Seeking Abraham's God after October 7th: From Radical Antisemitism to Relational Dialogue

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Abraham, the common spiritual ancestor of Jews, Christians, and Muslims, was called by God to be a blessing, not to conquer or convert (Gen. 12:1–2)[1]. One becomes a blessing by living in relation to the creator of the universe, identifying with a distinctive community devoted to that creator, affiliating with a heritage to which one is heir or with which one chooses to belong, and testifying to the idea that, whether or not a person is a member of one's community, each and every human being is created in the divine image. Just as God is unique, each and every human is also unique.[2] This is why all three great Abrahamic faiths teach that to save a single human life is to save an entire world and to take a single human life is to destroy an entire world (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4: 5; Quran 5: 32).

Nothing of this inspirational message can be found in the atrocities committed at the cruel hands of Hamas terrorists against innocent Israelis on October 7, 2023. In a massacre that will live in infamy, Hamas Islamic fundamentalists slaughtered infants, murdered the elderly, defiled women, beheaded men, burned young people alive at a rave, executed parents in front of their children and children in front of their parents, and took more than two hundred hostages, all presumably in the name of Abraham's God. In planning and executing these horrific deeds, Hamas extremists did not speak for the God of Abraham. They desecrated God's name!

All people of faith, regardless of political ideology, indeed all people who prize decency and civility, certainly anyone who claims to be heir to the inheritance of Abraham, must condemn those unconscionable acts unconditionally. There is no moral, religious, or political justification for such horror. But what happens after the condemnation and after Israel has exercised its right and duty as a sovereign nation to defend itself against this aggression, paying heed to the international rules of armed conflict? Is it possible to recreate a constructive dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians? If so, what would such a dialogue look like?

Such a dialogue is possible. We have extensive experience with its implementation before October 7 at the University of Haifa that can be applied to current circumstances if its conceptual underpinnings are properly understood.[3] This dialogue cannot be grounded in the interpretations of critical social theory that have forged an unholy alliance with Islamic radicalism. By presuming an indefensible dichotomy that falsely casts Palestinians as victims of the Jewish state's colonial domination, these interpretations draw upon ancient antisemitic tropes in a new form of intellectual antisemitism that lends academic respectability to jihadist terror. Rather, it must be grounded in what Jonathan Sacks called the "dignity of difference," by way of a pedagogy that engages intelligent interpretations of Israeli and Palestinian narratives with one another.[4] Only in relation, not radicalism, can we recognize the divine spark embedded in each human soul and truly find the God who first spoke to Abraham.

1. The Old Higher Antisemitism

How did we get to a place where this sort of brutality is thought to be a genuine expression of divine justice? To answer we need to recognize that Hamas and other radical Islamicists not only use Israeli hostages and innocent civilians as human shields, they employ progressive critical

consciousness, and those who defend it or at least the right to express it, as intellectual shields—student and other protesters, the media, policy pundits, academics, and additional opinion leaders. And this is all fed by what is taught in the academy. The prejudices against Jews and Judaism in what was taught at universities during the early decades of the last century, which justified much of the thinking that led to the Holocaust, have mutated since the late 1960s into bigotries confronted in university curricula more recently, which have justified much of the thinking that led on October 7 to the worst slaughter of Jews in a single day since the Holocaust. A particular interpretation of progressive thought has replaced biblical criticism as an academic framework for intellectual antisemitism, with the focus now having shifted to Israel from Jews and Judaism. Advocates of this framework have effectively joined forces with Islamic radicals to threaten the very soul of Abrahamic faith and the very heart of liberal democracy.

Many Jewish students before World War II arrived at university having studied the Hebrew Bible without any exposure to the so-called "documentary hypothesis". Advanced by the German Protestant scholar Julius Wellhausen, the hypothesis avers that the Bible was not written by a single author, such as Moses on behalf of God, but edited from different documentary sources: J, which referred to God by the name Jehovah; E, which referred to God as Elohim; P, the Priestly laws found primarily in the Book of Leviticus; and D, the Books of Deuteronomy and Judges. Wellhausen argued that the J, E, and D sources were all written under the ethical and spiritual influence of the Hebrew prophets prior to the Babylonian exile in 586 BCE, whereas the P source was composed after the return to Judea in 444 BCE as a prelude to the corrupting legalism of the rabbis.[5]

