

RELIGIOUS ZIONISM

After 40 years of Statehood

Editors

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WHO SPEAKS FOR TORAH—AND HOW?

Shalom Carmy

*R. Elazar said: If a man makes himself like a bracelet that hangs loosely around the neck, sometimes revealed and sometimes concealed, his learning will endure in his possession; if not, his learning will not endure in his possession¹.
It happened that a fire broke out backstage in a theater. The clown came out to inform the public. They thought it was a jest and applauded. He repeated his warning, they shouted even louder...²*

There is always something faintly unnerving about the idea of implanting one's ideas in the mind and heart of another. In our age, however, when so much of the social-cultural atmosphere militates against commitment to Torah, successful communication often seems virtually miraculous. We pray fervently, constantly, that the men and women we love will participate in the understanding, the passion and commitment, to which we aspire. Moreover, as Religious Zionists³ we believe in the desirability of communion with the entire Jewish people. To the extent that religious institutions play an official role in Israeli politics and society, the conversation is, willy nilly, imposed on us. For all these reasons it behooves us to ponder how we choose to communicate the truths of Torah and how our presentation is perceived by others.

I would like to introduce two ideas that may enlighten our attempts to communicate religious truth. I make no claim that consideration of these ideas is sufficient or necessary to alleviate the well-known frustrations and difficulties engendered by our situation. Nor do I suggest that these considerations override specific halakhic and moral principles. I do maintain, however, that failure to think through these matters has made our work much more difficult, and less productive, than it need be.

Revealed Self/Concealed Self

The first is the Kierkegaardian distinction between direct communication and indirect communication. Some truths are com-

municated directly—you assert them simply by stating them: e.g. we have no bananas today.” Franklin Pierce’s Vice President never took the oath of office; smoking causes cancer in rats. Or more to the point: Yom Kippur is the 10th of Tishre; our practice does not subsume rubber sneakers under the prohibition of footwear on that day.

Sometimes, however, direct communication is unlikely to bring the hearer into the proper relationship to the truth. This typically occurs when truth, in order to be apprehended correctly, must be internalized by the learner, affect his or her self-relation and precipitate a moral decision. Examples: there is an omnipotent, benevolent Being and it is your duty to worship and obey Him; at Sinai God spoke His Will for man; if you don’t repent, your life will be devoid of its ultimate value. In order that your interlocutor adopt your belief and guide his or her life in accordance with its truth, you must communicate the truth indirectly, educating a spiritual movement on the part of the hearer that will lead him to discover the truth on his own.

Paradoxically, the indirect communication often reduplicates the speaker’s passion more authentically than direct instruction. To borrow one of Kierkegaard’s examples: the prophet Nathan does not refer the sinful David to a halakhic text assessing his behavior, such as *Kiddushin* 43a,⁴ but instead favors His Majesty with a charming literary anecdote about a poor man’s ewe, arousing the king’s righteous anger so that, when Nathan makes the transition to the subjective and cries out “You are the man!” David condemns himself more wholeheartedly than the prophet ever could.⁵

Our Orthodox world does not do justice to indirect communication. In part, this is due to the very quality of Judaism from which its characteristic moral power derives: namely, that the prophet’s “Thus saith the Lord” and the halakhist’s “This is the law” do not invite reflection, but most often command specific, measurable obedience. Unlike Kierkegaard’s Lutheranism, our obedience to God requires the clarification of many details governing our conduct, and these laws must be formulated objectively: the fabric of our religious practice is external and quantifiable. But in our hearts we know that inwardness is important, even though we don’t feel comfortable talking about it, and distrust it, unless reassured by the proximity of a more tangible piety. We realize that, in order to

speak to others as Nathan did (and to have others thus speak to us), we must divest ourselves, temporarily, of the mantle of the prophet, forget our desire to justify ourselves, and put on the incognito of the poetic storyteller and his ear-lending accomplice. We find this difficult. It is easy, therefore, once we come to understand its vital importance and to prize it, to make a one-sided ideal of indirect communication.

