

Rabbis Joseph B. Soloveitchik and Abraham Joshua Heschel on Jewish-Christian Relations

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Abstract: How is it that Rabbis Joseph B. Soloveitchik and Abraham Joshua Heschel, who had so much in common, became the spokesmen for opposing positions on Jewish-Christian dialogue? Is there a fundamental difference in their analyses of the nature of Judaism and Christianity? Have recent developments confirmed or disconfirmed their hopes and fears? Would they say anything different today?

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From the forties through the seventies of the twentieth century, the two most consequential religious thinkers on the American Jewish scene were Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972) and Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (1903-1993), the former a professor at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the latter a professor and Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshiva University. By the late fifties each had emerged as the major theological voice of his institution and movement.² Indeed, they were probably the only theologians read by students of both institutions. Each had international followings.³

By 1960 R. Abraham J. Heschel was the most widely read Jewish theologian in America,⁴ whereas R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik was the most widely accepted ideologue of “Integrationist Orthodoxy.” Integrationist Orthodoxy” is preferable to “Modern,” since it reflects better its ideological tenor. For it, as represented by its ideological mentor, believes in integrating Orthodoxy and the university, Orthodoxy and the State of Israel, and Orthodoxy and the Israeli army. It not only exists in modernity or takes its cue from modernity, but relates to it by encounter or dialogue rather than by rejection or capitulation.⁵

Rabbis Heschel and Soloveitchik had much in common: Both were scions of illustrious eastern European families. R. Heschel, a direct descendant of the Apter Rav, was related to many of the great rebbes from the circle of the Maggid. R. Soloveitchik, a direct descendant of the Beis Halevi, was related to the giants of Lithuanian talmudic scholarship. Both were child prodigies⁶ who in their twenties broke with family tradition and started their general education in Warsaw only to continue at the University of Berlin—1925 for R. Soloveitchik, 1927 for R. Heschel—where both earned their doctorates in philosophy in the early 1930s.⁷ Indeed, in their dissertations both thanked the same neo-Kantian professor of philosophy, Max Dessoir.⁸ R. Heschel and R. Soloveitchik met first in Berlin⁹, and, later, in New York.¹⁰

Both R. Soloveitchik and R. Heschel struggled with the epistemology of Kant,¹¹ admired Kierkegaard,¹² and enlisted Bergson, Otto, Dilthey, Scheler, Husserl, Hartmann, Heidegger, among others,¹³ in Europe as well as Reinhold Niebuhr in America¹⁴ in their exposition of Judaism. To buttress their argument, they relied on physicists and philosophers of science such as Newton, Planck, Einstein and

Whitehead.¹⁵ Enamored of Rambam, they extensively cited and significantly modeled their lives after him.¹⁶ Indeed, R. Heschel at age twenty-eight wrote in seven months a commissioned biography of Rambam, published in 1935, in honor of his eight hundredth birth anniversary. In their major works, they cited the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Schneur Zalmen of Liadi, at crucial places in their argument.¹⁷

“Both were scions of illustrious East European families who overcame family tradition and started their general education in Warsaw only to continue in Berlin.”

Both were masters of the full gamut of the Jewish tradition. They not only knew Bible and its exegesis, the full panoply of Rabbinic literature, Jewish medieval philosophy, Kabbalah, Hasidism¹⁸, Musar, and modern German Jewish thought, but also articulated illuminating reformulations of much of them. Indeed, their mastery of the depth and breadth of the Jewish tradition along with much of the rest of the Western intellectual tradition and Christian theology may be unparalleled amongst twentieth century theologians.¹⁹

Both saw prayer²⁰ and the Sabbath²¹ as defining religious experiences in Judaism and penned penetrating works on their meaning. Together they

fought the intellectual trivialization of Judaism and defended the *halakhab* as a concretization of religious experience.²² They expounded Judaism in terms of religious anthropology and presented it as a response to the problems of—indeed the conflicts inherent in—human nature.²³ Both focused on the religious consciousness,²⁴ depicted religious experience as part of the human response to the mystery of existence,²⁵ understood the religious life as a response to the reality of being commanded,²⁶ conceptualized the problem of human existence in terms of meaning rather than being,²⁷ and perceived much of the divine-human relationship as a partnership.²⁸

Whereas others talked primarily of the ultimacy of Torah or Israel, they spoke primarily of the ultimacy of God.²⁹ Nonetheless, each realized the limitations of such talk. Since with regard to the Divine, one apprehends more than one can comprehend, clearly more than one can verbalize, each realized that much of faith experience must remain ineffable.³⁰ Both wrote of the potential redemptive significance of the State of Israel.³¹ Each was intensely involved in the passions of the day.³² Both used a literary style that matched their inspired vision.³³ The two were master stylists of English, Hebrew, and Yiddish,³⁴ indeed captives of the poetic muse.³⁵

Besides their mastery of these three languages, they knew Greek, Latin, Polish, and German. Finally, they raised many disciples. There is hardly a signifi-

cant theological voice in modern traditional Judaism of the twenty-first century in America who does not count him or herself as a disciple of one, if not both, of them.³⁶

“Together they fought the intellectual trivialization of Judaism and defended the halakhab... When others talked of Torah or Israel, they spoke of the ultimacy of God.”

Nonetheless, in the area of Jewish-Christian dialogue, by 1964 they had become the spokesmen for allegedly antithetical positions. What is the history and significance of their divergent approaches? In 1959 Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council. From 1958 to 1960 the Papacy eliminated from Catholic liturgies several expressions prejudicial to the Jews. The Pope charged Cardinal Augustin Bea, president of the Secretariat for Christian Unity of the Holy See, with the task of preparing a draft on the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people for the consideration of the Council Fathers.

Among the organizations that became involved was the American Jewish Committee. AJC set up an advisory group consisting of Rabbis Elio Toaff of Rome, Jacob Kaplan of France, and Louis Finkelstein, Salo Baron, Joseph Soloveitchik and Abraham Heschel of America. Interestingly, while

the Europeans were chief rabbis, the Americans were academics.

R. Soloveitchik and R. Heschel emerged early on as the major Jewish spokesmen. Already on December 8, 1960, R. Soloveitchik declared before rabbis of the various denominations, convened by the World Jewish Congress, that he opposed the presence of Jews as observers or with any formal status at the Ecumenical Council.³⁷ Within a year, on November 26, 1961 (moved from November 25, which fell on the Sabbath, to allow for R. Heschel’s presence), R. Heschel played the central role in a meeting with Cardinal Bea. They initiated their conversation with a discussion of Rabbi Akiba’s pronouncement on the uniqueness of The Song of Songs, about which Cardinal Bea had recently written. Among the other subjects discussed were: the difference in the sense of mission young people felt in Communist countries versus Western countries, the renewed religious interest in Israel, the underground Jewish religious life in the Soviet Union, the significance of holiness in time, and the talmudic idea that when reciting the *Shema* one should be ready for martyrdom if necessary.³⁸

On January 9, 1962, R. Heschel received a personal letter from Cardinal Bea in German which expressed his anticipation of a memorandum from R. Heschel. Three books by R. Heschel—*God In Search of Man*, *Man Is Not Alone*, and *The Sabbath*—were sent in

February 1962 to Cardinal Bea³⁹, who received them as evidence of the “strong common spiritual bond between us.” (This language of “spiritual bondedness” was eventually incorporated into the text of the Church document and became central to papal teaching on the Jews. Pope John Paul II reiterated the phrase during his visit to the Great Synagogue of Rome in May 1986.)⁴⁰ Still, in April it was unclear whether the Church would repudiate the notion that Jews are “deicides” cursed by God.

