

The Influence of Hegel
on Emil Fackenheim's Understanding of Judaism

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Department of Religion

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ABSTRACT

The Influence of Hegel On Emil Fackenheim's Understanding of Judaism

Celia Shulman

Fackenheim's use of Midrash resonates with a Hegelian prism through which one approaches philosophy, religion and history. The anti-Judaism that is found in Hegel is largely due to his unfamiliarity with Jewish sources. His main contention is that Judaism is no longer historically relevant because Jews have lost their sovereign state and that Judaism is no longer a true philosophy or religion, since revelation is a one time event, which cannot be carried to the present or the future. The undialectical nature of Judaism is, to Hegel, the reason why Judaism is surpassed by Christianity. Fackenheim juxtaposes Hegel's framework with Midrash to show that, indeed, a vital Judaism has appeared on the historical scene the second time. To Fackenheim, the Holocaust and the State of Israel are major watersheds in the history of Judaism, with the Holocaust having revelatory significance. Judaism's historical rootedness is paralleled by the importance Hegel attributed to history in his own analytical framework.

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Section I Introduction

The introduction begins with a statement of purpose, which attempts to give cohesion and unity to Fackenheim's writings on Hegel, Midrash and the Holocaust. I will also outline the respective themes of the six sections, which together capture the general tenets of Fackenheim and Hegel's philosophy. Their lives and philosophical works will be contextualized to help illuminate Fackenheim's understanding of Hegel's philosophy. Following the biographical discussions, I will introduce additional major figures who have impacted on the development of this thesis. The reasons how, and why, the topic became viable is discussed in the context of what commentators have to say about Fackenheim and his connection to German philosophy.

The thesis at times repeats arguments previously presented. My major task was to achieve comprehensiveness for each section, chapter, and the suggested book reviews—all incorporated into the final thesis. It is best to read the reviews and sections on Hegel's "fragments" as, at times purposefully digressive, and at other times an opportunity to delve parenthetically on several ideas and concepts that inform the larger thesis of Fackenheim's

reading of Hegel, and its impact on his theo-philosophical method of analysis. Regardless of my personal views, I have focused on doing justice to Fackenheim's reading of Hegel and Jewish religious works, and the syncretism that ensues.

Statement of Purpose

In this thesis, I will argue that Fackenheim's use of Midrash parallels Hegel's major ideas of philosophy, religion and history. For Fackenheim, the anti-Judaism* that is found in Hegel is largely due to his understandable lack of familiarity with Jewish sources. Hegel's main contention against Judaism is that it is no longer relevant historically because Jews have lost their sovereign state and secondly that Judaism is no longer a true philosophy or religion, since revelation in Judaism, unlike that in Christianity, is a one time event, which cannot be carried to the present or the future. The non-dialectical nature of Judaism is, to Hegel, the reason why Judaism is no longer relevant in history.

Fackenheim takes the seminal ideas of Hegel and demonstrates how Midrash can be understood by comparable dialectical methods, as Christian sources, yet Judaism remains unique and distinct. To Hegel, the absolute idea of God comes about through an exhaustive search for truth and represents the pinnacle of the science of metaphysics in

his Phenomenology. To Fackenheim, metaphysical science begins with the best modern German philosophers and ends with Midrash and Jewish Mysticism. To Hegel the Absolute Idea of God can only emerge from a pinnacle in major historical events such as the French Revolution, as it brings Absolute freedom to experience revelation of the Holy Spirit in the self. Fackenheim juxtaposes historical events to argue that the Holocaust and the State of Israel are major watersheds in the history of Judaism, which brings Judaism to the forefront of the history of religion and philosophy.

The Holocaust, to Fackenheim, has revelatory significance. He sees this as the defining historical event to Jews [and non-Jews alike]. The revelation of the commanding Voice or commanding Presence in the Akedah and Sinai will resound in the Voice of the ashes of Auschwitz in what Fackenheim will frequently refer to as the 614th commandment [the idea that Hitler should not posthumously be given victory].¹ Jewish morality takes the shape and form

*Fackenheim frequently conflates anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism although he does refer to the anti-Jewish bias of many modern philosophers. At times, I prefer using "anti-Semitism" as it is a more accurate rendering of Fackenheim's views.

¹ Emil Fackenheim, God's Presence in History, (New York: New York University Press, 1970) pp, 11, 89 & Michael L. Morgan ed. The Jewish Thought of Emil Fackenheim, (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1987), pp. 23, 24, 35, 36, 62. & Emil Fackenheim, Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy, (New York: Schocken Books, 1980), p. 70.

of Sinaitic commandments.² The Divine does not enter the human, rather the words of Torah are heard and seen. To Fackenheim, the Divine Speaker Himself is present even as His word is to be heard.³ Studying the Torah and praying are two ways of receiving the Torah.⁴ Fackenheim calls revelation the great shibboleth (flood or stream) of Jewish modernity.⁵ However revelation is not simply for Jews alone; it has significance and meaning for all modernity. Fackenheim's writings note that German rationalism went as far as it could go without revelation, which adds new knowledge that is not retrievable through philosophical rationalism. The inadequacy of both reason and moral imperatives become increasingly evident to Fackenheim with the advent of the Holocaust. In To Mend the Word he argues that "God's Voice" becomes more needed-- it is the beginning, which makes it possible for reason and philosophy to be reconstituted.

Fackenheim cites Martin Buber's Moses to write on revelation and its relevance for today. Revelation, to both Fackenheim and Buber, is a totally natural occurrence, at the same time it is quite extraordinary and may be called

² Michael L. Morgan ed. The Jewish Thought of Emil Fackenheim, (Detroit:Wayne State, University,1987),p.24.

³ Ibid., p.101.

⁴ Ibid., p.102.

miraculous.⁶ The total astonishment for the individual is that the Presence destroys the fixity of fields of knowledge and gives certitude in God's existence.⁷ Revelation after the Holocaust retrieves the past and the future in the present and represents the continuity of Judaism, as it does in all other epoch-making events in Jewish history. Whereas to Hegel the Absolute idea becomes the Notion only because the Idea exists, not only in thought but in the real life of the Christian State, revelation to Fackenheim takes on concreteness because it exists in a real state—the old yet new State of Israel.

To Fackenheim, after the Holocaust, the creation of the State of Israel places Jews back into history.⁸ As well, after the epoch-making event of the Holocaust, it is possible that revelation at Sinai is again being heard, and seen, as distinctly as it was by the lowliest of people, the maidservants at Sinai.⁹ To Fackenheim, revelation, now incomplete and partial, will ultimately reach fruition in Messianic days, even as the Sinaitic commandments remain.¹⁰

⁵ Emil Fackenheim, To Mend The World, (New York: Schocken Books, 1982), p.101.

⁶ Emil Fackenheim, God's Presence in History, (New York: New York University Press, 1970) p.12.

⁷ Ibid., p.13.

⁸ Emil Fackenheim, The Jewish Return Into History, (New York: Schocken Books, 1978). pp.273, 277.

⁹ Emil Fackenheim, God's Presence in History, p.7.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.11.

Synopsis of the thesis

Following the introduction, in Section II, I will present a synopsis of three major works of Fackenheim: Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy, To Mend The World and The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought. These texts deal with Hegel's anti-Semitism and Fackenheim's response. In Encounters between Modern Philosophy and Judaism, Fackenheim makes the point that even though Hegel posits Christianity as the Absolute religion, Judaism, like Christianity, could use its dialectic to posit the same supremacy. However, Fackenheim notes that this only proves that neither Christianity or Judaism is an Absolute religion-- that is, the one religion that surpasses all others. In To Mend the World, Fackenheim discusses how the Revelation at Sinai is the starting point in the process of how to overcome the devastation of the Holocaust in order to create bridges and build new beginnings.

In The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought, Fackenheim summarizes Hegel's philosophy and here we see that The Phenomenology is the pinnacle of metaphysics in the ladder to the Absolute Idea of God. As it goes through the Science of Logic, the Idea becomes the dialectical appropriation of all Nature, which becomes permeated by

Spirit. In the religious state, self-consciousness is separate from the divine and remains the other. It becomes Notion when philosophy and religion coalesce in a complete divine-human absorption of each in the other. This sameness of identity leads to the emergence of self-conscious activity of absolute freedom and Grace. The self-activity dialectically absorbs all of history to itself yet stays outside to transform it. Fackenheim discusses Hegel's view of Judaism, which sees Judaism incapable of being considered as a philosophy and a religion in the same way as Greek philosophy or Christianity.

In Section III, I present my own research on Hegel, the Holocaust and Midrash, and show thematically how the dialectic of Hegel is paralleled by Midrash. Each theme is a fragment that is a part of the Hegelian philosophy of science. What emerges is Fackenheim's attempt to overcome the devastation of the Holocaust by making the revelation of Sinai and the Akedah resound in the Voice of the ashes of the Holocaust. The fragments show how Hegel's union of revelation and history are paralleled by Fackenheim so that the present State of Israel embodies the basic ideas that were, to Hegel, unique only to Christianity. Although there is similarity between the dialectical approaches of Hegel and Fackenheim, Fackenheim repeatedly brings out the

uniqueness of Judaism in that it alone represents the incommensurability between the human and Divine, so that a human being cannot escape into idolatry.

In Section IV, I look at the positive and negative criticism on Fackenheim and here I discuss views of Louis Greenspan, Reinier Munk, Michael Morgan, and Gregory Baum. I look at the various authors who see Fackenheim as a Hegelian who tries to forge new beginnings for both modern philosophy and Judaism. I also look at an interview with Fackenheim and his response to his critics which reveals what he thinks in regard to Hegelianism: whether it is the Hegelian dialectic that overcomes the Holocaust; or, whether the overcoming of the Holocaust is possible because of the inherent dialectic of Midrash.

In Section V, there is an ensuing discussion on Fackenheim and how he sees himself in relation to Hegel, modern philosophy and Midrash. In this section there is a tension between Fackenheim's desire to overcome the Holocaust through a Hegelian mending and yet his belief that after Auschwitz his direct debt to Hegel comes to an end. Fackenheim builds bridges to the future in presenting Midrash as the dialectical thinking that meets the challenge of modern philosophy.

In Section VI, the Conclusion deals with some of the major problems encountered in confronting Fackenheim's writings. It is not clear whether Fackenheim offers a traditional mending of the metaphysical vacuum left by the Holocaust. Is Fackenheim saying that the Hegelian dialectic is capable of overcoming the Holocaust or is the mending only possible through Judaism and revelation? The question arises as to what extent the Holocaust competes with Sinai as a demonic inversion of the revelatory experience. Does the Holocaust itself become a root-experience? To what extent does the horror of the Holocaust become a transformative moment in Judaism as was Sinai? These are uncomfortable questions to raise as it might invoke absurd parallels between that which defined Judaism from a covenantal perspective and that which almost destroyed Jews and Judaism. Aside from the challenges that Fackenheim presents, it is clear that for him the Holocaust and the State of Israel have revelational meaning which bring Jews and their God back into history.

Biographical sketch of Fackenheim and Hegel

Emil Fackenheim is one of the foremost Jewish thinkers of this century. He has contributed a distinctive and poignant reflection on the Holocaust, and its impact on Judaism and how we see, or, indeed, should see, Israel both

as political state and as a Jewish existential phenomenon. His conceptions of Jewish life, after the Holocaust, provide modern Jewish thought with powerful and rich formulations.

Emil Fackenheim was born in Halle, Germany. He obtained his rabbinic ordination in Germany and his Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Toronto. He was imprisoned in the concentration camp of Sachsenhausen [1938-1939], following which he fled to Aberdeen and then Toronto. He made aliyah to Jerusalem in his mature years and has never held a full-time university position in Israel. Fackenheim is the author of eight books and over 100 articles in Israel. Although his fame is as a Jewish philosopher, it is less well known that he taught Hegelian Philosophy for many years at the University of Toronto, and his own work is deeply indebted to the tradition of German Idealism. Fackenheim's writings on Jewish religious and philosophical thought are also informed by his attraction to Midrash, and the writings of Buber and Rosenzweig.

Fackenheim's overriding concern is with the Holocaust. He sees the Holocaust as radical evil, an evil that ruptures all possible philosophical and religious thought. It is his contention that we must expose our thoughts to the event rather than to avoid it, because only in

confronting historical realities, like the radical evil of the Holocaust, can we begin to reconstruct philosophy and religion. Facing the horror of the Holocaust enables Fackenheim to articulate imperatives for future Jewish life and thought. What is especially resonating for Fackenheim is the Kabbalistic notion of Tikkun Olam (mending the world), which shapes his idea of resisting the traumatic effect of the Holocaust.

In God's Presence in History, his most popular book, Fackenheim questions faith in a God who saved Jews at Sinai but not at Auschwitz. Where was God that he did not save Jews? Fackenheim argues that survival and resistance to the Holocaust carries with it the commanding Voice: the 614th commandment not to give Hitler a posthumous victory. This commandment also implores Jews to partake of the great philosophical and religious traditions even, if after the Holocaust, the rereading of great classics takes on a different meaning and a different shape. Fackenheim hones the writings of both Buber and Rosenzweig to understand the contemporary complexity and meaning of revelation. Here Fackenheim finds that the creation of the State of Israel has great revelatory and redemptive significance.

In To Mend the World, Fackenheim seeks inspiration from the great philosophical traditions such as Hegel's, so

that he might rebuild a modern Jewish philosophy. He also explores other major figures of German Idealism such as Kant, Fichte and Schelling, and later Heidegger. He looks to these philosophers for possible answers as to how such an atrocity as Nazism could have taken place in this most culturally advanced period of German history.

My underlying thesis is that Fackenheim's rootedness in German Idealism is the beginning point to understanding his work. It is, however, also Fackenheim's later attraction to Midrash that brings forth his most distinctive and profound interpretations of the Hebrew Bible. In what appears to be a synthesis between modern philosophy and Judaism, Fackenheim culminates this forty year "reconciliation" with the statement that it is really impossible to overcome the Holocaust. It is possible, however, for Judaism to hold to its belief in an omnipotent God, who is a just God.

Hegel, the pivotal philosopher in Fackenheim's formation, was born in Stuttgart in 1770. He became a professor of philosophy in Jenna in 1805. He is the author of many seminal works including *Early Theological Writings*, *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, *The Encyclopedia*, *The Philosophy of Religion* and *The Science of Logic*, *Ideology and the State* which speculate on religion and philosophy,

and how they share the same truth that is God. The God of Christianity is the Spirit that moves and permeates all of life. To Hegel, it is Protestant Lutheranism that gave rise to the subjective freedom and universality of the self. His Phenomenology of Spirit is his best known work; it is the science through which Hegelian philosophy is made to appear as the highest form of knowledge. Here the Absolute Idea is the realization of the self-consciousness of Spirit as the Self that arises from historical contingencies, and then stands over and against them as the Notion that absorbs all reality to itself. Hegel considered his historical epoch as the highest point in the evolution of Spirit. Since the French Revolution, the Enlightenment and modern philosophy, gave rise to human freedom in all of its cultural manifestations, to Hegel, the times were ripe for the appearance of Spirit.

To Hegel, Judaism was spiritual and it represented a higher consciousness when it existed in relation to a state. Since the loss of the biblical State of Israel, Jews have been surpassed in historical relevance, particularly in the modern era by states like Germany where the Spirit and the state coalesce in infinite freedom, power and grace.

As previously suggested, it is important to recognize that Fackenheim considers Hegel to be the greatest modern philosopher.¹¹ He sees Hegel as the greatest modern philosopher in that he sought a synthesis between philosophy, history and religion, which had been unparalleled in the history of thought. To Fackenheim, no previous philosopher paid so much attention to history, as did Hegel. The entire evolution of spiritual height and depth in the modern era is a result of history being dialectically absorbed in the unity and non-unity between itself as Spirit and all of reality. To Fackenheim, the Holocaust ended any notion that the Hegelian unity between human reason and the Divine had triumphed, which is not to argue that the Hegelian synthesis, for Fackenheim, could no longer resonate and illuminate future efforts to reconcile the human and Divine. For Fackenheim, there are themes that emerge in Hegel that need to be reconsidered, as they gave unity, purpose and majesty to human life. As well, in Fackenheim's view, the unity Hegel brought to all of life, to the human and Divine, may one day influence life in ways that are yet not known.

