

COMMITTEE VII
In Search for Understanding
Among the Monotheistic
Religions

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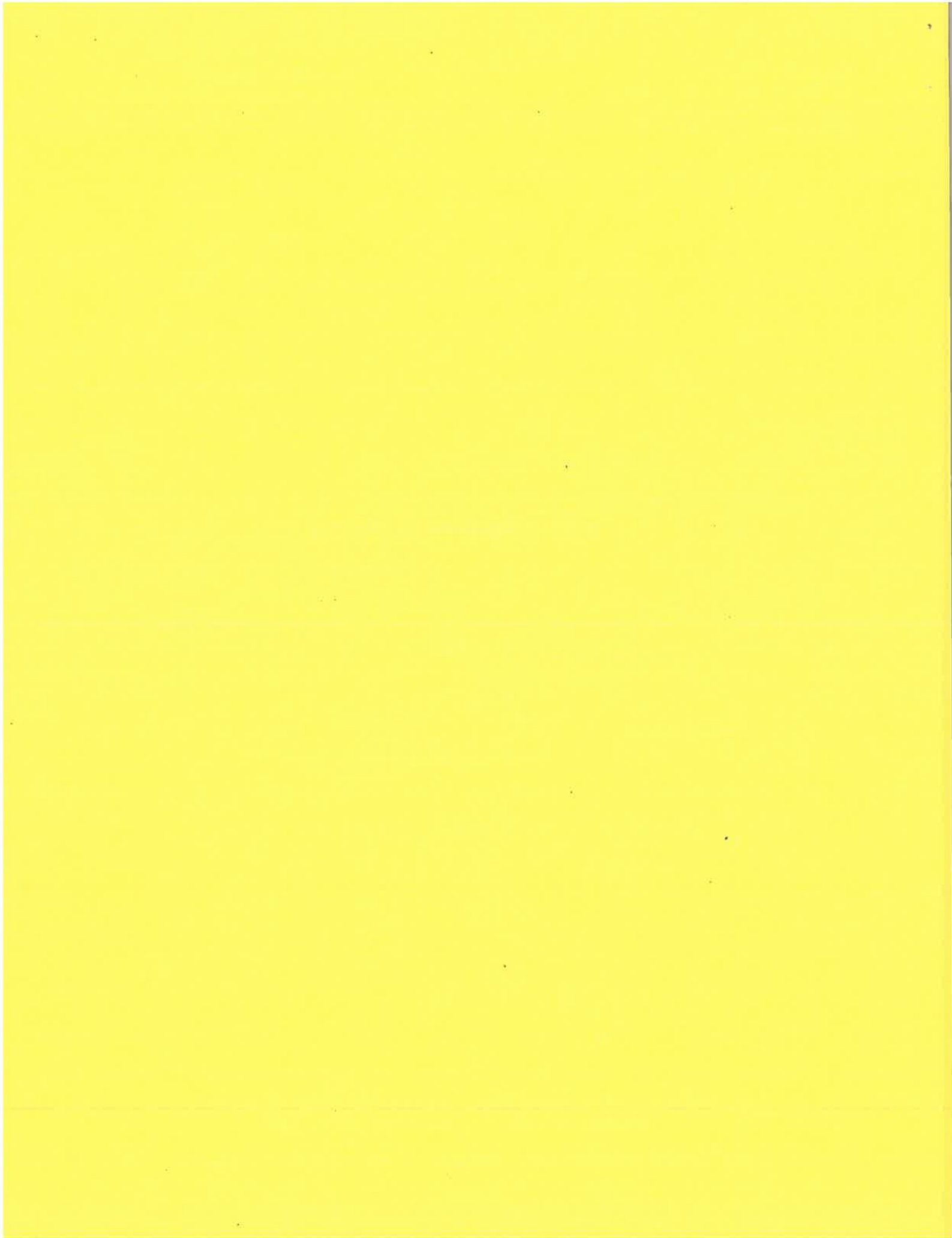
FUNDAMENTALISM IN JUDAISM

