

**A SYMPOSIUM ON THE WORK OF ZEV GARBER:  
REVIEWS OF *MAVEN IN BLUE JEANS***

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Zev Garber, Professor and Chair of Jewish Studies at Los Angeles Valley College, has made critical contributions to the academy through his scholarship, teaching, and leadership. The significance and range of his scholarly writings, that cover such fields as Holocaust Studies, Jewish theology, and American Jewish studies, are best underscored by the over five hundred page festschrift published in his honor in 2009, *Maven in Blue Jeans: A Festschrift in Honor of Zev Garber*, edited by Steven Jacobs. Garber's leadership in the academy includes longstanding and ongoing roles in the National Association of Professors of Hebrew, the sponsor of this journal. He has served as its treasurer, secretary, vice president, and president, editor of its newsletter, *Iggeret*, and has organized regional and national meetings. The publication of the following essays in *Hebrew Studies*, which were presented at a joint session of the meetings of the Western region of the American Academy of Religion and the Western Jewish Studies Association on March 14, 2010, is an additional fitting tribute to Zev's scholarly endeavors.

The papers analyze Garber's own work directly or situate it in relationship to some of the essays in *Maven in Blue Jeans*. Gereboff deciphers the hermeneutics of Garber's use of biblical and rabbinic sources in his various essays. Sabbath employs in a very novel way notions of types of speech in an examination of Garber's writings and academic efforts. Jacobs and Greenspoon take up respectively essays in the festschrift on Jewish Christian relations and biblical studies. Silverman advances an argument regarding the Jewishness of Edith Stein, a person on whom Garber has also written. The symposium concludes with a response by Zev Garber to these papers. Together these essays offer further insights into the work of Zev Garber and some of the critical issues of his scholarship.



## ZEV GARBER'S USAGE OF BIBLICAL AND RABBINIC SOURCES

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Interpreting and identifying the implications of biblical texts read through the lens of rabbinic sources and thought is a key component of Zev Garber's teaching, oral presentations, and published works. Garber engages biblical sources in a midrashic manner in order to extract theological and moral lessons relevant to Jews and others, especially Christian theologians. He writes and teaches so as to have his readers and audiences grapple with theological, philosophical, and moral concerns emerging from these documents when read holistically. Central to Garber's interpretation of the Bible is his understanding of midrash and Oral Torah as the rabbinic method and underlying concept for reading the Written Torah in an effort to have it speak to the changing circumstances over the ages.

Interpreting and identifying the implications of biblical texts read through the lens of rabbinic sources and thought is a key component of Garber's teaching and published work. From his first publication, "Psalm 138:4: A Religious Polemic in the Haggadah,"<sup>1</sup> to forthcoming essays, Garber has engaged biblical sources in a midrashic manner in order to extract theological and moral lessons relevant to Jews and others, especially Christian theologians. Although he is fully knowledgeable of the modern historical critical approach to biblical and rabbinic sources, evidenced particularly by his large number of book reviews, his publications on biblical sources only occasionally make use of these methods. He writes and teaches so as to have his readers and audiences grapple with theological, philosophical, and moral concerns emerging from these documents when read more holistically.

The key methodological assumptions and theoretical premises of his analyses of biblical texts first appear in print starting in the late 1970s, and are well developed by the mid 1980s. Central to Garber's interpretation of the Bible is his understanding of midrash and Oral Torah as the rabbinic method and underlying concept for reading the Written Torah in an effort to have it speak to the changing circumstances over the ages. Garber offers several different formulations of his understanding of the rabbinic approach to textual analysis. These are captured in such ideas as his interpretation of *na'aseh venishmah* from Exodus 24 and his neologism, *historiosophy*. The

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<sup>1</sup> Z. Garber, "Psalm 138:4: A Religious Polemic in the Haggadah," *CCAR Journal: The Reformed Jewish Quarterly* 17 (1970): 57–60.

application of these methods allows Garber to extract theological, and above all, moral lessons for the current world. Learning for Garber is meant to nurture sensitivity and empathy which lead to ethical decision-making and moral development.

Garber's published work on biblical sources achieves its mature and steady expression in the early nineties, for from that point forward, it is framed by the reality of the Shoah and the issues raised for all those living in the post-Shoah era. A good portion of these writings of the last twenty years are revised versions of his presentations in his dialog with three other partners of what is known as the Post-Shoah Midrash Group. His contributions here address theological and moral issues raised by the Holocaust as well as by developments in the land of Israel and relations between Palestinians and Israelis. His overall goal is to speak to these concerns as an observant, rabbinically formed Jew who carries forward the ongoing processes of midrashic interpretation resulting in the further disclosure of Oral Torah for our age.

In what follows, I will briefly elaborate on some of these key claims, offer some exemplifications, and end by situating Garber's work within the frame of his own autobiographical representation.

The focal points of many of Garber's articles are specific biblical passages, though these in turn are interpreted through comparison with other biblical sources. Garber has penned articles on the flood story, Genesis 6–9, the story of Sodom, Genesis 18–19, Jacob's encounter with the Angel at the Jordan, Genesis 32, Jethro, Exodus 18, the revelation at Sinai, Exodus 24, texts dealing with Amalek throughout the Tanakh, passages related to *lex talionis*, "The Love Commandment" in Leviticus 19, a passage in Deuteronomy 30 on the nature of the covenant and Torah, the confrontation between Amos and Amaziah recorded in Amos 7, and the Song of Songs. In addition, he has written several articles on the development and interpretation of the Passover Haggadah. He interprets the above cited biblical texts by bringing them into dialog with passages from classical rabbinic texts, especially the two talmuds, early rabbinic midrashim, and medieval commentators and legalists including Rashi, Rambam, and Ramban.

As noted, Garber sees his work as a form of midrash, a term for which he has offered several definitions. For example, "Midrash is biblical inquiry; an attempt to explain the biblical text in as many ways as seem possible to the

inquiring mind of the Jewish sage.”<sup>2</sup> For Garber however, the “crucial problem in textual interpretation is to discover a suitable hermeneutic, one that is both fair to the original image and faithful to the contemporary ethic.”<sup>3</sup> Garber’s comments from an article from 1979 on “Interpretation and the Passover Haggadah” apply equally as well to his understanding of the challenge faced by earlier rabbinic and contemporary interpreters of the biblical texts. He writes, “Interpreting the Passover Haggadah is the problem of relating blocs of religious thought patterns to the fluid, constantly changing life of the Jewish community. It is a question of old forms and new challenges.”<sup>4</sup>

A different way Garber understands his task as part of the ongoing rabbinic response to Sinai is set forth in his interpretation of the Israelites reply to God found in the covenant text of Exodus 24, “*na’aseh ve-nishma*” in his article, “Dialog at the Mountain: Thoughts on Exodus 24 and Matthew 17:13.” He writes, “Whether the Torah is defined as the result of an exclusive encounter at Sinai or of an evolving journey from Sinai, this national treasure is traditionally understood by the response of *na’aseh venishma*, (We shall do and we shall hear [reason]). Accordingly, the way of Torah presents three paths for the contemporary Jew.

1. One should believe that God’s Torah given at Sinai is all knowledge (*na’aseh* alone).
2. The Torah at Sinai tradition should be abandoned and Torah should be explained in purely rationalist terms. Torah is made in the image of the Jewish people (*nishma* alone).
3. One should accept the existential position that God’s teaching was shared at Sinai face to face with all of Israel present and future. “Present” implies that God’s revelation occurred and that Torah is the memory of this unusual theophany; “future” hints that Israel’s dialogue with God is an ongoing process. This view holds that people know only a part of divine truth and that each generation seeks, makes distinctions, categorizes, and strives to discover more (*na’aseh ve-nishma*).

