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Hermann Cohen, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig on Torah: Jewish Teaching versus Law

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Abstract. Cohen, Buber, and Rosenzweig were eminent figures in what Buber called a “Jewish renaissance.” I will limit myself to their relation to two basic Jewish concepts: *teaching*, i.e., the theoretical, theological part of the tradition, and *law*, i.e., the practical part. Historically, my focus is on those approximately 20 years between Cohen’s 1904 essay on *Ethics and Philosophy of Religion in their Interrelation*, and Rosenzweig’s 1923 essay *The Builders*, i.e., his response to Buber’s newly published *Speeches on Judaism*. Almost all of the main philosophical works of our three authors fall into this period: Cohen’s *System of Philosophy* (1902—1912), his *Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism* (1919), Rosenzweig’s *Star of Redemption* (1921), and Buber’s *I and Thou* (1923). To think, to feel and to do one’s own authentically without excluding oneself from the general culture, or more strongly: to accomplish the general, even the most general at all, precisely in the realization of one’s own, is for all three philosophers the high demand of their Jewish self-interpretation. None of them has devoted his life’s work exclusively to “Jewish” issues, least of all Hermann Cohen. But each of them is under the question of how it is possible to write in German about the general human and just in this to be unambiguously Jewish.

Keywords: Aesthetics, commandment, Dasein, Ethics, God, Israel, Jewish law, Judaism, logic, Mishnah, Philosophy, prayer, Religion, Talmud

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Introduction

What was called — according to Martin Buber an “expression of hope rather than reality”¹ — already at the beginning of the 20th century the “Jewish renaissance,” was tightly linked to an inquiry about whether it would be possible for the Jews, or, sometimes more specifically, the “Jewish people,” to redefine their reality. The emancipation movements of the 19th century forced the Western European Jews to replace the self-evidence with which their lives had hitherto proceeded largely apart from their surroundings with a much more consciously reflected individuality. For the first time since the Spanish-Arab Middle Ages, philosophy became increasingly important. Salomon Formstecher, Samuel Hirsch, and Salomon Ludwig Steinheim are only three of the authors who produced important works. In them, says Hermann Cohen, probably their most important heir on the threshold of the 20th century, “philosophical striving is expressed seriously and purposefully” [2. P. 115]. He adds: “The philosophy of Judaism is the essence of Judaism; and without philosophy, this essence cannot be grasped” [2. P. 115]. Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig follow this thesis in different ways, even without this extreme focus on philosophy. The one as a student of Wilhelm Dilthey and Georg Simmel, the other as a student of Friedrich Meinecke, Heinrich Rickert, and later Cohen himself, also belong to the history of Judaism that has become modern, and no longer seem to find valid answers without *questions*, they have learned from philosophy.

A systematic overall view of the three authors on these few pages cannot develop any depth of focus. Therefore, I will limit myself to one aspect which shows the philosophical contour of our authors condensed as in a prism, namely their relation to two basic Jewish concepts: to the *teaching*, i.e., to the theoretical, theological part of the tradition, and to the *law*, i.e., to the practical, action-oriented part. In terms of time frame as well, I limit myself to those approximately 20 decisive years, which are delimited by Cohen’s great 1904 essay on *Ethics and Philosophy of Religion in their Interrelation* (*Ethik und Religionsphilosophie in ihrem Zusammenhange*), already quoted, and by Rosenzweig’s 1923 essay *The Builders* (*Die Bauleute*), i.e., his response to Buber’s newly published *Speeches on Judaism* (*Reden über das Judentum*). Almost all the main philosophical works of our three authors also fall into this period: Cohen’s *System of Philosophy* (*System der Philosophie*, 1902—1912), his *Religion of Reason Out of the Sources of Judaism* (*Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums*, 1919), Rosenzweig’s *The Star of Redemption* (*Der Stern der Erlösung*, 1921), and Buber’s *I and Thou* (*Ich und Du*, 1923). To think, feel and do one’s own authentically without excluding oneself from the general culture, or more strongly: to accomplish

¹ All citations are translated from the German sources [1. P. 44].

the general, even the most general at all, precisely in the realization of one's own, is for all three philosophers the high demand of their Jewish self-interpretation. None of them has devoted his life's work exclusively to "Jewish" themes, least of all Hermann Cohen. But each of them is under the question of how it is possible to write in German about the general human, and just in this to be unambiguously Jewish.