In May, 1962, R. Heschel responded to Cardinal Bea’s invitation to submit proposals for the document on the Catholic Church and the Jewish people by submitting a memorandum “On Improving Catholic-Jewish Relations.” In his introduction, R. Heschel stated:

Both Judaism and Christianity share the prophet’s belief that God chooses agents through whom His will is made known and His work done throughout history. Both Judaism and Christianity live in the certainty that mankind is in need of ultimate redemption, that God is involved in human history, that in relations between man and man God is at stake; that the humiliation of man is a disgrace of God.

R. Heschel went on to make four recommendations to improve mutually fruitful relations between the Church and the Jewish community:

1. That the Council brand anti-Semitism as a sin and condemn all false teachings, such as that

which holds the Jewish people responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus and sees in every Jew a murderer of Christ.

2. That Jews be recognized as Jews ... and that the council recognize the integrity and the continuing value of Jews and Judaism.

3. That Christians be made familiar with Judaism and Jews.

4. That a high-level commission be set up at the Vatican, with the task of erasing prejudice and keeping a watch on Christian-Jewish relations everywhere.

In the summer of 1962⁴¹, R. Heschel was in frequent contact with Abbot Leo Rudloff, an active member of Cardinal’s Bea’s unofficial group on Catholic-Jewish relations. Abbott Rudloff had impressed upon R. Heschel the importance of his being available at the Ecumenical Council during the spring session when the resolution against anti-Semitism was scheduled for action. R. Heschel expressed concern about his “representativeness.” Accordingly, R. Tanenbaum worked to set up a meeting between R. Heschel and R. Soloveitchik⁴² for the Orthodox community, and another between R. Heschel and R. Freehof for the Reform community. The meeting between R. Heschel and R. Soloveitchik was to take place in early September. According to R. Bernard Rosensweig, in 1962 R. Soloveitchik met with Monsignor Johannes Willebrands (subsequently Cardinal and president of Commission for Religious

Relations with the Jews) to discuss the possibility of religious dialogue between Jews and Christians.⁴³

On March 31, 1963, Cardinal Bea visited New York. R. Heschel chaired a delegation of Jewish leaders who met privately with him and spoke at a banquet held in Cardinal Bea's honor. R. Heschel spoke of the common threat of evil facing humanity and of the necessity of dialogue. According to Cardinal Willebrands:

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik had also been expected at this meeting. He was not able to come because of the serious illness of his wife. I had the privilege and the joy to meet with him privately on the evening of the same day. This convinced me definitively: If the Vatican Council fulfilled its intention concerning the Declaration on the Jews, we would have a dialogue of a spiritual nature with the Jews.⁴⁴

The text of the Council's declaration, to be called *Nostra Aetate* ("In our Time"), from the second session in 1964 omitted specific reference to the term "deicide" (though condemning the notion of collective guilt quite strongly) and added a statement of eschatological hope for the union of Israel and the church. This last statement, which at best may have been intended to express the belief that at the end of time all who profess God's name will be gathered into union with God⁴⁵, was taken by many Jews as a reaffirmation of the Christian mission to the Jews. Accordingly, R. Heschel called the draft

"spiritual fratricide," and declared that, faced with the choice of conversion or death in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, he would choose Auschwitz. Nonetheless, on September 14, on the eve of Yom Kippur, feeling it an act of *qiddush ha-shem*, if not *piquah nefesh*, R. Heschel had an audience with Pope Paul VI in order to persuade him to adopt the original language of Cardinal Bea against the conversion of the Jews and the calumny of deicide. About this effort R. Heschel said:

And I succeeded in persuading even the Pope ... [H]e personally crossed out a paragraph in which there was reference to conversion or mission to the Jews. The Pope himself ... This great, old wise Church in Rome realizes that the existence of Jews as Jews is so holy and so precious that the Church would collapse if the Jewish people would cease to exist.⁴⁶

According to Eugene Fisher, executive secretary of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish relations, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, R. Heschel's efforts ultimately had such a transforming effect that by 1967 he was able to write that "The Schema of the Jews is the first statement of the Church in history—the First Christian discourse dealing with Judaism—which is devoid of any expression of hope for conversion."⁴⁷

In February 1964, at the Conference of the Rabbinical Council of America, R. Soloveitchik criticized the proposed decree as "evangelical

propaganda” that dealt with Jews only as potential converts. He argued that discussion between Christians and Jews should be limited to non-religious subjects, and that the Council should be asked solely for a condemnation of anti-Semitism, not for assertions of religious brotherhood.⁴⁸

R. Heschel declared that “faced with the choice of conversion or death in the gas chambers of Auschwitz, he would choose Auschwitz.”

In the spring of 1964, R. Soloveitchik delivered the talk “*Confrontation*.”⁵⁰ Rarely has a talk, subsequently an essay, been more consequential or more provocative to Christian-Jewish relations. What follows is not a summary of the essay, since the rhetoric of the essay is essential to its meaning and cogency.⁵¹ Only those elements significant for a comparison and contrast with R. Heschel are noted.

R. Soloveitchik lays down four preconditions for Jewish-Christian engagement:

- (1) There must be an acknowledgement that the Jewish people is an “independent faith community endowed with intrinsic worth to be viewed against its own meta-historical backdrop without relating to the framework of another (i.e. Catholic) community” (pp. 71-72)
- (2) The Jewish “singular commitment to God and...hope for survival are non-negotiable and not subject to debate or argumentation.”

(3) Jews should refrain from recommending changes to Christian doctrine, for such recommendations would lead to reciprocal Christian recommendations for changes to Jewish belief. Change must emerge autonomously from within, for “non-interference is a *sine qua non* for good will and mutual respect.”

(4) Each community must articulate its position that the other community “has the right to live, create, and worship God in its own way, in freedom and dignity.”

R. Soloveitchik emphasized that both communities have “the right to an unconditional commitment to God that is lived with a sense of pride, security, dignity and joy in being what they are.” This precludes “trading favors on fundamental matters of faith” or “reconciling differences” out of an obligation to compromise.

R. Soloveitchik spells out what he means by his rejection of any negotiation of differences:

Any intimation, overt or covert, on the part of the community of the many that it is expected of the community of the few to shed its uniqueness and cease existing because it has fulfilled its mission by paving the way for the community of the many must be rejected as undemocratic and contravening the very idea of religious freedom (p. 72).

We must always remember that our singular commitment to God and our hope and indomitable will for survival are non-negotiable and non-rationalizable and are not subject to debate and argumentation (p. 73).

For our purposes, note that the R. Soloveitchik's first recommendation (recognition of Jews as an independent faith community) resembles R. Heschel's second recommendation to Cardinal Bea, while his third (no Jewish proposals to change Christian doctrine) can be taken as opposing R. Heschel's first.

