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Techniques and Rules of Ineffability in the Dionysian Corpus

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Abstract:
Is the Dionysian God, or an experience of the Dionysian God, absolutely ineffable? Does the Dionysian corpus assert or perform such ineffability? This paper will argue that the answer to each of these questions is no. The Dionysian God is known *hyper-nous* as the *hyper-ousia* cause of all. And the Dionysian corpus unambiguously refers to, asserts of, and metaphorizes about this God just so. In arguing these points, this paper will call upon both the speech act theory of John Searle and the metaphor theory of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. More particularly, it will look to Searle's rules of reference and predication and conditions of illocutionary acts, as well as Lakoff and Johnson's schematization of metaphor gestalt and entailment to show how Dionysian expressions of inexpressibility are rule-governed and the Dionysian God is thereby (relatively) effable.

Keywords: Dionysius Areopagites, speech acts, Orthodox Christianity

Is the Dionysian God, or an experience of the Dionysian God, absolutely ineffable?[1] Does the Dionysian corpus assert or perform such ineffability? This paper will argue that the answer to each of these questions is no. The Dionysian God is known *hyper-nous* as the *hyper-ousia* cause of all. And the Dionysian corpus unambiguously refers to, asserts of, and metaphorizes about this God just so. In arguing these points, this paper will call upon both the speech act theory of John Searle and the metaphor theory of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. More particularly, it will look to Searle's rules of reference and predication and conditions of illocutionary acts, as well as Lakoff and Johnson's schematization of metaphor gestalt and entailment to show how Dionysian expressions of inexpressibility are rule-governed and the Dionysian God is thereby (relatively) effable.[2]

Such arguments go against the grain of Dionysian studies. They therefore require a good deal more exegetical and dialectical work than a single essay can accomplish. Given this spatial constraint, this paper opts for breadth over depth. The goal here cannot be that of conclusively demonstrating any one set of rules through fine-combed exegesis of all the textual evidence. Instead, this paper seeks to sketch an overall picture of Dionysian expressions of inexpressibility, one that layers the rules of Dionysian illocutionary acts upon rules of Dionysian referring and predicating expressions, and upon all of these, rules of Dionysian metaphor systems. The paper therefore aims to produce a cumulative case argument for the relative effability of the Dionysian God.

1. Expressions of Inexpressibility within the Speech Act

This first section of the paper identifies and analyzes Dionysian expressions of inexpressibility *within the speech act*, more specifically within referring and predicating expressions. It focuses on two such grammatical techniques: *hypernames*, the identification of *hyper*-prefixed divine names with God; and *negation*, the negation of divine names of God. It asks whether these techniques are governed by Searle's rule of reference and predication. And it answers that they are so governed, concluding that the Dionysian God therefore is relatively effable.

It is the simplicity of Searle's theories of reference and predication that make them so useful for the identification and analysis of ineffability discourse within the speech act. In the case of acts of singular definite reference, the referring expression itself must contain an identifying description that serves to pick out or identify the object in question (or the speaker must be able to produce such an identifying description on demand)[3] [25, p. 88].

> (1) [Referring expression] R is to be uttered only in the context of a sentence (or some similar stretch of discourse) the utterance of which could be the performance of some illocutionary act;
> (2) R is to be uttered only if there exists an object X such that either R contains an identifying description of X or [the speaker] S is able to supplement R with an identifying description of X, and such that, in the utterance of R, S intends to pick out or identify X to [the hearer] H;
> (3) The utterance of R counts as the identification or picking out of X to (or for) H[4] [25].

And in the case of predication, the predicate expression must count as raising the question of its truth or falsity with respect to the object referred to by the referring expression (in the mode of the utterance's illocutionary force) [25, pp. 122–124].

> (1) P [predicate expression] is to be uttered only in the context of a sentence or other stretch of discourse T the utterance of which could be the performance of some illocutionary act;
> (2) P is to be uttered in T only if the utterance of T involves a successful reference to [object] X;
> (3) P is to be uttered only if X is of a type or category such that it is logically possible for P to be true or false of X;
> (4) The utterance of P counts as raising the question of the truth or falsity of P of X (in a certain illocutionary mode determined by the illocutionary device of the sentence) [25, p 127].

With these rules this paper will ask whether the Dionysian corpus successfully refers to and predicates of a God that is therefore not (absolutely) ineffable.[5]

One of the more prevalent and important ways in which the Dionysian corpus expresses inexpressibility at the referential-predicative level involves the use of *hyper* (ὑπερ) as prefix or preposition. Not only is *hyper* ubiquitous in the Dionysian corpus;[6] it is considered by some to be "the key to the central dialectic in Dionysian thought" [3, p. 193]. The very opening line of the *Mystical Theology* hymns the Trinity as *hyper*-being and *hyper*-god and *hyper*-good (*MT* 1.1, 997A). *Divine Names* 2.3 specifies "the things unified (ἡνωμένα) of the whole divinity" as "the *hyper*-good, the *hyper*-god, the *hyper*-being, the *hyper*-life, and the *hyper*-wise and whatever else is of the *hyper*-having removal (τῆς ὑπεροχικῆς ἐστιν ἀφαιρέσεως)" (*DN* 2.3, 640B). And *Divine Names* 11.6 informs the reader that when Dionysius speaks of God as "that which gives substance

(ὑποστάτην) to life-itself or peace or power" (rather than as life-itself or peace-itself or power-itself), he does so "as *hyper*-beingly *hyper*-be-ing *hyper* all and the first beings" (*DN* 11.6, 953BC). What does the Dionysian corpus mean in referring to and predicating of God with such *hypernames*?

Given the usual translation of *hyper* as *beyond*, scholars generally read these *hypernames* as indicating transcendence beyond the name that has been *hyper*-prefixed. But Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* suggests that when *hyper* is used with respect to place and measure, it can be translated not only as *beyond* but also as *over*, *above*, and *exceeding*:

1. with respect to place in reference to motion: *over*, *beyond*;
2. with respect to measure: *above*, *exceeding*, *beyond*;
3. with respect to number: *above*, *upwards*;
4. with respect to time: *beyond* (i.e., *before*, *earlier than*);
5. in some dialects: *on behalf of*, *concerning* [16, p. 1858].

As is the case with most prepositions, these different meanings reflect different spatial relations, two of which are principal here: a sense of being beyond or across something (horizontal distance), and a sense of being over or above something (vertical height). And these two different spatial relations convey two different logical meanings: in the first case, the complete inapplicability or falsity of that which one is beyond or across; in the second case, an excessive measure or manner of that which one is over or above. Moreover, these two different logical meanings suggest two different senses of transcendence: removal beyond and superiority above.[7]

And it is not merely the case that *hyper* itself is grammatically ambiguous; it is also the case that the Dionysian corpus deploys *hypernames* ambiguously, sometimes to stress *preeminence above*; other times, *removal beyond*; and rarely to mean one to the exclusion of the other. *Divine Names* 4.3, for example, is not clear about whether hyper-prefixed and alpha-privative divine names, when said of the *hyper*-being good, denote excess above or exceeding beyond the name in question.

> If the good is *hyper* all beings, as it is, the formless produces-form. And in it alone non-being (ἀνούσιον) is excessive (ὑπερβολή) being, non-life (ἄζωον) is preeminent (ὑπερέχουσα) life, and non-intellect (ἄνουν) is exceeding (ὑπεραίρουσα) wisdom, and whatever is in the good is of the preeminent (ὑπεροχικῆς) form-production of that which is formless. And, if it is lawful to say, non being (μη ὸν) itself desires the good *hyper* all beings, and strives somehow to be in the good, and is truly *hyper*-being with respect to the removal of all (τὴν πάντων ἀφαίρεσιν) (*DN* 4.3, 697A).[8]

And *Mystical Theology* 1.1 uses several different *hyper*-light variations, each of which is ambiguous between a superabundant excess of light and a complete removal beyond light (thereby rendering the first three hyper-prefixed names ambiguous as well).

