paul Celan, *Die Niemandsrose*.

Gal-Eds Manger-Biografie ist ein Kunstwerk, dem das schier Unmögliche gelungen ist: Ein breite, deutschsprachige und in jüdischen Themen nicht unbedingt tiefergehend informierte Leserschaft anzusprechen und einem der größten jiddischen Dichter eine wissenschaftlich einwandfreie Biografie zu widmen, die eine Fülle an neuen Erkenntnissen bringt und die auch – ungewöhnlich genug für jiddistische Beiträge in deutscher Sprache – international Anerkennung fand.

Dem Aufbau des Talmuds nachempfunden ist die typografische Struktur des Buches, in der mehrere Textebenen parallel gehen. Die äußere Geschichte der Umgebung Mangers, die Orte, an denen er sich aufhält mit den für ihn dort und in dieser Lebensphase wichtigen Personen umrahmen dabei häufig die unmittelbare Erzählung von Mangers Lebensweg. Dem talmudischen Vorbild besonders nahe steht diese Anordnung, wenn im (durch größere Buchstaben

und eine andere Schriftart hervorgehobenem) Zentrum ein Gedicht Mangers steht, das von Gal-Eds Interpretation umrahmt wird. Sie funktioniert aber auch dann sehr gut, wenn im inneren Text Mangers verzweifelte Lage in den Zwischenexilen erzählt wird und im äußeren Text all die Bemühungen der Freunde weltweit anhand ihrer Briefe rekonstruiert werden, die Manger zu helfen versuchten.

Beide Fließtexte sind in Kapitel geteilt, die chronologisch nach Orten untergliedert sind und jeweils mit einer Fotografie beginnen, deren Beschreibung in das Kapitel einleitet. Gal-Ed hält in ihrer Biografie eine wohltuende Distanz zu ihrem Protagonisten. Sie lässt vor allem die Quellen sprechen, Ego-Dokumente Mangers und Zeugnisse seiner Zeitgenossen, publizierte Schriften wie Archivmaterial, die wiederum typografisch vom Fließtext abgesetzt sind. Darunter finden sich auch zahlreiche Fotografien und Faksimile von hoher Qualität, die die in den Texten vermittelten Bausteine ergänzen.

Diese innovative Form erleichtert es dem interessierten Leser, in das Werk hineinzublättern, sich an einzelnen Episoden oder Anekdoten oder einer Handschrift Mangers festzulesen. Einem systematischen Lesen dagegen scheint sich das Buch förmlich zu sperren. Innerer und äußerer Text treffen sich erst nach zig Seiten im Kapitelende wieder, mitunter springt einer der beiden Texte über zwei Seiten hinweg – manchmal sogar mitten im Satz oder sogar im Wort (z. B.: S. 120–122, S. 130–132). Vor allem zu Beginn gelingt es nicht immer auf Anhieb, die Textteile auf der neuen Seite zuzuordnen, immer wieder wird die Aufmerksamkeit auf einen anderen Textteil oder die Bilder gelenkt. Der enorme Erfolg des Buches ist sicher auch dieser überaus ästhetischen, dem modernen Leseverhalten und unterschiedlich vorgebildeten Leserinnen und Lesern entgegenkommenden Anmutung zu verdanken. Die Biografie entsteht gewissermaßen erst im Leseprozess durch das Zusammenfügen und Verknüpfen der Episoden aus Mangers Leben, seiner Texte, der Fotografien. Die Form hat auch für die Wissenschaft ihre Reize: Sie ermöglicht ein interdisziplinäres Schreiben, indem auf die unterschiedlichen Hintergründe des Lesers oder der Leserin Rücksicht genommen werden kann. Gerade die reichhaltigen Fußnoten ordnen die Arbeit immer zugleich in den Forschungsstand ein.

Gal-Eds Arbeit zeigt, wie sehr es sich für die Wissenschaft wie für die Öffentlichkeit lohnen kann, dem hohen Produktionsdruck der Universitäten nicht nachzugeben und einmal gut zehn Jahre in ein Projekt zu investieren

und auch die klassischen Formen akademischen Schreibens zu verlassen. Neben der Jiddistik wird auch die Germanistik von der Arbeit Gal-Eds profitieren. Die vergleichsweise gut erforschte deutschsprachige Bukowiner Lyrik ist immer auch als Ergebnis des kulturellen Schmelztiegels der mehrsprachigen Städte des damaligen Rumäniens verstanden worden. Die jiddische Dichtung, die zeitgleich am gleichen Ort entstand, blieb dennoch – nicht zuletzt aufgrund der Sprachbarriere – oft ein blinder Fleck. Auch Historikerinnen und Historiker werden in der Arbeit noch einiges Neues entdecken: So haben die Reaktionen der jiddischen Intelligenzija auf den deutschen Nationalsozialismus bisher kaum gebührend Aufmerksamkeit bekommen. (S. 350–362)

Wenn es, wie die Stilform der Rezension es fordert, nötig ist, Kritik anzubringen, so hätte an manchen Stellen – etwa wenn es um Mangers Interesse an der Volksdichtung[1] oder seine Rezeption christlicher Motive[2] geht etwa – mehr Bezüge zu anderen Autorinnen und Autoren hergestellt werden können. Vielleich hätte dies jedoch den Rahmen der ohnehin schon fast 800 Seiten starken Biografie gesprengt. Manger jedenfalls wäre gewiss mit diesem Mammut-Werk zu seinen Ehren einverstanden gewesen. Wenngleich der Ausdruck von Dankbarkeit nicht zu seinen Stärken gehört haben soll.

