Levinas and the Other Side of Theology

31.07.2002 | Veling, Terry

Prof. Terence Veling of the University of St. Thomas, Miami (U.S.A.) explores the implications of the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas's concept of transcendence.

Levinas and the Other Side of Theology

Terry Veling

In academic circles, Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) is recognised as one of the most important philosophers and religious thinkers of this century. His work has significantly influenced many "postmodern" thinkers such as Jacques Derrida, Maurice Blanchot, Luce Irigaray, Paul Ricoeur. He has also influenced Jewish and Christian leaders and educators, including Pope John Paul II. However, his thinking is not generally well known to a broader audience.

Levinas suffered the tragic loss of many of his family members in the Shoah and was himself incarcerated as a prisoner of war. His writings comes to us as a radical attempt to re-envisage the world of religious and ethical thinking in the face of the tragedies of this century. Levinas is very much a prophetic figure for our times, and his work deserves a wider exposure as we witness the beginning of a new millennium. At the cornerstone of his thought is ethical responsibility for "the Other".[1] On the "other side" of theology there is the Other in whose name theology is called to listen, to serve, to respond. Theology must pay attention once again to the Other who is both the mystery of God, the Holy One, and the face of the neighbour, the stranger, the poor one.

Theology's About Face

Back in 1974, when "liberation theology" was bursting onto the scene, Gustavo Gutierrez wrote: "Rediscovering the other means entering his own world. It also means a break with ours. The world of inward-looking absorption with self ... is not only interior but is socio-culturally conditioned. To enter the world of the other... with the actual demands involved ... is to begin ... a process of conversion."[2]

I find these words of Gutierrez, written a quarter of a century ago, strikingly resonant with what has come to be known today as our postmodern situation. Where should theology turn in its conversation with the cultural "mood" of postmodernity? According to David Tracy, it should turn around, and face the other:

The turn to the other is the quintessential turn of postmodernity itself. It is that turn, above all, that defines the intellectual as well as the ethical meaning of postmodernity. The other and the different come forward now as central intellectual categories across the major disciplines, including theology ... Part of that return to otherness ... is the return of biblical Judaism and Christianity to undo the complacencies of modernity, including modern theology.[3]

One of the reasons Levinas wants to refocus our attention toward the face of the other is his concern that we have enclosed ourselves in world of "immanence". In other words, we have reduced everything to our being-in-the-world, and we no longer know how to speak of

transcendence, the voice of otherness, the desire of infinity, the revelation of God who is otherwise than our being-in-the-world. He wants to speak against the complacencies of an age that thinks itself free of everything that is other than itself and beyond the embarrassment of a relationship with an unknown God.[4]

Levinas introduces his volume, *Of God Who Comes to Mind*, with a question like this: How can we speak God "without striking a blow against the absoluteness that this word seems to signify?" How can we speak of "the infinity or alterity or novelty of the absolute" without giving it back into immanence?[5] In other words, if we bring God too quickly and too readily into the ambit of our understanding and our grasp, don't we thereby miss God all together, the God of transcendence and otherness? It seems then, that speaking of God require "impossible requirements!"[6] For if we want to respect the "purity" and absoluteness of God's revelation, if we want to expose ourselves to the transcendence of God's word, if we want this word to come to us with a "power of speech" that addresses our lives - it must, somehow, be a word that comes "from on high" - a revelation that is nowhere already known by us, that is nowhere the same as us, that is not a knowledge we already possess or a god already within us. Otherwise, how could we speak of *revelation*?

In "Revelation in the Jewish Tradition" Levinas begins with a similar question: How do we connect the world we inhabit with something which is no longer of this world? How can we make sens of the exteriority of the truths and signs of revelation? How do we speak of an otherness that comes "from outside", from somewhere else? How is this thinkable? Truths from outside? From somewhere else? From where?

Haven't sociologists told us that our truths are the products of our own social constructions of reality? Haven't psychologists reminded us that many of our truths are reflections or projections of our own inner desires and conflicts? Wasn't it Heidegger who revealed that all our knowing reflects the ontological condition of being-in-the-world? And hasn't postmodernism (or at least, a certain type of postmodernism), confidently pronounced that there are no metanarratives, that there is "nothing outside the text"?

