

# RABBI DR LOUIS JACOBS' VIEWS ON THE HOLY SCRIPTURE AND SECULARIZATION



Dr. Ayşe AKINCI AMBAROĞLU

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# **Rabbi Dr Louis Jacobs' Views on The Holy Scripture and Secularization**

**Assist. Prof. Dr. Ayşe AKINCI AMBAROĞLU**

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2025

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**Yazar: Dr. Ayşe AKINCI AMBAROĞLU**

**ORCID NO: 0000-0003-2206-7364**

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**www.yazyayinlari.com**

**yazyayinlari@gmail.com**

**info@yazyayinlari.com**

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*to soul of my father Mahmut Akinci*

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*"Bu kitapta yer alan bölümlerde kullanılan kaynakların, görüşlerin, bulguların, sonuçların, tablo, şekil, resim ve her türlü içeriğin sorumluluğu yazar veya yazarlarına ait olup ulusal ve uluslararası telif haklarına konu olabilecek mali ve hukuki sorumluluk da yazarlara aittir."*

## INTRODUCTION

### RELEVANCE OF THE ISSUE

Conservative Judaism<sup>1</sup> has mostly completed its institutional development within the twentieth century Modern Jewish Movements in the United States. Formulated as 'Catholic Israel' by Solomon Schechter (d. 1915), Conservative Judaism defends the ways and requirements of reconciliation of tradition and inevitable modernism<sup>2</sup>. Conservative Judaism, as it is named so in the US and Canada, is the second Jewish group after Orthodox Judaism in the United States in terms of the number of followers<sup>3</sup>. When it comes to Britain, it has the least number of followers among Jews<sup>4</sup>. This book examines the views of Louis Jacobs (1920-2006) on the stance of Judaism against tradition within the frame of Holy Scripture, revelation, God, and modernity. Louis Jacobs was a member of Conservative Judaism which is called the Masorti movement within British Judaism, and he is accepted as an important figure in this movement for his criticism of Orthodox tradition.

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<sup>1</sup> Conservative Judaism: Founded by Solomon Schechter (1847-1915), it is a modern Jewish movement that advocates the integrity of Jewish society and the existence and necessity of a gradual change of the historical process. It is known as the 'Masorti movement' peculiar to British Judaism.

<sup>2</sup> Salime Leyla Gürkan, *Yahudilik, İsam*, İstanbul, 2008, s. 45.

<sup>3</sup> <https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/essays/demographics-of-judaism> 3.6.2017, In the US, the ranking is 38% Reform Jews, 33% Conservative Jews, and 22% Orthodox Jews.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jewish-population-of-the-world> 3.6.2017, The Jewish population in Britain is 290.000, corresponding to the 1% of the entire population.

There are researches<sup>5</sup> which connect the basic doctrines of Judaism in terms of religious and cultural perspective both with Holy Scripture analysis and interpretations and with historical turning points of Judaism, primarily including "The Legal Nature of Holy Scripture"<sup>6</sup>, "Jews as the Chosen People"<sup>7</sup> and "The Covenant Code"<sup>8</sup>.

In the history of Judaism, monotheist belief has been established as a fundamental principle<sup>9</sup> with the prophets Abraham and Moses. According to the Torah, God made agreements with the people of Israel and the prophets of the Israelites<sup>10</sup>. The immigration of the Prophet Abraham and his family from Harran to the land of Canaan, which is declared as the Holy Land, was realized as a result of the agreement God made with the prophet Abraham<sup>11</sup>. The fulfillment of this order by the Prophet Abraham corresponds to a new turning point for both religious obligation and Judaism in terms of space

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<sup>5</sup> Elliot N. Dorff & Louis E. Newman, *Contemporary Jewish Theology*, Oxford University Press, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, 25 that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying: 26 "Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there as a witness against you" Yas.: 31/24-26, bkz. Yas.: 28/58-30/10, 2.Kra.23-21.

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy: 7/6 'For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.' Exodus: 22/31 'You are to be my holypeople.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis, 17:1/9, Çıkış, 19:5, 20:1/17, Deuteronomy, 5:6/21.

<sup>9</sup> Manfred H. Vogel, "Monotheism", *Encyclopaedia of Judaica*, Jerusalem, 1978 (Ejd), C. 12, s. 263, Çıkış, 29: 5.

<sup>10</sup> Moshe Weinfeld, "Covenant", Ejd, C.5, s.1012-1025, Mezm.50-7, 81-10,11, Yas., 31:10-13,

<sup>11</sup> Genesis: 12:1/5

and society. Thus, the Canaan region is transforming into the land of Israel, and an inter-communal relationship is established between the two different societies of Israel and the peoples of the Canaan country. Thus, the Canaanite region is transforming into the land of Israel and an inter-communal relationship is established between the two different societies of Israel and the peoples of the Canaanite country<sup>12</sup>. In Judaism, the relationship of place, society and religion has a cyclical character. This issue remained to be a source of debate among the Jewish movements after modernity just like it has been in the formation of the Holy Scripture and Jewish tradition<sup>13</sup>.

The developments before and after the Babylonian Exile are important in terms of institutionalization and development of Judaism as a social structure and the diaspora experience afterwards<sup>14</sup>. The Second Temple Period begins with the Jews coming from Babylon to Jerusalem and rebuilding the temple in B.C. 516-515 and continues until the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in A.C. 70<sup>15</sup>. The characteristics of the Second

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<sup>12</sup> Abrahams Malamet, *Origins and the Formative Period, A History of the Jewish People* içinde, ed.H.H. Ben- Sasson, Harvard U. Press, Cambridge, 1997, s.4.

<sup>13</sup> Louis Jacobs, 'God, Torah, Israel', The Efraimson Lecture Hebrew Union College Press, 1990, Cincinnati, Rosensweig Franz, 'The Star of Redemption', University of Notre Dame Press, 1985, London.

<sup>14</sup> Ali Osman Kurt, *Erken Dönem Yahudi Tarihi Yahudiliğin Mimarı Ezra, IQ Kültür Sanat*, 2007, İstanbul, s.62.

<sup>15</sup> Ali Osman Kurt, *İkinci Mabad Dönemi Yahudiliği, Doğu'dan Batı'ya Düşüncenin Serüveni: Akli Düşünce ve Felsefenin Doğu'dan doğuşu: Babil-Keldani-Çin-Hint-İran-İbrani Gelenekleri*. Edt. Bayram Ali Çetinkaya; İstanbul, İnsan Yayınları, 2015, C.1. s. 945. Bkz. Maxwell Miller-John Haralson Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1986, s. 437. For starting the Second Temple period with the date of returning from exile, B.C. 509, see also Lester L. Grabe, *Judaic Religion in the Second Temple Period: Belief and*

Temple Period include the continuation of the emphasis on ethnic structure, the prominence of the lineage instead of the land, the transition of the leadership from the Sons of David to the oracles, the codification of the Torah, the demarcation of Israel's borders and the beginning of a new (eschatological) age<sup>16</sup>. The period after the Jews' exile from Spain in 1492 is the preparatory era of Early Modern Judaism and Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment)<sup>17</sup> under the influence of social mobility on cultural studies<sup>18</sup>. In modern Jewish history, the nineteenth-century Haskalah Movement that emerged after the Spanish Exile and the New Jewish Theology periods that developed after the Second World War draw particular attention<sup>19</sup>.

Following the Christian Reform, the widespread interpretation of the Holy Scripture text not only institutionally but also individually<sup>20</sup>, the discussion of Judaism's interpretation of the Holy Scripture on philosophical, theological, educational grounds and on the rituals during the Haskalah period started from Germany and spread to other countries in Europe. In the 18th century and afterwards, the transformation of Jewish people with the immigration to Germany and Britain in Europe first and then to the United States and Canada

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Practice from the Exile to Yavneh, Routledge, New York, 2000, s.5.

<sup>16</sup> Kurt, Ali Osman, a.g.e., s.951.

<sup>17</sup> Kurt, Ali Osman, a.g.e., s.951.

<sup>18</sup> Ruderman David B, Erken Modern Dönem Yahudi Tarihi, Çev. Lizet Deadato, İnkılap, İstanbul 2010, s.145-148

<sup>19</sup> Goldy, G. Robert, The Emergence of Jewish Theology in America, Indiana University Press, 1990, United States Of America. s.6.

<sup>20</sup> Hakan Olgun, Sekülerliğin Teolojik Kurgusu Protestanlık, İz, İstanbul, 2006, s.384.



due to the First and Second World War had an impact on the character of modern Jewish movements<sup>21</sup>.

The 20th-century Jewish approaches, especially the Reformist-Liberal Judaism<sup>22</sup> and Conservative Judaism movements in which Louis Jacobs belongs to discussed and reinterpreted the issues of overcoming the problems of secularization philosophically and practically, general theological interpretation after modernization, and the basic principles of Judaism. Although the establishment of the State of Israel is primarily associated with modernization, according to the postmodern approach, it is an example showing the effects of periodic differentiation in Judaism on institutionalization within the framework of religious principles<sup>23</sup>.

Reformist-Liberal Judaism is the movement that developed by the German Rabbis in 1885 with the Pittsburgh Platform, leaving Orthodox Judaism's idea of revelation<sup>24</sup>. Although Reformist Judaism was initially against Zionism, over time some of its views got closer to it. Reformist Jews defended that the Holy Scripture criticism should be made with scientific methods and be interpreted in the light of such studies. In this respect, they argued that the emergence of Halakhah as a result of the discussions of the Rabbis was a methodological model for them. The thinkers of Conservative Judaism, which

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<sup>21</sup> Shmuel Ettinger, *A History of The Jewish People*, Edt. H.H. Ben Sasson, Harvard U. Press, 1997, Cambridge, s.860.

<sup>22</sup> Louis Jacobs, *The Jewish Religion: a companion*, Oxford University Press, 1995, s.417.

<sup>23</sup> Jakob J. Petuchowski, "*Reform Judaism*", Ejd, C.14, s.23-27.

<sup>24</sup> Edward Lipinsk, Jacob Jashua Ross, "*Revelation*", Ejd, C.14, s.118-119.

were initially considered progressive and innovative and called 'Progressive' as they acted together with Reformist Jews, soon separated from them and established the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in 1886 due to their divergent views, primarily concerning the preservation of tradition and religious dietary restrictions<sup>25</sup>.

According to Robert G. Goldy, known for his works on Modern Jewish Theology and Judaism in the US, interactions with non-Jewish cultures in Alexandria<sup>26</sup>, Medieval Spain and Modern Germany have an important place at the basis of New Jewish Theology<sup>27</sup>. The similarity between Goldy's argument and Emile Durkheim's (1858-1917) analogy of social events over the particular case of Judaism shows the importance of modernization on religious institutions, theology and practices. According to Durkheim, the existence of a causal relationship<sup>28</sup> between social events cannot abstract the effectiveness of human, environmental, socio-economic conditions in the study of religions, on the contrary, it is possible to say that it can be examined within this framework. Louis Jacobs's

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<sup>25</sup> Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) was established in 1886 as an affiliate of the Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue with the efforts of Dr. Sabato Morais and Dr. H. Pereira Mendes of Sephardic communities in Philadelphia and New York. It is considered to be New York's oldest Jewish community institution.

<sup>26</sup> Alexandria is the most important science center established as a result of the spread of Hellenistic Philosophy in the Eastern Mediterranean. It is one of the three centers of Neo-Platonism along with Syria and Rome. Plotinos, who systematized Neo-Platonism, enabled Alexandria to be recognized as the center of science and philosophy. Çetinkaya Bayram Ali, İlkçağ Felsefesi Tarihi, İnsan, 2000, İstanbul, s.284.

<sup>27</sup> Robert G. Goldy, *The Emergence of Jewish Theology in America*, Indiana University Press, 1990, United States of America.s.7.

<sup>28</sup> Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, tr. Karen E. Fields, The Free Press, 1995, New York, s.24-25.

evaluation of the environmental conditions in the formation of the Holy Scripture together with revelation, and, the evaluation of genocide of Jews in Spain (1492) and in Germany (1941-1944) in the Holocaust philosophy and theology by thinkers such as Emil Fachenheim and Richard Rubenstein<sup>29</sup> in the context of God and evil reveal the importance of methodical difference in research on Judaism and periodic developments and new interpretation styles<sup>30</sup>.

The general situation of British Judaism from the perspective of religion in the 20th century, the Orthodox-Liberal split, and how critical views were interpreted by Louis Jacobs are very important in terms of their consequences. Louis Jacobs was a Rabbi at the New West End Synagogue<sup>31</sup> which belonged to London-based United Orthodox Jewish groups. However, as of 1957, he was criticized and excluded because of his views on the Holy Scripture and revelation, which were published in the Jewish Chronicle<sup>32</sup> soon named "Jacobs Affair", and were accepted outside the Orthodox Jewish thought.

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<sup>29</sup> Steven Katz, *Jewish Philosophers*, Bloch Publishing Company, New York, 1975, s. 223.

<sup>30</sup> Katz, a.g.e., s. 228, Muhsin Akbaş, *Holocaust Problemi ve Tanrı: Teolojik ve Felsefi Cevaplar*, AÜİFD C.XLIV, 2003, S.1, s.173-186.

<sup>31</sup> New West End Synagogue: It has been active since 1879 and it belongs to the Orthodox Jews of London. It is known for the support it provided during the establishment of the State of Israel and has governance in harmony with the London Orthodox Union. The synagogue is supported by the Rothschild family. Louis Jacobs served as a Rabbi, he won the Chief Rabbi elections but soon vetoed. See Miri-Freud Kandel, *Orthodox Judaism in Britain Since 1913*, Oxford U. Press, Louis Jacobs, *Helping With Inquiries*, Vallentine & Mitchell, London, 1989.

<sup>32</sup> David Ceserani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991*, Cambridge U. Press, 2005, s. 217.

These writings were later published in "We Have Reason to Believe," as Louis Jacobs' main insight into the Holy Scripture and the content of revelation. 'We Have Reason to Believe' is the first published work of Louis Jacobs which advocates the necessity to admit that the Holy Scripture involves the synthesis of revelation with human and environmental elements, and takes into account modern criticisms of Holy Scripture. Jacobs's approach to Orthodox Judaism with a critical point of view apart from the revelation views, explaining his explanations with Medieval and Contemporary Philosophical views allows to study this versatile Rabbi in various fields. Louis Jacobs, who was banned from being the Chief Rabbi<sup>33</sup> because of his views in "We Have Reason to Believe" and accused of being heretical and opposing the Orthodox Jewish tradition, continued his arguments in various fields, especially theology, ethics, law and mysticism.

The philosophical and sociological debates around the thesis of the decline or disappearance of religion in the twentieth century have also been evaluated in different dimensions within Judaism. In line with Conservative Judaism, which further reinforces the importance of traditional identity acceptance, Louis Jacobs critically analyzes the Jewish tradition and advocates for the public continuity of Judaism after revising the cultural tradition and religious identity of Judaism with methods appropriate to the conditions of the day.

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<sup>33</sup> Stephen Brook, *The Club: Jews of Modern Britain*, Constable-London, 1989. s.116.

## **RESEARCH AREA AND BOUNDARIES**

Judaism has a past of around three thousand and five hundred years and it could survive over the ages thanks to a strong tradition. The philosophical and doctrinal dimension of religion is distinguishable from individual experience and social phenomena. The aim of this book is to investigate how the non-religious conditions affecting the variation of interpretations between philosophical and doctrinal content and individual and social phenomena establish a relationship between these two fields; and also to analyze under what conditions such relationships forming religious traditions persist. Religion is a social institution composed of philosophical-theological, ethical- moral and legal-practice components. Social institutions tend to protect and maintain their existence, just like organisms. Religions are reflexive to conditions that are regarded as life threats as long as they have believers.

The 20th century is a period in which the discussions about religions intensify, such as on secularization, the decline of religion, and their possible defeat to atheism. In modern studies about religion, it is seen how different results are produced by the search for scientific truth and its criticism and symbolic, mythological and mythical expressions of religion. The differences between religious studies and studies on religion have become clear. Religious study, theology, mysticism is about rituals. However, scientific studies on religion arise from a liberal perspective. As a method, theological study has to question dogmatism.

While secularization is attributed to be a concept of the modern era, Talal Asad denies that it is a periodic concept and the "religious" and "secular" are basically not fixed categories. It is not easy for Asad to understand how much secular institutions are related to religion. Asad argues that nothing is essentially religious and that there is no universal essence that defines 'sacred language' or 'sacred experience'<sup>34</sup>. People assume that everything they think about falls into two classes, real or ideal, or two groups. This classification usually means the division of the world into two areas: sacred and secular<sup>35</sup>.

Mircea Eliade (1907-1986), who we know from his phenomenological studies in the History of Religions, states that the History of Religions is an interpretation, and unlike male-female or earth-sky-like polarizations, it does not imply an opposition. According to Eliade, the interpretation of the sacred opens the door to the understanding and interpretation of what is considered profane. Being related to the concept of religion itself means being confronted with the secular<sup>36</sup>. This means that contrary to what first comes to mind, there is no conceptual competition and opposition.

To Eliade, the History of Religions as a cultural discipline, includes the differentiation, change and gradual acceptance processes between cultural elements

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<sup>34</sup> Talal Asad, *Sekülerliğin Biçimleri*, Çev.Ferit Burak Aydar, Metis, İstanbul, 2007, s. 38.

<sup>35</sup> Asad, a.g.e, s. 38.

<sup>36</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Dinsel İnançlar ve Düşünceler Tarihi*, Çev. Ali Berkay, Kabalıcı 2000, İstanbul, C.1, s. 6.

other than Theology<sup>37</sup>. According to Mircea Eliade, the myths make us confront concepts evoking modern-secular discourse such as belief and knowledge, reason and imagination, history and fiction, symbol and allegory, natural and supernatural, sacred and secular<sup>38</sup>. Louis Jacobs, on the other hand, states that when the historian of religion and the theologian are compared in terms of their functions, the historian of religion examines exactly what happened in the past, whereas the theologian examines the effect of the past on today. In the works of Louis Jacobs, it is possible to see the theologian point of view as a requirement and result of the mentioned property<sup>39</sup>.

It is seen that Talal Asad's approach coincides with the social reality of religion with the comments made about secularization within the scope of Modern Period Judaism studies. Because it is insufficient to relate changes in different social arrangements within the history of Judaism, for example, in exile and migration conditions, with religious justifications. Louis Jacobs's understanding of not rejecting tradition altogether, and Talal Asad's notion that the definition of religious or non-religious is not based on an objective categorization emphasize the effect or non-religious conditions on the other religious traditions, which is the case of Judaism for Jacobs and Judaism, and of Judaism, Cristianity and İslam for Asad.

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<sup>37</sup> Eliade, *Dinin Anlamı ve Sosyal Fonksiyonu*, Çev. Mehmet Aydın, Din Bilimleri Yayınları 1995, Konya, s. 68.

<sup>38</sup> Eliade, *Dinsel İnançlar ve Düşünceler Tarihi*, Çev. Ali Berktaş, Kabaıcı 2000, İstanbul, C.1, s. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Louis Jacobs, *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, London, 1999. s.76.

Because in Louis Jacobs' works who base on his Rabbi and academic identity beyond being a devout Jew, the idea that revelation is intertwined with historical, cultural, economic and modern interactions is essential<sup>40</sup>.

The development of secular criticism within Christianity can be explained by the scarcity of religious practices. It developed as a result of a concern for secularization, and this development alone contributed to the formation of written secular history, descriptions and criticisms. For this reason, the views of Christian sociologists of religion were also included while addressing major secularization theories<sup>41</sup>.

In the introduction, I provided historical and general explanations about 'Judaism in England' as Louis Jacobs was living in England, and the conditions of the Jews in England during his lifetime, the foundations of the split within Orthodox Judaism and its development will make the content of the book more understandable.

The first part of the book gives information about Louis Jacobs' family, education life and basic views. The first part of the thesis gives information about Louis Jacobs' family, education life and basic views. The introductory section provides information on the New Jewish Theology and works which were influential during Jacobs' era, as well as the views of some figures who has intellectual influence on him, which include Alexander Altmann (1906-1987), Zacharias Frankel (d.1875), Solomon Schechter who is considered to be the founder of

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<sup>40</sup> Louis Jacobs, *We Have Reason To Believe*, s.14.

<sup>41</sup> See Chapter III



Conservative Judaism, and Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler (d.1953) who was his master at Yeshiva<sup>42</sup>. While examining his life, I benefited from the PhD thesis 'Teyku: Insoluble Contradictions in The Life And Thought Of Louis Jacobs'<sup>43</sup>, authored by Elliot Joe Cosgrove which includes Jacobs' life, views and works as well as the autobiography 'Helping With Inquiries'<sup>44</sup>, compiled by her wife from her own archive.

The second part of the thesis includes Holy Scripture criticism and explanations in Louis Jacobs' own works. In this section, his views on theological, ethical and legal issues were primarily exemplified. Based on the basic views of Louis Jacobs in his work "We Have Reason To Believe" on the content of the concept of revelation, the problem in the traditional understanding of revelation of Judaism was explored. The Rabbani literature included in Jacobs's works is briefly introduced in this section, and examples are given on how Jacobs uses these works. The criticisms of the Bible in Jacobs' works of "Jewish Law", "A Tree of Life", "The Talmudic Argument", evaluation of traditional interpretations, situations in which human and social conditions cannot be ignored, and the conditions of preserving the essence of tradition are included in the second part of the thesis. Because law is represented by

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<sup>42</sup> Yeshiva: Jewish religious education institution focusing on advanced Talmud education.

<sup>43</sup> Elliot Joe Cosgrove, 'Teyku: Unsoluble Contradictions in The Life And Thought Of Louis Jacobs', The University of Chicago, A Dissertation Submitted to The Faculty of the Divinity School in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Chicago, Illinois, 2008.

<sup>44</sup> Louis Jacobs, Helping With Inquiries: An Autobiography, Vallentine, Mitchell, London 1989.

the normative values it carries in public and individual terms.

Religion affects legal values. Revelation interacts with social, economic and other environmental factors. How to distinguish between the interaction of Jewish law with revelation and non-revelational elements is an important problem. This chapter also briefly mentions Louis Jacobs's views on mysticism and the tradition of Holy Script interpretation.

The third part of the book covers the discussions around the concept of secularization in the modern period and its history and concepts related to the concept of secularization in Jewish History. The diverging approach of religious movements within modern Judaism, Conservative Judaism, criticism of Louis Jacobs, views of Louis Jacobs's contemporaries were included in the third chapter. I also mentioned sociological debates on secularization. I highlighted the point of view proposed by Louis Jacobs for Judaism, which overlaps with sociological debates regarding the equality of the religious and the secular. Sources on General Jewish History, British Judaism, Biblical Literature, secularization theses and modern Jewish formations were evaluated.

Louis Jacobs taught at Oxford, Cambridge and Harvard universities. The web page named Louis Jacobs is still active<sup>45</sup>. Louis Jacobs' personal library, works, photographs and digital data about him is available at the Jewish Studies Library, affiliated with the Bodleian

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<sup>45</sup> <http://www.louisjacobs.org> 3.6.2017

Library of Oxford University and located in the European Association of Jews Studies (EAJS) as the common study platform of European Jews. However, most of the sources used in my studies during the preparation of the book, including Louis Jacobs' own works, were found in the British Library in London. In addition, some resources were obtained from London City University Library (UCL) and University of London Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) Library.

Since he produced works in all fields of Judaism, the criticism on Conservative Judaism was also directed against Louis Jacobs, who kept a distance from the Reformists After the Second World War, and was closer to Orthodox Judaism compared to the Reconstructionist<sup>46</sup> movement. Defending the continuity of tradition and inconsistency of views on revelation and Holy Scripture are among the prime criticisms<sup>47</sup>. In Louis Jacobs' view of the Torah, it is seen that he studied the Rabbani tradition with respect. Louis Jacobs' studies on the Torah after the Yeshiva, the philosophical accumulation he acquired during his doctorate education at the University of London, his research on the Babylonian Talmud, and his intellectual harmony with the Conservative school in America in the face of the current problems of Judaism are remarkable.

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<sup>46</sup> Reconstructionist Judaism: Born and developed in the United States of America. In this aspect, it differs from Reform Judaism and Conservative Judaism originating in Germany and Orthodox Judaism centered in Central and Eastern Europe. It is the Modern Jewish movement defined as a form of civilization that manifests itself in all areas of life rather than a religious doctrine. Jacobs Louis, *The Jewish Religion*. s. 417.

<sup>47</sup> Jack Wertheimer, *The Perplexities of Conservative Judaism*, American Jewish Committee, 2007, Volume 124, Number 2, s. 38-44.

The debate on the originality of the Holy Scripture or whether its content is symbolic is a fundamental debate among Jewish clergy<sup>48</sup>. Based on Louis Jacob's works, this book also addresses Jewish legal tradition and Holy Scripture interpretation, the relationship between Liberal and Ultra-Orthodox traditions and American Judaism, development of Cosenrvatie Judaism within the New London Synagogue and the criticism against the Conservative Judaism.

What is the result of institutional critique of religion in social life in the 20th century and in the context of Judaism. Individual religiosity and new religious movements have brought quite important inquiries and analyzes to this day. The relationship between the text and doctrine of religion is considered as complementary and inseparable. However, for Judaism, when the formation of the Bible is considered, the effect of the human element on the text reaches indisputable dimensions. Due to the influence of Jewish history on the text, a special section of secularization is included in our book, with examples from the Holy Scripture text.

*'The Jewish Scriptures in Terms of Text Content and Sources<sup>49</sup>, 'The Faith of God in the Jewish Holy Scripture<sup>50</sup>, 'The Torah According to Jewish Sources<sup>51</sup>, 'The Reconstruction of Judaism under the Leadership of Ezra after the Babylonian*

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<sup>48</sup> Muhammed Ali Bağır, Kutsal Kitap Eleştirisi: Eski Ahit ve Modern Dönem Öncüleri, Harran Ü. İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, C.XIX. S. 31, s.279-310.

<sup>49</sup> Ömer Faruk Harman, 'Metin Muhteva ve Kaynak Açısından Yahudi Kutsal Kitapları', İstanbul, 1988.

<sup>50</sup> Halim Işık, 'Yahudi Kutsal Kitabı'nda Tanrı İnancı', Marmara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, YL Tezi, İstanbul, 1993.

<sup>51</sup> Baki Adam, Yahudi Kaynaklarına Göre Tevrat, Pınar, 2001, İstanbul

*Exile*<sup>52</sup>, 'Principles of Worship and Belief in Judaism'<sup>53</sup>, 'Worship in Judaism'<sup>54</sup> are the works made in Turkey which are directly related to Judaism. Academic studies in Judaism vary in subject matter, including Jewish Scholars, the Judaism tradition and the Modern Jewish Movements.

'Early Jewish History: Ezra, Architect of Judaism'<sup>55</sup>, '18. Century Enlightenment Movement Haskalah and Mendelssohn'<sup>56</sup>, 'The Life of the Jewish Thinker Saadia Gaon, His Works, His Place in the History of Faith'<sup>57</sup> were prepared as a doctoral dissertation and then turned into a book. These studies are examples of works that explain the formation and transformation of tradition in Judaism through historical figures, works, and views in Classical and Modern Judaism. In addition, 'Spinoza and Bible'<sup>58</sup>, 'The Jews as a Chosen People'<sup>59</sup> are studies that have been prepared outside Turkey and contribute to the Bible and Jewish tradition.

<sup>52</sup> Ali Osman Kurt, Babil Sürgünü Sonrası Ezra Önderliğinde Yahudiliğin Yeniden Yapılandırılması, 2006. Doktora Tezi, Ankara Üniversitesi, Felsefe ve Din Bilimleri Anabilim Dalı Dinler Tarihi Bilim Dalı

<sup>53</sup> M. Hadi Tezokur, Yahudilik'te İnanç Esasları, 1992, PhD Thesis, Selçuk Ü. Felsefe ve Din Bilimleri.

<sup>54</sup> Âdem Özen, Yahudilik'te İbadet, Ayışığı Kitapları, İstanbul, 2001.

<sup>55</sup> Ali Osman Kurt, Erken Dönem Yahudi Tarihi: Yahudiliğin Mimarı Ezra. İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2007.

<sup>56</sup> Seda Özmen, 18.YY Aydınlanma Hareketi Haskala ve Mendelssohn, Ayışığı, İstanbul, 2014.

<sup>57</sup> Muhammed Ali Bağır, Yahudi Düşünür Saadia Gaon Hayatı, Eserleri ve İnanç Tarihindeki Yeri, Erciyes Ü. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Felsefe ve Din Bilimleri, PhD Thesis, Kayseri, 2015.

<sup>58</sup> Mahmut Salihoglu, Spinoza and the Bible, İstanbul 2012.

<sup>59</sup> Salime Leyla Gürkan, The Jews as a Chosen People, Routledge Jewish Studies Series, 2009, New York.

Some of the other referred sources concerning how Judaism was formed in Britain include '*London Jewry And London Politics, 1889-1986*'<sup>60</sup>, Todd Endelmann'in '*The Jews of Britain 1656 to 2000*'<sup>61</sup>, '*Erken Modern Dönem Yahudi Tarihi*'<sup>62</sup>, '*A History Of The Jews In England*'<sup>63</sup> and '*A History of Judaism*'<sup>64</sup>.

The works of Louis Jacobs including 'Jewish Law', 'Religion and The Individual' and 'Jewish Thought Today' are available in the Library of Islamic Research Center in Istanbul, affiliated with the Turkish Religious Foundation. Louis Jacobs' "A Jewish Theology" is frequently referred to in the relevant chapters, as it forms the basis of his perspective on belief and explains how he formed a relationship with the Holy Scripture. As can be seen in the second part, in his work "A Jewish Theology", Louis Jacobs follows the main line of the discussions on related issues as he received an Orthodox Rabbi tradition education. Louis Jacobs often refers to the theological views of Middle Age Jewish scholars, Sadia Gaon (882-942), Abraham b. Azra (1089-1167) and Maimonides (1135-1204) on the issues related to Jewish theology and Holy Scripture. The relevant chapters include Jacobs'

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<sup>60</sup> Geoffrey Alderman, *London Jewry And London Politics, 1889-1986*, Routledge&NewYork, 1989.

<sup>61</sup> Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Britain 1656 to 2000*, London, 2002.

<sup>62</sup> David Ruderman, *Erken Modern Dönem Yahudi Tarihi*. Çev. Lizet Diedato, İnkılap, 2010.

<sup>63</sup> Cecil Roth, *A History Of The Jews In England*, Oxford U. Press Amen House, 1942, Great Britain.

<sup>64</sup> Bernard Martin, *A History of Judaism, Volume 2, Europe and the New World*, Basic Books, New York, 1974.

reference to these scholars mainly on the issue of Jewish theology.

This book occasionally quotes Holy Scripture as they were indicated in the works of Louis Jacobs or were considered relevant. The Turkish edition of the Holy Scripture was consulted on this issue<sup>65</sup>.

Negative, positive and eclectic sociological theories on secularization, which were mainly written within the framework of the discussions that developed in 1960 and after, draw attention. These theories are partially mentioned in the third part of the book. Differences of opinion on the position of religion against modernization were emphasized. Talal Asad mentions in his work titled *Religious Forms of Secularism*, the political, cultural and so on. In relation to the elements; It was emphasized that it may face violence, corruption and sanctification, and the influence of non-religious elements on the shaping of Louis Jacobs' religion in terms of Judaism was exemplified. It was emphasized that in the face of secularization of religion, it may be faced with violence, corruption and sanctification in relation to political, cultural, etc. factors, which was also referred to in *Religious Formations of Secularity* by Talal Asad. I exemplified Louis Jacobs' evaluations on the influence of non-religious factors on the shaping of religion in terms of Judaism.

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<sup>65</sup> Kitab-ı Mukaddes, Kitab-ı Mukaddes Şirketi 2010, İstanbul.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF MODERN JEWISH HISTORICAL WORKS

After the Spanish exile in the 16th century, Jews were active in the Renaissance movement in Central Europe. The Jewish enlightenment of the 19th century Haskala and the Second World War led to the emergence of the New Jewish Theology (Modern Jewish Theology). After the difficult conditions faced by the Jews living in Spain in the 16th century, Jewish communities in the Iberian Peninsula were settled in safe areas, especially Istanbul, Simirna and Thessaloniki, under the patronage of the Ottoman Empire. The Safed, which was the center of the Messianic movement and mysticism in the second half of the XVII century, became an important center for Kabbalah learning. Following their exodus from Spain, Jews moved their precious treasury, Zohar, to first Turkey, Palestenian and Egypt, then to Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and Britain. The teaching of Zohar continued to expand with new interpretations and depths in all these countries.

Among them, the city of Safed in Palestine reached the highest level in teaching the Zohar. Moses Cordovero (b.1522), translated by Louis Jacobs, is considered one of the leading experts of the school of mysticism at Safed. Safed is accepted as the birthplace of Sabetay Sevi, and the tomb of Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai<sup>66</sup> is claimed to be also near the city<sup>67</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai: Ms. 2. yy. da Safed kentinde yaşadığı ve Romalılar'ın mabedi yıkımı sonrasında Yahudiler arasında birlik ve beraberliği sağladığı düşünülen, Kabala mistisizmi içinde önemli bir Rabbidir.

<sup>67</sup> Isidore Epstein, Judaism, Pelikan Books 1959, England, s.243-244.



"Haskalah", which is used to mean Jewish enlightenment, is generally a philosophical and social movement in the sense of the Jewish enlightenment in the XVIII and XIX Centuries, which started with the enactment of liberal laws that allowed Jews to escape from ghettos and join the European society, which are the equivalent of the European Enlightenment Movement. In the narrowest sense, it is a movement of Jewish intellectuals who work on Hebrew texts and philology first in Germany, then in Eastern Europe, and is called the pioneering "maskim". In the broadest sense, all the currents that advocate for Jews to come out of the ghettos and join the secular European society refer to the Haskalah movement<sup>68</sup>. Haskalah, which we can associate with the interaction of the reform on Jews, has an innovative and transformative character through the Holy Scripture. In fact, it is seen that the effects of the 1492 Spanish Exile and the shock in the lives of European Jews, the ensuing Portuguese and British events, the Reformation and the consequences of the French Revolution were among the preparatory factors of the Jewish Enlightenment before the Haskalah. The rationalist pursuits of European Jews appear with important theological, historical, philosophical and sociological problems and explanations, which mainly Jew historians and thinkers working on Jewish Modernization emphasize.

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<sup>68</sup> Ali Osman Kurt, Yahudi Aydınlanma Hareketi: Haskala, Milet ve Nihal, C.7, Ocak-Nisan 2010, s. 35-59.

The view that Judaism has a character that is open to change but has not opposed tradition throughout history is criticized by modern period historians such as David Sorkin (b.1953) and Michael Meyer (d.1937)<sup>69</sup>. The main features of Haskalah are as follows:

- It was born in the Eastern European Jewish community
- Hebrew is not only a religious language but also a language of education, science and culture.
- Halakha training is important
- It is a movement against European culture's threat to Judaism.

Defending the view that "Haskalah has a secular character", Klausner spoke about Haskala's power to create a wide influence over Europe. Mendelssohn's strong association with philosophy enabled him to successfully promote the efforts of powerful people in Jewish history, medicine and art. In this respect, Haskalah is a socially shared, educational-instructive, developer-transformative movement and an intellectual and social activity<sup>70</sup>.

According to Seda Özmen, a fundamental problem regarding Haskalah is whether the Jewish enlightenment is a movement based in Germany and Eastern Europe, or whether it is a movement dating back to 17th century, which can be explained by the processes of conflict, post-conflict innovation and transformation within Judaism.

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<sup>69</sup> Seda Özmen, a.g.e, s.53.

<sup>70</sup> Özmen, a.g.e, s.33.

While the first view on this issue suggests a movement whose periodic and regional boundaries are easier to determine, the second view will be associated with the enlightenment debates in Europe as the most recent date and will carry Haskalah to the 18th century<sup>71</sup>.

The Germany-centered influence of Haskalah, combined with the wave of immigration that accelerated especially after the First and Second World War, moved to Britain and other European countries, and then to the United States and Canada. Migrations both provided an alternative to the problem of order in economic and social life conditions and enabled intellectual Jewish scholars to express themselves in freer conditions.

The Spanish Exile of 1492, which is the period of intensified immigration movements, is an important date for Jewish Modernization due to the consequences of population mobility<sup>72</sup>. However, it is known that Ashkenazi groups were already migrating to Germany even before 1492. It is also noteworthy that the destinations of immigration, i.e. Italy, Germany and the Netherlands are regions where the Protestant movement is central and intense<sup>73</sup>. Because Protestantism accepted the Jewish Holy Scripture as it was accepted by the Jews, supported the learning of Hebrew, criticized Catholicism and tried to support its arguments about the essence of religion with the Old Testament<sup>74</sup>.

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<sup>71</sup> Özmen, a.g.e, s.36

<sup>72</sup> Ruderman David B., *Erken Modern Dönem Yahudi Tarihi*, Çev. Lizet Diedato, *İnkılap*, 2010, s.145.

<sup>73</sup> Ruderman, a.g.e, s.145

<sup>74</sup> Ruderman, a.g.e, s.145

David B. Ruderman, who considers the thesis that the Jews have little influence on the Renaissance and Reformation is insufficient, points out that there is not enough work on this subject and states that there is a small number of active intellectual Jewish communities in Italy. According to Ruderman, Jews left cultural traces in the main centers of Europe, especially in Italy, Austria, Hungary and the Netherlands in this period, in the context of humanist, Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic groups<sup>75</sup>.

It is necessary to examine the Haskalah Period or the history of the Jewish Enlightenment in two different periods. The period between 1720-1770 is the First Haskalah Period, and the period corresponding to 1780 and after is the Second Haskalah Period. In the first period of the Jewish Enlightenment, it is in religious and intellectual form, while in the second period it is in the social and political form.

The journey activities carried out by pro-Enlightenment Jews, such as Moses Mendelssohn, in Europe, who were emphasizing education, intellect, and religion is a form of religious and intellectual movement. On the other hand, in Mendelssohn's students, social, political and ideological sentiments were more evident<sup>76</sup>.

Even in the pre-Haskalah period, it is seen that the Jews started to become commercially and intellectually prominent in the society they exist in, and their views on a

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<sup>75</sup> Ruderman, a.g.e. s.145.

<sup>76</sup> Israel Jonathan, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism 1550-1750*, London, 1998, s.12.

conciliatory and secular society get shaped under the influence of the reform movement in Christianity. Seeking an answer to the question of what issues Jewish culture is in harmony with trends in European society, Jonathan Israel indicates the significance of the fact that Jews have been under the influence of different societies and cultures<sup>77</sup>. According to David B. Ruderman, this factor mentioned by J. Israel also shows that the attraction of Jews to the intellectual sphere of the society they live in is an inevitable result<sup>78</sup>. This interpretation can be seen as a general result of the problems faced by Jews on citizenship rights.

The Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah), which was staged to the rise of criticisms of the Holy Scripture, revelation, and the tradition of interpretation, has started to allow the discussion of not only the belief and worship dimensions of Jewish identity, religion, and consciousness but also the philosophical and sociological dimensions. The search for solutions, as well as the differences here, led to the emergence of modern Jewish thought.

Spinoza's criticism of the Torah constitutes an important turning point regarding the Jewish Holy Scripture, and appeared as a scientific-methodical criticism model for those who have done research on the subject after him. Stating that he was influenced by Spinoza's method, Richard Simon (1638-1712) drew attention to the style differences, author differences, contradictions in the narration of the subjects regarding

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<sup>77</sup> Jonathan, a.g.e, s.64.

<sup>78</sup> Ruderman, a.g.e, s.159.

the first five books in the Torah and stated that the Torah was not written by Moses<sup>79</sup>. According to the theory on the formation of the Holy Scriptures before and after Wellhausen (d.1918), it is scientifically not possible to claim that the first five books attributed to the Prophet Moses if the non-prophetic elements, i.e. kohens, could impose a law<sup>80</sup>.

The practices that caused religious genocide, oppression and anti-Semitism against Jews, which were seen in other regions of Europe after the Spanish Genocide of 1492, have special consequences as far as the holocaust in Germany in the 20th century. In addition we see processes, mainly including new debates on religion philosophy, objectivity of the religions, and secularization, to which Jews have contributed and also affected.

The 20th century corresponds to a period when the Modern Jewish Movements turned out to be Reformist and Liberal formations based in the United States and Canada. However, this situation also produced anti-theses and revealed a wide spectrum from the individual religious experience of New Jewish Theology to institutional criticism, existentialism and post-modern theses. The New Jewish Theology cannot be understood independently of the two great world wars that took place in the first half of the twentieth century and the conditions associated with it. In addition, the acceleration of the

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<sup>79</sup> Baki Adam, *Yahudi Kaynaklarına Göre Tevrat*, S.51, Bkz. Richard Simeon, *A Critical History of the Old Testament*, London 1682, Paul Hazard, *Batı Dünyasındaki Büyük Değişme*, Ç. Erol Güngör, s.111, Harman Ömer Faruk Harman, *Metin Muhteva ve Kaynak Açısından Yahudi Kutsal Kitapları*, s.214.

<sup>80</sup> Richard Elliott Friedman, *Kitab-ı Mukaddes'i Kim Yazdı?* Çev. Muhammed Tarakçı, Kabcı, İstanbul 2004, s. 38.

Jewish immigration movement from Europe to America and the academic and intellectual diversity created by the libertarian and democratic tendencies in the American state structure also had an effect on Louis Jacobs. After his exclusion from Orthodox Judaism, he was able to communicate his views to a wider audience by establishing a link with the Jewish Theological Seminary in the United States.

We gave brief information about Alexander Altmann, Zacharias Frankel, Solomon Schechter, Rabbi Eliyahu in terms of their influence on Louis Jacobs's world of thought. In addition to God-centered and institutional-critical views, primarily including Hermann Cohen (1842-1918), Franz Rosenzweig (1888-1929), Leo Beack (1873-1956) Martin Buber (1878-1965) ve Mordecai Kaplan (1881-1983) the human-centered thinkers such as Abraham Jashua Heschel (1907-1972), Milton Steinberg (1903-1950), Emil Fackenheim (1916-2003), Jacob Joseph Petuchowski (1925- 1991), Joseph B. Soloveitchik (1903-1993), Will Herberg (1901-1977), Eugene B. Borowitz (1924-2016), Robert Gordis (1908-1992), Arnold J. Wolf (1924-2008) has made contributions to the development of new Jewish theology<sup>81</sup>.

It is possible to say that Louis Jacobs' theological views and his criticism of Judaism in the modern period were influenced by the views around the New Jewish Theology. In the relevant section, by giving place to the views of the thinkers mentioned above, it is explained that this interaction is not just an effect. The different

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<sup>81</sup> Goldy, a.g.e, s. 6.

interpretations of thinkers in the field of New Jewish Theology on revelation, practice, theology and institutional structure of religion include Louis Jacobs' comments in this area. In this context, some of the views Jacobs referred to were included<sup>82</sup>.

## JUDAISM IN BRITAIN

After the Roman Empire's invasion of the Syrian region, a general name for the region at that period, Jews were condemned to live outside their ancestral lands, to diaspora life, and they had to endure intense cultural pressures in the regions where they lived. In this period, it is seen that Jews were forced to leave Palestine and Mesopotamia gradually, where they were an agricultural society, and began to live in many different parts of the world. The widespread Christian culture and socio-economic conditions caused Jews to develop innovations in their life skills and to maintain their existence by protecting their religious beliefs under restricted and special conditions<sup>83</sup>.

Britain is one of the last countries Jews settled in towards the end of the Middle Ages and in Europe. Although Jews gained dignity and wealth in England with their commercial talents and harmonious social behavior, they faced discrimination after the 4th Lateran Council in 1222. This situation coincides with a very early period when compared with the practices in other regions of

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<sup>82</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>83</sup> Cecil Roth, *A History Of The Jews In England* içinde, H. Graetz'in *Short History of The Jewish People*, London 1936, s. 14.



Europe. It is possible to see Jewish settlements in England in the thirteenth century until the reign of Edward I<sup>84</sup>. In the post-1272 period of Edward I, Jews regained their lost dignity and commercial rights. The Henry VIII Period is considered as a period of stagnation. In this period, it can be said that the practices against the Jews in Spain and Portugal were lightly realized against them in England<sup>85</sup>.

During and after the Spanish Exile in 1492, the islands around the Mediterranean and the Ottoman Empire (Istanbul) to which they belong became safe areas for the Jews of Spain and Portugal. After the Whitehall Conference in November 1655, the Jews were allowed to live in Britain. It is stated that Jews living in ghettos in England do not face any insecurity or threat of life. In the middle of the 17th century, Marranos began to live in colonies in London<sup>86</sup>. The questioning of Judaism in the United States over the Menessah Ben Israel incident<sup>87</sup> also caused a loss of status for British Judaism, and Jews started to get fewer rights compared to other parts of Europe. However, Britain and Ireland continued to be an important destination of Jewish immigration towards

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<sup>84</sup> Micheal Clark, *Identity and Equality The Anglo-Jewish Community in the Post Emancipation Era*, Phd.Thesis, Faculty of History, Trinity Term, 2005 Oxford, s. 32.

<sup>85</sup> Clark, a.g.e. s. 33.

<sup>86</sup> Mahmut Salihoğlu, *Marronalar ve Dini İnançları*, EKEV Akademi Dergisi, Sosyal Bilimler 2011, C. XV, S. 49, s.105-115.

<sup>87</sup> Menessah ben Israel (1604 -1657): He is the teacher of Spinoza, who is known for his Holy Script and Talmud studies. He argued that the Messiah would come earlier than expected. He also claimed that the Native Americans were the lost sons of the Israelites. Haim Hillel Ben-Saaon, "Messiah" Ejd, C.11, s. 1427.

Northern Europe. Although few in number, they were economically influential.

The French Revolution in 1789, on the other hand, ensured the completion of an important phase of the interaction between the state order and religious structures and groups, as the Jews gained equal citizenship rights and obtained their economic rights while Judaism was recognized as one of the official religions of France. This situation set an example for other European countries as well<sup>88</sup>.

According to David Sorkin, in the struggle of the Jews of Britain and Europe to achieve equal citizenship rights for two centuries, the decline of the gains from time to time should be evaluated separately. Although London was more prominent in terms of the Jewish population, in the 18th century, in addition to textile cities such as Manchester and Birmingham, there was also a remarkable number of Jews in towns such as Canterbury, Norwich, Exeter, Liverpool, Bristol, Plymouth, King's Lynn. The acceptance of Jewish children born in England as citizens caused social, if not physical, reaction. The London Committee of Deputies of British Jews (Board of Deputies) initiated institutional work on Jewish citizenship problems.

Britain was an important destination before the United States and Canada, especially during the First World War. In this context, it is not a coincidence that Jewish scholars immigrating from Germany to England

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<sup>88</sup> Solomon Grayzel, a.g.e., s. 507.

settled in university cities such as Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester, Brighton, and especially London.

It is possible to follow how sociological changes shaped the course of Judaism in England through the studies of David Ruderman and Todd Endelman. It is seen from the studies on British Judaism that the path of modern thought in Germany, East-Central Europe and America is followed.

Although not directly involved in the quest for freedom of the British Jews, it can be said that a small number of Jewish elites establish a practical and mental link between British life and Jewish life. Among these elites are Isaac Lyon Goldsmid and his son Francis Henry, Joshua van Oven and David Salomons<sup>89</sup>.

It is noteworthy that British Judaism became relevant to Israeli Judaism later. This situation cannot be explained only in terms of religion. The written culture created by the rich and well- educated Jews in Britain, which was the last immigration point in Europe before the US, makes it easier for us to understand the British Jewish typology in the modernization process. It is possible to say that, contrary to the value and interpretation-generating functions of the educated middle and upper class engaged in trade, the Jews in the middle and lower income groups are reflectors and witnesses of the shaping of the practice of religion<sup>90</sup>. Jewish immigration from Germany, Holland, and Eastern European countries concentrated towards England before the US. For

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<sup>89</sup> Todd Endelman, *Jews of Georgian*, s. 273.

<sup>90</sup> Endelman, a.g.e. s. 275.

educated Jews in England, it meant expressing oneself, finding employment, being associated with other Jewish communities and geographies around the world. On the other hand, the first and second world wars shifted the direction of Jewish immigration to the US and Canada<sup>91</sup>.

Louis Jacobs was the central figure in the history of religious development of 20th century British Orthodox Jews. Jacobs' position struggle within the New West End Synagogue and his conservative right views originated from his family were naturally strengthening him as a candidate after Hertz.