by

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Fundamentalism in Judaism

(1) The most important single fact about Judaism is that, although it is a religion, it is primarily municipal law. To put it more exactly, religion is what was left from what was once municipal law. Judaism never lost the traces of it being a territorially valid legal system. The loss of ancient Jewish political independence brought with it a strengthening of those features in the original code that were adaptable to a stateless condition, while aiding the development of some further features that were more typically "religious", including some that would have been entirely impractical had they been attempted as working norms of a functioning municipal system. In this sense, the religious metamorphosis, if that is the right word, of the ancient municipal system of law brought with it a ^{kind of} idealization which, due to a certain ^{the emphasis on the law part} simplemindedness about historical times, but also, perhaps, due to some deliberate mystification, was retrojected into the historical past, as if the norms of later vintage had been actually employed and practised in the historical past of national independence. As Wellhausen well saw it, the concept of theocracy is what was left over from national sovereignty.

These considerations are important because in seeking the special features of fundamentalism within the context of Judaism, it must never ^{be} ~~be~~ ^{lost} ~~lost~~ of sight that we are dealing with a system that is primarily norm-oriented, and only in a secondary degree concerned with beliefs and their authenticity, characteristics which more or less define ^{the} fundamentalism as such. Thus, Judaistic fundamentalism, we might as well state the main thesis of this paper at once, is a fundamentalism of norms and not of beliefs.

Much has been made in the last century of this characteristic of Judaism, mainly by proponents of apologetics of Judaism. Thus Martin Buber made much of the non-dogmatic character of the Jewish religion and, more recently, Walter Kaufmann extolled the virtues of a religion which could be so lax, almost humorous about matters of faith. What is common to all these apologists is that they regarded it as self-understood that the behavioural norms of Judaism have no binding validity. Thus cleansed of its essence, viz. strict normality, Judaism could indeed appear as a religion which compares rather well with those that make much of the exact wording of the "only true" belief.

(1.1) Judaism begins, ^{according to tradition} ~~to follow~~ legend, at Mount Sinai. The occasion is often referred to as "revelation" but this might be somewhat misleading. The word suggests the disclosure of some truth, while the text is clear enough that what was disclosed there ^{was} the command that was ^{to} be followed in the future. Jewish tradition treats the occasion, primarily as one at which the commanding authority of Moses was established, rather than where the ten commandments were spoken. This is, again, an all-important consideration, for the later developments in the Judaic normative system always mark the word of Moses to use a ^{notion} made seminal by Kelsen as the "basic norm."

The ten commandments ^{at Mount} enunciated at Sinai have no special status in Judaism; they are binding because they are part of the Torah. While the Torah itself is always understood as the Torah of Moses. The MIDRASH, of which more will be said later, has some rather revealing tales to tell about Sinai. The import of these is that the Hebrews wandering in the desert were somehow forced and compelled to accept the Law of God, and that they were not altogether

free agents when they became party to the Covenant. The psychological truth behind all this is the fact well-knownⁿ to all, that no law can be said to exist, ^{to be} valid, without it being efficacious, ^(meaning enforced) enforced; and people normally do not take kindly to being forced. The text of EXODUS chapters 19 and 20, ^{leaves} very little doubt that the occasion was managed with no little skill, whether divine or human, and that those who stood there under that mountain must have been terrified out of their wits. All the same, the authority of Moses was established and all else follows from this fact.

The TORAH, already mentioned in passing, is thus a concept with a range of interrelated meanings. Literally it means Law or Instruction, but it also refers to the Pentateuch, the Five Books whose authorship is attributed to Moses. In a wider sense all valid norms are norms of the Torah. As the author of the SHULCHAN ARUCH, the authoritative code of Jewish law, observes, even "the custom of our fathers is Torah". More specifically, Torah is said to be of two kinds. The written Torah, the (just mentioned) Five Books, and the Oral Torah, said to comprise the oral tradition that went with the written one by way of interpretation and explanation. The uninitiated might well think that there is a ~~grading~~ ^{by} value here in favour of the written Torah. After all, it could be said, that the Oral Torah is "only" interpretation. Nothing could be further from the truth, and this circumstance too is something we must never let out of sight. Judaism holds that both written and oral Torah are of equal importance. Yet, it is immediately added, that although they are of equal status, yet the Oral Torah has an inescapable logical priority over the written one. For

it ^{is} only through the testimony of the Oral Torah, the truthful testimony of the ancestors transmitted through the ages, that it is possible to know that the Written Torah is indeed the ^{written} ~~word~~ of God. This is a fine point in itself and, also, it goes a long way to answer ill-informed criticisms about the so-called text-worship in Judaism.