Carmen Reichert, München

[1] Der ästhetische Wert der Volkslieder wird nicht nur von Peretz, sondern auch von Shaul Ginsburg und Peysekh Marek (Hgg: Еврейскія народныя пѣсни въ Россіи [Jiddische Volkslieder in Russland], St. Petersburg 1901); Noach Pryłucki (Hg.: Yidishe folkslider. Warschau 1911, 2. Aufl. 1913); Yankev Fikhman (Hg.: Di yudishe muze. Zamlung fun di beste yudishe lieder. Warschau 1911) und anderen hervorgehoben. Hier wäre vielleicht ein Vergleich der poetologischen Positionen zum Volkslied interessant gewesen. Vgl. Gal-Ed, Niemandssprache, S. 230.

[2] In der Warschauer expressionistischen Khalyastre-Gruppe waren Jesus-Motive beliebt. Der als der „Nister" bekannte ukrainisch-jiddische Schriftsteller Pinchas Kahanowitsch widmete eines seiner frühsten Werke „Miryem" (Maria), und auch amerikanisch-jiddische Dichterinnern und Dichter, wie Anna Margolin und Sholem Asch verwandten in ihrer Dichtung christliche Figuren.

Wei Zhuang: Erinnerungskulturen des jüdischen Exils in Shanghai (1933–1950). Plurimedialität und Transkulturalität. Berlin: LIT Verlag 2015, 286 S., 29,90 €[1]

In einer Zeit, in der an den Rändern des europäischen Kontinents systematische Inhaftierungen, Enteignungen und Entfernungen aus Berufsfeldern eine beachtenswerte Popularität gewonnen haben, liegt die gesellschaftliche Relevanz des vorliegenden Buches auf der Hand.

Zu Beginn seiner an der Universität Frankfurt am Main eingereichten Dissertation „Erinnerungskulturen des jüdischen Exils in Shanghai (1933–1950). Plurimedialität und Transkulturalität" skizziert Wei Zhuang den historischen Hintergrund des jüdischen Exils in Shanghai: Innerhalb kürzester Zeit nach der Machtübergabe an die Nationalsozialisten bzw. den neuen Reichskanzler Adolf Hitler erfolgte die Umwandlung der Weimarer Republik von einer parlamentarischen Demokratie in eine auf eine Person ausgerichtete, zentralistisch geführte Diktatur. Mittels zahlreicher Gesetze wurden nicht nur die „Gleichschaltung" von Politik, Gesellschaft und Medien betrieben, vielmehr alle jene bekämpft, die man als „Volksschädlinge" verdächtigte. Nach der Boykottierung jüdischer Geschäfte und Unternehmen entfernte man innerhalb weniger Wochen zunächst in der Justiz und Medizin politisch Missliebige und Juden aus dem Dienst. Die sukzessive Enteignung jüdischer Deutscher betraf nicht nur Betriebe und Geschäfte, sondern erstreckte sich wenige Jahre später auf große Teile des Privatvermögens, später auf die Arbeitsleistung und das Leben selbst. Die Weltöffentlichkeit unterließ ein rechtzeitiges Eingreifen in die oben geschilderten Ereignisse. Stattdessen begannen zahlreiche Länder die Aufnahme von Fliehenden zu quotieren und vor ihnen die Tore zu schließen. Eine Ausnahme bildete Shanghai: Bis zum Oktober 1939 war die Stadt der einzige freie Hafen, der ohne Visum und Einreisegenehmigung betreten werden konnte. Von November 1939 bis Ende des Jahres 1941 durften nur noch diejenigen europäischen Juden einreisen, die über eine entsprechende Genehmigung des „Shanghai Municipal Council" verfügten.

„Die große Fluchtwelle nach Shanghai", fasst der Autor prägnant zusammen, „setzte erst nach dem ‚Anschluss' Österreichs im März 1938 und den Pogromen im November 1938 ein. Während der Novemberpogrome waren bereits

[1] Diese Rezension erschien in abweichender Form zuvor unter dem Titel „Das jüdische Exil in Shanghai und seine Bezüge zur Gegenwart", in: Deutsch-Türkisches Journal (19.08.2016).

Tausende der späteren Shanghaier Exilanten in die Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen, Dachau und Buchenwald deportiert worden. Jüdische Männer kamen nur dann aus den KZs frei, wenn ihre Familienangehörigen gemäß der ‚Vertreibungspolitik' des ‚Dritten Reiches' der Gestapo Papiere, wie etwa Einreisegenehmigungen anderer Länder und Fahrkarten, vorlegen konnten. […] In dieser Notlage fungierte die letzte frei zugängliche Stadt Shanghai als ‚der letzte Unterschlupf' für alle Juden, die wegen der Einwandererquoten anderer Länder Deutschland und Österreich nicht verlassen konnten. Ohne die ‚Arche Noah' Shanghai wären die zur Flucht an diesen ‚unbeliebten Ort' gezwungenen jüdischen ‚Shanghailänder' […] mit großer Wahrscheinlichkeit dem Holocaust zum Opfer gefallen. Die Rück- und Weiterwanderung vieler Shanghaier Flüchtlinge nach Europa bzw. in andere westliche Länder zwischen 1945 bis 1950 belegt, dass Shanghai als ‚Ort am Rande' für die Meisten lediglich als unerwünschter ‚Wartesaal' und ‚Transitort' fungierte." (S. 15).

In Wei Zhuangs Werk steht jedoch nicht die Folge historischer Ereignisse im Zentrum, vielmehr „die Ausformung spezifischer Erinnerungskultur des jüdischen Exils in Shanghai in medialen Repräsentationen." (S. 2). In Anlehnung an den vom Gießener Sonderforschungsbereich verfolgten Begriff der „Erinnerungskultur" definiert der Autor „allgemein das Ensemble von Formen und Inhalten von Erinnerungsprozessen, die durch eine nationale, ethnische, sprachliche bzw. religiöse Gemeinschaft etabliert werden und die um einen bestimmten Gegenstand kreisen. Erinnerungskulturen werden medien- und institutionenspezifisch artikuliert." (S. 2) Vereinfacht formuliert, untersucht Wei Zhuang die facettenreichen, kulturellen Auseinandersetzungen mit dem Shanghaier Exil in Literatur, Film und musealer Historiografie.