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<sup>2</sup> Z. Garber, “Torah and Testament: Teaching and Learning Scripture in Dialogue and in Hermeneutics,” in *Puzzling out the Past: Studies in the Northwest Semitic Languages and Literatures in Honor of Bruce Zuckerman* (ed. S. Fine, M. J. Lundberg, and W. T. Patard; forthcoming, 2010), n. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Z. Garber, “Interpretation and the Passover Haggadah: An Invitation to Post-Biblical Historiosophy,” *Bulletin of Higher Hebrew Education* 2 (1988): 26.

<sup>4</sup> Z. Garber, “Interpretation and the Passover Haggadah,” *Journal of Reform Judaism* 26 (1979): 83.

He concludes this *drash*, exposition, by drawing out its implications for how Jews should read and interpret biblical and the larger rabbinic corpus of Torah. He states, “*Na’aseh* alone permits no ultimate questions; *nishma* alone provides no ultimate answers. *Na’aseh venishma* together asks questions and attempts answers but leaves many uncertainties. Yet uncertainty is truth in the making and the inevitable price of freedom.”<sup>5</sup> These comments make evident the existential and epistemological axioms of Garber’s approach to biblical and rabbinic sources. Jews who affirm Torah see it as providing divine guidance mediated through the limitations of human reason. The meaning of Torah is forever open to discovery, especially as Jews seek to elucidate its messages for their ever changing circumstances.

Perhaps the most unique formulation of Garber’s understanding of classical rabbinic and his own view of Torah is captured in his notion of the rabbinic *historiosophical* approach to texts. For Garber, the rabbis did not interest themselves in historiography. “Jews in pre-modern eras did not look backwards with the aim of discovering facts. They sought rather to derive paradigms from the sacred events of the past by which they could then interpret and respond to contemporary events.”<sup>6</sup> Garber then introduces his neologism by stating,

Jews dabbled in *historiosophy* (a philosophy of history) and not *historiography*. The biblical authors discuss life, liberation, deliverance and the Jewish People’s continuous relationship with God. Running through this experience is an element of mystery stemming from God’s penetration into history, limiting human knowledge and ethical conduct.<sup>7</sup>

And Garber concludes by drawing out the implication of this rabbinic approach to biblical and rabbinic texts. “The right and ethical life is to be attained by following creeds, rites and rituals and appointed times—all of which enable each generation to reenact the pivotal moments in the life of the Jewish people.”<sup>8</sup>

These approaches shape Garber’s reflections on such matters on the relationship between Jews and Christians in the post-Shoah as well as his visions for Israeli-Palestinian connections. For example, his essay, “Night

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<sup>5</sup> Z. Garber, “Dialogue at the Mountain: Thoughts on Exodus 24 and Matthew 17:1–13,” in *Confronting the Holocaust: A Mandate for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Part Two* (ed. S. C. Feinstein, K. Schierman, and M. S. Littell; Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1999), p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Z. Garber, “Interpretation,” p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> Z. Garber, “Interpretation,” p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Z. Garber, “Interpretation,” pp. 26–27.

Encounters: Theologizing Dialogue,” focuses on Gen 32:22–32 the story of Jacob at the Jordan and Matthew 26:36–46, the account of Jesus in Gethsemane. After having discussed how Jacob’s transformation into the limping Israel indicates that Jacob does not lack firmness or strength “but represents that Jew who has confronted the holocaustal evil decrees of God and man and has prevailed,” Garber goes on to comment,

Jacob weakened and yet made stronger in the crucible of the Shoah, is psychologically prepared to meet at the River the other streams of the Abrahamic faith in mutual dialogue and respect. Only the Jacob who can wrestle unabashedly with the curse of the Shoah can hope to emerge with the blessing of Shalem (Gen 33:7) totally whole and at peace with the struggle. He has seen the dark face of God and yet he walks upright refusing to be downtrodden.<sup>9</sup>

Garber concludes by identifying the larger theological and moral implications of his reading. He states,

Torah is not the all perfect absolute of the true believers, nor does it provide an instant blueprint to rescue upon distress or demand. In God’s creation, there is *tohu vavohu*, (‘unformed and void’) so that man can redeem an imperfect world. God purposefully hides His face so that man can be free and choose the right ethical action.<sup>10</sup>

The clues to what has shaped Zev Garber’s engagement with biblical and rabbinic texts appear in his 2009 essay, “Terror Out of Zion: Making Sense of Scriptural Teaching.” Salient in this account is his primary and secondary school education in Orthodox yeshivot in the period immediately after the Holocaust, taught by refugee rabbis and survivors who “taught me the spirit of *musar* (moral deliberation) that God’s covenant with the Jewish people is absolute and eternal—and that the mission of the Jews is to apply ethical monotheism to everyone, everywhere at all times and under all circumstances.” After charting the contributions of his university training to his thinking and methods, he concludes, “For me the continuity of the Jews lies more in actual ethnic memory than factual historical details. Faith knowledge and its corollary, ‘mythicizing history’ was and is the way of

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<sup>9</sup> Z. Garber, “Night Encounters: Theologizing Dialogue,” in *Shoah: The Paradigmatic Genocide: Essays in Exegesis and Eisegesis* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1994), p. 161.

<sup>10</sup> Z. Garber, “Night Encounters,” pp. 161, 167.

Torah.”<sup>11</sup> These remarks help explain the passion, method, existential situation, and deep moral commitments and concerns that energize Zev Garber's interpretations of biblical and rabbinic texts. The ongoing process of midrash for him, often done now in conversation with previously excluded dialog partners, such as Christian theologians, is the way to engage Scripture in light of pressing political, moral, and theological issues. These discussions should result in the articulation of Jewishly informed answers that serve to help Jews fulfill their mission of improving the world and bringing peace to it and all of its inhabitants.

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<sup>11</sup> Z. Garber, “Terror Out of Zion: Making Sense of the Scriptural Teaching,” in *Confronting Genocide: Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (ed. S. L. Jacobs; Landham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), pp. 279–280.

# HISTORIOSOPHY AND ZEV GARBER, A NEOLOGISM: HIS TEACHING METHODOLOGY, LITERARY INVESTIGATIONS, AND ENGAGEMENT WITH ZIONISM.

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Zev Garber's signature mantra, *historiosophy*, demonstrates his commitment to using sacred text to shine a light on the moral issues of contemporary life, in general, and the life of the Jewish people, in particular. Garber's existential voice calls for the celebration of life, the power of faith, and the importance of moral action in the midst of confusion and evil, insisting that these are the secrets for survival. His teaching, his aesthetics, his epistemology, and his politics form a holistic approach to life, learning, and beauty. This essay explores, using a figural structure, the dimensions of Garber's voice—suggesting PaRDes.

*Mavenfest* and his own *opus* suggest that the scholarship and academics of Zev Garber can be organized as expressing four different figures of speech—metonymy (literal), metaphor (symbolic), synecdoche (moral), and anagogy (mystical).

At the metonymic level, Garber's editorial work as editor of *Shofar* from 1994 to the present, his books, edited collections, encyclopedia and journal articles, book reviews, lectures, etc. cover twenty-four pages in *Mavenfest*. His teaching at the community college was a five-class-a-semester schedule.

C. Jan Colin, in "Traveling in Ga(r)berdine," writes that Garber's teaching is described as "essentially postmodern ... without any of the post-modern relativism ... but rather teaching students how to fish; how to think; how to use critical skills and (inter)disciplinary toolkits ... [to] teach the paths whereby students can discover their own truths."<sup>1</sup>

According to Marvin Sweeney, Garber teaches that Jewish literature always had a didactic level, a level which, if read properly, would teach us a lesson about how to live.<sup>2</sup>

Steven Jacobs, in his introduction to *Mavenfest*, writes that Garber is "Master of the teachable moment."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C. J. Colin, "Traveling in Garberdine," in *Maven in Blue Jeans: A Festschrift in Honor of Zev Garber* (ed. S. L. Jacobs; West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2009), p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> M. Sweeney, "Conference Events," *Shofar* 28.1 (2009): 8.