But if you do so, you err in the opposite direction. Neglecting direct communication leads, not only to the certainty of mortal ignorance, which, as we have already noted, is intolerable for halakhic Judaism, but also risks existential bad faith. By not speaking directly, the individual is perceived to be a connoisseur of possible truth rather than a man of truth: his message one to be entertained, not seriously confronted. Weary of impersonation he becomes, at last, a poseur even to himself. Thus the exclusive cultivation of indirect communication is not the mark of the religious teacher, but the mask of the ironist, i.e. the aesthetic, uncommitted individual unwilling to make the leap into the ethical.⁶

Each alternative, then, regarded as the sole highway to the attainment of religious truth, spells catastrophe. Communicate from a purely objective, exclusively informative stance, as if you were sitting for an examination, and, unless you are addressing the already converted, your words are likely to fall on deaf ears; your air of detachment may even turn some away. Present the truth indirectly, like the beneficent spider which weaves its silent web before withdrawing into the shadows and, unless you reach the already initiated, your audience may not know what you’re up to; in any case, your absence from the center of the web will be noted, and veil your words in unreality. In a word, you will not be taken seriously.

Conclusion: the authentic communication of religious truth demands a balance between direct and indirect modes of communication. Direct communication is appropriate for the teaching of material and for the affirming of moral certainties. Indirect communication is important in educating others to think for themselves and where the speaker is indeed unsure of himself, unable to say with assurance: “Thus saith the Lord!”

Conflicting Roles

The second concept I wish you to consider is that of role playing. Sociologists, with their genius for discovering the seemingly obvious, inform us that throughout our lives we wear different hats. Our capacity and mode of communication is often a function of our roles. A moral and social etiquette governs our judgment about the appropriateness of behavior in different situations. A Federal judge cracking corny Yiddish jokes from the bench is doing something very different than the same judge serving the same jokes to his mother-in-law. Other cases may not be so clear cut. One is wise to abstain from advancing politically inflammatory theses on a condolence call, but what about a Shabbat afternoon *shiva*? It may be incongruous to harangue the bank teller about his/her halakhic obligations while calling upon their professional services; is it less so when one accosts them in the street?

The Halakha surely recognizes the need for good judgment in bringing our fellow man closer to God, to speak the word that is heeded and withdraw when the word cannot be heeded? But it requires a great deal of self-knowledge and awareness of social context to apply this principle in practice. Modern man, one may generalize, separates his roles much more sharply than his ancestors. This may be a result of greater social and demographic mobility, the complexity and specialization of modern life, the anonymity of urban existence, or some interaction of these factors and others.⁸ In the matter of Orthodox religious commitment, all this is compounded by the gulf separating the uninitiated from the initiated, the lack of knowledge, the failure of empathy.

We have adduced two principles with implications for the communication of religious truth. Both teach that truth is transmitted in a personal context, not merely by impersonal formulation. Please note, however, a significant difference in the way the two principles are experienced. Direct vs. indirect communication involves a choice of self: to what extent do I wish to reveal/conceal my ultimate concern in the context of the communication? To be sure, my choice of ontological style may depend on the responses anticipated—do they reject the truth, nominally subscribe to it, genuinely assent to it? And I may, in spite of my good intentions, be misunderstood because I cannot truthfully enter into any of the roles available to me. But the choice of how to appear is phenomenologically mine.

Not so with regard to role playing. Here what is phenomenologically immediate is the expectation of the others. It is my responsibility to interpret their perceptions correctly and act accordingly. If I reject the role by which I am defined, I may attempt to transform their perception, but that cannot always be done. The element of role playing thus limits my freedom, even as the act of communication expresses my free choice.⁹

The asymmetry between the two principles means that, despite their large degree of overlap, they offer responses to different kinds of moral questions. Direct/indirect communication is the guiding principle when the question is: How can I induce other selves to become involved with the truth in the appropriate degree of awareness, seriousness and commitment? The conflict of roles is pertinent when I wonder which truths are to be communicated in a particular situation. To engage in direct, unambiguous communication where indirect dialogue is appropriate, or, vice versa, to distance myself from the truth I assert when I should be proclaiming it at the top of my lungs, indicates that I fail to understand the nature of the truth. To think I can act as someone's father, when in fact I am their grocer, or to behave like a professional academician when approached for existential guidance, means that I don't understand my relationship to the other.