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The essay itself is quite unusual. Perhaps it can best be described *via negativa*, by stating what it is not. It is not written in Hebrew, the traditional language of Jewish legal discourse. It does not come to a clear behavioral conclusion (*pesaq halakhab*). It makes no reference to the history of Jewish understandings of Christianity. In this regard, it does not cite the Talmud, Judah Ha-Levi, Maimonides, Nachmanides, Menahem ha-Meiri, Jacob Emden, or Israel Lifschutz, not to mention authorities of the last century.⁵² Indeed, it hardly cites at all. And when it does cite Maimonides and Nachmanides,⁵³ the citations have nothing to do with Christianity. It also makes no assessment of the relationship between Christianity and *avodah zarah*.⁵⁴

On the other hand, what it does do is rife with paradoxes. By promoting the communication between Adam and Eve as paradigmatic of humanity, abstracting them from their maleness and femaleness, it spiritualizes the biblical narrative more than Philonic or Christian allegory. The references to an Adam I and an Adam II, though possibly Kabbalistic, have their closest cognates in Paul's Epistles⁵⁵ and modern Christian theology.⁵⁶ The analysis of Jewish-Christian relations is locked into ancient Jacob-Esau imagery redolent of medieval Jewish thought.⁵⁷ Its conclusion based on the assumption of an assertive Jacob turns out to be R. Soloveitchik's exegetical creation, opposed to the traditional midrashic reading of an obsequious Jacob before Esau.⁵⁸ The irony is even greater upon realizing that Catholic theological tradition identifies the Jews with Esau, and themselves—as the true Israel—with Jacob.⁵⁹

The essay also draws an analogy between the religious situation of the individual and that of the community, albeit assuming that much of individual religious experience is ineffable. It proclaims the standard of all religious communities to be "religious democracy and liberalism," while asserting that there can be no trans-religion standard. Finally, it draws upon the language of "The Lonely Man of Faith," which was delivered to a Catholic audience at St. Johns Seminary in Brighton Mass, 1964 and depicts what he holds to be the incommunicable faith experience.⁶⁰

Why is this response, or responsum, different from all other responses to Christianity? Why does it lack the traditional elements of the Jewish discussion of Christianity? Are they absent because R. Soloveitchik realized how much the modern situation differs from the medieval? After all, the political-religious equation has almost been turned on its head. Then the Church was at the apex of its temporal power, whereas Judaism was at its nadir. Now Judaism through the State of Israel is at the apex of its temporal power, whereas the Church is at its nadir.⁶¹ Since the ratio is more one of numbers than brute power, R. Soloveitchik only designates the Church as the “community of the many” and Judaism as “the community of the few.” Noteworthy is the fact that the Church is presented as a faith community with its own integrity.

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Rather than being formulated as a *pesaq halakhab*, the essay constitutes a meditative ambivalent reflection on the complexity of the issues. Its contradictory quality is intrinsic to its message.⁶² What it gives with one hand, it takes away with the other. On the one hand, it is sufficiently prohibitive to buttress those who are apprehensive about, or unwilling to engage in, such a conversation, providing the requisite religious legitimation for their declining to do so. On the other hand, it is sufficiently equivocal to allow

those who are well-informed theologically, and who psychologically do not grovel before Christianity or modernity, to broach a conversation with Christianity. It thus serves as a prohibition for the many and a permission for the few.⁶³ Some will claim that the Rav is talking out of both sides of his mouth. Precisely; the fragmented modern Jewish situation prevents a single answer on the burning issues of the soul. In the contemporary life of the soul there are few universals. A rebbe's answer has to be attuned to the needs, abilities, and the situations of his students. By referring to himself more as a *rebbe* than a *poseq*, R. Soloveitchik allowed himself to give divergent rulings to different students.⁶⁴ Apparently, in the vagaries of the post-modern world, one cannot be a *poseq* without being a *rebbe*, for the validity of an objective order so often consists in reflecting a subjective reality.⁶⁵

R. Heschel responded to the type of position identified with R. Soloveitchik⁶⁶ in his article “From Mission to Dialogue,” which appeared in “*Conservative Judaism*” 21 (Spring 1967). The article had been adapted from R. Heschel's address to the 1966 Rabbinical Assembly convention. It also incorporated selections from his 1965 Inaugural Address at Union Theological Seminary that was published as “No Religion is an Island.”⁶⁷ After stating that the primary aim of the article is to find a religious basis for cooperation on matters of moral and spiritual concern in spite of disagreements, R.

Heschel honed in on the difference between our contemporary situation and the pre-modern one:

A good many people in our midst still think in terms of an age during which Judaism wrapped itself in spiritual isolation, an age which I sought to relive in a book called "*The Earth is the Lord's*." Nowadays... involvement has replaced isolation. The emancipation...has not only given us rights, it has also imposed obligations...we are deeply conscious of the vital interrelationship of religious sensitivity and the human situation (p. 1).

As physical isolationism is no longer a socio-political reality, so spiritual isolationism, for R. Heschel, is no longer a moral option.

"Its contradictory quality is intrinsic to its message. It serves as a prohibition for the many and a permission for the few."

Having attacked Jewish isolationism, R. Heschel then targets Christian triumphalism, saying that while we pray "that all human being will call upon God, we abstain from conversion and regard any attempt at depriving a person of his noble faith, of his heritage, as an act of arrogance" (p. 1). Nonetheless, aware of the ineluctable dependence between what goes on in the Christian world and in the Jewish, he asserts "Unless we learn how to help one another, we will only weaken each other" (p. 2).

R. Heschel then turns to those Jews who affirm the supremacy the *halakhab* as well as those Christians who affirm the supremacy of the Church saying:

The supreme issue today is... the premise underlying both religions, namely, whether there is a pathos, a divine reality concerned with the destiny of man which mysteriously impinges upon history. The supreme issue is whether we are alive or dead to the challenge and the expectation of the living God. The crisis engulfs all of us. The misery and fear of alienation from God make Jew and Christian cry together (p. 2).

R. Heschel faulted Christianity for its dejudaization, especially of the Bible, and the dogmatization of its theology. He sought a coalition of Judaism and Christianity against the movement of modern nihilism, the desanctification of the Bible, and the removal of the Bible from public discourse, lest the life of faith become an anomaly. It is precisely such an understanding of this joint mandate that provoked R. Heschel's opposition to religious parochialism. In a possible allusion to his Bostonian counterpart, R. Heschel says:

"There was a time when you could not pry out of a Bostonian an admission that Boston Common is not the hub of the solar system or that one's own denomination has not the monopoly of the holy spirit. Today we know that even the solar system is not the hub of the

universe” (p. 3).

In contrast, R. Heschel insisted that “no religion is an island” since “We are all involved with one another. Spiritual betrayal on the part of one of us affects the faith of all of us” (p. 3). Since cynicism, as he notes, is not parochial, surely religions cannot “insist upon the illusion of complete isolation” (p. 3). R. Heschel then poignantly asks: “Should we refuse to be on speaking terms with one another and hope for each other’s failure? Or should we pray for each other’s health, and help one another in preserving our respective legacies, in preserving a common legacy?” Answering his rhetorical question, R. Heschel states: “The world is too small for anything but mutual care and deep respect; the world is too great for anything but responsibility for one another” (p. 3). In actuality, R. Heschel not only opposed religious isolationism, but worked to create a coalition of religions to counter the worldwide movement of inter-nihilism that threatens the ecumenical movement of interfaith.