Fackenheim writes on Hegel because, despite the anti-Judaic bias in Hegel, Hegel did more justice to Judaism

¹¹ Emil Fackenheim, The Jewish Bible after the Holocaust: A Re-reading

than any other philosopher. It was Hegel who pointed out that Judaism is Spirit-in-waiting. Hegel saw Judaism as the incommensurability between the human and the Divine. Nevertheless this incommensurability resulted in a religion where God is served by Jews who see themselves as the servants of God and are thus able to walk in front of Him with confidence, in spite of their finite limitations.

To Fackenheim Hegel did not understand that Judaism is unique because the Revelation at Sinai is about the incommensurability between the human being and the Divine, yet that incommensurability is bridged by the Torah and its interpretive tradition. For example, in Midrash, stories and parables are part of the oral Law, which to Fackenheim represent the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit [the Shekhinah] as the life of the Commandments.¹² God is never consumed in the process of interpretation as interpretation is infinite. In one Midrash Moses is said to look out from heaven, without understanding the interpretation of Torah that is being presently studied, yet God tells him that the rabbis are studying the Torah as was given to Moses on Mount Sinai.¹³

(Indianapolis: Indiana University press,1990), p.2.

¹² Emil Fackenheim, What is Judaism, (New York: Summit Books,1987),p.69.

¹³ Ibid., p.69.

To Fackenheim, the incommensurability between the human being and the Divine means that in Judaism mortal being and God can never share the same space in their self-consciousness, as one is infinite, the other finite. For Hegel it is important to maintain the distance and demarcation between what is human and what is Divine. Maintaining the separation between the human and the Divine is important in Hegel, as it is in Fackenheim, to prevent an escape into idolatry.

Influential Authors

The formative ideas for this thesis come from studying commentators like Louis Greenspan, Michael Morgan and Reiner Munk, who write about the connection between Fackenheim's use of Midrash, the Holocaust and German philosophers. It is with this in mind that I began to look for a general coherence and unity among all three components. Through their respective thoughts on Fackenheim's writings, I began to search for a basic methodological approach that informs Fackenheim's work, the culmination of which is the end of Hegelian metaphysics, which Fackenheim argues can only be retrieved through traditional sacred Jewish sources. Fackenheim's writings on Revelation in God's Presence in History forge new beginnings between what is the end of metaphysics and the

new beginning. Fackenheim's own contention is that the new beginning is to study an earlier philosophical tradition that looks at both Kabbalah and Midrash.

Louis Greenspan suggests in Fackenheim: German Philosophy and Jewish Thought that it would be useful to have a detailed study of Fackenheim's use of modern philosophers to see how they are incorporated into Judaism, and how and why Fackenheim deals with them. Greenspan states that "a detailed comparison of Fackenheim with these philosophers would be the subject of a useful study but the mere mention of it shows how deeply Fackenheim penetrated the current intellectual world."¹⁴

Reiner Munk in the same essay collection offers an explanation why Fackenheim writes on non-Jewish philosophers. Munk states that Midrash is considered by Fackenheim to be the response of authentic Jews to epoch-making events.¹⁵ The Holocaust, to Fackenheim, is an epoch-making event. He sees modern philosophy after the Holocaust in ruins, except for fragments of truth. Fackenheim picks up these fragments and uses modern philosophy to construct a Midrash.¹⁶ He hopes to put an end

¹⁴ Louis Greenspan, and Graeme Nicholson eds. in Fackenheim: German Philosophy and Jewish Thought, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) p.214.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 214

¹⁶ Ibid., p.232.

to the anti-Judaic bias that has vitiated modern philosophy.¹⁷ According to Fackenheim, modern philosophy lacks familiarity with Jewish sources. Jewish history can serve to challenge philosophy and thus to restore a more cogent truth.¹⁸ The creation of the State of Israel has a new universal significance and is of interest to philosophy seeking renewal.¹⁹

In reply to some critics, Fackenheim also gives us an answer as to why he writes on non-Jewish philosophers. For him, philosophical renewal is predicated on his assumption that modern philosophy will be modified by Jewish religious thought:

that not philosophy but a Jewish saying will have the very last word, after all. Neither Plato nor Hegel will ever quite be the same. The philosophers who reach the exit of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem find a saying of Ba'al Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism, a movement itself stemming from the Kabbalah: forgetfulness leads to exile, but memory leads to redemption.²⁰

Fackenheim seems to be writing Jewish philosophy from fragments of Hegel's dialectical understanding of history

¹⁷ Ibid., p.232.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.141.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.141

and imposing a Jewish "mending" from Midrash. Fackenheim also enables us to see that dialectical thinking of Hegel's caliber exists in Talmud and Midrash, rabbinic sources that were not understood by Hegel. Fackenheim states that if Hegel had attained this knowledge, he would have to withdraw his sweeping assertion that "no nation appears on the world-historical scene more than once."²¹

In essence, Judaism, to Fackenheim, has appeared as a testimony to the eternal nature of a people.²² After the Holocaust, Fackenheim feels that Hegel would have had to admit to the abysmal failure of his philosophy. Also, he would have seen how the dialectical nature of Midrash continually rejuvenates the ideas of the Bible such as the promise of the land so that even the Holocaust could not destroy them.

Jewish death at Auschwitz and rebirth at Jerusalem might make him wonder whether at least one people is not appearing on the scene for a second time, with world-historical consequences yet unknown.²³

²⁰ Ibid., p.299.

²¹ Emil Fackenheim, Encounters between Judaism and Modern Philosophy:A Preface to Future Jewish Thought, (New York: Schocken books, 1980) p.168

²² Emil Fackenheim "Hegel and Judaism: A Flaw in the Hegelian Meditation," in ed. J.J. O'Malley, K. W. Algozin, H.P. Kainz, and L.C. Rice. The Legacy of Hegel: Proceedings of the Marquette Hegel Symposium 1970 (Netherlands the Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), p.185.

²³ Emil Fackenheim, Encounters between Judaism and Modern Philosophy:A Preface to Future Jewish Thought, p.168.

Section II

Here I discuss the major works of Fackenheim as they relate to Hegel, the Holocaust and Midrash. In Encounters Between Judaism and Modern philosophy we learn that, to Hegel, Judaism was a static religion obsessed with legalisms; it lacked the liberating spirit of Christ. Fackenheim notes that Hegel portrays Judaism exclusively as a religion of law that does not permit interpretation and change. Fackenheim counters Hegel with the notion that Judaism holds the Divine and the human being separate and does not permit crossing the boundary where the human being becomes Divine. The point of union, and separation between human and Divine is the dialectical relationship between the commandments, which represent the Shekhinah as the life of the Commandments.

In To Mend the World Fackenheim counters Hegelian assertions that Judaism is a religion of servitude rather than the type of subjective freedom and universality that marks Christianity and Greek philosophy. Here Fackenheim notes that the Sinaitic Laws are the basis of freedom, morality and have universal significance. Fackenheim states that it is precisely because the Laws are recognized as given for the benefit of humanity that they are accepted out of love.

In The Religious Dimension In Hegel's Thought, Fackenheim juxtaposes the sheer beauty of Hegelian philosophy, which brings unity to revelation and history, against Hegelian anti-Semitism. Here we learn that only Greek philosophy and Christianity are dialectical and as such only they are able to enter the modern age. Universality present in Greek philosophy is reflected in their Nomos-- laws created by philosophers rather than gods. To Hegel, only Christianity experienced a revelation where human self-consciousness manifested the Divine Spirit. The infinity and universality of Christianity are, to Hegel, the Divine-human nexus.

Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy

In Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy, Fackenheim outlines Hegel's understanding of Judaism. From the outset Fackenheim states that Hegel, the most important modern Christian philosopher, tells us that Judaism is surpassed by Christianity. To Hegel the supercession is largely due to the nature of authority; in Judaism Moses was a sheer instrument of God; he did not make the laws. God is held to be the absolute authority, making no allowance for human interpretation and change.²⁴ In

²⁴ Ibid., p.81.

addition, Jewish law, to Hegel, lacks universal content²⁵ and Judaism implies the external practice of commandments that lack an inner mediation of Spirit.²⁶

To Fackenheim, Hegel represents the deepest modern philosophical challenge to Jewish religious existence to this day.²⁷ Fackenheim tells us that Judaism lacks the liberating spirit of Christ. In Hegel the transcendent Lord becomes immanent and is witness to the unity of spirituality with the human being.²⁸ This spiritual unity is the "jolt" that Christianity has given to the world.²⁹ In some sense, to Hegel, Christianity emulates the freedom of ancient Greece. Hegel had maintained a life-long affinity for Greek philosophy in that the divine-human rose to the subjective freedom of the gods, which resulted in divine-human laws.³⁰ The freedom of the subjective realm of the Greeks is carried forward in time to be recovered in modern Hegelian Protestant Christianity. Fackenheim states that to Hegel it is Jewish stubbornness to cling to the absolute distinction it makes between God and man.³¹ Hegel states that Judaism is "Spirit in its world" in readiness

²⁵ Ibid., p.81.

²⁶ Ibid., p.81.

²⁷ Ibid., p.86

²⁸ Ibid., p.120.

²⁹ Ibid., p.120.

³⁰ Ibid., p.102.

³¹ Ibid., pp.85 & 91.

and waiting. However, because Judaism awaits Messianic redemption rather than having the courage to fight for a state, the Jews are no longer historically viable.³²

Fackenheim notes that Hegel's mediation of all history puts Judaism in a paradoxical position. Since Hegel perceived Hegelianism as the only world historical witness to the evolution of Spirit, it left Judaism with only a Jewish historical view which nevertheless was superseded. Also, for Judaism to be of history, it must be in history actually as is manifested in the state. To be in history to Hegel means to have the ability to relate to other non-Jewish modern world views which however it cannot do given that all points of view are mediated from a world-historical view of Hegel.³³ Since Judaism has been dialectically dissipated from its religious past with Athens triumph over Jerusalem, Judaism can no longer be mediated with any serious historical consequences.³⁴

To Fackenheim, Hegel challenges Jewish self-understanding as Jews have only two choices. Jews can opt out of history in the decisive understanding that nothing can alter their self-understanding between Sinai and the Messianic days, or they can be of history and expose

³² Ibid., p.168.

³³ Ibid., p.87.

³⁴ Ibid., p.90.

themselves to epoch-making events that threaten the fiber of their religious self-understanding. Posited against epoch-making events, they either opt out of history or experience dissolution.³⁵

Fackenheim posits an alternative to Hegelianism which becomes the basis of his own Jewish philosophy. He asks if Judaism might not challenge Hegelianism as radically as Hegelianism challenges Judaism?³⁶ Hegel's philosophy mediates from the external view between Jewish history and world-historical movements such as the Greek, Catholic and modern secular Protestant worlds.³⁷ Fackenheim asks whether Hegel's external mediation of Jewish history with the periods of world history was matched by internal Jewish self-mediations in response to the epoch-making events. What if some distinctions between God and man, and between the one true God and all the false, were in fact as absolute as they are held by the Jewish self-understanding? Fackenheim puts it another way. What if the Jewish religious self-understanding has been able to hold fast to these distinctions in response to three thousand years of world-historical change rather than at a price of

³⁵ Ibid., p.88.

³⁶ Ibid., p.88.

³⁷ Ibid., p.88.

withdrawal from it?³⁸ His answer is clear: Judaism has its own dialectical response to all epoch-making events.

Fackenheim examines how, to Hegel, universalism and freedom are the evolution of God's self-othering in the human being even as the two stay distinct. Hegel's concept of "Notion" is the spiritual freedom and universality which points to Spirit as the basis of human subjectivity. The "Notion" in Hegel's philosophy only brings to thought that which is already real both in Protestantism and in German society. Hegel believed that the Germany in which he lived had reached this zenith of freedom and universality, which came from three distinct modern revolutions. The French revolution made autonomy its supreme principle. The Protestant revolution freed Christianity from papal authority, and this freedom is exhibited in politics, culture and science. A modern philosophical revolution recovered the ancient Greek freedom in the modern form of subjectivity.³⁹

Hegel did justice to Judaism in relating that Judaism is the origin of the other as Spirit. The injustice, in Fackenheim's view, is Hegel's inability to understand the dialectic prevalent in Judaism which holds God in absolute distinction from the human being and yet is able to bring

³⁸ Ibid., p.88.

together the otherness of God with the human being in both Grace and freedom by virtue of the Law.⁴⁰ At the same time, the otherness in Judaism is unlike the "Notion" in Hegel because from the standpoint of Judaism it is impossible to posit a philosophical thought that is at once both human and divine.⁴¹ The fact that both Christianity and Judaism can both be dialectical only proves to Fackenheim that though Hegel made Protestant Christianity the "absolute religion" there cannot be something called an "absolute religion."⁴²

Fackenheim explicates that in Hegel's view the lack of dialectical thinking in Judaism contrasts the sharp distinction between human and divine and allows for no mutuality and intimacy. In Hegel the absolute contrast between human and divine other could be overcome only by means of divine-human mediation in which the Divine concretized its own Infinity in the finite particularity and the finite was raised and transfigured by this relationship.⁴³ Lacking a mediation of this sort, Judaism, to Hegel, must hold fast to the contrast between God and man in order to retain its Jewish particularism that is its

³⁹ Ibid., p.120.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.161.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.161.

⁴² Ibid., p.161.

⁴³ Ibid., p.93.

choseness.⁴⁴ As well, to Hegel, Judaism manifests itself only as obedience to a God-given law.⁴⁵ In Hegel's explication of Judaism obedience is derived from fear of God as a Jew renounces his or herself in view of the Divine power and Infinity. A Jew regains his or herself and with it a confidence, by submission to the Divine power which will recognize the finite self as servant of the Lord.⁴⁶ In short, to Hegel, biblical Judaism implies a stance of frozen and passive obedience from the point of view of God and man's incommensurability.⁴⁷ The incommensurability can only be bridged by the law, but the law is to Hegel unalterable and uninterrupted.⁴⁸ Also not only is Judaism servile within its own law, it is doubly so since Redemption and Grace, which lives in practicing the law, are not possible without a state.⁴⁹

Fackenheim comments that Hegel was puzzled that Judaism managed to survive epoch-making events when it lacked the universality of dialectical thought through which it could absorb other strains of thought into its own.⁵⁰ Fackenheim finds that If Hegel had studied rabbinic

⁴⁴ Ibid., p.93.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.94.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.94.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.99.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p.99.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.168.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.104.

sources he would have understood that the basis of Jewish vitality is that its strength and survival came from precisely the dialectical approach to history. It is Jewish dialectical thinking that drew the boundary between that which was unchangeable and that which was to be absorbed and changed in order to fit into Judaism. In other words, Hellenism could be absorbed without the sacrifice of Judaism. Fackenheim demonstrates the dialectical nature of Judaism in his discussion on the Maccabean revolt and in the establishment of the Oral Torah by the Pharisees. To Orthodoxy, the Oral Torah is seen as important as the Written Torah given at the same time at Sinai, but not put in writing prior to the Pharisees. The Oral Torah carries divine inspiration and it moves the Written Torah forward in time.⁵¹ The dialectic in Judaism is derived solely on the basis that the human being is merely human and that God is transcendent even as he is immanent and accessible in the law.⁵²

Fackenheim states that Hegel did not have to face an epoch-making event like Nazism. Had Hegel lived he would have seen how the human-divine identity united Nazi Christians and Nazi pagans in the common worship of

⁵¹ Ibid., p.96.

⁵² Ibid., p.118.

