

## Review Essay

*Worship of the Heart: Essays on Prayer.* By Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, edited by Shalom Carmy. Toras Horav Foundation, New York, 2002.

**Reviewed by: LAWRENCE J. KAPLAN**

The book before us, edited by Rabbi Shalom Carmy, is the second volume of the *Me-Otzar HoRav Series: Selected Writings of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik*. As Professor David Shatz and Dr. Joel Wolowelsky, the editors of the series, note in their Preface to this volume: “Although many of Rabbi Soloveitchik’s writings and discourses have been published over the years, much additional material, rich and evocative, remains in handwritten manuscripts. *The Toras HoRav Foundation* was established by family members and former students to disseminate these and other works, with the aim of enhancing both our grasp of Rabbi Soloveitchik’s philosophy and our understanding of the diverse topics he addresses” (p. viii).

As Rabbi Carmy indicates in his useful and informative Introduction to the book, *Worship of the Heart* consists of three independent parts. Chapters 1-5, which develop a general theory of prayer, are taken from a series of notebooks composed by Rabbi Soloveitchik, better known simply as the Rav, in 1956-57 as a basis for a course at Yeshiva University’s Bernard Revel Graduate School. Chapters 6-9, which deal with the liturgy of the *Shema*, are taken from another series of notebooks from the same period. Finally, Chapter 10, “Reflections on the *Amidah*,” is a translation of a Hebrew essay of the Rav, “Ra’ayonot ‘al ha-Tefillah,” published in 1978 in *Hadarom*.

This review essay is in two parts. The first part will offer some substantive comments regarding the Rav’s theories of prayer

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and the *Shema*, as developed in the first two parts of the book, while the second part will present some critical observations regarding the transcription and editing of the work.

## I

While the first volume of the *Me-Otzar HoRav Series, Family Redeemed*, contains some halakhic observations and analyses, it belongs primarily to the genre of *aggadah* (non-legal Jewish thought). By contrast, in the Rav's discussions of both prayer and the *Shema* in *Worship of the Heart* we arrive at the unique blend of *halakhah* and *aggadah* that perhaps constitutes the very heart of his thought. Here precise and rigorous halakhic analysis dovetails beautifully with a profound and probing theological exploration of the nature of the human being's religious experience as he or she stands in the presence of God.

In this connection I wish to take particular note of the Rav's well known distinction between the *ma'aseh ha-mitzvah*, the indispensable means whereby one performs a commandment, and the *kiyyum ha-mitzvah*, the actual fulfillment of the commandment. This distinction enables the Rav to incorporate the aggadic realm of subjective religious experience into the inner sanctum of Halakhah.

Normally, the Rav points out, *ma'aseh* and *kiyyum* coincide. Thus, for example, one performs the commandment to eat matzah by eating matzah, and that act of eating simultaneously constitutes the fulfillment of the commandment. The same holds true for most commandments. However, the Rav contends, there are central and fundamental "experiential" commandments where performance and fulfillment do not coincide, where the performance is an outward act but the fulfillment is an inner experience. Examples of such commandments are prayer, which is performed by the pray-er's verbal recitation of a liturgical text, but fulfilled by his awareness of standing before the divine presence; repentance, which is performed by the returnee's verbal recitation of the confession, but fulfilled by his inner recognition of his sin, regret over the past, and resolve for the future, thereby returning to God, minimally out of fear and maximally out of love; rejoicing on the festivals, which is performed by such acts as the celebrant's eating from the meat of the holiday peace offering (when the Temple was still standing) or (nowadays) by his eating meat and drinking wine, but fulfilled by his inward sense of

rejoicing before the Lord; and mourning, which is performed by the mourner's engaging in the rites of mourning, but fulfilled by his undergoing the inner experience of pain and grief, and by his sense that the grisly encounter with death has cut him off from God. (Note how in all four commandments the inner fulfillment is not just an emotional experience, but involves an awareness of a special type of relationship with God.)<sup>1</sup>

In *Worship of the Heart*, both in connection with prayer and in connection with the recitation of the *Shema*, the Rav, not surprisingly, discusses with great acuteness, eloquence, and philosophic precision this special type of experiential commandment where performance and fulfillment do not coincide. One new theme emerges here, which, to my knowledge, is not to be found in the Rav's other writings on this subject. It is not just that with reference to this type of commandment the *ma'aseh* is outward while the *kiyyum* is inward. But more. The outward *ma'aseh ha-mitzvah* is a "piecemeal process of actual execution ... denot[ing] a religious technique, a series of concrete media through which the execution of the mitzvah is made possible, while the [inward] *kiyyum ha-mitzvah* relates to the total effect, to the achievement itself, to the structural wholeness of the norm realization" (pp. 17-18).

Here the Rav offers a striking analogy. He notes:

There is technique in painting: the proper selection and use of colors, the expert strokes of the brush, and so on. Yet the painting as a work of art is something different from all these details. It can

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<sup>1</sup> For a full discussion of the Rav's distinction between the outward *ma'aseh ha-mitzvah* and the inward *kiyyum ha-mitzvah*, and how he applies it to the four central commandments enumerated in the paragraph, together with complete documentation of both primary and secondary sources, see Lawrence Kaplan, "The Multi-Faceted Legacy of the Rav: A Critical Analysis of R. Hershel Schachter's *Nefesh Ha-Rav*," *BDD* (Bekhol Derakhekha Daehu: Journal of Torah and Scholarship) 7 (1998): 63-65; and, more recently, Shlomo H. Pick, "Le-Darko shel Ha-Grid Soloveitchik, zt"l, be-Limmud ha-Torah," *Mo'adei ha-Rav* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 2003), pp. 24-26; and David Shapiro, "*Ma'aseh ha-Mitzvah* and *Kiyyum ha-Mitzvah*," *Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik on Pesach, Sefirat ha-Omer, and Shavu'ot* (Jerusalem: Urim Publications, 2005), pp. 53-67.

never be integrated through a piecemeal, additive process combining the various phases of the execution of the details of the artistic work. It is the personal element, the talent of the artist, the instantaneous creative spark, that make the work worthwhile from an artistic viewpoint. (p. 18)

This distinction between outward *ma'aseh* as a “piecemeal, additive process” and inner *kiyyum* as relating to “the structural wholeness of the norm realization” forcibly calls to mind the Rav’s analysis in *Halakhic Mind* of the method of reconstruction employed both in science and in the philosophy of religion. The Rav argues there that just as in the realm of nature the modern physicist moves from an objective, piece-meal, additive order to a reconstructed, subjective, structural order, so in the realm of the spirit the philosopher of religion must begin with an “enormous mass of objectified [religious] constructs and gradually reconstruct out of them the underlying subjective aspects of religion.”<sup>2</sup> In an article published in 1987 I had already suggested that a link exists between the Rav’s universalistic, highly abstract, and philosophically technical discussion of the method of reconstruction in *Halakhic Mind* and his distinction between outward *ma'aseh ha-mitzvah* and inward *kiyyum ha-mitzvah* found in his more “particularistic” halakhic essays.<sup>3</sup> This link is now confirmed by the striking verbal similarities indicated above between *Halakhic Mind* and *Worship of the Heart*.

Let us turn now to the two specific commandments of prayer and the *Shema*. I think I can safely say that the reader familiar with the Rav’s published writings on prayer will not find anything especially new in the Rav’s discussion of this matter in connection with prayer in the chapter “Prayer, Petition, and Crisis.” In that chapter the Rav, with his customary elegance makes his familiar point that prayer belongs to the class of “experiential” commandments where the performance is an outward act but the fulfillment is an inner experience.

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<sup>2</sup> *The Halakhic Mind: An Essay on Jewish Tradition and Modern Thought* (New York: Seth Press, 1986), p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> Lawrence Kaplan, “Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik’s Philosophy of Halakhah,” *Jewish Law Annual* 7 (1987): 193-195.

We must discriminate between two aspects of *tefillah*: the external one, constituting the formal act of prayer, and the inner experience, which expresses the very essence of the mitzvah. The physical deed of reciting a fixed text serves only as a medium through which the experience finds its objectification and concretion. It is not to be identified with the genuine act of praying, which is to be found in an entirely different dimension, namely, the great and wondrous God-experience. (p. 20)

In support of this contention, the Rav proceeds to cite, as is his wont, the Rambam's statement in *Sefer ha-Mitzvot*, Positive Commandment 5, maintaining that the general commandment of serving God with all one's heart entails the specific duty of prayer, and his ruling in *Hilkebot Tefillah* 4:15 that "prayer without kavanah is no prayer at all." As I said, there is nothing very much new here.

On the other hand, the Rav's discussion in the chapter "Intention (Kavanah) in Reading Shema and Prayer" of the intention required for reading the *Shema* (more particularly, the first verse of *Shema*) and, in particular, the contrast he draws between that intention and the intention required for prayer break important new ground. In that chapter the Rav begins by arguing that the *Shema*, like prayer, belongs to the class of experiential commandments.

The very content of *kavanah* with reference to *Shema* and *tefillah* differs basically from the *kavanah* associated with other *mitzvot*. The latter require only normal heedfulness... and an intention of acting in accordance with the Divine will... Thus intention, in these commandments, does not constitute an integral part of the religious gesture. By contrast, the *kavanah* in regard to *Shema* and *tefillah* forms the ... central idea and the intrinsic content of the mitzvah. It is not a mere modality, expressing only the "how" of the *mitzvah*-fulfillment (as it does in other *mitzvot*), but rather is identified with the very substance and essence of the commandment. It implies ...a full-fledged, all-embracing and all-penetrating experience of God. (p. 89)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This point was first made in somewhat more technical halakhic "Brisker" language in a halakhic *biddush* of the Rav from 1932. See *Iggerot Ha-Grid Ha-Levi* (Jerusalem, 2001), p. 26.

