

Franz Rosenzweig and Gershom Scholem on Zionism and the Jewish People

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Among the many thinkers who have shaped post-Emancipation Jewish spiritual life in both Israel and the Diaspora, Franz Rosenzweig and Gershom Scholem have been particularly significant. Each of these men, in different ways, dealt with the major questions of Jewish existence. Rosenzweig, as a believer, as an adherent to his ancestral faith, considered the Jews to be the Eternal People who live outside history and who by their very existence, play a significant role in the redemption of the world. Scholem posited a dialectical development of Jewish history, yet his understanding of Judaism is closely linked with Zionism. His great contribution was his focussing on *kabbalah* and demonstrating the power that it wielded throughout Jewish history.

Both Rosenzweig and Scholem rejected any attempt to formulate a definition of Judaism. They both considered definitions as rational, dogmatic, and narrow. They both felt that the existence of the Jew should take precedence over any attempts at definition. For Rosenzweig the very existence of the people, and not the giving of the Torah, was an article of faith, the second being meaningful only in relation to the first.¹ Scholem reached the conclusion that Judaism is far broader than Rabbinism or any Jewish dogma, and incorporated secularism as well.² For both, thought *per se* is too narrow to encompass a living reality – an idea they derived from the philosophers of life such as Henri Bergson, who claimed nothing living can be defined, as it has not yet come to an end. Both were strongly opposed to the pan-rationalism of the nineteenth century, preferring myth to logic and believing that the way to a deeper understanding of religion is through mythical thinking. Both lived in and experienced the post-Emancipation era and tried to come up with new solutions to the problems of Jewish existence.

Rosenzweig was a philosopher with a broad outlook on the world. He considered mankind to be divided into Jews, Christians, and non-believers. Israel, in its priestly ways, expresses the essence of revelation in its absolute form. It was the

task of devoted Jews to work for a revival of Jewish life and learning, so as to lead the Jew back from the periphery to the center. Scholem considered the situation of the Jews in Germany as tragic; they had even lost a sense of being in exile; he envisioned the solution to the Jewish problem in life in Eretz Israel. Scholem was not a political Zionist but a spiritual, or cultural Zionist, a follower of Aḥad Ha-Am. But whereas Aḥad Ha-Am believed that the first principle of Judaism is ethics, Scholem did not believe that his Zionism could be defined intellectually. Scholem, as a *ḥalus*, a pioneering immigrant to Palestine, was a unique phenomenon among German Jews. In Vilna, the great historian Simon Dubnow, later killed in the Holocaust, wondered, much as Rosenzweig did in Frankfort, how the 'aliyah of a few Jews to Palestine could rescue the Jews of the Diaspora.

Like Kierkegaard, Scholem was a critic of modern bourgeois life, and perceived the deep *crisis* in modern Jewry over the last centuries: the decay of Rabbinism, and the emergence of shallow rationalism in Germany and throughout the world; the *kabbalah* was a light in this darkness. Scholem, who understood history in dialectical terms, believed a contemporary revival of Judaism must be based upon *new values*, and could only come about in Eretz Israel. His major contribution to modern Jewish life was through his work as an extraordinarily gifted historian. He opened the previously impenetrable world of the *kabbalah* to the modern Western reader. Thanks to his efforts, these vast realms were made available to all who were interested. "What had struck previous scholars of Jewish history as a wilderness now assumed structure, meaning, and a definite location in history."³

Scholem and Rosenzweig were among the most brilliant minds of our time, and were both fanatically devoted to the Jewish cause. In a sense they represented two sides of one coin. Rosenzweig's thought was based upon an experience which affirmed the Diaspora. He did not perceive the historical reality discerned by Scholem. Rather, his approach was based upon his religious experience, and upon the life of German Jewry at the beginning of this century, during the First World War, and in the early post-War years. Scholem was privileged to live a full life, witnessing the fruition of his revolutionary Zionist vision.