But this is all rather abstract. Let's turn to concrete examples. Remember that we are not aiming to resolve all aspects of the issues, but merely to look at them from the perspective of one criterion—communicating existential religious truth. First situations involving institutional religion, most notably the Rabbinate and its authority structure, where the sociological consideration is most prominent. Then the Orthodox Jew as a simple human being, unencumbered by any "official" role, where the questions of religious seriousness, of how to communicate the truth, become paramount.

Rabbinic Authority

One of the most controversial disputes before our community concerns Rabbinic authority. Who should wield this authority, and how should it be employed in areas that are not obviously halakhic?¹⁰

Who is a *Gadol*? Clearly the prerequisites are Torah erudition,

commitment and wisdom, i.e. judgment. One in whom any of these is lacking cannot expect to exercise authority, i.e. to be heeded simply because of who he is. Once we have determined who the *Gadol* is, we may rest assured that he (or they) will judiciously decide how to use Torah authority properly. This specifically includes a proper demarcation between the spheres of technical halakhic competence and general spiritual guidance, the choice of direct intervention vs. indirect influence in various public and private matters, an awareness of how one's involvement affects others.

This seems fine in theory. In truth there is little agreement about the locus of *dat Torah*, even in the so-called "right wing" world. Now if obtaining a centralized Torah authority is essential and urgent, the rational procedure would be to focus our attention on determining who of the possible candidates for leadership is indeed the most worthy—and may the greatest *Gadol* win!

This rational approach is not likely to yield decisive results. Moreover it is sure to reinforce two of the least attractive vices of contemporary Orthodox discourse:

1) The Loud Mouth: People lauding the superiority of their exemplary Rabbi(s) rarely do so knowledgeably. How many of the gentlemen who belittle, supposedly *on grounds of Torah scholarship*, the rank accorded, by their followers, to R. Shach or to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, have actually assessed the respective contributions to that scholarship of the *Avi Ezri* and the *Likkutei Sicho?* Knowledge of Nothing disparagement has a deleterious effect on our intellectual and moral lives and should not be encouraged.

2) Idolatry of the Intellect: The attempt to order, "quantitatively," Rabbinic luminaries, strengthens our inclination to value that which can most readily be inspected from the "outside," as it were. This enhances the cult of intellectual cleverness and analytic brilliance and the downplaying of wisdom, good judgment and their inevitable corollaries—self-criticism and humility. Our community does not need to breed more of this.

In any event, it is folly to anticipate consensus about Rabbinical authority. To claim that such consensus exists cannot fail to make us, and what we stand for, appear foolish too. To continue to make a great deal of this claim points to something worse. Incongruity between the insistence on putative truths that are not fundamental to Torah (i.e. the unique status of "our Rabbis?") and the relative

neglect of more central tenets and practices is comical in the extreme. By inverting the hierarchy of the important and the less important, such a policy appears to reflect a misunderstanding of religious truth in general.

Respect for other Jews' legitimate Rabbinic authorities does not, of course, impose upon us a belief in the inferiority of our own. Our ideological vitality has already been too much sapped by our addiction to aimless self-doubt. Just as important, we have no right to undermine our institutional legitimacy. I mean that insofar as the State of Israel has chosen to accept the Chief Rabbinate as the official Rabbinic body in Israel, we must sustain the authority of that body to adjudicate all questions regarding which the State has need of halakhic decision, independent of our regard for the individuals who happen to occupy particular positions at any specific time.

Rabbinic Interventionism

What should the Rabbi be doing, publicly, outside of his official role? Traditionally, the Rabbi has provided leadership in all areas of religious life. Today we hear criticism of Rabbis who involve themselves in party politics or who take outspoken positions on public matters that deviate from the critic's. At the same time, Rabbis are dismissed as cloistered and timorous men when they steer clear of the dust and heat of public controversy. Considering the importance of communicating the truth, what is the proper balance between intervention and silence?