Hitler.⁵³ This worship was the height of idolatry, a surrender to the reality of an absolute.⁵⁴ Though modern philosophy lies in ruins after the Holocaust, Hegelian dialectical fragments keep appearing on every side.⁵⁵ The animating principle of Hegel's entire life was the union of the divine and the human which permeated life with Spirit and their non-union prevented idolatry. He believed that the presence of Spirit has to exist in life already in order for philosophy to articulate this truth. To Hegel that Spirit unites both secular and religious aims and this can be seen in their unity in German culture under the banner of freedom and universality.⁵⁶

Fackenheim believes that Hegel was not without greatness for he depicted how easy it is to escape real life into an unreal future or a tribal memory.⁵⁷ Fackenheim believes that after the Holocaust Hegel would have seen Judaism appear in history the second time.⁵⁸ Fackenheim hypothesizes that Hegel would have seen a new union between secular and religious Jews in the State of Israel.⁵⁹ To

⁵³ Ibid., p.157.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp.158 & 158.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.158.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.158.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.168.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.168.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.168. Fackenheim states, "Jewish death at Auschwitz and rebirth at Jerusalem might make him [Hegel] wonder whether at least one people is not appearing on the scene for a second time, with world-historical consequences yet unknown."

Fackenheim after Auschwitz, the religious Jew still submits to the commanding Voice of Sinai, which bids him witness to the one true God. He is now joined by the secular Jew who submits to a commanding Voice heard from Auschwitz that bids him to testify that some gods are false. A Jew testifies that idolatry in the modern world is real.⁶⁰ Fackenheim provides several examples which show that the law was given to establish life not death and that if Jews do not give witness to their God as their Lord then God is no longer God even though he remains glorified in Himself.⁶¹

To Mend the World

In To Mend The World Fackenheim asks whether the Hegelian idea of Overcoming can be applied to Judaism's ability to go beyond the devastation of the Holocaust. Fackenheim is in search of philosophical categories, which can be applied to Judaism since the philosophical effect of the Holocaust is to paralyze the metaphysical capacity.⁶² A common modern contention is that it is impossible to form a Jewish philosophical response to the Holocaust.⁶³ Yet, to Fackenheim, Jewish thought has the necessary tools to

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.167.

⁶¹ Ibid., p.162..

⁶² Emil L. Fackenheim, To Mend The World: Foundations of Future Jewish Thought, p.132.

⁶³ Ibid., p.131.

respond to this contention. Fackenheim argues that, through Midrash, Judaism has the capacity to address its historical response to epoch-making events. As well, Judaism can utilize the ideas of major modern philosophers, especially Hegel, to see whether and how they apply to Judaism.⁶⁴

To Hegel, the idea of Overcoming is non-negotiable. The Idea in Hegel is the result of the union of the Divine with the human even though they both stay distinct. The union "Overcomes" historically all religions and philosophies as it most perfectly describes the openness and freedom that belongs to human beings through Grace. In effect, this freedom is found in Hegel's time by the secularization of life from ecclesiastical authority. Fackenheim observes that it was a Hegelian response that the idea is an infinite freedom in all walks of life, so that people could overcome all circumstances.⁶⁵ This optimism in modernity produced a self-confidence unparalleled in the history of ideas. To Hegel, modern freedom in self-activity reaches the pinnacle in human development of the individual in Lutheran Christianity. In Hegel's Christianity the person rises in preparation for Spirit and the Divine descends toward the human being. The rise of the human being to the Divine and the receptivity

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.137.

of the Divine in the human being is, to Hegel, absolute religion. In Hegel's absolute philosophy the same process occurs on the side of the Divine, which is the divine self-othering of religion.⁶⁶ To Christianity the person rising to the Divine and the Divine moving toward a person is a two step process. In Hegel's absolute philosophy this process is a single movement represented in the Notion.⁶⁷ The Hegelian "Notion" becomes the representational space that is occupied by both the Divine and the human being.⁶⁸ Divine infinity is therefore the "Overcoming" of finitude in the representational form.

To Hegel religion and philosophy reenact the singularity of the content of religion which renders both life and thought as dimensions of worship.⁶⁹ A clash between philosophy and religion would be possible if the philosophy did not deal with the same content as religion. The same content mediates both secular and religious life.⁷⁰ Since the same space is occupied by the human and the Divine it renders philosophy and life in synchrony with each other. This represents the Hegelian middle yet, to Fackenheim, the Hegelian middle is broken by right and left

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.130.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.137.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.137

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.138.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.137.

wing Hegelians. Left and right wing Hegelians took the "Overcoming," but in taking only fragments of it, they both lost freedom by losing the truth of reality. For the right-wing Hegelians, the "Overcoming" of man by God is a fideistic escape from the world, and in the left-wing Hegelians, the "Overcoming" of God by man is an act that conquers the world.⁷¹

To Fackenheim, Nazism saw itself as embodying the types of freedom that believed themselves to be infinite. Instead, Nazism produced a new category of human beings-- the Muselmanner-- those who remain alive, but who are spiritually dead.⁷² Theirs was a new way of living and dying, a new way of being human.⁷³ The suffering of the victims cannot overcome the reality of the Holocaust.⁷⁴ Yet Fackenheim takes over the Hegelian concept of "Overcoming" to state that for Judaism it is possible to go beyond the Holocaust because Judaism is about the commanding Presence at Sinai. To be commanding implies the age-old distinction between what is human and what is Divine. It is based on the incommensurability between the Divine and the human being, who, for Jews, are only brought together through

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.138.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.130.

⁷² Ibid., pp. 131 & 135.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 131.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.135

the Sinaitic law.⁷⁵ Judaism makes possible the eternal renewal of this old distinction in the sphere of life because, in the Sinaitic Law, the Jewish idea of Teshuva is pitted against the Hegelian idea of "Overcoming."⁷⁶ Fackenheim states that the Jewish religion cannot accept the commonality of human nature and the Divine.⁷⁷ The Divine other is never posited in a single movement of representational form. Judaism carries the double representation whereby the finite remains human and particular even as the Infinite posits eternity and universal freedom in the law. Teshuva, however, is a new beginning since the Sinaitic Law has its own inherent dialectic.

To Fackenheim it is essential to maintain the distance between the human and the Divine. The absolute freedom of the Sinaitic Law is posited against the idolatry of Nazism. Hegel saw Judaism as lacking Spiritual freedom in that it was tied to the observance of law. He failed to understand that Judaism's freedom lies in the dialectical understanding of freedom which emerges through the apprehension of the Sinaitic Law. Here what motivates observance of the Law is not fear, rather recognition and

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.141.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.138.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.138.

awe in the difference between what is human and what is Divine. Hegel also saw Judaism as particularistic lacking the universality of free ideas.

Fackenheim observes that Hegel sees Abraham's relationship to God as tribal and particularistic. However, Fackenheim notes that "Abraham's God blesses all nations in his seed."⁷⁸ Whereas, for Hegel, Moses is a mere "unfree" instrument of the Divine, the Moses of Judaism confronts the people on behalf of God and confronts God on behalf of the people.⁷⁹ For Hegel, Job renounces his finite condition in view of God, and in renouncing the renunciation finds himself accepted by God. To Fackenheim the renunciation is not the key or the core message of the story. Fackenheim states that God's absolute power notwithstanding, Job's protest and his self-assertion against God are central to the entire story.⁸⁰

Fackenheim acknowledges Hegel's genius for grasping the incommensurability within Judaism of a divine Presence that is and remains infinite and universal to a humanity that remains unyieldingly finite and particular.⁸¹ Fackenheim states that this sharp contrast is outside of Hegel's possible mediation. What can be mediated is what in

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.139.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.139.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.139.

Midrash is a divine-human moving-toward each other.⁸² The Jewish religion passionately and emphatically denies in its own religion what is central to Christianity-- the identity of human nature and the Divine.⁸³ However Judaism has its own dialectic which is present in Midrash. The dialectic is a divine-human turning toward each other despite, and "indeed because of, their persistent and unmitigated incommensurability."⁸⁴

The central experience of Sinai is retrieved by those who turn to God. Those countless generations who turn to the God of Sinai find themselves turned to Him in an inexplicable and unfathomable love. The love is disclosed at the Yom Kippur, when Teshuva, the coming back to God, encompasses all of history.⁸⁵ Fackenheim cites a characteristic Midrash which teaches the primordial infinite distance between the divine Creator and the human being, yet a "new beginning" is manifest in the meeting of the two. The meeting of the two occurs as there is a descent of the one and the "ascent" of the other. Since both remain the other to each other, there is no possibility that the realm of the human being is subsumed

⁸¹ Ibid., p.139.

⁸² Ibid., p.139.

⁸³ Ibid., p.138.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.141.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.141.

in Divinity. Even as the two remain distinct the close proximity of Sinai is that which mediates between them. The appropriation of the Sinaitic experience remains the central core that creates new beginnings everywhere. Sinaitic revelation becomes the great Shibboleth of our time:

When God created the world, He declared that "the heavens are the heavens of the Lord and the earth is for men" (Ps.115:16) But when He intended to give the Torah he repealed the former decree and said: "The Lower shall ascend to the Upper, and the Upper shall descend to the Lower, and I will make a new beginning," as it is said "And the Lord came down upon Mt. Sinai, and He said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord" (Exod.19:20).⁸⁶

The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought

Fackenheim situates Hegel in the era of modern philosophy, in which an attempt is made to unite the objective world of knowledge with the subjective realm of human thought. To unite these two realms implies the growth of human consciousness and self-actualization, which posits the other as the self. Modern philosophy begins with Spinoza where there is a union between the objective

Godhead who is the substance of the world and the self. To Spinoza revelation is absent because there is a union between substance and God: the human self. This is a mystical union which obliterates human-divine distinctions. With Kant, the objective Universal reason is innate to the self. A human being must consent to the laws of the universal and be compatible with reason; otherwise reason may reject them. To Fackenheim modern philosophy is, in some sense, a revival of Greek philosophy in relation to subjective freedom, which is imminent in the gods who are also mortal. Hegel emerges as the most important philosopher in Fackenheim because, in Hegel, in the union and non-union between self-consciousness and Spirit, a dialectic emerges in which philosophy absorbs history and religion in the ladder to the highest form of truth.

To Fackenheim modern German philosophy reaches the pinnacle of development in Hegel, as he has the innermost historical self-understanding and attempts a synthesis without parallel in the history of philosophy.⁸⁷ In addition, his synthesis between philosophy and religion is unique, as it encompasses all of history.⁸⁸ Not only did he have his philosophy encapsulate Protestantism and claim

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.139

⁸⁷ Emil Fackenheim, The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought, (London: Indiana University Press, 1967), p.11.

that only in his Christianity is this synthesis complete, he showed how all religions and philosophies were surpassed historically by his own.⁸⁹

To Hegel reality is Spirit and Spiritual development is a dialectical relationship among everything that exists.⁹⁰ History, science and metaphysics describe the historical evolution of Spirit into its highest manifestation as "Spirit in Itself or Absolute Spirit." The dialectical development of Spirit into its highest stage parallels the development of self-consciousness, that is Reason, which can only emerge from a thorough exposure to life.⁹¹ Life is permeated with Spirit in all its various contingent, finite and fragmented forms and even when unconscious of its reality it eventually emerges as such because it was already present in life. In fact it can only emerge as Spirit because its essential Being is contingent upon the whole of historical reality. The evolution of Spirit and self-consciousness, or Reason, is only possible because Spirit is "not a category brought to life by thought only if its overreaching power is already manifest

⁸⁸ Ibid., p 23.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.196.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp.19,26.

⁹¹ Ibid.,p.19.

in life for man prior to and apart from all of philosophizing."⁹².

Even though Hegel thinks that philosophy cannot transcend its contemporary world, his Hegelian science is a ladder that leads from non-philosophical thought to his absolute standpoint. Absolute Idea that God moves from being part of every historical contingency in an unreflective mode to the point when the Absolute stands over and against history in a process of transcendence of history itself.⁹³ What he reiterates continuously is that abstractness cannot lose the concreteness of life even as it rises above it.⁹⁴ Philosophical transcendence of historical circumstances can only emerge from a thorough exposure to life.⁹⁵ Hegel's philosophy arises from life in order to attempt to rise above it.⁹⁶ Life remains filled with contingency even when absolute thought rises above it.⁹⁷

The truth of self-consciousness is the presence of Spirit itself.⁹⁸ It is found in life and only reaches its fullness in Protestant Christianity.⁹⁹ Protestant

⁹² Ibid., p.21.

⁹³ Ibid., p.33.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 25.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 16.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 24.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 25.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 56.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

Christianity overcame the Christian dichotomy of the God who is transcendent and apart from finite self. In Protestantism thought God is completely transcendent, heaven meets earth as immanence is the presence of Spirit in man, and the presence of Spirit in the World. The Divine suffers death for the human being and the resurrection is eternal life.¹⁰⁰ The recognition of how the Divine can enter human life is the recognition that the creative force behind the self is the Holy Spirit— the work of a Divine other than human.¹⁰¹ Christianity is testimony to a God who is the Creator.¹⁰² To Hegel the Christian religion is absolute because it contains, preserves and reconciles the depth of the "religion of light" with the self or Spirit of "religion of art."¹⁰³ Hegel's philosophy and religion share the same representational space-- self-consciousness pointing at Spirit. To be more than a religious representation or artistic aesthetic it must be acted out historically.¹⁰⁴ This has been acted out in Christianity.

Hegel's philosophy brings to Christianity the idea of Notion. Briefly, it is the philosophical category that transforms the religious idea of God as the other into the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 56.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 56.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 56.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 53.

philosophical category that obliterates the distinction between the self and the other. It arises from religions which are all partial truths into the Absolute religion of Hegel, which absorbs the partial truths and stays beyond history in order to transform it .The Notion unifies that what is with that which yet it can become.¹⁰⁵ It unifies the real and the ideal, the finite and the infinite, and itself overreaches life.¹⁰⁶ The Notion moves from fragmentation of finite contingencies to a totality of Spirit.

It is a central Hegelian doctrine that the true religion is already the "true content," lacking merely the "true form," which is Hegelian philosophy.¹⁰⁷ Christianity is, therefore, already representational of the Spirit manifest in self-consciousness, but it is not until Hegel that the contemplative life of the soul becomes the pervasive reality that transforms history. Notion can transform history as it is derived from the dialectical movement from partial to total reality of self-consciousness. The Notion is transformative as the dialectical evolution of self-consciousness, points at Spirit itself, and brings to self-consciousness, freedom and universality. This freedom and universality already

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 22.

exists in self-consciousness as the Spirit of Christianity but as Notion it absorbs the process of historical growth, analysis and understanding. In Notion, the self has become inclusive of all of reality from which it posited itself in identity and self determination.¹⁰⁸

In order not to confuse Hegelianism with transcendental meditation, or immanentism, it is important to understand how in Hegelian dialectics, Spirit Substance or Nature mediate each and relationally are one integrated whole unit.¹⁰⁹ To Hegel all of reality Substance and Spirit describe the contingency, relativity and fragmentedness of each in the other.¹¹⁰ Each contains the real and the ideal component-- the ideal being the abstraction from nature which retains its structure throughout all mediation.¹¹¹ Only infinite Spirit emerges as overreaching and containing all of reality and is therefore totally unfragmented.¹¹² Everything that exists is relative to each other so that the inner bond between the Self and Substance or the World and Spirit is diminished even as it is enlarged by each

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 39 & 20.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 88.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 47.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 88.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 98.

other's Presence. Both Substance, Self and Spirit point to each other and do each other justice.¹¹³

In the dialectical development of Spirit the self evolves from a state of primitive being to an enlightened state. In its primitive state the contingency of the self and its surroundings makes the self undistinguished from the other.¹¹⁴ With the growth of self-consciousness, the self negates its environment but in its negation it posits its self-identity in freedom and distinctiveness from its surroundings. In a double movement, the negation becomes a self-affirmation of both its environment which it contains and itself, while at the same time being able to stay transcendent, that is abstract from all contingency.¹¹⁵ In the double movement of dialectical mediation, Nature discloses both Substance and Spirit. Since the abstraction in thought contains both Nature and finite spirit, the infinite Self is already represented in Nature as that which abstracts from the structure of Nature to embody the idea of all contingency.¹¹⁶

In a similar process Spirit, Nature and Idea serve to mediate each other so that all of reality represents the

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 47.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 38.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 39 & 20.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 88.

union and non-union of all things.¹¹⁷ Each reality is able to mediate for the other because each contains the other in both unity and separation, which encompasses them all and overreaches them all in the Absolute Self which is self-consciousness of the whole process. The overreaching of philosophy over the whole context of life is the philosophical Notion which is the worldly incursion of the Trinity.¹¹⁸ Just as the Son separates from the Father only to become one with Him in Spirit, the Absolute Notion of religion is that divine human unity which re-enacts the unity and separation of the Holy Spirit present in all of life.¹¹⁹ The rise of the human being to the Divine other and the concretization of the Divine in the self is a double movement. To Philosophy, however, this double manifestation is one movement of the Divine otherness in self-consciousness that points to itself. The single movement is one of freedom through Grace.¹²⁰ Christ is not only transcendent He has revealed Himself and is received and historically present as the gift of Divine Grace.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 78.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 203.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 202.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 188.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 188.

