

IM MEMORIAM

THE JEWISH WORLD VIEW OF GERSHOM SCHOLEM

by *ELIEZER SCHWEID*

Gershom Scholem's contribution to modern Jewish thought is concentrated in the field of research. Scholem is known for establishing historical philological research of the Kabbalah as a specific field within Judaica. There is, however, an element of exaggeration in the assertion, still frequently expressed even among distinguished researchers, that before Scholem began his work the Kabbalah was an "unturned stone" in Jewish research. It is even an injustice to present Kabbalistic research, as it developed in the last two generations, as the enterprise of a single individual. Jewish studies in the West did not ignore Kabbalah entirely even before the work of Scholem, and there were a number of modern Jewish philosophers and theologians (most significantly Rabbi Nachman Krochmal and Samuel Hirsch) who drew considerably from Kabbalistic thought, openly and with great respect. But one must particularly not deny the role of non-academic scholars and writers who nonetheless made an important contribution to the study of Kabbalah in recent generations. This scholarly literature differs in its methods and theories from that of Scholem and one finds there considerable criticism of his ideas, but this does not mean that one oughtn't reckon with its ideas, that there was no justification in such reservations, or that academic teaching has not made use of the contributions of this research and its interpretations. However, despite

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these reservations, Scholem's study of the Kabbalah stands as a unique achievement, both in terms of its comprehensiveness and its depth. His work was meticulous in its detail and at the same time reached the highest level of comprehensive observation, contributing to a deep understanding of mystical religion in general and Jewish mysticism in particular.

From the viewpoint of the development of Jewish thought dealing with the spiritual problems of the Jewish people in our time, the question one must ask is: How did the study of Jewish mysticism in its various forms contribute to the shaping of modern Jewish consciousness? This question has two parts: A. How did the knowledge of the contents of Kabbalistic thought and its place in Jewish religious culture, as either an exceptional phenomenon or a real basic source exercise its influence on the image of Judaism as it confronts the Jewish intellectual of our time? B. To what extent can a modern, intellectual Jew find in the Kabbalah ideas that enables him to deal with the fundamental problems of the Jewish religion and its affinity to modern times?

Scholem's work, which is written in a philological-historical manner, betrays a constant effort to deal with these questions. This seems to be the source of its enchantment to a broad community of intellectuals, Jewish and non-Jewish, who themselves have no acquaintance whatsoever with any of the Kabbalistic texts. Scholem succeeded in reviving the various trends in the Kabbalah to such an extent that his research became a fertile source of Jewish thought and creativity. It is no exaggeration to say that there is, in Scholem's work, a continuity of Kabbalistic creativity which goes beyond the bounds of the Kabbalah and even beyond the bounds of religion. This is accomplished through a unique empathy derived from an esoteric spirituality. This empathy seems to be the basis for the answers that Scholem offered to the fundamental questions of modern Jewish thought.

I

An understanding of the answer to the first part of the question, as it emerges from Scholem's research, is integrally related to the personal motives which brought him to the study of Kabbalah. There have been a number of central figures in the recent history of the Jewish people whose life stories have become, through their work, a kind of myth describing the modern Jew in his struggle with the crisis of faith which our nation is undergoing today. The most outstanding examples are Chaim Nachman Bialik, A.D. Gordon, S.Y. Agnon, Hillel Zeitlin, Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, and Martin Buber. Scholem's name belongs in this list. The story of his journey from the home of assimilated parents who were estranged from their Jewishness to complete identification with his own Jewishness, with Jewish-Zionist nationalism, with the study and investigation of Judaism, and in particular with the study and research of Kabbalah found clear

expression in the course of his work and in the goals and nature of his writings. Moreover, Scholem succeeded in gaining his readers' appreciation of his work by virtue of the connection with his life story, which seemed to touch from within upon their own lives. It is a fact, which deserves deeper examination, that the evaluation of Scholem's work relates directly to his own perception of its motivating force, objectives and achievements. Even the exaggerated emphasis on the element of innovation in research on the Kabbalah and the inherent, revolutionary significance of this research for the understanding of the past and future of Judaism has its source in the powerful perception that Scholem had of himself, which stamped his personality and his way to Judaism upon his work. He comes from a strange and distant place and discovers, first of all, Judaism and Zionism, then Judaica as an area of creativity, and finally the Kabbalah. Each of



