

Abraham Heyn's Jewish Anarcho-Pacifism

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Abraham Judah Heyn (1880–1957) was an orthodox rabbi of prestigious hasidic (habad) lineage, who served several communities throughout Europe and Palestine/Israel. Responding to the intensification of antisemitic brutality in Eastern Europe around the turn of the twentieth century, he promoted a hermeneutic of resistance, interpreting Jewish tradition as the foil of the state and of state-sanctioned violence — indeed, all violence. In this essay, three central themes developed in his writings — hitherto almost entirely neglected — are examined in detail. One, the notion that the essence of Judaism consists in a conviction as to the absolute sanctity of human life. Two, the implications this has for an anarcho-pacifist vision for human society reminiscent of Tolstoy's but articulated in a distinctively Jewish manner. Three, the nature of a true and morally sound revolution as determined by the essence of Judaism and the sort of community that, according to Heyn, it is designed to promote. More broadly, this essay aims to intervene in contemporary theo-politics by recovering for (orthodox) Jewish tradition an anti-authoritarian, anti-militarist, and universalist ethos, and by inserting Judaism and Jewish thought — in distinction from Jewish people — into the revolutionary tradition that has largely ignored them.

I. Introduction

The Babylonian Talmud that R. Meir once accompanied his wayward master, Elisha b. Avuya, on the Sabbath in order to learn

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from him and that upon reaching the Sabbath-limit,¹ Elisha b. Avuya went on while R. Meir turned back.² Commenting on this episode, Isaac Deutscher once celebrated the former as an example of those radical and brave ‘non-Jewish Jews’ like Karl Marx, Rosa Luxemburg, and Gustav Landauer,³ who passed beyond Judaism because it has become too small for them. Deutscher likewise despised men like R. Meir who may have been inclined to leave but, he says, behaved like the debased Uriel da Costa: unable to bear the consequences, they returned.⁴

Though perhaps articulated in less abusive terms, Deutscher’s governing assumption — that left-radicalism goes hand in hand with secularism — prevails both in the popular imagination and in the scholarly literature. Though this prejudice has been recently challenged by publications like *Religious Anarchism: New Perspectives* and *Essays in Anarchism and Religion*, the vast

¹ I.e. two thousand cubits in all directions from the place where a person makes his abode for the day of rest, beyond which it is forbidden to go.

² *Babylonian Talmud, Hagigah* 15a. Elisha b. Avuya is a notorious and fascinating figure in rabbinic tradition. A student of the great R. Akiva and the teacher of the equally great R. Meir, he experienced some sort of spiritual crisis that drove him to apostasy. In spite of this, R. Meir continued to study Torah with his teacher, contending that one ought “look not at the container, but at its contents (*Avot* 4:27).” See Goshen-Gottstein, A. *The Sinner and the Amnesiac: The Rabbinic Invention of Elisha Ben Abuya Eleazar Ben Arach*. (Stanford: Stanford U. Press, 2000).

³ There is a fair amount of research on Landauer and his links with the Jewish tradition, but among the most significant recent publications is Mendes-Flohr, P., Mali, A, and Delf Von Wolzogen, H., eds. *Gustav Landauer: Anarchist and Jew*. (Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2014).

⁴ Deutscher, I. “The Non-Jewish Jew.” In *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays*. (New York: Verso, 2017). Uriel da Costa was an elder contemporary of (and influence on) Spinoza. A member of the Portuguese ex-marrano community in Amsterdam, he was put under ban several times for publicly rejecting post-biblical rabbinic tradition. As he reports in the autobiographical portions of *Exemplar humanae vitae*, his reconciliation with the community was made contingent upon his public humiliation — which included lashes and being trampled upon by members of the congregation. These experiences left da Costa a broken man who ultimately took his own life. See Goldish, M. “Perspectives on Uriel Da Costa’s “Example of a Human Life.”” *Studia Rosenthaliana* 42/43 (2010): 1–23. <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.bc.edu/stable/24388990>.

majority of contributors to the effort have drawn on the various traditions of Christian anarchism. To a lesser degree, anarchist trends in Buddhist, Taoist, and Islamic thought have, in these publications and elsewhere, also been addressed. Where Judaism and Jewish thought are concerned, however, the scholarship is surprisingly sparse.

While there is ample research dedicated to the involvement of ethnic Jews in the international anarchist movement,⁵ a distinction is to be made between anarchists who happen to be (non-Jewish) Jews and Jews who understand their anarchism through the lens of their Judaism. Along these lines, the field is largely limited to the writings of two figures: Martin Buber⁶ and

⁵ Avruch, P. *The Russian Anarchists*. (Stirling: AK Press, 2006): 204; Avruch, P. *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America*. (West Virginia: AK Press, 2005); Fishman, W.J. *East End Jewish Radicals: 1875-1914*. (Nottingham: Five Leaves, 2004); Gidley, B. P. *Citizenship and Belonging: East London Jewish Radicals 1903-1918*. (Ph.d., U. of London, 2003); Knepper, Paul. "The Other Invisible Hand: Jews and Anarchists in London before the First World War." *Jewish History* 22, no. 3 (2008): 295-315; Moya, J.C. "The Positive Side of Stereotypes: Jewish Anarchists in Early-Twentieth-Century Buenos Aires." *Jewish History* 18, no. 1 (2004): 19-48; Schapiro, Leonard. "The Role of the Jews in the Russian Revolutionary Movement." *The Slavonic and East European Review* 40, no. 94 (1961): 148-67; Shone, S.J. *American Anarchism*. (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2014); Shor, Francis. "Cultural Identity and Americanization: The Life History of a Jewish Anarchist." *Biography* 9, no. 4 (1986): 324-46; Shpayer-Makov, Haia. "Anarchism in British Public Opinion 1880-1914." *Victorian Studies* 31, no. 4 (1988): 487-516; Shpayer-Makov, Haia. "The Reception of Peter Kropotkin in Britain, 1886-1917." *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 19, no. 3 (1987): 373-90; Zimmer, K. *Immigrants Against the State: Yiddish and Italian Anarchism in America*. (Champaign: U. of Illinois Press, 2015). One might also point to studies of prominent figures like Bernard Lazare, Emma Goldman, and Alexander Berkman.

⁶ Cannon, Patrick. "Martin Buber & Leo Tolstoy: Two Examples of Spiritual Anarchism." *Philosophy Now* 116 (2016): 16-18; Di Cesare, D.E. "Martin Buber and the Anarchic Utopia of Community." *Naharaim-Zeitschrift für deutsch-jüdische Literatur und Kulturgeschichte* 4, no. 2 (2011): 183-203; Doubrawa, E. "The Politics of the I-Thou: Martin Buber, the Anarchist." *Gestalt Journal* 23, no. 1 (2001): 19-38; Kohanski, A.S. "Martin Buber's Restructuring of Society into a State of Anocracy."

Gershom Scholem.⁷ Some work has also been done on the nexus of anarchism and Jewish nationalism, a line of research that includes also some examination of the early kibbutz movement.⁸

Jewish Social Studies (1972): 42–57; Mendes-Flohr, P. “Prophetic Politics and Meta-Sociology: Martin Buber and German Social Thought.” *Archives De Sciences Sociales Des Religions* 30, no. 60.1 (1985): 67–82; Schaefer, Y. Between Political Theology and Theopolitics: Martin Buber’s Kingship of God. *Modern Judaism* 37, no.2, (2017): 231–255; Schwarzschild, S.S. “A Critique of Martin Buber’s Political Philosophy: An Affectionate Reappraisal.” *The Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 31, no. 1 (1986): 355–388; Vogt, S. “The Postcolonial Buber: Orientalism, Subalternity, and Identity Politics in Martin Buber’s Political Thought.” *Jewish Social Studies* 22, no. 1 (2016): 161–186; Wolf, S. “Le vrai lieu de sa realisation est la communaute: L’amitie intellectuelle entre Landauer et Buber.” In *Juifs et Anarchistes: Histoire d’une recontre*, Edited by Bertolo, A. (Paris: Editions de l’Eclat, 2001). See also Brody, S.H. *Martin Buber’s Theopolitics*. (Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 2018). This text places Buber more squarely into the context of religio-political anarchism.

⁷ Biale, D. “Gershom Scholem and Anarchism as a Jewish Philosophy.” *Judaism* 32, no. 1 (1983): 70; Bonanni, M.C. “Gershom Scholem: Uno Spirito Anarchico Religioso?” *La Rassegna Mensile Di Israel* 77, no. 1/2 (2011): 97–116; Jacobson, E. “Gershom Scholem’s Theological Politics.” In *Metaphysics of the Profane: The Political Theology of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem*. (New York: Columbia U. Press, 2003), 52–84; Löwy, M., Scholem, G., and Richardson, M. “Messianism in the Early Work of Gershom Scholem.” *New German Critique*, no. 83 (2001): 177–91; Silberstein, L.J. “Modes of Discourse in Modern Judaism: The Buber-Scholem Debate Reconsidered.” *Soundings* (1988): 657–681.

⁸ Berman, M. “Statism and Anti-Statism: Reflections on Israel’s Legitimacy Crisis.” *Tikkun* 27, No. 3 (2012): 31–68; Bowes, A.M. “The Experiment That Did Not Fail: Image and Reality in the Israeli Kibbutz.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 22, no. 1 (1990): 85–103; Boulouque, S. 2004. “The Anarchists, Zionism, and the Birth of the State of Israel.” *Social Anarchism* 36: 15; Butler, J. “Palestine, State Politics and the Anarchist Impasse.” In *The Anarchist Turn*, edited by Blumenfeld J., Bottici C., and Critchley S., 203–23. (London: Pluto Press, 2013); Eiglad, E. “Anti-Zionism and the Anarchist Tradition.” In *Deciphering the New Antisemitism*, edited by Rosenfeld, A.H., 206–41. (Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 2015); Gordon, U. “HomeLand: Anarchy and Joint Struggle in Palestine/Israel.” In *Anarchy Alive! Anti-Authoritarian Politics From Practice to Theory*, 139–62. (Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2008); Grauer, M. “Anarcho-Nationalism: Anarchist Attitudes towards Jewish Nationalism and Zionism.” *Modern Judaism* 14, no. 1 (1994): 1–19; Horrox, J. A. *Living Revolution: Anarchism in the Kibbutz Movement*. (Edinburgh, Oakland, Baltimore: AK Press, 2009); Maor, Z. “Moderation from Right

That being said, with the exception of but a handful of studies, the religious dimensions of Jewish anarchism have been largely neglected⁹ — especially where, as Moshe Goncharok has pointed out, the anarchism or anarchist tendencies of the religiously *observant* are concerned.¹⁰

Thus, we return to the figure of R. Meir, whom I regard in a far different light than Deutscher. In R. Meir, I see someone who carries the periphery back to the center, destabilizing and enriching it. I see an example of one who insists that the teachings of an Elisha b. Avuya have a legitimate place in the *beyt midrash*, the traditional study-hall — indeed, one who forces God himself to accept these teachings!¹¹ There have been many such figures in the history of modern Jewish thought — obscure as they may

to Left: The Hidden Roots of Brit Shalom.” *Jewish Social Studies* 19, no. 2 (2013): 79–108; Oved, Y. “L’Anarchisme dans le mouvement des kibboutz.” In *Juifs et Anarchistes: Histoire d’une rencontre*. Edited by Bertolo, A. (Paris: Editions de l’Eclat, 2001); Tamas, G.M. “Ethnarchy and Ethno-Anarchism.” *Social Research* 63, no. 1 (1996): 147–90; Zipperstein, S.J. *Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha’am and the Origins of Zionism*. (Berkeley: UCLA Press, 1993). See also Lowy, M. *Redemption and Utopia: Jewish Libertarian Thought in Central Europe, a Study of Elective Affinity*, translated by Heany, H. (New York: Verso, 2017).