Eretz Israel versus Germany

Gershon (Gerhard) Scholem (1897-1982) was raised in Berlin, a city with a relatively large Jewish population. Though he came from a highly assimilated home, his circle of friends was Jewish, and Christianity played no particular role in his early life. His road back to Judaism was uncomplicated and demonstrated his strong will. He revolted against his assimilated father, who worked on Yom Kippur and put a Christmas tree in their home.⁴ By the age of fourteen, Scholem had already decided to become a Zionist and joined *Jung Juda*. He began to read Jewish history and Zionist-oriented books, such as those by Heinrich Graetz,

Moses Hess, Max Nordau, Theodor Herzl, and Nathan Birnbaum, which deeply impressed him and formed his worldview. He was drawn to mysticism, neither as a result of any experience in a synagogue, nor by any living personalities – spiritual leaders or masters – but rather by *books*. Works such as the *Zohar*, and those of Molitor, Schelling, and Martin Buber had a profound impact on him. Scholem frequented Buber and the latter realized that there stood before him a young man who would one day become famous.⁵ Scholem learned Hebrew with extraordinary drive, he studied Bible and Talmud with sympathetic Orthodox rabbis, visited synagogues in Berlin and sought out the friendship of East-European students. The most famous among those he met was Zalman Rubashov (later Shazar, third President of the State of Israel). Scholem realized that the East-European students who flocked to Germany because of the crisis in Eastern Europe and the revolution in Russia, many of them *en route* to Eretz Israel, had far deeper roots in Jewish sources than the stiff German Jews. Later, he developed a life-long friendship with the famous Hebrew author, Shmuel Yosef Agnon.

Between 1913 and 1918, both Scholem and Rosenzweig went to hear the aged Neo-Kantian philosopher, Hermann Cohen, who moved from Marburg to Berlin and, during the last years of his life, taught Judaism and philosophy at the *Hochschule*. Both were deeply impressed by this great sage and great Jew who had returned to his faith. Scholem wrote, in a letter to the poet Werner Kraft, that he had never “felt such a sadness over a person.” “Cohen,” concluded Scholem “will, in a superior sense, be my model.”⁶ Cohen was a mentor for both Scholem and Rosenzweig. The latter effusively praised Cohen’s lectures: “I had the surprise of my life. I am used to professors of philosophy who are subtle, acute, lofty.... Instead, I found something I hadn’t expected...the thing that, disenchanted with the present, I had long searched for in the writings of the great dead...I now saw face to face in the living flesh.”⁷

The young Scholem adhered to his Zionist path without compromise and without any sacrifices to Germany or Germanism. When Scholem was drafted into the army in 1917, he resisted. He was freed from service, with the help of some Jewish doctors, by pretending to be deranged. As a German Jew, Scholem acted in an extremely unpatriotic manner exhibiting great courage and strong will power.⁸ For Scholem, Zionism meant *‘aliyah* and self-realization. As Avraham Shapira has pointed out, Scholem saw Judaism and Zionism as completely identical, such that one cannot exist without the other.⁹

At university, Scholem initially studied mathematics, intending to become a teacher of mathematics in Palestine. But in 1919, he changed his plan, and decided to write his doctorate on the kabbalistic work, *Sefer ha-Bahir* (“The Book of Illumination”). At that time in Germany, such a choice of topic was extraordinary. Scholem chose this neglected area because he felt a deep kinship to kabbalistic ideas which he felt to be at the “root of his soul.” He explained this to Zalman Schocken in 1937, claiming that he had not become a “kabbalist” inadvertently, but that he knew what

he was doing – although he had initially thought it would be a much easier undertaking. When he switched from mathematics and epistemology to *kabbalah*, he had scarcely any knowledge of the subject, but was full of “insight.” He had an intuitive affinity to mystical theses, which walked a fine line between religion and nihilism. In that significant document, Scholem also relates that, in the beginning, he had not intended to write on the history of *kabbalah*, but on its metaphysics.¹⁰

Antisemitism played an important role in his evaluation of German Jews. Scholem was convinced that the Jewish leadership in Germany lived in self-deception, only seeing what they wished to see. Such figures as Hermann Cohen, Fritz Mauthner, Constantin Brunner, and Ludwig Geiger lacked proper judgement, being afraid to even mention the sore subject of antisemitism. As a youth, Scholem became absorbed in reading antisemitic literature, realizing the enormous dimensions of the hatred to which Jews were subjected. For him, Zionism was both a vision and a personal goal. He was close to the way of thinking of Aḥad Ha-Am. Zionism, East-European Jewry, the Bible, the Talmud, and a zealous devotion to the Hebrew language were the anchors of the Jewish identity of the young Scholem.