Now there are those who have argued that it is morally wrong for Rabbis who occupy official government positions to take positions that are not shared by a national consensus. On this view the Rabbi ought to be honored/humored as a kind of benign *Seelsorger*, in reality, he is a salaried civil servant, a cleric in both senses of the word. This is clearly an untenable position for any self-respecting individual. Thus one may well conclude, as Kierkegaard did in his "Attack on Christendom," that to be an apostle of the truth and a hired functionary of an established church is a contradiction in terms. The closest approximation to this radical judgment in recent Jewish history is *marran haRav* Joseph Soloveitchik *shlitza* who declined to be considered for the Chief Rabbinate of Israel after the death of Rav Herzog, reputedly because he doubted whether a

State-dependent Rabbi could, at that time, honestly fulfill his spiritual vocation.¹¹

At the time many inferred from this objection that the Rav was advocating separation of Synagogue and State for reasons of religious authenticity, like Kierkegaard, or even conscience, like the American Roger Williams.¹² This would seem to run counter to the practical exigencies of halakhic life and contemporary society: after all, the spinal cord of Jewish existence is communal observance of central *mitzvot*, most urgently the requirements of family life and identity. Even if the Rabbinate could subsist without State funding, it could not attain its necessary public goals without the support of legal sanctions. Thus, the outcry went, for everybody to act on the principle widely ascribed to the Rav would be a prescription for disaster.

But there is another, more serious, difficulty with the attempt to generalize the Rav's supposed judgment. To claim that accepting a State appointment compromises one's religious independence presupposes that, apart from the State, one is not subject to unwelcome interference. Granted that the baneful whiff of Erastianism that permeated the Classical Ben-Gurionistic Zionism of *manakhitut* has yet to evaporate from the corridors of the National Unity Knesset, governmental suasion is not necessarily the greatest impediment to Rabbinic integrity. Can anyone inhabiting our streets and our courtyards today ignore the pressures from within the Orthodox community, the anxiety about ostracism and social loneliness that shadows those of us who break ranks to follow in the footsteps of our mentors? Is a promising, or even an established, personality in the Rabbinic community indeed more constrained from doing his duty to truth and to the Jewish people by the civil religions of Shamir and Peres than by his desire to find favor in the eyes of his most vociferous neighbors?

If so, then our choice is not between State pressure and genuine independence, but rather between different vectors of constraint. Which factors are most oppressive will vary depending on the individual and the external situation. There may be circumstances in which a Rabbi is wise to avoid Caesar's beaureg. Nevertheless, the formal connection between Rabbi and State, like that between the intellectually honest teacher and the institution which pays his wages, need not undermine his integrity any more than the depen-

dence of most *Gedolim* of the past several centuries on their communities lessens our respect for their work.

We return to the two principles whose implications we are examining. The question of Rabbinic intervention will depend, among other factors, on how he defines his vocation and on how he perceives the public's perception of him. As a sociologist, he must understand that a great many people will expect him to stay out of "politics," i.e. to refrain from activities which serve his own interests or which further the interests of some particular group within the Jewish community. His view of politics may, of course, legitimately differ from theirs in several ways.¹³ He may very likely regard the success of a religiously oriented political party, or pecuniary incentives for Torah scholarship, as the indubitable priorities of *Knesset Yisrael*, and scoff at disagreeing voices. He may also have a different understanding of what constitutes "politics." Recommending his favorite electoral list may appear, to him, no more an act of "meddling" than preferring a younger colleague for advancement. He may, therefore, choose to defy the definition, imposed upon him by a part of the public, of his role, and he may be right to do so. We must, however, always be aware that, in people's minds, he is stepping out of character, as it were, and there is a price to pay. Unless the community is brought to a new understanding of the Rabbi's role, the price may be prohibitive.¹⁴

In addition to the analysis of contemporary society and its challenges, we might profit from the disciplined study of history. Examining, for example, R. Kook's variously nuanced pronouncements when faced by the prospect of women voting, and being elected to, the representative Jewish institutions of Mandatory Palestine.¹⁵ Observe how, despite his opposition to women's suffrage, he manages to avert a breach with the community. Consider R. Herzog's involvement in setting up the United Religious Front before the elections to the First Knesset.¹⁶ Or contemplate R. Kook's dramatic campaign for the exoneration of Stavsky, which surely carried him far beyond the limits of his official position, and earned him the calumny of the most powerful political bloc in Zionism.¹⁷ In these cases of Rabbinic intervention, and others, we may scrutinize the manner in which admired Rabbinic figures of recent generations made their decisions as to when, and how, they would intervene in public life.