⁹ See Agursky, M. 1984. “Universalist Trends in Jewish Religious Thought: Some Russian Perspectives.” *Immanuel* 18 (1984); Berti, F. Torah e libertà. *A/Rivista Anarchica* 40, no. 352 (2010); Biagini, Furio. *Torah and Freedom: A Study of the Correspondence Between Judaism and Anarchism*. (Lecce: Icaro, 2008); Chaterjee, M. “The Redemptive Role of Labor. In *Studies in Modern Jewish and Hindu Thought*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1997): 23–48; Löwy, M., and Larrier, R.B. “Jewish Messianism and Libertarian Utopia in Central Europe (1900–1933).” *New German Critique*, no. 20 (1980): 105–15; Luz, Ehud. “Utopia and Return: On the Structure of Utopian Thinking and Its Relation to Jewish-Christian Tradition.” *The Journal of Religion* 73, no. 3 (1993): 357–77; Shapira, A. *Anarkhizm Yehudi-Dati*. (Ariel: Hotsayt Universitat Ariel, 2015). See also Magid, S. *Hasidism on the Margin: Reconciliation, Antinomianism and Messianism in Izbica and Radzin Hasidism*. (Madison: U. of Wisconsin Press, 2003); this text, however, focuses on antinomianism, which is to be distinguished from anarchism.

¹⁰ Goncharok, M. “On the Question of the Relationship Between Certain Aspects of Judaism and Anarchism.” *Journal for the Study of Jewish History, Demography and Economy, Literature, Language and Ethnography* 6, no. 1 (2011): 8–22.

¹¹ *Babylonian Talmud, Hagigah* 15b.

have become — and it is one of them, R. Abraham Judah Heyn (1888–1957), whose work I intend to examine here.

Owing to Heyn's extreme obscurity, a brief word as to his biography is in order. He was born to the chief rabbi of the Ukrainian city of Chernihiv, R. David Tsvi Heyn, a great-grandson of the celebrated *Tsemah Tsedek*, the third Grand Rabbi of the Habad hasidic sect who also traced his lineage to the distinguished Hen-Gracian family, which traces its roots to 11th century Barcelona.¹² Thus was Abraham Judah immersed in hasidic life from his youth onward. After obtaining private ordination, Heyn went on to assume several rabbinic posts throughout Eastern and Western Europe before ultimately emigrating to Palestine by 1935.¹³

He entered the public sphere in reaction to the infamous Beilis trial of 1913 during which the defendant faced fictitious murder charges based on the blood libel (an antisemitic canard which asserts that Jews consume Christian blood for ritual purposes). He composed an essay explaining in detail not only the absurdity of such accusations from the standpoint of Jewish law, which proscribes even the consumption of animal blood, but more importantly, uses this prohibition to articulate a theology of non-violence that framed his thinking for the remainder of his life.

After immigrating to Palestine, Heyn served in a rabbinical capacity in several Jewish communities throughout the country, but finally settled in Jerusalem. There, he headed the *Beyt Midrash ha-Rambam* (an institution dedicated to Maimonides' legacy of free Jewish thought),¹⁴ served as director of the Center for Religious Culture¹⁵ and, after 1948, within the Department of

¹² Laine, E. "Kontres Teshuot Heyn: Helek Rishon." *Sefer She'elot u-Teshuvot Avney Heyn*. (New York: Kehot, 2013): 259–319; Heyn, A. 1931. *Lenahameyni*. (Tel Aviv: Self published): 70–71.

¹³ Belzer, S., and Zislensky, A.Y. eds. *Shaarey Tsiyon*. Nisan-Sivan 5695: 35.

¹⁴ "Be-Mosdot Yerushalayim u-be-Argonia." *Ha-Hed*. Vol. 12(8). April 1937. Pp. 19–20; Soker, Y. "Be-Beyt Midrash ha-Rambam." *Ha-Hed*. Vol. 12(9). May 1937. Pp. 16–17.

¹⁵ (Zohar, H. "Mosad ha-Rav Kook: Reyshito u-Meyasdav, Terumato le-Heker Erets Yisrael ve-ha-Tsiyonut ha-Datit." *Sinai: Ma'amarim u-Mehakrim be-Torah u-be-Mada'ey ha-Yahadut*. Tammuz-Elul 132 (5763): 132.

Cultural Education.¹⁶ Heyn's main teachings appear in a posthumously published three-volume collection of essays entitled *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut: Pirke Hagut u-Mahshava* (In the Kingdom of Judaism: Meditations and Thoughts), echoing Tolstoy's *In the Kingdom of God*.¹⁷ In it, his unique anarcho-pacifist interpretation of Jewish tradition is articulated through thematic essays as well as Sabbath and holiday sermons.

Here is not the place to elaborate at length on the context in which a hasidic rabbi came to appeal to Tolstoy's late Christian writings. In brief however, Tolstoyan ideas were very much part of the atmosphere in Heyn's generation of Eastern European Jewish intellectuals. Zionists like A.D. Gordon adopted his back-to-the-earth ethos, and his effort to supply a timely account of theological ideas was regarded by many Jewish traditionalists as external confirmation of their own efforts to demonstrate the continuing relevance of religion. This is to say nothing of the fact that his philosophy of non-violence served as a resource for Jews striving to respond to the increasingly intense pogroms that frequently broke out as the 19th century came to a close and the 20th began.

In this essay, I shall examine in depth three central themes developed in Heyn's writings, which have been almost entirely neglected: one, the notion that the essence of Judaism consists in a conviction as to the absolute sanctity of human life, two, the implications this has for an anarcho-pacifist vision for human society reminiscent of Tolstoy's but articulated in a distinctively Jewish manner,¹⁸ and

¹⁶ "Ha-Memshala Kibla le-Yadeha et Mahleket ha-Tarbut me-Yesodo shel ha-Va'ad ha-Leumi." *Ha-Tsofe* 01/17/1949: 4.

¹⁷ Heyn, A. *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut: Pirke Hagut u-Mahshava*. Vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rav Kook, 1958); Heyn, A. *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut: Pirke Hagut u-Mahshava*. Vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rav Kook, 1963); Heyn, A. *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut: Pirke Hagut u-Mahshava*. Vol. 3 (Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rav Kook, 1970).

¹⁸ There is something to be said here on Tolstoy's relationship to Jews and Judaism. Though it is indeed the case that he denounced Russian persecution of Jewish people, his anti-Judaism is palpable in much (though not all) of his later writing. See Eigland, E. "Anti-Zionism and the Anarchist Tradition." In *Deciphering the New Antisemitism*, edited by Rosenfeld, A.H. (Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 2015), 206–41. In this respect, thought it would be false to accuse him of anti-semitism, it would be equally false to represent his relationship to Jews and Judaism as

three, the nature of a true and morally sound revolution as determined by the essence of Judaism and the sort of community that, according to Heyn, it is designed to promote.

First, I will discuss Rabbi Heyn's view as to the essential character of Judaism — namely, the absolute sanctity of human life — and two related principles that Heyn derives from it: the inadmissibility of justifying means by their ends on the one hand, and of regarding the individual as the subordinate of the collective on the other. I shall then show how the essence of Judaism and its derivative principles — so far as Heyn understands them — leads him to a Jewish formulation of religious anarchism. This, I explain, is primarily based on Heyn's claim to the effect that the idea of the absolute sanctity of human life meaningfully intersects with traditional theological notions of human freedom. Earlier Jewish philosophers and theologians tended to restrict discussion of human freedom to the problem of providence — i.e. to the negation of freedom and moral responsibility that providence may entail. In contrast, Heyn uses the traditional terminology but extends its scope to include political and social questions falling within the scope of the relationship between the individual and the group of which he or she is a part. Finally, I address the question of revolution, finding that Heyn recommends revolution of the heart as a means of revolutionizing society at large. This does not mean that he adopts a passive or quietistic view. Rather, it is his conviction that a revolution conducted in a manner consistent with its goals, a Jewish revolution grounded in opposition to force and violence as such constitutes a position of strength because it undermines the moral foundation of the enemy.

In conclusion I find, in Abraham Judah Heyn's thought, a robust example of religiously-inspired radicalism. In this manner, I highlight the sort of exception that Deutsch failed to recognize and show that for the modern Jewish radical, Elisha b. Avuya is not the hero of the story; rather, it is R. Meir who brings home the

uncomplicated and without blemish. As with most European thought, the Jewish intellectual must proceed with generosity, attending to the message while bracketing the occasional jab at his person and his tradition. See Krauskopf, J. *My Visit to Tolstoy: Five Discourses*. (Philadelphia: Temple Keneset Yisrael, 1911).

teachings of Elisha b. Avuya, radicalizes the *beyt midrash* and, in doing so, enriches it rather than destroying it.

II. The absolute sanctity of human life as the essence of Judaism

Let us begin by considering an essay entitled, like one of Tolstoy's lesser-read works, "Thou Shalt Not Kill," in which Heyn presents the basic features of his thought. While this prohibition, he says, is universally acknowledged in principle, it has at least three senses. These are the "thou shalt not kill" of: (a) the "Romans," i.e. "the doctrine of the majority, the state, the society (*hevra*), and the public (*tsibur*)," (b) the "[anarcho-]individualists (*ba'aley ha-anokhiyut*),¹⁹

¹⁹ Here, I translate *ba'aley ha-anokhiyut* as "anarcho-individualism" as opposed simply to "individualism" for several reasons. First of all — as my memory recalls — he refers to Stirner a handful of times throughout the three volumes of his major work. Although Stirner is not mentioned here, this would suggest that Heyn was at least aware of the general substance of Stirner's thought. More importantly (as we shall see below), Heyn's account of the *ba'aley anokhiyut* implies that any and all moral constraints to individual liberty are — according to this worldview — absurd. This does not at all resemble political individualism, which insists on the right of each individual to act as he or she wishes, just *as long he or she does not infringe on the same liberty of another*. Even a more radical individualist like Thoreau, who opposed civil government, will still say "if I have unjustly wrested a plank from a drowning man, I must restore it to him though I drown myself;" see Cafaro, P. *Thoreau's Living Ethics: Walden and the Pursuit of Virtue*. (Athens: U. of Georgia Press, 2004), 65–70. In contrast, an anarcho-individualist like Stirner, will assert that "morality is incompatible with egoism, because the former does not allow validity to *me*, but only to the Man in me (Stirner, M. *The Ego and His Own: The Case of the Individual Against Authority*. Translated by Byington, S.T. Edited by Martin, J.J. (Mineola: Dover, 2005), 179)." and that "I recognize only the right that I impart (ibid. 297)." Though such claims are not necessarily tantamount to nihilism (Leopold, D. "Max Stirner", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2015/entries/max-stirner/>>)," the value distinctions they allow are focused solely on the person making them and imply no duties at all vis-a-vis the other. For instance, Stirner asserts that he loves men and that he has, for them a "fellow feeling" by dint of which he suffers when they suffer. It is for this reason and this reason alone that he can "kill them, not torture them (Stirner, M. 2005, 291)." From this, we see that if Stirner felt no such "fellow feeling," he

and (c) of “man as such.”²⁰ Let us first discern how Heyn conceives the three elements of this typology of prohibition, and then consider what he adds to it.