All this, for Levinas, is so much immanence, and it only serves to dull the voice of revelation, of that which comes from outside, from somewhere else, somewhere otherwise, from beyond being. In the midst of "the magnificent funeral celebrations held in honour of a dead god",[7] Levinas arrives with news that turns everyone's head, that leaves everyone somewhat stunned, for all of a sudden, here is a philosopher that dares speak again of revelation, of truths from outside, of an Other that is "otherwise than being".

Levinas begins one of his major works, *Totality and Infinity*, with the statement: "The true life absent." Isn't this something we all experience, at rock bottom, we always feel an "absence", or, as Augustine said, a "restlessness", that we never find the perfect match between our desires and their fulfilment, that we always experience a basic uneasiness in life, never a sense of total well-being and peace? Somehow, we always feel a separation, a gap, a rift, a rupture, never a feeling of completeness, harmony, perfect unity, communion - never a feeling of "totality", rather, always a feeling of "infinity" - of desires that are infinite, questions that always open out endlessly, yearnings that are never quenched. For Levinas, this experience is a first indicator of an otherness that we are always turned toward, of an "elsewhere" and an "otherwise", of a fundamental movement "from an 'at home' which we inhabit, toward an alien outside-of-oneself, toward a yonder".[8]

In the Greek philosophical tradition, this experience has generated whole systems of thought that attempt to close this gap, that have sought to correlate the structures of our thinking (epistemology) with the structures of being (ontology). "It is the destiny of knowledge to search out and adhere to being, and it is the destiny of being to disclose itself to be known."[9] The two share a destiny, are entwined, are a harmonious whole, are fully present because always present to each other. As

Levinas says, the whole trajectory of Greek philosophy is its "equation of truth with an *intelligibility of presence*, an intelligibility that considers truth to be that which is present or copresent, that which can be gathered or synchronized into a totality that we would call the world or *cosmos*".[10]

In contrast to this search for harmony, unity, and presence, Levinas prefers to speak of that "which cuts through and perforates the totality of presence and points towards the absolutely other".[11] He prefers to stay with the experience of rupture, because experience opens us to the voice of the other - that which speaks from outside, that which refuses to be tamed and domesticated into our harmonious worlds of rest and repose. Indeed, the philosopher's desire to get a good night's sleep where all is well in the world, a drowsy satisfied presence where there is no interruptive other, where everything is unified into a comfortable Sarneness - this experience is contrasted by Levinas with the state of "vigilant insomnia" where the other haunts ontological existence and keeps us awake,[12] keeps us vulnerable and exposed to the revelation of God ("Stay awake! Because you never know when the time will come." - Mark 13:33). In comparing the Greek tradition of speculative contemplation with the biblical tradition of revelation, Levinas says:

[For the Greek tradition] the opposites of repose - worry, questioning, seeking, desire - are all taken to be a waste of repose, an absence of response, a privation, a pure insufficiency of identity, a mark of self-inequality. We have wondered whether the Revelation might not lead us to precisely this idea of inequality, difference and irreducible alterity which is "uncontainable" ... a mode of thought which is not knowledge but which, exceeding knowledge, is in relation with the Infinite or God ... Perhaps the attitudes of seeking, desiring and questioning do not represent the emptiness of need but the explosion of the "more within the less"....[13]

And again:

Should we not go beyond the consciousness which is equal to itself, seeking always to assimilate the Other and emphasize instead the act of deference to the other in his alterity, which can only come about through the awakening of the Same - drowsy in his identity - by the Other?[14]

It seems to me that Levinas is saying: the more "disjuncture" we feel, the more likely we will hear the other's call. The more harmony and wholeness we feel, the more likely we will fall asleep in our own drowsy, comfortable worlds. Attitudes of "seeking, desiring and questioning", rather than "rest and repose", provide the best environment for the revelation of the other. In this sense, Levinas doesn't have a lot of time for the peace and serenity of contemplation or mysticism - at least not with the "cheap" kind, where "everything is played out in the depths of my self".[15] Losing myself in prayer and contemplation, being absorbed into the mystery, entering the space of mystical tranquillity – this is the last thing revelation is meant to do. Rather, its task always to announce, command, perforate, rupture, unsettle - to break open our world and turn us toward the call and demand of the other in our very midst. The other is always the prophetic voice of revelation, not the disclosive voice of being. God is otherwise than being, not the ground of being. And our problem is not so much that we have been forgetful of being, our problem is rather that we have been forgetful of the other. Levinas writes:

Ethical responsibility is ... a wakefulness precise because it is a perpetual duty of vigilance and effort that can never slumber. Ontology as a state of affairs can afford to sleep. But love cannot sleep, can never be peaceful or permanent. Love is the incessant watching over the other; it can never be satisfied or contented with the bourgeois ideal of love as domestic comfort.[16]

Much of today's "popular spirituality" goes in search of something that will give our lives a deeper sense of meaning, that will fulfil our desires and yearnings, that will absorb our fragmented, isolated selves into a larger, more integrated whole. For Levinas, this is reflective of an existential need that is too tied to the self and what the self lacks, rather than a Desire that reaches beyond

the self toward the Other.[17] To be an "I", to secure my identity, to feel my own authentic subjectivity - this, for Levinas, will only lead us circling back into the Same. The subject is always trying to secure its identity in terms of itself. According to Levinas, however, we need to start elsewhere, outside ourselves, "outside the subject". This itself strikes me as an amazing thought, particularly for our Western culture that is so dominated by a quest for my own self-sufficiency, that so highly prizes the autonomous, free, self-sufficient individual. Our "enlightened" culture is often suspicious anything that might impose itself on our lives or threaten our individual freedom. We like to stay in "control" of world as critical, independent, self-empowered subjects.[18] I have noticed in my own teaching, when dealing with Levinas' texts, that our class often bristles in the face of the priority Levinas gives, to responsibility rather than freedom, obligation rather than choice, self-giving rather than self-agency, passivity rather than assertiveness, "exterior-to-me" rather than "interior-to-me". We bristle because Levinas rubs against our cultural habits. In effect we find ourselves protesting, "What about me?"

What, then, does Levinas propose? What I find rather startling is his ability to speak in the name of the absolutely transcendent, the infinitely other, yet to do so by speaking of a very simple concrete relation: that of the face-to-face.[19] Every face we encounter is a face of otherness. Every face says, "I am other to you." Every face says, "I am not you." Every face says: "Don't kill me, don't absorb me into your world, don't obliterate me by making me the same as you. I am other. I am different. I am not you." It is important to note that Levinas is talking here about the naked face, the face that is not masked by the whole social apparatus of role and status. Rather, this is the naked face that stands before us, completely exposed, completely vulnerable, infinitely other, absolutely singular. "The skin of the face is the most naked, most destitute ... there is an essential poverty in the face."[20] The face is the face of You, and you are vulnerable and dependent on me. Yet you also face me with an "uprightness" - face-to-face. The unique, singular face stands opposed to the indifference of "impersonal anonymous Being". Rather, the face is "expression" - it not just "something" that I look upon, that I hold in my gaze. Rather, the face "faces" me, and this "toward me" is both a profound appeal against my indifference to your naked vulnerability, and an accusation that prohibits my violence toward you.

The face of the other breaks into my world and calls out to me. I am not an / unto myself, but an / standing before the other. The other calls forth my response, commands my attention, refuses to be ignored, makes a claim on my existence, tells me I responsible. And this always. I will never be freed from the face of the other. So much so, that Levinas says we always held hostage to the other, that we are never released from the other's speaking to us and calling forth our response. "It is impossible to evade the appeal of the neighbour, to move away".[21] The other says, "I am here" - and appeals to us, commands us: "do not kill me." What matters for Levinas is not so much the question of meaning in life, but the question of ethics. What matters is not so much our separation from God and the desire for mystical participation; rather, what matters is disregard for each other, and the desire for sociality, for ethical responsibility. What matters is not so much the declaration of my existence that says, "Here I am", but the "Here I am" that is the response of my existence to the call of the other.

According to Levinas, the "Here I am" is testimony itself to the revelation that comes from outside, from elsewhere, from otherwise than my being.[22] Wherever we find people saying "Here I am" not as an assertion or declaration of their existence - but as a response, then we are witnessing a testimony to the voice of the Other that commands from beyond. For Levinas, this is Revelation, and this is "how God comes to mind".[23]

We said right at the beginning: the subject of our enquiry is the very fact of Revelation, and the relation it establishes with exteriority. This exteriority ... cannot be transformed into a content with inferiority; it remains "uncontainable", infinite, and yet the relation is maintained. The path I am led to follow, in solving the paradox of Revelation, is one that claims we may find a model for this

Copyright JCRelations

relation in the attitude of non-indifference towards the Other, in the responsibility towards him; and that it is precisely through this relation that a person becomes his "self", designated without any possibility of escape, chosen, unique, not interchangeable, and - in this sense - free. Ethics provides the model worthy of transcendence and it is as an ethical kerygma that the Bible is Revelation.[24]