<sup>3</sup> S. L. Jacobs, "Introduction," in *Maven in Blue Jeans: A Festschrift in Honor of Zev Garber* (ed. S. L. Jacobs; West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2009), p. 2.

Garber, himself, talks about his teaching philosophy as being in the style of midrash. Education takes place when student and teacher are engaged in active discussion, sharing ideas.<sup>4</sup>

His fall 1994 Special Issue, “Perspectives on Zionism,” lays out a syllabus for a class on Zionism that covers the history, politics, religion, and sociology of the movement and the continued challenges to the state of Israel today.<sup>5</sup>

Garber’s dedication to Jewish-Christian dialogue inspired James F. Moore to write in his conference tribute to his mentor, “An Infusian Method for Teaching Judaism,” about how honored he felt, as a Christian, to be invited to contribute to Garber’s edited volume, *Academic Approaches to Teaching Jewish Studies*. Moore describes his strategy of infusion, inspired by Garber, which is a largely multi-cultural, inter-disciplinary approach to infuse his current courses with Jewish content.<sup>6</sup>

At the metaphoric level, Garber demonstrates his love of language both oral and written. His essay, “The 93 Beit Ya’akov Martyrs Towards the Making of a Historiosophy,” intertwines the Hillel Bavli (1892–1961) poem with Garber’s reflections on evil, politics, and history; on forced labor, rape, suicide; and on rhetoric and aesthetics. After an examination of the syntax and language style of the poem, Garber confirms the importance of this poem which he believes mythicizes history.<sup>7</sup>

Garber focuses on the human face of Jewish history with his interview, “Faith from the Ashes: An Interview with Sibylle Sarah Niemoeller von Sell,” telling the story of this courageous woman, a German, converted Jew, and shoah survivor, who speaks about the banality of evil in Hitler’s Germany and the many secrets still kept to hide culpability.<sup>8</sup>

At the synecdochic lens, Garber’s signature word, *historiosophy*, demonstrates his commitment to using sacred text to shine a light on the moral issues of contemporary life. Garber used his editorship of *Shofar* to focus on political and literary issues central to Jewish life. When Mel Gibson’s movie debuted, Garber edited the collection of essays, *Mel Gibson’s Passion: The*

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<sup>4</sup> Z. Garber, “The Flood and the Fig Tree: Teaching, Text, and Theology,” *Bulletin: The Council of Societies for the Study of Religion* 35.3 (2006): 53.

<sup>5</sup> Z. Garber, “Teaching Zionism: The Introductory Course,” in *Academic Approaches to Teaching Jewish Studies* (ed. Z. Garber; Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2000), p. 294.

<sup>6</sup> J. F. Moore, “An Infusion Method for Teaching Judaism,” in *Academic Approaches to Teaching Jewish Studies* (ed. Z. Garber; Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2000), pp. 247–266.

<sup>7</sup> S. L. Jacobs, ed., *Confronting Genocide: Judaism, Christianity, Islam* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2009), p. 107.

<sup>8</sup> Z. Garber and B. W. Zuckerman, *Double Takes: Thinking and Rethinking Issues of Modern Judaism in Ancient Contexts* (Studies in the Shoah 26; Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2004).

*Film, the Controversy, and Its Implications*. His own essay on the topic, “The Jewish Jesus,” expresses his recognition of the midrashic nature of the Synoptic Gospels. But the Mel Gibson film represents anti-Semitism that once again positions the Jew as Christ killer.<sup>9</sup>

Garber sees Israel as an essential part of the Jewish people. In his review of Amnon Rubenstein’s book, *From Herzl to Rabin: The Changing Image of Zionism* (2001), Garber concurs with the author that “Israeli policy should be a pluralistic and democratic one, not buried by parochialism and ancient creeds, but living in the present, and committed to the full rights of individualism and freedom.”<sup>10</sup>

When Garber focuses on an anagogic, the spiritual or mystical, range, it is not to make philosophic or abstract commentary but rather to make sense out of that which is not understandable—the nature of good and evil—the presence of suffering—the spirit of *tikkun olam*. James Moore lauds Garber for his chapter, “Deconstructing Theodicy and Amalekut: A Personal Apologia,” in his book, *Shoah, The Paradigmatic Genocide: Essays in Exegesis and Eisegesis*. In the role of a latter day Abraham, Garber pleads for humanity against the stern divine decree to annihilate the Amalekut. Garber makes the appeal claiming that it is the sin and not the sinners, the evil deed that must be fought. Instead of Amalekut, the external, a people to be executed, Garber reads Amalekut as the internal force, the seed of evil that must be engaged and eliminated.<sup>11</sup>

Garber’s article, “Terror out of Zion: Making Sense of Scriptural Teaching,” in Jacobs’s *Confronting Genocide*, considers the Deuteronomic order for the destruction of the seven nations of Canaan by the Israelites and argues that there is no divine sanction in genocide whatsoever in the twenty-first century, according to Jewish law. His salient point is that “killing the enemy in combat is an evolving cultural imperative and not a religious warrant.”<sup>12</sup> Fast-forward to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, and Zev warns against the Amalek-phobia that radicalizes politics on either side.

In a moment of ecstasy, Philo, quoted by Feldman, describes “a sudden inability to think or conversely a sudden fullness of thought, so that, under

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<sup>9</sup> Z. Garber, “The Jewish Jesus,” in *Mel Gibson’s Passion: The Film, the Controversy, and Its Implications* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2006), p. 66.

<sup>10</sup> Z. Garber, “From Herzl to Rabin by Amnon Rubenstein,” *Congress Monthly* 68.4 (2001): 21.

<sup>11</sup> Z. Garber, “Deconstructing Theodicy and Amalekut: A Personal Apologia,” in *Post-Shoah Dialogues: Rethinking Our Texts Together* (Studies in the Shoah 25; Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2004).

<sup>12</sup> Z. Garber, “Terror Out of Zion: Making Sense of Scriptural Teaching,” in *Confronting Genocide: Judaism, Christianity, Islam* (ed. S. L. Jacobs; Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2009), pp. 279–290.

the influence of Divine possession, he was filled with ... frenzy.”<sup>13</sup> But, rather than ecstatic experience, Garber focuses on the responsibility of the individual in the face of evil, and how, not only to survive, but to celebrate life.

In his “Thoughts On and From the Thought of Richard L. Rubenstein,” in *Hearing the Voices: Teaching the Holocaust to Future Generations*, Garber opines about good and evil and the power of God and writes:

To see the *Shoah* in Kabbalistic light is to contemplate the problem of evil not in a Ying-Yang imbalance that results in decay and death but in the context of faith and halakhah, which, while not obliterating the reality of evil, diminishes its power by virtue of cosmic or mythic perspective. That is to say, there is a symbiotic interaction between God and Man, in which the moral actions of *etaruta deletata* (the Lower World) have an impact on *etaruta dele`ela* (the Upper World).<sup>14</sup>

Garber’s sense of the mystical suggests that of Abraham Joshua Heschel. In his “Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel’s Paths to God,” Harold Kasimow discusses this mystic and political activist. As a political activist, Heschel walked with Martin Luther King in Selma, Alabama, to demonstrate against racism. Kasimow cites Heschel’s mystical view that *mitzvot* bring humanity closer to God.<sup>15</sup> Thus action, for both Heschel and Garber, is a way to access divine presence.

As *Mavenfest* and his *opus* show, Zev Garber can be honored by examining his metonymic teaching, allegorical muse-ing, synecdochal preaching, and anagogic walking.

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<sup>13</sup> L. Feldman, “Philo and the Dangers of Philosophizing,” in *Maven in Blue Jeans: A Festschrift in Honor of Zev Garber* (ed. S. L. Jacobs; West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2009), p. 155. Feldman notes that Philo expresses his own mystical experience in bodily terms.