It was during this period that the Jews were started to be assigned in public offices and the Rothschilds family entered the parliament. Again in this period, the Askenezi tendencies gained ground rather than Sephardic, which is relevant to immigration from Eastern Europe. The schools of the Jewish children were segregated, Jews became more harmonized with the social life and they were allowed to practice their worship. The first world war led to a significant rate of Jewish immigration from Central and Eastern Europe. As a reaction to ethnic and anti-Semitic tendencies, Zionism was born with the concept of Hovevei Zion (Hibbat Zion, Lovers of Sion) that emerged in the late nineteenth century and became influential in Britain. Although the Balfour Declaration was formally repealed by the government in 1939, Churchill's support soon ended the establishment of the State of Israel. Although the Balfour Declaration was formally repealed by the

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<sup>91</sup> Endelman, a.g.e. s. 276.

government in 1939, Churchill's support soon led to the establishment of the State of Israel.

Scattered almost every corner of the world and gained their public rights after long and difficult processes, the Jews became a practitioner and an important representative of violence, with the socio-cultural and economic cooperation between Zionist Jews and Liberal Jews.

The Reformation within Christianity posed a threat to Jews, especially those living in Eastern Europe. The Reformers' interest in the Old Testament did not constitute an element of security for the Jews. The reform represented by Luther also had an anti-Semitist character. During this period, Jews were continued to be exterminated through the inquisitions. The tension between Catholics and Reformists resulted against Jews in Portugal and in their favor in Germany<sup>92</sup>.

The Jews' status of being a foreigner and guest in Portugal in 1497, which they were obliged to be so again, was a historical, recurrent, religious and legal situation. Holy Scripture printing made for Jewish ghettos in Europe, especially Venice, has a great importance in the spread of the printing. Meeting the religious needs and demands of the Christian and Jewish population and the books about teaching Hebrew, especially the Holy Scripture, were crucial for the printing. The spread of scriptures provided ghetto-dweller Jews with opportunities to preserve and express themselves. The

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<sup>92</sup> Robin Spiro, *Post-Biblical Jewish History-The Long Vista*, ed. David Englander, *The Jewish Enigma*, The Open University London, 1992, s. 33.

forces driving the economy in different regions such as England, Germany and North America were Jews, supporters of Luther and Calvinists. Since the Jews considered their communities freer than other religious and national groups long before Luther, the post-reform economic activities continued with their usual skills and adapting to new conditions.

Jews, who do not feel indebted to society, can be viewed as naturally capitalists because they focus on regulating their own economic activities. Karl Marx (d.1883) thought that the business and finance sector was an anti-social activity and with the capitalist concept he referred to the Jews. This integration, which caused secular criticism of British Jews, shows the existence of favorable conditions for Reformist and Conservative Judaism. By the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, we see that the rights of French and Prussian Jews expanded, and other Eastern European Jews started to voice active demands regarding their quest for religious equality<sup>93</sup>. During this period, almost silence prevailed for British Jews. According to David Vital, this is because of the small number of British Jews among all Jews<sup>94</sup>.

In the study on 19th century Jewish Groups in Southwest England, it is stated that British Judaism was largely free in its organizations and institutions until the Second World War. Practices in this region and London

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<sup>93</sup> Michael Clark, *Identity and Equality The Anglo-Jewish Community in the Post-Emancipation Era 1858-1887*. St. Anthony's College, D. Phil. Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of History, University of Oxford, Trinity Term, 2005, s. 36.

<sup>94</sup> Clark, a.g.e., s. 37.

Jewish synagogues are broadly similar. It should be noted that maintaining the Jewish identity, which includes the historical and religious heritage of the Jewish community in England, was an important concern<sup>95</sup>.

Jews have experienced a positive course of development in England regarding their political, economic, social and religious status, except for short interim periods. There are more Jewish settlements in London, Oxford, Brighton areas in Britain. It is estimated that more than 100 thousand Jews were living in Britain at the beginning of the 17th century. After their arrival in the second half of the 17th century, Jews started to get permission for collective worship, and were allowed to register at the bar and accepted to the parliament in the early 19th century. As they became harmonized with British society, around 120 thousand Jews had migrated to Britain from Eastern Europe by the end of the 19th century. David Cesarani states that compared to their parents, younger generations have a higher rate of social adaptation to England, especially in education and work<sup>96</sup>.

Due to the large share of Jews in the establishment of the British colonies in South Africa and Australia and the long-term Jewish possession of British colonial ships, the Jewish community was demanding higher rights as

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<sup>95</sup> Bernard Susser, *The Jews South-West England, The Rise and Decline, of their medieval and modern communities*. Exeter University Press, 1993 s. 136.

<sup>96</sup> Nancy Green, *Jewish Workers in the Diaspora*, University of California Press, 1998, s. David Cesarani, 'The Remarkings of the Jewish Immigrant Working Class in England', paper presented at the conference, Amsterdam, 27.3.1992. s. 3.

Jews had already gained more economic rights in France<sup>97</sup>.

Grayzel explains the British Jews' struggle in 19th century as follows:

*"The struggle continued, and although a bill removing barriers was passed in the House of Commons several times (1833, 1834, 1836), it failed in the House of Lords. However, in the same years, the doors of British universities were opened to the Jews. In 1835 David Solomons and in 1837 Moses Montefiore were elected as the London Sheriff. Queen Victoria knighted Moses Montefiore. In 1855, David Solomons was elected Mayor of London. The ban that prevented Jews from entering the British Parliament was lifted in 1858 after a long and striking struggle of Lionel Rothschild and David Salomons against the opposition by being elected to the House of Commons many times."*<sup>98</sup>

The Jewish community in England is based on the Sephardic and Ashkenazi groups that came from the Netherlands and Germany from the half of the 17th century. The freedom given to the Jews in 1858 was very important as it gave them the right to equality as citizens of Britain, but it contained uncertainty regarding Jewish identity. British Jews faced the experience of being an equal and free citizen and a religious minority, which is the problem experienced by all European Jews. British Jews faced the experience of gaining equal and free citizenship as a religious minority, which is the problem experienced by all European Jews. This was not a process

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<sup>97</sup> Werner Sombart, *Yahudiler ve Modern Kapitalizm*, Ç. Sabri Gürses, Küre 2016.

<sup>98</sup> Solomon Grayzel, a.g.e., s. 508.



that could theoretically be planned. It was a period when Anglo-Judaism formed a subculture gradually<sup>99</sup>. The acceptance of Rothschild as a noble Jew increased contact with Jews at all levels of society. The role of these contacts is also seen in his admission to the Parliament.

In British Judaism, we can say that Jews from different identities showed a successful combination and harmony. It is not surprising that they compare themselves with other countries in Europe and consider themselves important as a second Israel. There is a symbiotic relationship between England and Anglo-Judaism seen between living organisms. For this reason, British Jews have achieved a noticeable harmony between their own culture and the culture of the environment in which they live, which is not present in other Jewish communities in Europe.

The divergence between Reformists and Orthodox became clearer in the nineteenth century. The debate on the "sanctity of the Torah authority" and the London Chief Rabbi's declaration banning the Reform Synagogue in 1842 constituted a historical breaking point<sup>100</sup>.

The majority of Jews in England belonged to the middle class. M. Freud Kandel defines this community as "a religious group in which secular values do not prevail." The role of the chief rabbi in the British Jewish community appeared to become even more notable, as concerns about

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<sup>99</sup> Michael Clark, *Identity and Equality The Anglo-Jewish Community in the Post Emancipation Era*, PHD Thesis, Faculty of History, Trinity Term, 2005 Oxford.

<sup>100</sup> Nicholas De Lange *Equinox*, Yahudi Dünyası, Oxford, (İletişim, Atlaslı Büyük Uygarlıklar Ansiklopedisi, Çev. Sevil-Akın Atauz, İstanbul 1987, s.171.

the preservation of Orthodox Judaism had grown with the growing challenge of reformist views<sup>101</sup>.

It is seen that the perspectives on how religion should be regulated in the 20th century changed and diversity increased<sup>102</sup>. The institutional representation of the Jewish middle class, which represents the majority of the Jewish community, and the chief rabbis, demonstrates the importance of the relationship between the social group and the religious leader and the importance of knowledge of these processes. Britain's decisive role in international relations has created some peculiar conditions and interpretation of Judaism in Britain compared to other European countries. We can say that the strong initiative of the Chief Rabbi of London during the establishment of Israel proves the political clouts of British Judaism<sup>103</sup>.

Before the Second World War, Britain was the focal point of immigration in Europe. Philosopher Lord Rabbi Dr. Alexander Altmann (1906-1987) came to Manchester Beth-Din as a Rabbi. Many Rabbis who came to Britain were employed in different cities, especially in London. Although they were ostracized by the Orthodox Rabbis, they played an important role in strengthening what has been called "progressive conservatism" (conservatism open to development and innovation) that had been restricted until then<sup>104</sup>.

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<sup>101</sup> Kandel, a.g.e, s. 24.

<sup>102</sup> Kandel, a.g.e, s. 25.

<sup>103</sup> Nicholas De Lange Equinox, a.g.e, s.169.

<sup>104</sup> Bermant Chaim, Troubled Eden, Vallentine & Mitchell, London 1969, s. 226.

The term of office of Joseph H. Hertz (1872-1946), Israel Brodie (1895-1979)<sup>105</sup>Immanuel Jakobovits (1921-1999), who were the chief rabbis of Orthodox Jews in London (the end of the 1800s until the early 1960s) coincides with the transformation of British Judaism. It is seen that the different decisions and practices of the rabbis in this period, who were open to criticisms of the doctrine and different views in practice - such as atheism, pluralism and multi-religious movements - corresponded to the intellectual differences as well as the life of an ordinary Jew. Chief Rabbi Dr. J.H. Although Hertz<sup>106</sup>made efforts to keep the British Jews together, but these efforts failed due to the conditions of war and genocide. Dr. J. H. Hertz and his colleague Robert Waley Cohen, who supported Zionism, fell out with each other. The mission of the UOHC (Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations) was weakened by the death of Hertz and the post-war Reform and Liberal Jewish formations. Waley Cohen became president of the Orthodox United Synagogue in 1946<sup>107</sup>. During this period, Liberal and Progressive communities were subjected to preferential tax. Again in

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<sup>105</sup> Israel Brodie was born in New Castle, England. He continued his education in London and Oxford Universities after Jews College. He learned Hebrew, Arabic and Syriac. Israel Brodie was in Australia for fourteen years as a Rabbi. He was appointed as the Religious Affairs Officer of the British army during the First World War. He taught at London Jews College. During the Second World War, he was re-appointed as a senior religious officer in the army.

<sup>106</sup> Hertz, who served as the Chief Rabbi for 33 years, is the longest-serving person in this post. According to Dr. Miri Freud-Kandel who made research on the life and works of Hertz after the 40th years of his death, he was a leading figure in the 19th century British Jewish community who are against the anti-Halakhah Reformist-Liberal and Reconstructionist views in the US.

<sup>107</sup> David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841-1991*, Cambridge U. Press 2005, s. 200.

this period, religious leaders of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish communities and the chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations expressed the same views, indicating that the Liberal and Progressive communities in Britain were closely interested in the debates in Europe.

Jewish volunteers in the British military forces during the Second World War tell about the aid provided by Britain to Jewish immigrants and the organization conditions of the Jewish Religious Organizations in Britain. Churchill's statement that "To me, among those gathered to defeat the enemy forces, the necessity of representing this race, which suffered the indescribable hardships of the Nazis, in a separate entity within a special unit seems much more appropriate indeed." was followed by the formation of Jewish troops, and the cooperation of Jewish University, laboratories and hospitals with Britain<sup>108</sup>.

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<sup>108</sup> Israel Brodie, 'British and Palestinian Jews In World War II', 1946, American Jewish Book, The Jewish American Committee, s. 42.

## CHAPTER I

### **A RABBI BETWEEN TRADITION AND CHANGE IN THE 20TH-CENTURY BRITISH JUDAISM: LOUIS JACOBS (1920-2006)**

The introductory section provided information on British Judaism and explained problems of religions, in particular Judaism, led by modernity. Reformist views that developed after the Jewish Enlightenment enabled the tradition to be questioned and researched more, and it revealed the necessity of more up-to-date interpretations on the solution of religious problems, especially belief, in the modern period. Louis Jacobs has applied a critical epistemological dimension while addressing the issue of revelation, one of the basic acceptances of the Orthodox theological tradition. Rabbi Jacobs is modern and innovative. However, he defended the sustainability of religious practices in modern life on the condition of preserving their essence. Jacobs is considered traditionalist since he advocated the reinterpretable nature of Jewish law. He is the spiritual leader of a marginalized community in British Judaism, despite his strong intellectual and personal ties with the institutions representing Conservative Judaism in the United States. This section includes basic information about the life and personality of Louis Jacobs, as well as his personal

and philosophical views that form the basis of his work and the world of thought.

### **LOUIS JACOBS' LIFE AND VIEWS**

Louis Jacobs is a British Rabbi and theologian. After receiving Orthodox Jewish education in Manchester Yeshiva and Gateshead Kolel, he also completed his education in secular academic philosophy at City University in London. He provided works on academic, analytical, and religious practices. He served as the Rabbi of the New London Synagogue from 1964 to 2000. He focused on how the Orthodox tradition can form a correct synthesis with holy Script criticism.

#### **Jacobs' Life**

Louis Jacobs was born on 17 July 1920 in Manchester, England. Their grandfather is a family of Orthodox Jewish traditions who migrated from Lithuania to England at the end of the 20th century where Jews were enjoying comfortable working conditions<sup>109</sup>. Louis Jacobs states that he was educated by his family in a culturally harmonious manner, like other Jewish children around him, until he went to the Manchester Yeshiva<sup>110</sup>.

He also notes that his grandfather was knowledgeable enough to answer questions about Jewish law and was respected by those around him as his Rabbi.

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<sup>109</sup> Elliot Joe Cosgrove, Teyku The Insoluble Contradictions In The Life And Thought Of Louis Jacobs, The University Of Chicago, PHd. Thesis, Chicago, Illinois, June 2008, s. 10.

<sup>110</sup> Cosgrove, a.g.e, s.12.

His father was respectful of religious days and traditional religious thought although he did not go to the synagogue for the Sabbath. While introducing his family, he says 'my family was a foreign immigrant family, but turned into a British Jew family'. Jacobs describes his mother's uncles, who are engaged in trade, and his father, who was a worker, as "liberal."<sup>111</sup> Politically, Jews in Britain were generally closer to the Conservative, although they were seen as inclined to the Labor Party, due to their prominent Zionist-antisionist differentiation during the Second World War. He states that Louis Jacobs's father never voted for the Labor Party, and similarly, this was one of the general features of British Jewish identity<sup>112</sup>.

Louis Jacobs married Shula Lisagorska on March 28, 1944, whom he met while studying at the Kibbutz created by Manchester Zionist Jews. It is mentioned in his autobiography that he thought at Zionist and Ultra-Orthodox educational institutions after his marriage and was financially supported by his spouse's family.

He says he felt weird while his hair was long and beard was shaved while studying Talmud daily for three hours in Yeshiva. According to Jacobs' wife, Shula, both Lithuanian originated East European traditions and British culture co-existed in this family<sup>113</sup>. Louis Jacobs notes that "Helping With Inquiries" could be written thanks to "Shula's archivism"<sup>114</sup>. His children are Ivor,

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<sup>111</sup> Louis Jacobs, *Helping Jacobs*, a.g.e, 28. *With Inquiries*, s. 11.

<sup>112</sup> Geoffrey Alderman, *London Jewry and London Politics, 1889-1986*, Routledge & New York, 1989, s.102.

<sup>113</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e., s. 67.

<sup>114</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e., s. 11.

Naomi and David. In 1974, his son Ivor opened the New North London Synagogue as the second Masorti Synagogue, which is still operating.

After Manchester, Louis Jacobs moved to London.

Jacobs believes that he should draw a new path for himself without questioning his family's commitment to the traditions, who came to England from Lithuania.

Apart from Yeshiva in Manchester and Gateshead Kollel in Tyne, he studied in Londra University. Louis Jacobs notes that after the Bar-Mitzvah ceremony, he was asked if he wanted to "go to Yeshiva", even if hesitated, he mentioned that a young man was teaching at Yeshiva, and his family replied as "why not"<sup>115</sup>. During his Yeshiva education, he primarily studied Talmud, Hebrew grammar and Jewish History. However, Jacobs states that students who want to spend their time on non-religious subjects such as art and philosophy could spend their extra time on them<sup>116</sup>. The source of Louis Jacobs' interest in philosophy was his mother who urged him reading, especially English literature, at an early age<sup>117</sup>. It is known that while at Gateshead Kollel, Louis Jacobs frequently went to the library in his time not studying Talmud<sup>118</sup>.

Louis Jacobs tells that Rabbi Golditch was a good teacher, and the reason why he wrote so many books on

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<sup>115</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 42.

<sup>116</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, 28.

<sup>117</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e. s. 47.

<sup>118</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e. s. 47.



Hasidism was the influence of Yeshiva education and Rabbi Goldhitch<sup>119</sup>.

Kollel is an advanced educational institution developed in Lithuania at the end of the 18th century, aiming to make Talmud more understandable. Under the leadership of Rabbi Dessler and David Dryan, it is opened with the thought that education in Lithuania can also be applied in Britain. Although Yeshiva provided religious education, Dessler also made efforts to reduce the distance between Yeshiva and Gateshead. Since Yeshiva offers academic career opportunities, it was criticized that Talmud studies have been made for worldly expectations and results<sup>120</sup>. Receiving education in Gateshead Kollel with students from Poland, Lithuania, and Germany, Jacobs says that Eastern European Jewish and German tradition is dominant in Gateshead Kollel and he was influenced by the references Dessler, who formally taught him for a little time, from

K. Marx, C. Darwin (d. 1882), S. Freud (d. 1939) and A. Einstein (d. 1955), and he continued his exchange of views with Dessler even after years<sup>121</sup>.

Louis Jacobs explains that his education at the Manchester Yeshiva in the following years was the basis for his studies on Jewish Theology<sup>122</sup>. It was Rabbi Yitzhak Dubov (1887-1977)<sup>123</sup> who made Louis Jacobs engage with

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<sup>119</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 23.

<sup>120</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 24.

<sup>121</sup> Jacobs, *Helping With Inquiries*, s. 59.

<sup>122</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e., s. 20

<sup>123</sup> Rabbi Yitzhak Dubov (1887-1977): A lithuanian immigrant and Talmud researcher. He is a Rabbi who was educated by Louis Jacobs while serving in the

Habad-Lubovitch<sup>124</sup> in the Hasidic tradition. He states that Rabbi Yitzhak Dubov's extracurricular activities, as well as the synagogue hymns, increase the enthusiasm of prayers and sense of rapture in children - or in Jacobs's own words, "It provides the development of religious feeling more than the Talmud interpretations course." Yitshak Rivkin (d.1947), another Rabbi from the Habad-Lubovitch tradition, enabled Jacobs to gain rabbinic coordination. Rabbi Yivkin's contribution is important in the formation of Jacobs's future main disposition. Jacobs came to the idea of making analytical studies on Hasidic themes during this period thanks to Rabbi Rivkin. Thus, Louis Jacobs' world of thought on traditional Orthodox thought started to develop with his first education<sup>125</sup>.

In his book *Helping With Inquiries*, Jacobs explains that he was called "masmid" (who continued to work for a long time) by his friends in the Manchester Yeshiva, and, over the years, he had a very different life and tasks<sup>126</sup>.

After eight years of training at the Louis Jacobs Manchester Synagogue, he received the title of Rabbi in 1943<sup>127</sup>. Meanwhile, he attended the Hebrew class at the Higher Crumpsall Synagogue in Manchester and worked together with Alexander Altmann, who was involved in the educational activities of Manchester's Orthodox Labor

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Manchester Yeshiva and contributed to the development of Talmud education in England.

<sup>124</sup> Habad-Lubovitch: A Russian origin Hasidic mystical formation based on the understanding of brotherhood and love.

<sup>125</sup> Cosgrove, a.g.e, s. 21.

<sup>126</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 267.

<sup>127</sup> Cosgrove, a.g.e, s.19.

Zionist movement. After returning to London UCL (University College London) Alexander Altmann's invitation also enabled Louis Jacobs to develop himself in philosophy, literature and hermeneutics and continue his academic education.

During his doctoral studies, he established rabbinic, academic and personal ties with Rabbi Dr. Alexander Altmann (1906-1987)<sup>128</sup>. Louis Jacobs benefited from the views of Altman (1906- 1987), who was an important follower of Moses Mendelsohn (1729-1786)<sup>129</sup> and promoter of his views in Europe and America. In his doctoral work 'The Business Life of the Jews in Babylon From the 3rd to the 6th Century'<sup>130</sup>, Louis Jacobs examined the interaction of the Jewish legal tradition with environmental factors in terms of language, theology and economics. He soon published it as 'Economic Conditions of the Jews in Babylon in Talmudic Times Compared with Palestine'<sup>131</sup>.

His friend Dayan Moshe Swift (1907-1983), who studied at the Manchester Yeshiva like Louis Jacobs, invited him as the president of Beth-Din to have a theological debate in front of the audience at the Synagogue. Louis Jacobs, on the other hand, refused this invitation and said that it is better to talk about this issue

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<sup>128</sup> Alexander Altmann, See Chapter 1.

<sup>129</sup> Moses Mendelsshon (1729-1786) advocated the idea of 'sharing a common culture and allowing Jews to remain as they are'. He translated the Pentateuch into German. He proved that Jewish prayers do not insult Christianity. Until Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Mind was published in 1781, Mendelsshon's advocacy of ancient metaphysics and cosmological evidence for God gained interest.

<sup>130</sup> Cosgrove, s. 57.

<sup>131</sup> Cosgrove, s. 58. *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 2:4,1957, s. 349-359.

between the two people<sup>132</sup>. After a conference, Dayan Moshe Swift accused Jacobs of "trying to teach the society about Kabbalah." This accusation caused verbal backlash against Swift, but an article was published in the Jewish Chronicle defending Louis Jacobs<sup>133</sup>. Swift explained that "they had to deal with Jacobs because a little known person openly and shamelessly wanted to change God's law, and they will continue to fight these heretics for the survival of Israel, no matter what it takes."<sup>134</sup> Representing Orthodox Judaism, D.

Moshe Swift criticizes Rabbi Jacobs. To avoid reactions, Jacobs acted individually and did not have an argument with him.

He taught for a while at Beth Hamidrash in Golders Green in London. It was when he was doing academic studies at the University of London. He served as Rabbi of the Manchester Central Synagogue. In 1954, with the approval of Isidore Epstein (1834-1962), the director of Jew's College, Louis Jacobs gave the course on "The Talmud, Its Origins, Growth and Redaction" at Hillel House University. In the following years he taught at many universities in Britain and the United States<sup>135</sup>.

Between 1954-1959, he served as Lord of London New West End Synagogue<sup>136</sup>. The New West End

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<sup>132</sup> Dayan Moshe Swift, *This Day at Sinai*, Moreshet Moshe, s. 300.

<sup>133</sup> Jacobs, *Helping With Inquiries*, s. 228.

<sup>134</sup> Swift, *This Day at Sinai*, Moreshet Moshe, s. 302.

<sup>135</sup> Miri Freud Kandel, a.g.e, s. 74.

<sup>136</sup> The New West End Synagogue was founded by Sir Samuel Montagu in 1879 at St. Petersburg Place in Kensington. Leaving the United Synagogue, it acquired an Anglo-Jewry character. According to Louis Jacobs, a number of regulations were introduced by Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler to prevent Jews in the region from

Synagogue was founded by Sir Samuel Montagu and influenced by the reform and anti- reform debates that existed within British Judaism. For the New West End Synagogue's elections in October 1953, family friend Ephraim Levine encouraged and helped Louis Jacobs to become the Chief Rabbi of the New West End Synagogue, and expressed his pleasure with a letter<sup>137</sup> after he won the elections. Although it was a convention that Louis Jacobs should become the chief rabbi at the end of six years, it was not realized as Louis Jacobs' views were put into the investigation.

### **Jacobs' Basic Views**

Louis Jacobs' academic ideas about traditional Judaism were formed by his beliefs that it was possible to build bridges between traditional learning and scientific methods as well as between social leadership and academic proficiency<sup>138</sup>. Jacobs also stated that the concept of learning in general can be gained as a secular act and can make religious beliefs stronger<sup>139</sup>. Thinkers like Jacobs Solomon Schechter and Joseph Hertz influenced Jacobs. Concerning language, problems, popular and English philosophical reason, he was especially influenced by G.K.

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shifting to other synagogues in response to the reform movement, but it is actually in a traditional line. The mixed prayer choir of the synagogue, where men and women sit separately, is among these innovations (Helping Inquiries p. 103.)

<sup>137</sup> Jacobs, *Helping With Inquiries*, s. 110.

<sup>138</sup> Cosgrove, a.g.e, s. 6.

<sup>139</sup> Cosgrove, a.g.e, s. 7.

Chesterton (d.1936), H.G. Wells (d. 1946) and G.B.Shaw (d.1950)<sup>140</sup>.

Especially A. Altmann's influence has enabled Jacobs to traditionalize sharing and synthesizing data of British origin with Eastern Europe. Jacobs's review and summary of Rabbinic Theology, his work and theses on Talmudic Knowledge, Jewish dogmas, Jewish mysticism and Hasidic behavior, the content and responsa literature of Jewish law, his work on the structure of Jewish theology and the tradition of English Philosophy were among rare studies, albeit not unique. In fact, Louis Jacobs's work can also be expressed as understanding Jewish historical background and providing his own interpretation of how to evaluate it. Louis Jacobs expresses this as explaining what a definition and tradition 'Judaism offers for a Jew'<sup>141</sup>. Louis Jacobs is of the opinion that developing a sincere and critical view of Judaism will help uncover the historical development of Judaism rather than harming it<sup>142</sup>.

Louis Jacobs won the New West End Synagogue Chief Rabbi election. However, Israel Brodie, who had the right to block his position, became the Chief Rabbi. Concerning Israel Brodie Jacobs says: "I must honestly say that he was encouraging as a colleague and when I joined the Jewish Community of London, he treated me with sincerity and took care of me like I was his novice."<sup>143</sup> On

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<sup>140</sup> Cosgrove, a.g.e, s. 15.

<sup>141</sup> Cosgrove, a.g.e, s. 7.

<sup>142</sup> Cosgrove, a.g.e, s. 7.

<sup>143</sup> While I was expecting "Great Expectations" from a Rabbi (Israel Brodie) speaking to a large congregation in Kiddush, I saw how different two friends can

March 1, 1964, members of the New West End Synagogue gathered extraordinarily and vetoed Louis Jacobs, despite being proposed to be the Chief Rabbi after the election he won. Thus, in this session, New West End Synagogue members witnessed a historical event within the British Orthodox Jewish community<sup>144</sup>. Chaim I. Maxman also dates Israel Brodie's veto as 1961 and states that he left the New West End Synagogue two years later in 1963<sup>145</sup>. Israel Brodie says that he knew Louis Jacobs' views were not compatible for becoming a Rabbi when he was working in New West Synagogue in 1954-1959. But he hoped Louis Jacobs would change his views not compatible with fundamental Jewish belief considering his intellectual capacity and skills. He regretted that Louis Jacobs did not change his views even after he talked with him on this issue<sup>146</sup>. While referring to the period when Louis Jacobs founded the New London Synagogue, Israel Brodie, who wrote the conference and synagogue speeches and memoirs, notes that he "wishes the recognition of importance of being an Orthodox Jew and ever-strengthening of the continuity of traditional line."<sup>147</sup>

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think from each other, as in "The Tale of Two Cities". I regret Brodie's speech that did not meet my expectations, even though Oliver Twist is important because he is a great literary figure (Jacobs, *Helping With Inquiries*. p.108).

<sup>144</sup> Brook, a.g.e, s. 148.

<sup>145</sup> Chaim I. Maxman, Halakhic Change vs. Demographic Change, American Orthodoxy and the Plight of Louis Jacobs, *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, Vol:14, No:1, 2015, s. 58-71. <http://www.tandfonline.com>

<sup>146</sup> Israel Brodie, 'Statement to Rabbis and Ministers' Delivered May 5, 1964, *The Strength of by My Heart*, Diplompti and Living Books, London 1969, s. 348.

<sup>147</sup> Brodie, *The Strength of My Heart*, Sermons and Addresses, 1948-1965, London 1969, s. 21.

After the death of Chief Rabbi Hertz in September 1946, the President of the United Synagogue had almost determined who would be the new president. The formal and informal approach was to choose someone who would take heed of the advice of others rather than follow his own solid principles. No agreement was made on a chief rabbi candidate until May 1948. Finally, Israel Brodie won without elections at the conference in May 1948, as he was unanimously agreed on. Being the only candidate, Brodie had a strong position in his post<sup>148</sup>. According to Aubrey Newman, author of *United Synagogue History*, Sir Robert Waley Cohen unconditionally supported Brodie's candidacy<sup>149</sup>. His British-born Jewish identity enabled Brodie to be nominated by the selection committee and Waley Cohen<sup>150</sup>.

Brodie describes his impressions during the Second World War and the collaboration of Jews in the Palestinian Territory with the British army. He also expresses pleasures as regards Churchill's acclaim of Jews in the British Army during the First World War for their sacrifices while fulfilling their responsibilities primarily in the Palestinian region<sup>151</sup>.

In his autobiography, Louis Jacobs does not include any incriminating statements about Rabbi Brodie regarding his departure from his post at the New West End Synagogue, although he does include statements on

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<sup>148</sup> Kandel, *Orthodox Judaism on Britain Since 1913*, s.101.

<sup>149</sup> Kandel, a.g.e. s. 101.

<sup>150</sup> Kandel, *Orthodox Judaism on Britain Since 1913*, s.102.

<sup>151</sup> Israel Brodie, 'British and Palestinian Jews In World War II', 1946, *American Jewish Book*, The Jewish American Committee. New Castle.



interpreting the revelation and tradition discussed in *We Have Reason To Believe*. Jacobs notes that while he was in charge at the New West End Synagogue, Brodie spoke to him about English literature, but did not find Brodie's approach friendly<sup>152</sup>. After Rabbi Isidore Epstein<sup>153</sup> retired, Rabbi Israel Brodie used his veto power as the head of the college affiliated to the New West End Synagogue, and opposed promotion of Louis Jacobs as the chief rabbi by claiming that Louis Jacobs' fundamental views were heterodox<sup>154</sup>. After this development, it is known that Louis Jacobs exchanged views with his friends and colleagues in America, Manchester and Oxford<sup>155</sup>.

Three hundred people who were accepted as 'Progressive Conservative'<sup>156</sup> along with Louis Jacobs left the New West End Synagogue after Jacobs was vetoed by Rabbi Israel Brodie despite winning the elections at the New West End Synagogue. Louis Jacobs, as the founding Rabbi, named St. John's Wood United Synagogue as the New London Synagogue on March 3, 1964, and assumed the spiritual leadership since its foundation<sup>157</sup>. After leaving the New West End

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<sup>152</sup> Jacobs, *Helping Inquiries*, Vallentine&Mitchell, London 1989, s. 108.

<sup>153</sup> Isidore Epstein (1894-1962): He was first to translate Babylon Talmud to English.

<sup>154</sup> Miri Freud Kandel, *Orthodox Judaism on Britain Since 1913*, s.104

<sup>155</sup> Kandel, a.g.e. s.102.

<sup>156</sup> It is the Jewish Movement that does not deny the belief in revelation, but does not base on the view that Moses got revelation on Mount Sinai. It initially covered all of the Reformist-Liberal Jewish currents, and later accepted the notion accepted by Reconstructionist Judaism. Initially, Conservative Jewish thinkers were also regarded as "Progressive Conservative".

<sup>157</sup> Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, Oxford, 1992, s. 363.

Synagogue, Louis Jacobs continued to teach at the London Jews College, the educational institution of British Orthodox Jews, between 1959-1962. Louis Jacobs did not consider himself a Progressive Conservative and, despite his criticism of Orthodox Judaism, he avoided clear statements of his departure from it. Although the views of Louis Jacobs, who is considered to be the Masorti Rabbi, are those that were already debated within the Orthodox Jewish Community and were not expressed for the first time, it should be taken into account that they were not generally accepted among Orthodox Jews. In addition, as Louis Jacobs's assessments were compatible with the views of the Jewish Theology Seminary and its surrounding community in the United States, Jacobs is considered the most important representative of Conservative Judaism in Britain. Jacobs's views, published in the Jewish Chronicle during his tenure at the New West End London Synagogue and later named "Jacobs Affair", are described as the symbol of the main contrast and differentiation in British Orthodox Judaism<sup>158</sup>.

In 'We Have Reason To Believe', Louis Jacobs relates Will Herberg's view of 'revelation'<sup>159</sup> with Emil Brunner's 'gramophone analogy' as follows: 'The silence and passivity of God on the man's interference with his words, and the silent and closed character of Holy Scripture until it is read, reminds us that we must listen to it with our heart and will by remembering that it is the

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<sup>158</sup> Ceserani, a.g.e, s. 217-220.

<sup>159</sup> Will Herberg's view on revelation, see Chapter 1

word of God.<sup>160</sup> According to Louis Jacobs, the revelation has changed. Before the discussion of whether the changes to which the revelation is subjected are deliberate or not, according to Louis Jacobs, realization of this situation also means God's approval. It is clear that Jacobs emphasized the quality of religious knowledge.

He was criticized by the Orthodox Jews, who advocated the unconditional defense of the Bible and religious tradition, both orally and in writing, and accepted this as a philosophy and practice of life. But he was welcomed by Reformist Jews. Louis Jacobs expresses the necessity of voluntarism in criticizing Judaism today but points out that an audacious style of criticism or a complete ignorance should not be made. He was disturbed by the attempt to portray him as an American supporter in the British Orthodox Jewish community. Because Louis Jacobs was never content to consider himself within American theological thought<sup>161</sup>.

Although Jacobs' works cover a wide range of fields in Judaism, his intellectual center and rise overlaps with contemporary Britain. It is possible to say that Louis Jacobs, who gave his first works consecutively in the 1950s, attaches importance to the studies of antiquity and the modern period and deals with philosophical arguments as much as religious texts in his research. In the early 1960s, Louis Jacobs succeeded in establishing personal, academic and intellectual relationships with the Conservative Jewish Communities, publishing companies

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<sup>160</sup> Jacobs, *We Have Reason to Believe*, s. 81.

<sup>161</sup> Cosgrove, a.g.e, s. 183.

and individuals in North America. His strong communication with Joseph Littman, owner of the Littman Library, and William Frankel (1917-2008) editor of the Jewish Chronicle, who were influential over Louis Jacobs, enabled him to find support in publishing his views<sup>162</sup>. Altmann's friends from the Institute of Jewish Studies, founded and led by Altmann, who shared the same ideas, also supported the views of Louis Jacobs. Jacobs's followers established the Association of Study Jewish Theology in London and appointed Jacobs as the director of the institution. This institution, where Louis Jacobs lectured and managed for many years, became an important center for British Conservative Judaism.

Jacobs, whose works 'We Have Reason to Believe' (1957), 'Jewish Values' (1960), 'Principles of the Jewish Faith' (1964), 'Faith' (1968) were published one after another, heeded the method of modern criticism of the Holy Scripture, accepted its consequences, and rejected the view that entire Pentateuch were authored by inspiration<sup>163</sup>. Louis Jacobs expressed the importance of the human factor in the formation of the Holy Scripture. He also stated that the principle of "Torah Min Ha-Şamayım" contradicts the idea that the Torah was written with inspiration<sup>164</sup>. Louis Jacobs' work "We Have Reason To Believe", published in 1957, has introduced his theological views to others.

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<sup>162</sup> Jacobs, *Helping With Inquiries*, s.133. Ceserani, a.g.e, s. 216.

<sup>163</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 145.

<sup>164</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 146.

Louis Jacobs did not only deal with the Jewish faith, philosophy, and law, but also made studies on Hasidism and the Kabbalah tradition, an important product of medieval Jewish Mysticism, and examined the Holy Scripture and Jewish tradition with studies on different periods and disciplines. The "Jewish Prayer", published by Louis Jacobs in 1955, is important in terms of emphasizing his point of view because he explained the subject of prayer with an argument that examines the subject of prayer not in a traditional way, but in terms of individual importance. Jacobs's emphasis on individuality has attracted the attention of the US and US-based publishers and non-Orthodox Jewish thinkers. Examples include the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and the Rabbinical Assemblies of America, the world's leading thinkers of non- Orthodox Judaism such as Leo Baeck (d.1956), Hugo Bergmann (d.1975), Theodor Herzl Gaster (d.1992), as well as North American publishing groups, mainly Commentary (1945).

As Louis Jacobs himself put it, the concept of 'Teyku' best summarizes Jacobs' Jewish belief and philosophy:

'In modern Hebrew, the word Teyku is used to mean a draw, meaning that in a football match, both teams fail to score or both teams score an equal number of goals. Whenever the word "Teyku" is mentioned in the Talmud, since there is no winner of the match that ends in a draw, the winner is left to the match or matches to be played later and the result is postponed to a later date.'<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Louis Jacobs, *Teyku: The unsolved Problem in the Babylonian Talmud: A study*

In the Babylonian Talmud, the word "Teyku" is repeated three hundred times, but not found in the Jerusalem Talmud<sup>166</sup>.

Jacobs relates this phrase with his views on the structure of the Jewish faith, the traces of socio- economic and cultural interactions on Judaism, and the concept of religion idealized by tradition.

According to Jacobs, worldly elements within Judaism manifested themselves with the influence of religious, divine, celestial revelation, practices outside the prophetic period, and other human, economic, geographical and historical conditions. He stated that the worldly elements in Judaism co-exist in almost the same proportion and continuity. Jacobs does not see this only as a historical problem. He also says that religion can develop by allowing the worldly in this regard, and discusses that it is difficult to accept it as a realist.

It is seen that Louis Jacobs combines the influence of the New Jewish Philosophy with the data of Jewish belief history within the framework of the historical conditions. He was in search of the problems that Orthodox Judaism cannot solve and he paid attention to stay away from the strict critical attitude of Reformist-Liberal comments.

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in the Literary Analysis and Form of the Talmudic Arguments, Cornwall Books  
Leo Baeck College, 1981 New Jersey, s. 301.

<sup>166</sup> Louis Jacobs, *The Talmudic Argument*, s. 12.

## Works of Louis Jacobs

When the whole of Louis Jacobs works consisting of articles, reviews and books are evaluated, three different elements stand out: Theological, Mystical and Talmud studies<sup>167</sup>. While Louis Jacobs explains his general thoughts about his works, he states that he does not have to make a living with his pen, some of his works are written due to his own religious position, some of them are personal interest and some of them are from the necessity of explanation on basic legal, philosophical and ritual-related issues related to Judaism<sup>168</sup>. Jacobs states that the seven thousand works on Judaism in his library are the basis of the works he wrote. According to Louis Jacobs, who stated that he devotes a significant part of his life to work even though it requires a difficult struggle, the way to really understand a book is to write a book<sup>169</sup>. Louis Jacobs donated his library, an archive of his photographs and notes, as well as his personal belongings of memorial value to the Oxford University, Hebrew and Jews Studies, while he was still alive.

*'What Does Judaism Say About...?'*<sup>170</sup>: Louis Jacobs states that this work was "prepared in a dictionary format at the request of the publisher, and that the basic concepts of Judaism, as well as current and controversial concepts,

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<sup>167</sup> Louis Jacobs, *Helping with Inquiries*, Books, p. 252.

<sup>168</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e. p. 25 Jacobs, a.g.e. p. 267.1.

<sup>169</sup> Littman Library Books, Cambridge University Press, Routledge & Kegan Paul; by publishers in the United States and UK including Behrman House, Basic Books, Hermon Press, Rossel Books and by Keter Publications in Israel.

<sup>170</sup> Jacobs, *'What Does Say Judaism About...?'*, Keter, Jerusalem, 1973.

are included in alphabetical order."<sup>171</sup> Louis Jacobs, in his work '*What Does Judaism Say About...?*', uses classical interpretations in the explanations of Jewish philosophy and belief accumulation on religious, philosophical, political and social concepts that are inevitably encountered after modernization, but also reflects his own point of view.

It is inevitable that this work of Louis Jacobs will be one of the first reference sources for a Jew faced with modernism. The fact that it is written in a fluent speaking style can be considered as one of the reasons why it is so in demand. This work seems to coincide with Louis Jacobs' identity as rabbi and the continuity of his active synagogue duties.

'*The Jewish Religion: A Companion*' is an encyclopedic reference book of Louis Jacobs, especially on the Bible, Talmud-Midrash, religious beliefs and practices, Jewish mysticism and Modern Jewish thought<sup>172</sup>.

In the book '*A Traditional Quest Essays in Honor of Louis Jacobs*'<sup>173</sup> published in 1991 under the editorship of Dan Cohn-Sherbok, Louis Jacobs' works are chronologically divided into books and articles, except for the last of the above works. However, '*Their Heads in Heaven Unfamiliar Aspects of Hasidism*', published in 2005, was not included in his books, as it was written later.

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<sup>171</sup> Jacobs, *Helping with Inquiries*, p. 259.

<sup>172</sup> Louis Jacobs, *The Jewish Religion: A Companion*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995.

<sup>173</sup> Dan Cohn-Sherbok (ed), *A Traditional Quest Essays in Honor of Louis Jacobs*, JSOT, Journal for Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 114, Sheffield Academic Press, 1991, England p. 217, 218.



Louis Jacobs' autobiography is titled as '*Helping with Inquiries: 'An Autobiography'*'<sup>174</sup>. In his autobiography, Jacobs gives detailed information about education, family life, his basic views, his books, New West End and New London Synagogues starting from his childhood with a fluent and plain expression. It is seen that Jacobs was sensitive to use a calm and non-aggressive style in '*Helping With Inquiries*' and '*We Have Reason to Believe*' while describing the still controversial issue that "The Torah contains elements other than revelation", and mentioning about being vetoed for the position of chief rabbi of the New West End Synagogue<sup>175</sup>.

### **The Theological Works of Louis Jacobs**

'*Jacobs Affair*' is a later name given to his articles published in the *Jewish Chronicle*, which caused Louis Jacobs to be considered a fundemantalist. At the time of its publication, the '*Jacobs Affair*' did not receive an immediate response, it was read by many and was adopted by people from the Orthodox Jewish tradition. Regarding his views published in the *Jewish Chronicle*, Louis Jacobs states that he was accused of being against traditional Judaism for many years. William Frankel (d. 2008), Editor of the '*Jewish Chronicle*', is a close friend of Jacobs from the New West End Synagogue. Frankel later encouraged the publication of Jacobs Affair as '*We Have Reason To Believe*' and undertook the editorship of it.

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<sup>174</sup> Louis Jacobs, Vallentine & Mitchell, 1989, London.

<sup>175</sup> Jacobs, *Helping with Inquiries*, p. 127, *We Have Reason to Believe*, p. 21.

Ever since Louis Jacobs began publishing his first written criticisms, he has rejected the criticism that he wanted to give a new method and spirit to worship. According to Louis Jacobs, existing traditional worships have developed overtime and become the basis. The main problem that concerns Louis Jacobs is the desire to understand "Descending of God on Mount Sinai" by making identification with Mekilta. He states that this is a process while this basic phenomenon is interpreted. Louis Jacobs started to publish his works by being academically critical, but soon he made works in the theological field, so that he reflected his different viewpoints.

The first edition of 'Principles of the Jewish Faith, An Analytical Study' was published in London in 1964. In this theological work, Louis Jacobs examined how Maimonides explains the basic Jewish belief principles, and he stated that he had no objection to accepting the thirteen basic belief principles proposed by Maimonides. However, according to Louis Jacobs, there is not enough evidence to accept the idea that all of Maimonides' principles of belief are divine, they should be regarded as revelation, and they originate from the Torah. In this work, Jacobs, referring to Mosess Mendelshon, states that he refers to the concept of 'dogma' as a general problem in Judaism<sup>176</sup>.

'A Jewish Theology' is an important work of Louis Jacobs in the field of Jewish theology and was first published in 1973 by Behrman House in London. In this book, Louis Jacobs emphasizes that for Judaism, which

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<sup>176</sup> Jacobs, *Helping with Inquiries*, p. 254.

has a monotheistic belief system, critical studies are not contrary to the essence of religion and that elements in the Jewish faith tradition must be sustained if they are not completely falsified. Jacobs's views in his '*A Jewish Theology* ', which includes theological evaluations of Judaism in line with Conservative Jewish Theology, and "*Beyond Reasonable Doubt*", in which Louis Jacobs deals historically and philosophically with the traditional belief style created by the history of Judaism and also he covers modern criticisms of Judaism are introduced in the second part of the book, where the theological views of Louis Jacobs are addressed.

### **Works of Louis Jacobs on Jewish Mysticism**

In '*Seeker of Unity: The Life and Works of Aaron of Starosselje*',<sup>177</sup> Louis Jacobs evaluated the works and views of a little-known thinker, Hasidic Rabbi Aaron ben Moses Ha-Levi (Horowitz) (1766-1828), mostly related to mysticism. In this work, Jacobs includes the biography of Rabbi Aaron, as well as the views of the Orthodox-Kabbalists, who were the Kabbalistic predecessors of Rabbi Aaron. These are Rabbi Aaron's views on "Philosophy of Religion" and "worship" as well as his comments on "Pentateuch". Louis Jacobs wrote this work without departing from basic concepts and by benefiting from Kabbalah Literature.

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<sup>177</sup> Louis Jacobs, *Seeker of Unity: The Life and Works of Aaron of Starosselje* Vallentine& Mitchell, London 1966.

'*The Palm Tree Of Deborah by Moses Cordovero*'<sup>178</sup>, on the other hand, is the translation of the work written by Moses Cordovero (1522-1570)<sup>179</sup> in Hebrew into English with an introduction and additional notes by Louis Jacobs. Louis Jacobs, with his interest in Jewish mysticism, translated this work having Hasidi and Kabbalistic character<sup>180</sup>. Panentheism<sup>181</sup> in Hasidism, according to Louis Jacobs, was influenced by Moses Cordovero's views<sup>182</sup>. In an area where Gershom Scholem and Martin Buber mostly work, Jacobs' emphasis on articles, translations, and criticism about the Kabbalah mysticism, which has an important place in the Hasidi literature, has been deemed important in terms of independent criticism in Judaism studies<sup>183</sup>. Another translation of Louis Jacobs on Jewish mysticism is '*Tract on Ecstasy by Dobh Baer of Lubovitch*'<sup>184</sup>, published in London in 1962 with the introduction and additions written by Jacobs.

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<sup>178</sup> Cordovero Moses, tr. Jacobs Louis, Vallentine&Mitchell, London 1960.

<sup>179</sup> He is a Kabbalist of Spanish origin. Cordovero's comments on *The Zohar* were printed under the title '*Precious Light*'. His work, published as '*The Palm of the Deborah*' with a translation of Louis Jacobs, is described as a moralist work that attracts attention by Jews who are not interested in Kabbalah. see. A Jewish Companion, Jacobs Louis, Oxford U. Press, 1995, New York, p. 100.

<sup>180</sup> Hasidism: XVIII. c. is a movement founded by Israel Baal Shem Tov as an elitist innovative movement in Poland and then spread to all of Europe, which is also common in America and Israel today, attaching importance to Kabbalah teaching in its lifestyle. Jacobs, The Jewish Religion, p. 218-223.

<sup>181</sup> Panentheism: is the idea that God's existence in the universe is in everything. Pantheism is the idea that the entire universe is God. Jacobs, The Jewish Religion, p. 373.

<sup>182</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Companion, Oxford U. Press, 1995, New York, p. 100.

<sup>183</sup> Morris M. Faienstein, 'Hasidism' The Last Decade in Research, Modern Judaism, 11, 1.1991; 111-120.

<sup>184</sup> Vallentine, Mitchell in conjunction with the society for the Study of Jewish Theology, London, 1962

### Louis Jacobs' Works in Talmud Studies

Louis Jacobs handled "Talmud studies" with a purely academic perspective as he did in his first scientific article, '*Evidence of Literary Device in The Babylonian Talmud*'<sup>185</sup>, published in 1952.