He then observes that though this thesis “that *kavanah* with regard to *Shema* is not to be identified with *kavanah* concerning other *mitzvot* appears to us to be a truism,” in point of fact there is a debate among the Rishonim, the classic medieval authorities, regarding its validity. Such giants as Rashi, Tosafot, and Ramban argue that the *kavanah* required for reading the *Shema* is the standard intention to perform the commandment in accordance with the divine will (*kavanah latzet*). Only in the generation following the Ramban do we find scholars such as Rashba, Reah, and the students of Rabbenu Yonah stating clearly and unequivocally that the *kavanah* required for reading the *Shema* is the inward intention to accept the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven. (pp. 89-91)<sup>5</sup>

As for Maimonides’ view concerning this matter as formulated in the *Mishneh Torah*, the Rav notes that it is not clear. He wishes to infer from Maimonides’ ruling in *Hilkebot Keri’at Shema* 2:1 that Maimonides in fact anticipates the above-mentioned view of Rashba, Reah, and the students of Rabbenu Yonah, but admits that his inference is somewhat speculative.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> We have here a striking example of how the Rav’s hashkafic commitments lead him into “taking sides” in a matter which is a debate among the Rishonim. For a general discussion of this phenomenon, see the forthcoming article of Daniel Rynhold, “Letting the Facts Get in the Way of a Good Thesis: Rav Soloveitchik’s Philosophical Method,” in A. Rosenak and N. Rothenberg eds., *The Influence of Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik on Culture, Education, and Jewish Thought* (Jerusalem: Van Leer Institute Publications), in press. Rynhold focuses on the Rav’s siding with Maimonides in his dispute with Nahmanides regarding the status of the *mitzvah* of prayer. See my discussion in Part II at note 45.

<sup>6</sup> The Rav, however, somewhat surprisingly, overlooks the responsum of Maimonides’ son, Rav Avraham ben HaRambam, which, on the basis of the Maimonides’s use of the word “*kavanah*” in *Hilkebot Tefillah* 4: 15 and *Hilkebot Keri’at Shema* 2:1, seeks to infer that Maimonides in fact rules that the *kavanah* required for reading the *Shema* is the inward intention to accept the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven. See *Responso Birkat Avraham*, no. 34. Thus Rav Avraham ben HaRambam turns out to have been the first *Rishon* to state explicitly that the *kavanah* required for reading the *Shema* is the inward intention to accept the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, preceding in this respect Rashba, Reah, and the students of Rabbenu Yonah. For a discussion of this responsum, see Avraham Feintuch, *Pikkudei Yesharim (Commentary on Sefer ha-Mitzvot)*,

Up until this point in the chapter the Rav's analysis pretty much overlaps with his halakhic discussion of this issue to be found in his comprehensive monograph, "Kuntrus be-'Inyan Keri'at Shema."<sup>7</sup> From this point on, however, the Rav advances into territory not covered in the more technical halakhic monograph. For in the monograph the Rav, in seeking to determine Maimonides' position with reference to the *Kavanah* required for reading the *Shema*, restricts himself to the *Mishneh Torah*. In *Worship of the Heart*, however, the Rav, in his quest to determine Maimonides' position on this issue, does not so restrict himself, but turns to *Guide* 3: 51, that great chapter of the *Guide* devoted to "explaining the worship [of God] as practiced by one who has apprehended the true realities." In that chapter Maimonides gives the reader guidance with regard to training himself so that when he performs the commandments he will act "as if [he] were occupied with Him and not with that which is other than He." Maimonides writes:

The first thing that you should cause your soul to hold fast onto is that, when *reciting the Keri'at Shema* you should empty your mind of everything and pray thus. You should not content yourself with *being intent* while *reciting the first verse of Shema* and saying *the first benediction*. When this has been carried out correctly and has been practiced consistently for years, cause your soul, whenever you read or listen to the *Torah*, to be constantly directed—the whole of you and your thought—toward reflection on what you are listening to or reading.

The Rav comments:

Thus ... Maimonides lets it be known that *kavanah* in reference to the first verse of *Shema* signifies the unique experience that we call accepting the yoke of Heaven. If he had concurred with Nahmanides in equating *kavanah* relative to *Shema* with the

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Vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Ma`aliyyot, 2000), pp. 150-151. [I now see that David Shapiro, in a somewhat different context, also notes that the Rav does not refer to this responsum. See Shapiro, "Mitzvot Tzerichot Kavannah," *Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik on Pesach, Sefirat ha-Omer, and Shavu'ot*, pp. 125-127.]

<sup>7</sup> Shi'urim le-Zekher Abba Mari, Z"L, Vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Makhon Yerushalayyim, 1983), pp. 27-33.

imperative intentionality applicable to other *mitzvoth*—that is to say, with a technical and conventional performance, not with an inward craving of the soul—then he would be recommending in the *Guide* not only the continual application of such devotional experience to all religious performance, but also a different kind of experience. In other words, the halakhic performance would be technical while the experience recommended in the *Guide* would be subjective. That Maimonides failed to distinguish between the type of intention required by the Halakhah and that demanded of the mystic proves our point: that Maimonides accepts the doctrine of subjectivism with regard to *Shema*. Moreover, he treats *Shema* and *tefillah* in an identical manner, implying that he identifies the subjective correlate of both *mitzvoth*. Thus, Maimonides' view on *kavanah* in *tefillah* applies to *Shema* as well. (p. 94)

This analysis is very acute and—to my mind at least—entirely convincing. I should add that *Guide* 3:51 has been the subject of extensive and exhaustive discussions by many of the leading scholars of Jewish philosophy, but, to my knowledge, none has picked up on the inference drawn from this passage by the Rav.<sup>8</sup> We can see from this particular example the riches that remain to be gleaned from the *Guide* by readers who, like the Rav, approach the text with finely honed philosophical and halakhic sensibilities and who, at the same time, have mastered the relevant halakhic and philosophic literature.<sup>9</sup>

If I might add my own observation concerning the debate among the Rishonim regarding the type of *kavanah* required for reading the *Shema*, I would like to suggest that this debate may be reflected in two variant texts found in the famous story in *Berakhot* 61b describing the martyrdom of R. Akiva. The standard printed version reads, “It was the time for reciting the *Shema*... and he [R. Akiva] accepted upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

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<sup>8</sup> The literature on this chapter is vast. For an up-to-date, very comprehensive bibliographical guide, see Michael Schwartz's introductory starred note to *Guide* 3:51 in his recent annotated Hebrew translation of the *Guide* (Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> The reader should note the similarity between Rav Avraham ben HaRambam's analysis of Maimonides's use of the word “kavanah” in *Hilkebot Tefillah* 4: 15 and *Hilkebot Keri'at Shema* 2:1 and the Rav's point that in *Guide* 3:51 Maimonides “treats *Shema* and *tefillah* in an identical manner.”



Rashi, commenting on the phrase “and he accepted upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven,” explains: “He read the Shema.” This version, then, would accord with the view of Rashi, Tosafot, and Ramban that simply reciting the *Shema* is equivalent to accepting upon oneself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, and that the only intention required is the standard intention to perform the commandment in accordance with the divine will (*kavanah latzet*). But according to Ms. Paris 671 and Ms. Bodlean 366 the story reads, “It was the time for reciting the *Shema* and he [R. Akiva] directed his mind (*bayah me-khaven da`ato*) to accepting upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven with love.” This version would appear to accord with the view of the Rashba, Reah, the students of Rabbenu Yonah, and (as the Rav has shown) the Rambam that the *kavanah* required for reading the *Shema* is the inward intention to accept the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven.<sup>10</sup>

After his examination of the issue of the nature of the intention required for *Shema*, the Rav goes on to argue that even if we accept the view, as indeed the Rav does, that the *kavanah* required for reading the *Shema* is the inward intention to accept the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, we must differentiate between that inward intention and the inward intention required for prayer.

*Avodah she-ba-lev* (service of the heart) [in *tefillah*] asserts itself in the great experience of Divine presence, the awareness of God, of His proximity and closeness to us. In service of the heart, the finite being encounters his infinite, invisible God, stands before Him and addresses himself to Him.... *Tefillah* is considered a dialogue, a conversation, colloquy between God and man, between Infinity and finitude, Being and nothingness. Man does not talk about God in the third person, as someone who is not there. He employs the thou, the grammatical form which brings together two unique individualities.... In short, in prayer man establishes contact with God....

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<sup>10</sup> For the reading found in Ms. Paris 671 and Ms. Bodlean 366, I am indebted to Yonah Frankel, *Iyyunim be-'Olam ha-Ruhani shel Sippur ha-Aggadah* (Tel-Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1981), pp. 49, 167. The other differences noted by Professor Frankel between the printed and manuscript versions are also very significant.

Reading *Shema* does not entail the state of consciousness required for prayer. “Accepting the yoke of Heaven” is not tantamount to entering the Divine presence.... For the performance of *Shema* is not the movement of going and coming to God. No encounter takes place. The element of dialogue is lacking in this ritual. It expresses itself more in the form of declaration, confession, profession of faith.... Of course, God is also experienced when one reads *Shema*, but not in a sense of fellowship or communion via the grammatical thou. God, in the experience of reading *Shema*, is “He,” the third person, the remote transcendent Being Whose yoke we do accept, Whose will we must abide, ... Whose authority we acknowledge, yet into Whose presence we must not venture.... (pp. 95-97)

I have just cited here some key excerpts from an extended and penetrating analysis on the part of the Rav of the two different types of *kavanah*, the two different modes of consciousness, the two different moods present in the reciting of *Shema* and prayer.<sup>11</sup> It should be evident that the term “avodah she-be-lev,” “service of the heart,” in the strict sense, applies only to prayer and not to *Shema*. In this sense the title of the book is a misnomer.

