Introduction

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The purpose of this collection of essays is to promote a serious encounter between Jewish theology and the process thought that is based on the philosophies of Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne. Process thought has been explored and employed by theologians and philosophers of religion virtually since its inception in the 1920s, but for most of this period almost all these thinkers were Christian. In recent years, however, a number of Jewish theologians and philosophers of religion have become interested in process thought. This book constitutes the first extended discussion of the relationships, both positive and negative, that might ensue between Judaism and process thought. It functions in a number of ways:

(1) as a brief introduction to process thought;
(2) as a collection of pioneering essays on Judaism and process thought;
(3) as an appraisal by Jewish and Christian thinkers of the appropriateness of process metaphysics for their respective religious traditions; and
(4) as a catalyst for a Jewish process vision.

I. Early Jewish Responses to Process Thought

The term *process thought* refers in this volume to the metaphysical cosmology developed primarily by Alfred North Whitehead and, somewhat independently and with some significant differences, by Charles Hartshorne. It is a way of understanding reality that emphasizes the changes in the nature of the universe and that interprets such change as the natural consequence of real and essential freedom, novelty, purpose, and experience.

This volume is not intended as an extended exploration of the roots of process thought, but it is important to recognize that process

thought is a family with many members whose *paterfamilias* is historically neither Whitehead nor Hartshorne. There is an impressive and influential consortium of intellectuals who promoted ideas that Whitehead and Hartshorne share, and who deserve to be credited as well. Hegel, Bergson, Alexander, Peirce, and James, among others, developed in their own ways the ideas that change is systemic, that individuals are radically related, and that creativity is the energy of life. There are important differences between them, but their individual commitments to the image of reality as processive make them philosophical "family." The expansion, systematic development, and application of these familial ideas to questions of science and religion in the twentieth century is most clearly represented by Whitehead and Hartshorne and their now three generations of students. Hence, the term "process philosophy" has become linked, in the last several decades, primarily to these two figures.

As a school of thought, process philosophy gained prominence and a geographical home in the years between 1930 and 1955 at the University of Chicago Divinity School. People there, such as Henry Nelson Wieman, Bernard Loomer, Bernard Meland, and Charles Hartshorne, encouraged students to consider the relationship of process thought and Christian theology. The consequence has been the development of several forms of Christian process theology, now represented by such individuals as John B. Cobb, Jr., David Ray Griffin, Clark M. Williamson (all included in this volume), Delwin Brown, Catherine Keller, Jay McDaniel, Schubert M. Ogden, and Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki.

During this same period and earlier, there was some engagement with process philosophy by several Jewish thinkers. Max Kadushin, in his book *Organic Thinking: A Study in Rabbinic Thought* (1938), directly addressed the relationship of his notion of rabbinic theology as "organic or organismic" and "the most comprehensive philosophy of organism . . ., that developed by Whitehead."[1] He found important overlap between Whitehead's metaphysics and rabbinic theology—"many of his [Whitehead's] metaphysical concepts can be taken as generalizations of the characteristics of rabbinic theology"—but finally was suspicious of Whitehead's commitment to organicity because of the latter's doctrine of "eternal objects."[2] (In this volume, Peter Ochs provides a critical comparison of Kadushin's organic thought with Whitehead's.)

In addition to Kadushin's participation in the philosophical movement identified as process or organic philosophy and his criticisms of Whitehead's thought, it is important to note in this intro-

duction the fact that Kadushin did not consider Whitehead's thought to be distinctly Christian. He discussed the metaphysical importance of Whitehead's ideas for religion in general and tested their adequacy against his own interpretation of rabbinic thought. But he did not see any necessary or intimate connection between process philosophy and Christianity.

The historical context, as well, freed Kadushin from making an association between process philosophy and Christianity. When Kadushin wrote, process philosophies were in their vigorous years of development and occupied centerstage in significant portions of the philosophical world. Whitehead's thought was part of the new intellectual framework that galvanized the intellectual community. It was only later, in the late 1940s and largely by way of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, that Whitehead's thought garnered sustained influence in American Christian theology.[3] Even then, those Christian theologians who attempted to "restate the insights of the Christian faith within a philosophical framework" that was specifically Whiteheadian found themselves having to make a case for the appropriateness of process philosophy for expounding Christian faith.[4]

One measure of their success in relating the two is the assumption today by many Jewish thinkers that process philosophy is markedly Christian in orientation. For example, a recent essay on current trends in liberal Jewish thought referred to "Protestant 'process theology.' "[5] The reference here was not to a position that was distinctly Protestant, but rather to the general theological notion that there is an "intimate relationship between the human realm and the divine" such that God is somehow present in human consciousness.[6] The fact that such a broad theological concept, which the author admits is central to (Jewish) Lurianic thought, is nonetheless linked with Protestantism tells us more about the theological success of certain Protestant theologians than about the affinity between Judaism and process theology. At the outset of this volume, then, it seems important to stress that process philosophy presents a general metaphysical scheme for understanding reality as a whole. It has relevance to particular religious configurations but to no one in particular. In Whitehead's own words:

> The useful function of philosophy is to promote the most general systematization of civilized thought.[7]

It provides "generic notions" to be assayed by the actual instances that are the measure of life.