<sup>14</sup> Z. Garber, “Thoughts on and from the Thought of Richard L. Rubenstein,” in *Hearing the Voices: Teaching the Holocaust to Future Generations* (Studies in the Shoah 19; ed. M. Hayse et al.; Merion Station, Pa.: Merion Westfield Press International, 1999) p. 22.

<sup>15</sup> H. Kasimow, “Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel’s Paths to God,” in *Maven in Blue Jeans: A Festschrift in Honor of Zev Garber* (ed. S. L. Jacobs; West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2009), p. 177.

# AN OVERVIEW OF *MAVEN IN BLUE JEANS* AND JEWISH-CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM AND OTHER DIALOGUES

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As Editor of this Festschrift, after initially discussing this overall project in the context of “Festschriften” as a contribution to the academic project, this contribution examines and comments on Part 2 of *Maven in Blue Jeans*, “Jewish-Christian-Muslim and Other Dialogues,” by looking at my own essay as well as those of Eugene Fisher, Daniel Morris, and John T. Pawlikowski (pp. 105–144). Since September 11, 2001, the world of the dialogical enterprise has changed, not only in the academy but in the world outside the academy as well. What do these four essays tell us about the current and future states of dialogical and trialogical relations? Can they contribute to furthering this newer agenda? Where do we go from here?

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Though not universally accepted across the academic spectrum, the website Wikipedia defines a Festschrift as “a book honoring a respected academic and presented during his or her lifetime.” The anonymous (and not necessarily refereed) author or authors go on to state that it

contains original contributions by the honored academic’s close colleagues ... typically published on the occasion of the honoree’s retirement, sixtieth or sixty-fifth birthday, or other notable career anniversary ... [and] usually relate in some way to, or reflect upon, the honoree’s contributions to their scholarly field, but can include important original research by the authors.

I cite this source for two reasons: One, that the forty-two of us privileged to be included in *Maven in Blue Jeans*, and representing only a truly limited few who honor Zev, have beyond question met the criteria of significant academic contributions well reflecting Zev Garber’s own pre-eminent contributions to the intellectual life of the academy, and, in so doing, have celebrated both the man and his work. And, two, we have opened the door to a challenge: Let *Maven in Blue Jeans* not be the end of this story but the beginning: Who knows? There may very well be among those reading this review a second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, *or seventh* editor or editors who will corral additional sets of colleagues and issue additional *festschriften*; so vast

are all of the areas that Zev continues to address. After all, the “Garber Bibliography” included in *Maven in Blue Jeans* runs twenty-five pages!

I will not, however, rehash my comments in my Introduction to *Maven in Blue Jeans* other than to state the following: From the very beginning through to publication, this project was truly a labor of love and respect for a friend whom we cherish deeply, and I know beyond doubt that the colleagues with whom I worked so closely, including those at Purdue University Press, would say the very same thing, and, metaphorically, rise in universal appreciation and applause were they all here today.

## 2. “JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS: A DIALOGUE WITH ZEV GARBER,” EUGENE FISHER

Gene Fisher I think best expressed the sentiments of many who have engaged in dialogue with Zev when he stated at the outset, “I consider Garber to be one of the most thoughtful scholars on either ‘side’ of the contemporary and historic Jewish-Christian dialogue” (p. 105).<sup>1</sup> It is that very thoughtfulness which characterizes not only Zev’s particular work but the fruitful nature of the best dialogues between Jews and Christians, and must be continually embodied in the twin Hebraic insights of *makhlokot l’shem shamayim* and *elu v’elu divrei Elohim Hayyim*. The function of dialogue is *not* agreement, it is education, and only the carefully thought-out preparation and presentation on any issue of common interest can result in both partners and the communities they represent learning from each other. Thus, the goal of the dialogue is not, nor has it ever been, resolution of difference, but, rather, a healthy respect not only for the person presenting but the *weltanschauung* he or she reflects. As such, thoughtful partnership in dialogue mandates knowledge, doing one’s homework, and the sharing of both positive and negative aspects of one’s own sources, without fear of intimidation or reprisal.

One result from the bad history of non-dialogue dialogues between Jews and Roman Catholics, and later Jews and Protestants, has, as Fisher correctly notes, resulted in misunderstandings both major and minor between communities (p. 109). In essence, we Jews have, over the course of our long, troubled, and primarily Western trek, too often the victim rather than the partner, have misread the various Christianities, particularly the Catholic, and failed

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<sup>1</sup> All page references are to S. L. Jacobs, ed., *Maven in Blue Jeans: A Festschrift in Honor of Zev Garber* (Shofar Supplements in Jewish Studies; West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2009).

to appreciate the translation of our own moral-ethical value system and ritual-ceremonial system and the outreach to the Gentile world reflected in these various reinterpretations. Christians, too often allied with the dominant power structures of Western civilization have re-read and contemporized a narrow self-serving New Testament history and let it serve as the goad by which to subjugate and worse Jewish communities within their midst. Recognition, then, of the damage done to the other becomes the first step towards framing such dialogical encounters.

Continuing in this vein and commenting further on something that Zev had written in 2003, Fisher goes on to argue that both communities must work “to eliminate all vestiges of the ancient teaching of contempt and collective guilt charge from Christian teaching at all levels” (p. 111).

Waxing somewhat theological, Fisher goes on to state “We proclaim a successful Messiah, but one whose work is not yet done, a Reign of God to come, which we, like the Jews, await and to which we, like the Jews, witness and are called by God to work toward” (p. 112).

Fisher then goes on to ask the provocative question, “How might such a dialogue [between Jews and Catholic Christians] go, should you be fortunate enough to be in one?” (p. 115), and posits four possible answers: (1) Catholics should listen to Jews; (2) Jews needs to appreciate Catholic advances; (3) Jews need to understand how Catholics and other Christians saw/experienced Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ*; and (4) both Jews and Christians need to examine their social language, how they talk to each other (p. 115). These four foundational items for Jewish-Christian, specifically Jewish-Catholic, dialogue need to be widely disseminated as constant reminders to all who are willing to engage in such conversations.

### **3. “DEVELOPMENTS IN CATHOLIC-JEWISH RELATIONS,” JOHN T. PAWLIKOWSKI**

Roman Catholic Servite Priest and Professor of Social Ethics at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, Illinois, Father John T. Pawlikowski has long been a presence both in national and international Jewish-Christian/Catholic dialogues as well as Jewish-Polish dialogues. In his own contribution to *Maven in Blue Jeans*, he addresses four challenges: (1) the Holocaust; (2) the theology of the Church’s relationship with Judaism in the light of new biblical research; (3) Jewish understandings of the land of Israel; and (4) joint social responsibility (p. 135).

With regard to the Holocaust/Shoah, Pawlikowski hones in on the important document (as he notes *not* a “formal papal encyclical”) *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* issued by the Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews in 1998, seeing in this milestone both positives and negatives (p. 136). He reminds not only his Church but all of us as well that the institutions we create are humanly-made and humanly-crafted, subject to the most stringent of critiques as well as the highest of praise. Until a full disclosure based upon open full access to archival sources by competent scholars takes places, controversy surrounding Catholicism’s role in the Holocaust/Shoah and that of its Church, especially Pope Pius XII, will not go away.

With regard to a Catholic theological understanding of Jews and Judaism, he notes with evident sadness, “the last fifteen years have not seen any major new statements on Catholic-Jewish relations” (p. 138), nor does he spare Pope Benedict XVI and the speech he gave at St. Peter’s Square in Rome on March 15, 2006, commenting, “In all candor, I have to say that this sounds very close to a classical replacement theology of Judaism” (p. 139).