Im ersten Hauptteil seines Buches analysiert der Autor die rekonstruierte Darstellung des Shanghaier Ghettos als „Erinnerungsraum". Zu Beginn skizziert er die wichtigsten historischen Fakten (S. 53–54): Die japanische Militärbehörde errichtete während des Zeitraums zwischen Mai 1943 und August 1945 im Shanghaier Stadtteil Hongkew ein sogenanntes ‚designiertes Gebiet' mit 40 Häuserblöcken. Die jüdischen Flüchtlinge, die seit 1938 bereits in anderen Stadtteilen eine Bleibe gefunden hatten, wurden dazu gezwungen in das mit 100.000 der Unterschicht angehörenden Chinesen und 8000 jüdischen Exilanten überbevölkerte Hongkew umzuziehen. Die neuen Bewohner nutzten ihr berufliches Fachwissen und bauten den in den japanischen Angriffen mehrfach stark beschädigten Stadtteil binnen kurzer Zeit zu einem Viertel mit

Geschäften, Cafés und Kultureinrichtungen auf. Obschon das „Ghetto" nicht hermetisch abgeriegelt war, durften die jüdischen Internierten den Distrikt nur mit Passierschein verlassen. Wie Wei Zhuang zeigt, stellen Literaturen, Filme und Historiografie das Shanghaier Ghetto als einen abgeschotteten und leidvollen Erfahrungs- und Aktionsraum dar. Während seine Bewohner als „Doppelopfer des Nationalsozialismus und des japanischen Faschismus" (S. 49) herausgehoben werden, wird der Erinnerungsraum mit einer Atmosphäre der bitteren Armut, dem Kampf um das nackte Überleben und der permanenten Gefährdung der jüdischen Gemeinde aufgeladen.

Im zweiten Hauptteil analysiert Wei Zhuang drei exemplarische „Erinnerungsfiguren". Der im litauischen Kovno stationierte japanische Vize-Konsul Sugihara Chinue stellte entgegen den Anordnungen seiner Regierung im Juli und August 1940 tausende Transitvisa an jüdische Flüchtlinge aus. Damit eröffnete er ihnen unter Einsatz seines Lebens den Fluchtweg mittels der transsibirischen Eisenbahn nach Shanghai. Sugihara wird „weltweit und besonders in Israel, Japan, den USA und Litauen als Inbegriff der Humanität, Gerechtigkeit und Zivilcourage in medialen Repräsentationen und im institutionellen Gedenken gefeiert." (S. 118) Im Gegensatz dazu wird im nächsten Unterkapitel der Fokus auf den japanischen Offizier Ghoya Kanoh gerichtet, der für die Erteilung der Passierscheine zuständig war, die die jüdischen Exilanten benötigten, um außerhalb des Shanghaier Ghettos ihrer überlebenswichtigen Arbeit nachgehen zu können. Da er persönlich über die Aushändigung der Passierscheine befand, avancierte der „König der Juden" – wie er sich selbst bezeichnete – zur symbolhaften Personifizierung von Willkür, Gewalttätigkeit und Brutalität der japanischen Besatzungsmacht (S. 136). Die dritte Erinnerungsfigur rückt die unzähligen chinesischen Rikscha-Fahrer, das mobile Kennzeichen Shanghais, in den Mittelpunkt: „Während diese Erinnerungsfigur in den westlichen Gedächtnismedien zumeist als ein omnipräsentes orientalistisches Symbol der Primitivität und Unmenschlichkeit erscheint, wird sie in den chinesischen Erinnerungskulturen vorwiegend als Symbol des harmonischen Zusammenlebens der chinesischen und jüdischen Bevölkerung inszeniert." (S. 51)

Im dritten Hauptteil setzt sich Wei Zhuang mit drei, ebenfalls exemplarisch ausgewählten „Erinnerungsnarrativen" auseinander: Nämlich 1.) den Liebesnarrativen, die die Beziehungen zwischen jüdischen Exilanten und chinesischen Einwohnern thematisieren und sowohl den reziproken Austausch

zwischen beiden Kulturen als auch Konflikte symbolisieren, 2.) den Narrativen von Frauen und 3.) den Kinder- und Jugendnarrativen. Hier sind vor allem die Ergebnisse des zweiten Unterpunktes hervorzuheben, der bedeutende Unterschiede in der Wahrnehmung der Dringlichkeit der Flucht durch Frauen und Männer betont: Es waren zumeist die Ehefrauen, die unter enormen Zeitdruck die Flucht nach Shanghai entschieden und dabei noch ihre Männer zur Auswanderung in den unbekannten und unsicheren Ort überreden mussten. „Denn die Männer, so die [U. S.-]amerikanische Historikerin Marion Kaplan, definierten ihre Identitäten meist über ihr Berufsleben und hatten Angst vor Berufs- und damit auch Status- sowie Identitätsverlust im Exil." (S. 203) Die Geschichte gab den Befürchtungen der Frauen Recht.

Wei Zhuang kommt das Verdienst zu, ein fachlich und sprachlich herausragendes Buch über die Darstellung des jüdischen Exils in Shanghai in verschiedenen Gattungen der internationalen Literaturen, historiografischen Darstellungen, Filmen und anderen visuellen Formaten vorgelegt zu haben. Insbesondere die Einleitung enthält eine kenntnisreiche und kommentierte Übersicht über die überaus zahlreichen Rezeptionen des Themas. Die Analysen sind keineswegs einseitig: Der Autor weist mehrfach daraufhin, dass „die Rolle der Stadt Shanghai als letzter Zufluchtsort im heutigen chinesischen kollektiven Gedächtnis verstärkt als ‚außenpolitische Imagewerbung' […] genutzt wird." (S. 243) Das Literaturverzeichnis umfasst multilinguale Publikationen und kann als Einstieg für umfassendere Forschungen genutzt werden.