Having thus established the centrality of Oral Torah, the road was opened to the development of Judaism qua legal system. In what follows a rather sketchy description of this system will be essayed.

(1.2) The Oral Torah originally was just that: a set of verbally transmitted rulings, interpretations and folk-tales. It needs no detailed argument, only a reminder of the frailty of human memory, to be quite certain that the Oral Torah must have been a rather fluid affair. We all remember things slightly differently from what we have been told. When the things to be remembered are norms, this actually ^{be} comes quite useful. Not having a text slavishly to follow, or, more accurately, having a ^{written} sacred text ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~maining~~ ^{meaning} of which is to be interpreted only in the light of Oral Tradition, entailed a very large measure of freedom in interpretation and in what follows from this, ^{with} ~~the~~ adaptability to changed conditions. When it was felt that the oral tradition has grown to a volume to be not only unmanageable but also beyond the normal capacity for recall, it ^{was} ~~has been~~ codified, under the name of MISHNA about 200 A.D. by R. Yehuda the Prince. It is noteworthy that this collection, divided into Tractates according to subject matter, and to specific rulings within the Tractates, already records more than one opinion. It is quite common for a Mishna (i.e. specific ruling) to have the form "This and this must be done in this way, but Rabbi So and So says differently."

Once the MISHNAH collection was ^{completed} it became the focus of further ^{centuries} of interpretative effort. After another ^{three} 300 hundred years, these debates have been edited and committed to writing, (again subject to the vagaries of memory) under the name of GEMARAH. In the strict sense, MISHNAH and GEMARAH jointly form the TALMUD. But even this is not quite exact, for ~~if, for example, a present-day interpretation~~ ^{is referred to, it too} will be included under the general labels of Oral Law or Talmud.

In general, it is the most distinctive consequence of the antecedents ~~recorded here~~ ^{recorded here} that thinking along the lines of the Oral law qua exposition of the sacred text, is to be committed to a form of case law. The technical name for the legal system that emerged from these sources ^{is} halakha, derived from the Hebrew verb for "going", the idea being that halakha is the normative system that teaches one the right way to go through life. It is a system of extraordinary complexity and detail, and its practice an intellectual pursuit of many ^{varieties} ~~subtleties~~. It is an axiom of the game that the MISHNA cannot be contradicted by a GEMARAH, and that neither can be contradicted, only interpreted, by later scholars. There is further an unwritten pecking order by which practitioners know whom they can dispute with and with whom not. A current halakhic ruling always takes the form of invoking past authorities, from the Talmud and its interpreters right up to the time of ^{the} person who is called upon to make the ruling. Inevitably, if someone is disputing a ruling, he will proceed exactly in the same way, marshalling authorities to support his view of the matter. In all this there is the self-understood assumption that all these debates are really approximations of the true word of the Torah, and that, therefore, the dispute really clarifies

what the true will of God really is. ("הַלָּכָה הַיְשָׁרָה")

It follows from all this that fundamentalism, if it is to be accorded any meaning within the context of Judaism, cannot mean anything but the continuing search, perhaps with added vigor, for the "true" or "real" halakha on this or that matter.

(2) So far I have emphasized the normative defining characteristics of Judaism. It would be a mistake, however, to infer that it has no ideological or, more narrowly, theological aspects. Only it must be kept in mind that these aspects are all parts of the normative system. The point has been made with clarity by Joseph Flavius, ^(c. 100 - c. 100 C.E.) in his Against Apion, where he explains what is meant by the terms "theocracy", which he is coining in that work. It means, he explains, that everything is made "part of religion" and not, for example, as with the Greeks and Romans, religion being made part of statecraft. This has rather interesting consequences.