Bible scholars call this approach to historical interpretation of biblical sources "higher criticism," in contrast to "lower criticism," which determines the most accurate texts to interpret. In a play on words, Solomon Schechter, founding chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS), famously referred to this hypothesis as "higher antisemitism".[6] He recognized that biblical historicism was but a symptom of hateful sentiments about Jews and Judaism espoused by many intellectuals of his time in institutions of higher learning. Indeed, Wellhausen translated later discredited anti-Jewish feelings from ancient and medieval Christian theology into what was thought to be respectable modern historical research.[7] Though by no means the only academic theory to reflect antisemitic bigotry, especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, because of the Hebrew Bible's centrality to Western civilization, Wellhausen's theory became a leading model of anti-Jewish scholarship.

Schechter refused to allow Wellhausen's hypothesis into the curriculum of the JTS rabbinical school. This was not only an indication of the sort of scholarship with which he felt future Jewish leaders should (or should not) be familiar, but also, and more pointedly, a protest against intellectual antisemitism writ large and a charge to JTS alumni to lead the struggle against it, inside and outside the academy. Before the rise of university-based Jewish studies after World War II, JTS was perhaps the leading center for the academic study of Judaism in North America. Many of its alumni went on to teach at leading institutions of higher learning around the world.

Jewish university students of the time were often shocked by the anti-Jewishness in this sort of biblical criticism and by other antisemitic opinions presented as facts in academic lectures on history, literature, and religion, especially when accompanied outside the classroom by discrimination in admissions, housing, student employment, fraternity membership, and more. Yechezkel Kaufman ultimately separated Wellhausen's anti-Jewish historicism from the legitimate academic claims of source criticism, to be taught at institutions of higher learning, including JTS, in a fashion that was less dismissive of traditional Jews and Judaism.[8]

2. The New Higher Antisemitism

After the grotesque "lower antisemitism" committed by the Nazis, blatant expressions of the old higher antisemitism receded for several decades, due in large measure to post-Holocaust guilt. However, sometime after Israel's victory in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, anti-Jewish sentiments began to resurface openly in university classrooms. The new academic charge was against the Jewish state, not Jews and Judaism, and the intellectual framework within which it was conceived was a branch of progressive thought known as critical social theory, or at least a particular interpretation of that sort of theory. This interpretation made it acceptable to say about Israel what had become unacceptable to say about Jews and Judaism. Israel became what former Canadian Minister of Justice and human rights lawyer Irwin Cotler called "the Jew among the nations"[9]. In the wider public this phenomenon has come to be known as the "new antisemitism." In higher education, following Schechter, it might be called the "new higher antisemitism".[10]

Progressivism is a body of thought and action that seeks to improve the human condition through social and political reform. Critical progressivism, which includes Marxism, neo-Marxism, postcolonialism, critical race theory, and postmodernism, calls for equal access to power and influence on the basis of class, culture, indigeneity, and race, among other categories, or at the very least appropriate attention to the egregious effects of inequality when it cannot be entirely eradicated. To overcome inequity, or achieve awareness of its pervasiveness, hidden assumptions are challenged and accepted dichotomies "deconstructed" in order to "problematize" matters under investigation so as to view them with appropriate degrees of complexity and nuance.[11] This account of progressivism has become so influential in public discourse of late that it is often difficult to distinguish critical social theory from other more moderate progressive views.

In a published conversation with critical pedagogue Peter McLaren, postmodern philosopher Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, observed an obsession with Israel and Zionism among several influential critical progressives that went beyond objecting to the policies of one or another Israeli government.[12] These critical social theorists argued that the very idea of a Jewish and democratic state in what Jews have traditionally considered to be their ancestral homeland was an illegitimate colonial project.[13] This delegitimization of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, as opposed to criticizing the policies of one or another Israeli government, is widely agreed to cross over into antisemitism because, among other reasons, it denies Jews the right of self-definition and self-determination. Gur-Ze'ev recognized at least two long-standing antisemitic tropes in this interpretation of his own critical tradition, one from the left and one from the right. Both of them harken back to the anti-Jewish sentiments of many intellectuals during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (what Schechter referred to as higher antisemitism) and also echo earlier medieval and ancient libels.