Louis Jacobs's article "*The Talmudic Hermeneutical Rule of Binyan' Abh*" and J.S Mill's "*Method of Agreement*"<sup>186</sup> was published in 1953. This article reinforces his search for a unique modern critique of the Talmud. After this article, J. Teicher, the editor of the journal, realized that Louis Jacobs would be an academically important person, but he notes that the statement in the article 'the rabbis do not like modern scientific methods' was not necessary. However, Teicher states that Jacobs's article was important as it shows that the Rabbi's method is different from Aristotle's logic<sup>187</sup>.

His article titled '*Are There Fictitious Baraitot in the Babylonian Talmud?*'<sup>188</sup> was published at Hebrew Union College Annual. His articles such as '*Evidence of Literary Device in the Babylonian Talmud*'<sup>189</sup> and '*Further Evidence of Literary Device in the Babylonian Talmud*'<sup>190</sup>, '*How Much of the Babylonian Talmud is Pseudepigraphic?*'<sup>191</sup> were published in the Journal of Jewish Studies with

<sup>185</sup> Jacobs, Journal of Jewish Studies, Volume 3, No. 4, 1952, p. 161.

<sup>186</sup> Jacobs, Journal of Jewish Studies, Volume 4, No. 2, 1953, p. 59-64.

<sup>187</sup> Cosgrove, a.g.e, p. 104.

<sup>188</sup> Louis Jacobs, Hebrew Union College Annual, 42, 1971, pp.185-96. Jacobs, *Rabbinic Thought in the Talmud*, Vallentine & Mitchell, London, 2005: 42-54.

<sup>189</sup> Louis Jacobs, Journal of Jewish Studies 3, 4, 1952, p. 161.

<sup>190</sup> Louis Jacobs, Journal of Jewish Studies 9, 3: 4.1958, p. 139-47.

<sup>191</sup> Jacobs, Journal of Jewish Studies, 28: 1, Spring 1977, 46-59.

evaluations by Professor Abraham Weiss<sup>192</sup>. Ever since Louis Jacobs began publishing his first written criticisms, he has rejected the criticism that he wanted to provide a new method and spirit to worship. According to Louis Jacobs, existing traditional prayers have evolved over time and have become basic worship. The main problem that concerns Louis Jacobs is the interpretation of "God's descending on Mount Sinai" as a fundamental phenomenon in the process. This basic fact in Judaism is important both for God's essence and for making sense of revelation. Academically expressing himself in critical form, Louis Jacobs, in a sense, reflected a different point of view within himself by giving works in the theological field.

In '*Studies in Talmudic Logic and Methodology*' (1961), which was his first work on the Talmud, he was more academically concentrated on the Babylon Talmud than the Palestinian Talmud. On the other hand, '*A Tree Of Life*' (1984) is an important study of Louis Jacobs on Jewish legal methods. He explores how Talmud studies are affected by social, political, economic and cultural interactions, and under which conditions the legal principles are determined within Judaism. He discusses the effect of the social and economic conditions in the period of Babylon Talmud in Judaism on religious transformation and change, and accordingly he expresses that a pluralistic way of life has developed in Judaism.

Louis Jacobs participated in the Annual Convention of the Rabbinical Assembly held in Catskills, United States

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<sup>192</sup> Jacobs, *Helping with Inquiries*, p. 252.

of America in 1968, attended by Conservative Rabbis. *Jewish Law*<sup>193</sup> is Louis Jacobs's book published simultaneously with this meeting. Louis Jacobs, one of the thousand Rabbis who attended this meeting, covers the basic issues of Jewish law that Rabbis can use in their sermons and provide explanations on them.

As regards 'Guide To Yom Kippur'<sup>194</sup>, 'Guide To Rosh Ha-Shanah'<sup>195</sup>, 'The Jewish Festivals'<sup>196</sup> Louis Jacobs dealt with Jewish festivals and special days, rituals and prayers belonging to these times and their details in these books. These small handbooks are a guide about the daily life of a Jew, written by Louis Jacobs based on his experiences as a rabbi at Manchester and the New West Synagogue in Kensington, and as the founder and rabbi of the New London Masorti Synagogue on Abbey Road.

'Theology In the Responsa'<sup>197</sup> and 'The Talmudic Argument'<sup>198</sup> explains the formation of the Talmud tradition and provides examples for Talmud provisions. 'Teyku: The Unsolved Problem in the Babylonian Talmud'<sup>199</sup>, on the other hand, is a book derived from Louis Jacobs's Ph.D. thesis. It focuses on the content of the Babylonian Talmud and explains the effects of social life on the elements of revelation. According to Jacobs, it

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<sup>193</sup> The Chain of Tradition Series, I. Behrman House, New York 1968.

<sup>194</sup> Jewish Chronicle Publications, London 1957.

<sup>195</sup> Jewish Chronicle Publications, London 1959.

<sup>196</sup> Louis Jacobs, Worcester: Achillie J. St. Onge, 1961.

<sup>197</sup> Louis Jacobs, The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1975.

<sup>198</sup> Louis Jacobs, Cambridge University Press, 1984 Cambridge.

<sup>199</sup> Louis Jacobs, Cornwall Books, in conjunction with Leo Baeck College, 1981 New Jersey.

seems that the issue of how the Talmud tradition of Babylonian life was influenced by non-revelational elements is a fundamental problem for him. Apart from the works of Louis Jacobs which we briefly discussed above, '*Jewish Mystical Testimonies*'<sup>200</sup>, '*Their Heads in Heaven Unfamiliar Aspects of Hasidism*'<sup>201</sup>, '*God, Torah, Israel: A Traditional but Non-Fundamentalist View*'<sup>202</sup>, '*Jewish Ethics, Philosophy and Mysticism*'<sup>203</sup>, '*Jewish Prayer*'<sup>204</sup> are his works on various subjects including traditional religiosity, mysticism and worship. "*Jewish Thought Today*"<sup>205</sup>, "*Hasidic Prayer*"<sup>206</sup>, "*Jewish Biblical Exegesis*"<sup>207</sup>, "*The Book of Jewish Belief*"<sup>208</sup>, "*Book of Jewish Practice*"<sup>209</sup> are Louis Jacobs' other works that contain his theological views and expressions on religious tradition.

## THE REVEREND AND THINKERS AFFECTING THE THOUGHT WORLD OF LOUIS JACOBS

Louis Jacobs represents the British Orthodox Jewish Rabbi and novelty within the twentieth- century Jewish philosophy. Since Louis Jacobs never saw himself apart

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<sup>200</sup> Louis Jacobs, Keter, Jerusalem 1976.

<sup>201</sup> Louis Jacobs, *Their Heads in Heaven: Unfamiliar Aspects of Hasidism*. London: Vallentine&Mitchell, 2005.

<sup>202</sup> Louis Jacobs, *The Efraimson Lecture* Hebrew Union College Press, 1990 Cincinnati.

<sup>203</sup> Louis Jacobs, *The Chain of Tradition Series*, 2. Behrman House, 1969 New York.

<sup>204</sup> Louis Jacobs, *Jewish Chronicle Publications*, London 1955.

<sup>205</sup> Louis Jacobs, *The Chain of Tradition Series*, 3. Behrman House, 1970 New York.

<sup>206</sup> Louis Jacobs, *The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1972.

<sup>207</sup> Louis Jacobs, *The Chain of Tradition Series*, 4. Behrman House, 1973, New York.

<sup>208</sup> Louis Jacobs, Behrman House, 1984 New York.

<sup>209</sup> Louis Jacobs, Behrman House, 1987 West Orange.



from Orthodox Judaism in terms of belief, the term Orthodox Rabbi was used.

Philosophically, Jacobs is in the same position between Reformists and Orthodoxy, as England is the bridge between Europe and the United States. Although he pays attention to the issues that Reformists deal with and he criticizes Orthodox Judaism, he is quite distant to the Reformists' approaches that are completely innovative and aim to weaken or eliminate the tradition. The main clergy thinkers who influenced Louis Jacobs' world of thought are the following:

### **Zacharias Frankel (1805-1875)**

Zacharias Frankel is a Jewish Rabbi and thinker. He started to be a rabbi in the Litomerice region in 1825, received a university education in Budapest in 1831, served as the chief rabbi in Dresden in 1836 and in Berlin in 1843.

Frankel expressed himself with the Jewish Historian school, which he founded and advocated freedom of research while retaining traditional Jewish faith and practice. Concentrating his views on the oppressive dilemma posed over his generation by the conditions of their period, Frankel focused on how Judaism could achieve a radically new legal status as a coherent and old non- Western religion without disrupting the sense of integrity and continuity<sup>210</sup>. The

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<sup>210</sup> Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* içinde 'Zacharias Frankel and the European Origins of Conservative Judaism, Brandies U. Press, 1994, London. s.257.

reason for Frankel's search is that he opposed Reformists' willingness to abandon any ritual that is unreasonable or makes social life difficult<sup>211</sup>. According to Schorsch, despite the acceptance of the Jewish Reformation with historically different validities in the modern perception, Frankel's decisive influence in shaping religious views is certain<sup>212</sup>.

The identification of Frankel with the Post-Reform Positive Historical School is due to his proposition of the term 'positive' as the opposite of 'negative', which he first expressed at the Frankfurt Rabbinical Conference in 1845. However, the word 'positive' also recalls positive law<sup>213</sup> against natural law<sup>214</sup>, amounting that rules are based on law. Frankel proposed removing these practices and introducing the Jewish Reform program as a solution to the difficulties in religious practice. It was also criticized for making this recommendation. However, Frankel argued that the principles of Halaha could change and this could be expressed as "moderate reform" or "thinking with faith". He suggested allowing autopsy under certain conditions, postponing the burial process of the funeral, making changes in the circumcision procedure, starting a special religious education program for girls, making changes in prayer books, and that the next day could be

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<sup>211</sup> Schorsch, a.g.e, s.256.

<sup>212</sup> Schorsch, a.g.e, s.256.

<sup>213</sup> Positive Law: It is the law that is produced and whose time and conditions are known. Elements such as constitution, law and regulation are related to the scope and effectiveness of positive law rules. Ali Seyyar, a.g.e, s. 423.

<sup>214</sup> Natural law is the unwritten law rule that can be accessed by man through reason. Ali Seyyar, İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Terimleri, Değişim 2007, İstanbul, p. 423.

left due to circumstances such as the obligation to work on holidays and festival days<sup>215</sup>.

According to Frankel, Judaism did not consist only of Halaha. He draws attention to the importance of the other "historical" aspects of Judaism as non-Halaha elements. Frankel did not want Hebrew to remain the language of worship for emotional reasons. He stated that Hebrew should be the language of worship, both because it does not prevent Halakha and because of objective historical facts. It is seen that Frankel is weak against the Reformists in terms of historical realities. Because Hebrew speaking was decreased and the conditions for teaching as a language of worship became difficult.

According to Frankel, who argued that Jewish History is a source of values, inspiration and commitment, history is in a secular category and has less obligation than Halaha. According to Frankel, both history and Halaha help revolutionary and path-breaking features of the mind. With his intellectual background coming from his family, he expressed his views in Conservative Judaism, which are a combination of traditional Judaism and historical Judaism. According to Frankel, it was important for Judaism to advocate for reform not only through financially supported organizations, but also academically and individually.

In the prayers performed in the Synagogue Choir in the Prayer Book he published, he received a reaction because he removed extreme parts that were not disturbed

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<sup>215</sup> Schorsch Ismar, a.g.e, p. 257.

by Orthodox Jews but criticized by Reform Jews. He was also criticized for trying to please a certain circle. These responses constitute one of the main arguments developed against Conservative Judaism<sup>216</sup>. Frankel states that he finds the overly symbolic interpretations of Kabbalah symbolism responsible for the devaluation of individual mitzvot rather than the concreteness and clarity of the Halakha method<sup>217</sup>.

According to M. Waxman, thinkers such as Leopold Zunz (d.1886) and Zacharias Frankel (d.1875), who advocated scientific research and explanation of Judaism in Germany, took into account the contrast between the conditions of the age and belief<sup>218</sup>. Zacharias Frankel reiterated that the whole, which was given to Moses on Rabbi Mount Sinai, accepted as "law", as expressed by Rabbi Asher<sup>219</sup>, is not of a pure structure but has a mosaic character. He was for adopting the view that legal principles should be at the center of religion, rather than religious experience in Judaism, which was criticized by German intellectuals from Kant (d.1724) to Bruno Bauer (d.1882). This situation enabled Frankel to be supported by the Jews who advocated Conservatism and led to the emergence of his academic identity. Zacharias Frankel's

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<sup>216</sup> <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/6301-frankel-zacharias3.6.2017> veya C.5 p. 482.

<sup>217</sup> Ismar, a.g.e, p.257.

<sup>218</sup> Waxman, a.g.m, s. 58-71.

<sup>219</sup> Asher ben Jehiel (1250 Germany-1327 Spain) is known as a Talmud scholar. He was also called as Rabbi and Rabbeinu Asher or Rosh. Babası, Rabbi Eliezer ben Nathan (Raaban) olarak tanınan dedesi and his two siblings studied in the field of Jewish law. He took lessons from Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg in Germany in the field of Medieval Talmud Commentary and Tosafist. As an idea, the influence of secular knowledge on secular Jews in Spain has been limited, especially due to his approach to philosophical studies.

first work "Jewish Oaths in Theology and History" was published in 1840.

After Frankel effectively stated that Saxonian Jews could not testify before the civil courts was not justified and that it was a purely political problem, regulations were made to establish the principle of equality regarding the testimony of Jews and Christians in Saxony and later in the surrounding areas<sup>220</sup>.

His works 'Grundlinien des Mosaisch-Talmudischen Eherechts' (Breslau, 1860), written for the history of Post-Talmud literature and containing the rabbinic marriage law, 'Entwurf einer Geschichte der Literatur der Nachtalmudischen Responsen' (Breslau, 1865) which shows that Talmud authors ignore Jerusalem Talmud, and 'Mebo ha-Yeruṣalmi' (Breslau, 1870), which he published as an introduction to the Jerusalem Talmud, are named as the Breslau School and included in the weak rationalist historian school<sup>221</sup>.

### **Solomon Schechter (1847-1915)**

Born in Focșani as the son of a family that immigrated from Moldova to the United States, Solomon Schechter is known as a Kohen, Rabbi, scholar and educator. Solomon Schechter, in his twenties, took lectures at Rabbinical College in the field of Modern Talmud

<sup>220</sup> The regulations named Prussian Diet was made in 1841 in line with the criticism and assessments of Frankel who objected the unfair attitude against Jews as regards legal discrimination and testimony application between Prussian Christians and Jews.

<sup>221</sup> Louis Jacobs, 'Frankel', The Jewish Religion, Oxford U. Press 1995, s. 172.

studies in Vienna. He then took Modern Talmud classes at the University of Berlin from Meir Friedmann until Friedmann's death in 1879. In 1882 he was invited to Britain by Claude Montefiore in London to become a rabbi-teacher. In 1890 he was appointed to Cambridge University as a lecturer in Talmud education for Rabbis. In his honor, lectures are given each year by the Jewish Society at Cambridge University in memory of Solomon Schechter.

He published the Cairo Genizah at intervals from 1896 to 1900<sup>222</sup>. They were named this way since they were found in the Genizah of Cairo hidden in the Egyptian Synagogue and thought to belong to Jews under the XV. c. Roman-Greek and Islamic influence. Schechter's works on more than 100,000 documents is his most effective and important work on Medieval Judaism.

In 1899 he became a professor of Hebrew at the University of London College. In 1902, he moved to the United States. From 1902 to 1915, he became the second president of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTSA), which was established in response to the advancement of the American Reform Judaism movement. After the presidency of Schechter, the name of this institution was changed to the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. He chaired the Hebrew Bible Publishing Committee of the Jewish Publication Society<sup>223</sup>.

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<sup>222</sup> Ismar Schorsch, a.g.e, p. 354.

<sup>223</sup> Michael R. Cohen, *The Birth of Conservative Judaism: Solomon Schechter's Disciples and the Creation of an American Religious Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press. 2012.p.16.

With the dynamic personality and spiritual leadership of Solomon Schechter, who became famous for his Genizah findings during his studies at Cambridge University in the continuation of Zecharias Frankel's Positive History school, the Conservative Judaism movement has grown to such an extent that it could become an important force in the religious, intellectual and social life of American Jews today<sup>224</sup>. Schechter's Conservatism expresses that the middle way in the interpretation of Reform and Orthodox Judaism, in a way that neither school understands, is the pursuit of what Zacharias Frankel called 'Positive-Historical Judaism'<sup>225</sup>.

Solomon Schechter, who played an important role as the founder and president of the United Synagogue in the United States, is considered the architect of the American Conservative Jewish Community.

In an inaugural speech Schechter made when he was President of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York in 1902, he emphasized the centrality of Jewish law in the life of a Jew. He stated that orders and prohibitions, as well as the Jewish law completely encompasses the individual, relations and society, and that one cannot become a true Jew by ignoring this fact. He emphasized that the approaches ignoring Jewish law and approaching Jewish law with an emphasis on individual religious experience can create a careless attitude towards religion and consequently, sincere religiosity will be avoided.

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<sup>224</sup> Epstein, a.g.e, p. 296.

<sup>225</sup> Salime Leyla Gürkan, *The Jews as a Chosen People*, Routledge Jewish Studies Series, 2009, New York, p. 82.

These arguments constituted important challenges of the traditional approach against Reform Judaism<sup>226</sup>.

Emphasizing the necessity of accepting the Torah as basic, Schechter used the term "Catholic Israel"<sup>227</sup>. This concept refers to national consensus and the elimination of differences on Jewish law<sup>228</sup>. This view is also a fundamental issue that distinguishes Conservative Judaism from Orthodox Judaism and states that tradition is open to change and transformation in modern times. Solomon Schechter's determination on this issue and his open support in the early years of Zionism does not seem inconsistent.

Louis Jacobs reinforces Schechter's emphasis on the concept of 'Catholic Israel' with his work '*God, Torah, Israel*'. As an indicator of the emphasis on belief, text and common tradition in Conservative Judaism, it is aimed to keep the historical and current conditions alive and transferable without rejecting the differentiation in the formation and interpretation of the text.

Schechter is considered to be the founder of Conservative Judaism, and his schools carry out secular and religious education activities widely in Canada and the United States<sup>229</sup>. Among their contemporaries, Louis Finkelstein and Solomon Schechter, who emphasized more on history than theology, were also interested in theology,

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<sup>226</sup> E. L. Fackenheim, *What is Judaism?* Syracuse U. Press, 1999. p.144-145.

<sup>227</sup> Isidore Epstein, *Judaism*, Pelican, Australia 1959, p. 297.

<sup>228</sup> Epstein, a.g.e, p. 297.

<sup>229</sup> Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *Modern Judaism*, Macmillan Press, London 1996, p.111. E. L. Fackenheim, *What is Judaism?* Syracuse U. Press, 1999, p. 144-145.



but nevertheless gave importance to theology in the curriculum in Schechter's educational institutions<sup>230</sup>.

### **Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler (Rabbi Eliyahu) (1892-1953)**

Eliezer Dessler (Rabbi Eliyahu) is a twentieth century Orthodox Rabbi, Talmud scholar, and Jewish philosopher. The writings of Rabbi Eliyahu, regarded as the "*spiritual leader*" by the Ponevezh Yeshiva in Israel, were published by his students after his death.

He was born in 1892 in Gomel, in present-day Belarus. After the Russian Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, they immigrated to England at the age of fourteen, with his father, who lost all his assets. He studied at the Kelm Yeshiva. Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, the uncle of Dessler and the leader of Orthodox Lithuanian Jews, saw Eliyahu as a brilliant student in Kelm, and in the following years he considered the procedures suitable for his nephew required to become a Rabbi in Kelm and rarely given beforehand. Louis Jacobs, in times other than Talmud studies, notes the contribution of Dessler's responses to the ongoing discussions of Judaism, along with the views of Einstein, Freud, Marx, and Darwin, to the development of his philosophical thought<sup>231</sup>. Despite his uncle's moral support for him, Eliyahu chose the low position of Rabbinic judge after he started a business with

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<sup>230</sup> Robert G. Goldy, *The Emergence of Jewish Theology in America*, Indiana U. Press, 1990, p. 8-9.

<sup>231</sup> Cosgrove, a.g.e, p.26.

his father. The Musar<sup>232</sup> movement also had an important influence on Rabbi Dessler. In early XX. c., he was an open-minded child of Yeshiva, but he worked on the general principles of Orthodox Kabbalah Mysticism and Hasidi Judaism and Jewish philosophy. It is seen that Dessler was generally influenced by XVI. and XIX. c. on Jewish Philosophy<sup>233</sup>.

From 1928, he held the post of chief rabbi at the London East End, Dalston and Northeast London Synagogues. The Sassoon family is a wealthy family whose children have Dessler's private tutoring. In addition to his work at Dessler Kollel, he spent an intense period teaching small groups. In the early 1940s, Rabbi Dessler took over the leadership of the newly created Gateshead Kollel in Western Europe for married men to do religious studies. Rabbi Dessler moved to Israel in 1940 as a leader, spiritual counselor and lecturer on the Ponevezh Talmud at Bnei Brak, Israel, where he passed away in 1954. Rabbi Dessler's views on Jewish ethics were published through his students in England and Israel.

Eliyahu Dessler had a profound mystical influence on Louis Jacobs. He graduated from the Manchester Yeshiva gaining the religious sensitivities of Judaism and eager to learn more. Rabbi Dessler's influence was great in Louis Jacobs's later study of Kabbalah and Hasidic Judaism and Jewish philosophy. Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer

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<sup>232</sup> Musar Movement: XIX. c. A school founded by Israel Salanter in Lithuania, based on the re-teaching of Rabbani literature and its interaction with Kabbalah. Works of '*Duties of the Heart*' (Bahya ben Joseph-Ibn-i Pakuda), '*Palm Tree of Deborah*' (Cordovero), '*Path of the Upright*' (Luzzatto) are seen as common works between Hasidism and the Musar school.

<sup>233</sup> Jacobs, *The Jewish Religion*, Oxford U. Press, 1995, p.120.

Dessler based on the Maharal<sup>234</sup> and the principles of the Hasidic studies of the nineteenth century as a method of interpreting the principles of Jewish philosophy.

### **Alexander Altmann (1906-1987)**

Born in today's Slovakia city of Kassa, Altmann's father Trier was the Chief Rabbi. He was an Orthodox Jewish, Scholar and Rabbi. Altmann completed his doctorate in philosophy at the University of Berlin in 1931. In the same year, he was awarded the title of Rabbi by the Berlin Hildesheimer Rabbi Seminary. From 1931 to 1938 he served as a rabbi and professor of Jewish Theology and Philosophy in Berlin. In 1938, he fled Nazi Germany and became one of the rabbis in England-Manchester where Louis Jacobs took lessons. While Alexander Altmann was a professor of philosophy at the University of London, he was Jacobs' professor who helped him develop academically in Jewish Philosophy.

Altmann had worked as a professor at the Department of Philosophy at Brandeis University since 1959, and he was accepted as the "Mendelssohn Scholar" since he introduced the work of Moses Mendelssohn in Britain and the United States. He was interested in Jewish mysticism and theology. He produced works on medieval Jewish philosophy and mysticism. Altmann's works in

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<sup>234</sup> MaHaRaL is the school of thought founded by Morenu Harav Rabbi Laib (d.1609, Prague). He acknowledges that this task in the universe where God created the universe but was not completed belongs to man, that Torah studies should be excluded from dialectics, and the principle that Torah and Talmud do not conflict with scientific developments. Louis Jacobs, *The Jewish Religion*, Oxford U. Press, 1995, p. 329-330.

which he was especially known were his pieces on the Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn who was the forerunner and symbolic name of Haskalah. First, in England and Europe, then in the United States, he undertook the works on Mendelssohn, contributing to the depth and spread of the Jewish Enlightenment.

In 1959, he went to the United States to pursue academic studies at Brandeis University, Waltham in Massachusetts. He worked in Jewish Philosophy and Jewish History. He was a guest at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Harvard University<sup>235</sup>.

He translated Saadia Gaon's work '*Kitabül-emânât ve'l-itikadât*' (Beliefs and Opinions) to English, by adding notes. By establishing the Institute of Jewish Studies under the umbrella of University College London, he tried to realize his ideas about the necessity of continuing Judaism studies independently. '*Saadia Gaon: His Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*' was translated from Arabic and published in *Three Jewish Philosophers* (Atheneum, New York, 1969).

Altmann died in Boston on June 6, 1987, at the end of his long academic career. Altmann wrote his works in different languages, including German, English and Hebrew. Altmann's works on Mendelssohn are as follows: '*Moses Mendelssohn's Frühschriften zur Metaphysik*' (Germany, 1969), '*Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study*' (University of Alabama Press, 1973), '*Essays in Jewish*

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<sup>235</sup> His home in Boston has been a meeting place for Jewish academics and students, and he has always had guests for Sabbath meals. Stating that Altmann had a new knowledge and skill such as the feeling of drinking water in a thirsty person throughout his life, Lawrence Ince states that he attended the Coptic language class between the ages of 65-70.

*Intellectual History'* (University Press of New England for Brandeis University Press, 1981). It contributed to the widespread knowledge and discussion of Mendelssohn's ideas and views.

After Germany and England, Altmann took his place among the important scholars of the modern period with his contributions to the development of innovative and critical Judaism based in the United States. Alexander Altmann explains that the History of Jewish Philosophy contributed to general philosophy in two ways. He states that the Jewish religion and the Greek philosophical tradition were in interaction with each other. Greek philosophy influenced Jewish philosophy, and in this way the general philosophy has been enriched with Judaism. This mutual interaction continued from the development of mythology to medieval philosophy and the Renaissance<sup>236</sup>.

Among Alexander Altmann's most important works are '*Isaac Israeli*', '*Saadia Gaon: Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*' and '*Scope of Metaphysics*'. In '*Isaac Israeli*', Alexander Altmann contributed to the presenting of Isaac Israeli's ideas today with his work on the medieval Jewish philosopher<sup>237</sup>. Altmann's "*Scope of Metaphysics*" focuses on the subject of reason and metaphysics, and draws attention to the importance of Maimonides' philosophical theory.

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<sup>236</sup> Alexander Altmann, *Judaism and World Philosophy*, p.65-115, Louis Finkelstein (ed.) *The Jews, Their Role in Civilization* içinde, Schocken Books, 1978, New York, p.65.

<sup>237</sup> With Salomon Miklos Stern, *Isaac Israeli: A Neoplatonic Philosopher of the Early Tenth Century. His Works Translated with Comments and an Outline of His Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 1958.

Altmann expresses the value of Maimonides' theorizing the search for truth. Alexander Altmann's '*Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism*', (Cornell University Press, 1969), '*Biblical Motifs: 'Origins and Transformations*', Harvard University Press, 1966 are examples of his work on the Holy Book.

Louis Jacobs' academic aspect was strengthened for many years by the influence of Alexander Altmann, whom he met in Manchester and who came to London upon his invitation. It was the time when Louis Jacobs, Alexander Altmann and Joseph Weiss exchanged views around the topics of their interest by exchanging correspondence among themselves starting from 1954. Despite his academic stance, Alexander Altmann supported Louis Jacobs' voluntary contributions to the congregation at the New West End Synagogue, along with Louis Jacobs's work at the Institute of Jewish Studies<sup>238</sup>.

## **LOUIS JACOBS AND THE NEW JEWISH THEOLOGY**

Louis Jacobs carefully followed the discussions on solving the universal and local problems of the Jews after the two world wars that took place one after another in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Mainly the names such as Milton Steinberg (1903-1950), Abraham Jashua Heschel (1907-1972), Will Herberg (1901-1977), Jacob Joseph Petuchowski (1925-1991), Robert Gordis (1908-1992), Joseph B. Soloveitchik (1903-1993),

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<sup>238</sup> Cosgrove, a.g.e, p. 72.

Emil Fackenheim (1916-2003), Arnold J. Wolf (1924- 2008), Eugene B. Borowitz (1924-2016) are considered as thinkers who contributed to the development of the New Jewish Theology that developed in the 1950s and after.

### **Institutional Critical / God-Centric Jewish Theology**

With the Jewish Enlightenment, Haskala, the idea of accepting the Jews as part of the Christian culture and society due to their common geography, became legally and practically widespread. This thought was met with positive reaction by Jews with a high level of education, and different alternative views paved the way for the reinterpretation of Jewish philosophical views, and a more effective definition of the originality of Judaism against Christian religion and culture.

The economic crisis that took place in the United States before the Second World War and affected the industrialized countries, especially Britain and Germany, created a philosophical search for a point of departure not only in the economic and political field, but also for Judaism. Studies, mainly by the followers of Moses Mendelssohn consisting Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber and Leo Baeck, on eliminating the adverse image of Jews in Europe stand out. It is seen that Jews were in an intense effort to produce ideas in the processes of cultural conflict, confrontation, recognition, and tolerance. While the Second World War revealed all the events described as extremism and secular evil, the interpretations in the context of Reformist-Liberal Judaism, especially Mordecai

Kaplan, who defended the God-Centered Jewish Philosophy, did not meet the reality in this period, and especially the publications on Judaism, Conservative Judaism, Reform and Orthodox Judaism published in the United States of America have intensified<sup>239</sup>.

### **Rationalist View**

Leo Baeck (1873-1956) was the German Reformist, Rabbi and thinker, and in his '*History and Theology*' published in 1932, he states that the adaptation of the 'Christian Reform' terminology and Protestant model for Judaism is problematic, and that this situation poses a serious danger such as the rise of Nazism<sup>240</sup>.

According to Leo Baeck, God is not a universal concept, and Jews as the "chosen community" do not originate from God, which is contrary to traditional belief. Baeck is unable to relate this thesis to Jewish history and traditional theology, although he expresses his view that God is related to the deep feelings present in the creation of the human soul<sup>241</sup>. Among the god-centered views, Eugene B. Borowitz, Mordecai Kaplan, Hermann Kohn and Leo Baeck are accepted as Neo-Kantian thinkers.

Leo Baeck has two suggestions regarding religious experience. The first is a classical, positive, activist, social, extrovert, rational, deep-rooted and masculine model of religious experience. The second is a passive,

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<sup>239</sup> Dan Cohn Sherbok, *The Jewish Heritage*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1988, s. 178.

<sup>240</sup> Eugene A. Borowitz, *A New Jewish Theology in The Making*, Westminster Press, London 1968, s. 87.

<sup>241</sup> Borowitz, a.g.e, s. 89.



independent, individual, person-centered, female-character and romantic religious experience model that accepts its own sensibilities as the rule. Leo Baeck's religious analogies for Christianity as the second type, romantic religion while for Judaism, the masculine character in line with the first religious experience model caused debate. In a neo-Kantian trend, Baeck cares about the contrast between monotheism in Judaism and mysticism in Christianity<sup>242</sup>.

Whether the monotheism and mysticism debate between Judaism and Christianity truly constructs a contrast, which Leo Baeck also discusses, should be considered as well as whether Catholics are outside this debate. However, Leo Baeck's definitions of positivist, extrovert, classical and dominant character for Judaism can be considered as another expression of Judaism's achievements in the non-religious field. Here arises the problem of Leo Baeck's involuntary objectification of Judaism with non-religious definitions in order to define religion. It is possible to evaluate the inclusion of definitions other than the doctrine of Judaism within God-Centered views as the glorification of religion in the face of the liberal views of the period and the sanctification of Jewish culture and history.

Following the neo-Kantian approach, he adds: 'Moral consciousness teaches God, '. While explaining God's effect on human life in Kant's approach, Baeck finds it ethical and universal to evaluate God as an idea, and basically tried to show the universality of Judaism in his

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<sup>242</sup> Borowitz, a.g.e. s. 91.

work, and warned against the terms and strategies adopted from Christianity to Judaism<sup>243</sup>.

### Existential View

The most important works of Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929), who was born in Germany and completed his education here, are accepted as '*Hegel and State*', '*Judaism Despite Christianity*' and '*Redemption of The Star*'. He acknowledges that God's revelation is not limited to a specific time and place and emphasizes the continuity of revelation by proposing a continuous evaluation of God-society relations.

Louis Jacobs did not put much emphasis on the ethnic aspect of Judaism, apart from issues related to criticism and interpretation of the Bible. Therefore, while evaluating Rosenzweig's views, he stated that ethnic characteristics are important as a carrier of cultural continuity. However, Jacobs states that it is more correct to admit that the main axis of religion is not ethnic views<sup>244</sup>.

Franz Rosenzweig deems Martin Buber's description of I-Thou as the illusion of modern man. According to Rosenzweig, in fact, there is a reduction to the relationship between God and the human mind in this explanation. Rosenzweig idealistically argues that love of God will regulate the Jews' relations with God and bring freedom to the Jews. Although he is not a Zionist, he also emphasizes the ethnicity of Judaism. In '*Redemption Of The Star*', Rosenzweig describes the characteristics of a

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<sup>243</sup> Leo Beack, Neo-Kantian Thinkers, Eugene B. Borowitz, A New Jewish Theology in The Making, in Westminster Press, 1968 London, p. 87.

<sup>244</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Theology, s. 274.

national religion regarding Judaism. According to Rosenzweig, the Star of David is a symbolic map. God, universe, man, creation, revelation and redemption are elements that each form one end of the Star of David and complement each other<sup>245</sup>.

Martin Buber (1878-1965) is associated with Franz Rosenzweig because of his existential views. He started his education in an Orthodox Jewish family and continued in the fields of Philosophy and Art History at the universities of Vienna, Leipzig, Berlin and Zurich. He taught and directed education programs for adult Jews at the Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus Institute together with Franz Rosenzweig. In 1938, he became Professor of Social Philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He gave lectures in the United States, and influenced Jewish scholars such as Will Herberg, Eugene B. Borowitz, and Christian theologians such as H. Richard Niehbuhr, and people from different disciplines such as Irvin Yalom (Psychiatry), Victor Turner (anthropologist)<sup>246</sup>.

After the Second World War, he opposed the calls of Orthodox Judaism to stay away from innovative and rational approaches, mysticism, and the suggestions that people can forget their pain through prayer. According to Buber, rational suggestions should be made in order to learn from the disasters experienced, and ideological results should be aimed by paying attention to the value of knowledge. The basic idea similarities of Abraham Joshua Heschel and Martin Buber, which we will evaluate

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<sup>245</sup> Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, p. 299.

<sup>246</sup> Martin Buber, *Eclipse of God*, Trans. Abdüllatif Tüzer, Ankara 2000, p. 4.

with their anthropocentric philosophical views, are striking, even if they do not completely agree on this issue.

The traditional understanding of transcendent, supreme God began with the red Spinoza. Spinoza interpreted God as all the principles in the mechanism of nature. Despite the pressure of the church and exclusion from the Jewish Synagogue, Spinoza's breakthrough was followed in later periods. Unlike his theoretical-rational arguments and definitions for God, Martin Buber emphasizes the relationship between God and man and the experience of God in man, and adopts the traditional understanding of living, creating, transcendental God. According to Buber, the ontological interpretation of traditional Jewish belief based on the God-Israel relationship and the concept of covenant should be prioritized<sup>247</sup>.

Buber's expression of the God-human relationship in the form of 'I-Thou' advocates the achievement of the individual God experience by internalizing God's mind and law within the post-modern Creative-Being interpretations, taking the person into the center. In this way, while God is the other, he is an entity within man that is 'one' with man. As an important step in post-modern Jewish theology, God is immanently conceived of being purged of transcendence. The concept of covenant between Israelites and God is carried from the dimension of agreement to the dimension of relationship. In this way,

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<sup>247</sup> M. Peppard, *Reclaiming The Post-Modern Jew*, Judaism, 51-4, 2002, p. 398.

Jewish identity is understood as dynamic spiritual experience, not a metaphysical truth<sup>248</sup>.

Although Maimonides accepted the concept of prophecy as a basic principle of faith, they associated it with the perfection of the person and argued that the prophet passed through a mental process, not the chosen by God. By choosing a person to be perfected, God is making clear that not every individual can be a prophet. There is a mental and natural relationship in the concept of revelation and the institution of prophecy, and in the relationship between God and man: When the content of revelation and miracles are compared, revelation takes precedence. Although this very rationalist view was accepted by Hermann Cohen, according to Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber, revelation is the product of individual experience. The essence of revelation is that it is the product of the human relationship with God, not the message delivered to man<sup>249</sup>.

Gershom Scholem (1892-1987) explained the role of Kabbalah in traditional Judaism and the importance of Jewish Mysticism in his works<sup>250</sup>. Martin Buber, on the other hand, followed Scholem's work on Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism, and reworked on the importance of Kabbalah Mysticism.

According to Martin Buber, the thought of our age, in its effort to make God unreal, understandably

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<sup>248</sup> M. Peppard, a.g.e., p. 398.

<sup>249</sup> Salime Leyla Gürkan, *Judaism*, Istanbul, İsam 2008, p.102.

<sup>250</sup> Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (1941), *Sabbatai Zevi, the Mystical Messiah* (1973), *On Kabbalah and its Symbolism* (1965), *Origins of the Kabbalah*, *Zohar: The Book of Glory*, Dharma Pub. 1994

preoccupies itself with reducing God to a moral principle. Post-Kantian philosophers try to envision the Absolute Being as "not existing within us". Preserving the deep meanings of the traditional concept of God is a fundamental necessity, provided that the bond we establish between our life and God does not manifest in a meaningless way in our concrete life<sup>251</sup>.

The reality of a vision that directly determines our existence is certain according to thinkers like Plato, Plotinus, Descartes and Leibniz, but it does not exist to Hegel. Because of the concrete life in which he lives by nature, man can only reach the 'spiritual principle called God' and 'what is real alone' with reason. For Hegel, the radical abstraction from which philosophical thinking begins makes the existential reality of I-Thou unimportant, along with the existential reality of everything else. According to Hegel, the absolute universal mind - God - uses everything that exists and develops in nature and history, including everything related to man, as a means of self-realization and being fully self-conscious. According to Hegel, there is no living and direct relationship between man and God<sup>252</sup>. According to Martin Buber, the principle that God chose the Israelites is exactly the opposite. Man attains the idea of God through individual experience. Buber's view is consistent when evaluated together with his views on revelation. It is seen

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<sup>251</sup> Martin Buber, *Eclipse of God*, Trans. Abdüllatif Tüzer, Ankara 2000, p.30.

<sup>252</sup> Martin Buber, *Eclipse of God*, Trans. Abdüllatif Tüzer, Ankara 2000, p. 31.

that Buber was influenced by Hegel in his views on the denial of miracles<sup>253</sup>.

### **Naturalist View**

Although Mordecai Kaplan (1881-1983) comes from the Conservative Judaism movement, he is the founder and most important representative of the Reconstructionist Judaism school, which was an important community in the United States in the 1960s. Although Kaplan was considered one of the pioneers of Conservative Judaism in the 1950s, his influence and work surpassed Conservative Judaism.

Despite the social emphasis of Jewish culture such as common consciousness, belief, value judgments, tradition and history, which Solomon Schechter defines as Catholic Israel<sup>254</sup>, the ethnic emphasis of Judaism is a priority in Mordecai Kaplan's thought<sup>255</sup>. Mordecai Kaplan pointed out the negative aspects of this ethnic unity and opposed the concept of nation based on blood ties by quoting Rabbi Saadia "Only the Torah unites and makes it a single nation"<sup>256</sup>.

According to Kaplan's understanding of God, one should mention the existence of a naturist God identified

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<sup>253</sup> Buber, *Eclipse of God*, a.g.e, p. 32.

<sup>254</sup> Salime Leyla Gürkan, *Yahudilik*, s. 45, Epstein, a.g.e, s. 297.

<sup>255</sup> Salime Leyla Gürkan, a.g.e, s.45

<sup>256</sup> Mordecai Kaplan, *A Philosophy of Jewish Ethics, The Jews, Their Role in Civilization*, ed. Louis Finkelstein, Schocken Books, New York, 1978, s. 42.

with nature, rather than a transcendent, omnipotent, and a creator God. God is in the universe. The idea of salvation that God has promised to people will be in the form of God's rewarding the good and good people. God is a good being because he gives man a sense of doing good. The idea of goodness in the human will should also be evaluated as proof of God's existence in the universe and nature. Mordecai Kaplan's rejection of the "God of Love" and adopting the idea of "Immanent God" led him to be accused as an Atheist. Mordecai Kaplan rejected the idea of "chosen community" within Judaism and argued that the Israelites have no superiority over other societies in any respect<sup>257</sup>.

According to Kaplan, Judaism is in an active and social transformation with its religious institutions. This transformation within Judaism is too complex to be explained by a single interpretation and restrictive social organizations and institutions. The modernization process in Judaism manifests itself in both beliefs and practices<sup>258</sup>.

The most important problem here is that Judaism, seen under threat, can continue to exist. Because the need for new interpretations of the tradition, beliefs, and practices of a religion, in a way, involves a reaction towards existing conditions to survive. This thought underpins Mordecai Kaplan's reconstructive views.

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<sup>257</sup> Jacobs, *The Jewish Religion*, s. 298.

<sup>258</sup> Mordecai Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, s.513



### **Neo-Orthodoxy View**

Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) defends the explicit synthesis of the secular culture formed by modernism and traditional Judaism and emphasizes the necessity to be careful against the adversaries that modernism can create in religious matters<sup>259</sup>.

### **Liberal View**

This view is represented by thinkers who advocate a universal view on the limits of ethnic and traditional Judaism, such as Abraham Geiger (1810-1874) and Kauffman Kohler (1823-1926).

### **Anthropocentric Jewish Theology**

Milton Steinberg (1950) paid attention to the dimension of religion between God and man, saying "We believe in the Personal God of Traditional Judaism."<sup>260</sup> With this statement, he is described as the pioneer of Will Herberg's ideas that emphasize individual religious experience<sup>261</sup>.

### **Individual Religious Experience**

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<sup>259</sup> Steven T. Katz, *Jewish Philosophers*, Bloch Publishing Company, Kudüs, 1975, s.164.

<sup>260</sup> Louis Jacobs, "Reconstructionism", *The Jewish Religion*, Oxford U. Press, 1995, s. 413.

<sup>261</sup> Robert R. Goldy, a.g.e, s. 87.

In his book 'Judaism and the Modern Man', published in 1951, Will Herberg (ö. 1977) states "Man's rejection of God has caused him to claim that God has no power, and then to accept it as a reality that the Godly power and might is in man himself". According to Herberg, the reason modern man denied that revelation was a divine concept was because he considered himself sufficient to describe the Holy Scripture. Revelation could be ready to be accepted as intuitive poetry, as long as it is in line with the intellectual abilities and reasoning of modern individuals<sup>262</sup>.

Herberg discusses "what the concept of God is" and states that the "concept of God is formed by the imagination of the human" and that this deistic approach makes the "holiness of God" debatable<sup>263</sup>. Herberg describes the traditional Jewish thought as a 'fundamentalist view'. Herberg describes traditional Jewish thought as a "fundamental view." His criticism of the modern view, which accepts the integrity of the Holy Scripture and revelation as the main character, is as follows: There may be mistakes and changes in the Holy Scripture due to the human element. In this respect, he admits that the Holy Scripture itself is not revelation, but a form of revelation scribed by people.

This thought of Herberg revealed that the approach of thinkers such as Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber and

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<sup>262</sup> Herberg, a.g.e, s.258.

<sup>263</sup> Will Herberg, *From Marxizim to Judaism*, The Collected Essays of Will Herberg', 1989, 'God and Man', s.28, Markus Wiener Publishing, NY. Bkz. Will Herberg, 'Judaism and The Modern Man', 'An Interpretation of Jewish Religion Torah', Teaching Law and Way', s.286, Meridian Books, 1960, USA.

H. Richard Niebuhr should be accepted as a third way. For example, Niebuhr points out that "throughout history, human beings have never been engaged in such an intensive study of revelation". According to Neibuhr, it is clearly seen in the Holy Scripture text of Judaism and Christianity that the influence of the social conditions in which religious thought developed affected religious dogmas, philosophical thought and moral values<sup>264</sup>.

To Will Herberg, the English language cannot fully match with phrases in Judaism and Torah. For example, as the Holy Scripture and Rabbinic Scriptures are all related to the concept of revelation, there is a reflection of revelation in every concept of the tradition of religious relations that man establishes with this world and God. According to Herberg, the term "Law" means not only laws or positive law, but it also means tradition, method, doctrine between God and man, and the way the man reaches God<sup>265</sup>.

### **Holocaust-Based Jewish Theology**

According to Emil L. Fackenheim (d. 2003), the experience of genocide repeated in the Spanish Exile of 1492 and later in the Second World War of European Jews shows that the concept of the covenant on Mount Sinai and that the Israelites were chosen by God are not valid. In this case, it is no longer necessary to mention the responsibilities of the Israelites arising from the covenant.

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<sup>264</sup> H. Richard Neibuhr, 1941 'The Meaning Of Revelation', The Macmillian Company, New York, s.4.

<sup>265</sup> Herberg, Judaism and Modern Man, s. 286.

However, those who prefer to fulfill the provisions of the covenant are free in this regard<sup>266</sup>.

Arnold J. Wolf (1924-2008), Richard Rubenstein (b.1924), Ignaz Maybaum (1897-1976) and Eliezer Berkovits (1908-1992) are among the representatives of this field.

### **Synthesist View**

It is represented by Abraham Joshua Heschel'e (d. 1972) whose main works are 'God in Search of Man', 'Maimonides, Die Prophetie', 'Man's Quest for God', 'Man is not Alone', 'The Earth is the Lord's' and 'The Sabbath'. He worked as a Professor of Jewish Ethics and Mysticism at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Abraham Joshua Heschel has written detailed reviews on the content of revelation, and the distinguishable natures of historical reality and religious knowledge. According to Heschel, while other religions can be described between man and God, Judaism can be defined over the person's relationship with the Torah and God<sup>267</sup>.

Abraham Joshua Heschel's primary emphasis was on a criticism focused on the extreme institutional structure of Judaism, not on God and worship. He argued that although Jews and Christians seem to share a common culture, their beliefs are very different. While common problems are encountered in matters based on

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<sup>266</sup> Elliot N. Dorff& Louis E. Newman, *Contemporary Jewish Theology*, Oxford University Press 1999 içinde Emil Fachenheim *The Jewish Return Into History*, s. 385-395.

<sup>267</sup> Heschel, a.g.e, s. 167.

the Holy Scripture, and there is no "dialogue" opportunity when faced with problems related to belief<sup>268</sup>.

Jacob J. Petuchowski (d.1991) begins his book "Prayerbook Reform in Europe"<sup>269</sup> by listing the dates of the prayer books of the European Reform Synagogues between 1816-1970. It is possible to think that these books are an answer to religious expectations and criticisms as a variety of worship and prayer, and they are far from the theoretical debates of Reform Judaism.

According to Petuchowski, the reason why Prayer Book<sup>270</sup> publications in European countries such as Austria-Hungary, Netherlands, Sweden as well as in British Synagogues follow Germany is closely associated with the spread of the Haskalah movement in Europe and the growth rate of the Jewish population in Britain<sup>271</sup>. The publications of the Reformist Jews during the years of institutionalization show that the philosophical debates reached the society or that this issue was given importance.

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<sup>268</sup> Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Toward An Understanding of Halacha*, Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1953, içinde s.160-182.

<sup>269</sup> *Prayer Book Reform in Europe, The Liturgy of European Liberal and Reform Judaism*, The World Union For Progressive Judaism Ltd., NY, 1968.

<sup>270</sup> *Forms Of Prayer Used in the West London Synagogue of British Jews*, (Daily & Shabat) 1841, London, ed., Marks, VOL. 1., London, ed. D.W. Marks, VOL. 1 (Festivals) 1842, London, ed. D.W. Marks, VOL. 2., (New Year) 1842, London, ed. D.W. Marks, VOL. 3., (Atonement) 1842, London, ed. D.W. Marks, VOL. 4., (Various Occasions) 1842, London, ed. D.W. Marks & A. Löwy VOL. 5., (Daily&Şabat) 1856, London, ed. D.W. Marks &A. Löwy, 2.edith., (New Year) 1885, London, ed.D.W. Marks&A. Löwy, 3.edth.

<sup>271</sup> Jacob J. Petuchowski, *Prayerbook Reform in Europe, The Liturgy of European Liberal and Reform Judaism*, The World Union For Progressive Judaism Ltd., NY, 1968. S. 39.

### **Anti-Synthesist View**

According to Solovietchik (1903-1993), who defends the necessity of evaluating the Halakha in two ways, religious and philosophical, the current state of the religious experience in Halakha includes the above two elements. Solovietchik has been criticized by modern liberal thinkers for placing Halakha above the Torah.

### **Post-Modern View**

According to Eugene B Borowitz (d. 2016), "two important factors are required to be successful in evaluating the results of the efforts of the Jewish theological tradition to the present day: The construction of theology in a modern form and the structuring of institutions accordingly"<sup>272</sup>.