After completing his dissertation at the University of Munich in 1922, Scholem settled in Jerusalem. Coming with a doctorate in *kabbalah*, he found no university, no national library and he had no job. Many *ḥalušim* of those years were revolutionaries. The land was empty and the hopes great. (There may be a relationship between desert landscape and the propensity to utopian vision.) The period was one of great ideas and many discussions were held as to how to realize the ideal society. Many idealized the return to the land, the simple life of physical labor, social justice, the re-entry into history and the new tie with the Bible and with the Land. Scholem believed that the Jews might have a new future in this land. He also hoped that the study of Jewish history would not be apologetic in character, as the Science of Judaism in Germany of the last century had been – inhibited and unable to inquire freely into many delicate subjects. The study of Jewish history in the Jews’ own land would be, he believed, more fruitful. He was also extremely interested in the themes of Exile and Redemption, which were closely related to the two elements at the core of his being: Zionism and Judaism.

Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929) was born in Cassel, where there was no strong Jewish community. His parents belonged to the Jewish community, yet, like many Jews, also had a Christmas tree in their home. Had it not been for Rosenzweig’s great-uncle, Adam Rosenzweig, a traditional Jew and a man of many talents, who explained to the young lad the Jewish way of life and the holidays and encouraged him to remain a Jew, he would have had nothing to hold on to.¹¹

As a student, Rosenzweig first studied medicine, and then turned to Hegel and the humanities, in the German-Christian-Greek garb in which they were presented at the time, with an emphasis on nineteenth-century German intellectual history. Some of his friends and cousins had converted to Christianity, whether for career reasons or out of religious emptiness,¹² and Rosenzweig had considered following in their

path. Yet in the end, the old treasure of the past became stronger and more significant to him than his temptation. At the age of twenty-seven, following a profound inner crisis, he returned to his ancestral faith, an event that made him a fighter for his old-new Judaism. The path he took, first considering abandoning the Jewish faith, then returning to it in the final hour of Yom Kippur, 1913, was hardly a popular route among the German-Jewish intelligentsia.

His revolt, however, was incomplete because his dialogue with his Christian comrades and their influence on him continued to constitute a significant part of his spiritual environment. Although that influence diminished through his encounters with Hermann Cohen in 1914, with Rabbi Nehemiah Nobel in 1919 and with Martin Buber in 1921, his intimate relation with those Christian friends still affected his understanding of Judaism, of Germany, and of Zionism. Following that Yom Kippur, his friends considered his return to Judaism as merely an episode on his way to Christianity. Yet that event proved to be the crucial turning point of his life, making him become a philosopher of Judaism who would uphold the position of Judaism alongside Christianity.

Rosenzweig, the Jew and friend of Christians, makes room in his philosophy for two religions symbolized by the two figures on the great cathedral at Freiburg. The Church is a woman with an unbroken staff and eyes open to the world, an image suggestive of a warrior confident of victory; the Synagogue is represented by a blindfolded woman holding a broken staff, who must renounce all work in this world; she does not see the world but, with her prophetic eye, discerns the remote, ultimate truth. He proclaims that the world needs the Jewish people as witnesses to God's presence in the world; he considered the Jewish people to be outside history. Judaism, for him, lives upon a bridge above the roaring stream of time, whereas Christianity lives within the stream of time, constantly struggling for mastery of the tides.¹³ Rosenzweig continues the line of thinking of the nineteenth-century enlightened Jewish thinkers, who considered the Jewish people in an *apolitical, purely religious light*. This was likewise the line of thought of Judah Halevi (whom Rosenzweig greatly admired, and whose liturgical poems he translated into German), who said, "our relation to God in our present state is a closer one than if we had reached greatness on earth."¹⁴ According to Rosenzweig, Christianity must work in the world and act toward its redemption, whereas Judaism must wait.