To turn around, to face the other, this is the conversion required of theology. As David Tracy notes, "surely, on the central question of transcendence, this ethical route to the Absolute Other only by way of the interrelationships of human others is Levinas' most original, and daring, and for Jewish and Christian theology, both promising ... and controversial move".[25] There are some that might question whether Levinas is merely "reducing" religion to ethics.[26] Yet this is a question that probably troubles the "theologically comfortable" more than those who know what is at stake in the world of real historical pain and suffering. The initial reception of liberation theology, for example, was dogged by the accusation that it was a "political reduction of the Gospel".[27] Yet liberation theology has continually insisted that the truth of theology will always be judged by the practice of ethical action and the demands of justice. "Any attempt," Gutierrez says, "to separate the love of God from the love of neighbour gives rise to attitudes which impoverish the one or the other."[28]

If, for Levinas, "ethics provides the model worthy of transcendence," it is because he is a little nervous about theology providing the "model," particularly when it is a worn-out theology ... with its transcendence that can be stepped over like a fence".[29] In other words, if there is any "reduction" to be spoken of, it is theology's complacent reduction of "the Most High God", the God who commands our attention toward the "widow, the orphan, the stranger and the beggar".[30] This is the transcendence of God that can never be scaled, the height of the Other that rises above us - demanding our attention, commanding our response, requiring our love. As though we could ever finally "jump the fence" and say to ourselves: "no more is required of me". When all the time we are faced with that most demanding of the Gospel sayings: "The poor you will always have with you" (Matt 26:11). The neighbour will always be there. I cannot escape the Other; I will always be hostage to the height of the Other who asks after me. "There will never cease to be poor in the land; I command you, therefore: Always be open-handed with your neighbour, and with anyone in your country who is in need and poor" (Deut 15:11).

Levinas proposes no secular humanism; rather, he protests against the domesticating of the divine. The "low fence" of theology is the fence that reduces God to a "theme" for myself, as though God were "there" to be grasped and known by us, present to us (an easy jump!), when all the time "divinity keeps its distances".[31] As though theology were all about my identification with God, when all the time it is about God's identification with the other. Like the sensibilities of liberation theology, Levinas wants to keep the human neighbour between myself and God, such that we cannot too readily approach the invisible God without first encountering the height of our neighbour. "Is divinity possible without relation to a human Other?."[32]

Being Faced

It is difficult to talk about the experience of "being faced". It is more common and familiar to talk about the experience of "facing being". Indeed, we probably can all resonate with this phrase, because we continually find ourselves "facing things". We face life's uncertainty, and we wonder about the future. We face life's pain, and we wonder whether we will ever find a measure of peace. We face life's profound ambiguity, and we wonder whether it will ever become clear to us. Facing being primarily means that our own being is a matter of concern for us. "We consider our being, question it, are troubled and afflicted by it, laden with it... We do not engender our being; it is given to us, laid upon us; we are burdened with it and have to bear it. We do not exist, simply; we have to be."[33]

We face our lives - and at the same time we face our limitations (and that which "outstrips" us). We wonder what life is about and what it all means. We find ourselves facing questions that are of concern to us about the shape of our lives, the shape of the world around us, questions about our future, our hopes for happiness, questions about pain and suffering. Facing being, we face the finitude of our existence and the vastness of our questions, and we feel caught-up in life's great mystery or, more darkly, in its stark futility. Either way, we are lost in questions about life, its meaning, its purpose, its reason, its mystery, its elusiveness.

Mostly we hold this experience and these questions in secret. Who can ever say to another what I feel when I find myself "facing being"? Philosophers, theologians and other writers are probably the ones who most "break with secrecy" to talk about this experience. They think deeply about this question and give us all a certain vocabulary to talk about the experience of "facing being". They break with secrecy, such that "facing being" is filled with a multitude of responses. It "means" this. It is "about this". These are the "reasons". This is "why". This is "how it happens" or "fails to happen". The secret need no longer be secretive, and we are overwhelmed with these gallant and noble voices - all "facing being" together.