We have just noted the difficulties when there is a gap between the Rabbi's view of his role and its public perception. We must not, however, forget the Rabbi's perception of himself: how does *he* define the act of religious communication? Does he emphasize the pole of direct communication, in which the objective content of his teaching is all that matters, or is he striving to lead his interlocutors towards an appropriation of his beliefs? The two models of communication will be differently realized for different personalities and for different issues. While the working out of this dialectic is especially intriguing for the Rabbinical and Hinnukh vocations, it is not inherently different from the challenge facing all God-fearing Jews. It is to this dialectic that we shall now turn.

Speaking the Truth

One thing is clear. To choose ¹⁸ totally indirect, incognito communication of Orthodox Judaism is impossible. What is true of the timid, whose anonymity is fear of exposure, is true of the incognito who dares to be "God's spy." The Orthodox Jew, unlike the Christian, cannot feign anonymity. You can plead vegetarianism and abstain from bread, wear a cap or be a woman: at some point the objective content of your religious commitment will out. Indeed, this state of affairs reflects the nature of Halakhaic life, with its emphasis on the tangible manifestations of commitment in action. As we noted above, some measure of external, direct commitment is necessary if the communication is to escape becoming detached and academic ¹⁹.

But though the absolute incognito is out, our existential choices imply a set of orientations around the direction/indirection poles. To venture a safe generalization: the "professionally religious" are, relatively speaking, at a disadvantage when it comes to indirect communication: What is more disheartening than pouring out one's fundamental convictions to an audience which believes it is getting the "company line?" By the same token, to the extent that you speak to the other from the shared awareness of a common human condition, you will better be able to educe a spiritual movement which will reduplicate the right relationship to the truth.

The specific shape of a human life expresses itself not only in the general features of one's career, but in the individual qualities of day to day existence as well. It is possible even for a Rabbi to over-

come the gap separating the teacher of truth from his audience. Despite his role as the objective expostor of the tradition, he can cast off the carapace of his professional image and address his fellow human beings man to man. Such an individual would embody the dialectic of direct and indirect communication: on the one hand, the revelation of objective truth; on the other hand, the concealment of the inner personality which draws forth the subjectivity of the listener. Whoever was privileged to sit at the feet of *maran haRav* shita will have little difficulty imagining a spiritual intensity able to pursue aggressively the objective intellectual inquiry of *Ish haHalakha* while, at the same time, lifting the veil sheltering the hidden, intimate enigma of the *homo religiosus*. As we reduplicate the religious gesture, it is incumbent upon us to make live the same passion, understanding and simplicity: the candle lit from a bonfire should also burn with a clear true flame.

To speak the truth, we said above, is not only to make true statements, but to make them truthfully, i.e. with the proper sense of conviction and commitment. To risk apoplexy over the comparative merits of Mosaic and Mays is not the way to establish one's worthiness as a crusader for truth; to discuss with equanimity the rock-ribbed objectivity. There is a time for detachment and a time for decisiveness; a time to be tentative and a time to be emphatic, even dogmatic.

We have already remarked on the comical impression and the sense of unreality which occurs when that which is tentative and secondary (e.g. the authority of a particular Rabbinic personality or group) is proclaimed to be central. What about the converse? What happens when that which should be maintained confidently, indubitably, decisively is communicated bashfully, hesitantly, inconclusively?

Two examples:

1) As a political force, Religious Zionism is not currently committed to the imposition of *Halakha* as the ruling law in the State of Israel. Nevertheless, we look forward to *medinat Yisrael 'al pi Torat Yisrael*: we want the Torah to be loved, heeded and adopted. Now it happens that *Halakha* for reasons understood by all parties to the deal, does govern one significant area of civil life in Israel—marriage and divorce. If *Halakha* is to provide a "shadow"

constitution for the State, a viable alternative to the secular status quo, then the realm of family law would present the Rabbinat with an excellent opportunity to display their competence and to convince society of their worthiness to adjudicate all areas of civil life. Many of our spokesmen forty years ago sincerely expected this to happen.