Nathanael Riemer, Potsdam

Gary Phillip Zola / Marc Dollinger, Hrsg.: American Jewish History. A Primary Source Reader, Waltham: Brandeis University Press 2014, XXV, 445 S., 39 €.

Das US-amerikanische Judentum ist außerhalb der USA, nicht zuletzt in Deutschland, ein zu Unrecht vernachlässigtes Thema in Forschung und Lehre. Es passt nicht einfach in die Kategorien von „Religion" oder „Nation", sondern nutzt den vom kulturellen Pluralismus der USA eröffneten Raum als ethnokulturelles Phänomen eigener Prägung. Damit ist das amerikanische Judentum für die Judaistik und sogar für die Jüdischen Studien schwer greifbar; für

Amerikanisten sind die US-amerikanischen Juden als Untergruppe der weißen Mehrheit oft auch nicht mehr besonders interessant.

Gleichwohl blüht in den USA selbst die wissenschaftliche Beschäftigung mit dem Thema. Führende Historiker des amerikanischen Judentums haben in Monographien das Thema in seiner Komplexität dargestellt: Jonathan Sarna mit dem Fokus auf Religion, Hasia Diner als Sozialgeschichte und Eli Lederhendler mit Blick auf seine transnationalen Verflechtungen.[1] Nun kommt mit einer Quellenedition ein weiteres Instrument für die Beschäftigung und mögliche Vertiefung des Thema auch hierzulande hinzu. Der Direktor der American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, Gary P. Zola, und der an der San Francisco State University lehrende Historiker Marc Dollinger präsentieren in *American Jewish History: A Primary Source Reader* fast 300 Dokumente zum nordamerikanischen Judentum, von seinen Anfängen 1654 bis in die Gegenwart. Zola / Dollinger treten damit in die Fußstapfen früherer Herausgeber solcher Editionen. Dabei sind vor allem Morris Schappes, Joseph Blau und Salo W. Baron sowie Jacob Rader Marcus zu nennen.[2] Der neue Band legt den Schwerpunkt auf die jüngere Vergangenheit bis zur Gegenwart. Mehr als die Hälfte der Quellen stammt aus den letzten 100 Jahren, knapp ein Drittel aus der Zeit nach 1945.

Die Edition nimmt für sich in Anspruch, den Kanon der Quellen zu erweitern, von denen viele aus den American Jewish Archives stammen (S. xxii). So sind unter den präsentierten Dokumenten viele, die hier erstmals veröffentlicht werden. Zudem weiten die Herausgeber die Perspektive auf ihr Thema, indem sie stärker als frühere Sammlungen auch Dokumente aus dem Alltags- und Erwerbsleben amerikanischer Juden präsentieren, die nicht im Zentrum der traditionellen, eliten-zentrierten Geschichtsschreibung stehen. So enthalten die Kapitel jeweils Abschnitte zu Einwanderung, Politik und Religion, aber auch zu Wirtschafts- und Arbeitsleben, Familienleben, Populärkultur sowie zu Antisemitismus.

[1] Jonathan D. Sarna: American Judaism: A History, New Haven 2004; Hasia Diner: The Jews of the United States, 1654 to 2000, Berkeley 2004; Eli Lederhendler: American Jewry: A New History, Cambridge 2016.

[2] Morris U. Schappes, Hg.: A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States 1654–1875, New York 1950; Joseph L. Blau / Salo W. Baron, Hgg.: The Jews of the United States 1790–1840. A Documentary History. 3 Bde., New York / Philadelphia 1963; Jacob Rader Marcus, Hg.: The Jew in the American World: A Source Reader, Detroit 1996.

Die Dokumente werden einzeln oder als zusammenhängende Gruppe von kurzen, zuweilen allzu knapp gehaltenen Texten eingeleitet und kontextualisiert. Ein- bis zweiseitige Einführungen zu den chronologischen Kapiteln stellen sie in den größeren Zusammenhang der jeweiligen Themen der verschiedenen Zeitabschnitte. Die Themen wiederum werden in der Einleitung des Buches (S. 1–5) zu einem Gesamtbild gebündelt; diese enthält zudem eine an Studierende gerichtete kurze Einführung in den Umgang mit verschiedenen Quellen. Ein Index erleichtert es, Quellen zu darin behandelten Themen zu suchen. Unter den Dokumenten sind auch einige visuelle Quellen: Fotos, Flugblätter und ein besonders originelles Fundstück: eine illustrierte Einführung auf Jiddisch in den uramerikanischen Sport Baseball (S. 138), gedruckt 1909 im auf die Amerikanisierung de Einwanderer bedachten *Forverts*. (Leider sind die visuellen Quellen aber oft zu klein und in unzureichender Auflösung reproduziert.)

Leitendes Prinzip bei der Quellenauswahl war es, die Vielfalt und Komplexität des amerikanischen Judentums abzubilden und amerikanische Juden mit ihrer Stimme sprechen zu lassen, so die Herausgeber (S. xxi). Dieser Anspruch wird weitgehend eingelöst. Allerdings ist die transformative Rolle von Frauen in den vergangenen Jahrzehnten unterbelichtet. Gleiches gilt für sephardische Juden, die in nur wenigen Dokumenten aus der Kolonialzeit präsent sind. Außerdem ist im Bereich Religion die schwierige Rolle der immer weiter nach rechts rückenden Orthodoxie in den letzten Jahrzehnten kaum durch Dokumente erfasst. Insgesamt jedoch entfalten die Quellen ein breites Panorama eines vitalen amerikanisch-jüdischen Lebens, entsprechend den Zielen der Herausgeber.