For Heyn, the foundation of the statist, or Roman, approach to the prohibition is the doctrine of “sacrificing the particular for the sake of the general.” All supporters of this view, he says, regard “the universal” as “the end of creation” and “the particular as the instrument thereof.” They disagree only “as to what constitutes the universal;” for some, it may be a religious community, for others the state or even humanity at large. In essence, however, “all have the same idol and it is called the whole; all worship at the same altar and it is called the good of the whole.” According to this doctrine, Heyn continues, murder is not sinful in itself; rather, it is condemned only insofar as threatens the whole.²¹ Therefore, when the whole itself demands bloodshed, the prohibition is lifted; “slaughter is sanctified” because “the being of the one is nothing more than a footstool for the life and prosperity of the many,”²² because man is regarded as nothing “but a tool of the community... a small nail in the structure of the great universal... the sacrifice of which logic dictates the necessity of” when that serves the general interest.²³

In contrast to Roman statism, anarcho-individualism maintains that “there is no whole, no mass, no gathering, no collective, no community constituting a higher purpose” more sacred than the individual, who is “a world unto himself.” As such, the latter cannot be sacrificed for the sake of the former; “if the individual is everything (*ha-kol*) and his destruction is the destruction of everything, for the sake of what could he be sacrificed?” In this sense, the prohibition of murder becomes something of an absolute.²⁴ Yet, Heyn contends, if there is indeed nothing other than

would recognize no obligation to avoid killing *or* torturing others. As such, Heyn’s account of the *ba’aley anokhiyut* more closely resembles Stirner’s anarcho-individualism than “individualism” more broadly construed.

²⁰ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 73.

²¹ *Ibid.* 74–76.

²² *Ibid.* 77.

²³ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 3, 335.

²⁴ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 77.

the individual (*efes zulado*),²⁵ there is nothing to keep him or her in check and the very notion of prohibition is rendered absurd.²⁶ If anarcho-individualism can explain the inadmissibility of self-sacrifice, it is at pains to establish moral grounds barring the perpetration of violence.

Appealing to Kropotkin — whom he calls “*the* righteous man (*tsadik*) of the new world” and “a pure and crystalline soul”²⁷ — Heyn entertains the prospect of replacing prohibitions on violence with “wise counsel” to the effect that the perpetration of violence invites its suffering.²⁸ He does not so much object to this counsel as identify its boundary. In the case of one who must choose to slay or be slain,²⁹ he avers, it supplies no barrier; “when two existences collide, yours takes precedence.”³⁰ This is the limit: anarcho-individualism regards the individual as an absolute, but cannot supply the ground for unqualified prohibition of his destruction.

The sense of ‘thou shalt not kill’ of man as such is a “variety of [anarcho-]individualism,” but a “holier” one which escapes this difficulty. To the aforementioned existential collision, it responds with a challenge: “perhaps his blood is redder!”³¹ In other words, it is based on conviction as to the “absolute holiness of human life and the absolute sinfulness of uprooting it.”³² This conviction as to the irreducible holiness of human life, Heyn maintains, constitutes “the essence of Jewish religion.”³³ It is not simply that Judaism prohibits killing. Rather, “Judaism *is* the teaching of the negation of blood[shed];”³⁴ this is not “a thing inscribed on the tablets [of the law], but the tablets themselves.”³⁵

²⁵ Here, Heyn draws on the traditional language of the *Aleynu* prayer “Our King is true and there is nothing other than him (*efes zulado*),” thus indicating that the individual treats himself like a god.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 78.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 78–79.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 78.

²⁹ *Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin* 74a.

³⁰ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 80.

³¹ *Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin* 74a.

³² Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 81.

³³ Heyn, 1970. *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 3, 187.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 201.

³⁵ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 81.

As Heyn develops it, the theoretical foundation of this position lies in a distinction between “the one (*ehad*)” and “the unique (*yahid*)”³⁶ — between, that is, quantitative and qualitative determinations of value. Quantitative value, he explains, is “the expression of a relation external to the object that bears it;” it pertains to “things which are means and not ends in themselves,” to *objects of utility*. In this sense, it is recognized in “the relation of an owner to his property” or to things that may enter his possession. Appealing to the ancient *ius abutendi*, Heyn holds that we have the right to destroy that which we own; an ox, for example, is slaughterable because oxen can be viewed as human property. *This ox* can be killed because *any ox* can be killed; oxen are not treated as subjects but as utile objects.

“No man,” Heyn states, “was created for the sake of another, nor for the service of some necessity external to his own requirements for life.” Man, he continues, “is not a means, but an end; the whole of his being is his alone and he exists only for himself.”³⁷ As such, human life “is in no respect the acquisition of another” it cannot be treated as property. If so, it “is not *one*, but... *unique*,” its value is strictly qualitative. In making this claim, Heyn appeals to a biblical census-taboo expressed in a rabbinic prohibition against directly counting people.³⁸ His gloss on the prohibition is that it has a moral message, that it expresses the singularity of each individual. As he

³⁶ It may be noted that Heyn borrows this distinction from Maimonides’ account of God’s unity as it appears in the *Guide for the Perplexed*, I.57. This appropriation is made all the more interesting by the fact that Heyn reverses Maimonides’ intent. For Maimonides God alone is unique because God alone is not the product of intelligent design — i.e. something existing for some rational end. However, as he goes on to explain, this does not mean that man (or anything else for that matter) has an ultimate purpose; “it was not a final cause,” Maimonides contends, “that determined the existence of all things, but only His will (Guide for the Perplexed 3.13).”

³⁷ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. I, 7

³⁸ *Babylonian Talmud*, *Berakhot* 62b; *Yoma* 22b. See Liver, J. “The Half-shekel offering in biblical and post-biblical literature.” *Harvard Theological Review* 56, no. 3 (1963): 173–198; Milgrom, J. “A Prolegomenon to Leviticus 17: 11.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 90, no. 2 (1971): 149–156; Neufeld, E. “The sins of the census.” *Judaism* 43, no. 2 (1994): 196.

goes on to articulate it, “from the standpoint of the self, it is all the same whether it dies alone or the whole world dies with it... He says ‘my death means [for me] an end to everything’” or, to express the same idea in the language of the rabbis: “when a single life is destroyed, it is as if a whole world is destroyed.”³⁹ Human life is an

³⁹ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 9, 39–42; cf. *ibid.* 213–14. See also *Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin* 37a. So as to discern how striking is Heyn's use of this concept, cf. Ascherman, A. “Does Judaism Teach Universal Human Rights?” In *Abraham's Children: Liberty and Tolerance in an Age of Religious Conflict*, edited by James, K.J., 81–101. (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2012); Regev, U. “Justice and Power: A Jewish Perspective.” *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 40, no. 1 (2007): 148–64; Dorfman, A., and Messinger, R. “Toward a Jewish Argument for the Responsibility to protect.” In *Responsibility to Protect*, 61–75. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. In these articles, the principle is largely incorporated into a classically liberal doctrine of human rights; it is not expanded into a general critique of the state.

It may also be noted here that by formulating this proposition in universal terms, Heyn takes an implicit position in a longstanding textual dispute with significant theological implications. According to some versions, the source text reads “whoever destroys a soul is considered as if he destroyed an entire world. And whoever saves a life of Israel, it is considered as if he saved an entire world (*Mishna, Sanhedrin* 4:5; *Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin* 37a; *Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin* 4:9).” Here, the universal “a single soul” appears. However, a parallel text appears in *Avot de Rabi Natan*, in which the passage reads “a single Jewish” soul. Most printed versions of the Talmud follow the latter reading, though the scholarly consensus is that the former is correct (Urbach, E.E. “Whoever Preserves a Single Life...: The Evolution of a Textual Variant, the Vagaries of Censorship and the Printing Business.” *Tarbiz* 40. (1971): 268–284; cf. Jaffee, M.S. “Rabbinic Oral Tradition in Late Byzantine Galilee: Christian Empire and Late Rabbinic Resistance.” In *Orality, Literacy, and Colonialism in Antiquity*. Edited by Draper, J.A., 176–79. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004).

Due to this interpolation — in addition to other rabbinic and mystical sources — major trends of modern kabbalistic and hasidic thought have adopted a profoundly ethnocentric view of human life. This is especially pronounced in the Habad tradition from which Heyn emerged. Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the movement's founder, writes (basing himself on Hayyim Vital's *Ets Hayim*) that “the souls of the nations of the world, however, emanate from” those aspects of the which contain no good whatever (*Likutey Amarim Tanya*, ch. 1). Later Habad theologians, Yoel Kahn for instance, interpreted this in a most radical sense, positing that the

“absolute essence”⁴⁰ — this is what Heyn intends by the irreducible holiness of human life as the core principle of Judaism: an individual is not one among many, but *one and only* or *non-numerable*.

Now, from his conviction as to the uniqueness of human life, Heyn derives two intersecting principles, both based on the supposition that uniqueness, or non-numerability of the individual implies that his or her value is *non-relative*. The first of these principles is that each person constitutes an end unto himself that that under no circumstances do ends justify means.⁴¹ Heyn reasons here that to treat people as means to other ends is to regard them as objects of relative quantitative value as opposed to subjects with the absolute value due a subject. Thus he writes that:

The justification of the means considered in themselves is a fundamental principle of Judaism, its primary substance. This is one of its most revolutionary contributions to world culture.

Jewish people are literally a distinct and superior species of human (Kahn, Y. *Mahutam shel Yisrael be-Mishnat ha-Hasidut*. New York: Hekhal Menahem, 2002; cf. Balk, H. “The Soul of a Jew and the Soul of a Non-Jew: An Inconvenient Truth and the Search for an Alternative.” *Hakira*, Vol. 16 (2013): 47–76). While Habad theology is not without other profoundly redeeming qualities, this particular train of thought is clearly problematic, especially when it is politicized by men like R. Yitzchak Ginsburgh, whose Jewish-supremacism translates into a justification for anti-Arab violence and Israeli imperialism (Satherley, T. “‘The Simple Jew’: The ‘Price Tag’ Phenomenon, Vigilantism, and Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh’s Political Kabbalah.” *Melilah*, Vol. 10 (2013): 57–91). Thus, Heyn’s departure from this element of his tradition is radical in the extreme. That being said, he did not directly indicate this divergence.