We are wiser today regarding the conditionedness of all speculative schemes. Among the cultural facts of Whitehead's lifestory are that he was white, middle-class, English, male, and the son of an Anglican priest (although in his late, metaphysical period he evidently felt the greatest affinity with Unitarianism). Certainly, any claims for the generality of his system must be weighed against these features and our methodological analyses need to include attention to the philosopher's personal history. But the more significant issue remains the actual usefulness of Whitehead's system for contemporary Jewish theologians.

Among Jewish thinkers in the 1950s who found process philosophy inviting, Milton Steinberg is notable. Above all, Steinberg was concerned that an adequate theology for American Judaism be formulated. In Arthur A. Cohen's estimation,

> No other contemporary Jewish thinker had examined with comparable care and concern the relevance of contemporary metaphysical theory to the problem of Jewish theism. He alone among his contemporaries sustained a concern for the relevance of reasoned inquiry to the task of faith.[8]

Steinberg described himself as a "traditionalist," yet joined the Reconstructionist ranks because of its commitment to "essential tradition and . . . to the demands of contemporary conditions."[9] On a number of important issues, however, Steinberg diverged from Kaplan. Unlike Kaplan, Steinberg believed that theological and philosophical issues are central to a reconstruction of Judaism, legitimate in and of themselves, and not simply derivatives of psychology and sociology. Most significantly, Steinberg differed with Kaplan on the nature of God. Opposed to supernaturalism, he nonetheless argued for the reality of God as a being and not simply as a process or force that makes for good in the world. He explained his differences from Kaplan on the nature of God as follows:

> Because Dr. Kaplan has refused any description of his God as that God is not in his implications but in Himself; because he speaks so generally of the God-idea rather than of God; because, furthermore, he shrinks God to the sum of those aspects of reality which enhance man's life, these being all of God which he regards as mattering to man, because of all this, the following has resulted:

a) The actuality of God is brought under question. It is asked: does God really exist or is He only man's notion?

b) The universe is left unexplained. To say of God that He is a power within the scheme of things leaves the scheme altogether unaccounted for.

c) A need arises for another God beyond and in addition to Dr. Kaplan's who shall account for the world in which they find themselves . . . .

d) Something alarmingly close to tribalism in religion is revived. A God possessed of metaphysical standing, a Being who is also a principle of explanation for reality, must be beyond the parochialism of time and space, of nation and creed. But a God who is all relativist, especially such a God as Kaplan's who tends to be a function of social life, an aspect of a particular civilization, is in imminent peril of breaking down into a plurality of deities, each civilization possessing and being informed by its own.[10]

In the same paper, Steinberg cited with approval Peirce, Whitehead, and Hartshorne, with particular reference to the idea of a transcendent-immanent God who is neither immutable nor omnipotent. Elsewhere, he acknowledged his debt to Hartshorne's neo-classical image of God, which he said freed him from:

> servitude to the classical metaphysicians and their God, who in His rigid eternal sameness is no God at all, certainly not the God of whom Scripture maketh proclamation nor whom the human heart requires.[11]

Regrettably, Steinberg did not live long enough to develop these ideas into a Jewish form of process naturalistic theism. Whether he would have is an inference that some reject. Arthur A. Cohen, for example, held that Steinberg was moving more and more toward religious existentialism. But it seems at least equally plausible that Steinberg's lifelong commitment to rational philosophy, modified though it was by a deepened recognition of human imperfection, would have led him to develop a Jewish process theology.

Steinberg is regarded as a transitional figure whose importance in the history of American Jewish theology lies in his recognition of the debilitating effects of Kaplan's sociological approach on religious liberalism and his subsequent call for a renewal of Jewish theology. Those who responded to his call were, on the whole, influenced not

by Whitehead and Hartshorne but by neo-orthodox and existentialist thinkers, both Jewish and Christian.[12] Beginning in 1960 and extending until very recently, forms of Judaism that emphasized naturalism and/or rationalism were eclipsed by forms that emphasized the theologically transcendent, the biblical, and, to a lesser extent, the mystical. Central to this shift has been the need to develop Holocaust theologies and to respond to related issues of identity, both of which were often worked out in terms of a "modernistic" particularism. Those like Levi Olan (included in this volume), who maintained the naturalist orientation, have been characterized as pursuing "an extreme Jewish rationalism based on science, nature, and logic."[13]

