

# How Jewish thinkers come to terms with the Holocaust and why it matters for this generation: a selected survey and comment

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## RÉSUMÉ

Six millions de Juifs, dont un million et demi d'enfants, ont été assassinés par le régime nazi au cours de la période la plus sombre de l'histoire de l'humanité, lors de ce que l'on nomme la *shoah*. Cet événement appelle une réflexion théologique difficile, mais une telle entreprise n'a été jusqu'ici menée que de manière très limitée. Pour dialoguer avec le peuple juif, pour comprendre Israël et avoir une juste appréciation de sa politique actuelle, il est nécessaire en notre génération de

comprendre comment les penseurs juifs considèrent la *shoah*. Le présent article résume brièvement plusieurs positions : la théologie de la protestation d'Élie Wiesel, le *hester panim*, « Dieu cachant sa face », de Eliezer Berkovits. L'article explore aussi la nouvelle conception de Dieu proposée par la théologienne féministe juive Melissa Raphael dans son ouvrage « la face féminine de Dieu à Auschwitz ». L'auteur encourage Chrétiens et Juifs à cheminer ensemble pour révéler un Dieu d'espérance et une guérison du monde, *tikkun 'olam*.

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## SUMMARY

Six million Jewish men and women, including one and a half million children, were murdered by the German Nazi regime in humanity's darkest period known as the Holocaust or Shoah. Few issues present more challenging theological deliberations, but more recent attempts at post-holocaust discussion have been limited. To dialogue with Jewish people, to better appreciate Israel and her political stance today, we must seek afresh in this

generation to understand how Jewish thinkers come to terms with the Shoah. This quite personal article briefly summarizes some positions, from Elie Wiesel's early theology of protest to Eliezer Berkovits' exposition of '*hester panim*', the hiding of God's face. Jewish feminist theologian Melissa Raphael's new reconfiguration of God in her '*female face of God in Auschwitz*' is also explored, with fresh encouragement for Christians and Jews to journey together to reveal a God of hope, a healing of the world – *tikkun olam*.

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## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Sechs Millionen jüdische Männer und Frauen, einschliesslich eineinhalb Millionen Kinder, wurden vom deutschen Naziregime ums Leben gebracht. Dies geschah in einer der dunkelsten Zeiten der Menschheit, Holocaust oder Shoah genannt. Es gibt kaum Anliegen, die größere theologische Diskussionen hervorrufen, aber doch waren die jüngeren Bemühungen in der Post-Holocaust Diskussion nicht ausreichend. Wir müssen in dieser Generation aufs neue zu verstehen trachten, wie jüdische Denker mit der Shoah umgehen, damit wir mit dem jüdischen Volk in den Dialog treten, Israel besser wertschätzen und

seine gegenwärtige politische Position besser einschätzen können. Dieser recht persönliche Artikel fasst kurz einige Standpunkte zusammen, beginnend mit Elie Wiesel's früher Theologie des Protestes bis hin zu Eliezer Berkovits Studie zu *hester panim*, dem Verbergen von Gottes Angesicht. Ebenfalls erörtert wird eine Art „Neuschöpfung“ Gottes durch die jüdische feministische Theologin Melissa Raphael in ihrem Werk „Das weibliche Angesicht Gottes in Auschwitz“, mit einer neuen Ermutigung an Christen und Juden, sich gemeinsam auf die Reise zu begeben, um einen Gott der Hoffnung und eine Heilung der Welt bekannt zu machen – *tikkun olam*.

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## Introduction

... Never shall I forget that smoke... the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke... those flames which consumed my faith forever... murdered my God, my soul and turned my dreams to dust...<sup>1</sup>

Six million Jewish men and women, including one and a half million children, were murdered by the German Nazi regime in the darkest, unimaginably terrifying period in history commonly called the Holocaust. Jewish people normally use the term Shoah (Hebrew HaShoah, 'the calamity').<sup>2</sup> Few historical events have attracted more attention or discussion. Borowitz states that tracking this debate 'is more than technically difficult; it is humanly daunting. Most thinkers involved admit that the Holocaust overwhelms them'.<sup>3</sup> As Katz observes, Auschwitz has become a 'datum point' in history not only for the Jewish people but indeed for all humanity.<sup>4</sup>

I preface this article with some caveats, chastened by responsibility, recognising that its heart is *not* some abstract theological thesis or philosophical debate but the inconceivable suffering and destruction of individuals with names, faces and families. I offer apologies if anything seems trite, inadequate or simply incorrect.

