STUMBLING BLOCKS TO STEPPING STONES

THE TORAH AS A KEY TO JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RECONCILIATION:

A NEW MODEL

A THESIS

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university, and that it is entirely my work.

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DEDICATION

For my Teachers.

My grandmothers.
Earl Williams.
Nancy Rambin.
D'vorah.
David and Andrew Silcox.
Rabbi Alan Ullman.

And Grandpa John.

All the flowers of all the tomorrows,

are in the seeds of today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

thankful for those women in particular who have gone before me, who paved the way and on whose shoulders the women of this generation stand. May our own daughters find our shoulders so worthy.

My then eight year old son Cameron's words, "I think Judaism and Christianity seem a bit like science and baking", provided much impetus for the conception of this study.

SUMMARY

"The Bible both connects and separates Jews and Christians".[1]

This statement acknowledges the historical reality that the Bible has separated Jews and Christians in aspects of theological interpretation and application. It also recognises that there are different interpretive traditions between the two communities which distinguish them from each other, and this distinctiveness is to be respected. And yet simultaneously, the Bible connects Jews and Christians into a body of shared sacred texts which offer a glimpse into the deep past, while at the same time possessing an eternal sensibility which renders its ancient echoes to be as relevant for the unfolding future as they are for the present.

Drawing inspiration from *Nostra Aetate*, which re-visioned the relationship between Catholics and Jews in part through the reassessment of certain scriptures, this thesis seeks to reframe the Jewish-Christian relationship with the Torah as its central touchstone. It is the primary claim of this thesis that the Torah, no matter how differently it is seen or understood, can be an authentic, foundational and shared starting point from where Christians and Jews can begin, refresh, or even contemplate a journey of reconciliation toward one another.

The intent of this project is to develop a new model or 'mode' for reconnection between Christians and Jews. This model effectively demonstrates that the Torah, sacred in different ways to both Jews and Christians, offers a unique vantage point to

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[1] Point 5 from the 2002 publication, *A Sacred Obligation: Rethinking Christian Faith in Relation to Judaism and the Jewish People*. See https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/sites/partners/csg/Sacred_Obligation.htm, retrieved March 11 2017

the Jewish-Christian relationship. Certain dynamics within the Jewish-Christian relationship which appeared to be impediments or hurdles, are seen in a different light. Actively engaging in the study of sacred text in a cross-community context is the fundamental suggestion offered through this thesis. It is hoped this type of engagement would deepen the dimensions of a relationship between Christians and Jews, which finds its starting point in a mutual desire for reconciliation, and a commitment to witness shalom to a hurting world.

The Torah becomes vitally significant, even essential, to this unfolding reconciliation. In short 'stumbling blocks' become 'stepping stones' as that which was seen to curb the relationship, transforms into the very mechanism by which the relationship is cultivated.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BAR *Biblical Archaeological Review*

BDB F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*

BH Biblical Hebrew

CE Common Era

DE *Dabru Emet*

DSS Dead Sea Scrolls

GK Greek

HB Hebrew Bible

JPS Jewish Publication Society Bible

LXX The Septuagint

MT Masoretic Text

4QMMT *Miqsat Ma'ase ha-Torah*

NA *Nostra Aetate*

NKJV New King James Version

NPP New Perspective on Paul

NT New Testament

NRSV New Revised Standard Version

OT Old Testament

CONTENTS

CHAPTER TWO 99

**ROOTS AND SEEDS: HISTORICAL DYNAMICS
IN THE JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIP**

CHAPTER FOUR   **196**

LANGUAGES OF RUPTURE AND RECONNECTION:

THE TORAH AS A KEY TO NAVIGATING SUPERSESSIONISM

CHAPTER FIVE 244

THE TORAH AS A KEY TO NAVIGATING FLASHPOINT TEXTS

CHAPTER SIX   **301**

THE SUBVERSIVE QUALITY OF TORAH TEXT:
THE TORAH AS A KEY TO GRACE

CONCLUSION   349

PREAMBLE

The door was shut. I looked between

Its iron bars; and saw it lie,

My garden, mine, beneath the sky,

Pied with all flowers bedewed and green:

From bough to bough the song-birds crossed,

From flower to flower the moths and bees;

With all its nests and stately trees

It had been mine, and it was lost.

A shadowless spirit kept the gate,

Blank and unchanging like the grave.

I peering through said: 'Let me have

Some buds to cheer my outcast state'.

He answered not. 'Or give me, then,

But one small twig from shrub or tree;

And bid my home remember me

Until I come to it again.'

The spirit was silent; but he took

Mortar and stone to build a wall;

He left no loophole great or small

Through which my straining eyes might look:

So now I sit here quite alone

Blinded with tears; nor grieve for that,

For nought is left worth looking at

Since my delightful land is gone.

A violet bed is budding near,

Wherein a lark has made her nest:

And good they are, but not the best;

And dear they are, but not so dear.[2]

Christina Georgina Rossetti

Christina Rossetti's poem *Shut Out*, which appeared in her first published collection of poetry in 1862, *Goblin Market and Other Poems,* presents the speaker behind a locked door on the other side of a beautiful, lush garden which was once familiar and accessible. Doors are places of potential access, thresholds which facilitate the possibility of crossing from one domain into another. The speaker in the poem is not locked in by the door, but rather locked out of a place not only that her heart wants to be, but a place she once was. There is a knowing to her melancholy - she misses what is she is forbidden from because she was once part of it.

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[2] Christina Rossetti, R.W. Crump, Betty S. Flowers. *Christina Rossetti: The Complete Poems* (London: Penguin Classics, 2001), 50

No reason is given as to why the speaker is locked out, only that a silent spirit who has no shadow prevents her re-entry. The iron bars, though cold and unyielding, afford the speaker snapshots into the busy life that is unfolding inside the garden. But a wall is built in response to her request of buds and twigs. Buds contain the potential of future blooms within them, and twigs come from a tree, and both, the poem suggests, would retain a sense of connection between the garden and the speaker. Her simple request silently denied, a wall is erected that has a permanency and a solidity that now prevents even a glimpse of what lies on the other side.

The images aroused by Rossetti's poem can be taken as a metaphor for the Jewish-Christian relationship as it is presented in this thesis. Let us envisage the relationship between Jews and Christians as a garden. It is a place of shared beginnings, of seeds and seasons, of potential life and growth. The wall is the imposed partition which permanently segregates Christian from Jew and names either as 'other', or even enemy, depending on which side of the wall one is positioned. The speaker is the seeker in this model who longs for reconnection, who like a bone dislocated from its socket aches for a realignment of this important relationship. The spaces between the iron bars are the glimpses of the other that have been afforded through rare moments of reconciliation, which the seeker longs to inhabit as a reality. The door or gate (Rossetti uses both images) is the potential access point, the threshold that invites and enables movement from one side to another. Except that it is firmly 'shut', and movement toward the other is impossible in this condition. In order to be fully experienced, everyone needs access to the garden. The metaphor of the garden can also be seen as the sacred space which is made available through the opening of

the locked door. The intention of this thesis is to explore how biblical text, specifically the Torah, can be a key to opening this door.

INTRODUCTION

I. THE TORAH AS A KEY
TO JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RECONCILIATION

"Yesterday: Auschwitz. And today a new day in Jewish-Christian rapprochement. Out of the ashes of the six million - whose sole crime was being Jewish - there rises, in the hearts of sincere, responsible Christians everywhere, a yearning to understand, a need to know, a desire to turn from the bloodletting of the past to a guilt-free future. As the Jericho walls which so long separated Jews from their Christian neighbours come tumbling down, the question for Jews is: are we ready? Now that the doors of ecumenism are swinging wide open, are we prepared for meaningful confrontation with Christians?"[3]

The twentieth century saw relations between Jews and Christians oscillate between the black shadows of the Shoah and unprecedented reconciliation, which was bolstered by the groundbreaking effects of the Second Vatican Council (1962-5), as

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[3] The opening words by Lily Edelman, in the 1967 issue of *Face to Face: A Primer in Dialogue*. Contributors to this edition included Abraham Joshua Heschel and Reinhold Niebuhr, amongst others. (Volume 9, Number 4; Spring 1967: B'nai B'rith Adult Jewish Education) v-vi

well as other vitally significant factors.[4] Positive and respectful, mutually enriching

engagement is now a norm within Jewish-Christian relations, where persecution,

mutual suspicion and hostility were once the more familiar terrain.[5] Reconsidering

firmly held misconceptions about Jews and Judaism and rethinking traditional biblical

approaches and hermeneutical methods, have been some of the key features in the

development of more positive relations between the two faith communities. The

reawakening of biblical scholars to the Jewishness of the NT for example, and the

fact that Jesus of Nazareth was born, lived and died as a Jew has played an important

role in redefining certain parameters within the Jewish-Christian relationship.[6] As a

result, the traditional Christian posture of condemnation or vilification toward

Judaism has largely shifted to one of affirmation for both the Jewish roots of

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[4] The Second Vatican Council, or Vatican II, broadly addressed doctrinal and wider issues which related to the Catholic Church and the modern world. In the concluding year of the Council in 1965, a document was produced entitled the 'Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions'. It became known as *Nostra Aerate,* from the opening Latin words ('In Our Time') to the document, and marked a dramatic shift in Church teaching on Jews and Judaism. Other significant factors to Jewish-Christian reconciliation in the twentieth century, following the harrowing and devastating impact of the Holocaust, included the formation of the modern state of Israel in 1948, and the growth of the ecumenical movement, through its efforts to address issues of Jewish concern relating to anti-semitism and the effects of Christian evangelism. See Edward Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1. See also, *A Jubilee for All Time: The Copernican Revolution in Jewish-Christian Relations.* Gilbert S. Rosenthal ed., (Eugene,OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2014)

[5] I intentionally write 'a norm' as opposed to 'the norm'. It is 'a norm' because positive relations between Christian and Jewish communities are a regular occurrence. In Ireland for example we have a thriving Irish branch of the International Council of Christians and Jews which regularly hosts public events and lectures raising awareness about this important relationship, in addition to more private functions. The United Kingdom and the United States have forged much in the way of a growing dialogue, although European efforts are often integrated with America initiatives (see, *Challenges in Jewish-Christian Relations,* James K. Aitken and Edward Kessler, eds., (New York: Paulist Press, 2006), 3). However, for all those committed to a healthy and growing Jewish-Christian dialogue, there remains many for whom such a norm is an anomaly, and also those who are unaware, disinterested or actively opposed (a cursory glance at the worrying rise in anti-semitism on both the political right and left is telling), and therefore it cannot yet be considered 'the norm'.

[6] See Paul M. van Buren, *A Theology of the Jewish-Christian Reality: Discerning the Way, Part One* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1987), 78-81

Christianity, as well as Judaism as a living faith in the twenty-first century.[7] Christian scholars, such as E.P. Sanders, Paul van Buren, Roy and Alice Eckardt, Krister Stendahl and John T. Pawlikowski, amongst others, made significant inroads in the development of a Christian theology and scholarship that aligns itself with Judaism, rather defines itself in opposition to it.[8] This shift within Christianity and the theological implications of this shift are examined more fully in chapters two, four and five of this thesis. Following the landmark publication of *Nostra Aetate* in 1965, which focused (in part) on the relationship between the Church and the Jewish people, and specifically on the teaching of the Church in relation to Jews and Judaism, much scholarship has been generated in the area of Catholic-Jewish

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[7] This statement for example, published in 1998 by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "We as Christians share deep and common roots with Jews, not least books of Scripture revered by both communities. There is much to be gained in exploring those common roots, as well as the reasons for the "parting of the ways" during the first generations of the followers of Jesus. New Testament texts reflect at many points the hostility between the two communities, but also point to ways in which a new spirit of mutual respect and understanding can be achieved. We as Christians also need to learn of the rich and varied history of Judaism since New Testament times, and of the Jewish people as a diverse, living community of faith today. Such an encounter with living and faithful Judaism can be profoundly enriching for Christian self-understanding. It is to nurture this blessing that we offer these guidelines for honest and faithful conversation and cooperation between Lutherans and Jews." (*Guidelines for Lutheran Jewish-Relations,* 1998). See https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/protestant/ELCA_Guidelines.htm. Retrieved August 22 2018

[8] Ed Parish Sanders (b.1937), for example, in many ways pioneered a fresh approach to NT study which emphasised not only the significance of Jesus and Paul as first-century Jews, but that any authentic study of these figures could only be rooted in a knowledge of first-century Judaism. See E. P., Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism,* (London: SCM Press, 1977), and *Jesus and Judaism,* (London: SCM Press, 1985). Other scholars and theologians whose research and publications helped shift the mode and focus of Christian theology toward one that both honours and is in conversation with Judaism, include Mary C. Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing? Judaism as a Source of Christian Self Understanding* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000); Kendall R. Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996); Walter Kaiser, *Recovering the Unity of the Bible: One Continuous Story, Plan, and Purpose* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009); and Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* ((New York: Seabury Press, 1979) amongst others.

relations and several ecclesiastical documents have been published to this effect.[9]

Statements from the Protestant churches regarding the repudiation of anti-semitism, such as the "Declaration of Guilt toward the Jewish People" (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony), were published as early as 1948, signalling the growing awareness of the horrifying contribution of Christian anti-Judaism to the unprecedented suffering of European Jews.[10]

For Jews, the response to this critical turn within both church teaching and Christian scholarship has been somewhat varied, insofar as the initial response in the Jewish community could be determined as one of distrust, particularly after the catastrophic

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[9] For example, "Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration Nostra Aetate", (No. 4, December 1 1974); "Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church", (June 24, 1985); "Catholic Teaching on the Shoah: Implementing the Holy See's "We Remember"", (Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, March 2001). See, *Bridges: Documents of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue, Vol 1: The Road to Reconciliation, 1945-1985.* Franklin Sherman, ed., (New York: Paulist Press, 2011), and *Bridges: Documents of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue, Vol 2: Building a New Relationship, 1986-2013,* Franklin Sherman, (ed.), (New York: Paulist Press, 2014)

[10] See Sherman, *Bridges: Documents of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue, Vol 1.* At the founding assembly in 1948, the World Council of Churches formally declared that 'anti-semitism is a sin against God and man'. In 1961, the Russian Orthodox church joined the assembly, and while less inclined to produce formal statements on Orthodox Christian-Jewish dialogue, Orthodox Christianity was, and in many ways still is, at the beginning stages of an important dialogue. Statements such as "We Must Be in Unity with the Jews" (Address by Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, Alexy II in New York, 1991) marked a slight shift in this particular aspect of Jewish-Christian dialogue. Nonetheless on a larger scale, the Orthodox Christian churches have not implemented as yet the necessary doctrinal and theological alterations toward Jews and Judaism which the Catholic and Protestant churches have endeavoured to put in place. Cf Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 9. See also, 'The Orthodox Churches in Dialogue with Judaism', Nicholas de Lange, in *Challenges to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 51-62

events of the Shoah in which historical Christian anti-Judaism played no small part.[11] However, prominent Jewish thinkers, such as Abraham Joshua Heschel and Martin Buber, wrote extensively on the philosophical dimensions of partnership and reconciliation, and sparked in many ways the beginnings of a Jewish response to the reality that Jesus was indeed a Jew.[12] The work of Jewish historian Jules Isaac, himself a survivor of the Shoah, emphasised the connections between Judaism and Christianity, and saw Isaac play an vital background role in the formulation of *Nostra Aetate*. Eminent Jewish scholars in the second half of the twentieth century, such as Geza Vermes and David Flusser, contributed enormously to the understanding of Second Temple Jewish life, out of which both Rabbinic Judaism and Christianity ultimately emerged.[13] More recent Jewish scholars, such as Amy Jill Levine, Mark D.

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[11] Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 2. It is important to acknowledge, however, early Jewish pioneers, such as Claude Montefiore, who in 1914 published *Judaism and St. Paul,* and then in 1935 *What a Jew Thinks about Jesus.* For more see Daniel R. Langton, *Claude Montefiore: His Life and Thought* (London: Vallentine Mitchell Press, 2002). Centuries earlier, Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) (who became known as the 'father of the Jewish Enlightenment (*Haskalah*)), saw the conditions of the European Enlightenment as potentially positive for Jews and advocated a favourable Jewish engagement with Christianity, demonstrated through his friendship and dialogue with Johan Kaspar Lavater. See *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 124, and Elias Sacks, *Moses Mendelssohn's Living Script: Philosophy, Practice: History Judaism* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2017)

[12] See Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Insecurity of Freedom: Essays on Human Existence* (New York: Noonday Press Printing, 1967), 170. Martin Buber famously referred to Jesus of Nazareth as his 'elder brother'. Franz Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption*, first published in 1921, laid the path for a possible Jewish theology of Christianity and envisioned a future in which both faiths had important, distinctive missions that served the God of Israel. Rosenzweig worked closely with Martin Buber on the development of the *I-Thou* philosophical approach and on a translation of Torah from Hebrew to German. See Franz Rosenzweig, *Der Stern Der Erlosung* (The Star of Redemption). Trans. William W. Hallo. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 1971). See also, Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses: A New Translation with Introductions, Commentary, and Notes.* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), x. Fox models his translation work in part on Buber and Rosenzweig's translation work, which attempted to 'draw the reader into the world of the Hebrew bible through the power of its language'.

[13] Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (London: SCM, 1973); *The Resurrection,* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2008); *The Story of the Scrolls: The Miraculous Discovery and True Significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2010; David Flusser, *Jesus in the Context of History* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969); *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press and the Hebrew University, 1988). Both scholars worked extensively on the research of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which, in addition to being of tremendous significance in their own right, provide a contextual reference point for the emergence of the fledgling Jesus Movement, one of many 'Juda-isms' in the Second Temple Period.

Nanos and Daniel Boyarin, have spearheaded Jewish research and publication on the figures of Jesus and Paul as Jews in the first century and have contributed enormously to both NT scholarship in this field, offering refreshing portraits of these Jewish figures who are essential to Christianity.[14] The publication of *Dabru Emet* (Speak Truth) in 2000, marked a significant Jewish contribution to the unfolding dialogue between Jews and Christians, its primary goal being to both collate a Jewish response to the widespread change in church teaching about Jews, and to inform other Jews about these changes.[15]

Thus the landscape of Jewish-Christian relations is a complicated terrain, dotted with landmines of agonising memories.[16] In his 2015 publication *Seeking Shalom: the Journey to Right Relationship between Catholics and Jews,* the current president of the International Council of Christians and Jews, Philip Cunningham, espouses a vision for a journey

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[14] Amy-Jill Levine, *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi,* (New York: Harper Collins, 2014); Mark D. Nanos, *Reading Paul Within Judaism,* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2017); Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity,* (Berger and London: University of California Press, 1997)

[15] Published on September 10 2000 in the New York Times, *Dabru Emet* דברו אמת was the first major collated Jewish response to the shift in Christian attitudes toward Judaism since Vatican II. The document was signed by Jewish community leaders across the denominational spectrum, although it was signed by very few from the Orthodox community for a variety of reasons. In addition, those who signed the document (some 220) did so not as representing their specific branch of Judaism but rather as individuals. Its significance however generated much internal reflection within the Jewish community on the issue of the Jewish relationship to Christianity. In December 2015, an Orthodox Jewish statement concerning Christianity was published, entitled "To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven: Toward a Partnership between Jews and Christians"and put forth through the CJCUC (Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation in Israel). It was signed notably by Rabbi's David Rosen (the former chief rabbi of Ireland) and Shlomo Riskin (who was recently put forward as a possible candidate for the Chief Rabbinate Council of Israel, 2018) amongst others. See http://cjcuc.org/2015/12/03/orthodox-rabbinic-statement-on-christianity/, retrieved August 23 2018. See also, Edward Kessler, "Considering a Jewish Statement on Christianity: *Dabru Emet* and its Significance", in *Challenges to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 195-217

[16] See Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *The Crucified Jew: Twenty Centuries of Christian Anti-Semitism* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992); Edward Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Macmillan, 1965; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985)

to reconciliation through this terrain, which is rooted in a vision of shalom.[17] *Shalom,* שָׁלוֹם, in BH stems from the root word *shalem,* meaning 'to be whole', and carries with it the connotation of well-being, prosperity and safety. Peace is therefore intimately connected to wholeness, and it is the pursuit of this all-encompassing shalom which enables reconciliation, and in turn, the possibility of restoration.[18] Cunningham notes, in his opening remarks, "it was through the reinterpretation of scripture, that the churches began to reverse their previous hostility to Jews and their religious traditions".[19] The beginning steps of a journey toward wholeness and right relationship between Christians and Jews was propelled by the reimagining of sacred text, and in the process a revisioning of the 'other' with whom that sacred text was shared, emerged.[20] This in many ways clarifies the macro-focus of this project - to re-imagine the Christian-Jewish relationship with scripture forming the core of how

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[17] The ICCJ (International Council of Christians and Jews) describes itself as 'the umbrella organisation of 40 national Jewish-Cristian dialogue organisations worldwide'. It was founded in response to the horrifying reality of the Holocaust, and in 1947 the ICCJ launched "The Ten Points of Seelisberg", which we will examine more closely in chapter two. See http://www.iccj.org/. Retrieved August 23 2018. See also William Simpson and Ruth Weyl, *The Story of the International Council of Christians and Jews* (Heppenheim, Germany: ICCJ, 1995). See also Appendix A

[18] Philip A. Cunningham, *Seeking Shalom: The Journey to Right Relationship Between Catholics and Jews* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2015), 156

[19] Ibid., x

[20] It is assumed for this study that the Hebrew Bible and the Christian OT, (while differing in significant ways which will be elaborated upon in chapter one), constitute a text which is sacred for both Jews and Christians and is therefore to some to degree shared. In reference to the above statement that reinterpreting scripture enabled a reversal of the 'previous hostility', some of those scriptures to be reinterpreted were the writings of the Apostle Paul and other NT texts and are therefore not shared in the same way. Nonetheless, the NT remains a document which has Jewish origins as it was largely composed by Jews, written to Jewish and early Christian communities and written about a Jew, Jesus of Nazareth. It therefore stems from the same Jewish cultural matrix as Rabbinic Judaism and while not a shared text, there are important cultural and theological themes which overlap with the Jewish world and are impossible to understand if separated from them. See Paula Fredricksen, *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity* (London: Macmillan, 2000).

that re-imagining unfolds, and in the process for Christians and Jews to learn to 'see' one another again.

Both Jews and Christians share what can be termed as a 'biblically oriented culture'.[21] David Stevens, former leader of the Corrymeela Community in Co. Antrim, in writing of his lived experience of reconciliation between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, claimed that a key to this reconciliation lay in both parties recognising that they are 'a storied people'.[22] Biblical stories are very human stories that are wildly relational, and when people find what stories they might have in common, whether they stem from religion or culture or language, they can find a place to begin a conversation.[23] In a similar sense it can be said that Jews and Christians are 'a storied people', in that both faith traditions, diverse though they may be, draw religious inspiration from a sacred body of biblical stories which are shared. Furthermore, Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism, in all their cultural, religious and denominational plurality, both find their origins in Second Temple Judaism. Acknowledging that Jewish identity in the Second Temple period was by no means homogeneous, both faith traditions emerge nonetheless from this shared Jewish matrix, and the stories of both were profoundly and irrevocably shaped in different

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[21] Edward Kessler, *Bound by the Bible* : *Jews, Christians and the Sacrifice of Isaac* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 18-19

[22] David Stevens, *The Place Called Reconciliation: Texts to Explore* (Belfast: Corrymeela Press, 2008), 9

[23] Chapter four of this thesis focuses part of its study on the conversational aspect of Jewish-Christian dialogue, drawing on the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein and the 'language game', which likens language to a game in which the speakers are the game-players. Chapter four further examines the idea that part of the rupture between Christians and Jews stems from languages of disconnection, and queries if the Torah can facilitate a language a of reconnection through its human stories, that are sacred in different ways to both Jews and Christians. It investigates if relating to one another in this way and learning to reconnect through sacred text can help to unravel *supersessionism,* the idea that one faith (historically Christianity) is superior and therefore has 'superseded' or replaced the other.

ways by the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE, the locus of all Jewish life up to that point. Having stories in common can be what divides us if we seek to replace or ostracise the other in that story. But it can also be what draws us together, in the recognition that we share something and without you, I simply am not whole.[24]

II. FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

II.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The central idea that the Torah can be a key to the betterment of Jewish-Christian relations rests on the assumption that multiple 'locked doors' exist within the relationship itself. A locked door is a closed entry point, but it is also a potential access point. It is a place where there could be entry or exchange, and indeed possibly and most likely where there was once entry, but now that entry, that movement and invitation to cross the threshold and engage with what is beyond the threshold, is inhibited and impossible. We live in a post-Shoah generation that is experiencing both unprecedented reconciliation between Jews and Christians and the significant growth of an Abrahamic dialogue, while simultaneously witnessing and experiencing a groundswell of re-emerging anti-semitism. It is important therefore

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[24] The Bantu language of Shona has a word, *ubuntu*, which means something like "I am who I am, because you are who you are". It is a strongly communal word that demonstrates a deep level of human connection as essential for survival. In terms of both shared origins and a painful process, or multiple processes, of separation, historically Christians and Jews have had a profound effect on one another for better or worse. In recent decades of scholarship, as already mentioned, we are witnessing a surge of academic and theological interest in the Jewish origins of Christianity, acknowledging the significance of this relationship and the shaping of early Christianity by first-century Judaism. For more on the shaping of both faiths by the other, see Peter Schäfer, The Jewish Jesus: *How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other,* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012)

to identify those locked doors and question if, how and crucially why they might be opened.

Three simple pictures provide a conceptual starting point which frame the project as it is pursued. The first picture is of a garden wall, long and thickset with a cold and heavy, old wooden door. The door has a substantial lock that has grown rusty with disuse and the passage of time. In this picture, the Torah is the unique and specific key that has the potential to unlock the door that is closed, and thus enable movement and access from one space to to another, and crucially movement toward a significant Other.

The second picture is of the same wall and door, but this time it is ajar. On the other side is the rest of the garden, an inviting space full of potential for life. The door which is ajar allows movement from one side of the wall to the other side to become possible. The door is open, but it is up to the seeker to walk through. The open door is merely is an invitation, a possibility. A threshold to something new.

The third picture envisages two people on either side of the wall bending down on their knees, gently but persistently and firmly removing the deceptively fixed solid bricks from this wall. They are deceptively solid because of their appearance, but when they are loosened with the smallest effort, they are moved with surprising ease. When each brick is removed it creates a hole in the wall, a potential window through which to look through to the other side and see the other. Little pockets of light

emerge enabling one to see the other, where previously one was not able to see at all.[25]

In addition to framing the pursuit of this thesis, each of these pictures offers a slightly different lens through which to view the modes of reconnection this thesis suggests are possible. The first and second pictures are explored in chapter three, investigating the possibility of the Torah being a key to the betterment of Jewish-Christian relations and examining what it could look like when a locked door becomes a threshold to potential reconnection. The third picture, explored through chapters four, five and six, is what potentially happens when we meet one another in the text and begin to lay aside some of our inherited theological assumptions. The walls which historically and theologically divide us become less important than the text in front of us, and the task in hand is to learn to 'see' one another through the prism of that text.

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[25] The first two pictures are really two different aspects of the same picture. They emerged gradually from active engagement with the ICCJ as well as a sustained consideration on personal encounters with Judaism and Christianity. This internal reflection has spurred a deep desire for Jewish-Christian reconciliation, and considered the important role of biblical text in that reconciliation. The third picture was an inspired by a relatively recent encounter between a dear friend who happens to be a rabbi and an extraordinary and enigmatic teacher of Hebrew text, and an older Christian gentleman who was profoundly and visibly moved by what it might mean to learn scripture from a Jewish teacher. The weight of the gulf between the two communities dawned on the gentleman and the importance of this encounter caused him to liken it to a piece of a wall being taken down, little by little, until we were no longer invisible to each other. The encounter happened during a Torah study session which was open to both Christians and Jews, in Woking, Surrey, England, in 2014.

II.2   LINGUA SACRA: BIBLICAL HEBREW IN THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

"The Hebrew language is held of little account because of a lack of dutifulness

or perhaps out of despair at its difficulty...Without this language there can be no

understanding of Scripture, for the selfsame New Testament, though written in

Greek, is full of Hebraisms.

Therefore it has been correctly said: The Jews drink from springs,

the Greeks from rivulets, the Romans, from puddles."[26]

The recorded 'Table Talk' of Martin Luther, preserved by his students in *Tischreden*, articulates his recognition of the importance of Hebrew for understanding Scripture.[27] Famous for his anti-Jewish works, hostility to rabbinic exegesis and quite virulent antagonism toward Jews in general (as well as 'papists', 'false Christians' and 'Turks'), Luther's earlier works contained (mildly) more positive sentiments, albeit couched in the hope for mass Jewish conversion to Christianity.[28] Some of the 'table talk' preserved in *Tischreden* would provide a fascinating opportunity for future research on the contribution of Luther's thought to the development of the 'law versus grace' dichotomy as a Christian hermeneutical lens, and the implications of

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[26] Pinchas E. Lapide, *Hebrew in the Church: The Foundations of Jewish-Christian Dialogue.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984), x

[27] http://www.ntslibrary.com/PDF%20Books/Luther%20Table%20Talk.pdf, retrieved April 21 2017

[28] Edward Kessler emphasises that Luther's older works cannot be disconnected from his younger, it is simply that his later works were visceral in their charges against all those he deemed to be the 'enemies of God'. See Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 119-121. See also Kirsi I. Stjerna, Brooks Schramm (eds)., *Martin Luther, the Bible and the Jewish People: A Reader* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012)

Luther's emphasis on the separation between Law and Gospel for Jewish-Christian relations.[29]

In any case, Luther's statement posits the notion of biblical Hebrew as foundational on a number of axes. Firstly, it is important for understanding and relating to Jewish history and texts in their own right, and Jewish reception history of those texts.[30] Secondly, it is important for understanding and relating to the Jewish grounding of early Christianity and the earliest Jewish followers of Jesus, and therefore of the NT texts also.[31] And thirdly, for opening new avenues for exploration and possible (re)connection along the path of Jewish-Christian reconciliation and dialogue. Essential for translation and exegesis, BH is therefore also essential for both answering and asking certain questions about the modes of thought and literary character(s) which underlie the texts that form the Hebrew Bible and the Greek NT. George Steiner, in his classic work *After Babel; Aspects of Language and Translation,* comments that,

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[29] Two quotes from *Tischreden* - "Never was a bolder, harsher sermon preached in the world than that wherein St Paul abolished Moses and his law, as insufficient for a sinner's salvation." and , "Moses with his law is most terrible; there never was any equal to him in perplexing, affrighting, tyrannizing, threatening, preaching, and thundering; for he lays sharp hold on the conscience, and fearfully works it, but all by God's express command." Cf http://www.ntslibrary.com/PDF%20Books/ Luther%20Table%20Talk.pdf, retrieved April 21 2017. Kessler notes that John Calvin was less antagonistic than Luther, and emphasised the continuing importance of the 'Law' for Christians, as well as the continuity of Israel's covenant with the God of Abraham, which Christians share. See *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, 121

[30] William Chomsky, *Hebrew: The Eternal Language* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1957); Lewis Glinert, *The Story of Hebrew* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017). Two excellent resources for examining the importance of the Hebrew for Jewish history and culture from Israel to the Diaspora, and its significance for Christianity from Jerome to the Renaissance to the Reformation.

[31] The study of 'semitisms', Hebrew or Aramaic idioms expressed through the koine Greek of the NT, is an important area of NT scholarship. See http://www.bible-researcher.com/hebraisms.html, retrieved April 22 2017. See also *Semitisms in Luke's Greek: A Descriptive Analysis of Lexical and Syntactical Domains of Semitic Language Influence in Luke's Gospel* (Mohr Siebeck, 2018)

'to both Jew and Gentile, the text of the Books of Moses had a revealed character unlike that of any later body of language. Thus Hebrew has served time and time again as the diamond edge of the cutter's tool'.[32]

As an ancient and yet living language that is sensitive to nuance and spans cultures and generations, Hebrew embodies Jewish dreams and prayers like bones and blood. It is the language of matriarchs and patriarchs, priests and prophets, sages and kings, storytellers and poets, rebels and unlikely heroes. Each letter is a world on it own, every stroke and lyric and cadence dripping with sacred memory. Multiple skeins of connection form beneath the surface of the text through the root system, enabling one text to implicitly contain several possible meanings or to be connected to another seeming unrelated text.[33] A web of intertextuality emerges as exploration into the language of Torah allows us to enter into those possible connections, and join our interpretive voices with an ancient conversation that is yet unfolding.

Burton L.Visotzky, Appleman Professor of Midrash and Inter-religious Studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, claims,

'It is only in the act of reading and the re-reading which each community does together that the Bible becomes a timeless text, the Word of God…The give and take of interpretation creates an extra voice in the room, the sound of Reading the

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[32] George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of language and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 62

[33] "(The) words of Torah are as mountains hanging on a hair", *Sifre Devarim* 335

Book. When that happens, the Bible speaks, not only to each community of readers,

be they Jewish or Christian, or any other flavour, but to all humanity'.[34]

This important idea articulated by Visotzky provides both significant impetus for this study, and also a vision for what is possible through the suggestions this thesis makes. Reading and re-reading, 'together' as Visotzky emphasises, releases the internal contours of the text which require interpretation. Furthermore, engaging with the original language of that text establishes a rather tight method of exegesis which allows for a multiplicity of readings.[35] This thesis therefore relies heavily on the use of BH, in a addition to NT Greek to a lesser extent, to engage the text. However, in adopting this approach to biblical text it is not assumed or suggested that using BH as a mode of entry into the text is the only way to engage with Torah. In fact, Emmanuel Levinas maintained that Scripture necessitates translation into the vernacular in order to become a living word, an act he termed as 'translating into

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[34] Burton L. Visotzky, *Reading the Book: Making the Bible a Timeless Text* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 4

[35] By 'tight method of exegesis', I mean to say the methodological approach adopted in this thesis is relatively simple when considering a biblical text. Rather like a hem on a garment, we unpick the thread of the Hebrew root and follow it to its first usage in a given text. From there, we establish a possible meaning and allow the text, in Visotzky's words, 'to speak'. (This is done however with a consciousness of James Dunn's caution, that a given root meaning of a Hebrew word does not necessarily determine its meaning in a later text.) This approach to study is advantageous when working in a group setting. Rather than one person offering one opinion on the meaning of a text to a group, an interactive study where all participants have the opportunity to respond to the text and trace the 'threads' together, enable a 'seeing' of the text which is far more rich. As the different voices engage with the varying possibilities the text offers, a broader picture of what lies beneath the surface of the text begins to emerge. Thus engagement and dialogue has occurred on a number of levels. See Randolph Tate on an 'integrated approach' to drawing meaning from the text. Randolph W. Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach,* 3rd Ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 1-6

Greek'.[36] Nonetheless, an essential part of the methodology for this project is to sift the expansive capabilities of Hebrew root words to release and engage the possible meanings located within the landscape of a given text. This approach informs the model as it takes shape, as we will see clearly in chapter three.

Drawing on a midrash (the definition of which is outlined below in II.4) which likens prayer to pitchfork, Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg suggests that engagement with the Torah is similar to engaging with a plough, as both expose 'new surfaces of earth to the light and the student reveals unexpected or long-buried facets of meaning'.[37] Indeed a traditional Talmudic dictum requires the attentive Torah student to "turn it over and over, for everything is in it. And in it should you look, and grow old and be worn in it; and from it do not move, since there is no characteristic greater than it".[38] Like upturning clods of earth, Hebrew becomes for this thesis a 'plough', which disturbs the crusts of the religious imagination that can only relate to Torah in binary

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[36] Emmanuel Levinas, *Nine Talmudic Readings,* trans. Annette Aronowicz, (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1990). Commenting on Levinas' emphasis on the importance of "cultural restatement", Rabbi Stephen M. Wylen writes, '(Levinas) took the terminology from the fact that the first published translation of the Hebrew Bible was the Septuagint, the Greek translation used by the Jews of Alexandria in the time of the Ptolemys, the Greek rulers of Egypt. Levinas believed that the cultural distance between the Scriptures and the reader is an integral part of what makes the Scriptures holy. It is as if the Holy Spirit were asleep in the text, and nothing can wake it up but the need to translate the words into another cultural idiom…Once we verbalise what the Scriptures are talking about in our own contemporary terms, we will discover the divine voice speaking through the written word.' See Stephen M. Wylen, *The Seventy Faces of Torah: The Jewish Way of Reading the Sacred Scriptures* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2005), 18-19

[37] Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep: Reflections on the Biblical Unconscious* (New York: Schocken, 2009), 238

[38] בֶּן בַּג בַּג אוֹמֵר, הֲפֹךְ בָּהּ וַהֲפֹךְ בָּהּ, דְּכֹלָּא בָהּ. וּבָהּ תֶּחֱזֵי, וְסִיב וּבְלֵה בָהּ, וּמִנַּהּ לֹא תָזוּעַ, שֶׁאֵין לְךָ מִדָּה טוֹבָה הֵימֶנָּה: *Pirkei Avot* 5:22, https://www.sefaria.org/Pirkei_Avot.5.22?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en, retrieved August 26 2018

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or reductionist terms, and exposes new interpretive and relational possibilities.[39] In many ways this is a key objective for this study.

II.3 MODE OF INQUIRY

Emmanuel Levinas, in his 1982 work *Beyond the Verse,* maintained that the biblical text has both 'strict contours (and a) plain meaning, which is also enigmatic.'[40] There is a plain meaning to biblical text and there are also more ambiguous meanings which are beyond the surface of the text, and the process of hermeneutics draws out the implied meanings which lie beneath this surface, (as was emphasised above in relation to the work of Burton Visotzky). According to Levinas then, the process of hermeneutics, interpretation and revelation are 'eternally inexhaustible', yielding their riches to each generation who is willing to engage with them and retell them.

For Hans-Georg Gadamer, understanding 'is dialogic, and thus intersubjective', meaning the dynamics between tradition and historical consciousness, culture and oneself and the other, are what establish the environment for an understanding which is rooted in a dialogical exchange.[41] Understanding which is attained through a

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[39] Zornberg draws the work of Russian poet Osip Mandelstam to buttress the midrashic image of prayer as a pitchfork. Mandelstam connects the activity of poetry to the action of a plough - "Poetry is the plough, tearing open and turning over time so that the deep layers of it, its rich black undersoil, ends up on the surface…Mankind craves…like a ploughman, for the virgin soil of time". See, *The Murmuring Deep*, 239

[40] Emmanuel Levinas, *Beyond the Verse,* Trans. Gary D. Mole. (London: Continuum, 2007), xiii

[41] Gill Scherto, "Holding Oneself Open in a Conversation", in *Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics and the Ethics of Dialogue,* 9. http://www.dialoguestudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ Journal_of_Dialogue_Studies_Vol_3_No_1_Holding_Oneself_Open_in_a_Conversation_Gadamers_Philosophical_Hermeneutics_and_the_Ethics_of_Dialogue.pdf, retrieved September 6 2018

dialogue with another, is, according to Gadamer, transformative.[42] Establishing authentic conversation in which Christians and Jews are open to one another and in the process are able to draw 'eternally inexhaustible' meanings from the text though a multiplicity of dialogues is the undercurrent for much of the exploration in this project.

Drawing from Visotzky, Levinas and Gadamer, the mode of inquiry adopted for this project is essentially conversational in nature, grounded in the premise that a multiplicity of dialogues are not only possible, but vital if we are to allow the text to 'speak' into the Jewish-Christian relationship. There is a dialogue with those who regard the text as sacred, a dialogue with the historical experience which brought us to where we are today, a dialogue with the language of the text (refer to 11.2 above), and a dialogue with the interior of the text itself. Moreover, if there is dialogue with the interior of the text, this means that we are allowing ourselves to be read by the text as much as we are reading it.[43]

II.3.1 HERMENEUTICAL DEW: A TEXTUAL APPROACH

"Let my teaching drop like rain and my words descend like dew,

like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants."

(Deuteronomy 32:2)

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[42] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* (New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013) 387

[43] Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg writes in *Moses: A Human Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016), about exposing oneself to 'the gaze of the text'. 1-3

Rain and dew, *geshem* גֶּשֶׁם and *tal* טַל, are both biblical images used in a variety of ways and texts. As natural phenomena, they register similar but yet distinguishable characteristics, in that they are both are formed from moisture in the atmosphere and are essentially composed of the same substance, but manifest differently. Rain falls and soaks and is absorbed. Dew forms and caresses and draws out the inner moisture of the places it finds itself before being re-evaporated. It is this evocative image of dew gently resting on the surface and awakening and drawing out the 'inner moisture', that I want to employ to underscore the textual approach this thesis adopts as we endeavour to highlight the vital significance of biblical text and specifically the Torah, to Jewish-Christian reconciliation.

As touched on above in II.3, my working premise is that both a dialogical relationship with the interior of the text is possible, in the sense of the 'communication' which takes place between the reader, the author and the text itself.[44] Establishing the meaning of a given biblical text requires not simply interpretation but participation with the interior processes of the text, and the *Wirkungsgeschichte*, the reception history of that text. Such an assumption of dialogue and engagement defines, in part, the process of *midrash*.[45] *Midrash* מִדְרָשׁ, derived from the Hebrew root *darash,* 'to seek out' or 'draw out' or 'to inquire', is the term used in

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[44] Randolph W. Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*, 14

[45] Literary critic Gerald Bruns writes on the importance of language releasing experience. The notion of language expressing and containing experience is one which Avivah Zornberg employs in her approach to biblical text and one which I find helpful for this project. See - Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *The Beginning of Desire: Reflections on Genesis* (New York: Schocken, 1995), xi-xv. For more on Gerald Bruns see *Modern Poetry and the Idea of Language,* Gerald L. Bruns. (Scholarly Series; Dalkey Archive Press, 1974); and *Hermeneutics - Ancient and Modern*. Gerald L. Bruns. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995)

rabbinic literature for the interpretive study of the Bible.[46] The hermeneutical emphasis for this project, is on releasing the internal Hebrew meanings located within the landscape of the narrative, and allowing them to animate the conversation as it unfolds in the same way dew draws out the 'inner moisture' where it rests.

Using both images of rain and dew, the biblical prophet Hosea offers two modes of relationship between God and Israel - one as rain, and one as dew.

"Let us pursue obedience to the Lord…His appearance in as sure as the daybreak, and He will come to us as the rain; like latter rain that refreshes the earth" (Hosea 6:3); "I will be to Israel like dew; he shall blossom like the lily, he shall strike root like a Lebanon tree" (Hosea 14:6).

If we notice, the first verse is spoken by the people, and the second is spoken by God.[47] Each expresses a desire for connection, but both use the differing images of rain and dew. Picking up the thread, the Talmud furthers Hosea's prophetic considerations and distinguishes between these sensibilities, suggesting that 'God-as-rain' is what the people desire, but 'God-as-dew' is what God actually offers to the people.[48] The Talmud reasons this must be because rain is at times 'desirable and at other times not desirable', but dew is 'desirable at all times'. Commenting further on this very idea, the nineteenth century Hasidic Master Shem Mi-Shmuel considers the distinguishing and unique features of dew, 'it rests for a moment on the grass…and

[46] Jacob Neusner, *The Midrash: An Introduction* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing, 2004); Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, *Midrash; Reading the Bible with Question Marks,* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2013)

[47] Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep,* 163

[48] Ibid., 163

arouses the inner moisture', before it vanishes and evaporates.[49] Why is it that in the words of Hosea, God wishes to relate not as a soaking, penetrating rain? Perhaps because if God were to only relate to Israel in this way, nothing would emerge internally from them.[50] Dew on the other hand signals a gentle touch that awakens our inner vitality and provokes an unfolding of a process within. Drawing on a midrash that connects Abraham with the verse 'Yours is the dew of your youth' (Psalm 110:3), Avivah Zornberg likens the activity of dew to perfume,

'To know God-as-dew is to respond to a hint, like perfume - a word or two is sometimes enough'.[51]

This redolent metaphor of dew, then, inspiring the approach taken to biblical narrative and Hebrew text in this thesis, is not a one way process. The text can also become dew for us as we engage, sparking our own interior processes, evoking the trace of something deeper like a hint of heady perfume. As we play with Hebrew meanings and various interpretive possibilities begin to surface, so also the deep residues of our own unconscious begin to interact and dialogue with this ancient text. Inner worlds are awakened as we are drawn into the inner world of the Hebrew Bible, and in the process we begin to see the other in our midst from a renewed perspective.

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[49] Ibid., 164

[50] Interestingly the Latin word for 'education' is *educare* and means to 'draw out that which lies within'. See Peter Jones, *Quid Pro Quo: What the Romans Really Gave the English Language.* (London: Atlantic Books, 2016)

[51] Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep,* 165-168

How can this textual approach support the hypothesis that the Torah is a possible key to Jewish-Christian reconciliation? Taking our directive from the text in front of us rather than the doctrines and cultural and religious differences that divide us, we allow ourselves to be shaped by the text. In a Gadamerian sense, we are engaging in 'true conversation' and are now part of a "communion in which we do not remain who we were".[52] Through engaging with sacred text we are opening ourselves to the other who shares that text, enabling our relational connections to be transformed.

II.3.2   ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTION

In her article *Notes toward Finding the Right Question*, Jewish feminist theologian Cynthia Oznick writes,

"The philosopher Suzanne K. Langer somewhere observes that every answer is concealed in the question that elicits it, and that what we must strive to do, then, is not to look for the right answer, but attempt rather to discover the right question.' She boldly highlights the 'danger' of asking the 'wrong question…which inexorably (leads) to answers, that are as good as lies".[53]

Scripture is full of questions. Questions about community and ethics, about the Divine and the nature of the relationship between humans the Divine. About how to relate to an invisible God whose Oneness is imprinted into the fabric of creation. About what it means 'to see' (a broader question we will engage with through

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[52] Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 403

[53] Cynthia Oznick, *Notes Toward Finding the Right Question*, https://hartman.org.il/fck_uploads/file/io4.ozick.pdf. Retrieved December 11 2016

chapters two to six), and how seeing the Divine and seeing the other in our midst are deeply connected. Indeed, the first reciprocal conversation between God and the first human in the first book of the Torah takes place in the form of a series of questions and opens with a question - "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9). "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9); "What is your name?" (Genesis 32:28); "What are you seeking?" (Genesis 37:15); "What is in your hand?" (Exodus 4:2), are other significant questions that act like hinges in pivotal moments of the opening biblical narratives. They express a latent vibrancy in that they are just as relevant if asked in the twenty-first century. Questions, mores than answers, have the capacity to "bring out the undetermined possibilities" and open up "possibilities of meaning".[54]

The original question propelling this study asks if the Torah is a stumbling block to the Jewish-Christian relationship, or a possible stepping stone to deeper and more fruitful relations. Oznick's statement about the answer being concealed in the question, and about therefore searching not for the right answer but the 'right question', helps to frame how we respond to the question this thesis poses. We can identify that the interpretation of the Torah in the historical Christian-Jewish encounter has been as an obedience demanding 'law' that is in contradistinction to grace. (This will be examined in different ways from chapters one to six). There is little doubt this has been a stumbling block to dialogue and relations, a 'locked door' to the pursuit of reconciliation.

In light of Oznick's recommendations however, we are not actually asking if the stumbling block should be removed or if we should just abandon hope of unlocking

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[54] Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 383

this part of the relationship altogether. Instead we are asking if it is not the stumbling block that is the problem, but rather the way we are perceiving it. And what informs our perceptions? In part, our language informs how we perceive what is around us and how we respond to those perceptions. (This will be examined more fully in chapter chapter four). Shifting theological vocabulary about the Torah enables perceptions about the Torah to shift also. This shift of language and perception transforms in turn what appear to be impasses on our path toward reconciliation. What appears to be a stumbling block might be a stepping stone, and what appears to be a locked door might actually be the very key to reconnection.

III. METAPHOR AS A TOOL FOR THIS THESIS

III.1 FROM THE DEEP: METAPHOR AS A WAY OF SPEAKING ABOUT GOD

"Deep calls unto deep", according to Psalm 42:8. Communication is more than a single, visible transaction between two parties, more than is visible to the eye. There is always more beneath the surface of what is communicated. The deeper, less visible aspects of a significant encounter leave unconscious thumbprints in the collective memory, which inform in different ways the collective imagination of those who participated in the given encounter.[55] Traces of our communications, both conscious and unconscious, with one another and with the Divine are reverberated throughout our religious imaginations and sacred texts across time and culture.

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[55] Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep,* ix-xii

Humans are entirely unique as a species, in that they not only possess a consciousness, but give voice to the experience of that consciousness, and attempt to draw meaning from it through language (the capacity to express that consciousness verbally).[56] This is what makes us fundamentally and fully human, as distinct from another animal species. It is precisely this depth of consciousness that language attempts to give form to and to communicate. 'Plain' language however, (that is, direct speech that avoids the use of imagery and symbolism) needs help from another source in order to flesh out the subconscious or deeper truth of a significant encounter or a particular transaction. In that vein, a metaphor is a 'figure of speech, that identifies something as being the same as some unrelated thing, for (linguistic) rhetorical affect'.[57] *Metaphor* is a linguistic phenomenon, wherein seemingly unrelated words and images are used to convey, describe, discuss and respond to something else, for the purpose of adequately communicating something profound or otherwise unfathomable.[58]

This project relies heavily on the use of metaphor to communicate its central ideas. While metaphor, according to the definition above, communicates something almost unfathomable through unrelated words or images, it should not be confined to the realm of 'symbol'. Nor is metaphor simply a form of analogy. Rather, as Mary Gerhart and Allan Russell put forth, metaphor is better understood as "the origin of

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[56] See Robert C. Berwick and Noam Chomsky, *Why Only Us: Language and Evolution.* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2016). See also George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation,* 60

[57] See https://literarydevices.net/metaphor/ and also,https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/metaphor. Retrieved December 10 2016

[58] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 3-6

a new understanding, (an understanding) that goes beyond language…"[59] It not only colours our language with nuances that enrich and enliven our imagination, religious or otherwise, but erupts to shatter the crusts of our imagination. Religious language in particular (that is, theological language that describes, discusses and responds to the notion of the Divine within an established religious framework), is inherently metaphorical. It is built upon linguistic constructions which enhance our models of God and function as helpful tools in delineating the sacred 'dreamscape'. Religious language is more than a collection of stories or laws expressing a certain theological view, it is as Rabbi Arthur Green suggests, "an attempt to put into narrative form a truth so profound that it cannot be told except when dressed in the garb of narration".[60]

For Christian feminist theologian Sallie McFague, these religious or sacred metaphors are a 'necessary human construction' within the realm of theology. We need them. In *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age*, McFague writes "We construct the worlds we inhabit…(but) then forget we have done so."[61] This implies we necessarily respond to human experience in all its shades through language, and respond in particular to the human experience of the Divine, through the use of *extended*

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[59] Mary Gerhart and Allan Russell, Metaphoric Process: *The Creation of Scientific and Religious Understanding* (Fort Worth, Texas: Texas University Press, 1984), 95-120

[60] Arthur Green, *Seek my Face: Jewish Mystical Theology* (Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2003), xxii

[61] Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987) 6

metaphors.[62] In so doing, however, we run the risk of mistaking our metaphors for what they really are, which McFague identifies with idolatry.[63] In other words, they become the very thing they have been employed to describe. We need to remember that metaphors are an essential part of human language and understanding, that, in the echoes of Paul Ricouer, feed our imagination through the complex interplay of engagement between the self and the symbol.[64]

Keeping in mind the idea that metaphor 'goes beyond language' is significant for the development of the model which informs this thesis in chapter three. In seeing it as something that 'goes beyond', we can see it as a tool to help us reach out within the deep, to reach from the deepest parts of us to connect with the deepest parts of an other. A tool which enables us to move beyond those 'safe shores' and limits of our (particularly theological) understandings, and tap open the fragile plaster that so often masks our human interactions. What would this look like when we apply what it is to call out to one's 'eternal other' from the deep, to the question of Jewish-Christian relations as a whole? And to the questions which bubble up when we begin to probe the deceptively solid eggshells of our inherited theological perceptions?

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[62] According to McFague, 'extended metaphors' take 'ordinary people and events (as the) context for envisaging and understanding the strange and extraordinary'. Metaphors, both root and extended, are a way not just of communicating, but of 'knowing', and this separates metaphor from allegory, which is an extremely important distinction. See McFague, *Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology* (Minneapolis MN: Augsberg Fortress Publications, 2000), 2-5

[63] See http://www.academicroom.com/article/sallie-mcfagues-metaphorical-theology. Retrieved July 14 2016

[64] Paul Ricoeur, Charles E. Reagan, and David Stewart (eds.), "Existence and Hermeneutics" in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: An Anthology of His Work* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), 101

III.1.1 THE UNFATHOMABLE ABYSS

A 'fathom' is a unit of length that is used to measure the depth of water.[65] Coming from the Old English, 'fathom' (meaning 'outstretched arms') in modern parlance has come to express something that is as difficult to grasp as the depth of the ocean. The Hebrew word rendered by the English as 'deep' in Psalm 42, and indeed Genesis 1, is *tehom* תְּהוֹם, and is more expressive and richer in association in its original context than its translation.[66] *Tehom*, conveying 'unfathomable void', 'deep abyss', or more poetically 'murmuring and dense with watery voices', is in biblical Hebrew the 'great Deep' of the primordial waters of creation.[67] As such it offers perhaps an apt metaphor in and of itself, for understanding why we need theological metaphors at all. Here, in an ancient subterranean ocean the deep abyss of one calls out to the deep abyss of another, in a way that only a voice in the depths could fathom. The deepest parts of us find resonance with the deepest parts of an 'other' and call out to that other, bypassing the masks of the surface. The superficial shell of human interaction is no longer present in the encounter, only the deepest parts of us, and it is these deepest parts that connect. As William James wrote,

"Out of my experience, such as it is (and it is limited enough) one fixed conclusion dogmatically emerges, and that is this, that we with our lives are like islands in the sea, or like trees in the forest. The maple and the pine may whisper to each other with their leaves. …But the trees also commingle their roots in the darkness underground, and the islands also hang together through the ocean's bottom. Just so there is a

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[65] https://www.britannica.com/science/fathom. Retrieved July 15 2016

[66] The Greek equivalent is *abyss* ἄβυσσος 'the unfathomable/bottomless depth'

[67] Avivah Zornberg's translation. See *The Murmuring Deep*, ix-x

continuum of cosmic consciousness, against which our individuality builds but

accidental fences, and into which our several minds plunge as into a mother-sea or

reservoir."[68]

William James' words identify a depth to human connections which resonate with the

Psalmist's use of *tehom,* as the unfathomable depth of one calls out to the depths of

another. Considering this image helps underscore why we use religious metaphors

and indeed why in this particular theological model they are being applied so

extensively - to express in a different way a deeper actuality that somehow could not

be adequately articulated through plain language. The human imagination itself is

perhaps so expansive that it needs something of depth to grasp and relate to. A

sacred metaphor then, in 'going beyond' language, could be said to be

communicating in conceptual terms what is actually happening 'in the deep', in the

subterranean sea of *tehom.*

The use of metaphor in constructing the arguments of this thesis provides a variable

tool which sustains the expression of profound ideas through accessible language

and images. The use of the 'key' metaphor for example, expanded upon in chapters

one and three, lends itself to a multitude of other metaphors, such as 'lock' and

'door'. It facilitates questions such as who may open this door, why is it locked, and

what lies on the other side?[69] These questions underpin the central ideas of chapter

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[68] William James, originally published in The American Magazine in1909. Cited in *Science, God's Hard Gift: James's Pragmatism Expanded and Updated*, by Frederick R. Bauer. (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse Inc, 2010)

[69] These questions are also asked through Franz Kafka's parable *The Law,* discussed in chapter two.

three which closely examines the Torah as a key to the betterment of Jewish-Christian relations.

The 'unfathomable abyss' can also apply to the Jewish-Christian relationship itself. The multiple 'partings' which occurred as Christianity and Judaism eventually became separate entities, created a chasm which was filled with mutual hostility, suspicion and isolation. And yet, the connection between Christians and Jews was never fully severed - it continued to operate largely in an oppositional mode of persecution, where supersessionism (defined in chapter one) was the defining feature. Revisiting this chasm itself gives an opportunity to reimagine the parameters of the Jewish-Christian relationship. If Torah speaks of *tehom,* the primordial abyss or the 'murmuring deep' as Zornberg describes it, being present before a new beginning dawned, revisiting the abyss in the Jewish-Christian relationship can perhaps provide a place from where beginnings in reconciliation become actualised.

Irving Greenberg stresses the importance of developing 'new patterns' of relationship in the ongoing dialogue between Jews and Christians. These 'new patterns' can and should, according to Greenberg, emerge in part from a sustained reflection on the reality of the Holocaust, where evil was wholly redefined. Without confronting this particular abyss, Jews and Christians, individually and collectively, run the risk of underestimating evil, and glamorising modern culture to the point of idolatry.[70] Indeed, it was the indescribable darkness of the Holocaust which acted as the catalyst for Christians to drastically reorient traditional modes of thinking about

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[70] Irving Greenberg, *For the Sake of Heaven and Earth: The New Encounter between Judaism and Christianity* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004), 129-140

Jews and Judaism. Both Jews and Christians find themselves inexorably repositioned following the Holocaust, and it is this repositioning which enables the 'new encounter' of which Greenberg speaks.

IV. STRUCTURE OF THESIS

Containing six chapters, this thesis is structured around the model developed in chapter three. Chapters one and two lay the definitive and historical groundwork for the model, and chapters four, five and six engage the model through navigating traditionally contentious areas in the Jewish-Christian relationship, including supersessionism, the supposed contradistinction between the Torah and grace, and interpretive approaches to some of the more challenging NT passages.

Chapter One, "Defining our Terms", lays out the terms to be unpacked throughout the thesis, and establishes important definitions and concepts, such as 'supersessionism', 'covenant', ideas of mutual partnership between Jews and Christians. Irving Greenberg's work on covenantal partnership, Philip Cunningham's approach to rethinking Jewish-Christian relations in light of *NA,* and Jules Isaac's key involvement in the ultimate formation of *NA,* and Mary C. Boys' research and contribution to Jewish-Christian dialogue provide important points of reference.

Chapter Two, "Roots and Seeds: Historical Dynamics in the Jewish-Christian Relationship", establishes the relevant historical backdrop of the Jewish-Christian relationship, paying close attention to the roots and seeds of Jewish and Christian hostility and mutual exclusion. The work of Fr. Edward Flannery on historical

Christian persecution of Jews, the scholarship of Geza Vermes on early Christian origins, Edward Kessler's comprehensive assessment of historical Jewish-Christian relations, and the work of historian Marc Saperstein inform the discussion, amongst others. The chapter concludes with a broad assessment, drawing on Mary C. Boys and Philip Cunningham, of the revision of church teaching in the area of catechesis and liturgy, following the positive developments in Jewish-Christian relations which were ushered in through Vatican II.

Chapter Three, "Open Spaces: The Torah as a Key to Sacred Reconciliation, Developing the Model", builds on all that has been established to develop a model which envisions the Torah in metaphorical terms as a 'key' that is essential for Jewish-Christian reconciliation. The essentiality of this first metaphor is expressed through the use of a second metaphor, that of a 'lens' which proffers possibilities of mirroring, reflecting and re-framing the relationship, in a space that has been made accessible through the opening of a door. Part of the significance of this model is that in suggesting cross-communal engagement through the medium of biblical text, specifically the Torah, as a key objective, the model actually uses biblical text to achieve this objective. It does this through offering close readings which reflect the interpretive and dynamic nature submerged within the interior of the texts themselves. In addition to the dialogical mode which sustains this chapter, a variety of genres are engaged. These include biblical narratives and text, informed by primary exegetical sources, (talmudic and midrashic texts,) and medieval Jewish commentaries, (Rashi and Ramban). Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg's interpretive methodology along with the influence of Burton Visotzky, provide a rich lens through which an approach to biblical text is developed, which values the coherence

of the text and enables the possibility of a multi-layered reading. In addition, Emmanuel Levinas' exegetic mode of enabling the 'face of the other' to be seen through the prism of the text sustains the mode of inquiry through this chapter.

Chapter Four, "Languages of Rupture and Reconnection: The Torah as a Key to Navigating Supersessionism", continues to examine the roots of the prevalent Christian idea that the Torah is disjoined from grace, through closely examining the connection between language and perception. Drawing on John T. Pawlikowski's work in analysing the implications of supersessionism for the Jewish-Christian relationship, specifically in relation to his critical assessment of Christology, and Didier Polleyfeyt, this chapter asks if supersessionism and replacement theology are languages of rupture which originated in a post-Destruction environment, querying also if the Torah can be a possible language of reconnection between Christians and Jews. In that vein, Ludwig Wittgenstein's 'language game' provides significant impetus to reconsider the theological languages which have historically sustained the relationship between Christians and Jews. The model in chapter three, then, provides an access point for developing this language.

Chapter Five, "The Torah as a Key to Navigating Flashpoint Texts", closely examines 'flashpoint' NT texts, which historically have been misused to buttress and provoke anti-Jewish sentiment. A most pertinent question in this chapter asks whether the NT texts themselves are sources of supersessionism, or if this was superimposed and read back into the text at later stages. This chapter also investigates aspects of the Greek word *nomos,* examining some of the implications for the Christian-Jewish relationship of translating the Torah restrictively as 'law'.

Mark Nanos' important relocation of Paul inside Judaism builds on the 'New Perspective on Paul' scholarship, while offering a critique of its post-Reformation starting point in reappraising the Apostle.

Chapter Six, "The Subversive Quality of Torah Text: The Torah as a Key to Grace", as the final chapter presents a more detailed exploration of the Torah as a text, particularly in relation to grace. Building from the discussion on *nomos* in the previous chapter, it draws on Robert Cover's analysis of inextricable nature of narratives and the laws found within those narratives. It also closely examines some of the 'legal' terminology within the Torah, relying to some degree on the more philosophical approach exhibited by Abraham Joshua Heschel in *Torah from Heaven*. This chapter further demonstrates some of the conclusions from chapter four, through highlighting that a shift in theological vocabulary can have a profound effect on translation.

V. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

This thesis is centred around the fundamental argument that biblical text can provide a unique space where a renewed encounter between Christians and Jews becomes possible. This encounter begins at an exegetical level, but the process of study itself enables a revisioning of the Deepest Other (examined more fully in chapter one), and in turn enables a deepening reconciliation (explored in chapter three). It might be assumed that the importance of the Bible in the Jewish-Christian relationship as it continues to unfold, as well as in the history of that relationship, is a readily familiar path of study. Indeed much has been published on the role of the Bible in past as

well as future Jewish-Christian relations.[71] Previous approaches in this field have

concentrated on different theological dimensions of that biblical culture, examining

for example, the role of covenant and its potential role in developing Jewish-

Christian understanding.[72] Another approach is to concentrate on the historical

aspect of that biblical culture, examining the different roles Scripture played as the

'partings of the ways' eventually solidified.[73]

This project offers however a specific focus on a particular aspect of the biblical

culture that Jews and Christians share - the Torah. This will add a fresh and much

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[71] The study of Jewish-Christian relations as a whole is complex and includes history, theology, sociology, politics, language and education as well as biblical studies. The Bible, however, occupies an underlying role in many of these discussions, as sociological and political norms, in the Middle Ages for example, grew directly out of theological persuasions about Jews and Judaism, which in turn stems from biblical interpretation and theological application. Thus the historical experience of the Jewish-Christian relationship is either directly or indirectly affected by the Bible. In 2002 the Pontifical Biblical Commission released a significant document entitled, *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible,* detailing a Catholic reassessment of the Jewish relationship with the Bible, and examines NT attitudes to Jews and Judaism. Within the context of *Nostra Aetate,* this document is significant in its commitment to the deepening of Jewish-Christian relations. See http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/pcb_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20020212_popolo-ebraico_en.html, and also http://www.jcrelations.net/The+Jewish+People+and+their+Sacred+Scriptures+in+the+Christian+Bible%3A%3Cbr%3EA+Response+to+the+Pontifical+Biblical+Commission+Document.2757.0.html?L=3, retrieved August 24 2018. For more on the importance of the Bible to Jewish-Christian Relations, see John F. A. Sawyer, "The Bible in Future Jewish-Christian Relations", in *Challenges in Jewish-Christian Relations,* p 39; and Edward Kessler, *Bound by the Bible* (2004) for an in-depth study into how Jewish and Christian interpretive encounters impacted Jewish and Christian exegeses.

[72] For example, Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt pioneered theological aspects of Jewish-Christian dialogue, through his focus on "(freeing) Christian teachings from its inherited anti-Judaism.". For Marquardt, the idea of covenant was a central link between Christians and Jews, "the most constructive biblical concept to describe both Christian identity and the Jewish-Christian relationship." See Simon Schoon, "Covenant", 111. See also "Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt (2.12. 1928 - 25.5. 2002)", http://www.jcrelations.net/Marquardt__Friedrich-Wilhelm.2541.0.html?L=3 , retrieved February 25 2019

[73] The statement "Christians and Jews", as a particular study on "The Church and the Jewish People" commissioned by the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany in 1975, emphasises the significant and ongoing role which Scripture has played within the historical Jewish-Christian dynamic, from the early Christian movement as a Jewish sect, to Paul, to the establishment of Christianity as the state religion of Rome, and in the centuries following. See "Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany", Document 14, *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People,* 74-76

needed perspective to the ongoing and multi-dimensional conversation about the Bible and Jewish-Christian relations, as we begin to see that the Torah is vitally significant to Jewish-Christian reconciliation. As such, this thesis identifies three gaps which it attempts to address.

The first is a sustained focus on the Torah as a fundamental document in the formation of both Judaism and Christianity, without resorting to the assumption that the Torah means 'law' or the 'old covenant'. This thesis therefore attempts to probe the possibilities of the Torah functioning as a key to the betterment of Jewish-Christian relations, in part through allowing the Torah to be referenced from the vantage point of Jewish sacred memory. This requires a critical shift in theological language, which is addressed in chapter four.

The second gap this thesis responds to is the lack of grassroots approaches to revitalising and nourishing 'face-to-face inquiry' between Christians and Jews.[74] As mentioned and as will be explored throughout these chapters, Catholic, Protestant and ecumenical bodies have produced a plethora of meaningful, landmark and significant documents which further the scope of the Christian-Jewish dialogue, at least at institutional level. However, it is vital to see this engagement being sparked in cross-community contexts and in flesh-and-blood encounters with the text. For S. Samuel Shermis, writing on the aspects of Jewish-Christian dialogue which concern education, this can be termed as "translating guidelines into strategies".[75]

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[74] Peter Ochs, *Another Reformation,* 19

[75] Michael Shermis and Arthur E. Zannoni (eds.), *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1991), 254

Point Four of the aforementioned *Dabru Emet,* stresses that "Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of the Torah".[76] Recognising the landmark contribution of *DE* to Jewish-Christian dialogue and reconciliation, this thesis nevertheless extends *Dabru Emet's* point beyond mere acceptance, and uses it as a starting point for a face-to-face encounter with the Torah itself. This dialogical encounter also goes beyond the 'moral principles' of the Torah, using narrative and conversational hermeneutics as a mode of connection, and as such fills a third gap though offering a future direction for furthering Jewish-Christian reconciliation.

V.1 CHALLEGES AND OBJECTIVES

Historically, Scripture has often been used as a tool to validate a vilification of Jews and Judaism. In some streams of Christian theology, the Torah is often equated with a burdensome, antiquated legalism which demands obedience in exchange for life. It is often placed in stark contrast to the concept of grace and it is assumed that the two are mutually opposed, (examined in chapter six). The questions behind the pursuit of this particular focus on the Torah, stem from a wrestling with the theological and historical impact of this imposed dichotomy and influence the development of this project. When placed in opposition to grace, a negative view of those who find themselves irremovably and irrevocably attached to the Torah naturally emerges, which as history affirms, has devastating consequences. The question remains - is the Torah a stumbling block for Christians in the Jewish-Christian relationship? Or, is it a potential stepping stone, a key to the betterment of

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[76] *Dabru Emet,* http://www.jcrelations.net/Dabru_Emet_-
_A_Jewish_Statement_on_Christians_and_Christianity.2395.0.html. Retrieved October 7 2017

this relationship which offers a sacred route to deeper and more fruitful relations. This project will effectively demonstrate that it can be the latter. An ethic of recovery and realignment can enable connections which are grounded in mutual openness and integrity.

This is by no means simple and many thorny issues both historical and theological potentially arise. Hermeneutics can induce fractious and violent debate amongst those of the same tradition, let alone those of differing ones. Undeniably, the Bible has been a point of historical contention between Jews and Christians, (explored with more detail in chapters one and two), as the weight of this heritage has sparked vehement and at times violent disputes. In the 1987 statement issued by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), it was expressed,

"The struggle between Christians and Jews in the first century of the Christian movement was often bitter and marked by mutual violence. The depth of hostility left its mark on early Christian and Jewish literature…In subsequent centuries, after the occasions for the original hostility had long passed, the church misused portions of the New Testament as proof texts to justify a heightened animosity toward the Jews. Persecution of Jews was at times officially sanctioned…Holy Week became a time of terror for Jews…"[77]

Acknowledging a theological and historically complex past with regard to Jewish and Christian interaction, the objective here is not to arrive at the same conclusion and to benignly hope that both parties might like one another more because they infer

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[77] The full statement is entitled "A Theological Understanding of the Relationship between Christians and Jews". See *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People: Statements by the World Council of Churches and the Jewish People,* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1988), 114-115

similar ideas about a text. Indeed traditional Jewish study encourages robust debate and healthy argumentation as a form of discourse in drawing out the meaning of a given biblical text. The intention and objective, rather, is to allow the Torah to become a meeting place which is pregnant with possibility, where multiple meanings can be found in sacred words as we engage in them together. The words become a world we can inhabit, a place with endless interpretation that is accessible no matter the theological, religious or ethnic background of the student.

Respectful participation and an active engagement with the text is what is required, and as we learn, together, to re-see the text and lay aside some inherited stereotypes, we begin to re-see the other with whom we share this text.[78] Shifting theological vocabulary, such as 'under the law', (examined in chapter five) and reconsidering traditional stumbling blocks, such as supersessionism, (examined in chapter four) are hopeful outcomes from this exegetical encounter.

V.2   POTENTIAL WIDER IMPLICATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

What are the wider implications in reconsidering the importance of the Torah for the Jewish-Christian relationship? Firstly, in a world fraught with religious tension and where interaction with the religious 'other' is increasingly commonplace, learning the language one's neighbour for sustaining the dynamics of a mutually fruitful dialogue is vitally important. *Nostra Aetate* opens with the now famous words translated from the Latin and states,

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[78] "Participation can (also) be transformational…interpretations and images not only bring complexities of past experience to summation but open possibilities for new forms of experience and creative interaction…" Nicholas Davey, *Unfinished Worlds: Hermeneutics, Aesthetics and Gadamer* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013) 104

"In our time, when day by day mankind is being drawn closer together, and the ties between different peoples are becoming stronger, the Church examines more closely her relationship to non-Christian religions. In her task of promoting unity and love among men, indeed among nations, she considers above all in this declaration what men have in common and what draws them to fellowship."[79]

The approach of this thesis speaks directly into what it means to engage in a dialogical encounter which is rooted in sacred text. Secondly, reconsidering the Torah for Christianity does far more than simply connect it with the language of Judaism, it reconnects Christianity with its own life source, thereby revitalising from within as well as without.

Another implication of the concentration of this thesis, is the potential impact for the wider Abrahamic dialogue, as it unfolds alongside Jewish-Christian, Christian-Muslim and Jewish-Muslim interfaith encounters. As touched upon in the next chapter, Islam also maintains a supersessionist view of Christianity and of Judaism.[80] This can be a point of potential theological reflection for the Christian-Jewish dialogue, enabling a deeper reassessment of the historical and theological dimensions of Christian supersessionism toward Jews, and what it might mean for Christians if the same posture is adopted by Muslims.

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[79] See http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html, retrieved February 27 2019

[80] Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 191-192. See also Franklin H. Littell, *The Crucifixion of the Jews: the Failure of Christians to Understand the Jewish Experience* (Macon, GA: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 2005), 28-32

A third possible area of impact which the focus of this thesis might access, is that of Eastern Christian-Jewish relations. It is acknowledged that this research, and indeed much of the Jewish-Christian dialogical enterprise, is conducted from a Western, specifically Euro-American perspective.[81] Widening this encounter, to African and Asian contexts for example, is particularly of significance in communities where there is little or no Jewish presence. This might seem like a contradiction, to promote dialogue on a Christian-Jewish platform where there is not much of a Jewish presence, but that is precisely why it is important. The chances of engagement between Christians and Jews in these contexts is virtually nil. Therefore, to support a biblical engagement with the Torah in a communal setting potentially does three things. Firstly, it offers an opportunity to engage those whose only reference point to Judaism might be an anachronistic projection of an ancient Judaism, retrieved from an interpretation of biblical texts. If a textual engagement was to be facilitated with an awareness of the Jewish reception history of the Torah, in other words a working knowledge of what the Torah means for Jews both historically and today, this might be a good foundation from where to establish some sort of positive mode of current Christian-Jewish connection.

Secondly, an engagement with the Torah potentially enables, for Christians, an affirmation of Jesus' Jewishness, a point emphasised by the Ten Points of Seelisberg and many of the major documents issued across the West/East divide or Global North/South divide.[82]

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[81] "The Development of Contemporary Jewish-Christian Relations", Aitken and Kessler, *Challenges in Jewish-Christian Relations,* 4-5

[82] See Jean Halperin and Hans Ucko, (eds.), *Worlds of Memory and Wisdom: Encounters of Jews and African Christians* (World Council of Churches: WCC Publications, 2005)

Which leads to the third possible outcome - an essential re-examination of liturgy and a revision of church teaching in relation to unfavourable perceptions of Jews and Judaism. This third point will be discussed in more detail in chapter two, in reference to the positive institutional changes effected by varying church bodies.

CHAPTER ONE

DEFINING OUR TERMS

I. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter established the central research question as one which investigates the possibility of reconciliation through sacred text in the field of Jewish-Christian relations. Specifically, this thesis is asking whether the Torah is a stumbling block for Christians in the Jewish-Christian relationship, or if it can be a stepping stone toward reconciliation. The premise for this research is that sacred text can provide a unique space where a renewed exegetical encounter between Christians and Jews becomes a mode for reconnection. Sacred reconciliation through sacred text, achieved through partnership and not isolation.[83]

Drawing inspiration from *Nostra Aetate*, which re-visioned the relationship between Catholics and Jews in part through the reassessment of certain scriptures, this thesis seeks to reframe the Jewish-Christian relationship with the Torah as a central

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[83] Edward Kessler writes that 'a successful re-reading of biblical texts" in the context of deepening Jewish-Christian relations (and indeed wider interfaith relations) through a renewed exegetical encounter, is dependant on mutual understanding and partnership. Reading in 'isolation' is therefore fruitless to this endeavour. See Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 210-211

touchstone.[84] This chapter therefore definitively outlines relevant themes, some of which have already presented in the Introduction, (such as the concept of 'Deepest Other' in the context of the Jewish-Christian relationship, and exploring notions of 'partnership' and 'mutual need' between Christians and Jews). Other themes are introduced and defined here with the intention of being explored more rigorously in later chapters, (such as the historical interpretation and application of the Torah in Jewish and Christian communities, and the repercussions of Christian supersessionism). Further, this chapter defines and fleshes out central metaphorical concepts, such as 'key' and 'door', on which the development of the model relies, therefore laying significant groundwork for the chapters which follow.

The Introduction set forth the use of metaphor as a tool to expand the capabilities of this thesis. Through using metaphor in this way, the theological possibilities of the Torah being a key to the betterment of Jewish-Christian relations, and essential to reconciliation are more clearly presented. The suggestion of the Torah as a 'key' in effect renders the Torah as a nexus, an essential link between Christians and Jews which has the latent ability to facilitate connection and re-discovery. What is to be re-discovered? Both the depths (*tehom,* referring to III.1.1 of the Introduction) of a

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[84] Re-reading Romans 9-11 provided much impetus for *Nostra Aetate* to re-evaluate traditional theological postures toward Jews and Judaism. Historically, Christian theology has portrayed Paul as abrogating his own Jewish identity in the attempt to promote Christianity among the Gentiles, and encouraging a 'Pauline Christianity' which was free from the shackles of Jewish law. The *New Perspective on Paul* scholarship, examined more closely in chapters five and six, has challenged some of these long held assumptions, and helped to relocate Paul in his Jewish context. *Nostra Aetate* in 1965 took an unprecedented step in reconsidering Paul's letters and not only revising traditional interpretations, but in actually using them as a pretext for recasting the Catholic-Jewish relationship as a whole. This idea of using scripture as a starting point for re-imagining the Jewish-Christian relationship is central to the development of this thesis. See Mark D. Nanos, *Reading Paul within Judaism,* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), 3-17. Edward Kessler, "*Nostra Aetate*: Fifty Years On", in *A Jubilee for All Time: The Copernican Revolution in Jewish-Christian Relations,* 38-39. Philip A. Cunningham, *Seeking Shalom: The Journey to Right Relationship Between Catholics and Jews,* 54-79

shared scriptural heritage, and the breadth and expansiveness of a reconciled relationship which is no longer hemmed in by age-old theological perceptions that found their root in prejudice and mutual hostility. In addition, the Torah becomes a lens through which to view the relationship between Christians and Jews. As the text is engaged, it becomes a prism through which to view the Other with whom this sacred text is shared, albeit shared in a different way.