If everything is part of religion, that is, of ^a normative system directed at regulating behaviour, then holding the right view, adhering to true beliefs, is also a matter of normative commitment. There is a duty to have the right beliefs. But here arises a snag, or better, two snags of unequal weight. One is the identification of the right beliefs and the other is determining whether someone, in fact, adheres to them. The famed non-dogmatic character of Judaism referred to above comes from the fact that the right beliefs have never been, to this day, uncontroversially codified. Of course, there are various codifications, those of Maimonides or ^{or,} say, Salomon Schechter, but none of these, or any other, has ever been universally accepted.

Just to give one example, it is ²obvious that on any list of correct and binding ^{Jewish} Judaistic beliefs there must be, right at the place of honour, the belief in the One God. But, here again, we have the authority of the great Maimonides, that the understanding of this belief is extremely difficult, for its meaning is, to say the least, rather obscure. Irrespective of the philosophical merits of Maimonides' doctrine of negative attributes, it is plain sense that the doctrine is not what it means simpliciter, ^{viz.} that God exists and that He is such-and-such. Or, ^{as} a glance at the JEWISH THEOLOGY by Kohler, is sufficient to show, ~~that~~ it is not easy to formulate the true belief, even with respect to the first article, ^{of fact namely} that there ^{is} a God at all. This is why Talmudic tradition thought it best to ^{embrace} leave well alone, and not ^{to} worry too much about formulations of theological dogma.

From reluctance to ^{make a} theological commitment follows the way out of the second predicament. How to recognize the person who holds the right beliefs, or, what is institutionally more important, how to identify those who do not. ²Well, the answer here was ready at hand. It was assumed that the test is the performance of the visible duties. He who performs them is deemed, without further ado, to hold the right views, and, of course, ~~conversely~~ ^{the opposite} for the "wrong types". Thus the "heretic" in Judaism is not, as the plain meaning of the word suggests, someone who is "choosing" his beliefs, but someone who "throws off the yoke of the Torah", i.e., fails to perform. With all the emphasis laid upon the development of character, and the framing of good intentions, Judaism is, with regard to belief, rather Hobbesian. It does not inquire what goes in the heart of man, in foro interno. Maimonides goes

as far as to say that belief in God ~~just is~~, it is nothing else but the performance of His Commands. And, of course, what these commands are is to be found out by way of the Torah sketched above.

(2.1) It follows from all this that there is a large measure of compatibility between rigour in demanding behavioural conformity and dogmatic laxity. Theology as a systematic study is, on the whole, alien to Judaism, and such theological speculations as were inevitable in a conceptual scheme which rests upon a commanding God, went into the creation of the MIDRASH, a compilation of great beauty and bewildering complexity. Typically, the Midrash takes a verse from Scripture and then expounds upon it by telling stories, comparing it with other ^{passage} places in Holy Writ, etc. We mentioned earlier the events ^{at} under Mount Sinai. The Midrash will have, on such ^a matter, lengthy records of conversations between God and Moses both before and after the event. ~~Now~~ the point of these Midrashim is that they must neither be denied nor taken too literally. Some one, who upon reading the record of such a "conversation", were to ask, "but did it all really happen this way?" would be testifying about himself that he did not yet enter into the spirit of the Midrash. In this sense, the Midrash offers a non-committal theological playground where no one is ever hurt. It is the height of bad taste to make ^{the} point ^{that is} of it all phantasy, and the height of stupidity to believe it all ^{literally.} Between these extremes, the Midrash instructs with its rich insights, not ⁱⁿ the least because it has varying, often conflicting, stories on the same verse, suggesting by all this that theology is not a science but something nearer to the sensitive centers of the personality ^{where poetry resides.} It was this Midrashic feature of Judaism, already much evident in the

story-telling parts of the Talmud, that captured the imagination of Walter Kaufmann, when he extolled the virtues of Judaism in his Philosophy and the Critique of Religion.

Thus ~~it~~ was made possible that for many generations adherents of Judaism should be scrupulously fulfilling the behavioural demands of their religion, ^{studying} and discussing the intricacies of their law, while at the same time giving free rein to their imagination about the unknown by following the charms of Midrash.
 somehow To adopt a phrase by the Irish writer Honor Tracy, "somehow ~~more~~ ^{more} ~~between~~ ^{between} truth and falsity, not committed to the one in any precise formulation, ~~and~~ not tempting the other.