Die Einleitungen und die Periodisierung der amerikanisch-jüdischen Geschichte in den zehn Kapiteln machen die leitende Perspektive der Herausgeber deutlich: Sie präsentieren das Judentum der Neuen Welt als zutiefst amerikanisches Phänomen, eingebunden in und geprägt durch die Wechselbeziehungen mit der unmittelbaren politischen, sozialen und kulturellen Umgebung der USA stärker als durch seine Ursprünge in Europa und Beziehungen zu anderen jüdischen Gemeinschaften, etwa in Israel. Zola / Dollinger legen diese Perspektive offen, indem sie unter Berufung auf Sarna, der als Berater des Projekts fungierte, betonen, „American Jewish history *is* American history“, und von einer „symbiotischen Beziehung“ sprechen (S. 4, 5, Hervorhebung im Original).

Konsequenterweise folgt die Periodisierung ihrer Geschichte dann auch weitgehend amerikanischen Entwicklungen, so dass etwa die Revolutionszeit und das Thema Sklaverei und Bürgerkrieg jeweils ein eigenes Kapitel bilden. Besonders ungewohnt ist diese Periodisierung für die Phase, in der andere Darstellungen amerikanisch-jüdischer Geschichte die osteuropäische Einwanderung ab ca. 1880 betonen; das entsprechende Kapitel heißt jedoch bei Zola / Dollinger „The Gilded Age and Progressive Era: American Jewish Life, 1880–1918" (S. 129–180). Diese Herangehensweise wird zuweilen problematisch, wenn etwa das Kapitel zur Zeit zwischen 1820 und 1860 fast nur die Migration von Juden innerhalb der USA behandelt und die Zuwanderung aus deutschsprachigen Ländern vernachlässigt. In der Einleitung des Bandes kommt im Abschnitt über die Jahre nach 1945 die Gründung des Staates Israel erstaunlicherweise nicht vor (S. 3). Insgesamt sind die Einleitungstexte so komprimiert, dass sie fast holzschnittartig verschiedene Themen der jeweiligen Epoche nebeneinander stellen.

Während diese Komprimierung die Nutzbarkeit der Einleitungen etwa für den Einsatz in der Lehre einschränkt, kann die Einordnung des US-Judentums in die genuin amerikanische Geschichte der eigenen Beschäftigung mit dem Thema nützen. Sie zwingt nicht-amerikanische Forscherinnen und Forscher dazu, das nordamerikanische Judentum in einem oft weniger vertrauten Kontext zu verorten. Dies sollte zugleich bedeuten, den amerikanisch-jüdischen Exzeptionalismus zu hinterfragen, der die gewohnteren Kategorien von Universalismus und Partikularismus den ganzen Band hindurch neu denken lässt. Damit und als reiche Quellensammlung zum Gebrauch in Lehre und Forschung ist der Band von Zola / Dollinger ein willkommener Beitrag zur Auseinandersetzung auch außerhalb der USA mit dem amerikanischen Judentum.

Markus Krah, Potsdam

Sammelrezension der Reihe Andrew Bush / Deborah Dash Moore / Macdonald Moore, Hrsg.: Key Words in Jewish Studies, New Brunswick u. a.: Rutgers University Press, 2011, je ca. 150–230 S., gebundene Ausgabe je ca. 58,00 €, Paperback je ca. 27 €, eBook je ca. 21 €.

Seit 2011 erscheint bei Rutgers University Press die Reihe „Key Words in Jewish Studies" unter der Ägide von Andrew Bush, Deborah Dash Moore und Macdonald Moore. Andrew Bush ist Professor of Hispanic Studies and Jewish Studies am Vassar College in Poughkeepsie im Bundesstaat New York, Deborah Dash Moore ist Professorin für Geschichte und Judaic Studies an der University of Michigan in Ann Arbor und Expertin auf dem Gebiet der amerikanisch-jüdischen Geschichte in vergleichender und transkultureller Perspektive. Macdonald Moore ist ebenfalls an der University of Michigan tätig. Bisher liegen „Key Word"-Bände zu folgenden Themen vor: „Jewish Studies", verfasst vom Reihenherausgeber Andrew Bush (Bd. 1, 2011), „Space and Place in Jewish Studies" von Barbara E. Mann (Bd. 2, 2012), „Haskalah" von Olga Litvak (Bd. 3, 2012), „Jewish Families" von Jonathan Boyarin (Bd. 4, 2013), „Shtetl" von Jeffrey Shandler (Bd. 5, 2013), „Jewish Peoplehood", verfasst von Noam Pianko (Bd. 6, 2015), „Holocaust" von Deborah E. Lipstadt (Bd. 7, 2016) und schließlich „Jew" von Cynthia M. Baker (Bd. 8, 2016). Weitere Bände sind geplant. Alle Bücher erscheinen gleichzeitig als gebundene Ausgabe, als Paperback und als eBook. Dem Reihentitel folgend haben alle Bände Abbildungen von Schlüsseln auf dem Cover.

Wie Herausgeber Andrew Bush in der Danksagung seines Buches berichtet, entspringt die Idee zu der Reihe seinen Diskussionen mit Deborah Dash Moore und Macdonald Moore, als die drei am Vassar College einen Jewish Studies-Studiengang einrichteten. Von den Diskussionen über Schlüsselbegriffe in den Jüdischen Studien im Allgemeinen und im Studiengang am Vassar College im Besonderen war es nicht mehr weit zu einer Buchreihe. Eine klar verständliche, kritische und an gegenwärtige Fragen gerichtete Vergewisserung zentraler Konzepte, die Darstellung ihrer wechselvollen Geschichte und mit ihr verbundene gesellschaftliche Diskussionen sollten Ausgangspunkt einer solchen Buchreihe sein.