⁴⁰ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 5.

⁴¹ The Kantian background of this claim is palpable. For more on the link between Kantianism and Anarchism, see May, T.G. “Kant the liberal, Kant the anarchist: Rawls and Lyotard on Kantian Justice.” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 28, no. 4 (1990): 525–538; May, T.G. “Kant via Rancière: From Ethics to Anarchism.” *How Not to Be Governed: Readings and Interpretations from the Critical Left*, edited by. Klausen, J.C. and Martel, J. (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2011): 65–82. See also Wolff, R.P. *In Defense of Anarchism*. (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1970); Pritchard, M.S. “Wolff’s Anarchism.” *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 7, no. 4 (1973): 296–302; Sterba, J.P. “The Decline of Wolff’s Anarchism.” *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 11, no. 3 (1977): 213–217; Riley, P. “On the Kantian Foundations of Robert Paul Wolff’s Anarchism.” *Nomos* 19 (1978): 294–319.

The tool which the hands operate, must itself be perfect... any blemish, no matter how small, invalidates it... the whole idea of absolutely despising a transgression performed by way of a good deed,⁴² that whole system, is the novel contribution of Judaism... [which] represents the opposite extreme of the idea that the ends justify the means.⁴³

One must, he indicates, *always* use “*kosher* tools.” Drawing an analogy to the hand-lathing ritual, he says that the vessel must be whole and unblemished; if not “the hands remain impure; indeed, they create, via the water and the blemished cup, more impurity, thus nourishing the external [evil] forces.”⁴⁴ If, that is, the means are bad, their result will be bad; means must accord with their end and in this sense constitute ends in themselves.⁴⁵

⁴² Here, Heyn appeals to the notion of a “precept fulfilled through a transgression (*mitsva ha-ba’a ba-avera*),” which normative Jewish law invalidates. See *Babylonian Talmud, Sukkot* 30a, 31b, 32b. Unlike other Jewish anarchists, most notably, Gershom Scholem, Heyn’s anarchism is by no means antinomian in character. For more on the link between Jewish anti-nomianism and Jewish anarchism, see especially Scholem, G. “Redemption Through Sin.” In *The Messianic Idea in Judaism: And Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality*, translated by Halkin, H. 78–141. (New York: Schocken, 1971); Jacobson, E. “Gershom Scholem entre anarchisme et tradition juive.” In *Juifs et Anarchistes: Histoire d’une rencontre*, edited by Bertolo, A., 53–73. (Paris: Editions de l’Éclat, 2001); Jacobson, E. “Gershom Scholem’s Theological Politics.” In *Metaphysics of the Profane: The Political Theology of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem*, 52–84. (New York: Columbia U. Press, 2003). See also Elijor, R. “Jacob Frank and His Book The Sayings of the Lord: Religious Anarchism as a Restoration of Myth and Metaphor.” *The Sabbatian Movement and Its Aftermath: Messianism, Sabbatianism and Frankism, Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 16, no. 1 (2001). In this respect, Heyn’s anarchism is the cousin of Landauer’s and Buber’s (see notes 3 and 6 above), both of whom also placed extreme emphasis on the consonance of ends and means.

⁴³ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 3, 318.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 193. See also *Mishna*, tractate *Yadayim*. Cf. Maimonides’ introduction to and commentary on the first two chapters of this tractate.

⁴⁵ As Uri Gordon has generously pointed out, means-ends unity is a central anarchist principle, and one that appears prominently in recent discussions of prefigurative politics. See Leach, D.K. “Prefigurative Politics.” *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements*. Edited by D.A. Snow, D. Della Porta, B. Klandermans, & D. McAdam. (Hoboken:

The second is that if people are not one, but unique, and so unaccountable, it follows that they cannot be treated as one among many. The whole, Heyn contends, “is nothing more than a collection of individuals” regarded from an external standpoint⁴⁶ whereas, in reality, there is no “majority, no congregation, no collective, no society,”⁴⁷ no “nation, country, congregation, party, [or] institution,”⁴⁸ no “higher purpose”⁴⁹ than the individual.⁵⁰ People, he says, “are not like drops of water that can be stirred together so that, in the end, they become a single entity.”⁵¹ Each person is a world unto himself. Here, Heyn simply draws a natural conclusion from his rejection of the ends-means dichotomy. If each individual is an absolute, then he really is a world unto himself; his vital interests and those of a social or political collective cannot be weighed against one another — the individual stands always apart from and above the collective.

In sum, we find that that “the absolute and unconditional prohibition of killing”⁵² implies the holiness of human life. Namely — in classical Kantian terms — that a person is a subject with irreducible *qualitative* value and not an object of relative quantitative value. In Maimonidean terms: a person is not just one, but unique. From this, Heyn infers, first, the non-admissibility of an ends-means dichotomy where people are concerned — it would imply that the end is more valuable than the human material sacrificed to achieve it. Since the individual can-

Blackwell 2013); Franks, B. “Prefiguration.” *Anarchism: A Conceptual Approach*, 28–43. (New York: Routledge, 2018). See also Gordon, U. “Prefigurative Politics between Ethical Practice and Absent Promise.” *Political Studies*, vol. 66, no. 2 (2017): 521–537; Swain, D. “Not Not but Not yet: Present and Future in Prefigurative Politics.” *Political Studies*, (2017): .003232171774123.

⁴⁶ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 69.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 77.

⁴⁸ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 96–97.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 77.

⁵⁰ Cf. “Have you ever seen an independent creature called the general? It is nothing more than a collection of particulars, each of which lives unto itself, and two instances of life in a single body I have never seen (Ibid. 8).”

⁵¹ Ibid. 143; Vol. 1, 78, 159.

⁵² Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 3, 201.

not serve as a means or a tool for others, he is not subordinate to them but stands apart. As Heyn understands it, the alternative is a dangerous fiction that “plows the whole world with salt.”⁵³ This complex of convictions, according to Heyn, constitute the essence of Judaism.

III. Heyn's conviction as to the sanctity of life as the moral foundation of an anarchist vision for human community

Let us now proceed to consider how Heyn's conception of the prohibition of murder implies anarchism broadly construed. Traces of his view can already be discerned in his approach to the question of numerability. So he understood it, that is numerable which lends itself to being *owned*. A proprietor counts his property and assesses its value in relation to other sorts and quantities of property. As property, the numerable can be treated as a relative use value, it can be reduced to and deployed according to the desire of the proprietor.

The term which Heyn uses is *ba'alut*. Though it implies ownership, it is better translated as *mastership*. That is numerable, quantifiable, usable, which is under the *dominion* of something else, which is *subordinate* to it. In this sense, the economic relation of property transforms into a political relation of sovereignty. As instances of absolute sanctity, human individuals cannot be treated in this way. If they are not subject to numeration, valuation, possession, and so on, they are also not subject to dominion; the human being cannot be the subordinate of another man or other men. “It is clear to me,” Heyn says, that the idea of “sacrificing the individual for the sake of the collective originates from a prior doctrine: that of dividing the inhabitants of the world into masters and slaves.”⁵⁴ For the master, his “men were nothing more than objects. The master could kill them at will in the same way that he might shatter his tools or slaughter his animal... The real utility or the capricious enjoyment of the master determined the being

⁵³ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 295.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 69–70.

of the slaves. They were his men, not humans but carriers of determinate value.”⁵⁵

Interestingly, in several places Heyn appeals to an incident recorded in Kropotkin’s *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*⁵⁶ to exemplify this relationship between ownership, dominion, and sacrifice on the one hand and, on the other, their rejection as the moral foundation of “the great city of ideal anarchism.”⁵⁷ So Heyn reports it, enamored with his father’s reputation for valor, Kropotkin inquired as to the details of an especially impressive exploit for which the elder had earned a medal of honor; he was said to have saved a family from a fire. Were you “singed by the fire?” Kropotkin the younger asked. “Little lamb,” his father answered, do “you think *I myself* went into the fire? I sent Frohl, my servant!” Then, responding to his son’s incredulity, he explained that the servant was “my soul, the acquisition of my money.” On the basis of this anecdote, Heyn articulates a “general principle” to the effect that it is because a master-slave relation obtained between the elder Kropotkin and Frohl that the latter could treat the former like merchandise, applying to him the distinction between one and many.⁵⁸ Though, he adds furthermore, “the forms of slavery have changed” over time and abject servitude has perhaps come to an end, “the foundation remains.” Namely, “external authority [that] hovers above” in the form of our “subordination to kings, to flags, parties, states” and even democratically elected parliaments, which dupe men into believing they have sent themselves to slaughter. In all such cases, there is a master who does the sending and slaves who “are sent because they are under his authority and not their own.”⁵⁹ This fundamental insight, Heyn contends, was

⁵⁵ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 3, 209.

⁵⁶ The incident is mentioned in Chapter 1, section 3 of this text.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 209.

⁵⁸ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 69–70. Cf. Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 3, 209. The story is repeated there, but in a slightly altered form.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 210. Cf. “Between generation and generation, group and group, man and man, there is no difference but the form of the master. Sometimes, it is in the form of a Roman crown, sometimes it is in the form of a Spartan helmet, sometimes [it is in the form of] a nihilistic clown who negates himself and others alike, a noble individual isolated in a closed room or a disorderly mob, a party or a society at large. What all of them have in

“the first reed plunged into” Kropotkin’s “upright heart” on which “the great city of ideal anarchism”⁶⁰ — which entails “a total negation of servitude and authority of one man over another” that in turn negates “the idea of sacrificing the one for the many at its very source”⁶¹ — was eventually built. Let us now see how he arrives at a similar result by appeal to traditional Jewish sources and ideas.

As Heyn understands it, man is a fundamentally social creature. “The life of the individual,” he says, “cannot be complete, healthy, and full without the life of the community.” This is true not only in respect of his basic survival needs, but also his spiritual needs. Appealing to language once used to describe the nature of God, Heyn writes that it is “the nature of the good to do good;”⁶² that is, it is constituted in its expression. Likewise, he explains, “life is expressed only through activity... [it] is nothing more than the expression of life, the ‘revelation of the concealed,’ the ‘making actual what was potential.’” Therefore, it “is not felt without other people,” without “brotherhood and connection” such that the “soul lives only insofar as it is gathered together [with others], in a community.” In this respect, “communal life is the glory of the individual”⁶³ — it is the necessary condition for the expression of his being and, to that extent, constitutes means of his liberty.

Still, it is precisely that: a means. The community in and by which man lives does not exist for its own sake. “Like the air which men breath” it may be, but they do not do so for the sake of

common is that all function as masters. One master replaces another, but the slave remains in his position (Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 2, 246).”