II. CHRISTIANS AND JEWS: THE DEEPEST OTHER

In 2010, Pope Benedict XVI issued an Apostolic Letter, writing,

"The bonds uniting Christians and Jews are many and they run deep. They are

anchored in a precious common spiritual heritage. There is of course our faith in one

God…(T)here is also the Bible, much of which is common to both Jews and

Christians. For both, it is the word of God. Our common recourse to sacred

Scripture draws us closer to one another."[85]

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[85] The final address of the 2010 Synod on the Middle East in the Vatican was given by Greek Melkite Archbishop Cyril Salim Burstos, in which he stated, "The promise of God…relating to the Promised Land…as Christians we are saying this promise is abolished…there is no chosen people…" See John L. Allen Jr., "Thinking Straight about Israel, the Jews and the Archbishop," *NCR Online,* (Oc. 27, 2010), retrieved September 15 2018. Philip Cunningham assumes that item 20 of Pope Benedict's letter could be in part a response to some of Archbishop Bustro's claims, as potential strain was placed on a developing Catholic-Jewish dialogue and the statement was a forceful departure from the sentiments of Pope John Paul II for example. See Philip Cunningham, *Seeking Shalom,* 227. Indeed, Bustros' statement provoked strong reaction, notably from Rabbi David Rosen (who in 2015 was part of the committee which produced the Orthodox Jewish statement *To do the Will of Our Father in Heaven: Toward a Partnership Between Jews and Christians,* discussed below), and Mordechai Lewy, the Israeli Ambassador to the Vatican, who expressed the 'suspicion' with which Jews will view 'the rapprochement with the Catholic Church', unless distance was made from such statements. See - https://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/themes-in-today-s-dialogue/isrpal/bustros2010nov1, retrieved October 9 2018. For the full text of Pope Benedict's Apostolic Letter, see http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20120914_ecclesia-in-medio-oriente.html, retrieved October 9 2018.

Drafted as a response to the 2010 Synod on the Middle East in the Vatican, item twenty of Pope Benedict's Letter emphasises the role scripture should play in Jewish-Christian reconciliation as one which instead of separating, 'draws us closer'. Being drawn closer to one another intimates a movement toward the other, and to actively move toward another necessitates a shift in the positioning of one's line of sight. It is impossible to move toward another if one is looking in the opposite direction or turned the other way.[86]

Actively engaging in the study of sacred text in a cross-community context, is the suggestion this thesis proposes for deepening the dimensions of a relationship between Christians and Jews which is founded on a mutual desire for reconciliation and a commitment to witness shalom to a hurting world. As touched upon in the previous chapter, participation in textual study together in a way which enables the dexterity of the text 'to speak', allows for a richer cross-party conversation which is centred on a multiplicity of dialogues. Dialogue transpires with fellow students of different or similar faith traditions, as does a dialogue with the interior of the text and with the reception history of that text. An internal dialogue within ourselves also

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[86] To turn toward another requires a decisive shift in posture, and when we posit this within the context of Christian-Jewish reconciliation, Christians (re)turning toward Jews communicates a type of repentance. In addition, as both Christians and Jews turn toward one another in the mutual pursuit of shalom, there is a sense of learning to see one another again, and so the idea of 're-turning' becomes a multifaceted concept. *Teshuvah*, תשובה, is often translated as 'repentance' and comes from the Hebrew verb *shuv,* meaning 'to turn or return'. It intimates a type of turning which enables one to return. Returning in and of itself, indicates coming back to space one has been to before in some capacity. As Arthur Green describes it, *teshuvah* is 'the universal process of return…(A)ll things turn toward their centre, as fully and as naturally as plants grow in the direction of light, as roots reach toward their source of water…the desire of all things to turn inward…(shows) that they are tied to their single source'. See Arthur Green, *Seek My Face: Jewish Mystical Theology,* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2003) 164-165. Indeed, Philip Cunningham sees the Catholic Church's reforming of its perception of Jews and Judaism since Vatican II as a vital work of *teshuvah* or *metanoia*. See Cunningham*, Seeking Shalom,* 179.

unfolds as the text begins to 'read us' as much as we are reading it.[87] These dialogues are vital, as they allow for a symphony of voices to be heard rather than one dominant voice, and give oxygen to the unfolding interpretation, as opposed to offering a single meaning or a single perspective. One voice does not dominate or drown out the voice of the other, but each has a space to speak and be heard and in Burton Visotzky's stream of thought, it allows the Bible to truly come alive.[88] In part, this describes the process of *midrash* as defined in the previous chapter, in that this mode of reading is an interpretive and conversational process of bringing to the surface a facet of an eternal revelation which continues to provide meaning, (or as Visotzky terms it, 'a whisper uttered long ago' which is still waiting to be heard.)[89] This shared interpretive and dialogical experience further enables a reconnection, not only with the text itself, but with those who are covenantally and eternally involved with that text. Sacred reconciliation beginning inside sacred text.

This reflects an idea articulated by Franz Rosenzweig which he termed as *Sprachdenken,* communicating a sense of language and words which come to life when they are used in relationship to another. In other words, two or more people are needed for dialogue to truly happen, and the engagement of language in this process enables an experience which moves beyond the words that are spoken. Language 'becomes alive in the mouth of the lover', and as Jews and Christians engage with

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[87] Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg writes of exposing oneself to the 'gaze of the text'. This approach facilitates a 'new field of encounter' and a multi-dimensional dynamic to engaging with the text. See Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *Moses: a Human Life,* 1-5

[88] Burton Visotzky, *Reading the Book: Making the Bible a Timeless Text,* 1-5

[89] Ibid., ix

one another through sacred text, a living encounter ensues with the self, the other and with the sacred words themselves.[90]

Similar overtones of the deep connectedness which exists in this sort of triangular mode between Jews, Christians and scripture, are expressed in the aforementioned 2002 publication entitled, *A Sacred Obligation: Rethinking Christian Faith in Relation to Judaism and the Jewish People.*[91] This statement, drafted by the Christian Scholars Group on Jewish-Christian Relations, outlines ten 'positions' each of which detail significant aspects of the Christian-Jewish relationship which they (the Christian Scholars Group) urge fellow Christians to strongly consider. Such a reconsideration in itself is considered by the Group as essential for a deepening of the relationship between Christians and Jews, and its essentiality is such that it is expressed as more than a matter of Christian conscience, and more so as 'a sacred obligation'. Point five emphatically states,

"The Bible both connects and separates Jews and Christians".

This vital statement acknowledges the painful reality that the Bible separates Jews and Christians in aspects of history and theological interpretation and application. It also acknowledges that there are different interpretive traditions between the two communities which distinguish them from each other, and that distinctiveness is to

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[90] Ephraim Meir, *Dialogical Thought and Identity: Trans-Different Religiosity in Present Day Societies* (Jerusalem, Israel: Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2013), 64. See also David Novak for a treatment of Franz Rosenzweig's theory of the Jewish-Christian relationship, in *Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Jewish Justification* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 93-113.

[91] Established in 1969, the Christian Scholars Group on Jewish-Christian Relations, seeks as an ecumenical body 'develop more adequate Christian theologies of the church's relationship to Judaism and the Jewish people. See Boys, *Seeing Judaism Anew: Christianity's Sacred Obligation*, 1-3. See also https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/sites/partners/csg/Sacred_Obligation.htm . Retrieved March 11 2017

be respected. And yet simultaneously, the Bible connects Jews and Christians into a body of shared and sacred texts which offer a glimpse into the deep past, while at the same time possessing an eternal sensibility which renders its ancient echoes to be as relevant for the unfolding future as they are for the present. The concluding sections of this chapter will more closely examine some of the ways in which the shared dimensions of the Torah as sacred text potentially impact the Christian-Jewish relationship.

The significant document *Dabru Emet* (דברו אמת 'Speak Truth') which was published in 2000, as highlighted in the Introduction, presents an eight-point Jewish statement on the position of Christians and Christianity from a cross-denominational Jewish perspective. Point eight emphasises, "Jews and Christians must work together for justice and peace", recognising that "although justice and peace are finally God's, our joint efforts, together with those of other faith communities, will help to bring the kingdom of God for which we hope and long. Separately and together, we must work to bring justice and peace to our world. In this enterprise, we are guided by the vision of the prophets of Israel…"[92]

The important term 'Deepest Other' used throughout this project, reflects in many ways some of the origins which Jews and Christians share. Crucially, however, it also reflects the possibility of a shared future and a prophetic partnership which is undergirded by biblical ideals of justice and peace, as expressed in *Dabru Emet*. Part

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[92] See *Dabru Emet,* http://www.jcrelations.net/Dabru_Emet_-_A_Jewish_Statement_on_Christians_and_Christianity.2395.0.html. Retrieved October 7 2017. See also, Edward Kessler and James K. Aitken, "Considering a Jewish Statement on Christianity", in *Challenges in Jewish-Christian Relations,* 194

of the significance of this document is that it was the first official, consolidated Jewish response to the theological shift which has occurred in Christian theological attitudes to Jews and Judaism, although it did not represent any branch of Judaism in particular. As such it underlines a steadily growing, cross-denominational Jewish awareness of Christian endeavours to reconsider its posture toward Judaism, and offers a much needed Jewish voice on Christianity.[93]

For Jews engaging in conversation with Christians through sacred text, there can be a sense of grappling with the fact that Christianity in its origins was a Jewish phenomenon, in light of the painful historical memory that exists between Jews and Christians.[94] There is an added necessity, according to Yehuda Gellman, that in response to the internal and external shift in Christian supersessionist teaching, Jews begin to 'reconsider the polemical elements of Jewish tradition that arose as a reaction to supersessionism'.[95] Gellman notes that Jewish and Christian thought 'developed over history intertwined with one another like two opposing wrestlers', and identifying supersessionist and anti-supersessionist trends within Christian and Jewish exegesis is of paramount importance for the future of any Jewish-Christian reconciliation.[96] Engaging in sacred text together in pursuit of this reconciliation

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[93] Eugene Korn and John Pawlikowski describe *Dabru Emet* and its significance, as 'the richest Jewish discussion of the covenant in the context of Jewish-Christian relations…it maintains that both religions share two central ideas: the God of Israel and Scriptures that give human beings (partial) access to God'. See Eugene B. Korn and John T. Pawlikowski, *Two Faiths, One Covenant? Jewish and Christian Identity in the Presence of the Other* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2005), 4-5

[94] It is important to emphasise however that Jews and Christians 'need' one another in quite different ways. This will be discussed in more detail below in II.3 *Mutual Need - Determining the Need for the Other.*

[95] Korn and Pawlikowski, *Two Faiths,* 3 and 35-41

[96] Ibid., 35

requires careful attention to the pitfalls of the past, as well as an awareness that both faiths emerge from and carry the heritage of some of the different branches of Judaism which flourished in the Second Temple Period.

The reconciliatory experience of studying the Torah in conversation with a Jewish community, I would contend, enables Christians in particular to re-turn toward the deep past. Keeping in mind the rich meanings of *tehom* and the unfathomable depths of a primordial sea from whence 'deep cries unto deep', the suggestion of Christians re-turning toward their Deepest Other (the Jewish people), who shares an essential part of the deep past, in some way intimates a returning to the deepest parts of themselves also.

II.1   SUPERSESSIONISM: A BARRIER TO RECONCILIATION

The phenomenon of supersessionism in many ways could be thought of as an antonym to reconciliation in that it necessitates one supplanting another, rather than a restoration of relations. If reconciliation speaks of reconnection and mutual embrace, supersessionism speaks of dislocation and superiority. For Christianity, supersessionism as a posture of replacement is embedded into significant theological tenets, such as interpretations of covenant for example, and can be difficult to sift out.[97]

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[97] Ronald E. Diprose asserts that replacement or supersessionist theology has consistently been the 'accepted position of a majority within Christendom form post-apostolic times until the middle of the nineteenth century'. See Ronald E. Diprose, *Israel in the Development of Christian Thought* (Rome: Instituto Biblical Evangelico Italiano, 2000), 32. See also, Michael J. Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel: An Analysis of Supersessionism,* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang GmbH, 2009), 17-18

While not a formal doctrine of the early Church, the ideas of Israel's Covenant with God being abrogated and succeeded by the New Covenant, the Hebrew Bible becoming the 'Old Testament' which makes way for a 'New Testament', or the people of Israel being replaced by the Church, has, in different forms and expressions, dominated Christian interpretations of its relationship to the Jewish people. As Nicholas de Lange writes in his chapter entitled "The Orthodox Churches in Dialogue with Judaism", supersessionism is so pervasive in Christian thought that it is extremely difficult to dislodge.

Yet without its dislodgement, an authentic meeting between Christians and Jews will simply and concretely remain an impossibility.[98]   In this context, Mary C. Boys reminds us that,

"For Christians, one religious 'other' - the Jewish people - has always been in our consciousness. There is simply no way to talk about Christianity without reference to Judaism. (Yet) for much of our history we have disparaged Judaism, thinking somehow that the *validity of our faith depended upon its supplanting the Jewish tradition from which we came.*"[99]

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[98] De Lange is speaking about Christian-Jewish relations specifically in the context of Orthodox Christian-Jewish relations, examining the history and possible future of that relationship. Orthodox Christian-Jewish relations are not as advanced in terms of dialogue and reconciliation as Catholic-Jewish dialogue, for example. De Lange feels this is in part due to a lack of 'firm and clear commitment to dialogue with the Jews in the pronouncements of the ecclesiastical leadership' as well as theological and historical obstacles which still need to be addressed. He does however maintain that there is potential in this relationship. See Nicholas de Lange, "The Orthodox Churches in Dialogue with Judaism', in *Challenges in Jewish-Christian Relations,* 51-64. For a list of Orthodox Christian statements in relation to Jews and Judaism from 1991-2009, see Franklin Sherman, *Bridges.,* Vol 2.

[99] Mary C. Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing?,* 7. Italics mine.

The term *supersessionism* itself comes from the English verb 'to supersede', which Merriam Webster defines as 'a transitive verb, (meaning) to cause to be set aside; to force out of use as inferior; to take the place or position of; to displace in favour of another'. Displacement and replacement are the forceful undertones which the verb expresses. The modern English verb comes, via Middle English and Medieval French, from the Latin *supersedēre,* meaning 'to sit upon'. When used in reference to Christian or Islamic theology, it refers to the displacement of one faith (for Christians, Judaism is superseded; for Muslims, Christianity and Judaism are superseded) which is deemed redundant, and its replacement with another who now legitimately carries forth the authentic message of the God of Abraham. The Islamic doctrine of *Taḥrif* تحـــريــف expresses, '(Islam) sees itself as the final successor to and the completion of the Abrahamic faith tradition of ethical and prophetic monotheism.'[100]

II.1.1   THE CHALLENGE OF SUPERSESSIONISM

If we take the notion of the 'Deepest Other' as touched on above, supersessionism poses an immediate and complex challenge. It is impossible to turn toward another and embrace the other if one perceives of that other as inferior or redundant. To dominate and replace naturally and obviously inhibits any authentic mutual connection. In the context of historical Jewish-Christian relations supersessionism as a mode of thought, theological belief, hermeneutical lens or ingrained mindset

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[100] *Taḥrif* (Arabic: تحـــريــف, "distortion, alteration") is an Arabic term which for some Muslims can mean the alterations which Islamic tradition claims Jews and Christians have made to the revealed books, specifically the *Tawrat* Torah), *Zabur* (Psalms) and *Injil* (Gospel). See Clinton Bennett, *Understanding Christian-Muslim Relations, Past and Present* (London and New York: Continuum, 2008), 53

simply leaves little or no space for the existence of Judaism as either living faith or a people. In 1960, Jewish historian Jules Isaac met Pope Paul XXIII to present his findings on *L'Enseignement de Mépris,* the 'teaching of Contempt'.[101] Having witnessed the death of his own family through the Shoah, Isaac had worked ceaselessly to effect changes in church teaching about Jews and Judaism, which he concluded were gross interpretive distortions of biblical text and a significant contributing factor to the European anti-semitism which had helped to light the fires of Auschwitz.[102] Isaac's seminal work relating to Jews and Christians and the history of that relationship, *Jésus et Israël,* used the French term *périmée,* (meaning 'outdated', 'invalid' or 'expired'), to describe Christian self-definition in relation to Jews and Judaism during the processes of separation which ensued following the destruction of the

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[101] Isaac's work by the name of this title would not be published until 1962. However his earlier work *Jésus et Israël* had done much in the research of anti-semitic roots in Christian teaching, and it was these finding he presented to the Pope. In 1949 Isaac had also met with Pope Pius XII, but there was less fruit in this meeting. Jules Isaac and Abraham J. Heschel were two key Jewish voices behind the shaping of *Nostra Aetate* and both played decisive roles. See James K. Aitken, 'Abraham Joshua Heschel" and Stephen Plant, "Jules Isaac", in *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations,* 186, 214. See also Dr Edouard Robberechts, "The Legacy of Jules Isaac", in "Secularity: Opportunity or Peril for Religions, The French Experience and Global Perspectives"- http://www.iccj.org/redaktion/upload_pdf/201307121332010.Sunday-Opening-Edouard-Robberechts.pdf. Retrieved December 6 2018

[102] Throughout his work, Isaac examined three charges consistently levelled at Jews by Christians - expulsion from the Land of Israel, the charge of Deicide and the notion that Judaism was a 'degenerate' religion. Isaac however concluded that it was not Christianity *per se* which needed to be re-examined, but rather the teachings of contempt which had distorted Christian teaching in relation to Jews and Judaism. See Matthew Tapie, "Christ, Torah, and the Faithfulness of God: The Concept of Supersessionism in "The Gifts and the Calling*"* (SCJR 12, no. 1. 2017): 1-18, https://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/scjr/article/viewFile/9802/8604, retrieved September 18, 2018. See also Terence L. Donaldson, "Supersessionism and Early Christian Self-Definition", (JJMJS No. 3 (2016): 1–32) p 4.http://www.jjmjs.org/uploads/1/1/9/0/11908749/jjmjs-3_donaldson.pdf, retrieved May 19, 2017

Temple in 70 CE.[103] The English translation of Isaac's work, published in 1971, renders this word as *supersessionism,* describing the 'increasing hostility' which was developing between Christians and Jews in these early centuries, when self-definition was paramount.[104] In chapter four we shall more closely investigate the causes and implications of supersessionism, focusing on the multiple ruptures of identity which the destruction of the Temple wrought. Moreover, we shall examine the possibility of the Torah as sacred text enabling a language of reconnection, and thereby enabling reconciliation, in place of the supersessionist language which has dominated the Christian-Jewish relationship for too long.

The question remains - is it possible to conceive of Christianity in theological terms without supersessionism? R. Kendall Soulen writes,

"The God of Israel is the firm foundation and inescapable predicament of Christian theology. Pursued without reference to the God of Israel, Christian theology is hopelessly exposed to the charge of being mere vanity, for the gospel about Jesus is credible only if predicated on a living God who 'gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist' (Rom. 4:17)."[105]

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[103] I intentionally write 'processes'. James D.G Dunn emphasises the multiplicity of Jewish 'ways' in the Second Temple Period. In addition to the well known groupings of Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes and Zealots, there were apocalypticists, Hellenizers, mystics and Samaritans as well as others. Therefore the emergence of Christianity as a Jewish sect and what was to become rabbinic Judaism occurred in a context of multiple partings within a complex array of interlinked Jewish identities. See James D. G. Dunn, "From the Crucifixion to the End of the First Century" in *Partings: How Judaism and Christianity Became Two,* ed., Herschel Shanks, (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 2013), 27-28

[104] Donaldson, "Supersessionism and Early Christian Self-Definition", 3

[105] R. Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), 4

Soulen goes on to grapple with the tension of a Christianity which affirms the God of Israel and the covenants with Israel in light of Christology, seeking to underline all the time the possibility of an authentic Christian faith which does not conceive of Jews and Judaism in supersessionist terms.

At the 1980 German Rabbinical Conference in Mainz, Pope John Paul II declared that the Jewish people are the "people of God of the old covenant, which has *never been revoked* by God".[106] Building on the positive relations which had begun to unfold since Vatican II, this declaration ushered in a fresh wave of Catholic reflection on the relationship with Jews and Judaism, resulting in the 1985 Vatican publication entitled, "Notes on the Correct Way to present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church".[107] If we historically chart the theological thread of supersessionism in its various manifestations and its impact on the Christian-Jewish relationship, this papal declaration together with 1985 publication (prior to the 1980 papal declaration in Mainz, the Vatican produced the 1974 "Guidelines", and in 2001 Cardinal Walter Kasper, the President of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, made a significant statement regarding the status of the

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[106] See John Paul II, "Address to the Jewish Community in Mainz", (November 17 1980). http://cdim.pl/1980-11-17-john-paul-ii-address-to-representatives-of-the-jewish-community-in-mainz,1780. Retrieved December 6 2018. See also Norbert Lohfnik, *The Covenant Never Revoked: Biblical Reflections on Christian-Jewish Dialogue* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1991), 13-16, and *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations*, 67

[107] Specifically, the "Notes" sought to advance what had started with *NA,* through remedying "a painful ignorance of the history and traditions of Judaism, of which only negative aspects and often caricature seem to form part of the stock ideas of many Christians." See "Magisterial Contributions toward a 'Theology of Shalom'", by Philip Cunningham in *Seeking Shalom,* 165-170

Jewish people in relation to an 'irrevocable' covenant with the God of Israel)[108], provided a much needed rapprochement between Christians, (specifically Roman Catholics) and Jews. It also generated an internal rapprochement, an inner 'metanoia' of re-turning toward a Deepest Other who shares an essential part of the deep past. At the 1987 General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, it was declared,

> "We affirm that the church, elected in Jesus Christ, has been engrafted into the People of God established by the covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. *Therefore Christians have not replaced Jews*".[109]

As Philip Cunningham emphasises, supersessionism has left an indelible mark on the telling of the Christian narrative. In this light, today's Christian story can no longer afford to omit its Jewish counterparts or ignore its Jewish origins, but must consciously be re-cast as a narrative which "affirm(s) Jewish covenantal life with God".[110]

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[108] Cardinal Walter Kasper, "The Jewish-Christian Dialogue: Foundations, Progress, Difficulties and Perspectives", (Jerusalem, November, 2001). See http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/ pontifical_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20011123_kasper-jews-christians_en.html. Retrieved November 5 2018

[109] This particular affirmation of the Statement expressly declared 'the theory of supersessionism or replacement (as) harmful and in need of reconsideration as the church seeks to proclaim God's saving activity with humankind'. It does, however, also state that 'the scriptural and theological bases for this view are clear enough; but we are prompted to look again at out tradition by events in our own time, and by an increasing number of scholars and theologians and scholars who are calling for such a reappraisal'. In line with Jules Isaac, I would contend the scriptural bases for supersessionism are definitively unclear, and were/are a distortion of inner-Jewish polemics, which were later grossly used to justify an increasing Christian anti-Judaism. See *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People,* 110-112, 155. Italics mine.

[110] Philip Cunningham, *Seeking Shalom,* 182-183.

II.2   BONES AND RIBS: *Genesis 2:20-23*

Embedded within the opening stories of Genesis, which both Jews and Christians share, is a profound rendering of what it means to know ourselves through first recognising and naming our Deepest Other. It provides a textual starting point for Jewish-Christian reconciliation as a rediscovery of an Other. In the text, two people emerge from one source. It is only, however, when one 'sees' the other and calls out to that other and names that other as distinctly and uniquely female, that the other recognises himself for who he distinctly and uniquely is.[111] This could sound like an 'anti-feminist' reading of the text, but in many ways it renders sensibilities of just the opposite. Moreover, this first episode of human interaction ruptures illusions of one 'superseding' or dominating the other, and provides a scriptural narrative which invites us to consider the inner dimensions of human intimacy.

Genesis 2:23 is the first usage of the words 'woman' (*ishah*) and 'man' (*ish*) in the Torah. The verse reads- *This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called woman (ishah אִשָּׁה) for from man (ish אִישׁ) she was taken*. Until this point in the text, the first man has been referred to as *HaAdam* הָאָדָם, literally 'the Adam', with the use of the definite article which is not included in most English translations. 'The Adam' was formed out of two essential components - the dust of ground, the *adamah* אדמה, and the breath/wind/spirit of the Creator, the *ruach* רוּחַ. Until the definitive moment when he (I use this pronoun simply as a term of convenience)

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[111] See Jonathan Sacks, "Faith Lectures - Creation: Where Did We Come From?", for more nuances on the Hebrew dimensions of this verse. http://rabbisacks.org/faith-lectures-creation-where-did-we-come-from/. Retrieved December 7 2018

stands opposite his Deepest Other, he is known only by the ground out of which he was formed. It is literally like being named 'earth-ling' or 'ground-ling'.

Traditional rabbinic interpretation does not see Adam as either distinctly male or female, but possibly both.[112] There is an androgyny to this primeval state, and yet earlier in the text, prior to his seeing of Eve, we are alerted to the fact that something is missing and needs to be 'found'. This 'finding' of an other is intimately connected to the process of naming - *and the Adam gave names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to all the wild beasts; but for Adam no fitting helper was found,* (Gen 2:20). Naming all the life in the garden invites and awakens a conscious search for the other. Avivah Zornberg draws on the commentary of medieval Jewish commentator Ramban in connection to the search for a 'fitting helper'.[113] Ramban emphasises that being alone and autonomous in the Garden is 'not good', because he would live a static, unchanging and unwilled life.[114] Man needs to live face-to-face with the Other, 'dancing to the choreography of his own freedom'.[115] If we read the text closely, it is only after the name of this Other, the *ishah*, is actually pronounced and spoken out that 'the-Adam' becomes aware of his own maleness, conscious of himself as an *ish* for the first time. Only now does he identify and name himself as such. He had to

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[112] See Elliot R. Wolfson, *Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism*, (Albany, New York: State of New York University Press, 1995), 85

[113] '*Ezer k'negdo'* in Hebrew - a significant term which we will expand on further in this chapter. See also Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *The Beginning of Desire: Reflections on Genesis* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1995), 15-16

[114] *Ramban* is an acronym for Rabbi Moses ben Nahman, (1194–1270 CE) also known as *Nachmanides*, an important medieval Jewish philosopher and commentator from Catalonia.

[115] Zornberg, *The Beginning of Desire*, 15

recognise and name his Deepest Other who was formed from the same bone, before he could truly know and name himself.

Franz Rosenzweig writes in his acclaimed work, *The Star of Redemption,* that 'only in the discovery of a Thou is it possible to hear an actual I, an I that is not self-evident but emphatic and underlined'.[116] For Christians and Jews, can we discover ourselves more authentically, through rediscovering our Deepest Other? What does this look like? What are the potential ramifications for such rediscovery? The supposition of this project is that through a renewed engagement with one another through sacred text, such a rediscovery of both Other and Self becomes possible. This rediscovery is a necessary tool to reframe the Jewish-Christian relationship in terms which remove the disastrous implications of supersessionism from the conversation. This text from Genesis redefines the parameters of a possible relationship, and provides simultaneously a textual starting point for envisioning the other without supersessionist lenses. It offers a vision of a new beginning.

II.3   MUTUAL NEED: DETERMINING THE NEED FOR THE OTHER

It is important to acknowledge that Christians and Jews 'need' one another in different ways, and while there might be a mutual need, it is not symbiotic or reciprocal in nature. While there can be 'simply no way to talk about Christianity without reference to Judaism' as Mary C. Boys reminds us, the same cannot be said for Judaism, at least not in the same way. Judaism did not sprout from a Christian root as Christianity sprouted from a Jewish one (although we are careful distinguish

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[116] Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption.* Trans. William W. Hallo (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 174-175

that both an emerging rabbinic Judaism and nascent Christianity came out of pre-Second Temple Jewish sects. There was not one uniform Judaism from which either faith emerged). Therefore traditional Judaism simply does not have the same reliance on Christianity. In *Guidelines for Christian-Jewish Relations,* (developed by the Episcopal Church in the USA), one of the 'Principles of Dialogue' set forth is the acknowledgement of a dissemblance in mutual need between Jews and Christians. Point two reads,

"In the case of Christian-Jewish dialogue, an historical and theological imbalance is obvious. While an understanding of Judaism in New Testament times is an indispensable part of any Christian theology, for Jews a "theological" understanding of Christianity is not of the same significance. Yet neither Judaism nor Christianity, at least in the Western world, has developed without interaction with the other."[117]

There is no doubt that a mutual 'shaping' of each other's traditions took place during the formative period in which Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism developed post-Destruction, (and continued) as Daniel Boyarin in *Borderlines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* and Peter Schäfer in *The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other,* both confirm through their scholarship.[118]

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[117] See "Guidelines for Christian-Jewish Relations: General Convention of the Episcopal Church (July, 1988): Principles of Dialogue, Point Two", https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/protestant/Episcopal_Guidelines.htm. Retrieved May 2 2017

[118] See Daniel Boyarin, *Borderlines*, 2-5; Peter Schäfer, *The Jewish Jesus,* 1-7. Edward Kessler writes of a mutual interaction between Christians and Jews sustained through exegetical encounters, at a time when it is assumed only mutual hostility and exclusion thrived. See Edward Kessler, *Bound by the Bible,* 1, 8-10

Part of the Christian need for Judaism is the Jewish witness to Christian origins. Somehow the presence of a living Judaism validates Christianity, no matter how much Christianity then has proceeded historically and theologically to define herself in opposition to Judaism.[119] For Rosenzweig, Christianity without Judaism is like the starlight which is visible on earth, whose star died millennia ago. It cannot actually live without nor 'overcome' Judaism, without itself being destroyed.[120] Echoing sentiments of Rosenzweig, John Shelby Spong writes in this vein,

> "I as a Christian need Judaism to be Judaism lest the ultimate truth of God be compromised or even lost in the shallowness of a rootless Christianity".[121]

For Judaism the need for Christianity differs significantly. Given the complicated history between the two faiths there are multiple Jewish perspectives on the Jewish need, or lack of, for Christianity.[122] Drawing on Rosenzweig's emphasis on the

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[119] Such sentiments were also expressed by Augustine. While Augustine was most forceful in his condemnation of Judaism, he nonetheless maintained that the continued existence of the Jewish people was important for Christians precisely because they provided a living witness that Christianity, in its arguments over validity and heresy with the pagans, was not a 'rootless' religion. Moreover, the Jewish people having been exiled from Israel affirmed for Augustine the consequences of sin. Centuries later, Bernard of Clairveaux would call for the protection of Jews for similar reasons, despite endorsing the mission of crusades. See Marc Saperstein, *Moments of Crisis,* 9-11. See also Mary C. Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing,* 57-58

[120] See Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption,* 414. Writing on Franz Rosenzweig's theology of the Jewish-Christian relationship, David Novak emphasises that Judaism 'saves Christianity from Gnosticism in all its guises'. See David Novak, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Jewish Justification,* 105

[121] John Shelby Spong, "The Continuing Christian Need for Judaism", in *Christianity and Judaism: The Deepening Dialogue,* 74. It should be acknowledged that Spong's liberal approach to the traditional tenets of Christianity is controversial.

[122] *Dabru Emet* expressed most clearly a consolidated Jewish response to the changes within Christian attitudes toward Jews and Judaism, and identified the need for Judaism and Christianity to work together for justice. Unlike Michael Kogan, however, *Dabru Emet* does not see Christianity as an extension of Judaism in any way, whilst recognising and affirming its Jewish origins. See *Dabru Emet,* 'Considering a Jewish Statement on Christianity', Edward Kessler and James K. Aitken, *Challenges in Jewish-Christian Relations,* 191-194.

importance of the Jewish-Christian relationship in terms of redemption, Michel Kogan affirms the Jewish need of Christianity to be a redemptive one, related to Israel's role among the nations. Interestingly, Kogan wholly refutes the popular idea that while Christianity needs Judaism, Judaism is self-sufficient and can be fully defined without referencing Christianity.[123] For Kogan, the idea that Jesus 'broke open' Israel's covenant in a unique way for the gentiles is a redemptive act among the nations which Judaism needs to affirm. In addition, it is the very fact that the two faiths shaped one another for better or for worse, which means, for Kogan, that Judaism interfaces historically and theologically and therefore irrevocably with Christianity. In any case, it is clear that the points of reference and of self-determination between the two faiths are somewhat different.[124] As previously stated Christianity sprouted from a Jewish root and not vice versa. Within that space of difference and in the pursuit of sacred reconciliation, what are the limits and possibilities of a sacred partnership emerging from the two faiths?

II.3.1   DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIP: עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ *Ezer K'Negdo*

There is a descriptive word in the Genesis passage discussed above in II.2 which can further enrich our thoughts in the exploration of what it is to recognise our Deepest

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[123] Kogan, *Opening the Covenant,* 118.

[124] For Frank Littell, all three Abrahamic faiths define themselves in reference to one another in some capacity. Christians historically have defined themselves in reference to Jews, and Judaism provides a tangent for the emergence of Christianity. Muslims also define themselves to some degree in relation to Jews, and Littell maintains that Jews define themselves in relation to Gentiles. Thus the dynamics of identity formation, particularly when that identity has been formed oppositionally, are not as clear-cut as we might imagine. See Franklin H. Littell, *The Crucifixion of the Jews: The Failure of Christians to Understand the Jewish Experience* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004), 5

Other and also the issues of mutual need along with developing an authentic partnership in the context. Genesis 2:18 reads,

"And the Lord God said: 'It is not good that the-Adam should be alone; I will make him an *ezer k'negdo* עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ."

Ezer k'negdo, usually rendered as 'help-meet' or 'fitting-helper', comes from the BH word *ezer* עֵזֶר, meaning 'help' or 'aid' with the connotation of 'power and strength', and *negdo,* coming from the root word *neged* נֶגֶד which means 'in front of', 'in sight of' or 'opposite', implying the sense of standing boldly before someone.[125] It is inherently prepositional, meaning it conveys the sense of an *ezer* who is positioned in such a way that they are 'opposite'. What might this mean? A 'help' who is 'opposite' might seem like a paradox. (The Hebrew Bible is full of delicious paradoxes which make translation and interpretation all the more exciting). Normally, we associate someone who helps us with someone who comes along beside us. And yet here we have two distinct humans formed from one, who are positioned opposite each other. Rashi, the great medieval French rabbi and biblical commentator, stated simply,

"*Ezer k'negdo*: (when he)is worthy, (she is) an *ezer,* a helpmate and support, when (he is) unworthy (she is) opposite and will fight".[126]

This hints at a possible true meaning of partnership - not to glibly and passively agree with the other on everything, for that is not mutual, nor truly helpful. Nor is to dominate and control the other. We all need to be 'called out' from time to time and

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125 BDB, 617

126 See https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/17772, retrieved August 9 2018. See also Dennis G. Shulman, *The Genius of Genesis: A Psychoanalyst and Rabbi examines the First Book of the Bible* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, Inc. 20013), 39

held accountable, and those who love us most, who truly love us in the sense of *chesed* חֶסֶד (covenantal loyalty - a theme we will look at in more detail in chapter six), will do it, while giving us the space that might be necessary. *Ezer k'negdo* demonstrates a depth in the possibilities of partnership. Being positioned opposite one another also means that one is automatically beholding the face of the other, the gaze being directed toward the other and not anywhere else. They are truly 'face to face'. In *Nine Talmudic Readings*, Emmanuel Levinas writes, 'The Torah is given in the Light of a face.'[127] For Levinas, being face-to-face is an essential component of the revelation at Sinai, for only in beholding the face of the other do we develop a sense of authentic responsibility toward that other.[128]

In the Christian-Jewish context, both references from Genesis and Emmanuel Levinas can offer paradigmatic ways of rethinking the relationship. The Genesis 2:18, 23 verses invite us to reconsider how we see and name our Deepest Other, remembering it is only in connection with seeing the other that we begin to truly recognise and name ourselves also. It invites us to reconsider where and how we position ourselves in relation to that other, not necessarily side by side but 'face to face', opposite one another where we can see the other more fully, and so responsively engage in the question of what it might mean to be an *ezer k'negdo* for the other. And it is here, in the light of the face of our Deepest Other, that the Torah can become a sacred meeting place once again.

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[127] Emmanuel Levinas, 'The Temptation of Temptation', in *Nine Talmudic Readings,* trans. Annette Aronowicz, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 47-48

[128] Zornberg, *The Particulars of Rapture: Reflections on Exodus,* 304-305

II.3.2   PARTENERSHIP AND COVENANT

The Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany emphasised in their 1975 publication that,

> 'Christians and Jews are characterised in their self-understanding by the knowledge that they were chosen by God as partners to his covenant. In that election, God reveals his love and his justice, from which grows the obligation from Jews and Christians alike, to work for a realisation of justice and love in the world'[129]

The concept of covenant in the Jewish-Christian relationship is significant, with varying interpretations and implications which accompany each interpretation. Closer attention to the dimensions of covenant will be paid in chapters three and four, with an exploration of Hebrews 8 in chapter five. Covenant, however, is deeply connected to the theme of partnership. Striking overtones to some degree (notwithstanding the notion of common election) with point eight of *Dabru Emet*, the above declaration highlights the potential of a partnership between Christians and Jews which mutually seeks and actively pursues a 'realisation of justice and love in the world'.

Irving Greenberg roots the development of Jewish and Christian partnership in the idea of *tikkun olam*.[130] For Greenberg, the idea of covenant is itself a partnership

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[129] The Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (*Rat der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland*) published an extensive study in 1975 entitled *Christians and Jews,* which closely examined three areas pertinent to the relationship between the church and the Jewish people. See "Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany", in *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People,* 74-82, 163.

[130] *Tikkun olam* תיקון עולם is that most rich of Hebrew phrases which speaks of the of the re-ordering the world. In traditional Jewish texts it refers to a perfection of the world though proclaiming God's sovereignty. In more recent decades it expresses a tone of repairing the world through responsibility to wider society, working for social justice and the good of all. See Rabbi Elliot N. Dorff, *The Way Into Tikkun Olam: Repairing the World* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2007)

with God, and to this end Christians and Jews, who both reflect an image of God to the world, bear both a distinctiveness and an 'intertwined destiny'.[131] There exists therefore great potential in the relationship between Jews and Christians to act not only as partners with one another, but also partners with God in proclaiming and activating redemptive justice in the world. The ultimate goal of such partnership is, according to Greenberg, the capacity to draw out of one another the experiences of that other, in order to 'bring the whole world closer to God'. [132]

The opening lines of the statement *To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven: Toward a Partnership between Jews and Christians*, released in 2015 by the Israeli based *Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation,* read,

"We seek to do the will of our Father in Heaven by accepting the hand offered to us by our Christian brothers and sisters. Jews and Christians must work together as partners to address the moral challenges of our era".[133]

Given the history of Jewish-Christian relations, in addition to increasing social and global challenges which include the startling rise of anti-semitism, Islamophobia and

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[131] Irving Greenberg's reassessment of the Jewish-Christian relationship in light of the Shoah and post-*Nostra Aetate* rapprochement between Christians and Jews, offers a bold vision for the possibilities of this relationship, rooted in a re-exploration of covenant. The concept of 'voluntary covenant' is a provocative one, in which he asserts that the nadir of the Shoah changed the terms of God's covenant with the Jewish people, and those who survived now voluntarily enter into it. See Irving Greenberg, *For the Sake of Heaven and Earth: The New Encounter between Judaism and Christianity,* 49, 55, 212

[132] Ibid., 211-212

[133] The full opening statement reads, "After nearly two millennia of mutual hostility and alienation, we Orthodox Rabbis who lead communities, institutions and seminaries in Israel, the United States and Europe recognize the historic opportunity now before us. We seek to do the will of our Father in Heaven by accepting the hand offered to us by our Christian brothers and sisters. Jews and Christians must work together as partners to address the moral challenges of our era." See CJCUC http:// cjcuc.org/2015/12/03/orthodox-rabbinic-statement-on-christianity/. Retrieved August 8 2018

the live issues which surround the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for example, a shared future which envisions justice and peace at its core is not without its potential challenges and pitfalls. Nonetheless, a 'vision of shalom' which enables Jews and Christians to partner together as mutual witnesses for shalom in the world is a noble ideal, if not a *mitzvah*.

The 'General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church' (USA) declared Jews and Christians as 'partners in waiting'. This waiting is of a messianic nature, wherein Christians are waiting for the 'redemption not fully yet visible in the world' but which has begun through Christ, whilst Jews await messianic redemption altogether. It emphasises, "Christians and Jews together await the final manifestation of God's promise of the peaceable kingdom."[134]

III. DEFINTIONS

In a subject so vast such as Jewish-Christian relations and the history of those relations, proposing a new model will always present multiple directions, methodologies and possibilities. This section tightens those possibilities through critically introducing, defining and expanding important concepts upon which the development of the model in chapter three will rely. As such it provides a necessary base from where some of the essential metaphors for this thesis can be further explored.

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[134] See "General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church" (1987), in *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People,* 118

III.1   BORDERS AND BARRIERS

A border can be a limit which can preserve or protect, or delineate a territory or a zone that has a specific function. It can demarcate a space and inform by its very existence those within and without the space, both the limits and ownership of the particular area the boundary identifies.[135] Borders and boundaries can therefore be positive, and even necessary constructions. A boundary could also be perceived as an imposition which functions as a barrier, to effectively partition and to separate one from another. Such a partition can be organic and naturally occurring, like a river or a mountain range.[136] It can be artificially imposed, such as the historical partition imposed by a colonial power, for example, in Northern Ireland, or in the definitive establishment of sharp territorial and national edges when it comes to (the very current) issues of migration.

In Daniel Boyarin's thought, a dividing line can be an unnatural imposition when it originates out of being forcibly severed from the lifeblood that gave you your first breath. This forced separation creates a resulting enmity, which can colour the religious and theological, cultural, social and even ethnic perceptions of the 'other' who, once not being an 'other' at all, now exists on the opposite side of that bloodline.[137] The possibility of any positive relationship or connection is severely

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[135] Cambridge Dictionary http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/boundary and http://www.dictionary.com/browse/boundary. Retrieved February 5 2016

[136] Merriam Webster: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/boundary. Retrieved February 5 2016

[137] In this vein, the concluding part of chapter four in this thesis will examine the idea of a 'tearing', a rupture in the early Jewish-Christian relationship which enabled the 'other' to become enemy. It is argued that supersessionism grew out of this rupture, and therefore is in and of itself a language of rupture.

curtailed, if not impossible, and mutual exclusion and hostility are exacerbated to the detriment of all.[138] Recognising the oppositional dynamics which often sustain identity formation, we must ask if exclusion as such is a necessity in the process of identity making. Miroslav Volf, in his widely acclaimed work *Exclusion and Embrace; Identity and the Other,* maintains that,

> 'exclusion happens…when impenetrable barriers are set up, that prevent a creative encounter with the other'.[139]

To 'embrace the other', in Volf's terminology, is to adopt the posture of 'full reconciliation'.[140] Such an image of embrace suggests two who are facing each other, face-to-face as we considered in I.1.3 above. That embrace, according to Volf, allows the other to be fully other, and 'never (remade) into one's own image'.[141] Striking tones with Genesis 2:23, we remember that 'the Adam' recognised and named his Deepest Other, *(ishah),* before he recognised and named himself *(ish).* Full embrace unfolded after this recognition and naming. Therefore, this thesis is asking if it possible to reform, in a sense, some of the oppositional dynamics which have sustained Christian and Jewish identities, through enabling 'creative encounters' with the Other. These creative encounters are engaged, it is suggested, most fruitfully through the active and dialogical reading of sacred text in a cross-community context.

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[138] See Daniel Boyarin, *Borderlines: the Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2004), 2-16. Boyarin maintains that "a significant part of the function of heresiology, if not its proximate cause, was to define Christian identity", p 4.

[139] See Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation,* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996) 22-25

[140] Ibid., 23

[141] Ibid., 24

Barriers and mutual suspicion, excluding the other who is not in our own image, or attempting to remake an other in our own image - these could be said to be dominant themes in the historical landscape of Christian-Jewish relations. In fact across the global spectrum of religious life, the connection between exclusion and inclusion, who is 'in' and who is 'out', and violence rings true.[142] Drawing to a degree from post-colonial theory, Boyarin maintains the historical and religious partitions which separated Jew and Christian were an 'unnatural' imposition. They were constructions of separation which stemmed from acts of violence between those who were deemed as 'heretics' and those who were 'not'.[143] This violence was both discursive and physical as Boyarin identifies, and ultimately fractured identities between the fledgling Christian community, an entirely Jewish movement in its origins, and her Jewish peers.[144]

Compounded with the catastrophic destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, this rupture was eventually cemented into a solid theological, religious, cultural, social, and ethnic border. This border served as a marker for identifying heretics who might be tempted to abandon 'orthodoxy' in favour of the heretical 'other', or those who simply acted as 'smugglers' between the two. 'Smugglers' were those who refused to

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[142] Jonathan Sacks, *Not in My Name: Confronting Religious Violence,* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2016), 24, 38-39

[143] In other words 'orthodox', according to who was asking the question. Christianity in particular has a history of 'heresiology', that is, defining itself according to what is not heresy. See Boyarin, *Borderlines - the Partition of Judaeo-Christianity,* 5-9. See also *Heresy: A History of Defending the Truth,* Alister McGrath (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2010)

[144] Boyarin, *Borderlines,* xiv. Rather than saying 'fractured relationship or connection', it is better to say 'fractured identity', as there continued to be a connection, just a mutually suspicious one which oppositionally defined itself by what the other was not. See also Peter Schäfer, *The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other,* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012), 1-3

be orthodox - they were the Christians who were Jews and the Jews who were Christians as Boyarin defines it, who resisted the enforcing of the heresiological partitions.[145] They continually crossed this invisible yet tangibly present, and historically real, barrier. As the dividing lines of orthodoxy and heresy became more firmly established over time, one group became defined by what the other was not, and those who once had dwelled within the same 'wide Jewish tent', found themselves, one way or another, on a different side of the barrier.[146]

III.2   DOORS AND DOORWAYS

A door is 'a swinging or sliding barrier, by which an entry point is either open or closed'.[147] A *doorway,* as distinct from a door, is 'the opening that a door either closes, or makes accessible'. Doors and gates have multiple associations across different cultures..[148] Doors, and similarly gates, are physical entry or exit points, but also function as metaphorical entry and exit points in the imagination.[149] Whether in

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[145] Boyarin, *Borderlines*, 10-26

[146] If, as Daniel Boyarin claims, the partition between what became 'Christianity' and 'Judaism' was an imposition, it raises the question through that very observation of what is it to re-imagine the Jewish-Christian relationship without imposed partitions. Healthy boundaries and distinctions which affirm the other's uniqueness certainly, but the question of 'imposed' or enforced boundaries and 'identity-in-opposition' dynamics remains an important one.

[147] Merriam Webster - https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/door, and http://www.dictionary.com/browse/door. Retrieved February 8 2016

[148] In Japanese culture for example, there is an etiquette to opening, closing, and entering a door (which are traditionally sliding as opposed to swinging), and how one enacts this demonstrates the level of grace and humility which that person embodies. See Roger J. Davies and Osamu Ikeno, (eds.,) *The Japanese Mind: Understanding Contemporary Japanese Culture,* (Vermont: Tuttle Publishing, 2002). See also http://www.koryu.com/library/dlowry6.html. Retrieved February 9 2016

[149] See Nato Giorgadze, "The Greater Reality Behind Doors: Study on Perception of Doors", p 21. https://soc.kuleuven.be/antropologie/ethnographica/2008/3Giorgadze.pdf. Retrieved February 9 2016

psychological, spiritual or physical terms, doors and gates mark the difference between coming into a specific area or going out of and leaving that area. They therefore represent the threshold that marks the change in identity and space. They can be open or closed temporarily, or locked shut permanently preventing access to what lies beyond the threshold of the door or gateway. Being inside the boundary they demarcate can be safe and give the impression of security (think of 'gated communities'), or it can be threatening (think of being imprisoned). Being outside the door or gate can imply a vulnerability, or a sense of isolation. Inclusion or exclusion, privacy or imprisonment, freedom or captivity can be implied by either a closed or an open door or gateway, suggesting a subjectivity in how they are perceived according to the circumstances of those attempting entry or exit through those markers. Doors and gates therefore also can be used to identify the so-called 'insider' or 'outsider', depending on where one is standing and where one wishes to stand. Those standing on one side of a door might be deemed to be separate or 'other' from those standing on the other side.

The image of 'the door' becomes for this model the metaphor which describes the potential access point between Jews and Christians. This potential access point, however, is 'locked', firmly shut by centuries of inherited prejudice, persecution and mutual suspicion. This thesis takes as a starting point that several locked doors exist within the Jewish-Christian relationship. As we noted in the Introduction, it is not automatically assumed that every barrier in the Jewish-Christian relationship need be removed or every door be opened in order for reconciliation to ensue - barriers and boundaries can sometimes be healthy. But when a potential access point, a possible threshold to deeper reconciliation, is blocked by unchallenged perceptions that

possibly (as we will explore in chapter four) feed on a language of rupture and replacement, we owe it to our Jewish and Christian children to find a key which can unlock it.

III.2.1   KAFKA AND THE DOORKEEPERS

Franz Kafka's story "Before the Law", told in his famous legal novel *The Trial,* tells of a man who spends his whole life unsuccessfully seeking the permission of 'the doorkeeper' to be allowed to pass through the door.[150] At the end of the man's life, the doorkeeper, who has never let the man pass, tells him that 'no one *but you* could gain admittance through this door, since this door was intended only for you'.[151] While there are multiple interpretations on the meaning of this parable, and indeed Kafka begins interpretation himself in *The Trial,* for this thesis we can draw together two suggestions which are relevant to the development of our discourse as it unfolds. The doorkeeper reveals that both the door and the man seeking to gain entry to the door, are unique. 'No one but you…this door was intended only for you'. Only the man who seeks to walk through the door, can. (Interestingly, throughout the story, the door is described as being 'open', it is only closed at the end of his life).

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[150] 'Before the Law' was composed in 1914 and then as part of 'The Trial' published posthumously in in 1925. See Franz Kafka, *The Trial,* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1970), 236-237. See also Franz Kafka, Translated by Breon Mitchell, *The Trial: A New Translation Based on the Restored Text,* (The Schocken Kafka Library: New York" Schocken, 1999)

[151] Referenced by Avivah Zornberg in relation to 'the Four Sons and the Four Questions' in the Passover Haggadah, *The Particulars of Rapture*, 188

For the particular locked door this model seeks to confront, Jews and Christians uniquely possess the key. The Torah, as the key in this model, is already within our reach. It is recumbent in our sacred origins, and forms a living part of the canon of sacred scripture which Jews and Christians share. But as with all keys, it is up to us to utilise it and it is up to us to walk through the opening that has been enabled.

The second suggestion arises from a question - who is the doorkeeper in the story? There is no answer as such, the doorkeeper is simply defined by his function which is to guard the door. Applying this question to the metaphor of the locked door within the Jewish-Christian relationship, we can suggest that Jews and Christians are our own doorkeepers, because we are the ones who hold the key to the door. We are the ones who close it and think it is impenetrable, and we are the ones who can open it.

III.3 KEYS

The ability to open, close or lock a door or gate requires a certain key. Without a key, the possibility of the door being opened remains elusive if not impossible, save for the use of force. Moreover, any key will not suffice, it has to be one that is distinctly shaped, whose ward fits the lock exactly and is therefore enabled to unlock the door or gate in question. The definition of a 'key' is 'a device… or a small piece of shaped metal with unique incisions, that fit the ward of a particular lock'.[152] In other words, a key is a device which fits a lock uniquely and has the latent ability to turn something which was otherwise locked or closed, and shift it so it can open. A

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[152] Merriam Webster and Cambridge Online Dictionaries: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/key http://www.dictionary.com/browse/key http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/key. Retrieved June 25 2015

second definition, describes a 'key' as a 'pin, bolt or wedge', which when inserted between certain parts, locks those parts together. A third definition of the word 'key' defines it as 'a specific thing…that provides a means of achieving or understanding something, or a word or a system for solving a cipher or code'.[153] A yet fourth definition defines it as the particular tone or pitch of a voice, melody or instrument. Four definitions for 'key', and yet each definition provides a particular description that when combined emphasises the dextrous capabilities of one very small word in the English language. Applied to the suggestions of this thesis, the Torah as a metaphorical 'key' within the Jewish-Christian relationship has the capacity to both open up that which was closed, and simultaneously draw those parts that were separate, closer together.

III.4   LENSES

The purpose of a lens is to focus and refract light, and in so doing act as a type of mirror though which an image is reflected and then seen, in the medium of that light.[154] As such a lens can also be defined in metaphorical terms as 'something that facilitates and influences perception, comprehension, or evaluation.'[155] The Torah, as sacred text in the development of this model, is seen as a particular and theologically

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[153] Merriam Webster: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/key. Retrieved June 25 2015

[154] A 'lens' is an optical device which affects the focusing of a light beam through refraction. See *The Living Camera: How do Eyes Make Images,* by David Denning and Molly Kirk (Article Published in BioMedia Associates, 2013) - see https://www.ebiomedia.com/the-living-camera-how-do-eyes-make-images.html, and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lens_(optics). The oldest known lens, interestingly, according to archaeological evidence, is the 'Nimrud' lens, 700BCE, Assyria, and the earliest written evidence mentioning a 'lens' as a device is to be found in the ancient Greek play (424 BCE) *The Clouds,* by Aristophanes. See A. H. Layard, *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon, Vol 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 197–98, and http://www.ancient-literature.com/greece_aristophanes_clouds.html. Retrieved June 24 2015

[155] Merriam Webster: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lens. Retrieved June 24 2015

important 'lens' through which the focus within the Jewish-Christian relationship can be re-adjusted. This re-adjustment refracts a 'seeing' of both text and people in a more nuanced way that stimulates positive connection and relationship. In other words, it stimulates *life*. This life is stimulated not simply through a mere re-adjustment of focus, but from the suggested implication of this re-focusing, which is reconnection.

Critical to any potential relationship or connection and the sustenance of that connection, is *how* we 'see'. How we see ourselves, how we see the other, and how we respond to that other. Everything we see is refracted through the particular prism or lens that is shaped by the religious, cultural, social, political and intellectual matrix which grounds us.[156] Sometimes however, that lens can reflect a view which finds its source from the roots of an inherited perception or memory, which was formed in bitterness or mutual opposition. Such perceptions are not an accurate measure of the 'other' who is being seen in this context and therefore require a necessary re-adjustment. Such a re-adjustment, or a refocusing can allow a clear view which will enable the ones who are beginning to 'see' one another again, to not only see that other but to move toward that other.

For Rosenzweig, the potential of a 'partnership' between the two faiths as touched on above, is evidenced through the different ways in which Judaism and Christianity respectively 'see'. He writes,

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[156] See James M. Gustafson, *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective, Vol. 1.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) 261

"The truth, the entire truth, belongs neither to them nor to us. We (the Jews) bear it within ourselves, precisely therefore we must gaze within ourselves if we wish to see it. So we will see the star, but not its rays. To encompass the whole truth one must not only see the light, but also what it illumines. They (the Christians) on the other hand, have been eternally destined to see the illumines object, but not the light. Thus though Christians and Jews see truth in different ways, before God there is only one truth."[157]

This rings again with associations of the Genesis 2:23 text, in the recognition and naming of a significant other and then a move toward that other. In *I-and-Thou* Martin Buber writes of this dialogical interaction between people, paralleling it with the *I-It* capacity that exists alongside when we become detached from the 'other'. Buber writes,

'The primary word *I-Thou* can be spoken only with the whole being. Concentration and fusion into the whole being can never take place through my agency, nor can it ever take place without me. I become through my relation to the Thou; as I become I, I say Thou. All real living is meeting.'[158]

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[157] Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star,* 413-414

[158] Nahum N. Glatzer, ed., *The Way of Response: Martin Buber. Selections from His Writings.* (New York: Schocken, 1966), 48. One of Martin Buber's most influential works *I-and-Thou* (1923) is based on the distinction between two word pairs that designate two basic modes of existence. The *Ich-Du* (I-Thou) mode, and the *Ich-Es* (I-It) mode. A dialogical mode is an essential component to relationship in which each entity is a whole other, and each whole other is enabled to relate to the other fully and completely, without reducing the other to an 'it'. See also Peter Atterton, Mathew Calarco, and Maurice Friedman, eds. *Lévinas & Buber: Dialogue and Difference.* (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 2004); and Maurice Friedman, *Encounter on the Narrow Ridge: A Life of Martin Buber.* (New York: Paragon House, 1991); and Kenneth Paul Kramer (with Mechtihild Gawlick), *Martin Buber's I and Thou - Practicing Living Dialogue.* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2003)

IV. TORAH

'The words of Torah are like golden vessels: the more you scour and rub them, the

more they glisten and brighten/reflect the face of him who looks at them. So it is

with the words of Torah: whenever you repeat them over and over, they glisten and

enlighten/reflect (*me'irin*) the face of the one (who studies them). As it says, "the

commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening (*me'irat*) the eyes'.[159]

"The Torah (primarily) is neither a book of science, nor a history. It is, first and

foremost, the sacred epic of a covenanted community in the making, one that even

yet has not fulfilled its destiny…"[160]

Throughout this thesis we will continue to expand our definition of Torah,
encountering different nuances as the discourse develops. Chapter three will more
closely the etymology of the word, and chapter five will investigate implications of
translating *torah* as *nomos*. For now let us outline what we are discussing when we use
the term *the Torah* הַתּוֹרָה. The Five Books of Moses is the most immediate and
easiest definition. These are the first five books of Jewish and Christian Bibles, which
are also known as the *chumash* חומש, (coming from the Hebrew for *five,* and generally
the Torah in codex form as opposed to scroll form), or the *Pentateuch* πεντάτευχος,
(coming from the Greek, meaning 'five scrolls'). Traditionally the five 'books' are
written onto a single scroll, signifying their unity in the collective Jewish memory.
The term *torah* itself means 'teaching' or 'instruction', as we will examine in much

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[159] A *midrash* which comes from a commentary on *Pirkei Avot*, cited in Norman J. Cohen, *The Way into Torah.* (Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2009), 27

[160] Description offered by Rabbi Rodney J. Mariner, in *The Torah*, (London: Kuperard, 2004), 8

more detail further in this thesis, rather than 'law', which arises out of the Latin translation *(lex)* of the Greek word *nomos* (see chapter five). In Jewish tradition the term *torah* can also refer to the Talmud תַּלְמוּד (compendium of Oral Torah), the Tanakh תַּנַ"ךְ (complete Hebrew Scriptures, or OT), any 'teaching' in the first five books (a 'torah'), or all Jewish learning, as in some capacity or another it derives from or reflects back to, the Torah.[161]

For the purposes of our developing discussion the term Torah is used in two ways - as the Five Books of Moses penned on a single scroll, and the 'essence' as Arthur Green writes, of the relationship consummated at Sinai.[162] It is the central reference point of Judaism. Given that the early Christian movement was a (one of many) Jewish movement centred around the Jew Jesus, who is the central reference point for Christianity, at the very least it (the Torah) merits a reconsideration which engages with it in broader terms than a collection of 'do's and dont's' or collated narratives.

IV.1   TORAH: HEBREW BIBLE OR OLD TESTAMENT?

A PARABLE:

Two friends are invited to a demonstration on how to weld a sculpture. They are both given

goggles to wear, since it is well known the light from welding is so bright that no one can look

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[161] Coming from the Hebrew verb 'to learn', the Talmud is a compendium of commentaries on practical applications of the Torah and the rest of the Scriptures, and is made up of two parts, the *Mishnah* משנה and the *Gemara* גמרא. See Adin Steinsaltz, *The Essential Talmud,* (New York: Basic Books, 2006)

[162] Arthur Green, *Radical Judaism: Rethinking God and Tradition,* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 87-88.

directly into the light without going blind. As it happens, one pair of goggles is tinted blue

and the other is tinted red. After the demonstration the two observers discuss what they saw.

They agree there was a flame and a bright light. Their description of this light is similar

except for one thing - one observer claims the light casts a blue glow upon everything, but the

other observer claims that the light casts a red glow. The two observers are faced with a choice

- they can debate endlessly over the true colours of the light, or they can agree that their

individual observations were the result of the difference between the goggles they we re

wearing. Each option carries different consequences. If they continue to argue over who saw

the true colour of the light, they will continue to argue, for neither one will convince the other.

If they agree on what they both saw, and recognise that the other was wearing different

goggles, they will be at peace with one another.[163]

It is common consensus that the Bible occupies a significant and central part of Christianity and Judaism as individual faiths, and therefore is relevant to both Jewish-Christian dialogue and reconciliation. The Bible as Jews or Christians understand it, however, did not always exist in its current form. We can see even biblical examples of this, when in the Torah Abraham is 'reckoned as righteous' before the Torah is given. Abraham did not possess a Torah nor Paul a New Testament, and the processes of formation and canonisation must always be taken into consideration when entering into a discourse about the authority and position of the Bible for the Jewish-Christian relationship.[164]

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[163] Stephen M. Wylen, *The Seventy Faces of Torah: The Jewish Way of Reading the Sacred Scriptures,* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2005), 15-16

[164] See *Scripture In the Jewish and Christian Traditions: Authority, Interpretation and Relevance,* Frederick E. Greenspahn (ed.), (Nashville, TN: Parthenon Press, 1982), 9-10

In the above parable the bright light is God's Word, the welding demonstration is the revelation of that Word, and the resulting sculpture is the Hebrew Bible.[165] Both Jews and Christians affirm that the Hebrew Bible, termed the *Tanakh* תַּנַ"ךְ for Jews and the Old Testament for Christians, is revelation from the Holy One. The different coloured goggles in the parable represent the different religious and interpretive traditions of the two faiths, and are therefore the definitive tools which colour Jewish and Christian readings of the same text.[166]

One specific way in which Jews and Christians read the Hebrew Scriptures differently is the attention or emphasis they place on different sections or books. In the wake of the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, Jewish and the emerging Christian communities went through significant, parallel and often times reactionary processes to decide which texts or 'books' were to be part of the accepted body of sacred scripture, and which were not. This is important to note when considering the scriptures Jews and Christians share, but also the different ways in which those scriptures are read and interpreted.[167]

In the Jewish canon, the books are laid out into three parts or sections- the *Torah* (the first Five Books, considered an individual unit in Judaism and foundational for the

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[165] Wylen, *Seventy Faces,* 16

[166] By 'the same text', I do not intend to belittle the differences between the Hebrew Bible and the OT, but mean to suggest the same basic substance of texts and essential canons (not including the Apocrypha). Attention is paid to the differences between how these texts are presented and therefore interpreted below. Marc Saperstein phrases it this way, "Though one frequently hears the assertion that Christians share with Jews a profound commitment to the Bible as the Word of God, a cautionary note is in order. We must not forget that the Hebrew Bible is not the same as the Christian Old Testament, even though it may contain precisely the same books". See Marc Saperstein, *Moments of Crisis,* 59

[167] Wylen, *Seventy Faces*, 24-25

rest of the Scriptures), the *Nevi'im*, (the Prophets, beginning with Joshua, including the Books of Samuel and Kings and ending with Malachi as the book-end to the Minor Prophets) and the *Ketuvim*, (the Writings, including Ruth, Daniel and Esther, and ending with Chronicles). Hence the **Tanakh** as an acronym.[168] For traditional Jews, the Torah is considered to be the direct Word of God communicated to Moses on Mt. Sinai, and therefore in accordance with the Talmud is the source of religious doctrine and practice. The Prophetic Books and the Writings are inspirational and sacred, but in relation to the Torah. The Torah is the foundation and the centre point of Jewish theology and life.[169]

Christianity, on the other hand, tends to view the entire body of Hebrew Scriptures, and the Apocrypha for some Christian denominations, as a whole frame of reference. More emphasis might be placed on the prophetic passages, as these are the foundation and support for many of the Messianic claims, seen to be fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. In the Christian canon, the books of the OT are typically arranged into four parts - *Historical*, comprising of the Pentateuch, and the books then from Joshua, including Ruth, Daniel and Esther, up to the *Wisdom* books, which include the Psalms and Proverbs and Job. The *Prophets* are divided into two sections, with the *Major Prophets*, such as Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel, coming before the *Minor Prophets* (which are counted as individual books in the Christian canons and one whole book in Jewish canon), ending finally with Malachi, drawing out the

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[168] See Timothy H. Lim, *The Formation of the Hebrew Canon,* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2013)

[169] Wylen, *Seventy Faces,* 22-23

emphasis on the impending birth of Messiah, who appears in the very next page in a Christian Bible with the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew.[170]

IV.1.1   THE GENRE OF TORAH

It is important to acknowledge the different layout and emphasis within the Jewish and Christian canons and to honour the differences in both and the historical and theological landscape that is reflected in each. However, the particular dynamic I want to draw out is the *implication* of locating a certain group of books in the Bible within the genre of 'history', without due regard as to where that group of books or writings are located within the collective and historical religious consciousness of the community from where these sacred texts emerged.[171] In Jewish thought the Torah is a unit that is "more than history, (and) more than law."[172] How these texts are held within the religious memory of the Jewish people will be explored in more detail in chapter three, but the implication of disregarding or simply not being aware of this memory and renaming it as either 'history' or 'law', can be a reactionary theological debate that encourages a rather fractious exchange. Such a reactionary response might assert the bible is not 'history' in the sense that our modern world understands

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[170] John Barton maintains that *kanon,* a Greek word meaning 'measuring stick' and intimating the 'fixed' books which became through various processes the accepted books for either community, is not a suitable term for describing the scriptures used by Christians and Jews in the first century. This is because the issue of fixed or closed texts and which were 'in' and which were out would not arise until later. See John Barton, *Oracles of God: Perceptions of Ancient Prophecy in Israel after the Exile* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 44. See also Timothy Lim, *The Formation of the Hebrew Canon,* 2

[171] See Dr. William V. McDonald, *A Hebrew Text in Greek Dress: A Comparison and Contrast Between Jewish and Hellenistic Thought* (Austin, TX: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014) for more on the importance of establishing the Jewish context of the Scriptures and the relevance of this for furthering biblical scholarship.

[172] George Robinson, *Essential Torah: A Complete Guide to the Five Books of Moses* (New York: Schocken, 2006), 56

and records history. This process continues, often with scrappy disputes where polarising themes such as 'evolution versus creationism' have a starring role. And the result can be those who are reacting against the very notion of the Bible as history, disregard it in its entirety. Or, the polemics might centre on a reactionary theological conversation about *law* and its apparent counterclaim, which is termed as *grace*.

If, however, the stumbling block which facilitates this debate in the first place is removed, and the Torah is seen as both what it defines itself to be and how it has been understood within the Jewish collective consciousness, the perimeters of the debates between those who passionately declare the Bible as 'history', (in the way we understand history in the twenty-first century) or 'law', and those who react and declare it as *non*-historical nonsense or a 'calcified' legalistic burden, naturally and necessarily shift. The foundation of those arguments and the polarising, destructive outcomes are somewhat altered simply by addressing the question of genre and title. A new vantage point from which to see and respond to the shared sacred scriptures between Christians and Jews, becomes possible.

This thesis posits the capability of the Torah to function as a metaphorical 'key' within the Jewish-Christian relationship. *But what is the theological basis for such a claim?* What kind of document is the Torah in and of itself that it could possibly be envisioned in this way? This second question shall be explored in more detail in chapter three as the model is developed, but for now we shall draw together two suggestions as to the theological plausibility for proposing the Torah as an essential key to Jewish-Christian reconciliation. Finally, as we move to conclude this chapter,

we shall consider the Torah in terms of a 'conversation with Otherness', a sacred meeting place where we can begin to see the face of our Deepest Other.

IV.2   TORAH - A SHARED STARTING POINT

The first suggestion as to the plausibility for proposing the Torah as an essential key to Jewish-Christian reconciliation, is that the Torah is a *shared starting point*. *Nostra Aetate* affirms the wider spiritual and biblical patrimony between Christians and Jews, when it states,

> "Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues."[173]

It is important, however, to recognise that the Torah is sacred for both Jews and Christians in different ways. What significance it has and what role it plays will depend both on the religious community, (whether Jewish or Christian), the particular denomination and the cultural and interpretive theological tradition of that community. No matter how differently it is applied or the reasons for that application, it is nonetheless a point from which to begin a conversation between Jews and Christians. This alone validates it being a potential key in the relationship.

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[173] Point 4, *Nostra Aetate*, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html, retrieved February 26 2019

How can it be legitimately said that the Torah is a shared starting point, if the very interpretations and applications, and reception histories, are so vastly different? In what ways is it shared, or a point of intersection? For Christians, (putting aside for now polemical or complex theological persuasions, such as 'grace and law' which we shall engage with more fully in chapters five and six), the Torah, or more commonly referred to in Christian circles as the 'Pentateuch', makes up the first part of the Old Testament and as part of the canon of sacred scripture retains an inspired relevance. As former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams said,

"When we read our holy book, the Bible, containing the Scriptures of the Jewish people and also the writings of the first generation of believers in Jesus, we do so in order to hear how God's revealing power has been at work in history."[174]

For Christians the Torah is important for understanding the history of Israel as a people, as well as some of the Jewish practices that would have been common in the time of Jesus, such as circumcision, dietary codes, regulations around the Sabbath, etc.[175] For some Christians, it underscores humanity's sinfulness and therefore desperate need of a Saviour which could only come through God Himself, and for others it highlights standards of holiness. It contains deeply loved narratives, lays the doctrinal groundwork for understanding crucial themes such as covenant and redemption, and is part of a whole trajectory of Scripture from Genesis to

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[174] http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/1087/what-is-christianity.
Retrieved July 9 2015

[175] Obviously the weight attributed to the Pentateuch depends on the particular Christian denomination and cultural and religious tradition, and it is important to note how diverse Christian denominations are. For more on Christian approaches to the Pentateuch and to the Old Testament in general, see T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: 3rd Edition, 2012); and *A Theological Introduction to the Pentateuch; Interpreting the Torah as Christian Scripture*. Eds., Richard S. Briggs and and Joel N. Lohr (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: 2012)

Revelation, that in most Christian communities is understood to point, ultimately, to Christ.[176] This is a simplified picture and does not represent Christianity in all its diversity nor all of the Christian approaches to biblical text or the Pentateuch in particular, but expresses aspects of how Christians might relate to this biblical text for the purpose of positively highlighting how the Torah can be a shared starting point for Jewish-Christian reconciliation. It must be highlighted however, as mentioned earlier, that with the profound shift in Christian attitudes to Jews and Judaism following the various denominational reassessments following *NA,* there has also been a shift in Christian attitudes to the Torah. This has expressed itself in fields of theology and scholarship, most visible in the reappraisal of the Jewishness of Jesus , for example, or the *NPP* discourse.[177]

For Jews, the Torah is both the sacred starting point for all religious life and the ultimate goal. It is a *Tree of Life*, the engagement with and study of which is like a continual, dialectical conversation that has been the centre of all Jewish communal and individual life since the memory of Mt. Sinai.[178] It is the first of the three sections which make up the Hebrew Bible, and as such is considered foundational

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[176] This is a generalisation - for a more diverse approach a variety of sources on this subject it would be helpful to read a range of Christian approaches from within different denominations. For example, a Catholic resource can be found in Scott Hahn, *Understanding the Scriptures: A Complete Course on Bible Study* (Midwest Theological Forum, The Didache Series 2005); and an Anglican approach to Scripture, amongst other subjects, can be found in Rowan Williams, *Being Christian: Baptism, Bible, Eucharist and Prayer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014). For a more general resource on historical Christian approaches to Scripture, see D. A Carson, (ed.), *The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures,* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016)

[177] See for example, 'Re-reading Paul: A Fresh Look at His Attitude to Torah and to Judaism, http://www.jcrelations.net/Re-reading_Paul.2229.0.html, retrieved February 28 2019

[178] Jonathan Sacks writes eloquently and extensively on the notion of the Torah forming the core of a continual, cross-generational and eternal three way conversation between the Jewish People, God and the Torah itself. See Jonathan Sacks, *Covenant and Conversation, Genesis: The Book of Beginnings,* (Jerusalem: Koren Publishers, 2009)

for all other aspects of Scripture. Indeed, if we take the Torah as the central covenantal text which frames Jewish consciousness as a whole, the Prophetic literature calls Israel back to Torah, to covenantal living with justice and righteousness at its heart, while the Writings reflect through song, poetry and narrative on the implications of living, or not-living, in relation to the Torah. Everything needed to walk in wholeness as humans is to be found in some capacity in the Torah, in not just its words, but its silences, its gaps, its cadences and echoes, and even 'jots or tittles'.[179] The stories and poetry, songs and the narratives to be found in the Prophets or in the Psalms all find their 'first' in the Torah. Arthur Green defines Torah as a communal response to the original question of the first conversation between Adam and God. He writes,

'All the imperatives of Sinai, are our ways of responding to the divine "Where are you?"'.[180]

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[179] The last portion of the Torah (in classical Judaism the Torah is divided into 54 portions, with one portion being sung or read each Shabbat throughout the year) includes an intriguing phrase *'eish da'at'*, meaning 'fiery knowledge, or law' (Deuteronomy 33:2). Midrash (*Midrash Tanchuma Bereishit* 1:3 https://www.sefaria.org/Midrash_Tanchuma%2C_Bereshit.1?lang=bi) concludes that this esoteric phrase is referring to the words of Torah itself, and describes the letters of the Torah as 'black fire', being layered upon 'white fire', the white or 'empty' spaces in between the letters. This description understands both the letters and the spaces between them to be necessary for the whole. In a similar way, the cadences of the Torah and the 'crowns' on the individual letters, as well as the silences both in the text and in the notations that accompany it are understood to enrich the meaning beyond the surface and tell an equally important story. What we see on the surface of the text, the black letters, are the representation for the 'plain' meaning (the *p'shat,* or surface meaning of the text), and the white spaces beneath the letters are the fire that fuels the deeper meaning. Torah, it is noted, opens with 'water' in the beginning in Genesis, and concludes with 'fire' at the end in Deuteronomy. Water brings life and flows downward, fire brings light and reaches upward - the Torah then, in mystical Jewish thinking is that which flows to our deepest parts and also enables us to soar heavenward, linking the finite with the infinite. For more see *Shabbat Forshpeis* at http://www.hir.org/a_weekly_gallery/8.16.02-weekly.html, retrieved July 5 2016. See also George Robinson, *Essential Torah,* 96-97

[180] Arthur Green, *Radical Judaism,* 101

In addition to the Torah being part of the sacred canon belonging to each community, there is a history of Torah, and wider biblical, interpretation which was not always restricted to either community, and furthers this idea of the Torah being 'a shared text'. Edward Kessler draws on classical interpretations of the *Akeidah* (the Binding of Isaac) for example, from both Christian and Jewish traditions to demonstrate dimensions of cross-community exegetical interaction. While there are of course differing biblical interpretations which emerged from Jewish or Christian schools of thought, Kessler highlights that historically there were also vitally important 'exegetical encounters', which nourished and sustained developing hermeneutical approaches around certain biblical passages.[181] Both the rabbis and the church fathers, according to Kessler, often asked overlapping questions with regard to the internal meaning of the biblical text. This is clearly exemplified by Origen, whose writings reflect an obvious interaction with the rabbinic modes of interpretation which were simultaneously beginning to flourish.[182] Thus it cannot be assumed that Christian and Jewish hermeneutical approaches developed only in isolation or opposition to one another.[183]

IV.3 TORAH: A FIRM FOUNDATION

The idea that the Torah is 'a shared text' to some degree leads us to a second important point when responding to the question of the theological basis for claiming the Torah's potential as a key within the Christian-Jewish relationship - it is

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[181] Kessler, *Bound by the Bible,* 8-17

[182] Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 81-83

[183] See Natalie B. Dohrmann and David Stern, *Jewish Biblical Interpretation and Cultural Exchange: Comparative Exegesis in Context* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 1-20

foundational. Let us think of Scripture in architectural terms for a moment, and picture it as a house or a building. If the foundation for the house is weak or inferior to the rest of the house, the structure will be unstable, and if it is unstable it is not safe. Or if the foundation of the house were to be removed altogether, the walls would simply collapse. In the same way, the Torah is like the foundation of the house, the understructure that ensures the rest of the building is stable.[184] Even in a chronological sense, it is the first place in the sequence of Scripture the student will encounter stories and themes and ideas of rest and delight, slavery and bondage, servitude and oppression, liberation and restoration, forgiveness and hope, the wiping out of humanity, and the rescuing of that very humanity who has been created in God's image. It is the bedrock from which later motifs are expanded, such as what it means to be 'holy', (*kadosh* קדוש)*,* to be 'set apart for a particular purpose', a theme which finds its first resonance in the Sabbath, the first thing to be named 'holy' in Scripture.[185]

IV.4 TORAH: CONVERSATIONS WITH OTHERNESS

Four thousand years of Jewish history is inextricably suffused into a dialectical and dialogical relationship with sacred text. Emmanuel Levinas emphasises the dialogical aspect of the relationship between the Jewish people and the Torah as something 'which is forever beginning again', a theme Rabbi Jonathan Sacks draws out extensively in his series entitled *Covenant and Conversation.*[186] For Sacks*,* the Torah is 'an

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[184] See *Torah Rediscovered.* Ariel and D'vorah Berkowitz, (Shoreshim Publishing, Fifth Ed., Revised, 2012) 26. See also Cohen, *The Way into Torah.* 3

[185] Genesis 2:3

[186] Emmanuel Levinas, *Beyond the Verse,* xiii-xiv

encounter between now and then, moment and eternity, that frames Jewish consciousness'.[187] He grounds Torah, and the rest of Hebrew Scripture (which harks back to or flows out from the Torah) in covenant, and crystallises Israel's engagement with that covenant as a continually unfolding 'conversation' that traverses the boundaries of time. In a sense it is an eternal conversation. Participating in this conversation in every generation is, for Sacks, an important part of what it means to be a Jew. For Jews there is new meaning, an 'eternal newness' as Zornberg writes, to be uncovered in every encounter with Torah, because it is in Torah, that sacred meeting place, that we encounter the Other. As mentioned earlier, Emmanuel Levinas expressed the indelible link between Torah and Otherness when he wrote, 'The Torah is given in the Light of a Face'. The encounter at Sinai as the defining moment in Israel's sacred memory, actually becomes for Levinas the paradigm 'for all relationships with the Other'.[188] Drawing this out further, Avivah Zornberg condenses the Sinai episode as,

"(a) face-to-face encounter..with the Face of the Other…The infinity encountered at Sinai is also the infinity encountered in the face of *any* other".[189]

Within Christian theological circles there can be a working assumption that the Jewish Bible is simply the Old Testament as it is categorised in the Christian canon, minus the New Testament. This is problematic on a number of levels, but it specifically ignores the reality of the relationship between the Jewish People and

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[187] Sacks, *Covenant and Conversation: Genesis*, 2.