Taken together, the two arenas reflect a conservatizing trend within the present Catholic hierarchy, and we Jews are right to be concerned. One can only hope that John Pawlikowski’s voice is not that of Rivka crying out in the wilderness. This Church which has come further than any other in its relationship with the Jewish people now appears to be in somewhat of a retrenching mode, facing a world of lessening commitment, energized evangelical Protestantisms particularly in Latin America, and an Islam which from its perspective is growing at an alarming rate. One can also thus hope that these same conservative voices will not reject the forward steps of *Nostre Aetate* and take backward steps to either nullify or marginalize its accomplishments.

Jewish concerns with the primacy of Eretz Yisrael are equally Jewish concerns vis-à-vis the Israeli-Arab/Palestinian conflict, and Pawlikowski is correct to note that Jewish urgings of support for Israel “will likely cause some tensions in the dialogue” (p. 141), resulting in something of a “balancing act” on the part of the Church. Any dialogical encounter between Jews and Catholics specifically and Jews and Christians generally cannot avoid either the Holocaust/Shoah or Eretz and Medinat Yisrael. The full integrity of the Jewish people is at stake in both. The challenge for both communities then is how to enter into these conversations with respect but open to both praise *and* criticism.

The final issue that he succinctly addresses is the easiest, that of social justice collaboration. Both religious traditions have strong histories in addressing the human needs of their own communities and those same needs in others outside their communities. Such efforts already exist in many communities where people of all faiths work together for the betterment of all, and one joins with Pawlikowski in urging the continuation of such efforts.

He then closes his contribution by briefly suggesting two additional arenas worthy of consideration in Jewish-Catholic dialogue, namely (1) “dialogue beyond the parameters of Europe and the Americas to the African and Asian contexts,” and (2) “the extent to which it should move to the inclusion of Islam” (p. 142).

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Because of the brevity of this essay, I will only make one comment regarding my own contribution and that of Daniel Morris: With regard to my essay, “Who Owns the Truth?” I argue that anticipated demographic and occupational shifts coupled with the rise in militant Islam will result in perhaps the unintended consequence of post-denominationalism among the monotheisms as all three confront their own rising fundamentalisms. With regard to Morris’s essay, “The Backwards Man and the Jewish Giant,” while not strictly speaking a contribution within the range of inter-religious dialogue, Morris’s contribution does indirectly point out the role that “traumatic memory” can play in any such encounter between representatives of various religious communities.

I conclude that these four contributions have thus opened any number of doors to continue the Jewish-Christian dialogical conversations.



## NOT IN AN IVORY TOWER: ZEV GARBER AND BIBLICAL STUDIES

Leonard Greenspoon  
*Creighton University*

Passion and commitment are two of the defining characteristics of Zev Garber's scholarship and of his approach to life. Students can immediately identify and identify with these features; moreover, many of Garber's colleagues have followed his lead in stepping down from the pristine environment of the ivory tower into the messy realities of life as it is being, and has been, led throughout human history.

In late February 2010, Zev Garber made two presentations at Creighton University, my home institution. His first was a well-attended public lecture on a Monday evening, titled "Reading the Bible through the Holocaust (Shoah)"—I hasten to add that the inclusion of the term "Holocaust" and the subsequent demotion of "Shoah" between parentheses were at my insistence: despite Zev's decades of insistence on Shoah as the proper term, I was not sure that a general public consisting of students and faculty would be familiar with that wording. The next day, Zev spoke to students in my class, a Senior Perspectives offering on "The Bible and the Holocaust."

After Zev left, I asked my students to write up their reactions to his presentations. In their comments, two ideas predominated to describe both Zev and his talks: passion (passionate) and commitment (committed). Representative of the students' sentiments are these assessments: "Dr. Garber's talk on Monday night was one of the (if not the) most exciting talks I've seen at Creighton! It was so cool to be in a room with such a passionate scholar!" and "Zev said he can't stand bystanders—he was OK with evil people, but the ones who say they're good but just sit there and don't do anything for humanity are the people who really bother him. You could tell that he is extremely passionate about his work." (Many of my students, rather naturally I suspect, fell into calling our visitor "Zev"; I don't doubt that he approves.)

In my view, such passion and commitment are rare, all too rare, in today's academic world. In grasping these elements of his personality and his work, my students were drawn to characteristics that Zev has displayed for decades—and that he inspires in his colleagues. Many of the authors whose articles appear in Garber's Festschrift, *Maven in Blue Jeans*, reflect this in-

spiration.<sup>1</sup> (In passing, I should note that *Maven* is among the very best Festschriften I have ever seen in truly honoring the scholar in whose name articles have been assembled.) In my remarks at this point, I am able to look at only a few of these articles, which are among the nine gathered together in part 1 of the Festschrift, “Exegesis and Eisegesis: Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and Rabbinic Literature.”

It was the title of Joseph A. Edelheit’s paper that first drew me to it: “The Messy Realities of Life: A Rereading of Numbers 19 and 20.”<sup>2</sup> On the basis of this title, with its commitment to “the messy realities of life,” I felt sure that I was going to meet a kindred spirit—and one who also displayed a marked kinship with Zev Garber. I was not to be disappointed.

Edelheit begins his analysis by affirming that “the seeming ‘happenstance’ of textual position [in this instance, the fact that Numbers 20 follows directly after Numbers 19] is itself a significant resource of meaning.”<sup>3</sup> Numbers 19 speaks of the ritual of the Red Heifer, a process for purification that, paradoxically, renders impure the priest who prepares it. But the following chapter, Numbers 20, although bracketed by the deaths of Miriam and Aaron, makes no mention of this ritual, whose very purpose is to provide purity for those in contact with the dead. Edelheit observes that the absence of any reference to the Red Heifer (and presumably this absence is intended to inform readers that the ritual did not in fact take place) points to its description in chapter 19 as theoretical and not meant to be applied. Moreover, Edelheit observes, Moses is pictured as so worn out by the combination of his sister’s death and the constant complaining of the people that he doubtless lacked the strength of mind or body to carry out the Red Heifer ritual, even if that had been his initial intent.

Edelheit elaborates on his thoughts in this manner: “These two chapters of Torah offer us the lesson of disconnects between the complex details of theory and the messy ambiguous realities of life.”<sup>4</sup> And he expands his horizon by noting: “There are many examples of leaders who fail their communities when the messy realities of life challenge their pristine understanding of their theoretical visions.”<sup>5</sup> Drawing upon the work of Hans-Georg

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<sup>1</sup> S. L. Jacobs, ed., *Maven in Blue Jeans: A Festschrift in Honor of Zev Garber* (Shofar Supplements in Jewish Studies; West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> J. A. Edelheit, “The Messy Realities on Life: A Rereading of Numbers 19 and 20,” in *Maven in Blue Jeans: A Festschrift in Honor of Zev Garber* (ed. S. L. Jacobs; Shofar Supplements in Jewish Studies; West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2009), pp. 28–34.

<sup>3</sup> J. A. Edelheit, “Messy Realities,” p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> J. A. Edelheit, “Messy Realities,” p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> J. A. Edelheit, “Messy Realities,” p. 31.

Gadamer and David Tracy, among others, Edleheit highlights the necessity of conversation as a model of interpretation. Such conversation, in reality dialogue, has been a hallmark of Zev Garber's passionate and committed career, much of which has involved him as a bridge between the pristine world of theory and the messy world of reality.

Edleheit himself carries these insights into the current conflicts between Israel (and the supporters of Israel) and the Palestinians (and their supporters). I wish to move, if only briefly, in other directions, related to two other aspects of biblical studies. The first example is cited to demonstrate how even a well-known hypothesis is weakened (in my view, considerably weakened) by failing to take into account such messy realities. In the second instance, I hope to strengthen, if also complicate, a scholarly debate by invoking the realities of life.

