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FAITH AND DOUBT

by

Rabbi Norman Lamm

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FAITH AND DOUBT

The problem to which this paper is addressed is of momentous
importance. How can we affirm our Jewish faith in a world so
beset by doubt? How, in the encounter of halakhic Judaism
with modern thought, can we preserve both our integrity and
our identity? How can we be academically and philosophically
honest and yet Jewishly firm? How can we emerge from the
dialogue between the two worlds which we inhabit with re-
newed conviction and stronger faith?

The problem itself is based on two presuppositions. First is
an assessment of the realities of our times. This is not a religious
age. Nor is it an age of willful heresy. It is an era of confu-
sion. But the confusion is not that of ignoramuses or of men
who engage in trivialities; it is that of a generation which has
suffered unprecedented agony as well as massive intellectual
displacement. For many of our contemporaries, God is ir-
relevant and secularism triumphant; there no longer are any
questions. However, for many others, the *will*-to-believe is
alive, but not the commensurate *ability*-to-believe. They are in-
telligent and concerned, but they question the validity of Juda-
ism, its meaningfulness and relevance to their own situations.

Their doubts may concern specific dogmas or principles, such
as: the existence of a personal God, revelation, the validity of
tradition, moral problems in the Bible, literary criticism, his-
torical conditioning, relativism, etc., although the first of these
is the most crucial. But their doubt is usually a more general
and fundamental one: a challenge to the very meaningfulness
of life itself. The individual questions are often only symptoms
of the terrible meaninglessness breaking into their affirmations
and cutting the ground from under them. No wonder that

anxiety, existential anxiety, is the hallmark of our times. The anxiety caused by doubt and meaninglessness is, as Tillich has called it,[1] spiritual anxiety. Medieval Jewish thinkers knew this anxiety well, which is why they declared that there is no *simchah,* no joy, that can equal that of the resolution of doubt. Life, as a continual quest for meaning, skirts on the very edges of the abyss of meaninglessness. Doubt is thus an integral part of the modern experience and, perhaps, may be said to characterize human life as such. A human being must think, and to think is to question, to probe, to criticize. Doubt reflects "the interrogatory, open-ended, aspiring character of our life."[2] We are naive if we think we can teach Judaism, especially to a young person, without encountering genuine doubt. And the doubts of our contemporaries cannot be silenced by shrill dogmatic assertions or by charming rhetoric, much less by superficial and artificial solutions which fool no one but their creators. Such problems in *emunah* exist, and we are going to have to meet them forthrightly, whether we like it or not, in our society, amongst genuinely committed and observant Jews, in our children — and in our own selves. Indeed, I am more concerned by how we approach doubt when it appears in our own midst than the doubt which confronts us when we engage in a dialogue with the uncommitted. Anyone who has taught or discussed the fundamentals of Judaism with young Orthodox Jews can testify to the ubiquity of honest doubt, and to the catastrophic consequences of cowardice in dealing with it.

My second premise is that Judaism has a message of overarching significance to address to modern man who lives not only in a "secular city" but in a "secular megalopolis." The insights of our tradition are straining for expression, waiting to be released, like the legendary picture of Messiah chained in Heaven and trying to break his shackles. Exactly what that message is and how it can be formulated in terms germane to the predicament of modern man — that I do not know. But I do know, to borrow the felicitous comment of Dr. Eliezer Berkovits (in a recent issue of *Tradition*), that Israel was not meant to be the *Neturei Karta* of the nations. If we have nothing to say to the world, we must stop talking. If we *have* some-

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thing important to say, even if we only intuit it and are unsure about how to formulate it, we must keep trying. Then, even if we do a great deal of stammering, we ultimately will articulate that which will again distinguish us as the "light to the nations."

We have, then, a vital message for modern Jews and modern man. But our audience is not hanging on our every word, waiting to be converted. It is tortured by doubt and, in this scientific age, it questions by training. We must proceed with the agonizing and honest recognition that doubt is an ineradicable feature of our culture and our times. We dare not be distracted by fear or diffidence from a radical confrontation with the skepticism that prevails even amongst committed American Jews in our days.

Two Attitudes

How has Judaism historically oriented itself towards the challenge of doubt? Obviously, doubt is not an invention of modern times. The High Priest who, according to the Talmud, became a Sadducee after eighty years must have acted on the basis of doubts. "Do not believe in yourself until the day you die," the Rabbis counseled,[3] demonstrating their awareness of the omnipresence of religious doubt.

Classically there were two approaches. First, there was *emunah temimah*, a direct, unquestioning, and unmediated faith in which doubt was consciously avoided — this was characteristic of most Jews throughout the ages. If it was philosophically unproductive, this simple faith nevertheless kept Judaism alive in the times of greatest stress. It is good to remember the testimony of the author of the *Ore ha-Chayyim* about the readiness of such Jews of simple and uncomplicated faith to suffer martyrdom for Torah while their sophisticated, philosophizing brethren, during the Spanish Expulsion, took the easy way out and accepted baptism.

Moreover, the most aggressive proponents of simple faith were not necessarily simple souls. Perhaps the most radical exponent of *emunah temimah* in fairly modern times was the Hasidic Zaddik, R. Nachman Bratzlaver; yet one need but read

his writings and the writings about him by his leading disciple and biographer to realize that he was an extraordinarily complicated man who had suffered the worst torments of doubt, who had studied Maimonides' *Guide,* and who had struggled valiantly in order to achieve the blessed *temimut* which he recommended over the theological sophistication for which he had such contempt. Simple faith is not the same as simplemindedness.

The second attitude was that of the great philosophical tradition of medieval Spanish Jewry. Highly rationalistic, it valued reason not only as a potent human instrument, but as the very sphere in which and by which man and God relate to each other. It was the saintly Bachya who reproached those who had the capacity and talent for a speculative approach to Judaism but who failed to undertake it.[4] Doubts, according to this tradition, should not be brushed aside, but met head-on with the tools of metaphysical discourse.

Which of these traditional approaches must be ours in this third quarter of the 20th century? Professor Harry A. Wolfson[5] has analyzed the relations between Scripture and philosophy — in Islam and Christianity as well as in Judaism — as conforming to one of three classes: the "Single-Faith Theory of the Authoritarian type" — such as the first tradition we mentioned as exemplified by R. Nachman of Bratzlav; the "Single-Faith Theory of the Rationalist type" — that which we attributed to Bachya; and the "Double-Faith Theory," according to which true faith is assent to Scripture whether with the aid of philosophy or without it.

It is this Double-Faith Theory which I accept in principle — but the rationalist aspect of it (though not necessarily the rationalist philosophy *per se*) which I consider most important for our times. I would never, Heaven forbid, disturb the unquestioning faith of any Jew who is comfortable in his convictions. There is no *mitzvah* to agonize over theological problems, whereas, according to many Rishonim, it *is* a *mitzvah* to believe fully and totally in God.

Nevertheless, it is self-deceiving to imagine that any significant number of Jews belong in this category. In an age of

instant world-wide communication, where every stray remark of casual *apikorsut* is trumpeted forth throughout the world as a sensational discovery of revolutionary import, and when so many people are graduates of colleges where young instructors delight in shaking them loose from any religious convictions and moral moorings — in an age of this sort, simple, whole-some, unquestioning faith has largely vanished. When faith is come by today, it must struggle relentlessly in unending tension with doubt. So many faiths, both religious and secular, have proved disappointing, that many a thoughtful man is afraid to give himself whole-heartedly to anything, lest such dedication lead to more frustration and heartache. Until two or three generations ago, for most Jews, faith might have been an *event* which, once achieved or born into, became a *state.* Now it is an elusive *goal,* and religious belief is a *process* that requires constant renewal. I do not say that this is a good thing that ought to be encouraged. But I do believe that we ought not waste our energies bemoaning the situation.

We affirm, therefore, the validity of the faith of those who are unaware of or choose to ignore the intellectual challenges of modern life. The prevalence of doubt does not invalidate the faith of those who do not experience it. But our major concern must be with those many who are aware of and who will not ignore the confusing, questioning, and challenging world. Most of us belong to that second category, whatever our personal inclinations.

Three Forms of Faith

In order for us to construct a methodology for dealing with doubt within the context of faith, it is necessary first to analyze what faith is or, more modestly, the major areas and types of faith. It should be unnecessary to state that when we establish specific categories of faith, we do not intend them as rigid compartments which are mutually exclusive. One category flows into the other, and man can live on several levels at once. Nevertheless, for analytic purposes it is advisable to subdivide the faith commitment into its components.

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Faith and Doubt

Philosophers of religion have observed that the word "faith" covers a number of types or categories of religious existence. Thus Martin Buber speaks of "Two Types of Faith" — the name of one of his books. One is a state of *acknowledgement,* in which I accept — with my whole being, not only my reason — certain propositions as true. The other is a relationship of *trust* where, again not necessarily with sufficient reason, I commit my confidence in another.