From the left, Gur-Ze'ev noted the influence of Marx's well-known association of Jews with the rising class of nineteenth-century bourgeois capitalists against which Marx advocated revolution.[14] In this view, Jews owned what Marx called the means of production—the factories and assembly lines of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Second Industrial Revolution—or at least were disproportionally represented in their control.[15] This libel echoes medieval diatribes against Jewish money lenders and more ancient references in Christian scripture to Jesus overturning the tables of the money changers in the Jerusalem Temple (Mathew 12: 21–17; Mark 11: 15–19; Luke 19: 45–48; John 2: 13–16).

From the right, Gur-Ze'ev observed the influence on critical social theory, especially postmodernism, of Friedrich Nietzsche's antinomian critique of moral legalism, which Nietzsche attributed to the Hebrew Bible.[16] However, contra the postmodern suspicion of power, Nietzsche's response to this legalism, which in his view weakened the natural will to power, was that God is dead and replaced by the so-called Ubermensch—the all-powerful man that was so influential in the rise of Nazism.[17]

Paradoxically, whereas the Marxist influence on this metanarrative echoes classic antisemitic fears

of excessive Jewish power, the input from Nietzsche criticizes how biblical law and prophetic ethics place limits on power. However, both of them echo Wellhausen's criticism of Jewish legalism—the one view in line with prophetic justice, at least as Wellhausen understood it, and the other view critical of the prophets, or at least the limitations they placed on power.

3. The Unholy Alliance between Progressivism and Islamicism

Gur Ze'ev argued that this new higher antisemitism rapidly permeated academic scholarship around the world as the metanarrative of progressive social theory, which was quickly imported into college curricula. Just as the old higher antisemitism, which caricatured stubborn Jewish legalism as replacing pure prophetic spiritualism, made its way from the academy into the heart of intellectual life on both sides of the Atlantic, this new mutation of bigotry against Jews creeped from university research and teaching into many aspects of contemporary Western culture.

The pervasiveness of this phenomenon explains why many academic, faith, and political leaders could not bring themselves to condemn the brutal slaughter of more than 1200 Jews on October 7, or fell prey to a false moral equivalence in doing so. Within this dichotomous conceptual framework, oppressors are agents with total responsibility for the consequences of their oppression. The dominated parties, on the other hand, are victims. They are acted upon, not actors. Hence, they are never responsible for the suffering that they experience at the hands of the oppressors and are sometimes or to some extent, some would even say always, justified in employing any means of resistance to that suffering.[18]

It is clear why this metanarrative, which enjoys an academic respectability similar to that garnered by Wellhausen, is adopted in the rhetoric of those who seek the destruction of Israel. This is not to say that critical progressivism is the source of the new higher antisemitism, any more than Wellhausen was of the old. Academic theories may express and transmit this prejudice, but they did not invent it. Bigotry against Jews is among the world's oldest of hatreds. It is to recognize, rather, that Jewish interpretations of the Hebrew Bible, in which the prophecy of returning to Zion was first articulated by the Hebrew prophets (Ezekiel 37; Zechariah 8), are deeply threatening not only to the hard left in contemporary politics but also to radical Islam, with which it is aligned, However, these readings of the Bible are now embodied by the Jewish nation state, not the Jewish religion, as persecuted by medieval Christianity and Islam, or the Jewish race, as defined by the Nazis.

Whereas Jews had been viewed for centuries as non-European "Orientals", the state established by the "People of the Book" has become the symbol of white European oppression. In a reversal of Edward Said's pithy expression "orientalism", according to which people of color, especially those of Arab descent, have been objectified and "otherized" by Western culture, Israel, and by extension the Jewish people, has been "Occidentalized" by these interpretations of critical progressive thought, while radical Islam is depicted as a defender of the downtrodden races. This is despite the fact that the majority of Jewish Israelis are people of color whose ancestors were expelled from Muslim-majority North African and Middle Eastern countries after the State of Israel was established.[19]

Sacks[20] observed that the intellectual link between critical progressivism and Islamicism is what he called "the ghost of Plato"—the absolutist political philosophy according to which a well-ordered society must be organized around the one "true" nature of justice.[21] Islam imported this theory into its faith tradition (as did numerous Christian denominations). Sacks called it *universal* monotheism. According to this political theology, there is one deity-Allah, who is the creator of good and evil, and the just state should be organized around the only "proper" way to worship Him.