I am a Christian: some would declare that I do not qualify to discuss the Holocaust. Eliezer Berkovits' heartfelt total rejection of any Christian doing so, given Christian complicity in the whole enterprise, still impacts: 'All we want of Christians is to keep their hands off us and our children'.<sup>5</sup> However, my Czechoslovak family was scarred by the Nazi regime and my most vivid memories from age five concern all I was instructed about these horrors in regard to family and friends, including Jewish people. Before I was able to read or write, I was instructed 'to hear, see, learn, witness and never forget'.<sup>6</sup> So I bring and expose to this article all these 'pre-conditions', keen to briefly but respectfully elucidate how some Jewish thinkers came to terms – or not – with the Holocaust.

The Shoah challenges all who accept the concept of a loving, providential God – and those who do not. Norman Lamm identifies two pivotal points for Jewish people: the first concerns the problem of *zaddik ve-ra lo*, 'the righteous whom evil befalls', and the second is the 'national theological' concern. This latter is an umbrella for issues of the covenant (the bond of the Jewish people with God), their identity as God's chosen people and

the significance of the creation of the State of Israel to their theology.

This article can only engage briefly with a few selected Jewish thinkers. Struck at the paucity of female voices (precisely those who presented me with their painful stories, thoughts about God and charge not to forget), I will present one feminist Jewish theologian's response which in my view makes a challenging but valuable contribution towards at least one Hebraic understanding of the mending and healing of the world – *tikkun olam*.<sup>7</sup>

## Initial responses

In severe persecution, Jewish people could affirm their faith through *Kiddush ha-Shem*, the sanctification of God's name,<sup>8</sup> and acts by which God is glorified, martyrdom being the highest of these. People like Rabbi Yerucham Hanushtate and Elchanan Wasserman went to their death in the Holocaust calmly, with the words of the Shema on their lips,<sup>9</sup> convinced that their deaths were vicarious sacrifices, bringing redemption for Israel and – for some – the Messiah's arrival.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout the Shoah and subsequently, some Orthodox responses concurred with traditional, biblical reactions to previous calamities. People argued that these were punishment for Israel's sins, *mi-penei hata'einu*. Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, leader of the Satmar Hasidim and a Bergen-Belsen survivor, identified Israel's sin as that of the Zionists attempting to exercise God's prerogative in initiating Israel's return from exile.<sup>11</sup> Ironically, others like Menechem Harton saw it conversely as punishment for exactly the opposite reason – that many Jewish people had become assimilated all too willingly into the 'lands of evil'.<sup>12</sup> Almost all Jewish people now view both of these responses as completely insupportable, although in reality a few support the same contention but for different reasons.

In the Holocaust's immediate aftermath, not surprisingly, there was 'one of the great silences of Jewish history'<sup>13</sup> – a fitting testimonial response – and also one of overwhelming exhaustion, shock and grief. 'We were all depressed, desolate, destroyed spiritually'.<sup>14</sup> Energy was poured into helping survivors and attesting to the atrocities. Some argue that latent guilt from lack of involvement of, for example, American Jews, contributed to the hiatus.<sup>15</sup> Poetic stories, as seen in Elie Wiesel's three potent narratives *Night*, *Dawn* and *Day*, offered initial attempts to come to terms with the



Shoah. Wiesel typified many, originally faithful to the belief in the omnipotent, benevolent God of the Torah, but who, deeply shaken by the degree of the suffering, 'sympathised with Job... and did not deny God's existence but...doubted His absolute justice'.<sup>16</sup> Wiesel offered no explanations for the Shoah transcended history: it could not be understood.<sup>17</sup> He witnessed, imperfect though that was, and protested, in traditional rabbinic style, to God.