For our purposes, let us sharpen that distinction. The first, that of acknowledgement, is a *cognitive* type of faith, in which I intellectually accept certain propositions as true — such as the existence and unity of God — whether or not I can offer convincing logical proof for my conviction. This is a "belief-that" type of faith; *that* God exists, *that* He is One, *that* He is incorporeal. The content of this faith is noetic, its mode is intellectual. The second type, that of *trust,* is not "belief-that" but "belief-in." Regardless of the thoughts I entertain *about* God, regardless of my theology and the dogmas I affirm, I belive *in* Him: I trust and esteem Him. This is the area not of propositions but of relationship; it is not existential in the logician's sense, but existential in the existentialist's sense.[6] Of course, as has recently been pointed out,[7] some forms of "belief-in" can be reduced to "belief-that." Belief in fairies, for instance, is just another way of affirming *that* fairies exist; no relationship of trust is implied in such belief. Nevertheless, there are some forms of "belief-in" that transcend, and are irreducible to, propositional statements of the cognitive type. Belief in a friend, for instance, is more than a statement about a friend's existence and character; it is expressive of a direct and unmediated relation of trust.

Now, this second category, that of trust and "belief-in," can be subdivided into two other classes. Trust can be expressed as an emotional investment in another; it involves warmth, affect, and affection. And trust can be expressed in action, in the willingness to pursue a certain course of conduct at the behest of the one in whom I have faith-trust, even to the point of sacrificing my life if he should demand it. The first type of faith, that of acknowledgement and "belief-that," the assent to a set

of metaphysical or axiological propositions, we shall refer to as *Cognitive Faith;* the second, the emotional form of trust or belief-in, as *Affective Faith;* and the third, or behavioral form of trust, as *Functional Faith.*[8]

The cognitive form of faith is the acceptance and pursuit of certain truths about God and His relation to the world and to man. The prophet Jeremiah sets the word *emunah* in opposition to *shekker,* falsehood;[9] its real meaning, therefore, is the affirmation of a truth. Etymologically, the word *emunah* is related to *emet,* truth.[10] From *emunah* there is derived an intermediate form, lost to us, in which *he* changes to a *tav: emenet.* The *nun* falls away, as it often does in Hebrew, yielding *emet.* (This is analogous to the derivation of the Hebrew word for "daughter" from the word for "son"; *ben, benet, bat.* Cognate languages, such as Aramaic and Arabic, retain the intermediate form.) The conceptual quality of *emunah* is evidenced by the confusion of the terms *emunah, daat,* and *mada* (the last two are forms of *yadoa,* to know) in medieval Jewish philosophy.[11] Indeed, "faith" for Saadia, Maimonides, and the other great sages of medieval Jewish philosophy, meant as it was defined by Aristotle: the final step in the act of learning or knowing. As such, faith is a general epistemological act and by no means a particularly "religious" category. There is, in this form of faith, no promise or expectation of peace and serenity and closeness of God. Cognitive faith is an epistemological phenomenon, an *emunah* or belief-that certain information is true.

Affective faith is personal and emotional, bespeaking a sense of trust, reliance, dependence, and hope. While logically it may presuppose assent to certain propositions, it is, by itself, an existential phenomenon. The Hebrew word *bitachon* may best describe affective faith: the desire for, reliance on, and support in the *mivtach,*[12] the fortress of strength and succor that God is and provides for man. It involves a quest for peace, for tranquility and, above all, for meaning. It is interesting that in the end of the *Shaar ha-Bitachon* of Bachya's *Chovot ha-Levavot,* where he discusses what we have called affective faith, he lists ten synonyms for *bitachon* — and *emunah* is *not* one of them!

The third is functional faith.[13] It is a faith which expresses

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itself in doing, in behavior. This too is a matter of trust, in the sense of trust-worthiness. I trust God to the extent that I will live by His *mitzvot* and, if need be, die for them. God is *faithful* in that He is concerned with me and values my obedience. This form of *emunah* is related to *ne'emanut*, trustworthiness. God is deserving of my confidence on which I base my life and for which I undertake to bear the yoke of His commandments. Thus, *va-yehi yadav emunah*[14] means that the hands of Moses were firm, trustworthy, they did not fail or betray the trust placed in them by the Israelites. So, too, *emunah* in God means that we function according to the divine will, i.e. halakhically, and trust God's commands and providence.

(Interestingly, while other religions are much concerned with the relation of Faith and Works, Judaism considers only the question of *Study* and Works. *Emunah* and *maaseh* are not conceived of in over-against terms, requiring an analysis of their relationship and perhaps a preference for one over the other. Faith and works — *emunah* and *maaseh* — are indissolubly intertwined: right conduct, the life of Halakhah, is a functional manifestation of *emunah*, and reciprocally, inspires the trust which informs it. It is study — *talmud torah* in its broadest sense, which includes metaphysics and theology[15] — which can be analyzed in relation to *maaseh*, as it was in the famous debate in Lydda in the days of R. Akiva and R. Tarphon: "Is study greater or is practice greater?"[16] Study and works can be counterposed, for both are parallel forms of faith — respectively, the cognitive and the functional.)

There are, then, three types of faith or, better, three manifestations of faith, for faith is something which must grasp the *entire* being and cannot be absolutely dissected.

What, now, is doubt that we can discuss it in the context of, rather than as the antithesis of, faith? Doubt is not denial, any more than assent is faith. *Safek*, doubt, must not be equated with *kefirah*, for the latter, denial, is itself a conviction. Doubt is, however, the openness to the possibility of denial; it is a state of suspension between *emunah* and *kefirah*.

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Three Types of Doubht

Religious doubts may be classified into three categories: *spurious, methodological,* and *substantive.*

A doubt is spurious if it does not issue from a question that expresses an authentic concern for the truth. A genuine doubt must be a question that arises from a quest, not a specious excuse that spares the doubter the need to commit himself. It must be critical not only of the object of its concerns but of itself as well, lest it be no more than an irresponsible evasion of the need to take a stand. We shall not here bother with what has been called "dogmatic skepticism" — the sophistic contention that there is no meaning to "truth" and "falsity" because all judgments are a matter of mere opinion.[17] The real skeptic is, of course, an entirely different sort of person. The Greek *skeptomai* meant to watch and search closely; the *skeptikos,* therefore, is a particularly careful investigator, not one who rejects ideas and proofs on principle. The object of his search is truth, not doubt.[18] The spurious doubter, however, seeks not to discover truth but to avoid both it and the passion to which it obligates him. His independence of thought is a fraud, and his emancipation a sham. "O Liberty," writes Ogden Nash at the end of a poem recently published, "how many liberties are taken in thy name!"

The second type of doubt is the methodological self-restriction of the believer in the process of strengthening his faith so that it may withstand criticism. He isolates the doubt and examines it, as a surgeon would a diseased organ, without affecting the rest of the body of his faith. It may be transformed into substantive doubt, but by itself it is the necessary means for achieving greater and more authentic religious knowledge. Of course, it may also revert to spurious doubt, to a completely unconcerned detachment, which in matters of religion is no more than posturing. It "implies an a priori rejection of the religious demand to be ultimately concerned. It denies the object which it is supposed to approach 'objectively.' "[19] Unconcerned detachment is the pseudo-question of the professor of comparative religion; the concerned questioning of the metho-

dological doubter is the mark of the authentically religious man who wishes to retain his full critical powers.

Is there any sanction for such methodological doubting in Judaism? Jewish philosophers have discussed many individual doubts — the whole range of challenges to Judaism in the world in which they lived. The very need to formulate responses implied the existence of questions, no matter what their intrinsic worth. But the first, and perhaps only, Jewish thinker who discussed doubt as such was R. Saadia Gaon in the introduction to his *Emunot ve'Deot*. In the phenomenology of the Gaon, doubt is not considered the key to all knowledge as it was later by Descartes. But the Cartesian formulation, *de omnibus dubitendum*, is only a more radical statement of the same methodological doubting. For Saadia, doubt is the subjective correlative of objective error, even as faith is the subjective correlative of objective, scientific fact. A doubt which remains imbedded in the mind permanently is damaging. *Safek,* for Saadia Gaon, is essentially a lack of knowledge, the result of ignorance. It has no intrinsic value.

Nevertheless, Saadia does have something good to say about doubt. If it is devoid of inherent worth, at least it possesses value as a means of acquiring truth. All of learning is the successive removal of doubts. Certainty can be attained, but only by means of doubts which are conquered, and doubt therefore has instrumental significance. The *safek* is not an intrinsic good, but once it is there it can be used. In other words, Saadia approves of methodological doubt, if only as a necessary evil.[20]

Substantive doubt is more than a technique; it is a condition of life. In methodological doubt, I possess and direct the question; in substantive doubt, the question possesses and directs me. In the former I place the doubt in "brackets," and work on it dispassionately, while my faith itself remains serene and undisturbed. In the latter, doubt has broken into my life, much against my will, has created havoc with my peace of mind, and leaves me in a state of anxiety, of spiritual hysteria. Methodological doubting is doubting by the clock: at certain times I focus my attention upon questions and challenges, at other times I dismiss them from my attention; in the college class-

room or laboratory I work within my brackets, doubting and even rejecting any supernaturalistic suppositions, and when I return home or pray I am in a state of undoubting faith. The categories of faith and doubt, in this case, remain mutually exclusive even though there is a certain relationship and tension between them. Substantive doubt, however, coexists with faith in the same person and at the same time. It may sound like a denial of the first axiom of logic — that two opposites cannot be true at the same time — but phenomenologically both can be observed to occur at the same time.[21] One may debate the desirability of methodological doubting, but it is irrelevant to ponder whether we ought or ought not engage in substantive doubt; it engages us, rather than the other way around. I believe that existentialists go too far when they universalize what we have called substantive doubt and declare it a permanent feature of thinking men, and even consider it a desideratum of authentic religious existence. But I believe that it is quite obviously a widespread phenomenon of the times in which we live.