Following the crisis which led to his own return to Judaism, it became Rosenzweig's goal to make German Jews conscious of their heritage. He wished to revive Jewish education in Germany. He had a positive attitude to the entire rabbinic tradition; the type of learning he proposed was one that would include all phases of classical Jewish learning, centering around the synagogue and the prayer book. He sought new interpretations for his generation, a new way of receiving the past. He started from the whole, suggesting that the details be worked out as time went on.

The need to participate in the First World War was understood by German Jews as self-evident. Being extremely nationalistic they wished to prove their patriotism. Rosenzweig was a German patriot, but somewhat less so than the typical German Jew. He wrote:

To what extent the Jew takes part in the life of the peoples is something he does not prescribe for himself; they prescribe it for him.... I conduct myself merely dutifully towards the State, I...do not offer myself as a volunteer in the army but go to the International Red Cross.¹⁵

Before being called up, in 1914, Rosenzweig volunteered to serve in the Red Cross; he thereafter served in the Army. During his service, he wrote that “we are really both” – meaning, both Germans and Jews.¹⁶ Rosenzweig taught German officers German history during the war years.

Generally speaking his war writings show a stronger Jewish identity than is typical of German Jews. He wrote what very few others would have written: “I was never aware before the outbreak of the war how completely I do not feel at all like a German.”¹⁷ Or, “My hopes are today as lively for England and Russia as for Germany. ...I am a Jew, and in Germany only a resident (*Staatsangehöriger*)!”¹⁸ And again he wrote: “I have no interest in this war waged because of Br̄ieg and Belgium.”¹⁹ When the antisemitic *Judenzählung* occurred, he angrily wrote to his mother:

We are Germans. This you can safely say about our political affiliation: as long as this State which ‘counts’ so wonderfully still recognizes us among its citizens.... The people, however, in contrast to the State do not count us among themselves.²⁰

He suffered personally (as a Jew), from antisemitism. When asked how, as a Jew, he could expect to be an officer, in a letter of 20 September 1917, he wrote, “I accept everything as a dumb dog and read.” He did not know what to answer to a Jewish boy in Scopia who asked why he did not devote himself exclusively to the Jews; he tried to explain his dual nationality with little success. On his visit to Warsaw on 23 May 1918, he wrote in a letter, “the Jewish boys are magnificent. I felt something I very rarely felt, a pride in my race, in so much freshness and vitality.” The Polish Jews seemed very clean and attractive to him. He noticed an extreme alertness among them and wrote home: “I understand now why the German Jew does not feel any kinship to these East-European Jews. He has become philistine and bourgeois; but I and people like me should feel that kinship strongly.”²¹ On 10 June 1918, he wrote in a letter, “the cowardly addition of our voice to the chorus of slanderers of the Polish Jews is the worst of the disgraceful acts that are part of German-Jewish life.”²²

Rosenzweig lived a life of dual loyalty. He taught that the Jews have no history and no epochs; they are alien on earth and in the realm of history. Alienation is, in a very deep sense, a Jewish trait: “to be a Jew is to be in exile.”²³ Were the Jew to

give up that feeling of alienation, he would give up his Judaism. In *The Star* he wrote:

...the true eternity of the eternal people must always be alien and vexing to the state, and to the history of the world. In the epochs of world history the state wields its sharp sword and carves hours of eternity in the bark of the growing tree of life, while the eternal people, untroubled and untouched year after year adds ring upon ring to the stem of its eternal life.²⁴

Rosenzweig's relation to Zionism is complicated. He is sympathetic to it but considers himself responsible for the Diaspora. On 1 May 1917, in a letter to Gertrud Oppenheim, he expressed his thoughts on the importance of the ties between the Jews in the Land of Israel and the Diaspora. Those contacts with the Diaspora, he thought, are what make the Zionists hold fast to their goal.²⁵ He sympathized with the theory of *Aḥad Ha-Am*. The importance of the connections between the Jews in their land and those in the Diaspora were later expressed by the State of Israel in its Law of Return. Rosenzweig admired the spontaneity of Jewish life in Palestine, the fact that Jews lived according to the Jewish calendar and that in Tel Aviv, the "town of speculators," stores are closed on the Sabbath. Here was a mold that could be filled with spiritual content. He also realized that more Bible learning was possible for the youngsters in Haifa than for his son in Frankfort.²⁶ Although he recognized the great importance of the body and saw the physical life of the people as a bridge to eternity, how, according to Rosenzweig's philosophy, the Jews could take care of the Jewish "body" remains an open question.