Plato's politics also lies at the heart of critical progressivism, at least of sort that Gur-Ze'ev depicts as embracing antisemitism.[22] According to this view, justice is defined in terms of absolute equality in the distribution of wealth, power, and influence. It follows that we should embrace a hard distinction between those who possess absolute power—the white colonial oppressors represented by the Jews—and those who are powerless—the oppressed people of color represented by the Palestinians and defended by Islamic radicals.

But, this is a false dichotomy that oversimplifies relations between religious, national, cultural and other forms of identity, on the one hand, and socio-economic class, on the other. Wealth, power, and influence are rarely, if ever, so neatly divided. Such oversimplification leads to indoctrination, not problematization, that seeks to avoid relevant evidence or to undermine the possibility of evidence altogether[23], and it has allowed the bigotry and barbarism inherent in jihadist terrorism to masquerade as resistance to western oppression. Israel is not a colonial project but the fulfillment of an indigenous people's legitimate aspiration to sovereignty in its ancestral homeland and no policy of any Israeli government, all of which have been democratically elected, can justify the Hamas sadism on October 7, whether that policy was implemented within or beyond the pre-1967 borders.

This sort of oversimplification also diminishes the moral agency, and hence humanity, of both victims and victimizers. Moral agents are *free*—able within reasonable limits to choose what to believe and how to behave; *intelligent*—capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, better or worse, according to some account of these terms; and *fallible*—able to choose poorly, according to their own account of what that means, and to change course upon recognizing when they have done so.[24] However, the choices, moral understandings, and ability to make mistakes of both victims and victimizers are limited by the rigid categories into which they are cast. Victims have no free choice, since they are acted upon, not actors. They do not need to make moral distinctions or change course, since they are always in the right. The beliefs and behaviors of oppressors, on the other hand, are determined by false consciousness, not choice. They too have no need for moral distinctions and cannot change course, since they are always in the wrong.

Jewish interpretations of the Hebrew Bible, on the other hand, offer an opposing view. There is one God, to be sure, who is the ultimate model of goodness, but there is more than one way to worship that God. Although there are moral duties to which all people are obliged, adumbrated in the seven laws given to Noah after the flood, the majority of biblical commandments are directed only to the children of Israel. Sacks called this *particular* monotheism. In this view, human beings are like God, in that they are singular, unique, distinctive; but humans are not themselves gods. They are free to choose a life in which they control themselves, but they are not at liberty to dominate others. They are capable of understanding the difference between disciplining themselves and subjugating their neighbors; and they are able to change course upon recognizing that they have erred by confusing the two. The very Hebrew word for holiness—*kedusha*—means to be different, and the purpose of both biblical law and its rabbinic interpretation is to enshrine in daily life reverence for what Sacks called the "dignity of difference"[25]. Contra Wellhausen, Marx, and Nietzsche, Jewish law seeks to embody, not undermine, prophetic justice.

This is why, although Jewish tradition believes that the world will one day be perfected, it does not accept any one utopian vision as the sole legitimate expression of that perfection. Gershom Scholem referred to this suspicion of utopianism as the "neutralization of messianism"[26], the idea that even though a messenger of the Divine may one day come to announce the redemption of humankind, we should not expect to be redeemed any time soon. Until that time, we should remain skeptical of all messianic claims, including postmodern anti-messianism. In the well-known words of the first-century founder of rabbinic Judaism Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakai, "If you have a sapling in your hand, and someone should say to you that the Messiah has come, stay and complete planting, and then go greet the Messiah"[27]. Scholem coined this term as a warning to messianic Zionists, who might be tempted to do terrible things to achieve redemption. But today, it could also

be read as a warning about the dangers of messianism among Islamic fundamentalists as well.

4. Cleansing Progressivism of Antisemitism

Gur-Ze'ev sought to cleanse critical progressivism of anti-Jewish tropes, just as Kaufman had done for biblical criticism, by deconstructing the very idea of homeland for both Jews and Palestinians as expressions of hegemonic national meta-narratives.[28] Unfortunately, although this move succeeds in removing the double standard created by the false dichotomy between Jewish Israelis as victimizers and Palestinians as victims, it fails to address the intrinsic nihilism of postmodernism, which is skeptical of all meta-narratives[29], including, paradoxically, even its own.[30]

To rid itself of antisemitism, progressivism needs not only to unequivocally denounce Jew hatred in all of its forms, including delegitimization of Israel, but also a willingness to set the record straight about the relation between the Jewish people and the land of Israel. This requires not only acknowledging what Gur-Ze'ev came to understand—that progressive delegitimization of Israel is laden with heavy doses of anti-Jewishness—but also what he did not recognize, that what is left of critical social theory after it is cleansed of this hate is not a new version of postmodernism[31], but Sack's "the dignity of difference".