> Trinity *hyper*-being and *hyper*-god and *hyper*-good, overseer of Christians in divine wisdom, guide us to the *hyper*-unknown (ὑπεράγνωστον) and *hyper*-brilliant (ὑπερφαῆ) highest summit of mystical scripture; there the simple, absolute, and unchanged mysteries of theology are veiled by the *hyper*-light (ὑπέρφωτον) darkness of hidden silence, *hyper*-illuminating (ὑπερλάμποντα) the *hyper*-most-appearing (ὑπερφανέστατον) in the darkest and *hyper*-filling (ὑπερπληροῦντα) the sightless minds with *hyper*-beauty (ὑπερκάλων) beauties in the wholly imperceptible and invisible (*MT* 1.1, 997B).

What does this ambiguity entail for an analysis of the grammatical technique of *hypernames* as an expression of inexpressibility? Provisionally, it suggests that *hypernames* frustrate reference and predication in not one or two but three different ways. Read as significations of excessive measure, *hypernames* fail both to refer to and predicate of God insofar as they attribute to God some property in excess of its greatest possible degree. It is crucial here to understand this: taken excessively, *hypernames* are not mere superlatives; they are *super-superlatives* that immeasurably exceed the maximum possible (superlative) degree. With respect to some divine name *dn* they indicate that God is *more-dn-than-maximum-dn*.[9] *Hypernames* therefore fail both to refer to and to predicate of God for the simple reason that, according to the grammatical logic of comparatives and superlatives, something cannot possess more of some attribute than the greatest possible measure of that attribute. Such *more-dn-than-maximum-dn* phrases therefore cannot serve as either individuating identifying descriptions or logically possible categories. And if we read *hypernames* as significations of utter inapplicability, then they fail to refer to and predicate of God for a different and simpler reason. In this case *hypernames* indicate that the divine name in question simply does not count as an identifying description or predicate term since the object of reference and subject of predication is entirely beyond it – they signify, with respect to some divine name *dn*, that God is *beyond-dn*. Moreover, when such *hypernames* are conjoined in rapid succession they imply that no divine name may count as an identifying description or predicate term of God, that God is beyond the domain of all differentiation and therefore cannot be identified or predicated as any*thing* – they signify that God is *beyond-all-dn*. And it is by virtue of the ambiguity between these two interpretations that *hypernames* ostensibly frustrate reference and predication in a third way: if *hypernames* do not at all apply to God, then God cannot possess them in excessive superabundance; but if God possesses them in excessive superabundance, then God cannot be utterly beyond them. Such a contradiction obviously renders *hypernames* unsuitable as both identifying descriptions that unambiguously identify and predicate terms that are logically possible. It is therefore necessary to turn to a second referential-predicative technique to resolve this ambiguity.

This second, very prevalent, very important means by which Dionysius expresses inexpressibility at the referential-predicative level is negation. It is crucial immediately to observe, though, that there are two principal terms for and types of negation in the Dionysian corpus: *aphairesis* (removal), a method of removing predicate-terms; and *apophasis* (negation), a logic for interpreting predicate-terms preeminently rather than privatively.[10] And it is important next to note that the former is employed much more frequently than the latter: whereas *aphairesis/aphairō* shows up a total of twenty-six times in the corpus, *apophasis/apophaskō* makes just eight appearances, only two of which can be found in the "apophatic" treatise *Mystical Theology*, neither of which falls after the introductory chapter.[11] The term *apophasis* is therefore entirely absent from the central methodological and performative chapters of the *Mystical Theology* (while *aphairesis* is used twelve times in these chapters and fourteen times in the entire treatise). Instead, the chapters on method (chs. 2–3) present *aphairesis* as the privileged means of hymning the *hyper*-being God, and the subsequent performative chapters (chs. 4–5) implement this method, hymning the *hyper*-being God through the removal of perceptible and intelligible properties from God. Together these chapters present the following picture of *aphairesis*. *Aphairesis* hymns God by removing "beings" from it. *Aphairesis* removes these beings sequentially, from last or furthest to first or closest: first alpha-privative prefixed intelligible properties (e.g., being-less, life-less), then sensible properties, then intelligible and trinitarian properties, and finally properties pertaining to thinking and speaking about God. *Aphairesis* removes such predicate-terms by means of narrow-scope predicate-term negation in which negative particles precede and therefore apply to the predicate-terms alone (rather than the entire predicate).[12] And *aphairesis* removes "all" beings from God, yet paradoxically reveals an underlying "statue," thereby yielding true "knowing" and "seeing" of the unknowable divine darkness.

We pray to come to this *hyper*-light darkness, and through not-seeing and not-knowing to see and to know not to see and to know that which is *hyper* sight and knowledge itself – for this is truly seeing and knowing – and [we pray] to hymn *hyper*-beingly the *hyper*-being through the removal of all beings (τῆς πάντων τῶν ὄντων ἀφαιρέσεως), just as those making a life-like statue lift-out (ἐξαιροῦντες) every obstacle to the pure view of the hidden and reveal the hidden beauty in it by the removal alone (τῇ ἀφαιρέσει μόνῃ). It is necessary, I think, to hymn the removals (τὰς ἀφαιρέσεις) oppositely from the positions; for we posit these beginning from the first things and descending through the middle things to the last things; but then we remove everything (τὰ πάντα ἀφαιροῦμεν) making the search for the highest principles from the last things, so that we may unhiddenly know this unknowing that is covered by all the knowledge among all beings, and we may see this *hyper*-being darkness that is hidden by all the light among beings (*MT* 2, 1025AB).

When *apophasis* does make its appearances in the Dionysian corpus, it does so not as a method of negating predicate-terms but as a logic of interpreting negative predicate-terms "*hyperochically*" (preeminently) rather than "*steretically*" (privatively). This understanding of *apophasis* comes out particularly well when several of the passages in which it appears are read together. According to *Celestial Hierarchy* 2.3, *apophatic* predicate-terms such as *invisible*, *infinite*, and *inseparable* signify not what God is but what God is not. In hymning God as invisible, the theologians deny that God possesses the attribute of visibility (with respect to being) rather than affirming that God possesses the attribute of invisibility.

[…] God] is *hyper*-cosmically hymned in negative (ἀποφατικαῖς) revelations by the scriptures themselves, named invisible (ἀόρατον), infinite (ἄπειρον), ungraspable (ἀχώρητον), and that which signifies not what it is but what it is not (*CH* 2.3, 140D–141A).

Divine Names 7.1 then furthers this, asserting that *apophatic* predicate-terms such as *invisible*, *ineffable*, *unnamable*, *incomprehensible*, and *inscrutable* indicate not God's lack but God's excess. In calling God invisible, the theologians attest to God's abounding luminosity (i.e., all-shining light) rather than God's deprivation of (ordinary) visibility: God is invisible in the sense that God is other than (ordinary) visibility *qua* excessive or exceeding visibility.

[…] it is customary for theologians to negate (ἀποφάσκειν) the things of privation (τὰ τῆς στερήσεως) with respect to God in an opposite sense. Thus, scripture calls the all-shining light invisible (ἀόρατόν), and the many-hymned and many-named ineffable (ἄρρητον) and unnamable (ἀνώνυμον), and that which is present in all things and discoverable from all things incomprehensible and inscrutable (*DN* 7.1, 865BC).

And *Epistle* 4 maintains that affirmations about Jesus' love for humanity have the power of preeminent negation (*hyperochikēs apophaseōs*). In saying that Jesus was non-human, we maintain that Jesus is *hyperochē* or *hyper* human: Jesus is not-human in the sense that Jesus is other than (ordinary) humanity *qua* excessive or exceeding humanity.

