

Jewish Philosophy and the Metaphor of Returning to Jerusalem

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There are multiple manners of defining Jewish philosophy. The controversies woven around this topic seem to leave the issue perpetually open instead of determining a unique and final perspective. However, this outcome is indubitably an indication of the fact that Jewish philosophy proposes a privileged manner of understanding Judaism through the encounter between philosophy and religion as a founding polarity of a creative tradition. One of the ways of asserting this polarity has gained the symbolic dimension of superimposing two cultural paradigms. This has been expressed through the metaphor of two cities, namely Jerusalem and Athens, and through the metaphor of two lands, Greece and Israel. Out of these symbolic designations I will bring into discussion the standpoints of Leo Strauss and Abraham Joshua Heschel and will try to offer a new perspective over this issue.

Athens versus Jerusalem as a State of Crisis in Jewish Philosophy

Leo Strauss believes that the Western man has become what he is by a continuous effort to put together biblical faith and Greek thought.¹ Thus, the most profound experiences of the past to which Western man is bound can be designated by the metaphor of the two cities, Jerusalem and Athens.

Although their encounter reveals a unique explanatory paradigm, the two explanatory structures lay on totally different foundations. Their importance and specificity can especially be understood by reference to the distinctive features they presuppose. Leo Strauss sets as distinctive of Athens the preference of the individual in acquiring excellence, distinction, and supremacy, whereas the distinctive feature of Jerusalem can be seen in the biblical reference to „the utmost honoring of father and mother”.²

Strauss' commentators have explained these particularities by carrying further the discourse on the existence of a fundamental tension within Western civilization that is determined by the conflict between the biblical and the philosophical outlook on life. The tension between Jerusalem and Athens is perceived as a tension between autonomous life and obedient

Key words:

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love. Michael L. Morgan thinks that these two worldviews inevitably lead to conflict since philosophy places man under the sign of independence and knowledge, whereas religion brings along the world of dependence and affection. Therefore the thinking of the Westerner finds itself in a permanent state of crisis. We are left to believe that the permanent conflict between philosophy and religion renders impossible their co-existence in a coherent cultural construction: that the reconciliation of the two spheres of the spirit corresponds to a state of crisis rather than a creative one.

We may accept that if we want to have a bird's eye view of Western civilization, then we are obliged to take into consideration a series of nuances in order to make the necessary distinctions relevant to understanding the development of various cultures that have contributed to the making of what is said to be of Western origin. Thus the state of tension that is brought along by the conflict between Greek philosophy and the mythical understanding of the world and of human existence reveals an inadequacy and an encounter much more tensioned than the one suggested by the encounter between Greek philosophy and Judaism. At the same time, the encounter between philosophy and theology that Christian thought gives rise to leaves unsolved the profound state of crisis that the placing together of thought and faith engenders. Actually, Christianity constitutes a state of conflict, of crisis that cannot find resolution in the balance between Jerusalem and Athens, theology and philosophy, faith and thought. Despite the fact that the manner of understanding the founding divinity of Christianity is constructed in the form of a theandric principle, the founding tension remains permanently in the domain of crisis and contradiction. This will be settled only in the eschatological perspective, which no longer pertains to that existence which philosophers can hope to integrate into their discourse. By employing the metaphor of two cities, we may state that this integration is possible in Christian thinking only through the state of war between two fortresses. In what we call "Christian philosophy" we come upon the conquering nature of Jerusalem and the state of submission of Athens, and from time to time witness attempts to break down the

walls of the conquering fortress. Hence, Jerusalem, although a conqueror, seems to be in a continuous state of siege.

Although the state of tension seems to be increasingly intensified in a description such as the one Leo Strauss proposes, nevertheless the defenders of a state of conflict between Jerusalem and Athens do not forget to specify that the secret of Western civilization lies precisely in the attempt to place together reason and faith.³ Consequently, Athens and Jerusalem are regarded as two inseparable parts of the Western spirit. It is obvious that when Leo Strauss speaks about the impossibility of a Jewish philosophy and when he builds this impossibility upon the tension between the choice for Jerusalem and the choice for Athens, his perspective is indebted to a Christian reading taken as a dominant feature of Western culture.