### **The Influence of the New Jewish Theology on Louis Jacobs**

Louis Jacobs finds that Heschel is in opposition to Mordecai Kaplan's naturalist formulations of Jewish life and rituals<sup>273</sup>. Based on Heschel's criticism, Louis Jacobs

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<sup>272</sup> M. Steinberg, *Anatomy of Faith*, Eugene B. Borowitz, *A New Jewish Theology in The Making* içinde, Westminster Press, London 1968, s. 72.

<sup>273</sup> Jacob J. Petuchowski, *Prayer Book Reform in Europe*, *The Liturgy of European Liberal and Reform Judaism*, The World Union For Progressive Judaism Ltd., NY, 1968. S. 39.

seems to have formed his own interpretation rather than disregarding the views of Liberal Jews, who advocate for the complete separation of Conservative Judaism from the tradition of Halakha and the practices. Jacobs criticizes the pragmatic naturalism advocated by Mordecai Kaplan and expresses that Kaplan represents the most extreme point from the tradition of religion, influenced by the American philosophical environment<sup>274</sup>.

Advocating the inevitability of holocaust-based theological inquiries and the importance of the connection between the individual and religion in the modern period, Louis Jacobs is of the opinion that traditional belief does not conflict with individual religiosity, on the contrary, they support each other. Louis Jacobs and Eugene B. Borowitz agree that the nature of Halakha limits personal freedoms in Orthodox Judaism and shares the view that this situation creates a contrast between Orthodox Judaism and Reformist-Conservative Judaism<sup>275</sup>.

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<sup>274</sup> Jacobs, *Belief in a Personal God: The Position of Liberal Supernaturalism*, Contemporary Jewish Theology ed. Elliot N. Dorff&Louis E. Newman, Oxford U. Press, 1999, s. 99.

<sup>275</sup> Eugene B. Borowitz, *Renewing the Covenant*, The Jewish Publication Society, 1991 New York, s.11. Jacobs, *Religion and Individual*, Cambridge U. Press, 1992, s.113.

## CHAPTER II

### THE HOLY SCRIPTURE AND JUDAISM ACCORDING TO LOUIS JACOBS

The first chapter introduced the life of Louis Jacobs, his world of thought and his main works. The second part examines Jacobs' views on theology, law, ethics, mysticism, literature, and the tradition of interpretation that are dealt with in his works. This chapter focuses on revelation, the Holy Scripture, and belief in God in the theological framework. While examining ethical problems according to the Jewish Bible, not the individual moral laws, but the matters of "chosen community", which is accepted as the basic characteristic of the Jewish community as well as the evil and freedom in the context of God-Man relations were discussed. It was determined from which sources Jacobs took the issues he studied in the field of Jewish Law. Then, examples were given from his works concerning the ten commandments, universality and legal issues to the extent they are deemed important for our subject. This chapter also includes information on Louis Jacobs's views on mysticism due to its connection with individual piety, and the tradition of the Holy Scripture's interpretation.



## **LOUIS JACOBS' VIEWS ON REVELATION, TORAH, AND GOD IN JEWISH THEOLOGY**

Louis Jacobs' theological views on revelation, divinity of the Torah and belief in God are of primary importance for our work, which are mainly elucidated in his works "We Have Reason to Believe" (1957) and "A Jewish Theology" (1973). Louis Jacobs' views on other theological issues such as angel, prophet, death and after are not discussed in this section. Primarily, his perspectives on revelation, the Torah, and the God are examined and other belief-related subjects are indirectly addressed.

It is seen that Jacobs is in search of an epistemological basis in his view of theological problems, and attempts to overcome the problems in this field by drawing attention to the criticisms of modern critical views.

### **The Problem of Divinity of Revelation and the Torah in Judaism**

Revelation is God's expression of Himself to the man in various ways as a being that cannot be perceived through the senses. Revelation phenomenally belongs to human reality, but it is an experience of human beings whose origin comes from God. In addition,

phenomenologically, revelation is the starting point of Judaism<sup>276</sup>.

### **Traditional Conception of Revelation**

According to Jewish sources, the traditional understanding of revelation accepts that revelation is a static phenomenon that takes place at a certain time. The Torah is from God and is for man. Man must work for the Torah, apply its orders and prohibitions, and accept it as the guide of his life. In the experience between God and his prophets, the man is chosen<sup>277</sup> and is expected to inform other people of what is asked of him<sup>278</sup>. In terms of God, revelation refers to different situations and forms of expression<sup>279</sup> such as "pointing to a divine religion"<sup>280</sup>, "making itself visible"<sup>281</sup> "through an angel"<sup>282</sup> or "directly

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<sup>276</sup> Edward Lipinsk, Jacob Jashua Ross, Ejd, "Revelation", Keter Publishing, 1972, Jerusalem, C.14, s.117.

<sup>277</sup> Numbers: 11/26 'However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp.'

<sup>278</sup> Genesis: 41/25 '... God has told you what he will do.' Exodus: 12/3 'Let the whole Israelite community know...' Numbers: 23/3 'Then Balaam to Balak ...' I will let you know when the Lord comes before me and tell me.' Numbers: 23/5 'Lord said Balaam...', 'Go to Balak and give him this news.'

<sup>279</sup> Edward Lipinski, Jacob Joshua Ross, Ejd, 'Revelation', Keter Publishing, 1972, Jerusalem, C.14, s.117. Sinanoğlu Mustafa, Kitab-ı Mukaddes ve Kur'an-ı Kerim'de Nübüvvet, Marmara Ü. Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, PhD Thesis, s.66.

<sup>280</sup> Deuteronomy 32/12 "Only the Lord guided him, there was no foreign deity with him."

<sup>281</sup> Genesis: 12/7 The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring[a] I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him. Genesis 35/7: There he built an altar, and he called the place El Bethel, because it was there that God revealed himself to him when he was fleeing from his brother.

<sup>282</sup> Genesis: 31/11\*13 The angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob.' I answered, 'Here I am.' And he said, 'Look up and see that all the male goats mating with the flock are streaked, speckled or spotted, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land.'

in God's words"<sup>283</sup>. In Judaism, it is possible to associate the realization of revelation between man and God with the sense of hearing in general<sup>284</sup>.

The Torah is a perfect, peace-ordering text attributed to God and Moses, inherited to the children of Jacob, with the aim of creating Israel<sup>285</sup>. God was manifested on Mount Sinai and appeared to the Israelites when they arrived in Sinai in the third month of the Israelites' departure from Egypt. God was manifested on Mount Sinai and appeared to the Israelites when they arrived in Sinai in the third month of the Israelites' departure from Egypt. He asked them "would you accept" the Torah, which he had previously offered to other nations, and obtained a promise from them. God called the Prophet Moses before him and informed the Prophet of the Ten Commandments (Asarat Ha-Dirarim)<sup>286</sup>.

In the Rabbinic tradition, it is accepted that the Torah was given to the Prophet Moses at once. It has been argued that God trained the Prophet Moses at this meeting on Mount Sinai. An important problem here is the scope of the text given to Prophet Moses. The idea that the Torah was given to the Prophet Moses along with the Mishnah and its interpretation with the Talmud is the starting point of the tradition. However, the view that

<sup>283</sup> Genesis: 1/3, 6, 9 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light... And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water."... And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so.

<sup>284</sup> Muhammet Tarakçı, 'Yahudilik'te Vahiy', Bütün Yönleriyle Yahudilik, Ankara 2012, Uluslararası Sempozyum, s. 61-71.

<sup>285</sup> Warren Harvey, "Torah", Ejd. C. 15, s. 1238.

<sup>286</sup> Baki Adam, Yahudi Kaynaklarına Göre Tevrat, Pınar 2001, İstanbul, s. 70,71.

only the ten commandments were given to the prophet Moses in Sinai gained importance. In addition, in terms of style, it is stated in the Torah that the events belonging to the period before the Prophet Moses were experienced under the witness of the Prophet Moses<sup>287</sup>, and the writing of the last eight sentences, which includes the death of the Prophet Moses and the statement "Moses died here" in the Book of Deuteronomy, was completed by Joshua. According to the Jerusalem Talmud, it has the meaning 'After scribing the 5 books of Moses, he returned and wrote the chapter of the story of Ba'lak and Bal'am'.<sup>288</sup> According to the Babylonian Talmud, the 'five books of Moses' were specified, but the other chapters were not. This difference is an example of the views in the Rabbinical tradition regarding the revelation and scribing of the Torah<sup>289</sup>.

The traditional view of the Torah is to accept the incarnation of the pre-eternal and eternal revelation. The post-medieval Jewish scholars, Saadia Gaon<sup>290</sup> and Abraham Bin Ezra, did not hesitate to explain their thoughts on the legal aspect of the Torah and the determinative nature of revelation. Because, in Judaism, as in Islam and Christianity, revelation is the source of belief as well as the basis for law and worship.

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<sup>287</sup> Leviticus 25: 8-24.

<sup>288</sup> Adam, a.g.e, içinde s. 78, TB, Baba Batra, 14b.

<sup>289</sup> Baki Adam, *Yahudi Kaynaklarına Göre Tevrat*, Pınar, 2001, İstanbul, s. 78.

<sup>290</sup> Muhammed Ali Bağır, 'Dinler Tarihi Açısından Saadia Gaon'un Hayatı, Eserleri Ve Yahudi İnanç Tarihine Etkisi' 'Rabbânî Yahudiliğin Orta çağdaki en önemli temsilcilerinden olan Saadia Gaon, Yahudiliğin kurallarını açıklamak, Tevrat ve Talmud eksenli yorumlarla Rabbânî Yahudiliği savunmak ve çeşitli hukuksal problemleri çözmek amacıyla Halaha alanında birçok eser kaleme almıştır.

According to the Understanding of Revelation in Orthodox Judaism, the entire Holy Scripture was conveyed to man by God. The word "convey" here is an ambiguous expression. Medieval commentators' interpretation of "and God spoke with Moses" on this issue is not based on a literal statement. According to Maimonides, the Torah was metaphorically named "speaking" in God's sight before it came to Moses in its entirety. But it is unknown whether the true nature of communication is established with everyone, other than Moses who received the revelation<sup>291</sup>.

Rabbis accepted that the concept of "inspiration" in the Bible is to varying degrees. The Pentateuch, or inspiration in the Torah, is higher and more direct than the Books of the Prophets. Although the emphasis on God in the Torah is more evident, the messages in the books of the prophets are expressed through the prophets. The Rabbis named all of the Torah, Neviim, and Ketuvim books as Tanak. Written Torah was named as 'She-Bi-Ketav' and Oral Torah as 'Torah She-Be Al Peh'<sup>292</sup>. The basic acceptance of Rabbani Judaism includes the facts that Written Torah cannot be understood without the Oral Torah<sup>293</sup>, Written Torah is universal, the Oral Torah is specific to Israel<sup>294</sup>, the Oral Torah shapes the traditional interpretation and not everyone is given the right to interpret the Written Torah<sup>295</sup>.

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<sup>291</sup> Louis Jacobs, *We Have Reason To Believe*, s.58

<sup>292</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 58.

<sup>293</sup> Adam, a.g.e, s.159, *Sifre on Deuteronomy*, Piska 351.

<sup>294</sup> Adam, a.g.e, s. 160.

<sup>295</sup> Adam, a.g.e, s. 161.

While Louis Jacobs defines the limits of the traditional understanding of revelation, he believes that revelation is not static, while the Holy Scripture text was written in the post-Moses period and shaped by the Rabbis. Louis Jacobs denies that Pentateuch was written by inspiration<sup>296</sup>.

The definition of "tree of life"<sup>297</sup> in the Torah corresponds to "Torah" in the Rabbari interpretation. Allah obliged the prophets of Adam, Noah, Ibrahim and Yusuf with the Torah<sup>298</sup>. According to Thomas Aquinas (d.1274), the prophetic state of receiving revelation was an ordeal to be suffered, not a skill to use. The word 'inspiration' in the assessment of Aquinas explains that the tool called language in the intermediary hierarchy in NeoPlatonism<sup>299</sup> makes it possible to facilitate the union of divine and human, and thus connects the divine entity to all creatures.

The Torah is the combination of the Oral and Written Torah. The first five books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy make up the chapters revealed by God. The forms of understanding formed by

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<sup>296</sup> Louis Jacobs, *We Have Reason to Believe*, s.58.

<sup>297</sup> Genesis: 3/22-24 And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side[a] of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

<sup>298</sup> Baki Adam, *Yahudi Kaynaklarına Göre Tevrat*, Pınar 2010, İstanbul, s.78.

<sup>299</sup> Neo-Platonism: Neoplatonism is a view represented by Plotinus (205-270). It was born as a reaction to dualism in Platonism. According to the neoplatonic view, the essence of the universe is one. This essence is of a nature that is tried to be grasped by the mind. But the mind cannot fully define this essence. Skirberkk G.&Gilje N. *Kelsefe Tarihi*, Çev.Emrah Akbaş-Şule Mutlu, Kesit, 2001, s.135.

the Oral tradition formed by the teachings of the Rabbis and the interpretations made about them until today also constitute the Oral Torah<sup>300</sup>.

Rabbani tradition also associates the Torah with the distinctiveness of the Israelites. He emphasizes that although God presented the Torah to all nations, the other nations rejected it, and the Israelites accepted this offer with their courage and assertiveness. The emphasis that the Torah was created for the sake of the Israelites is an extreme interpretation<sup>301</sup>.

### **The Holy Script and Revelation According to Modern Critical Commentary**

As regards the divine nature of Torah, it proves that God reaches to the restricted and mortal Man. Any interpretation of Judaism and Holy Script is unacceptable without accepting the divinity of the Torah<sup>302</sup>.

Baruch de Spinoza (1632-1677) was convicted for reading the banned 'Praedamnitiae', a secular book written by the former Calvinist Isaac La Peyrere who wrote that the Holy Scripture could be criticized. Spinoza was excommunicated and expelled from the nation of Israel. Spinoza directly criticized the invisible problems in Judaism with his analysis of which parts of Pentateukh were written by Moses, the draft of Ezra, the compilation

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<sup>300</sup> Warren Harwey "Torah", Ejd, C. 15, s. 1215.

<sup>301</sup> Baki Adam, Yahudi Kaynaklarına Göre Tevrat, Pınar 2010, İstanbul, s. 80.

<sup>302</sup> David S. Ariel, What Do Jews Believe? Schocken Books, 1995 New York, s. 136.

of the Bible, the origin of Books of Job and Daniel, and the ages of the works<sup>303</sup>.

According to J. Wellhausen's (1844-1918) theory that the Holy Scripture was compiled from different sources, four different sources were found in the first six books, which include the first five books as well as the Yeshu Book, added as it was written in the same style. They are chronologically J (Yahvist), E (Elohist), D (Deuteronomy = Repetition of the Law) and P (Priestly Code = Kohenler's Text)<sup>304</sup>.

Every revelation carries certain limitations and marks in the historical process, but this situation cannot be expected to last forever, because the eternal has not yet been realized, it is being lived in the contemporary. Known for his works such as *Inspiration and Revelation*, *The Cross in the Old Testament* and his work on revelation and non-revelation in the Holy Scripture, H. Wheeler Robinson (1872-1945) says that the Holy Scripture is known to contain errors. While its ancient form is the revelation, today it is known that it does not completely contain the revelation. But to him, the Holy Scriptures maintains the authority by giving messages in every age with human interpretations<sup>305</sup>.

According to H.D. McDonald, known for his work in the field of *Progress Christology*<sup>306</sup>, even if

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<sup>303</sup> Katie Magnus, *Outlines of Jewish History*, London, 1931, s. 243-254.

<sup>304</sup> Baki Adam, "Yahudilik", *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, Editör: Şinasi Gündüz, Ankara 2010, s.223.

<sup>305</sup> H. Wheeler Robinson, *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1946, s.158.

<sup>306</sup> *Progress Christology: Christology in the field of Christian Theology* is about the



acknowledging that the text of the Bible has changed eliminates the continuity of traditional religious codes, it reveals that the Bible is reflected as a more important message than the original. He emphasizes a period when more personalities with less religious abilities (than prophets) began to emerge, who could feel the spirit of God<sup>307</sup>.

Charles Harold Dodd (1874-1973) states that the Bible appears as the religious authority, primarily in our apparent behavior<sup>308</sup>. Here, it is necessary to explain the reason why the change or weakening of religious practices decreases the effectiveness of revelation. It is not possible to understand the apparent dimension of the relationship between the source of revelation and its addressee without relating it to the subject of belief. However, only the changes in the interest in religious practices with a conditional acceptance and without an effect on the belief as well as the implementation of the commandments in the Holy Scripture cannot be explained independently from the general religious debates after modernization<sup>309</sup>.

The notion of "revelation", which means an expression that emerges from a supernatural being and requires the mental consent of the believer, appeared for the first time in the early modern period. For medieval theologians, revelation is connected, above all, to one's

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existence, mission and personality of the Prophet Jesus, while Progress Christology tries to explain the relationship between the historical personality of Jesus and how it is understood today.

<sup>307</sup> McDonald H.D, *Theories of Revelation: An Historical Study 1860-1960*, London: George Allen-Unwin, 1963, s. 256.

<sup>308</sup> Charles Harold Dodd, *The Authority of the Bible*, London, 1928, s. 297.

<sup>309</sup> Dodd, a.g.e, s. 297.

view of deeds in the light of his ultimate goal. Revelation is not just about additional information about 'facts' that cannot be perceived through the mind or not physically observed<sup>310</sup>. The fact that one's mental consent becomes a need is a concrete example of the objectification of religion and the instrumentalization of revelation. Because, it emerges as a period when absolutely rational inquiries about the nature of belief are effectively reflected in institutional discussions.

In 20th century philosophy, the relationship between the theory of knowledge and the processes of acquiring knowledge with sociality is inevitable. The subject of revelation in philosophy overlaps with epistemologically isolated individualism. These explanations should be open to criticism of modernism and enlightenment ideals<sup>311</sup>. The understanding of the epistemological explanation of revelation with an objective approach as religious knowledge has been voiced loudly by Atheism and has been described as rationally unacceptable<sup>312</sup>. Even though the statements of theist thinkers on this issue are intended to prove belief, they are important in terms of their contribution to the development of the subject<sup>313</sup>.

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<sup>310</sup> John Montag, 'Revelation: The False Legacy of Suarez', *Radical Orthodoxy* içinde, J. Milbank, C. Pickstock ve G. Ward, New York: Routledge 1999, s. 43.

<sup>311</sup> Murat Bac, *Epistemoloji*, Anadolu Üniversitesi Açıköğretim Yayınları, Eskişehir 2011, s. 32.

<sup>312</sup> Bac, a.g.e, s. 33.

<sup>313</sup> Bac, a.g.e, s. 33.

### **Louis Jacobs' Views on Revelation**

Louis Jacobs explains his views on Jewish theology in detail, based on how the subject of revelation is understood and what it actually is. In "A Jewish Theology", Louis Jacobs's work evaluates theological views together with traditional and modern views. The 'content of revelation', 'criticism of the Torah' and 'traditional' and 'modern views' in *We Have Reason to Believe*, where Louis Jacobs provides his views on revelation, primarily emphasize the importance of theology in Louis Jacobs' works. Louis Jacobs's analysis and explanations of revelation do not object to the acceptance of divine revelation. However, he regards the existence of non-revelation elements in the text of the Holy Scripture, which he expresses openly starting from "We Have Reason to Believe" , and the reason why these elements cannot be revealed as a fundamental problem.

It is possible to say that Louis Jacobs associates his work on revelation and the Holy Scripture in different fields, which are primarily theology, worship, law, and mystical studies. The existence and continuity of Louis Jacobs' work on the Talmud from the beginning of his academic life to the last stages of his life draws attention. On the other hand, what is striking in Jacobs's studies on Talmud, Jewish law, and mysticism and his translations on these subjects is that the mentioned theological perspective had not changed.

Because Louis Jacobs considers epistemology as a priority within theology. Trying to reveal the influence of non-revelation elements on the Holy Scripture and Jewish

tradition and their place in Talmud studies is an important focus of his work. For this reason, Louis Jacobs bases his studies in the field of Jewish Theology and Law on epistemological questioning, and accordingly, he makes a joint evaluation of the traditional and modern views of revelation.

Judaism believes that the Torah is the explanation of God's will against humanity. According to Jacobs, because God's conversations with Adam and other prophets, that is, the prophets before Sinai, are described in the Torah, the Torah also includes the period before and after Moses<sup>314</sup>.

According to Louis Jacobs, who emphasizes the origin of the word Torah as "teaching", three basic information about Torah in the Rabbani tradition should be addressed first<sup>315</sup>.

- a. The combination of the three parts of the Hebrew Bible text, the Torah, the Prophetic Books, and the Hagiographa Books, is expressed by the term Tanakh. This term is a combination of the first letters of the Torah<sup>316</sup>, Nebiim<sup>317</sup>, and Ketubim<sup>318</sup> (Scriptures).

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<sup>314</sup> Jacobs, *We Have Reason to Believe*, s. 57.

<sup>315</sup> Jacobs, *a.g.e.*, s. 57.

<sup>316</sup> Torah is clearly referred to as written law (sharia) sent to the Children of Israel for the first time in BC 622 I. Kings 2/3, Deut. 29/8, II. Kings.14/6, Deut. 24/16 (Harman, *Text, Content and Sources of the Jewish Scriptures*, p. 28.)

<sup>317</sup> Nebiim: Prophets books consist of two parts. First Prophets: Joshua, Judges, I. and II. Samuel, I. and II. Kings, historical books; Next Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Joel, Hosea, Obadiah, Jonah, Mika, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephania, Haggai, Zakaria, Malachi. Harman, *ibid*, p. 29.

<sup>318</sup> Ketubim (Hagiography): It consists of Psalms, Proverbs of Solomon, Job, Songs

According to the Rabbis, priority is in the Torah, then the Prophets, and then the Hagiographa books. For this reason, the Torah (Pentateuch) in synagogues is hand written on specially prepared parchment in accordance with the strict scripting rules. It is accepted that the Torah was verbally transmitted to Moses by God in Sinai<sup>319</sup>.

- b. The term Torah is sometimes used for the teachings in the Books of Prophets and Hagiografia of the Holy Scripture. Where these teachings contradict the Rabbani laws, it is recognized that they have a higher jurisdiction status than Rabbinic laws. In case of doubt between Torah and Rabbinic laws, the stricter view is taken according to Torah laws. Although it is not found in the Pentateuch, the term 'Torah law' has become a mitzvah 'honoring the Sabbath' in Isaiah (1:13)<sup>320</sup>.
- c. The word Torah is also often used to refer to the whole of the words of the Rabbis, concentrating on the summary of the Jewish religious tradition and the explanations and practices of the Jewish religion. According to Schechter, the Torah acquired a meaning beyond the Holy Scripture<sup>321</sup>.

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of the Songs, Ruth, Proverbs of Jeremiah, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah Books, Chronicles I and II. Harman, *ibid*, p. 30.

<sup>319</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 58.

<sup>320</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s.58.

<sup>321</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s.58.

Louis Jacobs states that the above examples are not specifically among those revealed to Moses in Sinai, but are shaped according to the structure, needs and problems of society. While Louis Jacobs defines the limits of the traditional understanding of revelation, as he explains in 'We Have Reason To Believe', he states that the revelation is not static as the Holy Scripture text was written in the post-Moses period after the revelation given to Moses, and the Torah in today's form was shaped by the Rabbis<sup>322</sup>.

In his work named *Torah Min Hashamayim In Orthodox Theology*,<sup>323</sup> Paul Morris (d.1951) evaluates the views of Louis Jacobs as a Rabbi and the views of Emmanuel Levinas (d.1995) on the divinity of the Torah as a philosopher. According to Morris, Jacobs is a broad-minded Jewish scholar because of the method he followed in his work, because he avoids dogmatism and makes a rational effort against historical and environmental non-revelation elements<sup>324</sup>.

Concerning this issue, Louis Jacobs evaluates the Medieval and Modern-period texts separately. In order to understand the content of the revelation, Jacobs has adopted a research method that cares about the claims of critical studies and the cultural events of the years he lived. Jacobs states that the Ketuvim books, which describe the lives of saints, are more disordered than other

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<sup>322</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s.58.

<sup>323</sup> Paul Morris, *Torah Min Hashamayim In Orthodox Theology, Disputes, Debates And Discourse*, Journal of Modern Jewish Studies Vol 14, No. 1 March 2015, pp. 27-39 ISSN 1472-5886 print/ISSN 1472-5894 online © 2015 Taylor & Francis <http://www.tandfonline.com>

<sup>324</sup> Morris, a.g.m, s. 27-39.

books and do not reflect the Holy Spirit (Ru'ahl-Ha-kodesh) that constitutes the content of the prophetic message<sup>325</sup>.

### Belief in God

The 'God exists' premise shows the epistemological difference between “to know” and “to believe”. However, the views of Robert Audi (d.1941) draw attention regarding the existence of God, along with the Ontological Proof<sup>326</sup> of Saint Anselm (1033-1109) and the Cosmological Proof<sup>327</sup> of Saint Aquinas (1225-1274). According to Audi, we do not have an epistemological criterion for understanding whether the experience of encountering God's existence is an illusion. The encounter with God and the experience of His existence are untestable knowledge, as is the experience of encountering a real fountain<sup>328</sup>.

According to Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), the experience of God and the fact that the infinite cannot be known from the finite side caused the Prophet Abraham to face a situation which is epistemologically defined as murder because of an order that exceeded his knowledge. To Kierkegaard, who named the choice of the Prophet

<sup>325</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Theology, s. 199.

<sup>326</sup> Ontological Proof: It is the argument that theism accepts the existence of God, the highest and insurmountable features. Michael Peterson, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach, David Basinger, Philosophy of Religion, The Globe, 2013, p.841.

<sup>327</sup> Cosmological Proof: It is the argument established in favor of the existence of God, based on the need to explain the existence of conditional beings or the realm in the best way. M. Peterson, W. Hasker, B. Reichenbach, D. Basinger, ibid., p. 840.

<sup>328</sup> Bac Murat, Epistemoloji, Anadolu Üniversitesi, Açıköğretim Yayınları, Eskişehir, s.232. Audi, Robert, Epistemology: A Contemporary Introduction to the Theory of Knowledge, New York, Routledge, 1980.

Abraham as the leap of faith, the forgiveness of the son was the result of the father's unwavering faith. Epistemologically, this event and its consequence do not provide a solution to explain the existence of God<sup>329</sup>.

The understanding of God in the Jewish tradition is associated with the understanding of revelation. There is no detailed information about the appearance of the God in the narrations that God showed himself to the Prophet Abraham<sup>330</sup>. However, although the "revealed" has priority in the narrations, the expression of the Prophet Abraham is included in the "vision of God" due to the factual aspect of the revelation that requires more explanation.

'However, I can't let you see my face. Because the one who sees my face cannot live. " (Exodus 33:20) According to Louis Jacobs, God's statements and orders have priority here. Then, His manifestation can be understood and become important in human life<sup>331</sup>. *"And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."* (Exodus, 4:10). According to Louis Jacobs, the difficulty of talking about God's words and God is due to the finite nature of the human mind.

Louis Jacobs states that, in Judaism, both the anthropomorphic understanding of God and the view that

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<sup>329</sup> Bac, a.g.e, s. 233.

<sup>330</sup> Genesis, 17/1

<sup>331</sup> Edward Lipinsk, Jacob Jashua Ross, "Revelation", Ejd, C. 14, p. 117.



God has no human characteristics are excessive, while his view has more theistic character<sup>332</sup>.

According to Heschel; "God and man should be accepted as the two basic realities of the concept of religion. In addition, in order to grasp the reality of religious life, all communication and encounters between God and man must be studied." Heschel does not make God's existence a subject of examination but states that a person grasps the existence of God by thinking about the purpose of creation<sup>333</sup>.

It is seen that the debate in the text of the Holy Scripture about the fact that God is an invisible being and whether seeing him is the cause of death is associated not with the nature of God, but with the central position of man in its relationship with God<sup>334</sup>. God is the one who makes promises to man, heralds the son, sends his man to inform the Israelites of his will, explains what should not be done, accepts the burnt offering<sup>335</sup>. However, the fact that all of these took place in line with the conditions and needs of an Israeli family is an example of the parts of the Bible related to the human-centered aspect.

In order to prevent anthropomorphic interpretations in the Hellenistic period, , as in the text "*He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.*" (Joshua, 4:24), they added that phares

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<sup>332</sup> Jacobs, We Have Reason To Believe, p. 22.

<sup>333</sup> Abraham Joshua Heschel, Man is Not Alone, p. 22.

<sup>334</sup> Book of Judges (13:22/23)

<sup>335</sup> Book of Judges (13: 1-25)

“yad”, e.g. “hand” in Hebrew means “power and might”, which are attributed to God. The section *“Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up 10 and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of lapis lazuli, as bright blue as the sky.”* (Exodus, 24:9-

10) is transformed as *“they saw where the God of Israel stands”* in the Septuagint translation which Philo prefers<sup>336</sup>. In terms of the intensity of the main debates about Judaism, the Middle Ages represent a period when explanations not associated with the Messiah were not so popular. By expressing the society loyal to Christ in the last chapter of the Mishneh Torah, Maimonides puts: *“The law will be based on solid foundations, intelligent people will be free to learn the Law and its knowledge, there will be no hunger and war and hate and competition in those days, and there will be no effort other than obtaining God's knowledge on earth”*. According to Maimonides, this society could be the Messianic society. The formation of an elite class that would emerge from the spread of the teaching of the law was necessary to create the Messianic society.

Maimonides attempted to narrow the irrational beliefs by placing emphasis on the logic-mind relationship. It is possible to say that Maimonides took the idea of the reconciliation of reason and revelation from the

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<sup>336</sup> Dursun Ali Aykıt, ‘İskenderiyeli Philo’, *Doğudan Batıya Düşüncenin Serüveni*, Edt. Bayram Ali Çetinkaya, C. İnsan 2015, C.1, s. 395-420. Harry M. Orlinsky, *The Septuagint and its Hebrew Text*, The Cambridge of Judaism, II, Cambridge, 1989.

views of Islam, especially Mu'tezile school<sup>337</sup>. A great majority of the thirteen belief principles that Maimonides defined as the main principles are related to God, which include the existence and unity of God, the pre-eternal and eternal existence of God, that there is nobody to worship but God who does not have a partner and sent Torah, that God would not send law other than Torah, that God knows everything about human and that the date of resurrection would be determined by God.

Maimonides influenced Spinoza with his theological approach that a relationship similar to the relationship between 'human' and 'reason' should exist between 'God' and 'nature'<sup>338</sup>. Spinoza's thought that "the relationship that exists between things is also valid between abstract concepts"<sup>339</sup> makes Spinoza move away from the dualist understanding of God<sup>340</sup>.

### God-Universe Relationship

The conventional theism rejects pantheism and deism. Pantheism is more concerned with the omnipresence of God rather than his transcendence. According to conventional theism, God is both a transcendent and omnipresent entity. Deism advocates the idea that God is completely outside the universe. It is questionable whether God is beyond or outside the

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<sup>337</sup> Katz, a.g.e, s.72.

<sup>338</sup> Katz, a.g.e, s. 143.

<sup>339</sup> Spinoza, 2nd Proposition, For 8th Section: Spinoza, Çetin Balanuye, Say, İstanbul 2010, s.106-108.

<sup>340</sup> Katz, a.g.e, s. 144.

universe. For a theist, God is everything beyond the universe. If there is a place where the universe does not exist, God is there.

Judaism is monotheistic and rejects dualist systems. It has been accepted as fundamental in traditional Jewish belief that God is abstract and supernatural, and different from man. Belief in God creates a judgement. The Ten Commandments<sup>341</sup> regulate man's relations with God and relationship among people. According to Louis Jacobs, it is possible to see many different perspectives of humans in explanations regarding the concept of God<sup>342</sup>.

Contemporary experts working on the Holy Scripture state that the final parts of the Exodus were scribed by the Clergy at the end of a long process. It can be said that the Exodus is based on imagination, but based on early material. Because it is based on the thought that God lives in houses, tents used as temples or just in temples. But the combination of monotheism with the concept of the house of God in the Holy Scripture creates an interesting paradox. According to Louis Jacobs, problems like God's transcendent and omnipresence as well as God's house and closeness were noticed by Rabbi Torah scribes<sup>343</sup>.

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<sup>341</sup> Exodus 20: 2-17, Deut. 5: 6-21.

<sup>342</sup> Jacobs, *We Have Reason To Believe*, s.13.

<sup>343</sup> Jacobs, *A Jewish Teoloji*, s. 61.

### God as a Transcendent Being

The passage of Jacob's Dream<sup>344</sup> is among the narratives of God's transcendental being. Louis Jacobs expresses his views on the transcendence and omnipresence of God in Joshua Abelson's book "The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature"<sup>345</sup>. In is assessed in the passage of Yakub's dream, the metaphor of 'angels descending the ladder, 'God's saying to Jacob I will always be beside you', 'God's house ', 'The gate of the skies,' the stone on which Jacob lies is the house of God', 'to reconcile with God to give the one tenth of everything'. In the communication of transcendental God with Jacobs, the statements on the transcendental being of God and His behavior against Jacobs are not contradictory with each other<sup>346</sup>.

In the passage of the Dream of Jacobs, it is not sufficient to evaluate the issues of how man communicates with God as transcendent being, that God is with Jacobs, and Jacobs sees tithing to God as a result of the fulfillment of his earthly needs only in terms of individual religious experience. This is because Jacob should make the dialogue as a continuation of his predecessor Abraham and Isaac's relationship with God for the provision of basic needs, including food, shelter and security, which are valid for all people other than Jacobs.

Maimonides' views on the principles of belief were widely adopted by his successors, Nahmanides (d.1270),

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<sup>344</sup> Genesis; 28.10-22.

<sup>345</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Teoloji, s. 60.

<sup>346</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 60.

Josef Albo (d.1444) and Isaac Arama (d.1494), while the importance of three basic items is more evident: belief in God, acceptance of creation and acceptance of God's will.

In this case, we come across the necessity of preserving the dimension of belief in the shaping of religion despite everything. Because, as has been experienced many times, the channeling of social tendencies into Messianic society can turn into perverse tendencies if the dimension of belief is neglected. While material welfare ensured an ordered education and the spread of the teaching of the Torah, Mishnah, and Halaha, the periods of economic distress and social catastrophe spread the superstitions that children learned from their mothers and expand with their imagination.

Religion and family bonds are intertwined in Deborah's Song. Louis Jacobs states that he finds the text of Deborah's Song as sincere and important. To him, service to Israel and God is identified in this section while the Book of Judges, although childish, is valuable for constitutional developments and social order. According to Louis Jacobs, this chapter is identified with the enthusiasm and naturality of Jewish culture<sup>347</sup>.

Lappidot's wife Deborah, who is referred to in the Book of Judges as the only female prophet sent to the Israelites, is consulted about legal matters.

"When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior". "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but if the Lord is with us,

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<sup>347</sup> Jacobs, *A Jew Judges*, 4, 4-6.ish Theology, s. 63.

why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said,

‘Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.” The Lord turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian’s hand. Am I not sending you?” “Pardon me, my lord,” Gideon replied, “but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.” The Lord answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive.”<sup>348</sup>

This section includes the questioning of catastrophes despite God being with Israelites as well as the adverse consequences of not fulfilling the wishes of God referring to impotence. It is noteworthy that the Israelites sheltered God in their distress, and the Lord ordered the death of Midianis, who worshipped another God<sup>349</sup> to get rid of this situation.

More understandably with the transcendent existence of God, the statement in the ten commandments that ‘thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain’<sup>350</sup> is a frequently repeated and

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<sup>348</sup> Judges, 6, 12-16.

<sup>349</sup> Judges, 6, 7-10: ‘When the Israelites cried out to the Lord because of Midian, he sent them a prophet, who said, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians. And I delivered you from the hand of all your oppressors; I drove them out before you and gave you their land. I said to you, ‘I am the Lord your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.’ But you have not listened to me.”’

<sup>350</sup> Exodus, 20:7.

established principle. That is why, instead of 'Yhwh', which is the most sacred name of God called 'tetragrammaton', many different names are used for God in Judaism such as 'Adonay' (sir, lord), 'el elyon' (supreme god), 'ha-kadoš baruh hu' (lord of the universe) for God in Judaism. Many different names are used, such as 'shechinah' (existence of divinity).<sup>351</sup>

It is even stated that it is a historical mistake to pronounce the name of God after the destruction of the Temple, which constitutes an important turning point<sup>352</sup>. The Holocaust brought a contemporary interpretation with the principle of God's omnipresence, apart from the ideas that God is the savior and with the Jews and the revelation is historical.<sup>353</sup>

### **God the Creator, Revealing, and Powerful**

It is God who created the heavens, earth, light, stars, living beings and animals<sup>354</sup>. God is the Creator of humans in his own image, male and female<sup>355</sup>. He is the Creator of Adam and the birds from the soil<sup>356</sup>, the nation and nations.<sup>358</sup> God creates miracles<sup>357</sup>, heart to people<sup>358</sup>,

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<sup>351</sup> Harman, 'Yahudilik', DĠA, C. 43, s. 204.

<sup>352</sup> Steven T. Katz, *Jewish Philosophers*, s. 225.

<sup>353</sup> Richard L. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*, The John Hopkins University Press, 1966 London, s. 178.

<sup>354</sup> Genesis, 1:1-25.

<sup>355</sup> Genesis, 1:27.

<sup>356</sup> Genesis, 2:7, 2:19

<sup>357</sup> Genesis, 21:13, Deut. 26:1.

<sup>358</sup> Joshua, 3:5, 24:17.



and strife among people<sup>359</sup>. God is the entity that tells man what to do<sup>360</sup>, to the Israelites through Moses,<sup>361</sup> to Moses on Mount Sinai for the people of Israel<sup>362</sup>. God asked Abraham to abide by his covenant and heralded the proliferation of his lineage: "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, 'I am God Almighty'".<sup>363</sup> Following the meeting of Prophet Joseph with his brothers, Jacobs says in the words of Israel: "And may God Almighty grant you mercy before the man so that he will let your other brother and Benjamin come back with you. But if I must lose my children, so be it."<sup>364</sup> The above examples are examples of expressions of the glory and power of the Almighty Creator as well as the bond between man and God. These examples include the reciprocal relationship between man and God, God's promise, the covenants between God and His prophets, and God's compassion as well as his power.

The Sadducees actively solved the problem of the Jewish rules of legal proceeding and the final form of the Law. They were able to do this because they had a say in the administration of the Temple. They led to the formation of the Jewish Clergy. They did not accept anything that was not in the written Torah. They emphasized that Jewish theology has a rational and simple nature. The activities of the Saddukis were a

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<sup>359</sup> Psalms, 33:15, 51, 10.

<sup>360</sup> Proverbs, 6:14, 6:19.

<sup>361</sup> Genesis, 41:25, Deut 11:22.

<sup>362</sup> Exodus, 2:3, 21:1, Deut. 5:19, Leviticus, 10:11

<sup>363</sup> Leviticus, 27:34.

<sup>364</sup> Genesis, 17:1.

reflection of the relationship of the Jews with Rome, which prevented common people from commenting on religion with the formation of the aristocratic religious class. Their influence decreased with the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD by the Romans<sup>365</sup>.

### **Belief in God in Judaism According to Louis Jacobs**

Louis Jacobs sees the anthropomorphic explanation of God as the primary problem of Jewish tradition. In classical Judaism, the way man can speak to the almighty God is to associate Him with human properties. Quoting Schelter "Judaism never rebelled against God by attributing human properties to God; it only gave Godly properties to Human", Louis Jacobs says that the supremacy of human by speaking to God could be possible by attributing God human characteristics.<sup>366</sup> Here, Louis Jacobs points out that the man does not have divine qualities in perfect terms, but it should be understood that man owns "as possible" (kebbeyakbol) divine qualities<sup>367</sup>.

According to Louis Jacobs, God knows everything about all the people he created<sup>368</sup>, including all of their needs; he is benevolent, compassionate towards his creations<sup>369</sup>, approaches with goodness for the virtuous

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<sup>365</sup> Genesis, 43:14, 49:25, Exodus, 6:3.

<sup>366</sup> Harman, 'Yahudilik', DÍA, s. 213.

<sup>367</sup> Jacobs, We Have Reason To Believe, s.14.

<sup>368</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s.15.

<sup>369</sup> Joshua, 22:22

behavior of his creations, and still with love towards their spoiled behaviours and sins<sup>370</sup>. It is also in the Bible that God emphasizes the familial connection or nation bond of God by saying "I am the God of your father"<sup>371, 372</sup>.

Referring to Palestinian Rabbi Johanan, who stated that being able to internalize a narrative of the greatness of God anywhere in the Holy Scripture is related to God's humility (Isaiah 57:15), Louis Jacobs notes that knowledge of God with the limits in human relationship reflects the immanence of God<sup>373</sup>.

### **LOUIS JACOBS' VIEW ON THE EFFECT OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE ON THE FORMATION OF JEWISH ETHICS**

To Louis Jacobs, it should be understood that the mitzvot (orders) in the Torah are of God or human origin. Evaluating this subject in a separate chapter in his work *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, Jacobs interprets the determination of mitzvahs by man or God. Louis Jacobs describes this debate as an ethical debate and justifies why he considers it an ethical problem.

### **Chosenness**

In the Jewish literature, the concept of "chosenness" is generally interpreted as an extension of the covenant

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<sup>370</sup> Exodus, 18:4

<sup>371</sup> Jacobs, *We Have Reason To Believe*, p.13, Exodus 34:6/7

<sup>372</sup> Exodus, 46:3 ,49:25,

<sup>373</sup> Jacobs, *A Jewish Teoloji*, p.13

between God and man. "But the conditions that affect a wide generation, from the concept of chosen race to the liberal understanding of Reformist Judaism, have been completely shaped according to the historical conjuncture. Moreover, the concept of chosen race is also a phenomenon that occurred as a result of a series of historical events related to diasporas. Although the concept of "chosenness", which is critical in this respect, has a racial nature in the Kabbalah tradition, it is interpreted as superiority in terms of piety in some of the Rabbinic traditions. On the other hand, it has no value or determinative role in reformist and reconstructionist circles. However, there is no doubt that the understanding of the "chosen people" is the most important factor affecting the view of jews towards others. The intertwined history and conjuncture at every stage of Judaism's history leads us to deal with the "chosenness" idea in the same context. In this case, although it may seem paradoxical, it is possible to say that the idea of "chosenness" is the result of Judaism's view of other religions rather than a cause. Or, in other words, the idea of "chosenness" is a phenomenon formulated as a result of the relationship with the gentiles'.<sup>374</sup>

According to Spinoza, it is necessary to understand why God named the Israelites as a "distinguished" society.<sup>375</sup> Spinoza refers to the Torah while explaining this issue: According to the Torah, God, who appeared to

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<sup>374</sup> Jacobs, *A Jewish Teoloji*, p. 60.

<sup>375</sup> Kürşat Demirci, *Yahudilik ve Dini Çoğulculuk*, *Ayışığı Kitapları*, İstanbul 2005, s. 26.

Moses in fire and revealed the ten commandments,<sup>376</sup> accepts the Israelites as the addressee with his orders,<sup>377</sup> which proves the love of God towards Israelites and makes them superior over other societies<sup>378</sup>. According to Spinoza, the reason why Jews are superior to other communities is not related to the inferiority of other nations or Jews' advanced philosophical knowledge<sup>379</sup>.

*"You shall therefore keep all my statutes and all my rules and do them, that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out. And you shall not walk in the customs of the nation that I am driving out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I detested them. But I have said to you, 'You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey.' I am the Lord your God, who has separated you from the peoples. You shall therefore separate the clean beast from the unclean, and the unclean bird from the clean. You shall not make yourselves detestable by beast or by bird or by anything with which the ground crawls, which I have set apart for you to hold unclean. You shall be holy to me, for I the Lord am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine."*<sup>380</sup> This passage includes multidimensional promises, orders and reasons including the holiness of God, God's view of the Israelites in a more special position than other communities, giving the Palestinian lands for the Israelites as a property, the prohibition of eating unclean animals.

<sup>376</sup> Baruch Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* ya da Tanrıbilimsel Politik İnceleme, Çev, Betül Ertuğrul, Biblos, 2008 Bursa, s. 65.

<sup>377</sup> Deut. 10:15

<sup>378</sup> Deut. 4:7/8.

<sup>379</sup> Deut. 4:32

<sup>380</sup> Baruch Spinoza, Biblos, a.g.e, s. 65.

Spinoza discusses this issue in "A Theologico-Political Treatise" and states that "the feeling of being superior in every human being and his desire to be more valuable than others is reflected in the texts".<sup>381</sup> Because God spoke to Moses in a way that the man would understand. If miracles are shown to the public, God's message must be understood universally. However, the notion of being chosen has been misinterpreted. It led to an understanding of not believing in or accepting God, but made them declare that God was on their side<sup>382</sup>.

To Dan Jacobsan, in the Exodus, God Yahweh promises a distinguished society so as not to leave any doubt about the Israelites' own greatness and might. *'He has declared that he will set you in praise, fame and honor high above all the nations he has made and that you will be a people holy to the Lord your God, as he promised'*.<sup>383</sup> Here, while God used a clear expression in promising superiority to Israel, he tied his intentions to certain behaviors and conditions<sup>384</sup>.

Trying to prove that Judaism can be universal, like the early Hellenistic Jews, Herod tried to eliminate the nationalist side of Judaism and emerged as an important personality in this respect. Although Herod was Jewish and had religious murders, he was a ruler who received Roman support, eliminated the effectiveness of the Hasmonian state and adopted a secular attitude, therefore judging and executing high-ranking clergy in Sanhedrin.

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<sup>381</sup> Leviticus 20:22-26

<sup>382</sup> Spinoza, a.g.e, s. 67.

<sup>383</sup> Spinoza, a.g.e, s. 67.

<sup>384</sup> Deut., 26:19.

Herod took the Prophet of Solomon as a model and increased material welfare.

This period is noteworthy concerning secular practices, acceptance of economy as a constituent instrument of life and protection of diaspora Jews. Although Herod's construction of Jerusalem is important in terms of both its symbolic and practical value, it is more meaningful to accept it as complementary to the above-mentioned developments.

### **Problem of Evil**

Torah often depicts God as a 'good entity'. But the words of God that 'I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things' (Isaiah 45/7) gives information about the God that is the creator of good and bad. All Holy Scripture writers have written commentaries on God's goodness. The word "tov", expressing that God is good, has been repeated in many places<sup>385</sup>.

According to theistic belief;

1. God is all good.
2. Evil is real.
3. God has infinite power.

These successive 1st, 2nd and 3rd propositions seem to contradict each other. It is not very difficult to come to the idea that God is not entirely "good".

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<sup>385</sup> Don Jakobson, *The Story of The Stories: The Chosen People and its God*, London 1982, s. 42-46.

Concerning the problem of belief that arises here, Louis Jacobs cares about the explanations of Abraham ben David. According to Abraham ben David (d. 1198), we assume with our reason that God cannot create evil and we confirm this argument on the basis of the Bible and Jewish tradition. Based on reason, God is completely good. While good and evil coexist in the nature of man, this is not valid for God. It is not evil that God did not create an elephant in Spain even if it represents an absence. Imposing God to create something conflicts with being God. He does not create evil. Man calls this evil since God creates the good in relative terms. For example, rather than the expression that "God created a blind man" one should prefer "the person whom God has not given light" as a more appropriate explanation<sup>386</sup>.

The question "Why does God punish the righteous?" in the Book of Job has an important place in the history of thought<sup>387</sup>. The Lord let the devil harm his body without taking his life. The sensitivity of Job in order not to oppose the Lord in this troubled situation is described in the form of conversations. It is explained that there are two orders in nature: physical and moral order; it is not enough for man to only understand physical order as the man must also understand and obey the moral order. The questioning of Job's distress and trial in the

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<sup>386</sup> You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you. (Psalm: 86- 5); Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. (Psalm: 25- 8); Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations. (Psalm 100-4.5)

<sup>387</sup> Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology*, s.127.



Bible also focuses on the relationship between God and man within a personal experience.

According to the Kabbalist thought, the “evil” can have a positive effect:

*So fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. Moses then said to Aaron, “This is what the Lord spoke of when he said:*

*“‘Among those who approach me I will be proved holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored.’”*

*Aaron remained silent. (Leviticus 10:2-3)*

To Louis Jacobs, this chapter is the departure and destination points of theology. Jacobs describes this chapter as a frequently used narration used emotionally, sociologically, and theologically to state that the problem of evil cannot be settled without belief<sup>388</sup>.