The Documentary Hypothesis (often summarized as J, E, P, D, reputed to be the major "sources" from which the Torah was constructed) has been in and out of scholarly vogue since its inception in the nineteenth century. Relevant to our discussion is an observation that I have rarely, if ever, seen articulated; namely, that much of what constitutes the "contents" of each source is based on the view that if passage A appears to be of benefit to group X, then group X must have written and/or transmitted passage A.<sup>6</sup> In theory, this is a neat solution to a number of seemingly complex textual issues. In fact, however, life is far messier than that. Groups often, and for varying reasons, fail to effectively promote their own self-interest and/or completely misinterpret what is in their best interest. To assert a "mechanistic" approach to the composition of the biblical text fails, in my view, to do justice to the realities (many of which we will never fully uncover) in which ancient authors and tradents operated.

In another admittedly more specialized area, there is continued debate among Septuagint scholars whether the Old Greek of the Pentateuch was produced as a result of royal decree on the part of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (as related in *The Letter of Aristeas*) or the needs of the Alexandrian Jews themselves (among whom facility in Hebrew was fast disappearing). But why, I wonder, need this be an either/or proposition? As I recently wrote,

Real life is messy. And its study should reflect that reality. It is very easy for us, at many lengths removed from the realities of early Alexandria, to construct highly polished accounts of what happened, in which this or that moti-

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<sup>6</sup> For a classic statement of the Documentary Hypothesis, formulated for a modern audience, see R. E. Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (San Francisco, Calif.: HarperOne, 1997).

vated the translators, who consistently followed a given policy for an audience that was clearly identifiable. Upon even a bit more reflection, we must admit that such reconstructions are simplistic.<sup>7</sup>

While most collections of articles tend to be a series of monologues (even when they were first presented as part of a conference or colloquium), it is altogether fitting that Garber's *Festschrift* manages, at least in some places, to constitute a dialogue. This is the case with the second article I wish to look at, "Dialogue as Praxis: A Midrashic Reading of Numbers 19–20 and Hebrews 9," by James F. Moore.<sup>8</sup> As Moore notes at the onset of his article, "[I am] engaging in a dialogue with ... Joseph Edelheit.... The approach we have taken, all of us, has been dialogue on texts, which involves both the effort to fully respect the other as equal and to think about our texts together in a post-Shoah context."<sup>9</sup>

In Moore's analysis, the author of the New Testament text, Hebrews 9, refers to Numbers 19, a text from the Hebrew Bible, but "shows a curious lack of awareness of the details of the Numbers text."<sup>10</sup> In resolving a cluster of issues that arise as we seek to understand how the author of Hebrews understands Numbers, Moore also urges us to consider how Numbers helps us to rethink typical notions about Hebrews, thus reversing the usual pattern of reading. It is in this way, Moore affirms, that we can construct a dialogue among the very texts themselves.

This procedure, which Moore and others (including Garber) call a "midrashic reading," is of substantial value in helping to properly delineate the relationship that the book of Hebrews envisions between the followers of Jesus and those individuals who remained in what we would understand as Judaism. But there is more. As Moore convincingly demonstrates, this type of reading is necessary for continuing fruitful dialogue between Jews and Christians, especially in the post-Shoah era. And it is also a vital component of the process through which the theoretical is transformed, in part by liturgy, into practice, into the realities of life as we actually live it.

When I first began university teaching in the late 1970s, I was admonished to leave all traces of "myself" at the classroom door: "Nothing and

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<sup>7</sup> This is from an article, L. Greenspoon, "At the Beginning: The Septuagint as a Jewish Bible Translation," to be published in the near future.

<sup>8</sup> J. F. Moore, "Dialogue as Praxis: A Midrashic Reading of Numbers 19–20 and Hebrews 9," in *Maven in Blue Jeans: A Festschrift in Honor of Zev Garber* (ed. S. L. Jacobs; Shofar Supplements in Jewish Studies; West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2009), pp. 49–55.

<sup>9</sup> J. F. Moore, "Dialogue as Praxis," p. 49.

<sup>10</sup> J. F. Moore, "Dialogue as Praxis," p. 49.

no one should come between the student and the blackboard.” For better or worse, I followed this advice for a number of years. Whether or not such disengaged teaching and writing were ever effective, Zev Garber, with his passion and commitment, offers us another approach to the academic study of the Bible and, more broadly, to the living of life. Even if we do not embrace this paradigm ourselves, my experience with Zev provides inspiring evidence that many of our students and of our colleagues do—and that all of us have much to learn from their combined efforts.



## ON THE FRONTIERS OF FAITH: EDITH STEIN ENCOUNTERS HERSELF AS A BURNT OFFERING

Emily Leah Silverman  
*Graduate Theological Union*

This article explores the difference between Edith Stein's self-definition as a Catholic Jew and the normative Jewish position that precludes conversion to another religion. Zev Garber's description of the distinction between "guf" and "neshema" shows one way of partially bridging the gap between Stein's self-definition and normative Jewish understandings—Stein saw her *guf* as Jewish and her *neshema* as Catholic. Stein's interior life reveals that she had hoped that the Jews would accept Jesus as one of their own. According to Garber, Stein's self-understanding would preclude her from the Jewish community; in fact, they would view her as an apostate.

Edith Stein is a controversial figure in the Jewish community; volumes have been written about her dual claims of faith identity. She was born and raised a Jew, but converted to Catholicism in 1922 and became a Carmelite nun in 1933. She died in Auschwitz in 1942. The Church canonized her in 1998 as Saint Sister Benedicta Teresa of the Cross, co-patron Saint of Europe. Was she a Jew, a Catholic, or both? And was Stein murdered because she was a Jew, even though she was a fully cloaked Carmelite nun? These are but a few of the many questions surrounding her complex faith identity.

One key to finding answers amidst this ambiguity is to use some terms and concepts of Zev Garber, a contemporary scholar of Jewish history, philosophy, theology, and the Holocaust. He articulates different conceptions of the relation of *guf* (body), or the Jewish people, to *neshema* (soul), or religion. Garber uses these terms to differentiate between those who are a part of the Jewish people and those who are not. Garber asserts that Stein was not a Jew, but an apostate:

Paradoxically, according to Halachah, Edith Stein in her state of disbelief (from the tenets of Judaism) is considered a Jew, but in her decision to convert to Catholicism and later join the Carmelite order at Cologne, she has removed herself from the Jewish Fold. She has substituted one bridal garland for another "marriage to the Lord under the symbol of the Cross" in place to the thrice fold marriage espousal said daily in Jewish worship, a symbol of the devotion and affection between God and Israel.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Z. Garber, "Jewish Perspectives on Edith Stein Martyrdom," in *The Unnecessary Problem of Edith Stein* (ed. H. J. Cargas; New York: University Press of America, 1994), p. 69.

Stein's conversion to Catholicism and her Carmelite practice, in Garber's view, removes her from both the Jewish community and the Jewish faith. Garber argues:

*To identify with the Jewish people (guf = body) and not practice the Jewish religion (neshema = soul) is not grounds for excommunication. However, to proclaim Jewish ethnicity and to practice voluntarily another religious sancta (e.g., Christianity) is grounds for self and group removal from Jewish Identity.<sup>2</sup>*

The normative position is for the terms to be conjoined: one's faith practice as a Jew does not bear on one's belonging to the Jewish community, so long as one does not convert. The problem is that Stein converted. Stein saw herself as a part of the Jewish people ethnically, but her faith, or *neshema*, was that of a Catholic. Stein told her young niece Suzanne Batzdorff,

*What I am doing does not mean that I want to leave my people and my family.... I will always be close to you, the family and the Jewish people. And don't think what is happening in a convent is going to keep me immune from what is happening in the world.<sup>3</sup>*

Stein's interior life, however, lead her on a different path.