Unfortunately these hopes have no more been fulfilled than have the utopian dreams of the secular Zionists. Forget about proposing fundamental—perhaps controversial—solutions to chronic halakhic dilemmas: after all, creative greatness cannot be supplied on demand. Has the conduct of our *Battei Din*, in terms of administrative competence alone (i.e. *‘innuy ha-din’*) inspired public confidence? It is widely alleged, and not denied, that the standard approach to repeated wife-beaters is “educational” (in effect sending her back for more) rather than punitive or executive (i.e. mandating a *get* and making sure it’s arranged). What is one to make of a reluctance to use the powers of the court to ease pain and help salvage broken lives? Either that proficiency at Talmudic law has little to do with its sensitive, decent application, or that there is a curious lack of seriousness about the disposition of human lives. Is this merely a matter of public relations, of how people perceive the Rabbinat? Public relations cannot substitute for self-knowledge, and if we are to deserve the trust of the Jewish people, it behooves all *bnai Torah* to think hard about our moral priorities and what it means to accept responsibility rather than abdicate it.²⁰

2) In recent years we often hear from those who insist the old anti-Semitic propaganda had it right—that the teachings of the Torah about Gentiles are, God forbid, such as would repel those Jews and non-Jews who take common “perennial” morality seriously.²¹ The Rabbinic establishment and those it represents have more or less gotten around to condemning Kahane, but somehow, without questioning their sincerity, we sense that something is missing.²²

What is missing is the passion. Earnest, honorable, respectable teachers of Torah, who would self-assuredly and justifiedly snort at the suggestion that the prohibition of blowing *shofar* (or, for that matter, performing the organ) on Shabbat is “only” rabbinic, become strangely “objective” when called upon to instruct the faithful about attitudes to Gentiles. True, the laws of Dvarim 20 do not apply today. Yes, God is compassionately concerned for all His

creatures. Yes, there is some kind of halakhic source that says man ought to imitate the moral attributes of his Creator. But it’s “only” *darkhe shalom* and we don’t want to look like Reform universalists. So we do God a favor and endorse His Ways, but half-heartedly, grudgingly, like the proverbial Synagogue Board that wishes the ailing Rabbi his hearty *refua shelema* by a 6–5 vote. And like the Rabbi in the story, the ingenious, decent public gets the idea they’d be better off making their spiritual lives elsewhere. The consequences of our failure to communicate directly, forcefully, passionately, are spelled out by a freshly minted graduate of Yeshiva University. He writes:

“*Shalom Jews, Shalom dogs*” says the Knasset member ordained at the Mir Yeshiva in Brooklyn. The ignorant, assimilated Reform Jew, with a passing acquaintance with the assimilated Buber, is revolted. He cannot stomach turning a person—thousands of people—millions of people—into its. Not in our generation, and not ever.

* *But in the halakhic world of Britsk, does a voice cry out, saying “An Arab too is a gavra, a person”? Do all of these glib distinctions between subject and object teach their discoverers that the God who created one man cannot allow any men to be objects?*²³

My pleasure in a former student’s eloquence is mingled with dismay that he finds it necessary to pose such a question to me. But communicating the truth requires that we both speak truthfully and hear honestly the voices of those who solicit our concern. If, as Rambam declares, our vocation of teaching the truth derives from the commandment to love God (for how can I love Him without desiring to share my knowledge of Him with others?),²⁴ we fulfill this challenge when we are so animated by love for our fellows that we listen faithfully to their words and cares. Our own understanding, passion and commitment reflect, as in a glass, the seriousness with which we meet his or her gaze.

* * *

At the outset I asked: *Who* speaks for Torah? The answer, at one level, is simple: We do, each and every one of us. A harder question hides behind the first: Who are we? If we are to answer that question, for ourselves and for anybody else who asks if there is true fear of God in this place and in this person, we must order proper-

ly our duties and commitments and realize our true connection to the God whose Word is our life and the length of our days.