An important aspect of enforcing the impossibility of a harmonious relationship between Jerusalem and Athens is offered by that which Strauss calls the sociology of philosophy. This type of analysis leads Strauss to the conclusion that, in order to understand the tensioned relationship between philosophy and religion, we should not overlook the social status that philosophy has had at various times in the past. This status brings a wealth of understanding of the incompatibility between biblical faith and philosophical thought. By analyzing the status of philosophy in the Middle Ages, Strauss ascertains that for a long time philosophy did not have any social or political status. Within the medieval Islamic world, philosophy had a precarious status, the philosopher often being regarded with reserve or suspicion; in the Christian world, philosophy had come under the authority of the Church and had become part of sacred doctrine, thus losing its autonomy, whereas in the Jewish world being a Jew and being a philosopher were situations that were mutually exclusive. In this manner, the situation of Maimonides appears to Strauss to be a good example. Although Maimonides' work, *The Guide of the Perplexed* is the Jewish equivalent to Saint Thomas' *Summa Theologica*, the former did not enjoy the same authority as the latter enjoyed in Christianity.⁴ This comparison between Saint Thomas and Maimonides, Aquinas' forerunner, is a re-

current theme in the exegesis of Maimonides' thought. In this respect, Isaac Husik points out that "It is no doubt an exaggeration to say that there would have been no Aquinas if Maimonides had not preceded him".⁵ However, it is an indisputable fact that the translation of the Guide into Latin had a decisive influence on thinkers such as Alexander of Hales, William of Auvergne, Albertus Magnus, and others, but particularly on reconciliation of the teachings of the Church with Aristotle's thought as it appears in Aquinas.⁶ By rejecting the possibility of the existence of Jewish philosophy, Strauss locates the entire authority of Maimonides' thinking in the interpretation of the Jewish law presented in *Mishne Tora*. The importance that Maimonides' preoccupations with what concerns the codification of the law might thus explain why Maimonides is rather interested in highlighting to what extent the study of philosophy is allowed, than in using philosophy to justify the divine law.⁷ In other respects Strauss' standpoint toward the Guide is well-known. He asks us to understand that „it is not a philosophic book – a book written by a philosopher for philosophers – but a Jewish book: a book written by a Jew for Jews. Its first premise is the old Jewish premise that being a Jew and being a philosopher are two incompatible things.”⁸

Strauss finds one positive aspect of the precarious status that philosophy holds in Judaism and Islam. This positive element, to which we must grant an even greater importance than the author does, resides in the fact that while in Christianity philosophy has become subordinated to Christian theology, in Judaism and Islam philosophy develops in certain conditions of freedom by eluding the pressure exercised by the religious authority. Running the risk of exaggeration in his colorful depictions, the image of the medieval philosopher presented by Strauss is that of the philosopher who, withdrawn in his own world, eventually arrives at a comparison of his life with that of an emeritus.⁹ Strauss is convinced that such representations prove that medieval Jews had a clear consciousness of the incompatibility between biblical faith and philosophical thought.¹⁰ Moreover, Strauss emphasizes that this consciousness is a consistent feature of Jewish thought

for the periods that followed. As a first piece of evidence Strauss reminds us of Spinoza's statement according to which the Jews despised philosophy.¹¹ Strauss finds further support for this interpretation in the discovery that the promoter of Jewish enlightenment, Moses Mendelssohn, himself eventually apologized to his readers for recommending the study of logic to them. The tension between philosophy and religion appears more strongly marked to the exegete of Mendelssohn's thinking since he feels obliged to specify that logic is one of the subjects outside of Judaism the study of which is not subject to prohibition by the Jews.