⁶⁰ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 3, 209. Cf. *Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat* 56b — Heyn appeals to teaching of R. Judah, who said in Samuel’s name that “when Solomon married Pharaoh’s daughter, Gabriel descended and planted a reed in the sea, and it gathered a bank around it, on which the great city of Rome was built.” Based on Heyn’s reading of Rome, we might say that the doctrine of sacrificing the one for the sake of the many began its development. In the same way, but in the opposite direction, Kropotkin’s father planted the seed which grew into the negation of this doctrine.

⁶¹ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 69–70.

⁶² See *Hakham Tsvi*, Responsum 18. Cf. *Shomer Emunim*, ch. 2.

⁶³ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 86–87.

the air. On the contrary, “once breathing stops, it is all the same” whether there is air or not; in the same way, the “whole world was created for no other reason than to serve the needs of the individual.”⁶⁴ Heyn arrives at this conclusion by radicalizing the notion that “whoever destroys a single life is as if he destroyed an entire world.”⁶⁵ As he understands it, this teaching is based on a commitment to the “negation of servitude.” Neither slave nor master, every man, he says: “is the sole master of himself. Therefore, there are no two lives which belong to one of them. Each one is unique and it is therefore everything... there is only the individual.” However sacred the community, he continues, it derives its value from the individual; therefore, it “has no claim over the sovereign authority of the individual.”⁶⁶

If so, then while it may be that the life and being of the individual — and to that extent, his liberty — is realized only in community, the latter is not entitled to maintain itself by compelling the former. Rather, the individual must be free to actualize the potentiality of his being in a thoroughly unfettered manner. “Independence and selfhood,” says Heyn, “are the inner being of freedom, its depth and innermost chamber.” It is achieved through “the absolute negation of slavery, liberation from the foreign yoke, from dominion of another, from any sort of foreignness and otherness.” In speaking of foreignness and otherness, he does not intend national or ethnic others; rather, he intends everything that that “blemishes,” “harms,” or “diminishes” one’s “inner freedom and independence.” Thus, he writes:

⁶⁴ Ibid. 86.

⁶⁵ *Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin* 37a. As I indicated earlier, Heyn adopts the universalist — and, according to scholarly consensus, the correct — reading of this maxim. Standard editions of the Babylonian Talmud, however, follow the text of *Avot de-Rabi Natan*, which reads “a single life Jewish life.” It is, however, unclear whether Heyn has universalized a maxim which he understands, in the source text, to be ethnocentric in character or whether he appeals to older (and more universal) versions of the text that appear in quotation in many theological and legal texts (e.g. Maimonides’ *Mishne Torah*; see *Hilkhot Sanhedrin ve-ha-Onashim ha-Mesurim la-Heml* 12:3, which reads “a single soul” and *not* “a single Jewish soul.”

⁶⁶ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 42–43.

When inner, spiritual, freedom is cuffed... the lighter, the more kind, soft, and pleasant the authority resting upon you, the more it shackles your liberty, your sole lordship over yourself, the more it entangles you in its pleasant visitations, the more it entraps you. It pounces on you and penetrates your innermost being, your hidden depths. Silk threads more tightly confine the body than Egyptian rope and stalks of linen. The heart is more tightly squeezed by clouds than by iron traps and walls of bronze.⁶⁷

Any external compulsion, hard or soft (especially soft), any imposition from without constitutes a violation, for Heyn, of the absolute uniqueness and alterity of the self which must be released from every shackle if it is to express or manifest itself thoroughly.

Thus, commenting on Jeremiah 31:33 — which reads “no longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, to say know the Lord, for they will all know me” — does he remark that any form of social hierarchy violates the liberating moral doctrine of Israel. It is not, he says:

Just that one man will no longer enjoy a material advantage over another, that advantage which is essentially the result of violence. Even the *spiritual* advantage of one man over another will be negated... Every difference, every human inequality be it spiritual or material, necessarily divides men into classes. But the Jewish ideal is absolute equality — not just equality before the law, but moral, intellectual, and spiritual equality, an absolute equalization of value... Man is not one [among many], but unique. Everything depends on this. Each individual is the absolute and sole master of his ‘I.’ No ‘I’ bends to the authority of another ‘I’... every individual is his own master.⁶⁸

What is striking about this passage is that Heyn is utterly insensitive to the historical register of the verse. Jeremiah was clearly speaking of the messianic era; for Heyn, however, that each man *will become* his own master becomes a demand that each man must *now be* his own master and that none shall have his will

⁶⁷ Heyn, *Be-Malkbut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 3, 76–77.

⁶⁸ Heyn, *Be-Malkbut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 38–39.

bent before that of another.⁶⁹ Thus does he explain elsewhere that this constitutes the basic message of the Exodus from Egypt. Judaism, he says, “is fundamentally hostile to all the ropes and chains of the state. The Holy One, Blessed be He said to Israel: My children, this is what I thought [when I liberation you from Egypt], that you should be free from government; like a beast free in the wilderness without any fear of men, so I thought that you should be beset with no fear of governments.”⁷⁰ This is the very seed of that vine which God “transplanted from Egypt” and which “took deep root (Psalms 80:9–10)” in the heart of the Jewish life in *this* world.⁷¹

Thus, the relation between the sanctity and uniqueness of human life on the one hand and, on the other, the imperative of unmitigated freedom comes to constitute the very core of Jewish religion. The force of this conclusion, Heyn emphasizes by proposing a novel and extremely radical re-interpretation of the principles of *behirah hofshit*, freedom of choice. To explicate it, it is first necessary to turn to a talmudic homily involving the Sinatic revelation. Commenting on the verse “and they stood at the foot of (lit. “under”) the mount (Exodus 19:17).” it is taught that R. Avdimi b. Hama b. Hasa said “this teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, overturned the mountain upon them like an [inverted] basin, and said to them, ‘If you accept the Torah, it is well; if

⁶⁹ This is not to say that even from this standpoint there are no moral boundaries. Elsewhere, Heyn denounces “the pathological arrogance of a certain people] which extends even to the point of denying the very existence of others. It is not just that she is the wheat and others are the chaff... [according to her] even ascribing to others the value of chaff is too much, while for her even the status of first fruits is too meagre. She is everything and the rest are nothing. Evidently, a group like this recognizes not the naked being of another, of anything external to itself. This opened eye sees not the other; it really doesn’t see anything other than itself as more than an irritating buzz, as worthless chaos... This is the central point whence extend lines of blood and iron, the aggressive tendency to oppress, to seize, to dispossess whatever impedes the expression and emphasis of its being (Vol .3, 239–40).”

⁷⁰ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 87.

⁷¹ Interestingly, the verse cited by Heyn concludes “You drove out the nations [of Cana’an], and planted it.” Heyn excludes this phrase and fails to address the exclusion.

not, there shall be your grave,” to which R. Aha b. Jacob replied that “this furnishes a substantial caveat (*mude’a raba*) to [the obligation to fulfill] the Torah.”⁷²

Without digressing into the long history of interpretation bearing on this strange passage, let us simply comment as follows. R. Avdimi suggests that the law was accepted under compulsion, while R. Aha b. Jacob points out that were this the case, the legitimacy of the law would, in some respect, be undermined. Heyn elaborates on R. Aha b. Jacob’s challenge.⁷³ For Judaism, he maintains:

Freedom of choice is a necessary and not merely a contingent existence... Judaism is literally inconceivable without the principle of free choice. This principle is nothing other than the immediate consequence of absolute justice. This attribute constitutes the whole hidden depth of Judaism... [Its meaning is] the sole and unlimited right of every essence with no stipulation, no limit, no boundary imposed on it from without. For this right is not a gift or kindness from without, it comes only from itself. Since it does not come from any other domain, no other authority has attachment to or control over it. This... attribute of freedom, of absolute justice, is an outgrowth of the right of existence... [and] its singularity. The negation of all lordship, mastery, authority, and claims over the I — in this way, nothing external to it has the ability to rule over the freedom of this I if its right to itself is exclusive. The negation of external authority is a consequence of the right of being itself which cannot be challenged.

The foundation of free choice according to Judaism is the absolute justice which is the sole right that man has regarding his essential being... The negation of external authority over your I leads to the negation of lordship, mastery, compulsion, and blemish on your exclusive right. It is the foundation of freedom of

⁷² *Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 88a.*

⁷³ Actually, Heyn responds to this difficulty from two angles. In addition to the tack discussed above, he suggests that the image of the hovering mountain does not so much describe a case external compulsion as much as it conveys an inward sense of responsibility to ancestral tradition (This is based on the claim that the forefathers observed the Torah before it was bestowed at Sinai. See *Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 28b*). Here, we observe another example of the sort of beholdenness which the individual bears toward the community; it has its own force, but operates from within as a personal sense of loyalty.

choice according to Judaism. Consequently, the measure of freedom in Judaism and in the Torah of Israel is truly unlimited... No authority external to the individual can compel him and rule over his freedom. Only he himself is able to compel himself. This ability comes only from the unlimited freedom of man. Likewise, the individual is unable to compel anyone other than himself. He can compel only himself. The right to compel an essence arises from the unlimited freedom which man has with respect to himself; he is allowed to do with himself what he wishes. If you erase this point, the point of being, its holiness and its right, from our faith... then you render its substance a forgery... our special substance is the idea of 'beating' swords [into plowshares], the pulverization of the gods of power, compulsion, and the altars of man.⁷⁴

Here, I have quoted at length because the passage in question is incredibly powerful. Whereas earlier interpreters of the Jewish tradition — Maimonides, for example — understood the concept of *behira hofshit* to be the foundation of Jewish religion in the sense that it implies the negation of metaphysical determinism and makes possible (or at least sensible) the notions of commandment, and justifies the doctrine of reward and punishment, Heyn gives it an altogether new sense.⁷⁵ While he concurs that Judaism

⁷⁴ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 3, 261–72.

⁷⁵ See, for example, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Repentance 5: 3–4. Here, Maimonides identifies freedom as a necessary presupposition of the idea of commandment. See also *Guide for the Perplexed*, book three, chapter seventeen, where the doctrine of reward and punishment is included as well. The striking departure from traditional theological postures here can be discerned by reviewing what came before. As for the general crux of the problem, see Samuelson, N. "The Problem of Future Contingents in Medieval Jewish Philosophy." *Studies in Medieval Culture* 6 (1976): 71–82. For a selection of particular responses on the part of some major representatives of medieval Jewish philosophy, see Altmann, A. "The Religion of the Thinkers: Free Will and Predestination in Saadia, Bahya, and Maimonides." In *Religion in a Religious Age: Proceedings of Regional Conferences Held at The University of California, Los Angeles and Brandeis University in April 1973*. Edited by Goitein, S.D. (New York: Ktav, 1974); Weiss, S. *Joseph Albo on Free Choice: Exegetical Innovation in Medieval Jewish Philosophy*. (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 2017); Ventura, M. "Belief in Providence According to Gersonides." In *Minha l'Avraham: Hommage a Abraham, recueil litteraire en l'honneur de Abraham Elmaleh*. (Jerusalem: Comite du Jubile, 1959): 12–21.

is literally inconceivable without this doctrine, he deploys the traditional terminology to make a radically untraditional claim; the principle of *behira hofshit* is uprooted from its largely metaphysical context and transplanted into the field of politics. If it once described the sort of creature that one must be if he or she is to be held responsible for his or her obedience to or neglect of the law, it now comes to describe not how things are, but how they ought to be, the sort of relation that must obtain between a person and his or her socio-political environment. Namely, that compulsion of any sort is incompatible with the absolute sanctity of human existence.

