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Most of the Jewish theological discussions after the Shoah have dealt with the question of faith after the Holocaust. Is it still possible to believe in the Lord of History? Is it still possible to believe in a G-d who is assumed to be righteous, omnipotent, omniscient, and still accept His silence? Can we still adhere to the belief in divine providence and divine presence in the election of the Jewish people as the messenger of G-d for all humanity?

But I am going to ask some different questions this morning. I want to deal with something that is more implicit and hidden, perhaps even esoteric. Can we trace a transformation in the very basic concepts of the Jewish religion, of Jewish theology because of the Holocaust or after it? How did Jewish religious thinkers explain the relationship between G-d and history after the Holocaust? What is the presence of the Holocaust in the very concept of G-d? Can we identify a different emphasis?

I suggest that even when you deal with the most traditional and ultra-orthodox camps and thinkers, you may find such a hidden transformation. And I will focus upon the three most important theological notions or concepts – revelation, redemption, and if time allows, creation, connecting them to these two camps.

Let me summarize my claims. First of all, regarding redemption, we know that during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century we saw the rise of at least two redemptive or messianic movements without any precedent in Jewish history since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. These two movements cannot be explained without the presence and the imprint of the Holocaust.

With respect to revelation, the Holocaust has led some important religious thinkers to the idea that the Lord of Israel can and has revealed himself not only as a savior of the people - taking them out of Egypt and out of slavery - but that He is also revealing Himself from within the darkness, from within the horror, and from within the Tremendum He is no longer just the redeemer of Israel. That is, if I am correct, we find the indirect imprint of the Holocaust in the most important concepts of Jewish theology, namely revelation and redemption. I believe that there is also an indirect, hidden imprint within the concept of creation, namely the creation of man or the human being.

Let me start with the concept of redemption. Everyone who is familiar with the present Jewish situation would agree, I believe, that we are confronted and have been confronted with two important messianic or redemptive movements within the Jewish people. The first is the followers of Rav Zvi Yehuda Kook and the spiritual leadership of Gush Emunim and Yeshivat Mercaz Ha Rav. The second movement is that of the Lubavitch Hassidism. There is a tremendous difference between these two movements yet both of them have no precedent in scope and intensity in Jewish history since the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The first one, the followers of Rav Zvi Yehuda Kook focus upon the nation and redemption – the success of Zionism, the establishment of the State of Israel, the military victories moving from the Balfour Declaration to the immigration of one million Jews from the Former Soviet Union. They consider this to be a realization of

the promises of Prophets and this process of redemption, according to them, will inevitably lead us towards the final repentance and redemption of the people both historically and metaphysically.

In the second messianic movement – among Lubavitch Hassidim – the focus is more universal. For instance, the fall of the atheist, communist empire is considered to be an explicit sign of the new coming of the messiah. They would not speak about a State of Israel or political independence, but of the rescue of five million Jews in Israel, in America, and sometimes in Europe – *Malkot shel chesed* – this is the best situation of Jews in exile. For the Lubavitcher Rebbe, even some aspects of feminism are a symbol of the fact that the female aspect of G-d namely, Ha Schechina – the divine presence - is elevating itself from the dust.

There are tremendous differences between these two movements. The first group speaks about messianism without a personal messiah. For instance the second group awaits a potential personal messiah. However, both movements judge, evaluate, and interpret the Jewish situation after the Holocaust as a direct messianic or redemptive revelation. Both of these movements believe that during the last fifty years, you will find the traces of the coming messianism. In contrast to most studies and scholarship concerning messianism and milleniaris, we encounter a messianic agitation that is not encouraged primarily by suffering, humiliation, and deprivation against reality but because of it, because of the success and prosperity of the Jewish people or sometimes the world. It is not an antithesis but because of the fact that reality and history are smiling on us. I would suggest that it is directly connected to the Holocaust.

Let's start with the first group. Many people believe that the messianic agitation within the spiritual leadership of Gush Emunin and the followers of Rav Kook and Mercaz Ha Rav began as a result of the Six Day War. This is not accurate. It started much earlier. Some might say that it started with the first Rav Kook, the great Rav Kook, who died in 1935, but certainly it was present after 1948. Let's try to analyze it for a minute.

If theologically speaking you consider the establishment of the State of Israel as political independence for five million Jews, as I myself understand it to be, then it cannot give you any answer, any sense, any meaning or significance to the Holocaust. No symmetry is created between the destruction and the construction. There is no balance. If this is your interpretation of Zionism as a Jew, and of the State of Israel, you are doomed to live after the Holocaust in theological chaos. In that case G-d is still hiding His face.