The most significant issue that arises from this consistent and very coherent attitude of the Hebrew mentality, marked as it is by the dispute between Judaism and philosophy, is indicated by Strauss to be the impossibility of the existence of a unique cultural paradigm which encompasses at the same time both Jerusalem and Athens.¹² Consequently, the metaphor of the two cities expresses a fundamental tension, namely the tension between reason and revelation.¹³ The opposition between reason and faith is understood here as an exclusive opposition between the God of the philosophers on the one hand and the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob on the other.¹⁴

Strauss does not succeed in finding a way to reconcile the two, beginning as he does from the premise that this opposition is due to the fact that philosophy and religion have totally different foundations. Philosophy founds itself on epistemological certainty, whereas revelation relies on tradition, prophecy, and miracles. As a result, the former is critical, active, and open, while the latter is subjected, passive, and closed. In asking the question whether one can be a religious thinker and at the same time a philosopher, Strauss provides the answer that this is impossible without encountering a very profound inner tension.¹⁵

Considering this profound tension, Strauss turns to scrutinize the very existence of Jewish philosophy. Although he accepts that Western civilization rests on two poles, Jerusalem and Athens, or in other words the Holy Scriptures and philosophy, Strauss believes that the history of philosophy and

the history of scriptural religion are two worlds which will never meet. He clearly states that there is nothing that could be designated as Jewish philosophy, as there is no philosophy of religion in general: we can only speak of philosophers who make use of religion in their approach and of theologians who employ philosophy in order to achieve their own goals.¹⁶ In this manner, the two cities merely stand for an expression of the state of crisis of the state of a necessary exclusion. To Strauss, „The issue of traditional Judaism versus philosophy is identical with the issue of Jerusalem versus Athens”.¹⁷

The Golden Mean between Jerusalem and Athens

Heschel suggests a way to overcome the impossibility of reconciliation between reason and faith, philosophy and biblical tradition. He starts from the premise of necessity for rethinking the place of the Bible in relation to philosophy. In order to accomplish this, Heschel claims that it is necessary to build upon a philosophy of religion that will function as a philosophy of Judaism.

To symbolically express the special situation that this philosophy of religion holds, Heschel, too, makes appeal to the metaphor of the two cities, Athens and Jerusalem. Jewish philosophy is founded on the encounter between Jerusalem and Athens.¹⁸

By focusing his discourse on the Bible, Heschel attempts to observe a way in which this can regain an appropriate status within Western thinking. Because his interest lies in the status of the Bible, Heschel ascertains that a general feature of Western thought is that “the prophets are not present when the philosophers speak with God.” Otherwise said, the Bible is not present within the books of Western philosophy as the basis for discussing the meanings of existence and the system of values proposed by philosophy.¹⁹ Heschel tries to avoid two types of unilateral approach to the Bible in philosophical thinking. He finds totally inadequate the perspective that places the biblical contents within the sphere of primitive, mythological thinking and considers them as unsuitable for

comparison with the ideas present in philosophical systems. At the same time, it seems to him that the perspective that relies on the conviction that Moses had voiced ideas similar to Plato’s and Aristotle’s is not entirely appropriate and well outlined. Such a perspective settles the distinctions between philosophical thinking and the thinking of the prophets only at the level of style, of specific modes of expression. Postulated here is a similarity between biblical and philosophical thinking, even if in the Bible there are no elements pertaining to philosophic vocabulary.²⁰ Beyond these two unilateral standpoints, Heschel is convinced that „religion is more than a mood or a feeling. Judaism, for example, is a way of thinking, not only a way of living. Unless we understand its categories, its mode of apprehension and evaluation, its teachings remain unintelligible.”²¹

Heschel can be positioned somewhere in the vicinity of the second way of placing the Bible in relation to philosophy. Yet, he traces a very important distinction, namely the one that points out that in the Biblical faith we have encompassed a particular way of thinking. It is therefore supposed that despite the fact that Israel and Greece, Jerusalem and Athens have developed divergent doctrines based on distinct categories, the Bible represents a way of thinking to the same extent that Aristotelian philosophy is a way of thinking. Therefore Heschel does not say that biblical thinking and philosophical thinking are similar. The biblical vision and the philosophical vision are put in a relation of equivalence only because both offer complex ways of thinking. By this the Bible becomes more than a simple sum of doctrines, „it represents a way of *thinking*, a specific context in which general concepts possess a particular significance, a standard of evaluation, a form of orientation”.²²