On Holocaust, John Hick (d. 2012), who was a christian, also discusses this issue in his work named "Evil and God of Love", in addition to Jewish thinkers such as Richard Rubenstein, Emil Fackenheim, Ignaz Maybaum, Eliezer Berkovits.

The problem of evil is improper (unprovable) in terms of religion. Because man is concerned with the fairness of God. However, our judgments about evil create a problem with the concept of justice. The problem that God has allowed evil can be solved with a dogmatic approach<sup>389</sup>. John Hick’s arguments had been defended by

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<sup>388</sup> Job, 1:1-21

<sup>389</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Theology, s. 132.

Augustine (354-430) earlier in the 5th century. It emphasizes the problem that man was created in a way that is suitable for doing evil and that he must struggle to do good. The concept of God's goodness has been discussed in very early times and in modern times.

Louis Jacobs refers to the views of John Hick as to why God allows human suffering. Hick rejects the reasons that God aims at making the man realize his abilities and blessings already given by God. Instead, he uses the concept of "mystery" in this regard. To Hick, there is no clear answer to the question as to why God created a world where man could choose evil and why he caused some suffering. Rolan Puccetti argues that the concept of "mystery" is not enough to solve the problem, on the contrary, it makes the problem unsolvable. However, Hick even refers to the fact that God is seen as the 'King' in the Holy Scripture<sup>390</sup>. According to John Hick, we can only find a tiny light in a dense darkness to believe in God. He argues that faith in God is not rejected in holy Scripture language, but it is more difficult to distinguish between accepting and rejecting God. In this respect, Hasidism argues that God should remain secret and hidden for many years<sup>391</sup>.

### **Freedom**

The fresh ideas formed by phenomenological explanations of the concepts of 'God' and 'creator of

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<sup>390</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 133.

<sup>391</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 134.

everything' that emerged with the rise of modern sciences has spread the idea that all existence can be explained by the laws of nature without divine bonds. The God-nature relationship is thought to be the relationship between the inventor of the machine and the machine itself.

Judaism accepts the omnipresence of God in the universe and depicts God as the whole of the universe. This approach does not allow the world to exist as a system and human beings to act completely freely. It was accepted that God reatreated and allowed defects and evil, while the evil inclination was the result of human freedom. Although there are different reactions to the problem of evil, 'A Jewish person always bears the responsibility not only to do good, but also to prevent evil.'<sup>392</sup>

Most of the thinkers on religion agree on *deus absconditus*, e.g. God is unknowable. Two of the examples in this regard are Joseph Albo (d.1344) who says 'If I knew Him, I would be Him' and Abraham Bedersi (1270-1340) who says "Everything we know is God, and everything we do not know is also God". While following the traces of the idea of *deus absconditus*, Louis Jacobs refers also to Saadia Gaon<sup>393</sup> and Maimonides.

Although there are many explanations and examples of the *deus absconditus*, the quintessential theological explanation is in the Holy Scripture: "And he

<sup>392</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Theology, s. 135.

<sup>393</sup> Reuven Firestone, Yahudiliği Anlamak, Çev. Çağlayan Erendag-Levent Kartal, Gözlem, İstanbul 2004. s.88 Levililer 19:17.

said, You can not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live." (Exodus. 33/20).

The shema prayer that 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you will love God's Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength' (Deuteronomy, 6/4) is a major Monotheist expression. The rejection of polytheism as in "the Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and his name the only name (Zechariah 14/9)", is described in two ways: the indivisibility and unity of God's power is made with the emphasis on Echad in Tanakh<sup>394</sup>. God is one, unlike any other. He is the Master of all things, cannot be considered in the same context as the other Gods. The second expression is that God is unique and unlike any other. God is different from all other beings that man calls God. "'To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?' (Isaiah 40:25) says the Holy One".<sup>395</sup>

Louis Jacobs criticizes that modern Jewish thinkers Hermann Cohen, Leo Baeck, Martin Buber and their contemporaries do not give enough importance to pre-modern Jewish scholars<sup>396</sup>. He states that in "A Jewish Theology" he frequently refers to the Modern Jew. According to Louis Jacobs, many Jews see the conflict between traditional formulas and the reflection of new knowledge and egalitarian institutions.

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<sup>394</sup> Muhammed Ali Bağır, Saadia Gaon'un Hayatı ve Arapça Tevrat Tercümesi, Türkoloji Araştırmaları, C. X. S.1, İstanbul, 2015, s.121-148.

<sup>395</sup> Deut. 6:4.

<sup>396</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Theology, s. 21.

Despite *deus absconditus*, is it possible to completely describe God? Addressing this problem, Louis Jacobs discusses what it would be like to know "God" by referring to the ideas of medieval Jewish thinkers and expresses the view that God is closer to us than our breath, our hands and feet<sup>397</sup>.

In the passage "*You saw no form of any kind the day the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire. Therefore watch yourselves very carefully*" (Deuteronomy, 4:15), we see the influence of New-Platonism on the Holy Scripture. Louis Jacobs, with his comments in Saadia Gaon's "Beliefs and Opinion", states that the below passage is as important as a puzzle piece in the history of the interpretation of the Bible. "Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory." And the Lord said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." Then the Lord said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen." (Exodus/18-33)

The concepts that "Moses wished to see God", "God's face", "God's behind" should be dwelled on. Saadia Gaon strives to solve the problem of "seeing God". While he treats the issue of "being seen" as a literal

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<sup>397</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 8.

problem, he states that God's showing himself to his prophet is a special light, and this situation represents God's dazzling splendor. It follows from here that it is not possible for any person and by any means to see God<sup>398</sup>.

Louis Jacobs refers to Alexandar Altman's statements in 'Saadia Gaon's Beliefs and Opinion' about how medieval Jewish thinkers influenced Saadia Gaon<sup>399</sup>. In Moses' desire to see God, there is a desire to gain knowledge of how God performed the act of creation. Seeing God's face was a valuable desire to know the differences between God and an ordinary human being who can't create. But God expressed that man cannot see God's face with the phrase "look your behind", considering that it is impossible for a human to look behind himself. This statement, that is, the impossibility of Moses' will, is important because it expresses the concept of *deus absconditus* textually.

The knowledge of God through negativity in Jewish thought is consistent with the medieval Neo-Platonic philosophy that little can be said about God. The most important principle to be said about God is the principle of his unity and that everything was created by him. What Platinus expresses with the concept of "one" is not quantity or quality, but an essence beyond the one being<sup>400</sup>. Louis Jacobs describes this view of Platinus as the beginning of a systematic explanation about God<sup>401</sup>.

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<sup>398</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 37.

<sup>399</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Theology, 48.

<sup>400</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 47.

<sup>401</sup> Karl Vorlander, Felsefe Tarihi, Çev. Mehmet İzzet-Orhan Saadeddin, İstanbul 2004, İz, s. 216.

The Rabbani tradition, which interprets the Talmud, interpreted philosophical thought and belief in an original way. God is compared to the spirit. God fills the world, the soul fills the body. God sees but is not seen. Spirit also sees, but is not seen. God maintains the world, and the soul ensures the continuity of the body. God is pure; the soul is also pure. God is innermost where he is. Spirit is innermost where it is<sup>402</sup>. There are many passages in the Bible concerning the idea of the transcendent God described here.

The passage in the Book of Genesis, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness"*<sup>403</sup> express that God created the world, the sky and the beings that will inhabit them.

In the following section and in many sections where similar expressions are mentioned, God's transcendence is compared with concepts such as earth, mountain, sea, human, and purgatory; and Holy Scripture texts on the internalization of the belief in God are examined:

*Do you not know?*

*Have you not heard?*

*Has it not been told to you from the beginning?*

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<sup>402</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s.44.

<sup>403</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 57.

*Have you not understood since the earth was founded?*

*He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers.*

*He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.*

*He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.*

*No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. "To whom will you compare me?*

*Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens:*

*Who created all these?*

*He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name.*

*Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing<sup>404</sup>.*

After listing the transcendental narratives in the Holy Scripture, Louis Jacobs states that these narratives have been developed over time by its scribes and that he cares about various narrative differences<sup>405</sup>.

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<sup>404</sup> Genesis 1:1-4.

<sup>405</sup> Isaiah 40:21-26. Also, 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.' , 55:8-9, "Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty? They are higher than the heavens above—what can you do? They are deeper than the depths below—what can you know? Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea.' Job, 11:7-9, 'Look up at the heavens and see; gaze at the clouds so high above you. If you sin, how does that affect him? If you



According to Jacobs, although the Holy Scripture does not purely cover philosophical teachings, it is unthinkable that philosophical interpretations of transcendence and omnipresence are far from the main idea of the Holy Scripture. Even though God's transcendence and omnipresence is a philosophical method of expression, the lack of this idea has resulted in the depiction of God as king or father.

Texts stating that God is intertwined with the universe, contrary to the anthropomorphic idea of God, are also included in the Holy Scripture to an undeniable extent:

*"Where can I go from your Spirit?*

*Where can I flee from your presence?*

*If I go up to the heavens, you are there;*

*if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.*

*If I rise on the wings of the dawn,*

*if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand  
will guide me,*

*your right hand will hold me fast.*

*If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light  
become night around me,"*

*even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will  
shine like the day,*

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sins are many, what does that do to him? If you are righteous, what do you give to him, or what does he receive from your hand?"

*for darkness is as light to you.*<sup>406</sup>

These expressions in the Psalms express that God is everywhere at the same time. God is the creator. God created everything. God is present in every being he creates. God is present at the same time in every being he creates. The explicit expression of belief in God by rejecting deism with a theistic emphasis in the Holy Scripture is also reflected in Talmudic passages. In the third century, the Palestinian Rabbi Johanan states that being able to internalize a narrative of the greatness of God anywhere in the Holy Scripture is related to one's own smallness<sup>407</sup>.

God commands in the ten commandments in Exodus 20:4 regarding himself : "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. While the Yahwist text<sup>408</sup> depicts God with hand and arm, who talks and becomes angry, the Elohist text<sup>409</sup> emphasizes a "transcendent" God. On the other hand, in the Books of Prophets such as Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah, a universal understanding of God and the universal dimension of the beliefs of the Israelites draw attention<sup>410</sup>.

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<sup>406</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Teoloji. s. 59.

<sup>407</sup> Psalms 139: 7-12

<sup>408</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Teoloji, s. 2.

<sup>409</sup> Yahwist text: It contains the monotheistic belief narrative of the Torah. The omnipotent God is depicted with anthropomorphic elements. He is the national God of the Israelites. This text also draws attention with its strong expression, a synthesizing language and expressions about women's psychology. See: Ömer Faruk Harman, Metin, Muhteva ve Kaynak Açısından Yahudi Kutsal Kitapları, s. 90-92.

<sup>410</sup> Elohist text: It is found in chapters after the 15th Section in Genesis. There is intensity in the subject of the covenant between God and the Israelites and in the

According to Judah Halevi, the Jewish principles of faith can be explained by miracles and traditions. Halevi avoids rational understanding. The source and evidence of faith are the miracles experienced by the Israelites. Being among the medieval thinkers influencing Louis Jacobs, Judah Halevi summarizes his understanding of faith as follows: 'I believe in the Lord of Abraham, Isaac and Israel that he took the Israelites out of Egypt by miracle. Our belief is included in the Torah. I believe that God's Kingdom, his eternity, that he sent the Torah, his discretion and the evidence of all this is the exodus from Egypt.'<sup>411</sup>

Spinoza distinguishes the Holy Scripture scribes as educated and ordinary people. He states that educated people preserve the meaning while changing their sentence structures. He states that there are expressions that can be called absurd and can change the meaning in some books, especially in the Book of Judges. To him, it is necessary to read and interpret them by considering that they are in different categories such as imaginary, funny, social-political and religious<sup>412</sup>.

Hebrew chief priests have the right to interpret the Bible. This includes the right, in the name of the Bible, to declare heretics and blasphemy and to impose sanctions on them<sup>413</sup>. We see that Spinoza exemplifies this idea from

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moral expression of the Israelites' mistakes. There are no anthropomorphic elements about God. With a simple expression, it is a text that reflects the post-monarchy hope of the people after the destruction of the dynasties of David and Solomon in the 9th century BC at the earliest.

<sup>411</sup> Harman, "Yahudilik", DİA, C. 43, s. 201-206.

<sup>412</sup> Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology*, s.178.

<sup>413</sup> Benedict De Spinoza, *Teolojik-Politik İnceleme*, Çev. Musa Kazım Arıcan, 2011

the Holy Scripture, such as Deuteronomy; 27: 11-12, Deuteronomy; 33:10, Malachi; 2: 8. It shows that the authority of Moses and restrictions such as the peace of the people and the survival of the country constitute public and private rights. As Hegel reiterates, Spinoza is not open to the influence of religion itself or any variable other than God, which does not constitute a law<sup>414</sup>.

Because it is thought that the idea of God sitting in houses provides the continuity of the idea that he lives in a tent (temple). But the combination of biblical monotheism with the concept of the house of God creates an interesting paradox. With the transcendent and omnipresence feature of God, it is seen that problems such as God's house and closeness must be overcome<sup>415</sup>. Divine presence of God and its existence as a being in a place, another issue emphasized by the Rabbis, appears more clearly in Abelson's studies. Rabbis compares Shekina with light<sup>416</sup>.

'Come and see how Israel is doing without God's help! Shekina is with them wherever they go. Shekina was with them when they were exiled from Egypt; Shekina was with them in Babylon. In the future, Shekina will be with them as well. When Israel is saved and forgiven, Shekina will be with them. This passage in 'Midrash'<sup>417</sup> means to be enlightened in Shekinah in Kabbalah. Just as the gathering tent is filled with the light of the Divine

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TDV, Ankara, p. 131.

<sup>414</sup> Spinoza, a.g.e, p. 136.

<sup>415</sup> Spinoza, a.g.e, p. 142.

<sup>416</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Teoloji, p. 61.

<sup>417</sup> 'May the Lord make your face shine and bless you.' Numbers, 6:25.

entity, God will cover the entire world, and it will be honored by the Holy One<sup>418</sup>.

One of the most important advocates of pantheism is undoubtedly Spinoza. According to Spinoza, nature and God are the same, but only their names are different. God is not an entity outside of nature. According to Spinoza, God is the name given to everything that exists. Spinoza's position runs contrary to the deists' position.

In the deistic understanding, God has been outside the universe and idle since the first Sabbath<sup>419</sup>. The deistic approach holds that God has the honour of creator, he is idle since the first Sabbath as he has such right because he is the God, but which is actually a property not suiting God when the concepts of God and idleness are considered together.

According to Rabbi David Nieto (1654-1728), nature is the name of God meaning God's control over what he created. But he was attacked at the London Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue in November 1703 for defending Deist ideas as he said that the concept of 'nature' was one of God's names. According to Nieto, God and nature are one and the same. To him, nature constitutes the common point of the world and God. While Rabbis use the concept of God, Nieto's identification of God with nature has been considered as a modern choice and defined as Spinozism.

Psalms 147 says: "It is Lord that covers the skies with clouds, prepares rain for the earth, grows grass in the

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<sup>418</sup> Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology*, inside p. 61, Numbers, 6:25 için Sifre 41

<sup>419</sup> Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology*, s. 62.

mountains." Nieto states in his ritual speech that these expressions are mentioned in the Bible and that they have been accepted as a principle of belief for 4-5 thousand years. However, since the concept of nature is a modern concept, this expression is not mentioned in the Talmud passages. According to the scholars dealing with modern sciences, what nature does is the same as what God does. Therefore, he says that nature and God are the same<sup>420</sup>. Following this statement of Nieto, Warden's letter to Zevi Ashkenazi and the reply letter he received contained remarkable explanations<sup>421</sup>. In the letter of Zevi written in response to Warden, the statement "Since the water drop shows the characteristics of water and spark shows that of fire, there is no problem in identifying the nature, created by God, with God." Because, modern thinkers see every event in nature as an act of God<sup>422</sup>.

Louis Jacobs interprets Hasidi panentheism in "A Jewish Theology" and states that panentheism amounts to supernaturalism for a modern Jew<sup>423</sup>. Panentheism can only happen through evolution, which is the single universal law. In a concrete sense, it is believed that the universe and beings in which God integrates change and develops dialectically with evolution. After completing his development, the return will be to pre-eternal and eternal God. The souls who complete their evolution will meet God in this return. According to Panenteism, God is both constant (absolute) and changing (relative). God is both in

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<sup>420</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 64.

<sup>421</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 64.

<sup>422</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 65.

<sup>423</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 66.

and out of time; he is both finite and infinite. At the same time, he is both particular and universal; and he is both cause and effect<sup>424</sup>.

How is it possible for God to create the universe and to maintain His existence as the center of the universe? Many disciplines deal with this issue as a real problem. According to the solution offered by the Hasidi approach to the above problem, in reality, there is only God. Even if the created beings do not like it, it is not possible for them to exist independently. According to this statement, when talking about creation, the concepts of "existing independently" and "real" contain logical problems. This criticism is a serious challenge to Hasidism<sup>425</sup>.

Regarding God's omnipotence and omnipotence, two important passages in the Bible are striking. The first one in Genesis 18.1-15 where Abraham told his wife Sara that she would have a child, although she was old. When Sara laughed Abraham replied: 'Is there anything impossible for the Lord, why did you laugh?'. This statement reinforces God's power. The second one is in Jeremiah 32: 6-27 where Jeremiah's city was under threat. The question in that section that 'I am the Lord of all human beings, is there anything I cannot do?'<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> Super-naturalism: Supernaturalisme and Surnaturalisme in French, German Supernaturalismus and Surntulismus in German, Sopranaturlismo in Italian. Entities that are outside of nature, that do not obey its laws, and that are not of nature are supernatural. God, angel, devil, and spirit separated from the corpse means supernatural entities.

<sup>425</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 69.

<sup>426</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 70.

emphasizes his omnipotence and his transcendental existence.

Medieval Jewish thinkers, especially Saadia Gaon and Joseph Albo, who lived two centuries after him, focused on the question "Is there anything God cannot do?" Joseph Albo first said "God cannot do unthinkable things like making a square with one side unequal to the other three sides". Secondly, "He said that it is not possible for God to create a being that resembles himself in all aspects". Even if we think of instances that are impossible for God, if there are two Gods, one will be affected by the act of the other. In this case, God cannot create such a being, although it makes sense to our mind. As regards the debate between Saadia Gaon and Joseph Albo that while God creates everything, he can't or may not do so physically, Louis Jacobs claims that this view does not contradict monotheism and does not attribute deficiency to God. Regarding the problem of "God cannot create everything", Louis Jacobs states that different opinions on this issue are worth examining.<sup>427</sup>

To Joseph Albo (d.1444), we should not think that God cannot do everything. He warned that God is doing all that is appropriate and that he can do. Other thinkers use methods similar to Joseph Albo's approach in handling the issue. R. Nahman Bratzlov (d.1810) discussed whether it is possible for God to create a square triangle. He said that the concept of a 'square triangle' is an illogical case, and it is not possible for God to create something

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<sup>427</sup> Jeremiah, 32:37.



illogical<sup>428</sup>. According to Jacobs, the question, "Is it possible for God to create a mountain without a valley?" is an existentialist and subjective approach devoid of reality. The person who asks these questions lacks belief and the truth claims. In addition to the effect of modern sciences and technology, the existence of free criticism in our age brings subjective propositions such as "this is my value judgment".<sup>429</sup>

God is working to design the universe. Is it an obligation for God to work to design or plan the universe? According to Albo, God created the entire universe at the same time. He expresses that the creation stages of God described in Genesis are not an obligation for him, and that these stages are counted for human beings to understand. God needs nothing to create<sup>430</sup>.

The conventional theism involves the theses that God can do anything and he knows everything. As regards the statement that *'From his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth – he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do.'*<sup>431</sup> Jewish thinkers thought that such a statement is valid not only for the past but also for today and future. According to Rabbi Akiba, who lived in the 2nd century, "Everything is known, but the freedom of choice is given." If everything is known, how can it be said that the freedom of choice is given? It is possible to talk about the different answers given to this question.

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<sup>428</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Theology, s. 74.

<sup>429</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 74.

<sup>430</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 74.

<sup>431</sup> Steven T. Katz, Jewish Philosophers, Bloch Publishing, New York 1975, s.120.  
Louis Jacobs, A Jewish Theology, Behrman, 1973 London, s. 85-86.

According to Maimonides, God knows everything in advance, and man is free. According to Gersonides, one cannot claim that God knows everything in advance; God's knowledge of things has not been completed, but man is free. According to Crescas (d.1411), God knows everything, but man is not truly free. To him, man appears to be free, but God's advanced knowledge of everything affects man's choices. As discussed in Calvinist thought, man's good or bad choices will encounter reward or punishment. Similarly, Crescas argues that in situations related to basic principles important to Judaism, man is not free and that what God knows beforehand determines man's choices. Crescas emphasized that the knowledge of God affects human actions and has developed a skeptical perspective on this issue<sup>432</sup>.

The emphasis on the fact that God has no beginning and no end, that God is different from other beings is explained in many passages in the Holy Scripture:

‘Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.’ (Psalms, 90:2);

‘This is what the Lord says— Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.’ (Isaiah 44:6)

‘The eternal God (Elohe Kedem) is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.’ (Deuteronomy 33:27).

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<sup>432</sup> Psalm 33:14/15.

‘The Lord reigns forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord.’ (Psalms, 146:10).

In rabbinic thought everything was created on the first day and at the same time. But it took a six-day phase to see the creatures. This explanation removes the problem that God needs time to create.

Referring to ‘God blessed them and God said to them: Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that crawl on the earth.’ (Exodus 1:28), Rabbinic thought interpreted man also as a second being accompanying God. But the duty of man is not to move away from God's purpose of creation and not to use his power for destruction. This emphasis constitutes a recurring theme on the Sabbath. Creating activity is for man not to destroy God's creations and to use them in a beneficial way. Man is responsible and purposeful before God. While using his abilities given to him, Man has to behave responsibly in his behaviours against the universe<sup>433</sup>.

With respect to the concept of angel and devil we come across the notion of an externally influencing entity Even in the most modernist approaches in modern Judaism. It is possible to make many comments about why God created them. What is the purpose of creating these entities? What does it mean to believe that such beings are a step in the realization of the divine, or why

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<sup>433</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 109.

man would not have a pure and puritanical belief without believing in them?

Louis Jacobs believes that Maimonides and his followers Jewish scholars aim to purify the faith from all external factors, and this work ensures the preservation of the Jewish faith<sup>434</sup>.

According to the Torah, God is the one who determines destiny. This is stated in the Jewish Bible as 'From his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth',<sup>435</sup> and God's determination of fate is explained by medieval Jewish thinkers in two ways. According to the first understanding, this describes God's sovereignty over destiny, and this situation is expressed as "hashgahah kelalit". The second understanding includes a special expression describing the separate and individual determination of God and is called "hashgahah peratitis".<sup>436</sup>

Louis Jacobs examined the views expressed by William G. Pollard (d.1989) in his book "Chance and Providence" on theology, as they are related to modern sciences<sup>437</sup>. According to Pollard, statistical studies that summarize the studies of modern science are quite insufficient to explain the discussions. Because scientific studies have to include some probability calculations. This is the reason quantum physics arises and the chance factor

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<sup>434</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 98.

<sup>435</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 113.

<sup>436</sup> Psalm 33:14.

<sup>437</sup> Genesis 18: 17-33.

does not sustain determinist explanations<sup>438</sup>. As a traditional solution, both 'possibility' and 'coincidence' have been seen as God's action. It is "possible" for God to talk to man<sup>439</sup>. As in the example God said "Then to Abraham, 'Sodom and Gomorrah are under great blame. Their sins are very heavy. I'll go down and look for it. I will see if the accusations I heard are true or not. I will understand whether they did these things or not',<sup>440</sup> his talk to the Prophet about his people was realized within the realm of possibilities.

Langdon B. Gilkey (d. 2004) questioned the transition from the deterministic creation approach to liberal theology. God's creation as the ruler of all things is based on a traditional understanding of God. The existential conception of God implies an understanding of God that carries individual existence. According to Process Philosophy, God is the one who influences the existence process of the universe<sup>441</sup>. As to whether God is sovereign or sovereign, to Louis Jacobs, it is important to distinguish the periods before and after Darwin. It is necessary to admit that the pre-Darwinian idea that God created instantly whatever he wanted transformed to the idea of survival by adapting and changing<sup>442</sup>.

The Holy Scripture says 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.' (Deuteronomy 6:5). As regards loving God, in

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<sup>438</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s.114.

<sup>439</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Teoloji, s. 118.

<sup>440</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 121.

<sup>441</sup> Exodus: 18:20

<sup>442</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Theology, s. 120.

the Code of Law in the Mishneh Torah, Maimonides describes God as a being that enlightens the physical world with his own knowledge. The creator's perfect creation and the admiration for the creatures he created is a factor that creates and increases love for God: 'Fear the Lord your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name' (Deuteronomy 6:5). Is the combination of love and fear for God a contradiction?<sup>443</sup>

Referring to the statements of King David that 'My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"' (Psalm 42:3), and 'What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor' (Psalm, 8:4/5). Maimonides has drawn attention to invisibility and the incomparable power of God.

Man has given God an invisible and incomparable role because he loves God which is the most beautiful and the most powerful creator.

In medieval Jewish thought, love of God is associated with interpretations of practical life<sup>444</sup>. According to Maimonides, love of God is a necessary element for human salvation: "'Because he loves me,' says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name"' (Psalms 91-14).

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<sup>443</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 120, Jacobs, *What Does Judaism Say About...?* Quadrangle, 1975 New York, s.133.

<sup>444</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s.135.

The similar expressions of Joseph Albo and Abraham ben David on this subject were evaluated by Jacobs. Joseph Albo has devoted only a chapter on Fear of God in *Ikkarim* and has examined the subject in detail here. According to Albo, fear is related to how much the soul can feel the power of God. The fact that God can punish ensures that people do not commit behavior which is deemed harmful by God. Another type of fear is that man is appreciated by God and he strives not to lose such appreciation. Even if there is no punishment described here, it is possible to say that the fear would be very strong. Another important fear that should not be ignored is that man loves God very much but he is afraid of reaching God because he does not know the nature of God<sup>445</sup>.

According to Nahmanides, worshiping God is beneficial for man not God. The fact that the person avoids harmful behaviors, avoids bad attitudes and behaviors that are signs of ugly character, remembering God, thanking Him and believing in Him. A person's avoidance from harmful behaviors, attitudes and mischief is possible by his remembrance of God and being thankful to him and being a believer in him. "Purification of man" is like the purification of silver. Because other substances must be removed from silver in order to purify it. This process is necessary for silver to be considered precious. To Nahmanides, God does not need Menorah's right, sacrifice and incense, but they are given to man to recall the exodus from Egypt, and the

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<sup>445</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s.158.

commandments, and to teach that the world is created for man, not for God. Although Nahmanides was one of the first Kabbalists, he differs from the general understanding of Kabbalah by the view that worship is not for God. Because, according to the Kabbalistic view, God needs man's worship<sup>446</sup>.

Maimonides states that God speaks with people in an anthropomorphic language because he aims to make people understand more easily. In this respect, he emphasizes not the symbolic aspect of anthropomorphic narration and metaphor use, but the aspect aimed at conveying the truth. Louis Jacobs states that Maimonides' emphasis continues to be important and is an issue that should be taken into account in Holy Script interpretation<sup>447</sup>.

The Chabad branch of Hasidism especially emphasizes the importance of the concept of "intention". According to the idea of Chabad, the duty of the praying person is to reflect the Purest light over everything. Prayer functions as an inter-world carrier. The intention turns into fruit as one's emotions<sup>448</sup>.

In the modern period, the subject of prayer has gained importance in explaining the communication between the individual and God. Religious naturalism is against the personification of God. Religious supernaturalism, on the other hand, is identified with the power the person receives from God and the person's

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<sup>446</sup> Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology*, s. 176.

<sup>447</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, p. 184.

<sup>448</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s.174.



being the representative of God on earth, as we see in the traditional theistic understanding<sup>449</sup>. The views of Eugene Kohn (d.1977) and A. J. Heschel are important in terms of how God is understood. According to Heschel, prayer should be understood as the omnipotence of God, his glory, his astonishment with his miracles, and reaching out to man in response to his prayers<sup>450</sup>. Kohn defends the naturalistic view. To him, many people think that prayer does not reach the address. This thought stems from the denial of God as a transcendent being. For this reason, they have supernaturalistic tendencies since they think that they will be relieved at least because prayer involves conversation with God. According to Louis Jacobs, when thinking of God as a person and as a transcendent being are compared, the first one is more practical in terms of the sense of making the prayer reach God<sup>451</sup>. But this situation raises many new questions. *Where was the God that I spoke to born? Is talking to God a process or a static act?*

Jewish scholar Jacob J. Petuchowski (d.1991) examines this issue in his work "Can Modern Man Pray?" He says that the basis of the problem is the modern man's perception of God as a person. He finds it important that an educated person who has improved himself adopts the traditional understanding of prayer and does not see it dangerous<sup>452</sup>.

In Jewish teaching, it is noteworthy that fear of God is taught before love of God. Although the idea that the

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<sup>449</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s.191.

<sup>450</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s.193.

<sup>451</sup> Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Earth is the Lord's*, New York, 1966, s. 76.

<sup>452</sup> Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology*, s.195.

love of God cannot be without fear while fear of him is important and prior, according to Louis Jacobs, the idea that fear of God is the basis of Judaism is no longer valid<sup>453</sup>. To him, God's punishments are the consequences of human nature. Regarding the two types of fears, we should say that the suppression of stubbornness in the physical nature of man is a weaker fear, while the man's knowledge of God and resulting sense of responsibility is a source of a stronger fear. Albo's attempt to solve especially the weaker fear has been found worthy of review and evaluation many times in Jewish teaching. According to The Zohar, the fear of being punished for sins in this world or in the future is a weaker type of fear<sup>454</sup>.

### **HOLY SCRIPTURE AND LAW ACCORDING TO LOUIS JACOBS**

It is necessary to explain the basic concepts on Jewish law (Halakha) before explaining Louis Jacobs' views. The word halakha comes from the Hebrew root "halakh" and means walking and going. The term Halaha is used for Jewish law, meaning "the path a Jew must follow through his life".<sup>455</sup> To Neusner, 'Halaha consists of three main parts: the rules of a Jew's relationship with God, his social order, and his familial life.'<sup>456</sup> The

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<sup>453</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, p.196.

<sup>454</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, p.182.

<sup>455</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, p.178.

<sup>456</sup> Jacobs, "Halakhah", Ejd, C.8, s. 251.

'mitzvot'<sup>457</sup> in Rabbani sources, especially in the Holy Scripture and Talmud, show that the Halakha, which is formed with both written and traditional culture, is not only based on the Holy Scripture, but is also based on the rabbis' environmental and logical inferences<sup>458</sup>.

Jewish law is a tradition that has been nurtured and transformed by different cultural interactions for many years and in very different geographies. In his works *Jewish Law* (1968), *Teyku: The unsolved Problem in the Babylonian Talmud: A study in the Literary Analysis* (1981), *A Tree of Life* (1984), *The Talmudic Argument* (1984), Louis Jacobs evaluated the formation process, methods, examples and current problems of Jewish law in accordance with his theological views.

To Louis Jacobs, it is not possible to understand the dramatic stories and narrative richness in the Talmud without considering the educational background and narrative styles of Talmud scribes. With regard to the Halakha, the explicit aim is not to state what the law should be, but what the law is. According to the Rabbis, the Oral Torah is completely a divine revelation. Analogies can be made if Talmud sources do not give direct information about new terms and conditions. Concerning situations that cannot be solved clearly in the Talmud, Responsa literature develops solutions created

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<sup>457</sup> Jacob Neusner, *The Halakhah: Historical and Religious Perspectives*, Brill Publication, Leiden 2002, s. 3.

<sup>458</sup> Mitzvah: According to Jewish Law, orders in the Torah are called mitzvot (plural mitzvot). Religious orders and responsibilities, commercial law, respect for parents, Sabbath rules, marriage law, ethical rules are included in the mitzvahs. Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology*, p. 211, Jacobs, *The Jewish Religion*, p. 350.

again in accordance with the rules specified in Talmud sources<sup>459</sup>.

The Babylonian Talmud was brought together by Amoraim in the 16th century. It would not be wrong to think that other unknown scribes reshaped the Amoraic materials after Amoraim and also that the Babylonian Talmud was organized with an academic plan. During the academic study of Halaha in the 19th century, it is possible to find the traces of many interactions, especially Greek-Roman, in Jerusalem and Babylon Talmud. The diversity of this interaction is interpreted as that diaspora life provided a dimension to Judaism<sup>460</sup>.

### **Louis Jacobs' Sources on Halaha: Rabbani Literature**

Jews who stick to Tanah, Talmud and Halakhah are called Orthodox Jews. The Orthodox Judaism accepts that God made Moses to scribe the Torah while the Oral Torah (Talmud) was revealed orally.

The understanding of "Orthodox Judaism", which comes first in terms of affiliation and represents the official Jewish beliefs and traditions today, was called "Rabbani Judaism" in the Middle Ages. According to the belief of the Rabbani tradition, God revealed the Written and Oral Torah (Torah *şe-bihtar* / Torah *şe-beal pe*) to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Oral Torah was passed down from Moses verbally to Joshua, then to the notables of the

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<sup>459</sup> De Vries Benjamin, "Halakhah", Ejd, C.8, s. 252-254.

<sup>460</sup> Jacobs, A Tree of Life, s. 5,6.

Israelites, from them to the prophets, then to the great council members, then to the scribes (soferim), and to the first period religious scholars, Tannaim, which scribed Mishnah and Tosefta (It means additions to the Mishnah and it is six times larger than Misnah by volume. Its authority is lower than Mishnah as Tosefta is accepted as a source after it), while Amoraim (second generation religious scholars after Tannaim) formed the Talmud<sup>461</sup>.

Orthodox Jews follow the following pathway while studying the Bible: In order of the holiness degree following the Jewish Holy Scripture Tanah, the Mishnah, the Talmud, which is the interpretation of the Mishnah, the Midrash which consists interpretation rules for holy texts, the Holy Scripture translation Targum, the Dead Sea Scrolls, The Codes and Responsa (Tesuvot, Fatwa) Literature. Jacobs also studied the Holy Scripture in his work titled "Jewish Law" under the headings of Halakhic Midrashim, The Mishnah, The Jerusalem Talmud, The Babylonian Talmud, The Codes, The Responsa, respectively, which is the traditional framework of the Orthodox Jews.

### **Mishnah**

The Mishnah consists of the following six parts:

1. Zeraim (Seeds): All laws related to agriculture,
2. Moed (Festivals): Sabbath and holidays,
3. Nashim (Women): Marriage and divorce,

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<sup>461</sup> Eliezer Berkovits, "Babylonian Talmud" Ejd, C.15, s. 755-768.

4. *Nezikin* (Damages): Acts that harm personal law such as damages and theft,
5. *Kodeshim* (Sacred Things): Temple and sacrifice made during temple times,
6. *Tohorot* (Pure Things): The laws of purity and disgust.

According to Louis Jacobs, practical applications do not reach the Mishnah, approximately one and a half centuries before the arrangement of the Mishnah and after the destruction of the Temple in 70<sup>462</sup>. However, Rabbi Judas's aim to include the rules of the *Kodashim* and *Tohorot* in this law was to create the most comprehensive version of the law possible. According to Jacobs, the compilation of the Mishna, especially in written Hebrew, proves that the academic language was still Hebrew, even though Aramaic was widely spoken in Palestine during the Tannaim Period<sup>463</sup>. The Mishnah consists of 3 sections: *Midrash*, *Halakhah* and *Agada*. The teaching of both *Midrash* and *Mishnah* was provided by Tannaim, the great teachers of 1st and 2nd centuries AD in Jerusalem and its surroundings. Rabbi Akiva and his student Rabbi Meir are among the most influential scholars of this period.

Louis Jacobs likens his work "Jewish Law" to a mathematics book rather than a novel, asks it to be read, studied, and criticized for each argument and the chapters he examines.

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<sup>462</sup> Harman, 'Yahudilik', *DIA* C. 43, s. 198-199.

<sup>463</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 22.

Louis Jacobs likens his work "Jewish Law" to a mathematics book rather than a novel, asks it to be read, studied, and criticized for each argument and the chapters he examines. He explained that his book includes quotations and notes about the Mishnah because the Torah has been an authority and reference book in the past, present and future<sup>464</sup>.

### **Talmud**

Although it has different meanings, Talmud's literal meaning is "to work" and "to learn". The Talmud is classified according to six chapters in the Mishnah and based on the Gemara. Two basic forms of Talmud have been accepted as the Babylonian and Palestinian versions<sup>465</sup>. As such, the Talmud has an extremely important place in the formation of Halakha rules.

Rabbani Judaism is the continuation of the Pharisees, one of the early-period Jewish sects. Since they accept the Oral Torah as "revelation" together with the Written Torah, they are in an important position in the formation of the Jewish tradition. Their acceptance of the Oral Torah as revelation was effective in the existence and development of Talmud studies. Their argument that the Written Torah cannot be understood without the Oral Torah provided the formation and development of Jewish law<sup>466</sup>.

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<sup>464</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 23.

<sup>465</sup> Jacobs, Helping With Inquiries, s. 81.

<sup>466</sup> Bathja Bayer, "Talmud", Ejd, C.15, s. 750-755.

To Louis Jacobs, there is a contradiction between the Talmud as an academic work and its value as a practical and law book in the following eras. Upon Altmann's suggestion, Jacobs worked on Prof. Chaim Tchernowitz's *Toldot Halakhah* (The Development of Jewish Law) and the variables in the formation of Halakhah. For example, while the Sabbath candle should be lit in a part of the house that can be seen from the outside, social events differentiated the practice of mitzvahs, and when necessary it was lit inside the house not in a way to be seen from the outside due to social conditions<sup>467</sup>.

Has Louis Jacobs noticed the influence of human and environmental factors, that is, non-revelation elements, in the commandments in Halakhah? If Jacobs knows there are non-revelational elements, then it is a matter of wonder how he answered the question "why did these elements become part of the tradition?"<sup>468</sup> On the subject of the Talmud's formation, Louis Jacobs pays attention to the questions of whether the different elements were included in the Talmud by joint decisions or by collectively scribing the Oral Tradition later, and whether the Talmud scribes were certain individuals or it was scribed through anonymous accumulation<sup>469</sup>. According to Louis Jacobs, we don't know the names of people other than Rabbi Ashi and Ravina, who are known

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<sup>467</sup> Harman, "Yahudilik", *DIA*, C.43, s. 212-218.

<sup>468</sup> Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology*, s. 30.

<sup>469</sup> Mahmut Salihoğlu, *The Nature of The Halakhah, Louis Jacobs and The Modern Halakhic Debate*, University of Manchester, M.A. 1996, s. 67.



as Talmud writers, and what criteria they work with<sup>470</sup>. However, Jacobs states that the Amoraim writers and the final editors of the Talmud preferred to work in accordance with natural law theory instead of positive law as a method, therefore Halakhah gained a strong position in the tradition<sup>471</sup>.

The Talmud parts with independent subjects are called "sugya". Louis Jacobs states that the sugyas within the Talmud as completely literary pieces in their present forms. Criticism of the forms of sugya shows that the forms found in the Talmud are not the single and final forms, but they were previously existing. According to Jacobs, the recast of sugyas is not random. Beyond that, he states that questions and answers and discussions are not made with the aim of ending them. Jacobs points out that this process is a living one. He states that being open to affirmation- refutation, suggestion-rejection, and participation of different argument holders in an active position also indicates the vitality of the process<sup>472</sup>.

According to Louis Jacobs, the Talmud is a literary work. The literary aspect of the Talmud was achieved not by mysticism but by creative literary effort only. It is proved by the removal of the sections and forms from the Talmud text in case of any doubt or deficiency. The Rabbi editors, who gave the Talmud its literary form, made an intense effort at the end of the fifth century and the beginning of the sixth century. Therefore, due to their

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<sup>470</sup> Jacobs, *The Talmudic Argument*, s. 17.

<sup>471</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 18.

<sup>472</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 211.

responsibilities and living conditions, they benefited from the early-period Amoraim resources of the fifth century. Louis Jacobs states that early and late bibliographies can be distinguished in Talmud texts<sup>473</sup>.

The real identity of Talmud writers can no longer be determined, but it is possible to have an idea about the methods they work with. Despite the differences in the words used by medieval and modern scholars, Jacobs states that preserving the literary form of the Talmud with words compiled in different places and schools has been a tradition since Babylon. Louis Jacobs emphasizes that the creation of a joint work in the formation of the Babylon and Jerusalem Talmud is surprising and that this joint effort has yielded a successful result. He points out that the post-Amoraic Rabbis and Jewish Scholars acted without deviating from the traditional common purpose (sabor). According to Louis Jacobs, the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmud were formed with the same material, different environmental factors, and a common tradition and work. Jacobs emphasizes the significance of this formation beyond a historical effort<sup>474</sup>.

Logical explanation is necessary when there are objections from those who are accepted as the authority regarding the verification of Talmudic arguments. For Talmudic arguments, the authority's rejection of one of the two logically contradictory facts is a necessary effort to reach greater truth. Grounds for refusal are unreliability,

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<sup>473</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 211.

<sup>474</sup> Jacobs, *The Talmudic Argument*, s. 212.

false citations, the need for more information and compatibility<sup>475</sup>.

The majority of the Talmud consists of precise, legal definitions expressed concisely and concretely in Hebrew and Aramaic. Louis Jacobs states that translations are inadequate without logical analysis to understand what the truth is in the issues dealt with in the Talmud. He also noted that in Talmud studies, the Talmud's literary form and the effort to understand its message should be together<sup>476</sup>.

Louis Jacobs considers Boaz Cohen's study of the traditions in Judaism in five main areas in his work "Law And Tradition In Judaism" as the basis and attaches importance to Halakhah, Ethical, Theological, Philosophical and Mystical studies<sup>477</sup>.

In the period after the 6th century to today, accepted as the Post-Talmud period, the Talmud researchers attached more importance and prioritised Babylonian Talmud in comparison to Jerusalem or Palestinian Talmud. Referring to the works of Louis Finkelstein (1895-1991) and Louis Ginzberg (1873-1953) on this subject, Louis Jacobs emphasizes that the major halakhahists accepted that the Babylonian Talmud is not academic but a practical guide and a basic regulation. The fact that at least part of the Torah is the word of God has

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<sup>475</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 212.

<sup>476</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 212.

<sup>477</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 213.

made it accepted as the basis of law. This creates a unique situation for the Torah<sup>478</sup>.

There are criticisms of Talmud writers in medieval Spanish Jewish schools and modern Jewish formations. Louis Jacobs explains his views on the fact that contributions and criticisms of Talmud writers follow each other. Rabbis criticize King David for referring to his songs in the Torah. For them, the Holy Scripture is primarily the source of religion and morality, the manifestation of the divine will for humanity. But this did not prevent them from exploring the Book of Books in terms of literature as a teaching method. On the other hand, by discussing the principal words of God and accepting them as the essential element in the life of the Jewish peoples, the rabbis acknowledged that the literary form and recognition of the Babylonian Talmud as style did not require a religious obligation<sup>479</sup>.

According to Louis Jacobs, Talmud writers were composed of people with a collector spirit who were not well educated. This is why the Talmud contains dramatic stories and its desire to enrich the narrative is striking. According to Louis Jacobs, it should be emphasized that the Rabbis regard the Torah as literary and mystical, although they seem to have a "fundamentalist" stance in terms of religion<sup>480</sup>.

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<sup>478</sup> Jacobs, *A Tree of Life*, s. 5.

<sup>479</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 17.

<sup>480</sup> Jacobs, *Further Evidence of Literary Device in the Babylonian Talmud*, *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 9, 3:4, 1958, s. 139-147.

While it is generally accepted that the Talmud's oral tradition was brought together and then turned into a book, Louis Jacobs states that this work has an institutional feature and is the result of a conscious work<sup>481</sup>. For the Babylonian Talmud, Louis Jacobs states that it is not the Jewish law and practice book, but this work is the result of an academic and intellectual effort<sup>482</sup>.

Jacobs oriented his practical studies of Halakha towards academic studies. According to Jacobs, academic studies are important to explain Halakha's relationship between practice and law. Contrary to popular belief, the Babylonian Talmud, according to Louis Jacobs, consists of pseudepigrapha (fake author) elements. According to Jacobs, it is wrong to say that the Babylonian Talmud was completely fake, but he states that although the parts of these texts containing fake authors were easier to understand at that time, this was not done<sup>483</sup>.

Another Rabbinic expression, the term *Aggada*, comes from the root of the word 'to say'. All stories, history, philosophy, folklore, science, and everything related to Rabbinic literature are expressed in the term *Aggada*.

Louis Jacobs gives information about the use of mitzvot in Torah and Jewish literature in the 'Torah and Mitzvah' section of 'A Jewish Theology'. According to Jacobs, Torah refers to the general name of Jewish

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<sup>481</sup> Jacobs, *The Talmudic Argument*, s. 211.

<sup>482</sup> Salihoğlu, *Nature of Halakhah*, s. 57.

<sup>483</sup> Jacobs, *Structure and Form in the Babylonian Talmud*, Cambridge U. Press 1991, s. 4.

doctrine. Mitzvah are the practices required by Torah. Respect for parents, sabbath prohibitions and rules, marriage rules and ethical rules, which are in the Torah and ordered to Jews, are expressed in mitzvahs<sup>484</sup>. Mitzvot constitute an important part of the Torah studies of Rabbani Judaism. 'Although they are different issues, all the matters like the sending the person who eats the forbidden fruit to the world, respect for the parents, the behavior of a person towards his slaves are equal in terms of the studies of the Torah since they are mitzvot.'<sup>485</sup>

In the Rabbani tradition, mitzvahs are grouped according to different criteria. In the Rabbani tradition, positive mitzvot (mitzvot aseh) express what should be done and what is ordered, while negative mitzvot (mitzvot taaseh) express what should not be done, what is prohibited as well as the behaviors to be avoided. According to another Rabbani classification on the separation of mitzvot, they are divided into mitzvot (ben adam-la-Makam) which regulate behavior between man and God, and mitzvot (ben adam-la-havero) which regulate behavior between people and their neighbors<sup>486</sup>.

Louis Jacobs states that in the determination of the mitzvot, the traditional effectiveness of God's commandments plays an important role in general. According to Jacobs, the acceptance of mitzvahs for a Jew in the modern era is logically contradictory. The dilemma

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<sup>484</sup> Salihoğlu, *Nature of Halakhah*, s. 58.

<sup>485</sup> Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology*, s. 211.

<sup>486</sup> Jacobs, *a.g.e.*, s. 211.

between accepting because God commands and seeing it as rational should be discussed<sup>487</sup>.

In examining examples of the flexibility of the halakhah, Louis Jacobs explains the justification of orders and prohibitions, situations where they are out of practice, and variability of their provisions as characteristic of Jewish law<sup>488</sup>.

*'If they accept and open their gates, all the people in it shall be subject to forced labor and shall work for you. If they refuse to make peace and they engage you in battle, lay siege to that city. When the Lord your God delivers it into your hand, put to the sword all the men in it. As for the women, the children, the livestock and everything else in the city, you may take these as plunder for yourselves. And you may use the plunder the Lord your God gives you from your enemies.'* (Deuteronomy 20:11-14)

In his Halakha studies, Louis Jacobs tried to understand some new and unconventional methods. By doing this, he wanted to prove that a significant part of the Halakhah tradition was influenced by life outside the Jewish tradition and the interpretation tradition belonging to these cultures<sup>489</sup>.

In the situation where the mitzvahs are determined by Rabbis, that is, when the non-divine human elements are determinative, the fulfillment of these mitzvot is due to the abilities and choices of people for good. In the situation where the mitzvahs are determined by Rabbis,

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<sup>487</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 211.

<sup>488</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 211.

<sup>489</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 39.

that is, when the non-divine human element has the determination, the fulfillment of these mitzvot is due to the abilities and choices of people for good. According to Louis Jacobs, the attitude of people towards religion in this case does not show the truth and importance of mitzvahs, but the goodness of the people<sup>490</sup>.

Rabbis interpreted the phrase "you will not act with fraud" in the Holy text. In the Holy Scripture, wrong behavior is used in general terms. Since the expression here is a general expression, it includes all people and makes honesty the rule as a universal principle. However, according to Jacobs, this expression here can be interpreted in the opposite way for the opponents of the Israelites during its interpretation by the Rabbis<sup>491</sup>.