[188] Zornberg, *The Particulars of Rapture*, 305

[189] Ibid., 305-306

those same scriptures termed as 'old'.[190] Ignoring the ongoing Jewish conversation with the Scriptures which continues to unfold, could be considered one of the deceptively solid segments of the historically imposed barrier between Christians and Jews. It is 'deceptively' solid because once it is removed through witnessing, honouring and even engaging in this sacred Jewish conversation, the edifice of its solidity begins to crumble. A space has been made through which it is possible to glimpse the Deepest Other. Even if it is small it is a beginning, as we make space to glimpse one another in a way that honours the sanctity of that other, we begin to remember who we are. As Levinas reminds us,

"To approach the Other in conversation is to welcome his expression…it is therefore to receive from the Other, beyond the capacity of the I, which means exactly: to thane the idea of infinity. But this also means: to be taught. The relation with the Other, or Conversation, is a non-allergic relation, and ethical relation: but inasmuch as it is welcomed this conversation is a teaching".[191]

V. CONCLUSION

Avivah Zornberg intimates through her deep literary analysis of the biblical narratives, which is fused with psychoanalytical assessments and informed by

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[190] This issue was confronted by the Belgian Protestant Council on Relations between Judaism and Christianity, who stated in the their 1967 declaration that "Neither in the scriptures nor in the apostolic writings is there a break between 'old' and 'new'". This point was further clarified by the Council, adding, "It is not correct to designate the Torah, the Prophets and Writings (in abbreviated form the three together are called Scriptures) as "Old Testament", and the Apostolic Writings as "New Testament". This terminology suggests an opposition or contrast that does not exist". See *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People,* 158

[191] Cited by Zornberg, *The Particulars of Rapture*, 305

midrashic and Hasidic texts, that the Bible can be appreciated as 'the foundational text in our shared quest of what it simply means to be human'.[192] Historically and theologically, Jews and Christians have responded to, interpreted and applied the Torah, as part of their canon of sacred text, differently within their individual and unique traditions. Nonetheless the fact remains that the Torah in and of itself, no matter how differently it is seen or understood, or even maligned, can be an authentic, foundational and shared starting point from where to begin, refresh, or even contemplate a journey of reconciliation toward one another.

This chapter introduced the idea that a renewed exegetical encounter through the Torah is a plausible theological response to the environmental and historical climate of separation between Christians and Jews. Through using the metaphor of the locked door, a vantage point is established from where this thesis can concretely re-examine some of the 'stumbling-blocks' which form this age old separation.

Part of this exploration is to test the hypothesis that what appear to be stumbling blocks in the Jewish-Christian relationship, might instead be stepping-stones to better and more fruitful relations, or at the very least weaken some of the deceptively solid segments of this historically imposed barrier.[193] We are therefore asking if it is possible to use what has been relegated as a stumbling block *in and of itself,* the Torah,

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[192] See Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep,* 219

[193] The term 'deceptively' needs to be qualified and is used here with caution. The 'segments' are indeed solid - insofar they are historically very real. But, as this thesis will demonstrate, a simple shift in a word, or language or a concept, can radically alter perspective. *Therefore,* what seems fixed and immovable, from another angle is not so concrete, and its immovability is somewhat deceptive. Change is possible, and it often begins with our language, which in turn impacts our perceptions. We will examine this idea more fully in chapter four in relation to the Torah, and the idea of developing a language of reconnection between Christians and Jews through the medium of sacred text.

as a sacred 'key' to potentially unlock aspects of the Christian-Jewish relationship which have been historical sources of contention and strife. A critical objective in this endeavour is to enable the possibility of a rediscovery of relationship that, honouring the sanctity and reality of difference, goes beyond the historically enforced limits and into the depths of what it means to be human in a relational context.

CHAPTER TWO

ROOTS AND SEEDS: HISTORICAL DYNAMICS IN THE

JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIP

I. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on establishing and defining key terms and definitively outlining relevant themes which are critical aspects to the development of this thesis as a whole. This chapter seeks to embed the central research question (primarily examining the idea of sacred reconciliation within sacred text, through closely exploring the possibility of the Torah as a key to the betterment Jewish-Christian relations) in the historical context of the Jewish-Christian relationship. This chapter highlights the fact that social, political, religious and textual interaction did not end

with Constantine in the fourth century nor did it end with the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, but, for better or worse, has been an ongoing affair.[194]

The current dialogue which is unfolding between Christians and Jews arose so quickly, against the backdrop of the almost inconceivable reality of the Shoah, that it did not have a precedent to guide it.[195] As noted, Jewish-Christian interaction at exegetical, social and political levels was indeed a continuing force through the centuries, however much of it was characterised by exclusion, mutual suspicion and persecution. David Novak remarks that with regard to the current unfolding of Jewish-Christian dialogue, it must not be assumed that relational dynamics between Jews and Christians are the same as they were in the Middle Ages, one which he describes as 'at best unsympathetic, at worst hostile'.[196] Nor must it be assumed, we can add, that relational dynamics are either the same as they were in the first or

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[194] For Edward Kessler, Jewish and Christian interaction through the centuries is evidenced in relation to an 'exegetical encounter', that is, the reciprocal influence on either Jewish or Christian interpretation of biblical texts. The interpretations themselves reveal some sort of awareness of the exegetical traditions of the other tradition. Origen, for example, according to Kessler employed exegetical methods which were used in rabbinic interpretations, allowing for the conclusion that Origen was familiar to some degree with rabbinic exegesis. In addition, the Jewish compilers of *Genesis Rabbah,* a midrashic interpretation of Genesis composed between the second and fourth centuries BCE, were aware of Origen's interpretation, exemplified through their response to Origen. See Kessler, *Bound by the Bible,* 24-29. Pinchas Lapide's work on the use of Hebrew within Christianity from medieval times, through the Reformation and into modern 'Christian Neo-Hebraica' as he terms it, evidences an ongoing encounter of sorts between Christians and Jews. See Pinchas Lapide, *Hebrew in the Church: The Foundations of Jewish-Christian Dialogue.* For more on the mutual 'shaping' of Christianity and Judaism in positive and negative ways, see Peter Schäfer, *The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other.* Schäfer maintains that the boundaries between 'orthodoxy' and 'heresy' in both Judaism and Christianity are more fluid than often assumed, and it was precisely these fluid boundaries which forged the identities that were to eventually be defined as either 'Christian' or 'Jewish'. See as above, 8-10

[195] It is important to distinguish that whilst we are highlighting interaction between Jews and Christians is not a 'new' enterprise as such but has been ongoing through the centuries, in a mostly negative capacity, the reconciliatory dialogue and the pursuit of a fruitful relationship between the two faiths which emerged in the latter part of the twentieth century is a recent endeavour. See Aitken and Kessler, *Challenges in Jewish-Christian Relations,* 1-4

[196] David Novak, *A Jewish Justification,* 1-3

second century, or indeed could be the same. Thus we can conclude that relations between Christians and Jews have continually shifted along with the sands of time, shaped by dominating global powers and political and religious alliances.[197]

The difference in the 21st century is that Christianity and Judaism have both faced a sober internal reassessment following the catastrophe of the Shoah. For Christianity, this 'internal metanoia' has been particularly focused on the historical dynamics of its relationship with Jews and Judaism, which has led to a rapprochement of those relations.[198] In that vein, this chapter specifically examines some of the traceable threads in the early centuries of Jewish and Christian identity formation, thereby isolating some of the broad problematics which enabled supersessionism, for example, to gain such a destructive foothold in the Jewish-Christian relationship. In addition, it touches on how a reductionist vilification of the Torah as 'law' can lead

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[197] See Robert Chazan's chapter, "Christian-Jewish Interactions over the Ages", in *Christianity in Jewish Terms,* 7-24

[198] A clear indication of the rapprochement and ongoing development of those relations is exemplified through the 2015 statement released by the Vatican, which reinforces the Church's commitment to the values espoused through the groundbreaking text of *NA*. "The Gifts and Calling of God are Irrevocable" reaffirms the central tenets of the Church's endeavour to eradicate anti-semitism and espouse ever-deepening and positive relations with Jews and Judaism. However, it fails to offer anything radical in terms of confronting issues surrounding language around the concepts of 'Israel' and theological supersessionism. Rabbi David Rosen and Dr Edward Kessler both offer critique of the wider theological and political effectiveness of the document in this regard. See John L. Allen Jr., (2015) https://cruxnow.com/church/2015/12/10/vatican-document-on-jews-proves-that-revolution-is-the-new-routine/. See also http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/relations-jews-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20151210_ebraismo-nostra-aetate_en.html. See also Cunningham, P. A. (2017), "The Sources behind "The Gifts and the Calling of God Are Irrevocable" (Rom 11:29): A Reflection on Theological Questions Pertaining to Catholic-Jewish Relations on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* (No. 4)." *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations*, 12(1). https://doi.org/10.6017/scjr.v12i1.9792 . Retrieved November 10, 2019

to a vilification of the Jewish people.[199] Finally, this chapter looks at some of the revisions in church teaching in recent decades, a welcome move in the unfolding of Jewish-Christian reconciliation given the painful history which marks so much of this historical relationship. These revisions broadly have re-examined the liturgical, catechetical and biblical teachings fostered in Christian denominations, as church teaching in its different forms is a vital place where change can be effected.

II. THE TORAH: A POINT OF ROTATION BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

An axis is a line, a rotating body around which the earth turns. Brad H.Young maintains that, to a degree, Christianity and Judaism can be understood to define themselves on the basis of how they characterise the Torah.[200] In other words the Torah functions like an axis, a particular line or a hinge, from which both Christians and Jews take a certain directive. As we highlighted in the previous chapter, however, that directive and the movement that is created as a result, differs significantly between the two communities.

For one group that axis might be the epicentre, everything that they turn toward and what enables the very possibility of movement and transition. For others it may be

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[199] See Sean Freyne's essay, "Vilifying the Other and Defining the Self: Matthew's and John's Anti-Jewish Polemic in Focus", (Trinity College Dublin, 1985). Freyne writes, in relation to the development of polemic between early Christians and Jews in the Second Temple Period, that, "vilification serves not so much to define but to confirm the self that finds itself cut off from its natural matrix and is attempting to see an alternative mission for itself by way of compensation", (p 139).

[200] See Brad H. Young, *Paul the Jewish Theologian: A Pharisee among Christians, Jews and Gentiles* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson 2009), 62

the anti-thesis, the point from which they pivot from or pivot against. Nevertheless, whether a positive or negative starting point, it is at the very least a shared starting point, and of central importance to both Jewish and Christian communities and denominations for defining aspects of identity. It therefore can be thought to be of vital significance to the reconciliation of those relationships and identities. In one sense, the Torah could be said to be an axis within the Jewish-Christian relationship itself. In the opening lines of his important essay *Christology after Auschwitz,* Didier Polleyfeyt states that Christ is the very point of division and the very point of unity between Christianity and Judaism.[201] In a similar way we can refract this statement and say, as claimed in chapter one, that the Torah is at once what divides but potentially could draw the Jewish-Christian relationship together.

II.1   THE TORAH: TERRA INCOGNITA OF CHRISTIANITY

NT scholar Douglas J. Moo writes,

"Far too many Christians are abysmally ignorant of even the basic content of the

Old Testament. Too many pastors avoid the Old Testament, or preach only a few of

its more famous stories and texts. Evangelical scholars and publishers have

perpetuated the problem, by producing three or four solid exegetical commentaries

on New Testament books for every one Old Testament book."[202]

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[201] Dider Polleyfeyt, "Christology After Auschwitz: A Catholic Perspective", in *Jesus Then & Now: Images of Jesus in History and Christology,* Marvin Meyer and Charles Hughes, (eds.), (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001), 229-248.

[202] Greg L. Bahnsen, Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Douglas J. Moo, Wayne G. Strickland, Willem A. VanGemeren, Stanley N. Gundry, *Five Views on Law and Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 218

The previous chapter outlined some of the more positive Christian responses to the Torah (or the Pentateuch as it is more commonly termed in Christian parlance), which occupies a significant place in the Christian canon. Frank Crüsemann, in his monumental work *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law,* claims that Christianity is only recently beginning to rethink some of its traditional assumptions about the Torah. He remarks,

> "Torah - this Hebrew word is a central biblical concept, and (yet) it is an issue
>
> Christian theology as only recently begun to address."[203]

Part of this recent revision of Christian thought in relation to the Torah comes from the strategic developments within Christian-Jewish dialogue, particularly in relation to official Christian teaching concerning Jews and Judaism.[204]

Examining the syllabus of different denominational seminary course outlines, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Methodist), it becomes clear that much of the coursework and required reading is centred on subjects within Systematic and Liturgical Theology. This includes topics such as - Christology, Eucharistic Theology, Hermeneutics, Canon Law, Ecclesiology, Pauline Studies, Philosophical Approaches

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[203] Frank Crüsemann, *The Torah,* 1

[204] In the aforementioned document *A Sacred Obligation: Rethinking Christian Faith in Relation to Judaism and the Jewish People*, the Christian Scholars Group on Christian-Jewish Relations state that, "revising Christian teaching about Judaism and the Jewish people is a central and indispensable obligation of theology in our time.". See https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/sites/partners/csg/Sacred_Obligation.htm. Retrieved March 5 2017

to God, or Church History, as one might expect.[205] In comparison, the seminary outline in Jewish theological institutions, (Orthodox, Reconstructionist and Reform) tends to be built around three core concepts - Israel, Torah and God.[206] Of course, they are different institutions operating within different religious, cultural and denominational systems, and there is nothing wrong with this. The subjects and topics studied are as to be expected and pertain to the relevant theological, liturgical and denominational differences. However, when it comes to the study of the Pentateuch, for example, or approaches to Biblical Studies and Biblical Criticism, Israelite History and the Second Temple Period, (the formative period out of which Christianity grew and in which embryonic (Jewish) context the NT texts were formed,) there are points of intersection for both the Christian and Jewish prospective student. Therefore, if Christian seminaries omit on a large level in-depth study of the Torah and relegate it to the field of 'law', to be touched upon only in a module on Israelite history or to be distinguished from grace in a module on Soteriology, perhaps there are graver consequences than might be assumed. Re-envisaging the place the Torah occupies within seminary studies, in conjunction with the varying denominational revisions which have taken place over the last number of

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[205] For example, http://www.anglicanritecatholicchurch.org/pgc/major_seminary_syllabus.html; http://stas.org/en/seminary-life/study/academic-program; https://www.londonseminary.org; http://ptstulsa.edu/userPDFs/Academics/CourseMaterials/DS575_SPG.2014_S.pdf. Retrieved March 25, 2017. That being said, the efforts of Vatican II through *Nostra Aetate* and subsequent Catholic, Protestant and Ecumenical documents have sought to revise church teaching with regards to Jews and Judaism, as will be discussed in more detail at the end of this chapter.

[206] See http://www.jtsa.edu; http://www.rrc.edu; http://huc.edu. Retrieved March 24, 2017. See also Rabbi Hayim Lalevy Donin's, chapter entitled 'The Cornerstones of Judaism', in *To Be a Jew,: A Guide to Jewish Observance in Contemporary Life* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 7-28

decades at institutional levels, might prove a healthy investment for the future of Jewish-Christian dialogue.[207]

Not only is the Torah (both as a text in its own right but also as a concept) often an expanse of unexplored territory in Christian theology, it is also perhaps the most misunderstood. For example, the familiar 'Bible-in-a-Year' compilations frequently begin enthusiastically with readings from the Pentateuch, but once the familial narratives morph into the heavier ceremonial or ritual texts of Leviticus, for example, the emphasis tends to stall and enthusiasm wane. Texts centred on purity and defilement, on menstruation and skin conditions, as well as the meticulous, painstaking detail of every fibre in the wardrobe of a since defunct priesthood might seem out of step with contemporary culture or the realities of faith in the 21st century. Leviticus, however, is vital for understanding the sacrificial system, a point surely of the utmost importance for Christian theology.

Moreover, as Jonathan Sacks articulates, Leviticus is the heartbeat of Judaism, asking relevant questions which range from the meaning of holiness to what it looks like to love your neighbour as yourself, and then to love the stranger as yourself also. These familiar words which find their source in the centre of Leviticus itself, (and repeated by Jesus in answer to a question on the most important *mitzvot*), are revolutionary. Further, the text pinpoints and wrestles with some of the deepest questions that

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[207] Mary C. Boys, in *Has God Only One Blessing*, offers guidelines for rethinking the traditional Christian narrative and revising anti-Jewish teaching. See 'Re-educating Ecclesia', 267. Also Philip Cunningham suggests introductions for lectionary readings, which revise assumed interpretations and offer a potential access point into the text which bypasses anti-Jewish prejudices of old. See "Retelling the Christian Story in a Post - *Nostra Aetate* Church" in *Seeking Shalom,* 181-203

echo in religious life as much today as three millennia ago.[208] Rethinking the inherited assumptions that any of us might (or will) have, Christian, Jewish or other, about a certain text can make the riches within that text more accessible. It is a central premise of this thesis therefore that the riches within the Torah potentially offer a space for the deepening of a sacred reconciliation between Jews and Christians.

II.1.1   A COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIP

Just as the separation(s) between Christianity and Judaism as they developed are far more complicated than they could appear, so too the relationship between Christians and the Torah is more complicated than it might appear also. A mixture of theological perceptions, doctrinal conclusions, denominational emphases, cultural emotions and almost two thousand years of inherited memory will naturally inform the Christian approach to this biblical text in differing degrees.[209]

On the one hand, there exists a strong and deep Christian attachment to the Pentateuch which we outlined in chapter one. This attachment passionately turns for theological inspiration to the narratives and prose that give us the Garden of Eden and its Trees with their elusive and mysterious fruit, Noah and his birds and rainbow, Abraham and Sarah in their tent, Jacob and Esau and their bartering for birthrights with soup, Joseph and his enigmatic coat, Pharaoh and the frogs, the miraculous parting of the Red Sea, the Hebrews wandering through the wilderness for forty

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[208] See Jonathan Sacks, *Covenant and Conversation: Leviticus, the Book of Holiness* (Jerusalem: Maggid, 2015). Also the work of the eminent Nechama Leibowitz in S*tudies in Vayikra (Leviticus)*. Trans. Aryeh Newman. (Jerusalem: The World Zionist Organisation, 1980)

[209] See Leon Klenicki and Geoffrey Wigoder, (eds.), *A Dictionary of the Jewish-Christian Dialogue,* 16-22

years, manna and quails, water flowing from rocks, giant grapes, spies and a Land of Promises flowing with rivers of milk and honey. Themes of slavery and freedom, creation, family relationships, nationhood, inclusion and exclusion, leadership and idolatry all inspire and generate much theological and doctrinal reflection. For many Christians, what are considered to be the ethical or moral aspects of the Law, such as honouring one's parents or tithing, might be of the utmost importance, and in certain denominations the eternal relevance of the covenantal aspects of the Pentateuch will be passionately defended. Indeed the Ten Commandments are considered foundational and essential to Christian living in most Christian denominations.[210]

And then we come to this tricky term 'law', and the tone changes. Suddenly, these narratives are separated out from the legal or ceremonial aspects of the text, and the questions begin to reverberate - are Christians bound by this law? Does it need to be kept and obeyed for salvation? The question presupposes the answer - because salvation is attained through Christ according to the universal Christian understanding, it can be attained by no other means. There is a most important question to be asked in this, however, about the nature of the Torah in and of itself. In Jewish religious consciousness, was the Torah ever a 'salvation document', and did it ever purport to guarantee salvation attained through rote obedience? How did

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[210] Ibid., 19-22. In this regard, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explicitly states, "The Ten Commandments belong to God's revelation. At the same time they teach us the true humanity of man. They bring to light the essential duties, and therefore, indirectly, the fundamental rights inherent in the nature of the human person. The Decalogue contains a privileged expression of the natural law: "From the beginning, God had implanted in the heart of man the precepts of the natural law. Then he was content to remind him of them. This was the Decalogue"". See paragraph number 2070 (1994), "Catechism of the Catholic Church", http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s2.htm. Retrieved February 9 2019

Yeshua Himself, the very embodiment of salvation according to Christian understanding, consider the Torah?[211] Chapter five will examine in more detail some of the implications of the binary notion of the Torah as a law which stands in contradistinction to grace. The Torah is often assumed to be an obedience demanding legal system, that is defunct with the coming of Christ (see Appendix D). Moreover, according to some theologians, Christ actually sets his followers free from the burdens of this law, creating a 'millstone' type picture of the Torah.[212] There are a number of challenges and pitfalls with this thinking, some of which include immediate theological objections to the notion of the being set free from the Torah rather than from sin. And for those who so dearly cling to this law, what of them?

Reducing and confining the Torah to the category of law distorts its capabilities and essential function. It causes it to be disjoined from grace, which creates an artificially imposed separation. This separation creates a rupture, a tear, and in this place of rupture replacement theology or supersessionism comes to fill the lacerations in relationship and identity. What is the seedbed then of this perceived and imposed

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[211] *Yeshua* (Jesus) in Hebrew comes from the verb *yasha* יָשַׁע meaning 'to save' or 'to deliver'. On the question of Jesus' relationship to the Torah Geza Vermes asks, "Did Jesus oppose any tenet of the Torah?". In response to his own questions he answers, "Some Jews, who disapprove of Jesus, say so, as do some Christians, who disapprove of Judaism. However, two statements of Jesus survive in Matthew and Luke that demonstrate that the religion preached by him derived from the Law of Moses and was not a negation of it. For Jesus, Judaism and the Torah were not a passing phase in a divine plan, but a religion destined to remain 'until heaven and earth pass away'". See Geza Vermes, *Christian Beginnings,* 54-55

[212] For example, in a well-meaning article entitled "Should We Obey the Old Testament Law", the dominant conclusion is that if a Christian undertakes not to eat pork, for example, out of a desire to obey God, they are in effect nullifying God's plan for the 'fulfillment of the Law in Jesus'. If a person chooses not to eat it out out of nutritional reasons that is acceptable, but a 'line is crossed' if it is done with any religious intent. There are a number of pitfalls to this thinking, but in particular it reinforces the notion from a Christian perspective that the Messiah came to liberate, not from sin, but from the Torah. Such anachronistic reading of the NT texts is loaded with overtones of supersessionism and is a barrier in Christian-Jewish reconciliation. See https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/should-we-obey-old-testament-law, retrieved February 2 2019

dichotomy between Torah and grace, and what are its effects? In asking this particular question we are looking to the seed and root level to find its source, for as with a seed and the eventual fruit that comes with it, its entire genetic blueprint of potential is already invisibly present.

II.2 THE RESURRECTION OF MARCION

In his essay "Protestant Renewal: a Jewish View", which featured in *The Insecurity of Freedom: Essays on Human Existence,* Abraham Joshua Heschel observes,

'(Christianity's) spiritual alienation from Israel is most forcefully expressed in the teaching of Marcion, who affirms a contrariety and abrupt discontinuity between the God of the Hebrew Bible and the God whom Jesus came to reveal. Marcion… wanted a Christianity that was entirely free from any vestige of Judaism. He therefore saw his task as showing the complete opposition that he believed existed between the Hebrew Bible and the Gospels. Although in the year 144 of the Christian era the church expelled Marcion as an apostle of discontinuity and formally rejected his anathematised doctrines, traces of Marcion remain a formidable menace, a satanic challenge. In the modern Christian community, the power of Marcionism is much more alive and widespread than is generally realised…According to Rudolf Bultmann, " for the Christian, the Old Testament is not revelation, but is essentially related to God's revelation in Christ, as hunger is to food and despair is to hope. The God who spoke to Israel, no longer speaks to us in the time of the New Covenant…" This is the spiritual resurrection of Marcion. Was not the God of

Israel the God of Jesus? How dare a Christian substitute his own conception of God

for Jesus' understanding of God, and still call himself a Christian!"[213]

Consider for a moment the weight of Heschel's words. In a post-Shoah world, Heschel is attempting to trace the sour fruit of Christian anti-semitism (a phrase so oxymoronic its potency is all the more heightened), the taste of which was bitterly experienced during the 20th century, to the acrid soil out of which the musings of Marcion grew. As part of that great stream of Jewish philosophers who flourished on one side of the Atlantic as European Judaism died in upon the cinders of the Holocaust, he graciously grounds the God of Jesus as one in the God of Israel, thereby rooting to some degree the spiritual heritage of Christians and Jews, in the same first-century Jewish soil. How did a Jewish sect in its origins, with a Jewish Messiah at its centre, who claimed the Jewish Scriptures, morph into one of the greatest proponents of anti-semitism?[214] Inventing blood libels and murdering countless Jews in the bloody history of the Crusades, scapegoating with accusations

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[213] Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Insecurity of Freedom,* 170

[214] It is perhaps helpful to clarify the term *anti-semitism*. Strictly speaking, the term was coined in the 19th century and gained popular usage as anti-Jewish sentiments, measures and pogroms increased. Austrian Jewish scholar Moritz Steinschneider in 1860 and German journalist Willhelm Marr in 1879 are two of the first to be accredited with using this term. For Steinschneider, it was used in reference to the negative characterisations of Jews put forth by French philosopher Ernest Renan. For Marr, it was used to identify what he saw as the 'infiltration' of Jews and 'Jewishness' into German culture. The term, although lacking absolute definition according to Matthew McGarry, has come to denote, in the words of Jules Isaac in the *Teaching of Contempt* (1965), "(the) anti-Jewish prejudice, to feelings of suspicion, contempt, hostility and hatred toward Jews, both those who follow the religion of Israel and those who are merely of Jewish parentage". See Avner Falk, *Anti-Semitism: A History and Psychoanalysis of Contemporary Hatred* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc. 2008), 21. Falk, however, does not seem to distinguish between modern anti-semitism and ancient anti-Judaism as does Ed Flannery, who highlights that while we can speak of anti-Judaism, we cannot speak of anti-semitism in the same way in the ancient world. Therefore anti-Judaism gave rise to what was to become anti-semitism as we know understand it. See Edward Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews,* 294. See also, Klenicki and Wigoder, eds., *A Dictionary of the Jewish-Christian Dialogue,* 9-15. In chapter four of this thesis we will further clarify the subtly distinct, yet interlinked and overlapping nature of the terms anti-semitism, anti-Judaism and supersessionism.

of Deicide - all sparking and stoking the embers that would eventually light the ovens of Auschwitz.[215]

II.2.1 ROOT CAUSES

In recent years the factors involved in the separation of Christianity from Judaism, or the emergence of a separate Christianity and Judaism out of a common first-century Jewish root(s), has stimulated much discussion and is itself a by-product of a healthy and emerging Jewish-Christian dialogue that has been under way for some time. Reviewing these factors sheds some light on why Christianity and Judaism moved so far apart from one another in mutual opposition, hostility and suspicion, the former numerically dominating and persecuting the latter, to the detriment of all. It also helps us to trace the root system that gives life to the assumption that Torah is a burdensome law which stands in mutual opposition to the grace of the NT.

In the formative period of early Christianity it is entirely appropriate to consider Christianity as one of the *Juda-isms* of the first century.[216] Indeed there was not 'one Judaism' as we have noted, from which Christianity separated as is sometimes assumed. Multiple Judaisms, including Sadducees, Essenes, Pharisees and Zealots, abounded within the pressure-cooker environment of a Judea that was experiencing the tumultuous social, political and religious effects of an oppressive colonial

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[215] For a detailed exploration into medieval Jewish-Christian relations, see Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christian-Jewish Relations, 1000-1300: Jews in the Service of Medieval Christendom* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011). This is important for examining the medieval European context which provided the scaffolding for the actualisation of the Holocaust.

[216] See Lester Grabbe, *An Introduction to First Century Judaism: Jewish religion and History in the Second Temple Period* (Edinburgh: T&T Clarke, 1996)

power.[217] Each stream of Judaism shared both a common root that connected religious, ethnic, cultural, economic and social ties, and a common enemy - Rome. And for this fledgling, and comparatively small messianic sect emerging from the sands of the Judean wilderness, those of Israel who chose to follow Yeshua of Nazareth and those who did not, found their differences still lay within the framework of the Torah and concerned the right way to interpret the *mitzvot* as they understood them. Be that as it may, brotherly antagonism and internal polemics can often be the most passionate if not vitriolic (consider, for example, the legacy of tribal politics in Northern Ireland), and some of the sectarian manuscripts that form part of the Dead Sea Scrolls reflect this internal friction most sharply.[218] However to be part of 'the Jesus Movement' was still an internal, or fraternal, debate and the thrust of Jesus' message was, like the Pharisaic one, aimed at the renewal of Jewish life.

Rather than one homogenous 'parting', there were several critical points of fracture that contributed to the wider break of the Jewish-Christian relationship. Eminent

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[217] See Geza Vermes, "The Jewish Jesus Movement", in *Partings: How Judaism and Christianity Became Two,* 1-25

[218] In the corpus of manuscripts uncovered in the caves of Qumran, there are different classifications of texts as biblical and sectarian (non-biblical). (These are further divided into 'known' and 'unknown' classifications, comprising of those texts that were known and those that were previously unknown and particular to the Qumran community.) The sectarian texts reflect the social and religious divides of first century Jewish life, with the community who occupied Qumran having retreated into the wilderness to live out what they saw as the correct interpretation of the Torah. The remarks made about Sadduccees in particular are scathing. Here is a most important point to consider - these texts could not be deemed to be anti-semitic (that would be anachronistic) or anti-Jewish, for they reflect an internal Jewish debate. In a similar vein, when addressing the question about whether the NT is anti-semitic in its origins or not (there can be no doubt it has been used for anti-semitic purposes historically), we can apply this logic - they reflect an internal Jewish debate, but were used to buttress anti-Jewish arguments and later anti-semitism as the lines between Christian and Jew became more sharply drawn. For more on the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls, particularly in relation to early Christianity, see James VanderKam and Peter Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus and Christianity,* (New York: T&T Clarke, 2002)

Jewish scholar Shaye Cohen claims, "(T)he separation of Christianity from Judaism was a process, not an event."[219] An earlier fracture in the process came when Gentile followers inevitably began to outnumber the Jewish ones after Jesus' death, and the cultural impetus of the movement began to shift from one that was predominantly Jewish to one that was predominantly Gentile. Naturally, practical questions reflecting differences in the lifestyles of Gentile or Jewish followers surfaced, such as whether or not Gentiles needed to be circumcised for acceptance into the movement.[220] Cohen continues,

"The essential part of this process was that the church was becoming more and

more gentile, and less and less Jewish, but the separation manifested itself in

different ways in each local community where Jews and Christians dwelt together. In

some places, the Jews expelled the Christians; in other, the Christians left of their

own accord."[221]

The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the epicentre and locus of all Jewish life and faith, in 70 CE was another significant juncture in the Jewish-Christian relationship, the Great Revolt having begun four years before. The suffering inflicted

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[219] See Shaye J. D. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah, 2nd ed.,* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006) 228

[220] This is an important distinction - were the early Jewish followers advocating an abandonment of circumcision, or simply shifting the perimeters of acceptance? Chapter five of this thesis considers this question more fully in relation to the *New Perspective on Paul* scholarship. With regard to Paul and the issue of circumcision, Mark Nanos suggests that Paul was distinctly responding to the specific question in the context of how a 'non-Jewish man' could gain righteousness, and the response Paul gives is through faith in the Messiah, not the practice of circumcision. This does not nullify circumcision in any way, it simply means it is not the method for a non-Jewish man to gain acceptance into the community. See http://www.marknanos.com/paul-and-judaism-3-28-04.pdf, retrieved April 14 2017. See also Mark D. Nanos, *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First-Century Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002)

[221] Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 225-228

on the Jewish communities of Judea by Rome was catastrophic, with Josephus recording that "the soldiers out of rage and hatred, nailed those they caught, one after one way, and another after another, to the crosses, by way of jest."[222]

Determined to crush any vestiges of rebellion following the destruction of Jerusalem, Roman Emperor Vespasian imposed a heavy punitive tax, the *Fiscus Judaicus* tax, on all Jewish households in the Empire. A 'Jewish household' was identified as those who worshipped or behaved in a Jewish manner, and identified with the Jewish people.[223] For Gentile Christians to be identified as a Jew or connected to the Jewish people was becoming increasingly problematic on financial, political, social and cultural levels. This must have created tension for Jewish believers, for whom the situation was even more complex. Indeed even before the destruction of the Temple, but while things were presumably smouldering, we can see traces of this tension reflected in Paul's letter to the community in Rome. In his epistle to the Romans, estimated to be composed between 55 and 60 CE, Paul clearly addresses concerns of identity that are coming to the fore in a Christian community that is made up of both Jewish and Gentile believers.[224] Such a constituency would have been living in the heart of the Roman Empire and attempting to figure out their

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[222] See Flavius, Josephus. "Jewish War, Book V Chapter 11", http://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/war-5.html, retrieved April 4, 2017. See also Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 137-142

[223] See Marius Heemstra *The Fiscus Judaicus and the Parting of the Way*s, (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2010) for an exploration into the 'process' (in Shaye Cohen's terminology), of the separation between Jews and Christians under Rome. See also Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews,* 135-144

[224] Margaret Williams writes that the separation of those who identified as Christian and those who identified as Jewish, occurred much earlier in Rome than elsewhere due to differing factors. This is evidenced through the brutal persecution of Christians under Nero, as early as 64 CE, even before the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. See Margaret H. Williams, "Jews and Christians at Rome: An Early Parting of the Ways", in *Partings: How Judaism and Christianity Became Two,* 151-178

identity in the face of religious persecution and a radically shifting theological and geo-political landscape.[225]

II.3   THE SECOND CENTURY

Under the Emperor Hadrian, in the third decade of the second century, the Jews of Judea revolted against Rome for a third time. Shimon Bar Kokhba, a rebel warrior, was declared by the rabbinic sage Rabbi Akiva to be Israel's messiah who would be the one to restore Israel's national independence. The refusal to acknowledge the declared messiah-ship of Bar Kokhba was another stroke detaching Jewish followers of Jesus as Messiah from Jewish followers of Rabbi Akiva and Bar Kokhba. Further alienation between the emerging communities ensued as Rome decimated the rebellion, and Jerusalem was again destroyed. Following the revolt, those who were not killed died of disease and starvation hiding in caves, (the remnants of which can still be seen in the Judean hills today), and those who were left were sold into slavery, resulting in a severe depopulation of Judea. Echoing the oppressive patterns of previous despotic rulers, such as Antiochus Epiphanes in 164 BCE, the Emperor Hadrian declared it against Roman law to observe the Jewish Sabbath or any other Jewish custom through the prohibition of Torah law and observance of the Hebrew calendar. Torah scrolls were burned on the Temple Mount, and statues of Jupiter and

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[225] Added into these complexities is the fact that while being identified as Jewish was problematic on some levels, at the same time Christianity as it emerged into a distinct religion faced a battle with paganism, and retaining a connection to Judaism was also beneficial for the development of the Christian argument. Judaism was a recognised religion by the Roman Empire, while an emerging Christianity was not. Edward Kessler highlights however, that the dynamics were often more complex, because although the Jews of Judea were crushed by Rome and Jerusalem sacked and turned into a Pagan polis, Jews in Rome enjoyed limited privileges in comparison with the early Christians, insofar as the Roman policy of *presbyterron kreiton* (older is better) and *religio licita* (legal religion). Kessler further highlights that this is one reason the Church Fathers, although scathing in many ways toward the Torah of Moses and Jewish tradition, were nonetheless keen to simultaneously sustain a historical connection. See Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, 47

Hadrian were erected in what had been the Holy of Holies. Roman maps had Judea erased and *Syria Palaestina* became the new name for the land throughout the Roman Empire, with 'Jerusalem' becoming known as *Aelia Capitalina*, a Pagan Roman polis.[226] All Jews, whether followers of Bar Kokhba, Jesus of Nazareth or neither, were forbidden from entering Jerusalem, except once a year on *Tisha B'Av*, the Hebrew date for mourning the destructions of the Temple in Jerusalem. Rome made no distinction between ethnic Jew or Gentile practicing the Jewish faith, and infringement of these decrees resulted in severe punishments, including the favoured Roman method of execution - crucifixion.[227]

This brief sketch highlights the fact that historical and geo-political factors heavily influenced the ripping open of the national fabric between the emerging Christian and Jewish communities, in addition to the shift in demographics, differing interpretations of Scripture and of course of central concern - the understanding of what the expectant Messiah would achieve for Israel. For Emmanuel Levinas, as touched on in chapter one and referenced again in chapter three, seeing the Face of the Other is essential for the development of an identity that is whole. Otherwise, our identity as it develops is fragmented. Early Christian and Jewish identities, as they began to develop in the trauma of a post-70 CE world and in the wake of violent

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[226] See Hanan Eshel,'The Bar Kochba revolt, 132-135,' in William David Davies, Louis Finkelstein, Steven T. Katz (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Judaism: Volume 4, The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period,* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 105-127

[227] See H.H. Ben-Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People,* (Mass: Harvard University Press, 1976). "In an effort to wipe out all memory of the bond between the Jews and the land, Hadrian changed the name of the province from Judaea to *Syria-Palestina*, a name that became common in non-Jewish literature." 334, (although some historians dispute this theory). See also Peter Schäfer, (ed.,) *The Bar Kokhba War Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Second Jewish Revolt Against Rome,* (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2003). However as noted earlier, in Rome itself Christians were already seen as distinct from Jews and had been brutally persecuted since 64 CE.

Roman persecution, began to emerge in mutual opposition to the other. One was defined, in no small part, by what the other was not.

Although historical relationships and partings are always more complicated, we can see some of the factors which cultivated an appropriate seedbed for anti-Jewish sentiment to take root in an emerging Christianity. It is important not to underestimate the influence of Rome in the eventual breach between Jewish and Christian communities, and to highlight the fact that many of the factors which influenced the cultivation of anti-Jewish sentiment were not necessarily theological in origin. In other words, what began as circumstantial and environmental factors eventually fed into a theological stream, and it is this theological stream which is being explored.

III. THE CHURCH FATHERS

The teachers of the Christian movement as it became more established, known collectively as the Church Fathers, read the Apostle Paul's astounding and generous arguments for the inclusion of Gentiles into the commonwealth of Israel, as implying the total replacement of that very Israel and the exclusion of the Torah to which she was so firmly attached.[228] It is astonishing to trace how quickly a nascent Christianity evolved from being a Jewish sect who followed a Jewish Messiah, albeit on contentious terms with her Jewish peers, to a largely Gentile group which

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[228] As a collective term the 'Church Fathers' references the early Christian leaders and teachers, who 'gave their name to the patristic age of Church history, which lasted from the end of the first century to the early Middle Ages, and to the patristic literature, the main body of Christian texts from these years.' See William Horbury, "Church Fathers', *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations,* 94-95

harboured hostility and suspicion toward the Jews as a separate community by the second century. Such suspicion and hostility was, of course, reciprocated as we can trace in the development of Jewish liturgy between the second and fourth centuries CE.[229]

The Church Fathers were largely of Middle Eastern and North African origin, and wrote eloquently on many important theological subjects pertaining to developing Christian doctrine, including the Incarnation, the Sacraments, Atonement, the concept of Original Sin and the Logos. Many of the recorded writings, however, of the Church Fathers, constitute a large portion of the *Adversus Judaeos* literature, a collected body of writings which reflect deep anti-Jewish and anti-Torah sentiment.[230] While the anti-Jewish views presented are reflective of particular, elite voices and do not authentically represent Christian faith then, or now, they nonetheless provide us with substantial clues as to the nature of the seedbed in which Christian anti-Judaism was provided with the perfect conditions to flourish.

Composed sometime in the second century, the *Epistle of Barnabas*, for example, emphasised the unworthiness of the Jews, and how because they had proved themselves unworthy, God had transferred the covenant to His new people, the

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[229] Daniel Boyarin, *Borderlines,* 67-73

[230] *Adversus Judaeos* refers to 'the body of Christian polemical texts specifically directed against the Jews, which were written from the first century to at least the eighteenth century CE.' See James Carleton Paget, *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations*, 6-8. Kessler notes, however, that the biblical scholar Adolph von Harnack, of German Protestant origin and writing predominantly in the late 19th and early 20th century, maintained that the *Adversus Judaeous* literature was of no benefit when considering the history of Jewish-Christian relations, in that they were directed other toward pagans, or toward consolidating Christian identity through polemic. Interestingly Jewish scholars David Rokeah and Jacob Neusner support Harnack's claim to some degree. See Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 46

Church.[231] Here it is clear that sentiments of 'replacement' are already in full flow. It is important to acknowledge however, that the anti-Jewish polemic sustained by some of the early church leaders was carried out in a 'pre-Constantinian' context. In other words, Christians and Jews were engaged in a bitter debate where opposition, hostility and suspicion were reciprocated in the attempt to demarcate the lines of identity formation, and Christianity was a persecuted faith. It was not yet the majority faith it would later become. Demographics are significant here, as Marc Saperstein highlights through the Jewish and Christian communities established in Sardis.[232] It is after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire with the conversion of Constantine that the earlier seeds of anti-Judaism would begin to take over and later dominate European Christianity.

In this vein Fr. Edward Flannery notes,

"No century was more fateful for Jewish-Christian relations than the fourth. The Constantinian age was at hand, and the shape that human events would take for another thousand years was rapidly crystallising…It was a century in ferment. The pens of St. Jerome, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Ambrose and Augustine brought the patristic age to full flower; the Councils of Nicaea and Constaninople canonised the essentials of Catholic belief; and the empire split in two."[233]

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[231] Geza Vermes dates the Epistle to 120-35 CE. See Vermes, *Christian Beginnings,* 148

[232] Marc Saperstein, *Moments of Crisis in Jewish-Christian Relations,* 5-8

[233] Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1985), 47

III.1   THE 'OLD LEAVEN': IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

In an epistle to the 'Magnesians', an early Christian community in Asia Minor where the Apostle John had served just three decades before, Ignatius, (c. 30-110 CE) who was Bishop of Antioch in Syria, wrote,

> "For if we still live according to the Jewish law, we acknowledge that we have not received grace…Let us therefore no longer keep the Sabbath after the Jewish manner, and rejoice in days of such idleness. Rather, let every one of you keep the Sabbath in a spiritual manner, not in relaxing and eating things prepared the day before…not in delighting in dancing and clapping which have no sense in them…"[234]

The Magnesians are also encouraged by Ignatius to lay aside the 'old leaven' which was sour, and reminded them, lest they had forgotten, of the absurdity of confessing Christ and being influenced by 'Judaizers' at the same time. The 'old leaven' refers not to the Jewish custom of ridding the home of *chametz* during Passover, but of ridding one's self of the Torah and Jewish custom, which are considered the marks of a 'Judaizer'.[235]

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[234] Ignatius, 'Epistle to the Magnesians' 9:2-3. http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0105.htm. Retrieved February 24, 2017

[235] The full text reads: "Beware of Judaizing - Let us not, therefore, be insensible to His kindness. For were He to reward us according to our works, we should cease to be. Therefore, having become His disciples, let us learn to live according to the principles of Christianity. For whosoever is called by any other name besides this, is not of God. Lay aside, therefore, the evil, the old, the sour leaven, and be changed into the new leaven, which is Jesus Christ. Be salted in Him, lest any one among you should be corrupted, since by your savour you shall be convicted. It is absurd to profess Christ Jesus, and to Judaize. For Christianity did not embrace Judaism, but Judaism Christianity, that so every tongue which believes might be gathered together to God." (Chapter 10) See http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0105.htm. Retrieved February 24, 2017

Why did Ignatius feel the need to write such explicit instructions to a developing Christian community living in Asia Minor? We can observe two things.

Firstly, Jewish practices were still visibly part of the fabric of Christian life, or else Ignatius would not have exhorted his addressees to forsake their 'Jewish manner' of observing the Sabbath. (Indeed Christian scholar Philip Jenkins asserts that traces of semitic Christianities survived not just until the fourth century CE when it is commonly assumed they assimilated, but if remove our Euro-centric spectacles and look east, we can find traces until the thirteenth).[236] Clearly, the Jewish roots of Christianity were still strong and influencing developing Christian life. With Ignatius we can detect an emphasis on establishing the clear distinction between Judaism and Christianity. Indeed it is in his *Epistle to the Magnesians* (Ign. Msgn. 10.3) that the terms 'Christianity' and 'Judaism' are first encountered as distinct entities.[237] This is a marked departure from the Apostle Paul, who expresses concern for Gentile freedom and inclusion within a Jewish framework, not alienation of Jews within a Gentile one.

Secondly, the idea of a dichotomy between 'grace' and 'Jewish law' accompanying a dichotomy between 'Christian' and 'Jew' is already evident. As such Ignatius represents a significant juncture in the development of supersessionist identity.[238]

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[236] See Philip Jenkins, *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa and Asia - and How It Died.* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 6-8. See also Martin Freeman, *A New History of Early Christianity,* (New Haven & London: Yale University press, 2009) 116-117

[237] James Carleton Paget, 'Apostolic Fathers', *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations,* 28. Paget cautions that although this is the first recorded encounter of these terms used together, we "cannot be sure whether Ignatius was the originator of the contrast".

[238] Marcus Plested, 'Ignatius of Antioch', *A Dictionary Jewish-Christian Relations*, 204

Geza Vermes however, highlights that the 'Judaism' of which Ignatius is so scathing, is not the faith as practiced by those born as Jews, but rather the faith of Christians who were considered heretical through continuing distinctly Jewish practices. This again confirms the identity-in-opposition dynamics which featured so heavily in the formative years of early Christian and Jewish self-definition.[239]

III.2   JUSTIN AND TRYPHO

Justin Martyr (c. 110-167 CE) was born in Samaria (Neapolis), and is known for his two *Apologies* for the Christian faith.[240]   His third major work is in the form of a polemic, *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho*, and is a recorded 'discourse' between Justin and a Hellenist Jew named Trypho. In part, the discourse is responding to perceived Jewish criticism of Christianity.[241] During the course of the dialogue as it unfolds in the text, Justin Martyr painstakingly explains to Trypho that the Torah was given to the Jews only as a punishment for their exceptional 'hardness of heart'.[242]

Yet, Justin admits that in his day (c.153 CE mid-second century) there are still Jewish and non-Jewish believers who live in accordance with Jewish Law. These 'weak-minded brothers' are assured of salvation, he concedes, despite their stubborn insistence on observing the Law of Moses. Scholars are in disagreement as to the historical actuality of a real Jewish person named Trypho whom Justin is conversing

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[239] Geza Vermes, *Christian Beginnings: From Nazareth to Nicea,* 167-168

[240] See Judith Lieu, 'Justin Martyr', *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations,* 249. The first apology was addressed to Antoninus Pius, c. 156. See also Daniel Boyarin, *Borderlines,* 37-38

[241] Geza Vermes, *Christian Beginnings*, 178-179

[242] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, (11.2). See http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/justinmartyr-dialoguetrypho.html. Retrieved February 26, 2017

with, but as Edward Kessler highlights, "at the very least, Justin records contemporary debates with Jews through the mouth of Trypho."[243] As such, whether it reflects an historical encounter which took place between Justin and Trypho or not, it mirrors the historical and theological deliberations of an emerging Church with an emerging Rabbinic Judaism post 70 CE.[244]

Daniel Boyarin sees Justin's *Dialogue* as a key text in strengthening the self-definition of Christians over and against Jews, and traces the binary positioning of Christian verses Jew in part to the influence of this text. He writes,

"The double construction of Jews and heretics - or rather, Judaism and heresy - effected through Justin's Dialogue thus served to produce a secure religious identity, a self-definition for Christians."[245]

We can therefore detect that Justin was refuting the practices of 'Jewish' Christians as well as Christian 'Judaizers' in the same vein as Ignatius of Antioch. However he was also refuting through his discourse the validity of a Judaism which continued in its practices after Christ. The importance of the *Dialogue* in this regard is attested through its sustained use in later *Adversus Judaeos* literature, which according to Kessler, confirms it as,

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[243] Edward Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, 51

[244] Ibid., 51

[245] Daniel Boyarin, *Borderlines,* 39

"the most important and comprehensive anti-Jewish document in the patristic

writings, sowing the seeds for anti-Jewish attitudes that came to dominate the

thinking of the churches from the fourth to the twentieth century."[246]

III.3   SWARMS OF MARCIONITES

Marcion (c. 90-155 CE) came from Sinope, a Greek city near the Black Sea.

Influenced by Platonism and a fierce ascetic, Marcion was denounced as a heretic by

in 144 CE, due to his 'ditheistic' beliefs.[247] Despite this denunciation, Marcionite

churches, bishops and communities sprang up throughout the Roman empire.[248]

Tertullian, the second century Christian historian and one of Marcion's staunchest

critics, compared 'Marcionites' as his followers became known, to 'swarming wasps'.

Tertullian wrote,

"You will more easily discover apostasy in it than apostolicity, with Marcion forsooth

as their founder, or some one of Marcion's swarm. Even as wasps make combs; so

also these Marcionites make churches."[249]

He was both influential and popular, and although charged with heresy his teachings

remained deeply rooted and had a lasting impact, as Abraham J. Heschel astutely

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[246] Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 53

[247] Charles Freeman, *A New History of Early Christianity,* 134-136. Marcion's father was the Bishop of Sinope, and Marcion was excommunicated by both his father and the Roman church. See Geza Vermes, *Christian Beginnings,* 195

[248] Judith Lieu highlights that little is known about the survival of these Marcionite communities, but the inclination to denigrate the OT is thought to be a Marcion trait. See Judith Lieu, *A Dictionary Jewish-Christian Relations*, 284. See also Abraham J. Heschel, *The Insecurity of Freedom,* 170

[249] See Tertullian, "Against Marcion" (4.5) -http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/03124.htm. Retrieved February 26 2017. Part of Tertullian's refutation of Marcion was a refutation against Gnosticism, of which Marcion was a champion. Irenaeus of Lyons was another staunch opponent of Gnosticism and therefore Marcion. See Geza Vermes, *Christian Beginnings,* 194-195

notes. If some of the Early Church Fathers were unfavourably disposed toward observance of the Law of Moses and theologically reaching toward supersessionism, Marcion advocated complete abrogation of anything Jewish in order to rid Christianity of such 'corruption'.[250] He forcefully articulated a stream of thought which has been regularly resurrected and expressed in differing forms throughout Church history - that there is a permanent dislocation between the Judaism of the 'old' and the Christianity of the 'new', and that this is necessary and right. The residue of this abrogation has clung to Christian theology in the form of an enforced contradistinction between the OT and the NT, between the Torah of Moses and grace.[251]

III.4   AUGUSTINE, AND MELITO OF SARDIS: THE POET OF DEICIDE

Writing in the fourth century, Augustine of Hippo (c. 354-430 CE) contributed significantly to the entrenchment of supersessionism in developing Christian thought.[252] The ongoing physical existence of the Jewish people was a 'conundrum' to be addressed, and the 'new, spiritual Israel' was to be found in the church. His writings in relation to Jews and Judaism in the *City of God* located his answer to this conundrum in a 'typological' approach, that the destitution and dispersion of Israel was a warning to Christians.[253] "The Jews who slew Him, and would not believe in Him," were punished by God, their Temple destroyed and their beloved Jerusalem

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[250] Heschel, *The Insecurity of Freedom,* 170

[251] Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 26

[252] James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 219

[253] Marc Saperstein, *Moments of Crisis,* 10-11

levelled.[254] God had allowed the Jewish people to survive simply as a continuing punishment because they,

"bear the guilt for the death of the Saviour, for through their fathers they have killed Christ."[255]

Augustine connects what he sees as punishment visited on the Jewish people with the 'mark of Cain'.[256] Judaism and its Law, according to Augustine, have been,

'since Christ, a corruption, indeed Judas is the image of the Jewish People, and their understanding of Scripture is carnal'.[257]

The aforementioned Tertullian (c. 160-220 CE), whose writings appear earlier than Augustine, wrote,

"Who else, therefore, are understood but we, who, fully taught by the new law, observe these practices - the old law being obliterated…"[258]

A sentiment echoed by Justin Martyr, who stated,

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[254] NPNF1-02. "St. Augustine's City of God and Christian Doctrine" https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf102.iv.XVIII.46.html. Retrieved April 30, 2017

[255] *Contra Faustum,* Book XII, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/140612.htm. Retrieved April 30, 2017

[256] Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 5

[257] Edward Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews,* 52-53

[258] See Tertullian, "An Answer to the Jews', (III:10) http://www.tertullian.org/anf/anf03/anf03-19.htm#P2069_705019 . Retrieved May 1, 2017

"law placed against law has abrogated that which is before it, and a covenant which

comes after in like manner has put an end to the previous one."[259]

The accusation of deicide which Augustine directs is one that has been a consistent accusation thrown against the Jewish community through the centuries, often resulting in violent and bloody pogroms.[260] It was first levelled by Melito, the Bishop of Sardis (c. 140-185 CE) whose Passover sermon, the *Peri Pascha*, (a liturgical poem on the Passion), directs the responsibility for the death of Jesus toward Jews.[261] Edward Kessler remarks that this homily can be seen as,

"(the) beginning of the Christian theology of supersessionism that regarded Judaism

as a religious wasteland'.[262]

Kessler further identifies that the accusation of 'killing God' levelled from Christian to Jew signalled a sharp shift in the gulf between the merging communities. In earlier days the interpretation and application of the Torah was central, now "responsibility for the death of Jesus, lay with the Jews".[263] *Nostra Aetate,* for its part, revoked the age-old charge of deicide, stating, "neither all Jews indiscriminately…nor Jews today, can be charged with crimes committed during the "the Passion of Christ"". *NA*

further emphasised that "the Jews should not be spoken of as rejected or accursed as it this follows from Holy Scripture".[264]

III.4.1   THE WITNESS-PEOPLE

What is ironic and somewhat surprising to discover is the fact that many of the patristic writers, whilst articulating and promoting anti-Jewish sentiment and the superiority of Christianity on the one hand, on the other sought to preserve the ongoing physical existence of the Jewish people. The presence of a living Jewish community provided a solid historical and visible foundation for Christian claims. Edward Flannery terms this 'the Theory of the Witness-People'.[265] In the twelfth century, St. Bernard of Clairveaux articulated the crux of this double argument, stating,

"The Jews are for us living words of Scripture…for they remind us always of what our Lord has suffered. They are dispersed all over the world so that by expiating their crime they may be everywhere the living witnesses of our redemption".[266]

Relationships and interaction on numerous levels, social, political, economic an religious, between Christians and Jews as the centuries went on were thus a

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[264] The impact of these statements in *NA* can be seen as a profound re-ordering of an age-old relationship, which eliminates to a degree 'the source of much anti-Judaism and anti-semitism' within historical Christian teaching, in relation to Jews and Judaism. See Dermot A. Lane, "A Summary of *Nostra Aetate*, Article 4", in *Stepping Stones to Other Religions,* 272, 275

[265] Edward Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews,* 52-55

[266] It must also be noted that while endorsing the crusades themselves, St. Bernard vehemently warned against harming the 'flesh and bone of the Messiah…the Apple of God's eye' and asked 'Is it not a far better triumph for the Church, to convince and convert the Jews, than put them all to the sword? See *The Letters of St. Bernard of Clairvaux,* Trans. Bruno Scott James. (London: Burns & Oates, 1967), 466

complicated endeavour. Jews, according to some, were to be protected from violence and be afforded the luxury of living without damage being done to their property. And yet Christians must, at the urging of Gregory of Virgilius for example, the Archbishop of Arles in Gaul, preach so sweetly that Jews would have no desire to return to the miry clay that was the Law, their 'former vomit'.

Traces of this position with regards to the ongoing existence of the Jewish people and the dilemma this posed for the Church Fathers can be found much earlier, in the articulations of the aforementioned Augustine. The Jews still have a role according to Augustine - they are a 'witness-people', in that their very existence testifies to both the evil of rejecting God and to the reality of Christian truth.[267] They, like Cain, are therefore 'not to be killed', and Christians are to 'preach…with a spirit of love'.[268] The duality of Augustine's position with regard to the physical existence of Jews meant that Jewish communities must be kept in conditions which witnessed their 'accursed' status, and yet they must be allowed to live. Marc Saperstein notes the 'heavy tinge of irony' communicated by Moses Mendelssohn, when, speaking about Augustine of Hippo, he stated,

"Blessed be the ashes of that humane theologian who was the first to declare that God was preserving us as a visible proof of the Nazarene religion. But for this lovely brainwave, we would have been exterminated long ago."[269]

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[267] Edward Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews,* 53

[268] Ibid., 53. See also 'Augustine's Treatise Against the Jews', https://www.roger-pearse.com/weblog/2015/06/11/augustines-treatise-against-the-jews/ (10:15). Retrieved December 14, 2018

[269] Marc Saperstein, *Moments of Crisis,* 11. See also Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn,* (AL: University of Alabama, 1973)

III.5 THE 'GOLDEN MOUTH' OF JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

Dubbed the preacher with the 'golden mouth', St. John Chrysostom of Antioch (c. 349-407 CE) was a powerful orator, whose impassioned sermons were famous for anti-Jewish rhetoric. In one such sermon Chrysostom stated,

"If the Jews are ignorant of the Father, if they crucified the Son, and spurned the aid of the Spirit, cannot one declare with confidence that the synagogue is a dwelling place of demons? Gd is not worshipped there. Far from it! Rather, the synagogue is a temple of idolatry…A synagogue is less honourable than any inn. For it is not simply a gathering place for thieves and hucksters, but also of demons. Indeed not only the synagogue, but the soul of the Jews are also the dwelling places of demons."[270]

Like Ignatius in the second century, Chrysostom in the fourth century was feverishly trying to dissuade his congregants from either attending synagogues nor retaining any semblance with a Jewish lifestyle. This tells us two things. Firstly, that by the fourth century 'Christians who were Jews and Jews who were Christians' as Boyarin phrases it, was a common enough occurrence for Chrysostom to preach so vehemently about it.[271] This highlights that the 'partings of the ways' continued far beyond the first century, and the lines of demarcation between Christian and Jew were not clear even in the fourth century. Secondly, while indeed the repugnant words of Chrysostom and other Church Fathers might have been intended to recall

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[270] Ibid., 6. Chrysostom, before he became Archbishop of Constantinople, delivered a series of eight sermons passionately directed at dissuading his congregants for taking part in any way in the Jewish festivals. Saperstein notes that the association of the synagogue, the Jews and the demonic would become a salient feature in medieval and early modern anti-Judaism, (p 66). See also, Robert L. Wilken, *The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2012), 122-123

[271] Daniel Boyarin, *Borderlines,* 2-3

Christians form veering toward vestiges of Judaism, they undoubtedly stoked the fires of later anti-semitism.[272] As Christianity 'became wedded to politics' through Constantine, triumphalism and persecution could feed freely on the rich ground of anti-Jewish polemic which had been cultivated in these earlier centuries. Edward Kessler maintains that Chrysostom's writings have been,

"the most damaging and influential in the popular imagination and his denunciations of Judaism gave the Church for centuries a pseudo-religious basis for persecuting Jews".[273]

For John Chrysostom there was no middle ground to be found between Jewish and Christian identity. While it is clear that the margins of distinction between Christian and Jew in terms of practice were not as sharply drawn as we like to think by the fourth century CE, for Chrysostom there was only one way. "If the Jewish rites are holy and venerable…(then) our way of life must be false".[274]

III.6   DIVIDING THE LAW

"Ignorance of the distinction between the Law and Gospel is one of the principle sources of all the abuses which corrupt and still corrupt Christianity."

Theodore Beza

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[272] For some patristic and early Christian scholars, to say that the early Church Fathers were 'anti-semitic' is to imply an anachronistic use of the term. However, there can be no doubt that when the dynamics of power and politics shifted as Christianity became a majority and the official religion of the Roman Empire, these sentiments were used continually to buttress and justify anti-Jewish measures. See Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late Fourth Century*, (University of California, Berkeley Press, 1983), 124–126

[273] Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 61

[274] Robert L. Wilken, *The First Thousand Years,* 122

By the Middle Ages, the perceived disjunction between what was labelled as 'law' and 'grace' was a well established precept, so deeply buried in the sands of Christian thought it is almost impossible to sift out. An interesting distinction is to be noted here. While the dichotomy was emphasised between being 'under the law' and 'under grace' and Jews were confined to the former and Christians liberated under the latter, a space was made in Christian thought for the 'moral' laws of the Torah. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 CE), divided the Torah into what he saw as the ceremonial, judicial and moral codes. The 'moral law' is that part of the Law of Moses which predates Sinai and is part of the 'Natural Law', and therefore of eternal significance for Christians.[275] The ceremonial and judicial precepts of the Law of Moses, according to Aquinas, were temporary, and with the coming of Jesus these aspects of the Torah ceased to be binding. For a Christian to observe the ceremonial or judicial aspects of the Torah would be a mortal sin, as it would be like declaring Messiah has not yet come. And yet, Aquinas concedes, the judicial precepts of the Torah do contain elements of universal justice, again reflected in Natural Law. Therefore a ruler who was to enforce aspects of the judicial precepts are found in the Law would not be committing mortal sin.[276]

This highlights another dimension in the narrative that underwrites the assumed dichotomy between law and grace as it developed historically - the notion that the Torah can be dissected up and portioned out, conveniently allowing for more favourable or accessible aspects to be followed, but the more misunderstood parts to

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[275] See Jonathan Jacobs, 'Judaism and Natural Law', (Colgate University, 2009), 932-933: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1468-2265.2008.00429.x. Retrieved December 15, 2018

[276] *Summa Theologica,* I-II, q. 104, a. 3. See also Thomas Aquinas, *The Power of God.* Trans. Richard J. Regan, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012)

be abandoned.[277] (In one sense echoes of Marcionism can be detected in this trend - Marcion advocated cutting the entire OT, in addition to recasting the NT through retaining most of the Gospel of Luke (bar the first two chapters), and ten out of the fourteen letters attributed to the Apostle Paul.[278]).

There is a heavy theological discourse here which space will not accommodate, pertaining to the fact that there are certain parts of the Torah that are only applicable in the Land of Israel and not outside of it, or applicable for just the descendants of Aaron, or the Tribe of Levi, or men, or women. So it would appear that Torah itself acknowledges 'distinctions'.[279] The Book of Hebrews in the NT picks up this very theme in its wrestle with the ritual aspects of the Torah changing as they understood it in light of the Messiah. However, although made up of different parts and with different emphases, in Jewish sacred memory the Torah is always a whole that is intended for the community, and to dissect it in a way that defies its essential nature and function creates inevitable hermeneutical difficulties. One of the challenges with

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[277] Kessler notes that in the Christian interpretations of the bible, a dual 'continuity/discontinuity' hermeneutic developed, whereby there existed a simultaneous continuity and discontinuity with the Old Testament. On the one hand, (unlike Marcion), the God of both Testaments was one and the same. On the other, everything within the Old Testament pointed to the New. See Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 49

[278] Geza Vermes, *Christian Beginnings,* 194-195. Ironically, Marcion advocated a dislocation with the Hebrew Scriptures, in part because he agreed with the majority of Jews that the messianic prophecies as contained within the OT had not yet been fulfilled. See Saperstein, *Moments of Crisis,* 66

[279] Indeed, Martin Luther picks up in this very theme, stating that the "They cannot observe Moses' Law anywhere but in Jerusalem, this they now and are forced to admit". Drawing inspiration from John Chrysostom, Luther mockingly maintained that if the Jewish people could retune from exile and take possession of Jerusalem, "they will soon find us coming on their heels…and we will also become Jews". For Luther, this was never a possibility for it were, God would be 'a liar…and the devil truth'. Saperstein notes that in addition to John Chrysostom, Luther echoes Augustine's commitment to the idea that the Jewish exile is an eternal punishment and therefor an 'incontrovertible testimony to the truth of Christian faith'. See Marc Saperstein, *Moments of Crisis,* 34. See also Luther, *On the Jews and their Lies,* (47:161), https://archive.org/details/TheJewsAndTheirLies1543En1948/page/n13. Retrieved December 15, 2018

the historical assumption that scripture is pitted against itself in terms of 'grace' (which is Christian by default) and 'law' (which is Jewish), is that supersessionism finds ample ground on which to flourish. Chapter four of this thesis examines supersessionism and the possibility that the Torah can offer a key in and of itself to navigating this theological phenomenon, but here it can be definitively concluded that the *Adversus Judaeous* literature and the hermeneutic of degrading Jews and Jewish texts have historically sustained supersessionist dynamics throughout the Christian-Jewish relationship.[280]

IV.   THE CHANGING TIDE IN JEWISH CHRISTIAN RELATIONS

Whether the notion that Torah is abrogated in favour of grace, or the notion that the Jewish people themselves have been abrogated along with their law to which they are so firmly attached, is not quite apparent. What is clear however, is that the two ideas are inextricably intertwined and equally belligerent. It is therefore possible to conclude that a negative perception of the Torah is suffused and entangled with a negative perception of the Jewish people. For reconciliation, then, and a direction out of this tangled maze, this thesis suggests that a shift in how the Torah is perceived is key. If, as stated above in accordance with Ed Flannery's view, the cornerstones of anti-Judaism and anti-semitism are theological in origin, then a

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[280] Marc Saperstein queries the possibility that had the historical dynamics between Jews and Christians been different (had Constantine converted to Judaism for example, rather than Christianity), history might tell a different story. In response to his own hypothetical question he states there are no definitive answers, but that history confirms that 'no religious people is immune to the poison of fanaticism'. See Saperstein, *Moments of Crisis,* 13

theological solution to loosen some of the building blocks of this historical malady can be proposed. For Jules Isaac, traditional Christian views of Judaism as corrupt or decayed are grounded in a theological tradition of apologetics which claimed that the Jews were attached to the law because they were "carnal beings", despite its being 'obsolete' after Christ.[281] In *L'Enseignement de Mèpris* ('The Teaching of Contempt') Isaac wrote,

"This contention has its source in the earliest Judeo-Christian controversies over the Torah - the Law of Moses - and its observances. The Christian apologists maintained that with the coming of Christ, the Law had been fulfilled and superseded [*accomplie et dépassée*]. They taught that the Jews were attached to the letter and not the spirit of the law because they were "carnal" beings, blinded by Satan, incapable of understanding the real meaning of their own Scriptures".[282]

IV.1 MISSING LINKS

There is still a gap that is not clear in the jump from Paul's letters of apparent astonishment at the generous inclusion of the Gentiles into the commonwealth of Israel and clear and deep pain at his kinsmen in not recognising the Messiah, to the shockingly anti-Jewish and anti-Torah sentiments reflected in the writings of the

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[281] See Matthew Tapie, SCJR 12, no. 1 (2017): 1-18, "Christ, Torah, and the Faithfulness of God: The Concept of Supersessionism", https://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/scjr/article/viewFile/9802/8604. Retrieved December 15 2018

[282] Ibid., 11. See also Jules Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt,* 75

early Church Fathers.[283] Despite the visible anguish and the sense of wrestling to be detected in his epistles, Paul nonetheless speaks passionately of restoration and relationship with Israel.[284] Such is his conviction that this is not only possible but inevitable, that he describes the 'middle wall of partition', a physical barrier in the Temple in Jerusalem that kept the Gentile court separate from the Jewish one, (the original remains of which today are in the National Archaeological Museum in Istanbul), was broken down with the coming of the Messiah.

"For he himself is our peace who has made the two groups one, and has destroyed

the barrier, the middle wall of partition (dividing wall of hostility) between

us…" (Eph 2:14)

The notion of the disestablishment of the 'wall of partition' enables connection between Jews and Gentiles, who when they come together in faith according to Paul, are 'one new man'.[285] There are no barriers or segregation that promote division and hostility, only connection and relationship.

Indeed, *NA* affirms this when it states,

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[283] Krister Stendahl writes, "The main lines of Pauline interpretation - hence both conscious and unconscious reading and quoting of Paul by scholars and lay people alike - have for many centuries been out of touch with one of the most basic of questions and concerns that shaped Paul's thinking in the first place: the relation between Jews and Gentiles." Stendahl's words reinforce the importance of establishing context when approaching the Pauline epistles. See Stendahl, *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles,* 1. See also Young, *Paul: The Jewish Theologian,* 3-5

[284] See Mark D. Nanos, "A Jewish Contribution to Pope Benedict XVI's Celebration of the Year of St. Paul", in *Reading Paul within Judaism,* 173-177

[285] This phrase comes from a particular translation (AMP) of the Ephesians 2:14 verse above.

"Thus the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ-Abraham's sons according to faith -are included in the same Patriarch's call, and likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles. Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ, Our Peace, reconciled Jews and Gentiles. making both one in Himself."[286]

This is an altogether different persuasion than that of the Church Fathers and other theologians through the ages who reverse and twist the image of inclusion Paul illustrates to one of replacement, with forceful tones of rejection, exclusion and condemnation. Perhaps a hint to the missing link lies in the fact that Paul was addressing these issues at all, when he says 'do not consider yourself better than the natural branches' and 'do not be arrogant' in his letter to the Romans (Romans 11:18). He goes to great lengths to illustrate the concept of adoption in the Roman manner, perhaps never expecting or perhaps in warning, that the adopted son would attempt to replace the natural born son. Yet, in place of the 'wall of partition' so to speak, a firm wall of separation was theologically and historically erected between Christian and Jew - and it is this impasse which this thesis seeks to address through

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[286] *Nostra Aetate,* http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html, retrieved February 27 2019

reimagining the Jewish-Christian relationship with the Torah as the centre point of that reimagining.

In any case, it is clear why the seedbed of anti-Judaism within a developing Christianity was so acrid and produced such bitter fruit in the historical Jewish-Christian relationship as it developed over the centuries. It was filled with a hatred that was not just directed toward 'the other', but was harboured and nurtured toward the Deepest Other from whom this movement had come (and indeed the feelings of hostility and mutual suspicion, and accusations of heresy, were not only levelled by Christians toward Jews. The key difference, as noted earlier, lay in the demographic shift as Christianity moved to become an important political power through the Roman Empire). Perhaps it was rooted in jealousy or fear, or a type of self-loathing, or something altogether more Freudian with overtones of an Oedipus complex, at which Abraham J. Heschel hints. Jonathan Sacks asserts that the almost unexplainable hostility which fuels anti-semitism is a 'virus' which historically has mutated to suit whatever environmental conditions make themselves available, and supplants itself into those conditions.[287]

IV.2 DORMANT SEEDS

On the reverse however, a strain within Christianity can be detected which has always loved its Deepest Other, exemplified through the mirror of the very *Adversus Iudaeos* literature itself. It can be reasoned that if there were not such believers who were

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[287] Sacks describes the current resurgence of anti-semitism as 'The Fourth Mutation'. See Jonathan Sacks, *Future Tense: A Vision for Jews and Judaism in a Global Culture* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2009).

captivated by the beauty of Judaism and the Hebrew Scriptures and the Jewishness of their Christ, the cultivation of such forceful polemics directed not just at Jews but at 'Jewish Christians' or 'Judaizers' might not have been so prominent. John Chrysostom might not have spoken in such passionate rage of those Christians, both of Gentile and Jewish origin, who still in the fourth century filled the synagogues on the Holy Days and loved to join in the Festivals.[288] What of the sentiments of Justin Martyr, Augustine of Hippo and Ignatius of Antioch? Would they have warned their listeners if there were not those in the community who were doing the very thing they were condemning from the pulpit? So like the pauses between notes on a sheet of music, like the spaces in between letters on a page, let us take the silent voices of those at whom such anti-Jewish rhetoric was directed, as our cue.

In the wake of the Shoah, Christian theology as well as Jewish has undergone a sober reassessment. Compounded with this, or perhaps motivated by it, is an enthusiastic surge within Christian communities of all denominations to re-examine the Hebrew roots from which Christianity was given life and recover a theology that aligns itself with the 'religious other', rather than defining oneself over and against that other. Christian theologian Jürgen Moltmann termed this as 'the Hebrew wave'.[289] Israeli scholar Pinchas Lapide identified this growing trend within Christian scholarship as marked by

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[288] See John Chrysostom, *Against the Jews, Homily 1,* http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/chrysostom_adversus_judaeos_01_homily1.htm. Retrieved February 10 2019

[289] Jürgen Moltmann, "Der Gott der Hoffnung", in *Got Heute,* ed., N. Kutschki. (Munich 1967), 121. Cited by Pinchas Lapide and Ulrich Luz, *Jesus in Two Perspectives: A Jewish-Christian Dialog* (Minneapolis MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), 17

'an increasing ferment and unrest in churches. Roman and Greek thought patterns

are crumbling…(and) everywhere teachings are being revised, doctrines re-

examined…in order to open a way to the essential faith of the Nazarene who lived

and died on behalf of his people Israel…".[290]

Perhaps therefore, we are witnessing a 'Hebrew wave' in this century that was

sparked in the last, not just because of a commitment to tolerance or an attitude of

repentance in the wake of Vatican II, or guilt over Christian complicity in the Shoah,

but also because the seeds have always been there. The historical soil, being too acrid

and cold, allowed the seeds of reconciliation and reconnection to lie dormant while

plants of another variety flourished and choked out any potential life. And yet when

the conditions were right these seeds have begun to emerge with all the potential of

life within them that they carry. Perhaps the horrors of the wars in the twentieth

century and the magnitude of the Shoah acted as some sort of catalyst to provoke

those Christians for whom separation from their Jewish other is impossible, to let

their voices rise above the thunderous and violent murmurings and finally say

'enough - this is not who we are, and this is not who we will be'.[291] To say it with a

voice that has in the past been drowned out like the name of Haman on Purim, but a

voice nonetheless, a whisper, an echo of a connection that was, and an ache to be

connected again like a dislocated bone which needs to be reset into its socket. I

would suggest there has always been a 'remnant', a portion of those who are most

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[290] Lapide and Luz, *Jesus in Two Perspectives,* 16-17

[291] In January 1980, the Synod of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland produced a statement entitled 'Towards Renovation of the Relationship of Christians and Jews'. In this statement, which consisted of five broad points, it was emphasised that the 'guilt of German Christendom for the Holocaust' was to be confessed with dismay and co-responsibility. In that vein, the statement confirmed the permanent election of the Jewish people. See Document 17, "Synod of the Evangelical Church of the Rhineland (FRG), in *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People,* 92-93

deeply attached to her Deepest Jewish Other, perhaps unexplainably so, but irrevocably attached nonetheless, like a Ruth who refuses to be sent back into Moab. The time is ripe for tender green shoots, the 'Ruths' of this generation, as they did in the immediate after-math of the Shoah, to stand up and push past the rubble of anti-Jewish sentiment that for too long has darkened our relationships and told us to conform. The time is ripe to re-imagine a sacred future where the green shoots of relationships are reconciled and the sweet blossomings of restored, connected community come to the surface, in this century as we glimpse in the first.

IV.2.1   THE REVISION OF CHURCH TEACHING

In *Pirkei Avot* (the 'Ethics of the Fathers'), Rabbi Eliezer says, "Repent one day before your death".[292] The teaching is that since one does not know when one may die, repentance should therefore happen everyday.[293] *Teshuvah* is most often translated as 'repentance', and comes from the Hebrew verb *shuv,* meaning 'to turn back' or 'to return'. Restoration is implicit in this return.[294] The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) stressed in its 1987 statement, that repentance was a necessary response to,

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[292] וְשׁוּב יוֹם אֶחָד לִפְנֵי מִיתָתְךָ, *Veshuv' yom achad liphnei meta'tkha.* (Pirkei Avot 2:10): https://www.sefaria.org/Pirkei_Avot.2.10?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en. Retrieved December 17, 2018

[293] Leon Klenicki and Geoffrey Wigoder, *A Dictionary of the Jewish-Christian Dialogue* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1984), 158-159

[294] Ibid., 158

"the church's long and deep complicity in the proliferation of anti-Jewish attitudes and actions through its "teaching of contempt" for the Jews. Such teaching we now repudiate, together with the acts and attitudes it generates".[295]

The Presbyterian Church furthered its statement of repentance, through promoting deep change within the broader church structure itself. Confession of wrong-doing, admission of complicity, and a renewed commitment to developing a relationship between Jews and Christians based on mutual trust, as well as pledging to, "never again participate in, to contribute to, or to allow the persecution or denigration of Jews, or the belittling of Judaism", were some of the emphases expressed in this timely reassessment.