Heschel sees as an important step towards the clarification of the status of Jewish philosophy the understanding of several aspects of the relation between philosophy and theology.²³ The major distinctions identified by Heschel are the followings: while philosophy relies on investigation, theology is descriptive, normative, and historical; philosophy begins by raising problems, theology starts with dogmas; philosophy be-

gins with problems, theology already has the answer; in philosophy the emphasis is laid on problems whereas in theology the person is important; philosophy brings into discussion problems it considers universal, while in theology any universal problem represents something of a personal matter.²⁴ According to Heschel, a similar issue is at play in the relationship between philosophy and religion: „Religion is rooted in a particular tradition or in a personal insight; classical philosophy claims to have its roots in universal premises.”²⁵ In order to grasp the meaning of this interpretation it is important for us to understand that the entire effort to encircle what we may encompass within Jewish philosophy relies on the idea that in the Jewish tradition religion is not just a simple object subjected to examination, but rather at the same time constitutes itself as a challenge to philosophy.

Yet the specificity of Jewish philosophy has much more profound sources. In this respect, Heschel points out that there are two types of philosophy: one that aims at analyzing the contents of thinking, and another that is self-examining and manifests itself as a radical self-understanding, as an analysis of the act of thinking. The author also identifies the same typology in the study of religion, where we find analyses centered on the act of faith that have as their main concern the issue of faith, and at the same time analyses which deal with the contents of faith by examining the issue of the creedal confession. Heschel shows that unlike medieval Jewish philosophy, which was concerned about the issue of creedal confession, the model of philosophy that he considers representative for current Jewish philosophy abandons the analysis of concepts only to be engaged in situation analysis. This attitude relies on a conviction that we all can share, namely that „The religious situation precedes the religious conception, and it would be a false abstraction, for example, to deal with the idea of God regardless of the situation in which such an idea occurs”.²⁶

Within the internal logic of Heschel, acceptance of the above-mentioned theology brings about acceptance of the existence of at least two types of thinking: situational thinking and conceptual thinking. Each of these is favored by a particu-

lar context. Heschel is led by the conviction that the great merit of an approach from the perspective of philosophy of religion is that this subject embraces both spheres of thinking by mutually enhancing the broadening of our knowledge regarding the world and the understanding of its existential stake.²⁷ It is not by chance that the embodiment of the philosophy of religion is fixed precisely at the point in which philosophy and religion alike claim the right to provide ideas regarding fundamental issues. Thus, the relationship between the two poles of the unique paradigm that reconciles Jerusalem and Athens highlights a particular dynamic of the philosophy of religion as unifying subject.

If we accept that philosophy is a mirrored reflection, then Heschel suggests we define philosophy of religion „as religion’s reflection upon its basic insights and basic attitudes, as *radical self-understanding of religion in terms of its own spirit*.”²⁸ This definition engenders the existence of a self-explanatory effort that presupposes the understanding of experiences, attitudes, and main teachings of religion, yet also supposes a self-examining effort in order to grasp the meaning of the genuine of religious attitude.²⁹

Although Heschel mentions that this specific self-understanding implies also a critical perspective, he expresses his discontent towards the fact that philosophy by its critical approach asserts itself as a perpetual rival to religion, sometimes even attempting to displace the latter or become a religion. Heschel does not believe that an everlasting philosophy is possible, as by the very fact that philosophy mirrors a particular philosophical school it bears a limited character, and therefore the critique it undergoes must be considered a limited one. In this way philosophy of religion appears before us as a critical re-assessment of religion from the perspective of a particular philosophical choice with the goal of finding the place that religious understanding has within the dynamic process of human knowledge in general.³⁰