(3) The practical issue of such an approach is at once confusing and fascinating. It is especially confusing for those not familiar with the system and, I suppose, ^{the latter} are also most likely to be fascinated by the fact that it works so well. It would be natural to expect a system, such as I have been sketching, to be rather hierarchical. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is not merely that there is no Jewish Pope to whom obedience is due by all, but actually there is very little by way of hierarchical obedience. Rabbis are qualifying and certifying each other and each of them is competent in his own community. As for his standing outside the community, it all depends on the reputation he establishes for himself. Being aware of the constraints of reputation, each and every practitioner of rulings will be wary to issue a ruling which might be rejected by others, especially if they are likely to bring him into disrepute. These circumstances came about as a consequence of ^{the} Diaspora and the strains of commu-

nication. However, ^{and} ^{is} again a point of supreme importance, there is actually very little, if any, by way of material constraint upon what a properly qualified and authoritative practitioner might rule. There are various methods of doing the unusual, among which perhaps the most handy is the device of "danger to life". The meaning of this device is that if there is actual danger to life, then, with a few mostly insignificant exceptions, every rule of the Torah, including prohibitions which may be thought central, can be set aside. The saying of Jesus in the Gospel, ^{that} the Sabbath was given to you and not you to the Sabbath; (as a justification for breaking the day of rest) is not the invention of Jesus, but a quote from rabbinic sources. It remains only to determine that any particular situation is indeed one in which there is *actual* danger to life. Once it has been determined that such danger exists, ~~then~~ ^{for} the road is open the most far-reaching concessions, including even the manifest breaking of the prohibitions of the Written Torah.

The only material question that remains, of course, is who is a qualified judge to make such a ruling. And here is another bewildering aspect of the system. Although it is not hierarchical, yet there is an extraordinary measure of control over who is likely to be accepted as a qualified practitioner for the purpose of making rulings. The person who would be recognized as such a qualified practitioner must pass the muster of his peers. If he does not qualify, ~~then~~ not only will his ruling be ignored but he himself will be disqualified as a competent authority.

These considerations are far from being merely theoretical. Obviously, fundamentalism is to be sought in orthodoxy rather than in

the Reform or Conservative movements. And if we now ask what are the ^{chief} characteristics of this orthodox fundamentalism, ~~then~~ we come upon ^{one that} ~~might be~~ ^{regarded as a defining} feature of orthodox fundamentalism: that only properly recognized orthodox rabbis are qualified practitioners. In other words, it is more important who says what he says, than what it is that he is saying. Authority may be elusive in Judaism, yet it is supremely important.

(3.1) Earlier we found a large measure of elbow-room in matters of belief, as long as this was circumscribed by proper practice. Now we find, analogously, a large measure elbow-room in practice itself, as long as it is constrained by properly recognized authorities. Thus fundamentalism of practice is augmented by a fundamentalism of authorization and mutual recognition.

(3.2) It follows from all this that legitimacy ^{in Judaism} is the sum-total of mutual recognition. A ^{rabbi} recognized by all properly qualified rabbis as an authority, might go very far in audacious rulings. His word may well count ^{over} against the expressissima verba of Scripture. At this point we need to recall some of things said at the beginning of this lecture, about Judaism being historically, and still recognizably, municipal law. For indeed, once a Supreme Court has spoken, ~~never mind what~~, nothing remains to be said within that municipal legal system.

Add to all this what we have noted earlier about the decentralized nature of the system, and we have a first insight into the causes of the circumstance that rabbis are as likely to be motivated by animus regarding the authority of their fellow-practitioner, as about the substance of their rulings. The question of who is

" more fundamental " than the others, ~~readily~~ boils down to the related questions ^{of} who is more authoritative than the others, whose following is wider than that of the others, who commands greater recognition than the others, and so on. Judaism, it can now be readily seen, is at once tolerant (of opinions), pluralistic (~~of~~ local centres) and yet, in the last resort, authoritative, perhaps even in a somewhat diffused sense, autocratic. It should now also be apparent that fundamentalism, in the context of Judaism, can be not merely a descriptive term, characterizing certain views and attitudes, but also a battle-cry in the contest of authorizations. "I am more fundamental than thou", even if never put quite in this way, may still mean something like, ~~this~~: "I am nearer the sources than you, I am better authorized than you, my ruling corresponds to the true intentions of the Torah more closely than yours, ~~for~~ my arguments follow that Torah better than yours, etc.". Claiming authority from the Torah, and being authorities ~~of~~ of the Torah ^{rather} than on the Torah, fundamentalism does not necessarily mean more rigidity, but always better credentials.