On August 31st 2017, representatives of the Conference of European Rabbis and the Rabbinical Council of America, together with the Commission of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel presented the Holy See with a statement entitled *Between Jerusalem and Rome* כלל ופרט בין ירושלים לרומי. Amended to celebrate the 50th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* and to acknowledge its landmark contribution to the development of positive relations and dialogue between Christians and Jews, it specifically describes *NA* as enabling the initiation of a wider "process of introspection that increasingly led to any hostility toward Jews being expurgated from Church doctrine, enabling trust and confidence to grow between our respective faith communities.".[296] As such, *NA* represents a critical shift within church teaching in relation to Jews and Judaism,

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[295] See Clark M. Williamson, *A Guest in the House of Israel: Post-Holocaust Church Theology* (Louiseville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 1

[296] See http://www.jcrelations.net/Between_Jerusalem_and_Rome_-.5580.0.html. Retrieved December 5 2018

as has already been emphasised. The above statement from varying Orthodox Jewish bodies in response to these moves, and particularly in response to *Nostra Aetate,* signals the radical departure from Jewish-Christian dynamics in second and fourth centuries described earlier in this chapter, (not to mention a departure from the dynamics which sustained the crusades, the Inquisition, the pogroms and the final solution which would materialise in the subsequent centuries).[297]

As mentioned in the Introduction, the recovery of Christian origins and the rediscovery of Jesus' Jewishness has become a thriving field of scholarship, in tandem with the positive development of Jewish-Christian dialogue. A second vital area to be directly redressed in relation to Christian attitudes toward Jews and Judaism, which the Presbyterian Church's 1987 statement touches on, has been the domain of church teaching as expressed through liturgy, hymns, catechesis and prayer books.[298] In one sense this revision aligns with the notion of an 'everyday repentance', insofar as these are the everyday tools used for affirming faith, teaching and learning across all denominations of Christianity. They are therefore extremely effective tools for immediately reinforcing either positive or negative Jewish stereotypes, and provide a grassroots level opportunity to challenge, or sustain, inherited presumptions. Mary C. Boys writes of the historical "distorted education Christians have received about Judaism", and invites not just a re-examination of

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[297] While *Dabru Emet* was not officially endorsed by Orthodox rabbis, it represented a cross-section of varying Jewish denominational communities, and its contribution to the mutual enrichment of Jewish-Christian dialogue is significant. The two most recent statements from Orthodox bodies in 2015 (*To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven: Toward a Partnership between Jews and Christians*) and 2017 (*Between Jerusalem and Rome*) surely lean on the significance of what *Dabru Emet* achieved.

[298] See Stuart Polly, "What are Protestants Teaching their Teenagers about Jews and Judaism?" in *Christian Education and the Presentation of Judaism,* vol 2 New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai-B'rith, 1994), 18-27

religious education, but a radical rethinking "of Christian life in light of the church's changed posture toward Judaism".[299] In this vein, the "Berlin Document" or "The Twelve Points of Berlin", (issued by the International Council of Christians and Jews in 2009 to commemorate the historic drafting of the Ten Points of Seelisburg in 1947), calls all Christians to revise biblical, liturgical and catechetical approaches to Jews and Judaism.[300] Part of the motivation for this is to strengthen efforts to combat all forms of anti-semitism, and also to "remove all vestiges of contempt towards Jews and enhance bonds with the Jewish communities worldwide."[301]

The *Pontifical Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews,* established in 1974, in 2015 issued a significant document entitled "The Gifts and the Calling of God Are Irrevocable (Rom 11:29)". The document charts, amongst other things, the 'epochal' changes which have manifested between Christians and Jews post *NA,* and

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[299] Mary C. Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing?,* 261-262. Boys draws attention to the emphases contained in the 1985 "Notes," which, drawing in part from the 1974 "Guidelines," decried the marginalisation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic religious eduction and called for Jews and Judaism to be "organically integrated" into the teaching of the Church. See also, the "Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews: *Notes on the Correct Way to Present he Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church",* http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/relations-jews-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_19820306_jews-judaism_en.html, (retrieved February 12 2019), and Cunningham, *Seeking Shalom,* 160-170

[300] Revision of biblical approaches include recognising the Jewishness of Jesus and Paul in light of recent scholarship, and to avoid interpretations of biblical text which reinforce negative stereotypes of Jews and Judaism. Revision of liturgical approaches include emphasising connection between Jewish and Christian liturgy, and 'cleansing' liturgy of negative references to Jews in Judaism in prayers, hymns and preaching. Revision of catechesis includes thoroughly re-examining seminary programmes for example, in addition to developing positive models of interaction between Christians and Jews. See http://www.iccj.org/fileadmin/ICCJ/pdf-Dateien/A_Time_for_Recommitment_engl.pdf. Retrieved February 12 2019

[301] See "A Time for Recommitment: Building the New Relationship between Jews and Christians", http://www.iccj.org/fileadmin/ICCJ/pdf-Dateien/A_Time_for_Recommitment_engl.pdf. Retrieved February 12 2019

particularly in relation to Church teaching with regards to Jews and Judaism.[302] One of the key shifts noted is the transition from derogatory claims about Jews and Judaism in line with the 'teaching of contempt', to an affinity with and a realignment toward Judaism as 'an elder brother'.[303] The document also reflects deeply on the "process of implementation" of *NA* in the fifty years (published in the anniversary year of *NA*) since its issue.

Responding in this vein, Rabbi David Rosen (International Director of Interreligious Affairs for the American Jewish Committee, and former Chief Rabbi of Ireland), made an important clarification regarding the implementation of post-Conciliar Church teaching. Rosen commented that while since Vatican II it has been official Church policy (and we can see in the Protestant and ecumenical documents since Seelisberg in 1947 and the First Assembly of the Would Council of Churches the following year) to renounce anti-semitism in all its forms, the changes are not always implemented at a grassroots level, particularly at institutional and seminary level.[304] He stated, "Therefore it is important that Catholic educational institutions, particularly in the training of priests, integrate into their curricula both *Nostra Aetate* and the subsequent documents of the Holy See regarding the implementation of the

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[302] The Pontifical Commission produced, amongst other documents, the afore mentioned "Guidelines," (1974) and "Notes," (1985).

[303] See "Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews: *The Gifts and Calling of God are Irrevocable*", http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/relations-jews-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20151210_ebraismo-nostra-aetate_en.html. Retrieved February 12 2019

[304] See "New Statement on Catholic-Jewish Relations", Michael Pepperard (December 10 2015), https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/new-vatican-statement-catholic-jewish-relations. Retrieved February 12 2019

Conciliar declaration".[305] The revision of Church teaching is vital across all Christian denominations, but it must be nurtured and sustained at a fundamental ground level within living Christian communities in order to be effective.

Point Eight of Section One of the Pontifical Document reads,

"Texts and documents, as important as they are, cannot replace personal encounters and face–to–face dialogues."[306]

This line is significant, as it highlights the importance of real-life engagement engagement between Christians and Jews. The achievements of *NA* and subsequent statements with regard to deepening reconciliation between Christians and Jews will be limited in their effectiveness if they do not facilitate 'personal encounters'. This thesis offers an important suggestion in this regard - for Christians and Jews to actively engage in the pursuit of sacred reconciliation through sacred text. Reading biblical text interactively and engaging in conversational hermeneutics enables an invitation to relationship, and crucially enables the opportunity of 'face-to-face dialogue'. This connection is sought through active partnership, not, as Kessler reminds us, through 'isolation'.[307]

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[305] Ibid, https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/new-vatican-statement-catholic-jewish-relations. Retrieved February 12 2019

[306] http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/relations-jews-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20151210_ebraismo-nostra-aetate_en.html#7._The_goals_of_dialogue_with_Judaism. Retrieved February 12 2019

[307] Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 210-211

V. CONCLUSION

The brief sketch offered in this chapter of some of the dynamics present in the historical Jewish-Christian relationship, highlights the complexities of identity formation, and the multiple junctures which occurred in the 'partings of the ways' between Jews and Christians. This chapter has explored some of the roots of the 'partings of the ways', and some of the implications of those partings, which include the development of the *Adversus Judeaous* literature, and the imposed dichotomy between the Torah and grace as it began to develop. It is clear that this dichotomy cultivates in part the sustenance of supersessionism, which was able to fully flower as the dynamics of power and politics irrevocably shifted through the alliance with Constantine in the fourth century.

The move by varying church bodies and ecumenical councils in recent decades to repudiate anti-Judaism, anti-semitism and supersessionism, and to broadly revise church teaching in relation to Jews and Judaism, has been a welcome turn in the history of Jewish-Christian relations. Nonetheless, these institutional changes will remain static, unless engaged at a grass-roots levels by Christian educators of all denominations. They must lead, as the *Pontifical Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews* emphasises, to 'personal encounters and face-to-face dialogue'. Christians and Jews engaging in the interactive study of biblical text, and particularly the Torah as a covenantal and sacred text, is one suggestion for activating the potential with Jewish-Christian relations. Chapter three will therefore more closely examine the possibility of the Torah as sacred text enabling and unlocking this reconciliatory potential.

CHAPTER THREE

OPEN SPACES: THE TORAH AS A KEY TO SACRED RECONCILIATION

A NEW MODEL

I. INTRODUCTION: THE INTENTION OF THIS MODEL

As a subject of study, Jewish-Christian dialogue is very much in its infancy in comparison to other fields of academic discourse. The study of the history of relations between Jews and Christians as a theological and academic pursuit and the blossoming of those relations themselves, stands in sharp contrast to the long history of persecution, social exclusion and mutual hostility which dominated much of Jewish-Christian interaction. The twentieth century saw this interaction undulate between the nadir of the Shoah with its dark ramifications, and the beginnings of a tender reconciliation emerging out from under the Shoah's shadow. As thus far highlighted, the publication of *Nostra Aetate* in 1965 as part of the Second Vatican Council enabled a transformation in Church teaching concerning Jews and Judaism, and was a critical juncture in the (ongoing) journey of Jewish-Christian reconciliation and dialogue. In re-assessing pervasive and corrosive anti-Jewish attitudes which Christian teaching had long held, *NA* not only condemned Christian anti-semitism but also provided a methodology for re-examining the Christian-Jewish

relationship.[308] An intrinsic part of that methodology was to re-envision the Catholic relationship with Jews and Judaism through a fundamental revisiting of Scripture, and in particular those texts which had been used to vilify Jews and justify anti-Jewish sentiments, such as the writings of the Apostle Paul. While the rather complicated letters of Paul had often been misused to theologically malign and disparage Jews and Judaism (examined in more detail in chapters five and six of this thesis), Romans 9-11 actually became a pretext for the reconciliatory intentions of *Nostra Aetate* and provided a significant biblical springboard into previously unchartered waters. Drawing inspiration from this methodology, this model seeks to reimagine the relationship between Jews and Christians with the Torah as its compass. This chapter in particular offers the opportunity to develop further the role of sacred text in the pursuit of sacred reconciliation, allowing the text itself to become a place where reconciliation becomes possible.

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[308] As mentioned in previous chapters, the rejection of Christian anti-semitism and anti-Judaism through theological statements was a cross-denominational feature as world Christianity, particularly western Christianity, attempted to grapple with both the stark ramifications and theological causes of the Holocaust. For example, in 1961 in New Delhi, the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches renewed its call to denounce anti-semitism. Drawing from the statements produced at the First World Council of Churches held in 1948, the Third Assembly described 'anti-semitism (as) sin against God and man', emphasising that such an attitude is wholly 'irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith'. The Jewishness of the early followers of Jesus, himself a Jew, was also emphasised. In July of 1982, The WCC produced a document entitled *Ecumenical Considerations on Jewish-Christian Dialogue,* which acknowledged the damaging consequences of replacement theology, highlighting the importance of both a living dialogue between Christians and Jews, and also a commitment on behalf of Christians to deeply engage in a 'renewed study of Judaism'. For a comprehensive treatment of Christian statements and documents relating to the development of the Jewish-Christian dialogue, see Franklin Sherman, ed., *Bridges: Documents of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue, Vol 1: The Road to Reconciliation 1945-1985,* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2011). See also - *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People: Statements by the World Council of Churches and its Member Churches,* (Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Publication, 1988), pp 5-9, 12, 34-39.

I.1 THE TORAH AS A KEY

Chapter one set out the multiple possibilities which the metaphor of a 'door' can represent. Drawing from the metaphor offered in the beginning of this thesis, we can visualise the relationship between Jews and Christians as a garden. A garden is a place to cultivate life, where seeds and the potential of growth (or death if that potential is not guarded and tended) is always possible.[309] Christina Rossetti's vivid poetic imagery, presented in the Preamble, provides a picture of possible connection in such a garden, only this connection is curtailed and then permanently disabled by a firmly locked door. Furthering the 'door' metaphor, the intention of this model is to explore how biblical text, specifically the Torah, can be a key to opening this door, thereby enabling reconciliation and reconnection.

Across the spectrum of philosophy and literature, and biblical imagery, 'doors' carry a variety of associations. Doors that are open or closed, doors that are bolted shut - they all present subjective choices depending on where one is standing. A door could be an exit or an entry point, and can convey a sense of inclusion or exclusion, privacy or captivity depending on the perspective. It can be the invitation to freedom, or a barrier to that very freedom. For the purposes of this thesis, a locked door indicates

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[309] The text of Genesis 2:15 describes the dual role of the first human ('the Adam' in Hebrew, who was neither male nor female, but possibly both as discussed in II.2 of chapter one) in the Garden as 'tending' and 'keeping'. In Hebrew, 'to tend' is translated from the verb *'eved,* עָבַד which can mean 'work, worship, serve or slave', depending on which context it is used. See BDB, 713-714. For example, the Israelites are in *avodah* to Pharaoh, meaning they work/worship/serve and/or are slaves for him. And when the Israelites come out of Egypt, they will be in *avodah* to the One and Living God - indeed the daily temple service in Jerusalem later being called by this very name. The description of one of the roles of the Adam as being an *'eved* in the Garden provides multiple interpretive possibilities. The second part of the Adam's role, normally translated as 'keep', comes from the Hebrew root verb *shamor* שָׁמַר meaning 'to guard'. A primary function is to 'guard' the Garden of Delight (*eden* being the Hebrew word for delight). A more detailed exploration into the interpretive possibilities of what it might mean to 'guard' something precious in this sense can be found in chapter six.

an inhibition of movement, connection and relationship between Christians and Jews. And yet simultaneously, a door, whether locked or not, is always a potential access point, pregnant with the possibility for reconnection its being locked so firmly denies. A locked door also implies a vulnerability, in that without a key to open the door, moving beyond it will be impossible. The metaphor of 'key' then becomes hugely significant, and the one who holds the key possesses a special authority and capability to open it. It is the suggestion of this thesis that Jews and Christians both have access to such a key, in the form of the Torah.

Chapter one of this thesis offered a description of the Torah as,

"(a) sacred epic of a covenanted community in the making, one that even yet has not fulfilled its destiny".[310]

This description immediately locates the Torah as a living document within community and within covenant, (some aspects of which will be fleshed out below in II.2). Chapter one further defined the Torah as a document primarily concerned with sacred instruction, conveying an intimate sense of specifically parental instruction coming from a mother or a father.[311] Frank Crüsemann notes that this use, in the sense of Old Testament speech, implicitly expresses directional teaching as well as 'information (and) advice' within the community, including both priestly instruction and the teachings of prophets to their pupils.[312] Thus from family, to priest and

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[310] See Rabbi Rodney J. Mariner, *The Torah,* 8

[311] Frank Crüsemann cites the biblical wisdom literature, specifically Proverbs, to support this designation of Torah as instruction from a mother or father. See Frank Crüsemann, *The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law*, 1-2

[312] Ibid., 1-2

prophet, the concept of Torah as instruction within the community involved all strata of Israelite society, codified in a Deuteronomistic sense as the 'comprehensive written will of God'.[313] This particular definition connecting the Torah to teaching and instruction, (for there is more than one way of defining the Torah), communicates a fundamental dimension which is a vital puzzle piece in our pursuit of the possibility that the Torah can be instrumental in reconciliation between Christians and Jews.

Chapter one also set out some of the wider meanings for the actual word *torah*, and what exactly is being referenced when that term is used. For the purposes of this model, when the term *torah,* or 'the Torah', is employed, it is intended to convey the Five Books of Moses inscribed on a single scroll, and the 'essence', as Arthur Green writes, of the relationship consummated at Sinai.[314] As we begin to construct the model which forms the spine of this project, let us flesh out what type of document the Torah is as a whole, keeping the question of the theological basis for proposing the Torah as a key in Jewish-Christian reconciliation as a constant point of reference.

II. THE TORAH: A MULTI-FACETED DOCUMENT

Scholarly discourse within the fields of historical-criticism has defined the Torah in broad academic terms as a collection of documents gathered over time in the course of Israel's oral tradition and received pre-history (this shall be examined in more

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[313] Ibid., 2. See also, Jacob Weingreen, *From Bible to Mishna* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976), xi

[314] Arthur Green, *Radical Judaism: Rethinking God and Tradition*, 87-88.

detail in II.4 below). Theological parlance refers to the Torah primarily as the 'Mosaic law' and it is often, in Christian theological terms, contrasted with 'gospel'.[315] (The Jewish understanding of Torah as law (*halakhah*) carries somewhat different ramifications, as will be examined in more detail both later in this chapter and again in chapter six.) Establishing a binary comparison between 'gospel' and 'law' (Torah), however, can serve only to fashion, 1) a distorted picture of the function and purpose of the Torah as a whole; 2) a distorted picture of its reception history within the community irrevocably in relationship with it, and 3) a distorted picture of that community itself.[316]

Yet in 1948, and still within the glow of the crematoria, the World Council of Churches came together to produce a statement in Amsterdam at the very first meeting, detailing the positive connection between God, His Name, the Torah and His people Israel.[317] A re-examination had already begun, exemplified clearly through the Ten Points of Seelisberg (1947) which were themselves influenced by the aforementioned Jules Isaacs' critical rethinking of the Jewish-Christian

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[315] Crüsemann, *The Torah,* 1

[316] Crüsemann, *The Torah,* 1-3. Also, in 1980 the Evangelical Church in Rhineland produced a document emphasising the profound theological, social and historical implications of a distorted understanding of the Torah, stating, "Throughout the centuries the word 'new' has been used against the Jewish people in biblical exegesis: the new covenant was understood as contrast to the old covenant…thereby…we have made ourselves guilty of the physical elimination of the Jewish people". See Document 17, *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People,* 169

[317] "It was Israel to whom God revealed his name and gave his law". See *The Theology of the Churches,* 5-9, 160

relationship.[318] At the the Lutheran World Federation in 1982, this concept was expanded to more deeply communicate to Christians the Jewish connection to and understanding of the Torah. It emphasised,

"For Jews the Torah…is a record of a covenant between God and his people that is still in force. Christians should realise that this Jewish understanding is not necessarily legalistic but my lead to life in the presence of God…(T)hose early Christians generally should learn that faith in Christ does not preclude but rather includes a fulfilment of the Torah in the love of Christ".[319]

While not overly positive in some respects ('not necessarily legalistic…*may* lead to life…'), the above statement nonetheless affirms both the ongoing Jewish connection to the Torah through covenant, and also the connection between the Torah and the early Christian community. This second point is particularly important for Christians to reconsider, and there is a growing body of theological and scholarly research in this area.[320]

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[318] 1946 saw the establishment of the International Council of Christians and Jews, which met in 1947 for its second conference in Seelisberg, Switzerland. This conference produced a declaration which became known as the *Ten Points of Seelisberg: An Address to the Churches.* The Ten Points were influenced by the ongoing efforts of Jules Isaac, (who was an active participant at the conference), to draw critical attention to the 'teaching of contempt' within Christian liturgy and teaching regarding Jews and Judaism. See "The 10 Points of Seelisberg"*,* 1947, http://www.jcrelations.net/An_Address_to_the_Churches__Seelisberg__Switzerland__1947.2370.0.html?&pdf=1. Retrieved December 9 2018

[319] See *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People,* 161

[320] For example, see Paula Fredriksen, *When Christians were Jews: The First Generation* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2018); David Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988); Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006)

II.1 TORAH AS TEACHING

The primary meaning of the biblical Hebrew word *torah* תּוֹרָה, coming from the root word *yarah* יָרָה meaning 'to shoot', is literally 'teaching', 'direction' or 'instruction', like an arrow shot from a bow in archery which hits its target exactly.[321] It is interesting to note that a BH cognate root word, *harah,* הָרָה is linked to the physical act of human conception. As in English, this particular word has the double inflexion of both mental enlightenment and physical impregnation.[322] Thus the most succinct translation of the word torah is 'teaching', and it implies a type of teaching which has direction, and both encourages and sparks growth, meeting 'the target' exactly. 'Teaching' therefore describes, in part, the essence and the genre that the Torah holds within Jewish collective consciousness. Rabbi Goldie Milgram beautifully describes Torah as 'the sacred meeting place of generations', where, much more than a collection of bible stories, it is a place where we have the invitation to,

'dialogue and dance, wrestle with our ancestors' visions and formulate our own. (The) Torah is a place to both find and make meaning. The meaning is often hidden, buried inside the text, and inside of you.'[323]

The assertion that a primary function of the Torah as a covenantal document within the sacred community, necessitates the question, what does it mean to actually teach,

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[321] It is interesting to note that one of the biblical Hebrew verbs used for 'sin' is *chata,* חָטָא coming from the root meaning 'to miss', communicating the idea of 'missing the mark' or going off course. See BDB, 306.

[322] See Mariner, *The Torah,* 8

[323] Rabbi Goldie Milgram, *Meaning and Mitzvah: Daily Practices for Reclaiming Judaism* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2005), 92

and what does it mean to learn?[324] At its most basic level, teaching could be considered to be the act of imparting or transmitting knowledge or understanding, to a student. A 'teacher', then, is one who engages in and facilitates this act of transmission, and acts as a conduit between the student and the subject of learning.[325] Learning, however, cannot be a simple absorption of pre-digested information - true learning requires engagement and active participation, as expressed in the infamous phrase 'tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember…involve me and I learn'.[326] That is why the Torah, in Jewish thought, is the ultimate 'teacher' — the meaning is actively drawn out by the community and invites participation, and in so doing the directional meaning or deeper significance of the teaching is internalised.

In fact the relationship between the memory of Sinai in Jewish consciousness and daily life is crystallised by the communal response of *ma'aseh ve'nish'ma* - 'we will do, and we will hear' in Exodus 24:7. Such a formula is a radical alternative to a seemingly logical approach of hearing what it is you are to do first, understanding

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[324] The BH word for 'year', *shanah,* literally means 'to repeat', 'to change' and 'to teach', as well as 'year'. This offers interpretive possibilities understanding a year is repetition in some senses, but through that repetition we learn/are taught, and thus we also change year to year. See BDB, 1039.

[325] In Biblical Hebrew, a second word exists for the word 'teacher' apart from *torah/moreh*. It is *melamed* which comes from the root *lamed* to learn. Therefore a student or a disciple (a *talmid*) learns (*talmud*) teaching (*Torah)* from the teacher (*melamed*). *Pirke Avot*, ('Ethics of the Fathers' - a written compilation of the wisdom and ethics of the Rabbis from the Mishnaic period, and famed for its well-known sayings and ethical principles) says - 'I have learned from all my teachers, and from my students… most of all'. See Leonard Kravitz and Kerry Olitzky, eds., *Pirke Avot: A Modern Commentary on Jewish Ethics* (New Jersey: Behrman House, 1993)

[326] This phrase has been widely accredited to Benjamin Franklin, but recent research presents that this is incorrect and the phrase most likely emerges from a Chinese proverb. see http://www.barrypopik.com/index.php/new_york_city/entry/tell_me_and_i_forget_teach_me_and_i_may_remember_involve_me_and_i_will_lear/ andhttp://www.gazettextra.com/weblogs/word-badger/2013/mar/24/whose-quote-really/. Retrieved April 10 2015

why, and then doing it. 'Hearing' as conveyed in the Torah, is preceded by the communal act of 'doing', indicating that being an active participant releases the capacity to truly 'hear'.

The broader goal of all teaching, whether religious or secular, is to educate and to inform, so that the student is enabled to reach their fullest potential, succinctly expressed in the Latin term *educare*, 'to draw out that which lies within'. Thus, Torah understood in this vein is that which guides and enlightens, informs and instructs, and draws out 'that which lies within', for the covenanted community. Rolf Rendorff writes in his analysis of traditional theological issues in relation to the various documents and statements published by the World Council of Churches and its member churches on Christian relations with Jews and Judaism, that we can definitively conclude from the different denominational statements the "notion that one could earn salvation by fulfilling the Torah is not a Jewish idea…Torah means 'teaching' or 'instruction': how to live within the covenant God has established".[327]

II.2   TORAH AS COVENANT

Building on the understanding of Torah as 'teaching' within the covenanted community as mentioned above, there emerges a second definitive aspect of the Torah as a whole to be examined. Through exploring the theological credibility of the claim that the Torah can be a key to the betterment of Jewish-Christian relations, the notion that it is a primarily covenantal document must be considered.

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[327] Rolf Rendorff, 'Traditional Theological Issues', in *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People,* 160-162

The understanding of Torah not as law (it is thought of as *halakhah* which in broad terms is 'Jewish law' as we have mentioned, but this differs from the idea of 'legalism' as it might be defined in Christianity. *Halakhah* is more similar in function perhaps to Canon law,) but rather as a 'way of life', has to do with covenantal partnership. Thus the concepts of 'covenant' and 'Torah' go hand in hand. The Torah, as a document in Israel's sacred and mythic history and religious memory, contains the terms of the covenant which had already been established through Abraham. It is a response of faithfulness on the part of a people to an already faithful God, an expression and actualisation of covenant love.[328]

Furthermore, in traditional Jewish thought, the Torah, as a covenantal text that informs and instructs and guides, is also by its own definition a 'legal agreement' between God and Israel. In that vein, it is understood to be the 'national constitution' of the people of Israel.[329] As a constitution rooted in covenantal faithfulness, it is a constitution that would not be subject to the whims of a particular government being elected or one that could be altered by popular referendum.[330] Indeed there is a sense of the eternal about a constitution which would be present in the midst of the

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[328] It is intriguing to note the presence of the Hebrew word *lapide,* לַפִּיד, meaning 'flaming or burning torch' (a word which appears only twice in the entire Torah), in Genesis 15 with Abraham and in Exodus 20 at Mt. Sinai - both pivotal covenantal moments in the collective Jewish memory.

[329] See "Torah: Covenant and Constitution", http://pluralism.org/religions/judaism/introduction-to-judaism/torah-covenant-and-constitution/. Retrieved April 10 2015

[330] Political scientist Daniel Elazar wrote extensively on the relationship between biblical historical covenants as political concepts in ancient Israel. See Daniel J. Elazar, *Covenant and Polity in Biblical Israel, (Vol 1, Biblical Foundations and Jewish Expressions),* (New York: Routledge, 2017)

people to whom it was so deeply attached, somewhat like a 'portable homeland', in the immortalised words of the German poet Heinrich Heine.[331]

It is in this idea of 'constitution' that the notion of *nomos* could be said to have some bearing, insofar as there is a significant 'legal' aspect to Torah. Josephus, however, the first-century Jewish historian, rendered the word *torah* with the Greek term *politeia*, ('polity') rather than *nomos* ('law' or 'lawcode').[332] In any case, the primary function of Torah in Jewish collective memory, as indicated by its very name, is to teach or give directional instruction to the community and this instruction is communicated through the mediums of song, narrative, legal texts, genealogies, poetry, history and myth.[333] Therefore to apply any narrow, reductionist label which does not encompass the many aspects of Torah is to sorely limit the scope and depth of the document as a whole and restrict textual integrity. Any potential engagement is therefore already undermined from the offset.

As a covenantal document, the Torah contains many covenants within it - the covenant between God and Noah for example, the repetition of covenantal promises

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[331] Michael Goldfarb, *Emancipation: How Liberating Europe's Jews from the Ghetto Led to Revolution and Renaissance* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 240

[332] Phyllis A. Bird, *Faith, Feminism and the Forum of Scripture: Essays on Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books: 2015), 75

[333] Recent research has compared the Torah within the genre of a covenantal document to other national documents of the ancient Levant, with specific attention paid to written treaties between ancient empires and their vassal nations. Of particular interest are the specific studies that compare and contrast the Book of Deuteronomy, (the fifth book of the Torah and the 'repetition', as indicated by its Septuagint name, of some of the themes in other parts of the Torah, with the notion of covenantal and communal response forming a significant part of the discourse), with the codified form of an ancient Hittite treaty. This establishes the Torah at the very least an ancient text which activates legal responsibility on behalf of the participants. It also establishes it as the definitive legal document within Israel's sacred consciousness. See http://thetorah.com/significance-of-hittite-treaties-for-torah-judaism/, retrieved April 15 2015. See also Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered,* 4-5

to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the communal sealing of the covenant at Sinai, and the restating of the covenant by Moses to Israel on the banks of the Jordan River in the form of a song. Covenant and Torah form, as Rolf Rendorff describes it, 'an indissoluble unity'.[334] It therefore is unhelpful to refer to the Torah as the 'old covenant' - for a number of reasons this statement is problematic, not least because of the adverb 'old' which necessarily implies displacement and replacement. Moreover, in traditional Jewish thought these are not disjoined covenants, they feed and inform one another and experience renewal at different pivotal moments in Israel's history.[335] As Edward Kessler notes, the earliest followers of Jesus who were Jewish understood the fledgling Messianic movement to be 'a new phase in the covenant-story of Israel'.[336] Eminent Dead Sea Scroll scholar Geza Vermes, confirms that both the early Christian community in Luke and the community in Qumran, saw themselves as distinctly fulfilling Jeremiah 31:31-34, a passage which makes the only OT reference to a 'new' covenant.[337] This is important as the Hebrew word *chadash* חדש can mean 'new' or 'to renew' or 'to repair', with a sense of restoration or newness, and is the very word used in the Jeremiah 31 text in relation

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[334] *The Theology of the Churches,* 162

[335] The aforementioned Belgian Protestant Council clarified in their 1967 declaration on Relations between Judaism and Christianity, that 'It is not correct to designate the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings (in abbreviated form they are called Scriptures), as "Old Testament" and the Apostolic Writings as "New Testament". This terminology suggests an opposition or contrast that does not exist.' See *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People,* 158. See also Helga Croner, *More Stepping Stones to Jewish-Christian Relations,* (1985), 193-197

[336] Edward Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, 25

[337] See Geza Vermes, The Significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for Understanding Christianity, 210. In the "Journal of Religious History": Vol. 26, no. 2, June 2002. Cf http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-9809.00151/abstract. Retrieved April 16 2015

to covenant.[338] (This changes the tone of 'new', and concept we will explore further in chapter five in relation to Hebrews 8:7, 13.)[339]

II.3 TORAH AS KETUBAH

At a traditional Jewish wedding, the bride encircles her bridegroom seven times, under a canopy suggestive of both the hovering Presence of the Holy One, and the home that the new couple will build and inhabit together.[340] Once the bride has completed the circling she enters into the canopy (the *chuppah* חֻפָּה) and formalises her vows with her beloved in the presence of witnesses. The bridegroom places a ring, a symbol or a visible sign of the union that is taking place, on the index finger of the bride and as he does so promises to treasure his bride as one would treasure the most valuable jewel. The promises or vows exchanged between the bridegroom and the bride under the canopy are then codified in a written Hebrew document, a *ketubah,* which delineates the terms of the union and ratifies it as valid and binding in the eyes of the community.

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[338] BDB, 293-294

[339] In relation to this almost intractable theological issue between Christians and Jews, the Synod of the Evangelical Church of the Rhineland advocated the avoidance of the term "new" in relation to Scripture, primarily due to the implications this has for the Jewish people. Part of the 1980 statement entitled "Towards Renovation of of the Relationship of Christians and Jews" emphasised perceiving of 'the unbreakable connection of the New Testament with the Old Testament in a new way…'new' means no replacement of 'old'…Hence we deny that the people Israel has been rejected by God, or that it has been superseded by the church'. See Document 17, "Synod of the Evangelical Church of the Rhineland" (FRG), in *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People,* 92-94, and 158. See also Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered,* 55-57

[340] Ashkenazi Jewish tradition emphasises the circling must be completed seven times, symbolic of completion and fullness, with the number seven holding particular significance. Sephardic Jews tend to circle three times. All Jewish traditions however have the tradition of the bride circling the bridegroom before the stand under the *chuppah* together and sign the *ketubah*. See Steven M. Lowenstein, *A Jewish Cultural Tapestry: International Jewish Folk Traditions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 108-112

The Hebrew root verb for writing is *katav*, כָּתַב, and the first time this verb is used in the Torah is, interestingly, during the Sinai episode. From Egypt through the Fertile Crescent and ancient Levant up to Ur, (all geographical places alluded to in the Torah prior to Mt. Sinai), the use of the alphabet had long been established.[341] In the Torah however, the particular verb *katav*, 'to write' is not made use of at all, until Mt. Sinai.[342] In Israel's collective and religious memory this indicates that a very special type of writing took place (in traditional thought, the first time a Hebrew verb is used influences its interpretive usage later in the text,) during the exchanges and encounters of the Sinai experience, the type of writing that specifically and uniquely, is associated with a wedding.

According to the Hasidic masters, a type of 'wedding' between God and Israel took place at Mt. Sinai, such is the significance of the Sinai event.[343] The Cloud which brooded and hovered over the exchanges between God and Israel was the canopy, cloaking the community in a type of 'holy fog' or sacred mist. The Sabbath, the unique identifying sign of the exchange, was the 'wedding ring' as the symbol or sign

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[341] See Marc Van De Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000-323 BC* (Blackwell History of Ancient World, 3rd Ed.,) (New Jersey: Wiley and Blackwell, 2015) for more on the multicultural civilisations of the Ancient Near East and specifically on the development of writing.

[342] The rabbis held that the Torah's apparent lack of concern for exact chronology reflects the perspective of the community for whom it was written (we value chronology for the purposes of establishing historicity in a way the ancient simply did not - this does not make something more or less valid however). More importantly, the inconsistency on chronological sequence undergirds and highlights for the rabbis the Torah's position within Israel as the teacher - what the community needs to hear will be repeated in the sequence it is needed to be heard, for teaching is the ultimate goal of the Torah, not a chronological history. For more see Abraham J. Heschel, *Heavenly Torah: As Refracted Through the Generations,* 241-243

[343] See Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered,* 3-7, and Aryeh Kaplan, *Made in Heaven,* (New York: Moznaim Publishing Company, 1993)

of the promise, encircling those who remembered and protected her with shalom.[344]

The Torah, then, was the *ketubah*, the written testimony witnessing to and codifying the special nature and terms of the unique relationship between God and Israel that had been actualised through the sacred imagery of Sinai, reticent with traces of fiery volcanic movement offsetting the transient coolness of the hovering cloud. Whilst this is a more mystical understanding of the Torah, it helps to underscore the deep spiritual and covenantal attachment between the Torah and the Jewish people. In addition, while it is theologically applied differently, 'wedding' imagery is familiar territory in Christian theology, as Christ is married to the Church. What is common to both formulas, whether Jewish or Christian, is the idea of a covenantal contract, consummation and celebration.[345]

II.4   THE TORAH: ONE DOCUMENT OR A SERIES OF SOURCES?

A broad understanding of the Torah as a document in and of itself will engage not just with the perception of Torah in Israel's historic, mythic, religious and sacred memory, but also with the critical-historical understandings of the Torah as offered through academic discourse. In addition, it is beneficial to be aware of the progression of theoretical frameworks as they have developed in biblical scholarship. Frank Crüsemann describes the beginnings of historical-critical research into the

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[344] In later Jewish literature, the Sabbath is seen as a Bride in and of itself. Other personifications such as that of a Queen find their place in the dearth of Jewish poetry and song, and in later Polish Jewish literature particularly arising out of persecution and displacement, Shabbat becomes personified as a Mother. See Eugenia Prokop-Janiec, *Polish Jewish Literature in the Interwar Years* (Judaic Traditions in Literature, Music and Art). (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 190

[345] For a treatment of John's use of biblical marriage texts in relation to a developing bridegroom-Messiah theology, see Jocelyn McWhirter, *The Bridegroom Messiah and the People of God: Marriage in the Fourth Gospel* (Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

Pentateuch as relying on a methodology which focused on dismantling the text as a whole in order to extract possible older documents from it.[346] This led to the development of the 'Documentary Hypothesis' (or 'hypotheses' as there are more than one) which analysed different strands of the Bible in order to isolate possible sources and thereby theorise as to its formation.[347] The Documentary Hypothesis was especially popular in the 19th century as the historical-critical method of study the Bible and its sources began to find traction, and could thus be described as the 'late blooming flower of the Enlightenment'.[348] Julius Wellhausen, a prominent German biblical scholar in the 19th and early 20th century, built on previous documentary hypotheses to establish the 'New Documentary Hypothesis' which became one of the most influential theories of source-criticism in modern biblical scholarship. One challenge, however, with the development of the documentary hypotheses and biblical-criticism as a method of study, is that much of the scholarship upon which it relies was conducted by German Protestants with little or

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[346] Crüsemann, *The Torah,* 7

[347] The Documentary Hypothesis specifically analyses the Pentateuch in light of four proposed source documents, the *Yahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomist,* and *Priestly* sources. The other main hypotheses about the development and emergence of the Torah as a single text in Israel's national consciousness include, the Fragmentary Hypothesis (the Torah is a final collation of what ere originally fragmentary Israelite documents), the Supplementary Hypothesis (the Torah consists of one core document which had been added to and revised/redacted), and finally Traditional Authorship, which according to traditional Jewish, Christian and Islamic interpretation ascribes Moses as the primary author. The first three hypotheses emerged, in part, out of a growing movement which began approximately 160 years ago, in German, Scandinavian, American and British divinity schools, who were attempting to develop a 'scientific' reading of the Bible. (of course there were earlier attempts at biblical criticism in the 16th and 17th centuries, exemplified through the work of Baruch Spinoza for example, and Thomas Hobbes). In this vein Crüsemann writes, "The unified gift of the Torah, which remained valid during all pre-critical interpretation, was reduced to a series of self-contained, independent law books". See Crüsemann, *The Torah,* 7. See also, James L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now* (New York: Free Press, 2007), xi-xiv, 41-42; Richard Elliot Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible,* (Kindle Edition: 2013), and Joel S. Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library),* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2012). See also http://www.cs.umd.edu/~mvz/bible/doc-hyp.pdf. Retrieved December 10 2018

[348] George Robinson, *Essential Torah: A Complete Guide to the Five Books of Moses* (New York: Schocken Books, 2006), 127

no consideration toward the reception history of these texts within the Jewish community.[349] In addition, anti-Jewish sentiments were at least a partial influence on some of the conclusions drawn. As such, these hypotheses were described to be a form of a 'Higher Antisemitism', entrenched in the presupposition that the later sources which comprised the Pentateuch 'reflected a degeneration of spirituality into a compulsively legalistic fixation on the details of a sacrificial cult'.[350]

While biblical-criticism and the development of biblical scholarship has transformed the fields of biblical studies and interpretation throughout the 20th century, Jewish-Christian dialogue has a vital role in ensuring that such important and sensitive scholarship is rooted in mutual respect, with a consciousness of the reception history of those texts within a given community.[351] *Nostra Aetate* and the subsequent emergence of a Christian-Jewish dialogue which includes multiple Protestant denominations, has re-affirmed the Christian connection to Judaism and helped to shed some of the unhelpful assumptions toward Jews and Judaism which featured in 19th and 20th century biblical scholarship. Indeed Philip Cunningham maintains that

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[349] Rudolph Bultmann (1884-1976) for example, stressed the antithesis between the teachings of Jesus and Judaism. See Stephen Westerholm's chapter "The "Righteousness of the Law": Bultmann, Wilckens and Sanders", in *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: the "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 150-154

[350] Solomon Schechter, a rabbi who was a rough contemporary of Julius Wellhausen, described it as such, in relation to the Wellhausian assertion that the Pentateuch is 'the calcified Jewish form of once lively Israelite faith'. Schechter is synonymous with the discovery of the Cairo Geniza. See Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 129 See also Crüsemann, *The Torah,* 2

[351] Crüsemann notes the significance of the revision of certain literary-critical approaches to the Pentateuch, drawing attention to the fact that classical source theory was 'uncontestable' for a century. Crüsemann, *The Torah,* 7-8

in the light of *NA,* "the adoption of biblical-criticism in the Catholic community has opened up new possibilities for a fresh appreciation of the Jewish tradition."[352].

Michael Fishbane, writing on 'inner-biblical exegesis', emphasises the act of *Vergegenwärtigung,* that is the act of making 'the pastness of texts present to us and part of our ongoing cultural lives'.[353] While traditional authorship would be emphasised by the rabbis in relation to the formation of the Torah, the fact that classical Jewish hermeneutics offers space for and encourages reinterpretation, in some ways does not stand in direct opposition to the various documentary hypotheses. This could be said insofar as we are constantly rewriting ourselves into scripture through the very act of interpretation, the *innere Kraft* at the suggestion of Franz Rosenzweig, which releases an inner dynamic of the text through a live reading.[354] Therefore the Torah offers, as suggested earlier in this thesis, an opportunity to dialogically engage with the 'epic past' of the text, as well as with its present as refracted through our own lives.[355]

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[352] Philip Cunningham, *Seeking Shalom,* 33

[353] Michael Fishbane, *The Garments of Torah: essays in Biblical Hermeneutics,* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), ix-x

[354] Ibid., x

[355] Ibid., 106. Fishbane emphasises 'the acts of speech' involved in producing Torah text, highlighting the fact that it is not simply the product of an aesthetic act of writing, but 'actualises a present dialogue with an epic past'.

III. SACRED OPENINGS: CONSTRUCTING THE MODEL THROUGH SACRED TEXT

This part of the chapter will move to construct and develop the model which centres this thesis. The use of metaphor and Biblical Hebrew, as definitively outlined in the Introduction, is critically important at this point for expanding and ripening the ideas which ground this thesis.

In the Hebrew language, there are clues to the intrinsic meaning of a word, hidden within the root of the word itself.[356] The root words form the skeletal structure of the proposed model for reconciliation through sacred text, and it is onto these three root words that we will build the model. To add shape to the model, the significance of these Hebrew root words and their relevant meaning through the prism of biblical narrative will be closely examined.[357] Each narrative distinctly relates to the root word and refracts a deeper meaning that is relevant to our model, grounding our discussion as it emerges within the realm of sacred text and allowing the nuances and 'terseness' of the text to register and inform the conclusions that are drawn, as the

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[356] Classical Hebrew is constructed on a 'root system', where words are traced to a root verb that is made up of three consonants (there are exceptions to this). Each root verb will have a specific meaning, which is then in expanded into the variation of words which come from that root. See Maya Arad, *Roots and Patterns: Hebrew Morpho Syntax* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2005)

[357] In *Words and Their Meanings,* an in-depth and detailed study into Hebrew syntax and exegesis, Peter Ackroyd makes the important point that, in line with some of the linguistic work presented by James Barr, the root meaning of a Hebrew word does not automatically establish its meaning in a given passage, and the potential theologian or student should be cautious about being anachronistic in his or her approach to the text. He maintains however, that we must be open to the possibility and probability of echoes being heard from one passage to another in biblical times, and cultivate a sensitivity to 'overtones' in biblical material. He further highlights the complexities of translation, and that establishing the 'original' meanings of words in its truest sense is somewhat impossible. See *Words and Their Meanings: Essays Presented to David Winton Thomas*, Peter Ackroyd and Barnabas Lindars, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968) 2-12

model unfolds.[358] Part of the purpose of this is to demonstrate that a dialogical engagement with the text itself has the capacity to enable and expand the parameters of reconciliation.

III.1   OPENINGS

One of the Hebrew words sometimes translated as 'door' or 'doorway' in the biblical text is *petach* פֶּתַח, and literally means 'opening', coming from the root word *patach* meaning 'to open', or 'to break forth or loosen'.[359] This is the first root word which give structure and breath to the development of our model, and particularly relates to the idea of the Torah functioning as a sacred 'key' that has the latent potential to unlock aspects of the Jewish-Christian relationship in a unique way.

Unlike a physical door, which can be opened or closed and serves a particular purpose (as we have already discussed earlier in this chapter and in chapter one), an 'opening' is suggestive of more. An 'opening' proposes a space or a gap that allows access to something, and provides an expanse that by the very definition of its own expansiveness, cannot be 'occupied'.[360] An 'opening' could also be described as a portal, an entrance, a window or a cleft. It can be a beginning, an inception, a birth or the dawn of something that was not possible, without the opening being available.

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[358] By 'terseness' of the text I mean the ability of the Hebrew text to convey a multiplicity of meaning and a breadth of possibility, within relatively few words. In fact in classical rabbinical thought each letter and notation of the Torah text carries within it a world of meaning. See Rabbi Norman J. Cohen, *The Way Into Torah*, 71

[359] *Delet* דֶּלֶת is the specific Hebrew word for 'door' and implies clearly the door to an entrance which can be opened or closed. An 'opening' is different. See BDB, 195 and 834-835

[360] Merriam Webster   https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/opening. Retrieved March 5 2015

Thus an opening is both a necessary conduit and a space for something to happen, and unlike a door which can be closed again and serves a specific purpose, (to keep something either in or out or clearly demarcate a space), an 'opening' facilitates movement and is the space where interaction can take place. An opening at its very essence issues an invitation and is defined by what happens in it, rather than what is outside. It is inclusive and inviting.

A second connected meaning to the Hebrew word *patach* conveys the idea of 'unfolding'. Put together with the first suggestion of what 'opening' could be, this assembles a beautiful illustration of something being 'opened up', an inclusive space being made available for engagement and interaction to 'unfold', a little like the wings of a butterfly which unfold gently after an incredible, but natural, transformation has taken place.

III.2   SACRED KEYS AND SPACES

We have already established the multiple meanings the word 'key' conveys in English. In biblical Hebrew, a 'key' is a *maphteach*, מַפְתֵּחַ, and intriguingly shares the same root verb (*patach,* פָּתַח) as the word 'opening'. A 'key' therefore, in biblical Hebrew, is literally an 'opening instrument'. By its very definition it 'opens an opening' and in so doing causes something to loosen, unlock or break forth. In Hebrew, names are deeply significant and refer more to the function of something, rather than a description of its appearance. For example, if asked in English to describe a simple object like a pen, one might say 'it is long and silver, with a pointed end'. In Hebrew, if asked to describe that same pen, one would probably say 'it writes'. Therefore, a

Hebrew description of something is often inherent in its name, and here a 'key', a *maphteach*, is described not by how it looks, but by what it actually does. It's function provides its name, and linking back to the earlier discussion and definition of the Torah, the same formula can be applied insofar as 'Torah', with all its semantically rich offerings, is the name that most accurately describes its function and essence, rather than 'law'.[361]

A *maphteach,* a key as an opening instrument can highlight two things for us in relation to considering the Torah as a possible key for Jewish-Christian reconciliation. Firstly, that which 'opens' is vital in and of itself, essential to the 'opening' being made available. Secondly, the way in which something is opened and the opening it creates, are deeply intertwined. Clearly in Hebrew, there is a direct correlation between the 'key' (the agent that facilities the opening), the 'door' (the object that is being opened or unlocked through the action of the agent fulfilling its function) and the 'opening', the space that is made available as a result of the door being opened. Returning to our opening metaphor of seeing the relationship between Jews and Christians as a garden we can infer that the Torah, functioning as a *maphteach*, has the latent capacity to enable an 'opening', a sacred space for Jews and Christians to deepen the processes of connection and reconciliation.

We are suggesting therefore that 'opening' is thought of in two ways for this model - as a verb, an action word that is facilitated through using the very instrument that is essential to its opening, and a noun, a 'place' that is arrived through using the verb.

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[361] See Aviya Kushner, *The Grammar of God: A Journey into the Worlds and Words of the Bible* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015). See also Crüsemann, *The Torah,* 1-3

The metaphorical 'locked door' in this model which has been firmly shut between Christians and Jews through mutual suspicion and fear, separation and exclusion, is transformed into the entrance of the opening. The opening is what lies beyond the door, and the 'key' is the modus operandi that activates and facilitates the availability of this opening.

III.2.1   DOORS/OPENINGS OF HOPE: *Hosea 2:14-15*

The biblical prophet Hosea, despite being sometimes called the 'prophet of doom' in lamenting the breaches of covenant that preceded Israel's impending destruction, intersperses his prophetic stream with glorious promises of Israel's restoration. He is therefore also termed in Jewish tradition 'the prophet of love'.[362] In one particular utterance in the second chapter the prophet describes how the Holy One of Israel will woo the beloved into the wilderness as a lover is wooed, (despite the lover's unfaithfulness in a manner similar to Gomer, Hosea's wife), and speak tender words of comfort and restoration from that particular place.[363]

> "Therefore, behold, I will woo her,
>
> I will bring her into the wilderness,

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[362] See 'Amos and Hosea: Northern Prophets of Anger and Love' - http://velveteenrabbi.blogs.com/blog/2008/11/amos-and-hosea-northern-prophets-of-anger-and-love.html. Retrieved March 10 2015. See also Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets*, (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2001) for a classical exposition on the Biblical Prophets in what originated as Heschel's original doctoral thesis in German, first published in 1962.

[363] The Hebrew word for 'wilderness' is *midbar*, and comes directly from the word *dabar* 'to speak'. The wilderness in biblical Hebrew is distinct from the desert, and is a place of 'speaking' as well as a place of 'shepherding'. Therefore in this passage the sense in the Hebrew is that God will woo Israel to a space where she can be shepherded and hear Him speaking, and within that space of re-engagement restoration will come. This ties in with what it means 'to hear'. The Hebrew for 'obey' is hear, (*shema* שָׁמַע), which we will examine a little more closely in chapter six. Therefore to be in a space where hearing is made possible, and then to respond to what is heard through reconciliation and restoration are all themes that emerge in a close reading of the text.

And speak tender comfort to her.

I will restore her vineyards from there,

And the Valley of Achor (will be) as a Door of Hope;

She shall sing there

As in the days of her youth,

As in the day when she came up, from the land of Egypt.

The result of this impassioned encounter between God and Israel will be an incredible transformation which is so dramatic, Hosea describes it through paralleling the *Valley of Achor,* (a place replete in Israel's inherited and collective memory of coveting that which is not yours being accompanied by death and destruction, recalling Joshua 7:24), with a *Petach Tikvah*, literally translated as an 'Opening of Hope'.[364] Building on our earlier definition of 'opening', some translations actually render this word as 'portal', which offers another shade and nuance as to how 'opening' in this particular verse might be interpreted.

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[364] Most often this verse is translated as 'doors' of hope, (NIV) or occasionally 'gateway' (NLV) . The word is *le'petach* לְפֶתַח meaning 'to' or 'for' an 'opening of hope'. A trip to the Holy Land today can afford a visit to the traditional site of the *Valley of Achor,* located near Jericho. It is possible to go from there to *Petach Tikvah*, a town established in the late 1800's near Tel Aviv whose name was inspired by Hosea's proclamation. One can literally go from the *Valley of Achor* to *Petach Tikvah*.

And *tikvah,* תִּקְוָה meaning 'hope', is, in the text, like a cord or rope which enables the one who is waiting for it to grasp on to the possibility of a transformed existence.[365] Moreover, songs reverberate as a result of this restoration, choruses that resound in the melodies of hope that echoed in the Song at the Sea when Israel left *Mitzraim,* (the biblical Hebrew name for Egypt which literally means 'the narrow place', coming from the Hebrew root y'tzar יָצַר, 'to be narrow'). The meanings when delving into the prolific nature of both the text and the root systems which inform the text here are incredibly rich.

This prophetic narrative is presenting a textual possibility of what it looks like to go from a place where there is an inherited memory of separation, hostility and death, all of which leave conscious and unconscious traces in the collective memory, to a place that, by its very definition, is in its essence 'open'. A place of death becoming an opening or a portal to life. This 'opening' is epitomised by *tikvah,* hope that carries with it all the pregnant possibilities of restoration. Of shalom - peace and well-being and wholeness. Drawing on William Klassen's definition of 'peace', Philip Cunningham places the pursuit of shalom between at the centre of a developing post-conciliar Jewish-Christian relationship. This shalom is described as 'a process of living in wholesome relationship with others, ideally where partners and participants trust each other, act with integrity and are dedicated to the common good rather than

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[365] The word *tikvah* תִּקְוָה is translated as 'hope', and comes from the root word *qavah*, meaning 'to wait' and giving the sense of twisting and stretching like a rope or a cord. The origins of hope then, lie in waiting but a hopeful waiting which brings with it an expectancy and something tangible, of which it is possible to grab hold. *Tikvah* first appears in the Bible not in the Torah, but intriguingly in Joshua 2, in the form of a rope. In Jericho and the story of Rahab, she literally asks for a *tikvah* of scarlet thread. This is often translated as rope or cord, but the word is nonetheless the same as for 'hope'. The possibilities here are exciting for opening up the richness of the text and exploring the possibility of meanings that are animated through the internal meanings of the Hebrew text.

threatening each other'.[366] The word 'process' in this pursuit is significant, and parallels with Hosea's prophetic description of the journey from the Valley of Achor to an Opening of Hope. The traces of earlier, inherited memories that are painful are not disregarded but, as reflected in the prophetic narratives again and again, instead become the very sounding board used when expressing the unfathomable possibilities of restoration and hope. This is the suggestion for 'what lies beyond the door' - the radical transformation within the Jewish-Christian relationship of deep-seated memories rooted in trauma and desolation, into the possibility of rebirth and new life, accompanied by an ancient melody whose cadences tell the powerful story of liberation.

IV. THROUGH A CLEAR GLASS: SEEING THROUGH SACRED TEXT

This section will focus on the dynamics of seeing our Deepest Other through the prism of sacred text in the pursuit of reconciliation. The Jewish sages taught that the Prophets of old could see the God of Israel through a mirror, but that mirror was somewhat clouded. Moses on the other hand, in the midst of a cloud, had been able see God as though through a clear glass and be 'face to face' with the Holy One.[367] Thus we learn, the less 'focused' a lens or a mirror is, the more clouded the reflection

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[366] Klassen defines 'peace' or 'shalom' as both a state and process, in which wholeness in relationship with others is lived out. He draws on the work of Israeli scholar Zvi Werblowsky who maintained that 'shalom' indeed is 'the ultimate purpose of the Torah'. See William Klassen, "Peace", in *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations,* 338. See also Philip Cunningham, *Seeking Shalom,* 156

[367] Abraham J. Heschel, *Heavenly Torah,* 307

becomes, so that as with all misty or dark glass we might mistake our own reflection, for that which is on the other side.[368] The ancient rabbis understood Torah then, which was given in the midst of a cloud, to be a 'clear mirror', a divinely inspired looking glass through which one could pause as by a pool of still waters and 'see' - see the individual, the community, the world, eternity and God through a particular prism that refracted the heavenlies.

IV.1   REFLECTIONS: *James 1:23 and 1 Corinthians 13:12*

'What I do is the truest mirror of who I am.'

Craig D. Lounsbrough

The Apostle James in his NT letter exhorts his addressees to keep sight of their accurate reflection. He emphatically reminds them,

 'anyone who listens to the *word* but does not do what it says… is like someone who

 looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately

forgets what he looks like.' (James 1:23-24)

He thereby urges them to remember the significance of their reflection, and for that reflection to be the reminder of their true identity. Here the 'mirror' is used as a metaphor to describe in a deeper way the function of the 'word'. For James (*Jacob* in

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[368] German anthropologist and philosopher Ludwig Feurbach wrote of the problem of 'projectionism' in his work *The Essence of Christianity* (1841). His critique of religion in general and Christianity in particular was to strongly influence Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Picking up on the rabbinic understanding of everything we see being a reflection, if one is gazing into a looking glass that is so obscured it reflects a distorted image or the image of the gazer, then it is quite conceivable that what one is worshiping is a reflection of what is projected. On another level, in the 10 Commandments where we read 'have no other gods before me', it literally reads 'put no other gods before My Face', hinting that what is seen is what is worshipped, and these are themes that are brought up in the narratives of the Golden Calf, for example. Perhaps there is a textual basis for the idea that we can mistake an image for being God, and the call of the text is to look beyond what we think we see.

Hebrew), who is coming from a Jewish background and is undoubtedly deeply familiar with the role of the Torah in the community and its position as the hub of everyday Jewish life, the word is often interpreted as alluding to this important role of Torah as can be gathered from the verse above.[369]

It must not be assumed, of course, that the canons used in Jewish and Christian communities today are necessarily the same as the body of Jewish Scriptures used in the first century. Indeed the idea of books being 'in' or 'out' as they came to be defined in later centuries was not a primary issue in first century Jewish life.[370] What may be taken for granted today as the Hebrew Bible or the Christian New Testament is a collection or 'library' of documents and scrolls that were compiled over thousands of years within the life and sacred experience of Israel as a community. The Dead Sea Scrolls, as extant Second Temple literature, confirm the place of the Torah as the foundational and authoritative text within all factions of first century Jewish life (divided as it may have been), which was understood to be interpreted through the distinct voices of the Prophets, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah, and the Writings, with a heavy focus on the Psalms and Wisdom texts, as well as apocalyptic

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[369] It is important however to reiterate the pitfalls of anachronistic methodologies when we consider the role of Torah in first century Jewish life. The aforementioned James Barr emphasised in his work the importance avoiding anachronistic approaches in relation to assigning a specific 'theological weight' to Hebrew words in the pursuit of discerning a distinguishable 'Hebrew mentality', and was critical of an anachronistic use of etymology. See James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: 1961). See also Richard R. Topping, *Revelation, Scripture and Church: Theological Hermeneutic Thought of James Barr, Paul Ricoeur and Hans Frei,* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2007), 3

[370] As mentioned in chapter one, John Barton maintains that the use of the word 'canon' at all in relation to Second Temple Jewish literature and what became the Christian NT is unhelpful as the canonical processes emerged out of necessity in a later post-Destruction context. See John Barton, *Oracles of God: Perception of Prophecy in Israel after the Exile,* 44, 55-82. See also Timothy H. Lim, *The Formation of the Jewish Canon,* 1-17

literature.[371] The 'word' then, with all the rich implications of *logos* λὁγος, is understood to be the mirror itself that portrays the accurate reflection of who the community really is, and the significance of that reflection for daily living. Without being able to both see and acknowledge the reality of that reflection, the danger is not knowing who you are, and therefore not knowing how to live in meaningful relationship with God and with each other in sacred community. Seeing, reflecting and living are beautifully interwoven here through James' image.[372]

The Apostle Paul, having been trained at the feet of the great Pharasaic sage Rabbi Gamaliel as we read in Acts 22:3, employs a similar image as a teaching tool in the midst of a discourse about the nature of love in his first letter to the community in Corinth, stating that what we see in our reality is merely a 'reflection'. According to this thought, everything that is seen in the earthly realm is done so through a mirror, albeit a dim one, but there will come an age when there will be no mirror, no lens needed in order to see clearly, as we will be in direct face-to-face relationship. He writes,

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[371] For a short treatment on the Post-Exilic development of 'authority' in relation to the Torah of Moses and Ezra-Nehemiah, see "Torah of Moses: Pseudonymous Attribution in Second Temple Writings", Hindy Najman, https://www.academia.edu/4117346/Torah_of_Moses_Pseudonymous_Attribution_in_Second_Temple_Writings.
Retrieved December 12 2018. For the Dead Sea Scrolls, see James Vanderkam and Peter Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (San Francisco, CA.: Harper Collins Publishers, 2002)

[372] The idea of the 'word' however is not in any sense limited to the written word - the GK term used in this verse is *logou* λὁγου, which comes from *logos* λὁγος, meaning 'a word', 'idea', 'speech' or 'statement', coming from the root verb *legô* λἐγω meaning 'to say'. The 'logos' is common NT word which has come to be associated with Christ, and the Wisdom/Sophia or *Memra* tradition in early Judaism. See Daniel Boyarin, "Logos, a Jewish Word: John's Prologue as Midrash," in Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 546–549

"For now we see in a mirror (glass lens) dimly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." (1 Cor 13:12)[373]

It is this concept of a 'mirror' I want to expand and use to inform the discussion about the Torah as a 'lens' to view the relationship between Christians and Jews - what does it mean to reflect, and what does it mean to see through the prism of a reflection? The root of the biblical Hebrew word translated as 'mirror' or 'looking glass' is the verb *ra'ah,* רָאָה meaning 'to see', with the particular sense of something becoming visible, making an appearance or being observed by the one who is seeing. This takes us in two directions - how we see, and what is seen. It is relevant to our discourse on Torah as a place of sacred reconciliation insofar as how we see our Deepest Other is informed by our perceptions of that Other. Reconciliation implies a necessary moving toward the Other, and remembering the sentiments of Emmanuel Levinas, as we see the face of the Other so Torah is revealed.

IV.2   MOLTEN MIRRORS: *Job 37:18*

"Mirrors in metal, and the masked

Mirror of mahogany that in its mist

Of a red twilight hazes

The face that is gazed on as it gazes"

Jorge Luis Borges

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[373] *Specularibus lapidibus.* In NT GK 1 Cor 13: 12 reads, βλέπομεν γὰρ ἄρτι δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι (*blepomen gar arti di esoptrou en ainigmati*), which is rendered in the KJV as "For now we see through a glass, darkly"

The actual word 'mirror', coming from the Hebrew root *ra'ah* רָאָה meaning 'to see', occurs rarely in the Hebrew bible, and only once in the form of an object that has a particular function - in Job 37:18.[374] This is the second root word that will inform our model, and it will inform it in three distinct ways. in three distinct ways, relating to the idea of the Torah enabling a sacred 'seeing' of our Deepest Other.

'With Him have you made an expanse out the skies (of) dust-clouds,

which are as a molten mirror?' (Job 37:18)

Here in the rich and poetic, melodic language of Job we meet not just a mirror, but a 'molten' looking glass which has been formed through an action suggestive of something boiling hot being poured and then cast and hardened until it becomes that which has the ability to reflect. This is a seeming oxymoron. A molten mirror juxtapositions the image of a mirror which has a hard, shiny surface and is yet 'molten' at the same time, evoking volcanic images, reticent with the repressed, fiery energy that is bubbling beneath a deceptively solid outer crust. On the surface of the looking glass is a cool, firm exterior which at the same time somehow reflects the unknowable, glowing, melted and moving Life that is creating movement and straining against the seemingly hardened outer layer.[375] In this verse in Job, the

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[374] The Book of Job has some of the oldest (and most difficult), but therefore unique, Hebrew poetic portions of the entire Hebrew Bible. See Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry,* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 105-138

[375] In Japanese culture, bronze mirrors have a tradition of solid yet translucent capacity which reflects a story onto another surface. '(Japanese) bronze mirrors are known as magic mirrors, or makkyo (魔鏡). One side is brightly polished, while an embossed design decorates the reverse side. Remarkably, when light is directed onto the face of the mirror, and reflected to a flat surface, an image appears (the one featured on its back). While the metal is completely solid, the reflected image gives the impression that it must be in some way translucent. For many centuries, the 'magic' of these mirrors baffled both laymen and scientists.' See https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/exhibit/9AICex7GHApkLA. Retrieved April 26, 2015

molten mirror is compared with the skies and the dust, immediately bringing forth biblical images of creation with pictures of sky and dust, and an expanse separating the waters above from the waters below, thereby creating a space which facilitates that which is below, to mirror that which is above.[376]

This links us directly back to the significance of an 'opening', a space in which a creative encounter between Christians and Jews becomes possible, with the Torah forming the connection which both makes that space available (as a key) and the connection which facilitates that restorative relationship (as a lens through which to view that very relationship). The Torah is both the agent which facilitates the availability of that space, and is the 'mirror' or lens through which to view the relationship, which is being formed and cultivated in that space.

Drawing from the images gathered through the texts presented from James, 1 Corinthians and the Book of Job, the Torah becomes for this model the 'mirror', a reflective lens that provides a way of seeing the 'other'. The added inference of being 'molten' suggests a rumbling of movement which has the latent capacity to explode with life-giving energy for the see-er, the one who is willing to pause and see their Deepest Other. Furthermore, it provides a space to potentially refocus aspects of the relationship that were historically and tragically mis-focused and misaligned. Refocusing allows the one who is seeing and the one who is seen, and the complex

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[376] The word used for 'skies' here is actually more like 'dust-cloud' and is not the regular word used for skies/heavens (*shamayim*), or clouds. It is an unusual word that is used rarely the entire Hebrew Bible, and is from the BH root verb *shchak* שָׁחַק 'to rub away', 'wear thin' or 'pulverize'. It evokes particular images of the water creating sand through erosion. In fact elsewhere in Job a different form of this verb is used to say something to that effect - Job 14 describes the flowing action of 'waters rubbing away stones'. See Job 37:18, Biblehub https://biblehub.com/text/job/37-18.htm. Retrieved April 17 2015

interplay therein, to adjust their gaze in a way that does not detract from life but rather encourages and stimulates it. It is the suggestion of this thesis that learning to see one another through the refractions of sacred text is a possible, plausible and potential way for Christians and Jews to begin see each other afresh.

IV.3   LEARNING TO SEE: *Genesis 1:4*

Exploring the possibilities of 'mutuality' between Jews and Christians as reconciliation continues to unfold, Philip Cunningham compares the Jewish-Christian relationship to an infant who is learning how to speak.[377] Deeply connected to speech and communication is vision - how we see and how we respond to what is seen. (We shall examine some of the dimensions of seeing and language more closely in chapter four). If we are speaking about Jews and Christians learning to 're-see' one another, we might ask the question what could it meant to 'see' from a textual perspective?

In *Ways of Seeing (*1972), art critic and poet John Berger writes,

 'Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognises before it can speak. But there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words - but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relation between what we see and what we know…is never settled…Our vision is continually active,

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[377] Philip Cunningham, *Seeking Shalom,* 248

continually moving, continually holding things in a circle around itself, constituting

what is present to us as we are…'[378]

Commenting on the ability of the Belgian surrealist painter Magritte to capture the essence of the 'always -present gap' between what we see and the words we use to express what is seen and what it is 'to see', Berger surmises that we are never looking at just 'one thing'. We are continually looking at the *relation* between the thing we are looking at, and ourselves.[379] In his hermeneutical approach, Paul Ricoeur likewise traces the link between the self and the symbol, emphasising the significance of the engagement between the two. It is in the essential process of this dialectical engagement that embedded meanings are drawn out and interpreted.[380] This highlights the reciprocal nature of seeing - Berger asserts that if we claim we can see the 'hill' in the distance, then by all means of rational logic, we too can be seen from that hill.[381] Therefore seeing requires a certain element of what it is to 'be seen'. For the pursuit of Jewish-Christian reconciliation, we must indeed, as Cunningham states, learn how 'to speak' to one another. But I would add a critical appendage, Christians and Jews must learn, or re-learn, how 'to see' one another also, if this speech is to be one of reconnection and therefore authentically reconciliatory.

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[378] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 7-8

[379] Ibid., 7

[380] See Ruthellen Josselson, "The Hermeneutics of Faith and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion", *Narrative Inquiry,* 14(1), 1–28, Department of Psychology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and School of Psychology, The Fielding Graduate Institute, 2004)

[381] Berger, *Ways of Seeing,* 7-9

The first reference in the Torah to 'seeing', is attributed to God. God is the first to see in purely textual terms. And what is the first thing that is seen, by the first One to see? Light, that is *tov*, or 'good', with the sense of fruitfulness and potential.[382] Light whose essential essence is goodness contains within it the potential for life.

'And God saw

the light was *tov*'. (Gen 1:4)

The actualisation of potential is a theme which runs like a scarlet thread woven into different biblical narratives, and a fascinating exercise is to track 'seeing' and its respective trajectory through different biblical texts. What does it mean to 'see as God sees'? From Genesis it would appear to suggest seeing the light of Day One, and having eyes to see the *tov*, the life-giving potential in that light. There is however a brooding darkness that is present, and it is most significant that in the text the light and the potential of that light is seen while it is still 'in' the darkness, before it is pulled out and distinguished.

This chapter suggests that opening up or loosening that which has been historically and theologically   'locked' in the Jewish-Christian relationship, facilitates the availability of a sacred space. This sacred space enables the 'see-er' to see the light and life-giving goodness in the face of the Deepest Other. Returning to Emmanuel Levinas, the encounter at Sinai is essentially an encounter with the Face of the Other - an encounter with infinity that establishes a paradigm for how to respond to the

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[382] *Tov* טוב is the BH word translated as 'good', but this is not necessarily a 'moral' good. In Genesis 1:11 we meet a description of 'tov' which conveys a sense of fruitfulness that offers the actualisation of the potential for life, along with potential for future life contained within the seeds. It is the actualisation of the potential for life that is specifically 'good' in the text, along with the presence of the seed for future life. (Definition of 'actualisation of the potential for life embedded within creation', from Torah workshop with Rabbi Alan Ullman, Bangor, Belfast, January 2009).

infinity in the Face of a Deepest Other.[383] Seeing infinity in the Other reminds us of the deepest, infinite parts of ourselves, which call out to that Other ('Deep calls unto Deep', Psalm 42:7) . It further enables us, according to Levinas, to receive the Other also, in the way Torah was received at Sinai (highlighting again themes of covenant and *ketubah*). Torah becomes then in this model, not just an agent which facilitates encounter and engagement, but the very paradigm on which such an encounter is based.[384]

IV.3.1 BEING SEEN: *Genesis 16: 7-1*

This reflexive idea of seeing and being seen is furthered in the encounter of Hagar and her mistress Sarah in the Book of Genesis, who, pregnant with Abraham's seed, flees Sarah's harsh treatment and retreats into the wilderness. In Hebrew, the wilderness (a concept mentioned earlier with Hosea), is most often the word *midbar* מִדְבָּר, coming from the BH root *dabar*, 'to speak'. It is distinct from the desert, the *'aravah*, which is dry and arid with no possibility for life. The *midbar*, as refracted through the biblical and midrashic narratives, is both a place of shepherding and a place of speaking. The *midbar* as a definitive space where one can begin to hear God's voice is a theme we see again and again recounted and expressed in the narratives of Moses and Elijah, for example, and Jesus in the Gospels. Hagar as an Egyptian servant, a woman and a 'stranger' (her name *Ha-Gar* literally means 'The Stranger'), is

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[383] Zornberg, *The Particulars of Rapture*, 304-305

[384] Ibid., 304-306. See also Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969). See also Andrew Shepherd, *The Gift of the Other: Levinas, Derrida and a Theology of Hospitality* (Princeton: Pickwick Publications, 2014)

the first person in the Torah whom God has a conversation with in the *midbar*, the wilderness.

Positioned within the narrative of Abraham, Hagar teaches us something that is reflected in Israel's unique story again and again, and indeed can be traced in countless human stories and reverberates across religious and cultural divides. Hagar shows us what it is like to be a stranger, what it means to be in the wilderness, and what it means to be seen by God. Thus Hagar's very 'stranger-ness', her essential 'otherness', becomes the prototype for Israel's experience to be echoed through the ages, and therefore offers a timeless and prophetic voice that speaks into the question of how we see, and what it is to see at all - how we see the stranger, and how we see ourselves, having ourselves been seen by God.[385]

In a manner familiar, (in the birth of Samson for example, as well as similarities with the formula used in the Gospel of Luke), an angel announces to Hagar that she is pregnant and will give birth to a son who will have a particular destiny. Verse 13 of the text registers a reflexive 'double seeing',

'You are the God who sees - for I have seen Him…who sees me' (Gen. 16:13).

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[385] Tikva Frymer-Kensky maintains that the 'stranger-ness' of Hagar and her two exiles emerging through conflict with Sarah, should not be interpreted as "a conflict between 'us' and 'other', but between 'us' and 'other 'us'". In other words, there is the part of us in exile, whether or not that exile is self-imposed like Hagar, and there is the part of us which is 'established' and secure like Sarah. Both parts carry pain and desire to be seen, and ultimately find a way to 'participate in the ongoing saga of our part of human history'. See Tikva Frymer-Kensky's chapter "Hagar, My Other, My Self", in *Reading the Women of the Bible: A New Interpretation of Their Stories* (New York: Schocken Books, 2002), 236-237. See also Elizabeth Kraft, *Women, Novelists and the Ethics of Desire (1684-1814) - In the Voice of our Biblical Mothers* (New York: Rutledge, 2016)

For Hagar, alone and pregnant in the wilderness, a concubine, a slave, a refugee and a stranger, her seeing of God is implicit in the fact that she has indeed been seen first.[386]

IV.4   GAZING THROUGH WINDOWS: *Song of Songs 2:9* and *Genesis 6:16*

"I am no prophet, philosopher or theologian. I am simply a man who has seen something and who goes to the window and points to what he sees"

Martin Buber

Developing this theme of 'seeing' in the pursuit of sacred reconciliation, we can turn to Rashi, the great French medieval Torah commentator. Rashi skilfully interweaves a verse from the Song of Songs with a particular narrative from the life of Moses, found in Exodus chapter 3:7. For Rashi, Drawing these two verses together hints at how God 'sees'.[387] Taking the well-known encounter between Moses and the God-Who-Is at the burning bush in Exodus 3 as the starting point, Rashi travels

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[386] There are two intriguing wilderness scenes which occur in the Hagar narrative. The first is as described above, the second is after Ishamel is born. The rabbis suggest that he is about fourteen at this stage, and a close reading of the Hebrew text reveals Sarah sends Hagar away because she heard Ishmael *laughing*, the very meaning of Isaac's name. In this text most fascinatingly, Ishmael screams but no sound is heard, only Hagar's voice is heard. Yet God responds to the voice of Ishmael through the voice of his mother. This raises and interesting question, what does it mean to utter a silent scream? What are those sounds which get lodged in our throats which have no form? And what does it mean for our 'silent screams' to be heard? See Dov Peretz Elkins and Arthur Green, eds., *Rosh Hashanah Readings: Inspiration, Information and Contemplation* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2006) 109

[387] Paul Ricoeur uses the scene from Exodus 3:14, where God and Moses converse and the reality of God's Name is expressed, to speak of the relationship between philosophy and religion. He yokes together the contrasting language of philosophy (thinking) with the biblical language of what it means 'to know', and states 'the narrative context of the vocation story is torn by a kind of speculative irruption'. See Paul Ricoeur, *Critique and Conviction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 149. See also Geraldine Smyth, "Alive and Signalling: Theology as Calling", in *Theology in the Making: Biography, Contexts, Methods,* Gesa E. Thiessen and Declan Marmion, eds., (Dublin: Veritas, 2005) 144-158

seamlessly to the Song of Songs, the poetic narrative which melodically describes an intimate and impassioned relationship between two lovers.

"…there He stands behind our wall,

gazing through the window…

peering through the lattice…"

This verse suggests, in Rashi's reading, that God is the lover who is gazing as only a lover could at Israel His beloved, through a window from behind a garden wall.[388] John Berger writes of the effect of being seen, that 'the eye of the other combines with our own eye…(and) we are part of the visible world'.[389] Rashi subtly and gracefully connects this 'seeing and being seen' to the cry that calls out from Exodus 3:7, the signifying words that open the burning bush moment,

'I have indeed seen the affliction of my people'.

The word 'window' from the Song of Songs is of particular significance and offers the third root word which unfolds our model with another dimension of metaphorical potential. In BH 'window' is *chalon* and comes from the root *chalal* חָלַל meaning 'to bore' or 'to pierce'.[390] The first 'window' found in the Torah is the singular window in the Ark constructed by Noah, used specifically to let something out. Intriguingly, the Ark is described in the text as having a *petach*, an 'opening' before the flood (translated most commonly in this instance as 'door'), as well as the 'window' which is mentioned only after the flood.

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[388] Zornberg, *The Particulars of Rapture,* 46

[389] Berger, *Ways of Seeing,* 9

[390] BDB, 319

The 'opening' built in to the Ark's pre-flood structure is surely strange, conjuring illogical images of an intentionally gaping hole in the side of a boat that was intended to withstand the floodwaters of the deep and protect the lives of those within it from being submerged into the watery abyss. This seeming inconsistency possibly offers a suggestion as to why it is commonly translated as 'door'. Nonetheless the fact is that it distinctly is an 'opening' and not a door which can be closed, is suggestive of an eternal dimension in the structure of the Ark. Perhaps the *petach*, the opening in the side of the Ark renders it an opening in and of itself, a place that provides comfort and safety from the violence which swells and rages around it. After all the name Noah, *Noach*, means 'restful comfort'.[391]

The 'window', then, is what is opened after the floodwaters have ceased, to release the ravens and the dove to explore and bring back evidence of new life and growth on the earth. Keeping in mind the idea of an 'opening' which enables a space that is safe for authentic interaction, 'window' in this context is perhaps something which frames a space or an outlet, through which the potential for new life is explored. Taking the metaphor of a reflective lens and expanding it, the Torah can be like a 'window' in the Jewish-Christian relationship, acting as a framed space which offers a particular and unique vantage point between Christians and Jews that has the potential to allow those on one side of the window, to 'see' the other. Martin Buber used the metaphor of the window to describe the simplicity of what he was attempting to articulate through his work on dialogue.

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[391] The word 'ark' in Hebrew is *teivah*, תֵּבָה, meaning 'box' or 'chest', and is exactly the same word that is translated as the 'basket' in which Moses is placed as a baby on the River Nile. These two narratives are the only passages in the Torah which make use of this particular word. See BDB, 1061

"I am no prophet, philosopher or theologian. I am simply a man who has seen

something and who goes to the window and points to what he sees."[392]

A window here acts as vantage point through which the seeker is able to see what lies

bend the window and point to that which is seen, through language.

IV.4.1 RECOGNITION: *Exodus 3:7*

"For double the vision my eyes do see, And a double vision is always with me: With

my inward eye 'tis an old man grey; With my outward a thistle across my way.'"[393]

<div align="right">William Blake</div>

Returning to the opening words at the burning bush encounter in Exodus 3,

'I have indeed seen the affliction of my people'.

What has been seen? The suffering of the beloved who has a sense of belonging,

(indicated by the personal description of 'my' people, whether this 'belonging is

known or unknown), but more specifically and more importantly for Israel's

collective and sacred memory, the beloved herself has been seen. Later midrashic

literature plays on the importance of this point, emphasising the doubling of the

Hebrew verb to see, as it literally reads 'I have seen, seen', and adds a dramatic, heavy

emphasis that complicates the meaning of God's gaze. God has not just seen in this

instance, God has really, really seen, in a way perhaps that only God can. According

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[392] See Kenneth Paul Kramer, with Mechthild Gawlick, *Matin Buber's I and Thou: Practicing Living Dialogue* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2003)

[393] See Northrop Frye, *The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in Religion* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991)

to the midrash God is saying 'I see 'twice' - I see what no human can see'.[394] Perhaps this is the original 'double vision'.