Why should one go through the remaining things, which are numerous? Through them the one who sees divinely will know *hyper* mind that the affirmations (καταφασκόμενα) about Jesus' love for humanity have the power of preeminent negation (ὑπεροχικῆς ἀποφάσεως). So we may say briefly, he was not human (οὐδὲ

ἄνθρωπος), not as non human (μὴ ἄνθρωπος), but as from humans being beyond humans and as *hyper* human having truly become human, and, as for the rest, not having done the things of God as God, nor the things of humans as human, but administering for us a new theandric activity as God having become human (*EP* 4, 1072BC).[13]

Two phrases are here of crucial significance. The first, *to negate the things of privation*, states that *apophatic* negation must be sharply differentiated from privative negation (*sterēsis*, or less commonly *elleipsis*). The second, *preeminent negation*, shows that this difference must be understood semantically – *apophatic* negation states preeminence (*hyperochē*), not privation (*steresis*). Thus "negating the things of privation" does not change the syntactic form of a predicate-term negation (which can be of either the alpha-privative (*unwise*) or indefinite (*not-wise*) variety). Rather, it indicates that the predicate-term negation in question should be interpreted preeminently rather than privatively. And as passages such as *Divine Names* 7.2 suggest, when negative predicate-terms are applied to God, we should always interpret them preeminently rather than privatively.

But as I have often said, one must intellect the divine divinely. For one must arrange in order non-intellection (ἄνουν) and non-sensibility (ἀναίσθητον) of God according to preeminence (ὑπεροχήν) and not defect (ἔλλειψιν), just as we attribute non-reason (ἄλογον) to that which is *hyper* reason, non-perfection (ἀτέλειαν) to that which is *hyper*-perfection and *pro*-perfection, and non-manifest (ἀναφῆ) and non-visible (ἀόρατον) darkness to the inaccessible light according to a preeminence (ὑπεροχὴν) of visible light (*DN* 7.2, 869A; Cf., *EP* 1, 1065A).

Taken together, all of these passages in general and both of these phrases in particular reveal Dionysius' *apophatic* logic of negation: negative predicate-terms, read *apophatically*, indicate preeminence rather than privation. To say that God is not some divine name is to say not that God is lacking some divine name but that God preeminently possesses some divine name.

One could initially say therefore that *aphairesis* and *apophasis* are referentially-predicatively troublesome in opposing ways: whereas *aphairesis* turns away identifying descriptions and predicate-terms, thereby effectively refusing to identify and predicate anything of God (*beyond-dn*), *apophasis* identifies and predicates an excessive measure of divine names of God, thereby associating problematic identifying descriptions and predicate-terms with God (*more-dn-than-maximum-dn*). But there are two difficulties with such a neat reading. On the one hand, *apophasis* interprets that which *aphairesis* removes – the identifying descriptions and predicate-terms that *aphairesis* turns away are to be interpreted *apophatically*.[14] (To put it in the above imagery of the statue, the *aphairetic* removal of all beings reveals an underlying *apophatic-hyperochic* statue.[15]) On the other hand, *apophatic* interpretation is *hyperochic*, where a sense of preeminent-having is balanced by a sense of beyond-having. (This is so since *hyperochē* is composed of the preposition *hyper* and the verb *to have* (*echō*), and the preposition *hyper* is ambiguous between preeminent excess and exceeding beyond.[16]). At second blush, therefore, Dionysian negation appears to be referentially-predicatively troublesome in the same three ways as Dionysian *hypernames*. But in fact it is *hyperochē* that provides the key to resolving this ambiguity in general and to demonstrating how to refer to and predicate of the Dionysian God in particular.

If the Dionysian corpus deploys *hyperochē* at all like other Neoplatonists did, then it means by it the preeminence of causes over their effects (see [16], [11]). This is not to say that causes participate in their effects but rather that causes pre-exist and therefore pre-contain their effects. This, the Dionysian corpus tells us several times.[17] But what it tells us more often is that it is the divine-names-themselves that are the causes of the properties they effect: life-itself is the cause of

the property of life; being-itself, the cause of being.[18] And what it never tells us is that God is not cause of all things.[19] Put all this together and this is what you get: God is the cause of all things by means of his divine names; these divine-names-themselves pre-exist and pre-contain the properties that they source (in a manner that is *hyper*-unified and *hyper*-existent); these divine-names-themselves do not participate in the properties that they source. Add to this what we now know about Dionysian negation and the following picture emerges: to interpret *apophatic* predicate-terms *hyperochically* is to see that *aphairesis* removes from God the divine names *qua* properties to reveal a *hyper*-being God that pre-contains the divine names, which themselves pre-contain their effects. Combine this with what we know about Dionysian *hypernames* and the picture gets clearer: *hyper*-prefixed divine names function to indicate both that God is completely beyond the divine names *qua* effects (which are things of being) and that God preeminently possesses the divine names *qua* causes (which are *hyper*-being). Put differently, God is not the divine names insofar as God does not participate in the properties that they source, but God is divine names themselves as the *hyper*-unified, *hyper*-existent sources of these properties.

This disambiguation makes good sense of the evidence already presented – *apophatic* interpretation is *hyperochic* not *steretic*, *hyperochē* registers both transcendence and preeminence, the Dionysian God is the cause of all, divine names themselves are divine causal powers, divine names themselves are pre-contained in God, divine names themselves are *hyper*-unified and *hyper*-existent, divine names themselves are not removed from God,[20] the properties that divine names themselves source are pre-contained in the divine names themselves in a *hyper*-unified manner, and so on. This disambiguation also makes good sense of the evidence yet to be presented – that the *hyper-ousia* God may be known *hyper-nous*, and that this God dwells on an enshrouded divine summit that may be ascended. But here I will argue that this disambiguation makes good sense of the grammatical-logical form of *aphairetic* removal. As indicated above, the logical form of Dionysian negation is narrow-scope predicate-term negation, which, according to Aristotle fails to obey the law of the excluded middle just in case either the referring expression is vacuous or the predicate expression is a category mistake. This means that, if mind is a category mistake of God, then there is no contradiction when Dionysius asserts at the beginning of *Mystical Theology* 4 that *God is not mind-less* and then later asserts in *Mystical Theology* 5 that *God is not mind*. But it means more, since it is not the middle but the *non*-middle that Dionysius excludes.[21] Both mind and mind-less are false of God since God is *hyper* or *hyperochē* mind. And God is *hyper* or *hyperochē* mind as the cause of mind, the *hyper*-unified and *hyper*-existent divine name mind-itself that precontains its effects.[22]

The Dionysian God can therefore be unambiguously identified and logically predicated as, on the one hand, the *hyper*-being cause of all, the source of the properties in which beings participate, and on the other hand, not itself a being, utterly beyond the things of being. The Dionysian techniques of *hypernames* and *negation* are therefore governed by the following rules:

- Dionysian Rule of Reference: God is properly identified as that which cannot be identified by any*thing* of being (i.e., the properties sourced by the divine names themselves), but possesses of everything of being in *hyper*-being preeminence (i.e., precontains the properties sourced by the divine names themselves).
- Dionysian Rule of Predication: God is properly predicated as that which cannot be predicated by any*thing* of being (i.e., the properties sourced by the divine names themselves), but possesses everything of being in *hyper*-being preeminence (i.e., precontains the properties sourced by the divine names themselves).

These rules constitute an intra-textual logic or grammar, regulating Pseudo-Dionysius' otherwise antinomian techniques of reference and predication. These rules show that the Dionysian God is not absolutely ineffable.

2. Expressions of Inexpressibility at the Speech Act

This second section of the paper identifies and analyzes Dionysian expressions of inexpressibility *at the level of the speech act*, more specifically with respect to illocutionary force. It focuses on two such grammatical techniques: *assertions of ineffability* and *directions of ineffability*. It asks whether these techniques are governed by Searle's conditions of illocutionary force. And It answers that they are so governed, concluding that the Dionysian God therefore is relatively effable.