The Rav further argues that his thesis that the type of *kavanah* required for prayer differs radically from that required for *Shema* receives halakhic confirmation from the fact that there are “a multitude of ...special rules pertaining to tefillah that do not apply to *Shema*.” That is, precisely because prayer “entails the consciousness of the Divine presence,” while *Shema* “remains bounded by the intellectual-volitional sphere,” the halakhah set down very strict and demanding rules with reference to the former and relatively liberal rules with regard to the latter (pp. 100-103). Of course, one should add, Rashi, Tosafot, and Ramban would argue that the reason the halakhah has set down relatively liberal rules with regard to reciting *Shema* is because *no* special inward *kavanah* is required for its reading,

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<sup>11</sup> For two other discussions of this issue that, in a manner similar to that of the Rav, differentiate between the inward intention required for reading the *Shema* and that required for prayer, see Feintuch, *Pikkudei Yesbarim*, Vol. 1, p. 151 ; and Moshe Halbertal, “David Hartman ve-ha-Pilosofiyah shel ha-Halakhah,” *Mehuyavut Yehudit Mithadesbet*, Vol. 1 (Tel-Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2001), pp. 25-26.

just the standard intention to perform the commandment in accordance with the divine will.<sup>12</sup>

I would like to explore a bit further the Rav's conceptions of the "service of the heart" connected with prayer and the "acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven" connected with *Shema*. With reference to prayer, I believe we can gain a deeper and more precise idea regarding the sense in which the Rav considers prayer to be "service of the heart" and consequently the sense in which prayer differ from *Shema*, if we turn to his halakhic discourse, "Be-'Inyan Semikhat Geulah li-Tefillah."<sup>13</sup> There the Rav makes the following radical and fundamental point.

Fundamentally, with regard to the relationship that exists between a commandment and that which gives rise to the obligation to perform it, prayer differs from all other commandments that a person is obliged to perform. With reference to all other commandments, to begin with there devolves the obligation of its performance on the individual, and it is this obligation that transforms the person's act into a mitzvah-performance.... For example, with reference to grace after meals, a person is obligated to recite a blessing after he has eaten, and it is this obligation that gives rise to the halakhic entity of grace after meals.... However, with reference to Tefillah, prayer, which is an entity of *rahamim*, an [appeal] for [divine] mercy,...the order is reversed. The blessings of prayer do not attain the rank of being halakhic entities of blessing because one is obligated to pray, but by virtue of their own nature. The existence of the halakhic entity of Tefillah (*halot shem Tefillah*) does not depend on a person's obligation, but derives from prayer being intrinsically an appeal for [divine] mercy... To the contrary, a person's obligation to pray derives from the fact that a halakhic entity of Tefillah exists [prior to the obligation].<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> For further discussion regarding the intention required for reading *Shema*, see Meir Twersky, "Be-'Inyan Mitzvat Keri'at Shema ve-Kavanat Mitzvot," *Zikbron ha-Rav*, eds. A. Shmidman and J. Weider (New York: Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, 1994), pp. 111-121.

<sup>13</sup> *Shi'urim le-Zekher Abba Mari, Z"l*, Vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Makhon Yerushalayyim, 1985), pp. 35-57.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40. For a strikingly similar analysis, see Rav Yitzhak Hutner, Essay #5, *Pahad Yitzhak: Rosh ha-Shanah* (New York: Gur Aryeh, 1986), pp. 58-59.

The Rav brings many proofs for this contention, which I cannot discuss here.<sup>15</sup> The point I wish to make in this connection is that, although the Rav does not say so explicitly, this idea that the halakhic entity of Tefillah is an entity of *rahamim*, an appeal for divine mercy, independent of and prior to a person's obligation to pray, and its consequence that "one does not pray in order to discharge one's obligation" constitute for the Rav the deepest meaning of prayer being service of the heart.

Moreover, we can now understand why reading the *Shema* is not service of the heart. The Rav cites the statement of R. Shimon in Pirkei Avot, "Be careful with reference to reading the *Shema* and prayer. And when you pray, do not make your prayer fixed, but [an appeal for] mercy and supplication before the Omnipresent," and explains it as follows:

The Mishnah is very precise. It states that "when you pray do not make your prayer fixed," and by doing so excludes reading the *Shema*. That is to say, when you read the *Shema* you should perform the commandment in order to fulfill your obligation, like other commandments where you intend to discharge your obligation, but this does not hold true for prayer.<sup>16</sup>

To elaborate on this point: The Mishnah begins by saying "Be careful with reference to reading the *Shema* and prayer." In light of the Rav's analysis, we may say that the Mishnah singles out these two commandments as requiring particular care, for the *kavanah* required for them, unlike the *kavanah* required for other commandments, is an inward *kavanah* constituting the very substance and essence of the commandment. The Mishnah, however, then proceeds to implicitly contrast reading the *Shema* and prayer. *Shema* requires *keva*, fixity; prayer does not. The Rav understands *keva* in light of the discussion of the subject in Mishnah and Gemara *Berakhot* (28a) and Rashi's commentary ad. loc. The Mishnah there cites the view of R. Eliezer, "One who makes his prayer fixed, his prayer is not supplication." The gemara comments: "What is *keva*? If one's prayer appears to him as a burden." Rashi explains: "*Keva*, fixity, means that there is a fixed law that I must pray, and I do so to discharge my obligation." But, as we

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<sup>15</sup> See "Be-Inyan Semikhat Ge'ulah li-Tefillah," pp. 38-41.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

have seen, the halakhic entity of *Tefillah* is an entity of *rahamim*, an appeal for divine mercy, independent of and prior to person's obligation to pray, and consequently "one does not pray in order to discharge one's obligation." Rather, one prays in order to enter into God's presence and to address Him directly. In this sense prayer is not and should not be *keva*.<sup>17</sup> *Shema*, however, is acceptance of the yoke of Heaven. The inward *kavanah* required when reading the *Shema* is precisely the *kavanah* of being commanded, the awareness of God as "the remote transcendent Being Whose yoke we do accept, Whose will we must abide, ... Whose authority we acknowledge." It follows that one must recite the *Shema* precisely in order to fulfill one's obligation. The whole essence of *Shema* in this sense is *keva*. Consequently, if one recites the standard prayer when one is not obligated to do so he is still deemed to have prayed, except that the prayer he recites is a voluntary prayer (*tefillat nedava*) instead of an obligatory prayer (*tefillat hovah*). However, if one recites the *Shema* when one is not obligated to do so, the reading forfeits its halakhic status of *Keri'at Shema* and is viewed as being merely a commendable act of reciting verses from the Torah.

At the same time, this explanation as to why prayer is service of the heart can help explain the Rav's view that service of the heart encompasses not only prayer but study of the Torah as well. The Rav notes (p.19) that the Rambam in *Sefer ha-Mitzvot*, Positive Commandment 5, in support of his contention that the general commandment of serving God entails the specific duty of prayer, cites the Sifre, "And to serve Him' (Deut.11:13): This refers to prayer." However, as the Rav has often noted,<sup>18</sup> the Rambam goes on

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<sup>17</sup> This explanation of R. Eliezer's statement undercuts that offered by Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz, according to which R. Eliezer opposed fixed prayer. In general, we may say that Professor Leibowitz's often expressed view that "The sole meaning of prayer as a religious institution is the service of God by the man who accepts the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven" confuses the intention required for prayer with that required for reading the *Shema*. See Yeshayahu Leibowitz, "On Prayer," *Judaism, Human Values, and the Jewish State*, edited by Eliezer Goldman (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University, 1992), p. 31.

<sup>18</sup> See *Worship of the Heart*, p. 139 (the reference there is unclear); and "Be-Inyan Birkhot ha-Torah," *Shi'urim le-Zekher Abba Mari, Z"l*, Vol. 2, p. 7.

to cite the continuation of the *Sifre* “And to serve Him’ (Deut. 11:13): This refers to study.” The Rambam further cites a late halakhic midrash which states, “And Him ye shall serve’ (Deut. 10:20) Serve him through [study of] His Torah and serve Him through His sanctuary.”<sup>19</sup> The Rambam explains the latter phrase as meaning “to go there and pray.” From this the Rav concludes that “it is clear from the words of the Rambam that service of the heart refers to two things, to prayer and to Torah.”<sup>20</sup> (It should be noted, however, that in this passage from *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* the Rambam does not explicitly refer to prayer as service of the heart.) In his halakhic discourse, “Be-Inyan Birkhot ha-Torah” the Rav offers a number of suggestive points of resemblance between study of the Torah and prayer.<sup>21</sup> It appears to me, however—to return to the beginning of this paragraph—that in light of the Rav’s explanation in his halakhic discourse, “Be-Inyan Semikhat Geulah li-Tefillah” as to why prayer is service of the heart, the resemblance between prayer and Torah study is obvious. Just as “the existence of the halakhic entity of Tefillah does not depend on a person’s obligation, but derives from prayer being intrinsically an appeal for [divine] mercy,” so too the existence of the halakhic entity of Torah does not depend on a person’s obligation to study, but derives from the Torah being intrinsically *devar ha-Shem*, the will and wisdom of God.<sup>22</sup> And just as

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<sup>19</sup> See Rav Kapah’s edition of the *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* (Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rav Kook, 1971), p. 61, note 40, for the reference and further discussion.