Now, in either case, in order to be religiously authentic and psychologically sound, doubt must be profoundly teleological: one doubts for the sake of truth. In methodological doubting, I propose and wield the doubt for the sake of discovering the truth; in substantive doubting, the doubt that grasps me issues from my fear for the sake of truth, my concern with meaning, my terror of axiological emptiness.

Furthermore, the state of tension between faith and substantive doubt arises from the fact that (and one may infer this from Saadia's analysis of methodological doubt) faith and doubt presuppose each other. The statement *ani maamin* ("I believe") is a pious superfluity unless there had existed at least a hypothetical skeptic who questioned or denied what I now affirm. A statement of faith is more than the assertion of a dogma or principle for the sake of structuring a theology. It is the creation for myself of a new spiritual orientation, the acknowledgement of a metaphysical entity, against the background of its possible absence. This absence is the doubt presupposed by faith. The converse is equally true. The doubt of truth is possible only in the presence of the consciousness of

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and the desire for truth. As a positive act, doubt is meaningful only when it engages a meaningful affirmation of a truth, i.e., the faith which it questions.

Expanding on Saadia

We have seen that Saadia recognizes methodological doubting within the realm of cognitive faith. Begrudging though this sanction is, Saadia's authority is still sufficient warrant for the observant Jew to work on the frontiers of knowledge, both scientific and humanistic, even though the doctrines and the inner logic of his disciplines may cause him to entertain certain religious doubts. Quite another problem is raised, however, by substantive doubt within the confines of conceptual or cognitive faith. Can we extend Saadia's reasoning to cover this as well? And can we offer any more approval to methodological doubting than Saadia, for whom doubt remains in the ignominious position of the subjective correlative of error and ignorance?

For Saadia Gaon, as well as for other Jewish medieval rationalists, faith was defined as it was by Aristotle: a purely epistemological act, the final step in the process of learning or knowing. I am subjected to one of four sources of knowledge — immediate sensory experience, a priori axioms, logically derived information, or reliable tradition — and when I accept as valid what my senses or mind behold, that is faith. The information which I thus accept may be the number of apples in a bushel or the results of a differential equation; it is not by any means limited to religious knowledge, although it includes it. The inclusion of such religious information as part of the order of facticity is in line with the rationalists' confidence that the existence of God can be proven by unaided reason. Not only did Saadia hold such propositions as the existence, unity, and justice of God to be verifiable, but he maintained that most of the Torah could have been attained by means of human intellectual effort alone, and without revelation. Therefore, faith is a universal epistemological phenomenon, and not primarily a theological one. If, then, faith is the subjective acceptance of objective data — such as apples, equations, or the divine crea-

tion of the world — then doubt represents the absence of knowledge, an impediment to knowing with certainty. It is a temporary state of ignorance that can be overcome, in favor of certainty, by study.

Today, however, we can no longer uncritically consider religious propositions as no different from either the scientific description of sense-data or logically verifiable statements. Since Kant, despite some recent heroic efforts, we do not usually accept the validity of the classical "proofs" of God's existence, or any of their several modifications. Faith, therefore, is accepted in its narrower, theological sense as religious faith. Even when faith is defined cognitively, it is not identical with Saadia's epistemological acceptance of sensory or rational information. Certainly we need not go as far as some religious thinkers — including some Orthodox Jews in Israel — in asserting that Judaism has *no* cognitive content and that its assertions about man and the world have only symbolic significance (a discussion of this theory will take us too far afield). But it will suffice to say that, in most cases, the cognition of religion differs from ordinary cognition in the nature of the material cognized. The knowledge of God is radically different from the knowledge of the chemistry of hydrocarbon compounds. The cognitive statement "And God separated the waters above the firmament from the waters below the firmament" is not of the same order as "And George distilled the rain water." The object of cognition in one case is a fragmented, objectified bit of reality, and in the other that which, as Tillich has put it, refers back to matters of ultimate concern. To the extent, then, that cognitive faith is different from other kinds of cognition; to the extent that the contents of the concepts affirmed religiously are different from the contents of other concepts; to that extent is doubt removed from the matrix of objective-truth-and-error, and to that extent is doubt more than just the subjective correlative of objective error.

Our second step in expanding Saadia's sanction of doubt within faith is to recognize that not only is the object of cognitive faith different in religious faith from that of ordinary knowledge. but the relation of the knower to the knowledge is different in

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religious cognition from that of other forms of cognition. To put it somewhat differently, we stated in a foonote above that cognitive faith expresses an I-It relation to God. Now, not only is the nature of the It different in religious faith from other forms of faith (in Saadia's sense), but the response of the I to the It is different in religion from other kinds of knowledge.

One need not accept *in toto* the existentialists' view in order to appreciate that they have made some permanent contributions which cannot be ignored. Saadia, and those who followed him, lived and thought in an intellectual milieu which identified abstract truth with reality, and his creative interpretations were achieved within this context. Today, however, existentialism has taught us to understand man by cutting below the cleavage between subject and object which has characterized Western thought and science throughout most of its history. In other words, the emphasis on man in his existential reality, and not merely as object or merely as subject, has made us aware of the enormous significance of the psychological and spiritual life of man in interraction with his surroundings, with the situation in which he finds himself.[22] Doubt, even in the context of cognitive faith, cannot be considered merely as the subjective index of ignorance, as a simple absence of correct factual information. Just as faith by no means excludes man's inner life, so the doubt that is allied to this faith engages man existentially. In a word, not only methodological but also substantive doubt is active in the area of cognitive faith. Once we grant that the It, the object of religious cognition, is essentially different from other objects of cognition, we must take the next step and recognize a difference in the I of the cognizer. Hence, we may extend the limited validity given to methodological doubt by Saadia to cover, as well, substantive doubt.

Thus, what I propose is that in the cognitive areas of faith, the *emunah* of *emet,* doubt may play a positive role — not a frozen doubt, but a liquid doubt, one which melts in the encounter with *emunah* and is absorbed by it and strengthens it in return. Cognitive faith is not an abstract, static acknowledgement of truth; it is a violent struggle in the attainment of *emet.* I begin by believing despite doubt; I end by believing all the

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more firmly because of doubt. *Emunah* is thus a dialectical process, not an established fact; an inner encounter between "yes" and "maybe," between the exclamation point and the question mark. *Emunah* and *safek* are not in essential contradiction to each other. "Faith," as Tillich put it, "is the continuous tension between itself and the doubt within itself." The emet which cognitive *emunah* affirms is not given to us for the price of mere assent; it is the prize for which we must engage in a fierce intellectual struggle. Doubt, so conceived, becomes not an impediment, but a goad to reinvestigate and deepen cognitive faith-assertions. Out of the agony of a faith which must constantly wrestle with doubt may emerge an *emunah* of far greater vision, scope, and attainment.[23]

This is, of course, a dangerous and risky kind of faith. But, as someone so rightly said, you cannot open your mind to truth without risking the entrance of falsehood; and you cannot close your mind to falsehood without risking the exclusion of truth. The only way to avoid cognitive doubt is to ignore it; worse yet, to abandon the enterprise of cognition, or *daat ha-Shem*. The path to the knowledge of God is strewn with the rocks and boulders of doubt; he who would despair of the journey because of the fear of doubt, must resign himself forever from attaining the greatest prize known to man.

Doubt and Halakhah

Thus far our analysis has drawn upon Saadia Gaon as the sole source for a positive view of the role of doubt in Judaism. Is there any earlier, Talmudic source for such an attitude?