What is the reflex, the response of being seen? Remembering the effect on Hagar, the suggestion according to Rashi is that the effect of the Lover's eyes on the Beloved breaks the trance in which the Beloved has been held captive.[395] Conscious of being seen (by God), movement becomes again possible, and movement is both an essential ingredient for life to flourish and a sign of life itself. Movement can be as simple as breathing - inhaling and exhaling is movement. Movement is generally away from or toward something - toward restoration, toward reconnection and reconciliation. Toward leaving/moving away from the Narrow Place. Toward connecting beyond the wall. The potential here is limitless and exponential. Seeing and being seen and moving as reflexive verbs here are connected within the internal dialectic of the text.

At this point in the development of the model, which seeks to present the possibilities of sacred reconciliation between Christians and Jews through sacred text, we can say that the Torah can be approached as a metaphorical key which opens or makes available an 'opening' in which connection is cultivated; a lens through which that relationship can be viewed in either the reflective sense of a 'mirror', or the focused and framed sense that a 'window' can suggest. In both cases of a 'mirror' and 'window' there is an authenticity in what is being seen as

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[394] Zornberg, *The Particulars of Rapture,* 46

[395] Ibid., 47

relationship and connection form the corrective lenses that adjust the sight of the seeker appropriately, in a way that facilitates life.

IV.4.2   APPEARANCES: *Genesis 3: 6-7 and Exodus 3:1-10*

Staying with this exchange at the burning bush and the reflexive question of what it means to see, let us further this discussion in relation to the way in which Moses sees. Throughout this formative encounter between God and Moses in Exodus 3, the reader is presented with the way God sees, as an emphatic 'double seeing' described above, and the way Moses sees in response, in this instance. God sees twice, or 'doubly' in the text, Moses sees in or with *mareh* מַרְאֶה.

The BH word *mareh* מַרְאֶה shares the same root word as 'mirror' discussed above, stemming from the verb *ra'ah* 'to see'. In this particular conjugation it has the sense of 'an appearance', or a 'sight' or visible phenomenon.[396] It is something that is seen, but requires a special type of seeing in order to see it, and, critically, initiates a response to what is seen.

What does this mean, a type of 'seeing' that requires or initiates a response from the one who sees? Textually, we first meet this particular type of seeing, *mareh*, in the Garden of Eden, when the trees that are *tov* (fruitful and good, with the potential for life) are described as being 'pleasing to the sight (*mareh*), and good (*tov*) for food'. Later in the Garden narrative Eve sees the Trees in the middle of the Garden, which were described specifically as not 'good for food', and renders them nonetheless as

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[396] BDB, 906-909

'pleasing to the sight'. Her response is to consume what she sees (or thinks she sees), devouring that which was not intended for consumption. A devouring response of consumption to that which appears as desirable ensues, registering a timeless and universal truth repeated surely in every age.

Given that Moses is described in the text as also seeing *mareh*, what is his response? Having never experienced slavery unlike the rest of the Israelites, he has sought refuge from the wrath of Egypt in the wilderness, the *midbar*, where he has been a shepherd for the past forty years. In the arid terrain of the Arabian Peninsula a thorny bush catching fire was not an overly unusual spectacle. So what was it that Moses saw, that caused him to 'turn aside' and forever change his, and his people's, destiny? The bush that is burning is not being consumed or devoured by the flames, and a Voice reverberates from the midst of the fire, letting Moses know that he and his people, are indeed 'seen'. Moses' response to this is one of humility - he has turned aside intentionally to listen and to hear, not to consume or devour. Instead, transformation through an intimate encounter with Eternity and the actualisation of hope dawn on the horizon of possibilities.

V. CONCLUSION

This model suggests that the Torah, when approached as a sacred and foundational meeting point, has the latent capacity to open up the Jewish-Christian relationship in specific ways. Some of these ways include acting as a metaphorical key which unlocks certain dimensions within the relationship, and a lens that can be both a (an ancient) window through which to view that very relationship, and a (molten) mirror which

reflects aspects of that relationship. The lens metaphor also suggests a way of seeing the Other that invites a response. Through using the Torah as a 'lens' to see within the Jewish-Christian relationship, the inner eye that beholds the Other is allowed to be refocused. From this vantage point, both groups are then in a position to hear that Other, to hear that cry from the deep and move toward that Other, in the sacred space that has been made available.

Three root words which give form and shape to this model have led us through a set of interwoven biblical narratives - *patach,* 'to open' which led us to 'opening' and 'key', and to the space that potentially becomes available when we use that key; *ra'ah,* 'to see' which led us to a 'molten mirror' and to the complex question of what it means to see and be seen and the reflexive exchange therein. This root word also led us to *mareh*, seeing an appearance of something which can only be seen in a certain way and requires a response, and therefore asks us a question - will we respond with a devouring consumption, or a humility that enables us to hear? And finally *chalal,* meaning 'to pierce' which led us to the windows both in the Ark and in the garden wall of the Song of Songs through which the lover gazes at the beloved, and the beloved who knows she is seen, is set free. Windows look outward and open up and frame a particular vantage point through which it is possible to look beyond what is in front of you, mirrors reflect images that inform and refract echoes of an eternal identity otherwise perhaps unseen.

Within Israel's religious memory we have established the purposes of the Torah as - *teaching*, which provides direction and instruction and sparks healthy relationship with God and with one another; a *covenantal* document, which roots the text in relationship

and testifies to the legal aspects of that relationship; and a *ketubah*, a sacred marriage bond in which both parties are obligated to treasure the other.[397] This chapter has defined and described the Torah in theological terms as the foundational document of Israel's sacred and mythic history, and the foundational document for the later prophets and the psalmists to whom Christians look for spiritual encouragement and guidance. It is the ultimate source of authority and inspiration for the sages, the poets, the talmudists and, I would strongly argue, for the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth and for the responsa of Saul of Tarsus in his letters to the early Christian communities. It is the primary source of Jewish consciousness out of which Christianity originally sprang, and at the very least as shared sacred literature, can offer a distinct and ancient voice that can perhaps open perspectives afresh on aspects of the Christian-Jewish relationship that have been, at times, malignant sources of strain and tension. Torah tells us of our sacred origins, reminds us of how to love the stranger, teaches us how to see, asks us to do and to hear, grounds us in an awareness of our sacred Other and of our deepest selves and opens us to the realm of infinite possibility in an encounter with each other and with the Divine. As formatively declared by the *Synod of the Evangelical Church in Rhineland,*

"We confess, thankfully…the Scriptures to be the common foundation for the faith

and work of Jews and Christians".[398]

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[397] Frank Crüsemann highlights that the legal dimension of the Torah provides an 'indispensable source' through which to view Israel's social history. In addition, the laws within the Torah are in and of themselves a fundamental part of that history, attesting to a societal reality which is 'complex and multi-faceted'. Crüsemann, *The Torah,* 13

[398] "Toward a Renovation of the Relationship of Christians and Jews", (1980), *The Synod of the Evangelical Church in Rhineland (FRG),* in *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People,* 92-93

CHAPTER FOUR

LANGUAGES OF RUPTURE AND RECONNECTION:

THE TORAH AS A KEY TO NAVIGATING

SUPERSESSIONISM

I. INTRODUCTION

"All resistance is a rupture with what is. And every rupture begins, for those engaged

in it, through

a rupture with oneself."

Alain Badiou

The nature of the relationship between Israel and the church, as a dimension of the broader relationship between Jews and Christians, is a live issue with historical, theological, doctrinal, social and political implications. Defining this relationship is a concern we actually see arising in both the NT and early rabbinic texts, highlighting that from the earliest days lines of demarcation were being formulated within the context of identity formation, or at the very least being attempted.[399] However, as Marc Saperstein notes, how this relationship came to be defined was influenced by a

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[399] R. A. Markus, "The Problem of Self-Definition: From Sect to Church", pp 1-5, in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition: Vol 1, The Shaping of Christianity in the Second and Third Centuries* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1980). See also Daniel Boyarin, *Borderlines*; and Paula Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ,* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000)

host of moving factors, and each critical juncture in this journey irrevocably impacted the historical course of Jewish-Christian encounters.[400] What is termed as 'supersessionism', that is the theological persuasion of the effective replacement of Israel with a new 'people of God', has in some form or another been a continual force in the relationship between Christians and Jews. In one sense then it could be described as an 'old' theological as well as relational issue.[401]

Recent decades, however, particularly since Vatican II and the traumatic aftermath of the reality of the Shoah, have witnessed a profound re-examination of supersessionist assumptions, making this thorny issue in many ways more visible and more relevant than ever within the context of Christian-Jewish relations.[402] Spurred on and inspired by Vatican II's historic profession, many ecumenical and denominational Protestant groups have formally rejected supersessionism as a doctrinal or hermeneutical mode. For example, in 1987, the United Church of Christ expressly declared that,

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[400] Marc Saperstein, *Moments of Crisis in Jewish-Christian Relations* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1989), 1-2

[401] For example, the *Epistle of Barnabas,* a first-century Greek epistle, emphasises that the covenant and the Scriptures are no longer the inheritance of the Jewish people, but belong to the Christians, and Christians ought not 'heap up' their sins through saying 'that the covenant is both theirs and ours'. This highlights the replacement and supersessionist persuasions which featured and began to emerge strongly in the patristic period, and is exemplified clearly in the *Adversus Iudaeos* literature. See *Epistle of Barnabas* 4:6-8, http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/barnabas-lightfoot.html, and Geza Vermes, *Christian Beginnings: From Nazareth to Nicea*, 134-155. See also, Edward Kessler, *Bound By the Bible: Jews, Christians and the Sacrifice of Isaac*, 19. Franklin Littell writes of the 'displacement myth' as one which 'already rings with a genocidal note'. See Franklin H. Littell, *The Crucifixion of the Jews: The Failure of Christians to Understand the Jewish Experience,* 2

[402] It is important to note that article four in the *NA* document as part of the Second Vatican Council, did not expressly condemn supersessionism as a theological model, in that it states that the Church is 'the new people of God', drawing on traditional Christian understandings which emerge from inside a replacement theology mentality. Nonetheless, *NA* maintains that 'Jews remain most dear' to God, emphasised the importance of dialogue between the two faiths, and affirmed God's ongoing covenant with the people of Israel as valid. See Gilbert Rosenthal's Introduction to *A Jubilee for All Time: The Copernican Revolution in Jewish-Christian Relations*, xiii-xv

"Judaism is not superseded by Christianity…(and) Christianity is not to be understood as the successor religion to Judaism; God's covenant with the Jewish people has not been abrogated".[403]

The implications of renouncing supersessionism as a model and revoking it as a way of relating to Jews and Judaism, are manifold. Abandoning supersessionism as a mode of connection between Christians and Jews and rejecting it as a theological and hermeneutical tool not only directly impacts the relationship between Christians and Jews at an institutional level, as well as positively influencing relations at a grass-roots level, it also fundamentally and inevitably shifts internal Christian theological and dialogical thought in a new direction. Rather than viewing Jews and Judaism through a supersessionist lens, a new way of seeing is enabled which can mutually enrich our faith communities. In part, this involves Christians learning to 're-see' Judaism as a living faith guided by sacred text. This thesis suggests that it is in this sacred text we

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[403] In the same year, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) adopted a statement entitled, *A Theological Understanding of the Relationship between Christians and Jews*". Part of the document affirmed that "Christians have not replaced Jews", maintaining that Jews are already "in a covenant relationship with God". One challenge with this document, however, is that while emphasising the ongoing validity of Judaism and highlighting that Christians and Jews together are 'partners in waiting', it simultaneously emphasises the Christian witness to both Jew sand Gentile of Christ's atoning work. See, *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People: Statements by the World Council of Churches and its member churches* (1988), 105. Marc Saperstein identifies this as a tension which the document highlights, but fails to resolve. See Saperstein, *Moments of Crisis* (1989), 61-62, 80. However, Christian theologian Isaac C. Rottenberg highlights an important question in this regard, asking "can we proclaim a triumphant Gospel, without, in the process producing a triumphalist church?" See Isaac C. Rottenberg, *Christian-Jewish Dialogue: Exploring our Commonalities and our Differences* (Atlanta: Hebraic Heritage Press, 2005), 103, 117. Marvin Wilson queries if the two, the proclamation of the Good News, and Christian triumphalism which is so deeply ingrained in supersessionism, must always go together or if there is another way. Jewish theologian Peter Ochs offers 'postliberal Christianity' as a possible response to this question, claiming, "there is a way for Christians to rededicate themselves to the gospel message…without classical Christian supersessionism." See, Marvin R. Wilson, *Exploring our Hebraic Heritage: A Christian Theology of Roots and Renewal* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2014), 248, and Peter Ochs, *Another Reformation: Postliberal Christianity and the Jews,* 1.

can find an 'opening', a sacred space in which we can learn to connect to our Deepest Other in an authentic and reconciliatory way.

Picking up some of the threads from chapter two, (such as the emergence of Christian supersessionism within the context of early identity formation and the partings of the ways between Jews and Christians), and building on the model set out in chapter three, this chapter will more deeply probe certain theological and historical aspects of supersessionism. For example, investigating some of the origins of supersessionism, and asking if the NT texts themselves are actual sources of supersessionism, or if they were read and interpreted this way to satisfy a growing desire to establish Christian 'orthodox' identity and vilify the Jewish other who did not share that identity (and was in the process of reshaping its own identity both in opposition to the emerging Christian movement, and in the wake of the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE).[404]

Furthermore, this chapter will specifically pay close attention to certain dynamics which are present in the relationship between *language* and *seeing,* focusing on how words can affect and influence what is seen or perceived. The critical purpose of this is to effectively demonstrate that language which offers only negative associations with the Torah, and confines the Torah within a binary category of 'law in contradistinction to grace', a sentiment familiar in Christian circles, immediately affects not only how the Torah is then seen, read and interpreted, but crucially how

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[404] See Shaye J. D Cohen, "In Between: Jewish-Christians and the Curse of the Heretics", in *Partings: How Judaism and Christianity Became Two,* 207-237

the people most intimately connected to the Torah are in turn, seen and interpreted.[405]

Examining this dynamic between language and seeing propels this chapter into a discussion of the "language game" (in Ludwig Wittgenstein's terminology), exploring the relationship between Christians and Jews through this metaphor. Do both faiths speak different dialects of the same 'language', or are they in fact different 'languages' all together? Engaging the idea of the 'language game' allows us to lend this metaphor to the phenomenon of Christian supersessionism, enabling us to think of it in and of itself as an actual language. Examining the ruptured social, political, cultural and religious circumstances in which the language of supersessionism first emerged and developed, enables us to question if it is a 'language of rupture' itself, a vocabulary of replacement and superiority which surfaced in a post-Destruction context of fracture and trauma. Ruminating on the concept of a 'language of rupture' and building on the theory that the Torah, as sacred text, can be a vital key in Jewish-Christian reconciliation, this chapter will attempt to demonstrate that the Torah can be a possible 'language of reconnection' between Jews and Christians (and indeed between Christians and their early Jewish past).

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[405] For an example on how the use of 'hostile language' can affect neuro-chemicals in the brain, see Therese J. Borchard, https://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2013/11/30/words-can-change-your-brain/. Retrieved April 4 2017.

II. FRACTURED LANGUAGE AND FRACTURED LENSES

Language and thought are deeply connected in complex ways.[406] Theologian George Lindbeck writes in *The Nature of Doctrine,*

"(Thus) while a religion's truth claims are often of the utmost importance to it (as in the case of Christianity), it is nevertheless, the *conceptual vocabulary* and the syntax or inner logic which determine the kinds of truth claims a religion can make."[407]

What we say and the words we choose affect our perceptions of the other and how we see and respond to that other. In the context of the relationship between Christians and Jews and the language which has historically characterised that relationship, perceptions and prejudice have played a strong role in developing and sustaining mutual hostility and suspicion. Of course, words and language are but one of many factors which influence our perceptions and how we see the other, but they play a crucial role. Hans Georg Gadamer highlights that prejudices and interests, beliefs and ideas, whether conscious or unconscious 'always already' open us to certain truths and close us up to others.[408] The language we choose, then, when consciously engaging with an other, can be a reflection of our own 'complex interplay' of forgetting and remembering who we are as we interact with this other.

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[406] Hans Georg Gadamer writes in *Truth and Method*, 'Language and thinking about things are so bound together, that it is an abstraction to conceive of the system of truths, as a pre-given system of possibilities of being for which the signifying subject selects corresponding signs….So much is the logos bound up with language'. See Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* 434-435

[407] George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984), 35

[408] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, xxx-xxxiii

In other words, the language which surfaces in communication with an other is reflective of much more than what is visibly being exchanged.[409]

When the Christian 'conceptual vocabulary', to borrow Lindbeck's phrasing, used to relate to the Torah relies on reductionist labels such as 'law' or 'legalism' or adjectives such as 'old' and 'antiquated', and is peppered with verbs such as 'should, must or obligated to' and 'obey' or 'transgress', the perceptions of Torah predictably will be grounded in clinical, legal imagery. The mental reverberations stimulated will be connected to images of a court room and a judge handing down a sentence which has been determined by the 'good' or 'bad' behaviour. It will be seen as an antiquated law code which demands rote obedience and measures that obedience on a set of unbalanced scales which are always tipped toward death, since law does not bring life. And if what is assumed to be the natural antonym to that law, 'grace', is accompanied by adverbs such as 'free' and 'life-giving', or adjectives such 'new' and 'everlasting' or 'unearned favour', a binary theological architecture becomes the scaffolding on which much theological perception is formed, and a hermeneutic of rupture is established.[410] Torah is confused with legalism and labeled as 'law' , and as a result

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[409] Gadamer maintains that 'only by forgetting, does the mind have the have the possibility of total renewal, the capacity to see everything with fresh eyes, so that what is long familiar fuses with the new into a many levels unity'. This will be important for when we encounter the Joseph narrative and the complexities of trauma and memory st the end of this chapter. See *Truth and Method*, 15. See also, Avivah Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep,* ix-x

[410] This term 'hermeneutic of rupture' is used with caution. The terms 'hermeneutic of discontinuity' or 'hermeneutic of rupture' are sometimes used in reference to the Second Vatican Council. See For the purposes of this thesis, it is used in reference to an interpretive textual approach which dislocates law from narrative, and undergirds the hermeneutical process that certain biblical texts are automatically and fundamentally antagonistic to other texts. By this I specifically mean that the Torah is seen as automatically and fundamentally in contradistinction to the NT in certain streams of theological and doctrinal thought. We will examine more fully the pitfalls and implications of dislocating law from narrative in relation to Robert Cover's important *Nomos and Narrative* essay in chapters five and six.

firmly dislocated from the narratives which ground that law, and from grace.[411] There is a direct correlation between the splintering of the Torah as a whole from the concept of grace, and the deep-seated anti-Jewish attitudes which have surfed the historical tides of Christendom, and it is this angle of the fracture between Christians and Jews I wish to magnify here.[412]

The impression that dualistic language of 'old versus new' fosters is inherently supersessionist in nature. Displacement and replacement become the language of currency when one is perceived as unworthy, moribund or simply past their sell-by date. The hermeneutic of 'cutting' portions of Scripture and setting them in opposition to one another affects the overall interpretation of that Scripture, and also the interpretation of the Covenants and People which are to be found in that Scripture. It furthermore highlights two underlying assumptions. Firstly, it assumes that the entirety of biblical literature in its canonised form is one homogenous text (rather than a 'library' of texts that belong to the stream of Israelite sacred history). Secondly, it assumes that certain parts (of this homogeneous text) are ironically and fundamentally opposed and in contradistinction to other parts. Binary, supersessionist logic becomes the natural habitus as the newer, more legitimate parts of Scripture supplant the other, now redundant parts. These assumptions create an

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[411] It is important to emphasise at this point, as was highlighted in the Introduction and in chapter one, that the Jewish concept of Torah as *halakha,* that is Jewish law, and the Christian theological concept of the Torah as legalism, are radically different. This will be clarified further in chapter six.

[412] By 'splintering of the Torah as a whole from grace', I mean the common suggestion that the Torah is synonymous with 'the Law', and that because of these clinical and legal associations, the Torah is often presumed to be at odds with grace. Therefore I am suggesting it is a fracturing or a splintering , a fundamental disjoining between the Torah and grace which is unnecessary and somewhat of an imposition. In this vein Clark Williamson notes that classical Protestant Christian commentary has often paid insufficient attention to the rabbinic understanding of *chesed* ('loving-kindness' in Hebrew, explored in more detail in chapter six of this thesis), through claiming that the dispensation of 'grace' came after the dispensation of 'law'. See Clark Williamson, *A Guest in the House of Israel,* 5, 128

interpretive environment which is a little like looking though a lens that is fractured - the picture is distorted and out of focus. Therefore, this language of rupture directly feeds into replacement theology.

These 'fractured lenses' have a profound effect not only on Christian interpretations of Scripture, Covenant and People, but also have an internal effect on Christian identity in and of itself.[413] A 'superiority complex' becomes ironically suffused into grace. Law becomes 'Jewish' and grace becomes 'Christian' by association. Jesus, the Jew from Nazareth, becomes a blue-eyed, long-haired preacher who was vaguely, and possibly accidentally, Jewish but that fact remains of little real consequence, except to point out that he opposed the Jewish authorities of his day, and was eventually killed by them. His Jewishness is incidental and is somewhat obsolete after his resurrection, even though the ideas of resurrection and a Messiah are entirely Jewish concepts.[414] Torah becomes 'old' and Gospel becomes 'new', the Jew becomes forsaken and destined to wander in exile from the Promised Land and the Christian becomes the new and improved version of Israel with a focus on a heavenly rather than earthly

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[413] Abraham J. Heschel, *The Insecurity of Freedom: Essays on Human Existence,* 167

[414] In this regard, Didier Polleyfete writes, "The position of sharp discontinuity almost seems to say that Jesus was the Christ *in spite* of the fact he was a Jew rather than *because* he was a Jew. Theologians with such a Christological view are not interested in Jewish-Christian dialogue. The Jews do not have a distinctive position among non-Christians in the universal mission of the Church. The contemporary existence of the Jewish people does not imply specific questions for their own theological stance." See Didier Polleyfete, *Christology after Auschwitz: a Catholic Perspective.* Polleyfeyt further quotes Pope John Paul II, who "criticized Christologies which regard the fact that Jesus was a Jew and that his milieu was the Jewish world as mere cultural accidents, for which one could substitute another religious tradition from which the Lord"s person could be separated without losing its identity", as "not only (ignoring) the meaning of salvation history, but more radically [challenging] the very truth of the Incarnation". See http://www.jcrelations.net/Christology+after+Auschwitz%3A+A+Catholic+Perspective. 2216.0.html?L=3, retrieved December 8 2018

Jerusalem.[415] Testaments become segregated with tones of one being more important than the other, Covenants are divided with one superseding the other and People become displaced with one replacing the other. Jewish theologian Peter W. Ochs, Professor of Modern Judaic Studies at the University of Virginia, in his work on Postliberal Christianity in the context of Jewish-Christian relations, (which in turn draws on the work of George Lindbeck), concludes that both liberal and anti-liberal theologies are the strongest promoters of supersessionist persuasions. In part, this is because they are heavily reliant on binary thinking and 'exclusive contrasts' in order to communicate the validity of their faith.[416]

In Didier Polleyfeyt's important essay *Christology after Auschwitz*, he highlights some of the direct implications of 'old versus new' thinking as it has been historically expressed through Christian exegesis, liturgy and catechesis.[417] He categorises terms such as 'temporary and definitive', 'shadow and reality' as being rooted in supersessionism, and maintains,

"the ultimate consequence of these supersessionist expressions is that, while Israel

was the beloved of God at one time, after she missed her invitation, she lost her

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[415] Marc Saperstein, in his chapter on 'Jews and Christians in Antiquity', quotes Robert L. Wilken's work on shifting Christian attitudes to the Holy Land, with a particular focus on the fourth century CE. See Marc Saperstein, *Moments of Crisis,* 4, 66

[416] Walter Brueggemann, in his review of Peter Ochs work on this subject, classifies this binary thinking, while acknowledging its Enlightenment roots, as 'a footnote to Marcion'. See https://www.christiancentury.org/reviews/2011-09/another-reformation-peter-ochs?reload=1543151448954, retrieved December 9 2018. See also Peter Ochs, *Another Reformation: Postliberal Christianity and the Jews,* 8-17

[417] Didier Polleyfeyt, *Christlogy after Auschwitz: A Catholic Perspective.* See http://www.jcrelations.net/Christology+after+Auschwitz%3A+A+Catholic+Perspective.2216.0.html?L=3. Retrieved December 9 2019

election, and thus her right to existence – she is now a cursed nation or, at best,

anachronistic."[418]

II.1   LIBERATION THEOLOGY AND THE IMPACT OF WORDS

In *Ways of Seeing,* the aforementioned art critic and poet John Berger highlights the complex and intimate relationship between how we see and the words we use. To do this, he draws on the work of Rene Margritte, whose surrealist paintings often illustrated the influence of words on the perception of artistic images. Magritte exemplified through his art the 'always-present gap' which exists between words and seeing.[419] To demonstrate how the use of words can colour our impressions of what we see, or what we think we see, Berger presents his readers with an image of Vincent Van Gogh's famous *Wheatfield with Crows,* painted in 1890. He invites his readers to study the painting and respond to it, with the caption simply being the title of the painting. And then he presents the painting a second time, this time with a different caption to the first. The second caption reads, "this is last picture that Van Gogh painted, just before he killed himself". Suddenly for the observer the painting is transformed from a scene in a wheat field presenting a plethora of different possibilities, to a last depiction by a suicidal man. Somehow, as Berger observes, the words have irrevocably influenced how we interpret and respond the picture. There is a melancholy detected not through the image itself, but the (possible) meanings underlying the image which have been expressed through the words that accompany

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[418]   Ibid., http://www.jcrelations.net/Christology+after+Auschwitz%3A+A+Catholic+Perspective. 2216.0.html?L=3. Retrieved December 9 2019

[419] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 2008), 7-9

the image. The image perceived in the painting now 'illustrates the sentence'.[420] In Jewish-Christian dialogue, the terminology used has the immense potential to foster negative or positive associations of the other, depending on which words are chosen.

In *How Literature Plays with the Brain; the Neuroscience of Reading and Art*, neurologist Paul B. Armstrong demonstrates this point further. He explains how our neural pathways are stimulated by certain word association patterns. Memories are triggered as expectation forms part of our interpretation of the experience as it unfolds.[421] These memories are contained within our neural pathways and are 'tapped' when familiar patterns or connections are recognised by the brain.[422] In the same way that neural pathways are triggered when we detect a certain smell or hear a familiar song and are suddenly immersed in a memory, certain language and vocabulary stimulates memories and associations and emotions. Marcel Proust, for example, in *Remembrance of Things Past,* recalls the moment when upon tasting a crumb of madeleine dipped in

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[420] Ibid., 28

[421] Expectation and anticipation are important elements in interpretation. See Paul B. Armstrong, *How Literature Plays with the Brain; the Neuroscience of Reading and Art*, (Baltimore: Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 2014), 54-56.

[422] 'Neuroplascticity' is the aspect of the brain which allows it to constantly reorganise itself and form new connections, continually throughout our lives. Our neural pathways develop associations which are brought to the surface when hear a certain sound, use certain words, or detect a certain smell. See Maryanne Wolf, *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of reading and the Brain* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008)

tea he was transported to a world as real "as the scenery of a theatre" as the memory

of his aunt, in "the old grey house upon the street" began to surface.[423]

These literary and scientific examples highlight how words can strongly influence

how we perceive our surroundings.[424] When we use alternative words, different

perceptions and associations are aroused. Applying this to the issue of Christian

supersessionist language within the context of historical Jewish-Christian relations, it

is logical to conclude that using adverse or unfavourable words and terminology to

describe Jews and Jewish texts has a negative and mutually antagonistic effect.

John Pawlikowski draws attention to the fact that Christian historical and theological

probes into the religious and social context of the Second Temple Period, have a

tendency to assume that the Judaism into which Jesus was born was dominated by

legalism and 'sterility'.[425] Proponents of these views include prominent liberation

theologians, such as Jon Sobrino, who depicts the first-century Judaism in which

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[423] "And once I had recognised the taste of the crumb of madeleine soaked in her decoction of lime-flowers which my aunt used to give me (although I did not yet know and must long postpone the discovery of why this memory made me so happy) immediately the old grey house upon the street, where her room was, rose up like the scenery of a theatre to attach itself to the little pavilion, opening on to the garden,'as a theatre…when suddenly the memory revealed itself". See Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C.K Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (New York: First Vintage International Edition, 1989), 47-48

[424] Neurologist Lera Boroditsky writes, 'the languages we speak affect our perceptions of the world'. See https://www.edge.org/conversation/lera_boroditsky-how-does-our-language-shape-the-way-we-think . Retrieved February 2017.

[425] John T. Pawlikowski, *Christ in the Light of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 76-77

Jesus was immersed as deficient and incompetent at best.[426] He relies on a binary understanding of the teachings of Jesus and his followers on the one hand, and the teachings of the Pharisees on the other.[427] Pawlikowski maintains that Sobrino's work bears similarities to that of systematic theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg, insofar as both communicate the unchallenged assumption that "the freedom that Jesus provides in the knowledge of God and in action for justice, stands in direct opposition to the Torah".[428]

These Christian theologies which are constructed around dismissive and jaundiced views of Jews and Judaism highlight the complex interplay of words and perceptions in the formation of those theologies. When the all-encompassing richness of Torah is sentenced to the narrow category of legalism and grouped under the heading of a law which demands obedience in exchange for life, and then is separated from and contrasted to a freely available life-giving grace; or when 'Pharisees' become

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[426] Clark Williamson acknowledges the significance of the liberation theology movement, owing in part to its origins in a 'lived experience' of suffering and oppression, and of its endeavour in those contexts to express hope. Nonetheless, Williamson draws attention to some of the pitfalls of liberation theology in relation to Jewish-Christian dialogue, focusing on Jon Sobrino's 'unwitting' repetition of classical Christian anti-Jewish sentiments. See Clark M. Williamson, "Christ Against the Jews: A Review of Jon Sobrino's Christology", in *Christianity and Judaism: the Deepening Dialogue,* ed., Richard W. Rousseau, (Scranton, PA: Ridge Row Press, 1983), 145-153

[427] See Pawlikowski, *Christ in the Light of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue,* 68-72. See also Jon Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1978, and Dan Cohn-Sherbock, *On Earth as it is in Heaven: Jews, Christians and Liberation Theology,* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987)

[428] Wolfhart Pannenberg, in his examination of the resurrection and its relationship to first-century Jewish law, maintains that Jesus' death had the effect of nullifying the authority of the Torah. Eugene Borowitz offers sharp criticism of Pannenberg's failure, as a German theologian, to convey any theological sensitivity toward Jews and Judaism in the expression of his Christology. Borowitz further urges Christians who draw inspiration from Pannenberg's work, to do so with caution and intentionally dissociate themselves from 'his early explicit christological anti-Semitism'. See Eugene Borowtiz, "Anti-Semitism and the Christologies of Barth, Berkouwer and Pannenberg", in *Christianity and Judaism: the Deepening Dialogue,* 139-144. See also Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus: God and Man* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), 255; and Pawlikowski, *Christ in the Light of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue,* 37-39, 70.

synonymous with 'hypocrites' and Jews are de facto 'Pharisees', inherited memories of the suspicion, triumphalism and hostility which have historically marred Jewish-Christian relationship are drawn upon and further reinforced through language. Marcel Proust identifies the surfacing of triggered memories as 'involuntary'.[429] In the context of the Jewish-Christian relationship, these 'involuntary memories' as they emerge through the use of certain language, immediately and negatively influence the Christian perception of the Jewish People who cling so dearly to this 'law'.[430] As Pawlikowski concludes, any theology or Christology which relies on the devaluation of Judaism for its viability and success, is wholly unacceptable. The devastating impact of such theologies is to 'falsely set Christianity against Judaism in areas where they in reality share a genuine commonality…'[431]

II.2   *SPRACHSPIEL:* LANGUAGE GAMES

In his classic text *Philosophical Investigations,* published posthumously in 1953, Ludwig Wittgenstein developed the theory of the 'language game', (*sprachspiel* in German).[432] He conceived of language as analogous to a 'game', in which the speakers of the language are the 'players' of a game. As with any game, there are certain rules to be followed and moves to be made. The rules differ from language to language. Hence

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[429] Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past,* 47-48

[430] The reason this is problematic, is that it is a distortion of Torah itself. Legalism, in the Christian understanding of the word, is inherently opposed to grace. This is not being disputed. But that Torah and the Christian interpretation of legalism are *the same thing* is a gross distortion of the nature and function of the Torah in Jewish covenantal life.

[431] Pawlikowski, *Christ in the Light of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue,* 71

[432] See *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Philosophy and Language,* Morris Lazerowitz and Alice Ambrose, eds., (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), 27, 233-234. See also, *Ray Monk, Ludwig Wittgenstein; The Duty of a Genius.* (New York: Penguin, 1990)

misunderstandings arise when we don't understand the rules of someone else's game.[433] Language, according to Wittgenstein, holds different meaning in different contexts. When certain words that are used to describe a specific thing, (Wittgenstein used the example of a football game), are used in a different context to describe something else, they import a different meaning. The player of one game could not legitimately criticise the player of another game if he or she does not know the rules of the other game. And without knowing the rules, the language of the game is misunderstood.[434]

There is no doubt that Christianity and Judaism as distinct religious entities have unique vocabularies that pertain to the particularity and validity of each faith, and this distinctiveness is to be affirmed and honoured. Indeed the purpose for Ludwig Wittgenstein in identifying the language game was not to disparage those who speak a different language or encourage a 'one language' solution, but rather to comprehend why we have misunderstandings at all.[435] So often we are simply speaking a different language to the person with whom we are having a disagreement. We might even be using the same vocabulary, but in essence we are talking about different things and using different 'rules' to measure or account for those things. If we could understand the 'language of the other' in whatever context that might be, their rules of speaking, their 'game' a little better and they us, we

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[433] See Tim Raynor, "Wittgenstein on the Limits of Language - https://philosophyforchange.wordpress.com/2014/03/11/meaning-is-use-wittgenstein-on-the-limits-of-language/. Retrieved February 6 2017.

[434] See Nicholas Xanthos, "Wittgenstein's Language Games" - http://www.signosemio.com/wittgenstein/language-games.asp . Retrieved February 7 2017.

[435] See "Ludwig Wittgenstein", http://www.iep.utm.edu/wittgens/#H6. Retrieved February 7 2017.

might disagree less and agree more, or at least mutually agree to respectfully disagree. For inter-religious dialogue to flourish this is a healthy suggestion - to foster a respect for and understanding of the language of the other, which is founded on a mutual gravitation toward understanding. And in a globalised world where the proximity of the other is increasingly close, the need for learning the language of the other is both critical and pressing. Catherine Cornille reminds us in *The Im-Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue,* that,

"the idea of dialogue between religions has become as familiar as it is perplexing. In a world of close encounters between members of different religions, inter religious dialogue presents itself as an essential feature of coexistence and as a promise for religious growth".[436]

However, learning the language of the other when it comes to Jewish-Christian dialogue, while timely and necessary, is only a starting point, a threshold which potentially leads to something much deeper. This is what is meant by the unlocking of a 'closed door' within the Jewish-Christian relationship, unlocking the door removes a barrier that prevents access to the other. It enables the possibility of entering into a space in which to meet and see an other. An open door signifies such possibility, and to stand on the threshold of that open door places one on the cusp of opportunity. Reconnection and relationship, return, renewal and restoration all become viable potential realities as we move toward our Deepest Other. The Torah offers a paradigm for this movement toward the other in the narrative of Joseph, the

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[436] Catherine Cornille, *The Im-possibility of Interreligious Dialogue* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2008), 1

quintessential Torah text of rupture and reconnection.[437] We will engage with the language the Torah uses to demonstrate this rupture and reconnection, later in this chapter.

The unique dynamics which characterise the Jewish-Christian relationship invite us to question the nature of the 'language game' as it exists within this particular relationship. It is clear that although some vocabulary might overlap between the two faiths (acknowledging of course an internal and contextual diversity also within each faith and not assuming either to be homogeneous entities) and they share Second Temple Jewish origins, their 'language rules' differ. Thus the question arises - are they 'dialects' of a common Second Temple language, or are they two different 'languages' altogether?

II.3 RETHINKING THE LANGUAGE GAME

David Lochhead, in *The Dialogical Imperative: A Christian Reflection on Interfaith Encounter,* highlights the difference between learning the language of another in interfaith encounter, (which is more akin to becoming 'bilingual'), and learning the grammatical rules of another 'dialect' in order to have more meaningful and fruitful dialogue.[438] Christian-Hindu dialogue, for example, exemplifies what it is to learn a new religious 'language' and become bilingual for the sake of inter-religious communication and the development of a respectful, mutual dialogue. For the Christian-Jewish relationship however, it is perhaps closer to learning, or re-learning, the grammatical

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[437] Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep,* x-xvi

[438] David Lochead, *The Dialogical Imperative; A Christian Reflection on Interfaith Encounter* (Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock, 1988), 77

rules of an aboriginal language game.[439] In other words, it is not that Christianity has to become fluent in a foreign tongue in order to understand and commune with her Jewish Other. Rather, as the Jewish-Christian relationship begins to unfold and new dimensions of understanding and reconciliation emerge, the possibility of re-learning the language of her Deepest Other opens up, a language whose roots are embryonic.

Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism are both the descendants of first century Jewish sects and were valid components in a diverse Second Temple Judaism. The language(s) of pre-Destruction Judaism was the lingua franca which saw the birth of what was to become these two distinct faiths with shared roots. Therefore, it is about reconditioning and reconnecting the neural pathways which associate both the Torah and the Jewish people with legalism, through a retrieval of a vocabulary which is not defined by its opposition to the Other, but rather aligns itself with that Other. A dual recovery becomes possible - a recovery of a reconciled relationship between Jews and Christians, and a recovery of a reconciled relationship between Christians and the Torah.

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[439] This is not to suggest that modern rabbinic Judaism speaks the 'original' language and Christianity is a deviant of that original language. Both religious traditions emerged out of the multiple Jewish roots which were flourishing in the Second Temple Period. In this context, Daniel Boyarin describes the dynamic between Jews and Christians, rather than being of a 'parental' nature, closer to 'twins - joined at the hip…Judaism is not the 'mother'. Therefore, in the pursuit of reconciliation can both Christians and Jews find a point of reconnection in the sacred text out of which both of their religious traditions grew. See Daniel Boyarin, *Borderlines*, 5.

III. SUPERSESSIONISM - COVENANT; CONTEMPT; RUPTURE

Abraham Joshua Heschel writes in *The Insecurity of Freedom*, that as Christianity moved into the Greco-Roman world,

> "a continuous process of accommodation to the spirit of that world was set in motion. The result was a conscious or unconscious de-Judaisation of Christianity, affecting the church's way of thinking and its inner life as well as its relationship to the past and present reality of Israel - the father and mother of the very being of Christianity. The Christian message, which in its origins intended to be an affirmation and a culmination of Judaism, became very early diverted into a repudiation and negation of Judaism…the new covenant was not conceived of as a new phase or disclosure…but as a replacement of the ancient one."[440]

Supersessionism has, in different forms, theologically dominated the Christian-Jewish relationship and historically coloured perceptions of the Jewish people and Jewish texts. It leaves little or no 'theological room' for the ongoing survival and continued existence of the Jewish people.[441] It expresses at its core a 'triumphalism' which has been a salient feature of Christian-Jewish interaction for much of the history of this relationship. By 'triumphalism', I mean an inner orientation of superiority, which lends itself fully to the expression of supersessionism. Gilbert Rosenthal writes of Christian triumphalism as reinforcing over and over again the notions that a "New Israel has superseded the Old; God has replaced the Old Testament with the New;

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[440] Heschel, *The Insecurity of Freedom,* 169

[441] Mary C. Boys, *Has God Only One Blessing? Judaism as a Source of Christian Self-Understanding,* 7

the chosen people is now the Church…"[442] These concepts are deeply entrenched in the vocabulary which communicate them, and a re-examination, therefore, of the very vocabulary of supersessionism is not only necessary, but unavoidable for those who are invested in Jewish-Christian reconciliation. The horrific realities of the Shoah, the Second Vatican Council and the flourishing of Jewish-Christian dialogue in recent decades has cultivated a deep revision of classical Christian triumphalist attitudes. Henry Siegman maintains that the cosmic shift within Christian perceptions of Jews and Judaism, has in turn enabled Jews 'to shed their own peculiar kind of triumphalism., the defensive triumphalism of the persecuted and the abused, and to relate in a more open and creative way to the world about it'.[443]

It is important to note that supersessionism is not exactly a synonym for anti-Judaism or anti-semitism, although its influence is no less detrimental or pervasive. In an article entitled *Supersessionism and Early Christian Self-Definition*, Terence L. Donaldson highlights that while all three terms are connected and overlap in some manner, they distinctly portray an individual or particular facet of a 'larger phenomenon'. He claims,

"If *anti-Semitism* refers to hateful attitudes and actions directed toward Jewish people per se—that is, an ethnic, social, and often political phenomenon—and if *anti-Judaism* refers to statements and formulations designed to defend and bolster Christian claims about themselves by denouncing what were perceived as Jewish counter-claims—that is, a theological and socio-religious phenomenon—then *supersessionism*

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[442] Gilbert S. Rosenthal, *What Can a Modern Jew Believe* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 74

[443] Henry Siegman, "A Decade of Catholic-Jewish Relations - A Reassessment", in *Christianity and Judaism: the Deepening Dialogue,* 155

refers to the kind of Christian self-understanding that might be seen to undergird such anti-Judaic rhetoric and anti-Semitic activity."[444]

The degrading and triumphalist language used to reinforce perceptions of the Torah and Pharisaic Judaism or rabbinic Judaism as sterile and legalistic, or 'calcified', was birthed and shaped in the atmosphere of rupture which accompanied the eventual severing of Jewish and Christian communities.[445] An important question emerges - if the Christian theological vocabulary in relation to Jews and Judaism emanates from a place of rupture and feeds on inherited presumptions which both rely on and breed the vilification of the other, particularly a Deepest Other, does a new language need to be sought?

III.1 PERCEPTIONS OF COVENANT

Binary, supersessionist theology feeds into perceptions of covenant. If supersessionist lenses have a rupturing effect on the Christian relationship to Jewish people and on perceptions of scripture in relation to those same people, this same effect can be expected when it comes to the issue of covenant. 'Covenant' is a centre point between the two faiths, and however covenant is understood and interpreted, both Judaism and Christianity share a 'spiritual patrimony' in this regard,   laying

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[444] Terence L. Donaldson, "Supersessionism and Early Christian Self-Definition", (JJMJS No. 3 (2016): 1–32), p 4. See, http://www.jjmjs.org/uploads/1/1/9/0/11908749/jjmjs-3_donaldson.pdf. Retrieved February 10 2017. Italics mine.

[445] Prominent Biblical scholar Julius Wellhausen who pioneered historical biblical-criticism, particularly in relation to the formation of the Pentateuch, promoted the notion that institutionalised Israelite faith represented a 'calcified' form of spontaneous Hebrew worship. See *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages,* eds., Adam H. Becker, Annette Yoshiko Reed, (Minneapolis, MN: 2007), 98

'claim to the same biblical covenant initiated by God with Abraham and his descendants.'[446] Later in this chapter we will more deeply examine some of the origins of supersessionism, questioning the possibility that it emerged in the religious, political and social vacuum created by the traumatic destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. Prior to this, the emphasis of the early followers of Jesus of Nazareth was on the inclusion, or the question of how to include, Gentile believers into Israel, rather than how to incorporate Jews into the church. As such, this thesis suggests that supersessionist language relies on a hermeneutic of rupture, and this hermeneutic directly impacts the interpretation of covenant. Covenant becomes defined by adverbs such as 'old' and 'new', and entire theologies are established around this imposed dichotomy.[447]

Since the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent documents pertaining to the relationship with Jews and Judaism produced by Catholic, ecumenical and Protestant bodies, significant theological theories have developed around the concept of covenant. Indeed Michael Singer notes, "In the search for a new relationship between Christians and Jews, the search for covenant is ever present".[448] Two of the most significant theories have been the 'single' and 'dual' covenant theories, which in different ways seek to present an understanding of Judaism and Christianity as living

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[446] Eugene B. Korn and John T. Pawlikowski, eds.,*Two Faiths, One Covenant? Jewish and Christian Identity in the Presence of the Other,* 1

[447] Korn and Pawlikowski highlight some of the complexities of two faith entities laying claim to the same biblical covenantal tradition. As we explore in this chapter and elsewhere in this thesis, supersessionism in its various forms was the mode of covenantal interpretation preferred by Christianity. For Jews, however, the complexities lie in the issue of election. Christians appropriating the biblical covenants as contravening the uniqueness of election of Israel. Covenantal understanding in both faiths historically therefore has relied on an exclusion 'of the other'. Ibid., 1

[448] Michael A. Singer, "The Covenant in Recent Theological Statements", in Korn and Pawlikowski, *Two Faiths, One Covenant?: Jewish and Christian Identity in the Presence of the Other,* 111

faiths which are connected and equally valid. What both hold in common is an acceptance of the understanding that the covenant between God and the Jewish people is an irrevocable reality, 'never revoked'.[449] The 'single' or 'dual' aspects are the logistics of how this irrevocability is made manifest.

As with all theories, there are multiple versions. The single covenant theory essentially maintains that Jews and Christians emerge from one covenantal tradition. The biblical covenants, i.e the Noahide, Abrahamic, Mosaic and Davidic, are interpreted as a constant stream of reinterpreted and renewed covenants. For the early Jewish believers in Jesus of Nazareth, the coming of the Messiah as they understood it was a further renewal of the covenants which had gone before, this time creating an 'opening', so as to allow the *goyim,* the non-Jewish nations, to come into Israel's already existing covenantal tradition. Didier Polleyfete notes that for the single covenant theorists, "the gentile question is no longer: "How can the Jew be saved?", but becomes "How can I be included in the unbroken Covenant of God with Israel?"[450]

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[449] One of the key statements of *Nostra Aetate* declares that "God does not take back the gifts he bestowed or the choices he made". As mentioned in chapter one, in a 1980 address to the representatives of the Jewish community in Mainz, Germany, Pope John Paul II stated that the covenant between God and the Jewish people has "never been revoked". In part, the Pope was influenced by the work of Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. These words, "never been revoked" have become a hinge around which much post-conciliar reflection has developed. See Norbert Lohfnik, *The Covenant Never Revoked: Biblical Reflections on Christian-Jewish Dialogue* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1991), 13-16. See also, Dermot A. Lane, *Stepping Stones to Other Religions,* (Dublin, Ireland: Veritas Publications, 2011), 273; and *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations,* 67

[450] Polleyfeyt, *Christology After Auschwitz,* paragraph 12.
http://www.jcrelations.net/Christology+after+Auschwitz%3A+A+Catholic+Perspective.
2216.0.html?L=3

Franz Rosenzweig's work on the dynamics of the Jewish-Christian relationship in the early part of the twentieth century can be interpreted within the single covenant framework. His 1921 publication *The Star of Redemption,* conceptualised the idea that redemptive truth is found in both Judaism and in Christianity. He expounded this theory using the metaphor of the star (as mentioned in chapter one), placing Judaism as the eternal flame in the heart of the star, and Christianity as the rays of that star which shine into the world. The flame and the rays need one another in that they are part of one another, but the need is a conscious one only for Christianity, which would not exist without Judaism. Judaism, on the other hand, is 'unconscious' of its rays.[451]

The dual covenant theory in part arises out of critique on the perceived shortcomings of the single covenant theory. Polleyfeyt describes the dual covenant theory as recognising the "enduring bond between Judaism and Christianity, but then they focus upon the differences between both traditions and communities, showing how the service, teaching and person of Jesus mediate an image of God which is surely new".[452] For Rosemary Radford Ruether, John Pawlikowski and others, the single covenant idea is inadequate in that through implicating Christianity and Judaism in the same covenantal tradition, it raises age-old questions about the Jewish 'no' to Jesus, which historically was a major contributing factor in the emergence and

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[451] See chapter one of this thesis, II.1.3, *Mutual Need: Determining the Need for the Other.* Rosenzweig was, however, concerned about the 'enmity', the *Feindschaft,* which he saw existing between Christianity and Judaism. See "Franz Rosenzweig's Theology of the Christian-Jewish Relationship", by David Novak, in *Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Jewish Justification* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 93-113. See also, *The Star of Redemption.* Translated by Barbara E. Galli. (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005).

[452] Polleyfeyt, *Christology After Auschwitz,* paragraph 13.

sustenance of supersessionism.[453] A second perceived drawback is that Christianity becomes, in this mode, 'Judaism for Gentiles', and thus questions if Jesus brought anything 'new'.

For John Pawlikowski, the idea of a dual or double covenant is a more acceptable theology in light of Auschwitz, in that it proposes individual covenants which acknowledge the validity of the other, and therefore does not feed classical the Christian supersessionist claims which prepared the seed-bed for the Holocaust.[454] Moreover, it enables a more acceptable Christology and emphasises the profound role of Christ for all humanity, while simultaneously espousing a more appropriate response to the historical and theological relationship between Christianity and Judaism through honouring Judaism as a distinct living faith, something which supersessionism denies.

Accepting the drawbacks of the single covenant theory, (as well as the positives in that it maintains a continuity with biblical covenants, thereby in one sense defying supersessionism which proposes the abrogation of certain covenants in favour of a new one), we can identify a deficiency in the critique of 'Judaism for Gentiles' as a

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[453] For Paul van Buren, the fact of a Jewish 'no' should be seen in positive terms, indicating that the Christ event signalled something new. Rather than seeing an abrogation of God's covenant with Israel in light of the Jewish 'no', when we see God's covenant with Israel as un-revoked, and simultaneously affirm the uniqueness and newness of the Christ-event we make Christology not more appealing to Jews, but rather valid when Israel's 'enduring covenant with God is recognised and confessed as essential to it'. This opens up an important discussion about 'continuity' and 'discontinuity' in relation to the existence of both faith communities. As Polleyfete emphasises, Christianity is on the one hand 'grounded in Judaism', but on the other hand, they are two distinct faiths. See Polleyfeyt, *Christology After Auschwitz*. See also, James H. Wallis, *Post-Holocaust Christianity: Paul van Buren's Theology of the Jewish-Christian Reality* (Maryland: University Press of America, 1997)

[454] John T. Pawlikowski, "Christology and the Christian-Jewish Encounter", in *Christ in the Light of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue,* 8-36

reason for eschewing the single covenant tradition. If we look at the early Christian movement, we clearly see an emphasis detected both in the Gospels and the writings of the Apostle Paul on the inclusion of Gentiles into the movement rather than the inclusion, or exclusion, of Jews.[455] If we acknowledge the supersessionist distortions which gained momentum through the *Adversus Judaeous* literature as misrepresentations and manipulations of the intentions the early Christian movement, and if we affirm the Jewishness of Jesus of Nazareth, along with the vibrancy of Judaism as a living faith with a sacred past, present and future, in addition to the validity of Judaism and Christianity as faith expressions which both bear witness to some degree of their shared first-century roots - even if one is uncomfortable with the single covenant theory, is it not a more accurate reflection of some of the beliefs espoused by the early Christian movement? Does the idea of 'Judaism for Gentiles' actually pose a religious, theological, social or political problem?[456]

III.2   QUESTIONING THE ORIGINS OF SUPERSESSIONISM

The revision of classical Christian triumphalist attitudes toward Jews and Judaism, as mentioned above, has sparked an important theological discourse which questions the

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[455] See Harold H. Ditmanson, "Judaism and Christianity: A Theology of Co-Existence", in *Christianity and Judaism: the Deepening Dialogue,* 192-193. See also, Mark D. Nanos, *Reading Paul within Judaism* (Eugene, OR: Wipe & Stock Publishers, 2017), 49

[456] For Pawlikowski, it is problematic as the Church loses its distinctiveness, and may as well 'fold up as a major world religion'. There is an unresolved tension in Pawlikowski's assessment of covenantal reformulations. On the one hand he strongly maintains that Christianity must be able to express its uniqueness through the revelation of Christ, maintaining that 'the Christ event, however interpreted by different churches and scholars, stands at the very heart of Christian faith expression.' On the other hand, he maintains that a reconstructed Christology after Auschwitz will need to 'abandon some of the classic Christian formulations that Christ has fulfilled the messianic prophecies…and inaugurated the messianic age'. See Pawlikowski, *Christ in the Light.,* 1-4

origins of supersessionism and the historical Christian role in fanning the flames of anti-Jewish polemic. Part of this emerging and significant discussion involves the question of whether the NT texts are sources of supersessionism themselves, or were read and interpreted this way to satisfy a growing desire to establish Christian 'orthodox' identity and vilify the Jewish other who did not share that identity.[457] Some in this reappraisal of Christian theologies, such as feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether in *Faith and Fratricide*, maintain that the triumphalist tones of Christendom are to be found within the pages of the NT itself, in the form of a triumphalist Christology.[458] Tracing the atrocities of the Shoah to anti-Jewish theological seeds within the Church, Gregory Baum states that, 'The Holocaust acted out of the Church's fantasy that the Jews were a non-people, that they had no place before God and that they should have disappeared long ago by accepting Christ'.[459] Baum and Ruether offer rather radical responses to reconstructing Christology after Auschwitz.[460] Israeli historian Uriel Tal claims that the affirmation of an ongoing covenant between God and the People of Israel 'is of course, contrary to the

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[457] Such heresiological enterprises were, however, not one-sided but mutual, as Daniel Boyarin notes. Both the Rabbis and the Church Fathers sought to establish orthodoxy, and thereby define heresy. In part, each became defined by what the other was not, and as such we realise these heresiological aspirations were not just expressed by the emerging Christian movement. In addition, according to Boyarin this period of establishing lines of demarcation was for more fluid than we realise. See Daniel Boyarin, *Borderlines,* 2,18 and 38

[458] Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (Minneapolis: Seabury, 1974), 116

[459] See Gregory Baum, *Is the New Testament Anti-Semitic? A Re-Examination of the New Testament* (Glen Rock: Paulist Press, 1965), originally published as *The Jews and the Gospel: A Re- Examination of the New Testament* (Westminster: Newman Press, 1961)

[460] Having highlighted an unresolved tension on Pawlikowski's assessments, he refrains from endorsing Ruether's contributions entirely. Acknowledging her deeply valuable insights, he notes that she has 'provoked the Christological question in the dialogue in a way which no others have.' However, Pawlikowski feels the 'Christ event' becomes too relativised to be the substantial core of the Christian faith. Pawlikowski, *Christ in the Light.,* 3

theology of the New Testament'.[461] However, Tal also maintains that the Shoah was profoundly anti-Christian as well as anti-Jewish, and "not simply the final chapter in the long history of Christian anti-semitism…"[462]

III.2.1 THE POLEMICS OF CONTEMPT

The question remains, without definitive answers but with much scholarly discourse, if supersessionism or replacement theology can be traced directly to the pages of the NT. As a Holocaust survivor himself, it was such a question which spurred Jewish historian Jules Isaac in the immediate aftermath of the Shoah to produce one of his most prolific and prophetic works. Not living long enough to taste the fruit of *Nostra Aetate,* to which he was so greatly invested, Isaac's landmark publication *Jésus et Israël* traced what he termed as a 'teaching of contempt' through Catholic and Protestant scriptural commentaries in the attempt to isolate the causes and sources of Christian anti-semitism and supersessionism. Through comparing the Christian biblical commentaries and their suggestions to the Gospels themselves, Isaac concluded that a distortion of Jesus and his relationship with Israel facilitated the contempt of Jews to be conditioned into European Christianity. Such conditioning had proved to be catastrophic and he wrote of the urgency for a Christian re-visioning of conscience, motivated by the 'glow of the Auschwitz crematorium'.[463]

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[461] Cited by Isaac Rottenberg, in "Fulfillment Theology and the Future of Jewish-Christian Relations", in *Christianity and Judaism: the Deepening Dialogue,* 67

[462] John Pawlikowski highlights that while he also subscribes to Tal's view, the historical reality that Christian anti-Jewish sentiments provided a 'seedbed' for what emerged under the Nazi regime, must be emphasised. See Pawlikowski, *Christ in the Light of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue,* 137

[463] Isaac was driven to explore the roots of Christian anti-semitism out of a 'lacerated heart' as he wrote, having lost his wife, daughter and son-in-law and three sons to the Nazi genocide. http://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/histhp/15/ See also, Jules Isaac, *Jésus et Israël*, trans. Sally Gran, 2nd ed, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971)

Isaac does, however, as highlighted by Gregory Baum who was greatly influenced by his work, draw attention to the fact that the NT texts contain polemical material, which enabled a culture of 'disdain' for Jews to be established during the fractious periods of Jewish and early-Christian identity formation in a post-Destruction context. He questions whether 'the Christian Church could ever separate itself from its anti-semitic heritage'.[464] It was to this cause he devoted the remainder of his life, motivated in part by an admirable conviction (given his own painful experiences and loss) that anti-semitism as a phenomenon was fundamentally 'un-Christian'. His work became the backdrop for the historic development of the Ten Points of Seelisberg in 1946, as well as playing a key role in the formation of what would become *NA*.[465]

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[464] See Gregory Baum's 'Introduction' to Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1997) 2

[465] Both Jules Isaac and Abraham J. Heschel were actively involved in the negotiations prior and during the conciliar process of the Second Vatican Council, and both therefore played key roles in urging the Church to denounce Christian anti-semitism and establish measures to combat anti-Jewish sentiments within catechism and liturgy, as well as ridding Church teaching of age-old libels such as the charge of deicide. While Heschel considered *NA* a success insofar as it was an important shift for Church teaching with regard to Jews and Judaism as a whole, it did not meet all his expectations. Jules Isaac for his part presented Pope John XXIII with a document on his findings as a historian with regard to the 'Teaching of Contempt'. Isaac and Heschel's respective roles helped to direct the eventual 1965 declaration, although Isaac had died in 1963 before its publication. See James K. Aitken, 'Abraham Joshua Heschel", and Stephen Plant, 'Jules Isaac', in *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations,* 186, 214.

Polemical literature necessitates careful study of context, and possible reciprocal conversations.[466] Peter Schäfer, in his work *The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other,* asserts that the development early rabbinic Judaism and and the Christianity of the early church fathers, while being characterised by mutual exclusion, actually depended on and were deeply influenced by that mutual exclusion. Looking beyond the mutual hostilities and isolation, which fed into later persecution, one can begin to detect that the two faiths had a profound impact on one another, for better or for worse.[467] Edward Kessler draws attention to the fact that Christian exegetes were profoundly influenced by early rabbinic interpretations, and vice-versa.[468] He terms this an 'exegetical encounter', in which Christian or Jewish commentators were positively influenced by the other, and suggests that in addition to the polemical dynamics and mutual hostilities, there also can be detected a reciprocal admiration for and knowledge of the textual interpretations of the other faith tradition, be they Christian or Jewish.[469] This is corroborated to an extent by Geza Vermes, who highlights that, in a much earlier period, the *Epistle of Barnabas* was drafted by a 'Greek speaking Gentile Christian author…(who) reveals a

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[466] Marc Saperstein highlights the importance of rethinking traditional stereotypes in relation to polemical literature. He offers a most striking example through Melito of Sardis. Melito, bishop of Sardis, develops the first recorded charge of deicide levelled against the Jewish people. As we know this charge would become an ugly force with Christian anti-Jewish sentiments, often leading through the subsequent centuries and right into the twentieth century, to much violence directed at the Jewish community. What Saperstein draws attention to, however, is not the repercussions of this charge (which are manifold), but the archaeological excavations of Sardis, which reveal an enormous ornate synagogue, and a much smaller church from the time of Melito, who was bishop in the second century. What this reveals, according to Saperstein, is not a second century Jewish community who were suffering under oppressive blood-thirsty Christians, but rather a smaller emerging Christian community who were using polemical literature for the purposes of self-definition. See Marc Saperstein, *Moments of Crisis,* 5-8

[467] Peter Schäfer, *The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other*, 1-5

[468] Edward Kessler, *Bound By the Bible: Jews, Christians, and the Sacrifice of Isaac*, 8-9

[469] Edward Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, 6

remarkably broad and deep knowledge of the Greek Bible'.[470] In addition, Pseudo-Barnabas demonstrates a grasp, albeit a negative one, of the precepts of Jewish life, describing in detail the 'correct' response of a Christian to the Jewish Sabbath and the Temple, circumcision, dietary laws and covenants. This highlights that the lines of demarcation were not as clear-cut as we like to imagine, and nor were the polemics of contempt confined to one side. The crucial difference is that what began as a Jewish sect became a global force through the Roman Empire, causing the power dynamics to radically shift and the fertile soil of Christian-Jewish animosity, which at one time had been fraternal, could now mushroom unchecked into an acute oppression of the other. The rupture of fraternal identities and the polemics of contempt combined with the radical shift in global power dynamics enabled the language of supersessionism to become the lingua franca of Christians in relation to Jews and Judaism, with far-reaching implications.

III.3   SUPERSESSIONISM AS A LANGUAGE OF RUPTURE

"The storm is gone. But the 'after the storm' is always here."[471]

The volatile atmosphere of trauma and upheaval which accompanied the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE saw multiple ruptures - the rupture of communities and of identity, and the rupture of the very fabric of Jewish existence. Perhaps with

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[470] Geza Vermes, *Christian Beginnings: From Nazareth to Nicea*, 148-149

[471] Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining,* (Louiseville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 1

hindsight, as we are so far removed in terms of time from the first-century, we underestimate the collective psychological, social and theological effects of this cataclysmic breach in the heart of Jewish life.

With a rupture of any sort, comes a trauma. *Trauma* has multiple definitions across a variety of disciplines, but in broad terms it refers to the negative aftermath of a particular event or incident, as experienced by an individual or community. Similar to an earthquake, what constitutes actual trauma is measured by its impact. The person or group who lived through a traumatic experience, (an experience which mediated physical or psychological threats to the continued existence or identity of a person or group, and exceeded the categories of comprehension, both shattering and disconnecting what was familiar) is the one to determine the level of trauma experienced.[472] In other words, the experience of trauma is somewhat subjective, in that what might be traumatic for one person leaves another relatively unscathed, and it is the survivor of a trauma who defines it as such. Memory, therefore, plays a crucial role in the processing of a traumatic event.[473] And as human beings with inbuilt mechanisms to survive, what we remember and what we forget can be a complex process. Trauma is the residue from the experience, that through memory has the capacity to not only impact our present but also our future. 'Inherited' and 'trans-generational' trauma studies suggest that because of the complex interplay between the residue of trauma in the memory and the traumatic experience itself,

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[472] Ibid,. 15

[473] Cathy Caruth, ed., *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins Press Ltd, 1995), 4-6

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trauma can be passed inter-generationally.[474] Is it possible through the sustained use of a language and vocabulary that displaces and replaces Christianity's Deepest Other, the Jewish people, reticent memories of rupture and trauma strain against the deceptively solid plaster that masks our interactions with one another? Does the language of supersessionism as a language of displacement transmit to each generation a fresh expression of an original memory of collective rupture?

III.3.1 SOUL WOUND[475]

Both the destruction of the Temple 70 CE and the daily Temple service before its destruction, register in Jewish liturgical life and poetry, practices and synagogue observances, and even in every-day prayers. In traditional Judaism, a description of the *korbanot* (plural of *korban* קָרְבָּן), the daily sacrifices in the Temple, is recited each morning. And at the end of the *Amidah* prayer תפילת העמידה (recited three times daily) the traumatic memory of the Temple's destruction is voiced through pleas for its rebuilding and swift restoration. It is the 'soul wound' of the Jewish People, echoed across the generations.[476]

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[474] These studies, however, have had a relatively small sample case and are therefore not definitively conclusive. See Tori Rodriguez, "Descendants of Holocaust Survivors Have Altered Stress Hormones". Scientific American, (March 1, 2015), Retrieved November 30, 2018; and Natan Kellermann, "The Search for Biomarkers of Holocaust Trauma". Journal of Traumatic Stress Disorders and Treatment, 7(1), 1-13.N. (2018). Retrieved December 1, 2018.

[475] The term 'soul wound' is used most often in reference to the experience of collective trauma as expressed by Native American communities. See *Healing the American Soul Wound,* Eduardo Duran, Bonnie Duran, Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, Susan Yellow Horse-Davis, https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-4757-5567-1_22 . Retrieved May 1 2017.

[476] See Elizabeth Boase, "Fragmented Voices: Collective Identity and Traumatization in Lamentations", in *Bible Through the Lens of Trauma,* ed., Elizabeth Boase and Christopher G. Frechette, (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2016), 49-67

Indeed The Greek word *traumata* τραυματα, from where we derive *trauma* τραῦμα itself, means 'wound' and carries the impression of a type of wound or bruising which has been inflicted through piercing or twisting. This word appears only once in the Greek texts of the NT, in Luke 10:25-37 with the parable of the Good Samaritan. Communicated in response to the question of 'who is my neighbour', this parable almost ironically defines what it means to be a neighbour. Reminiscent of Joseph, to be a neighbour here is to see to the shalom of your brother. Therefore in order to understand who is your neighbour, you must first become a neighbour. And a neighbour here is defined by Jesus as 'one who shows mercy' in the binding of a *traumata* τραυματα, a wound. For both the wounded Jew lying on the side of the road and for the Samaritan in the parable, the 'other' was part of the religious, cultural and social divide which manifested itself at times bitterly in the first century. What is interesting about the phrasing in verse Luke 10:34 is that the wound is described not in terms of its traumatic effect or injury, but rather the healing response. The *traumata* τραυματα is bandaged by an unlikely other. Healing and restoration has been made possible through mercy from that other.

Perhaps this parable is indicative of the possibilities which emerge when we choose to navigate beyond our own wounds and see the wounds of another, and thereby see to their shalom. Henri Nouwen's *The Wounded Healer* suggests our wounds can be a starting point for interaction with others. Through acknowledging rather than ignoring our own 'woundedness', it can become a source of healing.[477] For the Jewish-Christian relationship, this entails not only acknowledging and revising past

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[477] Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 17-20

harmful theological and relational presumptions and the wounds created by these presumptions, but also revisiting the definitive trauma which irrevocably soldered the split(s) between the emerging Jewish and Christian communities in a post-Destruction context.

Sociologist Jeffrey Alexander emphasises the collective aspect in the experience and interpretation of traumatic events or experiences that 'wound' the collective soul.[478] He maintains that communal trauma is not an automatic response to an event which shattered norms, but rather manifests itself through a processing of these traumatic events. This processing indelibly scores collective and cultural identity, and such a 'marking' in their memory, according to Alexander, 'changes (their) future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways'.[479] If we take Alexander's emphasis on the experience of trauma in terms of its collective impact and the key role it plays in both the 'origin and outcome' of social conflicts, and then re-examine the historical Jewish-Christian relationship, there can be no doubt that the experience of collective trauma was deeply influential in the eventual 'partings of the ways' between Christian and Jews.

The field of psychoanalysis along with others (neurobiology, sociology and psychology in particular) is rich in research assessing and examining the effects of trauma on the individual self, on relationships and on communities. What I want to highlight through this is the possibility that supersessionism, which whispers forceful

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[478] Jeffrey Alexander, Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Trauma : A Social Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Polity press, 2012), 30

[479] See Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyreman, Bernard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, Piotr Stiompka, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (CA: University of California Press, 2004), 1-30

murmurings of displacement and replacement, emerged in a context of rupture as we have stated. And the language and vocabulary espoused by supersessionism therefore continues to communicate undertones of that rupture. This may not even be conscious or intentional, but is embedded into the very structure of the vocabulary. When the vocabulary of supersessionism is the main reference point for Christians in how they think about Jews and Jewish texts, it nourishes age-old associations of Jews with legalism and the contradistinction of Christian grace. The trauma of the initial rupture is re-experienced through a hermeneutic of displacement and replacement. The ripping apart of first century Jewish life and the fragmenting of identities, provided perfect conditions for the development of mutual suspicion and hostility. In the aftershock environment one group began to demographically dominate the other and eventually 'supersede' the other, defining itself by what the other was not and vice versa. Replacement theology arose (in part) not because of a rupture necessarily (for that rupture was across the spectrum of Jewish life), but certainly in the context of one, and in the traumatic aftermath which continued to violently tremor in the centuries that were to follow.

IV.   RUPTURE AND RECONNECTION

In *God Was in This Place, and I, i Did Not Know,* Lawrence Kushner writes that two primal 'psycho-spiritual tearings' lie at heart of both human evil and human pain. In the first tearing, a part of ourselves is torn off, and the torn-off piece is then made 'other' and eventually, 'enemy'. The memory of the tearing itself is too painful to remember (we will refer to this important point again when we refer to the biblical

character of Joseph at the end of this chapter).[480] And so it is buried deep within so as not to disturb the calm exterior, the visible and the conscious. Yet like a volcano reticent with a fiery energy that bubbles beneath the surface, at some point and in some capacity it will visibly erupt, possibly with catastrophic consequences. The sealed wound becomes, in Avivah Zornberg's rich phrasing, an 'internal stranger'.[481] A foreignness resides within our very own being which has been torn, and like a wounded amputee who can still feel his shorn off limb, we know it is missing but can still feel its shape and form.

The second tearing Rabbi Kushner refers to involves traumatic separation from one's parents. In a sense this is a necessary tearing, the cutting of an umbilical cord in order to live. This highlights the reality that sometimes we cut in order to live, and sometimes a cutting separates us from life.[482] Without this separation, this tearing, there will be no autonomy or development. In fact the opposite will unfold - if a mother remains connected to her baby after birth through the umbilical cord, they will both certainly die. Elements of each 'tearing' are visible in Jacob and Esau, the Torah's most famous twins. Nothing but the 'thinness of a membrane' separated them in the womb of their mother Rebecca.[483] 'Rebecca', in Hebrew *Rivkah* רִבְקָה meaning 'to fetter' or 'join together', is the first biblical character to query her limits

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[480] Lawrence Kushner, *God was in This Place and I, i did not Know* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2016), 68-69. The lowercase 'i' is not a typo, it is intentionally placed there by the author to demonstrate the flexibility with which this verse can be interpreted and approached, and draws attention to the question of ego, asking what it means to assume we are an 'Uppercase I'. See above, p 5

[481] Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep,* xiv-xvi, 231-234

[482] This would warrant further reflection on the notion of 'cutting' a covenant in the biblical sense, examining the dimensions of *b'rit* בְּרִית.

[483] Kushner, *God was in This Place,* 70

and actively go in search of God. Her life is defined by questions, *lamah zeh anoki,*

לָמָּה זֶּה אָנֹכִי, 'Why I', is a phrase that strikes a resonance with the questions of Job and

the Psalmist as two struggle against each other within her one womb.[484] One womb,

the interior of *Rivkah,* (tying together) becomes the place of struggle, a wrestle

which later defines the very essence of what it means to be 'Israel'. Jacob, wrestling

in the womb both before birth and with the Un-Named One by the River Jabbok

before he crosses back into Canaan, is renamed *Yisrael* יִשְׂרָאֵל, meaning '(he who)

struggles with God and with man, and is able/overcomes'.[485] It seems that the very

meaning of 'Israel' reflects the two 'psycho-spiritual tearings' of Jewish legend, with

one very important modulation, 'overcome'.[486]

How does this apply to the Jewish-Christian relationship, and the history of that

relationship? If we consider the second 'tearing', that of parental separation, it is a

necessary separation enabling us to live which nonetheless involves trauma and

rupture of some sort. Indeed Otto Rank, an Austrian psychoanalyst and a

contemporary of Sigmund Freud, wrote that "all human beings suffer trauma by

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[484] Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep,* 213-217

[485] The MT of Genesis 32:22-32 reads as follows:
"The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." *And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."* Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered." The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip. Therefore to this day the people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket, because he touched the socket of Jacob's hip on the sinew of the thigh." Italics mine.

[486] Kushner, *God was in This Place,* 71-82

virtue of being born and of the inevitable, violent, physical and psychic separation we suffer at birth from our mother."[487] Second Temple Judaism effectively birthed what became rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity. This emergence was accompanied by deeply traumatic, seismic events such as the destruction of the Temple and the Jewish-Roman wars, which concluded with the disastrous ending to the Bar Kokhba revolt between 132-135 CE. Within this tumultuous period and the struggles for Jewish and Christian self-definition which were to follow, we can see traces of the first 'tearing' suggested by Kushner, that of ourselves which then becomes 'other', and eventually 'enemy'. The tearing of ourselves and the making of that torn off piece into an enemy cultivated a culture of rupture, and it was from within this breach that supersessionism was able to flourish. I contend that supersessionism, the replacement and displacement of an essential other, can only succeed in a fractured environment of alienation and rupture. Reconciliation and relationship disable or at least limit the effects of that rupture, and offer a mode of possible reconnection. This thesis suggests that recovering connection between Christians and Jews can be facilitated through sacred text and a renewed exegetical encounter. To this end let us conclude this chapter with a Torah text which offers dimensions of both rupture and reconnection, and ask how it might legitimately speak into a sacred reconciliation between Christians and Jews.

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[487] First published in 1924, *The Trauma of Birth* (*Das Trauma der Geburt*) connected the traumas associated with birth to various human anxieties. See Otto Rank, *The Trauma of Birth* - https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.218387/page/n5. See also Frederick Wolverton, 'Are We Born into Trauma?' https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-trauma-addiction-connection/201109/are-we-born-trauma

IV.1   THE JOSEPH SAGA: RECOVERING CONNECTION

Genesis 37-50 comprise what can be called 'the Joseph narratives'.[488] Within these narratives we witness both a rupture of family and identity, and a reconnection with that family and identity which enables Israel's sacred future to unfold. This is significant for this chapter, as the Torah itself giving us a language for what it might mean to reconnect ruptured relationships. It is important to highlight also, in reference to chapter three of this thesis, that it is the *text* which is providing a model for reconnection. In and of itself, this demonstrates that within the words of sacred text are possible keys to sacred reconciliation. Scripture, as a 'shared patrimony', speaks into Judaism as a living faith and Christianity as a living faith, and therefore crucially has the potential to speak into their reconciliation.[489]

This theme of being 'torn' from the other which we mentioned above, torn from (or indeed tearing ourselves from) our brother or mother that is epitomised by Jacob's life, is replayed in the life his son Joseph. The first born son of his beloved Rachel, Joseph is 'torn' from him (as was Rachel in a sense). Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg writes,

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[488] Technically the Joseph texts are Genesis 37, and 39-50. Genesis 38 is a most intriguing interlude of the Judah-Tamar episode. This interlude makes more sense when it is interpreted within the whole tapestry of the Joseph saga, magnified in Judah's response to Benjamin's potential enslavement, which differs radically to his response to Joseph's potential enslavement years earlier. Judah is a key puzzle-piece for the Joseph narratives. For more on Joseph and his brothers and the textual complexities which arise, see James L. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible: A Guide to Scripture, Then and Now* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 176-195. See also, Zvi Grumet, *Genesis: From Creation to Covenant* (Jerusalem, Israel: Maggid Books, 2017), 385-417

[489] See Korn and Pawlikowski, *Two Faiths, One Covenant?,* 1. The specific phrasing is 'shared spiritual patrimony', in relation to both Judaism and Christianity laying claim to the same biblical covenants. *NA* refers to this as

"In thrusting Joseph's coat, torn and bloodied, at Jacob, and in saying "Please recognise it - is it your son's tunic or not?" - they in fact feed him with the words with which he interprets its meaning: "He recognised it and said, "My son's tunic! A savage beast devoured him! Joseph is torn in pieces' "[490]

The words Jacob uses to describe what has happened Joseph's sharply emphasise Joseph's actual predicament, *Tarof toraf Yosef* טָרֹף טֹרַף יוֹסֵף, 'Joseph is (surely) torn in pieces', (Gen 37:32-33). At a surface level, we might think Jacob is misinformed - he thinks Joseph has been torn by a wild animal when we, the readers, know he is actually on his way down to Egypt as a slave. *And yet is Jacob wrong?* Has Joseph not been torn from his father's house? Zornberg suggests that Jacob's emphatic exclamation subtly and yet powerfully and prophetically highlights the brother's true intent toward Joseph. It also accurately describes his clothing which has been torn from him, and is to be torn from him yet again when Potiphar's wife will attempt to molest him and later accuse him of rape. The 'stripping' of clothing displays, as Zornberg notes, an innate violence.[491] Rupture across multiple planes seems to define this narrative.

The connection between memory and trauma becomes clear when Joseph names his first born son *Manasseh* מְנַשֶּׁה, in the hope that he will 'forget' his father's house (Gen 41:51). Coming from the Hebrew root verb *nashah* נָשָׁה, meaning 'to cause to forget', Joseph is naming his son in a way which ironically will cause him to remember what

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[490] Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *The Beginning of Desire: Reflections on Genesis*, 266-267

[491] Zornberg, *The Beginning of Desire*, 292

he is trying to forget, every time he utters his name.[492] This complex interplay between forgetting and remembering will in fact enable Joseph to be the one who recognises his estranged brothers.

IV.2 RECOGNITION AND RECONCILIATION: *Genesis 44:18*

Joseph 'sees' his Deepest Other, his brothers, and the response of being seen, (as we encountered in chapter three with Hagar), seems to spark a directional response in Judah. *Va-yiggash eilav Yehudah* וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה, 'and Judah drew close'. Some translations render this phrase as 'and Judah approached' (NASB), or 'Judah stepped forward' (NLV). *Va-yiggash,* coming from the root *nagash* נָגַשׁ, carries a sensibility of intentionally being or coming close for a specific purpose.[493] Joseph's recognition of his brothers has unconsciously enabled movement. And this movement is toward the other, rather than away. Drawing from a Hasidic reading of this text, Zornberg comments, 'At its moment of resolution, Judah 'draws close' (*va-yiggash*) to Joseph and makes the speech that cracks Joseph's shell of alienation'.[494] Recognition of the other enabled movement toward that other, which in turn enabled speech, a language of reconnection, ultimately enabling reconciliation.