Even though he suggests a critical re-assessment of religion from the standpoint of philosophy,³¹ Heschel thinks that it would be inadequate for us to consider that the mission of philosophy of religion is to provide a rational basis for reli-

gion. Accepting such a perspective would imply that philosophy is identical with the rational, but Heschel believes that „we think through reason because we strive for spirit.”³² Convinced that some fundamental themes of Judaism cannot be explained through human reason alone, Heschel advises that in addition to the specific approach of reason we should pay attention to sources of cognitive intuition like religion, which he understands as sense of the ineffable.³³ By following this advice we will notice that Judaism leads us towards „a philosophy of both ideas and events.”³⁴ Starting from this position, Heschel suggests an understanding of Jewish philosophy as a philosophy of religion tailored to Judaism. Thus it takes on the form of a philosophy of Judaism. Such a philosophy will lead us towards the conclusion that, in an approach like the one advocated for Jewish philosophy, Judaism represents the spring of ideas that are displayed within philosophical analysis. It involves an effort to understand the teachings, occurrences, and engagements that Judaism presumes.³⁵

In this way the two poles expressed by the metaphor of the two cities create a median space as a space for conceptual play and equilibrium. Despite the existence of this common space, Heschel does not deny the fact that although Jerusalem and Athens are not geographically at a great distance one from another, they stand for different worlds from a spiritual viewpoint. Heschel acknowledges that there may exist standpoints that would argue that the intellectual view of positioning oneself between Jerusalem and Athens is not essential to the contents of Jewish philosophy. In this respect stands the simple argument that God could have placed the Jews somewhere between the Jordan and the Ganges, and Jewish thought could exist under the symbol of a different encounter other than that with Greek philosophy.³⁶ Nonetheless the author urges us that, beyond such standpoints regarding what could have happened or what could happen in the future, we should not lose sight of the fact that we have before us a real fact. There really is a symbolic polarity between Jerusalem and Athens, and it is fundamental for the understanding of Jewish philosophy.

Unlike Strauss, who considered as absurd the view that the encounter between Jerusalem and Athens represents a

unique coherent discourse, Heschel argues in a very convincing manner that only by maintaining balance in this polarity can the encounter between Jerusalem and Athens be rendered possible and necessary. This encounter can be achieved under the sovereignty of a polarity which must be understood as the mental representation of an ellipse. In this manner, Jewish philosophy is portrayed by Heschel as „elliptic thinking.” He believes that „philosophy of religion is involved in a polarity; like an ellipse it revolves around two foci: philosophy and religion. Except for two points on the curve that stand in equal distance to both foci, the more closely its thought comes to one, the more distant it is from the other one.”³⁷ All that is left for us to do is to let ourselves be convinced that the tension arisen out of the rivalry of these two distinctive powers makes “this thinking with an elliptic orbit” productive of a continuous enrichment of meanings for the encounter of philosophy with religion. An appropriate understanding of the way in which this encounter takes place in Heschel’s vision must take into consideration that „The categories within which philosophical reflection about religion has been operating are derived from Athens rather than from Jerusalem. Judaism is a confrontation with the Bible, and a philosophy of Judaism must be a confrontation with the thought of the Bible.”³⁸

Return Path from Jerusalem to Athens

When speaking about the existence of a philosophy of Judaism, one cannot avoid the discussion regarding the relationship between formalism and essentialism. A phrasing of this controversy that may already be considered classical is offered by Raphael Jospe.³⁹ It makes reference to the issue of what can be designated as Jewish and by this the discussion may be encompassed in a broader discourse regarding the issue of identity. As for the Jewish character of philosophy, the distinction between formalism and essentialism bears as its ultimate form of discourse the debate over the premises that define Judaism and the Jewish people. The essentialist standpoint leads to the conclusion that Judaism is what shapes the Jewish community and provides criteria for what

may be considered Jewishness, including the Jewishness of the philosopher and his philosophy. On the other hand, the formalist approach argues that the Jewish people shape Judaism, and that therefore the elements that stand for the Jewishness of the philosopher establish themselves as the forging element of his philosophy.⁴⁰ The great challenge in defining Jewish philosophy is to overcome the formalism-essentialism dispute and to analyze various systems of thinking that provide particular means for the establishment of the relation between philosophy and religion.