I.

Hermann Cohen (1842—1918) is a thinker of *teaching*. He understands the *law* as the generic term — based on the double meaning of the word *Torah* — but then he does not speak of the content of individual halakhic regulations; rather he concentrates almost exclusively on the duty of "theoretical instruction" [3. P. 393]. He is primarily concerned with *formal*, methodically determined *knowledge*: "The law is intended to be valid as the foundation of the moral world. The law, therefore, is preeminently called teaching" [3. P. 393]. The view that the appropriate action of a Jewish person consists in fulfilling individually revealed statutes, the *mitzvot*, is not the starting point in any of Cohen's writings. This is related to a basic principle of his philosophizing. He takes the question of truth into the hands of his thinking. Truth, for Cohen, is never to be found directly in a *multiplicity*, be it revealed commandments. Rather, it rests on a *single ground* that is incomparable with all multiplicity, and so only if the thinker first rejects multiplicity he can tread the path to insight into this ground. In Cohen, therefore, one will not find any casuistic considerations about the observance of certain *mitzvot*. He is only interested in that one, the "origin" [4. P. 79ff] of all legality and the basic principle of all ways to truth in general, however different these ways may be in the history of humanity, of thinking, political morality, and artistic culture.

Just *one* splitting and thus apparent multiplicity becomes a problem here: the necessary distinction between knowledge of nature and ethics. The ethical will does not flow out from nature. Nature does not flow out from the will. To mix both or to turn their relationship upside down in a metaphysics of the will was, according to Cohen, a philosophical fall from grace already with Plato, but especially since Spinoza on up to Romanticism and Schopenhauer. Despite this strict distinction, truth (*Wahrheit*) remains the defiantly held "fundamental law" between the existence of nature and the historical development of human morality in "connection and harmony" [5. P. 89, 500]. Truth in this way becomes a critique of man's method of distinction demanded by the man himself. This distinction between knowledge of nature and ethics is thus only "half" of the truth, but it remains the guiding principle. Truth in the full sense is therefore in the strict sense an "ideal" and in the progress of research and action. It can only be anticipated as an idea of the future. For historical human beings, it becomes identical to truthfulness [5. P. 91]². Its inner ambivalence is a strict distinction between nature and human action on one hand, and a view to the overarching unity on the other,

² And passim.

leading to the most arduous idea in Cohen's ethics: *the idea of God*. Truth marks the dividing line between philosophical thinking and religious trust. Although a methodically clear path leads toward this idea, the succinct sentence: "this truth we call God" [5. P. 445] — and with it, therefore, the word *God* — reaches the fabric of philosophical theory only because a religious experience immediately accompanies it. Cohen, however, speaks of this in his *Ethics of Pure Will* only in a hint. Only in a late 1916 essay, the philosopher states: "If we [...] drop the methodical distinction, ethics unites with religion in the trust in God" [6. P. 349]. This trust prevents Cohen's idealism, which remains in open limbo, from slipping into cynicism. It preserves a moment of hope in thinking, without which truthfulness would lose its reason.

The religion of which Cohen speaks must, according to the philosophical question of origin, carry a point of view of uniqueness in itself. In his opinion, only Jewish monotheism fulfills this condition sufficiently, in order to be allowed to speak within the realm of philosophy without turning off the methodically pure way. To put it more pointedly: The peculiarity of the Jewish religion lies in keeping the word *God* ready for the general human thinking in hermeneutically pure rigor. Those who inherit this religion, therefore, do not follow it by starting from the canon of the 613 *mitzvot*, but by formulating an uncompromisingly precise teaching about the innermost foundation of human truthfulness in purity and keeping it alive in the consciousness of humankind: the teaching of the *uniqueness of God*.