II. Modernity, Postmodernity, and Process Thought

The "theological issues of the hour" (to use Steinberg's phrase) have changed since neo-orthodoxy became influential in theological circles. Three issues in particular draw our attention. Chief among them is the environmental crisis and the theological obligation to address the relationship of religious traditions and philosophical systems to nature. It has become apparent that all sorts of dualisms, including the dualism between nature and God promoted by neo-orthodoxy, have contributed to the adversarial relationship of humanity to nature. Second, there is the cluster of issues connected with religious and cultural pluralism, including the relationship of one tradition to another, one gender to another, and one culture to another. The "other" argues for an acknowledgment of their inner lives and the reality and legitimacy of their particular perspectives (and consequently the limitations of other perspectives). Subject-object dualism again is indicted, and also absolutism, objectivism, and sexism, all of which call for theological response. How we negotiate between different perspectives and truth-claims is deeply related to how we understand God's nature and the principles of reality. Thirdly, there is the issue of spirituality, often described as the search for transcendent meaning and value distinct from the religious enterprise. That religion has become, for many, disconnected from spirituality is a profound indicator of its failure in the modern world. Liberal forms of Judaism, which have been most willing to submit to the arbitration of the modern, scientific worldview, share in this failure. As Rodger Kamenetz acknowledges in his recent book on Jewish-Buddhist dialogue, "The house of Judaism in North America has not been satisfactorily built—it does not have a spiritual dimension for many Jews."[14]

In broad terms, the issue before us is modernity itself. David Griffin's introduction to the SUNY Series in Constructive Postmodern Thought, which precedes this essay, outlines the matter. Based as it is on dualism or materialism, or a confused mixture thereof, the modern worldview has left us spiritually disenfranchised, alienated from both natural (including human) and transcendent forms of life. The structure of existence built by modernity is incongruous with a religious vision, except for perhaps a greatly attenuated vision. Living between a past tragedy of unspeakable dimensions and a possible future of universal catastrophes, contemporary Jewish thinkers must respond to the crisis of belief raised by both the Holocaust and modernity. Towards this end, Holocaust theology must be placed within a larger religious and metaphysical setting; indeed any discussion of evil requires an ecological setting, else it risks abstraction, trivialization, or glorification. But in addition to the need to address the Holocaust, contemporary Jewish thinkers face an audience of Jews who are neither fully comfortable with Judaism nor thoroughly at home in the secular world. For many, the modern scientific worldview cannot be correlated with Judaism (or any other religious tradition). A Judaism that has nonetheless attempted to comply with its materialism and dualism offers at best meager, temporary shelter. A contemporary *Guide of the Perplexed* requires first a revisioning of the whole conceptual scheme, the worldview, in which Judaism abides.

In describing the role of Jewish philosophers, Neil Gillman writes that historically their task has been

> to provide a coherent, internally consistent and sophisticated defense of Judaism in terms of the conceptual scheme and vocabulary of the particular age; in short, to make the case for Judaism, precisely at a time when such a case has to be made.[15]

As two particularly good examples of Jewish philosophers, he cites Saadya, who raised philosophical inquiry to the level of mitzvah and relied on the Islamic Kalam for his structure, and Maimonides, who used the language of medieval Aristotelianism to address those who sought to follow their intellects and yet remain Jewish.

Many of the Jewish thinkers included in this book seek to make a case for Judaism in terms of a conceptual scheme that is described as postmodern. Process philosophy is a form of postmodern thought in that it supersedes many of the philosophical assumptions of modernity, including, especially, late modernity's rejection of theism. Like deconstructive postmodernism, it rejects supernaturalism, the idea

of a totally independent, absolutely powerful God who transcends the world. But unlike the deconstructionists who proclaim the death of God and hence of all authority and truth, process thought affirms that God, the soul of the universe, is alive. And whereas deconstruction calls for a "closing of the past," postmodernist process thought uses the past in a process of reconstruction and renewal.

In brief, a process metaphysics embraces both the finite world and divinity; defends freedom, purpose, and reason as inherent in the structure of reality; insists that reality is "out there"; argues against both pure objectivity and pure subjectivity; and upholds the goals of truth, beauty, and goodness. In taking these positions, process thought rejects philosophical materialism, dualism, and sense-empiricism.

As process thinkers understand it, reality is organic and social, creative and communal—change and interrelatedness are part of its nature—and God is intimately involved in all the events of reality. God's involvement is revealed in the ongoing process itself, although God is not the process per se. God's activity is in one sense natural, like that of all other actual entities, as "there is only one genus of actual entities."[16] There is no metaphysical dualism in the process worldview. But God is not simply another finite being. God exemplifies the metaphysical principles but, at the same time, as the "chief exemplification" of these principles, qualitatively surpasses the abilities of all other beings. God is described as "perfect," both in God's "primordial aspect"—as the one who envisages all possibilities and who offers them, in graded form, to each arising occasion—and in God's "consequent nature"—as the one who experiences and responds to the creative advance as it is actualized in each moment, in each individual. (But perfection in the sense of completion and immutability in all respects is denied. If God were "perfect" in this sense, nothing that happened anywhere would mean anything to God.)