R. Heschel then makes a paradoxical move. While stressing that “the community of Israel must always be mindful of the mystery of its uniqueness,” he goes out of his way to identify the verse that would normally support such a position—“There is a people that dwells apart, not reckoned among the nations” (Num. 23:19)—with “the gentile prophet Balaam” (p. 4), as if to say that only a perverse interpretation of Scripture would circumscribe the

meaning of the uniqueness of Israel to dwelling apart.

“As physical isolationism is no longer a socio-political reality, so spiritual isolationism, for R. Heschel, is no longer a moral option.”

On what basis do Jews and Christians come together? Whereas all of humanity, R. Heschel believes, can come together on the basis of the image of God in all, Jews and Christians can also meet on “the level of fear and trembling, of humility and contrition, where our individual moments of faith are mere waves in the endless ocean of mankind’s reaching out for God ... where our souls are swept away by the awareness of the urgency of answering God’s commandment” (p. 5). Admittedly, “We may disagree about the ways of achieving fear and trembling, but the fear and trembling are the same.” However divided we are by doctrine, we are united by “Our being accountable to God, our being objects of God’s concern.” More specifically:

We are united by a commitment to the Hebrew Bible as Holy Scripture, faith in the Creator, the God of Abraham, commitment to many of His commandments, to justice and mercy, a sense of contrition, sensitivity to the sanctity of life and to the involvement of God in history, the conviction that without the holy the good will be defeated, prayer that history may not end before the end of days (p. 6).

R. Heschel challenges both Christians and Jews with regard to the other's role. "A Christian ought to realize that a world without Israel will be a world without the God of Israel. A Jew ... ought to acknowledge the eminent role and part of Christianity in God's design for the redemption of all men." Indeed, "Opposition to Christianity must be challenged by the question: What religious alternative do we envisage for the Christian World? Did we not refrain for almost two thousand years from preaching Judaism to the Nations?" After all, if "Judaism is the mother of Christianity, it has a stake in the destiny of Christianity. Should a mother ignore her child [see Isaiah 49:15] even a wayward... one?" (p. 8).

"What religious alternative do we envisage for the Christian World?"

R. Heschel concludes with a caveat that, while conceding some of R. Soloveitchik's reservations, manages to maintain his own position on Jewish-Christian discourse:

Refusal to speak to Christian scholars would be barbarous. Yet to teach without competence, without commitment, would lead to confusion and frustration. We may not be ready for a dialogue in depth, so few are qualified. Yet the time has come for studying together on the highest academic level in an honest search for mutual understanding and for ways to lead us

out of the moral and spiritual predicament affecting all of humanity.

Did R. Heschel's approach bear any fruit in the sixties?⁶⁸ For a fuller answer see the recent article on the subject, "Heschel and the Christians," by Michael Chester.⁶⁹ For our immediate purposes, Chester cites a eulogy of R. Heschel by John C. Bennett, president of Union Theological Seminary, where R. Heschel had been invited to be the first non-Christian visiting professor. President Bennett states:

Abraham Heschel belonged to the whole American religious community. I know of no other person of whom this was so true. He was profoundly Jewish in his spiritual and cultural roots, in his closeness to Jewish suffering, in his religious commitment, in his love for the nation and land of Israel, and in the quality of his prophetic presence. And yet he was a religious inspiration to Christians and to many searching people beyond the familiar religious boundaries. Christians are nourished in their own faith by his vision and his words (p. 249).

Bennett then says:

I truly believe that there has been a radical break in the minds and consciences of both Protestants and Catholics with their evil past of anti-Judaism⁷⁰, which so often helped to create the climate in which brutal racist anti-Semitism has flourished. I have great confidence that this

turning point has at last come, this turning away from so cruel and wicked a history, and Abraham Heschel has had an enormous influence in what one may call the consolidation of this change (p. 251).

This judgment of Bennett is confirmed by the Jesuit priest, Donald J. Moore, who writes:

Anyone familiar with the course of Catholic-Jewish relations will recognize the remarkable coincidence between the four proposals set forth in this memorandum [i.e. of Heschel cited above] and what has actually taken place within the Roman Catholic Church in its teachings and structures over the past quarter of a century.⁷¹

In the seventies, two events underscore the fruits of R. Heschel's efforts. In January 31, 1973, a little more than one month after R. Heschel's death, Pope Paul VI addressed thousands at the Vatican about the nature of the quest for God. There he stated: "Even before we have been moved in search of God, God has come in search of us." The published text credits the 1968 French edition of R. Heschel's, "*God in Search of Man*."⁷² According to many, this was an unprecedented public acknowledgement of a non-Christian by a pope. On March 10 of the same

year, *America*, the leading Jesuit American journal, took the unprecedented act for any Christian journal of devoting its entire issue to Jewish religious thought through a discussion of R. Heschel's impact:

The editor, Rev. Donald Campion wrote in his lead editorial:

The best instruction we Christians may receive concerning the continuing vitality and richness of the Judaic tradition in which we providentially share is the life and example of a Jew like Professor Heschel... May this special issue serve not only to introduce a Christian readership to the wisdom and holiness of a man and the sacred tradition that nourished him, but also promote the love ... that he strove mightily to inculcate. Each of you, our readers, will have his own lesson to learn from Abraham Heschel as he speaks to you of the living tradition of Judaism, in all its energy, holiness, and compassion. May the God whom Jews, Christians, and Muslim worship bring us to live together in peace and understanding and mutual appreciation.

Finally, we should ask whether R. Heschel's approach continues to bear fruit in the twenty-first century. In 2003, the Statement by the Christian Scholars Group entitled "*A Sacred Obligation: Rethinking Christian Faith in Relation to Judaism and the Jewish People*" offered the following ten statements for the consideration of their fellow Christians⁷³:

1. God's covenant with the Jewish people endures forever.
2. Jesus of Nazareth lived and died as a faithful Jew.

3. Ancient rivalries must not define Christian-Jewish relations today.
4. Judaism is a living faith enriched by many centuries of development.
5. The Bible both connects and separates Jews and Christians.
6. Affirming God's enduring covenant with the Jewish people has consequences for Christian understanding of salvation.
7. Christians should not target Jews for conversions.
8. Christian worship that teaches contempt for Judaism dishonors God.

9. We affirm the importance of the land of Israel for the life of the Jewish people.
10. Christians should work with Jews for the healing of the world.⁷⁴

This statement totally meets the demands of R. Abraham Joshua Heschel, indeed, it sums up his various pronouncements. Still, it is only a statement by a group of Christian scholars. The question is: were it to be adopted by the Church would it meet equally the demands of R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik? It is hard to see why not.

NOTES

¹ I am indebted to Professors Edward E Kaplan and Byron Sherwin, and Rabbi Jacob J. Schachter for their comments on this essay.

² Instructive in this regard is the volume in the B'nai Brith Great Book Series entitled *Great Jewish Thinkers of the Twentieth Century*, which was published in 1963. The youngest thinker represented is R. Soloveitchik. However, in the Forward, the editor writes: "It is regrettable that limitations of space prevented the inclusion ... of ... Heschel, whose neo-Hassidic thought has made such an impact on American Judaism" (p. xii). Such a statement is made of no other living thinker.