To Hegel philosophy is the completion of religion. The Absolute idea is the final category of logic.¹²² The process is the ladder that concludes in Protestantism because this is where self-consciousness has risen to the point of Absolute self-consciousness of God as the other present in all existence. The process of logic is only necessary to Hegel to posit the Absolute Idea at the end of it as that which unifies the wisdom of God with the wisdom of the world.¹²³

Hegel observes that his religious philosophy is only possible in the modern era because most modern states had passed from slavery and feudalism, and he could see the origin of recognized human rights. Modernity contains freedom of ideas and secular confidence in infinite aspirations.¹²⁴ The Hegelian philosophy describes the certainty and self-confidence of a modern era. Hegel describes "Spirit certain of itself" to represent moral knowledge and moral action that evolves from Universal Reason.¹²⁵ Hegel believed he surpassed all philosophy and all religious systems because his system was most comprehensive as it did not lose idealism or realism.¹²⁶

¹²² Ibid., p. 89.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 214.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 37.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 58.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 7

Fackenheim states that even when the Hegelian system collapses, as the modern world did not reach the divinity of Hegelian thought, we are left with countless invaluable fragments which continue to speak to us.¹²⁷

Regardless of the philosophical beauty of Hegelian thought, his anti-Judaism is pervasive. To Hegel, Judaism lacked the dialectical nature of the self and the other, which meant that Judaism could not reach the Spirituality achieved by the moderns. As such, Judaism could only obey laws which, by themselves, could never reach the liberating quality of the Divine, that is the self. Hegel and other contemporary philosophers accepted anti-Semitic attitudes that pervaded the society. Although Hegel transformed philosophy, he was no pioneer in understanding Jews and Judaism. His anti-Judaism was actually far more dangerous as it sought to demonstrate that historically Judaism was no longer a religion or a philosophy. Lacking the inwardness of spirit, Judaism could not achieve unity with the Divine. In Hegel's historical analysis of religions Judaism never reaches the sophistication of Greece and is totally surpassed by Christianity.¹²⁸

For Hegel, the Greek, Roman, and now the Christian world, are superior to Judaism, and this is largely on the

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

basis that Judaism does not produce and cannot produce a philosophy.¹²⁹ Judaism is seen as undialectical, instead, it is static, which means that Judaism can never surpass its historical epoch-making events, as it can not absorb history to itself in a liberating and conquering fashion. Because of its non-dialectical nature, Judaism, to Hegel, lacks universal freedom that comes from Spiritual unity between the human and the Divine.

The freedom which is derived by human-divine absorption of each in the other is prevalent in the Greeks and Christians.¹³⁰ It is Greek philosophy that achieves oneness of thought with Divinity.¹³¹ In Greek philosophy it is not God who writes laws, rather Nomos (Greek law) is created by human beings who absorb the universality of reason in the divine-human oneness. These laws reflect the universal component of human reason. This oneness of the human and the Divine is similar to the Christian representation, which enables philosophy to reach its final modern form.¹³²

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.188.

¹²⁹ Ibid., pp.158, 179, 187 & 188

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.188

¹³¹ Ibid., p.289.

¹³² Ibid., p.289.

The truth of Judaism, to Hegel, was fragmentary because of its failure to reach oneness with God.¹³³ Judaism wholly lacks the other-- His immanence and Presence.¹³⁴ Hegel, whose anti-Semitism was dangerous, nevertheless did more justice to Judaism than any other philosopher. He understood that the distinction between the transcendent Lord and the human being was indeed admirable. In fact, because of this distinction, Hegel observes that Judaism never lapsed into idolatry as did the Greeks.¹³⁵

For Fackenheim, Hegel's cryptic observations on Judaism were anti-Semitic, but Fackenheim admires Hegel's philosophical understanding and Hegel remained for him the most astute critic of Christianity, a religion that failed because it did not live the life of its ideals. It remained only a philosophy that could present truths conceptually, but in the Hegelian sense it failed because it lacked authenticity. Hegel criticized Judaism as he saw Judaism as being cultic and oriented only toward the external manifestations of the laws, which were devoid of inner spirituality. Hegel saw his synthesis between faith and philosophy as possible, but he despaired that many lacked

¹³³ Ibid., p. 134.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 197.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 197

true faith.¹³⁶ He saw that Christianity was not the life of the Spirit that he described in his philosophy.

Fackenheim states that Hegelian philosophy was far in advance of what existed. His thinking was comprehensive but Christian life was not.¹³⁷ Hegel writes that religious thinking cannot be an abstraction for if worship is to be genuine it has to have real feelings: "an inwardness of pure feeling united with outward actions."¹³⁸ Only a total integrated experience of thought, feeling and action can be called faith. To Hegel thinking entailed devotion; it is not random feeling but rather a "permanent character geared to the Divine."¹³⁹

Hegel persists in the belief that no religious authorities, or threats, can produce inwardness. Inwardness comes from Spirit itself, as this spiritual representation of Christ exists within the divine human relation, not outside it.¹⁴⁰ Again, he speaks about genuine religion as that which involves a man's total being. It encompasses feelings. It is not an abstraction, but comes from the

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 124.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 197

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 124.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 192.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 234

concrete experience of one's life and a total involvement in the life of the divine-human relation.¹⁴¹

To Hegel, the Absolute which is God, as He is manifest in life itself, was shattered by modern Christian decadence.¹⁴² Hegel ends his Philosophy of Religion with the mournful litany against the passing away of the spiritual community.¹⁴³ He seeks Spiritual unity among the fragmentation and finds that perhaps this is only possible among philosophers.¹⁴⁴ Hegel ends his Philosophy of History with the remark that Spirit reconciled with the world is only reconciled in thought, not in life. He rejects the spiritual community of his day for a world that can be permeated by the Absolute.¹⁴⁵

Section III

In section three, I discuss Hegel and Midrash, as they emerge from my own analysis, without recourse to secondary sources. After a careful investigation, I have not found secondary material that considers Fackenheim, Midrash and Hegel together, nor do they deal with the contrast, or similarity, among these sources. As mentioned earlier, Louis Greenspan's observation that a detailed study of

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 121.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 234.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 234.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 235.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 234.

Fackenheim's use of German philosophers would prove to be a useful study brought me to delve further and to also look at the relevance of Midrash as a major factor in arriving at an understanding of Fackenheim.

Hegelian Fragments Used by Fackenheim

This section examines the themes in Hegel that are appropriated by Fackenheim and evident in his reflections on Jewish thought. Fackenheim is able to present Midrash through language and categories that parallel Hegelian usage and is thus able to present Judaism as the dialectical movement of Spirit historically. The following themes will be discussed:

I. Hegel's Notion, To Hegel life precedes thought. Notion appears only at the end of the existential reality of Spirit present in life. The Holocaust presents us with a metaphysical paralysis of all conceptual categories and only survival is real. Survival, however, to Fackenheim, is permeated by Spirit. Conceptual categories are rebuilt by the retrieval of Kabbalistic thought so that conceptually it is possible to think about God's presence during the Holocaust even if His presence did not save millions of Jews from extermination. The presence of Spirit is not simply a conceptual reality to Fackenheim; it exists in the reality of Jewish resistance and Jewish survival.

If Spirit only existed conceptually then this would not parallel Hegel's Notion. The parallel between Notion and Kabbalistic concepts of the sanctity of life becomes the existential reality as the basis of all of history. The Holocaust has revelational significance as the Voice of the 614th commandment whose aim is to preserve both Judaism and the noble ideals of humanity.

II. Hegel on the dialectical relationship between Spirit and the State. The rebuilding of the State has Kabbalistic significance to Fackenheim. Resistance to the devastating effect of the Holocaust is proof that the State of Israel is permeated by Spiritual rejuvenation.

III. Hegel on the permeation of boundaries between the human and the Divine which leads to freedom and universality. In Midrash, God is omnipotent, yet there is a dialectical relationship between human and the Divine in the mutuality of the covenant and Revelation. Both freedom and universality are the basis of the Commandments.

IV. Hegel on the non-union between the human and the Divine. To Fackenheim, as to Hegel, union can lead to idolatry.

V. Hegel on epoch-making events in the dialectical evolution of Spirit. To Fackenheim, the Holocaust is an epoch-making event. There is dialectical significance of

the past being retrieved in the present from the Voice of the Akedah to Sinai.Revelation from the past now joins to the Voice in ashes of the Holocaust.

VI. Hegel on the Spiritual relationship between the human and the Divine. The Commandments in Midrash are the intermediary in the dialectical relationship between God, Israel and the State.

Fragment I

This fragment discusses:

- 1.Hegel's Notion-- religious philosophy arises from life experience;
- 2.Holocaust, a historical novum, leads to metaphysical paralysis;
- 3.survival is the only existential reality;
- 4.Tzimzum and Tikkun Olam emerge as religious, philosophical categories;
- 5.Spirit permeates all of life and is present in the 614th Commandment of resistance and survival;
- 6.Teshuva is the old-new dialectic of turning to God and differs from Hegelian overcoming;
- 7.the dialectic between Tzimzum and God's Presence in the State of Israel testifies to the sanctity of life and the sanctity of history.

The most important Hegelian fragment for Fackenheim's Jewish philosophy is found in Hegel's Notion [life precedes thought]. Hegel states that his philosophy is the completion of *form* for the Protestant content which was the reality of his day. Hegel teaches:

It becomes possible and actual for a philosophical thought that merely completes and brings to absolute self-consciousness a Divine-human mediation that, except for that completion and mediation, is already complete in historical life. Only thus does Hegel's thought mediate the ultimate dichotomy-- i.e. between itself and life--and "over-reaches" life.¹⁴⁶

In Hegel the Notion is the philosophical pinnacle of human-divine self-consciousness. It absorbs all of reality and fashions out of it something entirely new that reflects the highest comprehension. The highest comprehension to Hegel is Protestant Christianity. Life and thought reflects the Holy Spirit which is manifested in the Trinity. The Trinity completes philosophical thought dialectically so that all historical entities contained in its philosophical science are surpassed and overseen by this new understanding.

¹⁴⁶ Emil Fackenheim, Encounters between Judaism and Modern Philosophy: A Preface to Future Jewish Thought, p. 124.

Notion is the Absolute idea of God, which now is no longer simply a religious experience of the divine as the complete other. Rather, Notion is the philosophical completion of religion, as the other and the self become merged in self-consciousness.¹⁴⁷ In the Notion, the divine in the self is God, who becomes also the Self for the other.¹⁴⁸ The religious-philosophical nexus leads to self-consciousness whose primary expression is a universality and freedom from its previous primitive religious and philosophical forms. Having risen from life, Notion appropriates all of history to itself and rises above it to create a new reality. In answer to Hegel's dialectical synthesis between life and thought, Fackenheim presents the Holocaust as a historical novum that brings metaphysical paralysis of all conceptual categories and only survival is real.¹⁴⁹

For Fackenheim it is impossible to think philosophically and religiously given the atrocities of Auschwitz. Accordingly, Fackenheim argues that no great

¹⁴⁷ Emil Fackenheim, To Mend The World, p.137.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p.137.

¹⁴⁹ Fackenheim, "A Reply to My Critics," in Graeme Nicholson eds Fackenheim: German Philosophy and Jewish Thought, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p.267 & Gregory Baum, "Fackenheim and Christianity," in Louis Greenspan & Graeme Nicholson, eds. Fackenheim: German Philosophy and Jewish Thought, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p.183. & Laurie McRobert, "Kant and Radical Evil," in Louis Greenspan & Graeme Nicholson, eds. Fackenheim: German Philosophy and Jewish Thought, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p.28

ideas can match the magnitude of what transpired, and the search for metaphysical categories in any of the great philosophers turns out to be fruitless. To Fackenheim, surviving the Holocaust was, to the Jew, the existential historical reality that took precedence over any ability to think metaphysically. In actuality, however, thought and history are both important and interconnected to Fackenheim.

Lurianic Kabbalah emerges, for Fackenheim, once thinking begins to question where was God and why didn't He save Jews as He did in the past. Fackenheim, admittedly not a scholar of Lurianic Kabbalah, turns to Gershom Scholem as he [Fackenheim] attempts to bring forth a dialectic between survival, and Jewish religious thought and philosophy. The first metaphysical category that emerges from life and survival is from the Kabbalistic concepts of Tzimtzum and Tikkun Olam.¹⁵⁰ In Fackenheim the references to Gershom Scholem are scanty so that our understanding of Tzimtzum and Tikkun Olam is very elementary. The concerns of Jewish Mysticism are beyond the scope of this paper but a few

¹⁵⁰ Reinier Munk, "Revelation and Resistance: A Reflection on the Thought of Emil Fackenheim," in Louis Greenspan and Graeme Nicholson eds Fackenheim: German Philosophy and Jewish Thought, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p.238 & Michael L. Morgan, "Philosophy, History, and the Jewish Thinker: Philosophy and Jewish Thought," in Louis Greenspan and Graeme Nicholson eds Fackenheim: German Philosophy and Jewish Thought, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p.145.

citations from Gershom Scholem will help to situate the richness with which Fackenheim addresses the question of the sanctity of life even when it appears that God is dead.

Fackenheim cites Scholem's understanding of Jewish Mysticism, which notes that there are rules and regulations that apply to Tzimtzum (hiddenness of God).¹⁵¹ In Scholem, we are given to understand that this condition makes room for the world. Spiritual lights are withdrawn. Tzimtzum is a return to Adam Kadmon; it is a primordial state meaning that God is hidden as He was in the state before Creation began, before Adam sinned.¹⁵²

If Adam had not sinned the "world would have entered the Messianic state on the first Sabbath after creation with no historical process whatsoever."¹⁵³ Tikkun Olam, mending the world, is in effect the mending of the broken vessels of creation that trapped the Holy Sparks in material impurity after Adam sinned. Tikkun Olam, the release of the Holy Sparks from their material impurity, is possible now because God has become manifest in revelation and redemption.¹⁵⁴ In Lurianic Kabbalism, En-sof contracts to

¹⁵¹ Reinier Munk, "Revelation and Resistance: A Reflection on the Thought of Emil Fackenheim," p.247, footnote 27.

¹⁵² Gershom Scholem, The Messianic Idea in Judaism, (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p.46.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p.46.

¹⁵⁴ Reinier Munk, "Revelation and Resistance: A Reflection on the Thought of Emil Fackenheim," p.239 plus footnotes 24 and 27.

leave room for the world. In this state were He to enter the world He would destroy it.¹⁵⁵ In contraction, He is hidden from the world and in expansion He becomes revealed through the Law.¹⁵⁶ He can once again be known through His manifestation as witnessed in revelation and redemption. To Fackenheim, revelation is seen in the return to the Sinaitic commandments.¹⁵⁷ Redemption is seen by the creation of the State of Israel.¹⁵⁸

The Kabbalists explicate that God is always present in history, for even in the hidden state as En-sof, the oral Torah continues to manifest itself. It represents the great Voice that has never ceased.¹⁵⁹ To the Kabbalists the highest wisdom, the Sophia of God, which is the second sefirah contains the foundation of all emanations pouring forth out of the hidden Eden.¹⁶⁰ Kabbalists describe this foundation as a fountain, which gushes forth in constant production. They believe that if the fountain was interrupted for even a moment, all creatures would sink back into their non-being. On this fountain rests the continual existence of all creatures.¹⁶¹ It can be argued that, for Fackenheim, after

¹⁵⁵ Emil Fackenheim, What is Judaism, p.285

¹⁵⁶ Scholem, pp,44,45,46.