I believe there is, and the halakhic support comes from Hillel, according to the interpretation of Rashi:

Our Rabbis taught: A story — a Gentile once came before Shammai and asked him, "How many Torahs do you have?" He answered, "Two: the Written Torah and the Oral Torah." Said he (the Gentile): "I believe you [about the validity of] the Written Torah, but I do not believe you [about the validity of] the Oral Torah. Convert me on condition that you will teach me the Written Torah." Shammai scolded him and ejected him with rebuke. He came before

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Hillel [and made the same request of him]. He converted him. The first day he taught him: A, B, C. D. The next day he reversed it (i.e., he taught him the alphabet in reverse order). Said he to Hillel, "But did you not tell me otherwise yesterday?" Answered Hillel, "Did you not rely upon me (i.e., to teach you the alphabet)? Then rely upon me as well concerning the Oral Law."[24]

Now the different responses of Hillel and Shammai are not, as the naive popular belief holds, traceable to idiosyncratic differences in temperament. There are halakhic issues over which these two giants of the Law differ. According to Rashi, Shammai's rejection of the prospective proselyte was based upon a law cited in the Baraita: "A proselyte who wishes to be converted, and accepts upon himself all the Torah except for one item, may not be accepted."[25] Why, then, did Hillel accept the Gentile? Hillel, explains Rashi, relied upon his own wisdom in eventually influencing the candidate to accept all of Torah unconditionally. But is the Gentile not, as of now, an invalid candidate because of his present reluctance to accept the Oral Law? Here Rashi makes the following significant statement:

This case is not the same as that of one who wishes to be proselytized on condition that he accept everything except one item; for here [the Gentile] did not deny [the validity of] the Oral Torah, but did not believe that it came from God, and Hillel felt sure that after he would teach him he would rely upon him.[26]

Rashi's analysis, then, is this: Shammai equates one who has not yet accepted — i.e., one who doubts — with a heretic, one who denies. Hillel, however, makes a clear distinction between them: he who denies holds a wrong conviction and places himself outside the fold, but he who doubts holds no wrong convictions. He is one who does not *yet* believe but who, exposed to the right teachers and teachings and experiences, will believe. The *kofer*, one who denies, cannot be accepted as a proselyte; indeed, a native Jew who denies certain dogmas reads himself out of the community of believers. But one who doubts not only does not exclude himself from the House of Israel, but even if he is a Gentile he may be accepted as a proselyte *de jure*, even while he entertains his doubts!

This is, I believe, sufficient halakhic warrant for the thesis that doubt — the state of questioning suspension between faith and denial — can be acknowledged as legitimate within the confines of cognitive faith.

The honest doubter must, therefore, not be looked upon as an enemy who is hostile to Torah.[27] We must neither attack him nor avoid him. Nor must we be distraught when we are ourselves confronted by intellectual religious problems. Faith, in its cognitive sense, is the tension between itself and doubt, and inspires us to greater intellection, deeper study, more exhaustive inquiry, and ultimately growth in our *emunah*. I cannot imagine how halakhic progress could ever have been achieved without the dialectic of question and answer, problem and resolution. No one, as the wise Yiddish saying current in Yeshivot goes, ever died from a קשיא. The same might be said, *mutatis mutandis,* of faith and doubt within the area of cognition.

Doubt and Functional Faith

However, this grant of legitimacy to doubt must be limited to cognitive faith, and must not affect functional faith or halakhic practice. Once we violate a halakhic norm on the basis of a cognitive doubt, we have in effect ceased to function as believers and begun to act as deniers — not even as doubters. One can suspend intellectual judgment; one cannot suspend action. This is precisely the point made by William James in his criticism of agnosticism when he formulated his idea of the "forced option." You can refuse to come to a conclusion, or insist that it is impossible to come to a conclusion, in the theoretical sphere, such as on the question of the existence or non-existence of God; but in practice you must act *as if* there is a God or *as if* there is no God. There is no middle ground; inaction is also a decision. Similarly, in terms of our own analysis, doubt can function in the noetic or cognitive sphere of *emunah,* but not in the functional realm, that of Halakhah. If, as we have been insisting, doubt can be acknowledged as part of cognitive faith and in spiritually valid tension with it, then the functional commitment must be absolute; otherwise it re-

flects the utter hypocrisy of the claim for the religious validity of cognitive *safek.*

This point, so characteristic of pragmatism, was made earlier and most convincingly by Joseph Butler, whom Cardinal Newman considered the greatest of Anglican Bishops, in attempting Christian apologetics in the face of his contemporary, early 18th Century empiricism. Religion, according to Butler, involves two aspects: discernment, or what we have called the cognitive; and commitment — what Buber calls trust and which we have subdivided into the affective and functional. In the area of discernment, "probability is the very guide of life," in the sense of weighing the evidence and assessing the probabilities of the alternatives. This discernment "determines the question": my evaluation leads me to a decision. But this decision results in a commitment which is unconditional. "In matters of practice, [it] will lay us under an absolute and formal obligation." This total commitment is, thus, based upon but goes beyond rational considerations and probabilities. Furthermore, the question of probabilities in formulating my discernment is not an arid mathematical calculation. Even if the probability is quite low it can, if the issue is momentous enough and means enough to me, lead to a commitment that is absolute and in which probability thereafter plays no role. Thus, I see a child drowning, and I discern that there is a chance of saving him. Now I may estimate my swimming ability, the child's chance of survival until I reach him, and my chance of saving him, as very low, and the risk to myself as high. Yet, the fact that I believe there is some chance of saving him and that I consider it eminently worthwhile to do so, leads me to a commitment: I jump in and swim to the child. My discernment was plagued with serious doubts and grave misgivings. My commitment, however, is not one whit less total than if I had been a champion life-saver; I will spare no effort in achieving success. This is essentially what we have been saying: it is quite understandable and legitimate to entertain doubts in the area of cognitive faith, in *emunah-emet,* and yet insulate functional faith, the commitment of *emunah-ne'emanut* or Halakhah, from any doubts whatsoever.[28] This commitment demands of me that, by my

practice, I slice through the polarity of faith and doubt and opt for one or the other. The act, then, does indeed issue from the matrix of polarities in tension, but it itself must be expressive of only one or the other; faith, if the act is a *mitzvah;* doubt, if it is an *averah.* The act does not, of course, resolve my dilemma, but it does deepen my faith by virtue of my commitment and participation in the performance of the faith-act.

Moreover, the relationship between the cognitive and the functional does not proceed only in one direction, from the cognitive to the functional, or from theory to practice. When a Christian theologian states that "It cannot be required of the man of today that he first accept theological truths. . . Wherever the church in its message makes this a primary demand, it does not take seriously the situation of man today,"[29] he is discovering a truth that Judaism proclaimed a long time ago for men of all ages: *naaseh* comes before *nishma,* Halakhah precedes and remains unconditioned by theology. Judaism has always maintained that behavior influences belief, that the cognitive may be fashioned by the functional. Thus the bold statement of the Rabbis that God cries out, "Would that they had forsaken Me but kept My Torah!"[30] "The heart," a medieval halakhic source states, "follows actions."[31] Thus, too, the wise insight of Yehudah Halevi, so characteristic of his whole *Weltanschauung*: "A man cannot attain a relationship with God except by [the observance of] the word of God."[32] It is the functional life of faith, exclusively, which leads to the state of mutuality, or what we would today call "dialogue," with God. The normative is more fundamental than the cognitive; hence cognitive doubt, legitimate as it may or may not be in its own restricted sphere, must not affect halakhic practice. On the contrary, genuine halakhic living (which includes the study of Torah) may, in a manner more existential than logical, still the cognitive unrest: "the light which [the Torah] contains will lead him back to the right path."[33] It is — to use a homely metaphor — only an immature and impetuous youngster who, upon realizing for the first time the all too-human inadequacy of his parents and questioning their love for him, will precipitously act upon the basis of his doubts and run away from

home. A more mature youngster will stay home even while mulling over his doubts — and eventually the very continuation of the experience of his family's comradeship may help him to resolve his cognitively formulated doubts.

It is here that many contemporary Jews, disillusioned with liberal and secular faith and searching for Jewish religious expression outside the framework of Halakhah, have failed. In the absence of a total commitment to Halakhah as divine law and as the binding normative expression of Judaism, doubt loses its religious value, and theological discourse becomes an amusing game played by spiritual dilletantes. The "Jewish intellectuals" who deal in the coin of existentialist piety without investing in the halakhic commitment are unwitting counterfeiters. I say this not from the point of view of a parochial institutionalism, but with profound regret. The involved writing, the plaintive gesturing, the contrived marginality, the conscious mystifying — all of these are just an elaborate "spiel" if they are never meant to result in a faith which functions in real life as Halakhah.

Halakhic commitment, then, that which we have called functional faith, must be absolute and unconditional, even while simultaneously doubt plays its role within cognitive faith. But one may rightly ask: Is there any authoritative justification for this distinction between the cognitive and functional which permits us, in our case, to allow doubt into one area while sealing the other to it?