³ A comparable contemporary phenomenon of a Jewish theologian's influence extending far beyond his reference group is that of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the late Lubavitcher Rebbe. I recall an issue of *Panim el Panim*, the defunct Israeli weekly on religious life edited by Pinchas Peli, of the early sixties that featured the pictures of all three on the same page as the major influentials of the day.

⁴ To judge by paperback sales

⁵ See The Orthodox Forum, *Engaging Modernity: Rabbinic Leaders and the Challenge of the Twentieth Century*, ed. M. Sokol (Northvale, NJ: Jacob Aronson, 1997), especially the essays on R. Soloveitchik.

⁶ R. Heschel's first publication was of talmudic *novellae* at the age of fifteen. It appeared in a Warsaw rabbinic journal, *Sha'arei Torah, Tishrei-Kislev*, 5683 (1922). Already in 1925, R. Soloveitchik was known to have mastered the Talmud; see Hillel Goldberg, *Between Berlin and Slobodka: Jewish Transition Figures from Eastern Europe* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1989), p. 191, n. 11.

⁷ R. Soloveitchik wrote on Hermann Cohen's epistemology and metaphysics. He had originally planned on writing on Maimonides and Plato. R. Heschel wrote on prophetic consciousness. He told me that he had toyed with the idea of writing on the logical system of the *Sha'agas Aryeh* by the eighteenth century halakhist R. Aryeh Leib. Neither found a sponsor for his initial plan.

⁸ See Shaul Shimon Deutsch, *Larger Than Life: The Life and Times of the Lubavitcher Rebbe: Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson* (New York: Chasidic Historical Productions, 1997), 2:159.

⁹ Rabbi Shalom Dov-Ber Wolpo reports in his book *Shemen Sasson me-Haveirekha* (Holon: Ideal Press, 4763), p. 186, that Rabbi Ephraim Wolf wrote to the Lubavitcher Rebbe that the former president of Israel, Zalmen Shazar, told him that R. Soloveitchik, whom he met in his hotel in New York City, mentioned that he had met both Rabbi Schneersohn, the future Lubavitcher Rebbe, and R. Heschel in Berlin. Professor Haym Soloveitchik, told me (telephone conversation, March 16, 2004, as well as all other references to him) that his father told him that he only saw the future Rebbe pass by. R. Soloveitchik's oldest daughter, Dr. Atarah Twersky, recalls her father saying that the future Rebbe visited him unexpectedly in his apartment in Berlin. When he introduced himself as the son-in-law of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, R. Soloveitchik asked him why he was studying at a university when his father-in-law opposed it. My wife's uncle, Zvi Kaplan of Jerusalem, told me that Rabbi Yitsḥak Hutner told him that he was with the future Rav and Rebbe together at a lecture on Maimonides at the University (apparently in 1929). After the lecture, when the professor approached Schneersohn for his opinion, he deferred to R. Soloveitchik. In any case, in Berlin both Rabbis Heschel and Soloveitchik maintained relations with Rabbi Hayyim Heller, Rabbi Jehiel Weinberg, and Professor Eugen Mittwoch.

¹⁰ Rabbi Fabian Schoenfeld (telephone conversation of March 21, 2004) recalls seeing R. Heschel in the 1960s at two of R. Soloveitchik's *yahrzeit* lectures for his father in Lamport Auditorium of Yeshiva University. Prof. Haym Soloveitchik recalls that in 1962-63 he saw the two together twice in his father's Yeshiva University apartment and heard of a third meeting from his mother, who was present at all three. He also recalls (telephone conversation, June 23, 2004) that in 1967 R. Heschel paid a visit to R. Soloveitchik, who was then sitting *shiv`ab* for his mother in her or his brother's apartment in New York. R. Heschel's daughter, Professor Susannah Heschel, e-mailed me that she recalls R. Soloveitchik visiting her father in their home in the mid- or late sixties and that he paid a *shiv`ab* call when R. Heschel died. He died on Friday night, Dec. 23, 1972.

¹¹ See Goldberg, *Between Berlin and Slobodka*, p. 121 and Lawrence Perlman, "Heschel's Critique of Kant," eds. J. Neusner, E. Freichs, and N. Sarna, *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism: Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox*, Vol. 3, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) 213-226.

¹² Both considered Kierkegaard the Christian religious genius of the nineteenth century (see below). For R. Soloveitchik, the more theological the work, the more Kierkegaard is cited. For R. Heschel, see *A Passion for Truth* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1973), *passim*.

¹³ This comes through both in R. Soloveitchik's Hebrew work, *Halakhic Man*, translated by Lawrence Kaplan (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1983), esp. p. 164; with Jeffrey Saks, "An Index to Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik's Halakhic Man," *The Torah U-Madda Journal* 11 (2002-03), pp.107-122, respective entries in the index; and in his English work *The Halakhic Mind* (New York: Seth Press, 1986), respective entries in the index, both written in 1944. For R. Heschel, see Edward K. Kaplan and Samuel H. Dresner, *Abraham Joshua Heschel: Prophetic Witness* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), indices respectively. On Heidegger, see R. Heschel's *Who Is Man?* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), p. 97.

¹⁴ For R. Soloveitchik, see *Halakhic Man*, n. 41; for R. Heschel, see *The Insecurity of Freedom: Essays on Human Existence* (New York: Noonday Press, 1967), pp. 127-149. R. Heschel was called upon to eulogize his friend Niebuhr; see his *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity*, ed. S. Heschel (New York: Noonday Press, 1996), pp. 301-02.

¹⁵ For R. Heschel, see the appendix to *The Sabbath* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1963); for R. Soloveitchik, see *Halakhic Man*, *passim*; and *The Halakhic Mind*, respective entries of the index.

¹⁶ For both, see Goldberg, *Between Berlin and Slobodka*, pp. 123-26, and 202, n. 37. For R. Heschel, see Edward Kaplan, "Metaphor and Miracle: Abraham Joshua Heschel and the Holy Spirit," *Conservative Judaism*

46 (Winter 1994), pp. 3-18, esp. 6-8; and my eulogy of Professor Isadore Twersky, the Talner Rebbe, at the annual Maimonides dinner (1997), archived at the Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik Institute, Maimonides School, Brookline, MA.

¹⁷For R. Soloveitchik, see *Halakhic Man*, n. 31 along with nn. 55, 59, 60, 65, 66, and 70; and “*U-Viqqashtem me-Sham*,” in *Galui ve-Nistar* (Jerusalem: Department of Education and Torah Culture in the Diaspora of the World Zionist Organization, 5739), pp. 170-71. For R. Heschel, see “The Concept of Man in Jewish Thought,” eds. S. Radhakrishnan and P. Baku, *The Concept of Man* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1960), pp. 162, n. 26, and 165, n. 76; *God in Search of Man* (New York: Meridian Books, 1961), p. 333, n. 16; and *Man’s Quest for God: Studies in Prayer and Symbolism* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1954), p. 75. Haym Soloveitchik told me that his father considered the two great religious minds of the nineteenth century to be R. Schneur Zalmen and Kierkegaard. He had special regard for the former’s Torah commentary, *Liqqutei Torah*.