Questions abounded. Jewish people considered God omnipotent, omniscient, all-benevolent. They considered themselves as God's own chosen people, bonded to him by a covenant. The age-old dilemma of evil in the world despite God's existence, always haunting the faithful, was thrown into sharper relief because of the near extinction (some two-thirds) of the Jewish people. How does one reconcile an all-loving, all-powerful God with this massacre? If he cannot prevent the evil, he is not all-powerful; if he can but does not, then surely he is not all-loving. If he is not all-loving, all-powerful and all-knowing, what is the point of worshipping him? Is there a God at all?

### Protest

A recent form of protest theology is David Blumenthal's *Facing the Abusing God: A Theology of Protest*, in which God, having been absent from his people, is seen as complicit in the Holocaust's proceedings. 'God is abusive... God...caused the holocaust, or allowed it to happen...'<sup>18</sup> Blumenthal, like Wiesel, does not deny God's existence but he protests – strongly. Like Berkovits, he believes God must still be loved, but unlike the God of the Torah he is capable of sinning. God needs to repent from the Holocaust's heinousness.

Of course, one way to come to terms with the Shoah is simply to reject God: it was too 'obscene to accept' Hitler as God's instrument, too impossible to believe that the God of the Torah could exist after witnessing Auschwitz. Richard Rubenstein was forced to reconfigure the divine as *Holy Nothingness*.<sup>19</sup> His controversial book *After Auschwitz* announced this conclusion, declaring that we lived in the time of the death-of-God.<sup>20</sup> He argued that the Shoah required the Jewish people to give up any notion that they were still a chosen people.<sup>21</sup>

Most other thinkers could not give up on God, however. For example, Rabbi Irving Greenberg gives a modern, orthodox perspective.<sup>22</sup> Zev Garber argues that Greenberg, more influenced by rabbinic *midrash* than by *halacha*,<sup>23</sup> affirms the cov-

enant between God and Israel at Sinai, whose fulfilment should have assured Israel's protection. But as Israel defaulted, God gradually withdrew until he left them bereft in the Shoah. The failed covenant must now be re-envisaged. Jewish survival is now the focus, not the fulfilment of the Jewish law. Garber comments that this 'maverick' theology is at complete odds with the orthodoxy of the Torah and Mosaic Law.<sup>24</sup>

### Eliezer Berkovits

Many thinkers kept faith, finding other ways to justify God's apparent inactivity. Eliezer Berkovits, also an Orthodox rabbi, believed in biblical and Talmud tradition, and that God *was* in the camps, as evidenced by many who felt enabled by him to bear their sufferings. Berkovits acknowledges God's silence, using a biblical concept called *hester panim* – the hiding of God's face, citing Psalm 44 in which God mysteriously hides his face from the innocent in the presence of evil. *Hester panim* is also well known to rabbinic Judaism.<sup>25</sup>

Whilst Lamm views *hester panim* both as punishment and challenge,<sup>26</sup> Berkowitz considers it partly as a result of God allowing human beings to have a free will:

Because of the necessity of His absence, there is the hiding of the face and the suffering of the innocent, because of the necessity of this presence, evil will not ultimately triumph.<sup>27</sup>

Dan Cohn-Sherbok aptly points out that Berkovits' argument that God was 'present in his absence' was not the reality for those who had only 'void and darkness' and lost faith.<sup>28</sup> He also asks, and I agree: Could God not have revealed himself to his people whilst still maintaining humanity's free will? The thesis of the feminist Jewish theologian Melissa Raphael, which we shall explore later, may offer some 'solutions'. What matters here is that God is not absent; he is just hidden.

### Arthur Cohen

That the necessity of free will exercised by humans allows for evil acts like the Holocaust *is* another option to resolve the theodicy dilemma. Like Berkovits, Arthur Cohen believes that God does exist. He also does not hold God responsible for Holocaust injustice exactly because God cannot interfere to counteract the human free will. Yet because the Holocaust is a unique event, and it is



incomprehensible that a loving God could allow it, Cohen conjectures that it is a mysterious *tre-mendum* without precedent.<sup>29</sup> Cohn-Sherbok is convinced that Cohen's attitude is closer to deism than to Jewish theology.<sup>30</sup> While Cohen's explanation might excuse God of Auschwitz' worst abuses, it should not have prevented him from intervening to stop the Nazis. The questions return. Since God didn't help, is he not all-loving? If he is all-loving but did not prevent it, is he not powerful enough?