¹⁵⁷ Emil Fackenheim, God's Presence in History, p.15.

¹⁵⁸ Michael Morgan, ed.The Jewish Thought of Emil Fackenheim, (Detroit:Wayne State University Press,1987)p.286.

¹⁵⁹ Scholem, p.299.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.,p.298.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.,p.298.

the Holocaust, the Oral Torah is the fountain, that is the great Shibboleth of our time. In its manifest form the Oral Torah represents the resounding of the Voice of Sinai.¹⁶² To the Kabbalists, when En-sof is hidden, He retains the image of the perfect man, meaning that the Sparks of Redemption will one day usher in the Messiah. In the process of Tikkun Olam, mitzvot and prayers hasten the process of redemption. They are the manifestations of people returning to God.¹⁶³ This process of return, to the Kabbalists, is known as Teshuva.

Fackenheim characterizes Teshuva as the turning from evil.¹⁶⁴ Teshuvah and Tikkun Olam provide the ontological ground needed for Fackenheim's moral dimension.¹⁶⁵ Tikkun is more necessary now than ever to create the balance of power, in order that the Holy Sparks can increase and in time the restoration of the good over the evil will lead to the Messianic era. A human being is thus responsible for much more than his or her destiny. A person is engaged in the holy work of restoration of the balance between God's world and the world of human beings by fighting the powers

¹⁶² Ibid., p.299.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p.46.

¹⁶⁴ Laurie McRobert, "Kant and Radical Evil," in Louis Greenspan and Graeme Nicholson eds Fackenheim: German Philosophy and Jewish Thought, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), p.34.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p.29.

of evil and sin.¹⁶⁶ Teshuva is, for Fackenheim, the dialectic between the old and the new turning to God so that He can turn to human beings-- as the "impulse from below calls forth the impulse from above."¹⁶⁷

To Fackenheim survival and resistance is the first existential category of philosophy. Resistance takes on the shape and form of the Voice of the 614th commandment, which beseeches Jews to survive as Jews and not to despair of the world of ideas-- otherwise Hitler wins.¹⁶⁸ Revelation of the Voice is the first metaphysical and religious meaning of existentialism.¹⁶⁹ Jewish survival is, in part, perceived by Fackenheim as a dialectical movement between Tzimtzum, which is God's hiddenness during the Holocaust, and His Presence in revelation and in the State of Israel. By juxtaposing the Holocaust to revelation, Fackenheim aims to relate the fact that even at its most basic minimum, even when God appears absent from history, it is possible to speak about survival in religious and philosophical terms. To Fackenheim even when the idea of God appears dead survival itself is permeated by Spirit--the sanctity of life and the Presence of God in history.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.,p.29.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.,p.29.

¹⁶⁸ Emil Fackenheim, God's Presence in History, p.84.

¹⁶⁹ Emil Fackenheim, Quest of Past and Future, (London and Bloomington:Indiana University Press,1968),p.107.

To Fackenheim, God was not absent during the Holocaust because even out of the primordial withdrawal of God His commanding Presence was there in the Voice of the ashes of Auschwitz, which commanded Jews to survive.¹⁷⁰ Through Gershom Scholem's rendition of Kabbalah it is possible to see the continuity that Fackenheim seeks in Midrash between survival and the Voice of the 614th commandment. The Voice of the commanding Presence that called for survival of the Jewish people and the survival of their God is, for Fackenheim, the refusal to give Hitler a posthumous victory [hence his 614th commandment].¹⁷¹ It means that Jewish people must live, and not only to give testimony to the Holocaust but Jews must live as Jews because as Jews they give testimony that their God exists. Fackenheim cites the Maccabees as heroes because they rewrote the rules of the Sabbath so that they could fight on the Sabbath to preserve both "the state of God," and their God of faith by ensuring the survival of their people.¹⁷² The ideas of 614th commandment parallel the Notion in its absorbtive and expansive capacity. For not only does Judaism emerge as having survived the Holocaust with its tenets intact, but

¹⁷⁰ Laurie McRobert, "Kant and Radical Evil," p.28.

¹⁷¹ Wm. Novak, "An Interview with Emil Fackenheim," New Traditions, Summer 1986, 11-46, p.12.

¹⁷² Emil Fackenheim, Encounters between Judaism and Modern Philosophy: A Preface to Future Jewish Thought, p.117

the commandment beseeches Jews not to despair of humanity, or withdraw into mysticism.¹⁷³

Fragment II

This segment deals with:

1. Hegel's idea that the German State and Spirit are dialectically interconnected;
2. there is a parallel to be made between the State of Israel and Jewish Spirituality
3. Spirit acting among religious and nonreligious Jews during the Holocaust is witness and testimony to God's presence in history;
4. resistance is the Spiritual process of redemption which culminates in the State of Israel;
5. Tikkun and the restoration of the State differs from the Hegelian supremacy of the new over the old.

Another important fragment that Fackenheim picks up from Hegel refers to the dialectical relationship between the State and the Spirit and its impact on historical progress. In Hegel, the State, existing in reality, is essential to the Idea, because it is only by being in reality that the Spiritual impulse can be propelled forward historically. To Hegel, the dialectical relationship between Spirit and State places Germany as the embodiment

¹⁷³ Emil Fackenheim, "Tikkun After the Holocaust," Bridges Vol.4

of the highest manifestation of Spirit. To Hegel, Germany was ready for the full realization of the Trinitarian self-consciousness because the State was already Christian and at the zenith of its power and freedom.

A better understanding of Judaism by Hegel would, for Fackenheim, enhance Hegel's philosophical insight. To Fackenheim, if Hegel was alive today he would "have to" acknowledge that the present State of Israel is the embodiment of the old ideas of Zionism and Messianism in the new State. The State of Israel existing in reality is proof, to Fackenheim, that presence of Spirit motivated its creation Fackenheim believes that the State of Israel was not due to the Holocaust but it is nevertheless connected to it. The religious impulse in Fackenheim behind the State of Israel is unquestionable. He states that the State of Israel was formed from a deeper religious inspiration, which was carried to Zion.¹⁷⁴ To Fackenheim, this means that the State of Israel manifests the Spiritual guidance of men, who either were religious Messianists or secular Jews moved by the Spirit even if unconsciously. The survival of Jews and their commitment to ideals are based on the religious inspiration of Zion. These ideas are deeply

(3/4), p.274.

¹⁷⁴ Emil L. Fackenheim, "The Renewal of the Zionist Impulse," Zionist Ideas 4(1982), p.38

rooted in the soul of Jews even if they are secular. Fackenheim believes that had it only been anti-Semitism that motivated the birth of the State of Israel, then the State could have been in Uganda. However Fackenheim feels that:

Teshuvah was suggested by Herzl himself with his vision of "Old-New-Land." The old was to be renewed, the new was to recover the old, and the process was to take place not in some purely symbolic or spiritual realm but in "the Land."¹⁷⁵

To what extent does the State embody the idea of the old but also the new Jewish spirituality? It is useful to go back to both the Bible and Kabbalah to understand that, for Fackenheim, Jewish sovereignty is the "beginning of our redemption."¹⁷⁶ To continue to be, thus involves an absolute commitment on the part of the secular and religious Jews:

one believing, the other acting as though he believed despite everything, because---to quote a Kabbalistic saying-- "the impulse below calls forth an impulse above."¹⁷⁷

To Fackenheim the State of Israel is connected to the Holocaust and there is a mutual bond between them that is

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p.35.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p.38

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., p.38

unbreakable. The bond is not historical in the sense that, if there had been no Holocaust, the State still could not have come to fruition. Nor is the bond only religious, in the sense that the Holocaust, to Fackenheim, connects directly to the Messiah or punishment for sins. Here Fackenheim finds that to give theological causation for the creation of the State of Israel, after the Holocaust, is sacrilegious. The Holocaust and the State of Israel are connected by the authentic Jewish response that occurred during the Holocaust. The bond that exists between the Holocaust and the State of Israel was created by those who rebelled against the Nazis, whether they were religious or secular. The Jews who rebelled against the Nazis did so with dignity, whether or not they survived.

Rebellion took the form of secular armed resistance, as in the Warsaw ghettos, in those who were engaged in Jewish defense. Many of these Jews turned against God as they took destiny in their own hands. To Fackenheim, however, these Jews were, indeed, pious. They cited God against Himself and the biblical promises He made to Jews. These Jews believed that Israel would continue to live and

that revolt was necessary for the dignity of all future generations.¹⁷⁸

Many of those who resisted were also believing Jews, who according to one Treblinka prisoner, R. Israel Shapiro, died in the conviction that the ashes from Treblinka would purify all Israel.¹⁷⁹ He further stated that their sacrifices invoked the coming of the days of the Messiah.¹⁸⁰ To Fackenheim, the State of Israel is a redemption, which is not attributable to the Holocaust-- rather redemption is the process that began with resistance.

Redemptive manifestation is understood by Fackenheim as the Tikkun, which is possible now in the State of Israel because it was already present in the Holocaust.¹⁸¹ The Tikkun is seen as Israel itself. Tikkun is present historically in the revival of the language and the rebuilding of the ancient land. Unlike the Hegelian notion of a newly created supremacy, Tikkun calls forth Teshuva which is a return to the old ideas of the Bible so that the State of Israel represents that which once was and again can be in the present and future.

¹⁷⁸ Emil L. Fackenheim, The Jewish Return Into History, p.284.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p.281.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., p.281

¹⁸¹ Emil Fackenheim, "Jewish Existence after the Holocaust," in Michael Morgan, ed. The Jewish Thought of Emil Fackenheim: A Reader, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), p.194.

Fragment III

This segment will discuss:

1. The supercession of Christianity-- based on the Notion and the double representation, as well as the existence of the state where the presence of Spirit is actual;
2. Hegelian Notion and the confusion of boundaries between human and Divine;
3. double renunciation in Midrash, seen in covenantal mutuality and revelation;
4. in Midrash covenantal mutuality and Sinaitic Revelation are freedom and Grace;
5. covenantal mutuality as manifest in Job, the murmurs at Meribah, and secular responses to the Holocaust;
6. and Sinaitic Revelation and covenantal mutuality retrieves the Old Law for the present.

A further Hegelian fragment retrieved by Fackenheim is the Hegelian dialectical relationship between the human and Divine permeability of boundaries. To Hegel, the supercession of Christianity is historically absolute because it is the only religion that has double representation, that is Hegel's Notion of the religious ground where the Divine and human are united and separated in that the finite is augmented by the infinite and the

infinite is concretized by the finite.¹⁸² To Hegel, revelation obscures the boundaries between human and divine so that a human being expresses divine freedom and universality. Also, to Hegel, Revelation in Protestantism is an ongoing event as the German State has reached the zenith of its power and intellectual development. To Hegel, then, supercession of Christianity is complete on two accounts: divine human permeability in Revelation and Revelation as historically complete in a powerful state. Christianity, to Hegel, surpasses Judaism because in Judaism Mosaic law does not lend itself to the double representation found in revelation and, to Jews, revelation is no longer possible given that without a state Jews are no longer part of history.¹⁸³

For Fackenheim, the double representation in Hegel obscures the boundary between what is human and what is Divine. In Hegel, the historical supercession of Christianity means that the Trinity, as manifest in the human being, has absolute freedom to posit a totally new worldview. What emerges in the Notion, that is the meeting ground between human and Divine, is thought, which is at once both human and Divine. Fackenheim finds that Hegel's

¹⁸² Emil Fackenheim "Hegel and Judaism: A Flaw in the Hegelian Meditation," p.167.

Notion is impossible. It is impossible to be both-- Divine and human. Also, it is impossible to derive a philosophy based on the confusion between human and Divine boundaries. To be both is in effect to impose a type of tyranny.¹⁸⁴ To Fackenheim tyranny is possible any time the other does not remain separate and distinct from the Divine and infinite power. The separation and distinctiveness of the other in Judaism is, for Fackenheim, the ground of mutuality, a lack of unilateral possibility of tyrannical power.

Fackenheim sees Judaism's concept of Revelation and covenant as two areas of Divine human mutuality, where in their dialectical togetherness both remain separate and distinct. Divine human mutuality represents a double renunciation for the Jew in that death is renounced for eternal life, as well as the eternal is negated to affirm the finite self, in confidence that Divine Presence has granted Jews freedom to be distinct. In this double renunciation, the Jew is confident in both his eternal possibilities and in his finite self. In addition, for the Jew, thought is never other than human or the Divine other than the Divine.

¹⁸³ Emil Fackenheim, The Jewish Bible after the Holocaust: A Re-reading p.3.

¹⁸⁴ Emil L. Fackenheim, Encounters between Judaism and Modern Philosophy: A Preface to Future Jewish Thought. p.161.

To Fackenheim, Hegel did not understand that Midrash, the most profound, normative thought ever produced within Judaism, is explicitly doubly representational because of its concept of covenant and revelation. Both covenant and revelation are expressions of Divine human mutuality, freedom and Grace.¹⁸⁵ In Midrash, Fackenheim finds the double renunciation (renunciation of renunciation), since death is renounced for the purpose of restoring life and confidence.¹⁸⁶ In Midrash, the word of God's commandment was so powerful that when the Israelites heard it "their souls left them."¹⁸⁷

When the Word told God that His law is full of life not death yet it caused death "the Holy One blessed be He, sweetened (i.e. softened) the Word for them."¹⁸⁸

A Divine commandment manifests infinity and grace in the gift of the Commandments. The finite is elevated to the infinite just as the infinite descends to the finite. The word of the Commandments were sweetened so that the Israelites may live, not die. The acknowledgement of the human community as partner in divine-human covenant is based on a relationship of mutuality. In one Midrash, God

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p.162.

¹⁸⁶ Emil Fackenheim "Hegel and Judaism: A Flaw in the Hegelian Meditation," p.182.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p.182.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p.182.

states that He is not God unless Jews are His witness and testimony.¹⁸⁹ On the other hand, the incommensurability of the Divine is real and is fully explicated in the Midrash of Sim'on bar Yohai, who states that God needs human glorification but that He nevertheless is "glorified in Himself."¹⁹⁰

In Fackenheim, the mutuality of the covenant means that God is questioned in both His silence and His action. Job rebuked God for the death of his children. Similarly, to Fackenheim, the murmurers at Meribah were equally concerned with the fate of their children. Fackenheim writes that, in light of the children that died in Auschwitz, the reader has no choice but to take sides with the mothers of the children against Moses and against God Himself.¹⁹¹ Yet the State of Israel is a resurrection of hope. Fackenheim supports Buber's relationship between the I and Thou. Here human freedom is the basis of Divine-human mutuality where both the I and the Thou are separate and distinct personalities.

Covenantal mutuality is seen in the Sinaitic Revelation where the Commandments are given in perfect freedom. The Commandments are perceived as a gift and Jews

¹⁸⁹ Emil L. Fackenheim, The Jewish Return Into History, p.121.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p.122.

are free to accept or reject them. In the Sinaitic revelation, the Commanding Presence makes itself known through the Commandments and the Commandments themselves are the very life of the covenant.

Revelation of the Sinaitic commandments remains a distinct possibility in the present as it was in the past. To Fackenheim, the Sinaitic revelation retrieves the past in the present. It is here and now, as well as then-and-there for the reader who is willing to position himself at the foot of Sinai.¹⁹² Revelation is an ongoing event for anyone who relives the Sinaitic experience. What this means is that the present is based on the old Law and nothing new is added except the new historical context. To Fackenheim, revelation, in Judaism, is in the present post-Holocaust era-- a part of the Teshuva of the Tikkun Olam, which begins the process of Creation, Revelation, and Redemption. It is an ever-present reality given that the State of Israel is the beginning of the process of Teshuva.

Fragment IV

This fragment will look at:

1. Hegel's concept of idolatry ;
2. why idolatry is important to Fackenheim;

¹⁹¹ Emil L. Fackenheim, The Jewish Bible after the Holocaust: A Re-reading, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), p.32.

¹⁹² Ibid., p.12.