It is very different if you claim that on the one hand the Holocaust was a demonic catastrophe, almost infinite, without any precedent in human or at least Jewish history, but also that the construction, the redemption is messianic, infinite, without any precedent in human or Jewish history. You claim that the fall was total but also that the revelation of the divine face is now total because it represents redemption. There was a fall into hell but also a redemptive rescue. If you believe that it was a different planet both with respect to the destruction and with respect to the construction, some sort of theological balance as well existential and psychological symmetry - is created within your mind moving from total darkness to total light.

The final realization of this light is supposed to come very soon. A popular example is that of the morning star. Once you see it very early in the morning you may not believe that inevitably the whole world will shine in a few hours. However, if you have a real understanding of the laws of the cosmos, you can guarantee it. The same is true regarding the beginning of redemption and its inevitable outcome – complete ultimate redemption. That is, the present independence and revival of the Jewish people is likened to this morning star, which is pre-destined and pre-ordained to lead us to the final repentance and the final messianic realization. This is the perspective of the first camp.

The present independence and revival of the Jewish people is likened to this morning star, which is predestined and pre-ordained and will eventually bring us to the final redemption. This is the perspective of the first camp.

What about the second messianic movement, Lubavitch Hassidim? This movement started during the Holocaust. Let me quote the former Lubavitcher Rebbe. I am translating into English.

[In 1942] The troubles of Israel have now reached the most terrible degree. Therefore the days of the redemption shall come immediately. This is the only true answer to the destruction of the world and to the anguish of the Jews. Be ready for redemption soon, shortly, in our day. The righteous redeemer is already at our widow and the time to prepare ourselves to receive his face is now very short.

This catastrophic aspect of messianism is very common. The Chofetz Chaim, an important ultra-orthodox leader in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, said that the redeemer must come immediately because if he doesn't come immediately he will have nobody to come to because of the troubles of the people of Israel at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

But what happened with the last Lubavitcher Rebbe, Reb Menachem Mendel Schneerson. He took this messianic tension and transformed it from a messianic tension based upon catastrophe to a messianic agitation that is based upon success and prosperity, that is, reality is smiling on us. This is his fascinating continuity of the agitation created by his predecessor despite the radical change in the external conditions.

Even during the first Gulf War, he told us not to get gas masks since after the Holocaust Jews will not be gassed again. Theologically speaking it is not going to happen again. We are in a totally different situation. We are in a messianic era. Let me read:

It is obvious that after the Holocaust, this test shall not rise up a second time, neither hide nor hair of it, heaven forbid. To the contrary, there will be only goodness and mercy; goodness that will be revealed to all of the children of Israel wherever they are. I stress – goodness that is sensed and manifested.

So we have two redemptive movements without any precedent in Jewish history since the 17<sup>th</sup> century that during the last half of the previous century based themselves on Jewish success or universal prosperity.

Now ask yourself a different question. What are the two theological movements within contemporary Jewry which underscore the concept of an imminent G-d, some sort of pantheism, not a G-d who is transcendent beyond history and beyond the cosmos, a G-d who has created this cosmos but *m'l'o kol ha aretz k'vo do*, that is, glory is within the whole cosmos? It is these two movements, the followers of Rav Kook and the Lubavitcher Hassidim.

Now it is very strange. According to everything that we are used to reading in the theological scholarship,, if you have an attitude of imminence toward the divine realm, if you tend toward pantheism, you are expected to neutralize history because G-d is supposed to be within the whole cosmos and within the whole world. He is not supposed to manifest Himself by a sudden transcendent breakthrough in history. G-d is supposed to be not only in the cosmos but also within the spirit of every individual all the time. The focus of revelation and redemption is supposed to be psychological and cosmic and not historical. This is the focus of the religious drama. Why do you need a so-called transcendent messiah if the divine presence is everywhere? And this was the understanding in the history of Chabad Hassidism. Rav Kook was also influenced by such trends before the Holocaust.

But let us ask ourselves, what happens if you have such an approach towards the divine realm, but suddenly, because of external, dramatic developments, you cultivate a religious sensitivity towards history? Isn't it logical that from now on, just as the world and the cosmos are supposed to be full of the presence of the Lord, just as the human spirit is supposed to be full of the presence of the Lord, so now too history is supposed to manifest the very presence of G-d, namely redemption? Because otherwise, if G-d is everywhere including within history, why is history repressed after His presence? From now on, aren't we expected to look for the divine overflow, imminence, sanctity, and the realization *within* history as well?