The Three Visits

Scholem visited Rosenzweig three times. They knew each other through their publications and through mutual acquaintances: Mawrik Kahn (whom Rosenzweig met in the army hospital in 1918) and Rudolf Hallo (a younger friend from his hometown of Cassel, who studied archaeology and art in Munich, and was influenced by Scholem).

Scholem's first visit took place in May 1921, just after he had read the newly-published *Star of Redemption*, while he was still in the middle of his doctorate. His purpose in coming to the Frankfort area was probably mostly in order to visit Agnon and Buber, who lived not far from Frankfort. Rosenzweig described the day-and-a-half long visit as "wild." He subsequently wrote about Scholem:

His Judaism is nothing but a cloister. There he conducts his spiritual exercises, and despite all his side remarks, he basically takes no notice of others. Therefore he was at a loss for words.... He is really free of dogmas. One cannot

catechize him.... This has never before happened to me with a West European Jew. He is perhaps the only one alive who has really come home. But he has come home all alone.²⁷

Rosenzweig apparently also studied *kabbalah* with him on this occasion, and would seem to have perceived Scholem more as a bibliographer and a bibliophile; the allusion to monasticism may have referred to the life of a scholar within a university framework, where one only studies things scientifically and prefers the written words. For Rosenzweig, experience and the living word were the centers of vitality. Rosenzweig's surprise at Scholem's freedom from dogmas illustrates how much further Scholem had gone in reaching a definition of Judaism than Rosenzweig who was by no means dogmatic but thought being a Jew was a matter neither of nationality nor of religion. The term "religion" does not appear in *The Star* and religion after the Enlightenment meant merely one part of one's life. Judaism "is not only lived. One *is* it",²⁸ Nevertheless, Rosenzweig interprets Judaism first and foremost as a religion; for him, Judaism is not a nationality. He asserted that there is no Jew without Torah, whereas in Scholem's view there are secular Jews, and Judaism may even be defined as a nationality. The epoch that started with Rabbi Yoḥanan ben Zakkai may have dialectically come to an end. Rosenzweig's allusion to coming home "alone," mentioned in this letter, refers to Scholem's Zionism and his readiness for *'aliyah*, even if alone.

Prior to the second visit, they corresponded and it appears that the Zionist idea stood between them. In 1920, Rosenzweig wrote: "Zionism is a diagnostician of genius but a most mediocre healer."²⁹ He agrees with the Zionists about the decay of the local community, but not with their method of healing – i.e., *'aliyah*. In a letter to Scholem dated 6 January 1922, Rosenzweig wrote: "your central dogma is that Judaism is apparently dead and only 'over there' will it come to life again. I appreciate your conviction, because it is [for you] not a mere cowardly evasion but a true point of view, for which you sacrifice yourself.... *But it would be the end if you would find followers.*" [emphasis added].³⁰

At times, Rosenzweig had faith in Germany and was opposed to Zionism – and not only the kind of un-historical nationalism of Jacob Klatzkin, which rejects the possibility of any Diaspora Jewish existence after the Emancipation, and claims that in the Land of Israel there will develop a new kind of secular Jew who has no ties with the religion of his fathers. Rosenzweig did not recognize the secret forces that tie this people through the Bible and the prayer book to this land and may develop new creative forces for survival. Yet at other moments, he was well disposed to Zionism; Rosenzweig was not far from the line of thought of Aḥad Ha-Am when he wrote: "Only if the Land of Israel will keep the ties with Berlin, Lodz and perhaps with New York...will it remain Jewish, and it could then become a source for the growth of true life even for us."³¹

In March 1922, Scholem was again in Frankfurt. Rosenzweig's paralysis had already begun in December 1921, but was not yet publicly known, so Scholem was

unaware of it. As a young militant, Scholem decided to visit Rosenzweig and raise the theme of Zionism.³² The debate was heated, yet Scholem's impression was that Rosenzweig was not as extreme an anti-Zionist as was his wife, and that he could have been moved to change his views. Only after leaving did Scholem hear that Rosenzweig was very ill and that the prognosis was that he might die during the year. Scholem felt guilty about the whole incident.