3. the midrashic concept of idolatry;
4. idolatry and Nazism;
5. why Jews are less prone to idolatry;
6. creation ex-nihilo, miracles and the power of God in contrast to idolatry

Fackenheim picks up Hegel's idea that without the non-union between Divine and the human, religion is idolatrous.¹⁹³ To Hegel, the union with the Divine without the nonunion can lead to an escape into unreality. He saw that the union between the human being and the Divine promotes true religion . It enables the infinite to become concretized in the finite, so that the union represents true freedom and authentic existence. The non-union enables the finite to return to its humanity and its finite existence. To Hegel, idolatry occurs when there is no non-union and the human self flees from its real finitude into an unreal pious emotion.¹⁹⁴ To Fackenheim, Hegel would have learned from Judaism that, like Christianity, Judaism is also a witness to the togetherness of the Divine and human, and more importantly that the Divine is, and remains, other than the human.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Emil Fackenheim "Hegel and Judaism: A Flaw in the Hegelian Meditation," p.162.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p.164.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p.184.

Fackenheim aims to expand the concept of idolatry, which includes modern metaphoric gods like power and infinity. This identification he finds in Midrash. At length Fackenheim discusses Midrash where idolatry includes the feelings of power and infinity, which are displaced into objects of desire. The feelings can be consumed by the objects which become "false gods." Herein sex, money or the nation becomes the object of worship. What is particularly important to Fackenheim is to see the connection between leaders and the masses, whereby feelings of infinity and power are reinforced each in the other.

Modern idolatry in Midrash is analogous to the worship of statues in ancient days, so that the ancient Midrash speaks to us from days gone by as clearly now as it did then. It is possible that the evil inclination, which commits adultery, or cheats a neighbor, can, in the future, become the actual prostration before a statue.¹⁹⁶ It appears that the Midrash is less concerned with whether the idol is an actual statue or a metaphor for the subjective form, which represents itself as a "false god." The Midrash rather makes the analogy that once the most simple and basic commandments are abrogated, it is possible to commit

¹⁹⁶ Emil Fackenheim, Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy: A Preface to Future Jewish Thought, (New York: Schocken books, 1980) p.178

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p.173.

the worst evil. There is, however, a difference between sin and evil. The ancient rabbis have removed idolatry from all other sins so that the graveness of idolatry could not be mistaken for anything else.¹⁹⁷

To Fackenheim, the graveness of idolatry is death, a metaphor for an escape from reality into an inauthentic existence. Sin can be absolved by a personal encounter between God and the human being. Idolatry cannot be absolved as it is hidden from the person's eyes and not even recognized as idolatry. In the modern era, idolatry is the most serious problem because a modern person considers the worship of idols as long-past, and does not recognize within himself the projection of concepts of infinity and power, which were once placed on idols. To the modern human being, the worship of idols is overcome by the age of Enlightenment.

To Fackenheim idolatry is less likely to occur in Judaism because the modern Jewish religious thinker cannot simply take his thoughts as the all-encompassing reality for the present. The Jew has to reflect on the classical sources where idolatry is written about and is often found to be the products of a person who does not reflect on infinity and power, and simply acts according to impulse

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p.176.

and desire. The Jew must expose his thoughts to the past, that is the classical sources of Judaism such as the Bible. Talmud and Midrash, and here find that his thinking may differ from the ancient wisdom.¹⁹⁸ Even though the thinker may differ from the classical sources, to Fackenheim, the thinker has the benefit of self-exposure, which makes thinking authentic.¹⁹⁹ Classical Jewish sources teach that idolatry must be resisted even on pain of death.²⁰⁰ In fact the Midrash relates that to repudiate idolatry is as if a person was faithful to the whole Torah.

Fackenheim expands the concept of idolatry to include the Holocaust. Here Fackenheim speaks of Nazism as the most frightful, unique idolatry. Fackenheim states that this new idolatry is more mature than the old because it arises from a demythologization.²⁰¹ The worship of Volk and Fuhrer is not thought of as idolatrous. The Volk and the Fuhrer embody each other and take each other as part of an enlightened modern freedom. The modern demythologization withdraws the infinite feelings for objects but the feeling for infinity does not vanish. The feeling for infinity is transformed in the inner realm of the human being-- to what Fackenheim

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p.173.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p.173.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p.173.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p.187.

calls an "internalized idolatry."²⁰² Fackenheim states that Hitler could not demand religious worship, but the passion of Nazi idolatry matches any ancient idol worship.²⁰³ He observes that, to the ancient rabbis, all sin, error or ignorance is not idolatry. Neither is idolatry the humanistic ideals that search for an infinite, higher and perfected self. What these movements have in common is an internalization of divine-otherness, even as they are atheistic. Internalized idolatry is different from all other internalizations in that it represents passions and fantasies that are void of rationality, and they contain specific possibilities for infinite and radical evil.²⁰⁴ To Fackenheim, Judaism bears witness to the ultimate idolatry-- Auschwitz-- an infinite evil,²⁰⁵ unlike any other. It is so unique that it may have even ruptured the very substance of God.

To Fackenheim, testimony against modern idolatry lies in the religious inspiration that comes from the actual worship of God.²⁰⁶ For him, Jewish demythologizing of the world is less likely to lead to idolatry as there is non-

²⁰² Ibid., p.187.

²⁰³ Ibid., p.187

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p.190.

²⁰⁵ Emil Fackenheim "Hegel and Judaism: A Flaw in the Hegelian Meditation," p.18

²⁰⁶ Emil L.Fackenheim, Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy, p.198.

union between the Divine and the human given the incommensurability between the two. Judaism's concept of creation defines the difference between Creator and the created even when there is an incursion of the Divine in the human. Judaism's covenantal nature, however, means that although God is sovereign, human beings enter into a relationship-- "partnership" [albeit limited] and just as a Midrash can portray God as studying Torah, human beings can be considered to be godlike because they are created in God's image. In addition, Creation ex-nihilo means that the Jewish religious consciousness holds the world as Divine and therefore holy. This is not to suggest that there is a confusion of boundaries between the human and the Divine. In Jewish Mysticism the attributes of Justice and Goodness forever maintain the world and also cause the finite to perish.²⁰⁷

It is in religious consciousness that the Divine-human nexus meets, is separated and held apart.²⁰⁸ The meeting and separation can only occur because the Divine breaks through into the "world's worldliness"²⁰⁹. Fackenheim sees that if the meeting and separation occurs only in thought, this would not be an authentic existence. However, in Judaism,

²⁰⁷ Emil Fackenheim "Hegel and Judaism: A Flaw in the Hegelian Meditation," p.165.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p.166.

this "psychosomatic" place of religious consciousness is acted out and does not remain in thought only.²¹⁰ For Fackenheim, is acted out whenever a Jew walks in front of God and pays Him honor.

Fragment V

This fragment will discuss:

- 1.Hegel on epoch making events in relation to Absolute Spirit;
- 2.the Spirit in Judaism in the covenantal idea of the Akedah
- 3.the 614th Commandment in relation to the covenantal idea
- 4.the Holocaust as testimony to the 614th Commandment
- 5.Midrash on epoch-making events and the Voice of history in revelation and the state of Israel.
- 6.the Holy Spirit is returned to the Muselmanner through remembrance and repentance.

Hegel deals with the importance of the historical evolution of Spirit as it becomes manifest in life through epoch-making events such as the Reformation, the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. These events give witness to the evolution, in Hegel, of the "Absolute Spirit." Judaism, to Hegel, did not have the ability to be Spiritual in the modern era since the demise of the Jewish state made

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p.166.

Judaism ahistorical. However, borrowing on the concept of epoch-making events, Fackenheim understands the Holocaust as an epoch-making event and an integral part of the dialectical connection of Spirit in the Voice of the Akedah, to Sinai, and to the ashes of the Holocaust victims. To Fackenheim the Holocaust may have returned Judaism into history in ways that have not yet been realized.

Fackenheim deals extensively with the Akedah as it gives testimony to the connection between Judaism and God, and Judaism and the world.²¹¹ The Akedah, in Midrash, reveals the love that exists between the Jewish people and God, and the Jewish people and all other nations. The image of God implies that life is dignified by God's Presence. The image of God in the Akedah is that He comes down to the world of human beings. He is the commanding Presence of the Voice in history.

What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou shouldst think of him? Yet hast Thou made him, but a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with honor and glory."²¹²

²¹⁰ Ibid., p.166.

²¹¹ Emil Fackenheim, Encounters Between Judaism And Modern Philosophy, p.48.

²¹² Emil Fackenheim, The Quest for Past and Future, p.234.

Fackenheim makes extensive use of such midrashic sources to illuminate the importance of the covenantal connection among God, Judaism and the world. One Midrash relates that Abraham feared God and thus he was chosen to be the witness to other nations.²¹³ In another Midrash, Abraham establishes the covenant with God. Abraham is also depicted as wanting restitution for his suffering over the binding of Isaac and that God should forgive the sins of Israel in the future.²¹⁴ Abraham asks God to show mercy in judgment and bring redemption to all nations²¹⁵ It is important to note that Abraham is the father of the covenant between Israel and God, and Israel and all other nations.

For Fackenheim the root experiences such as the Akedah and Sinai were always present in the epoch-making events such as the Babylonian Exile and the end of prophecy. They come back even stronger and served to reinforce the unity of Jews and Judaism. After the Holocaust these root experiences are re-sounded in the Voice at Auschwitz, in the 614th commandment. This commandment bids Jews to survive, not to lose their humanity, not to compromise their ideals, and never to

²¹³ Emil L. Fackenheim, Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy: A Preface to Future Jewish Thought, p 65.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p 67.

forsake their God.²¹⁶ The Voice of the 614th commandment, from the ashes of the Holocaust, forbid Jews to be cynical about the ideals that have shaped humanity, to despair of the world or to withdraw into mysticism where out of despair they leave the world.²¹⁷ These root experiences represent a Voice whose aim is to give testimony and witness for future generation of Jews and non-Jews.²¹⁸ Fackenheim finds that the Voice was the Presence of God in all the epoch-making events in Jewish history, which testify to the sanctity and dignity of human life.

Fackenheim explains how the Nazi's "almost destroyed" the sanctity of the image of God and yet Jewish resistance to Nazism continued in both the physical and spiritual dimension. When Pelagia Lewinska grasped the core concept of Nazism, which was to cause such self-disgust leading to death or suicide, she felt the importance of continuing to live.²¹⁹ The Hasidim, who continued to observe the Mitzvah of tefillin, resisted the destruction of the image of God.²²⁰ Armed Jewish resistance was evident in the forests,

²¹⁵ Ibid., p 67.

²¹⁶ Emil Fackenheim, "Tikkun After the Holocaust," p.274.

²¹⁷ Ibid., p.274.

²¹⁸ Emil L. Fackenheim, Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy: A Preface to Future Jewish Thought, p 66.

²¹⁹ Emil L Fackenheim, To Mend the World: Foundations of Future Jewish Thought, pp.217,209.

²²⁰ Ibid.,p.219.

ghettoes and in the murder camps themselves.²²¹ Fackenheim writes that the Nazi attempt to destroy the image of God in the Jew was successfully resisted: "supremely so by the survivor."²²²

Yet it was possible to destroy the Holy Spirit. The memory of the Muselmanner, the dead that are yet alive, is the real testimony to Fackenheim of "non-men" Jews at Auschwitz, who gave up their "Holy Spirit."²²³ These were the people who could not transcend or go beyond their immediacy. The memory of the Holocaust may serve to open the gates of repentance and reconnect the Divine spark between the Holocaust victims and those that are living in the present. Yet Fackenheim relates Midrashim where it is evident that the last judgment belongs to God alone. Even Moses was not granted his wish to see the promised land as in anger he forgot to bless God for His power to perform miracles.²²⁴

Fackenheim states that prayer has the power of repentance. It is the great Teshuva of our times. If masses of Christians, Protestant and Catholic, within and outside Nazi-occupied Europe, prayed for Jews as did Lichtenberg,

²²¹ Ibid., p.219

²²² Emil L. Fackenheim, "Tikkun After the Holocaust," p.274.

²²³ Wm. Novak, "An Interview with Emil Fackenheim," p.31.

Nazism would have collapsed.²²⁵ In Midrash the power of prayer is that the Holy Spirit dwells in it.²²⁶ In an interview, Fackenheim speaks of not giving up on the idea of the Messianic Age-- for it has been proven that man cannot do everything and God is omnipotent.²²⁷ The Holocaust, to Fackenheim, is the great Shibboleth of our time.

The religious Jew who has heard the Voice of Sinai must continue to listen as he hears the commanding Voice of Auschwitz. And the secularist Jew, who has all along lost Sinai and now hears the Voice of Auschwitz cannot abuse the Voice as a means to destroy four thousand years of Jewish believing testimony.²²⁸

In Midrashim that speak of Isaac's martyrdom, the Akedah is not about child sacrifice.²²⁹ These Midrashim are witness and testimony to resurrection and eternal life. Here the issue is atonement for sins. Fackenheim speculates that the purpose of Jewish martyrdom might lie in the hereafter. It might be possible that Jewish martyrs atone

²²⁴ The Holy Scriptures, According To The Masoretic Text, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955), Deuteronomy, 32:51-52. p.283.

²²⁵ Emil L. Fackenheim, To Mend The World: Foundations of Future Jewish Thought, p.291.

²²⁶ Emil L. Fackenheim, To Mend The World: Foundations of Future Jewish Thought, p.293.

²²⁷ Wm. Novak, "An Interview with Emil Fackenheim," p.31.

²²⁸ Emil L. Fackenheim, God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections, p.89.

²²⁹ Emil L. Fackenheim, Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy: A Preface to Future Jewish Thought, p.66.

for the world's sins as well as their own.²³⁰ In some Midrashim and Tannah, Isaac lives; he does not die. The emergent theme is the Messianic promise that, one day, Jews will be as numerous as the stars.²³¹ The emergent theme is the Voice that gives testimony and witness to God's Presence in history.

Yet, to Fackenheim, the evil of the Holocaust cannot be compared to any other epoch-making event in Jewish history. The radical evil may have ruptured the very substance of God.²³² For Fackenheim, it even suggests that the covenantal idea has ended because Jews no longer want a God who did not save Jews as He did at the Red Sea. Fackenheim does not spare Judaism questions that are both disturbing, but necessary. He examines how it is possible for Jews to offer testimony for God's Presence given the atrocities of Auschwitz. How can a Jew remain "a witness unto nations" and if so what is that testimony.²³³ In the death camps, did God keep his covenant, as he did not save Jews as he previously had saved Isaac?²³⁴ Another question:

²³⁰ Emil L. Fackenheim, God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections, p.74.

²³¹ Emil L. Fackenheim, Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy: A Preface to Future Jewish Thought, p.56.

²³² Michael L. Morgan, The Jewish Thought of Emil Fackenheim, p.187.

²³³ Emil L. Fackenheim, God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections, p.94.

²³⁴ Ibid., p.77.

did Job forget his own children?²³⁵ Fackenheim compares these children to those who were murdered at Auschwitz.²³⁶

The living children cannot replace the one million children who died.²³⁷ Yet the Akedah theme, for Fackenheim, is reborn and resurrected in the creation of the State of Israel. When Jewish hope was murdered in Auschwitz, Jews restored a Jewish state "remembering" Ezekiel's prophecy and image of death and resurrection, of a messianic future and a world-to-come beyond time.²³⁸ Even though those murdered were not resurrected, there is Ezekiel's promise for the future: "I will bring you into the land of Israel."²³⁹ The "dried up old bones" will be resurrected.²⁴⁰ [Ezekiel's prophecy of eternal life for Jews is commemorated in the Zionist anthem.]²⁴¹

For Fackenheim, the proof that God is still the covenantal God of Abraham is seen in the redemption that has taken place in our time-- the creation of the State of Israel. God redeems His people as he will redeem all other nations. The Voice in history is part of the Zionist spirit, even among the secular who are not conscious of the

²³⁵ Emil L. Fackenheim, The Jewish Bible after the Holocaust; A Re-reading p.94

²³⁶ Ibid., p.94

²³⁷ Ibid., p.94

²³⁸ Ibid., p.69.

²³⁹ Ibid., p.67

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p.66

²⁴¹ Ibid., p.68.