This realization lies at the very heart of what makes Israel so threatening to both Islamicists and critical progressives. In a land dominated for centuries by despotism (Babylonian, Greek, Roman, Christian, and Muslim), it demands the right to be different, and even more radically, it insists that the people whose culture has historically celebrated this right are indigenous to that land, not those who sought to rule over them. This is not to deny legitimate Palestinian claims to self-determination or the impact that abuses of power, which too often go unnoticed, have had and continue to have on oppressed peoples (including those experienced by Jews). It is to argue, rather, that if they are to achieve the freedom, dignity, and security they so rightly deserve, Palestinians and other people whose rights have been denied must eschew the role of victim and take responsibility for their own destiny by building for the future rather than resenting the past.[32]

For Palestinians, this should begin by acknowledging that the label "Palestine" was first used to designate an official province in the second century by the Romans after they defeated the Judean rebellion and exiled Jews from Jerusalem. They sought to associate that land with the Philistines, rather than the Jews, a seafaring people of Greek origin who had not lived there for centuries. It was the Roman equivalent of declaring a land what the Nazis called *Judenrein*—clean of Jews.

If those who today choose to call themselves by this name wish to achieve self-determination on that land, they will need to disavow the history of that designation, along with the despotism it represents, including chants by their supporters of "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free". Instead, they must demonstrate a willingness to share the land with the very people exiled from it by the Romans who called it Palestine in order to dispossess them—the people who have maintained a presence there for centuries, both before and after their dispersion, and who have enshrined in ritual and liturgy their aspiration to return to it. Palestinians will only be liberated when they embrace, not re-expel, or worse annihilate, their Jewish cousins, who must in turn acknowledge Palestinian rights analogous to their own.

5. From Radicalism to Relation

What does this mean for deliberations about religious violence in Israel/Palestine? To be sure, Hamas's brutality on October 7 puts the call for complexity in considering relations between Israelis and Palestinians to the test, especially when taken together with the rationalization of these atrocities by some in halls of higher learning, the hesitation to condemn them by others, and the

anti-Jewish vitriol that followed.

And some things in relation to Israel and the Palestinians are, indeed, less complex than others. It is a simple moral truth that the atrocities of October 7 are evil. Scholars and educators should say so unequivocally. If the savagery that Hamas exhibited on that day is not beyond the limits of basic human decency, then there are no limits. Scholars and educators should also acknowledge that their students may be appropriately frightened in the face of such evil and console those who have experienced loss, including the extensive Palestinian losses due to Israel's self-defensive response to Hamas.

However, this acknowledgement should not include the false claim that Israel is perpetrating genocide in Gaza, which smacks of medieval blood libels against Jews by making of them perpetrators rather than targets of extermination. It could well be argued that this accusation is made to deny the historical persecution of Jews and reserve the status of victim for Palestinians alone. The allegation is also an Orwellian reversal of language; it is Hamas that declared the genocidal aim of annihilating Israel and the Jews, which took concrete steps to achieve that aim on October 7, and which has declared that it will repeat those atrocities again and again given the opportunity to do so.

It is also a simple truth that calls for the destruction of the State of Israel or annihilation of the Jewish people are forms of violently provocative hate speech that directly threatens Jews, both as individuals as a collective. It may end up being left for the courts in various jurisdictions to determine whether, to what extent, and in what ways such speech is protected in the public square of liberal democracies, including on university campuses, but that must not keep leaders and educators from calling it by its name, condemning it, and taking appropriate action when necessary to insure that all are safe and free from harassment.

However, it does not follow that discourse about Israel/Palestine should retreat to oversimplification, on one side or the other, even in the face of these straightforward truths. Relations between Israel and the Palestinians remain complex. To properly consider this complexity, citizens in open, pluralistic, liberal, democratic societies need to be educated, not indoctrinated, to acquire the skills and capacities to make up their own minds and hearts; to evaluate relevant evidence and consider matters in all of their complexity; and to develop the capability for recognizing and exercising their own moral agency.