In my view, Cohn-Sherbok's argument does not really get to grips with the foundation of Cohen's thinking here, as the point is that God *cannot interfere because* of free-will. Cohn-Sherbok also contends that the Holocaust was like other calamities that befell the Jewish people: destruction of temples, Jews degraded and killed. He adds, 'As the most recent link in the chain of Jewish persecution, it confirms the Jewish people in their role as God's suffering servant.'<sup>31</sup>

### Emil Fackenheim

The problem, as one of the most prominent thinkers, Emil Fackenheim, saw it, was the need to hold two ropes in tension: whilst it was unique, the Holocaust did not deny God's existence and, whilst it was without meaning, God was heard speaking in a commanding voice. Fackenheim argues that God gave Israel another commandment, the 614th commandment.<sup>32</sup> Although it seems impossible to believe in God after the Holocaust, he commanded the Jewish people not to despair of him or of humanity, or to become cynical, lest Judaism would die. God commanded them to survive as *Jews*, to remember the victims, so that their memory would not die – and so not give Hitler a posthumous victory. In a further move Fackenheim argues that 'the heart of every authentic response to the Holocaust... is a commitment to the autonomy and security of the State of Israel.'<sup>33</sup> In response, Michael Wyshogrod highlights the difficulty of a positive command arising from a negative experience, concurrently rejecting the Holocaust's uniqueness. Regardless, the 614th commandment does not seem overly convincing.<sup>34</sup>

After the world experienced this rupture of vast proportions, Fackenheim's suggestion to redeem the future is the process of *tikkun olam* – meaning completion, healing or mending of the world.<sup>35</sup> The concept of *tikkun olam* is seen more in the Kabbalah than in rabbinic Judaism but it *is* a positive way forward. Fackenheim propounds what Marc Ellis

calls a theology of 'ordinary decency',<sup>36</sup> contending that this mending of the world was already in place during the Holocaust. It took place by deliberately willed acts of decency, whether partisan resistance, determination to die with dignity, women refusing to abort or any other small act of kindness.<sup>37</sup> These things all contributed to *tikkun*, as divine presence is mediated through history and human beings. For Fackenheim, however, the greatest component of *tikkun* is the State of Israel.<sup>38</sup>

Without doubt, for many thinkers the birth and growth of the State of Israel were pivotal in coming to terms with the Holocaust. For many, the State is in some measure a compensation and also evidence that God still *is* the God of Israel and the Covenant.<sup>39</sup> Others however, like Norman Lamm, believe that this argument merely 'deserves utter contempt'.<sup>40</sup> Liberationist theologian Ellis argues that, unfortunately, Fackenheim's *tikkun* with the state of Israel at its heart does not take into account the rupture with the Palestinians, a cogent point that is hard to ignore. Melissa Raphael also argues that Fackenheim does not give credit to the rupture in the 'fabric of Jewish life... to the abuses of female religious agency legislated by Orthodox Judaism itself'.<sup>41</sup> However, the concept of *tikkun olam* surely resonates strongly with devastated souls yearning for healing and redemption, and Raphael herself also builds on this notion of 'mending the world'.

### Ignaz Maybaum

Perhaps God uses the bad for good? For Ignaz Maybaum, the Holocaust was the result of God's providence, *hashgahah peratit*, a *churban*. It was a terrible destruction, the third in a line of similar acts<sup>42</sup> yet by its nature the Holocaust heralds change for the better, not just for the Jewish people but for all humanity. Because of God's special covenantal relationship with her, God used Israel to enlighten the rest of humanity, to draw gentiles to him. For this purpose, 'Jews suffered vicarious death for the sins of mankind', a sacrifice chosen by God, exemplified by Isaiah's suffering servant. The 'Golgotha of modern mankind is Auschwitz'.<sup>43</sup> As a result human progress could be realised by the westernization of Judaism and the complete removal of the old eastern Europe *shtetls*.<sup>44</sup> Within the *shtetls* religious authoritarianism, persecution and theocratic oppression were possible, and Nazism was a manifestation of these evils.<sup>45</sup> Maybaum sees Hitler as God's 'servant', just as Jeremiah saw Nebuchadne-