And it is true. Two messianic movements without any precedent, two messianic movements that are betting on Jewish success after the Holocaust, two messianic movements whose theology is pantheistic and subscribes to imminence, how did they develop a religious sensitivity towards history? The Holocaust has a central role in this process.

There are only two Jewish orthodox religious leaders, that I am aware of, who made a comparison between the Holocaust and surgery, a divine operation within the body of the Jewish people. Who are they? Again it is the leaders of these two movements. Let me quote the Rav, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Rebbe of Chabad, "with all the horrible pain of the tragedy, it is clear that no evil comes from heaven. The Holy One, blessed be He, as that professional surgeon did everything He did for good." On a different level but using the same analogy, Rav Zvi Yehuda Kook said, "The Holocaust is a deep and hidden internal divine treatment of the cleansing of impurity of the exile. A cruel divine surgery aimed at bringing the Jews to the land of Israel."

What is my personal opinion regarding the idea that my grandfather and my grandmother and my aunt and some of my potential uncles were sick organs of the Jewish people that had to be destroyed for my redemption? This is a second question,

a personal one But in any case, from their point of view you see that from now on the Holocaust is not analyzed according to the past, as a punishment, but towards the future. It's not a punishment but a preparation for redemption. The pantheist G-d, the imminent G-d has returned to be the G-d of the bible, the G-d of history, the redeemer of Israel. Paradoxically, it took place partially because of the Holocaust, which has given a historical dimension to the pantheist concept of G-d – to the concept of an imminent G-d. Certainly it is not the sum of Jewish orthodoxy but these are two important phenomena within Jewish orthodoxy.

Let me move from the concept of redemption to the concept of revelation. Again, we are used to saying that the Lord of Israel is supposed to reveal Himself as the redeemer, as the Savior of Israel. Here I wouldn't say suddenly because we have some precedents. But interestingly enough we find an emphasis upon the possibility of revelation through the horror, through darkness, or if you wish. According to a book by the late Rav Joseph Solovitchik, G-d is revealing Himself from within, not only *after* the suffering but also from within the suffering of Job.

Let me try to explain. Usually the Lord of Israel reveals Himself as the savior who took the Jews out of Egypt, not as one who reveals Himself in the midst of the suffering. Emil Fackenheim, a non-orthodox thinker, used to speak about the voice of Auschwitz or some sort of a revelation in Auschwitz. He was criticized by orthodox thinkers who have not seen that this concept appears within orthodoxy and ultra orthodoxy as well.

Two years ago when I gave the first version of this lecture, I had two basic examples, now I have much more. The first is a book, Binat Nevonim by Rabbi Baruch Rabinovich who would have been the Munkatcher Rebbe if it weren't for the Holocaust. He was saved. He moved to the land of Israel and throughout his life he oscillated between religious radicalism and modern Zionism. He didn't write anything about the Holocaust that I am familiar with until the 1990s, breaking a silence of fifty years and only then, from the perspective of this great distance of time, did he write this book. He died a few years ago.

The whole book is a protest against the idea that G-d was hiding his face. Perhaps physically, historically it was Hester Panim, the hiding of the divine face. But ontologically and existentially, G-d was very close. The whole book is a paradox, a cry, a shout, not a logical explanation. On the one hand is the underlying uniqueness of the Holocaust. Similar to the scholarly work of Yehuda Bauer and Israel Gutman, Rabinovitch also underlined the uniqueness of the Holocaust, first from the point of view of Nazi Germany, their systematic activity and the lack of logic; and second due to unprecedented suffering of the Jewish people. Very honestly, and in a sincere way he claims that the Gadolim, the great religious leaders of the Jewish people were blind and didn't understand what was going on.

Because of the uniqueness of the event, because of the very intention, because of the fact that the world did not operate in its usual way, it cannot be blind nature for him. It is too traumatic to be an accident or a hiding of the face. As he understands it, G-d is infinite, either infinite mercy or infinite judgment. But whenever you have something infinite like the Holocaust you cannot ignore the paradoxical presence or the relation of G-d. If it is infinite, it is divine.

For those of you who are familiar with the Israeli scene, I found that in many of the lectures of Rav Amital, a religious moderate rabbi of religious Zionism, who is a survivor of the Holocaust, you find the same basic paradoxical idea, namely the Holocaust was so deep, so abnormal, without any logic, that it must be metaphysical because it transcends any proportion. The awful situation is taking away the human presence and the human logic and what is left is only the divine presence.