Among the authors who propose a Jewish philosophy understood in terms of a philosophy of Judaism we can mention Abraham Joshua Heschel, Julius Guttmann, Colette Sirat, and others. Guttmann, for example, ascertains that even from ancient times there are constant features of thinking that point to the fact that Jewish philosophy has always been a philosophy of Judaism. The emphasis on the religious element that lies at the foundations of community makes up the distinctive character of the Jewish philosophy. Guttmann accepts the fact – also highlighted by Isaac Husik and other historians of Jewish philosophy – that, formally, Jewish philosophy bears an evolution and a manner of construction similar to that of Christianity and Islam, yet by such statements we should not cast a shadow on the specificity of the philosophy of Judaism, ignoring differences in content provided by the specific doctrines and by the peculiar dynamics of conceptual framework.⁴¹ Colette Sirat suggests a philosophy of Judaism that attempts to overcome formalism and at the same time to detour certain shortcomings that have been voiced by various thinkers regarding the essentialism engendered by the philosophy of Judaism. By striving to always remain within the surroundings of a philosophy of Judaism, she maintains that „Jewish philosophy does not signify a philosophy elaborated by a Jew; nor does it signify a philosophy of which the sources are Jewish.... This means that a given philosophy, appearing at a certain moment of human history, was brought into connection with Jewish tradition, and the traits common to certain texts of the Hebrew heritage and to this system of thought were emphasized.”⁴² Therefore, Sirat endorses a con-

ciliatory stand that agrees that the tradition to which the Jewish philosophy can make reference could form a certain part of the latter or only certain elements of Jewish thought.

The solution we adopt in defining the Jewish philosophy is one which attempts to equally integrating Heschel's vision that presupposes a clear positioning of Jewish philosophy between Jerusalem and Athens, and the one suggested by Colette Sirat, which focuses on the specific pathways of encounter between Jerusalem and Athens.

A symbolic assertion of the impossibility of Jewish philosophy as it is endorsed by Leo Strauss points out that one cannot hold at one and the same time a passport for the City of Athens and one for the City of Jerusalem. The history of Jewish philosophy shows that it is needless for someone to be the holder of two passports. Even Leo Strauss discloses that Jewish philosophy had the advantage of not feeling the pressure of religious authorities as such a great burden. This liberty of Jewish philosophy has allowed free circulation from Jerusalem to Athens and back in a creative act following which we can notice that the great systems of Jewish philosophy have taken shape. How else can we imagine the reconstruction of philosophy that a Philo undertook within Judaism in ancient times, or a Maimonides in the medieval period, or a Richard Rubenstein in post-holocaust thinking? Even a disputed case such as Spinoza's, a representative of modern philosophy, although a very special case, cannot be understood unless this journey occurs and engenders remoteness, detachment but also something that we may symbolically designate as the return to Jerusalem. Only Emmanuel Levinas succeeds in such a profound and exemplary manner as Spinoza⁴³ in accomplishing a translation into the philosophic language⁴⁴ of the deepest meanings of Jewish tradition. Although her analysis does not refer specifically to Spinoza, we may say that Colette Sirat has understood very well the general framework of the types of connections that are presupposed by Jewish philosophy as philosophy of Judaism. Yet, this encounter with the religious tradition does not have to invoke an eternal essence of Judaism. Such an essence has been underlined by the exegetes of Jewish philosophy as non-functional. Rather, one

must aim at the specific areas of encounter with certain parts of tradition that are favored by a particular author and which, bearing the hallmarks of the Jewish tradition, capitalize the experience of exile in the fortress of Athens, and return to that place in the spiritual fortress of the tradition of Jerusalem that one considers the most fertile. A symbolic expression of Jewish philosophy can be comprised within the image of the road from Jerusalem to Athens and back.