In 1930, Stein wrote of her foreboding sense of divine mission. "After every encounter in which I am made aware how powerless we are to exercise direct influence, *I have a deeper sense of the urgency of my own Holocaustum.*"<sup>4</sup> Stein's use of the word Holocaustum in 1930 was radical. What did she imagine was the urgency of her "own Holocaustum"? She literally saw herself as offering her life as a sacrifice, but a sacrifice to what, and why? Was she a mystic who saw the end of German Jews?

Stein first wrote about the meaning of her future death in her last will and testament, composed on June 9, 1939:

*I pray to the Lord that he may accept my living and dying ... as an atonement for the Jewish people's unbelief and so that the Lord may be accepted by his own and that his reign may come in glory, that Germany may be saved and that there be peace in the world.<sup>5</sup>*

<sup>2</sup> Z. Garber, "Jewish Perspectives," p. 69, emphasis added.

<sup>3</sup> S. Batzdorff, "Witnessing My Aunt's Beatification," in *The Unnecessary Problem of Edith Stein* (ed. H. J. Cargas; New York: University Press of America, 1994), p. 31, emphasis added.

<sup>4</sup> E. Stein, *Self Portrait in Letters 1916-1942* (trans. J. Koepfel; Washington D. C.: ICS Publications, 1993), Letter 52 to Sr. Adelgundis Jaegerschmind, OSB, Freiburg-Gunterstal, ST Magdalena Speyer, February 16, 1930; p. 60.

<sup>5</sup> Cited by D. Sölle, *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance* (trans. B. Rumscheidt and M. Rumscheidt; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), p. 148, emphasis added.

This was the last will and testament of a contemplative. Her practice as a Carmelite included meditating daily on a cross in her cell, being in constant dialogue with the Lord, and offering her prayers. Her interior life was a way for her to atone for her Jewish people, because they did not accept the savior. Her daily practice was to save her people using the interior work of her soul. In this way she essentially carried their cross.

In 1941, Stein wrote a dialogue, “Conversations at Night,” which shows how Stein’s *neshema* was a Catholic approach to Jewish redemption. In the dialogue, Queen Esther comes to the Mother Antonia, the prioress at the Carmel, to tell her how the Jewish people will be redeemed. Queen Esther explains to the Mother:

I saw the church grow out of my people.... The unblemished pure shoot of David.... I saw flowing down from Jesus’ heart, the fullness of grace into the Virgin’s heart. From there it flows to the members as a stream of life.... *But now I know that I was bound to her. From eternity in accordance with God’s direction—forever. My life was only a beam of hers.*<sup>6</sup>

The church grows out of her, the Jewish people, and from these people Jesus was born. Jesus’ heart radiates into the holy Mother and then flows into the hearts of its members who are cleaving to her. Those who were bound to her were able to offer prayers to the Redeemer, so that the Jewish people would be saved. Queen Esther stated that once Jews found the Lord, he could return to earth for the second coming, and all suffering would end. The reason Queen Esther has appeared to the Mother prioress at this moment was to ask for help and to pray for the redemption of Jews from annihilation by the Nazis. The hearts of those in a contemplative order offered the best chance for the prayers of Queen Esther to be heard.

The Mother responds to Queen Esther:

Where else was she [Holy Mother Mary] to find hearts prepared if not in her quiet sanctuary? Her people [the Jewish people], who are yours, your Israel, I take up into the lodgings of my heart. Praying secretly and sacrificing secretly, I will take it home to my Savior’s heart.<sup>7</sup>

This was Stein’s way of asking for help—to ask the spiritually strong to pray for redemption. Stein showed that the task at hand was to pray for the Jews to come to accept Jesus the Savior. As Queen Esther, she conveyed the

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<sup>6</sup> E. Stein, “Conversation in the Night,” in *The Hidden Life: Essays, Meditations, Spiritual Text* (ed. L. Gelber and M. Linssen; Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1992), p. 132.

<sup>7</sup> E. Stein, “Conversations in the Night,” p. 133.

message that this work was to be done contemplatively and secretly within ones' heart, through prayer and sacrifice. It was truly a way for Stein to show mystical resistance.

Garber is indeed correct about Stein's soul. She was not a Jew in a way that Garber and the Jewish community recognize. From Stein's last will and testament and her dialogue, we see that she truly had a *neshema* of a Catholic. Stein's Holocaustum was to offer herself up on the burning cross. Stein tried in the interior realm to transmute their sins of unbelief into one of belief in her Savior, the Christian savior, who had Jewish blood like her. In her mind, she was saving her fellow Jews, but to Jews she betrayed them as a people.

Stein died on the burning altar, in a Holocaust. The Jewish community died in the Shoah,<sup>8</sup> in an abyss, not as a holy flaming sacrifice that would be redeemed by a savior Jesus Christ. Stein's view of her faith offends the Jewish community, because she was working to save them at the cost of their conversion to Christianity.

As a scholar, I respect that Stein saw herself in a different way than contemplatives of her time. She was a Jew like Jesus; the Jewish community was her *guf*. As a Jew, however, I strongly agree with Garber. Stein's contemplative acts were supercessionist. She hoped her people would embrace Jesus the Jew, and see the light that one of their own had already saved them, and their suffering would end.

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<sup>8</sup> D. Patterson, "Holocaust or Shoah," in *Maven in Blue Jeans: A Festschrift in Honor of Zev Garber* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 2009), p. 338. Patterson discusses the difference between the words Holocaust and Shoah and makes a strong point that the Jews died not as a holy sacrifice or burnt offering but in an abyss. To completely annihilate the Jews was the Nazi's point. This is the opposite of Stein's view of her own death.

## RESPONSE: LEARNING TOGETHER, A DVAR ON FAITH AND FATE

Zev Garber

*Los Angeles Valley College*

Integrating Jewish Studies into college humanities classes taught at schools of higher learning, public and private, is a constant in my decades of teaching, writing, lecturing, and editing in the wellspring of Judaica and its tributaries. The impact (light, dark, and myriad grey shadows between) is reflected upon by the essayists and discussants of the Maven, who analyze my historiosophy, methodology, and Torahtology. What they say and write is learning (academics, exegesis), what I teach and profess is *laerning* (existential faith knowledge, eisegesis). How so and why so, is the *ikkar* of my response delivered in the genre of a *shiur* to the panelists of the Mavenfest and audience.

I deeply appreciate the efforts of my colleagues Steven L. Jacobs, Joel Gereboff, Leonard Greenspoon, Roberta Sabbath, and Emily Leah Silverman in their evaluation of my teaching methodology and samples of my scholarly writing. Collectively, they reflect intuitively on my signature historiosophy, paradigmatic philosophy, midrashic *parshanut*, and post-Shoah Jewish-Christian dialogical encounter. Here I offer a *dvar teshuva*, touching on thoughts said or unsaid.

### 1. NOT AT THE IVORY TOWER (GEREBOFF, GREENSPOON)

Information on Judaica in American colleges, universities, and seminaries is scattered through a variety of sources. National surveys, school catalogues, dissertations, opinion columns, etc., have something to say about the scope of the discipline. What is clear is that Jewish Studies is a relatively new curriculum in American higher education (public and private), but its success and failure are not reported evenly by advocates of ethnicity or religion.<sup>1</sup> Rarely is there a word on the teaching of Jewish Studies in a two-year public college with the exception of my pioneering articles.<sup>2</sup> They re-

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<sup>1</sup> See Z. Garber, "Jewish Studies on the American Campus: *Yiddishkeit* or Scientific Dialect?" (in Hebrew), *Hadoar* 72.2 (December 4, 1992): 21–22.

<sup>2</sup> *The Humanities in Two-Year Colleges: Reviewing Curriculum and Instruction* (Center for the Study of Community Colleges and ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges, UCLA, Summer, 1975) reports, "no other information written by anyone but Garber has been discovered to indicate that Jewish studies courses are indeed being offered anywhere else" (p. 80). Drawing upon my experience of setting up a Jewish Studies program, I served as the respondent in a special session of the annual meeting of the American

flect on the rationale, curriculum, and ideology which I introduced in the early 1970s to set up the first-ever public Jewish Studies program funded by the State of California.