Voice. This Zionist impulse could not have come to being without the interfacing between the modern-secular and religious Jews.²⁴² Although Zionism is secular, Fackenheim here invokes the position of Abraham Isaac Kook: The State of Israel is the hidden religious inspiration carried to Zion as well as, in part, the work of God.²⁴³ For Fackenheim, "God commanded us to be Jews and we have to remain Jews until He releases us."²⁴⁴ The witnessing and the testimony of Holocaust survivors has metaphysical dimension, as resistance is not simply survival. but has ontological meaning.²⁴⁵ The Tzimtzum of God during the Holocaust may reflect the self-imposed exile of God without which the very being of the world would be impossible.²⁴⁶ In one Midrash God weeps at the inhuman condition that Jews experienced in exile and yet He is powerless to change it. Nevertheless the *Shechina* or Holy Spirit, remained with Jews during the exile. The love that exists in the three tiered relationship between God and Israel and Israel and other nations calls forth a mending-- a Tikkun which enables more and more of God to become manifest in the

²⁴²Emil L. Fackenheim, To Mend The World: Foundations of Future Jewish Thought, p.144.

²⁴³Emil Fackenheim " The Renewal Of The Zionist Impulse," p.38.

²⁴⁴Wm. Novak, "An Interview with Emil Fackenheim." .p.17.

²⁴⁵Emil Fackenheim," Tikkun After the Holocaust," p.277.

²⁴⁶Michael L. Morgan, The Jewish Thought of Emil Fackenheim, p.187.

world.²⁴⁷ A hasidic rabbi. Sholom Teichthal .wrote the following from Auschwitz just shortly before he died:

Now if we shall rise and ascend to Zion we can yet bring about a Tikkun of the souls of the people of Israel who were murdered as martyrs since it is on their account that we are stimulated to return to our ancestral inheritance...thus we bring about their rebirth²⁴⁸

Fragment VI

- 1.Hegel on the intimacy between the human and the Divine;
- 2.The Torah, the mediator between heaven and earth;
- 3.Revelation, the intimacy between human and Divine;
- 4.and Miracles and Revelation at Sinai are historically repeated in the human and Divine encounter

Hegel writes on the Spiritual intimacy that comes from the close proximity between heaven and earth. To Hegel, Spirit is the self-othering which exists in union between the human being and the Divine. To Hegel, the union of the Divine and human gives rise to love, universality and freedom. To Hegel, Judaism lacked the inwardness of Spirit and was based on its observance of the Laws. He saw the basis of Jewish observance as fear of God rather than autonomy and free will. To Fackenheim, Midrash describes the intimacy between the human and the Divine. For the

²⁴⁷ Ibid., p.187.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., p.188.

Midrash, the Torah is the mediation in the dialectical relationship between God and Israel. Here the intermediary between God and the human being is heaven itself and heaven itself is found in the Commandments. Fackenheim quotes Midrash on how God "descends" in order to make manifest to man either His nature or His will:

One might think that the Glory actually descended from Heaven. and was transferred to Mount Sinai; but Scripture says: 'I have talked with you from Heaven.'²⁴⁹

In the Biblical act of revelation, God descends into time, making it meaningful even in the sight of eternity.²⁵⁰ The Ten Commandments were designed for time, for fulfillment within history. Revelation is Presence of the Divine. The Divine Presence, the *Shechina*, is intimately involved in Jewish life, such as during prayer and study.²⁵¹ Revelation is the incursion of eternity in time, even if time itself is not ultimately transformed. If revelation changed time to eternity, it would not be revelation but the Messianic "end of days."²⁵² Revelation is a central doctrine of traditional Judaism. In effect, the events at Mount Sinai are as miraculous as is the parting of the Red

²⁴⁹ Emil Fackenheim, "Can There Be Judaism Without Revelation?" Quest for Past and Future: Essays in Jewish Theology, (London: Indiana University Press, 1968), p.67.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., p.67.

²⁵¹ Emil Fackenheim, What is Judaism: An Interpretation For The Present Age, p.164.

Sea.²⁵³ The Mishnah considers the denial of the Torah *min hashamyim* (Torah from Heaven) so serious an offence that it denies the disbeliever the world to come.²⁵⁴

To Maimonides, revelation is a fundamental truth because the world was created out of nothing.²⁵⁵ Fackenheim takes Buber's concept of revelation to include the openness to the idea that God can speak and that if a person is open he or she may hear God's voice.²⁵⁶ Revelation, to Fackenheim, is an incursion of a Divine reality other than man into the world of man.²⁵⁷ As opposed to being a loss of individuality, the encounter asserts the self in its radical uniqueness and distinctiveness from others and from God. The encounter is a radical affirmation of love and freedom.

Fackenheim links miracles to the intimacy in the encounter between the human and the Divine. Miracles such as revelation frequently occur when Judaism's ontological essence is threatened such as in the destruction of the First and Second Temple, the Spanish Inquisition and now

²⁵² Emil Fackenheim, "Can There Be Judaism Without Revelation?" p.67.

²⁵³ Ibid., p.69.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., p.70.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., p.71.

²⁵⁶ The National Hillel Summer Institute eds. "Can The Modern Jew Believe In Revelation?" The Sabbath as Idea and Experience; An Introduction to the Meaning of Jewish Life in Our Time, (Washington: B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, 1962), 17th Annual Session, p.65.

²⁵⁷ Emil Fackenheim, What Is Judaism? An Interpretation For The Present Age, p.27.

the Holocaust.²⁵⁸ To Fackenheim Jewish history is marked by periods of great tragedies when it was possible to sever the connection between God and Jews. It was always possible to disbelieve God's Presence in history. Yet these periods of great upheaval were marked by a renewal in the study, prayer and practice of Judaism as if the root experiences came back even stronger. To Fackenheim it is indeed miraculous that the oral Torah continued to pave the way for the incorporation of the great watersheds of Jewish history.²⁵⁹

Fackenheim cites Buber in support of the view that miracles have, at their starting points, an abiding astonishment. This astonishment cannot be destroyed; it is so clear and transparent that it permits the entry and the glimpse of the Sole Power into what is termed a totally natural phenomenon.²⁶⁰ Fackenheim also cites Elie Wiesel who compared the Holocaust with Sinai in revelatory significance.²⁶¹

The apprehension of God is vouched through the attributes of God that are alive in the Commandments. To apprehend this is to be in total awe of the connection

²⁵⁸Emil L.Fackenheim, God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections, p.8.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., p.12.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., p.89.

²⁶¹Emil L.Fackenheim, "The Renewal of the Zionist Impulse," p.84.

between the human and the Divine. The ancient rabbis stated that people should not serve out of fear for the sake of a reward rather "let the awe of God be upon you."²⁶² To obey the law is based on freedom of choice but the choice is no choice at all given that the laws are recognized as having been given out of love and concern for the human condition:

The Torah manifests love in the very act of manifesting commandments; for in commanding humans rather than angels, it accepts these humans in their humanity.²⁶³

Fackenheim states that modern Jewish philosophers must remember that their ancestors would often live by the belief that "when the Torah came into the world, freedom came into the world."²⁶⁴ The Midrash states:

Would that they had deserted Me and kept my Torah; for if they had occupied themselves with the Torah the leaven which is in it would have brought them back to Me.²⁶⁵

²⁶² Emil L. Fackenheim, Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy: A Preface to Future Jewish Thought, p.37.

²⁶³ Ibid., p.51.

²⁶⁴ Emil Fackenheim "The Revealed Morality of Judaism and Modern Thought: A Confrontation with Kant," in ed. Arnold Jacob Wolf, Rediscovering Judaism: Reflections On A New Theology, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965), p.75

²⁶⁵ Ibid., p.53.

Section IV Secondary critique of Fackenheim/Hegel

I Positive criticism

- 1) Reinier Munk
- 2) Michael Morgan
- 3) Louis Greenspan

There are several ways in which to read Fackenheim on Hegel. One way is to do what I have done-- taking Fackenheim's Hegelian fragments and looking at how closely they parallel his understanding of selected Midrash. To do this is to see the extent that Fackenheim is influenced by Hegel and the degree to which Jewish philosophy forms a parallel and reply to Hegel's thought. Some authors [Reiner Munk, for example] describe Fackenheim's indebtedness to Hegel. Munk, indeed, finds Hegel to be the basis of Fackenheim's reasoning process and the source of the unity Fackenheim achieves between Judaism and philosophy ²⁶⁶ Munk states that Fackenheim calls his Jewish philosophy a form of post-Hegelian philosophy, but nevertheless Hegelian.²⁶⁷ To Munk, Fackenheim forges the same synthesis between religion, philosophy and history as does Hegel. He further believes that Fackenheim achieves unity between all three spheres by the commanding voice, so that

²⁶⁶ Ibid., p.229.

revelation is the fiber that weaves all of his texts together. Munk states that resistance against the destruction of the holiness of life is what Fackenheim calls the commanding voice of Auschwitz, or the 614th mitzvah.²⁶⁸ Munk feels that, to Fackenheim, any synthesis between modern philosophy and Judaism will in the future have to include the sanctity of life-- the revelation of the Holocaust.²⁶⁹

Munk also notes that Fackenheim's strategy is to override the rupture that the Holocaust has caused in our ability to read philosophical works. Teshuva is the basis for the return of philosophical thought so once again we can comprehend great ideas and pay attention to the texts of Western civilization. To Munk, the Western tradition of thought and morality becomes, in Fackenheim, the basis for new dialectical thinking that, in itself, is tensionless and not ruptured by the Holocaust.²⁷⁰

Michael Morgan in "Philosophy, History and the Jewish Thinker; Philosophy and Jewish Thought in To Mend the World," states that, to Fackenheim, it is important to "listen" to classical texts, to its meaning and the

²⁶⁷ Ibid., p.224.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., p.232.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., p.233.

²⁷⁰ Louis Greenspan and Graeme Nicholson eds."Synopsis," in Fackenheim: German Philosophy and Jewish Thought, p.143

consequences it has for new hermeneutical possibilities.²⁷¹ Morgan notes that Fackenheim's forty year task was the reconciliation of philosophy with Judaism. Morgan commenting on Encounters Between Judaism and Modern Philosophy, states that there is the intermingling of these two disciplines, so that Judaism engages modern philosophy with its own dialectic. The unity between philosophy and Judaism is achieved in To Mend The World.²⁷² In these texts it becomes evident that, to Fackenheim, Jewish history challenges philosophy; it also provides the opportunity to restore it.²⁷³

Louis Greenspan in "Fackenheim as Zionist" notes the similarity between Hegel and Fackenheim. He states that there is an echo of Hegel in Fackenheim's writing.²⁷⁴ He states that the echo is the Hegelian sensitivity to world historical events. Hegel thought that the rise of Christianity and the French Revolution were historical watersheds in that they initiated new epochs. To Greenspan, Fackenheim portrays the Holocaust and the rise of Israel as epoch-making events.

²⁷¹ Michael L. Morgan, "Philosophy, History, and the Jewish Thinker: Philosophy and Jewish Thought in To Mend the World," in Louis Greenspan and Graeme Nicholson eds Fackenheim: German Philosophy and Jewish Thought, p.145.

²⁷² Ibid., p.145.

²⁷³ Louis Greenspan and Graeme Nicholson eds. "Synopsis," p.141.

II Negative criticism

1. Reinier Munk and Fackenheim in relation to Orthodox Judaism;
2. Gregory Baum on Fackenheim in relation to right-wing ideology;
3. Louis Greenspan on Fackenheim's Zionism being akin to that of R. Kook.

Reinier Munk finds that Fackenheim's way of discussing Midrash presents an unorthodox view of Judaism. The root experiences that are dialectically interconnected to the epoch-making events are problematic.²⁷⁵ Munk believes that Fackenheim has changed the meaning of traditional Kabbalah, so that there is an actual breach between God and man as the Holocaust has caused, in part, the rupture in God's substance.²⁷⁶ Fackenheim's description of the Sho'ah increasingly becomes identified with an actual rupture in God's substance. This challenges Rabbinic Judaism, which does not conceive of an actual breach between God and man, nor does it give the Holocaust authority to alter the God-man relationship. Munk finds that the Holocaust, in Fackenheim, has occupied such a central place that in fact

²⁷⁴ Louis Greenspan, "Fackenheim as Zionist," in Louis Greenspan and Graeme Nicholson eds. Fackenheim: German Philosophy and Jewish Thought, p.206.

²⁷⁵ Reinier Munk, "Revelation and Resistance: A Reflection on the Thought of Emil Fackenheim," p.236.

it competes with "root experiences."²⁷⁷ Munk states that increasingly, the Holocaust and the State of Israel, in Fackenheim, assumes a revelational character. The redeeming presence in the State of Israel is also the commanding presence along with the Holocaust. If Fackenheim means that, the Holocaust has a revelational character than it become a root experience. As a root experience the Holocaust is elevated the same status as the Akedah, and Sinai.²⁷⁸ This again challenges orthodoxy.²⁷⁹

Scholars like Gregory Baum, see Fackenheim as fideistic and rightwing, in asserting that Judaism has emerged at the helm of the synthesis between modern philosophy and Judaism. Baum asserts that Fackenheim abolishes the universal message of Judaism, and transforms it to suit right-wing ideologies.²⁸⁰ This criticism is levied against Fackenheim, who presents the Holocaust as so quintessentially unique that it no longer becomes possible for Jews to identify in the with universal concerns such as the plight of Arabs, the mass killings in Central America

²⁷⁶ Ibid., p.236

²⁷⁷ Ibid., pp.236 & 239.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p.236.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., pp.235 & 238.

²⁸⁰ Louis Greenspan and Graeme Nicholson eds. "Synopsis," p.142.

or the land claims of the Native people.²⁸¹ To Fackenheim, the 614th commandment consumes all of Jewish life so that concerns with other political issues do not need to involve Jews.²⁸² Obedience to this commandment demands that Jews suspend the ideals that people, not so singled out and threatened, regard as ethical guides. The basic point here is that the 614th commandment singles out Jews.²⁸³ Jews must be concerned with the survival of the State of Israel and that might mean at the expense of all other ethical issues. To Fackenheim, unless the rupture of the Holocaust is recognized, thinking, whether religious or secular, has no viable future.²⁸⁴

Louis Greenspan contends that Fackenheim sees Israel at the helm of world-historical significance. Greenspan invokes a Hegel-Fackenheim parallel, which he sees in Fackenheim; Zion, too, might have taken up the mantle of a failed European or German state of the 19th century.²⁸⁵ Indeed, Greenspan notes that Fackenheim claims a strong affinity with religious Zionism and the teachings of Rav Kuk [Kook] however, without the absolute priority of

²⁸¹ Gregory Baum. "Fackenheim and Christianity," in Louis Greenspan and Graeme Nicholson eds Fackenheim: German Philosophy and Jewish Thought, p.184.

²⁸² Ibid., p.184.

²⁸³ Ibid., p.185.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., p.185.

²⁸⁵ Louis Greenspan, "Fackenheim as Zionist," p.218.

settling the whole land of Israel.²⁸⁶ Teshuvah is played out in Israel. Israel has a historical mission; it is there where one finds an interplay between Judaism and democracy, and this is the place where a connection is made between the secular and religious.²⁸⁷ The state, however, is threatened by a religious fideism and by a secular liberalism that self-destructs when it comes to power.²⁸⁸ Today Israel presents us with an awareness of struggles, which has little evidence of the working out of a dialectical reconciliation between the religious and the secular. Even though the state is democratic, the view that the biblical land was given to the Jews may supercede, and change the democratic core of the State.²⁸⁹

Section V

Fackenheim and how he sees himself in relation to Hegel, modern philosophy and Midrash

- 1.Fackenheim on modern philosophy;
- 2.Fackenheim on Hegel;
- 3.Fackenheim on Midrash;
- 4.and the uniqueness of Judaism.