Now it is clear: this task is not an merely theoretical one, but one of Jewish action, and therefore the *law* now also comes into consideration in the narrow sense, i.e., as a canon of *mitzvot*. Thus, Cohen distinguishes, entirely in the sense of numerous predecessors, between "principles of reason (*Sichliot*)" and "prescriptions of obedience (*Schim'iot*)" [3. P. 409]. The former include, for instance, the Decalogue, the Noachide commandments, and the commandments of loving strangers and neighbors. The "prescriptions of obedience" include the dietary laws, the laws concerning the *tallit* (prayer shawl), the *tefillin*, etc. They form a "fence around the teaching," of which already the *Mishnah* speaks, thus protecting the teaching from heterogeneous influences. And they are a means of remembrance, so that the pure idea is not lost. According to Cohen, by the commandment to look at them, the shallow threads on the *tallit*, for example, are transformed into a sign of the teaching, "thereby, seeing becomes beholding by the mind" [3. P. 398]. Thus, the approach to 'teaching' asserts itself here as well.

But are the *mitzvot* not given with the Torah and therefore removed from any relativizing consideration? Samson Raphael Hirsch, the mastermind of the German New Orthodoxy in the 19th century, held the view that all 613 *mitzvot* were directly authenticated by an overwhelmingly large number of witnesses whom he saw—in his view of the simultaneity of all generations—gathered at the Biblical mountain of revelation [7. P. 17]. For Cohen, the "gift of Torah" (*Matan Torah*) is not an "object given" that can be pinpointed by witnesses. He asks, employing a term of Wilhelm von Humboldt and his teacher Hajim Steinthal, for the "inner linguistic

form” of the Hebrew word *Matan* and concludes: “On the *communication alone* it depends [...], on the Jewish linguistic spirit”³ [8. P. 640].

This means that *Matan Torah* is a pure movement of communication, not a handed-down written sentence. Revelation is a pure act of productive receiving of knowledge under the aspect of *God*. Only the law of this communicativeness is to be obeyed absolutely. Philosophy as “grasping” the “essence” of Judaism, so Cohen’s words of 1904 quoted above, is an insight into the logical conditions for this pure communicability, the “giving of the Torah,” to occur. Cohen’s most important source for this is the negative theology of the medieval rationalists from Saadiah to Maimonides: nothing else can be recognizable of God than only the so-called “attributes of action,” a theoretical expression denoting the project to design ethics under the ideal of divine action and to provide it in this way with a “logical substructure” [9. P. 287]⁴.

The individual *mitzvot* offer no guideline for this. Cohen appreciates them as a historical and for the time being also as an indispensable way of the knowledge of God; however: only in the meaning of a symbol. The *law* has “no value of its own, but this is exactly the value of a symbol, that it can awaken the genuine value” [3. P. 430]. Thus, the law is at least indirectly connected with the truth, with the “genuine value.” For it to unfold its symbolic effect, however, it must be possible to establish a direct reference to the truth at a central point of its wealth of action. Specifically, in the law’s canon, there must be a *fundamental law*, under the light of which the totality of the *mitzvot* becomes a fully valid symbol. This innermost commandment, which “flows through” the “whole chain” of the 613 *mitzvot*, is *prayer*, without which, as Cohen pointedly says, “worship would consist only in sacrifice.” In prayer, therefore, lies the “entire content of the worship of God” [3. P. 431]. And this total content, in turn, condenses in the *Sh’ma Yisra’el* of the daily liturgy: “Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one” (Dt 6:4). Speaking and hearing this teaching on God’s uniqueness during prayer is Israel’s basic duty of obedience. “Whoever calls the Shma‘ is called a Jehudi” — Cohen reinterprets into positive terms the Talmudic provision “whoever denies idolatry is called a Jew” [10. P. 104].⁵ This, and only this, is his answer to the question: who is a Jew?

“He who prays his *Shema‘ Yisra’el* with all the ardor of his heart, with trembling and quaking, he, and he alone, fortifies his Jewish self unshakably in spirit and soul” [11. P. 219]. Hermann Cohen writes this sentence in 1916, and he does not mean it in an edifying way at all, but as an attack contra the new movement of Zionism, which has become unmistakable. He considers it a “betrayal” [12. P. 118] of Judaism, when the communication between God and man is diverted to an interest in the realization of natural-vital national forces. He senses something

³ Italics by the author H.W.