(4) Modernity is a challenge to such a view of things. Moral autonomy is not a hallmark of Judaism. Christianity had ~~not a little~~ difficulty with the notions of natural law and conscience, for, on some interpretations, these concepts might well be used as weapons against the authority of the church. The notion of an "informed" conscience, so important for Catholic moral theology, more than solves the problem, highlights it. Judaism, consistently enough, does not avail itself of the idea of a natural law, nor does it grant any authority to private conscience. No system of municipal law can recognize anything more authoritative than itself.

However, Judaism is only the remnant of a municipal law, at any rate outside Israel. This remnant has been trying, in various ways, to accommodate itself to the need to appear, at least to the outside world, as a religion in the secular sense. Indeed, it has been a central argument of Spinoza against the continued validity of Jewish "ceremonial law", that it was, in fact, just municipal law, in his words lex patriae. It is an essential part of this argument that once the patria, ^{v. l. /} sovereignty, disappeared as a consequence of military defeat at the hands of the ^{Romans,} the laws of Judaism themselves have been set aside, just as a conqueror annuls the laws that existed before his conquest.

Rabbinic Judaism avoided Historically speaking this consequence with brilliant success. It survived, camouflaged as religion, right up to the modern age, when, for the first time, it had to take serious note of the challenge of personal freedom, moral autonomy and religious choice. The Reform and Conservative movements of Jews, not to mention lesser initiatives, were designed to meet these challenges. This is not the occasion to discuss them in detail, but that much can be said at the very least that, this far they have failed the tests of legitimacy, as outlined above. Even with the current ascent of orthodox self-assertiveness, the point is clear enough. Neither Reform nor Conservatism can claim, and they have not claimed, that they are more fundamental than the orthodox.

(4.1) That the Reform and Conservative movements have failed to establish their historical-institutional legitimacy, does not detract from their immense significance as religious movements.

Not the least important aspect of these movements is the fact that, by their very existence, ^{as newcomers,} they offered orthodoxy the exalted status of continued legitimacy and, from our ^a present point of view, the status of sole candidate to be regarded as fundamental. The same is true, mutatis mutandis, of the Jewish national movement, Zionism. This movement too claimed to have a formula in terms of which Jews can come to terms with the modern world, especially insofar as it is divided into nation-states.

Orthodoxy opposed Zionism almost as much as it opposed Religious Reform, and, in a sense, Zionism was a ^{more} dangerous enemy. For the national movement claimed to inherit religious orthodoxy, and in that sense it was a more serious competitor. That Zionism ^{it} issued ⁱⁿ the success of establishing the State of Israel, brought with it ^{not a} perhaps the greatest crisis ~~that~~ Judaism has known since the destruction of the cultic centre in Jerusalem, nearly two thousand years ago. Contemporary Jewish fundamentalism is today almost neatly divided by the stand they take to Israel and to Jewish statehood. The current upsurge of Jewish orthodoxy, although perhaps more ~~noisy~~ noisy than statistically real, is also divided by the stance ~~that~~ the various groups constituting it take ~~to~~ Israel.

(5) We can conclude then that Jewish fundamentalism is characterized by its orthodox affiliation, by its normative rigour and, as we just said, by a certain attitude to the State of Israel which each party ^{claims} to derive from the most authentic sources.