### **Midrash**

The term Midrash means to search and find the unseen part. In order to understand the scriptures, the tradition of interpretation has been formed with certain rules. For example, with a superficial reading, the Sabbath is understood as the day on which work is prohibited. But, it is possible to grasp the true meaning of the Sabbath according to the studies known as the Midrash tradition, which consisted of the research of the senior Rabbis for centuries and were assimilated into Judaism<sup>492</sup>. Regarding the Halakhah Midrashs, Louis Jacobs states that the main

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<sup>490</sup> Jacobs, *A Tree of Life*, s. 54.

<sup>491</sup> Jacobs, *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, s. 38.

<sup>492</sup> Jacobs, *What Does Judaism Say About...?*



feature of the Midrash process is the unification of a law with a verse from the Holy Scripture<sup>493</sup>.

In Maimonides' *Guide to the Confused* (Delaletü'l-hairin), Louis Jacobs examines how very different questions have become Halakha rules and regulations and how they are regarded as means of expressing Jewish values by taking into account 3 basic principles<sup>494</sup>.

The theological factor: God's commandments do not have to be rational, they are only meant to test people. No one should try to understand or guess what God means. According to the medieval Rabbi, the best way to understand Mitzvot is to consider yourself inferior in this matter. It is important to rationally explain why a rule is good. When rational explanations are defended by religious schoolers or theologians, they are enthusiastically accepted by rational followers or the public.

Jews have always felt obliged to defend their beliefs against their neighbors who are not Jews or who come from different cultures, even if they later accepted Judaism. These people were sarcastic towards Jews about how irrational situations are a source of belief. The Jews felt obliged to defend their religion by pointing to the value of Mitzvot against their gentile neighbors who ridiculed them for believing in irrational rules and behaving accordingly. According to Louis Jacobs, Jews have tended to explain issues related to the invisible and incomprehensible aspects of the value of mitzvahs, as

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<sup>493</sup> Jacobs, *We Have Reason to Believe*, s. 58

<sup>494</sup> Jacobs, *Jewish Law*, s. 21.

they belong to a religion that stipulates belief in irrational beings<sup>495</sup>. As an example of the difference in the lifestyle of the Jews in the modern period, it was seen that some Jews preferred the Kosher, i.e. pork-free foods in their nutrition as a religious duty, while others preferred only considering their taste<sup>496</sup>.

### **Dead Sea Scrolls**

Louis Jacobs states that Dead Sea Scrolls are the oldest Jewish Scripture<sup>497</sup> in the Northwest of the Qumran area<sup>498</sup>. The local population who initially found it did not understand what language it was written in. Studies on more scrolls found in this area over time realized under the leadership of Professor EL Sukenik (d. 1953) in 1947. According to Louis Jacobs, these scrolls date back hundreds of years earlier than the oldest Bibles available at that time. Among these scrolls, Louis Jacobs pays attention to the overlap of the text of the Prophet Isaiah with the current text, except for minor differences, and states that this copy is exhibited at Hebrew University<sup>499</sup>.

In the controversy about whether they belong to the Middle Ages or antiquity, Professor Solomon Zeitlin (d.1976) claims that the dead sea scrolls are from the Middle Ages. However, Louis Jacobs asserts that these manuscripts are from antiquity and were written by the

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<sup>495</sup> Jacobs, *A Tree of Life*, s. 26.

<sup>496</sup> Jacobs, *a.g.e.*, s. 26

<sup>497</sup> Jacobs, *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, s. 174.

<sup>498</sup> Jacobs, *The Jewish Religion*, s. 36.

<sup>499</sup> Jacobs, *What Does Judaism Say About?* s. 220.

community, which he thinks are continuing their distinctive life practices in solitary life. He states that during the demolition of the Temple, for the first time, there were some items belonging to religious groups such as an entire library, porcelain and lamp, while the studies on the evaluation of these evidences continue, and archaeologically, the Dead Sea Scrolls are among the most important works of all times<sup>500</sup>.

Louis Jacobs evaluates the part known as the farewell speech of the Prophet Moses in *We Have Reason to Believe* in terms of the presence of different readings about the Torah text. As regards 'I am one hundred and twenty years old. I can no longer lead you. Moreover, the Lord said to me, 'You will not cross the other side of the Jordan,'<sup>501</sup> while in the Septuagint the meaning is 'and he is gone', but in the Dead Sea Scrolls it says 'and he finished'. In addition, in the recently found Dead Sea Scrolls, the expression in this section is included in the text as 'And Moses finished his speech to all Israelites with these words'".<sup>502</sup>

Louis Jacobs conveys his thoughts on ascetic life by referring to the Qumran region where the Dead Sea manuscripts were discovered. According to Jacobs, people in this area may have lived as ascetic or semi-ascetic<sup>503</sup>. He states that the text differences are too small to change the meaning.

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<sup>500</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 38.

<sup>501</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 38.

<sup>502</sup> Deut. 31:1.

<sup>503</sup> Jacobs, *We Have Reason to Believe*, s. 63.

### **Religious Rules (The Codes)**

The commandments and principles in the first five chapters of the Holy Scripture are associated with early Judaism. This was a period between the 16th century BC and the 14th century BC. According to Hammurabi law (133-7), a woman who left her home had the right to marry for the second time. But, if the first spouse returned home, the woman was obliged to continue the marriage with the first spouse. There is a different expression on this subject in the Holy Scripture (I. Samuel, 19: 11-17, I Samuel, 25-44, II. Samuel, 3: 14-16)<sup>504</sup>.

The Second Temple Period is the period when the interaction of Judaism with neighboring cultures such as Palestine, Egypt and Rome diversified the interpretations of the Holy Scripture, the views of the first sects of Judaism before and after Christianity clearly differed, and institutionalization such as Rabbilic and Sanhedrin emerged. The foundation of Halakhah was laid in a way to be intertwined with religious and social activities in this period. Regarding this period, it would not be wrong to say a period that reflects the pluralism of Judaism.<sup>505</sup>

The Second Temple Period, with the activities of Ezra and Nehemiah, carries the religious and political dimension of institutionalization to today. In terms of the Holy Scripture, the Second Temple Period corresponds to the 6th century BC and the 7th century AD, when the texts accepted as Apocryphal are also dated. It is natural that

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<sup>504</sup> Jacobs, *What Does Judaism Say About?* s. 219.

<sup>505</sup> Raymond Westbrook, *Biblical Law An Introduction To The History And Sources of Jewish Law*, Edt. N.S. Hecht, B.S. Jackson, S.M. Passamaneck, D. Piattelli, A.M. Rabello. Oxford U. Press, 2002, s. 7.

books that are regarded as apocryphal are associated with a wide geography, different beliefs and cultures. The word apocryphal means 'secret' in Greek. It is thought to contain hidden meanings that Jews with beliefs requiring general acceptance cannot understand. The Apocryphal Texts were not included in the Palestinian Talmud and were added to the end of the Babylonian Canon. In addition, the Apocryphal Texts were not accepted by Protestants, although they were accepted by Catholics. In Judaism, there is also a difference of opinion between Orthodox Jewish sects and Reformist Jews<sup>506</sup>.

The Second Temple Period has a character in which the diversity of ideas and regulations on the content of the ten commandments, Sabbath regulations, and various issues concerning family law, written and oral law becomes evident<sup>507</sup>.

To Maimonides, the idea that 'Torah cannot be abrogated. Its orders and prohibitions are not open to interference' is included in the thirteen belief principles in Judaism. When considered legally, the Torah constitutes the Written Law. According to Louis Jacobs, 'The Torah contains orders and prohibitions of Rabbis that reflect God's will with revelation, which are not repetitive, not open to human disposition.'<sup>508</sup>

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<sup>506</sup> Westbrook, a.g.e, s. 24.

<sup>507</sup> Ömer Faruk Harman, *Yahudilik, DİA, Yahudilik*, C. 43, s. 201, Daniela Piattelli and Bernard Jackson, *An Introduction To The History And Sources of Jewish Law*, Edt, N.S. Hecht, B.S. Jackson, S.M. Passamaneck, D. Piattelli, A.M. Rabello, Oxford U. Press, 2002, s. 31, Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology*, s.226.

<sup>508</sup> Daniela Piattelli and Bernard Jackson, a.g.e, s. 25.

As stated in many narratives in the Tanah, God as the law-maker, the continuity and certainty of God's commands, and the sanctions to be applied against those who do not obey these orders are included in the Jewish Holy Scripture to a great extent: 'So Joseph established it as a law concerning land in Egypt--still in force today--that a fifth of the produce belongs to Pharaoh. It was only the land of the priests that did not become Pharaoh's.' (Genesis, 47/26), 'Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and instructions.' (Exodus, 18/26), 'Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave.' (Exodus, 18/20), 'On that same day you are to proclaim a sacred assembly and do no regular work. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.' (Leviticus, 23/21),<sup>509</sup> 'And whoever kills an animal shall restore it; but whoever kills a man shall be put to death. You shall have the[a] same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I *am* the Lord your God. Then Moses spoke to the children of Israel; and they took outside the camp him who had cursed, and stoned him with stones.' (Leviticus, 24/21-23), "Cursed is anyone who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!" (Deuteronomy, 27/26).

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<sup>509</sup> Louis Jacobs, "Halakhah", Ejd, C.7, s.1157, Jacobs, "Halakhah", The Jewish Religion, s. 210.

## **Responsas**

Responsa is the special name for question and answer literature in Jewish law. The Torah-based developments in Judaism grew even more as life expanded with civilizations beyond Jerusalem. Rabbis and synagogues have created an important institutional status in order to meet the religious, worship and social needs of the Jews who had to live in different geographies after the rapid decline of the Jewish population in and around Jerusalem. The rabbinate became a refreshing element for work and economic activity. As the influence of the rabbis on political issues diminished, their positive impact on the economy became more evident. The decisions of the rabbis and "responsas" constituted a carrier for both religious and economic activities. Jews were asked to make the most of all the blessings of God, and in this way, their economic development has been the product of their rationalization.

## **Louis Jacobs' Views on Certain Halakhah Provisions**

Among the views of Louis Jacobs on Halakhah, those on "ten commandments"<sup>510</sup> are The rules constituting the Jewish law are a whole that emerged with the answers of the Rabbis who constitute the Jewish experience with questions such as how to

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<sup>510</sup> Leviticus, 16/34, 17/7, 23/14, 23/31, 23/41, 26/46

perform religious worship, Sabbath rules and regulation of working conditions<sup>511</sup>.

It is seen that Louis Jacobs gives place to different opinions by examining the Halaha tradition. Louis Jacobs firstly expresses the views in the Rabbani literature about the problem he deals with in an explanatory manner. Then he justifies what is more correct to him.

### **Regulations Regarding Sabbath**

Shabbat in the Torah represents the rest of Yahweh following the act of creation as mentioned in Deuteronomy (5:15) and Exodus (20:11, 31:17), and the

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<sup>511</sup> Exodus 20: 1-17 And God spoke all these words: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your given below. These issues are Sabbath, not speaking the name of God, commercial law. Then, he dealt with some issues related to women and family and views on the beliefs of Muslims.



responsibility assigned by Yahweh to Israel according to Ezekiel (20:12-20) and Exodus (31:13-17)<sup>512</sup>.

According to Exodus 23:12, Sabbath corresponds to a social organization as a rest day for the worker in the field after working six days. In Babylonian and Assyrian traditions, it is known that the seventh day of the week is not a holy day, but a day to be avoided<sup>513</sup>. On his return from Babylonian exile, Nehemiah laid down some rules regarding the institutionalization of the Sabbath. According to the book of Nehemiah, it is forbidden to gather wood, make fire, cook, boil, travel, carry loads and carry on any work on the Sabbath. (Nehemiah, 13: 15-22) Regarding the Sabbath prohibitions, which are not included in the Holy Scripture, but listed in the Mishnah, Louis Jacobs comments that Rabbis rationally made such interpretations<sup>514</sup>. Louis Jacobs addresses the Sabbath commandment not to work (Exodus 35:1-3) and the account of the construction of the gathering tent. Jacobs emphasizes that the Hebrew word 'melaha' in both versions is used to mean 'work'. Any action prohibited on the Sabbath consists of the types of work required for the construction of the tent (Exodus 35: 4)<sup>515</sup>.

It is possible to see that Louis Jacobs evaluates the approaches of medieval Jewish thinkers. For example, Rabbi Judah (v. 1207) refers to the phrase 'Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy' found in Exodus 20:8. In

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<sup>512</sup> Jacobs, *Jewish Law*, s. 3.

<sup>513</sup> Âdem Özen, *Yahudilikte İbadet, Ayışığı Kitapları*, İstanbul, 2001, s. 193.

<sup>514</sup> Özen, a.g.e, s. 194.

<sup>515</sup> Jacobs, "Shabbat", *The Jewish religion*, s. 434.

the Book of Sefer Hasidim, Rabbi Judah states that everything that can make you forget the Sabbath should be avoided, that sadness should be avoided on that day, and actions that will remind you of the Sabbath should be done. It is important to take a bath before the Sabbath, wear clean and beautiful clothes, be cheerful and recite the day's prayers<sup>516</sup>.

Orthodox Judaism today adopts the traditional Sabbath rules. Conservative Judaism accepts the traditional view, but it is of the opinion that the established means of life, especially electricity, microphone, telephone, automobile use, are by comparison outside the Sabbath prohibitions. Reformist Judaism, on the other hand, is of the opinion that it is not necessary to implement Sabbath prohibitions, except that it is the day of worship and joy. The Sabbath is referred to in two places in the Bible. Therefore, the Sabbath begins with the traditional lighting of two candles by the woman in the house about twenty minutes before sunset on Friday.

With the fixing of the sunset time, depending on time and conditions, different practices have been observed regarding whether the Sabbath candle can be seen from the outside of the house. While Progressive Jews practice that the Sabbath candle is lit regularly at the same time, in Orthodox Judaism the time of lighting the Sabbath candle varies throughout the year<sup>517</sup>.

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<sup>516</sup> Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Hutton Webster, T.G. Pinches, I. Abrahams, Ed. James Hastings, T&T Clark, London 1930, C. X, s. 885-894.

<sup>517</sup> Arthur Hertzberg, Judaism, New York 1962, s. 117, Özen, a.g.e, s. 196.

Sabbath bans were supervised by paid public officials in the Jewish community. Giving permission to check whether the law is implemented or not means that the religion is under state control. As in the account of the Sabbath, in Judaism, rituals can be explained by God, as they were explained by believers and the Prophet.

The debates on the importance and continuity of the Sabbath prohibitions are also related to God's way of speaking about this issue in the Holy Scripture. It continued to be a certain rule as it was stated by God, but its conditions were discussed in accordance with the changing circumstances<sup>518</sup>.

### On Theft

To Louis Jacobs, the order that “Do not defraud or rob your neighbor *Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight*”<sup>519</sup> is a prohibition of negative behavior.<sup>520</sup> This is also a persecution. But the passage that “*If anyone sins and is unfaithful to the Lord by deceiving a neighbor about something entrusted to them or left in their care or about something stolen, or if they cheat their neighbor, or if they find lost property and lie about it, or if they swear falsely about any such sin that people may commit— when they sin in any of these ways and realize their guilt, they must return what they have stolen or taken by extortion, or what was entrusted to them, or the lost property they found, or whatever it was they swore*

<sup>518</sup> Jan Thompson, *Jewish Belief and Practice*, London, 1983. s. 27.

<sup>519</sup> Jacobs, *A Tree of Life*, s.112. Charles S. Liebman, Eliezer Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel*, California U. Press, 1983 London, s. 209.

<sup>520</sup> Leviticus, 19:13

*falsely about. They must make restitution in full, add a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the owner on the day they present their guilt offering*<sup>521</sup> is a positive order<sup>522</sup>. Perutah is the smallest coin of the Talmud era. Although the issue of the theft of Perutah is not included in the Holy Scripture, the Rabbis offer the punishment of flogging. According to Maimonides, there should not be a flogging penalty in the event of theft because this must be resolved by returning the stolen object or restoring its value<sup>523</sup>. This situation sets an example for Louis Jacobs' positive order regarding a negative situation mentioned above.

Louis Jacobs examines the issues Maimonides dealt with in the First Chapter of the book "Yad Ha-Hazakah", "Hilkot Gezelah Va Avedah" under the title "About Theft and Greed" in the Religious Rules (The Codes) section of his book "Jewish Law".

As stated in "Do not steal. Do not lie. 'Do not deceive one another. 'Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the Lord. 'Do not defraud or rob your neighbor. Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight.'" (Leviticus, 19:11-14), which is also mentioned in Exodus 22/3, the 'do not steal' phrase is based on the Holy Scripture, thus it is understood to be forbidden. Rabbis states that this might be interpreted in opposite terms by the opponents of the Israelites<sup>524</sup>.

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<sup>521</sup> Jacobs, Jewish Law, s.125.

<sup>522</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, Leviticus, 5: 23, <https://jps.org/3.6.2017>, Kitab-1 Mukaddes, Istanbul, Leviticus, 6:2-6.

<sup>523</sup> Jacobs, Jewish Law, s.124.

<sup>524</sup> Jacobs, Jewish Law, s.124.

Palestinian Rabbi Johanan says in the thirteenth century that 'Even if the Torah had not been given, we would nonetheless have learned modesty from the cat, which covers its excrement, and that stealing is objectionable from the ant, which does not take grain from another ant, and forbidden relations from the dove, which is faithful to its partner, and proper relations from the rooster, which first appeases the hen and then mates with it' implying that people could find the commands themselves<sup>525</sup>. Saadia Gaon also expressed his thoughts on this issue. In the early 17th century, Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz (d.1630) made studies as well. He considered the commandments regarding the love of God in the context of the necessity to love all of God's creation. It is often seen that people believe in the correctness of religious knowledge and commands but do not implement them in their own lives. Abraham Lincoln also pointed out about the Holy Scripture that "What bothered me is not what I understand in the Holy Scripture, but what I understand very well," implying that the issue is not that religious knowledge is correct, but that people do not apply these truths in their lives<sup>526</sup>.

The case of an unauthorized change of the location of the vehicles belonging to someone else, and that a slave or animal eats from the field or fruit of the neighbor or garden owner are included in the scope of theft. 'And he struck down a huge Egyptian. Although the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, Benaiah went against him with a club.

<sup>525</sup> Jacobs, Jewish Law, s.124.

<sup>526</sup> <https://www.sefaria.org/Eruvin.100b.29?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en> erişim tarihi 13.12.2020

He snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear.'<sup>527</sup> is in the Holy Scripture<sup>528</sup>. The "Benaya" mentioned here is one of the soldiers of David and it is clearly defined as robbery, not theft, since he clearly takes his spear from a person, and it is stated that instead of the double penalty required for theft, it should be paid as tit-for-tat<sup>529</sup>.

According to the Torah, theft, even the smallest amount, is prohibited. It is forbidden to steal or damage a non-Jewish person's property. In the event of such a situation, it is obligatory to return the person whose property was stolen or to compensate for the damage of the person who was damaged. According to Maimonides, even though the full fine occurs only when the amount stolen is at least equal to the value of a perutan, stealing even the smallest amount is still prohibited, and naturally, there is no difference between whether the victim is a Jew or not<sup>530</sup>.

The statement in Exodus: 22/1 that 'Whoever steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it must pay back five heads of cattle for the ox and four sheep for the sheep' is related to Johanna, son of Zakkai, and dates back to AD 1-2 according to Jewish Rabbis<sup>531</sup>. The 'man's torture to an ox', 'death of the ox' or 'stealing the ox' are counted as cases that require a punitive punishment. The principle stated in Exodus 22/6-7 that 'If anyone gives a neighbor

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<sup>527</sup> Jacobs, *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, s. 41.

<sup>528</sup> II. Samuel, 23:21.

<sup>529</sup> Jacobs, *Jewish Law*, s.125.

<sup>530</sup> Jacobs, *Jewish Law*, s.125.

<sup>531</sup> Jacobs, *Jewish Law*, s.125.

silver or goods for safekeeping and they are stolen from the neighbor's house, the thief, if caught, must pay back double.' is repeated in Torah and also applied by the Rabbis.

### **Cheating in Trade**

Louis Jacobs bases his views on cheating in trade in the Tractate Bava Metzia Section of the Babylonian Talmud on the basis of Mishnah and Gemara and bases his views on Mishnah to Rabbi Judah (d.1141): 'A shopkeeper should not give corn and nuts as gifts to children sent by their mothers to shop; because this encourages them to come to their shop and creates unfair competition against other tradesmen. Louis Jacobs refers to the explanations in the Gemaras on this subject. The rabbis accepted the provision allowing for pricing that could make prices more flexible, provided that a shopkeeper does not sell below market price<sup>532</sup>. Abba Saul says 'the shopkeeper should not separate the crushed beans'. However, Rabbi Aha, one of those who allowed this situation, argued that this should be allowed with regard to visible goods. The Mishnah scholar Rabbi Aha lived in Palestine in the 2nd century. He stated that the customer can see the bad bean residues, so there is no deceit and fraud<sup>533</sup>.

'Rabbi Judah lived in Palestine in the second century. The shopkeeper was of the opinion that he

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<sup>532</sup> Jacobs, Jewish Law, s. 3.

<sup>533</sup> Jacobs, Jewish Law, s. 64.

should not give small gifts to small children who were sent to buy items in his shop, because in doing so he took an unfair advantage over other tradesmen. Other rabbis, contemporaries of Rabbi Judah, give permission for reasons stated in Gemara. In this case, there is nothing to prevent the different practices of tradesmen. According to Louis Jacobs, it is unnecessary to object to the practices such as gift certificates etc. by companies to increase sales. Jacobs states that these practices do not fall under the category of fraudulent sales according to Rabbi Judas. Even though Rabbi Judas seems to be interested in protecting other tradesmen, other rabbis in his contemporaries seem to prioritize the public utility more<sup>534</sup>.

"According to the Mishnah, it is forbidden for people to paint animals in a way that makes them attractive because it is cheating."<sup>535</sup> In a period when slavery was common, slaves were painted to look better than they were. To Jacobs, it is possible to give similar examples of such prohibition today: processing fake paintings so that they seem to be original works of master painters, interfering with the mileage of a vehicle to show that the mileage is less than it actually is, advertising that the goods are sold at a discount, but actually selling the goods at a higher price<sup>536</sup>.

The principle "It is forbidden to paint an animal for sale to make it look strong and energetic, the animal

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<sup>534</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 64.

<sup>535</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 62

<sup>536</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 62.



should not look fatter than it is" means that the animal should not be fed with dandruff juice in Babylon. Zeiri said, in the name of Rav Kahana: The animal's fur or bristles should not be brushed<sup>537</sup>. The feathers or hairs of an animal for sale should not be made stiffer than it actually is, so buyers can imagine that the animal is chubby and flawless. Approval of artificially inflating the intestines at the butcher which provides them greater appeal is important to sales. Change in size and weight affects the sales process. Does the approval of the concerned practice also mean the approval of the sale? Gemara makes two statements on this issue. In Babylon, it is a fraud that the animal was fed fraudulently, or that the animal was brushed hard to make it look fatter than it is<sup>538</sup>.

Samuel, who lived in Babylon in the 3rd century, allowed fringes to be added to his cloak. Rabbi Judas (not to be confused with the Palestinian teacher of Rabbi Judas mentioned in the Mishnah) was a disciple of Samuel, and allowed the fine fabrics to be stoned. Rabbah is one of the teachers of Rabbi Judah and of the Babylonian generation that came after Rabbi Judah. Rabbi Judas allowed rags made of hemp to be hammered. Rava let the painted arrows. Rabbi Pappa, son of Samuel, was a contemporary Rava, allowing baskets to be painted. But don't we learn from the Mishnah that painting ships is prohibited? According to Jacobs, there is no contradiction between the examples mentioned above

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<sup>537</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 63-64.

<sup>538</sup> Jacobs, Jewish Law, s. 645.

and the Mishnah. He defended that Mishnah provision on the painting of the ships could not be applied to painting of the fabrics to be used and to the fringes added to a cloth<sup>539</sup>. Louis Jacobs states that it is possible to find similar examples today. According to the Mishnah and Gemara, a distinction is made between old and new ships, even if there seems to be a contradiction. There is no objection to making new products more attractive by painting or other additions. Mishna only sees the camouflage of an old product by painting as deception of the customer<sup>540</sup>. This situation is expressed as "there is no new right to the old product"<sup>541</sup>.

There are also different approaches to the prohibition of interest in the Talmud. A Jew can lend a foreigner a loan at interest if he cannot otherwise earn a living. Contrary to this view, it is also possible to praise the interest-free lenders to foreigners. Rabbi Akiva (d.137), on the other hand, argued that it is necessary for the Jews to apply interest to foreigners as mentioned in the Deuteronomy. According to Levi ben Gershon (Gersonides) (d.1344), who lived in the 14th century, 'no one should benefit a pagan and harm him as much as possible without leaving the rules of righteousness'. Therefore, it is a divine command to apply interest to a non-Jew. The consent to receive interest from non-Jews was seen as a result of the pressure exerted by kings and statesmen on the Jews; and it was stated that the interest

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<sup>539</sup> Jacobs, *Jewish Law*, s. 65.

<sup>540</sup> Jacobs, *Jewish Law*, s. 65.

<sup>541</sup> Jacobs, *Jewish Law*, s. 66.

received should be the minimum amount required to live, so there could be no penalty for interest<sup>542</sup>.

Rabbinic Judaism is the process of adapting old laws to modern conditions. The Jews emerged as the world's first rational economists in this period during which the foundations of the basic principles of trade were laid, the employment principles were supported by religious laws, and solutions to the problem of usury and interest were developed<sup>543</sup>. Relevant passages are 'If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not treat it like a business deal; charge no interest' (Exodus, 20:25), 'You must not lend them money at interest or sell them food at a profit.' (Leviticus, 25- 26), 'You may charge a foreigner interest, but not a fellow Israelite' (Deuteronomy 23:20). This approach, which is based on the fact that the protection of the rights of the poor community and social unity are possible with a strong economy, explains the existence of different economic practices among Jews and against foreigners.

The Jews have played a powerful role economically for centuries. At the end of the Exodus, they were acquitted from the charges in the story of Joseph in Egypt. The Jews achieved the position of the lender. God's promise that "I will make my people find favor in the eyes of the Egyptians. When you go, you will not go empty-handed". The Holy Script expressions allow us to follow the transformation: "God will bless you in line with His promises. You will lend to many

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<sup>542</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 66.

<sup>543</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Theology, s. 243.

nations, but you will not borrow." The facts that 'those who returned with Ezra brought great wealth', that the Rabbis were acquainted with gold varieties and the level of economic development of the Talmud period are remarkable. Thus, we can trace the source of the Jews' efforts and savings in the economic field, which is based on the Holy Scripture.

### **Beliefs of Muslims**

To Louis Jacobs, Maimonides' description of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as the Prophet of Islam caused Maimonides' books to be deemed worthless by the Jews. Because this interpretation of Maimonides has been interpreted and discussed that he was influenced by Islam which might lead to an influence on Halakhah by a source other than the prophets recognized in Judaism. His impression of being influenced by Islam and therefore the existence of an influence other than the prophets accepted in Judaism on Halakha. Although it is not accepted as an objective approach for Louis Jacobs to evaluate the discussion of whether Maimonides was Muslim only concerning his interaction with Halakhah<sup>544</sup>, it is possible to say that Jacobs does not approve of such a discussion about Maimonides.

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<sup>544</sup> Werner Sombart, *Yahudiler ve Modern Kapitalizm*, Çev. Sabri Gürses, Küre 2015, İstanbul, s. 274.

## Women and Family Related Issues

According to Torah, men take priority over women. Because when they are alone, men will be more successful than women to survive. In the case of captivity, saving the woman is a priority. Since women are more likely to be harmed in cases of sexual abuse against captives, rescuing a captive woman is naturally a priority<sup>545</sup>.

Louis Jacobs gives the issue of child marriage permission in Tosafot as an example that Jewish law can make different decisions on a subject at different times. The Talmud does not allow child marriage<sup>546</sup>. However, it was added to Tosafot in 12-14th centuries that the orphan and poor girls could marry at a child age if they wanted to, otherwise they would remain to be an orphan and poor<sup>547</sup>. As in this example, general principles may contradict with social or individual obligations and possible benefits. Louis Jacobs states that both rigid principles and limitless flexibility should be avoided, as is the case that Jews in France did not welcome this situation<sup>548</sup>.

For example, one might consider the view in Commandment 5 that honoring the mother is commanded by God because it is an appropriate behaviour, or the reverse, it is an appropriate behaviour because it is commanded by God. According to the first view, it might be correct that God commanded to belittle the mother, but

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<sup>545</sup> Jacobs, *A Tree of Life*, s. 60.

<sup>546</sup> Jacobs, *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, s. 28.

<sup>547</sup> Jacobs, *A Tree of Life*, s. 113.

<sup>548</sup> Jacobs, *a.g.e.*, s.113.

according to the second view, it would not be correct for God to command to belittle the mother. A similar approach can be considered for the theft in Order 8.

## Prayer

The most comprehensible interpretation in the Judaic tradition of worship and prayer, according to Louis Jacobs, is in Nahmanides'<sup>549</sup> interpretation of the Pentateuch. One of the important concepts used by Nahmanides is the concept of "purification of human or society". The expression "The word of the Lord is pure (tzerufah)" in Psalm 18:30 was interpreted by the Babylonian Lord as a key word to understand the purpose of worship in Midrash<sup>550</sup>. To the Rabbi, worshiping God and obeying his rules are instruments of becoming a better and perfect person and getting closer to God's love.

The idea that God needs prayers for sensitive religious societies, as in Kabbalists' assessments, is considered an absurd approach.

In Judaism, worship is not limited to prayer, because within the Jewish religious experience, Torah studies are considered to be worship in itself. Regarding prayer, the prayers made by the Rabbis are very important as they express the highest possible position in the world before God<sup>551</sup>.

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<sup>549</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s.113.

<sup>550</sup> Moses Ben Nahman, also called Nahmani, RamBaN (1194-1270): He was the leading Talmud and Kabbalah Scholar of the Middle Ages, Jewish Philosopher, poet and Rabbi born in Spain.

<sup>551</sup> Louis Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology*, s.183, Deut. 22:6.

Another important concept in prayer is "intention". This concept has historically been associated with prayer in the sense of being aware of what you are doing. This issue can be identified with the famous expression of the medieval Jewish scholar Bahya Ibn-i Pakuda "Prayer without intention is like a soulless body or an egg without a shell". According to Maimonides, the intention is to present a person in the presence of God, purified from all other thoughts<sup>552</sup>.

Hasidic tradition approaches prayer from a Kabbalistic perspective. Prayer is to turn to God completely. It is necessary to be emotionally concentrated. Prayer is a person's spiritual disappearance in the existence of the world. In the Hasidic doctrine, the existence of a person in nature, the privileges he wants to have as a human being, and his pride constitute an obstacle to the desire to integrate with the Divine being.

Prayer takes the person from the environment of difficulty and multiplicity to an independent and individual position.

Four forms of prayer can be mentioned<sup>553</sup>:

- I. Wish Prayers, (found in the form familiar to the Bible)
- II. Prayers for Worship
- III. Thanksgiving Prayers
- IV. Prayers of Regret.

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<sup>552</sup> Louis Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology*, s.183, Deut. 22:6.

<sup>553</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 188.

The word prayer is the word 'palal' (to judge, beg, cut)<sup>554</sup> in pagan origin religions, which refers to the worship performed in the form of opening wounds and scratches on various parts of the body.

### **No Misuse of God's Name**

*'Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.'* (Psalm, 86/11) was apparently used by the medieval Jewish thinkers concerning fear of God. Modern thinker Rudolf Otto used the term "numinous" in this regard. Numinous means mysterious, derived from numen<sup>555</sup>.

The issue of not saying the name of God should be practiced as permitted in Numbers 5, according to the Rabbis. It has been made a rule to say the name of God when necessary for the peace and harmony of the husband and wife in the home<sup>556</sup>.

### **Obligation of the Studies of the Torah**

According to the stated principle of Torah studies, one should share his work equally among the three important subjects, the Bible, the Mishnah and the Talmud. In Torah studies, as long as the concept of God exists in the mind, seeing the Talmud only as the sum of practical studies is a failure of a pure scientist view.<sup>557</sup>

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<sup>554</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s.189.

<sup>555</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Teology, s.189.

<sup>556</sup> Jacobs, A Jewish Telogy, s. 181.

<sup>557</sup> Numbers, 5



Although the Talmud becomes the main and final court of appeal for all courts that came after it, it is not the basis for determining the law<sup>558</sup>.

Torah studies have an important place in rabbinic thought and it has been regarded as a priority over all kinds of prayers and worship. Those who teach Torah to somebody are accepted to have the same value of a father for the learner<sup>559</sup>. Books about prophets do not take up much space in the Torah. The fact that the Torah is eternal and the adventure of the Torah is higher than the adventures of the Prophets explains why the chapters about the Prophets are few.

### THE HOLY SCRIPT AND MYSTICISM ACCORDING TO LOUIS JACOBS

To Louis Jacobs, mysticism is the most intense form of religious form. Therefore, a modern Jew can find answers to some of his problems with belief in Kabbalah. Because when religion fails to come up with a solution, a fight emerges between man and God. Since Kabbalah takes the idea of God to the center, it offers a proposal model to the investigative human being<sup>560</sup>.

While the traditional understanding of Kabbalah presents the coming of the Messiah as a divine grace, the representative of Safed Kabbalah and the Spanish poet Judah Halevi (1075-1141) advocates supremacy of direct

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<sup>558</sup> Jacobs, *The Talmudic Argument*, s.210.

<sup>559</sup> Jacobs, *The Talmudic Argument*, s.211

<sup>560</sup> Jacobs, *A Tree of Life*, s. 28.

contact with God over rationality. Maimonides' Mishnah Torah has been criticized. It is characteristic of this period that Neoplatonic tendencies became a tool for mystical formations. Among them, Isaac The Blind (1160-1235) makes explanations approaching Kabbalah by mentioning ten Sefirot of God and that creation is the voice of God.

Kabbalah reached its peak by Moses Ben Shem Tov in his work the Zohar (*Sefer ha zohar*). Mysticism aimed to approach the people by defending Pantheism. On the other hand, the views to be associated with rationalist Judaism mostly appeal to the educated middle class. Spinoza represents a final case of this contradiction. He adopts the pantheistic understanding of God and is also a rationalist. In this respect, Spinoza can be called the joint product or personified form of contradiction and conflict. In *Mesillat Yesharim* (*The Way of the Almighty*), a major work of Moses Hayim Luzzotto (1707-1746) from the XVIII century Kabbalah tradition, he touches on the subtleties of the way of spiritual perfection, and the high value of one's fear without fear of punishment and the difficulty of achieving this state<sup>561</sup>.

While Louis Jacobs was at the Manchester Yeshiva, he was interested in Jewish mysticism, meeting the works of writers such as Moses b Jacob Cordovero (1522-1570), Moses Hayyim Luzzato, and Naphtali Hirtz Wessley (1725-1805).

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<sup>561</sup> Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology*, s. 1.

Jacobs notes that the Musar movement was active in the Gateshead Kollel during his short disciple period therein<sup>562</sup>. While comparing the Mystical school of Musar with the mystical thought of the Habad branch of Hasidism, he expresses it as "According to the Musar movement, this world is nothing" and "According to Hasidism, the future world is everything".<sup>563</sup>

Louis Jacobs was interested in 16th century Kabbalistic studies, which Solomon Schechter also dwelled on before him. Louis Jacobs describes the work "Palmtree of Deborah" as childish and naive and emphasizes its importance for individual religious experience. According to Louis Jacobs, Moses Cordovero was influenced by two different ways of working at Safed: the Bible and Talmud Interpretations, and the interpretation of the rules of Jewish law and secret knowledge - Kabbalah Mysticism. Louis Jacobs translated his work into English as "Moses Cordovero's Palm Tree of Deborah from Hebrew (1960)" and wrote an introduction and additions to the work. Louis Jacobs notes that he finds Debora's Song to be childish, but very important to a devout Jew as it expresses enthusiasm and purity. Considering that Solomon Schechter had made similar comments about Moses Cordovero earlier, it is seen that Louis Jacobs continued the criticisms made before him.

The exile of Spain in 1492 and the murder of 6000 Jews in Poland in 1497-1648 reinstituted the belief in Messiah and made the Kabbalah mysticism ceased to be

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<sup>562</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s.178

<sup>563</sup> Jacobs, Helping With Inquiries, s.27

exclusive to the elite class and turned into an element of hope for the people. The Jews introduced expansions to their Holy Scriptures such as Kabbalah, eschatological desire to know the apocalypse, mystical interpretation of the text, transformation of insignificant people in the Holy Scriptures into superior characters.

It is seen that the traditional understanding of Kabbalah has been excluded with the Sabatayist movement. The results of scientific discoveries brought a new understanding of the world. Religious salvation and the hope of returning to Zion are associated with traditional assumptions. In the twentieth century, European women's ability to be at the forefront as preachers and the rise of the hope of living in a new world also expresses the search for social reform both geographically and socially<sup>564</sup>. The thought that the establishment of Israel will be accelerated and realized with Kabbalah led to the opening of the first Kabbalah School in Palestine. It was embraced by the clerics and also indoctrinated to the people that God gave oral law to Moses as well as Pentateuch. In the Talmud, the word 'Kabbalah' meant only doctrine or tradition. But it started to mean "privileged knowledge" or "a special education that enables learning about God ". The changes and transformations in this period, especially the Jewish Massacres in Eastern Europe and the Thirty Years' War in Europe (1618-1648), took place through Kabbalah for reasons that either eliminated Rabbi tradition or rendered it ineffective. The tragic death of Portuguese Solomon

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<sup>564</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 27

Molcho, who claimed to be the Messiah, and the fact that the Ottoman Empire forced Sabatay Zevi to become a Muslim can be considered as political misfortune. But these examples paved the way for Jews in search of individuality and modernization to express themselves mystically<sup>565</sup>.

Gershom Scholem (1891-1982) states that the first Kabbalists never interpreted the Song of the Song and found it important because it included the dialogue between God and the soul<sup>566</sup>. 'The man was perfect and correct. He was afraid of Allah and feared evil.' (Job, 1:1), 'You will fear the Lord of God.' (Deuteronomy, 10:20), 'Job said: Here I am a worthless thing, what shall I answer you.' (Job, 40: 4), 'and prayed: 'I am too ashamed and disgraced, my God, to lift up my face to you, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens.' (Ezra, 9:6), 'Daniel said : Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame.' (Daniel, 9: 7)' The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.' (Psalm, 111:10).

Existentialism basically has an atheist character. The clear differences and fundamental similarities between Orthodox Judaism and existentialist philosophy are striking. The necessity of proving God first, the imagination of a society outside the established order, the

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<sup>565</sup> Kürşad Demirci, Sabatayizmin Avrupa Yahudiliğine Etkileri, Cumhuriyet Ü. İlahiyat Fak. Dergisi, C.16, S. 2, s. 625-634.

<sup>566</sup> Demirci, a.g.m, s.625-634.

ideal rebellion movement that is expected to include all humanity, and the questioning of rationalism are among these similarities, but the mystical results of the individual and spiritual approach in Hasidism show a significant difference<sup>567</sup>. The Bittul Ha Yesh concept in the Hasidic tradition means self-rejection and suggests a method separate from universal existentialism<sup>568</sup>.

It is difficult to understand how Orthodox Jews value religious diversity. Although there are positive opinions on this subject, some of the Hasidis were described as heretics or non-religious. As a justification, they claimed that a traditional pattern approach of God cannot be accepted. Even if it seems like a good choice, it represents a choice with an unclear end and not enough by itself.

### **LOUIS JACOBS' VIEWS ABOUT THE BIBLE INTERPRETATION TRADITION**

In his works, Louis Jacobs makes references to thinkers and works that form the tradition of interpretation, especially concerning the issues of philosophy, mysticism, and language, from the early period to the present day, takes into account the historical and cultural conditions, and reflects a wide knowledge of other religions and scientific developments. For this reason, the following section on the tradition of Holy Scripture interpretation, divided as the Medieval Age and

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<sup>567</sup> Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology*, s.162.

<sup>568</sup> J. G. Weiss, a.g.e, s. 124.

the Modern Period, briefly focuses on the basic elements of interpretation and the leading figures on this subject.

### **Middle Age**

Rational thought accepts reason as an objective force and requires the restriction of definitions with power of reason at least to a certain extent. The acceptance of a secular principle as 'transcendent' and 'universal' is also sanctifying. The term "sacredness" in English is used to express the termination of the sacredness, and to identify the change and deterioration of the concepts accepted as "value".

Within the Holy Scripture interpretation, it is seen that the allegorical approach is very important in Philo, church fathers, medieval Jewish philosophers, Kabbalah representatives and the Hasidic tradition. The allegory defends the interpretation that the Holy Scripture text contains meanings beyond what is written. This mode of interpretation is seen as the Greek and Stoic philosophy influence on the Sacred Texts. Philo cares about the psychological and metaphysical meanings of symbolic language. Explaining the text taken from the Holy Scripture within the framework of the tradition of allegorical interpretation, Philo takes into consideration the person, event, environment and ethical principles<sup>569</sup>. Philo's desire to combine Jewish mysticism and philosophy on the same plane should be taken into

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<sup>569</sup> Jacobs, *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History*, içinde 'Eating as an Act of Worship in Hasidic Thought', ed. S. Stein ve R. Loewe, Alabama University Press, 1979, s.158.

account in research on Judaism. Philo effect is seen intensely in Talmud and Midrash literature. Karkasani (d.), Nahavendi (d.), Yahuda Halevi (d.), Erwin R. Goodenough (d.) and David Neumark (d.) are among the thinkers who carried the Philo's influence to the Jewish philosophy and mysticism and tradition of interpretation<sup>570</sup>.

Despite the interpretation of the Jewish Holy Scripture with the influence of Christianity, it is seen that the interpretations in which philosophy, philology and Kabbalah are used together have developed. Despite their differences, Abraham b Ezra (d.1167), Nahmanides (d.1270) and Isaac Abrabanel (d.1508) developed their interpretations of the Holy Scripture within the possibilities of their time<sup>571</sup>.

aid b. Yusuf Feyyumi (Sadia Gaon) focused on the Holy Script in his early studies of Judaism. For Gaon, reason and revelation do not contradict. Therefore, non-contradiction between the holy Script text and the Rabbinic tradition is imperative. Although Sadia Gaon was criticized for not developing a fundamental view, his continued influence until Haskalah shows the importance of his contributions to making sense of the philosophical views and Holy Scripture studies of his period<sup>572</sup>.

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<sup>570</sup> Dursun Ali Aykıt, İskenderiyeli Philo, Doğudan Batıya Düşüncenin Serüveni, ed. Bayram Ali Çetinkaya, s. 395-420.

<sup>571</sup> Alexandre Altmann, 'Judaism and World Philosophy: From Philo to Spinoza, The Jews, Their Role in Civilization, Edt. Louis Finkelstein, Schocken Books, New York, 1998, s.75.

<sup>572</sup> Alexandre Altmann, "Bible", Ejđ, C.4, s. 897.



Medieval Rabbinic interpretations include a period of one thousand years before Haskala. First of all, we should say that the religious sermons constitute the first and most important base. Interpretations in this field include cultural necessities and scriptures, and different views from earlier ages. The materials on this subject are midrash materials and masoras. The interpretation of the emphasis in singing and reading the Scriptures is prominent in the interpretations of this period. Rashi and Abraham bin Ezra are important names on this subject. In this area, the analogy of God as the "Father" and Israel as the "Mother" are examples of allegorical approach in the first period<sup>573</sup>.

The birth of Islam, which expanded from the Arabian Peninsula in the 7th century, and the Karai Judaism that emerged in the Caspian Region in the 10th century, affected the interpretations of the Holy Scripture as two important developments which revealed new perspectives. The scientific studies of the Muslims provided an effective reason for the philosophical and linguistic studies of the Jews. The decrease in the use of Aramaic words and the elimination of Aramaic words in the Holy Scripture are seen as an improvement in this period. Hermeneutic and allegorical interpretations of the Holy Scripture in Karai Judaism were then widely used<sup>574</sup>.

Saadia Gaon made an important contribution to the Pentatök interpretation with his works. Gaon's translation

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<sup>573</sup> Harman, "Said B. Yusuf Feyyumi", *DİA*, C. 12, s. 517-519, Harman, "Yahudilik", C. 43, s. 201-206.

<sup>574</sup> Louis Isaac Rabinowitz, "Bible", *Ejd*, C .4, s. 921.

of the Holy Text into Arabic and presenting his comments in his works in Arabic is remarkable in terms of the dimensions of cultural interaction. In Gaon's Book of Beliefs and Opinions, all of God's commandments are described with metaphors. The book of Shirat Yisrael, written by Moses Ibn Ezra under the influence of Saadia Gaon, carries many traces of the Holy Scripture. Ibn-i Ezra's work has also been influential on Arabic poetry<sup>575</sup>.

Abraham b. Ezra (d) did not accept the Aggadah Midrash, but accepted the Halakhah Midrash. He avoided the search for mystical meaning in the Torah and did not resort to Kabbalah<sup>576</sup>.

Sadia Gaon (d.942) is seen as "an important milestone in the long journey of the Israeli people to become a community with the Holy Scripture".<sup>577</sup> He drew attention to the influence of Babylonian influence on the Jewish Calendar, while his objection that the Passover Feast should not be celebrated according to the date in the Babylonian calendar was accepted. He worked on the conversion of the Hebrew language into the language of worship and made important contributions to the systematization of the Talmud in relation to the Halaha<sup>578</sup>.

The comments of Sadia Gaon, Maimonides, Abraham b Davud are suitable for the literal text and the purpose. According to Sadia Gaon, all the commands in the Torah are explained with metaphors. The

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<sup>575</sup> Rabinowitz, "Bible", Ejd, C .4, s. 920.

<sup>576</sup> Warren Harvey, "Torah", Ejd. C. 15, s.1240, Alexandre Altmann, "Bible", Ejd. C. s. 898.

<sup>577</sup> Alexandre Altmann, "Bible", Ejd. C. 4, s. 895.

<sup>578</sup> Harvey, "Torah", Ejd. C. 15, s.1240.

anthropomorphic portrayal of God is also a metaphor. According to Maimonides, there are allegorical narratives in all Bible chapters where changes in the rules of nature, resurrection after death, and the signs of doomsday are described. A Neoplatonic view is seen in Maimonides' account. It is possible to say that Abraham b Ezra has also developed a method regarding Torah interpretations<sup>579</sup>.

Expressions containing Radical Allegory, especially those of Isaac Averroes Albalog, Levi b. Gershom, Jacob Anatoli, Levi b. Abraham, are a common form of explanation. Jacob b. Rauben has adopted the traditional style of expression. When it comes to the literal interpretations, it is possible to say that unlike the Spanish school, with the influence of the Christian culture, especially in Southern France, religious explanatory and homiletic interpretations have priority over philosophical and philological interpretations.

Synthetic Bible interpretations have philological, philosophical, and Kabbalistic influences. Nahmanides and Abraham b. Ezra, both used Kabbalah tradition by criticizing it. Joseph Kimni combined different methods and took logic, philology and philosophy from Spain as well as homiletic and literal interpretations from Germany, and turned them into a synthesis. On the other hand, Nahmanides appears with an interpretation that is a mixture of Franco-Germanic and Spanish. Nahmanides focused on the general meaning and content of the text rather than philosophically dealing with concepts and its general philosophical meaning. This effort brings him

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<sup>579</sup> Harvey, "Torah", Ejd. C. 15, s.1240.

closer to Kabbalah. Although Nahmanides criticizes Kabbalah, he applies from time to time. Nahmanides primarily attaches importance to the meaning of the text and avoids philosophical pursuits.

In the interpretation understanding that developed after Nahmanides, Isaac Abrabanel in the 15th century drew attention, in contrast to Nahmanides who lived in the 14th century. In the 16th and 17th centuries, David and Hillel Altschuler wrote literal interpretations for the Prophets and Haggai at a time when Holy Scripture interpretation was declining. Containing their interpretations, *Metzudat David* and *Metzudat Ziyon* attracted widespread attention despite being different from the other major works<sup>580</sup>.