⁴ On the “Attributen der Handlung,” cf. [3. P. 109—115].

⁵ Babylonian Talmud, Megilla 13a.

like that in certain currents of Zionism and thus comes into sharp conflict with one of its advocates.

II.

That advocate is *Martin Buber* (1878—1965) who, in his counterattack, takes up Cohen's emphatic confession to *Hear, O Israel*, ironically "confessing" for his part that he had not found many such prayers "in the places of worship of liberal Judaism" [13. P. 291]. This mocking reaction to Jewish liberalism, to which he also ascribes Hermann Cohen, is not a return to Orthodoxy, however, but a rejection of confidence in the historical power of the idea. Buber also bases his conception of Jewishness essentially on *teaching* and not on *law*. Cohen's view, however, gives him the impression that, as he notes, the "nourishing, begetting, indissoluble element of religion, the secret of its super-rationality," is reduced to abstract dogmas and moral commandments; as if Judaism here were only

a whimsical, circuitous, historically at least unavoidable detour, but now heartily superfluous to these modern philosophical topics, for instance, to the idea of God as a postulate of practical reason, or to the categorical imperative [14. P. 132].

Cohen is not named personally at this point, but it is clear: What Buber also finds inadequate in Cohen's thinking in those years, too, is the "lived and to be lived life" [14. P. 133]. He observes an "alignment with the occidental dualism" of "spirit" and "life," "with the attitude of the *contract*" [15. P. 89]. And therefore it is time "to reflect on the fact that the attitude of the contract must now be replaced by that of realization," [16] "Not" God's revealed name "*I will be alone*, but the whole life of Moses, not the *Hear, O Israel* alone, but the whole death of the martyrs" belong to the "truth of the unity of God in Judaism" [14. P. 132].

Martin Buber is one of the personalities who, against the background of the 19th-century philosophy of life, added a new direction to all previous ways of considering Judaism in the German cultural sphere. The methodical core of his presentation is a philosophizing sharing of existential experiences — be it in Buber's early years of those of mysticism, be it later — beginning around 1912, the "faith experience" of what he will call the "in-between" of dialogical existence. His great meditation on the "basic word *I-Thou*" [17. P. 79] is such a conceptual narration of experiences of encounter. His social science, up to where he juxtaposes the "socialism of Moscow" to the "socialism of Jerusalem" [18. P. 992], has its specific attraction by dint of a narrative confession. Philosophical logicity and inner freedom from contradiction are indeed necessary. But it would, according to Buber, be a mistaken claim that such philosophical claims could establish the reality of experience itself. He warns that the "faculty of thought," although "indispensable," must not sacrifice to its logical "consistency anything of that reality itself which the experience that has happened ordered to pinpoint" [19. P. 1112]. Almost all of Buber's work has a rhetorical impulse. He is concerned

with the foundation of an immediate binding force between personality and religious tradition. *Personality* here is not an ethical principle of will in the sense of Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*, but a "conviction," an "affirmation of the whole human soul" [14. P. 136]. The Jewish sources are completely bypassed as soon as formal ethical principles are to be proven on their basis or extracted from them. The sources must rather be lived through as a path of spiritual search, as an incessant labor of historical commentary, which strives to achieve that "yes-saying" even in the face of the most brittle material of seemingly contradictory traditions. This pathway and the stages of its success are fused in the *teaching*.

To a large extent, Buber included his own biography in his accounts. Over long intervals of time, his thinking and writing are a tightrope walk between factual truthfulness and self-stylization, and have earned him substantial multiple reproach. Already early on his father responded to his confessional essay *My Way to Hasidism* (*Mein Weg zum Chassidismus*, 1917) by saying that such a stylized statement like his son's "I became aware of the calling" was a mistake: "You announce yourself there formally as Messiah"⁶. Such an almost prophetic self-confidence was not uncommon during the First World War and for some time thereafter, also in the case of other authors. This style has its justification because, on the path of existential discovery, only that knowledge can claim validity which is presented as a personal confession of one's factual life experience. In this sense, Buber's method is conclusive. It is only his great talent for linguistic aesthetics that would seem at times to play a trick on him, when the methodical seriousness of his communication, where everything depends on preserving a calm stance, falls victim to an elegant albeit too rapid procedure of finding wisdom.