Let us consider this last point ~~a little bit~~ more closely. When

the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D., an inevitable crisis ensued. It seemed problematic whether Judaism can continue to exist at all, in the absence of the cult, including animal sacrifices, ~~that went on there~~. It was the merit of the Rabbis that they found a formula by which Judaism became portable, i.e. territorially neutral. It became a religion that ~~can~~ ^{could} be practiced anywhere and at any time. There remained, of course, a fundamental layer of norms that were connected with the Land of Israel, ~~such~~ ^{and} that were applicable and obligatory only there; but, then, this had nothing to say about the question ^{of} whether ^{of} ~~a Jew~~ ^{There was a religious duty for} to live there in the first place. More than that, there evolved a whole ideology of Diaspora existence, ^{whose} ~~the~~ substance ~~of which~~ was that God, in his own good time, ^{will} ~~will~~ send the Messiah to return the exiled to their Land, and until that happens, it ~~is~~ not the will of God that Jews ^{should} attempt to throw off the yoke of the Gentile nations and aim at returning to their ancient land in and by force. This doctrine which has perfectly good Talmudic authority (B.T. KETUBOTH 110b and 111a) has been debated right from its first appearance, at any rate in theory, but since the emergence of Zionism it became a matter of great concern how the doctrine ought to be interpreted ^{and how binding it was at this time}.

Given the rigid normativity of orthodoxy, it was matter of great import whether Zionism was commanded or at least permitted, or, alternatively, forbidden. What orthodoxy could not allow was that it was irrelevant from a religious point of view, a pure matter of personal preference. This ^{current} debate, which echoes the one between Babylonian and Palestinian attachments of ancient times, is ~~one~~ ^{the} that most characterizes ^{present-day} Jewish fundamentalism. Authorities

are readily available to both sides. To mention just one pair of such authorities, There is a well-known, and recently much discussed, controversy between Maimonides and Nachmanides. The latter wrote a critical commentary on the former's compilation of the 613 commandments. (It should be explained that it is agreed by all rabbinic authorities that ⁵³ ~~this~~ is the correct number of Biblical commandments, but they differ about the exact list that is meant.) Nachmanides argues ^d that Maimonides erred when [↓] he omitted from the list of positive commandments [↓] (as contrasted with prohibitions) the duty to take possession of the Land of Israel. (SEFER HAMITZVOTH, Kook Inst. edn, pp. 244-5). It is ~~really~~ a matter of supreme importance how one answers ~~the~~ question; whether it is a religious duty, commanded directly by God, ~~that one ought~~ to make an effort to take possession of the ancestral land or whether it is not a duty, or perhaps it is even forbidden.

In the current idiom, this controversy manifests itself in the bitter feud between the nationalist and anti-nationalist wings of Jewish fundamentalism. It is correct, I submit, to regard both wings (with all their many subclasses) as fundamentalist ^{because} ~~because~~ they have in common a method of argumentation which is radically different from one which lays stress [↓] on present needs or on the implications of human autonomy. This common method of argumentation, the adherence ^{of} of the traditional interpretation of texts in the light of authorities recognized by all, is what makes ^{them} ~~that~~ fundamentalists; both argue that their interpretation is the ^{only} ~~one~~ true to the letter and ^{to the} ~~the~~ spirit of the word of God. In the visible sphere of politics this controversy manifests itself in the acrimony between the mostly American-based Hassidic groups (of which perhaps the most extreme and most vocal is that

of the Satmar group of Hassidim .Needless to say almost all conceivable positions on the scale have found representatives.

The Satmar group originates from Eastern Hungary or Northern Roun^ania, where, in the town of Satmar, their founder, Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum, has been chief rabbi before the Holocaust. Violently anti-Zionist (a normal posture at the time for a Hassidic rabbi), he was saved from Auschwitz by being included in the group of exemptees of Dr.Kasztner, under the fiction that he was going to Palestine.In the event he surfaced in Williamsburg and, being both ^{highly} talented and something of a sole survivor from among the pre-war Hassidic rabbis, he increased his following very impressively. He also succeeded in extending his authority over the anti-Zionist group of Neturei Karta of Jerusalem and thus gained a foothold in the Zionist country. The anti-Zionist fundamentalism of this group is uncompromising. They partake not in the affairs of state, receive no money or services from it and, on the whole, make it ^{very} clear that they regard the Zionist state as a sin against God and ^{also} significantly, that they would prefer Arab rule over the country. In the pursuit of this "aim" they more than once sought and succeeded in establishing contact with Arabs, including the PLO,and it is only the politically conditioned leniency with which they are handled, that prevented one or other of their members from being tried for treason.They are very skilful in using their overseas, chiefly New York, branches and it is this group which is responsible for the occasional demonstration outside Israeli diplomatic offices, where bearded

Hassidim are seen to call Israelis "Nazis".