Searle's theory of illocutionary force rests upon the simple yet revolutionary insight that the speech act is "the basic or minimal unit of linguistic communication". [25, p. 16] Every saying is a doing; every speech act therefore contains not only some *propositional content* (p) that is said but also some *illocutionary force* (F) that is done. One motivation for this distinction, according to Searle, is that it enables us "to account for and represent the generally overlooked distinction between illocutionary negation and propositional negation": while in most cases negation is of propositional content alone (e.g., it's not raining), in some cases negation is instead of illocutionary force (e.g., I don't say it's raining) or even of both propositional content and the illocutionary force (e.g., I don't say it's not raining). [25, p. 32] Another motivation, one that is of particular use in the identification and analysis of antinomian illocutionary techniques, is that the distinction between illocutionary force and propositional content enables an analysis of the conditions of successful illocutionary acts. These include not only an essential condition, which concerns what the speaker does (overall illocutionary point), and a propositional content condition, which concerns what the speaker says, but also a preparatory condition, which pertains to what the speaker implies, and a sincerity condition, which pertains to what the speaker expresses. [25, pp. 66–67] These conditions therefore make possible an understanding of the ways in which illocutionary acts can be unsuccessful ("self-defeating"), the following five of which are itemized:

- The illocutionary point cannot be achieved on the propositional content (e.g., "All my assertions are false");
- The illocutionary point cannot be achieved with the required mode of achievement of F on the propositional content (e.g., "I order you to disobey all orders");
- The propositional content is inadequate (e.g., "I predict that John Paul the Second has been elected as Pope");
- The preparatory conditions are impossible to presuppose (e.g., "I promise to do it, and I cannot keep this promise");
- The psychological state is impossible to express (e.g., "I apologize for that course of action which benefited you") [26, pp. 151–152].

Here we have what is probably the most useful instrument for the identification and analysis of illocutionary techniques. Its use, though, obviously requires prior determination of the illocutionary force type of the speech act in question. And so, Searle's taxonomy of illocutionary force – which is derived from the primary criteria of illocutionary point, direction of fit, and expressed psychological state [23] – is also necessary:

Table 1: Searle's Illocutionary Act Taxonomy

	Illocutionary Point	Direction of Fit	Psychological State	Propositional Content
Assertives	Commit speaker to truth of expressed proposition	Word-to-world	Belief	Any proposition
Directives	Attempt by speaker to get hearer to do something	World-to-word	Want, wish, desire	Future act of hearer
Commissives	Commit speaker to some future course of action	World-to-word	Intention	Future act of speaker
Expressives	Express psychological state about a state of affairs	None	Range of different possible states	Some property ascribed to speaker or hearer
Declaratives	Bring a state of affairs into existence by declaring it so	Both	None	Any proposition

Together Searle's taxonomy of illocutionary force, conditions of illocutionary force, and distinction between illocutionary and propositional negation prove of considerable use to the identification and analysis of Dionysian illocutionary techniques.[23]

The most obvious illocutionary technique used by Dionysius to convey the (relative) ineffability of God is a direct assertion that God is ineffable or *hyper* effable. As the previous sentence suggests, this technique comes in two basic forms, each of which possesses variations. The first form, the assertion that God is in some way ineffable, comes in two basic variations. In most cases Dionysius either asserts negative (alpha-prefixed) predicate-terms such as *unnamable* (*anōnymos*), *ineffable* (*arrētos*), *unspeakable* (*aphthegktos*), and *logos-less* (*alogos*) of God (or divine things) or denies positive predicate-terms such as name (*onoma*), speech (*legō*), and logos (*logos*) of God (or divine things).[24] And in a couple of other cases Dionysius denies the methods of position (*thesis*) and removal (*aphairesis*) of God.[25] These illocutionary techniques, especially those that fall in the last chapter of the *Mystical Theology*, play a crucial role in the Dionysius corpus, culminating the *aphairetic* removal of individual divine names by denying "all" *thetic* positioning of and *aphairetic* removing from God whatsoever. But whereas these techniques seem perfectly intelligible and successful on this account, they technically defeat themselves for at least two reasons: their illocutionary points of assertion cannot be achieved on their propositional contents of unassertability, and their preparatory conditions of evidence are impossible to presuppose. The claim that one cannot name and speak about God is itself a naming and speaking of God; the assertion that one cannot assert is itself an assertion; the removal of removal is itself a removal. Thus these propositional contents of unassertability cannot be realized on their illocutionary force of assertion. Moreover, these assertions presuppose evidence for their truth (regardless of whether the speaker is actually in possession of such evidence). But what evidence could one have for the ineffability of something, since all such evidence would require having at least some knowledge about what that thing is (even when that "thing" is no-thing or beyond-things)? The preparatory condition of evidence is therefore impossible to presuppose.[26]

Dionysius' second form of *ineffability assertion* is still more problematic as it is plagued by both of these difficulties as well as a couple of additional complications. Much like the assertion

that God is ineffable, the assertion that God is *hyper* effable can take the form of an assertion that God is *hyper* name or word or speech as well as an assertion that God is *hyper* the methods of position and removal.[27] But it can also take the form of an assertion that God is *hyper-in*effable, an assertion that appears to be at odds with the assertion that God is *hyper*-effable.[28] And on top of this, there is again the problem of determining how to translate and interpret these uses of *hyper*: when Dionysius says that God is *hyper* effability, *hyper* ineffability, and *hyper* both effability and ineffability, does Dionysius mean that God is *beyond in/effability*, *more-in/effable-than-most-in/effable*, or both?

But this added complication, the ambiguity of *hyper*, in fact provides a key to resolving all of these difficulties. To be such a key, though, the full (dual) resonance of *hyper* must be allowed to sound out. This is to say that although it is tempting to interpret these *hyper*-constructions in such a way as to make the Dionysian God beyond effability as exceedingly ineffable, this misses the fact that the Dionysian God is also *beyond ineffability* and *exceedingly effable*. And it also fails to provide a basis for Dionysius' assertion that God is ineffable. Both of these arguments require some explanation. Since the ineffability of something is always relative to some semiotic system in which that thing cannot be said, the ability to know and say that something is ineffable is only possible from the perspective of some other semiotic system.[29] Put in Dionysian terms, if God is ineffable to beings, then this can only be known and said to be the case from some perspective that is not of being. This other perspective, in short, is the humanly (and angelically) unknowable realm of *hyper*-being. Thus Dionysius' assertion that God is *hyper* both effability and ineffability functions on the one hand as indication that God is *beyond* both effability and ineffability, neither effable nor ineffable, from the perspective of being (since in/effability is a category mistake of God). But since this can only be known and said from a *hyper*-being perspective, Dionysius' assertion that God is *hyper* both effability and ineffability must on the other hand serve as pointer to this transcendent mode of "discourse." Here God is transcendently ineffable *qua* transcendently effable, *more-ineffable-than-most-ineffable* as *more-effable-than-most-effable*.[30]

Granted, this is not the simplest of solutions. But it is the only one that provides a ground for Dionysius' claim that God is ineffable, and is therefore the only one that preserves a non-contradictory reading of Dionysius' assertions of unassertability, sayings of unsayabillity, and removals of removal.[31] And it is the only solution that can explain – without resorting to hyperbole – those passages in the Dionysian corpus that speak of God's ineffability as transcendent namability or speakability and ineffable truth or logos.[32]

> For just as intelligible things are incomprehensible and unseen to the senses, and uncompounded and unformed things [are incomprehensible and unseen] to that in shape and form, and the intangible and unstructured formlessness of bodiless things [are incomprehensible and unseen] to that which is formed according to the structure of bodies, then, according to the same analogy of truth, the *hyper*-being infinite lies above beings and the *hyper* mind unity lies above minds. The one *hyper* thought is unthinkable (ἀδιανόητόν) to all thinking, the good *hyper* speech is ineffable (ἄρρητόν) to all speech, *henad* uniting every *henad* and *hyper*-being being and un-intelligible (ἀνόητος) intellect and ineffable (ἄρρητος) speech, speechlessness (ἀλογία) and intellectlessness (ἀνοησία) and namelessness (ἀνωνυμία) and being according to nothing of being and cause of all being, but itself not being as beyond all being so that it alone could properly and scientifically (ἐπιστητῶς) manifest itself about itself (*DN* 1.1, 588B).