Im Vorwort jeden Bandes wird das Anliegen der Reihe von der Herausgeberin und den Herausgebern – seit dem ersten Band 2011 zunehmend präziser – beschrieben. Die Reihe befasst sich demnach mit wichtigen Ideen, Praktiken,

Ereignissen und Gegebenheiten der Jüdischen Studien bzw. in der jüdischen Geschichte. Dabei werden die „Key Words" als „traveling" oder „transmigrating concepts" zwischen jüdischen Sprachen und Kontexten aufgefasst, deren Gebrauch, Dynamik und Grenzen sich über Zeit und Raum hinweg wandelten und in ihrer Entwicklung entsprechend dargestellt werden sollen.

Mit den je 150 bis 230 Seiten umfassenden Bänden sollen nicht nur Studierende, sondern auch Outsider der Materie zu Insidern gemacht werden, einen analytischen Überblick über Gegenstand und Forschungslage erhalten und am Ende mitreden können. Einer Kanonbildung von „Key Words" treten die Herausgeberin und Herausgeber entschieden entgegen. Vielmehr ist die Infragestellung und das Einschalten in die Debatten um Schlüsselbegriffe in Wissenschaft und Öffentlichkeit Ziel der Buchreihe. Infolge dessen gibt es mehr oder minder eingängige Schlüsselworte. Während einige schon lange mit der jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur verbunden sind, sollen andere mit der Reihe erst neu in die Diskussion gebracht werden. Etwas Vergleichbares gibt es auf dem deutschsprachigen akademischen Buchmarkt – zumal für die Jüdischen Studien – nicht. Man kann die „Key Words" allenfalls als kulturwissenschaftlichere Version der „Kontroversen um die Geschichte" oder „Geschichte kompakt", die beide bei der Wissenschaftlichen Buchgesellschaft (WBG) erscheinen, bezeichnen.

Um der Diskussion der verschiedenen „Key Words" eine verbindliche Systematik zu geben, haben bis auf das Buch „Shetl" alle Bücher denselben Aufbau. Sie eröffnen mit einer Darstellung der zu behandelnden Idee, Praktik, des Ereignisses oder einer spezifischen Konstellation in der jüdischen Geschichte (überschrieben mit „Terms of Debate"). Diese Einführung bzw. Hinführung dient dazu, mit dem Thema verbundene Konzepte und Traditionen vorzustellen, die sich im Lauf der jüdischen Geschichte entwickelt haben. Im zweiten Teil widmen sich die Autorinnen und Autoren dem Diskussionsstand des jeweiligen Themas („State of the Question"). Hier werden die aktuellen Debatten in Wissenschaft und Öffentlichkeit analysiert. Schließlich werden alle „Key Words" im dritten Abschnitt auf ihre Bedeutung in der zeitgenössischen Kultur und die Zukunft hin befragt („In a New Key").

Da im Rahmen dieser Besprechung nicht alle Bände eingehend referiert werden können, sollen drei von ihnen – der ersterschienene, ein Band zu einem gängigeren und zu einem eher neueren Thema – näher vorgestellt werden. Die Reihe wurde 2011 von einem Band des Mitherausgebers Andrew

Bush zum Thema „Jewish Studies. A Theoretical Introduction" eröffnet. Eingangs definiert Bush seinen Gegenstand als „study of the Jews" (S. 4), die von einem jüdischen Lernen unter einer religiösen Autorität abgekoppelt sind. Um die Geschichte der Jüdischen Studien zu erfassen, betrachtet Bush im ersten Teil der Terms of Debate die Evolution der Jüdischen Studien nicht als Phänomen der Säkularisierung oder Weberscher Entzauberung, sondern im Anschluss an die französische Soziologin Danièle Hervieu-Léger als „Metaphorisierung". Mit Hilfe der Methaphorisierung versucht der Autor, die neuen Funktionen jüdischer Kultur in der Moderne und ihren neuen Standort nachzuzeichnen (S. 2). Daneben Bush erinnert an den „Ashkenazi-centric account" (S. 5) in der Geschichte und ist darum um eine „ausbalanciertere Geographie der Jüdischen Studien" und der Gender-Beziehungen bemüht (S. 5 f.). Er schreitet anschließend die wichtigen, mit der Entstehung der Jüdischen Studien verbundenen Konzepte Wissenschaft, Geschichte, Nation, Rasse und Religion ab. Anschließend versucht er im Sinne Dipesh Chakrabartys die „Provinzialisierung von Ashkenaz" (S. 42)[1] zu betreiben (S. 40–49), indem er etwa auf die spanisch-jüdische Geschichtsschreibung verweist. Im zweiten Abschnitt State of Question wendet sich Bush den aktuellen Konditionen und Fragehorizonten der Jüdischen Studien zu (S. 50–92). Als zentral stellt er die Rolle des Holocaust und die Kontinuität der Jüdischen Studien nach 1945 heraus, in dessen Licht heutige Debatten um jüdische Identität und Erinnerung geführt werden. Daneben erkennt er eine zunehmende Aufmerksamkeit für zuvor ausgeschlossenen Ideen, Akteure und Praktiken, die durch Impulse der Kulturgeschichte Bedeutung erlangten. Im letzten Teil (In a New Key) inszeniert Bush einen Klassenraum der Jüdischen Studien wie in einem Kammerspiel. Auf der Besetzungsliste stehen Personen wie Martin Buber, Jehuda Halevi, Cynthia Ozick, Severo Sarduy oder Franz Kafka, deren Charaktere und jüdische Bezüge er in Stichworten erläutert.