<sup>20</sup> “Be-Inyan Birkhot ha-Torah,” p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-9.

<sup>22</sup> This idea, I believe, underlies the famous view expressed both in *Minhat Hinukh*, commandment 430, s.v. “u-mevu’ar sham be-Shulhan `Arukh;” and *Hiddushei Maran Griz ha-Levi al ha-Rambam, Hilkebot Berakhot* 11:16, s.v. “ve-hinneh,” that the blessing over the Torah is a *birkeat ha-shevaḥ* and not a *birkeat ha-mitzvah*. Note, as well, that Professor Feintuch in his recent study, *Ve-Zot Li-Yehudah: Tyyunim ‘al Hilkebot Berakhot le-ha-Rambam* (Jerusalem: Ma’aliyyot, 2003), pp. 159-163, discusses the blessings over the Torah in the chapter devoted to *birkebot ha-shevaḥ* and not in the one devoted to *birkebot ha-mitzvah*. Of particular relevance is the well known explanation offered by the Griz (Rav Yitzhak Zev Soloveitchik) in the immediately above mentioned discussion in the name of his father (Rav Hayyim Soloveitchik) as to why women recite

“a person’s obligation to pray derives from the fact that a halakhic entity of Tefillah exists [prior to the obligation],” so too a person’s obligation to study derives from the fact that a halakhic entity of Torah exists prior to the obligation. Strictly speaking, then, a book by the Rav entitled “Worship of the Heart,” if it is to be true to the Rav’s understanding of the concept, should consist of studies by the Rav on prayer and Torah study, not prayer and *Keri’at Shema*.

The theological implications of the above analysis are fundamental and far-reaching. For what it means is that from a purely *halakhic* point of view, the dialogical relationship between God and man, as expressed in God’s word to man (Torah) and man’s word to God (prayer), though it gives rise to obligation, both precedes and is independent of obligation. The contrast between this view and that of Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz is obvious and requires no elaboration.<sup>23</sup>

I now turn to an examination of the Rav’s conception of “acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven” connected with *Shema*. The Rav bases his conception upon the discussion of Maimonides as found in *Hilkhot Keri’at Shema* 1:2. The Mishnah in Berakhot states that the first paragraph of *Shema* (Deut. 6: 4-9) precedes the second paragraph (Deut. 11:13-21), since the first paragraph, *Hear*, contains the “acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven,” while the second paragraph, *If, then, you obey*, contains “acceptance of the yoke of the commandments.” Maimonides omits both the terms “acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven” and “acceptance of the yoke of the commandment” and paraphrases the Mishnah thus:

The paragraph *Hear* is recited first because it contains the commandments concerning God’s unity, the love of God, and His

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the blessing over the study of the Torah: “The blessing over the study of the Torah is not a blessing over the fulfillment of the commandment of study of the Torah, but is a separate law that Torah requires a blessing... And women are exempt only from the commandment to study the Torah, but this does not mean that they have no connection with the act of studying the Torah. Therefore, their study is considered an act of study of the Torah, and it is entirely fitting that they recite the blessing over their study.”

<sup>23</sup> See above, note 17.

study (*ve-talmudo*), which is the basic principle on which all depends. After it, *If, then, you obey*, is recited since the passage commands obedience to all the other commandments.

Thus Maimonides, and the Rav following him (pp. 107-121), understand the “acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven” to refer to the three commandments concerning God’s unity, the love of God, and His study. The Rav has a brilliant analysis, which we cannot enter into here, regarding the basis in the relevant talmudic texts for Maimonides’ assertion that “acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven” refers to these and only these three commandments (pp.108-109). More important in our view, however, is to understand how Maimonides and the Rav conceive of the nature of these three commandments and exactly in what way do they as a group comprise the “acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

The Rav argues that the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven “is not exhausted by the abstract cognitive act...but also includes the element of free assent and consecration....” (p. 109). In a similar vein, referring specifically to the commandment of God’s unity, the Rav maintains that:

The unity of God is not only the foundation of our noetic experience but also the source of our ethico-moralistic awareness .... The idea of divine unity, besides being a theoretical truth, also expresses an axiological truth. In proclaiming “the Lord our God, the Lord is one” ... we deal not only with a cognitive situation, a metaphysico-noetic idea, but also with a valuing situation. (pp. 116-117, 119)

Thus, for the Rav, the three commandments of God’s unity, the love of God, and His study comprise as a group the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven precisely because they combine theoretical, noetic, and metaphysical truths with practical, ethical, and halakhic norms, because they set down “cognitive premise[s]” leading to “assent and commitment” (p. 109).

This is very eloquently and very powerfully put. But I do not believe that it faithfully represents Maimonides’ view. Rather, for Maimonides, the difference between the three commandments of God’s unity, the love of God, and His study, which comprise as a group the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, and



the rest of the commandments, which comprise as a group the acceptance of the yoke of the commandments, is precisely the difference between theoretical truths and ethico-halakhic norms, between cognitive act and practical performance. In sum, for Maimonides the difference between the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven and the acceptance of the yoke of the commandments is the difference between reason and revelation.<sup>24</sup>

Despite the fact that the Rav states that “our task is now to interpret and expound these three basic motifs that comprise accepting the yoke of heaven” (p. 110), he discusses at length only the first motif, namely, the unity of God. In order, then, to substantiate my thesis, I will first critically examine the Rav’s reading of some key Maimonidean texts regarding divine unity and then take a brief look on my own at some key Maimonidean texts regarding the love of God and His study.

With reference to Maimonides’ definition of the commandment of unity in the *Mishneh Torah*, the Rav concedes that there “Maimonides defined the precept of unity only in cognitive intellectual terms” (p.115). As Maimonides writes:

God is one. He is not two, nor more than two, but one. His uniqueness is unlike that of other unities existing in the universe.... Knowing this truth (*ve-yedia’at davar zeh*) is a positive commandment, as it is written: The Eternal our God is one God. (*Laws of the Foundations of the Torah* 1:7)

The Rav goes on, however, to argue that Maimonides’ formulation of the commandment of unity in *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* “is suggestive of a halakhic-practical motif.” There—to cite the English translation used by the Rav—Maimonides writes:

We are commanded in the belief in His unity, that we are to believe that the Agent of existence and its first Cause is one. And this is Scripture’s statement, “Hear O Israel...” In many rabbinic texts you will find them saying “in order to make My Name one.”... This means that He indeed took us out of bondage and performed the

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<sup>24</sup> Note that in *Guide* 1:46 and 3:51 Maimonides uses the image of God as king in the context of an approach to God based on reason.

act of kindness and benefit that He did on condition that we believe in His unity as we are obligated to.

The Rav continues:

The differences between the passage in the *Code* and the one here are easily discernable. First, in the Hebrew translation of *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* Maimonides speaks of *emunah* (belief), instead of knowledge. The term *yedi'ah* (knowledge) does not appear in the Hebrew. The emphasis is laid on *emunah*-belief.<sup>25</sup> Second, the principle of unity in the *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* is connected with the original covenant between God and Israel....While in *Mishneh Torah* the whole doctrine has been placed on the level of metaphysics or theology, the *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* alters the dominant theme from the metaphysical or theological to the historical. (p. 116)

Neither of these two points can be sustained. With reference to the first point, it is difficult to understand the force of the Rav's argument about the difference between the use of *yedi'ah* in the *Mishneh Torah* and *emunah* in the Hebrew translation of *Sefer ha-Mitzvot*. For certainly the issue is not what Hebrew word appears in the Hebrew translation of *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* and what it means, but what Arabic word appears in the original Arabic text and what it means. And, as is indicated by an important footnote in *Halakhic Man*,<sup>26</sup> the Rav knew full well that the Arabic word used in the

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<sup>25</sup> The same linguistic observation, with reference to the commandment regarding the existence of God, is made by the Rav in "Ha-Yahas Bein Teshuvah li-Behirah Hofshit," *Al ha-Teshuvah*, ed. P. Peli (Jerusalem: World Zionist Organization, 1974), pp. 195-196

<sup>26</sup> *Halakhic Man*, trans. Lawrence Kaplan (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1983), p.145, n. 13. The Rav there refers to the 1914 edition of the *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* by "my friend, the Gaon, the light of the diaspora" Rav Hayyim Heller and Rav Heller's note to positive commandment 1 regarding God's existence. He further refers to the *Avodat ha-Melekh* (Vilna, 1931: reprinted Jerusalem, 1971) by "my uncle," Rav Menahem Krakowski and his comment there on p. 1 on *Laws of the Foundations of the Torah* 1:1. To spell out the Rav's references: In his note to positive commandment 1 Rav Heller argues that the Arabic term "itaqad" in the original should be translated as "yedi'ah" and not "emunah." In support of this view he cites an observation of Professor Eugen

original, in connection with both the first commandment regarding God's existence and the second commandment regarding God's unity, is *itaqad* and that *itaqad* means knowledge (*yedi'ah*) and not belief (*emunah*).<sup>27</sup> Indeed, Rav Kapach, in his recent Hebrew translation of *Sefer ha-Mitzvot*, translates—and correctly so—*itaqad* as *yedi'ah*. Finally, that *itaqad* means knowledge (*yedi'ah*) and not belief (*emunah*) is indicated by the fact that in his short *minyān ha-mitzvot* in the Introduction to the *Mishneh Torah*, which, as David Henshke has pointed out,<sup>28</sup> is based upon and was almost certainly written at the same time as the *Sefer ha-Mitzvot*, the Rambam states that the first positive commandment is “to know (*leyda*) that there is a God.”<sup>29</sup>

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(Yitzhak) Mittwoch, who was an academic advisor of the Rav. Rav Krakowski in his comment on *Laws of the Foundations of the Torah* 1:1 cites with approval Rav Heller's observation in his 1914 edition of the *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* that “itaqad” in *Sefer ha-Mitzvot*, positive commandment 1, means the same as “leyda” in *Laws of the Foundations of the Torah* 1:1. Thus, in the note to *Halakhic Man* the Rav indicates that his friend and rabbinic mentor, Rav Heller, his academic advisor, Prof. Mittwoch, and his uncle and halakhic correspondent, Rav Krakowski were all of the opinion that “itaqad” means “yedi'ah” and not “emunah”!