Thus, just as the sanctity of human life implies, for Heyn, an absolute refusal to distinguish between lawful and unlawful killing, reducing both to one and the same prohibition, at a deeper level he likewise refuses the distinction between just and unjust governments. Sovereignty, “dominion, considered in itself, the expression of rule over others, the authority of one man over another,” he says, “are equivalent to the sin of the fall of man.”⁷⁶ They represent a violation of the very core of the ethical and political message of Judaism, for “the kingdom of Judaism within us”⁷⁷ — sovereignty lies within or not at all.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 3, 319.

⁷⁷ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 241.

⁷⁸ Here, it is worth noting Heyn's explicit appeal to Samuel's condemnation of the people (1 Samuel, chapter eight) for having demanded a king (that is, a centralized system of governance). Some things, he writes, “were said lovingly and gracefully, supernal beauty and truth desire them. Other things, even commandments, were said in anger to begin with so that it is the will of heaven that they never come to pass. The chapter dealing with the monarchy constitutes a whole chapter in the Torah containing explicit and detailed laws and rules. Yet, the first prophet, of whom it is said that he is to be measured against Moses and Aaron together, announced aloud “you have done evil in the eyes of God in seeking a king (1 Samuel 8:6).” Thus did R. Nehorai, who is always the author of unattributed Mishnaic rulings (i.e. R. Meir) said that all the laws pertaining to kings were commandments given in anger. The sages of homiletic teachings further elaborated as to the suffering, as it were, of the God of freedom and the destruction of slavery, where the chapter concerning kings is concerned. I said that you should be free of kings in the city and likewise in the wilderness, yet you seek a king?! (Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 3, 200–01). Cf. “You have done evil in the eyes of God in seeking

IV. A revolution of the heart: Heyn's approach to radical change

We have observed that Heyn's belief as to the absolute sanctity of human life leads him to reject violence in all its forms, and that this rejection carries with it a refusal to admit the legitimacy of: (a) distinctions between the one and the many, (b) the sacrifice of the one for the many together, (c) the justification of means by ends, and (d) relations of mastery which give rise to all three. This leads us, in turn, to the following question: by what means is this

a king' — the whole chapter on the laws of kings is called a command issued in fury. Thus do we find in the *aggadic* teachings that 'I said that you should be free of dominion like a wild ox in the wilderness, but you [sought out a king]' (ibid. 319)." See also Abarbanel, introduction to 1 Samuel, chapter 8.

I have previously written on the subject of Abarbanel's anarchist tendencies. Others, however, read him as a republican. See, for instance, Cohen Skalli, C. "Abravanel's Commentary on the Former Prophets: Portraits, Self-Portraits, and Models of Leadership." *Jewish History*. Vol. 23, no. 3 (2009): 255–280; Baer, Y. *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*. Vol. 1. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1966): 256–57; Melamed, A. "Isaac Abravanel and Aristotle's Politics: A Drama of Errors." *Jewish Political Studies Review*. Vol. 5, no. 3–4 (1993): 55–75; Mittleman, A. "'Mishpat ha-Melukha' and the Jewish Political Tradition in the Thought of R. Shimon Federbush." *Jewish Political Studies Review*. Vol. 10, no. 3–4 (1998): 67–86; Korn, M. "Court Tales, Kingship and Commentary: Joseph and Daniel in the Eyes of Isaac Abarbanel." MA Thesis. Baltimore Hebrew University, 2003; Novak, D. "Kingship and Secularity." In *The Jewish Social Contract*. (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 2005): 124–156; Rader-Marcus, J. and Saperstein, M. "Don Isaac Abravanel on Monarchy and Republics 1483–1508." In *The Jews in Christian Europe: A Source Book*. (Pittsburgh: U. of Pittsburgh Press, 2015). Cf. alternate readings which regard Abarbanel as an advocate of the aristocracy:

Strauss L. "On Abravanel's Philosophical Tendency and Political Teaching." In *Philosophie und Gesetz: Frühe Schriften*, edited by Meier H., 195–231. (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1997); Baer, Y. "Don Isaac Abravanel and His Relationship to Problems of History and State." *Tarbiz* 8 (1937): 241–259; Borowitz, E.B. "Judaism and the Secular State." *The Journal of Religion*. Vol. 48 no. 1 (1968): 22–34; Ravitzky, A. "Kings and Laws in Late Medieval Jewish Thought: Nissim Gerona vs. Isaac Abravanel." In *Scholars and Scholarship: The Interaction Between Judaism and Other Cultures*, edited by Landman, L., 67–90. New York: Yeshiva U. Press, 1990; Melamed, A. *Philosopher-King in Medieval and Renaissance Jewish Political Thought*. (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003).

vision to be realized? If indeed the rule of one man over another is, together with all the violence that entails, to be regarded as an affront to the divine image of man, it would seem that revolution is called for. Yet, revolution in its conventional form, as type of military uprising, evidently runs counter to Heyn's moral philosophy. What then is to be done? Heyn invites revolution as a necessary response to violence and injustice but holds, like Tolstoy,⁷⁹ that it must be conducted in a manner consistent with its goals. A legitimate Jewish revolution must be carried out in a manner consistent with the nonviolent essence of Judaism.

In the first place, Heyn believes that the ability and impetus to bring about radical change depends on existential freedom; one must be in touch with oneself. This is accomplished above all by cultivating a youthful state of mind, a sort of innocence. Because "hands have not yet touched his mind or his heart," because "his inner eye has not yet been erased or crushed by constant oppression and by serving others," because "his soul has not yet been seduced" by "society and its false doctrines," it is "only the child [who] sees with his own eyes, hears with his own ears, thinks his own thoughts." Thus are youth — and, indeed, the young at heart who are also fit to "break every barrier, breach every veil of concealment, every covering and hard shell that has clung to his soul from without"⁸⁰ — "able to question and be astonished

⁷⁹ Medzhibovskaya, I. Tolstoy's Response to Terror and Revolutionary Violence. *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 9, no. 3 (2008): 505–531; see also Brock, P. "Russian Sectarian Pacifism: The Tolstoyans." In *Pacifism in Europe to 1914*, 442–70. (Princeton University Press, 1972); Stanoyevich, M.S. "Tolstoy's Theory of Social Reform. I." *American Journal of Sociology* 31, no. 5 (1926): 577–600.

⁸⁰ Here, Heyn adopts the idiom of Lurianic kabbalah. This tradition explained the origin of evil by appeal to a primordial crisis known as the "shattering of vessels (*shevirat ha-kelim*).” By a combination of self-restriction (*tsimtsum*) passage by way of intermediary entities known as "vessels (*kelim*)," God's being, or light, is said ultimately to reach our world. Initially, however, the proportions were poorly calibrated: too much light, too little vessel. In consequence, the vessels "shattered." In their shattered form, they become known as "husks (*kelipot*)" that conceal "sparks (*nitsotsot*)," or traces, of divine being. This concealment of divine being accounts for the possibility of evil. The human task is, by obeying God's will, to liberate the divine sparks from their concealment

at the” proverbial “nakedness of the King,” the violence and injustice of the rule of one man over another.⁸¹ Unsullied by those heteronomous forces that impose upon it some artificial shape, or which direct its development from without, the youthful soul sees clearly.

Having achieved clarity of vision, the youthful soul is called upon to be transformed by what it sees. This process of inner transformation, is what Heyn calls a “revolution of the heart.” Such an upheaval, he says, was fomented by Abraham our forefather, who “left [it] to us as an inheritance for the generations.” It is to be carried out “not with swords and spears, with bombs and mines, nor with any secret weapon,” not by force. These, he avers, “are not our tools; they are the tools of Esau and not of Jacob.”⁸² Moreover, they are “already rusty,” for “swords have

in the husks, thus restoring God to himself. On this subject, the literature is vast. Tishby’s study, however, is an excellent example (Tishby, I. *The Doctrine of Evil in Lurianic Kabbalah*. (London: Kegan Paul, 1942). See also Jacobs, L. “The Uplifting of Sparks in Later Jewish Mysticism.” *Jewish Spirituality from the Sixteenth-Century Revival to the Present*, edited by Green, A., 99–126. (New York: Crossroad, 1987).

While the Lurianic doctrine itself is more universal in character, it was, as Scholem points out, personalized. What, he says, is novel about hasidism is not its mystical doctrine, but its mystical ethics (Scholem, G. “Hasidism: The Latest Phase.” *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 325–50. (New York: Schocken, 1995). For instance, Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of Habad hasidism, speaks of the inwardness of the heart — which is, according to his understanding, synonymous with the divine presence (*shekhina*) — as something that can accumulate “husks” that are peeled away by self-sacrifice by acts of kindness and charity, thus restoring the individual to his or her true self and, at the same time the being of God to itself (*Likutey Amarim Tanya. Iggeret ha-Kodesh*, 4). It is this personalized form to which Heyn appeals.

⁸¹ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 2, 246–47.

⁸² Building from Isaac’s “blessing” for Esau, “you shall live by your sword (Genesis 27:40),” Jewish texts from the Talmud to late hasidic writings have developed an image of Jacob’s brother as the antithesis of the Jewish ideal: a violent, coarse man unconcerned with matters of the spirit. According to rabbinic tradition, Esau is also the progenitor of Rome — and ultimately to Christendom — thus extending his personal reputation to the state apparatus as such: it is violent and oppressive, it ignores or destroys what is most holy. See Cohen, G.D. “Esau as symbol in early medieval thought.” *Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, edited

never brought salvation, nor have they altered the character of the living.” On the contrary, “the sword is a thing that naturally swings around,” cutting down the servant today and the master tomorrow such that none are safe so long as “the blood of any man is made cheap” and the world’s supply of corpses and cripples, paupers and madmen, is continually replenished.

According to Heyn, it is upon us to bring forth “new lights” rather than depending on “old vessels.”⁸³ What is this new light, and how is it to be shed? A preliminary answer can be gleaned from the following proposal. In place of the old “me or you,” Heyn suggests, we must introduce “a new and revolutionary ‘me and you.’” Appealing to the Tolstoyan faith⁸⁴ in the brotherhood of humanity as “the secret of redemption,” individual and collective alike, he maintains that “we need only to make this idea into a fashion, to hand it over to the trend-setters of the world, the designers of spirit, to make this wonder penetrate.” Like Tolstoy, Heyn appeals to the court of public opinion; it is his hopeful conviction that “the world is tired of the ‘blessing’ of the sword” and

by Altmann, A., 19–48 Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1967; Elazar, D.J. “Jacob and Esau and the Emergence of the Jewish People.” *Judaism* 43 no. 3 (1994): 294–301; Wolfson, E. *Venturing Beyond: Law and Morality in Kabbalistic Mysticism*. (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 2006): Ch. 1–2.