"Being faced", however, is different. The intuition in this phrase shifts attention from *my gaze*, which tries bring everything under its surveillance, to *the gaze of the other*, which sees me without my knowing who is looking at me. The question of "facing being" *turns around* to become the question of "being faced" - "with the look, request, love, command, or call of the other".[34] It is no longer I who faces being, but the other who faces me. I am looked upon. I am asked after. Here, I lose a certain hold over myself, and find that I am no longer the one who interrogates and questions; rather, I am the one who is faced by the other's interrogation and questioning. This is not unlike the "resolution" to the Book of Job, when all those questioners suddenly find themselves placed in question ("Where were you when...?"). God questions more than God answers. The Jewish poet, Edmond Jabés for example, links God intrinsically to "The Book of Questions".[35] God is an "abusive word".[36] Rather than our facing God, God faces us and we are left feeling "abused" and subjected. In the midst of all our questions and anxiety, God dares yet to face us and hold us in question as though we were the ones accused, questioned, held responsible - as though we were meant to answer, not God.

Throughout his second major work, *Otherwise Than Being*, Levinas uses some very extreme words to describe the exposure we undergo in "being faced". He speaks of our being persecuted and held hostage by the face of the other. Rather than the notion of a free ego that chooses its commitments, Levinas speaks of the prior condition of being hostage to the other, a condition that is not rooted in our freedom or our choice, but in our being chosen. We are not the initiators of our own actions and meanings, rather, prior to any choice or intentionality on our part, we are already exposed to the other. The other holds me against my will, persecutes me by entirely dominating me. Prior to any decision on my part, I am born into a world where the other is always asking after me. I am bound and tied to you - to every you - and that is so from my first breath till my last. I am invested with responsibility even when I do not want to be. "The condition of being hostage is not chosen; if there had been a choice, the subject would have kept his 'as-for-me'."[37] I am always and already obligated to you - chosen - even before I choose. Levinas cites a well known passage from the Talmud: "All in Israel are responsible for one another."[38] We can read "Israel" as shorthand for "humanity," which means that being-for-the-other is written into the very fabric of life; it is the way life is fundamentally structured. Levinas is also fond of quoting a passage from Dostoyevsky's Brothers Karamazov, "Each of us is guilty before everyone and everyone, and I more than the others."[39] To which could add Derrida's words: "This guilt is originary, original sin. Before any fault is determined, I am guilty inasmuch as I am responsible.... Guilt is inherent in responsibility because responsibility is always unequal to itself: one is never responsible enough."[40]

Saints are exemplary people whose exemplary stories we tell over and over again because their

unbelievable lives are testimonies to the divine. Their lives are full of "insatiable compassion" which is a desire that is also a "diaconate." They place themselves in service, in the "welcome of the absolutely other".[41] Their lives are testimony to the transcendence of "being faced by the other." The only chance the Other has of interrupting our world is through the saint who bears witness to this revelation and this calling. In the presence of the saint who lives the life of responsibility, service and answerability, we know that we are in the presence of what is other than us through this very vocation. As Levinas says, the witness of an answerability that says "Here I am" is the very "glory of the Infinite", because it witnesses to that which is before us, prior to us, that which first and foremost and facing us because always engendering our response. "The glory of the Infinite is glorified in this responsibility."[42] It is not to us, but to the Other, to your Name, that glory is given (see Psalm 115:1):

When in the presence of the Other, I say "Here I am!", this "Here I am" is the place through which the Infinite enters into language, but without giving it to be seen ... I will say that the subject who says "here I am!" testifies to the Infinite. It is through this testimony ... that the revelation of the Infinite occurs. It is through this testimony that the very glory of the Infinite glorifies *itself*.[43]

"Here I am" is a "prophetic signification" that recalls the Hebrew phrase of the scriptures, *heneni*. Abraham says *heneni* when called to sacrifice his son Isaac (Gen 22:1); Moses says *heneni* when standing before the burning bush (Exod 3:4); Isaiah says *heneni* when God asks who he shall send (Isa 6:8). *Heneni* - "here I am" - is the very sign of "the-one-for-the-other".[44] Here I am, for You. This for-the-other is often perceived as "a seed of folly," an obsession, a "sickness" ("I am sick with love", Song of Songs 2:5; 5:8),[45] yet for Levinas, *heneni* is "a marvellous accusative: here I am under your gaze, obliged to you, your servant. In the name of God."[46]