The positioning of Jewish philosophy between Jerusalem and Athens can be taken into account in the perspective of the necessity to relate the two cultural models which we contain under the metaphor of two cities. Yet, when using the same symbolic language, we must notice that by employing an “elliptic thinking” the theorists of Jewish philosophy do not succeed in building their own fortress but always remain within the sphere of “between” as a form of thinking that exiles itself both from the city of Jerusalem and from the city of Athens. With all the enchantment that Jewish philosophy can yield in the form of a golden mean between philosophy and the tradition of Judaism, I believe that Jewish philosophy should not be defined only through this paradigm, which I dare to call a paradigm of exile. Rather I would be inclined to employ another paradigm that offers the dynamic of exile-redemption. This can help us to step out of the sphere of a “between” that we may perceive as a state of estrangement (be it in relation to tradition or in relation to philosophy) and can allow us to favor the model of travel between the two cities followed by a return home. Therefore, we may state that Jewish philosophy starts its journey from Jerusalem to Athens but never forgets to take the return path to Jerusalem, taking with it the entire experience of thinking that it acquires through the complex encounter with philosophical thinking.

In spite of all that Strauss theorizes, and even though it represents one of the founding dimensions of Western spirituality, Jewish culture significantly diminishes the tension between Jerusalem and Athens by the particular approach that is Jewish philosophy, which includes the interdependence of the two cities and also enforces the self-existence of Jerusalem.

Notes:

¹ Leo Strauss, *Jewish philosophy and the crisis of modernity: essays and lectures in modern Jewish thought*, edited with an introduction by Kenneth Hart Green, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1997, p. 372.

² Leo Strauss, *Jewish philosophy and the crisis of modernity: essays and lectures in modern Jewish thought*, edited with an introduction by Kenneth Hart Green, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1997, p. 378.

³ Michael L. Morgan, *Leo Strauss and the Possibility of Jewish Philosophy in Dilemmas in Modern Jewish Thought. The Dialectics of Revelation and History*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, p. 65.

⁴ Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago&London, 1988, p. 20.

⁵ Isaac Husik, *A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, Meridian Books, INC., New York, 1941, p. 307.

⁶ Isaac Husik, *A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, Meridian Books, INC., New York, 1941, p. 306.

⁷ Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago&London, 1988, p. 20.

⁸ Leo Strauss, *How to begin to study The Guide of the Perplexed*, in Moise Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, vol. I, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1963, p. XIV.

⁹ Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago&London, 1988, p. 21.

¹⁰ Elements for a more suitable presentation on the relations between philosophy and tradition can be traced in Moshe Halberthal, *People of the Book. Canon, Meaning, and Authority*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1997.

¹¹ See Benedict Spinoza, *The Chief Works of Benedict Spinoza*, A Theologico-political Treatise, Dover Publications, New York, 1951, the last paragraph of chapter XI.

¹² Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago&London, 1988, p. 20.

¹³ Michael L. Morgan, *Leo Strauss and the Possibility of Jewish Philosophy in Dilemmas in Modern Jewish Thought. The Dialectics of Revelation and History*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, p. 57.

¹⁴ Leo Strauss, *Jewish philosophy and the crisis of modernity: essays and lectures in modern Jewish thought*, edited with an introduction by Kenneth Hart Green, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1997, p. 398.

¹⁵ Michael L. Morgan, *Leo Strauss and the Possibility of Jewish Philosophy in Dilemmas in Dilemmas in Modern Jewish Thought. The Dialectics of Revelation and History*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, p. 66.

¹⁶ A presentation on the manner in which Leo Strauss argues against the possibility of the existence of a field that may be called Jewish, Christian, and Islamic philosophy can be found in Warren Zev Harvey, *Historiographies of Jewish Philosophy: The Place of Maimonide and Levinas in Raphael Jospe (ed.) Paradigms in Jewish Philosophy*, Associated University Press, London, 1997, p. 31.

¹⁷ Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago&London, 1988, p. 20. The radicalism of Strauss' view can be explained by the fact that he begins from a pre-established decision: "we have already decided in favor of Athens against Jerusalem" writes Strauss, in Leo Strauss, *Jewish philosophy and the crisis of modernity: essays and lectures in modern Jewish thought*, edited with an introduction by Kenneth Hart Green, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1997, p. 380.