Dem Untertitel „A Theoretical Introduction" folgend befasst sich Bush mit seinem Thema auf einer kritisch-theoretischen bzw. meta-theoretischen Reflexionsebene. Obwohl er eingangs den Ashkenaz-Zentrismus kritisiert, greift er dennoch oft auf ashkenazische Akteure und Denker aus Europa und Amerika

[1] Vgl. hierzu Dipesh Chakrabarty, Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference, Princeton, NJ: University of Princeton Press 2000 (Dt.: Europa als Provinz. Perspektiven postkolonialer Geschichtsschreibung, Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag 2010).

zurück. Sein Buch ist demnach keine Einführung in die Jüdischen Studien oder ihre geschichtliche Entwicklung, sondern eine Anregung zum vor allem theoretischen Nach- und Weiterdenken über Jüdisches Lernen und Studieren.

Hingegen bietet das Buch „Haskalah. The Romantic Movement in Judaism" (2012) eine klassischere Einführung in das Thema. Die Autorin Olga Litvak lehrt als Historikerin an der Clark University in Worcester im Bundesstaat Massachusetts. Ihre Expertise in russischer und russisch-jüdischer Geschichte, insbesondere im Hinblick auf Kunst und Literatur, fließt erkennbar in den „Key-Word"-Band ein. Zunächst jedoch setzt sie sich sowohl mit der Geschichte der Haskalah als auch den Trends ihrer Erforschung auseinander. Noch spezifischer als die Reihenherausgeberin und -herausgeber richtet sich Litvak an Lehrer jüdischer Geschichte, die ihrer Meinung nach die Geschichte der Haskalah stärker und differenzierter in ihre Lehrpläne aufnehmen sollten (S. xii f.). Zudem geht es ihr nicht um die Hebung neuer Archivquellen, sondern um einen Perspektivwechsel bei der Beschäftigung mit der Haskalah (S. xiii). Im ersten Teil Terms of Debate widmet sich Litvak dem üblichen Gebrauch des Begriffs Haskalah (S. 3–46). Sie argumentiert kritisch mit Hinweis auf den Untertitel ihres Buches, dass die Haskalah nicht als bloße, verspätete oder erzwungene Form der europäischen Aufklärungsbewegung zu verstehen sei (S. 23–25). Vielmehr stellt sie geradezu eine Überlappung von Romantik und Haskalah „jenseits der Aufklärung" („Beyond Enlightenment") heraus, so die Kapitelüberschrift, und macht deutlich, wie nachhaltig die Romantik eigentlich die Haskalah prägte (S. 25–46). Im zweiten Teil, dem State of the Question, beschäftigt sich Litvak eingehend mit der aktuellen Forschungsliteratur und hinterfragt dabei die Paradigmen der vor allem historisch geprägten Forschung (bes. S. 49–64). Ihr Hauptaugenmerkt liegt einmal mehr auf den Spannungen und Herausforderungen, die Haskalah nicht als Version der Aufklärung und als jüdischen Ideologie der Emanzipation (miss-)zuverstehen. Im letzten Teil des Buches wendet sich Litvak vor allem literarischen und fiktionalen Werken der Haskalah zu, die bisher oft von Literaturwissenschaftlern gelesen wurden, und versucht eine Neulesung und Interpretation (S. 81–190). Hier besonders spricht sie nicht von Maskilim oder jüdischen Aufklärern, sondern stets von „jüdischen Romantikern". Litvak wendet sich gegen die in der Haskalah-Forschung oft getrennte Behandlung der hebräischen und jiddischen überlieferten Texte auf der einen und den landessprachlichen Schriften der Maskilim auf der anderen Seite. Gleichfalls spricht sie sich gegen die

getrennte Erforschung der Haskalah-Schriften einerseits und der Haskalah-Geschichte andererseits aus. Die Betrachtung der Haskalah als romantische Bewegung würde diesem Missstand abhelfen, so Litvak. Diese „Romantisierung" der jüdischen Aufklärungsbewegung jedoch hat Litvak durchaus schon einige Kritik eingebracht.[2]

Der letzte zu besprechende Band der Reihe greift schließlich ein allgemein wohl noch nicht als Schlüsselbegriff der Jüdischen Studien etabliertes Thema – die jüdischen Familien (im Plural) – auf. Seiner Expertise entsprechend wählt der Autor Jonathan Boyarin, Professor for Modern Jewish Studies am Near Eastern Department der Cornell University in Ithaca im Bundesstaat New York, eine hauptsächlich anthropologische und kulturgeschichtliche Herangehensweise an den Gegenstand. Filme bis hin zu ethnographischen Aufzeichnungen, eigene Erfahrungen und Erlebnisse in der eigenen Familie gehören zu seiner vielfältigen Quellengrundlage. Jüdische Familien dienen Boyarin als Sonde zur Erforschung, wie jüdische Differenz geprägt und über die Zeit hinweg bestimmt wurde. Für diesen Prozess war (und ist) wesentlich, dass Familien – auch im Judentum – als Ort der Produktion und Weitergabe von Tradition gelten. Boyarin interessiert sich für den sozialen Wandel der jüdischen Familie und den Wandel der Konzepte von Verwandtschaft und Nachkommenschaft von der biblischen Zeit bis in die Gegenwart. Er kommt unter anderem zu dem Schluss, dass nichtjüdische Umgebungskulturen Ideal und Praxis jüdischer Familien stets mitbestimmten. Entsprechend sieht er auch, wie sich jüdische Familien bis heute verändern und neue Modelle bilden (S. 156–162). Neben traditionelleren werden heute zunehmend auch andere bzw. neue Modelle, etwa die Homo-Ehe oder Ehe mit Nichtjüdinnen und Nichtjuden, akzeptiert (S. 160 f.). Boyarin springt in seinem Buch in Raum und Zeit, wechselt zwischen Geschichtserzählung und Analyse und wirft vor allem Fragen auf (hierzu S. xiii). Einige davon sind: Gibt es eine traditionelle jüdische Familienform von der Antike bis heute? Was ist an den Familienformen spezifisch jüdisch? Gibt es z. B. bestimmte Geschlechterrollen (S. 52–57)? Sind – mit Blick auf die blühende jüdische Geneaologie – jüdische Gene durch die jahrhunderte- und jahrtausendlange Endogamie anders als nichtjüdische

[2] Vgl. etwa die Rezension von Daniel B. Schwartz, Romancing the Haskalah, in: Jewish Review of Books, Summer 2013, online: http://jewishreviewofbooks.com/articles/411/romancing-the-haskalah/ (13.11.2017).