For Whitehead, genuine creativity and community require the existence of God. All individuals are understood to be radically related so that the world is alive in every individual and every individual is felt by every other individual. There are no solitary selves for whom relationships are accidental. Thus, the unceasing change that occurs affects the entirety. God is the being who infuses creativity with order. Apart from God, creativity—the principle of novelty—is simply an abstraction; God is that actuality who provides novel forms based on an appetitive valuation of the eternal possibilities, thereby rescuing the process from being a perpetual rehash of old forms. Moreover, God is the chief stimulus behind the drive for community and the virtues that make it possible.

Although God is logically required by a process metaphysics, God is not simply a logical concept. Whitehead speaks of God as companion, and Hartshorne describes God as "the Holy One, the ethical Absolute, the literally all-loving Father," assertions based not only on logic but on the "felt" experience of God.[17] Experiential knowledge, it is argued, is not limited to that which we acquire through our sensory organs. If it were, we could at most speak of God, with Kant, as a logical construct or, with many contemporary thinkers, as an important part of our cultural heritage. For process thinkers, sensory experience is very important but it is itself dependent on a primordial feeling, called a *prehension*, which is unmediated by consciousness, culture, or developed physiology. Direct access to the world is given by the very process of coming-to-be. The past is not a datum received through sensory organs, nor are causality or values smelled, tasted, touched, seen or heard. Yet memory, connection, and value are undeniably part of our experience, as even sensory empiricists admit by their daily practice, if not verbally. God, too, is part of our basic prehension of experience: God is felt as with us, within us, and also other than us, just as the world is so felt.

Process thought affirms, with Jewish tradition, that God is both present in and transcendent to the world. It is not a form of pantheism, but is, rather, "pan*en*theistic." Hartshorne has defined panentheism as the view that:

> deity is in some real aspect distinguishable from and independent of any and all relative items, and yet, taken as an actual whole, includes all relative items. . . . Panentheism agrees with traditional theism on the important point that the divine individuality, that without which God would not be God, must be logically independent, that is, must not involve any particular world.[18]

This understanding of God's relation to the world is clearly not pantheistic. God is not the world, nor is nature God. Here process thought parallels Rosenzweig's contention that God and World and Individual cannot be dissolved into one another and yet are intimately related.

> God *and* the world *and* man! This "and" was the beginning of experience and so it must recur in the ultimate aspect of truth. For there must be an "and" within truth itself, within ultimate truth that can only be *one*.[19]

A similar insight is celebrated by a number of Kabbalists, who cite Midrash (Gen. R. 68) in support of their understanding of the Godhead:

> The Holy One blessed be He is the place of the world but the world is not His place.

The distinction between pantheism and panentheism is crucial and, although the Kabbalists did not always maintain this distinction, it is vigilantly maintained by process thinkers.[20]

Although the process view is sympathetic to the naturalism of Mordecai Kaplan and others, it is nevertheless a different form of religious naturalism. (This issue is discussed more fully in my essay later in this volume.) Kaplan's naturalism makes religion compatible with the modern scientific worldview by equating God with the process of life. Process theology rejects the mechanism, determinism, and materialism of that worldview in favor of an organic worldview that allows God as a personal being to be active in the process of life, without simply being the process itself. Because God is not the process itself, this form of religious naturalism, unlike Kaplan's, can account for moral value.

III. Whitehead on Religion

Whitehead's description of religion as "what an individual does with his own solitariness"[21] is often quoted as if it were his complete definition of religion. Were this so, there would be reason to be skeptical about the benefits of a Jewish-process exchange, for Judaism is not a religion of the individual but of the individual-in-community. Later in the same book, however, Whitehead clarifies his earlier statement. Having commented that "the world is a scene of solitariness in community," Whitehead says:

> The topic of religion is individuality in community.[22]

In *Science and the Modern World* the role of religion is described more fully:

> Religion is the vision of something which stands beyond, behind, and within, the passing flux of immediate things; something which is real, and yet waiting to be realised; something which is a remote possibility, and yet the greatest of present facts; something that gives meaning to all that passes, and yet eludes

> apprehension; something whose possession is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach; something which is the ultimate ideal, and the hopeless quest.
>
> . . . The fact of the religious vision, and its history of persistent expansion, is our one ground for optimism. Apart from it, human life is a flash of occasional enjoyments lighting up a mass of pain and misery, a bagatelle of transient experience.
>
> . . . Evil is the brute motive force of fragmentary purpose, disregarding the eternal vision. Evil is overruling, retarding, hurting. The power of God is the worship He inspires. That religion is strong which in its ritual and its modes of thought evokes an apprehension of the commanding vision.[23]

In *Process and Reality*, Whitehead describes the relationship between philosophy and religion in this way:

> Philosophy . . . attains its chief importance by fusing the two, namely, religion and science, into one rational scheme of thought. Religion should connect the rational generality of philosophy with the emotions and purposes springing out of existence in a particular society, in a particular epoch, and conditioned by particular antecedents. Religion is the translation of general ideas into particular thoughts, particular emotions, and particular purposes; it is directed to the end of stretching individual interest beyond its self-defeating particularity. Philosophy finds religion, and modifies it; and conversely religion is among the data of experience which philosophy must weave into its own scheme. Religion is an ultimate craving to infuse into the insistent particularity of emotion that non-temporal generality which primarily belongs to conceptual thought alone. . . . The two sides of the organism require a reconciliation in which emotional experiences illustrate a conceptual justification, and conceptual experiences find an emotional illustration.[24]

In Whitehead's view, religion and science and philosophy form a coherent whole. Philosophy is not superior to religion or science; rather, they are mutually interdependent.