Prof. Gershom Scholem

these discoveries entailed a critical rebellion against the accepted notions of his milieu which led him to the seeds of truth previously hidden from him. This truth was essential for his own knowledge of himself. Thus, there transpires within this rebellious man of discoveries a remarkable transformation: that which was most remote and alien to the spiritual starting point from which he began his voyage as a youth becomes that which was closest to him. Against a background which is totally foreign to the secular-rationalist culture in which he was educated, he discovered his inner Jewishness. But it must be added that even when his voyage of discoveries reached, as it were, its destination — that very inner place — Scholem remained a man of science who sought new discoveries, through rebellion against his own conclusions. It was as if he never rested from the toil of his journey.

The parallel between this personal story and the stories of Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber, with respect to the return to Judaism, is quite clear, but the differences are instructive. The first and most striking difference is found in the point of departure. Even Franz Rosenzweig did not come so great a distance. His parents were assimilated, but they did not deny their Jewishness. On the contrary, they threatened to break off family ties when their son considered conversion. Scholem, on the other hand, came from a family so alienated from their religion that in fact they broke off ties when he decided to return to active Judaism. This difference is of great significance: it appears to have determined both the manner in which Scholem approached Judaism and its limits. Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber brought with them, on their return to Judaism, a living remnant, albeit hidden and dormant, of Judaism from the home. On their way back, they renewed their Jewish world not only on the basis of what they learned in their maturity, but also, it would appear, on the basis of what they had absorbed in their childhood, which once again began to grow and flourish. This may be the reason why they did not restrict their work to the field of Jewish research but found it necessary to develop a comprehensive *Weltanschauung* of their own. Gershom Scholem remained a man of science all along. He passed through gate after gate in order to discover new and more astonishing landscapes. This seems to be the central, dramatic experience at the focus of Scholem's important articles and books, which makes their reading like thrilling drama. The process of research itself becomes a personal drama, reflecting the drama within the movement or thought under study. From his own point of view, traditional Judaism was a discovery, Zionism was a discovery, even Judaic studies was a discovery, while the Kabbalah was a discovery within a discovery, an infinite discovery.

To his readers, his discovery becomes their discovery, and from this devolves the impression of daring innovation, uniqueness and revolution in it. It is clear that the discoveries on his tireless journey of discoveries did not represent a resting place for Scholem. At times it appeared that he found in the Kabbalah worlds that could have been a home for him in a previous reincarnation, but in actuality, he was unable to tear himself away from the world from which he came and in which he acquired his tools as a scholar. Therefore, he remained inside the limits of the brilliant empathy of an enchanted scholar. Note that, in this way, research for him was not purely a technical means but rather a fundamental experience. This was the manner in which he lived his Judaism.

Does it follow from these observations that from the outset Scholem renounced the relevance of the subjects of his research as sources in which he would find an answer to the questions of a modern Jew? This is a question which will require further clarification in the latter part of our discussion. To begin with, however, it appears that Scholem found so much relevance in the research process itself that

he did not even attempt to examine the relevance of the subject matter. He attributed a positive, productive value to the dynamics of the critical discovery which negated and overturned accepted premises. He rebelled against petrified images and discovered hidden faces under them, believing that through this process an essential message was transmitted to his readers, one that would help them to find, like himself, their stance as Jews. We must therefore examine the nature of this message.