Different disciplines have their own particular patterns of thinking, inquiry, or information gathering and processing. For example, scientific inquiry calls for classification, explanation of technical processes, detailed statements of fact often containing a definition or statement of principle, problem solving, and experiment reporting which involves discriminating observation, careful explanation, and considered conclusions. Many of the Jewish Studies courses taught at Los Angeles Valley College are interdisciplinary in scope. As such, the Jewish Studies program is an instructional form of the humanities, and its emphasis is on reading, writing, and reasoning.

What is the proper way of instructing these skills? There are as many approaches to teaching Jewish Studies as there are instructors in the discipline. At the two-year college level, however, teacher-student interchange is paramount. Take my approach to teaching Hebrew literature, for example.

A slogan of nineteenth-century *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Zunz, Scheinschneider, Jost) prevails in “higher” Jewish Studies: every writer must be a “digger,” and all scholars antiquarians. The traditional methods of teaching modern Hebrew literature (as well as Bible, rabbinics, medieval literature) in the original, found in upper division and graduate courses, namely, translation, expounding of grammatical intricacies, hoary lectures, etc., prove less than adequate at an introductory level. In its place, I use an historical-critical method which stresses contemporary literature as an interpretation of history and in light of other literary works in general and contemporary Hebrew works in particular.

A moderate number of readings from Hebrew poetry, prose, and essay is given. One-third of the class time constitutes lectures on the socio-historical forces which motivated and shaped Jewish life in the last two centuries. Two-thirds of the class hour are devoted to a direct interpretation of the assigned texts in order to discern the major values and trends of modern Hebrew literature. A study of literature must not be confused with the history of literature, and thus a confrontation with textual sources more than histories and commentaries is of primary importance.

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Academy of Religion devoted to “Teaching Religious Studies at Community Colleges ” (Orlando, Fla., November 22, 1998).

A deeper appreciation of Hebrew literature develops if the professor plays more of a passive role than is traditionally assigned to him/her. By encouraging the student to do research at home in order to explicate the text in class, and answer questions of difficulty from a peer group, the professor is planting in the students seeds of loyalty to some great literature, which otherwise would not grow from the total lecture method that often detaches the student from the material. Furthermore, the student gains self-reliance from such an exposure, his/her own germane ideas are able to sprout, and a relaxed teacher-student relationship is created.

By playing the role of a class catalyst, professors have many opportunities to present their own contribution and to refine it in light of class feedback to a greater degree than the straight lecture method. An ideal educational experience is thus fulfilled since the goal of discovering provocative ideas of great men and women is brought about by professor and student exploring together.

This is aptly expressed by a parable narrated by S. Y. Agnon, Nobel Laureate in Literature (1966), in his novel *Guest for the Night* (1939):

It is like an architect who asked for a stone and they gave him a brick, for he intended to build a temple, while they intended to build a house to live in.

Clearly, the intent at Los Angeles Valley College is to provide a secure home for Jewish Studies in the San Fernando Valley. Our home is not an ivory tower temple—all who are hungry for Jewish knowledge are welcome to hear our words and join in the dialogue.

## **2. TEACHING ZIONISM AND FACING PALESTINIANISM (SABBATH)**

Teaching Zionism should be seen in terms of its central affirmations. The goal is to familiarize the student with what the Zionist tradition regards as its essential genius, and to provide an opportunity for an appreciation of the similarities and the differences between the ideologues and divisions within greater Zionism, which arguably are the tributaries that feed the stream of Jewish peoplehood today. The jury may be out on whether or not the State of Israel is the pinnacle of Zionism, but it is certain that the Zionist idea challenged the notion that the Jewish People must remain a victim of world history; and the Zionist revolution, like an Ezekielian voice in the valley of the bones, caused the people to rise from the deadly weight of Shoah to the

statehood in *Eretz Yisrael*. Of paramount importance, too, is discussion and exposure to Palestinian nationalist affirmation and dialogue.

If the prospects for Arab-Israeli dialogue are not bright, then it is the business of responsible intellectuals and thinkers among the combatants to make them bright. Learning the complexity of the historical, religious, cultural, psychological, and political factors of the Palestinian national movement is imperative for Jews. Similarly, Arabs must come to realize that Jewish self-pride as expressed in peoplehood, religion, and the statehood of Israel are answers to Jewish identity, survival and anti-Semitism. *And both peoples must learn that blatant immoral acts by individual or state can never be condoned and prejudicial, passionate ideology which feeds these atrocities must never be tolerated.*

### **3. POST-SHOAH CHRISTIAN-JEWISH DIALOGUE (JACOBS)**

Post-Shoah Christian-Jewish dialogue offers a context for asking questions, and provides a frame of reference for insights on the background, meaning of anti-Judaism and the practice of anti-Semitism. Dialogical encounter balances discussion of complicated religious and theological problems of *contra-Judaeos* and seeks a better understanding of Jewish-Christian visions of the other. It battles Nazism's "dislike of the unlike" with the battle cry, "Never Again" for us and them. And suggests that the message of the Shoah for Christian and Jew, ever since Calvary, is the Sinaitic covenant of survival with morality.

### **4. SAINT EDITH STEIN (SILVERMAN)**

My writings on Edith Stein focus on her contested religious identity, claimed as a Jew (heritage, descent) and a Christian (conversion, Cologne Carmelite Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross). Stein's biographers and defenders claim that she remained loyal to her Jewish roots and publicly proclaimed her Jewish identity, as a form of protest against virulent German anti-Semitism. I agree, but her voluntary act of the acceptance of Jesus as Lord, God, and Savior compromises the rabbinic argument of once an Israelite, always an Israelite even though one has sinned. Her alleged last words, to her sister, Rosa, also a convert to Catholicism, "Let us go, we will die for (not *with*) our people" confirms her Christological wish "that the

Lord has taken my life in exchange for all (sins of the Jews).”<sup>3</sup> I honor her Catholicism by not hyphenating her as a Jew; and I acknowledge that the Catholic faithful (and others) are baptized into the ashes of Auschwitz by learning the life, tribulation, and burning death of the Blessed Edith Stein.

## 5. WHITHER JEWISH STUDIES?

At the annual convention of the Association of Jewish Studies (Boston, December 1998), Professor Hava Tirosh-Samuels (Arizona State University), chair of the Maven plenary session, opined that the perceived dichotomy between objective scholarship and commitment to Jewish spirituality has rendered Jewish Studies irrelevant to young Jews. To correct this fault, she suggested, “we must make it very clear that the academic study of Judaism is not just about facts but also about values” (“The Chronicle of Higher Education,” February 26, 1999). As expected, this ignited a heated discussion on the merits of Jewish Studies and the Jewish community at the meeting and afterwards a rambling who-is-who-isn’t teaching correctly the subject on the Internet.

This debate is not new to me. In my Introduction to *Methodology in the Academic Teaching of Judaism* (University Press of America, 1986), I raised the issue, what constitutes Jewish Studies, how to teach it, to whom, etc., and I observed that contemporary *Wissenschaft des Judentums* is being broadly transformed from an exclusive institution to an inclusive one. Thus the “facts” only school, where the student sits back and absorbs like a sponge the knowledge of a professor’s lecture, would simply not do. The Jewish Studies scholar should attempt to teach Judaism (faith and fate) creatively and objectively without indoctrination. One must have the right to challenge students and to set and maintain scholarly standards but one is also responsible to respect the students’ right to learn, to ask questions, to defend beliefs, to express opinions, or disagree without repression or reprisal.

Not whither but whether practitioners of Jewish Studies heed the *eitsah* is the question. Let the *laerning* begin.

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<sup>3</sup> NC News Service, May 4, 1987, p. 23.