IV. A Brief Overview of the Essays

Many of the Jewish thinkers who have been directly influenced by process thought in their struggle with modernity are included in

this volume. Part I consists of essays by Jewish thinkers who have found process thought to be a useful way to explore Judaism and its theology. The issues discussed are primarily theological: God's transcendence and immanence, the problem of evil, and the idea of revelation. Among the authors in this first section there is general agreement with Levi Olan's statement:

> The metaphysics which most satisfactorily accounts for the nature of the universe . . . was formulated by Whitehead.

According to Olan, we are at an *axial point* in time, precipitated by atomic fission and requiring a "re-evaluation of our basic understanding of man's place in the universe." Neither classical supernaturalism nor the "empirical-rational epistemology" of the sciences that explained away supernaturalism is satisfactory. Rather the *neo-classical* picture of the divine as transcendent-immanent, relational, personal, mutable, and persuasive (not coercive) is both more adequate to what we now know about reality and "readily appropriated by the prophetic faith" of Judaism.

William Kaufman draws on Hartshorne's notion of God as dipolar as a way to navigate between images in Jewish literature of God as wholly transcendent and immutable, on the one hand, and images of God as wholly immanent and mutable, on the other. Likewise, it is Hartshorne's distinction between God's necessary and contingent aspects and his neo-classical notion of perfection that my essay employs in delineating a form of Judaism that is neither dualistic nor pantheistic. Sol Tanenzapf suggests that the ideas of divine dipolarity and internal relatedness to the world enable the construction of a more adequate theory of revelation and philosophy of Mitzvot than can be derived from a dualistic, substance metaphysics.

The issue of divine power is addressed in several essays. In this first section, Harold Kushner gives us a personal account of how he found philosophical support from process thought for his own moral intuitions about divine power. Later, the notion that God's power is persuasive rather than coercive is addressed in more detail by David Griffin, Norbert Samuelson, and Hans Jonas.

Lori Krafte-Jacobs offers a critique of efforts to define *an* essence of Judaism. Her argument is grounded in process metaphysics and its emphasis on freedom, change, internal relatedness, and the character of actual entities. In this light, such terms as *Judaism* and *the Jews* are shown to be ontological abstractions; their referents are, as Jewish history makes clear, complex and mutable individuals. Krafte-Jacobs

proposes speaking of continuity rather than essence, suggesting both pragmatic and metaphysical benefits.

Part II consists of a dialogue between Jewish and Christian thinkers on the appropriateness of process thought for Judaism. Three of the originating essays were written by Jewish thinkers—Peter Ochs, Hans Jonas, and Alvin Reines—and three by Christian thinkers—David Griffin, Clark Williamson, and William Beardslee.

Peter Ochs offers a "rabbinic text process theology," based on the thought of Max Kadushin, as an alternative to "Jewish natural process theology." He assumes Kadushin's critique of Whitehead and elaborates on the differences between the two. After raising a number of criticisms, he nonetheless concludes that "text process and natural metaontologies . . . represent mutually-irreducible but complementary forms of inquiry." John Cobb responds to Kadushin and Ochs with a positive appraisal of the "harmonious fit" between text process theology and his own natural process theology. When fully understood, Cobb believes, Whitehead's conception of God as an *actual entity* is quite compatible with rabbinic thought; many of the most important differences raised by Ochs are reduced to a matter of emphasis.

Further compatibility between Ochs' rabbinic text process theology and a Whiteheadian/Hartshornean approach is evidenced in William Beardslee's essay on process hermeneutics. Ochs says:

> Revelation . . . displays its meaning to a potentially indefinite series of symbolizing interpretants: in rabbinic theology, these constitute the revelation's text process.

Beardslee reaches a similar conclusion:

> Each reading of a biblical text invokes a different group of propositions . . . . We always deal with Scripture-and-interpretation.

For both thinkers, the text is foundational but its interpretation is unfixed. From Beardslee we again hear a critique of the search for *essence*, in this case the essence of the biblical message or text, for such a search denies the process of creative transformation that takes place between the reader, the text, and God's presence in our lives. With Ochs, furthermore, Beardslee believes that an encounter with the text should positively transform the reader. In his response to Beardslee's essay, Nahum Ward also affirms the criterion of transformation. The Torah, Ward asserts, "is about transformation," confronting us "with a reality that breaks into and challenges our own."

Ward connects this way of thinking about the text with classic rabbinic hermeneutics.