### **The Modern Period**

Holy Scripture studies in Modern Judaism are closely related to the discussions of Jewish Enlightenment after Haskalah. Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment) is the Jewish search for innovation that started in Western Europe and spread all over Europe. These efforts, primarily related to education and in particular religious education, had an impact both on other areas of life and on all Jews. This period was later identified with Moses Mendelssohn. Moses Mendelssohn is regarded as a pioneer in Holy Scripture translation and interpretation of his time and is referred to as the "father of enlightenment".

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<sup>580</sup> Harvey, "Torah", Ejd, C. 15, s. 1236.

Mendelsshon aimed to reduce the problems between Jews and non-Jews in their daily relationship and to develop a more conscious relationship of affiliation by improving the interest of the members of Judaism with the Holy Scripture<sup>581</sup>.

The departure point of Mendesshon in the 19th century was philosophical debates and their impact on religious philosophy. Mendelsshon pioneered the translation of the Holy Scripture into Western languages, primarily into German. In the interpretation of the Holy Scripture text, he paid attention to understandability and consideration of the interests and needs of the existing conditions of the Jews. Arguably, although this period is considered as an evaluation of the Holy Scripture perspectives within Christianity and its adaptation to Judaism, considering that the Jews are more existential and more mystical about the Pentateuch, the importance of the modernization effort on a subject that the Jews are more conservative is even more important.

The work of Mendelsshon and his contemporaries in Germany facilitated the dissemination of critical studies. Mendelssohn's books for the Prophets and Hagiography books, which consist mostly of medieval Holy Scripture commentary, and H. Graetz's comments on *Song of Song* and *Psalms* are among the most important works in this field<sup>582</sup>.

When the importance given to the formation process of the Pentateuch for both Judaism and

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<sup>581</sup> Horace D. Hummel, "Bible", Ejd. C. 4, s. 905.

<sup>582</sup> Saul Aaron Adler, 'Bible', Ejd, C. 4, s. 900.

Christianity is compared, the result is very compatible with each other<sup>583</sup>. Samuel David Luzzatto (ShaDaL) represented Moses Mendelssohn's approach to the Holy Scripture in Italy. Luzzatto emphasizes the importance of the results of positive sciences and philosophical studies in Holy Scripture studies. He prioritized the joint evaluation of diversity in linguistic, cultural and geographic conditions concerning the interpretations of the Early and Middle Ages, translation and other works of Holy Scripture literature. He tried to reflect this idea in his works. He translated and interpreted the Book of Isaiah in 1855. Luzzatto's work was published and presented at the seminar held for Rabbis in Padua in 1871. In 1876, translations and interpretations of the Book of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Proverbs and Job were published. An important contribution of Luzzatto is that he draws attention to the influence of other cultural interactions, especially the Aramaic languages, during the development of Hebrew<sup>584</sup>. In Heinrich Graetz's (1817-1891) work titled Jewish History, published in 1876, the determinative nature of religious principles is noteworthy. According to Heinrich Graetz, Jewish History is the history of the Jewish Bible Torah. He states that "The soul of a Jew was the Torah and his body was the Holy Land." This meant being part of both a religious and a political whole. According to Graetz, "Deuteronomy" and "Isaiah" are the best sources to describe the origin of the Jews.

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<sup>583</sup> Adler, "Bible", Ejd, C. 4, s. 902.

<sup>584</sup> Samuel Sandmel, The Hebrew Scriptures An Introduction to Their Literature And Religious Ideas, NY, Oxford Univ. Press, 1978, USA s. 527.

Kabbalah was shaped and strengthened by the philosophical understanding of the Orthodox trend. The works of Ibn Rushd influenced the Orthodox tradition through Maimonides' translations<sup>585</sup>. It is possible to interpret this effect in two ways. It is not a sufficient explanation that the orthodox tradition has developed allegorical interpretations under threat. Although allegorical interpretations emphasize the importance of meaning by increasing the power of expression, they have been criticized for causing passive support for dogmatic beliefs<sup>586</sup>. On the other hand, the Kabala method accepts as the basis that allegorically the rational and mystical interpretations represent two poles.

Abraham Khana, who is called the Spiritual Father of Zionism, argues that the Bible can be interpreted more accurately by the Jews, despite the consistency of criticism outside of Judaism.

Arnold Ehrlich (d. 1919) takes a secular approach and criticizes the disregard for what non-Jews write<sup>587</sup>.

The Holy Scripture method proposed by Spinoza contained significant criticism. According to Spinoza, the subtleties of Hebrew should be known. It must also be acknowledged that the Holy Script writers made some additions. The negativities in the text should be identified and evaluated separately from the essence of religion. Each book should be interpreted separately. Literal interpretations should be given priority in order to gain a

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<sup>585</sup> Saul Aaron Adler, "Bible", Ejd, C. 4, s. 901.

<sup>586</sup> Alexandre Alt Altmann, "Bible", Ejd, C. 4, s. 899.mann, "Bible", Ejd, C. 4, s. 899

<sup>587</sup> Altmann, "Bible", Ejd, C. 4, s. 899.

better understanding of the basic concepts of the Holy Script. Metaphorical interpretations are possible when literal interpretations conflict with reason. The author of the books of the prophets, the historical conditions in which these texts were written, the distortions and positive contributions should be evaluated separately<sup>588</sup>. It should be said that especially Reformists adopt a modern approach in the interpretation of the Holy Scripture. It was even recommended that every society can worship in their language, and that unwelcomed parts of the Holy Scripture such as the place of women within the family and society should be removed. The Hasidics, on the other hand, expressed a stronger tendency to continue to be representative of the Rabbani tradition. Although Orthodox Judaism approaches change moderately, they care about the condition of not contradicting the "Halakhah". Ultra-Orthodoxy, on the other hand, continues to exist as groups that minimize the change and adopt a more strict and introverted lifestyle. Louis Jacobs' orthodox family origin and initial religious education from the Rabbinic tradition explain his wide application to Rabbinic sources. Louis Jacobs refers to Hasidi sources in his studies of Kabbalah. Making translations on this subject and including Hasidi views in his works are associated with individual religiosity.

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<sup>588</sup> Saul Aaron Adler, "Bible", Ejd, C. 4, s. 902.



## CHAPTER III

### LOUIS JACOBS AND SECULARIZATION

The concept of religion after modernization has been examined with a new perspective, especially with institutional and philosophical criticism. Classifiability of the monoteists nature and provisions of Islam, God-individual-church relations in the context of Christianity's criticism about the holy Scripture have been in interaciton with evaluation of Judaism as an institutional structure.

In the 20th century, assessments on Judaism, particularly theological problems, were presented in section 1.3 within the framework of the New Jewish Theology. Interpretations of Jewish philosophy after modernization have formed modern theology, and Louis Jacobs's theological views were given in section 2.1 while Jacobs' examples highlighting that Halakhah is open to change to solve the problems of modernization were also included in section 2.3.

Louis Jacobs closely follows his contemporaries. But Jacobs' most distinctive stance is not an absolute reform. Jacobs strives to reveal that human and environmental elements have harmoniously influenced religion since the early days of Judaism. According to Jacobs, the theological or legal problems discussed in the post-modern period cannot be addressed regardless of tradition. This chapter covers the philosophical and sociological assessment of secularization as a concept, the

main debates of Judaism in the modern era and the importance of Louis Jacobs as the British representative of Conservative Judaism institutionalized in the US.

### **THE CONCEPT OF SECULARIZATION AND PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE CONCEPT OF SECULARIZATION**

Directly or indirectly secularization (secularization) is coming up in the fields of History of Religions, criticism of the Holy Scripture, Modern Religious Formations, the post-reform studies in Christianity, and especially the post-Haskalah studies in Judaism.

Can an individual react to modernity in a modern society on religious issues, other than in the form of traditional and liberal influences ? If this is possible for religious institutions or social structures, what conditions are the determinants of these reactions?

The Conservative Judaism was developed within Reform Judaism after modernity. It aims at voluntary reconciliation of religious values and divinities with man and the world, but could not easily renounce the idea of application of religious practices in accordance with Halakhah. Conservative Judaism has faced significant criticism, although it has set out ambitiously in this regard<sup>589</sup>.

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<sup>589</sup> Benedict De Spinoza, Teolojik-Politik İnceleme, Çev. Musa Kazım Arıcan, 2011 TDV, Ankara, s. 128.

Modernity is not an absolutely definable and objective concept. On the contrary, it is more accurate to define and limit modernity as a sociological phenomenon, and according to values that vary from society to society. Some subjective consequences should be evaluated to be accepted primarily regarding historical, religious and sociological varieties of societies, democracy, human rights, individual and social freedoms/rights.

The questioning of modernization is, in a way, the adoption of change. This situation also requires the determination of the boundaries of the Divine and the secular one. Whether the sacred or orders/prohibitions already defined by the religion require revision and how to justify situations that require revision are important problems encountered with modernization. Modernity is the problem of how to live in the world and deals with the analysis of how social structures and institutions are shaped especially in political-economic areas after modernization.

A modern state cannot free itself from the contradiction of making attempts to shape and restrict the religious beliefs and identities of its citizens in accordance with the social state principle.

### **The Concept of Secularization**

The word 'secularization' comes from the word 'Saeculum' in Latin and means non-religious and belonging to the world. In Latin it means "sacer" (sacred), "sacrare" (blessing), "sanctum" (saint), "sacrum"

(sacred)<sup>590</sup>. The word 'sacred' in English is a word derived from Latin. The word 'holy' derived from the German word "heiling" is also used in its sacred meaning<sup>591</sup>. The term "holy" is used when indicated by God, and "sacred" is used if it is sanctified by people<sup>592</sup>.

According to Georges Bataille (d.1962), all of the societies sustained effort to design a superior existence, but they all failed. He says: 'First of all, if the confusion has not ended in the world of fog, these fog bring a dull world against a luminous world. Man feels a vague and powerless fear because of his sense of sacredness. Undoubtedly, the idea of sacredness is a precious and unique emotion, but it has a dizzying, disorienting and dangerous appearance between the known and the unknown'.<sup>593</sup> 'In the narrow meaning, the language of religion is speaking about God'.<sup>594</sup>

At the end of the 19th century, anthropological studies revealed that many phenomena related to normal and human life had a religious essence. The perception of life was transformed into a single and unchangeable essence. This essence, namely religion; was the object of a universal experience. In modern history, mythification was considered a progression. In the rational attitude before the Enlightenment, everything claimed to belong to the

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<sup>590</sup> See Chapter 3.5.5

<sup>591</sup> Cengiz Batuk, *Mitoloji, Doğudan Batıya Düşüncenin Serüveni* içinde, Edt., Bayram Ali Çetinkaya, İnsan, 2015, İstanbul, C.1, s. 906.

<sup>592</sup> Batuk, a.g.e., s. 906.

<sup>593</sup> Ahmet Güç, *Dinlerde Kutsal ve Kutsallık Anlayışı, Dinler Tarihi Araştırmaları I*, Ankara, Türkiye Dinler Tarihi Derneği Yayınları, 1998, s. 338.

<sup>594</sup> Georges Bataille, *Din Kuramı*, Çev. M. Mukadder Yakuboğlu, Göçebe Yayınları 1997, İstanbul, s. 28.

'divine logos' was resolved by reason and was often described as absurd. Enlightenment philosophy, on the other hand, accepted the concept of myth as 'deep and revealed truth' in the secularization process<sup>595</sup>. The word "sacre" in French was not part of the everyday language of Christians in the Middle Ages and early Modern Age. There were scientific uses to refer to certain things (grail), institutions (consistory) and persons (the king's body), but there was no presumed experience of the objects to which it refers. Throughout this period, in terms of the religious belief of the people, "sainthood" was a concept associated with the ordinary people and their world. During the revolution, the word 'sacre' came to the fore with threatening expressions. For example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1789) refers to natural, inalienable, and sacred rights. In Roman Empire period Latin language, "sacer", which is the root of the word sacred, describes everything a god has. It means "everything" that has been taken from the profanum realm by the state and transferred to the realm of sacrum. In modern English, the word 'sacred' is a singular thing or person that is often set apart and revered at first. But when we speak of sacred things, one should not understand only beings called gods or spirits: a stone, a tree, a spring, a pebble, a piece of wood, a house, in short, anything can be sacred. A rite or ritual is expected to be of a sacred nature. In fact, the rite that does not include it to a certain extent is not called a rite. There are phrases, expressions and formulas that are only suitable for the

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<sup>595</sup> Turan Koç, *Din Dili*, Rey, Kayseri, 1995, s. 11.

expression of holy personalities<sup>596</sup>. The concepts of profane or secular, which are the opposite of the concept of sacred (sacred, holy), include concepts other than those belonging to God and the supernatural domain. The contrast between the sacred and the profane was an important element in revealing the origin of all religions. When primitive man encountered a mysterious situation, myths were born and the limits of his concept of the sacred were formed<sup>597</sup>.

### **Secularization as a Philosophical and Sociological Debate**

Enlightenment is the transformation of the debates of philosophy of science and philosophy of religion in the XVII. and XVIII century through law, religious institutions, education system and economic systems. During this period, the philosophical and religious traditions were questioned. On the other hand, existing practices were also questioned and different experiences of change were ensured.

Spinoza's views in the context of biblical criticism, the views of philosophers in the period of enlightenment on religion and science, and the widespread discussion of established paradigms related to the methods of critical thinking has brought the religion beyond the clergy's domain. The biggest debate in this period was the problem of revelations<sup>598</sup>. The main subject of 20th-

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<sup>596</sup> Asad, a.g.e, s.56.

<sup>597</sup> Emilie Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of The Religious Life*, 1976 London, s. 37.

<sup>598</sup> Eric J. Sharpe, *Dinler Tarihinde 50 Anahtar Kavram*, Çev. Ahmet Güç, Arasta,

century Jewish law was that the philosophical and religious views that come with modernization were influenced by theology under the influence of debates in Western science and cultural life. It is possible to say that the Renaissance and Reform approach, especially represented by Martin Buber, Shmuel Hugo Bergman (d. 1975), Gershom Scholem (d. 1982), developed within the framework of the question of 'what the Torah means to us'.<sup>599</sup>

### Philosophy and Religion

Religion is generally 'Faith in God'<sup>600</sup> and 'the experience of the Holy'.<sup>601</sup> Theologically the religion is concerning 'what mankind is preoccupied with when he/she is alone'<sup>602</sup> and 'his/her relationship between his/her peculiar existence as an existence outside beyond himself/herself'<sup>603</sup>. In a philosophical sense, it is 'opium of the people'<sup>604</sup> while sociologically it is 'the preservation of values'.<sup>605</sup> Ferguson's interpretation of the diversity in definitions of religion is remarkable<sup>606</sup>. Ferguson cares

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Bursa, 2000. s. 49.

<sup>599</sup> Paul Hazard, *Batı Düşüncesindeki Büyük Değişme*, Çev. Erol Güngör, Ötüken, İstanbul 1999, p. 267.

<sup>600</sup> Paul-Mendes Flohr, *Law and Sacrament: Ritual Observance in Twentieth-Century Jewish Thought, Divided Passions Jewish Intellectuals and the Experience of Modernity*, Wayne State U. Press, Detroit 1991, p.342.

<sup>601</sup> Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

<sup>602</sup> Rudolf Otto (d. 1937)

<sup>603</sup> Alfred North Whitehead (d. 1947)

<sup>604</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach (ö.1872)

<sup>605</sup> Karl Marx (ö.1883)

<sup>606</sup> Harald Hoffding (ö.193)

about which value judgments the variables in the definitions correspond to. According to him, the failure and inadequacy of definitions arise from these value judgments. It is a normal result to encounter the individual or those embodied in the definitions of religion<sup>607</sup>.

As Spinoza's panentheistic view of God that 'everything that exists is in God; nothing else exists'<sup>608</sup> is interpreted as atheism, deism is also more associated with disbelief than belief. The deist approach created a new acceptance of God, along with Platonist and Neo-Platonist views. Accordingly, man finds and feels God in the inner self and seeks and accepts it in the outer world. To love God is to love what belongs to man. This situation, which we call humanism, presupposes that modern man accepts everything that is social at the same time as an individual. In that case, a person can solve every problem, including the sacred, with his own desire and initiative. Explanations about the boundaries and competencies of human nature are in search of a moral basis that is not based on religious beliefs. Can a person act outside the metaphysical realm in order to reach absolute goodness and morality? This problem revealed the claim that man can reach absolute morality with non-religious elements.

The views of Kant, who suggested raising human innate moral qualities to functional level with mental discipline, and Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), who argued

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<sup>607</sup> Cox, James L, *Kutsalı İfade Etmek*, Çev. Fuat Aydın, İz, İstanbul, 2004, s. 34.

<sup>608</sup> Cox, a.g.e, s. 23.



that universal good can be achieved by the human mind have actually clarified the debate on whether God's existence is apodictic or not. Russel's view that 'the evidence found to prove the existence of God is deprived of scientific value<sup>609</sup>, religion is the cause of evil<sup>610</sup>, great wars and repression regimes, while religion survives through problems of poverty and unhappiness, and religion would disappear after the elimination of such problems<sup>611</sup>' run parallel with the August Comte's (1788-1857) positivist understanding which we can define as evolutionary religion perspective.

Hegel (1770-1831) cares about the state's relationship with religion. Religion is one of the main institutions of the state. Those who say that politics can be based on religion are faced with a confusion caused by Hegel's thoughts. According to Hegel, the fact that religion is the basic element of the state creates an element of political confusion<sup>612</sup>. While Hegel criticizes Judaism's adherence to the Positive Law, Kant uses the term 'legal' to ethically emphasize that Judaism's adherence to positive law is malicious.

The three main areas in Hegel's philosophical system, logic, nature and philosophy of spirit<sup>613</sup> are

<sup>609</sup> Nihat Keklik, *Filozofların Özellikleri, Felsefeye Giriş 2*, Doğu Yayınları, İstanbul, 1983. s.182.

<sup>610</sup> Nihat Keklik, *Filozofların Özellikleri*, Köprü, İstanbul, 2001, içinde B. Russell, *Dünya Görüşüm*, s. 17.

<sup>611</sup> Keklik, a.g.e, s.19.

<sup>612</sup> Keklik, a.g.e, s. 26.

<sup>613</sup> Hegel, *Hukuk Felsefesinin Prensipleri*, Çev. Cenap Karakaya, İstanbul Sosyal, 1991, s. 211. <sup>618</sup> *Philosophy of Spirit*: In the concept of Spirit, which is divided into three as Subjective, Objective and Absolute Spirit, the concepts of law, traditional life and state show variable and separating features in subjective Spirit

included in the Phenomenology of Spirit. Religion coexists with art and philosophy as the absolute spirit. Because according to Hegel, religion cannot be the core form of knowledge. Considering that religion inculcates indifference to world affairs and events in reality while the state is rooted in the world, it is not vital for the state that people are engaged in religion. Religion is a consolation to the oppressed. People are condemned to helplessness in the face of tyranny. This reveals superstitions and slavery<sup>614</sup>. According to Hegel, the existence of the state is the 'walk of God on earth'.<sup>615</sup> The human mind was given to man by God. With this reason, man and God share the "legislative power".

### **An Evaluation on Secularization Theories**

To Luckmann, people don't construct their own world view, but they are born within the forms of world views knitted around them. They can filter these views and form their own one among the choices of acceptance and rejection. Historical religions form the content of these choices<sup>616</sup>.

The first or old paradigm of secularization is explained with respect to Europe. Accordingly, while the past consisted of religious societies, religion lost its

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while philosophy, art and religion are included in the Absolute Spirit by showing permanent and unifying features.

<sup>614</sup> Phenomenology of Spirit: It is Hegel's work published in 1807. It consists of three main sections called Philosophy of Logic, Philosophy of Nature and Philosophy of Spirit.

<sup>615</sup> Hegel, a.g.e.s. 211.

<sup>616</sup> Hegel, G.W, Tüze Felsefesi, Çev. Aziz Yardımlı, İdea, 2013, İstanbul, s. 280.

importance during the process of modernization. Claiming that the philosophical, theoretical and practical problems that religions face in the 20th century are common, Peter Berger defended that religion lost importance against modernity, religious communities would be required to live as minorities, and religions would no longer serve as a "sacred canopy". As the religious authority lost power, different views rose under the view of 'pluralism'. He argued that the church had moved away from the concept of 'reality' and that would apply to other world religions as well. According to Berger, it is quite contradictory that the transcendent God, who created man and the earth, does not intervene in the evils etc. on earth<sup>617</sup>.

In terms of sociological criticism, the criticisms to which the Bible was exposed formed the negative paradigm. Peter Berger's thesis about the "extinction of religion" became an influential interpretation until it was later falsified by himself and others. In fact, the period that August Comt describes as the phase of the Positivist Religion is an important period not only for Christianity, but also for Judaism and Islam. This process means that Judaism and Christianity hence the Holy Scripture's doctrine and historicity have been damaged. Of course, modernization was also showing its effect on the social dimension.

As a way of understanding and explaining the relationship between modernizing society and religion,

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<sup>617</sup> Thomas Luckmann, *Görünmeyen Din*, Çev. Ali Coşkun-Fuat Aydın, Rağbet, İstanbul, 2003 s. 64.

the secularization thesis emphasizes a situation in which society as a linear image evolves from a system of sacred content to secular conditions<sup>618</sup>. Secularization refers to the process and it is noteworthy that science is the dominant element of the secularization process. It is noteworthy that science is the dominant element of the secularization process. According to this, belief in supernatural beings will completely disappear in a future period as a result of the development of science<sup>619</sup>. The secularization thesis that can be summarized in this way has also caused new discussions.

In assessing whether Protestantism is a transformative and secularizing element, or whether it is a feature of the Bible, Berger argues that, in Deuteronomy 26: 5-9, depiction of God having a mighty but pragmatic relationship with the Israelites indicates an element of secularization<sup>620</sup>. In Amos 3:2, God says: "From among all the families on the earth, I have been intimate with you alone. That is why I must punish you for all your sins." God is angry with the Jews and at the same time saddened by their calamity. Anger arises from the relationship of faith between God and the Jews. Sadness, on the other hand, is remarkable in terms of the position of the Jews before God and God's qualities. While this dual interpretation offers a common explanation for the genocides suffered by the Jews, it shows that the holy and the unholy are considered together. Worldly suffering is

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<sup>618</sup> Peter L. Berger, Kutsal Şemsiye Çev. Ali Coşkun, Rağbet, 2000 İstanbul, s. 197-198.

<sup>619</sup> Mehmet Özay, *Sekülerleşme ve Din*, İz, İstanbul 2007, s.115.

<sup>620</sup> Özay, a.g.e, s.115.

handled from two perspectives: faith and coping with helplessness<sup>621</sup>.

To explain the reasons for the small number of stories on war in Talmud, Elie Wiesel gives examples from Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yohai and Rabbi Akiva and shows them as those who like the rebels. According to Maimonides, although our ancestors stated that we were in exile due to neglect of the art of war, we should interpret the Talmud's silence on this issue in another way: It can be said that the completely negative attitude towards the war in Judaism is naturally here. To him, war means disaster and suffering; and war is not an ideal and should not be idealized. He states that Josephus Flavius, who praised the war and the Romans, was an assimilated Jew; it should also not be forgotten that King Solomon's expression "Do not rejoice when the enemy is defeated"<sup>622</sup> is the universal expression of God<sup>623</sup>.

According to Karl Marx, 'the religious state is the theocratic state. The sovereign in all states must either be the greatest God of the Jewish religion, or the Dalai Lama, who is the representative of the Creative being, as in Tibet. Or, as Görres rightly asked the Christian states in his last work, they should all bow to a church. This church is an infallible church, because without being the supreme leader of the church, as in Protestantism, the sovereignty of religion is nothing more than the religion of

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<sup>621</sup> Berger, a.g.e, s. 199.

<sup>622</sup> Berger, a.g.e, s. 200.

<sup>623</sup> Proverbs of Solomon 24:15-20

sovereignty, and worshiping the will of the government.'<sup>624</sup>

The existence of the moral goals of religion passes through the process of secularization, criticism and acceptance. According to Steve Bruce, "religion consists of actions, beliefs and institutions that are based on the assumption that there are supernatural beings, forces or processes that have moral intentions and definitive power that have the capacity to determine or interfere with humanitarian issues."<sup>625</sup> Religion rejects guided understanding of morality solely guided by mind; and accepts supernatural and transcendental interventions - revelation, miracle - in beliefs and practices.

To Berger, the immigration of the Jews from both Mesopotamia and Egypt means, apart from geographical mobility, their separation and rupture from the religious characteristics of both geographies. Apart from understanding secularization as a process, Berger considers it as the change and transformation of the authority and symbols that affect the social structure. In this respect, '*secularization*' is '*worldliness*' as a universal term. According to Thomas Luckman, 'secularization has been more influential on men than women, on middle-aged people than youngs and olds, on the working class

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<sup>624</sup> Elie Wiesel, Bugünün Yahudisi, Çev. G. Suveren, İstanbul 1996, s. 197-198.

<sup>625</sup> Karl Marx-Engels F., Din Üzerine, Çev. Kaya Güvenç, Sol Yayınları, Ankara 1976, s. 32. <sup>631</sup> Steve Bruce, Cathedrals to Cults: The Evolving Forms of Religious Life, Paul Heels Religion, Modernity and Postmodernity, içinde Blackwell, Oxford 1998, s.19-36.

than rural people, and on Protestant and Jews than Catholics<sup>626</sup>.

According to Charles Taylor, the acceptance of negative paradigms about secularization could in a sense even result in a neglect of religion. For this reason, it is inevitable to discuss whether there are common areas between what is religious and what is modern, the function of religious institutions in secularization and the "differentiation" of their position within the state. Since economic regulation, health services and educational activities are included in the modern state structure as important institutions in place of churches, a limited range of discussion areas emerged related to philosophical, methodical and practical issues on the function of religious institutions.

Differentiation does not eliminate the shaping made by religion. Because the phenomena of "completely pushing religion aside" and "reaching religious satisfaction" describe different realities. According to Jose Casanova, "differentiation" and "specialization" are also different concepts. Specialization within the state is institutionally and functionally a completely modern determinant of the fields of economy, law and health. But religions, wherever they are in the world, refuse to be marginal and propose integration with society. Despite special conditions, religions continue their existence by expressing their messages universally, not individually<sup>627</sup>.

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<sup>626</sup> Steve Bruce, *Religion and Modernization*, Clarendon, Oxford U. Press 1992, s. 6.

<sup>627</sup> Peter Berger, *Kutsal Şemsiye*, Çev. Ali Coşkun, Rağbet, 2000 İstanbul, s.198.

As evidence for the non-decline of religion, arguments have been developed regarding individual religiosity, new religious movements, and that nontheism did not increase in the expected rate. 'Europe, especially in the early modern period, staged a transformation from a human-centered universe to the God-centered universe understanding. In this period, religious rationalism evolved into secular rationalism, and the idea of transcendence towards secularism and individualism. Deductive thinking styles have been replaced by quantitative and inductive methods.'<sup>628</sup>

In the 19th century, the rate of church attendance was high for Christians in England. At the beginning of the 20th century, these rates started to decrease gradually. After the Second World War, the rate of going to church decreased rapidly<sup>629</sup>. The decrease in church attendance continued after the 1960s. According to Charles Taylor, in the 19th century, the French Catholicism and the British Evangelical Movements fought against the danger of atheism's spread as a mystical doctrine through the elites and their scientific and institutional tools<sup>630</sup>.

According to Berger, "There is no reason to think that humanity will be less religious in the 21st century".<sup>631</sup> David Martin notes that it would be incorrect to identify religion with 12th century Catholicism and to accept any

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<sup>628</sup> Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, University of Chicago Press, 1994, Chicago, s. 210.

<sup>629</sup> Ömer Demir-Mustafa Acar, *Sosyal Bilimler Sözlüğü*, Ağaç Yayınları, İstanbul 1992, s. 306.

<sup>630</sup> Charles Taylor, *Seküler Çağ*, ç. Dost Körpe, İş Bankası Yayınları, İstanbul 2014, s. 499.

<sup>631</sup> Taylor, a.g.e, s. 499.



differentiation from this line as secularization. To Martin, "termination of secularization" is necessary. Because, with the concept of secularization, the fact that religious practices differ individually and socially is ignored. Distancing from religion and ignoring the reality of religion due to reasons such as the concern of objectivity, the prominence of individualization in the modern state structure has become the method of sciences such as sociology, history, and philosophy. Stating his views more briefly and clearly, David Martin suggested the removal of 'secularization' from the dictionaries.<sup>632</sup>

'Although it is possible to conceptualize secularization in other ways, it is mainly about people's beliefs. When we say that one society is more secular than another, we basically mean that fewer people's lives are affected by religion when compared to the other society.'<sup>633</sup> The emergence of fundamentalism as a global problem is one of the facts that should be evaluated during the secularization discussions<sup>634</sup>.

Modernization has undoubtedly manifested itself in all areas of social life such as science, politics, art, philosophy, religion, social life, education and law. Areas related to modernization, such as politics and the state system, law and philosophy, seem difficult to understand in isolation from religion. Although the concepts of

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<sup>632</sup> Peter L. Berger, *From the Crisis Religion to the Crisis of Secularity*, Sociology of Religion içinde, Edward Elgar Publications, England 1995, C.I, s. 636-646.

<sup>633</sup> David Martin, *The Religious and the Secular: Studies in Secularization*, Routledge&Kegan Paul, London 1969, s. 67.

<sup>634</sup> Steve Bruce, *Religion and Modernization*, Clarendon, Oxford 1992, s. 7.

“secular”, “secularization” and “secularism” are related to each other, we must distinguish their differences.

After Martin Luther, we see that the Church was institutionally reorganized, which brought a new dimension to the state-religion relationship while the common point regarding the intra-church arrangements is related to 'traditional practices'. It is clearly seen that the reformists continue this perspective within Judaism. Reform, contra-reform, and religious wars threatened the economic activities of the people. According to Max Weber, modern capitalism and the Protestant morality can be named as the panic of the quest for liberation. How to work harder, earn more money and save more money can be associated with religious and economic happiness.

According to Martin, when social sciences are handled in a cyclical rather than a planar method, the absoluteness of the concept of "secularization" cannot be mentioned. Since secularization cannot prevent the existence of new religious movements, religion stands firmly. In the anti- secularization view, he emphasizes "individual piety". Since the introduction of oneself as a 'believer' is out of institutions and at a high rate despite modernization, it is wrong to think that religion has no power against secularization<sup>635</sup>.

Steve Bruce, unlike Auguste Comte's thesis, argues that materialism, which is seen as the basis of modernism,

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<sup>635</sup> M.Ali Kirman, *Sekülerleşme Perspektifinden Dini Fundamentalizm*, *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* Volume:1-2 Winter 2008, s. 274-291.

will not become universal, but lead to indifference overtime. He defends that a conscious non-theism may be possible with being very interested in religion, but being indifferent to religion would remove religion which is an instrument of social consensus.

Judaism's idea that 'the changes in the social function can be understood in historical integrity is a determinist approach.'<sup>636</sup> We can say that Christian Methodism and Conservative Judaism developed similar arguments after modernism. Conservative Judaism, as expressed in the negative secularization thesis, has developed a proposal other than atheism in response to the decrease in the influence of religion. Karel Dobbelaera, on the other hand, was interested in the manifestations of secularization in micro, meso and macro scale and in individual, institutional, social-political terms, and associated the inevitability of secularization with rationalism. To Dobbelaera, secularization continues unidirectionally<sup>637</sup>. It is possible to describe Dobbelaera's way of handling the issue in the context of state systems as the continuity of Comte and Hegel's views.

While being 'modern' means being an 'individual', it does not mean being active instead of passivity in the traditional order. Compliance with non-religious rules and justifications becomes mandatory after modernization. The religion-based institution and institution-individual relations are overcome. Liberal

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<sup>636</sup> Martin, a.g.e, s. 68.

<sup>637</sup> Otto Heller, *Yahudiliğin Çöküşü*, Çev. Süheyla –Saliha Kaya, İnter Yayınları, İstanbul 1992, s. 93.

democracy initiated a 'directly accessible' society. Modern society bears distinct differences from the ruling-ruling relationship in Classical Judaism, Medieval Christianity, and Islam. But this difference cannot be expressed simply by stating that religion does not exist in the public life of the modern nation-state. For example, although both the extremely centralized state and citizens are secular in France, in England the state is affiliated with the official church, but very few citizens are religious. In the USA, most of the population is religious, but the federal state is secular. Although the secularism of these three countries has many common aspects, they differ significantly in terms of the relationship between modern state design and religion<sup>638</sup>.

While secularism requires a distinction between the mind of the individual and the principle governing the public, it also demands the replacement of 'religion' and 'religious' with 'secular'. One of the main reasons for exclusion of religion in the modern state design is that religions are associated with violence. Violence cannot be justified by the Quran or the Bible. The Qur'an cannot be held responsible for the incident in 1982, in which the Syrian General Ali Haydar massacred thirty four thousand civilians in the rebel city of Hama on the orders of Hafez al- Assad, the secular president. The same is true of the pro-secularist Saddam Hussein, who gassed thousands of Kurds and massacred the Shiite population in southern Iraq. While Ariel Sharon killed Palestinian

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<sup>638</sup> Karel Dobbelaere, "Towards an Integrated Perspective of the Processes Related to the Descriptive Concept of Secularization", William H. Swatos-Daniel V. A. Olson, within *Secularization Debate*, Rowman-Littlefield, Lanham 2000 p.21-41.

civilians indiscriminately, he did not refer the Torah (passages like Joshua's massacre of all living things in Jericho). It is an important question for Jews how to understand the orders God sent to the chosen people to destroy the original people of the Promised Land in the first five books of the Torah. Examining the divine and human elements of the discourse that constitutes the religious ideology is essential to understand how a modern Jew interprets this text. However, according to Asad, this situation cannot be associated with the truth of religion and the sincerity of the religious people, but it is more closely related to the reflex of rational mind to protect the state<sup>639</sup>.

Hegel's argument that religion naturally forms the basis of the state structure because it is inherent in human nature, but that secular governments eliminate the unknown between true religiosity and people who seem religious is important in terms of showing that this is a recurring discussion<sup>640</sup>. In the modern and secular world, reason and violence come together in the state, and the state, which constitutes its greatness, is considered sacred as an institutional unity. Against the idea that privileges gained due to religious affiliation are evaluated negatively, to Talal Asad, in some cases they can do this because they believe it is true or because it feels like this; but it is very different to say that they are compelled to do so. He also adds a different dimension to the discussion stating that numerous religious Muslims, Jews and

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<sup>639</sup> Asad, a.g.e, s. 56.

<sup>640</sup> Asad, a.g.e, s. 21, 22.

Christians do not feel the need to kill unbelievers while reading the scriptures<sup>641</sup>.

The text of the Quran is to force Muslims to be guided by the Quran. Christians and Jews are free to interpret the Bible as they wish. Based on these two propositions, the following conclusions are reached: To commit terrorist acts in the name of Islam is a religious order and advice. In terms of Christian and Judaism, it should be considered as individual behavior due to the different interpretation of the Holy Scripture. It is clear that these two results are not a rational comparison and contain a contradictory evaluation<sup>642</sup>.

Some anthropologists have also begun to focus on secularism from a contrary perspective to contemporary political theories. 'Myth and violence' replaces 'tolerance' and 'rationality'. Weber also drew attention to the relationship between modern states and violence. However, Michael Taussig complains that the understanding that the monopoly of violence belongs the rational- legal state, which Weber advocates, misses the following point: "Violence is inherently mysterious, mystifying, incomprehensible, frightening, mythical and mysterious, as well as having a power that transforms violence into an end in itself - a sign of the existence of the gods as Benjamin puts it<sup>643</sup>.

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<sup>641</sup> Hegel, *Hukuk Felsefesinin Prensipleri*, Çev. Cenap Karakaya, İstanbul Sosyal, 1991, s. 216.

<sup>642</sup> Asad, a.g.e, s. 22.

<sup>643</sup> Asad, a.g.e, s. 22.

According to Charles Taylor, the emergence of secularism is closely related to the concept of modern nation-state. Secularism legitimizes itself in two ways. The first is to reveal the common points in various practices of religion as the most important value. The second is the purification of religion from politics<sup>644</sup>. According to Charles Taylor, traditional authoritarian government asks members of the society to passively obey the law. Modern democratic administration is organized according to the compulsory contributions of members of the society. Paying taxes, conscription to the military, contributing in the continuation of public order according to bureaucratic rules are situations where a person is required by the state. It should be said that in today's liberal democracies the direct link between voters and their representatives in parliament is increasingly weakened; representatives in parliament are increasingly less representative of the socio-economic interests, identities and aspirations of the culturally differentiated and economically polarized constituency.

It is impossible to find a universally agreed secular or religious basis for the political principles accepted in a modern heterogeneous society. According to Charles Taylor, this model of secularism is not only intellectually attractive but also indispensable for a modern democratic state. According to Benedict Anderson, the modern nation is an imaginary community. The community structure of the modern nation can highlight two features of the modern imagination of the democratic state. The first is

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<sup>644</sup> Asad, a.g.e, s. 34.

the horizontal, direct access character of modern society, and the second is its taking root in secular and homogeneous time. The concept of the public sphere has led to the emergence of equality, citizenship and individualism. The modern nation, defined as an imaginary community, is always explained by the constructed images<sup>645</sup>.

The effectiveness of mystical, ethical or legal perspectives in the interpretation of the Scriptures is evident periodically. The responsibility and pleasure of worshipping as the addressee of God, or the interpretation of the orders as moral / immoral, right / wrong, good / bad, includes periodic differences as well as the responses given by the individual. 'God created the days and set aside the sabbath for himself. He created months and set aside the festive days for himself. He created the years and set aside the Sabbath year for himself. He created the Sabbath years and set aside the Jubilee years for himself. He created nations and chose Israel. He created the lands and set aside the land of Israel for himself. The earth belongs to the earth together with all it contains'. 'for you are a people holy to the Lord your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the Lord has chosen you to be his treasured possession.'<sup>646</sup>, 'Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the Lord your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people'.<sup>647</sup>

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<sup>645</sup> Asad, a.g.e, s. 12.

<sup>646</sup> Asad, a.g.e, s. 12.

<sup>647</sup> Deuteronomy 14:2



It is said that Moses and his people made sacrifices to God and Moses sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on his people as a sign of this covenant (Exodus, 24). Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu from his tribe as well as seventy elderly people of Israel, went up to the God and prostrated from a distance to him only Moses got closer to the Lord. Moses told his people all the words and rules of God and then scribed them. In addition to the sacrifice narration, this passage mentions that Moses was covered by the cloud for six days on Mount Sinai, and he met God on the seventh day after God's call, the glory of God was like fire devouring the mountain's peak, Moses stayed on the mountain for forty days and forty nights. According to Freud's thesis on Moses, he was an Egyptian commander. He has successful excursions with the military units formed by the Jews. Prophet Moses' king established a monotheistic religion instead of the ancient Egyptian religion. In other words, he wanted to replace traditional Egyptian politics with a new one. This new policy was supported mostly by foreigners, and especially Jews, in the hope that it would give them a place in the new order. However, the traditional forces of the Egyptian State killed the king and got back the power. Prophet Musa fought with the Jews, but when he failed he had to leave Egypt with the Jews<sup>648</sup>. According to Baykan Sezer, Freud's interpretation is noteworthy in terms of explaining the relations between Prophet Moses and the

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<sup>648</sup> Deuteronomy 9:6

Egyptian Palace and the relations of Jews with Moses and the Egyptian administration<sup>649</sup>.

At the end of the 12th century, restrictions were imposed on Jews in financial transactions in Europe, especially in England, and the Christians were made more active in the financial sector through the regulations of the state. Jews, whose book assets were always remarkable, agreed to pay ransom even for books seized for the church. Jews were socially excluded but intellectually successful in the Reformation and Renaissance, which broke the monopoly of the church. The exile of Jews from Spain and Portugal in 1492 and 1497 was felt almost everywhere in Europe. The forced immigration of the Jews led to the emergence of a culture of reconciliation or conflict with different Jewish cultures in the places they migrated. In some countries they were privileged while in others they were among disadvantageous groups. The ghettos were the isolated zones where there were unfavorable living conditions. Although there were those who see the isolation of ghettos insufficient and defended for even tighter rules, Jews were able to get medical and law education, even in the middle age, in the universities which were opened by the church and spread over first Europe and then to the world<sup>650</sup>. In this period, the preference of Italian instead of Hebrew in the ghettos and the cases where the Sabbath prohibitions were not applied for different reasons were noteworthy<sup>651</sup>.

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<sup>649</sup> Baykan Sezer, *Toplum Farklılaşmaları ve Din Olayı içinde*, Kitabevi, 2011 İstanbul, s. 70.

<sup>650</sup> Sezer, a.g.e, s. 70.

<sup>651</sup> Cecil Roth, *The Jewish Contribution to Civilisation*, The East and West Library,

As the first important example of the relationship established with space in the formation of identity, the event "Abraham bought a tomb in Hebron" in the Book of Genesis is remarkable. While there are those who find that it is explained in detail in the Torah as a purely symbolic narrative, it has been also interpreted as an expression of an unchanged historical event as the true word of God. Abraham does not take a mystical approach to his death. Regardless of whether it is accepted as symbolic or real, the story of the land bought insistently in order to bury the dead in the soil of a foreign country, tells the strength of the relationship established with space is, even for death. Ibrahim bought Hebron for the tomb of Sare and acquired it as a property in a country where he was a foreign and a guest. Absolutely, it is spiritually and materially important for a place to be sacred, to have property value and to eliminate alienation<sup>652</sup>.

After the destruction of the Temple of Solomon in the 6th century BC, the nation of Israel built its political and religious institutions more solidly. This situation is interpreted as the struggle of the identity to give a unique quality to Israel's emerging culture as a nation and transform its distinctive heritage to humanitarian civilization<sup>653</sup>. Economic growth is noticed before and after Egypt, and this situation is identified with the magnificence and mercy of God who granted them land. Joseph is included in the Book of Exodus where he was depicted as a discreet and wise person, skillful in financial

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Oxford 1943, s. 28.

<sup>652</sup> Roth, a.g.e, s. 28.

<sup>653</sup> Micheal Avi-Yonah, "Hebron" Ejd, C. 8, s. 226-235.

matters, talented in finding the balance between rulers and people.

In 1850, it was decided that Jews could own land in the United Kingdom. Information is given about the religious life and social lives of Jews starting from the existence of Judaism in the UK to 21st-century British Judaism. In 1948, Britain ended its mandate over Palestine. Israel decided to proclaim its state despite the oppositions of the USA, Russia and Britain, while Britain was the first country to swiftly establish political and cultural relations with Israel.

An intense immigration to America started in the late 19th century. The Pittsburgh Platform (1937) formed the basis of Reformist Judaism. It was accepted that humanity could unite at the scientific level. Science and logic could lead to this unification.

Zionism is a secular Jewish Nationalism movement<sup>654</sup>. It is seen that Zionism influenced British Jewish groups based in London and united them politically as of the beginning of the 20th century. Conservative Judaism does not have a Zionist character. However, both Orthodox and Conservative Jews supported Zionism because of the traditionalist discourses in Zionism. Although the reformists were less ambitious during this period, Zionism's unifying nationalism of these three main formations should not be ignored. According to Kant, Michael Creizenach and Abraham

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<sup>654</sup> Malamet, a.g.e, s. 9.

Geiger should be qualified as Radical Reformers. Scorsch adds Frankel to these two names<sup>655</sup>.

Louis Jacobs, who came from Orthodox tradition in education and practice but has modernist ideas, argued that some parts of the Torah were not of divine origin and that the parts consisting of human elements should be separated from divine origin parts. This development was the most interesting debate on a topic related to theology and Holy Scripture criticism since the establishment of the Reform Synagogue in London in 1840.

Religions in general, Judaism in particular, have been transformed due to political and social circumstances, including their texts and doctrines. Adapting religion to different conditions in the interpretation of the belief and legal principles can be called secularization. The milestones recorded in history in Judaism as in other religions, especially political changes, differences in the social and economic structure, were referred to when necessary. Hasidic Reformist and Conservative Judaism are included under the title of Hasidic and Liberal Approaches of Judaism with their basic explanations and criticisms. As an example of the Sabbath Ban, driving is not against the Sabbath prohibitions according to Reformist Jews. Orthodox Jews accept walking to the synagogue on Shabbat, and Conservative Judaism accepts parking the car in the area where the synagogue is located and going to the synagogue on foot<sup>656</sup>.

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<sup>655</sup> Gürkan, “Yahudilik”, DİA, s.195.

<sup>656</sup> Scorsch, a.g.e, s. 256.

## **SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN JEWISH AFTER MODERNIZATION**

Religion is a social and institutional organization. In addition to theological and philosophical debates on beliefs faced by members of other religions, Judaism is faced with many other legal and religious problems concerning modern Jews outside and inside Israel and Israel. This section deals with nationalism, anti-Semitism and pluralism specific to Judaism in the context of social philosophy.

### **Nationalism**

Aaron David Gordon, the relationship between a nation and land can be likened to the relationship between father and child<sup>657</sup>. The concept of nationalism includes a cosmic entity where the physical nature of a people's homeland fuses with the spirit of the people<sup>658</sup>.

The idea of 'chosen community' is the result of Judaism's view of other religions rather than its cause<sup>659</sup>. On the other hand, Genesis 13:15-18 says 'for all the land which you see I will give to you and to your descendants forever. I will make your descendants as plentiful as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can count the dust of the earth, then your descendants could also be counted. Arise, walk about in the land through its length and

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<sup>657</sup> Salime Leyla Gürkan, *Yahudilik, İsam, İstanbul* 2010, s. 159.

<sup>658</sup> David Aaron Gordon, *Nationalism and Socialism, Contemporary Jewish Thought* içinde ed. Simon Noveck, B'nai B'rith Great Books Series: Volume IV, 1973, s. 57.

<sup>659</sup> David Aaron Gordon, a.g.e, s. 62.

width; for I will give it to you." Then Abram moved his tent and came and lived by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron; and there he built an altar to the Lord.'

The relationship between Prophet Abraham and the space with God's promise, that he was informed that his lineage would multiply indicates an assured ideal that transcends the relationship between the Prophet and God and is indispensable for Judaism. The struggles made to realize this ideal have formed one of the important arguments of the Zionist approach. The land from the Egyptian river to the Euphrates was given to Abraham, Isaac and his sons. The concept of the Promised Land is a concept specific to the Jews. The concept of Holy Land has been reinterpreted in two basic ways. The first of these is the intensification of immigration to the American continent in the 20th century. The other is that the calls made by political Zionism to Israel, which emerged especially at the end of the 20th century, were in harmony with the conditions of the Second World War. 'Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.' (Exodus, 19:3-6) Holy Scripture, called the Torah of Moses, compares Egyptians and Israelites. Accordingly, the Lord protected

the people of Moses against the Egyptians. This comparison is associated with the superiority of the Israelites over the Egyptians. It is revealed by God through the Prophet Moses that the Israelites were the special people or 'the chosen community'. 'The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.' (Exodus, 31:16/17). 'I will maintain my love for him (David) forever, and my covenant with him will never fail.' (Psalm 89:25), 'I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered. Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness—and I will not lie to David—' (Psalms, 89:34-35), 'Carefully follow the terms of this covenant, so that you may prosper in everything you do.' (Deuteronomy 29:9), 'You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the Lord your God, a covenant the Lord is making with you this day and sealing with an oath, to confirm you this day as his people, that he may be your God as he promised you and as he swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I am making this covenant, with its oath, not only with you who are standing here with us today in the presence of the Lord our God but also with those who are not here today.' (Deuteronomy 29:12-15). It is noteworthy that the covenant would be renewed and the next generations will benefit from the promises of the covenant. 'The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah' (Jeremiah 33:14-16).



‘I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. They will be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me and that all will then go well for them and for their children after them. I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul’ (Jeremiah 32:37-41).

"Everlasting", "fear", "safe living space", which are the terms of the treaty, are described in the same expression. The emphasis on the state elements and functions formed by a society rather than a belief community draws attention.

“‘The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them” declares the Lord. “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people’ (Jeremiah, 31:31-40). The above narrative illustrates the communication between the community and God, who is the lord of the community.

God's law is written in their hearts by God himself. It is explained in God's language that the breakdown of the agreement requires different practices in new agreements. This shows that the relationships between God and Israel and between the communities of Judah and God is "mutual."

In Judaism, 'Shema Israel, Adonai Eloheynu, Adonai Ehad! Listen, Israel, our God is One!' Prayer is included in both personal and synagogue prayers and is repeated throughout the day. Similar expressions which emphasize the oneness of God are repeated in Isaiah, 45: 5 and Deuteronomy, 32:39. The unity of God, pragmatically, not philosophically, is God who created the universe, sent the Bible, and chose the people of Israel.