> On the one hand, [God is] nameless, since they say the godhead itself, in one of the mystical sights of the symbolic theophany, rebukes him who says "What is thy name?" and, leading him away from all knowledge of the divine names, says "Why do

you ask my name?" and "It is most wondrous." Is not this truly the most wondrous name, "the name *hyper* all," the nameless, the *hyper*-established (ὑπεριδρυμένον) "every name that is named," whether in this age or in the future? (*DN* 1.6, 596A).

For example, this is unified and common to the henarchic trinity with respect to the divine unity *hyper*-beingness: the *hyper*-being subsistence, the *hyper*-divine divinity, the *hyper*-good goodness, the identity beyond all of the whole identity beyond all, the *hyper* unity-source unity, the unspeakable (ἄφθεγκτον), the much-speaking (πολύφωνον), the unknowable, the all-intelligible, the position of all, the removal of all, the *hyper* all position and removal, the remaining and foundation of the henarchic substances in one another (if I may so speak), wholly *hyper*-unified, and in no part comingled, […] (*DN* 2.4, 641A).

[…] it is customary for theologians to negate (ἀποφάσκειν) the things of deprivation (τὰ τῆς στερήσεως) with respect to God in an opposite sense. Thus, scripture calls the all-shining light invisible, and the many-hymned (πολυύμνητον) many-named (πολυώνυμον) ineffable (ἄρρητον) and unnamable (ἀνώνυμον), and that which is present in all things and discoverable from all things incomprehensible and inscrutable. In this way, even now, the divine apostle is said to have hymned as foolishness of God that which appears unreasonable and paradoxical in itself, but which uplifts us to the ineffable truth before all reason (*DN* 7.1, 865BC).

It is also the only solution that resolves the first two illocutionary difficulties encountered above. If the assertion that God is ineffable is made from the perspective of *hyper*-being with respect to the things of being, then its propositional content can be realized on its illocutionary point and its preparatory conditions can be presupposed. God can be known and said to be ineffable in one "language" provided that this ineffability pertains to some other language. Of course, there is problem pertaining to how Dionysius, a being, could know and say that God is ineffable. But here, we can do as Dionysius does and appeal to revelation: Dionysius knows and can therefore say that God is ineffable since this has been revealed to Dionysius by God (through the celestial and ecclesiastical hierarchies by means of a *hyper*-logos "saying").[33] (Note, though, that Dionysius, a being, would not be able to know or say what this means – more on this later).

The Dionysian corpus is not always content simply to assert the ineffability of God. Occasionally Dionysius also directs his reader, or asks God to direct both himself and his reader, to an experience of divine ineffability and unknowability. Such illocutionary acts of *ineffability direction* are quite prevalent in the *Mystical Theology*, which opens by petitioning Trinity to guide Christians "to the *hyper*-unknown (ὑπεράγνωστον) and *hyper*-brilliant highest summit of mystical scripture;" then exhorts its reader, Timothy, both to "leave behind sensible and intellectual activities, all sensible and intelligible things, all non-beings and beings, and unknowingly strive upward, as far as possible, toward the union (ἕνωσιν) of that which is *hyper* all being and knowledge" and to be "purely uplifted (ἀναχθήσον) to the *hyper*-being ray (ἀκτῖνα) of the divine darkness;" and later directs the reader *now* to enter the *hyper* mind darkness of complete logos-less-ness, unknowing, and soundless, and to become "wholly unite to the unspeakable (ἀφθέγκτῳ)" (*MT* 1.1, 997A–1000A; *MT* 3, 1033BC).

If Dionysius' *ineffability assertions* culminate the removal of individual divine names from God, then *ineffability directions* culminate *ineffability assertions*. Here the Dionysian corpus does more than just say that God is ineffable; it realizes ineffability, a state of silent unknowing. As was the case with Dionysius' *ineffability assertions*, however, these *ineffability directions* are ostensibly self-defeating. Since their propositional contents concern states that cannot be said and known, they are inadequate to their illocutionary forces of direction. One cannot be directed to strive toward that

which is essentially unknowable and unsayable. Thus one of the preparatory conditions of these illocutionary acts of direction – ability to undertake the directed action[34] – also cannot be presupposed. One cannot do that which cannot be known and said. Of course, it could be said that such a destination is not unknown to all, that God quite clearly "knows" what happens when one is guided into the divine darkness. And it could also be said that the destination would not itself have to be knowable and sayable (by humans) for the path to it to be effective (for humans). Still, though, there would be, as in the case of *ineffability assertion*, the problem of knowing and saying that some destination is unknowable and unsayable, for if that destination were really unknowable and unsayable then it could not be known and said to be a something that is unknowable and unsayable.

As was the case of *ineffability assertion*, however, a way out of this dilemma lies in Dionysius' use of the term *hyper-unknowable*, which, much like *hyper-ineffable*, registers not only a sense of being *really* unknowable but also a sense of being knowable in a preeminent or transcendent manner.[35] Moreover, this solution is confirmed throughout the *Mystical Theology*, as several other passages reveal the destination of Dionysius' directions to be a state of both unknowing and knowing. The last sentence of chapter one describes it as one of knowing *hyper* mind by knowing nothing:

> And then [Moses] is released from what sees and is seen and enters into the truly mystical darkness of unknowing, in which he shuts out every knowing apprehension and comes into the wholly intangible and invisible, being entirely of that which is beyond everything and nothing, neither himself nor another, united surpassingly (κατὰ τὸ κρεῖττον ἑνούμενος) to the completely unknown by an inactivity of all knowledge, knowing *hyper* mind by knowing nothing (*MT* 1.3, 1000C–1001A).[36]

The final sentence of chapter two describes it as unhiddenly knowing the unknowing that is covered by all the knowledge among beings:

> It is necessary, I think, to hymn the removals oppositely from the positions; for we posit these beginning from the first things and descending through the middle things to the last things; but then we remove everything making the search for the highest principles from the last things, so that we may unhiddenly know this unknowing that is covered by all the knowledge among all beings, and we may see this *hyper*-being darkness that is hidden by all the light among beings (*MT* 2, 1025B).

And the first sentence of chapter two "directs" God to conduct us to the *hyper*-light darkness in which true knowledge of the unknowable God is acquired by not-knowing to know not to know that which is *hyper*-knowledge:

> We pray to come to this *hyper*-light darkness and through not-seeing and not-knowing to see and to know not to see and to know that which is *hyper* sight and knowledge itself – for this is truly seeing and knowing – and [we pray] to hymn *hyper*-beingly the *hyper*-being through the removal of all beings, just as those making a life-like statue lift-out every obstacle to the pure view of the hidden and reveal the hidden beauty in it by the removal alone (*MT* 2, 1025A).

If one takes unknowing and knowing to apply here in the same way and at the same time, these illocutionary acts, whether said with an assertive force or a directive force, are self-defeating. Their propositional contents are contradictory and therefore "inadequate" to their illocutionary forces. And their preparatory conditions – evidence, in the case of assertion; ability, in the case of direction – are therefore impossible to presuppose. But if unknowing and knowing apply to this destination or state in different respects, then the former of these objections disappears: God

transcends all ordinary modes of knowing yet is known through a transcendent mode of knowing; God is unknowable from the perspective of being yet known from the perspective of *hyper*-being. Moreover, if such knowledge about unknowing knowing is not only revealed by God (through the celestial and ecclesiastical hierarchies) but also experientially realized while in a state of unknowing knowing, then the latter of these objections also disappears. And here, unlike the case of *ineffability assertion*, Dionysius, a mere being, could really know and say that God is unknowable and unsayable, having attained to a *hyper*-being perspective from which such things are knowable and sayable. (Dionysius could also therefore know and say that humans can attain to such a state).