Four of the exchanges—between Griffin and Samuelson, Jonas and Cobb, Williamson and Laytner, and Reines and Griffin—center on the concept of God as it appears in process and Jewish theologies, with particular emphasis on the issue of God's power.

In "Process Theodicy, Christology, and the *Imitatio Dei*," Griffin details the benefits of conceiving of God's power as persuasive rather than coercive. In addition to offering a more benevolent divine image for human imitation, "persuasive omnipotence," Griffin argues, is the only possible kind of omnipotence in relation to a world in which nondivine beings inherently have some degree of freedom. Once freedom is extended to beings other than divinity, as it is in both the process and Jewish perspectives, God's activity necessarily takes the form of persuasion. Griffin understands power to be inherent in every created being, not simply a divine gift which could be revoked. When power or "creativity" is understood as ingredient in the world, evil becomes a relational event and not a source of accusation against God. Griffin develops the further implications of persuasive omnipotence in an exposition of Christology and Jewish-Christian relations, ending with the entreaty that theologians recognize:

> the degree to which people's emotions and attitudes, and therefore their behavior, are determined by their "intoxication" with their perception of the Holy.

Norbert Samuelson, through the medieval rabbinic authority Gersonides, tests Griffin's assertion that process theology is compatible with Jewish thought. He summarizes Gersonides' positions on creation out of nothing, divine omnipotence and omniscience, human freedom, and divine revelation. In general, Samuelson finds much agreement between Gersonides' positions on creation and revelation and that of process thought. On the issue of God's power, however, Samuelson points out that Gersonides affirms both coercive and persuasive power for divinity.

> Insofar as the laws of nature are an expression of divine power, it is coercive. Similarly, insofar as the moral ideals that function as the end toward which all of history moves are an expression of divine goodness, and insofar as that goodness is identical with God's power, it is persuasive.

The theological revisioning that is entailed by the process position of divine persuasive omnipotence is thus not foreshadowed in classical rabbinic philosophy. Neither, however, is coercive action seen as the only form of divine activity.

Hans Jonas offers a concept of God and a theodicy that is in concert with the process vision. The voice of Auschwitz, he asserts, calls us again to Job's question: "What is the matter" with God? If, as Jews understand things, God is "eminently the Lord of *History*" and this world is "the locus of divine creation, justice, and redemption," then Auschwitz cannot be the last word.

> [O]ne who will not thereupon just give up the concept of God altogether . . . must rethink it so that it still remains thinkable; and that means seeking a new answer to the old question of (and about) Job.

Jonas draws for us a speculative myth about how the world came to be and by what sort of creator. God is described as "suffering," "becoming," "caring," and, "the most critical point in our speculative, theological venture," as "not *all*-powerful." Instead, Jonas proposes that God willingly divested Godself of coercive omnipotence in order to create a world in which there were other beings. He argues that the very concept of omnipotence is paradoxical because it is a relational term in which all relations (such as resistence to the omnipotent one) are negated. Omnipotence is omnivorous, destroying the very beings who give its power meaning! Jonas urges us to consider the idea that God's power is not "power to interfere with the physical course of things" but instead "the mutely insistent appeal of His unfulfilled goal." In other words, God's power is persuasive power, working in the world as a divine lure.

The Christian theologian John Cobb sees much that is "virtually identical" in Jonas' thought and in process theology. There are differences, Cobb explains, but there is no great divide separating Jonas from Hartshorne and Whitehead. What Jonas offers is a form of Jewish process theology, drawing upon the Lurianic concept of *tzimtzum* (divine contraction) but modifying its sense of divine activity so that God is not responsible in full detail for the events of the world. Jonas' position that the heart of God's power lies in the "Hear, O Israel!" (the *Shema*), calling us to create a better home for God and the world, represents a process vision of theology.

Clark Williamson discusses the supersessionist ideology that has characterized much of the Christian discussion of covenant and elec-

tion. He is deeply critical of this position and argues that the process theory of internal and external relations and the mutability of God can "intelligibly articulate" an alternative and "more appropriately Christian position" in which the Christian covenantal relation with God does not contravene the Jewish covenant but testifies to its truth. Anson Laytner affirms this approach and offers additional ways in which process thought can engender "interfaith reconciliation." In particular, the idea that reality is processive opens up a "spiritual space" in which a new and healthy relationship between Judaism and Christianity can develop.

> Christians ought to free themselves from viewing Judaism in only its Old Testament or even New Testament Pharisaic modes, and Jews need to stop seeing Christianity as a Jewish heresy and as an oppressor.

Laytner maintains that when the many theological commonalities of the two faiths are coupled with the insights of process thought, there is firm ground for understanding.