ezzar in that same role.<sup>46</sup>

The criticism of Maybaum's thesis is voluminous. Raphael bluntly states that it is 'indefensible on almost every front', epitomising the worst of masculine theology which must justify God's sovereignty.<sup>47</sup> Katz vociferously declares it 'an inversion of all sanity, morality, theology'.<sup>48</sup> All critics agree that the Holocaust did *not* bring about Judaism's envisaged transformation as Maybaum had hoped. Cohn-Sherbok argues that losing traditional Judaism lost the richness of traditions; Raphael thinks that the ultra-orthodox community has proved quite capable of continuing 'medievalism' regardless.<sup>49</sup>

From my point of view as a Christian it is important that Cohn-Sherbok<sup>50</sup> and Katz<sup>51</sup> quite legitimately criticise the fact that Maybaum regards the Holocaust as similar to the crucifixion of Jesus. Maybaum totally misunderstands the human cause of the death of Jesus Christ for the sins of the world. At the cross no monstrous crime of cruelty was involved. Jesus Christ, believed to be God, took on the sins *himself, willingly*, thus demonstrating divine love, mercy and grace. Very different indeed to the Shoah.

### Melissa Raphael

Raphael uses the failure of Maybaum's thesis to expose why most patriarchal thinking in post-holocaust theology is doomed to prove unsatisfactory, pivoting as it does around power, divine and human, still centred on the 'domination of history by violence'.<sup>52</sup> Powerfully, in my estimation, Raphael challenges the very concept of the kind of God postulated by Maybaum and others. The patriarchal theology of male Jewish thinkers forces them either to reject God or to challenge his apparent silence and passivity. This approach inevitably leads to suggestions of divine powerlessness (Rubinstein), callousness (for example, Berkovits) or cruelty (Blumenthal, Maybaum, Fackenheim). Instead Raphael suggests that one should not ask *where* God was in Auschwitz but *who* he was. She envisages a God of presence who is present as Shekinah<sup>53</sup> in the Holocaust – loving, powerful, the female face of God. Drawing on midrash, on the mystical Kabbalah of Isaac Luria and on testimonies of female survivors from the death camps, Raphael sees God's presence as suffering with those who suffered. He is a covenantal God who still reveals himself and redeems through small yet heroic acts of care, compassion, nurtur-

ing and sacrifice:

Restorative acts bespeak the presence of a healing and mending God in spite of conditions which, although they cannot destroy God, appear to destroy the conditions by which the divine might be manifest.<sup>54</sup>

Like Fackenheim, Raphael searches for *tikkun olam*, the mending of the world, and finds it in human deeds. As the world's communal fabric was ripped apart, human love was anticipating its renewal.<sup>55</sup> Resistance to Nazi assaults on the Jewish body, the family and others caring relationships – these are places where God's presence was revealed in the midst of desolation and degradation.

When I was young, seated at the feet of Anna F., my young boyfriend's Jewish grandmother, survivor with only one of her sons from two concentration camps, I felt overwhelmed by her eyewitness accounts, and even more by her faith and extraordinary forgiveness and love. Living in Prague with her husband, a university teacher, with their young family, they avoided capture and deportation until betrayed by their closest friends. She told me of the squalor, the fear during the cattle-truck journeys, the stench; of having to paint pretty pictures on dinner-menus for camp hierarchy while family and friends, stripped naked, were herded into gas chambers. Then, surrounded by her sculptures and paintings, she, and these, told of another side, of tenderness, embracing love, mother and child images, holding arms, gentle touches and smiles to another, born in that traumatic time. She encouraged me to see, through the privileged sharing of her experiences, that God was in these encounters, a God who speaks love and healing and suffers with us in life's despicable calamities. When I read Raphael's thesis about a different sort of God than perhaps traditionally envisaged by many Jewish thinkers, I instinctively knew that this resonated with what I had heard and seen with Anna.