II

Scholem's subjective approach to Judaic studies was not solely his own individual position. It was shared with a number of outstanding Jewish thinkers of his time who insisted, as he did, on an uncompromising Zionist ideological foundation. Beyond the personal experience, one detects in the message which he sought to transmit to his readers a position whose content was characteristic of a certain stream within Zionism. Like a number of the critics of Judaica among Eastern European Zionists (Ahad Ha'am, Chaim Nachman Bialik), Scholem also took a stand against the barrenness of *die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in the West. Like them, he aspired towards the integration of Judaic scholarship within a national cultural revival. Like them, Scholem sought a broadening of an independent Jewish tradition that would serve as a basis for the absorption of influences from the outside. And like them — here the striking parallel to the Judaic research of M. J. Berdichevski — he wishes to prove that there exists another Judaism which is vital, spontaneous, and innovative, beyond the unbending cloak of Rabbinical, halakhic Judaism and the florid and vague pretenses of Judaism of the Emancipation — the two distorted faces of the modern *Galut* mentality. In these observations, one finds the message that Scholem sought to transmit through his research. The Kabbalah was first of all, in Scholem's view, proof that "Judaism" is not so standardized and sterile a concept as suggested by the Orthodox on the one hand and the adherents of emancipation on the other. Judaism has many faces and this is why, in the view of some of the Kabbalists, there is no Jew for whom the Torah does not have its own unique significance. Furthermore, Judaism embraces opposition elements and contradictions; it includes daring outbursts beyond the limits of halakha; and there is even conflict with halakha. Thus, Judaism is a broad field which cannot be dogmatically defined, so that Zionism, too, in its full revolutionary and innovative force, finds a place for itself in this very same field. The Kabbalah is proof that it is possible to introduce daring innovations, to overturn sanctified principles, and to allow the infiltration of foreign influence and at the same time to participate in the continuity of the tradition, transmitted from generation to generation. The Kabbalah is the prime example of revolutionary daring which has yet remained within the tradition. The Kabbalah drew extensively on Neo-Platonic sources; assimilated influences from Gnosticism as well as Christian and Islamic mysticism; inter-

preted key concepts in Jewish theology (such as creation, revelation, and redemption) contrary to the accepted notions of outstanding authorities, and at the same time presented itself as *Kabbalah*, that is, as authentic tradition passed on from generation to generation. There is, in the Kabbalah, a vitality which renews the religious vision and in so doing creates new symbols and forms.

As such, it represents a strong protest against the Exile. The Messianic drive which pulsates in the Jewish people expresses itself in the most daring and consistent way in the Kabbalah. Thus, it is the most promising alternative for Judaism of the Exile, and it is no wonder that the tremendous drive for redemption that preceded Zionism in the modern era had its source in the Kabbalah. This drive burst forth as a rebellion against the entire Exilic existence in the form of Sabbatean Messianism. Indeed, we stand here in the presence of the source of hidden power upon which the new, redeemed Judaism will be able to flourish.

It must once again be emphasized that Scholem was not the only one who regarded the Kabbalah as an inner source of nurturance for the Zionist rebellion against the Exile. In the opinion of the first religious Zionist thinkers (especially Rabbis Alkalai, Kalischer and Kook) the Kabbalah is not only the source confirming the Messianic aspiration, which begins with an awakening in human initiative and culminates in grace that changes the cosmic order, but it is also the basis for a comprehensive philosophy of a full national life, from its natural, material basis to the upper spheres of the spirit. Thus, the Kabbalah nurtured the Jewish nationalist world view in a very positive and direct way. For writers who lived through the crisis of the modern Jew but did not sever their ties with the spiritual, religious heritage of the Jewish people (and this includes a significant group of the best of the writers, poets, and Zionist thinkers of the first half of the century: Chaim Nachman Bialik, S. Y. Agnon, A. D. Gordon, Uri Zvi Greenberg, Hillel Zeitlin, Chaim Hazaz) the Kabbalah was an important source. Out of a primary emotional identification, they drew directly upon symbols that expressed their experience as modern Jews and the deep crisis and spiritual struggle which was bound with it. But for a scholar and a man of science like Scholem, the Kabbalah was above all proof that a revolutionary alternative to Rabbinical-Halakhic Judaism is possible — one that does not break with the continuity of tradition, and at the same time expresses a certain undefinable quality of unique spiritual activity passing from generation to generation. One might say that the sense of the existence of this quality was “meta-scientific”, but it was the ground for the strong empathy that characterizes Scholem’s research. He identified with the Kabbalists whom he studied without adopting their world view. He was enchanted with their daring spiritual quality and their yearning for the revelation of inwardness. In the Kabbalah he found the source of the creative force of the Zionist vision.