There is another sense in which Judah's act of drawing near to Joseph is deeply significant. When Joseph was coming to find his brothers to fulfil his father's wish and 'see to their shalom' in Genesis 37:14, the text reads 'the brothers looked up and

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[492] Ibid., 286-288

[493] BDB 674. We first encounter this word being used in the conversation between Abraham and God in relation to mercy for Sodom and Gomorrah. See Genesis 18:23

[494] Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep,* 307-309

saw him *from a distance*'. It seems they decided at that moment in their heart to kill

him, but (although the text is somewhat ambiguous) due to Reuben's intervention he

is thrown into the pit and then sold. Jonathan Sacks notes the significance of this

term 'distance' - it is precisely because they saw him from a distance that they did not

'see' him.[495] This is the very opposite of what it means to draw close. In the drawing

close of Judah to Joseph, a 'tragic history of hatred, jealousy and resentment' has

been interrupted, and the reconciliation of the brothers will enable Israel's sacred

future to be actualised.[496]

These verses from the Joseph narratives offer a potential paradigm for sacred

reconciliation between Christians and Jews. We can acknowledge there were ruptures

across multiple planes in the formation of Jewish and early Christian identities

following 70 CE. Christians and Jews have learned over time to see one another

'from a distance', and in that space hostility, suspicion, persecution and ultimately

death abounded. It is unhelpful to typify one community as 'Joseph' or one as 'the

brothers'. Instead, drawing deeply from and entering deeply inside the text, let us ask

ourselves in the context of Jewish-Christian reconciliation what it can mean to 'see to

the shalom' of our brother. Let us ask ourselves if we can even recognise our

brother or sister (perhaps gleaning from the parable in Luke 10: 25-37 as expounded

upon in III.3.1 above), and in that space learn what it might mean to be a brother or

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[495] Sacks quotes Arthur Schopenhauer and 'the Hedgehog's Dilemma' to demonstrate the modalities of distance and closeness. "What do porcupines do in winter? asked Schopenhauer. If they come too close to one another, they injure each other.If they stay too far apart, they freeze. Life, for porcupines, is a delicate balance between closeness and distance. It is hard to get it right and dangerous to get it wrong. And so it is for us." See Jonathan Sacks, "The Space Between", in *Covenant and Conversation*, http://rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation-5771-vayigash-the-space-between/, retrieve January 8 2019

[496] Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep,* 307-309

sister. And crucially, let us 'draw close (*va-yiggash)* to our Deepest Other, actualising movement toward that Other and in the process disabling the effects of a history marred by exclusion, alienation and rejection.

In one sense, the profound shift in Christian teaching in relation to Jews and Judaism in recent decades exemplifies dimensions of the reconciliation between the brothers. The 'Christian Scholars Group on Christian-Jewish Relations' and their aforementioned 2002 publication for example, *A Sacred Obligation*, acknowledges the wounds within the Christian-Jewish relationship (largely inflicted by Christians) and emphasises the dimensions of relationship which require both urgent reflection and action in order to cultivate a culture of reconciliation, and therefore a future, between Christians and Jews.[497]

V. CONCLUSION

The language of supersessionism, displacing and replacing Christianity's Deepest Other, creates a 'false memory' of that Other. It facilitates an 'identity-in-opposition' dynamic, enabling siege mentalities to flourish on all sides.[498] It harbours negative ideas of the Torah and the people intimately and irrevocably attached to the Torah, preconditioning and sustaining a response of rupture and displacement. At its heart, supersessionism is a speech of rupture, reflecting traumas both sustained and inflicted in the tearing of first century Jewish life, and the need to dominate the other

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[497] See "A Sacred Obligation: Rethinking Christian Faith in Relation to Judaism and the Jewish People", https://web.archive.org/web/20130624181714/http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/ecumenical-christian/568-csg-02sep1, retrieved February 5 2017

[498] See *Reconciling Memories,* eds., Alan D. Falconer and Joseph Liechty, (Dublin, Ireland: The Columba Press, 1998), 13

who once not being other at all is now 'enemy'. It cultivates a distorted picture of the Torah as 'old', the Jew as 'legalistic' and 'replaced', and creates a distorted picture of the Jewish-Christian relationship, and the history of that relationship, also.

Pinpointing where supersessionism begins is clearly a subject of ongoing theological, historical and textual debate, but there is general agreement that as a hermeneutical mode it became established relatively early in church history. As highlighted, some contend that a direct line can be drawn from the pages of the NT to Auschwitz.[499] Chapter two of this thesis examined some of the roots of Christian-Jewish antagonism, highlighting the formative role which some of the Apostolic Fathers played, who openly promoted strongly anti-Jewish rhetoric along with supersessionist claims to the scriptures and the covenants of Israel. One theological implication of these sentiments was to create a Christian culture which was defined by being 'not-Jewish', effectively reversing the Apostle Paul's idea of believing non-Jews being grafted into the 'olive tree' of Israel. (This is reciprocated during the complex processes of the partings of the ways, insofar as it equally became that being 'not-Christian' was a critical part of what it meant to be Jewish). Justin Martyr was the first documented early Christian writer to refer to the church as the 'true spiritual

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[499] One challenge with this view, is that the Dead Sea Scrolls, another sectarian body of Jewish religious texts emerging from the Second Temple Period, contain much hostile material directed at other rival first century Jewish groups. These texts, however, are not considered to be anti-semitic in that they are reflective of an internal Jewish split. The possibility that the NT texts were used to justify later Christian anti-Judaism as they were taken out of their Jewish context, is a strong one. That being said, the Dead Sea Scrolls have not be used historically to justify anti-Jewish and and anti-semitic beliefs through the centuries, and therein lies a sharp difference. For more on the sectarian aspects of the Qumran community, see Jodi Magness, "The Temple Tax, Clothing, and the Anti-Hellenizing Attitude of the Sectarians", in *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2002), 188-206

Israel'.[500] As such he is seen as a key figure in the promulgation of Christian anti-Jewish sentiments, which feed directly into supersessionism. Another possibility is that the suppression of the Bar Kokhba revolt against Rome in 135 CE and its disastrous consequences for the Jewish people was a critical juncture in the separation of early Christians and Jews.[501] It was therefore a key moment in the development fractious Christian-Jewish polemics, enabling existing polemics and supersessionist tensions to be deepened. Walter C. Kaiser asserts a later date for the development of supersessionism, drawing a connection between Eusebius and the alliance forged with Constantine in the fourth century.[502] Edward Kessler highlights that relations between Christians and Jews became much more strained in the fourth century when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, and by the time the Talmud was completed, 'Jewish Christianity' disappeared almost entirely.[503]

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[500] See *St. Justin Martyr Dialogue with Trypho,* trans. Thomas B. Falls, rev. Thomas Halton, ed. Michael Slusser, (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003). See also, Shaye J. D. Cohen, "In Between: Jewish-Christians and the Curse of the Heretics", in *Partings: How Judaism and Christianity Became Two,* 212-213

[501] Eusebius Pamphilius, a fourth century Christian historian and polemicist, writes that before the Jewish revolt there were at least fifteen bishops 'of Hebrew descent'. After the rebellion which consisted of 'severe battles' and Hadrian's subsequent decree, 'Marcus' became the first Gentile bishop to Jerusalem. See Eusebius Pamphilius, "The Bishops of Jerusalem From the Age of Our Saviour to the Period Under Consideration', in *Church History* 4.5.1-3, and 4.6.4 - https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iii.ix.v.html . See also, Michael J. Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel: An Analysis of Supersessionism* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang GmbH, 2009), 44

[502] Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "An Assessment of 'Replacement Theology'; The Relationship Between the Israel of the Abraham-Davidic Covenant and the Christian Church", *Mishkan* 21 (1994), 9. Cited by Michael J. Vlach, *The Church as a Replacement of Israel,* 41-43

[503] Although Philip Jenkins maintains that semitic Christianity did not disappear in the fourth century as supposed, but in the fourteenth. According to Jenkins, as late as the thirteenth century, these semitic Christians called themselves *Nasraye,* (a term that preserves the Aramaic title used by the Apostles), referred to Jesus as *Yeshua,* and their monks bore the title *rabban,* a derivative of *rabbi.* They used literary approaches that had as much to do with the Talmud as they did with the theologies of Latin Europe. See Philip Jenkins, *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, and How it Died* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009), 67. See also Edward Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 5

The significant words of Pope John Paul II in Rome, during the first official papal visit to a synagogue in 1986, broadly signalled the profound shift which had begun to emerge within Christian language with regard to Jews and Judaism.

> "In doing this, I venture to say, we shall each be faithful to our most sacred commitments, and also to that which most profoundly unites and gathers us together: faith in the One God who 'loves strangers' and 'renders justice to the orphan and the widow,' commanding us too to love and help them. Christians have learned this desire of the Lord from the Torah, which you here venerate, and from Jesus, who took to its extreme consequences the love demanded by the Torah."[504]

The suggestions of this thesis, and in particular this chapter, for developing a language of reconnection through engagement with sacred text, joins the unfolding dialogue between Christians and Jews. In so doing, it critically asks if the Torah can become for Christians and Jews seeking a 'new way' together, a fundamental starting point, being the 'revelation we have in common'.[505]

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[504] See 'Text of Pope's Speech', 1986: https://www.nytimes.com/1986/04/14/world/text-of-pope-s-speech-at-rome-synagogue-you-are-our-elder-brothers.html, retrieved September 14 2018

[505] See "The Roots of Anti-Judaism in the Christian Environment, from Pope John Paul II's discourse during his visit to the Rome Synagogue, (April 1986), http://www.vatican.va/jubilee_2000/magazine/documents/ju_mag_01111997_p-42x_en.html, retrieved May 2 2017

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TORAH AS A KEY TO NAVIGATING FLASHPOINT TEXTS

I. INTRODUCTION

Christian theology has traditionally held that the NT texts dismiss the Torah in favour of grace.[506] Such a conclusion presupposes that the Torah itself is inherently opposed to grace. Historically, this theological assumption has been very damaging for the Jewish-Christian relationship, inviting hostility and fostering negative, legalistic perceptions of Jews and Judaism. NT scholarship, in its earlier days, often identified Jesus as being an enemy of the Pharisees and tended to characterise the Pharisaic movement in broad strokes as being 'works-based' or hypocritical, while Christianity invoked sensibilities of faith and love.[507] Thankfully, much of this scholarship has been revised in recent decades, with detailed attention being paid to the 'Jewishness' of Jesus of Nazareth, who lived and taught, and died, as a Jew in a Jewish setting.[508] This more recent, and currently flourishing, scholarship has been

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[506] This view tends to be emphasised more in a 'Reformed' approach to the concept of grace, that is, the theology which arose out of the Reformation. The Catholic view of the relationship between law and grace differs slightly, although still historically has maintained that Israel was 'obsolete' with the coming of Christ. See Cunningham, *Seeking Shalom,* 182-183

[507] Mark D. Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm (eds.,) *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2015), 6

[508] David Flusser, as professor of early Christianity and Second Temple Judaism, closely explores Jesus of Nazareth in the context of first century 'Jewish life and faith', in the *The Sage from Galilee: Rediscovering Jesus' Genius.* For example, he examines the concept of 'normative *halakot'* as developing during Jesus' time, and concludes that Jesus' moral decisions in a given situation often reflect the presiding *halakot.* See as above, xv

oxygenated by the commitment of both the Catholic Church through Vatican II and the various Christian denominational bodies, to both decry antisemitism and affirm Jesus "as a son of Israel".[509] Indeed the Ten Points of Seelisberg, as mentioned earlier, in 1947 emphasised the significance of the fact 'that Jesus was Born of a Jewish Mother'.[510]

The letters of the Apostle Paul, which comprise a large section of the NT, have historically provided much theological fodder for cultivating anti-Jewish sentiments in the field of Christian hermeneutics. In his chapter "Portraits of a Lutheran Paul", Stephen Westerholm examines Augustine, Luther, Calvin and Wesley respectively, specifically assessing their eminent and influential contributions to Pauline interpretation.[511] He argues that the 'Lutheran' Paul of twentieth century Pauline scholarship refers not so much to a denominational designation, but rather to a specific reading of Paul "as one for for whom the doctrine of justification of faith is central and deliberately excludes any role for human 'works'".[512] Westerholm's reassessment of Paul is therefore influenced to some degree by the approach adopted by Ed Parish Sanders, namely to relocate the apostle from a Western

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[509] For example, in 1993 Pope John Paul II signed a *Fundamental Agreement* between the Holy See and the State of Israel, which established formal relations between the two entities. Part of a statement in this *Agreement* expressly emphasises the Vatican's "condemnation of hatred, persecution and all other manifestations of antisemitism directed against the Jewish people and individuals anywhere, at any time, by anyone." See "Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Israel, Article 2 (2)", https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/mfa-archive/1993/pages/fundamental%20agreement%20-%20israel-holy%20see.aspx, retrieved February 17 2019. See also Cunningham, *Seeking Shalom,* 172, 218

[510] The Ten Points of Seelisberg, August 5 1947. Point 2 reads, "Remember that Jesus was born of a Jewish mother of the seed of David and the people of Israel, and that His everlasting love and forgiveness embraces His own people and the whole world". See https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/interreligious/Seelisberg.htm, retrieved February 17 2019. See also Appendix A

[511] Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics",* 3-88

[512] Ibid., xvii

framework into his (Paul) own times, as much as is possible. Mark Nanos notes that while historical and biblical-critical methods took steps much earlier in affirming the Jewishness of Jesus and placing Jesus of Nazareth within a 'Torah positive' framework, this approach did not so quickly extend to the Apostle Paul.[513] However, the 'New Perspective on Paul' scholarship, of which E.P Sanders was a pioneer, made significant inroads reversing traditional stereotypes both of Paul and of first century Judaism.

The primary goal of this thesis is to establish the possibility that the Torah, as sacred text, can be a key to the betterment of relations between Christians and Jews. With that in mind, the purpose of this chapter is to engage the Torah in such a way so as to reflectively reconsider specific NT 'flashpoint' texts, which have historically been used to theologically buttress anti-Jewish and anti-Torah attitudes. Part of the motivation for exploring these particular texts is to build on the conclusions from chapter four and to further probe the question of supersessionism, asking whether or not it can be traced directly to the NT texts themselves. To accomplish this we shall first engage with the nuances of the Greek word *nomos* νόμος, used both in the NT and the LXX to transliterate the term *torah,* and the possible implications of this transliteration.

In the process of engaging with the nuances of this crucial term *nomos,* a foundation is established from where it is possible to more closely examine the Apostle Paul's own seemingly complicated relationship with the Torah. This is important for the development of this thesis as it will enable a re-engagement with specific verses from

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[513] Mark Nanos, *Reading Paul within Judaism,* 77

the texts of Galatians, Romans and Hebrews, which historically have been used in Christian theology to reinforce anti-Jewish persuasions.[514] Revisiting these familiar texts in this way facilitates a retrieval to some degree of these texts. The intention of such a retrieval is to honour both the integrity of the Torah as sacred and covenantal text, and the community whose life is bound up in the very fabric of the Torah itself. This approach enables us to further rethink inherited supersessionist hermeneutics which can colour Christian approaches to biblical text, for the wider purpose of re-imagining the Jewish-Christian encounter. In addition, revisiting these flashpoint texts helps to reframe some of the traditional arguments which have historically limited Christian engagement with the Torah. This reframing clears a theological space which enables Christians and Jews to engage with the possibility of a renewed exegetical encounter - sacred reconciliation through sacred text.

II. TORAH > NOMOS > LEX

In both the LXX and the NT the term *nomos* νόμος is used to translate the word *torah* תּוֹרָה. *Lex* is the Latin translation of *nomos* used in the Vulgate, (the Latin translation of the Septuagint), and *law* is used to translate *lex* in the English translations of the Bible.[515] Making allowances for what is 'lost in translation', these terms nonetheless carry undertones of 'legalism' and 'legislation' and give an impression of a legal system which demands rote obedience and compliance. While, of course, the Torah

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[514] Acknowledging that the text of Hebrews was most likely not authored by Paul, as will be discussed further in this chapter.

[515] The English word 'law' comes from the Old English *lagu,* which in turn comes from Old Norse and carries the sense of 'something being laid down or fixed'. *Nomos* has the inflexion of 'custom' as well as 'law', or *polis* meaning 'constitution' or 'judicial norm' depending on the context in which it is used, as we will discuss further below. See https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/law, retrieved March 29 2017

as a whole contains legislation within it, (and indeed in Jewish thought retains a legal position insofar as it is God's legally binding contract with the people of Israel), to define the Torah solely as a *law* with all the suggestions of *lex*, jars sharply with traditional Jewish definitions and the etymological connotations we have thus far attempted to establish. Furthermore, it facilitates the notion that because Torah is synonymous with *law* it must be disjoined from *grace*. This disjoining creates a fundamental rupture of relationship across multiple planes.

Strong's Exhaustive Hebrew and Greek Concordance offers 'law', 'Mosaic Law', and 'a force to impel action' among its definitions for *nomos* (νὸμος). The root of the Greek word *nomos* is *nemo* (νέμω), meaning 'to parcel out', 'allot', or 'apportion', and along with its cognates, *nomos* appears in the NT approximately 200 hundred times.[516] In Homeric literature, *nomos* has the sense of the social, cultural and legal 'norms' that prevail within society, and it is this tone of *nomos* that Robert Cover strikes in his significant essay *Nomos and Narrative. Nomos*, however, is also defined as 'a system of religious thinking', particularly when it appears without the Greek definite article, and 'a general principal of law' or 'a working principle that regulates life' as well as an abstract 'governing power'.[517] Each of these definitions are determined by context, a point which must be underscored. *Nomos* has a variety of uses and carries a

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[516] 165 times as *nomos* in 167 verses, and 200 times with root/cognates. See http://biblehub.com/greek/3551.htm, retrieved March 29 2017. For a detailed overview of the uses of *nomos* and its cognates in different contexts, see https://www.wenstrom.org/downloads/written/word_studies/greek/nomos.pdf, retrieved January 3 2019

[517] See Heikki Räisänen's chapter entitled "Paul's Word-Play on νὸμος: A Linguistic Study", in *Jesus, Paul and Torah: Collected Essays* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 69ff. Paul tends to use *nomos* most frequently in the singular reflecting the LXX usage of the term, and employs it with or without the definite article. See also Pericles G. Katoppo, "'Translating *Nomos* "Law" in Romans in Simplified Indonesian", (October 1, 1991), https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/026009439104200404?journalCode=tbtd, retrieved January 4 2019

multiplicity of meanings, and this must be kept in the frame when navigating the Pauline epistles for example, which employ the term approximately 120 times.[518]

II.1   THE NUANCES OF NOMOS IN THE NT

Following are three textual examples, each of which suggests a different nuance or use of the term *nomos* in the NT itself. These examples demonstrate the dexterity of the word and highlight the importance of avoiding the assumption that *nomos* simply means *law* and specifically the Law of Moses, or that when Paul uses it in a negative sense he automatically means the Torah. The first two examples are verses from the Letter to the Romans, and the third is from the Gospel of John.

II.1.1   NOMOS AS A 'GOVERNING POWER'

"For the law (*nomos*) of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law (*nomos*) of sin and death." (Romans 8:2)

Some interpretations of this verse might render that the second half of the verse is referring to the Torah or the Law of Moses.[519] The mental and verbal affects of

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[518] The majority of Paul's usage of the terms is found in the Epistle to the Romans (approximately 74x) and the Epistle to the Galatians (approximately 32x). See A. Andrew Das, *Paul and the Jews* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 155-165. Romans and Galatians are therefore key texts to study in order to gain an appreciation of Paul's application of the term. Mark Nanos comments on the interpretive importance of Romans in particular for historically shaping Christian theological attitudes toward Jews and Judaism. See Mark D. Nanos, *Reading Romans within Judaism: Collected Essays of Mark D. Nanos, Vol 2,* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2018)

[519] An example of a standard interpretive commentary on this verse: "In these verses, Paul contrasts two laws: the law of the Spirit and the law of sin and death. The law of the Spirit is the gospel or good news of Jesus, the message of new life through faith in the resurrected Christ. The law of sin and death is the Old Testament Law of God." See GotQuestions.org Home, retrieved January 3 2019. A second example, found in *John Gill's Exposition of the Bible,* https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/romans-8-2.html, retrieved February 17 2019

equating Torah with law and subsequently with sin and death have done their job well if this is the dominant interpretation that is received and applied. And yet one chapter earlier (Romans 7:12) Paul declares both the Torah and the *mitzvot* (*entole* ἐντολὴ in NT Greek) as 'holy, righteous and good'. As other commentaries note, in the verse itself there is no sense that either of the two usages of *nomos* refer in any capacity to the Torah, and indeed the rest of the chapter is devoted to outlining the fruits of living a life infused with the Holy Spirit.[520] The *nomos* of a life lived in Messiah is more powerful and sets us free from the *nomo*s of sin and death, presumably the 'natural law' or order of the flesh. This suggests more the idea of an 'abstract governing power', a little like the laws of gravity, than the Torah, and together with Romans 7:1 infers the idea that the *nomo*s, the normative governing laws or powers, be they in society or the natural order of sin and death, have no jurisdiction over those who are in Messiah, for they are under a different *nomos* altogether, 'the spirit of life'.[521]

II.1.2   NOMOS AS A 'PRINCIPLE'

One chapter earlier in the Epistle to the Romans, Paul writes,

"So I find it to be a principle (*nomos*) that when I want to do right, evil lies close at

hand." (Romans 7:21)

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[520] For example, *Meyer's NT Commentary,* and *Elliot's Commentary for English Readers,* both maintain that this verse is not referring to the Law of Moses. See https://biblehub.com/commentaries/romans/8-2.htm, retrieved January 3 2019

[521] "A figurative use (of *nomos)* may also be seen, as when Paul refers to the law of faith (Rom. 3.27)… Other instances are the law of sin (Rom. 7.25), the law of the spirit of life (Rom. 8.2), and the law of Christ (Gal. 6.2)." See *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, (Abridged in One Volume),* Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (eds.), Geoffrey W. Bromiley, (trans.), (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 652

Exactly the same word *nomos* is used in this verse, and yet many translations render its use here as 'principle'. This conveys the idea of a general 'principle' or 'norm' in life, that evil is nearby when Paul wants to do the right thing. In fact it sounds almost like a wisdom statement from Proverbs. It also shows us how in one short passage the same word can carry different nuances and establishing both the immediate and wider context of text or verse is vital in translation. David Stern suggests that Paul is engaging in a wordplay here with *nomos,* drawing on its possible meaning as a 'rule' or 'principle', a 'law' in the sense of governing legislation, and the Torah simultaneously.[522] Whether or not this is so, it opens an interesting possibility. In the stream of Jewish thinking that understands all biblical and rabbinic 'teaching' to be *torah* in the wider current of meaning that the word carries, could we legitimately translate torah (with a small 't', as a 'teaching') here? The verse would become, "I find it to be a *torah* (a 'teaching') that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand". This shows us how a simple alteration in emphasis and word meaning, can profoundly impact theological assumptions and conclusions. The predominant scholarly conclusion here, however, is that Paul is using *nomos* with the common inflexion of a 'principle' in this verse.[523]

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[522] David Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary,* 379

[523] For example, "The word νομος, law, in this verse, must be taken as implying any strong or confirmed habit, συνηθεια, as Hesychius renders it, under the influence of which the man generally acts; and in this sense the apostle most evidently uses it in Romans 7:23." See https://www.studylight.org/commentary/romans/7-21.html, retrieved February 17 2019

II.1.3   NOMOS AS 'SCRIPTURE'

John 10:22 presents Jesus in Jerusalem during the Festival of Chanukah, embroiled in a passionate debate. As any good Jewish teacher, Jesus uses Scripture in the form of a question to answer his opponents and is recorded as replying in verse 34, "Has it not been written in the *nomos*, 'I said you are gods?'". Here Jesus is quoting directly from Psalm 82:6, as would have been well known to his fellow debaters. The word *Law* with a capitalised 'L', coming from *nomos*, is a very common translation of this verse. Very few scholars, however, would assert that the 'Law of Moses' and the Psalms are one and the same. This highlights an underlying working assumption in some NT translation that *nomos* is almost always rendered as the Law of Moses, or at least should most often be translated as *Law*. Here, however, as many commentators would concur, we can clearly see that *nomos* has a wider sense of Scripture - in this case the Psalms. To translate *nomos* as the Five Books of Moses simply makes no sense in this context. The use of the actual term *nomos* is not in question, it is the restrictive translation and interpretation here as *Law* which most often indicates the Law of Moses.[524]

A second example to support this claim can be found in 1 Corinthians 14:21. Here, Paul is often translated as writing,

"in the Law (*nomos*) it is written,'by men of strange tongues and by the lips of

strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to Me', says the

Lord".

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[524] In fact, the use of *nomos* here again complements the idea of *torah* having the wider usage of all scriptural or rabbinic teaching, as well as the Torah of Moses. Therefore we can suggest that the nuance of *nomos* in this particular passage is the wider body of Jewish Scripture.

However what is translated as 'Law' here is clearly not referring to a passage from the Torah, but from the Prophets as Paul is specifically quoting Isaiah 28:11. Therefore it would appear that the use of *nomos* in this passage also conveys this broader sense of Scripture.[525]

II.2   A REALIGNMENT OF NOMOS

Is *nomos*, then, a helpful or accurate translation of Torah, given our expanding definition so far? The Jewish translators of the Septuagint in approximately 132 BCE and the Hellenist Jews of Alexandrian Egypt (for whom the Septuagint became the primary biblical text due to their fluency in Koine Greek), rendered the Torah תּוֹרָה as *nomos* νόμος in their translations and writings. In order to retain a sense of literary and thematic integrity and avoid some of the pitfalls of anachronism, we need to appreciate their application of *nomos* for Torah. However, as eminent professor of Jewish history Steven D. Fraade notes,

> "the price these ancient biblical translators paid in translating Torah as nomos (200 times out of 220), was the unintended consequence of characterising the Torah (Pentateuch), and (then) the Hebrew Bible overall, as 'The Law', as the Septuagint's 'nomos' and the Vulgate's 'lex' are translated in turn by most modern English translations of the Bible. As long ago noted by C.H. Dodd, "Thus over a wide range the rendering of 'torah' by 'nomos' is thoroughly misleading, and it is to be regretted that the English versions have followed the Septuagint via the Vulgate in so many

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[525] See the NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon, https://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/nomos.html, retrieved March 15 2017

cases", thereby "giving a legalistic tone to much of the Old Testament." Once the

Torah and the Hebrew Bible are represented as 'The Law', then the isolation of its

narratives from its laws and the reductionist dichotomisation of Old Testament Law

(and 'legalism) from the New Testament Spirit…are not far to follow. It is precisely

this terminological disintegration of the laws and narratives of the Bible that

permitted the former to be largely abrogated while the latter to be typologised in

what came to be the dominant, supersessionist narrative of Christianity - with grave

historical consequences."[526]

Whilst recognising the historical choice of the Hellenistic translators in rendering the

Torah as *nomos*, we can nonetheless trace the mental and verbal consequences of this

choice. As Fraade highlights, it is the correlation of the Torah with law and legalism

that is problematic. This legalistic association has become a dominant historical lens

through which the Scriptures are read and interpreted. Certain translations for

example, such as the NIV, insert headings to guide their readers' interpretation. This

can be either helpful or unhelpful depending on the interpretation and subsequent

application. Romans 7:1, to illustrate this point, is part of a longer discourse in which

the Apostle Paul is drawing out a complex argument on what it means to be free

from the penalty of Torah (not the Torah itself), through using familiar imagery

(marriage) to which his readers could relate. The NIV translation places a heading

above this chapter (one which is most definitely not in the original text) - 'Released

From the Law, Bound to Christ' - lest the reader be in any confusion as to the correct

interpretation of this chapter. This immediately limits the scope of the text, restricts

its authenticity, and places the reader(s) in a fixed position in relation to the Torah,

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[526] Steven D. Fraade, *Nomos and Narrative Before Nomos and Narrative,* Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities 17.1 (Winter 2005), 84

and I would suggest, the Jewish people. It further intimates that release from the Torah was Paul's agenda, (see Appendix D). Such an approach would, in Westerholm's estimation, reflect more of a 'Lutheran' approach to the apostle, insofar as it suggests an obsession with freedom from the ceremonial aspects of the Torah in tandem with justification by faith alone.[527]

However, in both Talmudic and midrashic sources, we can find similar teachings regarding the idea of 'freedom' from the Torah. In the Talmud we read,

"Rabbi Yochanan said - 'what is meant by the phrase "With the dead, free" (Psalm 88:6)?

That when a man dies he becomes free from the Torah, and from the commandments". (Shabbat 30a).[528]

The effect of death on one's obligation to the Torah is being debated. This signals that Saul of Tarsus is not the first in the Jew to broach the subject of freedom from the Torah. How this freedom is interpreted and applied however, is of critical importance. Mark Nanos emphasises the influential role which the interpretive tradition surrounding the Pauline epistles, and Romans in particular, have played in shaping Christian identity. Within these parameters of Christian identity formation,

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[527] Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul,* xvi - xix

[528] דאמר רבי יוחנן מאי דכתיב במתים חפשי כיון שמת אדם נעשה חפשי מן התורה ומן המצות: This is part of a longer Talmudic tractate dealing with assessments of life and death in relation to the teachings of David and Solomon and Shabbat practices. See Sefaria https://www.sefaria.org/Shabbat.30a.5?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en, retrieved January 3 2019. David Stern notes that other passages echoing the same sentiment are to be found in Shabbat 151b, *Niddah* 61b and in the *Pesikta de Rav Kahana,* which is one of the oldest midrashim). See David Stern, *New Testament Commentary,* 375

Jews and Judaism have most often been characterised as 'inferior to Christianity'.[529] In this vein, Krister Stendahl writes,

"Especially in the Protestant tradition - and particularly among Lutherans - it is Paul's Epistle to the Romans which holds a position of honour, supplying patterns of thought that are lifted into the position of ovearching and organising principles for the Pauline material."[530]

Stendahl notes that the key to Pauline thought is to be found in a broader reappraisal of not only his letters, but the entire body of NT texts in addition to 'the long and varied history of Christian theology'.[531] Taking Stendahl's thought further, it could be said that Paul's very own writings offer a strategy for rethinking the Jewish-Christian relationship, one which was employed by the Second Vatican Council in the formulation of *Nostra Aetate*. The 'teachings of contempt' within the Christian interpretive tradition, as Jules Isaac identified them, can be reversed according to Mark Nanos with Romans 11 as its starting point.[532] Romans 11 contains important insights concluded by Paul as he wrestles and ruminates on Israel's election by God through grace and her irrevocable calling among the nations. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, it was Romans 9-11 that furnished both *Nostra Aetate* and the Church with the

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[529] See Mark Nanos, *Reading Romans within Judaism,* 179 ff

[530] Krister Stendahl, *Paul Amongst Jews and Gentiles,* 1-2

[531] Ibid., 2

[532] Nanos, *Reading Romans,* 179-181. Nanos also highlights that in spite of the unfolding scholarship in this area affirming Paul's place within the Judaism of the first-century, and the restorative statements made by Pope John Paul II for example in Rome in 1986 and the World Council of Churches in 1988, translators and interpreters alike continue to reinforce negative associations between Paul and the Torah, and by proxy Paul and the Jewish people. This has the unfortunate consequences of perpetuating replacement theology, and according to Nanos distorts the very source which could dispel supersessionist sentiments.

scriptural 'means to reassess attitudes toward Jews and maintain the continuing validity of God's covenant with his Jewish people'.[533]

Referring back to the use of the actual word *nomos*, Ariel Berkowitz suggests it is not so much the use of the term itself that is problematic, it is the automatic assumption in translation that it means *law*, and that *law* is an adequate synonym for *torah*.[534] Left unchallenged, this assumption spawns the idea that because *nomos* is *lex* and *lex* is *torah*, the Torah itself is a system of law which stands in contradistinction to grace. And it is this theological idea that has carried 'grave historical consequences' in Stephen Fraade's assessment.[535] According to Berkowitz, a better, more accurate translation for *nomos* when it is used, particularly in the NT, might be a direct translation from *nomos* to *torah*, 'the Torah', or even 'teaching'. This would omit the word *law* altogether, except in those instances of course where *law* (or another one of its multiple meanings) was actually intended.[536]

It is clear from this that translators have an ethical and moral as well as religious responsibility to pay close attention to the inherited presumptions which can colour translation and interpretation. Walter Benjamin notes in his famous essay *The Task of the Translator* (1923), that translation has the potential to increase our understanding of a text through offering a dexterity of language. Rather than limiting or constricting or reducing an important concept through translation, the translated text

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[533] Edward Kessler, "Nostra Aetate: Fifty Years On", *A Jubilee for All Time,* 39

[534] Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered,* 110-112

[535] Steven Fraade, *Nomos and Narrative Before Nomos and Narrative*, 10

[536] Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered,* 110-112

can communicate a dimension of its 'essential meaning'.[537] Rethinking, therefore, the meaning we ascribe to certain words, like translating *nomos* or *torah* as 'teaching' or 'instruction' instead of merely *law*, can be part of a 'process of completion' in Benjamin's terms, rather than reduction and limitation.[538] The translated text can reflect an infinity of possibility rather than reinforcing age-old stereotypes.

III. PAUL AND THE TORAH

The Apostle Paul is attributed with authoring a possible fourteen of the NT epistles to the developing communities, and from the seven epistles that scholars are in agreement about his authorship, we can safely ascertain that he is a 'lion' of a man with an incredible grasp on philosophy, both Jewish and Hellenistic, and language.[539] He possessed deep conviction and expressed his thoughts with an almost unruly, passionate integrity. Harold Bloom refers to Paul as a 'literary genius'. Hans J. Schoeps writes,

"Paul was a dynamic personality, on whom thoughts rained so that he was driven

ceaselessly from one to another. Moreover his thought was penetrating, leading us to

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[537] Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, (eds.,) *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume 1, 1913-1926* (Cambridge, MA and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 255-257

[538] Ibid., 262

[539] In all probability, Saul/Paul was fluent in Hebrew (Acts 21:40, 22:20) and Aramaic (the lingua franca of Judea and Galilee according to Dead Sea Scrolls archeologist Yigael Yadin), and most likely, despite inevitable scholarly debate, capable in both Greek and Latin. See Brad H. Young, *Paul the Jewish Theologian,* 14-15. See also Sarah Ruden, *Paul Among the People: The Apostle Reinterpreted and Reimagined in His Own Time* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2010), xi-xiii. There is a question over whether the 'Hebrew' mentioned in the Acts reference was actually Aramaic.

well-nigh unfathomable depths. Often he merely suggests, and instead of a whole

chain of thought will give us flashes of ideas".[540]

Paul is often credited with being the first Christian missionary, and his epistles are

foundational for the development of much Christian doctrine and theology. The

reception history of Paul and his epistles, however, has not always been positive.

Hyam Maccoby, in *Paul and the Invention of Christianity,* claimed that Christianity as a

religion separate to Judaism was largely the work of Paul (who was quite possibly,

according to Maccoby, a Gentile or a 'Hellenised Jewish convert').[541] Thomas

Jefferson wrote of the Apostle as 'the first corruptor', and Nietzsche referred to him

as the *Dysangelist.*[542] There is no doubt that Paul is a controversial figure in both the

Jewish and the Christian world. There is also no doubt that verses from the Pauline

epistles, and other NT texts, have been used to theologically justify anti-Jewish bias

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[540] Hans J. Schoeps, *The Theology of the Apostle in the Light of Jewish Religious History.* Trans., Harold Knight. (Cambridge, England: James Clarke Co. 2002), 49

[541] Hyam Maccoby (1924-2004) wrote extensively, amongst other things, on the subject of anti-semitism. He drew a direct line between the pages of the Gospels and the phenomenon of anti-semitism as it had developed. Unlike Jules Isaac, Maccoby asserted that anti-semitism as it had been historically experienced by Jewish communities was a product of Gentile Pauline Christianity. He did, however, affirm the Jewishness of Jesus and hold that Jesus of Nazareth was a Jewish rebel whose life and teachings, and death, reflected that of one who rejected the Roman occupation of Judea. His view of the Apostle Paul was not so favourable. See Hyam Maccoby, *The Mythmaker: Paul and the Invention of Christianity* (Harper Collins, 1987). See also James Tabor, *Jesus and Paul,*

[542] "Paul was the great Coryphaeus, and first corrupter of the doctrines of Jesus." Thomas Jefferson, cited in *The Great Thoughts: From Abelard to Zola, from Ancient Greece to Contemporary America, the Ideas that have Shaped the History of the World,* by George Seldes, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1985), 208. See also, Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Jewish Dysngelist", in *The Writings of St. Paul,* ed., Wayne A. Meeks, (London/New York: Norton, 1972), 291 ff

and anti-Torah sentiments, or downright anti-semitism.[543] The question remains - what was the nature of Paul's own relationship to the Torah? This question is theologically complex, on which much historical ink has been spilled. Nonetheless it is important for this thesis as the Pauline epistles have traditionally framed much of the Christian interpretive approach to the Torah as it developed. Asking this question therefore addresses, or at least opens the question of, a particular stumbling block in the Christian relationship with the Torah, which enables us to more fully consider the possibility of the Torah being a key to the betterment of Jewish-Christian relations. To broach the question of the Apostle Paul and his relationship with the Torah, with Jewish-Christian reconciliation in mind, we will take a deeper look into the events of Acts 21, a key passage in the narrative of the fledgling Christian community, as they unfold.

III.2   ACTS 21 - CONTEXT AND CHRONOLOGY IN A KEY TEXT

"After this, we started on our way up to Jerusalem. Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.

When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters received us warmly. The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. Paul

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[543] David Luckensmeyer asserts, in relation to the charge of anti-semitism levelled against Paul, that, "It is possible to conclude that Paul is intentionally not anti-Semitic - his letters convincingly reveal a person who considers his life and thought 'within Judaism'…But Paul's texts may well have had an anti-Semitic effect." He continues, however, that it is important to reiterate the fact of a traceable polemic which has been extrapolated from the text and used to historically to vilify Jews and Judaism. See David Luckensmeyer, *The Eschatology of 1 Thessalonians,* (Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus/ Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 167-171

greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through

his ministry.

When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother,

how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the

law. They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the

Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or

live according to our customs. What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you

have come, so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a

vow. Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that

they can have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know there is no truth in these

reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law. As for the

Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from

food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from

sexual immorality."

The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went

to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and

the offering would be made for each of them." (Acts 21: 15-26, NIV).

There are two important hermeneutical observations to be noted here. Firstly, not all

the events in the NT are chronological in the order they might appear at a surface

reading. In other words, keeping a sharp eye on the chronology in the interior of the

text is important, rather than presuming there to be a superficial chronological

unity.[544] For example, the events of Acts 21 most likely occur *after* Paul had written the epistles to both the Galatians and the Romans. This conclusion is based on the fact that the Book of Acts was composed somewhat later (c.63-65 CE, although some scholars propose the later date of 80-90 CE) than Galatians and Romans (c. 50-58 CE approximately).[545] Tuning in to this chronological aspect shows us Paul's attitude toward both Torah and his Jewish kinsmen at a later time in his ministry, when it is assumed by some (both Christian and Jewish) theologians that he had abandoned the Torah and his people long ago.

Secondly, establishing context plays a crucial role in interpreting Paul's sentiments and instructions for the community contained within his letters. The Epistle to the Galatians is an excellent example of the importance of establishing both the immediate as well as the wider context of the letter.[546] The immediate context of this letter concerns new Gentile believers in Messiah who are being taught, possibly by Gentile converts to Judaism, that acceptance into the community of Israel and salvation are dependant upon their physical observance of the Torah. Because of this, it stands to reason that Paul, who is preaching the inclusion of Gentiles into the commonwealth of Israel on the basis of their acceptance of Messiah alone, might incorporate negative statements about the mis-use of Torah in this manner. Such

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[544] For a helpful overview of the chronological development of the Pauline epistles, see Rick Aschmann, "Chronology and Locations of the Writing of Acts and Paul's Letters", https://aschmann.net/BibleChronology/WherePaul%27sLettersWereWritten-changes%20since%202017-06-21.pdf. Retrieved January 4 2019. See also Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered,* 102-105

[545] See Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 295-305

[546] Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered,* 17-18

statements however, must be interpreted in light of both the immediate and overall context of this letter.[547]

Continuing with the example of Galatians, Paul's chief purpose is to offer a theological, practical and authoritative response to specific circumstances in this developing community. Therefore, he is obviously not making conclusive statements in this particular letter about the centrality and wider importance of the Torah, and he is definitely not teaching on the practical application of Torah in the life of a faithful member of the household of Israel. Rather he is emphasising, in response to a particular live issue, that one may not abuse the Torah and live according to *halakhah* in order to merit salvation or justification in the eyes of God or the community. This, according to Paul, is not only unnecessary it is simply not the essential function of Torah within the covenanted community. A similar idea applies in the letter to the Romans, where Paul is responding to specific problems the developing communities are encountering.

III.3   SAUL/PAUL - A RADICAL JEW

In *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity,* Daniel Boyarin claims that Pauline literature is so significant for biblical scholarship, that it should be essential reading for all students of first-century Judaism.[548] For Boyarin, the essentiality of engaging with Paul is underpinned by the fact that his letters can, and should, be taken as the

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[547] For more on assessing the context of Galatians, and seeing the text through the lens of an 'intra-Jewish' debate, see Mark Nanos, *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in First-Century Context* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2002), 25 ff

[548] Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1994), 1-2

'autobiography' of a first-century Jew. In Boyarin's notable endeavour to 'reclaim Paul as a Jewish thinker', he compares Paul's work to that of Philo and Josephus.[549] A 'new perspective' on Paul indeed, and high praise from a Jewish Talmudic scholar in the twenty-first century to a Jewish scholar in the first. Emphasising the fact that there was no one way to 'be Jewish' in the first-century, Boyarin claims that Paul's very marginality and his attempt to forge and recreate a new identity, actually expresses his essential Jewishness. Thus Boyarin engages in a 'wrestling' with the discourses and sentiments of Paul, in the knowledge that from one Jew to another the pursuit of wrestling over and contesting meaning is par for the course.[550]

From the Acts 21 passage above it is clear that the early Jewish leaders of the Jesus Movement were asking similar questions which might be asked today about Paul's own relationship to the Torah. The passage seems to infer a rumour that had been spreading like wildfire amongst the believing Jewish communities - that *Sha'ul of Tarsus* שאול התרסי (Paul's Hebrew name) was teaching his students both the abandonment of circumcision and Torah, and to even go so far as to 'forsake Moses' altogether. What is of particular importance in this passage is the fact that there were numerous Jewish 'believers' in Messiah who were 'zealous for the Torah', and were therefore worried and confused as to the apparent persuasion of Paul's teaching. Indeed there were so many of these believers, that the Greek text uses the term

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[549] Boyarin, *A Radical Jew,* 2

[550] Ibid., 3

'myriads', often translated as 'thousands' but more accurately rendered in Greek as 'tens of thousands'.[551]

Notice the sequence of events in the passage. After they had reunited in Jerusalem they went to the home of James (Jacob), where Paul began relating the most recent reports of his mission teaching the Good News of the Messiah to the *goyim*, the nations.[552] Upon hearing this there was much rejoicing at what was happening among all people, not just in Israel. This exuberance is tempered however with a heavy concern - the 'myriads' of Jewish believers in Jerusalem who are zealous in their love of Messiah and Torah, are deeply concerned by the rumours that have been circulating about the content of Paul's message, namely that he is preaching an abandonment of Moses *(Torah)*, circumcision *(covenant)* and Jewish custom *(halakhah* and *minhagim)*.

Saul/Paul, who in his own words had been "circumcised on the eighth day, of the People of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrew parentage, in observance of the Torah, a Pharisee", further describes himself in Acts 22 as "a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city (Jerusalem). I studied under Gamaliel, and was thoroughly trained in the Torah of our ancestors. I am just as zealous for God as any of you are today". Later in Acts 23, "My brothers - I am a Pharisee, descended from Pharisees…" Paul's response to the request made by the

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[551] μυριάδες *myriades* - strictly meaning 'ten thousand', 'tens of thousands', or 'an indefinitely large number or a figure of speech for a number that is too large to count.' See http://biblehub.com/greek/3461.htm, retrieved March 15 2017. See also David Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary,* 300

[552] The Greek word used in the Acts 21 passage is *ethne* ἔθνη which carries the meaning of people from the 'nations', meaning non-Israelites or pagans depending on the context. See https://biblehub.com/greek/1484.htm, retrieved March 14 2017

his fellow Jewish believers to overturn the rumours about his rejection of Torah and Moses, and his subsequent self-describing statements are of crucial significance and provide an important vantage point from where we should begin to interpret Pauline theology.[553] They should not be ignored, underplayed or written off as circumstantial.

What is of particular significance is the obscure timeline in this passage - if, (as we have already stated), the Apostle Paul had penned his epistles to the communities in Galatia and Rome before the events that occur in Acts 21, we should not be surprised at the rumours that had begun to circulate among the believers in Jerusalem. What is most striking, however, is *Paul's own response* to these rumours. Having been asked by Peter and James and the other elders who were present to make his position clear and overturn these rumours altogether, Paul responds by meeting every requirement of both Torah and Jewish custom exactly. According to Ariel Berkowitz, this is Paul's 'golden moment', a choice opportunity to clarify his position in relation to Torah once and for all to entire early Christian community, both Jewish and Gentile.[554]

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[553] Brad Young notes the context in which Paul twice declares Tarsus as the city of his birth (both in Acts 21:39 and 22:3). The Roman authorities have accused him of being 'the Egyptian', a revolter against the Roman army. See Young, *Paul the Jewish Theologian,* 12-16

[554] Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered,* 104

III.4   HERMENEUTICAL TRANSITIONS

Biblical and NT scholarship generally holds that very little can be obtained from the Book of Acts as it is a 'transitional' book.[555] As such it contains an account of a sequence or series of events, rather than theological statements, creeds, hymns or instructions found in other NT writings and letters. It is therefore seen by many scholars as a 'bridge' text that serves to link the Gospels and the Epistles. One particular 'transition' that the Book of Acts registers is the demographic shift that occurs in the early Christian community between the almost exclusively Jewish audience to the predominantly Gentile one. However, some biblical and NT scholars go beyond this demographic transitional element and interpret it as a 'theological' transition also. For example, Merril C. Tenney, Professor of New Testament Studies and Greek, writes,

"Since Paul was the leader of the Gentile Mission, he deserved primary attention, and the explanation of the transition from Jew to Gentile, from Law to Grace and from Palestine to the Empire, did not call for a comprehensive survey of all that took place in the missionary growth of the christian church. For Luke's purpose, the presentation of this one phase was sufficient".[556]

Tenney's *New Testament Survey*, one of the standard textbooks in many seminaries and theological colleges introductory courses to the New Testament, here equates the transition 'from Jew to Gentile' with the the transition from 'law to grace'. This

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[555] For example, J. Dwight Pentecost, *New Wine: A Study of Transition in the Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010)

[556] See Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Survey,* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985) 234. See also Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered,* 103-104

expresses an age-old assumption which positions the Jewish people together with 'law' and Christians with 'grace', with repressed inferences of the adjectives 'old' and 'new', implied by the word 'transition'. Such a conclusion surely exposes hints of replacement theology or supersessionism - one system or people group being superseded or replaced by a newly elected one. Similarly, J. Dwight Pentecost's book on the transitional nature of Acts maintains,

> "This transition…involved many radical changes. It transformed from an old
>
> revelation to a new revelation…that is, from the Old Testament to the New
>
> Testament. It moved from the administration of the kingdom by Law to a new form
>
> of the kingdom administered by grace. It changed from Jew as ethnic community to
>
> Gentile. It transferred from Israel as a chosen entity to the church."[557]

Remembering that both the epistles to the Galatians and the Romans, often cherry-picked as fodder for anti-Jewish or anti-Torah sentiments, were already written when the events of Acts 21 take place might broaden our perspective as we interpret some of the more challenging verses in those two letters. Berkowitz maintains that Acts 21 should therefore become a primary text in approaching Pauline hermeneutics, remembering the importance of both chronology and context as we translate, interpret and apply.[558] The consequences of not incorporating these hermeneutic principles have been distorted and painful, often portraying Paul, a faithful Jew in his own eyes and words, as an inherently anti-Jewish, anti-Torah missionary who rejected

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[557] J. Dwight Pentecost, *New Wine,* 6-7

[558] Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered,* 102-105

both 'the Law' and his people in favour of a new religion.[559] And the consequences of this sentiment, whether intended or not, has been to traumatically dislocate Christians from the Jewish roots of their faith on two particular axes - the Jewish people, and the Torah, the quintessential Jewish text. The Book of Acts therefore can perhaps offer more to our hermeneutics and subsequent theology than might be presumed.

The scope for this conversation is much wider and deeper than what is offered here, but it can be definitively concluded that Paul's relationship with both the Torah and the Jewish people is more complex than is sometimes assumed. This has long been affirmed by E.P Sanders for example, and the broader New Perspective on Paul scholarship which, as mentioned, has done much to reconsider some of these age-old presumptions about the Apostle. Bipolar dispositions which imply that Saul as a Jewish Pharisee was murderous and legalistic, but Paul as a Christian was grace-filled and therefore anti-Law, reduce and ignore both the intricacies of first-century Jewish life and Paul's own claims about the Torah, the Jewish people and his personal identity as a Jew. Rethinking Paul has profound implications for how we interpret and receive his epistles and theological directives.

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[559] Pamela Eisenbaum, *Paul Was Not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009), 6

IV. REVISITING CHALLENGING TEXTS

"I feel obliged to question this view…but even where we are not convinced, (it does)
the very valuable service of forcing us to re-examine a text strenuously and rethink
matters we have tended to take for granted, and (helps) us look at key points in the
Epistle, from new angles…"[560]

Responding to the monumental work of Professor J. D. G Dunn on the Apostle
Paul's use of the phrase *ergo nomon* ἔργων νόμου, translated as 'works of the Law',
C.E.B Cranfield comments that although one perspective may not agree with another
when it comes to wrestling with aspects of the Pauline epistles, different persuasions
provide ample material and motivation for a deep reckoning with the interior of the
text. For any biblical scholar or serious student this must always be recognised and
the possibility of fresh intersections welcomed.[561]

The final part of this chapter revisits certain 'contentious' texts which contain
difficult phrases. The immediate purpose of this reconsideration is to challenge
inherited presumptions about Paul and his relationship with the Torah as expressed
through his letters, as they historically have fed directly into both Christian
theological perceptions about the Torah as a living text, and the Jewish people whose
identity is intimately and irrevocably bound up with that text. The wider purpose is
to question if the Torah is a stumbling block to more fruitful Jewish-Christian

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[560] Dunn's work picked up the thread from E.P Sanders. As such he is a major contributor to the field
of the NPP scholarship - indeed Westerholm notes it was Dunn who 'christened' this new era in
Pauline scholarship. See Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul,* 183. See also C.E.B Cranfield, *On
Romans, and Other New Testament Essays* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clarke, 1998), 2

[561] Cranfield, *On Romans*, 1-2

relations, or a potential stepping stone. In order to accomplish this, four verses from four texts are examined, (two from Romans, one from Galatians and one one from Hebrews - it is acknowledged of course that the Letter to the Hebrews, is not authored by Paul and therefore is not considered a Pauline text. Nonetheless it is a key passage in the discourse about the sources of supersessionism, and is significant in our reconsideration of 'flashpoint' texts as it is one from which supersessionist conclusions in relation to Jewish-Christian dynamics are often drawn.)[562]

Each of these texts could be seen to contribute to anti-Jewish or anti-Torah dispositions and therefore keep the metaphorical door of reconciliation closed. The attempt here is not to 'shoe-horn' a theology which suits our persuasion through making the texts say what we wish. Rather, it is to offer theological space where we can ask in the interest of Jewish-Christian reconciliation, is this (predominant interpretation) what Paul really means? Does this commonly accepted assumption about the Torah represent Jesus of Nazareth faithfully as a Jew? Is this what the text itself implies?

IV.1 'UNDER THE LAW' ὑπὸ νόμον - *Romans 6:14*

The instantly recognisable and oft-quoted maxim 'under the law', *upo nomon* ὑπὸ νόμον, is one which the Apostle Paul employs approximately ten times between the

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[562] Eusebius also questions the Pauline authorship of the Letter to the Hebrews. One modern theory proposed by Adolf von Harnack is that Priscilla, a contemporary of the Apostle Paul who is mentioned along with her husband Aquila in the Book of Acts and Paul's Letter to the Romans, composed Hebrews. According to this theory no name was offered for fear of suppression of the Letter as she was a woman. See Ruth Hoppin, *Priscilla's Letter: Finding the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Fort Bragg, CA: Lost Coast Press, 2009. See also Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (3rd Ed.,) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 411-417

Letter to the Romans, 1 Corinthians and Galatians. Romans 6:14 might be an extremely familiar example - "you are no longer under the law but under grace". 'Under the law' in Christian theology is often interpreted as a general, negative sentiment Paul is making about living a life still within the framework or confines of the Jewish Torah. It presumes there to be no difference between the Torah and the Christian understanding of legalism. Moreover it presents the Torah as a system of rules which demands perfect compliance and obedience., a way of living which is naturally distinct from grace. Romans 6:14 in particular is often used to emphasise the perceived distinction between the 'law' (assumed to be the Torah) and 'grace', a condition of favour and forgiveness that has been established through Christ.

Such an understanding feeds into a hermeneutic of dividing up the bible into parts which are inherently pitted against one another. The adjectives 'old' and 'new' applied to the two testaments in Christian bibles reflect entrenched historical assumptions about Jewish and Christian identity. The 'law' is the old and 'grace' is the new. Jews by association, in later Christian readings of these texts, are of the 'old' and therefore inherently legalistic, and Christians are of the 'new' and therefore living in grace.[563] Can we really derive all of this theology, with its far-reaching historical, theological, social and cultural consequences, from this maxim and the others like it? If so, (for this is the historical and theological reality which has persisted in the Jewish-Christian

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[563] As highlighted in chapter three, the Evangelical Church of the Rhineland produced a statement in 1980 challenging the traditional Christian use of the word 'old' in relation to Jews and Judaism, and emphasised the historical implications of this language. It stated, "Throughout the centuries the word 'new' has been used against the Jewish people in biblical exegesis: the new covenant was understood as a contrast to the old covenant, the new people of God as a replacement to the old people of God. This obliviousness…marked Christian theology…Thereby we have made ourselves guilty of the physical elimination of the Jewish people." See Document 17, *The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People,* 92-92, 169

relationship), it is imperative for the sake of dialogue and reconciliation to revisit these terms that come from the quill of Sha'ul of Tarsus with a keen eye, gazing through the lens of the document itself that seems to be the stumbling block in this equation.

IV.1.2   LEGALISM AND LANGUAGE

The term 'legalism' carries certain associations in Christian theology which it might not in other fields of discourse. In Christian thought, 'legalism' is that phenomenon in which emphasis on behaviour, moral rigour, or 'the letter of the law', is placed above the grace of God. Legalism is distinct from ideas of obedience or discipline.[564] In 1921, the biblical scholar Ernest DeWitt Burton offered a Pauline usage for the term *nomou,* suggesting it was related to the concept of 'legalism' as opposed to the Law of Moses.[565] The aforementioned Scottish theologian C.E.B Cranfield, a contemporary of E.P Sanders in the field of Pauline scholarship, shed further light on this phrase and others like it in his essay on Paul,

which first appeared in 1964. In his accomplished commentary on Romans, he writes,

"the Greek language of Paul's day possessed no word-group corresponding to our

'legalism', 'legalistic' and 'legalist'. This means he (Paul) lacked convenient

terminology for expressing a vital distinction and so was surely seriously hampered in

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[564] See Daniel G. Reid et al., *Dictionary of Christianity in America* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990). See also *New Dictionary of Theology,* Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright eds., (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 379-380

[565] See Ernest DeWitt Burton, *The International Critical Commentary: Galatians* (first published in 1921), (Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark International, 2001), 120

the work of clarifying Christian position with regard to the Law. In view of this, we

should always, we think, be ready to reckon with the possibility that the Pauline

statement, which at first sight to the Christian might seem to disparage the Law, were

not really directed at the Law itself but against that misunderstanding and misuse of

it, for which we now in these days have a convenient terminology. In this very

difficult terrain Paul was pioneering."[566]

In other words, according to DeWitt Burton, Cranfield and the scholars who have

followed them, the Apostle Paul is navigating difficult terrain as the same linguistic

dilemma he faced in the Greek language also existed in Hebrew. There were no

Hebrew words which easily convey the concepts of 'legalism' and 'legalist' just as

there were no Greek.[567] Paul therefore is making a complex theological argument in

his epistles, which responds to a specific situation that arose in a specific context. He

employs this term *upo nomon* to express his dismay at the exploitation and

misapplication of the Torah within the newly believing community. The specific

misapplication is new believers applying *halakhah* in order to be justified and accepted

into Israel. In fact, in refuting this application of Torah one could argue that Paul is

upholding a strong Jewish sentiment that the Torah must be studied and encountered

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[566] C.E.B. Cranfield, *Romans International Critical Commentary, Volume II,* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1975), 853

[567] However, here we must proceed with caution. Part of the radical impact of Sander's pioneering work on Paul, was that he did not present Paul as being at odds with a 'legalist' Judaism. If we are claiming that Paul was refuting legalism to a degree through his use of the word *nomos*, avoiding the pitfall of anachronistically inadvertently assuming that the Judaism of which he speaks is the hub of that legalism is of the utmost importance. There is a danger os imposing a post-reformation understanding of legalism onto these texts. See Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul,* 201-205

and lived 'for its own sake'.[568] It is not an exchange system or a cheap one way ticket to salvation. And the exploitation is those who are teaching, particularly in the context of the community in Galatia, vulnerable new believers from non-Jewish backgrounds to take on all aspects of Torah and *halakhah* in order to gain acceptance into the wider community of Israel.

One important point must be highlighted here that Cranfield emphasises - it is not the validity of the Torah itself that is in question, but the misuse of it. There is no suggestion that Paul is prohibiting Gentile believers in the Jewish Messiah from learning more about the Torah and the customs of Jewish life. But he is passionately refuting the idea that in order to *gain entry* into the community, in order to gain acceptance and partake in the blessings and inheritance of Israel, they need to do anything more than have faith in the Messiah. Therefore 'works of the law' (a phrase we will come to further in this chapter) can not secure acceptance, justification or salvation. Only faith in the Messiah, according to this reading of Paul, can achieve those things. The Torah has a different purpose, a different function within the covenanted community, and it is clear that Paul does not regard the Torah as a 'salvation document', but rather as that which is 'holy, righteous and good' (Romans 7:12).

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[568] *Pirkei Avot,* the 'Ethics of the Fathers', states, "Rabbi Meir says: Anyone who involves himself in Torah for its own sake merits many things, and moreover the entire world is worthwhile for his sake…" (*Pirkei Avot* 6:1). In this vein, the Talmud records a rabbinic debate with Rabbi Akiva (c. 50-135 CE) about whether the action of the Torah, or the study of the Torah for its own sake, is more important. The conclusion is that study is greater as study is what brings about the action (*Kiddushin* 40b). See "Torah Lishmah", https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/34559.3?lang=en&p2=Kiddushin.40b.8&lang2=en, retrieved January 6 2019

In fact, Paul responds to his own statement about not being 'under the law but under grace' with a rhetorical question in the very next verse,

"What then - shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! May it never be". (Romans 6:15)

Remembering the common Hebrew word for 'sin' (*chata* חָטָא) means to 'miss the mark' as a bow shot from an arrow that misses its target, reinforces the root sense of the word 'torah' as instruction which which hits the target exactly. In the strongest possible language, we can picture the Apostle Paul using all linguistic and metaphorical measures available to him to passionately communicate the importance of grace in the Messiah, of not misusing or exploiting the Torah, and then of not misusing 'grace' as a licence to freely 'miss the mark' or sin.[569] Clearly he is responding to a myriad of issues that had been erupting within the emerging communities in Rome and Galatia.[570]

IV.2 'WORKS OF THE LAW' ἔργων νόμου *- Galatians 2:16*

Ergo nomon ἔργων νόμου, is a phrase employed by Paul approximately eight times in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians. It is most commonly translated as 'works of the law', and by that the meaning is interpreted by many scholars as being the practical 'deeds' of Torah. Drawing from Cranfield's assessment above, whilst keeping in mind the caution to avoid an anachronistic imposition of post-Reformation understandings of legalism onto Paul, it can be suggested that Paul is

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[569] Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered,* 112

[570] Pamela Eisenbaum, *Paul Was Not a Christian: The Original Message of a Misunderstood Apostle*, 55-66

attempting to navigate the complex theological and linguistic terrain in which he found himself. A complexity in interpretation however is to be noted here. Traditionally, Lutheran and Reformed traditions (in particular) interpreted this phrase to mean that any human effort could not secure justification, righteousness or salvation before God (a theology known as 'works righteousness').[571] Agreeing that Paul was refuting the notion of securing justification through 'works or deeds', the *New Perspective on Paul* movement in NT scholarship, nonetheless takes a different perspective on exactly what those 'works' are. Thus the issue in question is not so much Paul's affirmation of justification through faith, but rather what he meant by 'works of the law'.

The *New Perspective on Paul* is a field of biblical scholarship that became prominent in the 1970's, and was spearheaded by E. P. Sanders 1977 publication on *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.[572] Followed by Professor Dunn, the aforementioned C.E.B Cranfield, and later by N.T. Wright and other such NT scholars, this stream of thinking on Paul attempts to re-imagine the Jewish world from which Paul emerged. In so doing, it seeks to move away from 'projecting' specifically Western, Christian, (and Westerholm would argue Lutheran), assumptions back into Paul's theological assertions.[573] building to some degree on Sander's approach to Paul and 'covenantal nomism', Dunn holds that *ergo nomon* is used by Paul to convey those commandments which specifically confer Jewish identity, such as circumcision, kashrut or the

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[571] Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul,* 249-258

[572] See E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (London: SCM Press 1977). See also E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism,* (SCM Press, 1985)

[573] Westerholm, *Perspectives,* 226

observance of Shabbat.[574] By this, he (Paul) was accentuating his persuasion that entry into Israel was achievable through the work of Messiah himself and not dependant on the Gentile observance of the specific requirements which identify one as a Jew. It is important to note in this conclusion that there is no sense of a condemnation of Jewish law, but rather a misuse of it.

If Paul advocates justification through Messiah rather than justification through specific 'works of the law', be they deeds according to the Lutheran and Reformed positions, or rituals that confer Jewish identity, what could this mean? We can make two observations. Firstly, it confirms the Torah in its teaching function of instructing the covenanted community how to live with God and with one another in sacred time, rather than being a failed salvation document that is 'paralysed' in its capacity to offer salvation, as Christian theology sometimes assumes. If justification, then, according to Paul, comes through Messiah, of what benefit is the Torah at all? Paul himself responds - 'So then, the Torah is holy, and the *mitzvot* are also holy, and righteous and good', in the context of a discussion that is unfolding in his epistle to the Romans about the nature of sin in relation to the Torah.

Reading between the lines, it is interesting to note that Paul is quick during his discourse to affirm the positive aspects of what it means to be Jewish, perhaps to dispel the very assumptions which he is later (in Acts 21, as discussed earlier in this chapter) accused of - namely that he is relinquishing his relationship with his fellow Israelites and their Torah and promoting the abandonment of Moses. Hinting that

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[574] Sanders writes of 'grace and works' as being 'in the right perspective' for first-century Judaism, contradicting much historical Christian characterisation of the Judaism of Jesus and Paul as being a 'religion of legalistic works-righteousmess'. See Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism,* 59, 239

such questions were simmering beneath the surface of the emerging communities, Paul pointedly states in Romans 3:14,

'What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there at all in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God…What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness somehow nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all!'

A second observations leads us back into this idea of 'deeds of Torah'. Cranfield notes that James Dunn focused in his 1982 Manson Memorial Lecture, entitled the *New Perspective on Paul*, on one NT example of this very phrase located in Galatians 2.16,

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Cranfield highlights Dunn's interpretation of Paul's use of *ergo nomon* as contextually inferring the 'things that (are) distinctively and characteristically Jewish'.[575] According to Dunn, Paul and his Jewish contemporaries did not see these distinctive Jewish practices as 'merit-amassing observances', but rather as 'badges' that mark one out as being part of the covenant people. What Paul is denying here, according to Dunn, is

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[575] See Cranfield, *On Romans,* 3

not the *relevance* of these badges, but that God's grace could only extend to those who wear them.[576]

IV.2.1   LETTERS FROM QUMRAN - 4QMMT

The phrase *ergo nomon* ἔργων νόμου (from the Greek *ergō*, meaning "to work, accomplish") has an exact Hebrew equivalent - *ma'aseh HaTorah* מַעֲשֶׂה התורה (*ma'aseh* מַעֲשֶׂה meaning 'to accomplish', or 'acts, actions, achievements or deeds', coming from the Hebrew root asah עָשָׂה meaning 'to do' or 'to make').[577] In order to offer a deeper suggestion as to the context of Paul's use of the phrase, let us turn to the only extant Second Temple Period Hebrew source where this exact phrase is located - the Dead Sea Scrolls.[578]

The title of a particular document significant for this discussion is 4QMMT, which stands for *Miqsat Ma'aseh HaTorah*, (a phrase emerging from a reconstructed line in a fragment of the text - C27). Dead Sea scholars John Strugnell and Elisha Qimron translated this phrase as 'Some Precepts of the Torah' and eventually entitled the

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[576] Ibid., 3. Cranfield does not support Dunn's view that it is specific Jewish markers which Paul is referring to, but rather to misuse of the Torah in general. See Jacqueline, C.R. de Roo, "The Concept of "Works of the Law" in Jewish and Christian Literature", in *Christian-Jewish Relations Through the Centuries,* Porter and Pearson eds., 123

[577] BDB, 793-795

[578] Dunn, in developing his argument about ἔργων νόμου, used the three known Qumran texts where this phrase *ma'aseh HaTorah,* or *Torah ma'aseh,* or *ma'asav b'Torah,* are located. The most famous is 4QMMT, the other two texts are 4Q174 and 1QS. See de Roo, "The Concept of the "Works of the Law"", 122

Scroll with that very name.[579] The recognition of the possible similarity between the phrase *ma'aseh hatorah* מעשי תורה in 4QMMT and *ergo nomon* ἔργων νόμου in the Pauline epistles has been noted by a number of researchers, particularly since the publication of 4QMMT in 1994.[580]

The 'works', 'deeds' or 'precepts' of 'the Torah' (depending on the translation) referred to in 4QMMT include twenty specific legal issues on which the writers of the text disagree with the intended recipients of the text (many scholars believe it to be a letter). The 'legal deeds' as terms them, in question concern matters of purity, sacrifice, priestly gifts, forbidden marriages and persons forbidden from entering the sanctuary.[581] The relevant passage is found in the reconstructed section C of 4QMMT:

"Now we have written to you some of the precepts/deeds/works of the Law *(miqsat ma'aseh haTorah)*, those which we determined would be beneficial for you and your people, because we have seen that you possess insight and knowledge of the Law. Understand all these things and beseech him to set your council straight and so to keep you away from the counsel of Belial. Then you shall rejoice at the end times when you find the essence of our words to be true. And it will be reckoned to you as

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[579] 4QMMT is a legal text, found in six fragments in Cave 4 at Qumran, (where ninety percent of the corpus of Dead Sea manuscripts were found.) See James VanderKam and Peter Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus and Christianity,* (London: T & T Clark International, 2002), 212

[580] See Martin Abegg, "4QMMT, Paul and 'Works of the Law'", in *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation,* Peter Flint ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 203-216

[581] See VanderKam and Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls,* 212-213

righteousness., in that you have done what is right and good before Him, to your

own benefit and to that of Israel"[582]

According to Dead Sea Scroll and NT scholar John Kampen, one legitimate reason

for the enthusiasm and scholarly concern in the potential identification of this

significant phrase in a Second Temple Hebrew text, is the apparent absence of the

phrase in other extant Jewish literature. Kampen, however, cautions the excited

student to avoid 'parallelomania', a pitfall in Second Temple Period scholarship that

his own mentor, the eminent Professor Samuel Sandmel, strenuously sought to avoid

when investigating the religious, social, political, cultural and environmental matrix

which saw the emergence of both the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament

texts.[583]

Nonetheless, the fact that this important phrase is found in two different, both

Jewish and sectarian, Second Temple sources, one in Hebrew and one in Greek, is

significant in and of itself and deserves careful attention. Biblical scholar and Dead

Sea Scrolls researcher Martin Abegg stated in his 1994 article entitled "Paul, 'Works

of the Law' and MMT", published in the *Biblical Archaeological Review*,

"In short, *Ma-aseh HaTorah* is (the Hebrew) equivalent to what we know in English

from Paul's letters as 'Works of the Law.' This Dead Sea scroll and Paul use the very

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[582] 4QMMT C 26-32 [WAC, 364]. See also Garcia Martinez, "Some Fragments of 4QMMT", http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/rak/courses/427/texts/4QMMT.htm, retrieved March 19 2017

[583] See John Kampen, *Reading 4QMMT: New Perspectives on Qumran Law and History,* Moshe J. Bernstein and Kampen eds., (Symposium Series: Scholars Press, 1995). *Parallellomania* is that condition wherein the Second Temple Period student becomes dizzy with excitement at the suggestion of any connection between the communities at Qumran and the nascent Christian communities, and might seek to trace genetic connections and parallels at every turn, rather than appreciating the matrix in which these texts were formed. See also Samuel Sandmel, *Parallelomania,* (1962)

same phrase. The connection is emphasised by the fact that this phrase appears nowhere in rabbinic literature of the first and second centuries A.D. -- only in Paul and in MMT. The 'works of the law' that the Qumran text refers to are obviously typified by the 20 or so religious precepts (*halakkah*) detailed in the body of the text. For the first time we can really understand what Paul is writing about. Here at last is a document detailing "works of the law"[584]

Abegg highlights an important point regarding the idea of 'religious precepts' or 'deeds', both interpretive translations of the same Hebrew word *ma'aseh*. However, bearing in mind Sandmel's cautious approach, Abegg is perhaps underscoring the parallels between Paul's usage of the term and the way it is used in 4QMMT with too much enthusiasm. What can be definitively concluded, is that Paul was not using a phrase totally foreign to the Judaism with which he was familiar.[585] The very fact of its usage in wider Second Temple Jewish texts highlights the futility of imposing a post-Reformation understanding of legalism onto Paul's argument. In and of itself however, the common use of this phrase does not definitively conclude that Paul and

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[584] *BAR*, 11-12/94 issue, p 53.

[585] Keeping in mind of course that the Dead Sea Scrolls provide the only other extant literature where the equivalent of Paul's phrase is used, meaning we have no way conclusively knowing how common this phrase was among other Second Temple Jewish sects. Elisha Qimron, however, in his translation work on the fragment from Qumran containing the line *miqsat ma'aseh haTorah* considers the term *'ma'asim'* (the plural of *ma'aseh*) to be a synonym of the Hebrew word *devarim* (meaning 'words' or 'things'), and as such interprets *ma'aseh* as 'laws' or 'precepts' of Torah. See Elisha Qimron, John Strugnell et al. *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert Volume X. Qumran Cave 4: V: Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Torah* (Oxford University Press, 1994)

the composers of 4QMMT were communicating the same nuances for *ergo nomon/ma'aseh hatorah* through their respective uses of the term..[586]

IV.2.2   THE DEFINITE ARTICLE

There is a final, but important, linguistic note to be made in reference to *ergo nomon* and *ma'aseh hatorah*, and that is the presence or absence of the Greek definite article του, meaning 'the'. In Romans 3:20a ("Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of law") and Galatians 2:16 for example, the text in which Professor Dunn was locating his treatment of the term 'works of the law', the definite article is notably absent rendering a close translation 'works of law'. (In other parts of Romans, Paul does employ the use of the definite article.) The absence of the definite article changes the dynamics of interpretation. For Ariel Berkowitz this is significant for two reasons. Firstly, it highlights the immediate tendency to translate *nomos* as the Torah or the Law of Moses without examining its variety of possible meanings and the significance of the inclusion or exclusion of the definite article. Secondly, it possibly clarifies the suggestion that Paul was making an argument about 'works, acts or deeds' of *nomos,* of law, not having the ability to secure justification which the Messiah can.[587]

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[586] Writing on Jewish folk narrative, Haya Bar Itzhak clarifies three usages of *ma'aseh* in traditional Jewish literature, as identified by *Chazal* (the collective noun for the Sages of Mishnah and the Talmud). As already noted, in Classical Hebrew *ma'aseh* implies works or deeds with a sense of 'workmanship' or accomplishment. It is the regular verb used throughout the Tanakh which denotes the idea of 'doing', as well as a noun that derives its sense from the verb, meaning it is 'the thing that is done'. The second meaning attributed to *ma'aseh* is 'something that occurred, something that happened, that is historic'. And the third usage is the sense of *ma'aseh,* most commonly used in Mishnaic Hebrew, is that of a religious 'precept' or *halakhah* (Jewish religious ruling). See Haha Bar Itzhak, "Non-Verbal Communication and Genre Definition in Jewish Folk Narrative", in *Oral Tradition and Hispanic Literature: Essays in Honour of Samuel G. Armistead,* Michael M. Caspi ed., (New York & London: Garlan Publishing, Inc., 1995), 17

[587] Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered,* 113-114

Whether *ma'aseh* is intended to convey a 'precept' or a 'deed' of Torah, 4QMMT supplies us with significant insight concerning aspects of Jewish legal teaching during the late Second Temple period. This is important for understanding the context out of which the New Testament texts, and particularly for this discussion Galatians and Paul's use of this phrase (notwithstanding his use of the definite article), developed and emerged.[588] Cranfield maintains that Pauline statements which appear to be disparaging about the Torah, are actually,

'directed not at the law itself, but rather against that misunderstanding and misuse of it, for which we now have the convenient terminology'.[589]

IV.3   CHRIST AND THE 'END OF THE LAW' τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς - *Romans 10:4*

The third verse which merits reassessment in relation to contentious biblical texts and the possibility of nurturing Jewish-Christian reconciliation though the Torah, is found in Romans 10:4. It is typically presented,

'For Christ is the end of the Law, so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes' (NRSV).

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[588] VanderKam and Flint offer four aspects where the DSS can be seen to illuminate the field of NT scholarship. Firstly, a general survey of the Scrolls provides key insight into first century Jewish society, practices, beliefs and schism. Secondly, they increase our knowledge of early Judaism itself which illuminates aspects of the Gospel message and helps root the Gospel firmly in an aspect of first-century Judaism. Thirdly it helps us see a sharper outline of the similarities and differences in the teachings of Jesus and other first-century Jewish sects. Fourthly, it provides 'new' texts with wording similar to certain NT passages (such as 4QMMT and this curious phrase 'works of the Law'), which shows that 'much or some', as VanderKam and Flint put it, of Jesus' teaching was anticipated in earlier texts, rather than being the product of the later church. See VanderKam and Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls,* 321-322

[589] C.E.B. Cranfield, *Romans* (ICC, Vol 2), 853

On first glance this might convey the assumption that Jesus Christ has nullified or abrogated the Torah,

as the JB (Jerusalem Bible) translation of this verse appears to affirm,

'But now the Law has come to an end with Christ, and everyone who has faith may be justified'.

These translations infer an inherent interpretation that anyone who follows Christ has no need of Torah, as it 'met its end' in Him. This is underpinned by the assumption that Torah means Law, and the 'old' system of legalism met its end with the dawning of grace, and righteousness now abounds. Righteousness and Christ are pitted definitively opposite the Torah. For example -

'Christ became the end of the Law by virtue of what He did on earth through His sinless life and His sacrifice on the cross. So, the Law no longer has any bearing over us…'[590]

Jason C. Meyer writes in *The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology,* that the Torah was ineffectual, and that,

"the New Covenant both replaces and surpasses…the transitory Old Covenant of Moses".[591]

Other Christian translations of this verse offer, however, clues that there might be more going on in the language than could be presumed at first glance. For example, the NIV translation:

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[590] See "What does it mean that Christians are not under the Law?", https://www.gotquestions.org/not-under-the-law.html, retrieved May 3 2017

[591] Jason C. Meyer, *The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology,* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2009) 268-287

'Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes'.

And the *Aramaic Bible in Plain English* translation:

"For the Messiah is the *consummation* of The Written Law for righteousness to everyone who believes."

Given the potential ramifications in interpretation which this verse holds, it is important to query our presumptions as we approach it. Did Paul really communicate, in his understanding, that Israel's Messiah means the nullification and abrogation of Israel's Torah? Is this what the 'myriads' of believers in Jerusalem, thirty years after the ministry of Jesus, who were 'zealous for the Torah', understood? The termination of the Torah might make sense if the Torah was a means of securing salvation and justification through obedience and works. But as we have laboured to demonstrate throughout this thesis, in Jewish sacred memory this understanding does not adequately describe define the Torah - instead it undermines and distorts it.