⁸³ Heyn, Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut. Vol. 1, 202–03. As for the distinction between lights and vessels, see note 76 above. As for the notion of a “new” light, this is an important theme in Habad hasidism especially. Broadly speaking, it relates to the manner in which divine light, or being is, in response to specific events or actions (the blowing of the shofar on Rosh ha-Shana, for instance), conveyed unto the created worlds. See, for example, Shneur Zalman of Liadi’s commentary on the verse “Forever are the eyes of the L-rd your G-d upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year (Deuteronomy 11:12)” in *Likutey Amarim Tanya. Iggeret ha-Kodesh*, 14. Heyn, of course, translates the new revelation of divine being into a new mode of social and political being among men.

⁸⁴ See Donskov, A. and Woodsworth, J. eds. *Lev Tolstoy and the Concept of Brotherhood: Proceedings of a Conference Held at the University of Ottawa, 22–24 February 1996*. (Ottawa: Legas, 1996); Berman, A. *Siblings in Tolstoy and Dostoevsky: The Path to Universal Brotherhood*. (Chicago: Northwestern U. Press, 2015).

its fruits,⁸⁵ and that awakened to the “me and you,”⁸⁶ the fact that we have “all one Father” who “created us,” we will naturally ask “why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother (Malachi 2:10)?” Building on this conviction, Heyn represents the Abrahamic revolution — indeed, the “essential being of Judaism” — as an endeavor to realize brotherhood among nations by way of a “culture of the heart and, what is more, the enheartening of the mind.” To support this, he points out that:

Abraham, our forefather... is the one who... is called “father of the multitude of nations (Genesis 48:19)” and... ‘the one who made all the inhabitants of the world into brothers.’⁸⁷ On Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, the days of days, we likewise pray “make all of them [the nations] a single bundle (*agudah ahah*).” Likewise it is written “I will pour a pure language upon the nations (Zephania 3:9)” — that is our mission and the teaching of our mission. Real Judaism announces the revolution of the heart; that is, the notion that the world is built up with kindness and not with brutality. Judaism sees the secret of redemption in absolute equality.”⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 271.

⁸⁶ It may be that Heyn has Buber’s I-Thou relation in mind. However, at no point does he refer directly to his contemporary.

⁸⁷ *Midrash Tanhuma, Lekh Lekha*.

⁸⁸ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 1, 274. The degree to which Heyn’s use of this biblical reference departs from that of his contemporaries in the orthodox rabbinical camp can be discerned by reference to the following sources. To begin with, consider *Midrash Tanhuma, parashat Nitsavim*; here, the “multitude” is interpreted as the collective body of the Jewish people alone. Cf. Mittleman, A.L. *The Politics of the Torah: The Jewish Political Tradition and the Founding of Agudat Yisrael*. (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996) 19, 77, 171; Mittleman, A.L. “Fundamentalism and Political Development: The Case of Agudat Yisrael.” In *Jewish Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective: Religion, Ideology, and the Crisis of Modernity*, edited by Silberstein, L.J. (New York: NYU Press, 1993) 231; Morgenstern, M. *From Frankfurt to Jerusalem: Isaac Breuer and the History of the Succession Dispute in Modern Jewish Orthodoxy*. (Boston: Brill, 2002) 52. In these sources, we see that this exclusivist interpretation of the reference served an ideological role for a fundamentalist political action movement. That being said, there is also a long history of more universalist deployments of the same reference; see, for instance, Idel, M. “Particularism and universalism in Kabbalah, 1480–1650.” In *Essential Papers on Jewish Culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, edited by Ruderman, D.B., 324–344. (New York: NYU Press, 1992).

For Heyn, the revolution of the heart, nt involves the Abrahamic vision of a multitude of nations united under the kingdom of God that negates all human sovereignty. This, he indicates, is the special mission of the Jewish people: spreading the new light of true religion by dint of which old hearts become youthful, “dry bones hear the word of the Lord” and live, and the redemptive flame is ignited.

Building on this idea, Heyn focuses on the figuration of Abraham as the exemplar of the divine revolutionary in order to elaborate as to the manner in which this light is to be spread. Abraham, he says, reached out to others in a “fatherly” manner. By “fatherly,” I believe that Heyn understood not patronizing or paternalistic, but intimate and loving engagement — engagement aiming less to direct than to cultivate moral insight. Abraham’s revolution, Heyn writes, was:

Not conducted with blood and fire. The revolutionaries were led neither via punishments nor signs, neither by tyrant nor prince. ‘The world is not without its king,’ he said to the children of Ham, who said to him [after the battle of Siddim in Genesis, chapter 14] “you are our king.”⁸⁹

In the first place, we see that the Abrahamic revolution entailed proclamation of the kingdom of heaven, of the sovereignty of God. However, what is, for Heyn, crucial is not only the substance of Abraham’s teaching, but the manner in which it was delivered. Thus, he goes on to explain that Abraham’s:

Method of planting [seeds of change] and its modes was not through proofs; though logical demonstrations existed, he changed neither people nor the condition of the world through them. These were just his ‘ands’ and ‘thes’ (*gamin ve-etin*) [i.e. afterthoughts]. Moreover, even these flowed from the essential hidden spring [of his teaching]; they were not strictly rational and scientific.⁹⁰ ‘It is the nature of the good to do good’ — this is the fundamental and existential character of the absolute individual, the absolutely unique.

⁸⁹ See *Bereishit Rabba* 42:5.

⁹⁰ Concerning Heyn’s implication that the force of reason can also be regarded as a form of violence, or unwarranted authority over another, it is perhaps worth referring to Feyerabend, P. *Science in a Free Society*. (New York: Verso, 1982).

There is, in that nature, the unique key to the hidden wonder of the first inclination to create the worlds and to form man. The desire to do good that is in the nature of the good is what encouraged that One who is alone to create others, that which is other than himself. The desire to do good is, in essence, a desire for others. This is what penetrates others from the very beginning. The same goes for man. The more something has the supernal attribute of uniqueness... from the absolutely unique, the more it has the attribute of being good and doing good, the more it feels a thirst for others, a capacity to 'make souls'⁹¹

Here, so far as Heyn understood them, we observe two features of Abraham's method. One, that he was not so much concerned with convincing people, with serving as a teacher and — so we have already seen — to that extent a master. Rather, he appealed to the intuition of the heart and endeavored to ignite the fellow-feeling already there by demonstrating its origin in the source of all good.⁹² Two, he did so by drawing the link

⁹¹ Here, Heyn refers to Genesis 12:5, which speaks of "the souls that they [Abraham and Sarah] made in Haran." See Rashi's commentary on this verse, where it is explained that one who teaches another is considered as if he had made them.

⁹² As Uri Gordon has correctly pointed out, Heyn's account of Abraham's *modus operandi* is distinctly reminiscent of the hasidic ethos as represented by its founder, Israel Baal Shem Tov. Take, for instance, the following teaching: "you shall love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18)" — this is a reflection of the mitzvah, "You shall love the Lord, your God." When one loves another Jew, he loves the Holy One, blessed be He. For the soul of a Jew is a "portion of God Above," and when one loves a fellow Jew, he loves his innermost essence. Thus, he loves the Holy One, blessed be He, as well (Schneerson, M.M. *HaYom Yom*, translated by Kagan, Y.M. (New York: Kehot, 2005) 78). This love, is, as reported elsewhere, to be "without any differentiation of who or what he is (Schneerson, J.I. *Likkutei Dibburim*, translated by Kaploun, U. Vol. 3. New York: Kehot, 1982) 770). As for the strategic function this approach played in efforts to transform Jewish life, see for instance Schwartz, B.L. "The Vilna Gaon and the Baal Shem Tov: Head or Heart? The Debate over Spirituality." *Judaism's Great Debates: Timeless Controversies from Abraham to Herzl*. 57–63. (Lincoln: U. of Nebraska Press, 2012). See also Gellman, U., Rosman, M., and Sagiv, G. "Beginnings." *Hasidism: A New History*, edited by Biale, D, Assaf, D. Brown, B., Gellman, U., Heilman, S., Rosman, M., Sagiv, G., Wodzinsky, M., 43–53. (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 2017).

between his uniqueness, the absolute sacredness and inviolability of his own being which, we now see is not amoral, but quite the contrary. Since the soul derives its absolute character from the absoluteness of God, it shares in the divine nature, which is the desire to create or, in other words, an inward desire for the other. Here, a sense of mutual responsibility, of care, emerges not in spite of the soul's uniqueness, as the limit thereof, but because of it — for it is the nature of the good to do good (*teva ha-tov le-heytiv*). Actualizing this feature of his own being, Abraham inspired it in others. Moreover, so Heyn continues, he was able to reach this place precisely by cultivating the sort of independence and self-sufficiency discussed earlier:

The one who needs nobody is the one who everyone needs and who refines them. The perfect giver is the one who receives nothing by dint of his nature. The true benefactor is the one who needs good from nobody else in the world. This is the principle and substance of love which is not dependent on something.⁹³ Specifically this love, where one receives nothing from the beloved, is true love. The unique one who is never negated, which is not created on condition, has no condition of cessation. In other words... he who benefits not from that which is of others enjoys the others themselves;

Again, it is clear that Heyn is universalizing the more ethnocentric doctrine of “love of a fellow Jew (*ahavat Yisrael*).” However, this is not without parallel. See, for instance, some of the the comments of M.M. Schneerson, the last Lubavitcher Rebbe, on the personality of Abraham on the holiday of Lag ba-Omer, where he speaks of love and “unity in diversity” as pertaining not only to Jews, but also to humankind as a whole (Schneerson, M.M. “Lag BaOmer, 18th Day of Iyar, 5750.” *Sichos in English*. Vol. 44. (New York: Committee for Sichos in English, 1979).