III

Now we come to the second question: Did Scholem believe that, beyond the legitimation of an alternative Judaism, the actual contents of the Kabbalah could nurture a new cultural creativity? Did he have a comprehensive vision of a Jewish culture which he sought to present as the aim of Zionism?

Concerning the programmatic part of the question, there is a simple answer: Scholem saw himself as a student of the history of Jewish thought and not as a thinker. None of his writings contain a programmatic proposal, nor is there a hint that he had such a proposal. One may even assert the contrary: his attitude toward the thinkers who proposed a defined program beyond the socio-political-territorial vision of the pioneering Zionists was essentially negative. This was particularly pronounced in Scholem's attitude towards Martin Buber, who sought in the prophetic and Hassidic legacy a programmatic message for the fulfillment of Zionism. Scholem thought that such ideological attempts were inauthentic and he preferred restraint. We can know nothing about the Judaism of the future at this time; only the past is revealed to us. This crystallized, definitive opinion gained moving expression in the conclusion of his classic work, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, p. 349–50). The following is an excerpt based on a Hassidic story that he heard from S. Y. Agnon:

When the Baal Shem Tov had a difficult task before him, he would go to a certain place in the woods, light a fire and meditate in prayer — and what he had set out to perform was done. When a generation later the “Maggid” of Meseritz was faced with the same task he would go to the same place in the woods and say: We can no longer light the fire, but we can still speak the prayers — and what he wanted done became reality. Again a generation later Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov had to perform this task. And he too went into the woods and said: We can no longer light a fire, nor do we know the secret meditations belonging to the prayer, but we do know the place in the woods to which it all belongs — and that must be sufficient; and sufficient it was. But when another generation had passed and Rabbi Israel of Rishin was called upon to perform the task, he sat down on his golden chair in his castle and said: We cannot light the fire, we cannot speak the prayers, we do not know the place, but we can tell the story of how it was done. And, the story-teller adds, the story which he told had the same effect as the actions of the other three.

To this story, with its many meanings, Scholem added his own explanation:

You can say if you will that this profound little anecdote symbolizes the decay of a great movement. You can also say that it reflects the transformation of all its values, a transformation so profound that in the end of that remained of the mystery was the tale. That is the position in which we find ourselves today, or in which Jewish mysticism finds itself. The story is not ended, it has not yet become history and the secret life it holds can break out tomorrow in you or in me. Under what aspects this invisible stream of Jewish mysticism will again come to the surface we do not know. But I have come here to speak to you of the main tendencies of Jewish mysticism as we know them. To speak of the mystical course which, in the great cataclysm now stirring the Jewish people more deeply than in the entire history of Exile, destiny may still have in store for us — and I for one believe that there is such a course — is the task of prophets, not of professors.

Thus, Scholem did not assume the role of prophet and, one may add, he did not have much faith in those in his generation who tried to be more than professors. The reason for his mistrust is suggested in the short sentence about the spiritual crisis which the Jewish people is undergoing in our times, which for Scholem is the most severe crisis the nation has ever known. He claimed that those caught up in the midst of the crisis are unable to understand it properly and, therefore, cannot find a solution to it. This may be compared to what was said about the Lurianic Kabbalah which was in his opinion the spiritual response of the Jewish people to the trauma of the expulsion from Spain. The generation that lived through the expulsion itself was incapable, in the opinion of Scholem, of a deep, spiritual response. True confrontation, namely, the Lurianic Kabbalah, came several generations after the expulsion itself, after the full meaning of the event had been revealed. If this is true with respect to a crisis like the expulsion from Spain, all the more so with respect to the unmeasurably greater crisis, namely, the transition to modernity. The present does not produce true prophets, but rather researchers, students of the past. To return to the image of the Hassidic story quoted above: professors are those who come after the story is told. Examine and you shall find that the researcher no longer tells stories; he does not continue the patchwork of deeds that occurred from within the happenings but looks upon them from the outside. At most he tells us about the story.