Space does not permit a full exploration of Raphael's complex thesis, much of which is alien to Christianity as it is to traditional Judaism. Raphael herself admits that 'much of the kabbalistic scheme is too gnostic, esoteric and dualistically inclined'<sup>56</sup> but she still puts forward some concepts and statements that might be prone to misinterpretation. This could be seen in her statement that women did not call on *God* in Auschwitz, so much as on *each other*.<sup>57</sup> I believe that she is absolutely distinct in her understanding that within their healing acts to one another, women were demonstrating



God's *hesed* (covenant love) in the camps. This idea does not carry any gnostic implications.<sup>58</sup> However, Raphael has clearly 'refigured' the God of the Torah. Not surprisingly, the number of male Jewish thinkers, and indeed Christian theologians, who have engaged with her thesis is limited. This is regrettable as there is much to explore. I suggest tentatively that her 'new configured' God, revealing him/herself in loving acts of kindness, powerful in powerlessness, coming alongside and into the suffering of humans, has important similarities to the God who revealed himself in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

### Messianic Jews

The Messianic Jew Arthur Katz still sees the Holocaust as a judgement against Israel for her sins, and the founding of the State of Israel as a mark of resurrection.<sup>59</sup> Yet two other Messianic theologians are attempting to make connections with the God who is revealed in a new way. One of them is Tsavi Sadan, who first roots the Holocaust in the exemplar of the suffering Job and then draws parallels between Christ's suffering and that of the Jewish people who unknowingly lived through this.<sup>60</sup> The other is Barry Leventhal, who also finds that it is only the suffering of an incarnated God that could even begin to relate to that of those who lived and died in the Shoah.<sup>61</sup>

### In lieu of a conclusion

The Holocaust decimated the Jewish people physically, psychologically and theologically. The emergence of the State of Israel had huge implications on post-holocaust thinking, intensified after the 1967 Six Day War with Israel's Arab neighbours, but today Jewish thinking is as deeply divergent as ever. The same questions abound but with potent new ones added. Where was God in the Shoah? Why do the innocent suffer? What does the State of Israel mean within the covenant between God and the Jewish people?

In many ways, I feel unentitled to draw any conclusions. Perhaps I should simply summarise Jewish thinking and leave it at that. Yet since childhood, I have been weighed down by all I have read, seen and contemplated. I am potently aware, too, that many Christians at the time stood on the *side* of the abyss, not in it like the Jewish people. Dare I say that exactly as a Christian, sharing the same God, I care about engaging with my Jewish friends about

their faith and mine in the light of the Shoah? To dialogue with Jewish people, to better understand them, Israel and her political stance, we must first seek to understand how they come to terms with 'the weeping of Rachel for her children who are never coming back from the land of the enemy'.<sup>62</sup>

In 1963, Karl Barth visited the United States to dialogue with Jewish thinkers, including Fackenheim, with the plan that each would leave aside 'their hermeneutical armature' to 'fraternally re-read the Bible'. The mission was a failure; the Holocaust and Israel were never even mentioned. Many years later Fackenheim ruminated that it was too much back then, and even in the 1990s, to hope that a post-holocaust theological sharing might be possible.<sup>62</sup> But there are moves to do so now, and this article urges once again that Christian theologians of the present generation re-engage with the theology of that darkest period of humanity, the Shoah, and particularly with Jewish theologians. I even contemplate that there are indeed precious threads and themes that God's peoples, sons and daughters, Jews and Christians, might share and weave to help reveal the God of hope and a healing of the world, *tikkun olam*. *Shalom*.