Importantly, this solution is reinforced by passages elsewhere in the corpus that show that Dionysius knows quite a lot about the character of silent unknowing knowing. The opening sentences of the *Divine Names* maintains "we are unspeakably and unknowingly conjoined to unspeakable things and unknowable things through a union that is superior to our rational and intellectual power and activity" (*DN* 1.1, 585B–588A). The first *Epistle* confirms this, adding that our knowledge of that which is *hyper* everything known is *hyper-nous* knowledge (which escapes those with knowledge *of being*):

> But God, *hyper*-established *hyper* mind and being, not known and not being in general, is *hyper*-beingly and is known *hyper*-mind. And the surpassingly complete unknowing is a knowledge of that which is *hyper* everything known (*EP* 1, 1065AB).

The fourth *Epistle* adds that those "who see divinely will know *hyper* mind that the affirmations about Jesus' love for humanity have the power of preeminent negation (ὑπεροχικῆς ἀποφάσεως)" (*EP* 4, 1072BC). *Divine Names* 7.3 also identifies unknowing knowing as *hyper-nous* knowledge, going on to specify that *nous* is illumined by the inscrutable depth of wisdom when it stands away from all beings and itself:

> And there is, further, the most divine knowledge of God, which is known through unknowing during the union *hyper* mind, when the mind, having stood apart from all beings, then having given up even itself, is united to the *hyper*-brilliant rays, there illumined by the inscrutable depth of wisdom (*DN* 7.3, 872AB).

And given this standing away, *Divine Names* 7.4 exclaims that what is in fact complete knowledge appears as madness from the perspective of ordinary speech and intellect (*DN* 7.4, 872D).

Moreover, what we see in all these passages is not only a characterization of the state of silent unknowing knowing (as *hyper-nous* knowing) but also an indication of how this state is achieved: one must stand away from all beings and one's mind; one must remove all beings, from last to first; and one must leave behind all sensible and intelligible things. This is the path of *aphairetic* removal, best exemplified in the hymns of *Mystical Theology* 4 and 5, which *qua* hymns most likely served a performative-ritualistic role within the liturgy.[37] The assertive illocutionary acts (removals) of *Mystical Theology* 4 and 5 are therefore best understood as *declarative*-assertives – assertive illocutionary acts that by virtue of their proper performance convey the utterer to a state of silent unknowing knowing.[38] Thus, while *ineffability directions* culminate *ineffability assertions*, serving to direct to a state of ineffability rather than simply asserting ineffability, these *ineffability declarative-assertives* culminate *ineffability directions*, actually producing a state of silent unknowing knowing. That which seems to be a simple series of assertions about God's (relative) ineffability is actually a performative means of creating a state of ineffability in the asserter, of conveying the hymnist or liturgist to a *hyper-ousia* plane from which God's ineffability and unknowability to beings can be known *hyper-nous*.

It is crucial then to bear in mind that the *aphairetic* removals of *Mystical Theology* 4–5 do more than simply remove from God; they also state preeminence. The Dionysian God is more than just ineffable and unknowable – the Dionysian God is *hyper* effable and *hyper* knowable. The

following rule of illocutionary force therefore regulates Dionysius' assertions about God in a manner comparable to the way in which Dionysius' rules of reference and predication regulate Dionysius' naming of God:

- Dionysian Rule of Assertion: God is properly asserted as that which, on the one hand, is ineffable (or beyond the category of in/effability) and unknowable (or beyond the category of un/knowability) from the perspective of being, and on the other hand, preeminently effable (or sayable *hyper-logos*) and preeminently knowable (or knowable *hyper-nous*) from the perspective of *hyper*-being as the *hyper*-being cause of all.

This rule, in conjunction with the above rules of reference and predication, constitute an intra-textual logic or grammar, regulating Pseudo-Dionysius' otherwise antinomian techniques of illocution. The Dionysian corpus is rule-governed at the illocutionary level; the Dionysian God is not therefore absolutely ineffable.

3. Expressions of Inexpressibility above the Speech Act

In this third section of the paper things go a bit differently. The overall goal is that of identifying and analyzing Dionysian expressions of inexpressibility *above the speech act*. But such identification is focused on Dionysian metaphors of ineffability – *metaphors of darkness* and *metaphors of height* – since these metaphors have an internal structure and external interconnection that extends beyond any one speech act. And such analysis is prosecuted by means of the metaphor theory of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson – in particular their notions of gestalt and entailment – since Searle does not offer tools for the analysis of systematically structured and interconnected metaphors. Nevertheless, this section of the paper draws a conclusion similar to those of the previous sections: Dionysian metaphors of ineffability are rule-governed; the Dionysian God is not completely ineffable.

As in the case of Searle's theories of reference and predication, Searle's theory of metaphor is quite elementary: metaphors are cases in which speaker's utterance meaning differs from literal word or sentence meaning; the interpretation of metaphors therefore requires only principles of conversation and rules of speech act theory, the following three of which Searle enumerates:

1. If the utterance is defective if taken literally, look for an utterance meaning that differs from sentence meaning.
2. Whenever you hear "S is P", to find possible values of R [utterance meaning] look for ways in which S [subject expression] might be like P [literal sentence meaning], and to fill in the respect in which S might be like P, look for salient, well known, and distinctive features of P things.
3. Go back to the S term and see which of the many candidates for the values of R are likely or even possible properties of S[39] [23, pp. 105–106].

But here, unlike Searle's theories of reference and predication, simplicity is a vice. To pin metaphorical meaning solely on deviant usage is to fail to appreciate those aspects of signs and sign-systems that make possible metaphorical usage: the richly connotative and deeply embodied nature of signs as well as the systematically structured and intricately interconnected nature of sign-systems. And to limit the interpretation of metaphors to the above principles of conversation and rules of speech act theory is to fail to provide concrete tools for the analysis of systematically structured and interrelated metaphors. This section of the paper therefore turns to the metaphor theory of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, which, despite an overreaching theory of metaphor and uncharitable reading of its opponents, provides such tools.[40]

Lakoff and Johnson make two crucial insights about the embodiment and structure of abstract concepts: humans draw on concrete bodily experience in understanding and expressing abstract concepts, and they do so by systematically structuring abstract concepts in accordance with

bodily experiences. Particularly relevant to the former insight is Lakoff and Johnson's idea of a *primary metaphor*. While all metaphors are "cross-domain mappings" from source domains to target domains, the primary metaphor maps sensorimotor source domains (vehicles) to subjective target domains (tenors), and does so both naturally and unconsciously.[41]This mapping is the result of two processes: an initial conflation of sensorimotor experiences like warmth and subjective judgments like affection such that neural activations of the sensorimotor source network are immediately "projected" to the subjective target network, and a later awareness of and differentiation between these experiences such that sensorimotor concepts can be used to conceptualize and verbalize subjective experiences in absence of their corresponding sensorimotor experiences. These primary metaphors then function as atoms for the molecular *complex metaphor*, which, although not directly grounded in a single sensorimotor experience, receives an indirect grounding through its component primary metaphors.[42] Thus, Lakoff and Johnson believe that "[m]any, if not all, of our abstract concepts are defined in significant part by conceptual metaphor"[43] [15, p. 128].