How we speak for Torah has a great deal to do with our chances to successfully communicate the truth. More important, how we speak for Torah determines how true the Torah is in the name of which we venture to speak. We must learn to distinguish the truth which can be stated simply and directly from the truth which requires subtlety and indirection. We must also know to communicate with diffidence and tentativeness those truths regarding which we have no right to certainty as surely as we make our stand upon the truths we affirm at the core of our religious-ethical existence.²⁵

NOTES

1. *Yalkut Shimoni*, 929 to Mishle 19. cf. *Eruvin* 54a.
2. S. Kierkegaard *Either/Or*, Vol. I (Princeton, 1971), "Diapsalmata," p.30.
3. Though the matters I discuss here are pertinent to any serious religious stance, there is no doubt that we are most urgently, and richly, challenged to work through the full range of difficulties within the Israeli arena. See also R. Norman Lamm: "Towards the Renewal of Mizrahi" (Eng. *Morasha* 11, Fall 1984, 5-11).
4. I refer to the Talmudic debate about David's responsibility for the death of Uriah.
5. E.g. *For Self-Examination* (Princeton, 1974), pp. 61-64. See, on the question of communication in Kierkegaard, with emphasis on the transition to direct communication, JW. Eirod: *Kierkegaard and Christianity* (Princeton, 1981), ch.7, the literature cited there, and the entries in "Soren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers" (ed. and tr. Hong and Hong; Indiana UP, 1967), Vol. I, 252-329. After completing this essay I read with interest Michael Frosnak's *Commandments and Concerns* (JPS, 1987). I call upon the reader to note the similarities and differences between our orientations on religious communication.
6. Kierkegaard, of course, understood this. He regarded his inability to break through to direct communication as a failing. At the end of his life, in the "Attack on Christendom," he emerged, without abandoning the methods of indirect communication, as the overt spokesman of a public position.
7. *Ye'annot* 65b.
8. I have found R. Sennett *The Fall of Public Man* (New York, 1977) particularly helpful to my thinking on these matters.
9. Sociologists who stress the role of roles tend to minimize the transcendence of the self which we presuppose in the previous paragraph. One can benefit, however, from the shrewd insights of these writers (Erving Goffman, by way of illustration) without succumbing to reductionist tendencies.

10. Some suggestive discussions by Rabbinic and political thinkers are found in *Morasha* (Heb.), 8, Summer 5734, 7-33. Also interesting are G. Bakon: *Da'at Torá ve-Heset mashiah* (*Tarbiz*, 52:3 497-508); L. Kaplan: "Rabbi Isaac Hurner's 'Da'at Torah Perspective on the Holocaust: A Critical Analysis'" (*Tradition* 18:3, 235-248) and his correspondence in 212, 180-187. Hillel Goldberg makes interesting comments in an unpublished manuscript forthcoming in *Tradition*, on "Israel Salanter and *Orhot Zaddikim*: Restructuring Musar Literature" (note 18). Rabbi W. Wurzburger's "Covenantal Imperatives" (Samuel K. Mirsky Memorial Volume, ed. G. Appel [Yeshiva U. 1970], 3-12) develops a "modern Orthodox" position supporting *da'at Torah* in non-halakhic contexts in a modified way.
11. See the Rav's letters printed in *HaDvar* 39 [12 Adar 5720] 330. The Rav's written reasons are clearly connected to the particular political situation and to his own personality and ideals.
12. On Kierkegaard, see Eirod, ch. 6 and any of the late works, especially the "Attack on Christendom." On Williams, see W. Miller: *The First Liberty* (NY, 1985), Part III and the literature cited by Y. Mirsky: "Civil Religion and the Establishment Clause" (*Yale Law Review* 95:6) 1237-57.
13. The following account of the official Centennial commemoration of George Washington's inauguration is an apt illustration, and remote enough not to arouse strong feelings: "The 30th began, for those who were sober at least, with nine o'clock services at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, where Washington had prayed a hundred years earlier before his inauguration. All of the ushers were descendants of prominent heroes of the Revolutionary War. When Bishop Potter's sermon pressed the point that the leaders of 1889 were less virtuous (in terms of patronage abuse) and less statesmanlike than those of 1789, President Harrison simply stared at the bishop. (Many felt that Potter's remarks, which continued to be discussed for days, had been in poor taste. *The Times*, however, said that Potter had only spoken the truth.)" (M. Kammen: *A Machine That Would Go of Itself* [NY, 1987], p. 149).
14. We often err in assuming the absoluteness of contemporary Western standards about the immorality of judges furthering private or partisan interests. What constitutes "interestedness" varies among different legal societies. I have found J. T. Noonan's big book on *Brides* (New York, 1984) instructive on that particular mode of judicial and political interestedness; one might want to examine Hazon Ish's thesis (*Halakha ve-HabHitakhan*, 2:30) in the light of this data.
15. This story is most fully told in M. Friedman: *Herra vaDat* (Ben Zvi Institute, 1977), chs. 6-7. The documents were republished in *Haqat* #5.
16. See S. Avidor's biography: *Yahid beDoro* (Jerusalem, 1980) 240-246. On R. Kook's role, see Y. Avneri "Rabbi A.I. Kook's Involvement in Arlosoroff Murder Affair and Its Impact on His Status and Image" *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies: History Section*, Vol II, 133-138.
18. Note that there are situations in which indirect communication occurs in