Such warrant, I believe, may be found in the *Nefesh ha-Chayyim* of R. Hayyim of Volozhin, for whom an aspect of this problem is central to his conception of the mystery of *tzimtzum*. Briefly, R. Hayyim found himself affirming two apparently incompatible theses. On the one hand, his conception of God was one which led him to acosmism or illusionism. The *En-Sof* (God in His infinity and absoluteness) is the only reality, such that even the world does not exist for Him. The words *ein ode* (in the verse ". . . for the Lord is God in the heavens above and on the earth below, *ein ode* — there is none other" in Dt. 5:39) is taken by R. Hayyim as *mammash*, literally so: not only that there are no other gods, but that there is nothing else at all. In the face of the divine Infinity, all finitude ceases

to exist; only God is real, all else is illusion. On the other hand, R. Hayyim laid the greatest stress on Halakhah and formulated an unprecedented evaluation of the Study of Torah.[34] Now Halakhah and Torah deal with the world as it is, as a multi-faceted reality, rich in its variegated phenomena, and impose upon this world a number of distinctions, such as "sacred" and "profane," and various levels within the category of the sacred. Can one theologically affirm a God who in His ontological all-ness denies reality to the world, and at the same time acknowledge the Halakhah which presupposes a real world and its many orders of differentiation? Yes, answers R. Hayyim, we accept both. We cannot explain it by discursive reasoning, but we can affirm it mystically. Indeed, this is the secret of *tzimtzum* and the central paradox of religion: from God's point of view there is only God, and no world; from our point of view there is both God and cosmos, and Halakhah is thoroughly relevant and obligatory. In fact, the major brunt of R. Hayyim's critique of Hasidism is that the Hasidim allowed their theological theory of radical immanentism, which denies value distinctions in the presence of God, to spill over directly into practice, resulting in certain antinomian tendencies.

What we see, therefore, in bold relief, is that a major ex-positor of normative Judaism considers the area of cognitive faith — the realm of theology and theosophy — as distinct from functional faith, that of halakhic conduct and its axiologi-cal basis. By the same token, if we grant validity to doubt within the sphere of the cognitive, it is legitimate to insist upon a total halakhic commitment unaffected by doubt. I do not mean, of course, that R. Hayyim would necessarily agree to our validation of cognitive doubt. I do believe, however, that our methodology is authenticated by his approach to *his* problem.

Doubt and Affective Faith

We have determined, then, that doubt, even substantive doubt, has a place in cognitive faith, but that it must be excluded from affecting functional faith. What, however, of affective faith, the area of *bitachon?*

Now my thesis is this: just as we proposed the sealing off of functional faith, or halakhic conduct, from cognitive doubts, so must we exclude such doubts from the area of affect, insofar as it is within the power of the will to do so. The trust relationship is a delicate one, intensely personal, and it has explosive implications for the totality of the faith-situation. If my cognitive doubts are indeed authentic religious phenomena, they must be confined to intellection, and must not disturb my personal trust and love for God.

However, it is obvious that the category of emotive faith also possesses its own, inherent possibility of substantive doubt, in the sense of questioning one's trust in or reliance on God. For instance: the martyrdom of the six million Jews raises brooding questions of theodicy within us. Do they not shake our trust in God's providence or fairness or goodness or justice? The paradigm for this doubt is the question of Abraham: "Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justice?" (Gen. 18:25). It is not a matter of getting back at God because of the evil in His world by questioning His existence — although that is a psychologically understandable reaction. It is, rather, a matter of accepting His existence and His personality, but doubting His interest in us, His fairness, or, if you will, what He has informed us about His nature: that He is a *Rachum ve'Chanun* and *Tzaddik*. Hence, it would seem, *safek* can exist even within the affective, non-cognitive aspects of Faith.

However, further reflection will show that there are two kinds of affective doubt. One appears as a trauma within the trust relationship, and the other reverts to a cognitive-type doubt (it is understood that we mean by this the substantive, not the methodological, cognitive doubt).

Now these doubts of the first type are of a different order from the cognitive doubts we discussed above. A fundamental difference between the cognitive and affective-functional aspects of faith is that the former is discursive, it is *about* God, while the latter is relational. In the former I am concerned with a religious It — the concepts of God which engage my attention — whereas in the latter I relate to God as a Thou or a He.[35] The former is characteristically impersonal, objective; the

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latter — personal and unmediated. In this context, it follows that the affective-faith-doubt tension is represented by the oscillation between closeness and distance, ardor and bitterness. It is an integral part of man's relation with God, his deepest religious experience, and neither can nor should be removed. These polarities are akin to what the mystics have called *ratzo va-shov,* the alternation between intense light and the very blackest darkness of the soul. It is they — the trust-correlatives of certainty and doubt — that constitute the dynamism and the very essence of the genuinely religious man's spiritual biography.

The second kind of affective doubt, however, that which reduces to a cognitive-type doubt, merits special consideration. It is quite common, usually inspired by questions of theodicy, and can be enormously disturbing. How ought we deal with it?

It is well to consider how such cognitive-type doubts originate within the realm of affective faith. The personal trust relationship, like cognitive faith when it engages substantive doubt, is not static — but in a different way. Love and hate, warmth and coolness, praise and reproach, are the poles between which relationship moves. Now when pushed to an extreme, the personal relationship is threatened, and appears to reduce to an "It" assertion. I may be angry with a friend, even as Job was angry with God. In my haste, I may say things not *to,* but worse, *about* my friend, which I will regret — even as Job cried out, "It is all one, therefore I say that He destroys the innocent with the wicked" (Job 9:22), for which the Talmud so harshly condemned him. Thus, a trauma in the relationship has engendered a quasi-cognitive doubt which, however, can flourish only in the absence of that relationship. Such statements, as that of Job, which skirt the border of propositional, belief-that doubts, are offered only in the absence of the other, the Thou. Once this Thou appears, all my belief-that doubts are removed, not by being resolved but by being pushed into irrelevance. In the presence of the beloved and mysterious Thou, questions are no longer meaningful, because the whole category of discursive belief-that has been subsumed under and swallowed into affective belief-in. Thus, Job rants and raves, and for millenia learned

theologians and philosophers and Bible scholars try to discern the thread of his argument. But when God appears out of the whirlwind, Job is overwhelmed — not by the cogency of the divine philosophy, but simply the Presence of the Thou whom he loves and fears, by Whom he is fascinated and overawed.

The approach to these cognitive-type doubts, therefore, must be one of reversing the process that generated them, that is, by proceeding from the propositional to the emotive, from belief-that to belief-in. Such doubts, as Job learned, can be removed by Presence, by relationship, which is an affective spiritual phenomenon transcending the noetic and cognitive ground of doubt.

Interestingly, it appears to be characteristic of Judaism that, without at all deprecating intellection, it moves from belief-that to belief-in, from the propositional to the relational.[36] Thus, Buber has correctly pointed out that the doctrines which the Mishnah in Chap. X of *Sanhedrin* considers fundamental, such that if one denies them it results in his loss of *olam ha-ba* (the world-to-come), are not true dogmatic belief-that propositions.[37] They are, in effect, the underpinnings of an attitude of trust, of belief-in. The beliefs in resurrection, divine origin of Torah, and Providence are really the foundations and the characteristics of personal trust. Similarly, Bachya describes discursively the qualities of the *nivtach* (the object of faith) which make him worthy of the *bitachon* of the *boteiach* (the one who has faith).[38] In the very section where he discusses belief-in, the very essence of the trust-relationship, he utilizes the descriptive language of belief-that! For belief-that is converted to belief-in; otherwise, without this personal moment, true *bitachon* is never attained.

The Jewish Rationalists

But if the relational belief-in rather than the propositional belief-that is the essential core of Jewish faith, such that cognitive doubts in the former can be overcome by reverting to a state of relation, does this mean that the whole elaborate enterprise of Jewish medieval rationalism is an aberration, a foreign graft on the body of essential Judaism? There are those who,

like R. Samson Raphael Hirsch, have answered in the affirmative, accusing Maimonides, for instance, of submitting to alien influences and neglecting the autochthonous world-view of Judaism. Yet I find it hard to believe that such giants of the Halakhah as Saadia and Bachya and Maimonides were so assimilated that they failed to grasp the essential nature of the Torah's faith-commitment and wasted their enormous philosophical talents on an area of concern which is, at best, secondary and peripheral.

I prefer to view the matter differently. Traditional Jews have all along known intuitively that the great Jewish philosophers believed in God and in Torah and the Jewish tradition before they set out to prove their beliefs, and that their faith was unconditioned by their speculation. Equally apparent is the fact that the proofs of God's existence and unity, for instance, were quite ineffective in persuading heretics and winning them over. If believers need no proof and non-believers are not convinced by it, why then the whole complex effort? Some, perhaps, will say that it was meant for those who were weak in their faith, who were perplexed, who sought philosophic support for their doctrines. No doubt there is a good deal of truth in this answer. Yet even a cursory acquaintance with the great medieval Jewish philosophers gives us the feeling that they took their work with much more seriousness than usually befits what is but a pedagogic task. Saadia and Maimonides were not patch-work carpenters of religious philosophy. They were master builders, not emergency repair-men. And what shall one say of the saintly Bachya who considered metaphysical speculation a *mitzvah* and rebuked those who had the capacity for philosophical thinking but failed to undertake it?[39] And if philosophical speculation was only a means of "reconciliation" for troubled intellects, would Maimonides have included it as the very beginning of his immortal Code, the *Mishneh Torah,* and would he have considered it, in this same Code, as "a great matter," even greater than the study of Halakhah?[40]

The medieval Jewish rationalists were men of profound faith who understood that true faith must mean complete faith, *emunah shelemah,* a faith that will grasp and engage man in

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his totality and not only in selected aspects of his personality and his being. They knew full well that the central core of Jewish *emunah* is the relation of trust, belief-in. But they realized, probably in response to the new currents of the cultures in which they lived, that with the development of man's rational sophistication this particular area of the human personality had been neglected in Judaism.[41] They therefore saw it as their *religious duty* to include within the faith-commitment the Jew's philosophical drives and cognitive yearnings as well as his sense of trust and unmediated emotional or affective relation, his belief-that as well as his belief-in. "In fact," writes a perceptive contemporary student of the medieval philosophers, "they merely transpose the act of faith into the medium of rational thinking, and this is their true philosophical significance."[42] Somewhat earlier, the same idea was stated by the foremost student of the late Rav Kook: Maimonides held that the function of speculation and the classical proofs is "to reveal what is hidden," to make available to discursive reason what would otherwise remain equally valid and active but inaccessible to man's rational cognition.[43]

The medieval Jewish philosophers, then, undertook to explicate the relational belief-in in the idiom of propositional belief-that. But this in itself is an implicit acknowledgement that the inner core of faith is the former rather than the latter. Hence, while it is a religious virtue (*mitzvah*) to adumbrate the rational foundations of Judaism, the way to regain a faith beset by doubts, where cognitive efforts have failed, is to reverse the situation of the believer-doubter from a belief-that frame to a belief-in situation, to go from the periphery to the core, to relocate him from the outer world where the object of faith is an It to the inner sanctum of relation where the object of faith is not an object at all but the holy Thou.