It is a contradictory idea. Or perhaps it is a cry; please be with us. This is on the ontological level but it also represents the existential level as Rabbi Rabinovitz formulated it. If it is your father, even when he is beating you, he is still your father. Rabinovitz says that these are the ideas that kept him from losing his mind; knowing that it is father who is beating us, that we are still his children, that it is the finger of G-d.

I am not going to summarize this book, but what is interesting to me is that there is a transformation in his emphasis on the image of the G-d of Israel. It is the G-d of Israel revealing Himself within the darkness and from the darkness. If after the Holocaust, redemption is based upon prosperity and success, here it is the opposite. Revelation can be based upon suffering and darkness.

I don't have the time to summarize the book Esh Kodesh, *The Fire of Holiness*, which has been analyzed by many important scholars but I want to underline one aspect that is relevant to me and which I believe has not been emphasized. When Kalonimus Shapira wrote his sermons, in the Warsaw Ghetto during the Holocaust, and within a week a thousand or more Jews including children were murdered, you see his struggle with his own faith. His concept of G-d is imminent. If G-d is with us, if we are suffering He is suffering too. Since all reality is within the divine realm, so His creatures, including us, are a part of the divine realm. So He is suffering by our suffering. When we call *please save us*, we are calling to Him. Ultimately it is He who is crying because we are a part of Him.

Try to imagine that a thousand children were killed last week and yet Shapira has pity for G-d. Why does G-d have to suffer because of these children? Mainly Kalonimus Shapira is trying to overcome his own suffering by elevating it to the divine realm. From now on it is G-d who is suffering.

Those of you who are familiar with the history of Jewish theology perhaps are aware that it started with the Lurianic Kabbalah. In Lurianic Kabbalah G-d is not omnipotent so to speak. He needs us to pray, to perform the commandments, to redeem something within Him because of the Sheviret HaKelim, the breaking of the vessels. We have to do something within the divine realm to help it to redeem itself. In the Holocaust it has reached its climax. G-d is suffering with us and because of us.

Shall I be rude and say that G-d was crucified with us? Shall I dare to say that paradoxically Shapira came very near, perhaps more than anyone before him, to Christianity? That G-d Himself is crying, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*" That G-d is saying, "my Lord, my Lord, why have you forsaken me?"

For Rabinovitz, G-d was still the father. Now he is the son, with a small s, who is suffering, so to speak. But there is one important distinction that has been remained between Christianity and this movement. Yes, G-d is *revealing* Himself through suffering, but He does not *redeem* through suffering. Suffering is suffering. Evil is evil. It's not that by the suffering you are redeemed. Salvation and torture are not simultaneously one and the same thing. The Lord of Israel for Kalmonius Shapira revealed Himself through the darkness but he did not redeem us through the darkness.

If I had the time, I would also underline the third hidden transformation regarding creation. I will claim when I write this paper that the demonization of the majority of the Jewish people by the Satmer Rebbe and his followers after the Holocaust has no precedent in Jewish history. Similarly the demonization of humanity by some important Jewish scholars after the Holocaust is also very unique in our tradition.

Now let me conclude with a personal experience. Years ago I visited Auschwitz. And I was fortunate to meet a group of ultra-orthodox Jews led by a Viznitzer Rabbi, a survivor of the Holocaust. When we entered the gas chamber, which is smaller than this hall, he took the psalms, tehillim, and he started to read a chapter verse by verse and everyone repeated after him. Until he reached the verse "*Tzadik ata HaShem vashar moshpatecha*" - "*You know the righteous and your judgment is just.*" And he cried it out and everyone shouted and cried it out after him. Then he said "*Noch amul*" - "*Again*" - five times and everyone repeated it and everyone cried, including me. It was as if he was trying to convince himself, us, perhaps G-d, that His judgment was just. This is perhaps the topic that I have not dealt with – the justification, the theodicy of G-d after the Holocaust to which most scholarship is devoted

.I spent Shabbat with them in Krakow and this Rabbi/survivor told me that there is an Hassidic interpretation of another verse in this psalm: "*Gam ki elech be-Geve*" - "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for you are with me." This is the usual translation.

According to him, there is a Hassidic interpretation that says that even if I go through the shadow I shouldn't fear. So why do I fear? Because the divine presence is also there! If the people of Israel are suffering, G-d is suffering with them. This is the topic of my discussion – the different emphasis within Jewish theology with respect to the most basic concepts.

Thank you.