<sup>27</sup> For an incisive discussion of the difference between “itaqad” (= “yedi'ah” = “knowledge”) and “imman” (= “emunah” = “belief”) see Avraham Nuriel, “Musag ha-Emunah Etsel ha-Rambam.” *DAAT* 2-3(1978-79): 43-47.

<sup>28</sup> David Henshke, “Seridei Sefer ha-Mitzvot le-Rambam be-Mishneh Torah,” *Proceedings of the Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies* 3:1 (Jerusalem, 1990), pp. 180-186. See, as well, Rav Nahum Rabinovitch, *Hakdamah u-Minyan ha-Mitzvot: Mishneh Torah le-Rambam `im Perush Yad Peshutah* (Jerusalem: Ma`aliyyot, 1997), p. 57.

<sup>29</sup> The following question naturally arises. Given, as I have shown, that the Rav knew all this, how could he in “Ha-Yahas Bein Teshuvah li-Behirah Hofshit,” with reference to the commandment regarding the existence of God, and in *Worship of the Heart*, with reference to the commandment regarding the unity of God, have attempted to differentiate between “yedi'ah” in the *Mishneh Torah* and the supposed use of “emunah” in *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* and to draw substantive conclusions from this differentiation. To answer this question, I would suggest that we have to remember that the Rav prepared neither text for publication. I firmly believe that had he done so he would have included a note in both instances to the effect that what he was saying

The second point made by the Rav regarding the connection made in *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* between knowledge of God's unity and the exodus is stronger, but nevertheless cannot serve to justify the conclusion drawn by the Rav that the *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* "alters the dominant theme [of God's unity] from the metaphysical or theological to the historical." And this for two reasons. First, there is no mention of covenant in this passage. Second, and more important, the English translation cited by the Rav of this passage from *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* is inexact. It should read: "They [the Sages] mean by this that He took us out of bondage and performed the act of kindness and benefit on our behalf that He did only in order that we know His unity, since this [the knowledge of His unity] is our bounden duty." That is to say, "since the knowledge of His unity is our bounden duty" *independently of the exodus*. For Maimonides, the ground of obligation of knowledge of God's unity is not revelation and certainly not history, but reason, that is, the knowledge of God's unity is knowledge of a rational truth. The function of the exodus for Maimonides, as is indicated by many Maimonidean texts (most especially Chapter 1 of the *Laws of Idolatry*), is to provide the political conditions that will enable the Israelites to obtain the proper

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in the body of the text was "derush," so to speak, but that the "peshat" is as I have said and as he himself pointed out in the footnote to *Halakhic Man*. I say this, not because I possess some occult faculty, but because there are at least two examples where the Rav in essays he prepared for publication does exactly this. First, in "Of the Dew of the Heavens and of the Fat Places of the Earth," *The Rav Speaks: Fives Addresses* (Jerusalem: Tal Orot, 1983), p. 181, the Rav cites an explanation of a certain *sugya* in the name of his great grandfather and namesake, Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchk of Brisk. In footnote 3, appended to the text, the Rav begins "The plain sense of the *sugya* is..." thereby indicating that his grandfather's explanation was "derush." Second, in "The Lonely Man of Faith," *Tradition* (Summer 1965), p. 7, the Rav writes "I am a man of faith for whom to be means to believe, and who substituted "credo" for "cogito" in the time-honored Cartesian maxim." In note \* appended to this comment the Rav adds, "This is, of course, a rhetorical phrase [i.e. "derush," L.K.], since all emotional and volitional activity was included in the Cartesian *cogitatio* as *modi cogitandi*." The resemblance between this example and the issue of "yedi'ah" versus "emunah" is striking.

knowledge of God's existence and His unity.<sup>30</sup> Thus, while it is true that "in *Mishneh Torah* the whole doctrine [of God's unity] has been placed on the level of metaphysics or theology" and that the *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* introduces a historical theme, it is *not* the case that "the *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* alters the dominant theme from the metaphysical or theological to the historical." Rather, the historical is firmly subordinated to the metaphysical and theological.

The Rav in his discussion of the commandment of the love of God as a component of the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven does not analyze the key Maimonidean texts discussing this commandment in the *Sefer ha-Mitzvot*, *Mishneh Torah*, and the *Guide*. An examination of these passages carried out by many scholars, most recently by Professors Howard Kreisel<sup>31</sup> and Menachem Kellner,<sup>32</sup> indicates, to cite Kellner, "that the love of God depends upon the knowledge of God without entirely reducing the former to the latter."<sup>33</sup> Or again, "we achieve love of God through the apprehension of God's being to the greatest extent possible for humans."<sup>34</sup> If love of God depends upon and derives from knowledge of God, and knowledge of God is knowledge of a rational truth independent of revelation, then love of God is similarly independent of revelation.

But more than this. As Kreisel has noted, Maimonides in an important passage from *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* (Principle no. 9) distinguishes between four types of commandments, namely, those concerning opinions, deeds, moral dispositions, and speech. Regarding commandments concerning opinions, Maimonides states, "He has commanded us that we should attain firm knowledge regarding a particular opinion, for example, that we should know the opinion of His unity, the love of God, may He be exalted, and the fear of Him." Thus Maimonides lists the love and fear of God as rational opinions along with knowledge of His unity. Moreover, as an example of a

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<sup>30</sup> I hope to discuss this at length in a forthcoming article, "The Significance of the Exodus in the Thought of the Rambam."

<sup>31</sup> "The Love and Fear of God," *Maimonides' Political Thought* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1999), pp. 225-266.

<sup>32</sup> "Translator's Introduction," *The Book of Love*, Yale Judaica Series (New Haven and London: Yale University, 2004), pp. xiv-xvii

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

commandment concerning moral dispositions, Maimonides lists love of one's fellow. It is clear, as Kreisel points out, that Maimonides deliberately chose his examples in order to differentiate between love of God, which is an opinion belonging to the rational part of the soul, and love of one's fellow, which is a moral virtue belonging to the appetitive part of the soul.<sup>35</sup> Or, as the Rav states in another context, by love of God Maimonides means "the pathos of the intellect."<sup>36</sup> Again, we arrive at the conclusion that love of God is independent of revelation.

Finally, we turn to the third of the commandments comprising the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, "ve-talmudo" "and His study." The Rav, following the standard rabbinic understanding of this word, paraphrases it either as "the study of Torah" (p. 107) or "study of His Torah" (p. 109).<sup>37</sup> But, as a number of scholars have recently noted—Rav Kapach in his commentary on the *Mishneh Torah*, Kreisel in his important work *Maimonides' Political Thought*, and Kellner in his recent translation of *Sefer Ahavah*—"ve-talmudo" does not mean "study of His Torah," but rather "His study," and it should consequently be translated either as "study of His unity" (Rav Kapach) or "study of Him" (Kreisel)<sup>38</sup> or "study of God" (Kellner).<sup>39</sup> To cite Kellner:

The philosophically ... alert reader of the *Mishneh Torah* ... must understand the key term, *ve-talmudo*, to mean the study of God, and not study of God's Torah. The study of God, as taught in the first four chapters of the *Mishneh Torah*, involves the study of physics and metaphysics, not the study of the Talmud as ordinarily understood.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Kreisel, pp. 226 and 330, n. 3.

<sup>36</sup> "U-Vikashtem mi-Sham," *Isb ha-Halakhah: Galmi ve-Nistar* (Jerusalem: World Zionist Organization, 1979), p. 123, continuation of note 2.

<sup>37</sup> See, as well, "Be-Inyan Birkhot ha-Torah," p. 8. For a fuller discussion of the Rav's view, see Meir Orlian, "Birkhot ha-Torah shel Kerit'at ha-Torah be-Tzibbur," *Beit Yosef Shaul* (New York: Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, 1994), pp. 199-201.

<sup>38</sup> "The Love and Fear of God," *Maimonides' Political Thought*, p. 241.

<sup>39</sup> "Translator's Introduction," *The Book of Love*, p. xx.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, xx-xxi.