¹⁸Whereas the mastery of Kabbalah and Hasidism by R. Heschel, the *basid* and Professor of Jewish Ethics and Mysticism, is assumed, it is noteworthy how often R. Soloveitchik, the *litvak*, cites these sources when constructing his own theology. In his arguably most theological essay, “*U-Viqqashtem me-Sham*,” his citation of them, especially the Zohar, is only second to his citations of Maimonides. On the whole subject, see Lawrence Kaplan, “*Motivim Qabbaliyim be-Haguto shel ha-Rav Soloveitchik*,” in Avi Sagi, ed., *Emunah bi-Zemanim Mishtanim* (Jerusalem: Department for Torah Education and Culture in the Diaspora, 1996), pp. 75-93. On R. Heschel’s mysticism, see Arthur Green, “Three Warsaw Mystics,” *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 13 (1966), pp. 1-58.

¹⁹For initial comparisons, see my “The Inexplicable Phenomenon,” Review of Abraham Joshua Heschel, Prophetic Witness (*Midstream*, May/June 1999), pp. 43-44; and Goldberg, *Between Berlin and Slobodka*, respective entries of the index. There is a sense in which both Rabbis Heschel and Soloveitchik constructed distinctive syntheses of Maimonidean, Hasidic-Kabbalistic, and modern Continental thought.

²⁰For R. Soloveitchik, see *Worship of the Heart: Essays on Jewish Prayer* (Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2003); for R. Heschel, see *Man’s Quest for God: Studies in Prayer and Symbolism* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1954).

²¹For R. Soloveitchik, see his *Shi’urim le-Zekher Abba Mori z”l*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem, 5743-45), pp. 1:50-68; 2:105-151, and “*Ha-Shabbat ve-ha-Mo’adot*,” in *idem*, *Ha-Adam ve-Olamו*” (Jerusalem: Department for Torah Education and Culture in the Diaspora, *Sifriyat Eliner*, 5758), pp. 241-248. For R. Heschel, see *The Sabbath*.

²²While this is R. Soloveitchik’s signature position, R. Heschel also says: “Jewish law is sacred prosody. The Divine sings in our deeds, the Divine is disclosed in our deeds” (*Man’s Quest for God*, p. 106).

²³This perspective permeates their entire oeuvres. For R. Soloveitchik, start with his “Confrontation,” and “The Lonely Man of Faith,” conveniently published together in *Studies in Judaica in Honor of Dr. Samuel Belkin as Scholar and Educator*, ed. L. Stitskin (New York: Ktav, 1974), pp. 45-133. (See note 50 below.) For R. Heschel, see his *Man Is Not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), Part II, “The Problem of Living,” and his *Who Is Man?*

²⁴Compare R. Soloveitchik’s description of “Halakhic Man” in his book of that name, and R. Heschel’s description of “The Pious Man” in his *Man Is Not Alone*, pp. 273-296.

²⁵See Rivkah Horowitz, “*Yahasו shel ha-Rav Soloveitchik la-Havayyah ha-Datit ve-le-Mistorin*,” in Avi Sagi, ed., *Emunah bie-Zemanim Mishtanim*, pp. 45-74.

²⁶R. Heschel even subtitled a chapter “I am commanded—therefore I am” (*Who Is Man*, p. 111).

²⁷For R. Soloveitchik, see *Worship of the Heart*, p. 120; for R. Heschel, see *Who Is Man*, pp. 67-68.

²⁸For R. Soloveitchik, see *Mo’adei Harav: Public Lectures on the Festivals by the Late Joseph B. Soloveitchik* (Based upon Students’ Notes), ed. Shlomo Pick (Ramat Gan: The Ludwig and Erica Jesselson Institute for Advanced Torah Studies, Bar-Ilan University, 2003), pp. 168-193. For R. Heschel, see *Who is Man*, pp. 75

119, with Byron Sherwin, "My Master," eds. H. Kasimow and B. Sherwin, *No Religion Is an Island: Abraham Joshua Heschel and Interreligious Dialogue* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), pp. 56-57.

²⁹Compare: "If God is not the source of the most objectified norm, faith in Him is nothing but an empty phrase" (Soloveitchik, *The Halakhic Mind*, p. 55); "The supreme problem in any philosophy of Judaism is: What are the grounds for man's believing in the realness of the Living God?" (Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, p. 26).

³⁰Instructively, R. Soloveitchik, *à la* Barth (see below), uses the category to assert the incommunicability of faith where it functions as a separator, whereas R. Heschel uses it to underscore the pre-conceptual, or at least pre-verbal, commonality of the faith experience where it serves as a unifier.

³¹For R. Soloveitchik, see *Hamesh Derashot* (Jerusalem: Tal Orot, 5734); and his manifesto of religious Zionism, "Kol Dodi Dofek," translated in *Theological and Halakhic Reflections on the Holocaust*, eds. B. Rosenberg and F. Heuman (New York: Ktav, 1992), pp. 51-117. For R. Heschel, see *Israel: An Echo of Eternity*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967.

³²For R. Soloveitchik, see Bernard Rosensweig, "The Rav as Communal Leader," *Tradition* 43:4 (1996), pp. 210-218. For R. Heschel, see my "The Jewish Basis for Social Justice," eds. G. Orfield and H. J. Lebowitz, *Religion, Race, and Justice in Changing America* (New York: The Century Foundation Press, 1999), pp. 41-47, 183; and "Abraham Joshua Heschel—Our Generation's Teacher," *Religion & Intellectual Life* 2.2 (Winter 1985), pp. 9-18 (www.crosscurrents.org/heschel.htm).

³³I know, and have heard of even more, cases of people whose religiosity was triggered by reading their works. On R. Heschel's poetics of piety, see Edward Kaplan, *Holiness in Words* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

³⁴When R. Heschel's biweekly seminar of the late 1960s dealt with Rabbi Mendel of Kotsk it was conducted in Yiddish. For him, only Yiddish could capture authentically the Kotsker's spirit. The result was his two-volume Yiddish work on the Kotsker Rebbe (1973). Many of R. Soloveitchik's essays were originally delivered in Yiddish. Both were masters of the spoken idiom and, given the choice, preferred speaking *mame loshn*. According to Haym Soloveitchik, their first meeting in New York, at which his mother was present, focused on Yiddish literature.

³⁵One of R. Heschel's first works was a book of Yiddish poetry, *Der Shem Hameforash: Mentsh* (translated by Morton Leifman, *The Ineffable Name of God: Man: Poems in Yiddish and English*, (New York: Continuum 2004)) Written in Vilna in the mid 1920s and published in Warsaw in 1933, it consisted of dialogues with God. R. Soloveitchik told me of his appreciation of the poetry of the grandfather of my wife's uncle, known as the *ilui* of Rakov. He was taken by the idea that one of the great scholars of his grandfather's coterie composed poetry. For the poetry, see *Kitvei ha-Ilui me-Rakov*, ed. Zvi Kaplan (Jerusalem: Netsach, 5723), pp. 175-200.

³⁶On our subject of Jewish-Christian relations, the works of two disciples are instructive. David Hartman, albeit a disciple of R. Soloveitchik, expounds more the position of R. Heschel; see his *A Heart of Many Rooms: Celebrating the Many Voices within Judaism* (Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1999), pp. 180-91. David Novak, albeit a disciple of R. Heschel, expounds more the position of R. Soloveitchik; see his *Jewish Christian Dialogue: A Jewish Justification* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 6-9.