Later, they occasionally corresponded between Frankfort and Jerusalem on literary matters. In 1926, to honor Rosenzweig's fortieth birthday, a group of friends, under the leadership of Buber, presented short essays in honor of their sick friend. Scholem sent an interesting essay on the Hebrew tongue.³³ When Scholem was in Frankfort in 1927 on one of his visits to Europe, Ernst Simon encouraged Scholem to visit the paralysed and very sick Rosenzweig; on that occasion they discussed other matters. After his death in 1929, Scholem spoke of Rosenzweig in an exceptionally laudatory manner. One can feel his profound personal and philosophic identification with Rosenzweig who was, according to Scholem, "one of the most sublime manifestations of the greatness and religious genius of our people."³⁴ Scholem wrote of him: "never before or since have I seen as intense a Jewish orientation as that displayed by this man."³⁵ Scholem's eloquent words, written in 1930, when very few scholars had even read *The Star*, are still very moving and inspiring. Concerning Rosenzweig's chapter on revelation, Scholem wrote: "I regard this chapter as one of what may be called Judaism's definitive statements on the religious question."³⁶

The Written Word and the Oral Word

Scholem and Rosenzweig represent contrasting ideals. Scholem demands that the Jews return to their historic homeland because the Diaspora is not the proper soil where the Jews may prosper and build an ideal society; Rosenzweig has no faith in any soil and no hope for a peaceful life on earth. He sees the Jewish people perpetually wandering with their Torah from one land to another. Scholem demands the study of historic texts as objective data, as documents; Rosenzweig demands the study of the past as a living experience. The Torah, he said, lives with us because we live with it today. Objective facts are not yet Torah, they become Torah "when one adds something small of his own." Rosenzweig is community-minded, whereas Scholem is more concerned with the promotion of the scientific study of Judaism. Rosenzweig's main goals are the education of the Jewish community from within, and the creation of an environment for Jewish tradition and learning. His major tool is the oral word, the dialogue, the give and take of the classroom. As a historian, Scholem lives by the written word,³⁷ the book, the manuscript. Scholem studies the details, quoting the famous saying of Warburg, "God reveals Himself in the details."³⁸ From them, he builds his

magnificent historical construction of the different phases of the *kabbalah*. For him, *kabbalah* is the heart of Judaism.

Scholem was made for university life; it suited his interests and his personality. Meinecke offered Rosenzweig a position at the University of Berlin which he refused. In the Germany of the 1920s, one could not engage in Jewish learning at a university. Rosenzweig built in Frankfurt the Free Jewish House of Learning, a modern imitation of the *Bet ha-midrash* which was at that time, according to Buber, the best institute for Jewish learning in Western Europe.

At times Scholem was impatient with Rosenzweig's emphasis on the eternal Jew and the Jewish holidays. In 1937, on the occasion of Rosenzweig's fiftieth birthday – observed in Jerusalem in a memorial evening – Scholem criticized Rosenzweig for falsifying the concept of redemption, excluding its apocalyptic element. It was only thus, claimed Scholem, that Rosenzweig could believe that the cycle of the holidays anticipates redemption.³⁹

Conclusion

One's perception of the distance between Rosenzweig and Scholem depends upon one's interpretation. Rosenzweig saw the core of Judaism in the Torah and the Synagogue, and was primarily interested in the Jewish religion whereas Scholem was not. Scholem seemed to Rosenzweig to be a "nihilist, far removed from his own religious interests or way of life."⁴⁰ On the other hand, in Yosef Ben-Shlomo's reading of Scholem, one may see similarities between the two.⁴¹ Later in his life, Scholem stated his belief in God, declaring the impossibility of an ethics not founded on God. He wished to combat the Jewish ignorance of contemporary Jewish youth, and refused to see the Jews as a nation like other nations, or Palestine as "another Serbia." Scholem likewise agreed that the Jews must live in a religious dimension. Like Rosenzweig, he supported the idea that the secret of Jewish survival cannot be explained in natural terms. Both Scholem and Rosenzweig considered themselves as sons of the Jewish past, affirming a Jewish history in which nothing should be excluded. Both rejected the a-historical approach of Canaanism.