Let us then offer a closer reading of the Greek language of the verse, prompted by the different possible translations and meanings of this significant little word 'end'. In Greek the verse reads,

τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς εἰς δικαιοσύνην παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι

Telos gar nomou Christos eis dikaiosynēne panti tō pisteuonti

We have discussed at length the expansive nuances in the meanings of Torah תּוֹרָה and *nomos* νόμος. The Greek word translated as the 'end' of *nomos* in this verse is *telos*

τέλος. *Telos* can mean 'goal' or 'purpose', 'consummation' or 'end'. In Arndt and Gingrich's *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament*, *telos* τέλος is defined as the 'aim, purpose or goal' toward which a movement is being directed. Out of the 42 times this word appears in the NT, it only means 'end' with the sense of a cessation in four or possibly five places.[592] The second point of note is the absence of the definite article for *nomos* - it simply reads *nomou* meaning 'law'. Rather than Christ being the termination of the Law, the Greek of this verse suggests two possible readings. One reading is that for Paul, the Messiah is the culmination or the *nomos,* law in its widest sense, as we lmow it. A second reading is that the Messiah is for Paul the goal of the Torah, the purpose toward whom all the movement and breath of the Torah is directed.

Either of these readings offer different implications for how we understand Paul and his relationship to the Torah. Whatever Paul's seemingly complex relationship with the Torah it is clear that for him, the Torah has taken on a 'new significance' in light of how he understands the Messiah. Perhaps it is only complex if we make it so. This demonstrates how reconsidering one word can transform the potential interpretation of a verse. And translation, as we have noted, has profound ramifications for the interpretation and application of text, and the development of theology. The language we use directly influences how we see the other in our midst, as examined in chapter four. Changing our theological vocabulary and shifting the perimeters of our perceptions is a beginning step toward a realignment of both the

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[592] William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *Bauer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 819

external Jewish-Christian relationship, and the internal relationship between Christians and their Jewish roots.

IV. 4   A 'NEW COVENANT' בְּרִית חֲדָשָׁה - *Hebrews 8:7,13*

It is not clear whether the text of Hebrews in the NT is an epistle, or was originally part of a larger work. It does not follow the format of Greek letter writing which the Apostle Paul employs in his epistles. It is not addressed to anyone, although it seems apparent that the intended readers of the text are an early Jewish Christian community. Given that we cannot establish with certainty the author of the text it is harder to establish the intended recipients.[593] Nonetheless the text displays, along with its magnificent Greek, an inner knowledge of the workings of the Temple in Jerusalem, and a familiarity with Judaism which leads to some scholarly speculation that it was composed by a Jew for Jewish believers.[594]

It is important to reconsider Hebrews as a 'flashpoint text' with regard to Jewish-Christian relations, precisely because it is not considered a Pauline epistle. The *NPP* scholarship, as noted above, benefits from decades of a Pauline reassessment which

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[593] As mentioned earlier, one more recent theory is that Priscilla is one supposed author. Paul is another, Timothy yet another. Eusebius writes in his *Church History* that Origin maintained 'only God knows who wrote this book'. The title 'To the Hebrews' was inserted later, it was not part of the original text, adding to the ambiguity of establishing the community for whom this letter/text was intended. See Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3.3.5 - "some have rejected the Epistle to the Hebrews, saying that it is disputed by the church of Rome, on the ground that it was not written by Paul." See also James D. G. Dunn, "From Crucifixion to the End of the First Century", in *Partings: How Judaism and Christianity Became Two,* 49-51.

[594] Scholars note that the author of Hebrews displays a rich knowledge of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, not referring directly to the Temple in Jerusalem. However, it is unlikely that the author had no knowledge of the Temple, given the attention to detail…It is for precisely this reason that Sandmel holds this text to be a Jewish polemic against an earlier Judaism, the community for whom this letter is intended seeing themselves as the fulfilment of ancient Judaism. See Samuel Sandmel, *Anti-Semitism in the New Testament,* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 121

has endeavoured to relocate Paul within a Jewish setting and recalibrate some of the anti-Jewish theological conclusions inferred from his writings. While Hebrews is part of the NT canon, which has as a whole been reappraised and revisited on an number of axes in relation to Jewish-Christian dialogue, it is of benefit to reconsider specific verses from within this text which historically have nourished certain supersessionist assumptions.[595]

Chapter eight of Hebrews in particular contains sentiments about covenant which have long been a source of theological tension, and could be interpreted to directly promote supersessionism. Interpretations and applications of this text through the centuries have certainly used it in this way.[596] In this light, John Gager views the text as an intelligible polemic against Judaism, and as such regards it as the most regards it as "the most important anti-Judaising text of early Christianity".[597] Samuel Sandmel, whose aforementioned work contributed heavily to the reassessment of the Jewish Jesus and therefore to the advancement of Jewish-Christian dialogue in this respect, asserts that whilst Hebrews does not vilify Jews and Judaism as such, it nonetheless affirms Christian supersessionism over and against Judaism.[598] Lloyd Kim, however,

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[595] The idea that the NT is anti-semitic or whether it nurtured the seeds of what would become Christian anti-semitism, became a prominent theological question in the years immediately following the Holocaust. In this pursuit Jules Isaac was most influential as previously noted, deeply focusing on a re-examination of the NT texts in order to determine the causes of the anti-semitism so painfully real in his own life.

[596] Ekkehard W. Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann write, in reference to the question of anti-Semitism and the NT, that, "It can seem as if no verse in the Christian Bible, even in the first part of the bipartite canon, has escaped anti-Jewish interpretation or anti-Jewish use over the course of the centuries." See Ekkehard W. Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann, "Hebrews and the Discourse of Judeophobia", in *Hebrews in Contexts,* Gabriella Gelardini and Harold W. Attridge, eds., (Brill Academic Publishing, 2016), 357

[597] John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity,* (Oxford University Press, 1983), 183

[598] Samuel Sandmel, *Anti-Semitism in the New Testament,*, 120

in his work on *Polemic in the Book of Hebrews: Anti-Judaism, Anti-Semitism and Supersessionism,* maintains that to designate it as 'Christian' supersessionism over and against Judaism is a somewhat anachronistic conclusion. He qualifies this by confirming that while indeed Hebrews has been historically used to theologically buttress and promote Christian notions of supersessionism over and against Jews and Jewish texts, it fails to account for the author's own apparent Jewish identity. Kim also asserts that there is a 'social function' to the clear polemic which is found throughout Hebrews.[599]

This passage can therefore be considered a key flashpoint text, in that it distinctly demonstrates the shifting tide of relations between Jews and early Jewish Christians, and is attributed with being a contentious historical source of Christian supersessionism. To this end, let us examine more closely the dimensions of the BH term חָדָשׁ *chadash* (meaning 'renew', 'repair' or 'new' and coupled, in addition to other multiple uses, with the idea of 'covenant'), with the intention of drawing out interpretive possibilities for the inclusion of the Jeremiah 31:31-34 passage, employed by the author of Hebrews to effectively demonstrate his or her argument. Part of this re-examination is to emphasise the importance of establishing social and linguistic context in the field of hermeneutics, highlighting how the misinterpretation and misapplication of biblical texts have had a disastrous impact on Jewish-Christian relations.

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[599] See Lloyd Kim, *Polemic in the Book of Hebrews: Anti-Judaism, Anti-Semitism, Supersessionism?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 3-5, 192

IV.4.1 A SYSTEM OF THE SADDUCEES

Chapter 8:7 reads,

"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought

for a second".

And verse 13 continues,

"In that He says "a new covenant", He has made the first obsolete. Now what is

becoming obsolete and growing old, is ready to vanish away".

These verses have long provided what seems like a source of NT proof for Christians that God has abrogated his covenant with Israel in favour of a 'better' covenant. What is of the 'old', (what is Jewish), is obsolete. And moreover, this replacement, this transition is necessary due to the incomplete capacity of the that first covenant, as seemingly indicated by the text. It is not hard to see how these verses can be interpreted to buttress anti-Jewish sentiments, create a negative picture of Jews and Judaism, and particularly of the Torah. A standard Christian textbook on the outline of the NT, for example, states that,

"the writer of Hebrews (argued) that it was both pointless and unnecessary for

Christians to keep the ritual requirements of Old Testament Law…Previous

prophets had spoken in God's name to the people of their own time, but they were

now summed up and replaced by Jesus. He (was) the fulfilment of all Judaism's

aspirations…who both summed up and superseded all that had gone before".[600]

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[600] John Drane, *Introducing the New Testament,* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 423

A cursory glance at the Hebrews 8:7,13 verses presents what appear to be immediate supersessionist conclusions that the 'old' covenant and all its requirements have been abrogated in favour of a 'better', 'new' one. As the *NPP* scholarship emphasises, however, in relation to the Pauline literature, establishing the context of any NT text or letter is vital, and without doing this, the hermeneutical conclusions run the risk of being supported by anachronistic projections. As mentioned earlier, the text of Hebrews was most probably intended for Jewish believers in the diaspora. If this is the case, the intended recipients of the text would have had a familiarity with the priestly sacrificial system of the Temple, the locus of all Jewish life. And these specific verses occur in the middle of a series of verses discussing this very system.[601]

Central to Second Temple Judaism was the established system of atonement through animal sacrifice, and all Jews, whether they followed Jesus of Nazareth or Hillel, or whether a Zealot or a Sadducee, would have understood this. If this passage is therefore examined within the context of a close discourse on the implications of the sacrificial system being understood in light of the Messiah, we can assert that these verses are possibly referring, not glibly to the abrogation of an entire covenant

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[601] As noted elsewhere, the Hebrew term for covenant is *brit* with the Greek equivalent *diatheke*. It is significant to note that *diatheke* is missing from the Greek of Hebrews 8:7. A direct translation simply reads, "εἰ γὰρ ἡ πρώτη ἐκείνη ἦν ἄμεμπτος, οὐκ ἂν δευτέρας ἐζητεῖτο τόπος - For if the first had been faultless, a place would not have been sought for a second". https://biblehub.com/text/hebrews/8-7.htm, retrieved January 12 2019

with an entire people, but with a particular aspect of the sacrificial system.[602] For Michael Kogan, what ended in 70 CE with the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem was not Judaism, but a 'component' of Judaism, "the Temple sacrificial system of the Sadducees".[603] If post-Destruction Judaism wrestled with the absence of a Temple priesthood and the seismic implications of this, it is not inconceivable that a Jewish sect who believed Israel's Messiah had come also wrestled with the implications of a 'changed' priesthood. Hence, "what is becoming obsolete and growing old, is ready to vanish away".[604]

The word translated as 'obsolete' here in NT Greek comes from the verb *palaioó* παλαιόω, which means 'to make ancient', or 'to declare a thing to be old'.[605] As the verb translated as 'obsolete' is used twice in this verse, it carries the sense of that which 'is becoming old'. Thus, it is a possibility that at the time of this text's composition, the "vestiges of the sacrificial system were still functioning, they were not finished…instead they were 'becoming obsolete and 'growing old'".[606] Christian theologian Paul Ellingworth holds that for this community, the acknowledgement of

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[602] The dating of Hebrews, in addition to the authorship, has long been in debate by theologians and scholars alike. As previous noted, some advocate a later, post-destruction date of composition. Samuel Sandmel holds that the author was engaged in a polemic with ancient Judaism, as opposed to the Judaism of his or her day, and this combined with the total absence of any mention of the functioning Temple in Jerusalem but rather a heavy focus on the biblical tabernacle of Moses, leaves speculation about an earlier dating. However, it also must be acknowledged that there is likewise an absence of of any mention of Jerusalem or the Temple's destruction, and coupled with the extensive knowledge of the sacrificial system, this lends itself to the alternative conclusion that it was composed pre-70 CE. See Samuel Sandmel, *Anti-Semitism in the New Testament,* 121

[603] Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant,* 165

[604] It is a common assumption in Christian theology that the Torah and covenant or the 'old covenant' are one and the same. However the Torah, while being a covenantal text, is not one covenant, but contains a series of covenants within as we have already noted.

[605] Thayer's Greek Lexicon, https://biblehub.com/greek/3822.htm retrieved January 12, 2019

[606] Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered,* 49

Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah and the shift in animal sacrifice was 'a total reordering by God of his dealings with his people'.[607] The crucial point here is that this suggests an internal directive shift, not a replacement. But as the demographic shift from Jew to Gentile and the eventual consolidation with the Roman Empire took place, this 'reordering' was interpreted as a total superseding and used to vilify the Jews and Judaism from which it had come.

Another contextual dimension which C. F. D. Moule draws to our attention, is that of relations between the 'Christian' or believing Jews of this particular community and their fellow 'non-Christian' Jews. If Hebrews was written to a predominately Jewish believing community in the diaspora, it may well reflect some intra-Jewish issues which the community was facing. In this vein Moule writes,

"You Christians have no temple, do you?", the non-Christian Jews were claiming, "Nor do you have a priest, or even a sacrifice. How then can you call your faith a true religion?" To this the author of Hebrews replies, "Nonsense. We have a high priest (4:14; 8:1) who is greater than Aaron; we have a sanctuary in the heavens' (8:5-9:24) greater than that of Aaron; and we have a sacrifice from which the priests of the old covenant have no right to eat (13:10)."[608]

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[607] Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (New International Greek Testament Commentary), (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 409

[608] See 'The Temple in the Epistle to the Hebrews", (February 2014) (http://www.theworldofthebible.com/history/temple-epistle-hebrews/), retrieved January 12 2019

IV.4.2 'NEW' OR 'RENEW' - *Jeremiah 31:31-24*

Sandwiched between verses 7 and 13 of Hebrews 8 as presented above, is a direct quotation of Jeremiah 31:31-34. The author of Hebrews employs this well known prophetic passage to elucidate his or her argument about the meaning of the 'new covenant' spoken of by Jeremiah, in the light of Christ. The author of Hebrews, however, was not the first draw from this text. Luke 22:20 records Jesus as saying during the Passover supper with his disciples, "This cup is the *new covenant* in my blood which is poured out for you". The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 also makes use of this phrase, "In the same way also the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the *new covenant* in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me".[609] Geza Vermes asserts that simultaneous to the Lukan community's understanding of Jesus as the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophetic utterance concerning a new covenant with Israel, the Qumran community also saw themselves as the living fulfilment of this new covenant. Indeed, for the community in Qumran, the Sadducean system in the Temple had become so corrupt, that they abandoned Jerusalem and the sacrificial system altogether. Vermes writes,

"(They) abandoned the national sanctuary and substituted for it a spiritual Temple within their community in which prayer and holy life replaced offerings and sacrifices, although they hoped to take charge of the national cult in the capital again at the end of time."[610]

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[609] David Flusser asserts that the Lukan mention of the 'new covenant' is actually a later addition to the text which is drawing from 1 Cor 11: 25. See David Flusser, *The Sage from Galilee,* 106

[610] Geza Vermes, *Christian Beginnings,* 2

The author of Hebrews brings in the complex and rich imagery of the Tabernacle priesthood, pointing to the Messiah as the eternal High Priest along with the *brit chadashah* בְּרִית חֲדָשָׁה, the 'new covenant'.[611] There are many avenues of theological discussion, but for the purposes of this thesis let us examine more closely the nuances of the BH verb *chadash* חָדַשׁ meaning 'to repair' or 'renew'. As an adjective it indicates something 'new', for example, a *shir chadash,* a 'new song' like in Psalm 40. It also is the root verb for the Hebrew term for 'month'. 'Month' and 'new' therefore have the same root - 'repair' or 'renew'.[612] Ariel Berkowitz remarks in this regard that there is not a brand new moon in place each month. Rather, this word refers to the phase of renewal which the moon is undergoing.[613]

Interestingly, it is Jeremiah who uses this verb so compellingly a second time - in Lamentations 5:21. The verse, written in the context of mournfully lamenting the (first) destruction of the Temple and subsequent exile to Babylon, is poignantly sung in synagogues today around the world every Shabbat as the Torah scroll is returned to the Ark. It comes after a heartrending verse about being 'forgotten' as a people by God, and reads, "Return us O Lord to you, and we will be returned/restored, renew (*chadesh*) our days as of old." Restoration, renewal, resuscitation - these are the senses

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[611] For a detailed treatment of the points of overlap between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the text of Hebrews in terms of language and imagery, see Lawrence H. Schiffman, "Temple, Sacrifice And Priesthood In The Epistle To The Hebrews And The Dead Sea Scrolls", in *Echoes from the Caves: Qumran and the New Testament,* https://brill.com/abstract/book/edcoll/9789047430407/Bej.9789004176966.i-350_011.xml, retrieved February 22 2019

[612] BDB, 293-295

[613] Berkowitz sees the linguistic possibilities of *chadash* and its historical usage referencing renewal as carrying over to the concept of covenant, and maintains for those early Jewish believers, whether in the Lukan community, Qumran or the recipients of Hebrews, it would been understood not as an abrogation, but a renewal or 'amendment'. See *Torah Rediscovered,* 57

accompanying this particular usage of *chadash,* rather than a superseding abrogation. There is no doubt, however, that the flashpoint verses of Hebrews have been historically and theologically misused as a proof-text to imply just that.

With the charge of anti-semitism as inherent within the epistle, Lloyd Kim concludes, as we have mentioned, that it is anachronistic to presume this to be the intention of the author. In a similar vein, A. Roy Eckardt questioned that while it could be asserted that much of the NT harbours the seeds of what would become Christian anti-semitism and a virulent anti-Judaism, he also concluded that it is also possibly anti-semitic in and of itself to level the accusation directly at the NT.[614] This is because the NT is in its origins essentially a Jewish product of the shifting environment of Second Temple Judaism - a body of texts written by Jews and often intended for Jews, during a tumultuous, and sectarian, period of Jewish history. In this regard, Kim remarks that in the context of of the Epistle to the Hebrews,

'Though there are indeed strong words against the Levitical priesthood…there are strong words of praise for Jewish men and women in the history of Israel. Though (the author) seems to encourage his readers to separate from Judaism, he also promotes a faith that is deeply rooted in Jewish thought and history.'[615]

He also highlights, to a degree in line with Sandmel, that the traceable polemic in the letter is not directed at Jews or the Jewish people, confirmed by the fact that the Greek term Ἰουδαῖος *Ioudaios* is not mentioned in the epistle at all. It is the 'Jewish

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[614] A. Roy Eckardt, *Elder and Younger Brothers:The Encounter of Jews and Christians,* (Scribner New York, 1967), xix

[615] Lloyd Kim, *Polemic in Hebrews,* 2

institutions' central to Jewish life as it was known which were being reinterpreted.[616]

Thus it is clear that there is both 'continuity and discontinuity' between this emerging

Christian/Jewish community and other 'Judaisms' of this period.[617]

However, as Edward Kessler cautions, in the field of Jewish-Christian relations it is

important to analyse both the quest for the historical meaning of a text, while

simultaneously examining the 'history of effects' of those texts.[618] It seems clear

from our analysis above that the *Wirkungsgeschichte,* that is the reception history, of

the NT passages examined in this chapter is somewhat different to the origins and

intent of these passages. Nonetheless, it is the reception history which has had the

most significant impact on Jewish-Christian relations.

V. CONCLUSION

Revisiting these specific flashpoint texts highlights two immediate conclusions to be

drawn in relation to Jewish-Christian reconciliation. Firstly, the significance and

impact of *translation*. As emphasised in chapter four, when particular words are used,

mental and verbal associations abound. For example, in Meyer's work on the *End of*

the Law, he stresses the associations of the 'old covenant' verses the 'new'. Left

unchecked, inherited presumptions about a text and its meaning can become the

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[616] Ibid., 5

[617] Ibid., 1-2. Again it is important to reiterate that it was not discontinuity with the Jewish people, but rather discontinuity with certain aspects ritual Judaism, of which there was more than one expression during this period.

[618] Kessler, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 36

theological and doctrinal foundations from where whole patterns of thinking within communities are established. Choosing an alternative word, or simply examining the meaning and context of a word and the overall passage in which it is found, can profoundly alter how that text is interpreted and received. Therefore, we are in fact suggesting an approach which, through focusing on the context in which specific biblical texts were formed, challenges the accepted reception history of certain texts. This challenge seeks to cultivate a future reception history, which is founded on a sense of mutual witness and reconciliation rather than dynamics of oppositional identity formation.

Secondly, revisiting these specific NT verses invites sustained reflection on the pertinent question - is the NT itself a source of supersessionism, or are there supersessionist layers which were imposed onto and later read back into the text? This question has profound implications for Christian theology and for the Jewish-Christian relationship. If supersessionism is to be located in the NT narratives, gospels, epistles etc, this must either be accepted or a critical attitude adopted toward the formation of the texts. However, if it is that supersessionist tendencies which developed during the partings of the ways were read back into these texts, we must adopt a critical attitude toward the post-Apostolic era and check the lenses and theological equipment being used to interpret and apply those texts. This requires the dual approach indicated above, of critically examining both the origin and intent of the texts themselves, and the reception history of those texts.

CHAPTER SIX

THE SUBVERSIVE QUALITY OF TORAH TEXT:

THE TORAH AS A KEY TO GRACE

I. INTRODUCTION

> "Thou hast created me not from necessity, but from grace".

<div align="right">Solomon Ibn Gabirol</div>

Chapter five examined some of the nuances of the Greek word *nomos,* which is often used in conjunction with *lex* to transliterate the Torah as *law.* Whilst acknowledging that the translators of the LXX employed the term *nomos* to transliterate *torah*, we drew on Steven Fraade's assessment of some of the 'grave historical implications' of this translation.[619] As Ariel Berkowitz concluded, it is not so much the use of the term *nomos* itself that is problematic, it is the automatic assumption that it means 'law' and that 'law' in turn almost exclusively means the 'Law of Moses', particularly when the Pauline epistles use this term negatively. This creates a reductionist

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[619] Randolph Tate notes the early Christian used the LXX as their bible, drawing attention to some of the dynamics of translation, in that any translation inevitably introduces a 'modification' of religious and philosophical concepts, as a text moves from one language to another. See Randolph Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach,* 53. Paula Fredriksen states that "with the Greek language came paideia", meaning that with the translation of the Torah into Greek inevitably came the translation of ideas. Greek concepts as such were not 'read into' the text, they were provided by the language itself. See Paula Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ,* 14

dichotomy between the Torah as perceived law and the concept of grace, and this binary framework creates a ruptured plane for the pursuit of Jewish-Christian reconciliation.[620]

This chapter demonstrates that the *nomos*, the established rule or norm to borrow one of its meanings, is an integral part of the Torah narrative, in conjunction with Robert Cover's important essay *Nomos and Narrative,* which focuses on the intimate and dissoluble relationship between the two. The Torah and the wider biblical texts tend to subvert the *nomos* through a 'classical biblical dysfunction' as Tikva Frymer-Kensky terms it.[621] Drawing from the model in chapter three, this chapter will present a close reading of three specific, evocative narratives located in the Prophets, the Torah and the Writings respectively. The subversive qualities which these texts offer will be examined, with a keen eye focused on how they might speak into Jewish-Christian reconciliation.

In addition, these close readings will demonstrate that grace cannot be easily disjoined from the Torah as is so often presumed, but is in fact an integral part of it. The first narrative is centred on *Hannah* (1 Samuel 1:1-14), the second on the five daughters of *Zelophehad* (Numbers 22:1-11) and the third on *Ruth*. Engaging textually

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[620] The 1982 statement issued by the *Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews,* emphasises the 'uniqueness' of the relationship between Jews and Christians, and states that Jews and Christian are 'linked together at the very level of their identity'. Michael Kogan notes in this vein that relations between Jews and Christians are not automatically comparable to the interfaith relations between other world religions. In relation to identity formation and the development of positive Jewish-Christian relations, he writes, "What each thinks of the other is crucial to each one's own self-evaluation". See Michael Kogan, *Opening the Covenant,* 128. Therefore it is vital on a number of levels to reconsider the framework within which Christian-Jewish dialogue is approached, and part of this consideration involves a reassessment of the classical 'law versus grace' dichotomy which is so prevalent in Christian theology.

[621] See Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible: A New Interpretation of their Stories,* 302

with these strong and inspiring biblical women, we encounter themes of grace and mercy and covenant-loyalty as they are stitched into the texts like the finest embroidery. Building on this textual engagement, as has been a key focus and methodology throughout this thesis, a vantage point is established from where certain stock phrases often used in Christian theology, such as 'obedience to the law' and 'keeping the law' can be more effectively examined. This discussion will also draw from the previous chapter, which closely examined some of the classical Pauline phrases, such as 'under the law', with the purpose of reframing how we might perceive of and respond to these well known maxims which are central concepts in Christian hermeneutics.[622]

Finally in this chapter, a detailed examination of the legal terminology often associated with the Torah will be undertaken. For example, 'commandments', 'ordinances' and 'statutes' as they are presented in the Torah will be investigated, with the purpose of demonstrating that a simple alternation in perception and translation, as touched on in chapter four, can have an enormous impact on biblical interpretation. This in turn has implications for the relationship between Christians and Jews, and the macro-purpose of this concluding chapter is to collate some of the

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[622] As noted elsewhere in this thesis, Judaism does retain a 'legal' standing for the Torah, and there is full acknowledgement that the Torah contains within it many laws. In Jewish thought this 'law' is *halakhah*, which effectively is the process and activity of living out the commands of the Torah in day-to-day life. Therefore it is not to suggest that Christianity conceives of the Torah as law while Judaism does not, but the perception, application and understanding of that law is vastly different. For Christianity, the law or the Torah has often been characterised as an obedience demanding system which is defunct in favour of grace. For Jews, the Torah contains laws within it to live by, but it is an all-encompassing way of life which at its heart teaches the covenanted community how to live. Manfred Vogel, in his chapter entitled 'Covenant and the Interreligious Encounter', writes in this vein that "Judaism and Christianity place the law in different contexts. Christianity seems to place it primarily in the context of vertical relation between man and God. In Judaism, however, the burden of *halakhah* impinges upon the horizontal relation between man and man…it is a distinctive feature of Judaism that it refracts the vertical through the horizontal relationship…". See *Issues in the Jewish-Christian Dialogue,* Helga Croner and Leon Klenicki eds., 72

central ideas of this thesis, to effectively prove the possibility that the Torah, as sacred text, has a vital role in the pursuit of sacred reconciliation between Christians and Jews.

II. THE SUBVERSIVE QUALITY OF TORAH TEXT

In the significant essay *Nomos and Narrative* by Robert Cover, the irreducible connection between laws and the narratives which ground and express those laws, is emphasised. Cover writes of the delicate interaction of narrative with law, and how this interaction is what sustains the *nomos*, the 'normative universe' in which we live ,

"we inhabit a nomos - a normative universe. We constantly maintain a world of right and wrong, of lawful and unlawful, of valid and void. No set of legal institutions exist apart from the narratives that locate it and give it meaning. For every constitution there is an epic, for every decalogue a Scripture".[623]

For Cover, the *nomos* is not confined to, or even defined as, a series of legal codes or institutions. Rather, it is the 'normative universe', and within this normative world, there exists a delicate interplay between the established *nomos* and the narratives which house it. Cover illustrates this intricate tension between law and narrative by the example of the Torah law of inheritance, by which traditionally the eldest son receives a double portion of the family inheritance. This legal aspect (the established *nomos*) to the Torah as it is governed and played out in Israelite life is embedded in many biblical narratives. And yet these narratives often express a complex irony, a

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[623] See Robert Cover, "Nomos and Narrative" in *Narrative, Violence and the Law: The Essays of Robert Cover,* Martha Minow,   Michael Ryan and Austin Sarat, eds., (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 95-172

'classical biblical dysfunction', often passing over the first-born son in favour of the younger son (think of Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Joseph and his brothers).

There are therefore 'layers of meaning' Cover suggests, in which a subversive force is stronger than the rule of law, a reminder that 'divine destiny is not (always) lawful'.[624] In other words, the sacred future is centred on divine destiny and purpose and not necessarily the normative *nomos* one happens to inhabit. In relation to the Torah then, if we apply Cover's analysis, to separate Torah law from Torah narrative is to immediately undermine its strength. The laws and the narratives work together. In Cover's terms, they are 'structuring stories that spark our communal imaginations'.[625] This is helpful for reframing a Christian approach to the Torah which sees the text as a whole, rather than a set of defunct laws and a separate set of still-relevant narratives. Let us tightly read three biblical narratives to demonstrate this point further.

II.1   GRACE AS A VERB: *1 Samuel 1:1-14*

John Berger writes of the 'sadness in Monet's eyes'.[626] There was a melancholy which infused the Impressionism that was to become his legacy, and this melancholy found its way onto canvas through the medium of his eyes. In the opening lines of the biblical book of 1 Samuel, we meet a woman of a melancholy disposition named

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[624] Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep*, 348-250

[625] Quote from Richard Weisberg, in *Narrative, Violence and the Law,* vi

[626] In a chapter entitled "The Eyes of Claude Monet", Berger examines what he sees as an understated melancholy which is repressed in Monet's work. See John Berger, *Selected Essays of John Berger,* Geoff Dyer, eds., (New York: Random House Inc., 2001), 424 ff

Hannah (*Chanah* חַנָּה). Hannah, meaning 'grace' or 'favour', finds the very meaning of her name in the eyes of her husband Elkanah, and yet her own eyes convey an inner sadness that prevents her from eating and only allows her to weep. The subversive quality of the text and the tension between the *nomos* and the narrative is found here on a number of axes. In the ancient world, (as in many places today)to be married and not fruitful in a biological sense would be a cause for great consternation. And yet Elkanah favours Hannah, who is barren. There is something in how he sees her, which necessitates the question - what is it to find grace or favour in the eyes of an other, and why is this important? In chapter one of this thesis, we explored some of the textual possibilities which emerge from Genesis 2:22-24 in relation to the Deepest Other. The Adam sees his eternal other who was formed from his very substance, and it is only in 'seeing' and naming that other, that he could know and name himself. This subtle but powerful interplay of beholding another seems to be refracted in the idea that grace/favour is found in the eyes of another. This is important in the pursuit of reconciliation between Christians and Jews, insofar as there is an indelible link between the two faiths.[627] Perhaps learning to 'see' one another in relation to that link, can help to forge a path toward the other rather than away from that other.

Peninah, Elkanah's other wife, also lives out the fullness of her name - 'pearl'. And what is a pearl? A natural object of great beauty that has been formed in part by an irritant, a provocation in a tightly closed space that has produced something of great value and worth. In fact, pearls as they are found in nature are the result of

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[627] See Harold H. Ditmanson "Judaism and Christianity: A Theology of Co-Existence", in *Christianity and Judaism: The Deepening Dialogue,* 191-192

autoimmune responses happening inside a mollusk, somewhat similar to the human body responding to an antigen. Contrary to popular belief, they are rarely formed out of grains of sand - what is to become the pearl might start its life as a parasite, or even as injured tissue within the mollusk.[628] Crucially, it is the response to the irritant that produces the pearl. (*Peninah* פְּנִנָּה is also a cognate of the Hebrew word *penimah,* פְּנִימָה meaning 'inner depth' or 'within').[629] We read in the text that Hannah is exceedingly provoked by Peninah, 'thunderously' so as the Hebrew intimates, who has many sons and daughters while graceful Hannah has none. The result of this provocation however, is not quite jealousy or anger. It is a provocation which enables Hannah as 'Grace' to fully embody who she is. Like the threads of pure gold that repair the once broken shards of pottery in the Japanese art of *Kintsugi,* it is Hannah's very brokenness that becomes the gold which brings the pieces of her life into a beautiful whole.[630]

Let us begin, however, with textually tracing the word 'grace' and its internal meanings, to see if it can expand our understanding for what it was that Hannah personified in the text. We first meet the word 'grace' in the Torah at the beginning - 'And Noah found *chen* (grace/favour) in the eyes of the Lord.' (Gen. 6:8). The Hebrew word *chen* חֵן comes from a root meaning 'grace' or 'favour', with an intimation of 'bending or stooping' in an act of kindness.[631] It can be subjective, in

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[628] See http://www.pearls.com/pages/how-pearls-are-formed. Retrieved July 16, 2016

[629] BDB, 819

[630] The Japanese art of Kintsugi, see http://www.thisiscolossal.com/2014/05/kintsugi-the-art-of-broken-pieces/ and https://akintsugilife.com. Retrieved July 16 2016

[631] The verbal cognate *chana* means 'to incline' or 'lean towards'. See BDB, 333. 336

that it is an attribute one demonstrates (graciousness, kindness, favour) or objective in that it is a state one embodies or inhabits (beauty, elegance). And this grace, as we have noted, is distinctively something to be found in the eyes of another. Therefore, 'seeing' and the relationship which emerges from that seeing are vital elements to the outworking of grace and tell of a reflexive quality that grace demonstrates. Elie Wiesel captured the connection between grace and 'seeing' the face of another when he expressed,

'For me, every hour is grace. And I feel gratitude in my heart each time I can meet someone and look at his or her smile…'[632]

In Genesis 39:1 we read about Joseph who has been cruelly betrayed by his brothers and ripped from the fabric of his family, sold as a slave and sent down into *Mitzraim*, the Narrow Place of Biblical Egypt.[633] In this Narrow Place, exhibiting no visible signs of trauma, Joseph 'finds grace/favour' in the eyes of his new Egyptian master Potiphar. What can we identify as common to both Noah and Joseph? They both find grace and favour in the eyes of a significant Other, and as an outworking of this grace they both are entrusted with important missions which will centre on the preservation of sacred life. Noah will construct an Ark which will guard the remnants of all future life against the surging violence of raging waters. Joseph will be entrusted with the entire household of his master, and when he is betrayed yet again and sent into the more literal narrow place of an Egyptian prison, he will again emerge unsullied to find favour, this time in the eyes of Pharaoh, the king of all

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[632] Elie Wiesel interview with Oprah, (2000), http://www.oprah.com/omagazine/oprah-interviews-elie-wiesel/all. Retrieved July 17 2016

[633] As noted earlier, the BH root of the word for Egypt comes from the verb *tzar,* meaning 'to be narrow' or 'to constrict'. See BDB, 865

Egypt. His finding grace in the eyes of an important other will ensure the survival of the people during the famine that is to come. Crucially however, it ensured the survival of an Israel that would be incomplete without reconciliation between the brothers. Grace, it seems, is the first step to engaging the sacred future. And in each of these texts, 'grace' has a verbal quality. There is a 'motion', a movement that grace initiates. Rather than thinking of grace as a noun, as a static 'thing' to be understood cognitively, this text hints at the possibilities of grace of as an *action*, a way of living and moving and being that is to be constantly embodied and inhabited. It also hints at the element of responsibility.

II.1.1   A SEED FOR THE PEOPLE

Returning to Hannah in her state of provocation, we see her taking bold action. She questions the condition in which she finds herself despite the consolations of her adoring husband, but this time something is different to all the other years she has wept and prayed at Shiloh. As she silently bares her soul, there is one very interesting turn. Rather than asking for a son or a 'male child' as is so commonly translated, she asks to be given a *zerah anashim*, זֶרַע אֲנָשִׁים, literally 'a seed (of the) people'. The request of Grace therefore, is not one of manipulation or selfishness, or jealousy at the wealth of the Pearl. The inner heartbeat of Grace seeks for the life of the community. It seeks after the well-being of the other, reminiscent of Joseph's charge in the parting words from his father Israel -

'Go, and see to the shalom of your brothers and their flocks and bring me back

word', (Gen 37:14).

309

Hannah asks not just for the well-being of her household but she asks for a seed, which has the potential for life and fruit, and crucially for future seeds. Indeed fruit is essentially a seed, encased in a sweet flesh. *In her moment of utmost desperation, she asks for a seed.* Hannah's request is not about her, it is about ensuring the sacred future. This is the pearl of great price, the jewel of great worth that has been produced by a cry from the depths. This is the call of Grace.

Yet Hannah's noble request is met with contention. The High Priest Eli could legitimately have her severely punished for appearing drunk in Israel's sacred places. He directly accuses her of the disgraceful behaviour he thinks he sees, only to be firmly told by Grace that he has judged wrongly.[634] This is the second step Hannah has made - speaking truth to power. Eli's response to Grace's acclamation of truth in the face of his own power is gracious in return - *'Lekhi L'shalom',* לְכִי לְשָׁלוֹם, "walk toward peace/wholeness" he says, "and may you be given by the Holy One everything you have asked". Like a biblical Grace Kelly, Hannah has suffused elegance and poise with intelligence and passion and boldness. As her parting words to Eli she asks that she, Grace, may find grace and favour in his eyes. Perhaps it is the question of Grace to find itself in the eyes of all who will see it, which releases humility and therefore a quality of favour which is essential to its outworking. Finding favour in the eyes of another is indicative of our need for the other, and this is something of which that Hannah, in personifying Grace, demonstrates a keen awareness.

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[634] Frymer-Kensky observes that Eli does not stop her from praying and does not tell her to go home. It is the 'intensity of her prayers and their long duration' which garner his attention, in addition to the fact that, as Frymer-Kensky highlights, he cannot make out what exactly she is saying due to the silent nature of her intense petition, as the text notes. See Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible,* 302

Her face, the text tells us, 'is no longer sad'. In Hebrew this verse reads 'her face was

no longer turned in toward herself' *u'phaney'ha lo hayu lah owd,* וּפָנֶיהָ לֹא־הָיוּ־לָהּ עוֹד.

Something transformative has transpired through this encounter. What does it mean

for a face to be 'no longer be turned in' toward itself? Presumably it is to be looking

outwards, the eyes lifted and adjusted in their gaze. Perspective has inevitably

changed, for where we place our eyes so will our perspective be. The language strikes

a marked contrast with Cain in Genesis 4 whose downcast face enabled the demise

of both him and his brother, the sacred future being snuffed out as though it were

vapour.[635] Grace in action has spoken truth to power, found favour in the eyes of the

other before whom she stood, no matter who that other was, and in the process

enabled her sacred future. She is now entrusted with the seed of the sacred future of

Israel, the Judge who will anoint the first King of Israel and then anoint King David

himself, forbearer of the Messiah. The 'dysfunction' present within the narrative has

somehow enabled a subversion of the *nomos,* the established norm of fertility and

reproductive capabilities in the ancient world, in favour of one who sought a 'seed'

for the people.

II.2   FIVE UNMARRIED SISTERS: *Numbers 22:1-11*

A beautiful example of this subversive quality which the Torah voices through its

text is to be found in the case of five sisters, who are also the daughters of a certain

man from the tribe of Manassah, named Zelophehad. In a signal act of courage after

the premature death of their father they defend what they perceive as their right as

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[635] The name Abel, *Hevel,* literally means 'vapour'. It is thus sometimes translated as 'vanity', for
example, the opening lines of Ecclesiastes — 'all is vanity' (all is vapour). See BDB, 210

unmarried, orphaned women to inherit their father's portion of the land. They present a legal case to Moses, who in turn who brings the case to God. The response of God in the text is intriguing -'*ken, b'not Tzelophehad dovrot*', meaning 'Yes! the daughters of Zelophehad have spoken rightly…just so'. What is particularly striking here is not the request at the heart of the narrative, it is the response of God who speaks about their act of speech.[636] Why does God give them favour and respond with grace to this particular bold act of speech, in a text with so many similar requests?

In answer to this question, we may note that this narrative is located in the Book of Numbers, a Torah text which draws out, amongst other things, the dimensions of speech. Indeed, the Hebrew name for this section of the Torah is *B'Midbar* בְּמִדְבַּר, meaning 'in the wilderness'. And *midbar,* as noted earlier in this thesis, while designating a geographical area of wilderness that is good for shepherding, is cleverly associated with speech, (from its root verb *dabar* דָּבָר meaning 'to speak', or 'word or thing'). The *midbar* then, as we touched on in chapter one in relation to Hagar, is a place of speaking, as well as being a place of shepherding. And 'to speak' necessitates hearing what is spoken. A din of language clamours up from this Torah text sandwiched between the ceremonial codes of Leviticus and the recounting of words in Deuteronomy. Complaints, verbal mistrust and skepticism culminate in Moses's complex failure to speak to the rock. After forty years of 'mis-speaking' in the *midbar,*

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636 See Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *Bewilderments: Reflections on the Book of Numbers,* (New York: Schocken, 2015), 265-269

the very place of speaking, five sisters, in protest at perceived injustice speak out in such a way that subverts the *nomos* in their favour forever.[637]

What was it in their speech that transformed the legal basis on which women could inherit, in the ancient world no less (this point must not be overlooked)? Avivah Zornberg notes the simplicity of language used in the text, articulating a depth of feeling that was missing from the other instances where speech brought forth death. In this text the women, described as sisters or daughters in their respective roles, are noted as 'coming forward' to present their case, from the root word *karav*, קָרַב meaning 'to draw near'. This verb is what is commonly translated as 'sacrifice' or sometimes 'offering' (*korban* קָרְבָּן) in biblical texts, but resists that translation in favour of opening a question about the very nature of what it means to draw near to God and to the other. At the heart of true intimacy, is an element of sacrifice.[638] The five sisters are united in their plea and 'draw near' to Moses and to God, signifying intimacy, boldness and an element of sacrifice on their behalf. They speak of their father, and presumably in some repressed reference of honouring one's parents, ask emphatically to be given 'a holding in the land' so that his name would not be forgotten unjustly.

Their request seems to use the same language as previous requests made by Israel in the *midbar*, 'give us' meat, 'give us' water, 'give us' bread, 'let us' return to Egypt. Yet it is different. 'Give us a holding on the land' - they strike a tone that is concerned

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[637] Ibid., 281-284. See also Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible,* 72

[638] Zornberg, *Bewilderments,* 265

with the sacred future, much like Hannah. Grumblings of mistrust and selfish murmurings of jealousy do not colour their petition. A desire to preserve the name of their father and for them to be preserved in the process is at the core of their cry. Guarding what is sacred and holy propels them to speak out. Love cloaked in a verbal request about inheritance meets the mercy and compassion of God and subverts the normative rule of law in this Torah text.

II.3 EXTRAORDINARY LOVE: *Ruth*

This subversive capability of *nomos* and narrative is clearly exemplified in the Book of Ruth. As a Moabite she is forbidden from marrying into Israel, and yet marries into Israel and becomes the progenitor of Kind David, from whose house, both Jews and Christians agree, comes the Messiah. The central message of Ruth is not embodied in law but in narrative, even though the laws and customs about intermarriage, while never explicitly stated in the text, are everywhere evident. Aviva Zornberg notes there is a repressed legal basis for the text, and it is this legal basis which sets a subversive tone for the narrative from the beginning.[639] The dynamic quality of *chesed,* חֶסֶד often translated as loving-kindness with tones of covenant-loyalty, and occasionally translated as grace or mercy, but another of those biblical Hebrew words that defy direct translation, is woven through the narrative like a scarlet thread.

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[639] Avivah Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep*, 348-349. See also Robert Alter, *Strong as Death is Love: The Song of Songs; Ruth: Esther: Jonah: Daniel* (W.W. Norton & Company, New York: 2015), 57-61

Chesed moves and breathes and generates throughout the text and the narrative employs it to demonstrate its subversive power. *Ruth*, רוּת, meaning 'friend or companion', and sharing a cognate of the Hebrew word for 'shepherd', is the embodiment of a loving-kindness which expresses itself through fierce faithfulness, the personification of *chesed* itself. As an outsider, a Moabite and a woman, she subversively and almost ironically demonstrates everything that Israel is called to be. Boaz also expresses loving-kindness and mercy, in response to what he sees oozing from Ruth.

It is noteworthy that the only time a woman in Scripture is named as an *Eshet Chayil*, אֵשֶׁת חַיִל, a woman of 'valour/worth' or 'strength and virtue' in the stream of the Proverbs 31 poetic description, is here in the text of Ruth. Ruth is named by Boaz not a 'Moabite', as she has been termed up until now, a reminder of the repressed but evident social and religious barriers that should separate them, but a 'woman of worth'. Proverbs identifies the worth of such a woman as being far superior to the value of rubies or precious jewels. He 'sees' her, and as we noted with Hagar in chapter three, 'being seen' enables movement toward one another in a way that pushes through boundaries. It 'breaks the trance' of invisibility and animates the possibility of relationship. In Ruth, *chesed* has enabled both the release of movement toward the other and the seeing of that other, in a way that defies all social norms.

Zornberg makes the important point, however, that in the text of Ruth, *nomos* and *chesed* are not schematically opposed to one another as one might assume. It is not that covenant-loyalty and loving-kindness somehow overturn the harsh stipulations

of law.[640] Such a view might actually be seen to feed into and support a 'law versus grace' dichotomy so prevalent in Christian theology. On the contrary, it is aspects of law and custom that inform many aspects of *chesed,* such as gleaning in the field of another and provision for widows and orphans for example. In fact it is precisely this law of gleaning, derived from Leviticus 23, that enables romance to blossom and *chesed* to flourish between Boaz and Ruth. This 'being seen' by Boaz as she gleans in his fields ushers a visible transition in Ruth, which highlights the possibility that she has been 'unseen' by her mother-in-law up until this point. When she returns from Boaz's fields she is asked by Naomi 'who are you, my daughter'?[641] This is possibly a dual acknowledgment - an acknowledgement of familiarity and yet an acknowledgement of estrangement at the same time, accompanied by a new way of mutual seeing with her now eternal other, or her 'Deepest Other' we might say. For Zornberg, the import of Ruth is that through her story,

"(it is) possible to reimagine Sinai. She becomes the source of a teaching that Solomon acknowledges and makes his own. She returns us, her grandchildren, across a gap, to that subversive force of narrative that is never lost. This is the Torah that, like its teacher, can never be fully known, that is always discontinuous, of which we ask, Who are you? and rejoice in the silence that animates its response."[642]

Each of the above passages, one to be found in the Prophets, one from the Torah and one from the Writings respectively, links us back into the ground of Torah text

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[640] Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep,* 361-362

[641] Twice she is asked 'who are you', first by Boaz and then by Naomi.

[642] Zornberg, *The Murmuring Deep*, 379

and the roots of grace to be found there. *Chen* חֵן and *chesed* חֶסֶד are immutable qualities that by their very nature are irrevocable, or else they could not be *chen* or *chesed*. Grace and favour, loving-kindness and covenant-loyalty are the green shoots which emerge out of the rich soil of Torah and intertwine the narratives, prose, legislation, ritual, ceremonial and moral codes, prophecies, poetry, songs, genealogies, histories, letters and stories that compile the rest of Scripture. The juxtapositioning of grace against Torah according to this suggestion and according to our readings of the texts above, is not an adequate option as it undermines the powerful subversive force of Torah, and therefore the subversive nature of grace itself. Rather, tracing the delicate intertwining and connectedness of *chen* and *chesed* that breathes through the texts as a whole and interfaces with the *nomos,* makes for a much richer hermeneutic.[643]

If we are stating that love and grace have the latent power to overturn the rule of law, it might look as though we are lending some credibility to the 'law versus grace' argument. This argument historically has been a stumbling block in relations, theological or otherwise, between Christians and Jews. Here we are demonstrating that the Torah itself, what is considered 'the Law' in many received denominational traditions, is the one that subverts the *nomos*, the rule of the land in favour of mercy and grace and the fulfilment of divine destiny if they conflict. For the Torah, the sacred future is what is at stake. The Torah and *chen* therefore could not be assumed to be antagonistic to one another or mutual opposites, for they are allies. In fact if this shows us anything, it is that *the Torah itself* is at mutual odds with 'legalism', a

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[643] Brian Neil Peterson writes on the "interconnections between narrative and legal instruction", as they occur through the narratives of Genesis. See *Genesis as Torah: Reading Narratives as Legal Instruction* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018)

system that sacrifices divine destiny and grace on the altars of conformity. This the way of the Narrow Place, of Egypt, not of Torah.

III. ENGAGING WITH THE TORAH TEXT

In 1926, Martin Buber stated during a lecture in Vienna,

"…(He must) read the Jewish Bible as though it is something entirely unfamiliar, as though it had not been set before him ready made…face the book with a new attitude as something new…He must withhold nothing of his being…and let whatever may happen occur between himself and it. He does not know which of its sayings and images will overwhelm and hold him…he holds himself open. Do not believe anything a priori; do not disbelieve anything a priori. Read aloud the words written in the book in front of you; hear the word you utter and let it reach you."[644]

Everett Fox, whose translation of the Torah is influenced by the translation first devised by Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, maintains that an interactive engagement between the reader and the biblical text is possible through an engagement with the inner language of the text.[645] The poet Carl Sandburg described language as a 'river', which is an apt metaphor for the nuances and currents within

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[644] This lecture became an essay entitled 'The Man of Today and the Jewish Bible", translated and published in English in 1948. See Walter Brueggemann, *Ichabod Toward Home: The Journey of God's Glory* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 92. See also Everett Fox,*The Five Books of Moses*, ix

[645] Buber and Rosenzweig began a translation project of the biblical texts into German. The project, which lasted effectively from 1925-1962, focused on making Hebrew syntax accessible in the German language, along with Hebrew wordplays and primal root meanings. Fox bases his translation work in part on this radical work by Buber and Rosenzweig, attempting to make accessible the 'Bible's verbal power'. See Fox, *The Five Books of Moses,* x-xi

biblical language. In his 1916 *Chicago Poems* he wrote, "there are no handles upon a language, whereby men take hold of it".[646] Rather than a static entity, Sandburg described language as a 'river' which breaks new courses and every thousand years changes its route to the ocean. Its destination is the same, but its route can and will change like the wind that blows. He reminds us of the fluidity of meaning within words, and that different currents in the river of language can express different meanings at different times. Put simply, there is an expansiveness to meaning.

George Orwell, in his 1946 essay on *Politics and the English Language,* wrote of a 'staleness of imagery and lack of precision' which he perceived to be plaguing the English language.[647] Using language in a way that either 'prevents or conceals' thought was to Orwell an obstruction of a possible encounter with truth. Together with Fox's assessments of translation, Sandburg and Orwell offer us a suggestion for re-thinking the theological terms we so unflinchingly use in conversations about 'law' and 'grace'. Perhaps it is such 'staleness' of language that can impede biblical hermeneutics - our apathy and passive acceptance of terms and phrases that might have a wider current of meaning in the flow of the river. Fox reminds us of the eminent possibilities which lie in the work of translation and the 'power of language'.[648]

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[646] From the poem "Languages". See Carl Sandburg, *Chicago Poems [1916]*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1916), 173

[647] See http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e_polit. Retrieved July 17 2016. See also George Orwell, *Politics and the English Language.* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2006)

[648] Fox, *The Five Books of Moses,* ix

In that vein, the remainder of this final chapter will focus on specific phrases and terminologies often used in relation to the Torah. The previous chapter addressed certain hermeneutical issues which arise from misreadings of flashpoint texts, particularly in relation to problematic phrases such as 'under the law' or 'keeping the law'. Building on our conclusions from that study, this section shall further address certain assumptions which arise from phrases such as 'keeping the law', and 'obedience'. In addition, the so-called 'law words', the legal terminology of the Torah, such as commandment, ordinance, statute and judgement, will be investigated. These are terms which can be presumed to convey certain stereotypical views of the Torah as being an obedience centred framework. Part of this exploration is to effectively demonstrate that a linguistic adjustment can be a stepping stone to more fruitful relations between Christians and Jews, and that the Torah, or the Law of Moses, is not the legalistic stumbling block Christian theology has often assumed it to be. Demonstrating this further enables the possibility of sacred text aiding the pursuit of sacred reconciliation.

III.1   KEEPING THE LAW: *Genesis 2:15*

In the previous chapter we examined the textual implications of the phrases 'under the law' and 'works of the law', two well known 'flashpoint' maxims which are employed numerous times in the Pauline epistles. The phrase 'keeping the law' or another similar formulation is often paired with a question, 'do we have to keep the law?' Coloured with other modal verbs like 'should' or 'must', the idea of 'keeping the law' is often in Christian theological circles as an implied but destined to fail method of securing the goal of salvation, through going through the motions of

observing the ritual requirements of Torah. It registers negative associations with the word 'law', that are seen to stand in contradistinction to the cadences of 'living in grace'.[649] However, what could it mean 'to keep the law' in the expansive river of Hebrew language?

The Hebrew verb *shamar* שָׁמַר is generally translated as 'to guard', 'to keep' or 'to observe', with an implied tone of protecting that which is precious from potential damage or harm, like a doorkeeper or guardsman.[650] The one who does the guarding or protecting is enabled and equipped to do the task which has been set before them. We first meet this word in the very beginning of the Torah when the Adam, who has been formed out of the feminine earth, the *adamah*, is gently and lovingly placed in a Garden named 'Delight'. The literal Hebrew reads -

וַיִּקַּח יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם וַיַּנִּחֵהוּ בְגַן־עֵדֶן לְעָבְדָהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ

Va'yi'kakh Adonai Elohim et-haAdam, v'yanichey'hu b'Gan-Eden l'avdah ul'shamrah

"And the Lord God took the Adam and comforted him in the garden-of-delight to work/worship/serve and to guard…" (Gen 2:15)

There are some noteworthy aspects to this rich verse. As emphasised in chapter one of this thesis in relation to the 'Deepest Other', *Adam* is not necessarily name more than it is a description of the human being. (S)He is literally an 'earth-ling', as the human, described as neither male nor female at this point, has been formed out of

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[649] The International Bible Society, for example, defines the Torah as the body of Old Testament laws predominantly found in the first five books, and qualifies this definition through stating that it represents an inadequate system, whereby obedience to the law was necessary in order to 'merit God's favour and blessing'. See https://www.biblica.com/resources/bible-faqs/in-the-bible-we-read-about-the-law-what-does-this-mean/. Retrieved January 19 2019

[650] BDB, 1036

the *adamah,* the earth. The one who has been formed from the earth and whose nostrils have been infused with the Breath of Life is both intimately connected to the ground from which he emerged and the Creator whose image he bears. This connection is exemplified in the commission from the Creator 'to guard' the Garden in which he dwells. *Eden* עֵדֶן in Hebrew, as with *Adam*, is not a strict noun but an expressive depiction of the nature of the Garden - this is a *Garden-of-Delight*. Delight is the garden-home of Adam and Eve. And the 'earth-ling' is charged with conserving and preserving the Delight-of-the-Garden, and is to protect the Garden from anything which might inhibit Delight from flourishing.

In a different biblical text from a different time in Israel's history, *Qohelet* קֹהֶלֶת offers us, through the melancholy musings of Ecclesiastes, a suggestion for what it is to guard that which is precious -

> "To everything there is a season,
>
> A time for every purpose under the Heavens.
>
> A time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted.
>
> A time to build up, and a time to tear down.
>
> A time to tear, and a time to sew.
>
> A time to keep silence, and a time to speak". (Ecclesiastes 3:2-8)[651]

This is what it is to *shamor* - protecting life and guarding that which is precious is not twiddling one's thumbs in an eternal and somewhat boring bliss. It is weeding and

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[651] Robert Alter, in his masterful translation and commentary on the Wisdom Books, writes that the text of Job in particular displays a 'most direct and radical subversion' of the rational moral order. See Robert Alter, *The Wisdom Books: Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), 337-341

planting, sewing and reaping, gathering stones and casting away stones, hearing the silence, birthing and dying and learning how to speak. Anyone who has kept a garden knows that you cannot leave it to its own devices and hope for a beautiful, nourishing garden filled with beautiful flowers and fruits - if you leave the garden alone it will inevitably be overtaken by weeds and the fruit eaten by slugs. Every time therefore you sift the soil, pluck out weeds, plant seeds and prune or harvest you are guarding the sacred future of the garden in the present. Adam is a custodian, a gardener of a sacred Garden planted in Eternity. In Jewish mystical thought the Torah, as divine instruction that hits the target exactly, provides the path back to the Tree of Life in the middle of the Garden itself. To 'keep the law' then, in the rich expansiveness of meaning that Hebrew offers, could be better translated as to 'guard the Torah', the blueprint for how to live in the Garden. 'Guarding' strikes a significantly different tone to 'keeping', which suggests a sort of striving.

III.2   OBEYING THE LAW: THE NUANCES OF 'SHEMA'

"Forward, the Light Brigade!",

Was there a man dismayed?

Not though the soldier knew;

Someone had blundered.

Theirs not to make reply,

Theirs not to reason why,

Theirs but to do and die.

Into the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

'Obedience' to something or someone implies a total surrendering of personal will. In a military sense, as so poignantly expressed by Alfred Lord Tennyson in his 1854 poem *Charge of the Light Brigade*, obedience can be defined as "dutiful or submissive compliance to the commands of one in authority."[652] While theologically this may have interesting avenues for a potential discourse on the nuances of 'free-will', for now the negative resonance of 'obedience' when coupled with the notion of the Torah as an obedience and punishment oriented 'law' is the trajectory we will follow. Often 'obedience' might be sandwiched into a sentence about 'law and grace' and their contradistinction. It might sound something like 'the Law of Moses demands obedience' unlike the 'Law of Christ' which is rooted in grace and love.

The mental reverberations of this language, as examined in chapter four, produce a ripple effect of implying that the Torah is synonymous with the concept of law as we have come to understand it in English, as we examined in chapter five through the nuances of *nomos* and *lex*. 'Obedience' is the required response to a dry legal system which existed outside of a life lived under grace. Furthermore, it brands a contrast between what is thought to be 'old' and 'new', what is thought to be 'law' versus 'love', or even more sinister distinctions of 'Jew' versus 'Christian' as we have noted elsewhere. Such sentiments are in part, however, based on a fundamental presupposition about the very nature of what it means to 'obey' at all. Challenging these presuppositions can be helpful for removing stumbling blocks, which in turn enables the pursuit of a reconciliation less hindered by older unhelpful stereotypes.

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[652] Merriam Webster - https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/obedience and http://www.dictionary.com/browse/obedience. Retrieved July 17 2016

In Biblical Hebrew the root verb *shama* שָׁמַע is translated as 'to hear' or 'to listen attentively'.[653] This is the word also used to translate 'obedience' or the verb 'to obey' when it is interpreted in the text. In other words, there are no exact Hebrew words for obedience at all.[654] To 'obey' is to 'hear' and vice versa. But what does it mean to truly 'hear' and what is the nature of this hearing? If a mother instructs/asks/tells her children to clean their bedroom and they 'hear' her say such a thing and respond with an eager 'yes' thereby affirming that they have heard the request, and she returns a few hours later and the room is not clean the likely response would be - why did you not listen?. Or another favourite in the stockpile of phrases for exasperated parents - *do you hear me*? At its heart, this is a question that answers the question of what it means to hear - true hearing and listening both elicits and requires a response. Something registers and is internalised in our very depths when we truly 'hear'.

III.2.1   POSITIONING THE HEART: *Exodus 24:7*

However, the Torah does not give the assumed formula for hearing and understanding, doing and responding. In fact, as with many things, they seem to be subverted to what our Western minds might expect. Intriguingly in the Torah text, *doing* is what precedes true *hearing*. This dialectical relationship between doing and hearing is crystallised in Jewish consciousness by the communal response uttered at

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[653] BDB, 1033-1034

[654] There are no direct Hebrew terms for 'obedience' in the sense that obedience has come to imply, as the definition above suggests, a dutiful compliance similar to a soldier or an animal who must obey its master. So if we take the meaning of obedience as applied in modern language, the Hebrew differs. However, the word obedience in English arises from the Old French *obeir* which in turn comes from the Latin *oboedire*. This is composed of two Latin terms *ob* meaning 'to' or 'towards', and *audire* meaning 'to hear'. Therefore in Latin as with Hebrew, it conveys the sense of being positioned 'toward hearing', which is more in line with the Hebrew suggestions of *shema* as noted above. See https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/obedience. Retrieved July 18 2016

Sinai - 'all that God has spoken we will do, and we will hear', *Kol asher-diber Adonai n'asei ve'nishma,* וַיֹּאמְרוּ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע (Exodus 24:7). Such a formula is a radical alternative to a seemingly logical approach of hearing what it is you are to do first, understanding why, and then doing it. Israel's response to the Words being uttered at Sinai is to 'do' them, and then to 'understand' what it is that has been done. That hearing in the Torah is preceded by the communal act of doing, suggests two things. Firstly it hints at different levels of 'hearing', and secondly, that actively participating and engaging in community awakens our collective consciousness and releases a latent internal capacity to 'hear' at a communal level. Notice the receptive use of the term 'we', emphasising communal oneness and collective responsibility.

Furthermore, it intimates a depth in the meaning of *shema* that resists translation, meaning that 'hearing' is much more than perceiving sounds with the ear and making sense of those sounds, more than the superficial downloading of information, and obedience is more than simply responding to an instruction like a soldier compelled to follow the orders of a commanding officer. Perhaps it is the ancient Israelite version of *fides quaerens intellectum* - faith seeking understanding. Or learning through doing. It is a positioning of the heart and a way of being that, like 'grace', is to be inhabited.

III.2.2 INHABITING THE VOICE: *Deuteronomy 27-28*

Deuteronomy 27 begins a discourse on blessings and cursings within a narrative which pre-empts the cross-over into the Promised Land. While six Israelite tribal leaders are gathered on Mt. Gerizim and six are gathered in Mt. Ebal, the Levites, as the priestly tribe, are instructed by Moses to 'give answer with a loud voice' to all of Israel, and be the mouthpiece that pronounces the blessings and cursings over the community. Deuteronomy 28 continues this discourse, and opens in verse one -

'Now it shall come to pass if you diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord your

God to observe carefully all the commandments…all the blessings will overtake you,

because you have obeyed the voice of the Lord your God'. (Deut. 28:1-2)

If one was looking to find a passage to support the common claim that the Old Testament affirms a method of 'obedience', rote compliance and submission to the Law in order to secure blessing or favour, this might be a good one to choose. However, in the stream of expansive meaning that *shema* offers, a different current emerges. What might read as 'diligently hearken' in the text is a repetition of the word *shema* - literally *'shemo'a tishma'a'*, שָׁמֹועַ תִּשְׁמַע֮, and renders something more like 'if in your hearing, you will hear'. What is to be heard? The verse continues 'in/inside the Voice of Adonai your God', ***b'kol*** *Adonai Elohekhah* בְּקֹול֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ. What does it mean in our hearing, to hear in the Voice?

The reverberations in Hebrew suggest a type of hearing which enables the hearer to make God's Voice their place of habitation. In other words, true hearing comes from inside God's Voice. This is a most striking and evocative image, that resonates with a

scene from the Garden in the beginning, (the very first textual encounter with the verb *shema*), and this dialectical relationship between hearing and the Voice of God. In Genesis 3:8 we read -

וַיִּשְׁמְע֞וּ אֶת־ק֨וֹל יְהוָ֧ה אֱלֹהִ֛ים מִתְהַלֵּ֥ךְ בַּגָּ֖ן לְר֣וּחַ הַיּ֑וֹם

V'yishm'u et-Kol Adonai Elohim mit'halakh b'Gan l'Ruach hayom

'And they heard (*v'yishm'u*) the Voice of the Lord God walking in the Garden in the cool of the day…'

The response of hearing the Voice in the Garden in the wake of a scene which embodies the very act of not-hearing (plucking and consuming the fruit of that which was not intended for consumption), is one of hiding, one of shame. Isaiah 55, speaking into a different time in Israel's history, offers an alternative picture to the one in Genesis, when the prophet calls out an open invitation to those who will respond. In a passage that is centred on the reality of eating and drinking freely and abundantly without payment, surely the very embodiment of a life imbued with 'favour', the prophetic text utters - 'listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good' (Isaiah 55:2). The language here strikes notes that resound in both Deuteronomy and Genesis, and are a double play on the verb *shema*. According to the invitation of the prophet, if 'in your hearing you will hear', what you choose to consume will be 'good' and fruitful and life-giving. An alternate, prophetic picture is painted where the fruit of a different tree can be chosen.

Looping back to the Deuteronomy 28 text, hearing 'in the Voice' is coupled with 'guarding/observing the commandments'. Hearing the Voice and guarding that which springs from inside that Voice resonate differently to the mental and verbal

images of 'obedience' and 'keeping the Law'. Blessing, (a different textual study but nonetheless intriguing), is transformative in nature and is what abounds as a consequence to hearing and guarding, according to this Deuteronomy passage. So much so that 'blessing' will actively pursue and even overtake you, as you dwell within the cadences of God's Voice.

This demonstrates effectively the conclusions of chapter four, that a simple shift in the assumed perception of the Torah and the vocabulary which is used to define and describe the Torah, can generate a different response. It also demonstrates the connection between vocabulary and established theological perceptions.

IV. THE TORAH AND LEGAL TERMINOLOGY

"My teaching shall drop as the rain (Deut 32:2). Even as one rain falling on various trees gives to each a special savour in keeping with its species - to the vine the savour of grapes, to the olive tree the savour of olives, to the fig tree the savour of figs - so the words of Torah are one, yet within them are Scripture and Mishnah, Halakhot and Aggadot."

(Sifre Devarim 206)[655]

A study into the nature of what it means 'to obey' or 'to keep' Torah in the context of the 'law versus grace' discussion, is incomplete without exploring exactly what it is one is responding to, what is being kept, what is being heard, what it is that is being

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[655] *Sifre Devarim* is a section of *halakhic midrash* which is a rabbinic exegesis focused on *halakhah,* rather than *aggadah.* These two terms are explained further in IV below. See Reuven Hammer, *The Classic Midrash: Tannaitic Commentaries on the Bible,* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1995), 493

guarded. In other words, what are the 'garments' of Torah, what are the externals that make up the fabric of law and narrative as it emerges in the text?

As noted throughout this this thesis, particularly in chapters one and three, etymological definitions of the Torah convey a sense of 'instruction' or 'teaching' with the dual inflexion of hitting a target as an archer shoots a bow. Social definitions of the Torah in the Wisdom traditions for example, use the term 'torah' in the sense of instruction which comes from the teaching of a wise mother. Within Israel's historical, mythical and religious consciousness, the Torah can be described as the sacred blueprint for life in covenantal community. As Manfred Vogel maintains, this 'life' which is inextricably bound up in the covenantal community, is expressed on both vertical and horizontal axes.[656] In other words, it is not simply about a relationship with the divine, the Torah is very much concerned with intra-human relationships. In this vein, Jonathan Sacks describes the Torah as,

'our greatest gift…our constitution of liberty under the sovereignty of God. (The Torah is) our marriage contract with heaven itself. Written in letters of black fire on white fire, joining the infinity of God and and the finitude of humankind in an unbreakable bond of law and love. The scroll Jews carried wherever they went, and the scroll that carried them. This is the Torah, the voice of heaven as it is heard on earth, the word that lights the world…'[657]

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[656] *Issues in the Jewish-Christian Dialogue,* Helga Croner and Leon Klenicki, eds., 72

[657] See Jonathan Sacks, http://rabbisacks.org/why-judaism-nitzavim-5775/. Retrieved September 4 2016

In order to get a better grip on the nature and function of the Torah however, and its possible validity in the pursuit sacred reconciliation between Christians and Jews, a deeper investigation into some of what might be termed as 'legal vocabulary' is necessary. These are the terms that are taken to infer 'law', words such as 'judgement', 'statute' or 'commandment'. Continuing with the method of utilising Hebrew to rethink underlying assumptions which can be embedded into our theological vocabulary and perceptions, this section shall examine these important terms with the vigour required to demonstrate that a shift in translation can radically impact interpretation. For Jewish-Christian dialogue and reconciliation, this is a necessary shift to enable a possible connection which turns age-old stumbling blocks into potential stepping stones.

IV.1 TORAH WITH A SMALL "T"

In conjunction to the definition of the Torah as 'teaching' as noted above, one could say that there are many *torahs* within the Torah. In other words, there are many teachings, and the poetry and prose, histories and letters, narratives and genealogies, songs and stories are all *torah*, in the sense that within the framework of the Torah, and the rest of Scripture, they are teachings which instruct the community in a specific way.[658] One could legitimately surmise that all of Scripture is *torah* in this sense, and indeed 2 Timothy 3:16 in the NT can be seen to affirm this idea, claiming, 'all scripture (*graphe* γραφή) is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for

reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness…'

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[658] Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered,* xxiii. See also Heschel, *Torah from Heaven,* 368-370

Here, *graphe*, the Greek word used in both the Septuagint and NT for 'scripture', is expressed specifically as that which teaches the community and is used in the common first-century Jewish sense that denotes scripture.[659] This approach, echoed in 2 Timothy, is one which informs rabbinic discussions centred around the question of chronology and linear interpretation. In rabbinic thought, the Torah as sacred teaching and instruction for the covenanted community renders chronology, particularly as it has come to be understood, as less significant to the overall purpose of either the legal or narrative portions.[660] According to the rabbinic sages, a lack of chronological consistency in the Torah, rather than being a sign of fallibility, is instead a positive. It affirms a particular teaching or 'timeless' truth that the Torah is drawing out in a specific way for the sacred community. Indeed the 'gaps' within a Torah text are not obstacles but provide, according to the rabbis, creative opportunities for engaging with the terseness of the text, and entering into the expansiveness of meaning that interpretation can offer.[661] There can also be hermeneutical challenges in anachronistically imposing a Western linear chronological approach onto the biblical texts.[662]

In addition to *torah* as a particular type of content with a particular function in the wider stream of both the Torah and the rest of Scripture, we find within the Torah itself other categories of instruction, closely related to torah but with slightly

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[659] See http://biblehub.com/greek/1124.htm. Retrieved September 4 2016

[660] Heschel, *Heavenly Torah,* 240-242. See also Adin Steinsaltz, "Principles of Talmudic Hermeneutics" in *Reference Guide to the Talmud,* 219

[661] Norman Cohen, *The Way Into Torah*, 71ff

[662] See James Kugel's chapter on "The Rise of Modern Biblical Scholarship", in *How to Read the Bible,* 1-46

differing purposes within the life of the community. There are four specific words which meet this criteria- *mishpatim, edut, chukim* and *mitzvah*, commonly translated as judgements, testimonies, statutes/decrees and commandments respectively. These are the 'legal' words of the Torah that are used throughout the Hebrew Bible and the NT, and they emphasise a legal aspect that *nomos* νομος, the Greek word for 'law' used in the Septuagint and NT, draws out specifically.

It is in this sense that Torah has been equated with the concept of law, as it contains different legal categories and classifications. In the previous chapter we traced some of the verbal implications of a restrictive use of the term *nomos* for the Torah. In English literature, the title given to a body of literature generally captures its essence and expresses its function. For example, a chemistry book would not be entitled 'German', simply because it was composed in the German language, or expressed its central idea through the medium of German. It would be entitled 'chemistry' because that is the subject and the the function of the book is to teach chemistry. In Hebrew, the Torah has never been entitled 'the Law' (although in footnote 1 above, and elsewhere in this thesis, we have noted the Jewish concept of the Torah as *halakhah*. This will be discussed further below.) This term 'law' or 'the Law' has arisen through the Septuagint, Latin Vulgate and finally English translations, as has already been definitively noted. The 'law words', or the legal terminology of the Torah, emphasise the different types of instruction and different legal and ethical aspects which are contained within the Torah. In Jewish religious and social memory, however, the Torah is not nor never has been simply reduced to a 'law' which is in contradistinction to grace. Moreover, these legal terms in no way promote observance in order to guarantee righteousness or salvation. They are a part of the

overall function of the Torah within the covenanted community - to teach. It is therefore critically important to establish the nature of each of these words in order to avoid unhelpful presumptions which feed into an age-old narrative of pitting the Torah against grace and creating a perceived, or even desired, conflict of interest. Each of these legal terms has a unique nuance and important function within the stream of Torah.

IV.2 JUDGEMENTS: מִשְׁפָּטִים *Misphatim*

Mishpatim are the moral and ethical rulings in the Torah that are more accurately rendered as 'judgements'. This is the body of precepts which generally require no explanation or justification, in that the need for a category of rulings that legislate against theft, murder, rape, physical assault etc. is rather self-evident for the survival of a society. They form part of what Thomas Aquinas grouped together as Natural Law, in that Aquinas perceived they contain a form of justice that exists beyond the boundaries of time, space and culture.[663] The LXX uses the Greek word *krimata* κρίματα in Deuteronomy 4:45 to transliterate *mishpatim*, a word that carries with it the idea of civil condemnation if the boundary the judgement creates is exceeded.[664] In other words, if someone commits murder, there is a necessary and appropriate consequence for that action. Therefore mishpat also denotes a form of social

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[663] See David Novak: *Natural Law and Revealed Torah (Library of Contemporary Jewish Philosophers),* Hava Tirosh-Samuelson and Aaron W. Hughes, eds., (Brill Academic, 2013) 44

[664] Brice L. Martin, *Christ and the Law in Matthew* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2001), 198-199. It is of interest to note that all 'judgments' require credible witnesses in order for the appropriate response to be exacted, they cannot be conducted from hearsay.

'justice', and comes from the Hebrew root verb *shafat*, שָׁפַט meaning 'to judge' or 'to govern'.[665]

IV.3   WITNESSES AND TESTIMONIES: עדות *Edut*

Edut are 'testimonies' or 'witnesses', from the verb *ud* עוּד meaning 'to give evidence', 'testify' or 'bear witness' with the more subtle implication of admonishment, warning or protest.[666] They are a classification of commandments that don't express a moral imperative as such but are considered spiritually necessary, in that they pertain to Israel's uniqueness and so function within the community as significant 'reminders' of Israel's faith, history and destiny. They have an important role in the making up of the fabric of memory within the Torah, and the dialectical tension that exists between actively 'remembering' in order to connect the past and the future in the present.[667]

For example, the commandment to 'remember' the Exodus event at the annual appointed time of Passover (*Pesach* פֶּסַח, literally meaning 'to jump over'), through actively participating in the removal of *chametz* חָמֵץ (fermented grains) from the home, is an *ed* עֵד (feminine singular of *edut*). It is a 'witness' in that it testifies to a sacred history and spiritually strengthens the faith of the individual and the community in which that individual is living, by linking the generations together through the power of active memory. This aspect of Torah brings with it an 'ethic of

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[665] BDB, 729-730

[666] The Greek equivalent is *marturia* μαρτυρία, from where we get the word *martyr*

[667] James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson, eds., *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing CO. 2003), 422

responsibility', a responsibility to those have gone before and those who will come afterward.[668] The commandment regarding the wearing of *tzitzit*, צִיצת the fringes of pure blue thread, is another *ed* as is the tradition of the *mezuzah*, מְזוּזָה the parchment containing the words of the *Shema* inscribed on the doorposts of a Jewish home. These commandments therefore 'bear witness' and are sacred reminders which transmit timeless teachings within Israel's consciousness and collective religious, cultural and social memory.[669]

IV.4   DECREES AND ORDINANCES: חֻקִּים *Chukim*

The reasons for the *edut* are explicit within the text, in that they function as a visible testimony which in and of itself is a teaching, and recalls a specific sacred memory within the religious consciousness of the community. The reasons underlying the *mishpatim* are also relatively straightforward in that they represent an obvious moral code, vital for the survival of any civilised society. In fact according to Thomas Aquinas the 'moral' aspect of the Torah to be found in the 'judgements' is eternal.[670]

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[668] Jonathan Sacks draws on the work of Viktor Frankl in his exposition on engaging as a human being of faith with the ethical challenges of modern life. Viktor Frankl writes, "Being human, means being conscious and being responsible". See Jonathan Sacks, *To Heal a Fractured World: the Ethics of Responsibility* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 3-15

[669] Joshua 22:34 provides us with a textual example for when this term is used as a place name: "And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar *Ed*: for it shall be a witness between us that the Lord is God." (KJV)

[670] In 1982 Jewish theologian Michael Wyschogrod, in agreement with Swiss theologian Clemens Thoma, presented Vatican officials in Rome with the argument that the teachings of Aquinas, (with regard to his conviction that the ceremonial aspects of the Mosaic law after the Christ event were mortal sin), were a major stumbling block in the development of Jewish-Christian relations. Matthew Tapie offers a response to this assessment, closely examining the relationship between the theology of Thomas Aquinas and supersessionism. Tapie proposes the possibility, first clarifying the difference between supersessionism and anti-semitism, that Aquinas offers through his theology a possible affirmation of post-biblical Judaism. See Matthew A. Tapie, *Aquinas on Israel and the Church: The Question of Supersessionism in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014).

There is a third category of Torah commandments and rulings, however, for which the reasons are more ambiguous. These are known as *chukim*, and are generally translated as 'decrees' or 'ordinances'. The best known example of *chukim* might be Israel's dietary codes, known as *kashrut* כַּשְׁרוּת, for which no explicit reason is given either in the Bible or in the Talmudic Literature. Suggestions are made about the possible health benefits of *kashrut,* as well as the sense of distinctive culture and identity it has historically fostered within Judaism. Other *chukim* include the ritual of circumcision (*Brit Milah* בְּרִית מִילָה), the ashes of 'the red heifer', and the prohibition of mixing wool and linen in the material of the same garment (*shatnez* שַׁעַטְנֵז).

While concrete reasons for the *chukim* remain elusive (for that is their distinguishing feature), the Talmud does however, offer a suggestion as to their purpose. As human beings, if we do not understand the reason for doing or not doing something, or that reason is not explicitly obvious (the immediate consequences of murder or theft are enough to know that such an act is immoral), it is tempting and quite natural to find excuses to do or not do the act in question. The nations, according to the Talmud, will at one time or another applaud some of the moral aspects of Torah. Indeed the Greeks under Antiochus Epiphanies equated the Torah with other Greek literature that was of poetic and philosophical importance. But it will be the *chukim*, that which confounds conventional logic and reason, (and therefore that body of legislation into which one needs to look more deeply in order to see its wider reflection and purpose), which will be the first to be refuted and the first to be abandoned.[671]

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[671] Rambam, or Moses Maimonides, maintained that there was a rationale behind each of the different legal categories within the Torah, including the *chukim*. The *chukim*, however, unlike the *mishpatim*, offer no explicit rationale, it needs to be uncovered. See Moses Maimonides, *Guide to the Perplexed,* chapters 23 and 31, http://www.mesora.org/chukim.html. Retrieved February 2 2019

Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan writes that the very fact a commandment does not have a seemingly logical reason, makes the guarding of that commandment all the more precious. It becomes a tender act of faith, with elements of humility and sacrifice. It is the *chukim* that help us understand the enigmatic response of Israel at Sinai - "all that God says we will do, and we will hear (*shema*)." For Israel, to guard the Torah as a treasure is more than an act of morality fuelled by rational logic, it is the very essence of faith itself. A posture of continuity and trust with a surety that resists the malady of scepticism, a malady that at different times in Israel's history threatened to swallow it whole, as Torah reminds us through the narratives of *B'Midbar.*[672]

IV.5   PRECIOUS STONES: מִצְוָה   *Mitzvah*

The word *mitzvah* does not translate easily. It is broadly translated as 'commandment' and can encompass any or all of the categories of the commands above (judgements, witnesses and decrees), or be a specific command on its own.[673] It comes from the Hebrew root verb *tzava* צָוָה, which transmits the sense of a charge being laid upon someone through the spoken word.[674] There is a deeper connotation that is intimated through this 'charge' - that of attachment or connection. The Aramaic sister word for *tzav* is *tzavta*, which means 'to attach' or 'to join', conveying a sense of a close personal bond. In other words, *mitzvah* can be defined as a spoken command, spoken from the mouth of the *metzaveh*, (the one giving the command) that at once connects

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[672] Avivah Zornberg draws upon Stanley Cavell's treatment of skepticism and relates it to the mood of the Israelites in the wilderness. See *Bewilderments,* xiv-xv

[673] There is another word for commandment, used in the text of Ezra and the Book of Daniel - *te'em* טְעֵם in Aramaic, which in Hebrew is *ta'am* טָעַם meaning 'to feed'. This potentially offers an expansive interpretation within the current of *mitzvah.*

[674] See https://biblehub.com/hebrew/6680.htm. Retrieved August 20 2016

the do-er with the speaker, in the realm of the ordinary. This realm is transformed, however, both through this connection and the actions that result from this connection - *mitzvah*. Mitzvah is therefore a 'double entendre' in that it is the command, but it is also the response to that command. We respond with *mitzvah* (the deed) to the *mitzvah* (command) and thereby our actions are intimately connected into the words of the one commanding.