Fackenheim urges us not to dismiss the systematic "impulse" that joins together the disciplines of modern

²⁸⁶ Ibid., p.203.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., p.218.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., p.218

philosophy with Judaism.²⁹⁰ In To Mend the World, philosophy and Jewish thought are joined to show that Judaism is part of modernity and, indeed, even surpasses the Hegelian synthesis of reason and revelation. Fackenheim's tribute to Hegel is readily apparent. He considers himself a post-Hegelian rather than an anti or non-Hegelian.²⁹¹ As a post-Hegelian, Fackenheim enumerates several core ideas in Hegel that influenced his own thinking and which cannot be dismissed by modern philosophy. Hegel believed that philosophy and religion are rooted in history. To him, philosophical thought is based on human existence. It arises from existential conditions in order to rise partly, or wholly, above them. Secondly, to Hegel, existence itself has an irreducible religious dimension. Thirdly, he sees that religions may emerge out of several conditions, one of which may be a truth that originates in something entirely new in history, something unprecedented and so radical that it makes necessary a new philosophical appraisal²⁹² Fourthly, to Hegel, the modern way of thought preserves and supercedes rather than rejects or abandons the past²⁹³

²⁸⁹ Ibid., p.219.

²⁹⁰ Michael L. Morgan, "Philosophy, History, and the Jewish Thinker: Philosophy and Jewish Thought in To Mend the World," in Louis Greenspan and Graeme Nicholson eds. Fackenheim: German Philosophy and Jewish Thought, p.145.

²⁹¹ Michael L. Morgan ed. The Jewish Thought of Emil Fackenheim, p.313.

²⁹² Ibid., p.313.

²⁹³ Ibid., p.337.

Fackenheim in "A Retrospective of My Thoughts" notes his deep admiration for Hegel and his influence on his own Jewish philosophy. He observes that in his old age he will most likely return to the thoughts of Hegel and stay with the study of Hegelian fragments. For Fackenheim, the Absolute Idea of Hegel may be shattered, but the Absolute Idea is compared to an old man for whom religious doctrine is full of life experience. It contains the world and does not live outside of it.²⁹⁴ Fackenheim continues to see Hegel as the master of the synthesis between history, and religious and philosophical thought.

Fackenheim is able to still refer to himself as a post-Hegelian, because as much as he is in debt to Hegel, Fackenheim's Jewish philosophy establishes his distinctiveness. Graeme Nicholson, in "The Passing of Hegel's Germany," notes that Hegel and Fackenheim had a similar focus, that is the relationship between life and thought. This similarity, to Nicholson, makes Fackenheim a Hegelian.²⁹⁵ Fackenheim's response to Nicholson is that the passing of Hegel's Germany devastates philosophy, ["as philosophy is full of beauty except for its end and

²⁹⁴ Michael L. Morgan, Jewish Philosophers and Jewish Philosophy, p.226.

²⁹⁵ Fackenheim, "A Reply to My Critics," in Graeme Nicholson eds Fackenheim: German Philosophy and Jewish Thought, p.262.

climax."]²⁹⁶ Fackenheim states that "with Auschwitz, my direct debt to Hegel comes to an end."²⁹⁷

In Fackenheim's Jewish Bible After The Holocaust, we find Fackenheim's most comprehensive gloss on Hegel. Here he says Hegel had "chutzpah" to write about Christian supercession of the Old Testament when his knowledge of Judaism was inadequate. Fackenheim also acknowledges his own "chutzpah" to take on Hegel on his own merit. Fackenheim uses Rosenzweig's writings because Rosenzweig, who studied Hegel extensively, did not end up as a Hegelian.²⁹⁸ Buber is also very important to Fackenheim's intellectual underpinnings, in that both Rosenzweig and Buber counter the biblical hermeneutics of Hegel by making revelation the bridge between then and now.

Fackenheim finds that modern philosophy [including Hegel] is full of anti-Judaic prejudice. Hegel considers Judaism as a non-spiritual entity, lacking the seeds of the philosophy of Spirit.²⁹⁹ Hegel thinks that these seeds are to be found in both the Greeks and the Christians.³⁰⁰ The ultimate point in Hegel's criticism of Judaism is that it

²⁹⁶ Fackenheim, "A Reply to My Critics," p.262.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., p.263.

²⁹⁸ Emil Fackenheim, The Jewish Bible After the Holocaust: A Re-reading p.6.

²⁹⁹ Nathan Rotenstreich, The Recurring Pattern: Studies in Anti-Judaism in Modern Thought, (London:Weidenfeld and Nicolson LTD,1963),p.50.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., p.51

is a non-dialectical religion.³⁰¹ Judaism, to Fackenheim, challenges Hegel. Indeed, Fackenheim states that it would be to Hegel's surprise that Judaism has appeared on the world historical scene for the second time.

Fackenheim nevertheless considers Hegel to be the most important modern philosopher as, in him, history and life preserves the spiritual dimension that offers transcendence from brute historical chaos.³⁰² Fackenheim states that a philosophy which assumes transcendence and stays spiritual may well become, not only as Hegel wrote, the Owl of Minerva, but also the cock which announces the coming of a new day.³⁰³ To Mend the World, in spite of the fact that it ends on the note that it is impossible to overcome the Holocaust, relates in chapter four the rupture in the history of philosophical thought, as well as in Jewish and Christian relations. The 614th commandment bids Jews not to be hardened toward the world, not to allow great ideas to die. For if the great classical ideas were to die, Hitler would win out. To Fackenheim, Jewish philosophy is meant to shed light on the reciprocal relationship that exists between the Jewish heritage and philosophy, in general. The relationship between the two is a dialectical, reciprocal

³⁰¹ Ibid., p.58.

³⁰² Emil Fackenheim, The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought, p.13.

³⁰³ Ibid., p.13

exposure to each other.³⁰⁴ It is in the encounter between the two that Judaism and philosophy are tested against each other.

Fackenheim is resolute in his goal to prove that in the encounter between modern philosophy and Judaism, Judaism stands the test of all philosophies and remains distinctive. Fackenheim reiterates that Judaism does not collapse boundaries between the human and Divine and that is Judaism's most important characteristic. The distinction between human and Divine in Encounters Between Judaism And Modern Philosophy shows that Judaism cannot lapse into a self-grandiosing idolatry, between a subjective self and a world objective unity.³⁰⁵ Nor can Judaism tap into a fundamentalist reading of texts that posit absolute ideas. The schools of Hillel and Shamai often clashed in their interpretations of Oral Torah (in turn, interpretations of the written Torah) yet the rabbinic view was that "both are the words of the living God."³⁰⁶ Mishnaic commentaries observe that the Torah is inexhaustible-- it quotes Rabbi Ben Bag Bag: "turn it and turn it (the Torah scroll), for

³⁰⁴ Michael L. Morgan, ed, Jewish Philosophers and Jewish Philosophy, p.XV.

³⁰⁵ Emil L. Fackenheim, Encounters Between Judaism And Modern Philosophy: A Preface to Future Jewish Thought, p.94.

³⁰⁶ Emil L. Fackenheim, What is Judaism? An Interpretation For The Modern Age, p.70.

everything is in it."³⁰⁷ Mishnah Abot teaches that piety is interpretation.³⁰⁸ Fackenheim, however, notes that this is not a liberal interpretation where everything is possible nor an absolutist interpretation where change ceases.

Fackenheim's answer to the intellectual study of the Holocaust is found at the end of To Mend The World. Yet, to Fackenheim, the rupture in history caused by the Holocaust is so complete that any Tikkun can only be fragmentary.³⁰⁹ His metaphoric answer to intellectuals like Hegel is to conclude that it is impossible to overcome the Holocaust.³¹⁰ It is part of who we are and Jews cannot escape it.³¹¹ Others may desire that Judaism seeks a universalism, but the Jewish answer is to preserve a heritage that is in itself holy.³¹²

What behooves Judaism is to stay historically rooted and to be a witness to the incommensurability between the human and the Divine. In returning to God, Fackenheim believes that we turn to Him for judgment that will be forever remembered in Jewish prayer on Yom Kippur. In returning to God, to both His crown and His scepter, we

³⁰⁷ Ibid., p.71.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., p.71.

³⁰⁹ Emil L. Fackenheim, To Mend The World: Foundations of Future Jewish Thought, p.320.

³¹⁰ Ibid.,p.330.

³¹¹ Ibid.,p.330.

³¹² Ibid.,p.330.

capture a messianic moment-- a messianic fragment: Israel, Torah and God constitute a unity.³¹³

Section VI Conclusion

Fackenheim's writing has multiple purposes. He writes as a Jewish philosopher for whom, after the Holocaust, Judaism must look inward to finding religious inspiration. On the other hand he writes as a modern philosopher, who finds classical texts pungent with ever-growing new meaning and new understanding. To this end, he seeks a synthesis between Judaism and modern philosophy, so that Judaism and modern philosophy will imbue each other with new meaning. Yet, there is confusion in Fackenheim about the dialectical nature that should exist between modern philosophy and Judaism. It appears that on the one hand there is no possibility of using the ideas of modern philosophy because the Holocaust has left an unbridgeable hiatus in metaphysics. What emerges, however, in his later works is a dialectic between modern philosophy and Judaism, which has no tension and has completely retrieved the past and our ability to reread texts despite the Holocaust. It is as if the mere exposure of modern philosophers to the Holocaust retrieves modern philosophy with Judaism at the helm. In

³¹³ Ibid., p.329.

this sense Fackenheim's work can appear excessively insular and particularistic to some.

There is also a problem with how to understand Fackenheim's juxtaposition of the Holocaust with seminal sacred biblical concepts. Should so much weight to Judaism be attributed by its greatest tragedy, by Jewish destruction and near extinction, rather than through its major religious and sacred literature? On the one hand, Fackenheim offers Midrash as the mending that can occur, so that the old is preserved in the new; however, he comes close to offering a "Hegelian-type" of overcoming. This Hegelian overcoming posits something entirely new for Fackenheim [that the Holocaust has not destroyed philosophical thought]. At other times, in Fackenheim, the Hegelian past is merely absorbed in the new, so that the new does not change the old [harmonization of Midrash and Teshuva]. It becomes unclear whether Fackenheim seeks a transcendence of the Holocaust in the Hegelian sense of the term and whether that means the past is absorbed or is transformed with the new, to something entirely different from the past. What Fackenheim means by transcendence is found in To Mend the World. Here the Holocaust cannot be overcome, and Jews must live with reality of the horror. In his latest book, Jewish Philosophers and Jewish Philosophy,

Jewish philosophy is, in essence, a transcendence of the Holocaust, if it seeks to be an encounter between the Jewish heritage and modern philosophy. The relationship between them is dialectical and reciprocal. What Fackenheim means is that the confrontation with Auschwitz exacts a new concession on the part of modern philosophy. The Holocaust is the novum that necessitates a reexamination of what it means to be human. In seeking a synthesis between modern philosophy and Judaism, the Holocaust must be transcended in order not to give Hitler a posthumous victory. In this later work, transcendence becomes a dialectical and reciprocal relationship between modern philosophy and Judaism. There are moments when it is difficult to truly determine whether it is Midrash, or Hegel, that becomes the instrumental component of Fackenheim's dialectical synthesis.

There are several major challenges one encounters in studying Fackenheim. The extent to which Fackenheim continues to be in debt to Hegel is difficult to assess, as Fackenheim sometimes comes across as inconsistent and contradictory. He sees that, Hegel's philosophy may yet be the cock that announces a new day even as he states that with Auschwitz, indebtedness to Hegel comes to an end. In Jewish Philosophers and Jewish Philosophy, Fackenheim

states that, in his old age, his thought on Hegel will increase even more as Hegel is the one philosopher that carries a life-time of knowledge and historical awareness. On the other hand, he presents Midrash as the dialectical challenge to Hegel's anti-Semitism. It is possible that Fackenheim remains contradictory because Fackenheim's admiration of Hegel is juxtaposed to Hegel's anti-Semitism. While it is possible to give credence to Hegel's major philosophical ideas as they present themselves to Christianity, it is not possible to give credence to such ideas as Christianity's supercession, nor that Judaism is undialectical

A major contradiction occurs in his use of Midrash which presumes to follow a traditional outlook on epoch-making events. To clarify, Midrash epoch-making events are mended by the retrieval of root-experiences. Yet Fackenheim deviates from the pattern of orthodox interpretation in that "the orthodox" do not conceive that anything halakhically different will happen between Sinai and the messianic days. Fackenheim also deviates from traditional Kabbalah interpretation in that the cosmic breach that has occurred during creation has, because of the Holocaust, possibly caused a rupture in the divine substance itself. Lurianic Kabbalah, as explicated by Scholem, never

conceives of an actual breach between the bond of the human being and God. The breach between the two, due to the Holocaust, to Fackenheim, actually has bearing on the covenant God made with Jews. To Fackenheim, the covenant God made with Jews may have been broken. The anger that Fackenheim may have toward the God, who did not save Jews as He did at Sinai, may represent a breach in the relationship between God and the Jewish people quite outside of what is acceptable to orthodoxy.

Undoubtedly, Fackenheim has attributed too much transformative power to the Holocaust. The thought that the covenant may have been broken because of the Holocaust is, to the orthodox, untenable. Orthodoxy is also challenged by Fackenheim's interpretation of radical evil. Here Fackenheim has given evil an almost Gnostic interpretation. Radical evil threatens the power of God, as the rupture that the Holocaust caused may have affected His very substance. Perhaps the biggest challenge to Orthodox Judaism is Fackenheim's addition of the 614th commandment. Fackenheim's heroes are the Maccabees precisely because they rewrote Laws in order that Jews could fight on the Sabbath. Fackenheim here does not differentiate between the sacred and the profane. It is one thing to adjust to circumstances and quite another thing to add a commandment.

The addition of a commandment removes the sacredness of all Commandments, and gives too much importance to the Holocaust.

There is a confusion and contradiction in Fackenheim on the nature of root-experiences and epoch-making experiences. Is the root experience a revelation, which makes the Holocaust a root-experience, or is the Holocaust an epoch-making event that threatens Judaism. Fackenheim uses these terms loosely, so that sometimes the 614th commandment gives the Holocaust the status of a root-experience. If it is a root-experience, then this is different from the traditional Midrashic portrayal of epoch-making events. Regardless, Fackenheim remains vague on the extent the Holocaust, and subsequently the State of Israel, have revelational characteristics.

There is also an ambiguity in Fackenheim as to the nature of miracles and revelation. Is the incursion of the Divine into human a revelation of Sinaitic commandments? It appears that as a root-experience revelation takes on similar manifestations to Sinai. However, Fackenheim is not clear on how the miraculous differs from the revelatory and whether, in fact, they are similar. If they are similar then is the creation of the State of Israel a miracle as well as a revelation? It is unclear from his sparse

comments on this subject as to the extent that the 614th commandment is both a revelation and a miracle, or the product of those who fought to create the State of Israel. It might appear that the State is the product of both resistance and that the resistance is, indeed, miraculous.

One complication arising out of Fackenheim's work is the over-riding privileging of the ascendancy of Zion over the Galut. The Teshuvah that Fackenheim proposes is only possible because there is an Israel, and all Jews must [re]turn to it in order to renew the old in the new. This commitment to Israel undoubtedly diminishes Galut Judaism, which he claims no longer is viable without Israel. It is not self-evident that Galut Judaism could not survive without the Jewish State. For many halakhic Jews, the two thousand-year history of Galut Judaism attests to the fact that Judaism's strength is found in Torah and Rabbinic Judaism. In Fackenheim, it is Zion that has made Judaism historically significant. However, the tension today in the State of Israel between the religious and the secular, as well as the Arabs and Jews, places Israel in a precarious and volatile position. While it is understandably important to unite Jews everywhere around Israel, it is also important to remember that Judaism thrived and retained its distinctiveness within, and sometimes because of Galut.

As with many other imaginative and penetrating thinkers, there are tensions and ambiguities in Fackenheim's thought. At the same time, Fackenheim has skillfully presented Judaism as a religion that does not compromise the power of God or the freedom of the individual. In Fackenheim's presentation of Midrash, the Jew is forever reminded of the Creator and forever walks humbly, albeit proudly with God. The presence of individual freedom is basic to the covenant between God and human beings. It is precisely because this freedom is not compromised that it is possible to speak both of the fear and love of God in the same breath. For Fackenheim, the Holocaust has revelatory meaning in that despite the most heinous crimes in human history, Jews and Judaism survived and will continue to relate its unique understanding of God and His Presence in history.

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