³⁷This and what follows is based on the archives of the American Jewish Committee, and on Eugene J. Fisher, "Heschel's Impact on Catholic-Jewish Relations," *No Religion Is an Island*, pp. 110-23. I accessed these archives of the Committee, located in their Manhattan office, through the kindness of Dr. Steven Bayne and Charlotte Bonelli of the Committee.

³⁸From a memorandum of Zachariah Shuster to Foreign Affairs Department of AJC, dated December 1, 1961.

³⁹This follows Fischer's article. According to the memo in the archives of AJC, it was at Cardinal Cushing's invitation that R. Heschel and R. Tanenbaum went to Boston on March 27 to meet Cardinal Bea, at which time R. Heschel gave him *The Sabbath*.

⁴⁰See Fisher, "Heschel's Impact on Catholic-Jewish Relations," p. 114.

⁴¹The following is taken from a memo of R. Marc Tanenbaum, the head of interreligious affairs of the American Jewish Committee, to John Slawson, its president, dated September 4, 1962. In another letter, dated July 10, 1962, R. Tanenbaum wrote to Martin Buber and mentioned that R. Heschel had told him of his recent meeting with Buber in Israel to update him on Catholic—Jewish relations.

⁴²According to Professor Haym Soloveitchik, their second meeting focused on issues that were central to Vatican II. I was told that R. Wolf Kelman of the Rabbinical Assembly reported that R. Heschel mentioned to him that prior to his visit to the Vatican R. Soloveitchik had told him: "*Ir zeit unser shaliach*" (you are our representative). According to Haym Soloveitchik, his father already then had reservations about Vatican II, believing that the Church could not engineer the requisite theological revisions to accommodate Jewish understandings of national redemption. Indeed, Cardinal Willebrands, head of the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, called the subsequent change in the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church "a real, almost miraculous conversion in the attitudes of the Church and Catholics toward the Jewish people" (cited in Thomas Stransky, "The Catholic-Jewish Dialogue: Twenty Years After *Nostra Aetate*," *America* 154, No. 5 [February 9, 1986], p. 93).

⁴³"The Rav as Communal Leader," p. 214. Rosensweig wrote, "The Rav rejected this notion totally, using the basic arguments which he had developed in *Confrontation*." Rosensweig believes (telephone conversation, March 14, 2004) that the 1964 lecture, "*Confrontation*," composed at the urging of Rabbi Walter Wurzburger, reflected R. Soloveitchik's thinking of 1963 if not 1962. See the next note.

⁴⁴From his Forward to *A Prophet for Our Time: An Anthology of the Writings of Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum*, eds. J. Banki and E. Fisher (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), p. xiv. R. Soloveitchik's wife became ill between Purim and Passover of that year. R. Fabian Schoenfeld (telephone conversation of March 21, 2004) recalls hearing from R. Soloveitchik of a meeting between him and Willebrands in a New York hotel at which R. Israel Klavan was present. R. Soloveitchik reportedly pressed the Cardinal on the Jewish right to the Land of Israel, access to the Western Wall, and the Jewish right to build the Temple. The Cardinal acceded to the first two, but not to the third. Dr. Atarah Twersky, recalls (in two conversations in late March, 2004) that a non-American Cardinal (Willebrands is Dutch) came to their home in Brookline probably in the mid-or late sixties. She remembers her father telling the Cardinal that his mother would keep him indoors on Easter out of fear of anti-Semitic attacks. Henry Seigman claims (telephone conversation on March 4, 2004) to have arranged a meeting in the early 1970s between the two in a New York hotel at which Rabbi Klavan and Father Flannery were present. At that meeting, R. Soloveitchik pressed Cardinal Willebrands on whether Catholic theology could entertain the possibility of the salvation of a faithful Jew. Cardinal Willebrands told me (telephone conversation on March 29, 2004) that he recalls meeting R. Soloveitchik at least twice.

⁴⁵After all, R. Soloveitchik himself describes Jews as "praying for and expecting confidently the fulfillment of our eschatological vision when our faith will rise from particularity to universality" ("*Confrontation*," [see below] p. 74).

⁴⁶"A Conversation with Dr. Abraham Joshua Heschel," Dec. 20, 1972, NBC transcript, pp.12-13.

⁴⁷Abraham J. Heschel, "From Mission to Dialogue," *Conservative Judaism* 21 (Spring, 1967), p. 10.

⁴⁸For a detailed treatment of the Jewish involvements in the fourth session of the Vatican Council in 1964-1965, see the two articles by Judith Herschcopf, "The Church and the Jews," in vols. 66 and 67 of *The American Jewish Year Book 1965*, Vol. 66 (pp. 99-136) and 1966, Vol. 67 (pp. 45-77), prepared by the American Jewish Committee.

⁵⁰Subsequently published in the journal *Tradition* (1964), pp. 5-29, and republished in *A Treasury of Tradition* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1967), pp. 55-78, which is cited throughout.

⁵¹Much of what follows is based on the extensive assessment of its content by Eugene Korn; see <http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/meta-elements/texts/conferences/korn> with the response of Dr. David Berger. See also, Daniel Rynhold, "The Philosophical Foundations of Soloveitchik's Critique of Interfaith Dialogue," *Harvard Theological Review* 96 (2003), pp. 101-20.

⁵²Many of which are cited in R. Heschel's comparable essay (see below).

⁵³Notes 2 and 6.

⁵⁴Of course, anyone as well versed as R. Soloveitchik was in the writings of Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr would be hard put to deal with Christianity in such terms. In "*Kol Dodi Dofek*," p. 70, R. Soloveitchik intimates having a comprehensive knowledge of nineteen centuries of Christian theology from Justin Martyr to the present.

⁵⁵Corinthians 15 and Romans 5.

⁵⁶Dr. Alan Brill of Yeshiva University hears in this formulation echoes of the Protestant theologian, Karl Barth. Barth in the *Church Dogmatics* dichotomizes culture and faith. The former he assigns to Adam I, majestic man, and the latter to Adam II, covenantal man. The other influential Protestant theologian is Emil Brunner. The impact of his books, *The Divine Imperative* and *Die Mystik und das Wort*, are so pervasive that Brill thinks that R. Soloveitchik "consulted with Brunner's writings directly before delivering many of his essays" (unpublished typescript). Haym Soloveitchik told me that his father had "high regard" for Brunner. R. Soloveitchik frequently refers to Barth and Brunner separately. In *The Halakhic Mind* he mentions them together in the introduction (p. 4) and in n. 93 (p. 129). R. Heschel also cites Barth's *Church Dogmatics* and Brunner's *The Divine Imperative*; see his *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity*, p. 419, n. 70; and p. 420, n. 4.