Rabbi Arnold Wolf, drawing from themes in both Psalm 119, a prosaic praise song which lovingly expresses different dimensions of Torah, and Proverbs 6, envisions *mitzvot* as precious stones and brilliant gems that stud an ancient path. As we walk along this path some of the gems are easy to pick up and carry, while others are more deeply embedded into the pavement and require more effort. The end result of gathering exquisite stones and dazzling gems as we walk along this sacred path, both the ones that are easy and more difficult to gather, is the possession of as many precious jewels as one could possibly hold. Each one is rare and unique and adds something distinctively beautiful and worthy to our experience of life.[675] Each *mitzvah*, each statute or ordinance, is a teaching which directs our lives toward a target as an arrow shot from a bow. There is a purposeful momentum which is aiming for a target. There is movement. Our lives become more like verbs, action words that are becoming, rather than nouns.[676]

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[675] See Rabbi Lawrence Kushner, *Jewish Spirituality for Christians,* 57

[676] On *mitzvah,* see   A. J. Heschel, "Transcendental and Terrestrial Perspectives", in *Heavenly Torah,* 270-272

IV.5.1   COMMANDMENT AND CONNECTION

The Hasidic masters emphasised this point of connection and attachment within the meaning of *mitzvot,* and saw them as physical acts that unite people and God in multi-dimensional ways, vertical and horizontal all at once.[677] Experiencing and doing *mitzvot*, according to this thinking, is a way to discover the 'sacred in the mundane' insofar as that which is holy and that which is profane become looped together in a distinct and special way. For example, eating is considered a physical, almost carnal act in some ways, and yet the very concept of *kashrut* infuses the whole idea of eating with a sense of connectedness and consciousness which transforms it into a sacred experience. The ordinary is not divorced from the sacred, it becomes sacred itself through the *mitzvot*.[678]

Jewish tradition makes a distinction between *mitzvot bein adam la'Makom* - commandments between a person and God, and *mitzvot bein adam la-chavero,* commandments between one person and another.[679] The former category mostly include the *edut* and *chukim*, (the testimonies and decrees), and the latter include the *mishpatim* (judgements and moral rulings). However, neither the moral, ethical, ritual or ceremonial *mitzvot* are considered to be more weighty or important than the other as there are delicate intricacies woven between them that interlaces them, making them inseparable. The *mitzvot* are therefore all parts of a whole and as a whole work better together, a little like the image of a human body made up of composite parts.

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[677] See Manfred Vogel, "Covenant and the Interreligious Encounter", in *Issues in the Jewish-Christian Dialogue,* Helga Croner and Leon Klenicki eds., 72

[678] Kushner, *Jewish Spirituality for Christians,* 55-57

[679] In rabbinic thought, this offers an explanation as to why there are two tablets on which the words were inscribed, one for each category of *mitzvot*. See Avivah Zornberg, *Murmurings*, xi

Different parts of the human body have different functions, but the body needs to be whole in order to function fully and enable the human to reach their fullest potential.

For example, the *mitzvah* of welcoming the stranger and the *mitzvah* of guarding/ remembering the Sabbath might seem like separate, distinct commandments, but they feed into one another in a causative and responsive way. It is a common custom to have strangers dine at the Sabbath table, and to fulfil the *mitzvah* of *hachnsat orchim* הכנסת אורחים (hospitality) in Jewish culture is of the utmost importance, ensuring that no one is isolated or neglected especially during sacred times and seasons. These three *mitzvot*, then, welcoming the stranger, guarding the Sabbath and practising hospitality respectively, feed and blend seamlessly into one another. Each one informs the experience of the other and each one actually enables the fulfilling of another.

A second example of the interconnectedness of the *mitzvot* (and therefore the hermeneutical difficulties which can arise from dislocating them) is the fact that the celebration of Passover is considered an *edut*, a *mitzvah* that is a testimony and witnesses afresh to the narrative of the Exodus, with its many detailed requirements and nuanced aspects and customs. However, it also teaches through its different aspects a deep moral and ethical principle - God created us to be free and orchestrated that freedom, subverting an oppressive power in the process.[680] The moral and ethical facets are therefore deeply embedded into the testimonial

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[680] See *The Jonathan Sacks Haggadah: Collected Essays on Pesach* (Jerusalem, Israel: Maggid Books, 2013), 2-5.

dimensions of this *mitzvah,* highlighting the potential folly of disjoining and isolating them.

V. HALAKHAH AND AGGADAH - AN INDISSOLVABLE UNITY

Halakhah, הֲלָכָה coming from the Hebrew verb *halakh* meaning 'to walk', is the collective noun for that body of content which is concerned with the working out of the *mitzvot.* In other words, it is how one 'walks out' the legal and moral aspects of Torah, defined as above. *Aggadah* אַגָּדָה (or plural *aggadot,* coming from the Hebrew root verb *nagad* meaning 'to tell' with the causative sense of making something 'conspicuous'), are the narratives in which the *halakhah* is submerged and given life. Abraham Joshua Heschel, in his weighty treatise *Heavenly Torah - As Refracted through the Generations,* writes,

> 'The Torah stands on a dual foundation - *Halakhah* and *Aggadah*'.[681]

In other words, Torah is both *aggadic* and *halakhic* at once, meaning it is composed of both narrative and legal portions that are inextricably bound and together fulfil a unique purpose in instructing the covenantal community. He identifies these two strands as being inseparable and in their unity sees grace and love as being enveloped in a morality, that together wield a potency. *Halakhah* speaks to the community visibly in precise and exacting terms, while *aggadah* is the language of songs and poetry, and both are necessary for the formation and cultivation of Israel's theological dreamscape.[682] The Torah is the *chukim* and the *mishpatim,* the narratives and the

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[681] Heschel, *Heavenly Torah*, 1

[682] Ibid., 1-3

poetry, the *edut* and the *mitzvot,* all together. It is highly doubtful that a first century Jewish way of understanding the Torah would have divided it into the rule parts and the narrative parts.

Heschel's understanding of Torah and the interconnectedness of *halakhah* and *aggadah* partners aptly with the aforementioned essay on *Nomos and Narrative* by Robert Cover in his analysis of the dialectical relationship between the two, and the importance of not dislocating law from the narrative in which it finds itself embedded. Not restricting his treatment of the subject to biblical text, Cover nonetheless utilises biblical text as an example of how law and narrative intermingle and it is in this very interlacing that their strength is to be found. To separate them would be, according to Cover, to erode the tenacity of the text as a whole. Moreover, we can conclude that preserving the integrity of Torah text in this way can be seen as a refusal also to undermine or decry the religious imagination of the community in which these narratives, and the *nomos* they contain, nourish and sustain.

V.1   PSALM 119 - THE STREAMS OF TORAH

Psalm 119 offers a poetic depiction which propels us into a biblical stream of consciousness which reflects deeply on the different dimensions of Torah. It draws together in its song-like mode all the nuanced aspects of Torah we have encountered in this chapter, and grounds them in the rich cadences of Hebrew poetry. The psalmist treated particular modes of Torah like streams running toward the sea, and each stream of Torah pools into a rich reservoir of collective Jewish wisdom that

provides a source of thirst-quenching nourishment for the parched. Its opening words register familiar tones of Wisdom literature, describing as 'blessed', or more accurately 'contented and happy' (coming from the Hebrew word *ashrei* אַשְׁרֵי), the person whose *halakhah*, whose 'way of walking', is bound up in the 'torah' or the teaching of the Holy One. Guarding the *edut*, the testimonies or witnesses, loving the *mitzvot*, learning and engaging with the *mishpatim*, protecting the *chukim,* and cleaving onto the Words that drip from God's mouth like a lover cleaves onto her beloved, are the pulse of this psalm. [683]

Evocative and poignant language,

> "my soul desperately breaks for the longing of your words…it melts with heaviness…open my eyes and enlarge my heart…the bands of wickedness have robbed me, but I have not forgotten your Torah…"

convey a depth of longing and a thirst for a fresh encounter with the sacred that is almost repetitively expressed, articulating an expansiveness of spiritual truth that seems to be evading plain language. It is truly a cry from *tehom,* from the 'murmuring deep' of a soul that has tasted the sweetness of Torah, which is sweeter than the drippings of the honeycomb as Proverbs muses, and longs for more of it. 176 verses ruminate and wax on the internal meanings of what it is to live within the melodies of Sinai. '(Grant me) Your Torah in graciousness', *v'torat'khah chaneyni,* וְתוֹרָתְךָ חָנֵּנִי the poet beseeches, pulling together Torah and grace as indivisible from one another. The idea that the Torah is an oppressive law which needs to obeyed for justification

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[683] Walter Brueggemann writes that the psalms reflect a dialectical relationship, wherein 'Israel moves from commandment to communion (and) the weight of duty is overridden by the delight of a lyrical community with God'. See Walter Brueggemann, *The Psalms: The Life of Faith,* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 195

or salvation stands in stark contrast like a jagged splinter that is at odds with the smoothness of the flesh in which it finds itself ingrained.[684] Love, sweetness, desire, beauty, mercy, connection, deep attachment and spiritual arousal set the tempo for this psalm.

VI. CONCLUSION

'The fire of Torah, became garbed in ink and parchment and G-d's wisdom, which is the essence of Torah, was embedded in its words and letters.' [685]

"Rabbi Shimon said - "woe to the human being who says the Torah gives us mere stories and ordinary words! All the words of Torah are sublime words, all the letters sublime secrets…the story of Torah is the garment of Torah. That is why David said, "Open my eyes so I can see the wonder of your Torah!" (Psalm 119:18). What is under the garment of Torah? …The essence of the garment is the body, and the essence of the body is the soul. So it is with Torah. She has a body, the commandments of Torah, and a soul, the eternal beauty of the Torah. Those who seek to know her do not look at the garment, but rather the body that is under that garment. As (fine) wine must sit in a jar, so the Torah must sit in its garment. A fine

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[684] Ibid., 194. Walter Brueggemann notes that the Christian, and particularly Protestant, reductionist tendency to champion 'grace alone' does not lend itself fully to the nuanced dimensions of a 'life with God' which this psalm articulates. Grace is infused into this life not separated out.

[685] See Heschel, *Heavenly Torah*, 333

wine is only a fine wine when it is tasted out of its jar. So look at what is under the garment! All those words and stories…they are but garments." (Zohar III:152 a)[686]

The Zohar and medieval Jewish folklore compare the Torah to a beautiful princess who is draped in external garments. The one who sees only these externals of Torah, the stories and words and commandments, has been fooled by the disguise. He or she does not realise that they stand before a real princess. The one who both sees the stories and words and commandments of the Torah and seeks to live by the teachings conveyed within them, knows they are connected to something of great worth and so are enabled to appreciate some of the beauty of the princess. However the one who not only sees and lives by them but truly recognises what is being seen, who feasts their eyes on the exquisite refinement and delicacy of the Torah that dwells eternally beneath her garments, takes hold of something very precious and embraces the princess as his or her very own beloved. Michael Fishbane, in *The Garments of Torah: Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics,* writes,

> "Hebrew Scripture is an ontologically unique literature: not because of its aesthetic stele or topics of concern —which are judged weak in comparison with contemporary medieval romances and epics —but precisely because such externalities are merely the first of several garment-like layers concealing deeper and less refracted aspects of divine truth whose core, the root of all roots, is God himself. Thus, as indicated in this myth of Scriptural origin, the divine Reality exteriorises and condenses itself, at many removes from its animating soul-root, into a verbal text with several layers of meaning. The true hermeneutic —who is a seeker

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[686] See Elliot R. Wolfson, *Through Speculum that Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 386-392

after God and not simply a purveyor of aesthetic tropes or normative rules —will be drawn to this garmented bride…and will strip away the garments of Torah until he and the beloved one (God as discovered in the depths of Scripture) are one."[687]

When we engage 'beneath the garment' so to speak, and draw out the deeper meanings bubbling beneath the surface as they interact with what is bubbling beneath our own surface, therein lies the interface, the dance of sacred scripture. We have throughout the previous chapters established a strong working definition of the Torah. This includes connotations of the Torah as directive 'teaching' or 'instruction', which etymologically carries the sense of hitting the bulls-eye in a target as an arrow shot from a bow. The definition of the Torah, as established in chapter three, further carries the connotation of a mother's instructions and is intimately bound up in the concept of both community and covenant. These definitions and descriptions have been expanded in this final chapter through an exploration of grace within the Torah itself, tracking the trajectory of *chen* חֵן and *chesed* חֶ֫סֶד, 'grace/ favour' and 'faithful loving-kindness' or 'covenant-loyalty' respectively, from the matrix of the Torah and on into the narratives of the Prophets and Writings. In turn, this allowed us to definitively conclude that law and narrative are not so easily dislocated from one another, and promoting a hermeneutic which relies on a fundamental disjoining of the two is as futile as separating crops from their soil and expecting a rich harvest.

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[687] Michael Fishbane, *The Garments of Torah: Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics*, 35

Engaging with the legal terminology of the Torah has effectively demonstrated the findings of chapter four of this thesis, namely that a simple shift in the assumed perception of the Torah and the vocabulary which is used to define and describe the Torah, can generate a different response. It also demonstrates the connection between vocabulary and established theological perceptions. This is what is meant by allowing the Torah to function as a key in the Jewish-Christian relationship - by engaging the Torah as a key, different aspects of the relationship that were closed off due to misunderstanding the 'language game', begin to open up like a key unlocking a door. With this open door the potential for reconciliation and reconnection becomes a viable possibility. Surely such an exciting proposition, reconnecting and reconciling beyond the wall so to speak, is worthy to be pursued.

CONCLUSION

I. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has attempted to critically examine presumptuous and theologically inherited notions about the nature and function of the Torah. The overall purpose of this examination is to effectively demonstrate the possibility that the Torah, as sacred and covenantal text, can provide a unique space where a renewed exegetical encounter between Christians and Jews can become a mode for reconnection. In other words, to prove that the Torah is an essential key to Jewish-Christian reconciliation, and in that space to begin to re-imagine the parameters of the Jewish-Christian relationship.

In order to accomplish this, it has been necessary to dispel simplistic or reductionist definitions and assumptions about the Torah, through a number of avenues. One such avenue has been an in-depth examination of theological language, highlighting the significant impact which certain words, such as 'law', 'old' and 'legalism', can provoke, and the influence of translation on theology. A second avenue has been the exploration of 'flashpoint texts', namely NT passages which historically have been misused to malign Jews and Judaism. A third avenue has been an ongoing endeavour to demonstrate the dexterity of biblical text, and its inherent subversive ability to facilitate a range of simultaneous dialogues. These dialogues take place across multiple planes - with fellow students, with the inner world of the text, with the

historical voices who have interpreted the text across generations, and with oneself as the text begins to read us as much as we are reading it.

A key methodology to this thesis has been the detailed exploration of Hebrew word usage within biblical text, endeavouring to enable the text 'to speak' in Burton Visotzky's terminology, as a "modern midrash - re-reading the text as it speaks to our twentieth-century consciousness".[688] Opening up the rich theological heritage embedded beneath the surface of the text, and making the abundant poetic, literary and narrative beauty of the Torah and its unique spiritual depth accessible to communities who find themselves awakening to their shared roots, is one of the hopeful outcomes of this endeavour. As such this thesis has demonstrated both a 'text-centred' and 'reader-centred' approach to meaning.[689]

A second significant aspect to the methodological approach adopted is the re-visioning of sacred relationship through sacred text, inspired in part by *Nostra Aetate*, which re-assessed the relationship between Catholics and Jews through the re-evaluation of certain scriptures. In that vein, this thesis has sought to reframe the Jewish-Christian relationship with the Torah as a central touchstone.

A third approach significant for the development of the thesis as a whole has been the sustained use of metaphor throughout, communicating central ideas through the

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[688] Burton Visotzky, *Reading the Book: Making the Bible a Timeless Text,* x

[689] By a 'text-centred' approach, I mean to convey the sense in which the meaning of the text resides within it. By a 'reader-centred' approach, I mean the dynamic by which the reader's engagement is what 'actualises the potential' and meaning residing in the text. Randolph Tate suggests an 'integrated approach' to drawing meaning from biblical text, whereby 'meaning results from a conversation between the world of the text and the world of the reader, a conversation informed by the world of the author'. See Randolph Tate, *Biblical Interpretation,* 3-5

metaphors of a 'garden', a 'locked door', a 'key' and a 'lens'. These metaphors convey the core intention of this thesis, which is to explore how biblical text, specifically the Torah, can be a 'key' to opening up some of the theologically locked doors within Jewish-Christian relationship.

II. KEY FINDINGS

II.1 FILLING A GAP: SACRED RECONCILIATION THROUGH SACRED TEXT

Chapter One traced, amongst other things, some of the positive developments within the Jewish-Christian relationship through the various Christian (Catholic, Protestant and ecumenical) and Jewish documents which have been issued particularly in the latter half of the twentieth century as the dialogue has continued to unfold. Building on the landmark achievements of *NA,* which in part drew from the inspirational work of Jules Isaac*,* "Notes.," "Guidelines.," "A Sacred Obligation" and *Dabru Emet*, amongst others have sparked and oxygenated a growing warmth at an institutional level between Christian and Jewish bodies. One challenge, however, with the above documents, is that while they are monumentally significant given the painful history of relations between Christian and Jews, they don't offer a specific prescription for *how* to achieve the type of Jewish-Christian partnership which "(can) address the moral challenges of our era".[690]

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[690] "To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven: Toward a Partnership between Jews and Christians", http://cjcuc.org/2015/12/03/orthodox-rabbinic-statement-on-christianity/, retrieved February 22 2019

This thesis fills that gap in part, through offering one very particular proposal for how that partnership can be actualised - pursuing sacred reconciliation through the medium of sacred text and thereby accessing a space where one can authentically learn to 're-see' the Deepest Other afresh. S. Samuel Shermis terms this as "translating guidelines into strategies".[691] Philip Cunningham's vision for a journey toward Jewish-Christian reconciliation provides both a beginning and end point for this pursuit, in that it frames the journey toward Jewish-Christian reconciliation in a vision of *shalom*. Cunningham emphasises the fact that "it was through the reinterpretation of scripture, that the churches began to reverse their previous hostility to Jews and their religious traditions".[692] The beginning steps of a journey toward wholeness and right relationship between Christians and Jews was propelled by the reimagining of sacred text, and in the process a revisioning of the 'Other' with whom that sacred text was shared, emerged.

II.2   THE IMPOSED DICHOTOMY BETWEEN LAW AND GRACE HAS HISTORICALLY NURTURED SUPERSESSIONISM

Chapter Two examined some of the roots of the 'partings of the ways', and some of the implications of those partings, which include the development of the *Adversus Judeaous* literature, and the imposed dichotomy between the Torah and grace as it began to develop in this context. It is clear that this dichotomy is an imposition which cultivates in part the sustenance of supersessionism, and was able to fully flower as the dynamics of power and politics irrevocably shifted through the alliance

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[691] Shermis and Zannoni, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 254

[692] Philip Cunningham, *Seeking Shalom,* x

with Constantine in the fourth century. Some of the implications of this dichotomy include a binary, mutually exclusive hermeneutic which manifests across theological and relational axes, determining one set of people, covenants and scripture to be defunct in favour of another set of people, covenants and scripture. This discontinuity has had disastrous historical ramifications not only for the Jewish-Christian relationship, but also for the relationship between Christianity and her own Jewish roots. It was in this vein that following from *NA* and the subsequent documents produced at institutional level from varying denominational bodies, a broad revision of church teaching accompanied the inner impetus to squarely confront Christian anti-Judaism. Broadly, this revision has included a re-examination of hymns, teaching resources, catechesis and liturgy and is a welcome signal of the ongoing positive developments within Jewish-Christian dialogue.

II.3   RE-IMAGINING THE JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIP THROUGH BIBLICAL TEXT PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY FOR RELATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

This thesis has critically asked if what is perceived as a stumbling block can in fact be a stepping stone, through querying the possibility of using what has been relegated and labeled as a stumbling block (within Christianity) *in and of itself,* the Torah, as a 'key' to the betterment of Jewish-Christian relations.

Offering a close reading of biblical narrative, **Chapter Three** concluded that a deep engagement with the text provides exciting interpretive possibilities for a renewed

exegetical encounter. When we engage 'beneath the garment' of the text so to speak, and draw out the deeper meanings bubbling beneath the surface as they interact with what is bubbling beneath our own surface, therein lies the interface, the dance of sacred scripture. One of the biblical passages examined in this regard was Hosea 2:14-16, which speaks of a place of death becoming an 'opening' to hope. The traces of earlier, inherited memories that are painful are not disregarded but, as reflected in the prophetic narratives again and again, instead become the very sounding board used when expressing the unfathomable possibilities of restoration and hope. What was a stumbling block becomes a stepping stone. This is the suggested motivation for pursuing a reconciliation which lies beyond the 'locked door' - the potential transformation within the Jewish-Christian relationship of deep-seated memories rooted in trauma and hostility, into relations which hold the possibility of renewed life and restored relations.

II.4   MOVING FROM A LANGUAGE OF RUPTURE TO A LANGUAGE OF RECONNECTION

Philip Cunningham identifies that both in the wider context of interfaith dialogue and for Catholic-Jewish dialogue in particular, a key task in the emergent relationship was, and is, to learn 'how to speak' to one another.[693] Drawing on Ludwig Wittgenstein's theory of *Sprachspiel,* 'the Language Game', **Chapter Four** assessed the possibility that supersessionism was a 'language' in and of itself, which was sustained and nurtured in the traumatic aftermath of a post-Destruction Jerusalem, when the

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[693] Cunningham, *Seeking Shalom,* 248

partings of the ways between Christians and Jews began to solidify. We therefore suggested that supersessionism, rooted in the idea of dislocation and replacement, is fundamentally a 'language of rupture'. Responding to this assessment, it was proposed that an active, communal engagement with biblical text, and specifically the Torah as sacred and covenantal text, not only proffers the possibilities of a renewed exegetical encounter between Christians and Jews, but crucially also potentially offers a 'language of reconnection'.

II.4.1 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MEMORY FOR THE JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

Building on the idea of developing a language of reconnection between Jews and Christians, chapter four also offered a tight reading of the Joseph narratives. Specific attention concentrated on the significance of rupture in Joseph's own life, and the reconnections which were enabled through language and a 'drawing close' in the text.

Here we can offer one final reflection. In "The Future of the Past" Jonathan Sacks highlights why the reconciliation between the brothers in Genesis was so significant - it wasn't just the brothers who were reconciling, it was the whole history of brothers since the beginning of time as it is given in the Torah. From Cain and Abel to Ishmael and Isaac, to Esau and Jacob and Joseph and his bothers, a trajectory of exile had been established. Sacks notes that the text asks a pivotal question about the nature of relationships,

"Can brothers live peaceably with one another? This question is fundamental to the biblical drama of redemption, for if brothers cannot live together, how can nations? And if nations cannot live together, how can the human world survive?"[694]

The necessity of authentic reconciliation is therefore of paramount importance in the text. Joseph's life demonstrates that we possess not the ability to change our past, but the ability to use the *significance* of our past, no matter how traumatic (trauma and rupture almost feature almost continually in Joseph's early narratives). The past events which marred Jospeh's teenage years and tore him from his father, are reinterpreted in the light of reconciliation, and the fact that both Egypt and Israel experience a form of salvation through Jospeh's actions. Striking tones with the passage from Hosea, what once was reticent with memories of separation and death, becomes a doorway to hope, a threshold to possibility. For the Jewish-Christian relationship, we can infer that the trauma of past relations, visited mainly by Christians onto Jews, cannot be altered. However, the significance of this history can become an access point to an authentic reconciliation grounded in *shalom*. In may ways, the rapprochement between Christians and Jews following the horrific reality of the Shoah, reflects an inner metanoia within the varying Christian denominations, seeking to 'draw close' to its Deepest Other in a similar way to the brothers. The past cannot be undone, and it is precisely because of this sharp reality that the possibilities of a new future can be forged. Joseph therefore epitomises what it means to oscillate between memory and hope. The memories of the past and the possibilities of the future continually intersect through his life. Cardinal Walter

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[694] See Jonathan Sacks, "The Future of the Past", http://rabbisacks.org/future-past-vayechi-5779/, retrieved February 22 2019

356

Kasper, former President of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, uses the term *memoria futuri* with regard to the Jewish-Christian relationship, emphasising the importance of cultivating a sense of memory which will 'empower the present'.[695]

II.5   ENGAGING WITH A NON-LUTHERAN PAUL

Chapter Five reflectively reconsidered specific NT 'flashpoint' texts, which have historically been used to theologically buttress anti-Jewish and anti-Torah attitudes. While Pauline scholarship has undergone a broad reassessment, particularly through the academic and scholarly achievements of the *NPP* approach, Paul is still predominantly cast in a 'Lutheran' light. Stephen Westerholm clarifies this not as a denominational designation, but rather as a specific reading of Paul "as one for for whom the doctrine of justification of faith is central and deliberately excludes any role for human 'works'".[696]

Mark Nanos' work on Paul, in *Reading Paul within Judaism,* in seeking to relocate the apostle from projections which rely on anachronistic interpretations of contentious verses, provided key insight into developing an informed approach to Paul as a Jew. Critically, Nanos highlights that in spite of the unfolding scholarship in this area, affirming Paul's place within the Judaism of the first-century, and the restorative statements made by Pope John Paul II for example in Rome in 1986 and the World

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[695] See http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/ rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20021106_kasper-boston-college_en.html. Retrieved February 24 2019. See also Edward Kessler, *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations,* 201

[696] Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul,* xvii

Council of Churches in 1988, translators and interpreters alike continue to reinforce negative associations between Paul and the Torah, and by proxy Paul and the Jewish people.[697] This has the unfortunate consequences of perpetuating replacement theology, and distorts the very source which could actually dispel supersessionist sentiments.

II.6   THE IRREDUCIBLE CORRELATION BETWEEN LAW AND NARRATIVE

Drawing on Robert Cover and Abraham Joshua Heschel, **Chapter Six** demonstrated not only the futility of dislocating narratives and the *nomos* or the 'laws' which centre those narratives, but the fundamental correlation between law and narrative. Separating legal portions of biblical text from the narratives which ground them, undermines the strength of the text as a whole. Moreover, the biblical texts regularly display a subversive tendency demonstrated through the narratives, wherein what seems to be the *nomos,* the 'norm' in this case, is overturned. To demonstrate this we closely read three biblical passages, one from the Prophets (Hannah), the Torah (the Daughters of Zelophehad) and the Writings (Ruth).

II.6.1   THE TORAH AS A KEY TO GRACE

A second significant conclusion to be drawn from chapter six is the intertwining of the Torah and grace, as demonstrated through tracking the trajectory of *chen* חֵן and *chesed* חֶ֫סֶד, 'grace/favour' and 'faithful loving-kindness' or 'covenant-loyalty'

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[697] Mark Nanos, *Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First - Century Context to the Apostle,* 1-8

respectively, from the matrix of the Torah and on into the narratives of the Prophets and Writings. In turn, this allowed us to definitively assess, as mentioned, that law and narrative are not so easily dislocated from one another, and promoting a hermeneutic which relies on a fundamental disjoining of the two is as futile as separating crops from their soil and expecting a rich harvest.

II.6.2   THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HALAKHAH AND LEGALISM

As noted, Judaism retains a 'legal' standing for the Torah, and there is full acknowledgement that the Torah contains within it many laws. In Jewish thought this Torah law is *halakhah*, which is effectively the process and activity of living out the commands of the Torah in day-to-day life. Therefore, it is not to suggest that Christianity conceives of the Torah as law while Judaism does not. This would be a reductionist understanding. However, the perception, application and understanding of that law is vastly different. For Christianity, the law or the Torah has often been characterised as an obedience demanding system which is defunct in favour of grace. It is sometimes assumed that the Torah as the Law of Moses is synonymous with the idea of 'legalism'. For Jews, the Torah contains laws within it to live by, but it is an all-encompassing way of life which at its heart teaches the covenanted community how to live. Here there is an important distinction to be discerned. As mentioned in chapter six, Manfred Vogel, in his chapter entitled "Covenant and the Interreligious Encounter", writes in this vein that,

"Judaism and Christianity place the law in different contexts. Christianity seems to place it primarily in the context of vertical relation between man and God. In Judaism, however, the burden of *halakhah* impinges upon the horizontal relation

between man and man…it is a distinctive feature of Judaism that it refracts the

vertical through the horizontal relationship…".[698]

III. FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov tells the story of an impoverished *tzadik* (a righteous

man) who dreamed of a rare and precious treasure and travelled long distances to

find it. When after a long and perilous journey he at last came upon the secret place

the treasure of his dreams was hidden, he found that it was in the very place he had

started from - his own home. The treasure had been in his possession from the very

beginning. But, as the Kotzker Rebbe noted, sometimes we must journey a great

distance in order to behold the precious things which have been there all along.[699]

This thesis has proposed that the Torah as sacred and covenantal text is a precious

treasure which is essential for reconciliation between Jews and Christians, and is

within the reach of the Jewish-Christian relationship. Like the treasure in the story

told by Rabbi Nachman, however, at times the Torah has been concealed in this

relationship, overlooked, or resigned to reductionist labels and vilified unjustly to the

detriment of all. The intention of this project has been to revise some existing trends

through developing a new model, thereby carving a different approach to Jewish-

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[698] See *Issues in the Jewish-Christian Dialogue*, Helga Croner and Leon Klenicki (eds.), 72

[699] *The Stories of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov and Saba Yisroel,* Simcha Nanach, trans. (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), 320

Christian reconciliation, which envisions the Torah as a key that can unlock aspects the Jewish-Christian encounter in a unique way.

III.1   DEVELOPING A POST-SUPERSESSIONIST NARRATIVE

Jewish scholar Peter Ochs maintains that it is possible for Christianity to relinquish the classical trends of supersessionism while simultaneously expressing the Gospel message. A 'post-liberal' Christian theology according to Ochs, provides a method of reaffirming 'classical Christology' whilst rejecting supersessionism.[700] Part of the reason that such a hypothesis is even possible, is the 'new epoch of relations' which has developed between Christianity and Judaism, discussed at various points throughout this thesis. This new epoch presents an alternative to the binary approach, prevalent in the earlier decades of an emerging Jewish-Christian dialogue, of adopting either a 'liberal humanism' or a 'reactionary orthodoxy', and enables a new dialectic. In that vein, what has been presented here is a dialogical approach to Jewish-Christian reconciliation which roots itself in that 'new dialectic', seeking a 'face-to-face inquiry' on the limits and possibilities of this important relationship.[701] The context in which this takes place is also significant. As Edward Kessler notes we are living in a constantly 'globalising' world, and this necessitates that Jewish-Christian dialogue as it continues to unfold must reflect this 'globalising' reality.[702] Therefore Jewish-Christian engagement must be not only institutional, but regional and fundamentally at grass-roots level. This is also where the premise of a dialogical

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[700] Peter Ochs, *Another Reformation: Postliberal Christianity and the Jews,* 1-5

[701] Ibid., 19

[702] See Edward Kessler, "Working Toward an Appreciation of Common Purpose", in *Jews and Christians in Conversation,* 69

engagement around sacred text which this thesis proposes can offer something constructive.

III. 2 CONSIDERATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

One specific consideration for future research emerges from a sustained reflection on the passionate and important work of Jules Isaac. Despite his monumental contribution to a fledging dialogue between Christians and Jews as the horrors of the Shoah became apparent in the late 1940's, sources consolidating his contribution and significant role, particularly in English, are scant.[703] There are of course his own works, *Jésus et Israël* (1948), *Génése de l'Anti-Sémitisme* (1961) and *L'Enseignment de Mepris* (1962), and his involvement in the Ten Points of Seelisberg and meetings with two Popes, as well as partnership with Abraham Joshua Heschel in working behind the scenes in the development of *NA,* are duly noted.[704] However, his significance is grossly understated, and without his contributions we might well ask if Jewish-Christian dialogue would be where it is today. This sentiment is sharpened not only by the context out of which his commitment to Jewish-Christian dialogue emerged, namely the murder of his family in Auschwitz, but also by the fact that he died in 1963, shortly before he could see the fruits of *NA*. An examination therefore into his key role in shaping Jewish-Christian dialogue would be a worthy endeavour.

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[703] English sources on Isaac rely on translations of either Isaac's own works from French, or largely unavailable translations from the French of works about Isaac. Four such works in the French include, *Hommage solennel a Jules Isaac: 1877-1963*; *Salle des Centraux, le 21-10-1963* (1963); André Kaspi, *Jules Isaac ou la Passion de la Vérité* (Plon 2002); Michel Michel, *Jules Isaac, un historien dans la grande guerre: Lettres et carnets, 1914-1917* (Armand Colin, 2004).

[704] See for example, "The Legacy of Jules Isaac", presented by Dr Edouard Robberechts at the 2013 ICCJ annual Conference. http://www.iccj.org/redaktion/upload_pdf/201307121332010.Sunday-Opening-Edouard-Robberechts.pdf, retrieved February 24 2019.

IV.   A CONCLUDING MIDRASH

<u>THE ENDLESS TORAH</u>

Midrash asks, "Why was Torah given in the wilderness? This teaches that if you do not make yourself as free as the wilderness, you will not merit the words of Torah. And as the wilderness has no end, so too the Torah has no end, as is says, 'its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea' ". (*Pesikta De-Rav Kahana* 12:20)

As the Israelites move through the wilderness, they empty themselves of slavery, as a balloon shooting through the air empties itself of wind. They become open to something different, through that something has not yet manifested itself. The Torah they receive is not (yet) a Torah of Words. it is a 'Torah' of Silence, a Torah of Sky. It is a Torah of Freedom.

Pesikta Rav Kahana teaches that the people must receive this Torah of Wilderness before they are ready to receive a Torah of Words. Torah received by slaves becomes just another rule laid down by a master. For Torah to be a covenant between heaven and earth, it must be received by a people free to think for themselves. Torah, as the midrash says, is not limited by its ink borders. It has no end. Its words grow anew, like leaves on trees. As long as we explore our covenant with the Infinite, Torah continues to expand. It is ever moving, like the horizon in the distance.

As it says in Scripture, "Would you by searching fathom the mystery of the Divine?

Would you find the limit of the Almighty? Higher than Heaven — what can you do?

Deeper than Sheol — what can you know? Its measure is longer than the earth and

broader than the sea". (Job 11:7-9)[705]

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[705] Taken from Jill Hammer, *The Jewish Book of Days, A Companion for All Seasons* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2006), 281

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE TEN POINTS OF SEELISBERG[706]

ISSUED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND

JEWS

AUGUST 5, 1947

AN ADDRESS TO THE CHURCHES

SEELISBERG, SWITZERLAND, 1947

We have recently witnessed an outburst of antisemitism which has led to the persecution and extermination of millions of Jews. In spite of the catastrophe which has overtaken both the persecuted and the persecutors, and which has revealed the extent of the Jewish problem in all its alarming gravity and urgency, antisemitism has lost none of its force, but threatens to extend to other regions, to poison the minds of Christians and to involve humanity more and more in a grave guilt with disastrous consequences.

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[706] See http://www.jcrelations.net/
An_Address_to_the_Churches__Seelisberg__Switzerland__1947.2370.0.html?
id=720&L=3&searchText=An+Address+to+the+Churches&searchFilter=%2A, retrieved July 28 2018

The Christian Churches have indeed always affirmed the un-Christian character of antisemitism, as of all forms of racial hatred, but this has not sufficed to prevent the manifestation among Christians, in various forms, of an undiscriminating racial hatred of the Jews as a people.

This would have been impossible if all Christians had been true to the teaching of Jesus Christ on the mercy of God and love of one's neighbour. But this faithfulness should also involve clear-sighted willingness to avoid any presentation and conception of the Christian message which would support antisemitism under whatever form. We must recognise, unfortunately, that this vigilant willingness has often been lacking.

We therefore address ourselves to the Churches to draw their attention to this alarming situation. We have the firm hope that they will be concerned to show their members how to prevent any animosity towards the Jews which might arise from false, inadequate or mistaken presentations or conceptions of the teaching and preaching of the Christian doctrine, and how on the other hand to promote brotherly love towards the sorely-tried people of the old covenant. Nothing would seem more calculated to contribute to this happy result than the following:

TEN POINTS

1 Remember that One God speaks to us all through the Old and the New Testaments.

2   Remember that Jesus was born of a Jewish mother of the seed of David and the people of Israel, and that His everlasting love and forgiveness embraces His own people and the whole world.

3   Remember that the first disciples, the apostles and the first martyrs were Jews.

4   Remember that the fundamental commandment of Christianity, to love God and one's neighbour, proclaimed already in the Old Testament and confirmed by Jesus, is binding upon both Christians and Jews in all human relationships, without any exception.

5   Avoid distorting or misrepresenting biblical or post-biblical Judaism with the object of extolling Christianity.

6   Avoid using the word Jews in the exclusive sense of the enemies of Jesus, and the words "the enemies of Jesus" to designate the whole Jewish people.

7   Avoid presenting the Passion in such a way as to bring the odium of the killing of Jesus upon all Jews or upon Jews alone. It was only a section of the Jews in Jerusalem who demanded the death of Jesus, and the Christian message has always been that it was the sins of mankind which were exemplified by those Jews and the sins in which all men share that brought Christ to the Cross.

8   Avoid referring to the scriptural curses, or the cry of a raging mob: "His blood be upon us and our children," without remembering that this cry should not count against the infinitely more weighty words of our Lord: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

9   Avoid promoting the superstitious notion that the Jewish people are reprobate, accursed, reserved for a destiny of suffering.

10   Avoid speaking of the Jews as if the first members of the Church had not

been Jews.[707]

APPENDIX B

NOSTRA AETATE[708]

DECLARATION ON

THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

NOSTRA AETATE

PROCLAIMED BY HIS HOLINESS

POPE PAUL VI

ON OCTOBER 28, 1965

1.   In our time, when day by day mankind is being drawn closer together, and the

ties between different peoples are becoming stronger, the Church examines more

closely her relationship to non-Christian religions. In her task of promoting unity

and love among men, indeed among nations, she considers above all in this

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[708] http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html, retrieved July 29 2018

declaration what men have in common and what draws them to fellowship. One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth.[709] One also is their final goal, God. His providence, His manifestations of goodness, His saving design extend to all men,[710] until that time when the elect will be united in the Holy City, the city ablaze with the glory of God, where the nations will walk in His light.[711]

Men expect from the various religions answers to the unsolved riddles of the human condition, which today, even as in former times, deeply stir the hearts of men: What is man? What is the meaning, the aim of our life? What is moral good, what is sin? Whence suffering and what purpose does it serve? Which is the road to true happiness? What are death, judgment and retribution after death? What, finally, is that ultimate inexpressible mystery which encompasses our existence: whence do we come, and where are we going?

2. From ancient times down to the present, there is found among various peoples a certain perception of that hidden power which hovers over the course of things and over the events of human history; at times some indeed have come to the recognition of a Supreme Being, or even of a Father. This perception and recognition penetrates their lives with a profound religious sense.

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[709] Cf. Acts 17:26

[710] Cf. Wis. 8:1; Acts 14:17; Rom. 2:6-7; 1 Tim. 2:4

[711] Cf. Wis. 8:1; Acts 14:17; Rom. 2:6-7; 1 Tim. 2:4

Religions, however, that are bound up with an advanced culture have struggled to answer the same questions by means of more refined concepts and a more developed language. Thus in Hinduism, men contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an inexhaustible abundance of myths and through searching philosophical inquiry. They seek freedom from the anguish of our human condition either through ascetical practices or profound meditation or a flight to God with love and trust. Again, Buddhism, in its various forms, realizes the radical insufficiency of this changeable world; it teaches a way by which men, in a devout and confident spirit, may be able either to acquire the state of perfect liberation, or attain, by their own efforts or through higher help, supreme illumination. Likewise, other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing "ways," comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites. The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself.[712]

The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good

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[712] Cf 2 Cor. 5:18-19

things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men.

3. The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all- powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth,[713] who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.

4. As the sacred synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that spiritually ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock.

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[713] Cf St. Gregory VII, letter XXI to Anzir (Nacir), King of Mauritania (Pl. 148, col. 450f.)

Thus the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ-Abraham's sons according to faith[714] -are included in the same Patriarch's call, and likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles.[715] Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ, Our Peace, reconciled Jews and Gentiles. making both one in Himself.[716]

The Church keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: "theirs is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the law and the worship and the promises; theirs are the fathers and from them is the Christ according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary. She also recalls that the Apostles, the Church's main-stay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people.

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[714] Cf. Gal. 3:7

[715] Cf. Rom. 11:17-24

[716] Cf. Eph. 2:14-16

As Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation,[717] nor did the Jews in large number, accept the Gospel; indeed not a few opposed its spreading.[718] Nevertheless, God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers; He does not repent of the gifts He makes or of the calls He issues-such is the witness of the Apostle.[719] In company with the Prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and "serve him shoulder to shoulder" (Soph. 3:9).[720]

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues.

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ;[721] still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not

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[717] Cf. Lk. 19:44

[718] Cf. Rom. 11:28

[719] Cf. Rom. 11:28-29; cf. dogmatic Constitution, Lumen Gentium (Light of nations) AAS, 57 (1965) p 20

[720] Cf. Is. 66:23; Ps. 65:4; Rom. 11:11-32

[721] Cf. John. 19:6

teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.

Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of men and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.

5. We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly way any man, created as he is in the image of God. Man's relation to God the Father and his relation to men his brothers are so linked together that Scripture says: "He who does not love does not know God" (1 John 4:8).

No foundation therefore remains for any theory or practice that leads to discrimination between man and man or people and people, so far as their human dignity and the rights flowing from it are concerned.

The Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or

religion. On the contrary, following in the footsteps of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, this sacred synod ardently implores the Christian faithful to "maintain good fellowship among the nations" (1 Peter 2:12), and, if possible, to live for their part in peace with all men,[722] so that they may truly be sons of the Father who is in heaven.[723]

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[722] Cf. Rom. 12:18

[723] Cf. Matt. 5:45

APPENDIX C

DABRU EMET[724]

A JEWISH STATEMENT ON CHRISTIANS AND CHRISTIANITY

NATIONAL JEWISH SCHOLARS PROJECT | 14.07.2002

In recent years, there has been a dramatic and unprecedented shift in Jewish and Christian relations. Throughout the nearly two millennia of Jewish exile, Christians have tended to characterize Judaism as a failed religion or, at best, a religion that prepared the way for, and is completed in, Christianity. In the decades since the Holocaust, however, Christianity has changed dramatically. An increasing number of official Church bodies, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, have made public statements of their remorse about Christian mistreatment of Jews and Judaism. These statements have declared, furthermore, that Christian teaching and preaching can and must be reformed so that they acknowledge God"s enduring covenant with the Jewish people and celebrate the contribution of Judaism to world civilization and to Christian faith itself.

We believe these changes merit a thoughtful Jewish response. Speaking only for ourselves - an interdenominational group of Jewish scholars - we believe it is time for Jews to learn about the efforts of Christians to honor Judaism. We believe it is time

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[724] http://www.jcrelations.net/Dabru_Emet_-_A_Jewish_Statement_on_Christians_and_Christianity. 2395.0.html, retrieved July 29 2018

for Jews to reflect on what Judaism may now say about Christianity. As a first step, we offer eight brief statements about how Jews and Christians may relate to one another.

Jews and Christians worship the same God. Before the rise of Christianity, Jews were the only worshippers of the God of Israel. But Christians also worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; creator of heaven and earth. While Christian worship is not a viable religious choice for Jews, as Jewish theologians we rejoice that, through Christianity, hundreds of millions of people have entered into relationship with the God of Israel.

Jews and Christians seek authority from the same book -- the Bible (what Jews call "Tanakh" and Christians call the "Old Testament"). Turning to it for religious orientation, spiritual enrichment, and communal education, we each take away similar lessons: God created and sustains the universe; God established a covenant with the people Israel, God"s revealed word guides Israel to a life of righteousness; and God will ultimately redeem Israel and the whole world. Yet, Jews and Christians interpret the Bible differently on many points. Such differences must always be respected.

Christians can respect the claim of the Jewish people upon the land of Israel. The most important event for Jews since the Holocaust has been the reestablishment of a Jewish state in the Promised Land. As members of a biblically based religion, Christians appreciate that Israel was promised -- and given -- to Jews as the physical center of the covenant between them and God. Many Christians support the State of Israel for reasons far more profound than mere politics. As Jews, we applaud this

support. We also recognize that Jewish tradition mandates justice for all non-Jews who reside in a Jewish state.

Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of Torah. Central to the moral principles of Torah is the inalienable sanctity and dignity of every human being. All of us were created in the image of God. This shared moral emphasis can be the basis of an improved relationship between our two communities. It can also be the basis of a powerful witness to all humanity for improving the lives of our fellow human beings and for standing against the immoralities and idolatries that harm and degrade us. Such witness is especially needed after the unprecedented horrors of the past century.

Nazism was not a Christian phenomenon. Without the long history of Christian anti-Judaism and Christian violence against Jews, Nazi ideology could not have taken hold nor could it have been carried out. Too many Christians participated in, or were sympathetic to, Nazi atrocities against Jews. Other Christians did not protest sufficiently against these atrocities. But Nazism itself was not an inevitable outcome of Christianity. If the Nazi extermination of the Jews had been fully successful, it would have turned its murderous rage more directly to Christians. We recognize with gratitude those Christians who risked or sacrificed their lives to save Jews during the Nazi regime. With that in mind, we encourage the continuation of recent efforts in Christian theology to repudiate unequivocally contempt of Judaism and the Jewish people. We applaud those Christians who reject this teaching of contempt, and we do not blame them for the sins committed by their ancestors.

The humanly irreconcilable difference between Jews and Christians will not be settled until God redeems the entire world as promised in Scripture. Christians know and serve God through Jesus Christ and the Christian tradition. Jews know and serve God through Torah and the Jewish tradition. That difference will not be settled by one community insisting that it has interpreted Scripture more accurately than the other; nor by exercising political power over the other. Jews can respect Christians" faithfulness to their revelation just as we expect Christians to respect our faithfulness to our revelation. Neither Jew nor Christian should be pressed into affirming the teaching of the other community.

A new relationship between Jews and Christians will not weaken Jewish practice. An improved relationship will not accelerate the cultural and religious assimilation that Jews rightly fear. It will not change traditional Jewish forms of worship, nor increase intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, nor persuade more Jews to convert to Christianity, nor create a false blending of Judaism and Christianity. We respect Christianity as a faith that originated within Judaism and that still has significant contacts with it. We do not see it as an extension of Judaism. Only if we cherish our own traditions can we pursue this relationship with integrity.

Jews and Christians must work together for justice and peace. Jews and Christians, each in their own way, recognize the unredeemed state of the world as reflected in the persistence of persecution, poverty, and human degradation and misery. Although justice and peace are finally God"s, our joint efforts, together with those of other faith communities, will help bring the kingdom of God for which we

hope and long. Separately and together, we must work to bring justice and peace to our world. In this enterprise, we are guided by the vision of the prophets of Israel:

It shall come to pass in the end of days that the mountain of the Lord"s house shall be established at the top of the mountains and be exalted above the hills, and the nations shall flow unto it . . . and many peoples shall go and say, "Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord to the house of the God of Jacob and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in his paths." (Isaiah 2:2-3)

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APPENDIX D

CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS

Chapter four of this thesis explored aspects of the relationship between language and perception. Specifically, it investigated how the language and vocabulary we use can stimulate certain neurological responses and associations, and therefore can influence our interpretations of what we see. Anaïs Nin is credited with employing the phrase 'we don't see things as they are, we see things as we are' in her 1961 work *Seduction of the Minotaur,* (although the origin of the phrase is somewhat ambiguous and is attributed by different sources to both the Babylonian Talmud and Immanuel Kant). Wherever its place of origin, it highlights a profound truth about the nature of 'seeing' and the interpretation and application of what we think we see. It is in this sense the Torah is suggested as a possible lens through which to view the Other in the Jewish-Christian relationship. As explored through the model in chapter three of this thesis, The Torah offers possibilities of mirroring, reflecting and re-framing the Jewish-Christian relationship, in the context of a reconnection that is enabled by unlocking the potential access points, the potential places of connection.

Just as language and vocabulary influence our perceptions, so too rethinking, reconfiguring, retrieving and realigning our language can have the same effect. Challenging deeply ingrained assumptions about the Torah is important, as it has the dual effect of challenging also deeply ingrained assumptions about the Jewish people. The significance of this must not be underestimated, particularly in a world that is

witnessing the astonishing re-emergence of anti-semitism within living memory of Auschwitz. Challenges can be uncomfortable, but they can also be expansive. In challenging our vocabulary and the associations stimulated by that vocabulary, we are probing the crusts of our religious imaginations and upturning new surfaces of possibility. Readjusting our linguistic limits can allow us to expand and move from that which is narrow and constricting, to a wider space which enables movement and breath.

Left unchecked, the suspicions and assumptions about the Torah that surface in our language have far -reaching consequences which are both theological and historical in terms of impact. They are theological insofar as a hermeneutic which equates the Torah as a burdensome law, and subsequently places the Torah at odds with grace, provides a fractured starting point which has a ripple effect into other areas of Christian theology. And they are historical insofar as these theological persuasions have impacted the application of this theology, in terms of the Jewish-Christian relationship. In other words, what happens in the realm of theology has a direct effect on the political and socio-cultural environment in which people live, which in turn impacts relationships and perceptions of the other. And in the case of the historical Jewish-Christian encounter, negative or skewed theological perceptions of the other has led to much spilled (mostly Jewish) blood.

I. REALIGNING OUR VOCABULARY

"The Old Testament Law, and any other system of rules, is very much like (a) paralysed man attempting to rescue (a) girl who is drowning. His intention is sincere

and commendable, but he lacks the power to save her. Likewise, the Law cannot save the sinner. Neither can the Law release the Christian from his or her bondage to sin. As a matter of fact, it is the Law, which somehow sustains our bondage to sin. The solution to the problem of sin, therefore, is to be released from the Law and thus, from sin. Paul describes this release in Romans 7:1-6. He does so by explaining two great truths: (1) We have been released from the Law, and (2) we have been joined to Christ."[725]

The above interpretation of Paul's intentions, by a sincere and well-meaning Associate Professor in Biblical Exposition at a leading American Bible College, highlights the painful reality of a hermeneutic which relies on the presumption that the Torah restrictively means law and is referred to as 'the Law', and this law is therefore in contradistinction to grace through its very definition. We can see how this feeds into a number of conclusions that have a direct bearing upon two important relationships - the relationship between Christians and Jews, and the relationship between Christians and the Torah. Both axes of these relationships inform one another.

This interpretation highlights a number of assumptions. Firstly, it highlights the assumption that because the Torah is 'the Law', it is therefore necessarily in total opposition to grace. The Torah is consequently defined not as an all encompassing way of life, but as a 'system of rules'. It highlights other assumptions also - that the Torah is not able to 'save the sinner'. Not only that, the Torah is apparently the very thing that 'sustains bondage to sin', a point which the composer of Psalm 119

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[725] See https://bible.org/seriespage/15-it-s-wonderful-life-romans-71-6, retrieved September 6 2016

somehow missed. The solution to sin, according this line of thought, is to be 'released' from the Torah, presumably just the 'legal' parts as the narratives normally retain a sense of theological importance. This release from the Torah is apparently what Paul is trying to articulate to the fledgling Jewish-Gentile community in Rome through his letter. Grace, a further conclusion that could be inferred from this, is to be found outside of 'the Law' and Christians are its sole custodians. The conclusions have a direct bearing on the delicate unfolding of the tender shoot that is Jewish-Christian dialogue and reconciliation. What are the implications of these conclusions, and can shifting the vocabulary change the perimeters of the discussion? In an attempt to answer this question we can make four observations.

I.1 RELEASED FROM BONDAGE

The vocabulary and language which express this thinking potentially lead one down a path of logic which concludes that those who are 'under the Law', (presumably the Jewish people and/or Christians who retain a sense of attachment to certain parts of the Pentateuch), cannot be 'under 'grace'. I am not refuting the sentiment conveyed by the Apostle Paul (namely that being in servitude to a kind of legalism constricts the expression of grace), but rather refuting the silent assumptions - that a life of Torah is somehow in contradistinction to a life of grace. *It is the confusion of Torah with legalism which needs to be clarified.* Without this clarification, the thought continues that those who are 'bound' to this Law (i.e the Jewish people) are contained within a system that only serves to sustain 'bondage to sin' and not provide release from it. One would like to ask how in the biblical stream of consciousness it is possible to legitimately conclude that God brought Israel out of Egypt, (a 'Narrow Place'), into

liberation and freedom on a journey toward the Promised Land, only to handicap them with an oppressive system of rules seven weeks later. Enforcing a legal system that not only cannot save, but sustains bondage to sin and yet demands obedience. Since Egypt itself is the house of bondage/servitude and the opening words to the decalogue that lie at the heart of the revelation at Sinai are - 'I have brought you *out* from the land of Egypt from the house of bondage/servitude', *Anoki Adonai Elohekhah, asher hotze'tikha m'aretz mitzraim m'beit avadim* אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים one wonders how it could make sense that one form of bondage and servitude, was replaced with a another form of bondage and servitude.

Moreover, there are repercussions in for developing a Jewish-Christian dialogue when the Torah is viewed in such stark and reductionist terms. Rabbi Benjamin Blech, in his work *Understanding Judaism: The Basics of Deed and Creed* (1991), describes the posture of Christianity toward the Torah as he interprets it:

"Christianity rejected the Jewish Law and gave a new interpretation for Sinai. This (interpretation) is the crucial distinction between the Old testament and the New. The Torah, was most assuredly given to the Jewish People at Sinai, but its laws are no longer binding according to Christianity. How could God give directives that later he saw fit to change? Christianity responds that the Old Testament was given only in order to *prove that it could not be kept.*"[726]

While Blech is indeed offering a particular, individual perspective and does not accurately represent Christianity in all its complex diversity, he presents a legitimate

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[726] Rabbi Benjamin Blech, *Understanding Judaism: The Basics of Deed and Creed* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1991) xviii

Jewish response to a traditional Christian posture toward the Torah.[727] The reductionist understanding of Torah as a law which exists simply to prove that it cannot be perfectly kept is incongruous with the Jewish notion of Torah, understood in Jewish religious memory to be a gift in the form of revelation from the mouth of God. Moreover, this perception of Christianity creates an immediate stumbling block in the relationship between Jews and Christians, and cultivates theological confusion and religious and social alienation.[728]

I.2 SEEKING PERFECTION, OR SEEKING SHALOM?

The understanding that the 'Law was given…to prove it (could) not be kept' leads us to a second observation - the notion of 'perfection' and the idea of 'keeping the law perfectly'. As Blech surmises, Christianity tends to view the Torah as a system of rules that needed to 'kept perfectly'. This idea creates an expectancy of inevitable failure. But it also invites us to challenge the notion of 'perfection'.

Chapter six demonstrated the rich nuances of what it might mean to 'guard' the Torah, as a gardener might guard her garden or a farmer might guard his crops. The sense of 'perfection' which arises out of the assumption that the Torah must be 'kept perfectly' in order to secure justification which almost cruelly is an impossibility - is this another projected 'conflict' inserted and read back into the text? What does it

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[727] However it must be noted that Blech writes as a polemicist in some regards and not in a dialogical vein. His work is included here simply to offer one Jewish interpretation of the Christian perception of the Torah, and to highlight the possible implications of this interpretation.

[728] Berkowitz, *Torah Rediscovered,* 82

mean to 'keep the law *perfectly*', and if we shift the terminology, does our understanding also shift?

In classical Greek philosophy, mathematics and art, 'perfection' has to do with attaining that which is without flaw. There is an 'abstract ideal' which the object or person must emulate. Indeed to be 'perfect' can be defined as the very epitome of 'flawlessness', and being free from defect or blemish, as well as carrying Aristotelian tones of satisfying all known requirements through excellence. The English word 'perfect', while based on a more Greek understanding of perfection, comes from the Latin verb *perfectus,* which means 'to complete'. Its transliteration in Biblical Hebrew would be *shalem,* שָׁלֵם a root word meaning 'whole' or 'complete' with the sense of safety and peace, from where the word *shalom* שָׁלוֹם comes. Biblical peace and wholeness stand on altogether different conceptual ground to 'that which is without flaw'. This is an important point when it comes to understandings of law and grace. If in Hebrew thought the notions of Law (*Torah*), Perfection (*Shalom*), Keeping (*Guarding*) and Obedience (*Hearing*) are different not just in nuance and possibility of meaning, but altogether in persuasion and perspective to their prejudiced transliterations, on what merit do these age-old arguments that satellite around the contradistinction of law and grace stand?

In Hebrew, then, to 'be perfect' does not mean to strive for excellence and an unattainable standard of flawlessness (although these are surely not undesirable qualities, and are essential in mathematics, for example). Rather 'perfection' in a biblical sense could be described as 'completeness' - living a life of *shalom*. In other

words to be whole and to be who you were created to be in all its entirety, in relationship with the Other who was created in the image of the Divine and who reflects back to us who we truly are. Shabbat, the 'island in time' when all is as it should be, is the reference point for this shalom - a day when striving to be something or someone is not an option, we simply are who we are created to be, and pause to bless what already is.

To 'keep the Law perfectly' can be re-translated as meaning 'to guard something precious', in shalom, in wholeness with all the expansiveness this river of meaning might offer. The terminology has shifted, and as a result so has the focus. Referring to chapter four of this thesis, changing our language has enabled our perceptions to shift also. Removing 'must', 'should' or 'have to' words from our lexicon along with legalistic terminology, completely alters the tone with which we respond to the Torah. It is not that there are 613 commandments of Law to be kept perfectly 'or else', it is that the Torah teaches the covenanted community how to live in relationship with God and the other in our midst, through the *mitzvot, mishpatim, edut* and *chukim,* as examined in chapter six.

I.3   MISSING THE MARK

We are familiar with the verse,

"For through the Torah, comes a knowledge of sin", (Romans 3:20).

This might seem to confirm the viewpoint of the interpretation of Romans 7:1-6 offered above, but if we look carefully we might hear a different meta-narrative.

The etymological meaning of the Hebrew verbs used to describe both *torah* and *sin* throughout the Hebrew Bible strengthen this idea. The word *torah,* as discussed at length in this thesis, comes from the Hebrew root word *yarah* which transmits the sense of hitting a bulls-eye on a target as an arrow shot from a bow. One of the Hebrew words translated as 'sin' is chata, חָטָא which literally means 'to miss the mark/target'. The Greek transliteration for *chata* is *hamartia* ἁμαρτία, which carries the same implications of missing the mark/target. The Eastern Orthodox Church understands this to be 'a misuse of what God has created'.[729] In the Eastern Christian tradition, rather than the idea of sin conveying a legal misdeed which transgresses the Law, sin is conceived of in terms of illness or infirmity. Sickness is to the body what sin is to the soul.

We could say then, that which was outside of Torah (teaching that hits the mark/target) naturally missed the mark (and was considered 'sin' or that which separates, or is like a 'dis-ease' in the soul). Torah, therefore, through its very essence, and even title, shows us how *not* to live, as well as how to live. In that sense, one could say that the Torah indeed highlights 'sinfulness' in that it shows what it looks like to both 'hit' and 'miss' the mark. The difference is by adjusting our language we are not reading an antagonism or a protracted struggle into the the relationship between the Torah and grace where there simply isn't one.

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[729] See "Healing the Infirmity of Sin: A Spiritual Nutshell", http://ww1.antiochian.org/content/healing-infirmity-sin-spiritual-nutshell, retrieved April 13 2017

I.4   NOT A SALVATION DOCUMENT

This complex and important idea that the Torah highlights 'sin' and makes us aware

of our need for Messiah leads us to a fourth observation - the implications of the

notion that 'the Law cannot save'. In Jewish consciousness and biblical tradition the

Torah was never a 'salvation document', and therefore indeed cannot nor was never

esteemed 'to save' in and of itself, because it was never intended to. Guarding the

mitzvot and responsively hearing the melodies of Sinai, in Israel's collective memory

were never intended to secure salvation. The Torah is simply not a 'salvation

document'. It is the terms of an already established covenant, and in Jewish memory

a response of faithfulness on the part of a community to an already faithful God.

One implication of the statement 'the Law cannot save' is that it intimates a

repressed idea of dispensationalism - that Torah governed from Sinai to Christ, and

now we are in an age of 'Grace'.[730] The challenge of this kind of dispensationalism

is it promotes a 'succeeding' of one system over another, which can rely in different

ways on the complex hermeneutics of Replacement Theology. Moreover, such an

interpretation might be somewhat logical from a Christian perspective if the Torah

was a document which secured salvation and justification through obedience. But it

isn't, as has been effectively demonstrated throughout this thesis. If we acknowledge

that in Jewish memory the Torah was never intended to save, but rather is a means of

living out a covenant relationship with God and with one another, the parameters of

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[730] 'Dispensationalism' as a theological /doctrinal approach can be broadly defined as an attempt to present a coherent theory on what seem like different time periods or 'ages' as they manifest in the biblical timeline. John Nelson Darby, an Anglo-Irish clergyman in the early 19th century, promoted six such 'dispensations' or time periods. See Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Wheaton, IL: Bridgepoint Books, 1993).

the argument again shift. The Torah cannot save us through obedience, because it was never intended to. It can show us how to live in relationship with God and with the Other in our midst. It can teach us about justice and shalom. It is a starting point for Jews and Christians to begin a conversation, and as *Dabru Emet* emphasises, both "Jews and Christians accept the moral principles of Torah". (Refer to Appendix C above).

In his essay *The Nature and Function of Jewish Law,* Eliezer Berkovitz speaks of the 'all-inclusive' nature of Torah that richly encompasses all aspects of individual and communal life.[731] As Rabbinic scholar Jacob Neusner says, "God, through the Torah, is concerned with what (I) eat for breakfast", reflecting this all-encompassing nature of the *mitzvot*.[732] Ellen Flesseman, in her article on 'Old Testament Ethics', writes that,

"through (teaching and instruction) God has made life safe. It is like a road which He

has traced through a wilderness of infinite possibility, along which His children can

walk safely, guided by His hand."[733]

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[731] Eliezer Berkovits, *The Nature and Function of Jewish Law*, 42. Berkovits, it must be noted, was not a advocate of Jewish-Christian dialogue, and maintained that, "Christianity (w)as the true cause of the Nazi policy of Jewish elimination and who have therefore argued that the Jews"and indeed the entire world"would be better off without Christianity." See David Novak, "Instinctive Repugnance",(May 2002), https://www.firstthings.com/article/2002/05/instinctive-repugnance. Retrieved February 26 2019

[732] See *Just War in Religion and Politics: Studies in Religion and Social Order,* Jacob Neusner, Bruce D. Chilton, R. E. Tully, (eds.), (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2013), 103. This is in the context of "God is as concerned with what man eats for breakfast as with its motivation for going to war".

[733] Ellen Flesseman, "Old Testament Ethics", published in Student World, *Rethinking Ethics*, (Geneva: A Quarterly Review, World Student Christian Federation, No. 3, 1964).

A mother's instructions or teaching for her child are not intended to secure their justification or love in her eyes - her love for her offspring is not so fickle. The instructions are for the child, to live a healthy and whole life that is safe from the potential perils of human existence. They are a primordial cry to protect the life she birthed. The Torah is held in Jewish consciousness and Israel's collective memory to be that sacred blueprint for how to live in relationship with one another and with the Divine, in a community context. Attempting to abuse it as a system that will gain you supernatural 'brownie points' with God is severely critiqued by the Prophets throughout Israel's history, and is a subject the Apostle Paul gives much attention to in his epistle to the Galatians.

I.5 LEGALISM VERSUS GRACE - THE REAL DICHOTOMY

In the text of Galatians the Apostle Paul is responding to specific issues arising in the early Christian community in Galatia. In his response he repeatedly warns the community against the potential pitfalls of new Gentile believers in Messiah, tender in their faith, taking on *halakhah* (Jewish Law) in order to gain full acceptance into the wider Jewish community or be justified in the eyes of God. Any attempt to live out an aspect of Torah in the hope of gaining justification or being more righteous or securing salvation or acceptance is a clear misuse of Torah according to Paul, and is effectively what can be termed as 'legalism'. Legalism in many ways is the antonym of grace, and having explored the expansive dimensions and internal meanings that Hebrew can offer toward an understanding of Torah, we can safely suggest that legalism is also the opposite of Torah. It is the opposite of taking the 'princess' as a 'beloved'. For the one who takes the Torah as his or her beloved, knows that they

stand before a princess. This is a relationship of love, so clearly detected in the poetic tones of Psalm 119.

Legalism can be defined then as an act that presupposes rote compliance to a system of rules in order to secure another goal, a little like 'being good' in order to get more presents from Santa Clause. It is inherently manipulative. From this, can we firmly deduce the possibility that what many Christian theologians label as 'the Law', is actually the concept of legalism? Therefore, is there a mistaken understanding that Torah and legalism are one and the same? And is it a case of shifting our terminology and vocabulary, to both clarify and allow for a shifting of our perceptions also?

Chapter six concluded through a close reading of biblical text, that the Torah itself is the one which subverts the *nomos,* the legal norm, when it corrodes the potential of the sacred future. Legalism is that which sacrifices the sacred future on the altars of conformity and rote religious observance. The assumed 'law versus grace' dichotomy perhaps could be renamed in Christian terms as 'legalism versus grace', with the rich dimensions of meaning Torah conveys being restored to their rightful place in the lexicon of the wider community.

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APPENDIX E

THREE STORIES

STORY ONE

THE FORGOTTEN SCROLL

Stone masons and carpenters were everywhere. It was spring cleaning in Jerusalem like never before. Not in recent times anyway. Hammering and banging, yelling and dust. It had been a long day for the Cohen Gadol Hilkiah, the Great High Priest. Heat and thirst and waves of tiredness, and yet a desire to fulfil the wishes of his King. King Yoshiahu, (known also as 'Josiah'), son of Amon and Yedidah, of Judah, had been but eight years old when he became the king of the Southern Kingdom. Josiah was young, but had a fierce desire to do what his father had done and revoke the destruction his grandfathers had wrought on Jerusalem and Judea. In time the royal chronicles would come to say he kept a straight path blazed by his ancestor, King David.

On this particular day, in the eighteenth year of his kingship, Josiah sent Shaphan the Sofer (the Scribe), to the Temple with specific instructions for Hilkiah the High Priest. These instructions were all about counting the silver which the trustworthy Doorkeepers of the Temple had collected from the people. And so Shaphan the Sofer, armed with the instructions for Hilkiah, set out from the royal palace and

made his way up the well travelled path of ascent toward the Temple. Lost in thought about the radical reforms happening around him in Jerusalem and what it meant, he reached the Temple courts sooner than expected. His arrival was greeted by excited shouts which could mean either something wonderful had happened, or something terrible.

The High Priest himself was running toward Shaphan, and before Shaphan could deliver his message Hilkiah exclaimed, "we have found it!".

"Found what?" Shaphan replied. "The Scroll of the Torah! ספר התורה!" This could only mean one thing. Trembling, Shaphan the Sofer unrolled part of the heavy Scroll to carefully examine it. It was indeed none other than a copy of the Torah of Moses, which had not been seen or heard in Israel for almost three generations. Legend would say that Josiah's wicked grandfather Manasseh had hidden all the Torah scrolls is the land. Forgetting himself, his tears formed clean tracks down his dusty face, and he urgently made his way back down the path of ascent to the Palace. He must see the king and there wasn't a moment to lose.

With his heart bursting through his chest he pushed into the king's chambers and relayed the events that had just unfolded in the Temple. Approaching the king boldly, he delivered his message. Upon hearing the words that kept tumbling out of Shaphan's mouth like a stream, Josiah did what any good king would do and tore his garment, the ripping sound being accompanied by a broken wailing sound which appeared to emerge from a place deeper than just the king's consciousness alone. The sound of the ripping and wailing seemed to give voice to a grief at what had been

lost to the previous generations. It reminded Shaphan of the *shevarim* שברים sound, the staccatoed wailing of the shofar on certain times of the year, when the call of the shofar was used to stir the soul of the nation. Huldah, the great and wise prophetess, would say that Josiah's actions were a sign of his pure heart and that his humility would be the saving grace of Jerusalem, at least in this generation.

The Torah had been found buried deep under a heap of debris and dirt. Nonetheless, it had been found. In Jerusalem. In the Temple. Its words and instructions had been forgotten by many and had been out of sight for generations, but there it faithfully lay - and indeed it had been there the whole time. Its song was calling out with a voice that was registering in the memory of the king, and what affected the king inevitably affected Jerusalem and her people. And now that the rubble around it had been shifted and the dust swept off, the people could begin to hear the echoes of Sinai once again.

In this passage found in the Second Book of Kings (see 2 Kings 22-23), the Torah is not lost or blotted out or obsolete, but simply hidden. It is covered over in centuries of debris and neglect. Like Hilkiah and his team of workers, can we remove some the linguistic rubble that we collectively have heaped upon the Torah? Like Josiah can we rip our proverbial garments and look afresh at the treasure which for so long has been swept under a heap of legalistic vocabulary, along with its people? Of course we will always come with our cultural and religious baggage, far removed from the world in which the Torah originated. This is unavoidable. But we can at least begin, or even join, an unending conversation that is still unfolding.

STORY TWO

THE PRINCESS OF LIGHT

What does the Torah mean to the Jewish People? Once there was a princess, whose home was a beautiful house on a hill, in the heart of the holy city of Jerusalem. She was not a princess like any other, for she was made entirely of pure, brilliant light. Her father, the king, was the Master of Eternity and his seat was a heavenly palace whose pavement was made of sapphire. In this palace the king had two thrones, each with a name engraved in jewels above it. Above one throne was engraved the word 'Justice', and above the other was engraved the word 'Mercy'. When he sat on the throne of Justice the king was stern but fair and those who had hurt others were held to account for their actions. When the king sat on the throne of Mercy compassion flowed out from the throne room and forgiveness abounded. The judgements of one throne were always balanced by the judgements of the other, and in this way there was both justice and mercy in the world at the same time.

The king had sent his darling princess, his beloved, into the world to radiate light so the people of the world could know both justice and mercy. Much of the time to the human eye the beautiful princess was invisible, although the people of Jerusalem seemed to be able to sense her presence and had a longing to draw near to her, and

once in a while they saw her in their dreams and visions. Sometimes, when they caught a glimpse of her she was as a beautiful princess, and sometimes she seemed like a glorious bride. Other times she appeared as a divine presence which broodingly and mysteriously hovered over the Temple. Then the people would say to each other, 'look it is the princess!' and a great commotion and shouts of joy would be heard ringing on the streets of Jerusalem. Whenever they saw her they immediately said a prayer of thanksgiving, for the people knew as long as the princess was there it meant the eyes of her father, the king, was on them also.

While the Temple stood in Jerusalem, the princess was happy and her days were full of blessing. But when the Temple was torn down and Jerusalem ravaged the princess was heart broken. And when she saw how the people she so loved were being expelled from their land into exile she cried tears of salty rivers that ran toward the Vally of Hinnom. She decided that she could not part with the people, so she too went with them into exile.

When her father the king had learned that she had left her beloved Jerusalem and had hidden herself away in exile, he called upon all the princes go out into the world and search for her. And he told them,

"whoever finds my daughter the princess will be joined to her in marriage and the day of their wedding will be a celebration such that the whole word will rejoice. Do not think it will be easy to find her - she is well hidden. But remember two things, she is made of light so consider how you see; and know that she is always with her people. If you can learn to see her people, you might be able to see her".

Now every prince in the world of course wanted to marry a beautiful princess, and particularly one whose father was the ruler of the world. So, one by one the bravest and most daring princes all set out on a quest to find her, searching for her everywhere. They looked in every town, every village, in every field and in every forest. On every mountain and in every valley. In every room of every house and in every nook and cranny. But even though they looked everywhere, so they thought, they could not find her. At last there came a time when there was one prince left who had not yet searched for the princess. Now it was his turn, and he could not turn down such a noble quest. Before he set out into the world to find her he sat down in his royal chamber and thought to himself,

"What does it mean that the princess is well hidden, and yet with her people?"

To answer his question the prince sought out an old, wise sage whose creases in his face and long beard looked like they alone had witnessed every emotion the Jewish people had felt in every age. The sage answered the prince's question with another question,

"What is it that is always with the Jewish people? There is only one thing that is always with the Jewish people. When you find out what it is, you will find the princess."

What do the Jewish people always carry with them, from land to land and place to place in their wandering, the prince thought? *The Torah* of course. They carry it with them wherever they go. The prince went back to the sage with his answer and asked him to teach him the Torah so he could find the princess. And the kind sage agreed to teach him. Now the prince had to study Torah for many years before he was able

to master it, but a day came when he was such a master of Torah, he was so acquainted with her cadences and silences as well as her words that he felt he had the clues to be able to start searching for the princess.

And lo and behold, when he followed his heart which had been so steeped in Torah, he found her there. Where was the princess hidden all this time? In the very words within the Torah. For as he read the words of the Torah, and opened up the secrets underneath its letters, the wise prince suddenly glimpsed the light of the princess, and his eyes were filled with splendour.

And now that the prince knows where the princess is hidden he is determined to set her free. When she is free, her father the king has promised to return her to her home and once she is home with her people, there will be a great wedding feast and the whole world will celebrate.'

<div align="right">(Jewish Legend, Spain, Thirteenth Century, adapted.)</div>

STORY THREE

THE LOCKED DOOR

She closed her eyes and used her hands as eyes to feel. There it was, the cold and heavy, old wooden door. A door that had been shut for generations, acting as a barrier to keep that which was on one side separate from that which was on the other. The door was covered in a thick layer of ivy, and had a heavy brass lock that had grown rusty with disuse and the passage of time. It was hard to even see that there was an opening to put a key, if there was such a key that is. Had this door ever been open? Who had closed it and when? And why? What could happen if it opened, and what lay beyond on the other side? The questions were endless.

She remembered her grandmother as a storyteller, and into her stories were woven songs from the ancients that coloured her stories like delicate embroidery. One of the songs, said to have come from the mouth of King David himself, spoke of a type of restful delight that meets the questions of the heart. With her heart overflowing with questions, her only response was to return to the source of those stories, hoping for a clue about the mysterious Locked Door. She ran upstairs to her grandmother's bedroom where her eyes fell on what had been her grandmother's most precious possession - a small jewellery box, wooden and studded with shiny jewels that reflected light in little patches onto the ceiling. Engraved into the box were markings which refused to be still and seemed to form shapes like clouds on a windy day.

But the box contained within it something even more ancient and precious, although at first glance one might not think so. Inside the box was a simple, metal object that had been handed down for generations. Each generation had been faithful to carefully store it safely and guard its use, for it had been sacred in different ways at different times. But its sacredness remained nonetheless. Different generations had used the object in different ways - some had guarded it like one would guard rubies and some had used it to guard them, some had limited its use, and some had kept it safe but not used it at all. Some for fear of it getting damaged or lost or used in the wrong way, and some for simply not knowing what it was for. It had an odd shape with definite and particular incisions and grooves that looked as though they were made to fit into something else. If she put this seemingly defunct object, old and forgotten, into the door that was shut, and used it to shift the lock of that door, what might happen? Could and indeed would the door open? What then?

She grasped the ancient object in her hand and felt its cold metal contrast sharply against her warm flesh. As she walked toward the door carrying this ancient object, she was suddenly conscious that she was making a journey, a journey that many before her might have longed to make or maybe had not been able to make, and the weight of those who had gone before, that great cloud of witnesses, and the weight of those yet to come, felt tangibly present. The Eternal in the here and now. Past, present and future colliding in one seemingly mundane moment.

Cautiously, she pushed the ancient object into the rusty opening in the old wooden door. It fit. Like a glove onto a hand it slid beautifully, and slowly the lock turned with creaks and rumbles and the sound that rust makes when it grates on something,

reminding her of a distant phrase that iron sharpens iron. The lock clicked. This ancient object, a key, sometimes used and sometimes ignored but nonetheless guarded by the generations who had gone before her, had done its job. Now it was her turn. Her part in this scene was to push open the door that the key had unlocked and walk through the opening it had created, for a key can only unlock something, the rest is up to us.

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