Elizabeth Pinder-Ashenden, originally an anthropologist, trained for the Baptist ministry in the UK

### Notes

- 1 Elie Wiesel, *Night*, trans. Stella Rodway (New York: Avon Books, 1960) 44, 74-76.
- 2 Some prefer the term *Shoah* to Holocaust, as they are uncomfortable with the sacrificial connotations connected to the latter (Greek *holókaustos*: *hólos* 'whole' and *kaustós* 'burnt' as in sacrificial offering to the gods). The word *Shoah* was chosen to describe the Holocaust by the Israeli Knesset on April 12, 1951, when it established Yom HaShoah VeMered HaGetaot, a national day of remembrance. Cf. Zev Garber, *The Shoah: A Paradigmatic Genocide* (Studies in the Shoah: Lanham, New York & London: University Press of America, 1994) 4-6, for a brief resume of the terms and their issues.
- 3 Eugene B. Borowitz, 'Confronting the Holocaust' in Jacob Neusner (ed.), *Faith Renewed: The Judaic Affirmation Beyond the Holocaust: Volume 1* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1994) 175.
- 4 Steven T. Katz, *Post-Holocaust Dialogues: Critical Studies in Modern Jewish Thought* (New York: University Press, 1983) 142.
- 5 Quoted in Neusner (ed.), *Faith Renewed*, 190.
- 6 My mother's family is Czechoslovak; their home had been a 'safe house'. Those who died and sur-



- vived the concentration camps, both Gentile family and Jewish friends, and the total destruction of Lidice, gave me a special type of inheritance.
- 7 Tikkun is a Hebrew term used in both classic rabbinic and kabbalistic Judaism, meaning the redemptive, healing restoration of the world. Tikkun also used in Ecclesiastes (1:5; 7:13; 12:9) denoting a mending. Cf. Emil Fackenheim who brought this concept to post-holocaust theology in *To Mend the World: Foundations of Future Jewish Thought* (New York: Schocken Books, 1982).
- 8 Eliezer Berkovits, *Faith after the Holocaust* (New York: Ktav, 1973) 82-85.
- 9 Shema Yisrael, 'Hear, (O) Israel', are the first words of the section of the Torah that is a centrepiece of the morning and evening Jewish prayer services.
- 10 Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *Holocaust Theology* (London: Marshall Morgan and Scott, 1989) 125.
- 11 Norman Lamm, 'The Face of God: Thoughts on the Holocaust' in Bernard Rosenberg and Fred Heuman (eds.), *Theological and Halakhic Reflections on the Holocaust* (New York: Ktav, 1992) 121.
- 12 Jonathan Sacks, *Faith in the Future* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1995) 239.
- 13 Sacks, *Faith in the Future*, 36.
- 14 Haskel Lookstein, *This Week and Last Week: Reflections on the Fortieth Yom ha-Azma'ut*, in Rosenberg and Heuman, *Reflections on the Holocaust*, 243.
- 15 Borowitz, 'Confronting the Holocaust'.
- 16 Wiesel, *Night*, 55-56.
- 17 Borowitz, 'Confronting the Holocaust', 178.
- 18 David Blumenthal, *Facing the Abusing God: A Theology of Protest* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993) 247.
- 19 Cf. for a brief description and critique of Rubenstein's Holy Nothingness: Klaus Rohmann, 'Radical Theology in the Making: Richard L. Rubenstein Reshaped Jewish Theology from Its beginnings', in Betty Rubenstein and M. Berenbaum (eds.), *What Kind of God? Essays in Honour of Richard L. Rubenstein* (Studies in the Shoah; Lanham, New York and London: University Press of America, 1995) 17-21. Rubenstein developed a more mystical concept of the divine.
- 20 Richard Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966) 49.
- 21 Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*, 47.
- 22 Irving Greenberg, 'Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity, and Modernity after the Holocaust' in Eva Fleischner (ed.), *Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era? Reflections on the Holocaust* (New York: Ktav, 1977) 7-55.
- 23 Garber, *Shoah: Paradigmatic Genocide*, 45.
- 24 Garber, *Shoah: Paradigmatic Genocide*, 46.