The question arises: Does the researcher believe that in this way he fulfills the same mission? He who recognizes the pulsating pathos in Scholem's concluding sentences will not hesitate to answer affirmatively. The researcher changes before our eyes and takes a stand as a believer that "the secret life . . . may break out tomorrow in you or in me". We find that by studying the past and its teachings we prepare the work that is yet to come.

Here we come to the second part of the question. As we have seen, Scholem believed that scholarly research fulfills a mission in the spiritual awakening of Jewry and its confrontation with its spiritual crisis. How? The first, primary answer has already been suggested above. Scholem saw research as an authentic, perhaps the only authentic way in which a Jew who led a full, modern existence could identify with the Jewish-religious legacy. This at least was the most far reaching Jewish experience of Scholem himself. The essential quality that characterizes Scholem's work and makes its reading a spiritual event is the sharp, clear intuition that emerges from detailed philological discussion. This intuition has its source in a feeling of identification or empathy. Scholem believed in the power of empathic study which delves into the spiritual world of the past, or of other people, to the point wherein it appear as it did to its creators. The empathy which characterizes Scholem's research may be compared to that of a gifted actor who delves into the depths of the personality he presents. He lends it his sensitivity, imagination and incisiveness and thereby raises it, as it were, from its own being,

without losing his own self-identity. The reading of *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* provides this kind of experience, as do Scholem's lessons and lectures. He knew how to open up the spiritual world of the Kabbalists as if from within, so that his listeners could delve with him into a completely new spiritual world without themselves becoming Kabbalists. What was the residue that remained with them from this experience beyond "knowledge"? How would this residue reveal itself in their own thinking? One cannot know. Scholem was certain, in any event, that the "residue" (in the Kabbalistic sense!) definitely remained. For this reason, he believed that there was a cultural value to empathetic research and that he was fulfilling a mission. When he was asked what the modern Jew should do in order to live his Judaism despite the crisis, his one simple answer was: to study more and more; to engage in the study of Torah for its own sake.

IV

It is easy to understand this answer against the background of the personal experience of a scholar of Scholem's stature. It is also important to remember, however, that this represents a personal version of the commonly accepted outlook of the Zionism of *Eretz Yisrael*, realized in the second and third *aliyot*. In the writings of most of the leaders of that generation, we find the certainty that, if they were to succeed in establishing an independent Jewish life in *Eretz Yisrael*, that is, if a large Jewish community were to gather and live on its own soil, speak its own language and meet all of its own material and spiritual needs, the singular identity of Jewish culture would be revealed "by itself" as a spontaneous expression. We find the same certainty that it is both impossible and also unnecessary to restrict the creative impulse by rigid definitions. Creativity must have the freedom to develop in its own way and we should be concerned with only the most general factors: land, language, society, knowledge of the history of the people, and knowledge of its literary sources. Scholem's assumption that empathetic study of the spectrum of sources, especially of essential, innovative sources, is a guarantor of continuity and that there is no need to propose any fixed limits to Judaism is quite understandable against this background of general Zionist agreement on this matter. But in recent years, after the Holocaust, after the establishment of the State of Israel, and after the process of Jewish assimilation reached the threatening dimensions that we know today, there was a shift in Scholem's thinking. His appraisal became less confident, more pessimistic, conscious of the great danger, and conscious as well of the fact that his simple proposal for Jewish education was insufficient. The shift is apparent in several articles included in the collection *Devarim be-go*, among which the most significant and far reaching is the essay "Reflections on Jewish Theology," written in 1973. However, even here there is no fundamental reversal. In this essay, Scholem presents himself as being without solutions of his own to the theological questions of our time. Moreover, he expresses doubt as to the ability of his contemporaries to propose such solutions since they are in the very midst of the crisis. His attitude to the theological ideas

of 19th and 20th century Jewish thinkers (Steinheim, Geiger, Kohler, Cohen, Rosenzweig, Buber) is still reserved and tends toward scorn. It is interesting also that, even though he himself noted the affinity of theologians such as Cohen, Rosenzweig, and Buber to mystical sources, he repeats the accusation that not only the *Wissenschaft* school, but also Western Jewish theology ignored the Kabbalah as an important source of authentic Jewish thinking.