¹⁸ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1955. Heschel bases his arguing on the conviction that Jewish philosophy understood as philosophy of religion is born out of two parents, that is philosophy and religion: "It is not born of self-reflection of religion but of the encounter of the two... Philosophy of religion did not arise in Athens but in the encounter of Judaism and Greek philosophy" (pp. 12-13).

¹⁹ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 25.

²⁰ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 26.

²¹ Abraham J. Heschel, *Between God and Man. An interpretation of Judaism*, The Free Press, New York, 1959, p. 35.

²² Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 14.

²³ It must be mentioned that in Jewish thought there are discussions both with regard to the relationship between theology and philosophy and also controversies with regard to the existence of a theology within Jewish thought. There are authors who believe theology is predominantly a Christian issue. Yet there are also authors, such as Louis Jacobs, who expresses his optimism regarding the blossom of a Jewish theology in contemporary world, see Louis Jacobs, *Jewish Theology Today* in Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed.), *Problems in Contemporary Jewish Theology*, The Edwin Hellen Press, Lewiston, 1991. However we can mention authors who have a more nuanced attitude, for example Manfred H. Vogel, *What can the Term "Jewish Theology" Possibly Mean?* in Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed.),

Problems in Contemporary Jewish Theology, The Edwin Hellen Press, Lewiston, 1991.

²⁴ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 4. This personal character as a central element for religion is taken into account by Heschel when he highlights the fact that "The Bible speaks not only of man's search for God but also of God's search for man" *Between God and Man. An interpretation of Judaism*, The Free Press, New York, 1959, p. 68.

²⁵ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 16.

²⁶ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 7.

²⁷ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 6. Heschel says that "All philosophy is an apologia pro vita sua." Within this context, the philosopher is never a mere spectator, he is a „toiler for truth."

²⁸ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 8.

²⁹ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 9.

³⁰ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 12.

³¹ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 10. This critique must be made with "intellectual honesty." It is this honesty that stands for Heschel as "one of the supreme goals of philosophy of religion, just as self-deception is the chief source of corruption in religious thinking, more deadly than error."

³² Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 19.

³³ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 20. On the encounter with the ineffable, see Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Omul nu e singur. O filosofie a iudaismului*, Ed. Hasefer, București, 2001, pp. 17 and ff.

³⁴ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 21.

³⁵ Thus, "philosophy of Judaism has a meaning comparable to the meaning of a phrase such as philosophy of Kant or the philosophy of Plato; Judaism as a source of ideas which we are trying to understand," Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p.22.

³⁶ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 15.

³⁷ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man. A Philosophy of Judaism*, Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1955, p. 13.

³⁸ Abraham J. Heschel, *Between God and Man. An interpretation of Judaism*, The Free Press, New York, 1959, p. 242.

³⁹ A detailed discussion can be found in Raphael Jospe, *What is Jewish Philosophy?*, The Open University of Israel, Tel Aviv, 1988.

⁴⁰ Raphael Jospe, *Jewish Particularity from Ha-Levi to Kaplan: Implications for Defining Jewish Philosophy* in Raphael Jospe and Samuel Z. Fishman (eds.) *Go and Study, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations*, Washington D.C., 1980, p. 312.

⁴¹ Julius Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism. The History of Jewish Philosophy from Biblical Times to Franz Rosenzweig*, The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1964, p. 4.

⁴² Colette Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 4.

⁴³ See Iosif Brucăr, *Spinoza. Viața și filosofia*, Ed. Hasefer, București, who points out that Spinoza's viewpoint remains one utterly Jewish. Also, see Moshe Idel, *Maimonide și mistica evreiască*, translated by Mihaela Frunză, Ed. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, the chapter on Spinoza.

⁴⁴ See in this regard Tamra Wright, "Translating the Bible into Greek": The Jewish Thought of Emmanuel Levinas, *Le'ela*, October, 1997, p. 41 and ff.