Even more importantly for the analysis of Dionysian metaphors, Lakoff and Johnson understand abstract concepts to be internally structured and interconnected. This is due to what they call *gestalt* and *entailment*. The former notion, gestalt, refers to the way in which abstract concepts are internally structured into coherent wholes by carrying over the inferential patterns of the source domain into the target domain. Just as some concept itself is understood in terms of some metaphor, so that concept's component parts – e.g., participants, parts, stages, linear sequences, purposes, and causes – are understood in terms of that metaphor's component parts.[44] Thus, if, for example, argument is metaphorized as war, then its participants are metaphorized as adversaries; its parts, as attack and defense; its purpose, as victory. In this way metaphors bestow a complex internal structure upon concepts that reaches far beyond the actual source-target mapping itself. Quite commonly, though, concepts are structured by multiple, apparently inconsistent metaphors.[45] In such cases, these different metaphors will cohere to the degree to which they possess overlapping experiential entailments. The apparently inconsistent metaphors *an argument is a container* and *an argument is a journey*, for example, cohere due to the following overlapping entailments: as one makes an argument, more surface is created; as more surface is created, more ground is covered; as more ground is covered, more content is provided ([14], pp. 93–94). Thus the notion of entailment provides a means of showing how partially inconsistent metaphors to "fit together," even though there is no single image that completely fits them ([14], p. 94).[46] Together these tools are invaluable to the analysis of Dionysian metaphors of ineffability: the notion of gestalt serves as a means of elucidating the internal complexity of such metaphors, while entailment offers a way of reconciling apparent inconsistencies within and between these metaphors by demonstrating their overlapping entailments.[47]

The most common way in which Dionysius metaphorizes divine ineffability and unknowability is by using darkness to symbolize the dwelling place of God. The *Mystical Theology* is rife with such metaphors. Alluding to *Psalms* 18:22, *Mystical Theology* 1.2 asserts that darkness is the hiding place of God (*MT* 1.2, 1000A). *Mystical Theology* 1.3 follows this not only by citing Bartholomew as authority for the claim that the good cause of all is undisguisedly and truly manifested to those who enter "into the darkness where, as the scriptures say, the beyond all truly is," but also by illustrating this claim with the example of Moses, who, after being released from what sees and is seen, "enters into the truly mystical darkness of unknowing" where he is "united surpassingly to the completely unknown" (*MT* 1.3, 1000C, 1001A). And then *Mystical Theology* 2 maintains that the removal of everything yields a seeing of "this *hyper*-being darkness that is hidden by all the light among beings" (*MT* 2, 1025B). These passages draw on the metaphor *unknowing is darkness*, an extension of the primary metaphor *knowing is seeing*, to symbolize the ineffability and unknowability of God as a dwelling in darkness. [15, pp. 53–54, Cf., 8, p. 296] Thus this metaphor – in conjunction with the primary metaphors *states are locations*, *destinations are purposes*, and

means are paths [15, pp. 52–53. Cf., 8, p. 286] – provides a gestalt that structures the complex Dionysian metaphor *God dwells in darkness (into which the seeker of God must enter)* as follows:

Table 2: Gestalt of the Dionysian Metaphor *God Dwells in Darkness*

Participants	Christian as seeker, God as that which is being sought
Parts	Lighted area in which God does not dwell; dark area in which God does dwell
Stages	First seeking for God, then finding God
Linear Sequences	Progressive entry into the divine darkness
Purposes	Finding God by entering into the divine darkness
Causes	Seeker enters into the divine darkness by removing the things of being from God

This metaphor gets much of its force from the fact that it draws on the primary metaphor *knowing is seeing*: since knowledge is (near) universally metaphorized as seeing and sight requires light, darkness is indeed an apt symbol for ignorance. But this metaphor is also apt due to the fact that it highlights an important difference between the metaphorical darkness that hides God and the physical darkness that obscures physical objects: God is not a corporeal object that could be enshrouded in actual darkness.[48]

But there is a tension in this metaphor: on the one hand, God dwells in darkness and is therefore unknowable; on the other hand, the Christian seeker enters into this darkness in order to find God – to be "united surpassingly to the completely unknown by an inactivity of all knowledge," to "unhiddenly know this unknowing that is covered by all the knowledge among all beings," to "see this *hyper*-being darkness that is hidden by all the light among beings." To put this tension in terms of Lakoff and Johnson's metaphor theory, there is an apparent incompatibility between the primary metaphor *knowing is seeing*, which entails that God cannot be known if God cannot be seen, and a cluster of proximity metaphors – *similarity is proximity, intimacy is proximity, knowing is proximity, degree is distance along a path*[49] – which entail that, as the seeker draws close to God, the seeker better knows God. Here we have what initially appears to be an antinomian grammatical technique. One possible way of resolving it is to say that, upon entering into the divine darkness, what the seeker knows about God is that God is unknowable. But this does not do justice to fact that Dionysius describes the divine darkness not as a simple or stark darkness, but as a luminous or *hyper*-light darkness. (And it also does not do justice to the fact that the experience of luminous darkness is a *hyper-nous* knowing). On a number of occasions Dionysius very clearly declares that darkness should not be understood as a privation of light. Darkness, rather, is a preeminence of light. *Epistle* 5, for example, identifies divine darkness with unapproachable light and *hyper*-having brightness:

> The divine darkness (γνόφος) is the "unapproachable light" in which it is said God lives, being invisible through its *hyper*-having brightness (ὑπερέχουσαν φανότητα), and being unapproachable through its *hyper*-throwing of *hyper*-being light-pouring (ὑπερβολὴν ὑπερουσίου φωτοχυσίας). In it enter all who are worthy of knowing and seeing God – not (actually) knowing and seeing God, but truly coming to be in the *hyper* sight and knowledge, knowing this thing, that it is after all perceptible and intelligible things, and saying prophetically, "Knowledge of you is too wonderful for me; it is too high; I cannot attain it." Thus it is said that the divine Paul knew God as *hyper* all intelligence and knowledge. Hence, he says that his ways are inscrutable and "his judgments are

unsearchable," and his gifts are indescribable, and his peace transcends "all understanding," for he found him who is *hyper* all and knew beyond understanding that he is beyond all as the cause of all (*EP* 5, 1073A–1076A).

And *Mystical Theology* 1.1 not only petitions Trinity to guide Christians to the highest summit of mystical *logiōn* that is both *hyper*-unknown and *hyper*-brilliant but also implores Timothy to be uplifted to the *hyper*-being rays of the divine darkness:

> Trinity *hyper*-being and *hyper*-god and *hyper*-good, overseer of Christians in divine wisdom, guide us to the *hyper*-unknown and *hyper*-brilliant (ὑπερφαῆ) highest summit of mystical *logiōn*; there the simple, absolute, and unchanged mysteries of theology are veiled by the *hyper*-light darkness (ὑπέρφωτον γνόφον) of hidden-mystical silence, *hyper*-illuminating the *hyper*-lightest in the darkest (ἐν τῳ σκοτεινοτάτῳ τὸ ὑπερφανέστατον ὑπερλάμποντα) and *hyper*-filling the sightless minds with *hyper*-beautiful beauties in the wholly imperceptible and invisible.
> This is my prayer; and you, dear Timothy, in the earnest study of mystical sights, leave behind sensible and intellectual activities, all sensible and intelligible things, all non-beings and beings, and unknowingly strive upward, as far as possible, toward the unity of that which is *hyper* all being and knowledge. By an undivided and absolute *ecstasis* of yourself and everything, shedding all and freed from all, you will be purely uplifted to the *hyper*-being rays of the divine darkness (τὸν ὑπερούσιον τοῦ θείου σκότους ἀκτῖνα) (*MT* 1.1, 997A–1000A).

And *Mystical Theology* 2 offers a prayer to come to the *hyper*-light darkness:

> We pray to come to this *hyper*-light darkness (ὑπέρφωτον γνόφον) and through not-seeing and not-knowing to see and to know not to see and to know that which is *hyper* sight and knowledge itself – for this is truly seeing and knowing (*MT* 2, 1025A).

Given the above claim that divine darkness is an unapproachable light, these *hyper*-light constructions cannot be read simply as indications that divine darkness is symbolically beyond light. Divine darkness must in some sense also be excessive light. But then both darkness and light would symbolize unknowing.