Emmanuel Levinas, the contemporary French philosopher, writes that the distinctions between the non-practicing and practicing Jew, the religious and the profane, have never been so blurred as in our time. Neither does the practice of the faith make the Jew religious nor does its non-practice make him irreligious. The land does not receive its importance from the landscape but from the understanding of the Bible.⁴² The return to the land is a quest for origins for the apparently non-religious Scholem. For the religious Rosenzweig, his return was to the Jewish faith. Both the practicing and the non-practicing Jews were searching for their origins, for their identities and found them in the commonality of Jewish

peoplehood. Their divergent paths tended to merge as they approached their shared destinations. Ze'ev Levy criticizes Rosenzweig for failing to see the significance of the decisive development of a Jewish nation in the modern era. He notes that there are American Jews who might use Rosenzweig's theory to justify disregarding Israel.⁴³ Indeed we have no record of even a mention of the Balfour Declaration in the writings of the sage of Frankfort. His ties to his native land, Germany, and his friendships with his Christian circle were commandingly strong. In defense of Rosenzweig's position, it is important to remember that the majority of German Jewry were not Zionist during those years, changing their views only after Hitler's ascent to power.

Zionists may also view Rosenzweig's critique of Zionism as a means of self-criticism and of reevaluation. This approach was taken by Pinchas Rosenbluth in his essay, "Rosenzweig's Attitude to History and Zion,"⁴⁴ and by the present author in her dissertation.⁴⁵ Rosenzweig's words may be taken as a warning not to put all our eggs in one basket and as a reminder of the danger confronting the Jewish people if they rely too much on the soil and forget the real goal of Jewish identity. Rosenbluth speaks of the vital importance of Israel's connection with the Diaspora and with world Jewry. Jews must remember that in the final analysis, the people are more important than the land. Rosenzweig's theory reminds us that we are not a nation like any other nation, and that the Jew should remember both his task and his Master.

Similarly, Scholem's writings against religion may be read as a critique of the religious situation. Always, he considered himself as a son who continues the past and wishes to pass on tradition to the future generation. His writings reflect a sincere desire to help rescue religion from the abyss of perfunctory performance. Scholem put his finger on an important source of religious vitality which was concealed from the eyes of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century viewer. The current appeal of his work illustrates the extent to which his direction can enable us to better grasp the essence of the Jewish religion. Scholem's criticism could facilitate the purification process by removing the dross and improving the quality of the resulting product. While not in the conventional sense a religious leader, he ended his important work, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, by writing: "The story is not ended, it has not yet become history, and the secret life it holds can break out tomorrow in you or in me."⁴⁶ He had an extremely keen feeling for religion, and he discovered and scaled heights of religious sincerity and fervor that few in his generation were even aware of. It was on one of those peaks that he met Franz Rosenzweig.