Notes

1. For Levinas, "the Other" is in the first place the other human being who calls forth ethical responsibility, yet the Other is also the "Most High". Translators of Levinas ponder the distinction (though Levinas is never entirely consistent) between *Autrui* (the personalised form, often capitalized by Levinas) and "autre" (the more general form, often in lower case). Other/other - I give up on distinguishing these two words that are both big and little as if capitalisation really matters. I am happy to use one or the other (O/o), even as Levinas himself does, as though we could, in the end, too carefully distinguish between them.
2. Gustavo Gutierrez, "Liberation, Theology and Proclamation," in Claude Geffré and Gustavo Gutierrez (eds.). *Theology of Liberation, Concilium* 6/10, June (1974) 59.
3. David Tracy, "Theology and the Many Faces of Postmodernity," *Theology Today* 51/1 (1994).
4. E. Levinas, "Philosophy and the Idea of the Infinite" in Adriaan Peperzak, *To The Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1993) 96.
5. E. Levinas, *Of God Who Comes to Mind* (Stanford: University Press, 1998) p.xii.
6. Levinas, *Of God Who Comes to Mind,* p. xii, see also 124. Elsewhere Levinas asks: "What is this thinking we are seeking which is neither assimilation of the Other to the Same nor integration of the Other into the Same, a thinking which does not bring transcendence back to immanence and does not compromise transcendence in understanding it?" "Transcendence and Intelligibility", in Adriaan Peperzak, Simon Ctritchley, Robert Bemasconi (eds.). *Basic Philosophical Writings* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996) 155.
7. E. Levinas, "Revelation in the Jewish Tradition", in Sean Hand (ed.). *The Levinas Reader (Oxford:* Blackwell, 1989.) 193
8. E. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969) 33.

9. Steven G. Smith, "Reason as One for Another: Moral and Theoretical Argument," in Richard A. Cohen (ed.). *Face to Face with Levinas* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986) 54.
10. Emmanuel Levinas and Richard Kearney, "Dialog with Emmanuel Levinas", in *Face to Face With Levinas,* 19.
11. "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas", 21.
12. "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas", 28.
13. *Levinas Reader,* 208; see also *Of God Who Comes to Mind*, 50.
14. *Levinas Reader,* 209.
15. Edith Wyschogrod, "Interview with Emmanuel Levinas", *Philosophy & Theology* IV/2 (Winter 1989) 105-118.
16. "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas", 30.
17. "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas", 31
18. See my own reflections on this enlightened cultural mood in *Living in the Margins: Intentional Communities and the Art of Interpretation* (New York: Crossroad, 1995) 50-55, 188-191.
19. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity,* 185-219.
20. E. Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Phillippe Neino.* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985.) 86
21. E. Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991) 128.
22. Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity,* 106.
23. Levinas, *Of God Who Comes to Mind,* 168.
24. *Levinas Reader,* 207.
25. David Tracy, "Response to Adriaan Peperzak on Transcendence," in Adriaan Peperzak (ed.). *Ethics as First Philosophy: The Significance of EmmanueI Levinas for Philosophy, Literature and Religion* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 194.
26. A discussion of this question can be found in Merold Westphal, "Levinas' Teleological Suspension of the Religious" in *Ethics as First Philosophy,* 151 -160.
27. See Claude Geffre's editorial, *A Prophetic Theology", in *Theology of Liberation,* 11.
28. Gutierrez, "Liberation, Theology and Proclamation", in *Theology of Liberation,* 63.
29. E. Levinas, *Proper Names* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) 92.
30. *Levinas Reader,* 251.
31. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity,* 297.
32. *Levinas Reader,* 247.
33. Alphonso Lingis, "The Sensuality and the Sensitivity", in *Face to Face With Levinas,* 225.
34. Derrida, *The Gift of Death,* 68.
35. Edmond Jabés, *The Book of Questions* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1972).
36. Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being,* 156.
37. Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being,* 136.
38. Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shevuot, 39a. Quoted by Levinas in *Outside the Subject.* 35.
39. Cited in *Otherwise Than Being,* 146; see also *Outside the Subject.* 44.
40. Derrida, *The Gift of Death,* 51. See also Levinas *Ethics and nfinity,* 111: "One is never without debt with regard to another".
41. E. Levinas, "The Trace of the Other" in Mark C. Taylor (ed.), *Deconstruction in Context* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1986) 351,353.
42. Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being,* 144.
43. E. Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo* (Pittsburgh Duquesne University Press, 1985) 106-7.
44. Levinas, *Of God Who Comes to Mind,* 75.
45. Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being,* 151.
46. Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being,* 142, 198 (f/n 5).

Terence Veling is Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Pastoral Ministries at

St. Thomas University in Miami, Florida.
Source: Gesher

Copyright JCRelations