### **Anti-Semitism**

The concept of anti-Semitism was firstly used by German journalist Wilhelm Marr, who claimed that Jews are biologically different, they belong different nation, a foreign race and could not be assimilated. According to him, modern history should be understood as an ongoing struggle between Foreign Semites and native Teutons<sup>660</sup>. Before Marr, anti-Semitism was based on religious legitimacy and it was pointed out that the Jews did not accept Jesus Christ, they were the murderers of Jesus and they refuse salvation<sup>661</sup>. However, a secular justification arose with Marr. The struggle to preserve

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<sup>660</sup> Kürşad Demirci, *Yahudilik ve Dini Çoğulculuk*, Ayışığı 2000, İstanbul, s. 26.

<sup>661</sup> Dan&Lavinia Cohn Sherbok, *Yahudiliğin Kısa Tarihi*, Çev. Bilal Baş, İz, İstanbul 2010, s. 135.

their religious and ethnic identity under adverse conditions that were almost part of their destiny for the Jews generated philosophical and intellectual debates during Haskalah and afterwards. However, this situation led to the discussion of many issues not only on theoretical issues but also on daily religious practices. The Jews' view of the Holy Scripture, revelation, 'chosen community', relations with non-Judaism members, the possibility of being a modern and religious Jew, especially the Sabbath, trade, interest, eating and drinking, the regulation of synagogue rules, crystallized the traditional and liberal nature of modern Jewish groups. The divergence of conservative views and traditional views reveals a deeper problem of the Jews. The debate that tradition can be sanctified or evaluated with objective criticism determined the result of this divergence. In the same period, the theses/anti-theses formed by the practices based on anti-Semitism with Zionist views express the reassessment of ethnic or nationalism and the inevitability of social and political discussions for the Jews. Traditional Judaism turned the Holocaust into a myth and made it a justification for the legitimacy of Israel's lands<sup>662</sup>.

Hegel states that religion proposes unchanging divine commands in the face of changing world conditions as the contradiction between religion and the world. To him, a true religion is an institution that does not confront the state, and that the state proposes and encourages its citizens. Different religious tendencies

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<sup>662</sup> Cohn Sherbok, a.g.e, s. 135.

express their opinions within the boundaries of civil society. It is possible for religious groups to demand certain exemptions in their mutual relations with the state. Hegel is of the opinion that the state should not accept these demands for privilege. The formation of privileged groups within the state should not be allowed even for religious purposes<sup>663</sup>. To evaluate Hegel's example regarding the demands of privileged groups within the state, he continues his explanations about examining the position of religious groups in the state by interpreting the behaviors developed against Jews.

According to Hegel, Jews see themselves not only as a religious community but also as a foreign nation. Hegel finds the Jewish demands for civil citizenship justified in terms of legal technique. Failure to give Jews their rights will result in their isolation from society. According to Hegel, it is the responsibility of the state to ensure that the critical tradition is not continued<sup>664</sup>.

Hegel's emphasis on the pluralism of the modern state, which criticizes anti-Semitism, reflects a secular perspective. The experience of the Jews they gained as a result of their diaspora life also shows that the struggle to be accepted by the established state order has been repeated frequently. According to Hegel, in a modern state, citizenship status and related rights are what are essential for Jews, like members of other religions and

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<sup>663</sup> Charles S. Liebman-Eliezer D. Yahya, *Civil Religion In Israel*, California U. Press, 1983. s. 137.

<sup>664</sup> Hegel, a.g.e, s. 214.

nations. Minority and difference should not preclude citizenship rights. It is worth questioning whether there is a religious and secular debate of Jewish cultural civilization in Jewish history and whether it is a fundamental problem. According to Alan Uniterman, 'Jewish history, existence, identity, culture and consciousness are basically united in a religious framework. In Judaism, perhaps because religion is not a full-fledged concept, there may be more interaction with cultural and historical elements'.<sup>665</sup>

According to Uniterman, the universal message of the Torah, the fact that the revelation applies to those who lived after the time of the prophets, and the covenant between God and Israel only applies to the Israelites or the members of Judaism represent two different extremes for Judaism. While these two perspectives contradict each other, they are not always considered apart from each other<sup>666</sup>.

It is known that until 1880-1929, 170 thousand Jewish immigrants, consisting of 130 thousand from Russia, 40 thousand from Austria Hungary and, after 1920, Poland moved to Britain while 114 thousand Jews emigrated to different countries from Britain in the same interval<sup>667</sup>.

The 1930s were the years when the Nazi regime in Germany imposed a series of prohibitions involving direct

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<sup>665</sup> Hegel, a.g.e, s. 215.

<sup>666</sup> Uniterman, *The Jews, Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, Sussex, 1999, Brighton. s. 5.

<sup>667</sup> Uniterman, a.g.e, s. 6.

legal intervention in the human and civil rights of the Jews. In the 1940s, it is estimated that nearly six million Jews were killed by Nazis primarily in Germany, as well as in Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Austria, Russia, Ukraine, Belgium, Yugoslavia, Romania and Norway<sup>668</sup>.

As antisemitism declined across the North and West after World War II, it showed a dramatic manifestation in the South after the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court's ruling outlawing discrimination in public education. Despite the Supreme Court's decree in the *Brown V. Board of Education*, the majority of southerners refused to comply, remained firm in their opposition to integration, and attacked those who complied with the country's new law. Although most opposed discrimination against Jews, they were afraid to take a different public attitude due to the dominant regional values and sentiments of their communities. Such reluctance was rooted in concerns that the South was the most antisemitic region in the country, as survey data from the 1950s and 1960s show. The issue of the adverse conditions of South American Jews has not been duly regarded<sup>669</sup>. The views of Emilie Fackenheim and Eliezer Berkovits have focused on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism<sup>670</sup>.

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<sup>668</sup> Eva Groepler, *Anti-Semitizm, Antik Çağdan Günümüze Yahudi Düşmanlığı Tarihi*, Çev. Süheyla Kaya, İstanbul, 1999, s.194.

<sup>669</sup> Dan&Lavinia Cohn-Shebok, *Yahudiliğin Kısa Tarihi*, Çev. Bilal Baş, İz, İstanbul, 2010. s. 153.

<sup>670</sup> Leonard Dinnerstein, *Anti-Semitism in America*, 1993, Tuscon, USA, s.175.

## Pluralism

During the hellenistic period, Judaism inevitably remained closed and stuck to traditions as Greece was representing freedom, universality and polytheism while Judaism was nationalist, polytheist and based on holy scripture. This led to fundamental social and political controversy and to strain against religious institutions. The idea that the Oral Law is complementary to the Written Law was the necessity of an introverted and closed education system<sup>671</sup>.

The historical course of the pluralism view in Judaism encompasses a wide range of spectrum from the concept of 'chosen community' to the liberal approach of Reform Judaism<sup>672</sup>. According to Jacobs, Jews live by adopting the practice of pluralism in the 20th century. For him, pluralism is possible and even necessary in a modern society<sup>673</sup>.

## MODERN JEWISH GROUPS

Reformist, Reconstructionist, Zionist, and Feminist Jewish schools as well as many debates on belief and philosophy constitute Modern Jewish thought. These discussions require separate attention. Here, however, Orthodox and Reform Judaism was evaluated for their contrast in their representation of traditional and novel

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<sup>671</sup> Seteven T. Katz, *Jewish Philosophers*, 1975, Israel, Keter, s. 228-233

<sup>672</sup> Jacobs, *What Does Judaism Say About?* s. 317.

<sup>673</sup> Kürşad Demirci, *Yahudilik ve Dini Çoğulculuk*, İstanbul, Ayışığı Kitapları, 2000. s. 26

ideas, while Conservative Judaism was evaluated as the basis for Louis Jacobs's views.

### **Orthodox Judaism**

Regarding modern Orthodoxy, it is possible to say that it is the Jewish group that accepts the continuity of Halakhah norms, avoids the influence of new philosophical debates on theology by keeping a distance from philosophy,<sup>674</sup> and expresses the least opinion on issues related to changing conditions. According to the Orthodox Jewish belief, the Torah, the word of God and thus the highest form of revelation, was prepared after God's dictation to the Prophet Moses and the Prophet Moses himself has written it, which was preserved in its original form until today<sup>675</sup>. Louis Jacobs states that Orthodox Judaism's view on revelation is 'to accept that the entire Torah was revealed to Moses and that it is completely original.'<sup>676</sup>

The views of 19th century Orthodox Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch and Solovietchik within the Orthodox Jewish Community of America became accepted norms for critical views and debate<sup>677</sup>. Although he did not provide novel approaches towards the Torah and the Halaha, Samuel Belkin, the President of the Orthodox Yeshiva University, explains *In His Image* (1960) how the Jewish legal tradition works in practice, the character and

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<sup>674</sup> Jacobs, *What Does Judaism Say About?* s. 317.

<sup>675</sup> Steven T. Katz, *Jewish Philosophers*, 1975, Keter, Israel, s. 250.

<sup>676</sup> Salime L. Gürkan, *Yahudilik, İsam*, İstanbul, 2015, s. 95.

<sup>677</sup> Jacobs, *Principles of The Jewish Faith*, 1988, s. 216.



purpose of the mechanism of repentance, the meaning of the mitzvah and the nature of the Jewish community<sup>678</sup>.

In his work titled 'Faith After the Holocaust' (1973), in which he addressed the Holocaust, Eliezer Berkovits criticized the evaluation of the problem as if there had been no genocide in Jewish history before, and the comments on this issue, which he likened to the reactions to a situation encountered for the first time<sup>679</sup>. Berkovits dedicated his *Towards Historic Judaism* (1943) to the theme of Zionism and Secular Zionism. In addition, in a monograph entitled *God, Man and History* (1959), Berkovits was interested in reinterpreting tradition to emphasize the dynamic characteristics and value of modern man. Berkovits' interest in Halakha, although certainly traditional, is noteworthy in that it shows the influence of existentialist thought, and especially Rosenzweig and Buber<sup>680</sup>.

The Orthodox belief system fully accepts Maimonides' thirteen principles of belief<sup>681</sup>. These are the existence of God, his unity, his independence from material qualities, his everlasting and eternal nature, that he is worshiped, the truth of the Prophet's words, the supremacy of prophet Moses over all prophets, that Torah was given to Moses in Sinai, that Torah never changes, that God knows one's deeds and thoughts, that he will respond to these deeds with rewards and punishments,

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<sup>678</sup> Steven T. Katz, *Jewish Philosophers*, 1975, Keter, Israel, s. 250.

<sup>679</sup> Katz, a.g.e, s.251.

<sup>680</sup> Katz, a.g.e, s. 239.

<sup>681</sup> Katz, a.g.e, s. 250.

that Christ will come even if he is delayed, and that the resurrection will occur after death<sup>682</sup>.

According to Orthodox Judaism, the Israelites who can understand God's laws are the 'chosen people'. Although this may seem like a historical mission, it is actually proof that man has divine reality<sup>683</sup>.

The United Synagogue includes Orthodox synagogues in and around London. It was founded in 1870 by being united under the same roof to express their independence from German and Polish influence. Sephardic and Reform groups never took place in the United Synagogue. It was originally founded with three important Ashkenazi Synagogues in London. Over time, those who carried out the accession procedure joined this union. Synagogues under the roof of United Synagogue paid dues for the first fifty years. Later, it got important donations from other donors, primarily the Rotschilts family. The United Synagogue, where the Rabbis in this synagogue are paid for a salary, has become an exemplary organization for Orthodox Synagogues in other European countries<sup>684</sup>.

The method discussions in the United States of America, Canada and England made significant contributions to the uninterrupted continuity and spread of the German-origin Haskalah movement and its reflections in Central Europe, especially in Amsterdam. We can say that before the Second World War, the

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<sup>682</sup> Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *Modern Judaism*, Macmillan Press, 1996, New York, s. 45.

<sup>683</sup> Cohn-Sherbok, a.g.e, s. 45.

<sup>684</sup> Cohn-Sherbok, a.g.e, s. 45.

connection between social life and religion in London was established more effectively by the United Synagogue and other Orthodox institutions. Reformist Jews are few in number compared to those in America. During this period, there were some searches for synthesis within Orthodox Judaism. Orthodox Jews politically supported the Zionists during this period.

### **Reform Judaism**

Reformist Judaism is based on the Pittsburgh (1885) and Columbus (1937) platforms and advocates the existence of Jews in education, culture and all areas of life, by renouncing a hidden life in ghettos after Haskalah<sup>685</sup>. Spinoza's rejection of the Medieval tradition of faith, and his views that the Prophets were superior as insight rather than theoretical knowledge, that Maimonides' conception of faith expressed not what the Bible says but what the Bible implies, and that the Bible was constituted by society was important issues within Judaism's own tradition<sup>686</sup>. Haskalah is a movement based in Europe and especially Germany. Mendelssohn's views on the existence of the belief in God and the inseparability of God's existence in the universe and in man, that the traditional form of Jewish law can be adapted to the present day without distortion, that a Jew should not break his ties with education and tradition were adopted

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<sup>685</sup> Stephen Brook, *The Club, The Jews of Modern Britain*, Constable-London, 1989, s. 91.

<sup>686</sup> Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *Modern Judaism*, Macmilian, New York, 1996, s. 71.

and developed by communities migrated to the US and Europe and united around a collective idea<sup>687</sup>.

The Pittsburgh Platform of 1885, which is accepted as the basis of American Reform Judaism, emphasizes the unity of God, that tradition cannot meet the religious needs of the people, the necessity of making efforts to realize the expectations of the people of Israel regarding Messiah as a nation, not as a race, that Judaism is a religion like Christian and Islamic religions and is open to progress. It also accepts the immortality of the soul, denies concepts like heaven-hell and reward-punishment and emphasizes the awareness of responsibilities against universal problems<sup>688</sup>.

At the Columbus Platform held in 1937, it was emphasized that Judaism is a part of the world's historical and cultural heritage. According to the decisions taken here, the developmental process formed by the mind and scientific studies was accepted. It was accepted that scientific explanations should replace mysterious expressions in the text of the Bible. It was also stated that God cannot be limited by time and space, that God is the master of the universe and the father of the Israelites. Man was described as morally responsible to God as a child. The Holy Scripture, on the other hand, is a book whose holiness must be accepted at all times. Palestine is the center of the Israelites, but the Jews are accountable to the Messiah wherever they live<sup>689</sup>.

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<sup>687</sup> Cohn-Sherbok, a.g.e, s. 74.

<sup>688</sup> Cohn-Sherbok, a.g.e, s. 72.

<sup>689</sup> Cohn-Sherbok, a.g.e, s. 82-84.

Reform Judaism lacks consistent explanations as to how religion can provide its views on the modern age of life within Judaism. Reform Judaism devoids of consistent explanations as to how the inclusion of religion in modern life can be ensured within Judaism. Post-Modern understandings argue that liberal interpretations of religion do not reflect the essence of religion, and that one's religious expectations can be explained with abstract concepts other than what modernization promises.

Other thinkers advocating reformist Judaism are considered to be Abraham Geiger (1810-1874), Samuel Holdheim (1806-1860), David Einhorn (1809-1860), Kaufmann Kohler (d.1926).

### **Conservative Judaism**

It is a progressive, synthesist school of Judaism that is assumed to have started with Zacharias Frankel and Solomon Schechter. It proposes the combination of Torah and Talmud education with secular education, discusses religious practices according to the conditions of the day, but also wishes for their continuity. Anthropocentric views in Conservative Judaism explain the problems that emerged in the 20th century and offer suggestions. Eli Ginzberg's views are striking in this context.

In his work 'Manpower For Conservative Judaism'<sup>690</sup>, Prof. Eli Ginzberg discusses three important points for Judaism in America after the Second World War:

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<sup>690</sup> Cohn-Sherbok, a.g.e, s. 84-87.

- I. Rabbis are humans. The fact that it is a spiritual and religious responsibility should not prevent us from seeing the human-side of the rabbis.
- II. Education and living conditions of the rabbis should be rearranged as required by the era.
- III. Due to the increase in the number of educated people within conservative Judaism, the issue of how to evaluate manpower needs to be addressed.

According to Eli Ginzberg, although Orthodox tendencies are decreasing rapidly, modern educational institutions are preferred because of the facilities they offer. Thus, he points out the importance of Hebrew education, the difficulties in the transmission of Jewish culture and the necessity to overcome them. He suggests that these problems can be overcome with the education opportunities in the USA. Simultaneous and joint training programs should be prepared and planned in a short time.

Eli Ginzberg makes following recommendations for the over-mentioned problems:

- I. Due to the human aspects of the rabbis, it should be ensured that they complete their education and assume mission without interrupting their education by making the necessary financial support. It is wrong to expect them to work on the principle of long-term volunteering.
- II. The roles of the Rabbis in society need to be restructured. It is possible to attract the

attention of young people and to ensure that they adopt and emulate them as a moral model as long as the encouraging examples are sufficient in number and quality.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF LOUIS JACOB FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM AND SECULARIZATION**

The reformist movement is a liberal movement based on rational thought and progressivism. It rejects the Talmud tradition of Jewish law, and proposes a rejection of the concept of flexibility and 'chosenness' in the Sabbath rules. It approves the shortening of synagogue prayers according to working life and the use of local languages in place of / alongside Hebrew in rituals and prayers. The practical examples of modernist views of Reformists include assignment of missions to women aside from men in synagogue choirs and confirmation-type applications specific to girls in place of bar-mitzvah. The conservative school, on the other hand, has a sensitive reflex towards the creation of a common consciousness of society and the heritage of religion created by tradition and cultural accumulation.

Secularization, which is conceptually a philosophical and factually sociological concept, reveals a synthesist view with Conservative Judaism in Modern Judaism.

Conservative school thinkers have been involved in written debates, although more cautious about the

Reformists' debate on the originality of revelation. In addition, the Conservative school differs from the Reformist school with the idea that Jewish ethnic identity and traditional culture constitute the memory of the society and its continuity is also a religious requirement. New Orthodoxy, as Orthodoxy in its modern form, maintains its emphasis on tradition against change. The arrangements made in synagogues show that change is indispensable. But Orthodoxy is essentially based on the Holy Scripture and the Rabbani tradition. They consider the reactions of the reformists to be highly extreme, and the views of the Conservative school as temporary evaluations made under the influence of modernism.

Louis Jacobs interpreted the debates that existed within the post-Haskalah Jewish movements with his unique attitude. Louis Jacobs, as a theologian, explored how to interpret traditional Jewish belief and modernity together. Unlike the reformists, he argued that the link with tradition should be maintained, emphasizing that cultural and social continuity for Judaism cannot continue without historicity. Although Louis Jacobs can be regarded as traditionalist in this respect, his views on the originality of the Holy Script make a very important distinction against Orthodox Jewish thought. Louis Jacobs, considered as a Conservative, is an influential clergyman and thinker in modern British Judaism.

Louis Jacobs claims that although it is introduced as a secularized community, very few of the Jews, putting forward ideas about God, have a problem in accepting



God and that this should be accepted as a social phenomenon<sup>691</sup>.

### **The Impact of Conservative Judaism on Louis Jacobs**

The concept of conservatism includes different political and economic uses. It can be defined as 'preserving what is present' in a narrow sense<sup>692</sup>. Conservatism was born as a reaction to philosophical enlightenment philosophy. Edmund Burke's (1729-1797) views on the French Revolution in his work 'Reflections on the Revolution in France' (1790) was identified with the concept of Conservatism<sup>693</sup>. Although enlightenment philosophers placed the mind above the individual and the nonhistorical individual above society, Burke argued that tradition was wiser than the theories of intellectuals.

According to Burke, society and history are essential, while isolated and non-historical individuals lack the power of effectiveness. The continuity of organic integrity in society instead of individualism is among the basic features of Conservatism<sup>694</sup>.

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<sup>691</sup> Cohn-Sherbok, *Modern Judaism*, s.101-129. Edt. Jacob Neusner, *Conserving Conservative Judaism içinde*, Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data. 1993, USA.

<sup>692</sup> Jacobs, *Jewish Thought Today*, s. 49.

<sup>693</sup> Skirbekk G& Gilje N, *Felsefe Tarihi*, Çev. Emrah Akbaş-Şule Mutlu, Kesit, İstanbul 2006, s. 333.

<sup>694</sup> Skirbekk G& Gilje N, a.g.e, s.332

## **Practices of Rabbi Louis Jacobs: New London Synagogue**

Louis Jacobs, who left the New West End Synagogue and founded the New London Synagogue in 1961, also founded the New North London Synagogue in 1974, where his son Ivor served as Rabbi.

Conservative Judaism can be defined as a middle ground that defends tradition against Reformists, and seeks answers to critical views against Orthodox Jews and offers a religious life proposition without excluding modernism.

Although Louis Jacobs did not hide his affiliation with the American Conservative Society. But he refused the criticism that he was "pro-American" and he also rejected the proposals to permanently move to America.

The philosophical and theological basis of Louis Jacobs's views is that revelations were included in holy Scripture after interpretation and Halakhah was formed by being fed from sociological and historical-cultural conditions. However, it is not possible to adequately understand the clerical identity of Louis Jacobs independent from modern philosophy.

The dispute between Israel Brodie and Louis Jacobs is an important controversy within the United Synagogue in England. This debate, which is considered important among British Jews and whose dynamic consequences continue, is far from an individual matter. However, from the point of view of Louis Jacobs, the fact that this incident with Brodie took place in the New West End Synagogue,

which was the center of socio- economic and political relations for British Orthodox Jews, is important in terms of reflecting the Jews' view against new approaches.

After the First World War, the British Jewish community could orientate the Orthodox community in religious terms by making the intervention it wanted. The Chief Rabbi was responsible for the spread, representation and, when necessary, the defense of Orthodox Judaism in the British Jewish community. The Central Orthodoxes had an intense population after the first world war. During this period, Orthodox Jews were represented by the United Synagogue. The United Synagogue and the Chief Rabbi of the synagogue were influential in how religion should be interpreted by the public. The Chief Rabbi was aware that he was in a position to impose himself as a religious authority<sup>695</sup>.

After the Second World War, the number of the Jewish community halved from half a million and this community was divided into three important parts. Orthodox Jews formed the group considered Central Judaism by the United Synagogue. The second generation of Eastern European Jewish immigrants, on the other hand, was politically right-wing, but they were especially close to the Lubavitchers from ultra-Orthodox tendencies. However, the Reformist features of Liberal Jews, who constitute the most important part of British Judaism and support leftist views politically, are the biggest indicators of change. Modern Judaism examines the conditions under which the Torah was formed and discusses what

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<sup>695</sup> Skirbekk G& Gilje N, a.g.e, s. 333.

the basic message of the Torah is. In this period, the effect of different beliefs on Torah was also questioned.

In Jewish culture, "knowledge" meant "knowledge of the Torah." "A good manager should have been a good family member, a successful merchant and a knowledgeable person." By always keeping the knowledge of the Torah superior and maintaining a lively relationship between this knowledge and practical life, religious and secular principles were transferred from generation to generation. They believed that rulership might involve some sins and that this situation could be avoided with the humility provided by the knowledge of the Torah. This example, which shows that the interpretations between Orthodox, Reformist and Conservative Judaism develop around the same issues, reflects the interpretation of Hasidism seen as introverted, and reminds that the Jews have adopted different views after modernization.

### **Louis Jacobs' School and Students**

We should discuss the impact of Louis Jacobs' works. A legitimate question is why he left Orthodox Jewish Community and founded the New London Synagogue for a personal ambition after being vetoed from the New West End Synagogue. Even if this claim is true, he puts his career at risk by explicitly stating his views that would be considered unorthodox within an institution with a classical theological tradition.

Strict traditional views form institutionally closed communities. Individuals in such societies may

also be in secrecy that allows them to reveal their radical ideas at the final stage of their lives or to bring these issues to be unveiled after their death. The expression of an Orthodox Jews' assessment of revelation by Louis Jacobs created great controversy. It is seen that Jacobs initially expressed his views in a more open and harsh tone, but adopted a moderate one over time. This change is associated with an increased number of publications and recognition of Jacobs. Since the 1950s, when Louis Jacobs started publishing his theses in the Jewish Chronicle, he had the opportunity to re-express himself in various aspects in his books, articles and speeches.

Upon the death of Louis Jacobs, the Rabbi of the New North London Masorti Synagogue, Jonathan Wittenberg<sup>696</sup>, described Louis Jacobs as a person who constantly reads, takes care to explain his ideas in a way that people of different ages and cultures can understand, and has an advanced insight.

Wittenberg establishes a connection between Louis Jacobs' Lithuanian origin and the German philosophical discipline. According to Wittenberg, Jacobs is in academic affinity with the ideas of the American Conservative Judaism school. Due to social conditions in England, Jacobs is the leader of an Anglo-Jewish community based in London.

Jacobs also cared about the issues Haskala addressed. Academically, he evaluated the historical

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<sup>696</sup> Miri F. Kandel, *Orthodox Judaism on Britain Since 1913*, Preamble.

conditions and changes of the Jewish faith. His contributions to theology, morality, law and practical religious life demonstrate his importance in British Orthodox Jewish thought.

Jacobs states that parts of the environmental and social conditions that are open to change in the formation of halakhah constitute principles with different interpretations within the tradition. He is of the opinion that Judaism in the modern period cannot solve existing problems with a reform which is independent of tradition. As Louis Jacobs explained, "the need to strictly abide by the rules" is left to the "mystical consensus of the Jewish people", "while an investigation into the "origin of Jewish beliefs and institutions" is strongly advocated<sup>697</sup>. To mention three important principles Louis Jacobs focused on:

Louis Jacobs also managed to build a mass within the framework of his own ideas with a contemporary method, as he was closely interested in the thinkers considered within the New Jewish Theology and reflected them in his studies on theological, legal and mysticism. New London Synagogue is operating in St. John's Wood, Abbey Road, 33 primarily on Sabbath, or for Bar-Mitzvah, wedding rituals, and festive days.

Louis Jacobs' personal library and archive are in Jewish-Hebrew Studies, affiliated with the Bodleian Library of Oxford University where he gave seminars. The

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<sup>697</sup> Jonathan Wittenberg, In Memoriam, Rabbi Dr. Louis Jacobs, Our Rabbi and Teacher, *European Judaism*, Volume 39 No:2 Autumn' 06. s.161-169

webpage [louisjacobs.web](http://louisjacobs.web) covers his life, audio and video archive (consisting different subjects and questions/answers), developments regarding his students and Masorti Jewish institutions and organizations, primarily New London Synagogue, as well as introduction and sales of his works.

Louis Jacobs' critical views continued in his works from *We Have Reason To Believe* until his death in various fields including theological, legal and mystical areas. He expressed his thoughts academically in universities such as Oxford, Cambridge and Boston. It reflects the seriousness of Louis Jacobs' concern with matters of tradition and essence of Judaism.

Some of the articles written about Louis Jacobs have been published in 'A Traditional Quest' dedicated to him. The thoughts of Jacobs's contemporary thinkers and students, especially about Conservative Judaism, are included in a separate section under the heading *Contemporary Thinkers' Views of Louis Jacobs*. His views have been crystallized periodically in his works consisting of 'Jacobs Affair' and 'We Have Reason To Believe' in the 1950s, 'A Tree of Life' in the 1980s, 'Heaven On Their Heads Unfamiliar Aspects' in the 2000s which complement each other. It was attempted to understand, explain and exemplify the extent to which Louis Jacobs reached a religious and critical interpretation from a traditional education. Louis Jacobs' relationship with modernization made him more critical of Hasidism. This subject, which Jacobs may be considered to be the strongest, is also the

point where he and Conservative Judaism are mostly criticized.

During his doctoral studies, Alexander Altmann was the most influential teacher of Louis Jacobs with his personality and views. He transformed the education he received in the Orthodox tradition with a critical perspective. Louis Jacobs has an attitude that is not tired of questioning but is far from rigid reactivity. The interaction between the personality of Louis Jacobs, his education, the conditions he faced, and the quest for liberation in the modern history of Judaism in Europe are compatible with each other and can be explained in the context of the cause and effect relationship.

Without ignoring scientific criticism and social dynamics, the effort to explain how Judaism bases Orthodox, Reformist and Conservative approaches, and what justifications these current approaches rely on is an important issue for Louis Jacobs as well as for contemporary Jewish thinkers. Conservative Judaism is in a position that includes the synthesis of Orthodox and Reformist approaches. Conservative Judaism is in a position that includes the synthesis of Orthodox and Reformist approaches. The subjects that Louis Jacobs dealt with the Holy Scripture in his works, the chapters he chose from the Torah text, his long-standing studies on the Talmud, his general views on the Holy Scripture criticism and his view of the Holy Scripture express more clearly his individual religious thoughts, philosophical aspect and the basic message he shared with the Jews who followed



him in the New London Synagogue<sup>698</sup>. Despite leaving the New West End Synagogue, Louis Jacobs never rejected Jewish theology and philosophy.

Louis Jacobs is a well-educated, religious, contemporary Jew. He was also interested in Hasidism for a part of his life. I considered this research important because it academically articulated the current considerations within the orthodox tradition. Undoubtedly, in the 19th century, an intellectual could not isolate himself from the discussions of his age, no matter how religious he was. Louis Jacobs was not a fervent advocate of modernization in this regard, and appears with his principled, rational and explanatory character. Louis Jacobs, as a theologian, explored how to interpret traditional Jewish belief with modernity. According to him, a modernly educated Rabbi could also be devoted to his roots, perform his worship, and also be engaged with science and art.

### **The Views of Contemporary Thinkers on Louis Jacobs**

Dan Cohn-Sherbok wrote the foreword to *A Traditional Quest*, compiled in memory of Louis Jacobs. According to Cohn-Sherbok, Jacobs is a versatile and productive personality who has contributed to a wide range of Judaism. Combining his academic contributions with his spiritual leadership at the New London

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<sup>698</sup> Gürkan, *The Jews as a Chosen People*, Routledge Jewish Studies, 2009, New York, s. 82.

Synagogue, Jacobs is, according to Cohn-Sherbok, one of the leading contemporary Jewish scholars<sup>699</sup>. Jacob Neusner points out that he respects the theoretical explanations of Louis Jacobs on Judaism; and that he was more than a Rabbi who had deep insights on theology, law and mysticism. According to Neusner, Louis Jacobs had the opportunity to express himself theologically more easily, as he acquired Torah knowledge at a young age; but he did not respond to the criticisms directed to him using only his own views and using a religious language. Jacob deals with the views of important philosophers in Jewish history and theological debates. He makes critical evaluations but does not have an academic perspective with an absolute reform orientation.

Although Jewish intellectuals played the role of intellectuals in the center, economic activities were more decisive than philosophical and intellectual concerns for the Jewish people at the periphery. Because man is a social being. He cannot maintain his organization of life only with his religious belief and philosophy of life. Detailed life organization is concerned with economic resources, needs and how rational their distribution is.

According to Jacob Neusner, the practices in the first four centuries of Christianity were accepted as basic until the twelfth century, and a social lifestyle was implemented without economic regulation. For this reason, it has become a necessity to compare the aristocratic state structure and Judaism. With Aristotle's

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<sup>699</sup> New London Synagogue, 33 Abbey Road, London, NW8 0AT.

state philosophy, Christianity realized the need for economic regulation<sup>700</sup>.

Max Weber states that he did not encounter capitalism in his works on China, India and Ancient Israel. According to this interpretation, capitalism is a modern phenomenon. But according to Neusner, this conclusion is a problematic inference in terms of social sciences as it is based on insufficient resources<sup>701</sup>. Because, according to Neusner, religious life is not only lived in the center in academic, political, economic, social and other areas of society.

Eugene Borowitz (d.2016) believes that the Holy Scripture has been written entirely by people. Borowitz expressed his feelings and thoughts about Jacobs: 'In my opinion, Louis Jacobs's views on the Torah are misunderstood', 'Since the day we met thirty years ago, he has been lovingly, softly sharing his ideas; he is open to discussion' and 'he enriches the others'.<sup>702</sup> To Borowitz, 'Louis Jacobs does not target religious fundamentalism. But the appropriate discourse for the work of the people that contributes to establishing peace between the life and religion of an ordinary believer may be "folk fundamentalism.'<sup>703</sup>

According to Steven T. Katz's Religion, we can consider Judaism as a complex structure in which beliefs,

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<sup>700</sup> Cohn-Sherbok, A Traditional Quest,

<sup>701</sup> Jacob Neusner, Rabbinic Political Theory, The University of Chicago Press, London, s. 213.

<sup>702</sup> Neusner, A Traditional Quest (inside), s. 20.

<sup>703</sup> Borowitz, A Traditional Quest (inside).

behaviors, heroes, laws, rituals and institutions are shaped according to the Holy Scripture. However, after the second destruction of the Holy Temple in AD 70, we see that Judaism began to be identified especially with the Jewish people. Judaism reflects a whole that spreads over a wide geography and has texts in different languages<sup>704</sup>.

Traditional Judaism, rather than just being understood as a religion, is a collection of covenants, teachings, and commandments between God and the Israelites. The Jews perceived the worship of different religions, especially paganism, as a threat to the covenant between God and the Israelites. Jews also positioned themselves differently from Islam and Christianity throughout the Middle Ages. Judaism was defined as a religion that could not be compared to Islam and Christianity, with the emphasis on the covenant, chosen people and promised lands. Albert Friedlander, in *New Dimensions And Explorations A Traditional Quest*, states that Louis Jacobs attaches importance not only to the knowledge of Talmud Rabbis but also to the thoughts of philosophers, and indicates richness in his works and his personal value in the Anglo-Jewry Rabbis.

Byron L. Sherwin is a long-time friend of Louis Jacobs with whom they made intellectual idea exchange. According to Sherwin, the works and views of Louis Jacobs should be examined from four different angles. These are theological, rabbinical, Jewish law, and Jewish mysticism. Sherwin states that Louis Jacobs' work on the Rabbinic period and the historical continuity of these

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<sup>704</sup> Borowitz, a.g.e, s.

works are important due to his extensive knowledge of Early and Medieval Judaism<sup>705</sup>.

Sherwin defines the theological views of his friend Louis Jacobs as "middle way".<sup>706</sup>

Jacobs attached importance to the knowledge of reasons of the historically grounded theological problems. According to Sherwin, Jacobs preferred the demarcation of borders for the settlement of the problems.

In his article "The Human Body and The Image of God",<sup>707</sup> Byron L. Sherwin states that "future generations will recognize the name Louis Jacobs not just as a name in British Judaism, but through his academic publications and his work as Rabbi".

Louis Jacob's conflictual career in New West Synagogue has always been remembered. Byron L. Sherwin says that Jacobs had an important place among his contemporaries with his views and life. To Sherwin, Jacobs is valuable both intellectually and spiritually. He also notes that friendship with Jacobs has contributed to him much.

In addition to his personal friendship with Jacobs, Sherwin states that Jacobs is admired and seen as a model Rabbi by many American Jews as well as<sup>708</sup>.

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<sup>705</sup> Katz, Edt. The Impact of The Holocaust on Jewish Theology, New York Universitesi 2005, A Traditional Quest, s. 42-57.

<sup>706</sup> Sherwin, 'Louis Jacobs: Man of Controversy Scholar Of Distinction', Dan Cohn-Sherbok A Traditional Quest içinde, Judaism, 28. 1.1979, s.95-109.

<sup>707</sup> Cosgrove, a.g.e, s. 264.

<sup>708</sup> Sherwin: The Human Body and The Image of God, A Traditional Quest, teki bölüm aynı zamanda 'Louis Jacobs: Man of Controversy, Scholar of Distinction' adıyla, Judaism 28.1, Winter 1979, s. 95-109

Paul Morris expresses the importance of Jacobs with his linguistic knowledge and analysis. Jacobs's interest in philosophy and literature explains what he dealt with German idealism, Kant, and Marx, albeit to a lesser extent. Technical and philosophical debates draw attention in the vast majority of Louis Jacobs's works. His evaluation of the Maimonides' third principle can be given as an example<sup>709</sup>.

### **Criticism of Louis Jacobs' Views and Conservative Judaism**

Although Louis Jacobs did not attend the invitation of the Reform Synagogue in the United States in 1959, he made a speech at the Reform Synagogue in Britain. Concerning the speech of Jacobs, who was always supported by his friend Frankel, the Jewish Chronicle commented that "the isolation was broken". According to Dayan Moshe Swift, who was among those who listened to the speech, Louis Jacobs 'acts in cooperation with the reformists and threatens the British Jewish Union.'<sup>710</sup> Moshe Swift's 'heretics' criticism of Louis Jacobs and Brodie's veto reflect the British Orthodox Jewish Community's opinion of him. When Louis Jacobs was the director of Jewish College, he was considered a 'Trojan horse' by people who knew his views. Asked why he was allowed to serve, Norman Cohen said 'After Alexander

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<sup>709</sup> Sherwin, *The Human Body and The Image of God*, inside *A Traditional Quest*, s.75. <sup>716</sup> Morris, *The Quest For A Jewish Theology and A Non-Fundamentalist Halakhah. A Traditional Quest içinde*, s.194.

<sup>710</sup> Cosgrove, a.g.e, 265.

Altmann went to the US, Louis Jacobs was also known to have received some offers and Brodie also opposed Jacobs to become the college's director; but the task was assigned to him due to Epstein's insistence<sup>711</sup>. For Louis Jacobs, he says 'a kosher teacher, but not a kosher manager'.<sup>712</sup>

According to Epstein, "Conservative Judaism occupies a position between Orthodoxy and Reformism. On the one hand, the Conservatives embraced some of the reformist Jewish novelties, such as terminating the gender discrimination in worship as applied by the Orthodox Synagogue, inclusion of English language to prayers, and combining music and worship. On the other hand, Conservatism claims to fully accept the structure of the Rabbinic tradition, although it allows for new interpretations in accordance with modern needs and beliefs<sup>713</sup>. Accordingly, for instance, Conservatism allows driving to the synagogue on the Sabbath, contrary to rabbinic law. Conservatism should define the principles of its practical attitude towards Orthodox Law. Conservatism acknowledges God's revelations to Jesus, and adopts a positive attitude towards the national aspirations and hopes of the Jewish people for Israel's ancient homeland. It interprets the continuity of Hebrew as the preservation of a cultural tradition, not for national historical reasons. Unlike Orthodoxy, Conservative Judaism rejects the doctrine of

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<sup>711</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 252.

<sup>712</sup> Jacobs, a.g.e, s. 253.

<sup>713</sup> Epstein, a.g.e, s. 296.

resurrection, while accepting the belief in immortality as in Reform Judaism.'<sup>714</sup>

Three basic principles of Conservative Judaism can be stated as follows:

- (1) The strengthening of all values (material and spiritual unity) belonging to Judaism, which Schechter calls "Catholic Israel";
- (2) The continuation of the Jewish tradition;
- (3) Strengthening the Jewish education system to a self-sufficient level.<sup>715</sup>

With the acceptance of the three basic principles above, it was predicted by the advocates of Conservative Judaism that other problems could be solved more easily. Conservative Judaism refuses to offer any commitment to its core values and religious dogmas. This situation allows for a considerable degree of differences between individuals and groups considered within Conservative Judaism in terms of practice as well as in matters of belief. At this point, Mordecai Kaplan differentiated within Conservative Judaism and became the representative of the Reconstructivist movement<sup>716</sup>.

Tracee L. Rosen<sup>717</sup> questions to what extent the defenders of Reformist views and those serving in Conservative Jewish Synagogues are helpful to the Jewish

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<sup>714</sup> Epstein, a.g.e, s. 297.

<sup>715</sup> Epstein, a.g.e, s. 297.

<sup>716</sup> Epstein, a.g.e, s. 297.

<sup>717</sup> Rosen L. Tracee (d.1959) Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies' ten mezun olduktan sonra, Encino, California, Salt Lake City ve Utah' da Rabbi olarak görev yaptı. Conservative ve Reform Sinagoglarının ikisine de bağlıdır.



community<sup>718</sup>. According to Jack Wertheimer,<sup>719</sup> Conservative Judaism stands somewhere between Orthodox Judaism and various Liberal Jewish views<sup>720</sup>.

We can say that Louis Jacobs was influenced by the God-centered criticism of the New Jewish Theology and the Institutional critical views of his era, and the philosophy education he received brought him closer to the scientific method in his Torah studies. 1960 and after is a period in which quite different views and studies are concentrated in terms of secularization theories. Cross-inquiries between public secularism, individual religiosity, new religious movements, and rigid materialist Atheism have also created a number of problems and differences for British Jews. Modernization necessitates the change in traditional institutions, the re-questioning of sacred and ethical values, and the formation of new proposals regarding the interrelationship of secular and religious spaces within themselves and with each other.

The main method of Louis Jacobs is to evaluate the language, content and interpretation of the Holy Scripture with Rabbani tradition and scientific critical methods. Apart from the purely scientific concern, Jacobs's mastery of traditional knowledge facilitated his study without ignoring the basic concepts and problems of Jewish theology. After the Second World

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<sup>718</sup> Tracee, 'Conservative Judaism at the Crossroads: Choosing the Path of Outreach', American Jewish Congress, 2005, Vol. 54 Number ¾, Issu, 215/216 Judaism, s.198-201.

<sup>719</sup> American Jewish History Professor at JTS

<sup>720</sup> Wertheimer, The Perplexities of Conservative Judaism, American Jewish Committee, 2007, Vol.124 Number 2, 2007, s. 38-44.

War, his increasing academic and personal relations with the US Jews have been effective in expressing Jacobs's work in Conservative Judaism and reaching the masses.

Louis Jacobs states that the general trends in modern Judaism are closely related to some developments such as the Atheist philosophical movements that emerged as a result of scientific inquiry in the 19th and 20th centuries and the Jewish genocide. It caused some of the European Jews to completely renounce their religion and to be assimilated, and some of them to adopt a libertarian and liberal understanding of life. According to Jacobs, Jews' inquiries in the field of religion were particularly about the existence of God, the afterlife, and the Jewish lifestyle. For instance, the halacoust led to the question of 'If there is God, why didn't he help us?' Discussion of the problem of evil and the existence, power and goodness of God after the genocide has also increased the interest of Jewish scholars in new ways of thinking and life. It has been observed that the Jewish religious leaders did not oppose the idea that one could be Jewish without believing in God.

Louis Jacobs did not describe himself as a secular Jew like Albert Einstein. In a letter he wrote to religious teachers, he asked them to stop insisting on the existence of God. He explained the reason for this behavior as grasping the reality of his time. Louis Jacobs summarized his opinion on this issue as "A Judaism that does not contain ideas about the afterlife would be wrong." He

stated that God leaves people to think and interpret his existence<sup>721</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

Rabbi Dr. Louis Jacobs was a theologian, clergyman and philosopher who has worked for half a century in the fields of Jewish Theology, Halakha, Jewish Mysticism and Ethics. He represented the Coservative Judaism which is the smallest Jewish community among 20th century British Jews. In his academic, philosophical and theological studies, Louis Jacobs examined the subject of revelation in the context of epistemological consistency, or in other words, epistemology of revelation. He benefited from modern Holy Scripture interpretations and adopted a critical approach to revelation.

Concerning the subject of belief, Rabbi Louis Jacobs prioritized individual religiosity and traditionality, contrary to his critical attitude against revelation. Thus he is closer to Orthodox Judaism compared to Reformists. Louis Jacobs's understanding of God is Judaism's understanding of God that became traditional with Maimonides. God is a perfect, creative, compassionate universal being, whose existence and unity can be accepted through proof. To Louis Jacobs, the Torah was not given to Moses on Mount Sinai at once and it does not have a Divine integrity. Rather, the contradictions in its content show the intervention of the human element together with the factors of history and environment.

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<sup>721</sup> Jacobs, *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, s. 39.

According to Louis Jacobs, tradition is superior to rationality, and continuity of religion is superior to individual questions. Because of this point of view, Jacobs has been described as conservative. There is a critical approach to the Torah and Jewish History on the issues that Louis Jacobs deals with in his works. Some of the most important elements that make up this perspective are the education and personality of Louis Jacobs. Completing his orthodoxy education patiently and enthusiastically, Louis Jacobs, after becoming Rabbi, continued his personal interest in philosophy and English literature academically during his doctoral studies. He expressed the importance of Hebrew in Torah studies in his studies on the Babylonian Talmud. He explained that language gained meaning in the Holy Scripture not only as a divine but also through social and cultural interactions.

Louis Jacobs became the most important representative of Conservative Judaism in Britain, distinguishing himself academically and virtually from the modern British Orthodox Jews. Seeking a sincere and intellectual solution to the "religious threat of secularization" thesis philosophically and sociologically, Louis Jacobs's criticism of Orthodox Judaism is not enough to define him as a secular rabbi. After completing the traditional Jewish religious education, Louis Jacobs continued his academic studies in Judaism, while pursuing developments within secular education and contemporary Judaism. Although he sees Judaism as a field of study as a whole, he continued his studies in specific fields such as theology, philosophy, mysticism,

and Jewish law, with scientific, religious and philosophical methods specific to those fields.

Louis Jacobs' book "We Have Reason To Believe" was published in the late 1950s and has been discussed for many years. "We Have Reason To Believe" is Louis Jacobs' first published work, which splits from the traditional view of Orthodox Judaism on revelation and reflects modern critical Holy Scripture criticisms.

In his work 'A Life of Tree' published in the 1980s, Jacobs basically states that not only revelation is the determinant of Jewish law, human tendency and social conditions shape the Halaha; and acceptance of Halaha as a religious obligation stems from the understanding of individual religiosity, but this situation provides the basis for the formation of an important tradition. Jacobs' free expression of his objective and critical views of Jewish theology while fighting for the position of Chief Rabbi at the New West End Synagogue as an active cleric is identified with this work. Despite winning the elections, Jacobs's statements about the objectivity of the revelation in 'We Have Reason to Believe' caused him to be vetoed. Louis Jacobs' foundation of the New London Synagogue in 1963 and continuation of his duty as a Rabbi shows how much importance he attached to the social importance and practice of religion. He served at Harvard, Oxford, and Cambridge universities and was invited to many meetings. The fact that he continued to produce works until the end of his life was a result of his disciplined personality. The New London Synagogue became an alternative to the United

Synagogue and Liberal Synagogues within British Judaism. Conservative Judaism is a marginal movement based in London, while the majority of its members are in the United States and Canada. The Conservative Judaism movement is a dynamic institutionalization movement that does not reject tradition, attaches importance to religious practices, combines philosophical discussions with theology, and places emphasis on reconciliation with modernity.

While explaining his thoughts on Jewish theology, morality, worship and social issues, it is seen that Louis Jacobs did not ignore the scientific method in his biblical criticism and took a holistic approach to historical interpretations and explanations of the Torah. At the same time, he appears to express his own thoughts not by positioning himself away from absolutely reformist Liberal Jewish views and the orthodox Jewish views who are indifferent to rigid traditional and social changes. Rather he criticized both of them, while mostly the Orthodox Jewish approach.

Louis Jacobs criticized the Reformist Jews, stating that although they expressed their acceptance of the Jewish tradition, they adopted a form of explanation that was disconnected from tradition, and that they avoided referring to medieval Jewish thinkers which make them contradictory in themselves. It is interesting that although he was excluded from Orthodox Judaism, he did not define himself outside of it. On the other hand, his divergence with Orthodox Judaism is evident in his views on revelation and in Holy Scripture evaluation.

Louis Jacobs' views on the acceptance and continuity of tradition coincide with Orthodox Judaism.

Jacobs highlights the inevitability of Modernization and defends that tradition should not be excluded while solving the problems of text and meaning in the Holy Scripture with reason. He states that social change and transformation processes facilitate the contribution of human elements to the text of the Holy Scripture and that this situation can be solved with reason. The survival of religion against the thesis of its decline and disappearance in the twentieth century was realized thanks to tradition, and there is a state of equality in the competition between religion and secular elements.

Louis Jacobs, who has more than thirty books and more than fifty articles with expanded editions of his works, stated that "all of his work is to understand the Holy Scripture better" and has proven this in almost every subject and at different levels of expression about Judaism. Louis Jacobs advocated that religious knowledge can be complemented by secular knowledge and that modern life can continue its existence as a religious society with new interpretations in line with the basic principles of religion, and has worked for this objective with his works and institutional efforts. To Louis Jacobs, the solution of the rivalry between secularism and religious tradition can be achieved by the method of reconciliation and synthesis.

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M.İhtisas OSB Mah. 4A Cad. No:3/3  
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Tel : (0 531) 880 92 99  
yazyayinlari@gmail.com • www.yazyayinlari.com

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