Three Ways of Relocation

How can this relocation take place in order to minimize the possibilities of a personal spiritual catastrophe of doubt hardening into denial? This paper was intended as diagnosis more

than prescription, and a full discussion would take us far afield. I shall, however, sketch briefly an outline of what I believe is an advisable procedure.

The first effort must be to enter into a situation of true *tefillah,* prayer. The essence of prayer is the confrontation with God; the most fundamental *kavvanah* or intention is the consciousness of presenting oneself before God.[44] It is true that the major complaint of contemporary men is that they cannot bring themselves to pray. It is an honest objection, but is based, I believe, upon a faulty premise, namely, that the cognitive affirmation of religion must precede its affective relationship. When we are convinced, however, that confrontation precedes cognition, that the existential encounter and the sense of trust have priority over the propositional belief-that aspect of faith, then we shall realize that it is possible by an act of will to locate ourselves in a situation of prayer. I share Rav Kook's belief that man is naturally in a latent state of prayer and that he must remove his distractions in order to discover, or "reveal," his innate prayerfulness.[45] Prayer, of course, will not answer philosophical questions and resolve theoretical doubts, but it will take the sting out of them and, by the force of relationship, help transform the substantive doubts into methodological ones.

A second suggestion is: the study of Torah. Hasidism, of course, always understood the paramount importance of *devekut,* the experiential communion with God, in the study of Torah. According to its interpretation, God is especially immanent in Torah, and the study of Torah is therefore a means of achieving an encounter with the divine Presence.[46] Even according to the classical rabbinical approach, study of Torah is a form of communion, although more dogmatic than experiential. Nevertheless, even according to the most authoritative and elaborate expositor of this doctrine, R. Hayyim of Volozhin, for whom study of Torah "for its own sake" means for the purpose of understanding its contents, such study is more than an intellectual pastime, a kind of cognitive entertainment. The student, in his studying, must be conscious primarily or even solely of his intellectual tasks, but Torah as such is far more than a document of the divine legislation; it is in itself,

mystically, an aspect of God, and hence the student's cognitive activity on Torah serves the higher end of binding him to God.[47] The cognition of Torah is therefore different from speculative cognition of God; the latter is thinking *about* God, the former is, so to speak, thinking *to* God. For R. Hayyim, every religious performance — prayer, Torah, the *mitzvot* — is an effort to bring God out of His self-contained and impersonal Absoluteness into His Relatedness, by which alone man can achieve a personal relationship with Him.[48] Hence, the study of Torah too is a way of rediscovering a belief-in relation to God. Of course, whether Torah or *tefillah* is the more effective method depends entirely upon the personality of the individual in question.

Finally, it must be remembered that faith, especially in Judaism, is not entirely and exclusively an individual problem. The covenant was sealed between God and the people of Israel, not just a collection of individual Israelites. Identifying with a community of believers which has a tradition of faith and a history which includes an encounter with the Divine, is itself a way of relocating oneself in a relationship of trust in God. Thinking, at least in our society, is the solitary act of a single individual, whereas believing and trusting is re-enforced by a participating historical community.[49] One who separates himself from the community thereby surrenders this opportunity to encounter God as one of its members.[50] *Gemillut chasadim,* acts of loving-kindness, or the enhancement of social harmony and communal welfare, is therefore a means of allowing individual citizens of the community to join it in its covenantal, faithful role. Included in this category is *dibbuk talmidei chakhamim,* the attachment of oneself to the scholar-saint — the model of faith and trust — which the Talmud considers a fulfillment of the Biblical commandment to cleave to God; for by such intimate association I appropriate the *talmid chakham's* "belief-in," tempered by the assaults of doubt which it has survived and from which encounters it has emerged strengthened, and thus "cleave" to the Obejct of our shared faith. To paraphrase Simon the Just, therefore, the three things on which the world of faith rests are: study of Torah, prayer, and the identification with a believing community.

For the epistemologist and the logical empiricist (and the Jewish rationalist for religious reasons) the problem is how to reduce belief-in to belief-that. For the individual Jew struggling for faith, caught up in the existential anxiety of doubt and the meaninglessness and non-being it implies, the problem is how to elevate and retransform belief-that to belief-in. The cognitive doubts, of course, remain objectively as they were before; but we can deal with them as we should: intellectually and dispassionately, without falling into the gaping abyss over whose narrow edge we walk our winding trail.

Conclusion

We have tried, in sum, to formulate a methodology for dealing with doubt in the context of Jewish faith. We found that there is place for doubt within the confines of cognitive faith; it must not be allowed to interfere with normative halakhic practice, which is the expression of functional faith; and in affective faith we found that cognitive-type doubts can be met by creating a situation in which belief-that reverts to belief-in.

Practically, this means that we must shift the focus of our major communal concerns. Today, one half of the population of this country is 25 years or younger. Most of our youth is college educated — about 350,000 Jewish students are now in American universities — and the academic temper is disposed to irritating questions.

Jewish religious leadership must not fear honest questioning. In fact, we may consider ourselves fortunate when we find the signs of doubt. Usually we meet nothing but a spiritual vacuousness in our "Jewish intellectuals." Where we find questioning, even of a hostile variety, Judaism stands a chance. Doubt acknowledges implicitly a faith-affirmation with which it is engaged.

If we are to win the hearts and minds of educated Jews, we must turn our attention more to the campus than to the synagogue, more to the lecture than to the sermon, more to the podium than to the pulpit. And in our encounter with young

intellectuals, we must understand their questions before we offer our answers.

What also requires our urgent attention is the degree of questioning that goes on in the minds of young people in our own yeshivot and for whom no help is offered in dealing with their religious problems. We live in an open, pluralistic, secularist society. Modern Orthodoxy can no longer continue to ignore this fact of life, and act as if instruction in religious observance and education in Talmudic law will, by themselves, keep the secularist wolf from the door.[52] Teaching the intellectual content of Judaism, *hashkafah,* in a manner relevant to the concerns of modern men must assume a new role in Jewish education, and must begin *before* our young people have already given up the fight because their elders have failed to prepare them for it.

But before that, committed Jewish thinkers must face the intellectual challenges of contemporary life fearlessly, without the improvising and dissembling that have too often infected so much of modern Jewish apologetics. The intellectual problems are so many, and require such a bewildering variety of specializations, that the task cannot be undertaken by individuals working alone. We must undertake on-going consultations amongst committed Jewish thinkers of all shades of opinion on the ethical, philosophical, and dogmatic issues that have to be met.

A final word. We have analyzed faith in an effort to learn how to contain doubt. But how can *emunah shelemah* be achieved — that reintegration of the total personality in the face of God? How can doubt as such be transcended?

In the Jewish manner, let us attempt to answer this question with another question — one that may appear absurd and even brazen: Can God doubt? Does *He* sometimes oscillate between affirmation and denial?

Now, of course, I do not mean to ask if God believes in God. That does not make sense, certainly not in a cognitive context. However, the question is legitimate and valid in the affective or trust sense, when the object of divine concern is man. The drama of human existence is predicated upon the divine grant of freedom to man. Only in terms of this gift of ethical sover-

eignty does the human predicament become worthy of consideration. But such freedom for man implies that God has willingly surrendered part of His control, that He has, paradoxically, willed that things may go against His will. The built-in risks in the creation of an ethically autonomous being are implied in the symbolic story in the Midrash about the debates amongst the Heavenly hosts as to whether or not such a creation ought to take place. The deadlock amongst the angels was broken by God's vote in favor of the creation of man. He knew that man might well fail, yet He was willing to take His chances on him.

In a word, God had, or has, faith in man; He trusts him, believes in him. So, on the verse that God is *E-l emunah*,[53] a God of faith, the Midrash comments: *she'maamin bi'veruav,* that He believes in His creatures. But faith always implies the possibility of doubt. If, then, God has faith in man, He can also doubt man.