The price Buber pays with this style of sharing philosophical reflection in the realm of Jewish subject is a one-sided devaluation of the *law*. True, it is said: Whoever, like Samson Raphael Hirsch, acknowledges the laws of the Torah in full "certainty of revelation" is "inviolable in the lawfulness of his life" [14. P. 136]. But they who fulfill the 613 *mitzvot* unconsciously, just nominally, their attitude has to be rejected "from the bottom up" [14. P. 136]. This is only a copy of the already prevailing "dependence of life on the disembodied gear" [14. P. 140], against which Buber takes up arms, utilizing a substantial array of elements of religious renewal. Again, in the style of those years, it is from the "youth" where he envisions "rebirth" of religion. Already, in this valuation of youth as an almost independent historical principle, there is resistance against the form of life of the *law*, which naturally attains maturity only with advancing age. Buber bets on another card so to speak. He considers the hope for renewal from the *law* as a form of "romanticism." On the other hand, "rebirth is always when the spirit summons the *elemental forces* enclosed in the formations and calls them to new creation." According to Buber, the "spirit" succeeds in this "when it finds *people* [*Volk*] by making *people* [*Volk*] fruitful"⁷ [14. P. 138]. The "primeval forces of the people"

⁶ Carl Buber to Martin Buber, probably at the end of 1917, in: [20. P. 520 f].

⁷ Italics by the author H.W.

are the myth, which should reach down under the historical phenomena of Judaism and be revealed to the Jewish youth as a source and provider of direction.

Nietzsche's thought of a life force pressing for expression, which was also taken up in Judaism in many variations, also shapes Buber's idea of Jewish "realization." However, he does not go as far as some of the other Jewish authors, who sometimes completely detach themselves from religion. For Buber, everything Jewish remains constitutively bound to a "religious life" [14. P. 128]. The realization of being Jewish is also a "realization of God"⁸. However, everything depends on the fact that "between living and dead forces, between symbols that are strong in sense and those that are weak in sense [...] a distinction can be made"; that is, "a choice can be made"⁹ [14. P. 141]. And a complex of legal orders merely taken over and accepted stands in direct contradiction to this.

In all this, Buber maintains the strict obligation between himself as a Jew and the Torah. One could almost speak of an excessive direct commitment. For he binds the feeling of his Jewishness in parts so closely to the ductus of the Biblical wording that every fluctuation in its evaluations and nuances of expression, be it positive or negative, in recognition or with skepticism, immediately brings his whole existence into flux. One recognizes here the source of his so-called "metanomism" [22. P. 22], for the cause of the unrest is the Torah as *law*, not as *teaching*. An example: According to Buber, for an authentic Jewish person, it must be unquestionably established that there is no other God but the Only One. The Decalogue, with its first address to Israel, sets the groundwork for everything that follows: "I am the Lord thy God." This is unquestionably certain for a true Jew. The instruction follows immediately: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me!" Buber translates the Hebrew wording: "No other deity be thee" (*Nicht sei dir andere Gottheit*)¹⁰. So, to whom does it apply? Obviously, to someone, according to Buber's perspective, who must be admonished and therefore does not belong completely and in truth to the people of Israel. And just this, namely that Moses, the teacher of the people,

could not avoid saying this to them and to me, this is just the fact, from which—exactly because this is said to me rightly—I rightly demand redemption. And from this, I must not accept *the statutes and legal decrees* [the "law"], but must ask and question each one: Is this said to me, rightly to me? So that I can count myself once to *Israel*, which is addressed, and another time, many other times. not.¹¹

For Buber, not being a Jew in this questioning is a "No!" It is a negation directed at his existence as a Jew, an exclusion from Israel. However, precisely this would be impossible without a strong awareness of his positive belonging to Israel.

⁸ Cf. Buber's preface to the republication of his first "Reden über das Judentum" 1923: [21. P. 7f].

⁹ Italics by the author H.W.