⁹³ See *Mishnah, Avot* 5:16: “any love that is dependent on something, when the thing ceases, the love also ceases. But a love that is not dependent on anything never ceases.” See Danzig, G. “Greek Philosophy and the Mishnah: On the History of Love that Does Not Depend on a Thing.” In *When West Met East. The Encounter of Greece and Rome with the Jews, Egyptians, and Others. Studies Presented to Ranon Katzoff in Honor of his 75th Birthday*, edited by D. M. Schaps, U. Yiftach, D. Dueck, 23–50. (Trieste: Edizioni Università di Trieste, 2016); Kochin, M.S. “Friendship Beyond Reason.” Presented to the Annual Meeting of the Western Political Science Association, Denver, March 27, 2003. <http://www.georgetown.edu/departments/government/gradpages/avramen/friendship%20beyond%20reason.pdf>.

he is pleased by their pleasure — or, what is more, from their essential existence.⁹⁴

Here, we see that, in Heyn's view, the link between the absolute character of God's nature and that of man insofar as it relates to the revolution of the heart has mainly to do with the attribute of unconditionality. It is not simply that God is inclined to do good because he is good; it is that, being unconditioned, both his own cause and an end unto himself, God behaves altruistically in his beneficence. He is self-sufficient; thus, the love he bestows is not "dependent on something," it is expressed without expectation or need of reciprocity. To the extent that the human soul is also absolute and sufficient unto itself, needing naught but its own freedom, it is likewise able to act altruistically. Thus, the Abrahamic revolution, so far as Heyn conceives it, entails a process of "making souls," of putting people in touch with the absoluteness and uniqueness that characterizes them as men, by virtue of which they are intrinsically good and naturally inclined toward altruistic behavior. This is the revolution of the heart Heyn envisions: a moral transformation on the part of each individual which renders superfluous the organized violence of the state.

This, so he maintains, constitutes a revolutionary program consistent with a prohibition against killing that is without conditions.⁹⁵ It is one in which ends cohere with their means and the individual is in no manner submerged in the collective or subordinated to its utility. It is a non-violent program of revolution but by no means a passive one. On the contrary, if it involves solidarity with the weak, it is by no means an "ethic of weaklings and slaves." Judaism, Heyn explains, is:

⁹⁴ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 3, 46–48. Here, one might reflect on the relation between Heyn's view on sovereign generosity as articulated here and Nietzsche's opinion on the same. See Schoeman, M. "Generosity as a central virtue in Nietzsche's ethics." *South African Journal of Philosophy* 26, no. 1 (2007): 41–5; White, R. "Nietzsche on generosity and the gift-giving virtue." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 24, no. 2 (2016): 348–36.

⁹⁵ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. 3, 201.

A moral doctrine that consists entirely in a screed against the right of force (*zekhut shel ha-koah*). It finds its consistency in a total war against force and its right. It raises the weak, the pursued, and the oppressed on a standard. Whereas they are typically last, extraneous, it ensures them a place at the top of the gate... Those who established this relationship between the weak and the strong neither fashioned an ideology of weakness, nor a cult of degradation, submission, and bodily destruction.

The opposite is true. It is because freedom is priceless (*tesula be-faz*),⁹⁶ it is because the right of the individual is absolutely holy, it is because the sole right which the individual has over himself cannot be taken away (*eyna nitenet le-hilakah*), it is because the suffering of he who lacks all of these things is immeasurable, it is because the lot of the oppressed, the persecuted, and the despised is equivalent to death... that the Torah strives against force and its right. Force and its right are what has brought great troubles into the world. It is out of an ambition is to make everyone strong, to uproot weakness, that Judaism wrestles against the strong arm — this is the sole cause for the weakness of the weak...

Here, hostility to power does not constitute an eternal foundation in itself; there is no raising of weakness and the weak to the status of a cult. The opposite is true: power is highly valued. However, because of that it is impossible not to declare a holy war against the prime cause of weakness and the weak: the force of war and aggression. Because the whole Torah is based on the principle that 'what is hateful to you, do not to another,' weakness is utterly foreign to Judaism... When we are dealing with the lot of truth, with the trampling of justice and the disgrace of fairness (*mishpat*), then there is no limit to true greatness and power, the elevated spiritual power that Judaism discloses."⁹⁷

Here, we see that if, according to Heyn, Judaism opposes force and violence categorically, expressing special care for the weak, the oppressed, and the persecuted because they suffer from it most, this is not because Judaism celebrates weakness. It is not, as Nietzsche sometimes indicated, a cult of weakness.⁹⁸ On the

⁹⁶ This is a reference to Lamentations 4:2.

⁹⁷ Heyn, *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut*. Vol. I, 46.

⁹⁸ Consider, for example, Nietzsche's remarks on Jewish ethics in the *Genealogy of Morals*. On this subject, see Yovel, Y. "Nietzsche and

contrary, it aims at empowerment through true strength, which lies in the just doctrine of “what is hateful to you, do not to another,” the meaning of which is “love thy neighbor as thyself”⁹⁹ — love him, that is, as an instance of the divine absolute and treat him accordingly. This demand is its own sort of battle cry: it calls upon the truly strong to draw on that strength and to conduct a holy war against the violence of the strong arm.

V. Conclusion

Let us now summarize this extended analysis of a fascinating and deeply underappreciated Jewish thinker. We found that Heyn distinguishes three forms of the prohibition of killing. One, the “Roman” or statist mode which, on his account entails the subordination of the particular to the universal and justifies killing on that account. Two, the individualist, which he considers upright except insofar as it is unable to account for the moral necessity of refraining from spilling blood when one’s own life is at stake. Three, the Jewish (or that of man as such), which evades this difficulty by maintaining the absolute sanctity of human life.

As I demonstrated, the idea that human life is sacred involves three intersecting convictions. One, that each instance of life is not merely one among many, but unique. Two, that instances of human life are, therefore, not numerable. Three, that in consequence none can be sacrificed for any collective good, any good of the many. In this manner, we found that human life is altogether irreducible.

the Jews.” In *Nietzsche’s On the Genealogy of Morals: Critical Essays*, edited by Acampora, C.D., 277–290. (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006); Santaniello, W. *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews: his critique of Judeo-Christianity in relation to the Nazi myth*. SUNY Press, 2012; Golomb, J. “Nietzsche on Jews and Judaism.” *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 67, no. 2 (1985): 139–161; Eisen, A.M. “Nietzsche and the Jews reconsidered.” *Jewish social studies* 48, no. 1 (1986): 1–14.

⁹⁹ See *Sifra* 2:12 and *Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat* 31a. Cf. Christoyannopoulos, A. “The Golden Rule on the Green Stick: Leo Tolstoy’s International Thought for a “Postsecular” Age.” In *Towards a Postsecular International Politics*, edited by Petito, F. and Mavelli, L., 81–102. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

We then saw that, according to Heyn, belief as to the sacredness involves three intersecting convictions. One, that each instance of life is not merely one among many, but unique. Two, that instances of human life are, therefore, not numerable. Three, that in consequence none can be sacrificed for any collective good, any good of the many. In this manner, we found that human life is altogether irreducible.

Our analysis of Heyn's position as to the moral illegitimacy of the state then arose from the problem of numerability. Appealing, in part, to the personal reflections of Peter Kropotkin, whom he held in high regard, Heyn explained that that is numerable which can become an object with respect to, can enter into the ownership of, something else. That is, those things which can be mastered by others. Insofar as humans are non-objectifiable, they also stand outside relations of mastery. The individual, so he argued, is necessarily and absolutely free. Jewish moral doctrine, he claimed, rejects inequality of any sort, including inequality of power; that is, inequality of sovereignty. Thus, Heyn finds that one of the very foundations of Judaism is the doctrine of free choice radically construed; each man constitutes his own master and coercion of any sort is prohibited. In this way, the state is precluded as a moral option.

Having accounted for Heyn's religious rejection of the state, we concluded by examining his views on revolution. So we discovered, Heyn holds that the means of revolution must be consistent with its ends. If the goal of revolution is a social condition free of violence and coercion of any kind, the same must be the case for the revolution that brings this about. Heyn calls for a revolution of the heart which involves putting others in touch with the absolute character of their being which, unconditioned, becomes the foundation for unconditioned — that is, essentially altruistic — behavior. Like Tolstoy, he believes that revolution is the product of moral transformation.

Where does this leave us? This study of Abraham Judah Heyn's thought ought to be regarded as a preliminary. There are further implications as to Heyn's understanding of the essence of Judaism. These include his analysis of punishment generally and capital punishment in particular, of economic inequality as a form

of violence (which enables him to articulate a Jewish doctrine of “from each according to his ability and to each according to his need”), of war as a moral problem, of the interpretation of Jewish law and, finally, of the Zionist movement and the State of Israel.¹⁰⁰

More generally, the work of Abraham Judah Heyn is but one example of efforts on the part of observant Jewish philosophers and theologians to achieve the sort of synthesis between political radicalism and the traditional *beyt midrash* that R. Meir achieved and the Elisha b. Avuyas of the world fail to discern. Studies of Heyn and others like him constitute a twofold intervention. On the one hand, they challenge a longstanding consensus that supposes an opposition between radical and traditional identities — especially where anarchism is concerned.¹⁰¹ Contemporary scholarship has only begun to uncover the ideological and religious fluidity that actually prevailed within Jewish communities well into the twentieth century.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ These, I have addressed in a much longer study that will appear in my (forthcoming) *No Kings but the Lord: Varieties of Religious Jewish Anarchism*. In brief, as I indicated earlier, Heyn worked for the Department of Cultural Education after the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948. While he does not directly address the apparent inconsistency of his *personal* engagement with the state apparatus and his own anarchism, he does — on several occasions in the third volume of *Be-Malkhut ha-Yahadut* — address the question more generally. That is, how his ideas might square with the existence of a Jewish state. In my view, he is ultimately unsuccessful. However, in many respects his effort parallels Buber’s (see Buber, M. *A Land of Two Peoples: Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs*, edited by Mendes-Flohr, P. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 2005) — his anarchism becomes an anarchist ethos within the framework of a moral critique of the policies and practices of the State of Israel (or a foundation for one) that falls short of rejecting its legitimacy.

¹⁰¹ Margolis, Rebecca E. “A Tempest in Three Teapots: Yom Kippur Balls in London, New York and Montreal. In *The Canadian Jewish Studies Reader*, edited by Richard Menkis and Norman Ravvin, 141–63.” (2004).

¹⁰² See my (forthcoming) “Dancing at Every Wedding: The Biography of Rabbi Yaakov Meir Zalkind, a Religious-Zionist, Pacifist, Anarcho-Communist.” See also Polland, Annie. ““May a Freethinker Help a Pious Man?”: The Shared World of the “Religious” and the “Secular” Among Eastern European Jewish Immigrants to America.” *American Jewish History* 93, no. 4 (2007): 375–407; Türk, Lilian, and Jesse Cohn. “Yiddish Radicalism, Jewish Religion: Controversies in the Fraye Arbeter Shtime.”

Highlighting this fluidity means more than simply setting the historical record straight. It also part of what it would mean to reverse the post-WWI narrowing of socio-political imagination.¹⁰³ As much as this is a matter of reviving the utopian mindset prepared to envision a qualitatively better society, it is — especially in an increasingly polarized public arena — equally a matter of challenging preconceived notions about *who* participates in the articulation of that vision.

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¹⁰³ Soldatenko, Gabriel. “Between Truth and Utopia: Philosophy in North America and the Narrowing of the Social-Political Imagination.” *Imagination: Cross-Cultural Philosophical Analyses* (2018): 203; Cooper, Julie E. “The turn to tradition in the study of Jewish politics.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 19 (2016): 67–87.

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