There is even Biblical evidence of such divine doubt. Soon after the creation of man — the divine act of faith, appropriately followed by God's blessing of the object of His faith[54] — the drama of human freedom begins. Is God's trust vindicated? Adam and Eve fail. Cain fails. For ten generations God withholds His wrath and extends His patience.[55] He continues His trust in man despite, as it were, the irrationality of such faith. Finally, the generation of the flood reaches a new low in its abuse of freedom. "And the Lord repented that He had made man upon the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart" (Gen. 6:6). What does this "repentance" mean if not that God had begun to doubt man, to question His own trust in him, that the doubt implied by faith had now gained the upper hand, and that the next step was the transformation of doubt into denial, i.e., the denial of existence to man? The very words "and it grieved Him at His heart" are, in their very anthropomorphism, a classical description of the psychological manifestation of doubt-anxiety.

The Lord doubted man. A new chapter had begun in the tension between God's faith and His doubt. Were doubt to emerge victorious, as denial, and faith withdrawn, the world would

cease to exist: "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the earth . . . for it repenteth Me that I have made them" (Gen. 6:7). Only the virtue of Noah kept the divine faith sufficiently alive to prevent that cosmic cataclysm from coming into being, the doubt from winning out as denial: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 6:8).

Man's trust in and doubt of *E-lohim* is paralleled by God's trust in and doubt of the *tzellem E-lohim,* the divine image. Wherever a relationship involves at least one free agent, there is immediately implied the possibilities of both faith and doubt in that free agent.

This, then, is how our own doubts may be transcended, if even for a fleeting moment, which may be worth all of eternity: by the realization that we may well be the objects of God's doubt. The fullness of faith can be attained when, instead of doubting God, we come to the sudden and terrible awareness that God may be doubting us; that our *human* existence has yet to be affirmed by God who may not be convinced of its worth; that God may have lost faith in us because we have betrayed Him. That must be the focus of our concern.

What a tragic fate! — to be tossed between the torment of doubting God and the terror of being doubted by Him. But it can be more than a fate; it can be a destiny: to be concerned with and be the concern of the Creator of all.

The way of the faithful Jew in this last third of the twentieth century is not an easy one. Not for him is the facile "peace of mind" of those for whom religion is but a psychological crutch; nor for him is the perverse security of the nihilist who has resigned himself to utter, hopeless meaninglessness. His way is not easy — but it is sublime, and it is sacred.

In the words with which the profound Spanish philosopher, Miguel de Unamuno, concluded his masterpiece, *The Tragic Sense of Life*: "and may God deny you peace but give you glory!"

FOOTNOTES

1. Paul Tillich, *The Courage To Be* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1952).

2. M. Homes Hartshorne, *The Faith to Doubt* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Halls, 1963), p. 79.

3. *Avot* 2:5.

4. See *infra*, n. 39.

5. Harry A. Wolfson, *Philo* (Cambridge: Harvard U., 1947), vol. I, p. 156.

6. Prof. H. Richard Niebuhr asserts, with appropriate qualifications, that "belief-that" conforms more to the Greek sense of the term "faith," and "belief-in" to the Hebrew sense (in his "On the Nature of Faith," in *Religious Experience and Truth*, ed. Sidney Hook [New York: N.Y.U. Press, 1961], 93-103); in this he follows Buber who makes this his main thesis in his *Two Types of Faith* (London: 1951). As we shall shortly show, however, Jewish faith cannot be defined so narrowly. The two types of faith have also been declared characteristic, respectively, of the Thomistic and Augustinian traditions, and of Catholicism and Protestantism. We shall here be using the terms "belief" and "faith" interchangeably, although there are differences between them; cf. Raziel Abelson, "The Logic of Faith and Belief," in the above volume ed. Hook, pp. 116-129.

7. H. H. Price, "Belief-In and Belief-That," *Religious Studies*, Vol. I, No. 1 (Oct. 1965), pp. 1-27.

8. These three categories may be characterized, using Buber's terminology, as follows: The cognitive expresses an I-It relation, the affective an I-Thou, and the functional an I-He relation. The cognitive is I-It because my faith or affirmation is focused not directly on God, but on a concept about Him. The affective form of faith is not always, nor need always be, a personal encounter; but the full range of religious emotions certainly strives for and derives from the ideal of confrontation with God as the Thou as an ideal. It is because this form of faith aspires to this encounter that my use of the term "affective" should not be taken too literally; I intend by it an activity or state with more objective reference than emotion or affect as such. The functional is I-He in the sense that halakhic living does not require an I-Thou encounter, but is predicated upon such an encounter as an historical event; the performance of *mitzvah* is not itself a personal confrontation, but is based upon the collective We-Thou meeting of Israel with God at Sinai.

9. Jeremiah 9:2 — וידרכו את לשונם קשתם שקר ולא לאמונה גברו בארץ. Interestingly, the next verse contrasts בטחון with betrayal, the absence of trustworthiness.

10. So R. David Kimchi, in his *Sefer ha-Sharashim*, and Abravanel in his Commentary on the *Guide* of Maimonides.

11. See Henry Malter, *Saadia Gaon: His Life and Works* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1921), p. 193, n. 455; S. Ravidowicz in *Metsudah* (1943), pp. 132-143; Alexander Altmann, in the introduction to his "Saadya Gaon: Book of Doctrines and Beliefs," in his *Three Jewish Philosophers* (Meridian & J.P.S.:

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1960), p. 19; R. Hayyim Heller, notes to his edition of Maimonides' *Sefer ha-Mitzvot*, Pos. Com. 1, n. 1. On the necessary metaphysical presuppositions of Halakhic Judaism, see Walter S. Wurzburger, "Meta-Halakhic Propositions," in *The Leo Jung Jubilee Volume,* ed. Kasher, Lamm, and Rosenfeld (New York: The Jewish Center, 1962).

12. *Supra,* n. 8. In Arabic, the related root means a strong rock on which one may lean for support and behind which one may be shielded from his enemies.

13. My use of this term needs some explanation. The usual Platonic tripartite classification of the soul, or personality, accepted by Saadia amongst others, is that of knowledge, emotion, and will. Tillich (*Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality* [Chicago: Chicago University, 1955], p. 53) makes use of the same analysis in describing faith; since faith is the concern of my entire being about my ultimate "where" and "when," all three elements enter into the act of faith. By "will" Plato means mettle or honor or courage, as well as sheer intentionality. I have used "function" instead of "will" in order to indicate the functionality of faith in Judaism as expressed in the Halakhah: my commitment to God as it reveals itself in a sacred pattern of living and acting. This pragmatic interpretation of belief has been emphasized by many philosophers, beginning with Pierce, James, and Dewey. "I believe," is referred to by Stuart Hampshire, in stressing the behavioral implications of belief, as a "declaration of intention," i.e., to do something; see his *Thought and Action* (New York: Viking Press, 1960), p. 159f. Cf. R. W. Sleeper, *Religious Studies,* vol. II, No. 1 (October 1966), pp. 75-93, who expands the terms "believe-in" and "believe-that" from a psychological and epistemological to an ontological basis. "Believe-in," according to Sleeper, includes "a willingness to act on what is believed, to govern one's actions in what is believed *in*" (p. 89).

14. Exodus 17:12.

15. According to Maimonides, *Hil. Talmud Torah* 1:11, 12, and *Hil. Yesodei ha-Torah* 4:13. See *infra,* n. 52.

16. Sifre, Dt. # 41 (ed. L. Finkelstein); *Kiddushin* 40b.

17. Hartshorne, *op. cit.,* p. 97.

18. Karl Löwith, "Skepticism and Faith," *Social Research,* vol. 18 (June 1951), pp. 219-222.

19. Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: Chicago University, 1957), p. vii.

20. For a thorough treatment of Saadia's views on doubt, see Abraham J. Heschel, "The Quest for Certainty in Saadia's Philosophy," *JQR* (1942), pp. 265-313.

21. Cf. Arnold Brecht, *Political Theory: The Foundations of Twentieth-Century Political Thought* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University, 1959), pp. 476f. In general, in attempting to understand spiritual phenomena we may not rule out the coexistence of opposites which, logically, may be mutually exclusive; cf. John Wisdom, *Philosophy and Psycho-Analysis* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), p. 277.

22. Rollo May, "The Origins and Significance of the Existential Movement in

Psychology," in *Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology,* ed. May, Angel, and Ellenberger (New York: Basic Books, 1958), pp. 11, 14. On the modern tendency, often exaggerated, to focus on the believer as well as or instead of the object of his belief, see Claude Welch, "God, Faith, and the Theological Object — An Historical Dialectic," in *The Harvard Theological Review* (July 1966), pp. 212-227.