¹⁰ Ex 20,3; Translations according to Buber's letter, June 5, 1924, cf. the following note.

¹¹ Buber, letter to Rosenzweig, June 5, 1924, in: [20. P. 199f].

And so the *law* incessantly inflicts inner divisions on him instead of creating coherence as a power of order. Therefore, Buber, the thinker of autobiographical experience, places a “dividing line” [20. P. 199f] between the affirmative “I am” of the only God, i.e., the constituting characteristic of Israel, and the defensive “No other deity be thee,” i.e., the implicit exclusion from Israel.

“Israel” is for Buber the name for an ideal of pure worship. However, *the ideal* is not understood as an abstract idea but as an intrinsic power, a judicial power over the life of the individual. The ideal *Israel* has power over the life of Buber the Jew; it acknowledges and denies, includes and excludes. But the whole burden of this judicial process rests upon man. Because for God, that instance which could lead beyond this immanent court procedure between man and Torah, thereby relieving both Israel and the individual, recedes altogether. Buber emphasizes: “God is not a lawgiver to me, only man is a lawgiver” [20. P. 200]. But from this it follows, using Buber’s phraseology “*eclipse of God*” (*Gottesfinsternis*) that through a life *under the law* there can be no reconciliation of totality and the individual man. For the *law* “does not apply to me universally,” he continues, “only personally, namely only that of him which I must recognize as said to me.” Buber’s self presentation as situated within a conflict would have to be described as classical tragedy, and, analogous to ancient Greece, where philosophy stood next to tragedy, in Buber the *teaching* stands next to the *law*. Studying them in tracing their development is the lifeline for that longed-for “yes-saying of the whole human soul” which always remains threatened by the *law*. Seen in this way, the myth of the “elemental forces,” whose path a Jew has to follow inwardly in order to form his Jewishness [14. P. 141], possesses an emancipatory quality.

III.

Franz Rosenzweig (1886—1929) tries to preserve the unity of soul and *law* despite an experience that comes close to Buber’s split. He had already struggled against the Jewish folk-myth earlier on [23. P. 284ff]. And also his famous answer to Buber’s statement on the law — the essay *The Builders* (*Die Bauleute*) — places the crack that the existential consciousness of the 20th century drives into the unity of the law somewhere else than Buber.

Buber had divided between commandment and prohibition, between affirmation and negation. Rosenzweig distinguishes between *law* and *commandment*, between that which must be known and recognized as a canon of legal action in many ways, and that which only reveals itself in the moment of action as a currently valid command. The *law* is tradition and inheritance from the past; therefore, it must become anew a “commandment,”

which immediately, at the moment it is heard, is translated into action [...].
It must regain the modernity that all great Jewish times have felt as the only proof of its eternity [24. P. 116].

This transformation of *law* into *commandment*—according to Rosenzweig’s reference to a Talmudic play on words—makes “children” (Hebrew *banim*), who take up the inheritance of the fathers by learning, into “builders” (Hebrew *bonim*) of the future peace.¹²

When in October 1913, already on the way to baptism, Rosenzweig decides otherwise: “I remain a Jew,”¹³ he finds himself on a path of discovery that also forces him to question the individual regarding an “I” that works “in the name of all Israel,” an Israel “to whom the law was given and who was created by the law” [25. P. 457]. For Buber, the *law* remains a sting that incessantly forces the question of an activity “in the name of all Israel,” but fails to resolve it. Rosenzweig’s *law* is both a question and an answer, rift and redemption at the same time. If it succeeds in giving it the “presence” of the *commandment*, the wholeness of a creative deed emerges at that moment, and that means the unity of an individual and Israel. This likewise demands choice and freedom over the weaving of tradition. And whether a person “can” do this without breaking the law is always in question; only “the possibility of being able is given to all of us. This we know”¹⁴ [24. P. 120].