There are many Hassidic groups just as there are non-Hassidic orthodox groupings which are not Zionist. Among the Hassidim the most significant group is the so-called HABAD, or Lubawitch, sect of Hassidim, under the ingenious leadership of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, another pre-war survivor. This group is not openly anti-Zionist and its leader often pronounces on how to conduct Israeli political affairs. By comparison to the Satmar people, the Lubawitch Hassidim are Israeli "patriots". All the same, Rabbi Schneerson has never set foot in the country and his horizon is the global Jewish people, rather than Israel the state. In a sense, this group is a kind of mission to the Jews, to borrow a somewhat Christian term. They aim at "returning" the Jews to strict observances, everywhere. It is this group which is in large part responsible for the resurgence of orthodoxy in all parts of the world, including the US. This "return" is rather visible due to the addition of external signs of religious commitment, such as the public wearing of skull-caps or, in more extreme cases, the public display of the TZITZIT, the Biblical "four corners". All the same, in the ideology of this group ^{too} observance is the centre of attention, and Israel is seen as ^{but} a function within this context. The Rabbi will sometimes order people to immigrate ^{this} into Israel, but he often forbids ~~it~~ if he thinks that such a step will undermine the habits of observance.

The non-Hassidic groups, some of them known as the Litvians,

on account of their being heirs to the great traditions of the Talmudic academies in ~~that~~ country, are also strictly non-Zionist. From this point of view there is a strange convergence of positions here, as the leaders of these groups sometimes reside in Israel sometimes in the US, while the location makes little difference to their global advocacy of orthodox fundamentalism. Thus, for example, perhaps the most important "Litvanian", Rabbi Eliezer Schach, resides in Israel where he is the most "dovish" of all rabbis. The quasi-Zionist Lubawitch have their centre, as stated, in New York, and many more examples could be given of this geographic neutrality among the non-Zionist.

It is an entirely different matter with the Zionist fundamentalists, chiefly the Gush Emunim group. These group received its ideological impetus from the teaching of a former Chief Rabbi of the country under the British Mandate, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, and ~~this~~ influence has been maintained by his son, ^{the late} Rabbi Zwi Yehuda Kook, who ~~is~~ the spiritual father of the Gush. Members of this group are highly motivated. They take a leading role in settling in the territories gained by Israel in the Six-day war, and, it should be reported, they were also the ideological hotbed of the terrorist organization uncovered by Israeli police, and whose members ~~went~~ ^{were sent} to jail. The Gush people do not go abroad unless it is in the interest of the movement, or for pressing family reasons. They hold to ~~the~~ Nachmanides' interpretation of the commandments and thus consider it a religious duty of the highest order to hasten the advent of the Messiah and the redemption of Israel in its own Land.

Gush Emunim and the non-Zionist or anti-Zionist Hassidim share a burning belief in the absolute rightness of their respective positions and so, not surprisingly, their debates are acrimonious to a degree almost unimaginable between either of these and ^{the} run-of-the-mill secularists. The fundamentalist Hassidim regard the Gush people as barely better than idolaters (their idols being Land and Nation) while the latter see the former as failing in their most elementary religious duties viz. living in the Land of Israel and working toward the reestablishment of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

(5.1) It follows from the foregoing that in the Jewish context there is not, as there cannot be, a special notion of fundamentalism. We have been assuming all along that there was such a phenomenon, but it is readily seen that it is not different from normative orthodoxy. The strict observance of rules of conduct, the learned derivation of these rules and their ever changing applications to new circumstances, are hallmarks of traditional orthodoxy. That different political-religious attitudes can be justified by these methods should not be surprising. For it remains a fact, rather important at that, ^{that} the common ground between the various groups (dietary laws, holidays, ~~the observance~~ of the duty to study ^{the Torah} etc. etc.) is vastly greater than what divides them. Being situated right in the centre of normative orthodoxy, both parties can claim, as they in fact do, that ^{their} stance is the one most faithful to the fundamentum laid by God Himself through the agency of Moses.