23. "A churchman," wrote George Bernard Shaw (in the Preface to *Misalliance*), "who never reads *The Freethinker* very soon has no more real religion than the atheist who never reads the *Church Times.*"

24. *Sab.* 31a–ת״ר מעשה בנכרי אחד שבא לפני שמאי, אמר לו כמה תורות יש לכם, אמר לו שתים תושב״כ ותושבע״פ. א״ל שבכתב אני מאמינך, ושבע״פ איני מאמינך. גיירני ע״מ שתלמדני תושב״כ. גער בו והוציאו בנזיפה. בא לפני הלל, גייריה. יומא קמא א״ל א״ב ג״ד, למחר אפיך ליה. א״ל והא אתמול לא אמרת לי הכי, א״ל לאו עלי דידי קא סמכת דעל פה נמי סמוך עלי.

25. *Bekhorot* 30b — הבא לקבל דברי חברות חוץ מדבר אחד, וכן גר הבא להתגייר וקבל עליו ד״ת חוץ מדבר אחד אין מקבלין אותו.

26. Rashi to *Sab.* 31a — דלא דמיא הא לחוץ מדבר אחד, שלא היה כופר בתושבע״פ, אלא שלא היה מאמין שהיא מפי הגבורה, והלל הובטח שאחר שילמדנו יסמוך עליו.

I wish to emphasize that I am using this passage to justify the theoretical distinction between doubt and denial, not any practical halakhic differences between them. Cf. Rav Kook, *Iggerot ha-Reiyah,* Vol. I, p. 20.

27. It must be remembered that doubt, ubiquitous as it is in our times, constitutes a threat not only to religious faith, but to all affirmations, even anti-religious ones. Thus, Arnold Brecht, *op. cit.,* p. 466f.: "Doubt has overcome not only many believers, but many atheists as well. It seems to have escaped notice that modern science has also produced a large class of what may be called 'doubting atheists' — people who once were atheists pure and simple, and who still today would classify themselves basically as such, but who now admit to some degree of doubt, because they have come to see the limitations of science. This doubt of atheists is as much a result of modern science as is that of believers, and science should receive as much credit for the one as it has attracted blame for the other."

So, from a different point of view, Paul Tillich, in his *Rechtfertigung und Zweifel;* see *The Theology of Paul Tillich,* ed. Kegley and Bretall (New York: Macmillan 1952), p. 203. Rav Kook writes (*loc. cit.,* p. 21): "If the denial (*Kefirah*) of our generation were truthful, it would always base its claim on doubtfulness . . . but it lies maliciously and asserts a claim to certainty, when even the most weak-minded know that it cannot go beyond doubt."

28. The same pattern holds true in ethics, when I am confronted by two or more conflicting courses of action, each in itself morally commendable. "What I have to do is study the situation as fully as I can until I form the considered opinion (it is never more) that in the circumstances one of them is more incumbent than any other; then I am bound to think that this *prima facie* duty is my duty *sans phrase* in the situation (W. D. Ross, *The Right and the Good*

[Oxford: 1930], p. 19). Halakhically, a positive commandment performed at the expense of a negative commandment, because of the principle of *aseh docheh lo taaseh,* is no less meritorious, and should not be executed with any less enthusiasm, than an ordinary positive commandment.

29. Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era,* pp. 2021.

30. J. T. *Chaigah* 1:7; *Pesichta* to Lam. R., 2. This attitude is related in these sources, to the allied concept that the study of Torah not for its own sake leads to the study of Torah for its own sake.

31. *Sefer ha-Chinukh,* 20: ‏הלבבות נמשכים אחרי הפעולות.‏

32. *Kuzari,* 3:53.

33. *Supra,* n. 30.

34. See my *The Study of Torah Lishmah in the Works of Rabbi Hayyim of Volozhin* (unpublished doctoral thesis, New York: Yeshiva University, 1966), chaps. ii, iii, and iv.

35. See *supra,* n. 8.

36. Cf. Rashi to Ex. 20:19.

37. Martin Buber, *Two Types of Faith,* p. 41.

38. *"Chovot ha-Levavot",* Shaar ha-Bitachon, chap. ii.

39. *Ibid., Shaar ha-Yichud,* chap. iii.

40. *Hil. Yesodei has-Torah* 4:13.

41. Bachya, in his introduction to his *Chovot ha-Levavot,* bemoans the neglect of the study of the entire area of "duties of the heart," in which he includes both ethico-moral obligations and religious philosophical doctrines.

42. Erich Frank, *Philosophical Understanding and Religious Truth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 29.

43. R. Yaakov Mosheh Charlop, at the beginning of his *"Mei Marom,"* a commentary on the "Eight Chapters" of Maimonides.

44. R. Hayyim Soloveitchik, *"Chidushei Rabbenu Chayyim Halevi,"* Laws of Prayer, 4:1.

45. Rabbi I. A. H. Kook, Introduction to *Olat Re'iyah,* his commentary on the Prayer book: ‏התפלה המתמדת של הנשמה.‏ Cf. R. Shneour Zalman of Ladi, *Likkutei Amarim,* 1:15 and Introd. to II: ‏אהבה טבעית ומסותרת,‏ and similarly, R. Yehudah Aryeh Leib of Gur, *Sefat Emet* to va'Et'chanan (vol. V, p. 20).

46. For sources, see my *The Study of Torah Lishmah in the Works of Rabbi Hayyim of Volozhin,* chap. vi.

47. *Ibid.,* chap. vii.

48. See my "G-d is Alive," in *Jewish Life* (March - April 1966) pp. 19-23.

49. Thus the phenomenon of "epistemological loneliness," a term coined by David Bakan. See Rollo May, "Contributions of Existential Psychotherapy," in *Existence,* p. 57. On the role of community in the experience of faith, see Buber, *op. cit.,* pp. 170-174.

50. Maimonides, *Hil Teshuvah,* 4:2.

51. *Avot* 1:2.

52. Cf. my article on "The Voice of Torah in the Battle of Ideas: A Program

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for Orthodoxy," in *Jewish Life* (March-April 1967), pp. 23-31. Critics of the point of view here presented may point to the Halakhah, codified by Maimonides (*Hil. Avodah Zarah*, 2:3) and based upon talmudic sources, which proscribes the study of that which may lead one to heresy and hence into doubt. However, this must be read together with the opinion of Maimonides (*Hil. Talmud Torah* 1:12, according to *Hil. Yesodei ha-Torah* 4:13), mentioned above, according to which the study of metaphysics is included in the category of *Gemara* and hence obligatory. In *Yes. ha-Torah* Maimonides offers his personal opinion (*ve'ani omer*) that the speculative pursuits should be reserved for those who had already achieved excellence in the study of Halakhah. If one reads the passage in *A. Z.* carefully he will note the author's explanation of and qualifications on his prohibition: the inability of all kinds of mentality to understand philosophic truth (*ve'lo kol ha-deiot yekholin le'hassig ha-emet al buryo*); the emphasis on the fact that this is a general decision to be applied to the masses of people (and by inference not to special classes) and to casual, unsystematic study (thus: *v'im yimshokh kol adam achar machshevot libo*); and the fear that such speculation will be undertaken by those who do not know its fundamental principles and methods (*v'eino yodeia hamiddot she'yadin bahem*). Obviously Maimonides was dealing with two principles which had come into coniflct — the duty to know God rationally and the obligation to protect the unsophisticated from spiritual confusion — and in these two passages he laid down the guidelines for the correct choice of which principle to follow under which circumstances. Certainly we should continue to apply the same rules to the kind of situation to which they are relevant. What, however, if the state of society and culture are such that to follow these rules without deviation would result in wholesale abandonment of the faith? Would we be justified in applying these rules regardless of the effects that were to follow? Obviously not. We do not, today, live in a stable, religiously secure society in which, without the malicious intrusion of heretical thoughts, life would continue faithfully at its own pace and without interruption. We who are Orthodox are today a minority within a minority and we are surrounded on all sides by a culture which encourages questioning in general as well as raising specific doubts. (See the perceptive article by Joseph Grunblatt, "The Great Enstrangement — The Rabbi and the Student," in *Tradition* [Summer, 1966], pp. 66ff.). We need not belabor the point that a straight application of Maimonides' decision to our situation would be doing a grave injustice to Torah as well as misreading the intent of the Halakhah. In Maimonides' days, most people were covered by his decision in *Hil. A. Z.*, and the minority of accomplished scholars and sophisticated intellects by the law in *Hil. Yes. ha-Torah*. That was how the Halakhah protected the integrity of faith. Today there may be pockets here and there of those who still live in self-contained communities without any access to the great sources of Western civilization; for them the same decision holds true without change. But most of us, despite our lack of halakhic expertise and our doubtful philosophic sophistication, are such that doubt is ubiquitous with us, and if we do not entertain it yet we

surely will be exposed to it before long. For us, and this is the essence of what I am trying to say, the study of Jewish thought, accepting the challenges of modernity, and the anticipation of the doubts that will be imposed upon our children, are an aspect of *Gemara,* according to the decision of Maimonides in *Hil. Yes. ha-Torah* and *Hil. T. T.*

53. Dt. 32:4.

54. Gen. 1:28. When God regains His faith in man, after the flood, He again blesses him: Gen. 9:1, 2. Blessing thus always accompanies faith, whether by man in God or by God in man.

55. *Avot* 5:3.