The *logic of trust* in this redemptive “being able” leads to Rosenzweig’s main work, *The Star of Redemption (Der Stern der Erlösung)*. Its intellectual path unfolds the problem of a fundamental split and its redemption. There the “being created” of Israel by the “law” gets an all-embracing meaning, because it closes the whole exposition. In the beginning, Rosenzweig places three facts that, in his view, no one can evade with consciousness, namely God, the world, and man. Each asserts itself — as language, man’s most important form of expression, reveals it — inevitably in human life and thought. But they stand initially, as mere facts, unrelated and uninterconnected. This is not a specifically Jewish but a thoroughly general human problem. Rosenzweig, therefore, did not want to have written a “Jewish book” according to the usual understanding. Rather he aspired to writing nothing more or less than a “system of philosophy” [26. P. 374]. His question is whether it remains with the isolation of those three facts, which would confirm man’s profound fear of his isolated separation — for instance in death — or whether it uncovers an inner dynamic, which brings God, the world, and man into a correlation with each other.

The *first step*, in the initial part of *The Star*, is to uncover in all three facts an analogous structure of polar duality: a primordial moment of affirmation, i.e., the positing of a being in general — God, the world, man — and a primordial moment of negation, i.e., the first approach of the particular determination of this being by confrontation to something else. Both moments create living but still isolated

¹² An interpretation of Isaiah 54:13, quoted in the Sabbath evening prayer and used by Rosenzweig as the motto of his essay, “All your children [*banaych*] shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children (Isa 54:13) — read not *banaych* (your children), but *bonaych*: your builders,” BT Berachot 64a. et passim; [24. P. 106].

¹³ Letter to Rudolf Ehrenberg. October 31, 1913.

¹⁴ Italics by the author H.W.

formative units of the being of God, of the being of the world, and of the being of man. This is, according to Rosenzweig, the stage of “paganism.” The *second* step is found in the transition from the first to the second part of *The Star*. Here, the isolated facts lead to a reversal of their inner polarity. The affirmation of the original essence becomes the negation and delimiting specification. As a determination by the counterpart, the negation becomes the affirmation and a new determination of essence in terms of three particularities. The essence of God is now his creative power; the essence of the world is its continuously renewed existence; the essence of man is his active self.

This reversal of essence also sets in motion a reversal of the initial isolation of God, world, and man, i.e., a tendency towards interconnection. Central in the second part is a theory of human language. According to Rosenzweig, grammar reveals the essential logic of conversion, which also means that it becomes — in the specific speech of human beings — at the same time a factor of human historical experience. In the third part of *The Star*, this revelation, which creates a connection, i.e., which redeems from isolation, is illuminated under the light of conclusive truth. Here, forms of human interaction with revelation are presented, in which *historical* activity is connected with the value of *eternity*. They are forms of divine service. Through their interpretation, Rosenzweig wants to authenticate the overall path of his philosophical system toward the end. Similarly, as at the beginning, where those three facts appeared as polar dualities, the philosopher also places at the end a structural duality, namely of Judaism and Christianity. They form an opposition of mutual complementation, in which each of the two sides realizes an original and necessary form of religiosity.

Judaism remains the always preceding, older side in this correlation of revelation. For in the fenced-in “narrowness” of Jewish “*Dasein*” (*existence*), the unity of the consciousness of the creation of the world, of the revelation to man, and of the redemption as a vision of divine truth, is protected from fragmentation by means of manifold radiation into the world. This fragmentation is what Rosenzweig considers the main danger of Christianity. Therefore, the unity of experience, which is real in Jewish *Dasein*, remains for Christians the always visible antipole, vis-à-vis to which they can lead their consciousness back to unity. But Jewish *Dasein* must practically be realized. And this requires that “the Jew enter himself into memory internally [*sich in sein Inneres hinein er-innert*] only for the sake of his highest, for God’s sake” [25. P. 454]. He must comprehend Israel’s being created in the *law*, and thus must obey it. The individual law-abiding Jew is — as Rosenzweig interprets the mysticism of the exile of the divine *Shechina* — the eternal “remnant of Israel,” which gives himself, against his tendency to immanent separating from God, the reverse direction towards the “unification” [25. P. 455]. The becoming into direction of unity is placed upon man’s soul and into his hands. The Jewish man and the Jewish law—between these two is played out no less than the process of redemption that is inclusive of God, world, and man [25. P. 456f].