NOTES

1. Franz Rosenzweig, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, ed. Rachel Rosenzweig and Edith Rosenzweig-Scheinmann, 2 vols. (Haag, 1979), 1:162.
2. "The binding character of the Revelation for a collective has disappeared. The word of God no longer serves as a source for the definition of possible content of a religious tradition and thus of a possible theology." See Gershom Scholem, "Jewish Theology," in his *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis* (New York, 1976), 274.
3. Alexander Altmann, "Gershom Scholem, 1897-1982," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 51(1984): 7.
4. Gershom Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem* (New York, 1980), 10.
5. According to the testimony of the late Raphael Buber to the author in October 1978.
6. Gershom Scholem, *Briefe an Werner Kraft*, ed. Werner Kraft (Frankfurt am Main, 1986), 80.
7. Franz Rosenzweig, *Kleinere Schriften* (Berlin, 1937), 291.
8. Rivka Horwitz, "Voices of Opposition to the First World War among Jewish Thinkers," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 33(1988): 255-59.
9. Avraham Shapira, Introduction to Gershom Scholem, 'Od *davar* (Explications and Implications: Writings in Jewish Heritage and Renaissance), vol. 2, (Tel-Aviv, 1990), 21.
10. Letter of Scholem to Zalman Schocken, in David Biale, *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 75; "With Gershom Scholem: An Interview," in *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis*, 19.
11. N. N. Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig, His Life and Thought* (New York, 1967), XXXVI; Rivka Horwitz, Introduction to F. Rosenzweig, *Mivhar 'iggerot Rozenšvaig ve-divrei yoman* (A Selection from Rosenzweig's Letters and Diaries) (Jerusalem, 1987), 8-13.
12. See Rivka Horwitz, "Warum liess Rosenzweig sich nicht taufen?" *Der Philosoph Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929): Internationaler Kongress Kassel 1986*, ed. Wolfdietrich Schmied-Kowarzik, 2 vols. (Freiburg, 1988), 1:90-96.
13. Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, trans. William W. Hallo (New York, 1970), 298.
14. *Kuzari* 1.113.
15. From Franz Rosenzweig's letter to Eugen Rosenstock of 7 November 1916, in *Judaism Despite Christianity: The Letters on Christianity and Judaism between Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy and Franz Rosenzweig*, ed. Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy (New York, 1969) 136.
16. Horwitz, "Voices of Opposition," 255-59.
17. Letter of 9 September 1914, in Horwitz, "Voices of Opposition," 251.
18. *Ibid.*, letter of 29 December 1916.
19. *Ibid.*, letter of 23 July 1917.
20. *Ibid.*, letter of 16 February 1917.
21. Rosenzweig, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, 1:564-565 (letter to his mother, 23 May 1918).
22. *Ibid.*, 1:575 (letter to his mother, 10 June 1918).
23. *Ibid.*, 2:700 (letter to R. Hallo, 15 March 1921).
24. Rosenzweig, *Star of Redemption*, 334-335.
25. Rosenzweig, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, 1:400.
26. Glatzer, *Rosenzweig, His Life and Thought*, 357.
27. Letter to R. Hallo, 12 May 1921, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, 2:704.
28. F. Rosenzweig, "Towards a Renaissance of Jewish Learning," in his *On Jewish Learning*, ed. N. N. Glatzer (New York, 1955), 58.
29. *Ibid.*, 64.
30. Rosenzweig, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, 2:741 (6 January 1922).
31. Letter to Gertrud Oppenheim, 1 May 1917, *ibid.*, 1:400.
32. I interviewed Scholem in March 1977 concerning this matter, and I wish to report it according to my information.

33. The collection was not published at the time. This letter was recently published by Stefan Moses, "Gershom Scholem, On Our Language: A Confession," *History and Memory* 2:2(Winter 1990): 97-100.
34. G. Scholem, "Franz Rosenzweig and His Book *The Star of Redemption*," in *The Philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig*, ed. Paul Mendes-Flohr (Hanover, N.H., 1988), 23.
35. Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem*, 140.
36. Scholem, "Franz Rosenzweig and His Book *The Star of Redemption*," 36.
37. Scholem wrote: "The people and the book came into existence together" (see "'Am ha-sefer," in *'Od davar*, 160); whereas, for Buber and Rosenzweig the oral word preceded the written word. This was one of the principles of their translation of the Bible.
38. Gershom Scholem, "Israel and the Diaspora," in *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis*, 253.
39. "Rosenzweig-Feier in Jerusalem," *Der Jüdische Rundschau* 8(January 1937): 15.
40. Letter of Rosenzweig to R. Hallo, 27 March 1922, *Briefe und Tagebücher*, 2:768.
41. Yosef Ben-Shlomo, "The Spiritual Universe of Gershom Scholem," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 29(1983): 126-144.
42. Emmanuel Levinas, *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Seán Hand (Oxford, 1989), 250, 255, 261-262.
43. Ze'ev Levy, "On Rosenzweig's Conception of Judaism and Eretz-Israel," (Hebrew) *Da'at* 6(1981): 57.
44. (Hebrew) *Da'at* 6(1981): 108.
45. "Speech and Time in the Philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig" (Ph.D. diss., Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, 1963), 143.
46. Scholem, *Major Trends In Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 1941), 350.

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