Two points may be added to Kellner's observation. First, we may substantiate that *ve-talmudo* means the study of God as taught in the first four chapters of the *Mishneh Torah* and involves the study of physics and metaphysics by the following consideration. That "His study" is included in the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven is derived from the phrase in the first paragraph of *Shema*, "And these words which I command you this day shall be on your heart" (Deut 6.6). But in *Laws of the Foundations of the Torah* 2:2 Maimonides, in introducing the teachings of these four chapters, states: "I shall explain important principles concerning the work of the Master of the Worlds so that they might be an entry for one who understands [to come] to love the Name. As the Sages said concerning love: 'Thereby you come to acknowledge Him who spoke, and the world came to be.'" This comment of the Sages is from *Sifre, Va-Etbanan* 33, and is a comment on the phrase "And these words which I command you this day shall be on your heart." Thus, the study of "these words," i.e. the words contained in the first four chapters of the *Laws of the Foundations of the Torah*, leads to the knowledge of God, particularly the knowledge of God's unity, which, in turn, leads to the rational love of God—precisely the three commandments comprising the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven.<sup>41</sup>

Second, while it is true that the first four chapters of the *Mishneh Torah* involve the study of physics and metaphysics, and not "the study of the Talmud as ordinarily understood," it must be noted that at the end of chapter four of the *Laws of the Foundations of the Torah* Maimonides states that "the subjects of these four chapters ...are what the early Sages called *Pardes*," and that he further states in *Laws of the Study of the Torah* 1:12 that "the subjects called *Pardes* are included in [the category of Torah study known as] Talmud." It follows that the study of God = study of the first four chapters of the *Mishneh Torah* = study of physics and metaphysics = study of

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<sup>41</sup> My explanation of Maimonides' innovative use of the *Sifre* in *Laws of the Foundations of the Torah* 2:2 parallels the incisive analysis offered by Kreisel, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-229. Kreisel, however, does not take note of the relevance of this use for determining the meaning of "ve-talmudo" in *Hilkebot Keri'at Shema* 1:2.

*Pardes* = study of Talmud. So *ve-talmudo*, at one and same time, means study of God *and* study of His Talmud!

Our examination of the Rav's conception of the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven indicates that while the Rav bases that conception on a reading of key Maimonidean texts, particularly *Hilkhot Keri'at Shema* 1:2, he reads those texts through a blend of neo-Kantian and traditional rabbinic lenses. I would suggest, then, that we should view the Rav's conception of the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven not so much as a faithful interpretation of Maimonides' own view of the matter, but rather as a creative reinterpretation and development of the Maimonidean position.

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I have been able to focus only on a few selected elements of the rich teaching to be found in *Worship of the Heart*. I have not, for example, discussed the Rav's incisive analysis in chapter four of the book of the concept of the aesthetic or his profound observations in chapter eight of the work regarding the blessing of *yotzer 'or*. And in my remarks about the Rav's concept of prayer I was not able to take into account the Rav's important essay, "Reflections on the *Amidah*." But I trust that what I have discussed has served to underscore the work's exceptional importance.

## II

And now—alas—I must turn to an unpleasant task. In a review of the first volume of the *Me-Otzar HoRav Series, Family Redeemed*, edited by Professor Shatz and Dr. Wolowelsky, I took note of the difficulties involved in transcribing, editing, and preparing for publication the manuscripts of the Rav which formed the base of the essays comprising that volume. Despite some minor textual corrections I put forward and some queries I raised regarding certain larger policy decisions of the editors, I commended them for carrying out a difficult and thankless task in a professional and exemplary



fashion.<sup>42</sup> It is with a heavy heart that I have to say that I cannot do the same for Rabbi Carmy's editing of *Worship of the Heart*. The first two parts of this volume are rife with errors of transcription, many of them extremely serious. In addition, there are a goodly number of dubious and problematic editorial decisions, both of commission and omission.

Let me begin with the textual errors. Here I wish to emphasize that I have not seen the two series of notebooks that form the base of the first two parts of *Worship of the Heart*. I have thus limited myself here to examples where I am certain or almost certain, based on sense, context, or parallel passages (oftentimes all three), that the text contains errors of transcription and where I feel confident in offering the correct reading. There are many other places in the text where I suspect the presence of errors of transcription, but either I am not certain that the text is incorrect or even if I am certain that it is incorrect I have no alternative reading to offer.

By far the most egregious error of transcription is to be found on p. 141, lines 11-12. There we read, "The bodily functions should cease to be merely diabolic processes, biological tensions and relaxations, moving viciously towards the inevitable exhaustion and destruction of the organism." Readers familiar with the Rav's writings might rightfully be taken aback by his apparent adoption of a gnostic view of the body and its processes. Moreover, they might wonder, if the bodily functions are indeed diabolic processes moving in a vicious fashion—whatever that might mean—how can the Rav go on to say that these functions should "become filled with ontic worthiness and relevance"? Finally, they might query, how in the world can diabolic processes be described as "*merely* diabolic"?! Of course, what we have here are two simple errors of transcription, which, alas, completely distort what was a very elegant and physiologically precise statement on the part of the Rav. (As the Rav often remarked, halakhic men, among other things, need to possess a good knowledge of physiology.) The text should read, "The bodily functions should cease to be merely diastolic (!) processes, biological

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<sup>42</sup> Lawrence Kaplan, "Soloveitchik on Family Relationships," *Judaism* 50:4 (2001): 491-499.

tensions and relaxations, moving viscosly (!) towards the inevitable exhaustion and destruction of the organism.”<sup>43</sup>

Equally serious errors, if not quite as spectacular, are to be found on p. 119, where three times (lines 12, 18, 33) the text reads “biological” when it should clearly read “axiological”(!), thereby completely reversing and making nonsense of the Rav’s meaning.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, on p. 141, line 1, we find the opposite error, and the text reads “axiological” when it should clearly read “biological.”

I will just list, without further comment, the other errors of transcription I have discovered. Readers who will check the passages cited will readily verify the accuracy of my assertions and the seriousness of the errors involved.

P.3, line 6: Change “blind to “bold” (cf. p. 3, line 11 and p. 80, line14); p. 57, line 13: Change “light” to “right” (cf. p. 60, line 25); p. 77, line 17: Change “wondrousness” to “woefulness;” p. 80, line 17: Change “intimately” to “intimidating;” p. 81, line 25: Change “avowing” to “allowing;” p. 84, line 20: Change “maintained” to “not maintained” or “rejected”(!); p. 84, line 30: Change “*majestas Dei*” to “*caritas Dei*;” p.120, line 6: Change “night” to “right;” p. 127, line 26: Change “extentia” to “existentia” (cf. p. 134, line 31); p. 135, line 30: Change “afforded to” to “referred to” (cf. p. 136, line 27).

Compounding the errors of transcription, there are, as I noted, a goodly number of editorial “sins,” both of commission and omission. To start with the “sins” of commission: One perhaps minor but nevertheless disconcerting error, arising from an unfortunate attempt at an editorial “clarification,” occurs at the very beginning of the book. On p. 6 the Rav cites an exchange between the king of the Khazars and the *haver* from Judah ha-Levi’s *Kuzari* 4: 4-5. On the next page we read of man’s “despair over the emptiness and absurdity of existence which he, together with the wise king of the Kuzari, recognizes as the vanity of all things.” Readers may wonder where in the *Kuzari* is the king of the Khazars depicted as wise and where in that work does he speak of “the emptiness and absurdity of existence ... and the vanity of all things.” The answer is

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<sup>43</sup> Note the Rav’s precise physiological description of the act of eating in “The Symbolism of Matzah,” *Festival of Freedom: Essays on Pesah and the Haggadah* (Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav, 2005), p. 57.

<sup>44</sup> In line 33, change “not biological” to “axiological.”

clear. The Rav originally wrote of man's "despair over the emptiness and absurdity of existence which he, together with the wise king, recognizes as the vanity of all things," and was, of course, was referring to King Solomon (!), the wisest of all kings and the author of *Koheleth*, who at the beginning of that work exclaims "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Someone, perhaps one of the copy editors—I find it impossible to imagine that it was Rabbi Carmy himself, though as the editor he must, of course, accept ultimate responsibility—decided to clarify the Rav's reference to "the wise king" and, noting the reference to the Khazar king on the previous page, inserted the words "of the Kuzari" into the text.

This editorial insertion, while embarrassing, is perhaps not that serious. More troubling is the clumsy and obtrusive editorial stitching. As mentioned earlier, Rabbi Carmy explains at some length in his Introduction that *Worship of the Heart* consists of three independent parts. It is difficult therefore to understand why in the body of the text there are all sorts of editorial insertions that seek—unsuccessfully—to disguise this fact and to give the work as a whole the appearance of a unified monograph.

Thus, the book begins with a prologue by the Rav, where we read, "When I speak about the philosophy of prayer or *Shema*, I do not claim universal validity for my conclusions" (p. 2). However, the text continues "I am not lecturing on philosophy of prayer as such, but on prayer as understood, experienced, and enjoyed by the individual." (This sentence is repeated almost verbatim in the following paragraph.) Here there is no mention of *Shema*. It is clear that this prologue served just as an introduction to the section on prayer, and the phrase "or *Shema*" was added to make it look as if the prologue was a prologue to the entire book.

Worse, is the transition between the first part of the book on prayer and the second part on the *Shema*. At the end of chapter 5, "The Absence of God and the Community of Prayer," we read: "To understand how prayer enables man to establish communion with God requires us to analyze the religious-liturgical elements of our principal texts. The next four chapters will examine some of the texts pertaining to the *Shema*, the acceptance of the yoke of Heaven. We shall then return to an analysis of the text of the *Amidah*" (p. 86). This makes no sense. The *Shema* is not a prayer, but acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven and the yoke of the commandments. Why should the book leave the discussion of

petitional prayer and take up the *Shema*, only to return at the work's end to the petitional prayer contained in the *Amidah*? Of course, the order was determined not by any internal logical but by purely external editorial considerations, by the fact that the Rav's notebooks on prayer end abruptly, and that the editor decided, for perfectly valid reasons, that it would make sense that those notebooks be followed by the notebooks on the *Shema*, and only then by "Reflections on the *Amidah*," which is a very different type of work, being, as we noted before, a translation of a Hebrew essay of the Rav published in 1978. So why does the editor seek to paper over all of this, particularly since in the Introduction he has provided us with all the editorial information necessary to reconstruct his true and again perfectly justifiable motivations for the order he adopted? What we have before us, then, is a rather transparent attempt to create an illusory unity where no real unity exists.