In all of these respects, therefore, Scholem remained faithful to his earlier stance. Nonetheless, he felt a need to propound, in the article mentioned above, a number of fundamentals characteristic of Jewish theology, something he had intentionally not done previously. The permanent elements that, in his opinion, provide boundaries for the uniquely Jewish world are these: First, Judaism and total secularism do not go hand in hand. Scholem goes even further. He casts doubt on the very ability of a completely secular culture to provide itself with a hierarchy of positive values. Against the background of the greatest crisis of Western culture in our times, he increasingly tends towards the conclusion that without a foundation of transcendental, religious faith, Western culture cannot withstand the processes of moral disintegration. In any case, with respect to Judaism, Scholem's words are incisive. Judaism may be able to deal with secular humanism; however, estrangement from transcendental faith would, in the end, destroy the line of continuity.

Second, Judaism as an established and unique religion stands upon the following three essential foundations: the belief in creation, the belief that God revealed his words to man in the Torah, and the belief that the people of Israel and all mankind will ultimately be redeemed, and that this is the purpose of the history of mankind. These three foundations of Judaism are problematic for anyone who wishes to participate in the cultural-historical, scientific, socio-political experiences of our time. A fundamentalist understanding of these beliefs does not seem viable within this reality, while Scholem proposes no new conception that would adapt traditional beliefs to the thinking of our times. However, he is certain that the future of the Jewish religion hinges on such a revelation, and that to this one must aspire.

Third, Judaism has always been pluralistic. It has never had a monolithic, dogmatic teaching and it never will, but every approach has insisted upon the crucial importance of a relationship of commitment to tradition. Even the most innovative and revolutionary ideas have found a place in this tradition. This is not merely a matter of maintaining the established authority of the religion. It is an essential issue, for only through tradition can religion stamp its impression upon public life, or, in other words, the way in which the religious outlook and experience are shaped into behavior patterns and symbols for the individual and the

community is through tradition. Indeed, only by such fashioning can the religious outlook achieve its purpose.

All of these characteristics are described in the article as demands or expectations from any Jewish theology which may be created in the future. Therefore, Scholem's ambivalence towards Orthodox Judaism, which is obvious throughout the article, should not cause surprise. He cannot accept the fundamentalist position, but he is clearly envious of it, because in his eyes the fundamentalist position is the only authentic religious stand. This would seem to be at the root of Scholem's attitude of condescension towards the attempts of modern theologians, from Steinheim to Buber. If one measures the "authenticity" of a religious position according to orthodox fundamentalism, one cannot accept a theology based on modern, rationalistic philosophy as authentic. The only possible authentic position for one who cannot accept orthodoxy is an aspiration toward the revelation of a new kind of fundamentalism, born of the primal religious experience that is bound to follow or emerge out of the crisis.

It is not surprising that in this article, too, Scholem does not go beyond the limits of presenting the questions. He does not have even the beginning of an answer. What then is the conclusion? He presents some warnings against what he sees as perverted and erroneous ways. Scholem warns against an oversimplified interpretation of the Zionist aspiration for normalization of the Jewish nation. A return to normal life in one's own land and state — yes; imitation of the culture of other nations to the point of becoming like them — no. This is complete assimilation and would mean national destruction. As we have seen, Scholem warns against the aspiration towards complete secularization of religious, social life. Indeed, it is clear that secularization, like oversimplified normalization, also belongs to the realm of assimilation. In other articles from the collection *Devarim be-go*, Scholem comes out strongly against the domination of orthodox norms in the State of Israel. But even here, he insisted that in a Jewish State religious symbols and norms should be publicly maintained. What are his criteria? Where is the line to be drawn? There is no clear answer. The longest article, "Reflections on Jewish Theology", concludes with the affirmation that when the meaning of the secularization of Western culture shall be fully expressed, the creative force of religion will be renewed. Renewal will come from the very depths of the religious experience, as it is revealed in the Kabbalah. In this way, an authentic solution will be found. What is the basis for this belief? Scholem presents no historical support for this claim. Here he truly reveals himself as a Kabbalist, and his faith reminds us of the Kabbalah's hidden first principle of Creation, which is either "nothingness" (*ayin*) or "will" (*raṣon*). Its validity derives from its very existence.