(S. 107–110)? Letzteres führt ihn etwa zur Auseinandersetzung mit der Idee rassisch-jüdischer Differenz (S. 118–128). Boyarin beantwortet jedoch keine dieser Fragen. Er stellt sie nebeneinander und bietet verschiedene Deutungen und Begründungen an.

Die drei vorgestellten Bände der „Key Words in Jewish Studies" zeigen einige grundsätzliche Merkmale der Rutgers-Reihe auf. Es handelt sich um reine Textbücher, die keine Abbildungen enthalten. Im Anhang findet sich immer eine Bibliographie und durch einen Index ist jeder Band rasch zu erschließen. Alle Autoren mit bisher einer Ausnahme („Shtetl" von J. Shendler) halten sich an den editorischen Dreischritt aus Terms of Debate, State of the Question und In a New Key, der die Inhalte aller Bände strukturiert. Einige Autorinnen und Autoren berichten in ihren Vorworten und Danksagungen, wie sie zu ihrem Key Word kamen. Demnach sind die Bände oft Ergebnis eingehender Diskussionen mit der Herausgeberin und den Herausgebern. Die Autorinnen und Autoren schufen (und schaffen) durch ihre Vorschläge also die „Key Words in Jewish Studies" mit. Es wundert daher kaum, dass sie ihren Gegenstand und somit die Inhalte ihres jeweiligen Schlüsselworts zuweilen recht individuell auffassen und darstellen. Da sich die Bände auch an eine interessierte Öffentlichkeit richten, nähern sich die Autorinnen und Autoren zudem ihren Themen oft von einer aktuellen Fragestellung her. Darüber hinaus scheint alle Autorinnen und Autoren das Anliegen zu einen, nicht ein klassisches Überblickswerk zu liefern, sondern die allgemeinen und akademischen Diskussionen weiter oder überhaupt erst anzuregen. Folglich sollte man die „Key Words" nicht mit grundlegenden, auf Vollständigkeit beruhenden oder gar didaktischen Themeneinführungen verwechseln. Es sind zumeist voraussetzungsvolle Bücher, die für Studierende und auch interessierte Außenstehende vermutlich nicht leicht zu erschließen sind. Dies zeigt etwa das Buch über „Jewish Families" von Jonathan Boyarin, das zeitlich, räumlich und thematisch sowie zwischen Sprachen und Kontexten ständig in Bewegung ist und somit Leserinnen und Lesern einiges abverlangt. Die meisten Autoren werfen vor allem Fragen auf und begegnen althergebrachten oder gar eingefahrenen Debatten kritisch.

Die Fragehorizonte der Bände schöpfen in erster Linie aus einer US-amerikanischen jüdischen Lebenswelt und Perspektive. Der Band „Holocaust" von Deborah E. Lipstadt etwa macht dies im Untertitel „An American Understanding" deutlich, und auch Olga Litvak konzentriert sich in ihrem Buch

zur Haskalah explizit auf Texte, die englischsprachigen Leserinnen und Leser zugänglich sind (S. xii). Dies alles ist für Leserinnen und Leser außerhalb Amerikas zweifelsohne spannend, mag jedoch vielleicht nicht immer das sein, was sie im ersten Moment mit einem Buch zu zentralen Schlüsselbegriffen der Jüdischen Studien und Geschichte verbinden würden. Der meist essayistische, informelle, gar plauderhafte Ton der Themenbände mag jedoch helfen, sich auf das Leseerlebnis einzulassen, das Denken und Fragen der Autorinnen und Autoren nachzuvollziehen und dies schließlich als fruchtbare Anregung für die eigene Beschäftigung zu begreifen.

Mirjam Thulin, Mainz

Siona Benjamin

Siona Benjamin is a painter originally from Bombay, now living in the US. Her art is informed by her background of growing up Jewish in predominantly Hindu and Muslim India. Siona's paintings bring the imagery of her past in dialogue with her role in America today, as in making a mosaic inspired by both Indian miniature and Sephardic icons. Siona holds an MFA in painting and another MFA in Theater Set Design. She has exhibited in the US, Europe, and Asia. She has been awarded a Fulbright Fellowship in 2011 for an art project titled: Faces: Weaving Indian Jewish Narratives. Research for this project has been conducted in India. Another Fulbright Fellowship supported her research in Israel in 2016- 17 in Israel for a new art project.

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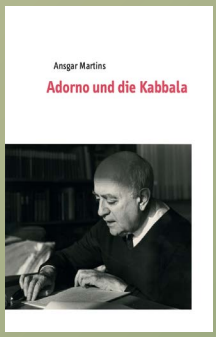

List of New Publications

Aburabia-Queder, Sarab: The Emergence of a Class Identity. Naqab Palestinian Professional Women (Hebrew), Jerusalem: Magnes Press 2017.

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PaRDeS. Zeitschrift der Vereinigung für Jüdische Studien e.V., möchte die fruchtbare und facettenreiche Kultur des Judentums sowie seine Berührungspunkte zur Umwelt in den unterschiedlichen Bereichen dokumentieren. Daneben dient die Zeitschrift als Forum zur Positionierung der Fächer Jüdische Studien und Judaistik innerhalb des wissenschaftlichen Diskurses sowie zur Diskussion ihrer historischen und gesellschaftlichen Verantwortung.

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