Finally, and even worse, is the interpolated transition between chapter 3, "The Human Condition and Prayer," and Chapter 4, "Exaltation of God and Redeeming the Aesthetic." At the conclusion of Chapter 3 we read: "The next chapter examines the way in which Judaism attempts to redeem the aesthetic experience. This analysis will elucidate the manner in which the depth crisis precipitated by the despair of the aesthetic contributes to the need awareness that is vital for petitionary prayer. It will also lead us to the other essential components in prayer—thanksgiving and praise" (p. 50). This is simply incorrect. An examination of the Rav's argument reveals that "the depth crisis precipitated by the despair of the aesthetic" does *not* "contribute to the need awareness that is vital for petitionary prayer," but leads directly to thanksgiving and praise. In order to explain what led the editor could commit such an error, we must turn to an examination of the editorial "sins" of omission.

At the heart of these "sins" is the fact that not only is *Worship of the Heart* not a unified work, but the first part on prayer (chapters 1-5), based as it is on a series of notebooks, has many loose ends and is incomplete, concluding, as I noted before, abruptly. The editor either in his Introduction or in footnotes at the appropriate places ought to have alerted the reader to the following lacunae present in the work, but signally failed to do so.

First, the Rav in Chapter 2 discusses the famous debate between Maimonides and Nahmanides regarding the obligatory nature of prayer. He contends that

The controversy does not revolve around the conjunction of prayer and *tzarab* (crisis.) Both are in agreement that *tzarab* underlies prayer. They differ however about the substance of the experience of *tzarab* itself.... One may speak of two distinct and incommensurate *tzarab* conceptions...: First, the experience of surface *tzarab*...; and second, the experience of depth *tzarab*... (p. 30)

The Rav then proceeds to analyze at great length and with great subtlety and acuteness these two conceptions of *tzarab* and the differences between them. However, he never returns to conclude his argument, though the conclusion is obvious, namely, that for Nahmanides only the intermittent experience of surface *tzarab* gives rise to the obligation to pray, while for Maimonides it is the everyday experience of depth *tzarab* which obligates one to pray. It should be noted that this point is explicitly spelled out by Rabbi Abraham Besdin in his reconstruction of a lecture of the Rav on prayer in his book *Reflections of the Rav*.<sup>45</sup> Either the editor should have filled in the final missing step of the argument in the chapter itself or he should have presented the argument in full in the Introduction.

Second, in Chapter 4 (pp. 54-55) the Rav argues that there are two categories which link the aesthetic experience and the religious experience: the exalted and the heroic. "Through these two forms of feeling a possibility is presented whereby to raise the aesthetic to the plane of the transcendental." He then goes on to say "Let us here consider the category of the exalted" (p. 55). But nowhere later on in the discussion does the Rav return to discuss the category of the

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<sup>45</sup> "Prayer as Dialogue," in Abraham Besdin, *Reflections of the Rav*, Volume One (Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav, 1993), pp. 79-82. For a cogent critique of the Rav's claim that for Maimonides it is the everyday experience of depth *tzarab* which obligates one to pray, see David Hartman, *A Living Covenant* (New York and London: MacMillan, 1985), p. 321, note 16. To carry Professor Hartman's critique one step further, the very fact that for Maimonides prayer is a form of *avodah*, service, rules out the possibility that its obligatory nature derives from the everyday experience of depth *tzarab*. In this respect, contra the Rav (*Worship*, p. 29), the commandment to pray must be fundamentally *distinguished* from the commandment "to cry out and blow the trumpets ...whenever trouble befalls the community" (*Hilkehot Ta'anit* 1:1).

heroic. Either the editor should have excised this reference to the heroic or, perhaps better, he should have indicated in a footnote that the Rav does not discuss the category of the heroic in these chapters, but that a full discussion of that category can be found in the well known essay of the Rav, “Catharsis.”<sup>46</sup>

Finally, and most important. The central argument of the Rav in the first part of the book is a two-fold one: a) that the core of prayer is petition and not praise or thanksgiving; and b) that prayer as petition arises out of universal depth crises, common to all men. The Rav, however, then proceeds to discuss the depth crisis of boredom, precipitated by the despair of the aesthetic. But, as we have seen, an examination of the Rav’s argument indicates that this depth crisis leads directly to thanksgiving and praise, and, contrary to the editor’s interpolated transition, does *not* “contribute to the need awareness that is vital for petitionary prayer.” Only in Chapter 5, at the very end of the first part (pp. 78-83), does the Rav turn to another type of human depth crisis, that of loneliness. It would appear that the Rav intended to show how this type of depth crisis leads to petitionary prayer, but the chapter, and with it the first part, ends abruptly before the Rav can make that argument. The first part of the book on prayer, then, is a fragment. The editor should have spelled this out in full. Instead, to return to my earlier point, it seems he interpolated the comment that “the depth crisis precipitated by the despair of the aesthetic contributes to the need awareness that is vital for petitionary prayer” precisely in an attempt to conceal the incomplete nature of the argument.

More generally, the first two parts of *Worship of the Heart* (chapters 1-9) have not undergone the careful editing and polishing necessary to transform the two series of notebooks that form their base into a publishable work worthy of the Rav. I do not wish to try the patience of the readers any further and therefore shall omit examples. Suffice it to say that on page after page I noted awkward locutions, sentence fragments, quotations not identified as such,<sup>47</sup> unnecessary repetitions, misplaced sentences, inaccurate or unclear references,<sup>48</sup> inconsistent transliterations, and the like. One expects

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<sup>46</sup> “Catharsis,” *Tradition* 17:2 (1978): 38-54.

<sup>47</sup> See below, note 52.

<sup>48</sup> See above, note 18.

this in a manuscript not readied for publication, certainly in a manuscript consisting of a series of notebooks intended to serve as a basis for a lecture course, and I am sure that there were originally many more such rough spots and that the editor and his staff caught and corrected most of them. But they did not do their job thoroughly.

Again, I am sorry to have to say all this. Rabbi Carmy is well known—and justifiably so—as a devoted student of the Rav, who in his own essays on the Rav has written learnedly, sensitively, and insightfully about the thought of his Rebbe. But here he has fallen short of the mark.

I am happy to be able to end this section on a more positive note. As stated at the beginning of this review essay, the third part of *Worship of the Heart*, “Reflections on the *Amidah*,” consists of a translation of a Hebrew essay of the Rav, “Ra’ayonot ‘al ha-Tefillah.” I am pleased to say that the translation, carried out by Rabbi Carmy and reviewed by Professor Shatz, is, despite some minor errors and imprecisions<sup>49</sup> and a few typos,<sup>50</sup> both elegant and accurate and succeeds in capturing the Rav’s unique style and voice.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> P. 144, line 9: Change “that they be made explicit,” to “that He bring them out into the wide expanses;” p. 146, lines 30-32: Change “Antithetical dynamic experiences which seek to erupt and reveal themselves must be integrated into the external...”, to “It commands that an individual integrate within himself antithetical dynamic experiences which seek to erupt and reveal themselves in the external...”; p. 147, line 16: Change “his religious song” to “his heartfelt religious song;” p. 148, lines 6-7: Change “monotonous uniformity” to “monotonic continuity;” p. 153, line 11: Change “an assured love” to “a love replete with trust;” p. 158, line 11: Change “The dynamic and the beautiful of are not” to “The dynamic and the cosmically beautiful of themselves are not;” p. 158, line 29, after “(*Megillah* 18a):” There is a quote missing. “For He is greatly exalted above all the hymns; and no matter how much I praise Him, there is more in Him [to be praised]” (Rashi on Exod. 15:2); p. 162, lines 32-33: Change “God will not tolerate the arrogant man. Man who has become alienated from” to “God will not acquit the arrogant man. Man who has become detached from;” p. 169, line 34: Change “the enormous impulse” to “the overwhelming impulse;” p. 173, line 1: Change “the demolition” to “the liquidation;” p. 173, line 5: Change “celebratory” to “hymnic;” p. 174, line 24: Change “confronted” to “entreated;” p. 175,

In sum, I trust that if a second edition of *Worship of the Heart* appears, the first two parts of the work will be thoroughly revised along the lines I have just indicated, while the third part will incorporate the minor corrections I have suggested in notes 49 and 50.<sup>52</sup> Only in this way will we have an edition of the work that will do

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line 2: Change “tormented” to “oppressed;” p. 178, line 18: There is a phrase missing. Change “he offers up lambs of fire” to “he offers up the souls of the righteous; and some say he offers up lambs of fire;” p. 180, lines 10-11: Change “lift his eyes to God’s mercy and providence” to “lift his eyes to God that He have mercy upon him and take note of him;” p. 180, line 13: Change “in distress” to “in the straits;” p. 181, line 20: Change “delightful” to “delicate;” p. 181, line 22: Change “cleansing himself before” to “clinging to.” I have other, very slight corrections and suggestions for improvement, but these must suffice for the while. I wish to emphasize that while my list of corrections is fairly extensive, the corrections themselves are mostly minor. This list, then, ought not, in any way, be perceived as calling into question the generally very fine quality of the translation.


<sup>50</sup> One rather spectacular typo may be found on p. 170, line 2: Change “infested” to “invested.” Other typos are: p. 145, line 25: Change “Diety” to “Deity” (Of course, in current North American culture this typo might not be so far off the mark); p. 153, line 14: Change “borne” to “born;” p. 181, line 31: Change “word” to “world.”