The final set of essays also centers on God and the proper conception of divinity, but the theological discussion gains wider purview as a discussion of the differences between modern and postmodern worldviews. Alvin Reines, well known for his liberal notion of Judaism as polydoxy,[25] presents a "theology of pure process," called *hylotheism*, which takes as its starting point the Enlightenment inheritance. In particular, he emphasizes freedom of thought, radical individuality, religious tolerance, and the epistemological view that truth about the extramental world is to be based entirely on sense data. On these bases, he argues for a concept of God as "the enduring possiblity of being." Such a God is empty of actuality and thus dependent upon the world for instantiation. The actual, the world, is, however, dependent upon the possible, God. But this necessary relationship between God and the world lacks intimacy because actuality involves finitude and is thus logically separated from that which endures. One consequence of this situation is that human knowledge of the divine is "muted": The only certain knowledge that we can have about God's will is that God wills to exist, and hence the world exists.

> [A] universe that has undergone value-death is equal in divine worth to a universe that is rich in value for human beings. The universe does not exist to fulfill some ideal and esteemed purpose

> of its own. It possesses no ultimate and intrinsic value. Its sole function is to be an instrument of the godhead's existence.

Reines criticizes other forms of process philosophy for their inconsistent affirmation of change. Hylotheism, he asserts, is the only form of process theology that affirms the unadulturated mutability of God because it affirms God-as-possibility and not as limited actuality.

In response, David Griffin describes Reines' worldview as "substantively indistinguishable from scientistic secularism." Reines, says Griffin:

> continues to use the word "God,". . .but the meaning of the word has virtually nothing in common with widely accepted meanings.

Griffin offers a response to hylotheism and the "modern liberalism" on which it is based. He argues against the "sensationist epistemology" and "individualistic ontology" that Reines embraces and for the Whiteheadian epistemology of "prehensive" or nonsensory knowing and ontology of relationality. Griffin proposes that just as supernaturalism needed to be rejected, a point on which both he and Reines agree, so too must modernism and its attendant atheism (or "scientistic secularism") be rejected. Griffin concludes his essay, and this book, in support of the late Rabbi Levi Olan's witness that God who is Creator is also "Liberator from the modern to the postmodern world."

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Like all metaphysical systems, process philosophy is "the tentative effort to seek coherence and consistency, the perspectival effort to seek relevant generality."[26] It is not a final model for theology or metaphysics; like all else it is limited, partial, and imperfect. Nonetheless, such understanding as can be gained from the process approach awaits us.

It is important to note that process thought is only one of several resources upon which today's Jewish thinkers can draw in seeking to coordinate the truths of Jewish tradition with contemporary insights. Some of what process theologies point to can be found in the Kabbalistic tradition, some in parts of Martin Buber's, Franz Rosenzweig's, and Abraham Heschel's works (for example), some in the renewal movements in contemporary Jewish circles. Some of it can also be found in a sustained dialogue with Eastern traditions, deep ecology and varieties of feminist thought. The dialogue with process philosophy

is not the only dialogue that needs to be undertaken. We must seek theological insight wherever it is available.

It is also important to note that Judaism has something to contribute to all of these dialogues. Dialogue is an opportunity for teaching as well as learning. The long intimacy with God that Jews have felt and the texts and language in which this experience has been expressed can enrich and personalize theological discussion. Judaism's commitment to the historical realm and its mending, here and now, makes theological and philosophical discussion answerable to the actual world. At various times in the past, Judaism has been a ferment in the generation of new worldviews, not simply a respondant to an existing one. Judaism has much to gain in dialogue and much to offer to other ways of understanding.

Does process thought have a role to play in a contemporary understanding and development of Judaism? Does Judaism have a role to play in an understanding and development of process thought? My answer to both questions is affirmative. But this collection of essays does not exclude the contrary postion. What is important is not that the affirmative position be taken, but that an earnest encounter between Jewish thinkers and process thought occur, that the incipient dialogue of the recent decades receive a serious hearing by those who lovingly imagine a Judaism for the twenty-first century.

Notes

1. Max Kadushin, *Organic Thinking: A Study in Rabbinic Thought* (1938; New York: Bloch Publishing Co., no date on reissue), 247–50.

2. Ibid., 248, 250.

3. In their introductory essay, "The Development of Process Theology" (in *Process Philosophy and Christian Thought*, Delwin Brown, Ralph E. James, Jr., and Gene Reeves, eds. [Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1971]), Reeves and Brown note that "Whitehead's actual influence on American theology during the thirties was very limited. In 1939, some thirty-five participants in a 'How My Mind Has Changed In This Decade' series in *The Christian Century* gave scant mention of Whitehead. . . . A constructive approach to theology through the use of Whitheadian metaphysics is nowhere evident" (25).

4. Bernard M. Loomer, "Christian Faith and Process Philosophy," *The Journal of Religion*, XXIX/3 (July, 1949), reprinted in *Process Philosophy and Christian Thought*, Delwin Brown, Ralph E. James, Jr., and Gene Reeves, eds., 70–98. This essay has been described as an "early milestone in the develop-

ment of process theology." (John B. Cobb, Jr., and David Ray Griffin, *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976], 178.)

5. Peter J. Haas, "The Making of a New American Jewish Theology," *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly*, XXXIX/3 (Fall, 1992), 10.

6. Ibid. I believe that Haas is referring to the process perspective on God's consequent nature, though he does not name it as such.

7. Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (original edition, 1929), Corrected Edition, David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne, eds. (New York: Free Press, 1978), 17.

8. Arthur A. Cohen, *The Natural and the Supernatural Jew*, second edition (New York: Behrman House, 1979), 230–31.

9. Milton Steinberg, quoted in Simon Noveck, *Milton Steinberg: Portrait of a Rabbi* (New York: KTAV Publishing House Inc., 1978), 87.

10. Milton Steinberg, "The Theological Issues of the Hour," *Proceedings of Rabbinical Assembly*, 1949: 379–80, quoted in Noveck, *Milton Steinberg*, 259–60.

11. Steinberg, *Proceedings*, 377, cited in Noveck, *Milton Steinberg*, 262. See also, Steinberg, *Anatomy of Faith*, Arthur A. Cohen, ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1960), 177–79, 179–81, 270–71.

12. There are a few Jewish thinkers of the 1960s who continued to be influenced by the process perspective. Levi Olan, included in this volume, is one. Harold Schulweis is another; he was, to our regret, not able to contribute to this collection. Roland Gittelsohn, a Reform rabbi, has been described as having "wedded his naturalism to contemporary 'Process Philosophy' (deriving from the thought of A. N. Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne)" by Steven T. Katz in his book, *Jewish Philosophers* (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1975), 254. Katz goes on to summarize Gittelsohn as follows:

> The traditional transcendent referents of Judaism, e.g., God and Torah, are re-defined in immanentist naturalistic terms which translate, for example, the term "God" from meaning "the transcendent Creator of the world" to a natural process within the universe: "God is to nature what energy is to matter. He is *within* nature. He is not supernatural."

In this brief gloss, Katz errs in two important ways. First, he does not acknowledge the important fact that the description of God given by Whitehead and Hartshorne is much more sophisticated than this. He is therefore not able to make any distinction between Kaplan's naturalism and that of process philosophy. Second, Gittelsohn does not place himself with the process school of thought, nor does he refer to Whitehead or Hartshorne

in the book cited by Katz, *Man's Best Hope* (New York: Random House, 1961). Gittelsohn specifically rejects the notion of God as a "Cosmic Person" and affirms the use of the term "personal" in reference to God only if it means that God "functions in our lives *personally*." This is clearly Kaplanian naturalism and not Whiteheadian/Hartshornean theology. Moreover, Gittelsohn describes God as one not conscious of individual actions and as fully immanent in nature, never transcendent; he interprets "God's will" to mean "the nature of the universe and myself," "God wants me to" to "refer to my inescapable responsibility to conform to the nature of the universe and myself," and "God watches over me" to refer to "the laws of nature which are changeless and dependable" (121–22). Such a theology is much removed from that of Whitehead and Hartshorne and needs to be so recognized.

13. Steven T. Katz, *Jewish Philosophers* (New York: Block Publishing Co., 1975), 254.

14. Rodger Kamenetz, *The Jew in the Lotus: A Poet's Rediscovery of Jewish Identity in Buddhist India* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994), 282.

15. Neil Gillman, "The Jewish Philosopher in Search of a Role," *Judaism* 34/4 (Fall, 1985), 477.

16. Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 28, 168.

17. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1960), 16; Charles Hartshorne, "The Formally Possible Doctrines of God," in Delwin Brown, Ralph E. James, Jr., and Gene Reeves, eds., *Process Philosophy and Christian Thought*, 213.

18. Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 89–90.

19. Quoted in Nahum N. Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought* (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), 205.

20. The failure to differentiate between pantheism and panentheism, incidentally, goes far beyond the confusion about process thought. Louis Jacobs, for example, conflates Elizabeth Barrett Browning's panentheistic exclamation with R. Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev's pantheistic song. Barrett Browning writes:

> Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God;
> But only he who sees, takes off his shoes.

R. Levi Yitzhak writes:

> Where I wander—You!
> Where I ponder—You!

Only You, You again, always You!
You! You! You!
When I am gladdened—You!
When I am saddened—You!
Only You, You again, always You!
You! You! You!
Sky is You! Earth is You!
You above! You Below!
In every trend, at every end,
Only You, You again, always You!
You! You! You!

The difference between "Earth's crammed with heaven" and "Sky is You! Earth is You!" is the difference between panentheism and pantheism; it is the difference between the-world-in-God-and-God-in-the-world, on the one hand, and the-world-is-God, on the other.

21. A.N. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making*, 16.

22. Ibid., 86.

23. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Free Press, 1967), 191–92.

24. Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 15–16.

25. See especially Alvin Reines, "Birth Dogma and Philosophic Religious Faith: A Philosophic Inquiry," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 46 (1975), 297–329, and "God and Jewish Theology," in *Contemporary Reform Jewish Thought*, ed. Bernard Martin (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968), 62–86.

26. Delwin Brown, "Thinking About the God of the Poor: Questions for Liberation Theology From Process Thought," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, LVII/ 2 (Summer 1989), 277.