V

In summary, the importance that Scholem attributed to the study of the Kab-

balah, in terms of shaping the modern Jew's identification with Judaism, rests on the recognition of the essential driving force which renewed Judaism throughout history; on its contribution to an image of a multifaceted, innovative, and revolutionary Judaism, with its aspiration towards redemption as a vision of the complete and all encompassing life; on the unbroken continuity of tradition through empathetic study that will enable nurturance of the creative drive in the future; and finally, on the sustained faith that Judaism will indeed be renewed when the time is ripe. Scientific research can offer no more than this. Scholem believed, however, that we must remain at present within the limits of scientific learning and that the time is not yet ripe for innovative religious creativity. We must, therefore, hold fast to our positive attitude toward faith and tradition and study out of empathy and hope.

Scholem leaves us with a number of unanswered questions which call for resolution here and now. We find ourselves in the midst of a struggle for the crystallization of religious symbols, lifestyles and laws that will establish the character of the State of Israel as Jewish state. It is a fateful hour and the die is being cast in our time. In this struggle, we require more than *Torah lishmah*, general warnings, and faith. Those who must undergo the greatest of all the crises that the people of Israel have ever undergone are in need of instruction. A mystical belief in the power of the study of a mystical religion will not help them find their way, and even if study is an essential part of every solution, it is not a solution when presented by itself, without a living tradition. We must, therefore, be truthful in concluding the discussion: Scholem's outlook on modern Judaism does not answer the need. It does not even provide a basis upon which to develop an outlook that would closely confront the questions he raised. It often seems that in some of his ideas about Judaism, its history, and the value of creative thinking in modern times, he placed unjustified obstacles in the path of spiritual confrontation and minimized the connecting links to relevant strata of tradition.

We refer to a series of questions requiring thorough clarification: The question of the position of mysticism in Jewish thinking, in relation to other strata and movements in Jewish religious thought and experience; the significance of mysticism in the transition to modern times; the contribution of Judaic studies and, especially, the question of the value of post-emancipation religious creativity, both within and outside of Zionism. But the main question is: Is that generation which is in the midst of the crisis truly unable to deal with it? If this claim is correct with respect to our generation, it will be true, it seems, for the generation to come as well, and for the generation after that, if it is still identified with Judaism. There does not seem to be any basis for the assumption that after the traumatic crisis there "must" come a stability that will enable reappraisal. The rapid process of change that Western culture, and the Jewish people within it, are undergoing has now continued for several generations. There is still no sign of stabilization.

Perhaps one must come to terms with the fact that rapid change is a permanent feature of modernity, that this is the situation that one must confront, and that therefore there is no escape from appraisal in the midst of the change, here and now, to the best of our ability to understand today's reality. We must not postpone this for tomorrow, because it is doubtful whether what is not accomplished today can still be accomplished tomorrow. We may find, to our sorrow, that our belief in the coming renewal was only an illusion based on our yearning for the lost paradise of a religious authenticity whose vestiges are still in view in the stronghold of orthodox fundamentalism.

Scholem's research made an important contribution towards understanding the Judaism of the past with the tools of modern thought. His Jewish world view explains the crisis of modernity in great depth. It represents a fruitful challenge to those thinkers who would wish to confront the crisis. But those who are prepared to answer the challenge will be unable to accept most of his limits and definitions. They will have to pave new ways from Scholem onward.

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