- spite of the communicator. Jonah fled from God, yet his flight reduced movement of repentance from his companions on the ship. Our discussion, however, is concerned with individuals who recognize an obligation to communicate the truth to others (and to themselves) and undertake to meet their obligation.
19. The treatment of moral and religious commitment in imaginative literature is often held up as the ideal case of indirect communication. Yet I wonder how many readers of Dostoevsky, T.S. Eliot, or Walker Percy, to say nothing of apologists like C.S. Lewis and Chesterton, are really innocent of their authors' commitments. The indirect truth of the imagination communicates despite this awareness. Presumably King David suspected that the prophet Nathan might be offering him his composition for some purpose beyond mere entertainment. This point merits more detailed development.
20. As I prepare this essay for the printer (12 Tishre 5748) headlines tell of an accused murderer, about to be extradited to France, whose wife has sued for a *get* in a patent ploy to halt the deportation. The Jerusalem Rabbinical Court promptly ordered that he be kept in Israel in order to execute the divorce. Whereupon a major political leader of religious Zionism wisely counsels the public against judging the Rabbinic judges without studying the text of the *get*. Unwilling to let well enough alone, however, he goes on to declare that this solitary action, in response to a fictive suit, belies the allegation that the Rabbinate is inattentive to the plight of *agunot*. Whatever the juridic and political merits of the original extradition case, this lame attempt to pacify suffering women adds insult to injury.
21. I have commented on these tendencies in "Much Ado About *Natzi*" (*Hemester*, Teyet 5746, 1, 4-5).
22. I am not referring primarily to the "Racism Law" fiasco. At least part of the blame in that affair, it seems to me, rests with the ill-prepared formulation of the law. Nonetheless it is disappointing that the representatives of Orthodox Jewry who are presumably the most illiberal by Kahane's description of Torah Judaism are the most reluctant to discredit his claim to authenticity: the colloquy of R. Akiva and Tineus Rufus (*Tankhuma Teruma*: 3) would lead one to expect the opposite. Those interested in the problem, posed by the association of Kahane and his (often freethinking) fellow travellers with Judaism would benefit by studying the relationship of certain xenophobic movements of the 1930's to the Roman Catholic Church. See, for example, E. Weber: *Action Francaise* (Stanford, 1962) and A. Brinkley: *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin and the Great Depression* (Vintage Books, N.Y., 1983). Readers of these works are unlikely to revise their opinion of Pope Pius XII.
23. Letter received June 1986. Rest assured Brisk is not underdefended in my response.
24. *Sefar haMitsvot*, Positive Commandment 3.
25. The comments of Ms. Erica Schoonmaker on the first draft have affected the second for the better.