⁵⁷For a spirited defense of the identification of Esau with Christianity, see Abarbanel's Commentary to Isaiah 35. The origin of the Rabbinic association of Esau/Edom with Rome is unclear (see Louis Feldman, "Remember Amalek!": *Vengeance, Zealotry, and Group Destruction in the Bible According to Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus* [Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2004], pp. 62-67); it may be related to the Hadrianic persecutions (see Genesis Rabbah 65, 21). In any case, when Christianity took over the Roman Empire, it got stuck with the designation. Such a designation, however, has nothing to do with history, as Saadia Gaon noted over a thousand years ago; see Saadia's *Polemic Against Hivi Al-Balkhi*, ed. Israel Davidson (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1915), #76, p. 67. Even stranger is how Jacob's twin brother came to epitomize the gentile world. The phrase "As a rule, it is known that Esau hates Jacob" (*Sifrei* Numbers 69, ed. Horovitz, p. 65), referring to the biblical Esau in Genesis, came to be understood as "it is axiomatic that Esau hates Jacob," referring to the gentile world in general.

⁵⁸Gen. Rabbah 75, 2. One wonders what conclusions would have resulted had Abraham, who taught the fear of God and the Torah to the people of Haran (*Tanhuma, Lekh Lekha*, end Gen. 12), served as the model. See Menahem Kasher, *Torah Shelamah*, 3:555, n. 95.

⁵⁹See Rosemary Reuther, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), p. 133; and Gerson Cohen, *Studies in the Variety of Rabbinic Cultures* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991), pp. 251-261.

⁶⁰When I mentioned this to R. Soloveitchik's daughter, Dr. Atarah Twersky, she agreed that the talk, at which she and her late husband were present, comes under the rubric of general religious discourse and thus confirms R. Soloveitchik's position that whereas "we are ready to discuss universal religious problems, we will resist any attempt to debate our private individual commitment" (p. 80). According to Dr. Twersky, R. Soloveitchik's opposition to Jewish-Christian dialogue was rooted in two perceptions. The first was that "dialogue" is prone to downplay differences in order to underscore commonality and thus result in

intellectual perversion. The other was that Jewish-Christian dialogue is especially prone to misunderstanding since Judaism and Christianity share theological terms without sharing their meanings.

⁶¹R. Soloveitchik relished this reversal, indeed deemed it the strongest knock of the Beloved “on the door of the theological tent.” (“*Kol Dodi Dofek*,” p. 70).

⁶²For the purposeful contradictory nature of R. Soloveitchik’s writing, see Ehud Luz, “*Ha-Yesod ha-Dialekti be-Kitvei ha-Rav Y. D. Soloveitchik*,” *Da`at* 9 (Summer, 1982), pp. 75-89. For a defense of it, see my late colleague (O.B.M.), Marvin Fox, “The Unity and Structure of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik’s Thought,” *Tradition* 24/2 (Winter, 1989), pp. 44-64.

⁶³See David Hartman, *Love and Terror in the God Encounter: The Theological Legacy of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2001) ch. 5; and Walter Wurzbürger, “Justification and Limitations of Interfaith Dialogue,” W. Wurzbürger and E. Borowitz, eds., *Judaism and The Interfaith Movement*, (New York: Synagogue Council of America, 1967), pp. 7-16.

⁶⁴This is in line with the paradoxical nature of the phenomenon known as “the Rav” for such a wide diversity of disciples. For recent literature on this, see Seth Farber, *An American Dreamer: Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik and Boston’s Maimonides School* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 2004), p. 157, n. 1. R. Soloveitchik was the great bridge builder and boundary marker. Many of his disciples, unwilling or unable to bear the tension in maintaining both, became either bridge builders or boundary markers to constituencies outside Modern Orthodoxy, Jewish or otherwise. The former see in their mentor the great permitter; the latter—the great prohibitor. Both are partially right. Indeed, one’s location on the ideological spectrum as well as one’s role in the community seems to color one’s view of what in R. Soloveitchik was primary and what was secondary.

⁶⁵In a similar vein, R. Yitzhak Hutner, the American *rosh yeshiva* closest in mentality and experience to R. Soloveitchik, was quoted as saying, “Regardless of what you hear quoted in my name, do not believe it unless I have told it to you personally” (Goldberg, *Between Berlin and Slobodka*, p. 63). For individualizing of answers by a *rebbe*, see Akiva Yosef Isenbach, *Or Shabbat* (Jerusalem: 5754) pp. 1:277-279.

⁶⁶It turns out that R. Soloveitchik and R. Heschel first responded positively to an invitation by a Christian audience to address them on the subject. They then addressed their respective rabbinic audiences. It would be worthwhile to compare the differences between the two Heschel articles with those between the two Soloveitchik ones.

⁶⁷*Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 21 (January, 1966), reprinted in *No Religion Is an Island*, eds. Kasimow and Sherwin, pp. 3-22. (See note 28 above.)

⁶⁸With regard to the fifties, Professor J. A. Sanders of Union Theological Seminary opined that Karl Barth’s famous work, *The Humanity of God*, which appeared in 1956, was influenced by R. Heschel’s *God in Search of Man*, which appeared the year before” (“An Apostle to the Gentiles,” *Conservative Judaism*, 28 [Fall, 1973], p. 61).

⁶⁹By Michal A. Chester, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 38:2-3 (Spring-Summer, 2001), pp. 246-70.

⁷⁰Cardinal Johannes Willebrands writes in his book *Church and Jewish People: New Considerations* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992) that Abraham Heschel’s article of 1966, “No Religion is an Island,” helped persuade him that “anti-Semitism is simply anti-Christian” (p. 162—reference courtesy of Father David Michael of Brandeis University).

⁷¹Donald J. Moore, S. J., *The Human and the Holy: The Spirituality of Abraham Joshua Heschel* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1989), p.12. Moore correlates R. Heschel’s memorandum with the changes in the teachings of the Church (pp. 17-18). Moore’s assessment is confirmed by Fisher’s; see Fisher “Heschel’s Impact on Catholic-Jewish Relations,” p. 115. Cardinal Willebrands also testifies that “Heschel’s influence on the Second Vatican Council’s theology of world religions was deep and decisive” (“Forward” to *No Religion Is an Island: Abraham Joshua Heschel and Interreligious Dialogue*).

⁷²The classic formulation of this idea is in Judah Halevi's, "*Ana emtsa'ekb: U-be-tsateti li-gratekb li-grati matsatikb.*" ("In going out toward Thee, toward me I found Thee.")

⁷³ Annual Report 2003 Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College, pp. 8-9. This statement is partially a response to *Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity*, which called on Jews to re-examine their understanding of Christianity. Both are available at <http://www.bc.edu/research/cjl/resources/articles/>.

⁷⁴ To get a sense of how much progress has been made, the findings of Claire Huchet-Bishop, *How Catholics Look at Jews* (New York: Paulist Press, 1974) follows. She lists what young Catholics in many countries were taught about the Jews in the 1960s when R. Soloveitchik was formulating "Confrontation":

1. The Jews are collectively responsible for the crucifixion and they are a "decide people";
2. The Diaspora is the Jew's punishment for the crucifixion and for their cry, "His blood be upon us and upon our children";
3. Jesus predicted the punishment of his people: the Jews were and remained cursed by him, and by God; Jerusalem, as a city, is particularly guilty;
4. The Jewish people as a whole rejected Jesus during his lifetime because of their materialism;
5. The Jewish people have put themselves beyond salvation and are consigned to eternal damnation;
6. The Jewish people have been unfaithful to their mission and are guilty of apostasy;
7. Judaism was once a true religion, but then became ossified and ceased to exist with the coming of Jesus;
8. The Jews are no longer the chosen people, but have been superseded as such by the Christians.