- 25 Melissa Raphael, *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz: A Jewish feminist theology of the Holocaust* (London & New York: Routledge, 2003) 45.
- 26 Lamm, 'The Face of God'.
- 27 Borowitz, 'Confronting the Shoah'.
- 28 Cohn-Sherbok, *Holocaust Theology*, 66-67.
- 29 Arthur Cohen, *The Tremendum: a Theological Interpretation of the Holocaust* (New York: Crossroad, 1981) *passim*; *tremendum* is a term originally used by Rudolf Otto, equated with a mysterious holy wrath of God and used about the Holocaust by Cohen (78) as an 'event that annihilates the past of hope...and confronts us as abyss'.
- 30 Cohn-Sherbok, *Holocaust Theology*, 78.
- 31 Cohn-Sherbok, *Holocaust Theology*, 79.
- 32 Emil Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflection* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972) 84-95.
- 33 Fackenheim, *Mending the World*, 302-305.
- 34 Michael Wyschogrod, 'Faith and the Holocaust: A Review Essay of Emil Fackenheim's *God's Presence in History*', *Judaism* 20 (1971) 286-294.
- 35 Fackenheim, *Mending the World*, *passim*.
- 36 Marc H. Ellis, *Oh Jerusalem! The Contested Future of the Jewish Covenant* (Minneapolis, Augsburg /Fortress, 1999) 81.
- 37 Fackenheim, *Mending the World*, 300.
- 38 Fackenheim, *Mending the World*, 312. Note that he still ends up rejecting the traditional view of God and Judaism.
- 39 Raphael, *Female Face of God in Auschwitz*, 31.
- 40 Lamm, 'The Face of God'.
- 41 Raphael, *Female Face of God in Auschwitz*, 137.
- 42 Beginning with the destruction of Solomon's temple by Nebuchadnezzar which started the Jews a diaspora; the second was the destruction of Herod's temple which gave birth to the era of the synagogue without animals sacrifices; Cf. Ignaz Maybaum, *The Face of God After Auschwitz* (Amsterdam: Polak & van Gennep, 1965) 72.
- 43 Ignaz Maybaum quoted in Cohn-Sherbok, *Holocaust Theology*, 36.
- 44 Shtetl: Yiddish for small Eastern European townships, largely speaking Yiddish, seen as pious communities following Orthodox Judaism that disappeared largely post-holocaust; see [www.jewish-guide.pl/shtetl/24](http://www.jewish-guide.pl/shtetl/24).
- 45 Maybaum, *Face of God After Auschwitz*, 66-68.
- 46 Maybaum, *Face of God After Auschwitz*, 67.
- 47 Raphael, *Female Face of God in Auschwitz*, 34.
- 48 Katz, *Post-Holocaust Dialogues*, 252.
- 49 Raphael, *Female Face of God in Auschwitz*, 34.
- 50 Cohn-Sherbok, *Holocaust Theology*, 40.
- 51 Katz, *Post-Holocaust Dialogues*, 252.
- 52 Raphael, *Female Face of God in Auschwitz*, 35-42.
- 53 Shekinah: the indwelling presence of God, traditionally figured as female; an 'abiding, dwelling or habitation' of the physical manifestations of God described in Ex 24:16; 40:35, Num 9:16-18; also used to describe the mystical 'shekinah' presence in the tabernacle; cf. [www.jewishencyclopedia.com/](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/)



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- 54 Raphael, *Female Face of God in Auschwitz*, 12.
- 55 Raphael, *Female Face of God in Auschwitz*, 142.
- 56 Melissa Raphael, 'When God Behold God: Notes towards a Jewish Feminist Theology of the Holocaust' in *Feminist Theology* 21 (1999) 53-78.
- 57 Raphael, *Female Face of God in Auschwitz*, 44.
- 58 Raphael, *Female Face of God in Auschwitz*, 100.
- 59 See [www.hearnow.org/ezek37.html](http://www.hearnow.org/ezek37.html).
- 60 Cited in Richard Harvey, *Mapping Messianic Jewish Theology: A Constructive Approach* (Milton Keynes, Colorado Springs & Hyderabad: Paternoster, 2009) 93.
- 61 Barry R. Leventhal, 'Holocaust Apologetics: Towards a Case for the Existence of God' in *Christian Apologetics Journal* 1.1 (1998) 1-11; available at <http://scott-juris.blogspot.com/Holocaust%20Apologetics.pdf>.
- 62 Jeremiah 31:15.
- 63 Emil Fackenheim, *The Jewish Bible after the Holocaust: A Re-Reading* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990) 71-73.