This interpretation of the law, which leads Rosenzweig to include the psychology of the individual in his considerations even far more than the great traditional models, leads him to seek proximity to mysticism. But he insists on formulating this using the means of philosophical rationality. His existential interest brings him, as already noted, into a kinship with Martin Buber; but an even closer relationship binds him to Hermann Cohen. Despite the enormous difference in the style of philosophizing, Rosenzweig finds the logical foundation for the analysis of those three facts at the beginning of *The Star* in Cohen's analysis of infinitesimal mathematics, which in the latter's *Logic of Pure Knowledge* had been extended to a comprehensive theory of *scrutinizing origins* (*Ursprungsdenken*). But also the determination of Jewish existence as a life independent of the historical striving of the *world's peoples*, which concludes *The Star*, leads back to Hermann Cohen. The latter, as Rosenzweig reports from recollection, had exclaimed at the end of his great lecture on *The Social Ideal in Plato and the Prophets* (*Das soziale Ideal bei Platon und den Propheten*): "But we — are eternal!"¹⁵ And in allusion to this statement, Rosenzweig concludes: the Jewish "community" cannot utter the "we of its unity [...] without internally hearing the complementary *are eternal*" [25. P. 331].

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¹⁵ On January 7, 1918 in Berlin, cf. Rosenzweig, Introduction to H. Cohen's "Jüdische Schriften," p. LXII [27. P. 348]. Cohen had published the lecture without these words (cf. [28. P. 297—335]).

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Герман Коген, Мартин Бубер, Франц Розенцвейг о Торе: еврейское «учение» versus «закон»

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Перевод с немецкого Д.И. Чистякова

Аннотация. Г. Коген, М. Бубер и Ф. Розенцвейг были выдающимися фигурами «Еврейского ренессанса», как его называл сам Бубер. Данное рассмотрение ограничивается их позициями по отношению к двум базовым еврейским понятиям: учение, т.е. теоретическая теологическая часть традиции, и закон, т.е. практическая часть.

В историческом плане автор сосредоточится на периоде, который охватывает приблизительно двадцать лет: от эссе Когена «Об этике и философии религии в их взаимосвязи» (1904) до эссе Розенцвейга «Строители», которое представляет собой ответ на недавно опубликованные Бубером «Речам об иудаизме». Этот период включает в себя практически все основные философские труды рассматриваемых авторов: это и «Система философии» Когена (1902—1912), и его же «Религия разума из истоков иудаизма» (1919), «Звезда избавления» Розенцвейга (1921), а также «Я и Ты» Бубера (1923). Мыслить, чувствовать и предаваться своему подлинному делу, не вынося себя за общекультурные рамки, или, ещё более категорично: достигать общего, самого всеобщего как такового именно в том, что является собственным — таким образом все трое философов видят призвание своего еврейского самоопределения. Ни один из них не посвятил всю свою жизнь сугубо «еврейским» вопросам, в наименьшей степени ими занимался Герман Коген. Однако в отношении каждого из этих авторов может быть поставлен вопрос о том, как возможно писать на немецком языке об общечеловеческом так, чтобы при этом совершенно недвусмысленно быть евреем.

Ключевые слова: эстетика, заповедь, Dasein, этика, Бог, Израиль, еврейский Закон, иудаизм, логика, Мишна, философия, молитва, религия, Талмуд

Информация о финансировании и благодарности. Следует упомянуть несколько важных имен, поскольку данный текст в первую очередь основан на работах Иехояды Амира, Ханса-Кристофа Аскани, Леоры Батницки, Луки Бертолино, Франческо П. Чильи, Артура А. Козна, Ханса Мартина Добера, Мориса Фридмана, Роберта Гиббса, Наума Н. Глатцера, Артура А. Козна, Хайнца-Юргена Герца, Питера Э. Гордона, Ривки Хорвица, Ханса Кона, Даниэля Крохмальника, Рейнхольда Майера, Пола Мендес-Флора, Стефана Мозеса, Фридриха Нивенера, Бенджамина Поллока, Вольфдитриха Шмид-Коварзика, Стивена П. Шварцшильда, Йозефа Б. Соловейчика, Джозефа Тернера.

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