This requires examination of intelligent versions of each perspective by entering sympathetically into one of them and engaging in dialogue with the other. This examination cannot be grounded in the oversimplified dichotomy between persecutors and persecuted, which, tragically, is the one false binary that critical progressivism has failed to deconstruct. It must be based, rather, in the "dignity of difference". I call this sort of examination, accordingly, "pedagogy of difference"[33].

First, this pedagogy requires narratives about both Israel and Palestine that are rooted in some reasonable account of relevant evidence and that seek relation with one another, rather than to destroy one another's collective memory.[34] I call these "intelligent narratives"[35]. Feminist philosopher Nel Noddings once observed that intelligent believers and unbelievers have more in common with one another than they have in common with unintelligent believers and unbelievers, because they are prepared to engage in dialogue.[36] In a similar vein, intelligent Israeli and Palestinian narratives have more in common with one another than they have with unintelligent Israeli and Palestinian orientations. Articulating intelligent Israeli worldviews will require heeding Scholem's warning about the dangers of untempered messianic Zionism, on both the right and the left; articulating positive reasons for Jewish affiliation beyond fear of assimilation or annihilation; and acknowledging a genuine Palestinian claim to indigeneity in the land which they call Palestine and that Jews call Israel. Formulating intelligent Palestinian perspectives will require the embrace of their own moral agency and that of their Israeli neighbors. This entails rejection of antisemitism

in all of its forms, including the libel of Israeli occupation and genocide in Gaza and the refusal to admit, much less condemn, the Hamas atrocities.

Second, this examination entails exposure to at least one of these narratives with sufficient empathy to consider what it would be like to take that narrative on board as one's own. In communities of religious, ethnic, cultural, national, or other affiliation, this may involve initiation into membership in that community, in which students can find grounding for their sense of moral agency. In common schools and secular universities, both public and private, this should involve sympathy with and respect for its traditions and tribulations. I call this "pedagogy of the sacred", following educational philosopher Thomas Green, when he wrote: "To think of the absence of the sacred, that is, its total absence, is to conceive a condition in which nothing excites horror. And in such a condition, moral education cannot gain a foothold."[37]

Finally, this approach to education demands exposure to the other narrative, Israeli if one begins from a Palestinian perspective and Palestinian if one begins from an Israeli viewpoint, and then juxtaposing these narratives in genuine dialogue with one another across deep difference. One learns to critique, not only according to the internal standards of perspectives to which one is heir or with which one has chosen to affiliate, either as a member or for educational purposes, but also according to the criteria of at least one alternative, if not more. The point of such engagement is to empower students with an inquisitive attitude toward the worldviews to which they are heir or with which they choose to affiliate, in the relevant sense, and to promote respect for perspectives deeply different from their own. This is accomplished by subjecting all perspectives to scrutiny, both from within and without, in ways that are appropriate to the educational setting in question. Because of its centrality to the entire approach, I call this final aspect by the same designation as the whole, pedagogy of difference.

6. Conclusion

Implementing this sort of relational discourse about Israel/Palestine will require advocates of intelligent Israeli and Palestinian narratives to engage with one another, to acknowledge the suffering and legitimate rights of both peoples. To this end clear-sighted leaders like Schechter will need to mold current institutions or create new ones that will combat bigotry and hate against Jews as well as Muslims and affirm the common humanity of Israelis and Palestinians; Jews, Muslims, and Christians; followers of other faiths and those who profess no religion whatsoever; and people of all races, cultures, socioeconomic classes, and sexual orientations. This will undoubtedly be extraordinarily difficult for all parties after the events of October 7 and their aftermath. However, to paraphrase the Talmudic sages, it is not up to us to finish the task, but neither are we free to refrain from taking it on (Mishnah Avot 2:19). Nothing short of the very soul of Abrahamic faith and the future of liberal democracy hangs in the balance.

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[21] Plato, Republic. Translated by R. Waterfield. Oxford (Oxford University Press) 2008.

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[23] H. A. Alexander, Reimagining Liberal Education: Affiliation and Inquiry in Democratic Schooling. London/New York (Bloomsbury) 2015, 91–106.

[24] H. A. Alexander, Reclaiming Goodness: Education and the Spiritual Quest. Notre Dame (University of Notre Dame Press) 2001), 40–50.

[25] Sacks, Dignity.

[26] G. Scholem, The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays. New York (Schocken) 1995.

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[29] J. F. Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition. Minneapolis (University of Minnesota Press) 1979.

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[35] Alexander, Reclaiming, 139–170.

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