<sup>51</sup> The editor, however, ought to have noted in the Introduction that “Reflections on the *Amidah*” was originally published in *Hadarom* together with the Rav’s major Hebrew monograph, “U-Vikashtem mi-Sham,” and that the former was intended to be a companion piece to the latter. Indeed, in private conversation the Rav once referred to it as “‘Ra’ayonot al ha-Tefillah’ in light of ‘U-Vikashtem mi-Sham.’” I believe that this should affect the way we ought to interpret this essay, but cannot enter into this matter here.

<sup>52</sup> A Hebrew translation of *Worship of the Heart* has recently appeared: *Avodah she-be-Lev* (Alon Shevut, 2006), translated by the distinguished scholar of Midrash and Targum Studies, Professor Avigdor Shinan. I am sorry to say that the translation reproduces practically all of the many weaknesses in the original English edition that I have pointed out. With regard to the serious errors of transcription that I noted, Professor Shinan catches exactly one. On p. 127, line 6 of the Hebrew translation (= p. 127, line 26 of the English) he corrects “extentia” to read “existentia.” It would appear that in some instances he was aware of problems with the text, but it apparently never occurred to him that



they might be owing to errors of transcription. For example, on p. 27, lines 4-5 (= p. 3, line 6 of the English) he translates “our blind intent” as “kavanatenu ha-kemusah,” which of course means “our hidden intent,” not “our blind intent.” As I noted, the text should be corrected to read “our bold attempt” and should be translated as “kavanatenu hanoezet.” It is particularly surprising and distressing that Professor Shinan did not catch the editorial error of “commission” on p. 7, changing “the wise king” to “the wise king of the Kuzari,” since he caught the allusion to Koheleth and correctly translates “which he... recognizes as the vanity of all things” as “asher ... hu makir behiyoto ha-haveil she-behavalim.” In certain respects his translation compounds the errors in the English edition. It might be relatively easy, say, for the English reader to realize on p. 141, lines 11-12, that “merely diabolic processes,” should be changed to read “merely diastolic processes,” and “moving viciously” to “moving viscously.” But what is the Hebrew reader to do when confronted on p. 139, lines 5-6 with “tahalikhim sitniyyim”—note how the “merely” has been silently dropped—and with “ha-na'im be-orah akhzari,” which actually means “moving cruelly,” not “moving viciously”—perhaps another example where Professor Shinan felt uncomfortable with the English text in front of him. A particularly striking and unfortunate example of how a slight slip in the English can lead to a major embarrassment in the Hebrew translation can be found on p. 24, lines 10-14 (= p. 42, lines 28-30 of the Hebrew). There the Rav quotes directly from *Hilkebot Teshuvah* 10:6. Unfortunately, in the English edition the quotation marks were omitted, and, furthermore, instead of the text reading “*Hilkebot Teshuvah* 10:6,” it reads “See *Hilkebot Teshuvah* 10:6.” Professor Shinan consequently and rather amazingly did not realize that what we have here is a *direct* quotation from *Hilkebot Teshuvah* in English translation, and, instead of providing us with Maimonides’ Hebrew original, he *re-translated* the English translation back into his own very elegant modern Hebrew! Thus, the Rambam writes: “Davar yadu’a u-barur she-ein ahavat Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu niksheret belibo shel adam ‘ad she-yishgeh bah tamid ka-raui.” In the English edition the passage reads as follows: “It is known with certitude that the love of God does not become clearly knit in a man’s heart until he is continuously and thoroughly obsessed by it.” (This translation closely resembles the English translation of Moses Hyamson, but differs from it in some slight but interesting ways. See Moses Hyamson, *The Book of Knowledge by Maimonides* [Jerusalem: Boys Town, 1965], p. 93a.) Shinan retranslates the English thus: “Yadu’a hetev, ki ahavat Ha-Shem einah nikva`at be-

justice to its exceptional importance in particular and to the legacy of the Rav in general, goals, I know, shared by Rabbi Carmy and myself—and, indeed, by all students of the Rav’s writings.<sup>53</sup> 

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virur be-libo shel adam kol ‘od she-eino ‘osek bah be-oraḥ obssevisi(!), be-lo hefsek u-be-oraḥ yesodi.” This is simply inexcusable. Regarding the overall level of the Hebrew translation, while I have only spot-checked it, the translation generally seems accurate and reads smoothly and elegantly. However, Professor Shinan’s translation from the English to the Hebrew of the Rav’s philosophical terminology is frequently imprecise and, at times, even inaccurate. Thus, to take a few examples—I will not bother to give page numbers—“being” should be translated as “havayah,” not as “kiyyum;” “the infinite mind” should be translated as “ha-sekheh ha-einsofi” or “ha-de‘ah ha-einsofit,” not as “ha-muskalot ha-einsofiyyot;” self-transcendence should be translated as “hitnase‘ut ‘al-‘atzmit” (the phrase used in *U-Vikashtem mi-Sham*), not as “hit‘alut ‘atzmit;” “leap” should be translated as “kefitzah,” not as “nitur;” “fact and value” should be translated as “uvdah ve-‘erekh,” not as “metizut u-mashma‘ut;” and finally “intellect” should always be translated as “sekhel.” In sum, just as I would hope that a second edition of *Worship of the Heart*, thoroughly revised along the lines I have indicated, will appear in the not-too-distant future, so I would hope that in that same not-too-distant future a second, revised edition of the Hebrew translation, reflecting that revised English edition, will similarly appear. Moreover, that revised translation should be thoroughly reviewed by someone possessing special expertise in medieval Jewish philosophy and in the thought of the Rav, as well as special acquaintance with medieval and modern Hebrew philosophical terminology, say by Professor Shatz, the Series Editor. It is embarrassing for me to have to be so directive, but the Rav deserves no less.

<sup>53</sup> After I had completed this review essay and submitted it for publication, a lengthy review essay by Joshua Amaru of *Worship of the Heart* appeared in *The Torah u-Madda Journal* 13 (2005): 148-176. The essay, “Prayer and the Beauty of God: Rav Soloveitchik on Prayer and Aesthetics,” is a very thorough and thoughtful examination and critique of several of the book’s major themes. Amaru’s essay overlaps only slightly with my own, our two essays primarily complementing each other. Thus Amaru, as the title of his essay indicates, analyzes at length the Rav’s discussion of aesthetics, something I pass over entirely, while I analyze at length the Rav’s understanding of the *Shema* as the acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, something Amaru

passes over entirely. Even our analyses of the Rav's views regarding prayer have different foci. Amaru's focus is more extensive, his concern being the Rav's overall theory of prayer in light of the general theological problematic of prayer, while mine is more intensive, zeroing in laser-like fashion on the Rav's understanding of prayer as worship of the heart. Unlike my essay, Amaru's does not discuss the book's many editorial problems, though in note 15 (pp.173-174) he touches upon what I referred to as the book's third and most important structural problem. Two minor critical observations. First, Amaru in describing the book states, "The first half is an attempt to outline a general philosophy of prayer, while the second half is largely made up of philosophical/theological interpretations of specific prayers, *shema* and its blessings...." (pp. 148-149). And again, in the essay's conclusion, Amaru states that "the second half of the book ... is focused on interpretations of specific prayers" (p. 172). This description of the distinction between the two parts of the book as one of "kellal u-perat" is misleading. For, as we have seen, the Rav sharply differentiates between prayer, which is service of the heart, and the *Shema*, which is the acceptance the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven. Second, Amaru speaks of Kantian influences in *Worship of the Heart*. To be more precise, he ought to speak of neo-Kantian influences, particularly the influence of Hermann Cohen. This would have enabled Amaru to resolve some loose ends. Thus Amaru states that "The Rav elaborates a kind of structural psychology in which human experience can be divided into three parts: the intellectual/cognitive gesture, the ethical gesture, and the aesthetic gesture. This division, while not explicit in Kant, is clearly Kantian in origin" (p. 164). But while not explicit in Kant, this three-fold division is explicit in Cohen's philosophy. Witness the titles of Cohen's three systematic works, corresponding to Kant's three Critiques: *Logic of Pure Cognition*, *Ethics of Pure Will*, *Aesthetics of Pure Feeling*. In general, Amaru's discussion of these three gestures in the Rav's thought would have benefited from some comparison with Cohen. Further, Amaru correctly notes that "In an extended interpretation of Maimonides' account of the sin of Adam, the Rav argues that Adam's sin was precisely the preference for the aesthetic...over the ethical-cognitive...." (p. 167). And in the note appended to this text (note 27, p. 175) Amaru observes that "This is a somewhat unusual reading of the *Guide* 1 :2 in that it claims that ethics are part of the consciousness of Adam before the fall." But, as has often been noted, "this somewhat unusual reading of the *Guide* 1:2," which, incidentally, the Rav puts forward also in "Confrontation" and

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“The Lonely Man of Faith,” is taken straight from Cohen. Indeed, Professor Aviezer Ravitzky (may God send him a speedy and complete recovery) relates that he once asked the Rav in personal conversation why he favored this interpretation of Maimonides’ text, and the Rav’s first response was “This is the way Hermann Cohen explains it.” See “Confrontation,” *Tradition* 6:2 (1964): 9, note 2; “The Lonely Man of Faith,” *Tradition* 7:2 (1965): 15, note \*; and Ravitzky, “Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik on Human Knowledge: Between Maimonidean and Neo-Kantian Philosophy” *Modern Judaism* 6:2 (1986): 174. These slight critical observations, I hasten to add, are not intended in any way to detract from the importance of Amaru’s fine review. I believe that anyone who will read both our essays will receive a very good idea of most—not all!—of the central themes of *Worship of the Heart*. It goes without saying that our essays can be no substitute for the book itself.