Another way of attempting to resolve these conflicts, more particularly of explaining the assertion that God dwells in luminous darkness, is to interpret them as paradox. Here, Dionysius could be understood as conveying the super-unknowability of God through the paradoxical conjunction of two conflicting extensions of the basic metaphor *knowing is seeing*: unknowing is excessive darkness, and unknowing is blinding light. (The paradox would be generated by the fact that although both excessive darkness and excessive light prevent seeing, these two states cannot obtain at one and the same time). Here, the Dionysian God would be so unknowable that it dwells in inscrutable darkness and blinding light at one and the same time. But this "solution" fails to take account of Dionysius' claim that true knowledge of God is revealed in such states of luminous darkness, that proximity to God yields "knowledge" of God. A more plausible solution instead takes luminous darkness to be a symbol for *hyper*-mind knowledge of the *hyper*-being God – a transcendent form of knowledge that requires ignorance of the things of being. Thus, whereas simple light stands for knowledge of the things of being and simple darkness signifies ignorance with respect to the things of being, luminous darkness symbolizes both the complete absence of knowledge from the perspective of being and a *hyper*-mind knowledge of the *hyper*-being God. The key to understanding Dionysius' use of metaphors of light and darkness lies therefore in a proper understanding these metaphors' inner complexity. Here, Lakoff and Johnson's notion of gestalt is

again of considerable use, as it shows us precisely where this complexity resides, allowing us to emend our former gestalt as follows:

Table 3: Gestalt of the Dionysian Metaphor *Knowledge of God is Luminous Darkness*

Participants	Christian as seeker, God as that which is being sought
Parts	Lighted area in which God does not dwell, luminously dark area in which God does dwell
Stages	First seeking for God by entering into the divine darkness by removing the (lighted) things of being, then finding God by having the darkness illuminated by God
Linear Sequences	Progressive entry into the divine luminous darkness
Purposes	Finding God in the divine luminous darkness by attaining *hyper-nous* knowledge of God
Causes	Seeker enters into the divine darkness by removing the things of being from God, God illuminates the darkness by bestowing *hyper-nous* knowledge of the divine *hyper*-being

Like the basic metaphor *knowing is seeing*, the Dionysian metaphor *divine knowledge is luminous darkness* possesses two stages: a stage of initial darkness or ignorance, and a state of final illumination or knowledge. But unlike the basic metaphor *knowing is seeing*, the Dionysian metaphor *divine knowledge is luminous darkness* does not present these stages as mutually exclusive. To enter into the light of *hyper*-mind knowing is to remain within the darkness of ignorance of the things of being. To enter into the divine darkness is to be illuminated. The power of this Dionysian metaphor is its ability to do double duty, conveying both states at once.

A second metaphor of divine ineffability, height, is not as common as that of darkness and, moreover, never occurs independently of it. Nevertheless, height is a crucial metaphor for understanding the nature of God in the Dionysian corpus, especially since procession is symbolized as movement down from God, reversion, as movement up to God. But this God that is "up" is metaphorized in two seemingly conflicting ways: both as unknown and as more. As many of the above passages illustrate, the primary metaphor *unknowing is up* is frequently in play in the *Mystical Theology* where it is conjoined with the metaphor *unknowing is darkness*. The opening prayer of the first chapter asks God to guide Christians to "the *hyper*-unknown and *hyper*-brilliant highest summit (ἀκροτάτην κορυφήν) of mystical scripture" where "the simple, absolute, and unchanged mysteries of theology are veiled by the *hyper*-light darkness of hidden silence" (*MT* 1.1, 997AB). Not much later, the first chapter adduces Bartholomew's belief that God is manifested only to those who ascend the holy summit (ἁγίων ἀκροτήτων) and enter the divine darkness (*MT* 1.3, 1000C). And then the first chapter draws to a close by reporting Moses as one who has in fact made such an ascent and entered "the truly mystical darkness of unknowing" (*MT* 1.3, 1000D-1001A). In these passages Dionysius implicitly draws on the basic metaphor *unknowing is up*, which, according to Lakoff and Johnson, has its experiential basis in the fact that it is easier to see and grasp objects that are close to the ground, and is therefore closely related to the operative metaphor in Dionysius' use of darkness as a symbol of divine unknowability, *knowing is seeing*.[50] [15, p. 54] These two metaphors reinforce one another, serving to symbolize God as doubly unknowable (according to the things of being) – unknowable as dwelling not only in impenetrable darkness but also on an inaccessible mountain peak; unknowable, in short, as residing on an

enshrouded summit. The gestalt for this metaphor – *God dwells on an enshrouded summit (up to which the seeker must ascend)* – can be tabulated as follows:

Table 4: Gestalt of the Dionysian Metaphor *God Dwells on an Enshrouded Summit*

Participants	Christian as seeker, God as that which is being sought
Parts	Base of mountain where God does not dwell, enshrouded summit where God dwells
Stages	First seeking, then finding
Linear Sequences	Progressive climbing up the divine mountain
Purposes	Finding God by reaching the enshrouded summit
Causes	Seeker reaches the enshrouded summit by removing the things of being from God

As in the case of *God dwells in darkness*, two things are of note here. This metaphor gets much of its force from the fact that it draws on the primary metaphor *unknowing is up*: since knowledge is (near) universally metaphorized as grasping objects that are close at hand and objects that are up high are not close at hand, height is indeed an apt symbol for ignorance. And this metaphor is also apt due to the fact that it highlights an important difference between the metaphorical height that distances God and physical height that distances physical objects: God is not a corporeal object that could be physically distanced from humans.

There is of course the aforementioned tension at the heart of this metaphor's gestalt: on the one hand, God dwells on an enshrouded summit and is therefore unknowable; on the other hand, the Christian seeker climbs to this divine summit in order to find God. In terms of Lakoff and Johnson's metaphor theory, this is again to say that there is an apparent tension between, in this case, the primary metaphor *unknowing is up*, which entails that God cannot be known if God resides on a mountain summit, and the aforementioned cluster of proximity metaphors, which entail that as the seeker ascends the divine mountain, she draws closer to God thereby better knowing God. But in this case this proximity metaphor cluster is most evident in passages that speak of the removal of divine names from God as an ascent from last things that are least similar to God (in this case perceptible symbols) to first things that are more similar to God (in this case divine names). *Mystical Theology* 2 tells us that whereas the method of *thesis* begins from the first things and descends through the middle things to the last things, the method of *aphairesis* ascends from the last thing to the first things in a search for the highest principles (*MT* 2, 1025B). And *Mystical Theology* 3 uses similar language, adding an example that makes it clear that the first things (e.g., life and goodness, speaking and thinking) are more similar to God, while the last things (e.g., air and stone, drunkenness and anger) are further away from God:

> But why, you may ask, do we begin the divine removal from the last things (ἐσχάτων), having posited the divine positions from the first thing (πρωτίστου)? [The reason is] that [when] positing that which is *hyper* all position it is necessary to posit the hypothetical affirmation from the more akin to it (τοῦ μᾶλλον αὐτῷ συγγενεστέρου); but [when] removing that which is *hyper* all removal [it is necessary] to remove from the farthest away from it (τῶν μᾶλλον αὐτοῦ διεστηκότων). Is it not life and goodness more than air and stone? And [is it not] more not drunkenness and not anger than not speaking and not thinking? (*MT* 3, 1033CD).

In these passages *up* signifies not (only) God's ineffability and unknowability but (also) divine names that are more and more similar to God. As one climbs the divine mountain, one removes divine names that are more and more similar, thereby getting closer to closer to God. But this would seem to make no sense! If these divine names are more and more accurate, how can the removal of them from God bring us closer and closer to God? Is this again an antinomian grammatical technique, the clashing of two different logics of transcendence?

Of course, we have already seen how this apparent inconsistency is resolved in the case of divine names: the God that is *not-dn* from the perspective of being is *more-dn-than-most-dn* from the perspective of *hyper*-being (*qua* precontaining both the divine names themselves and the properties they source in a manner that is *hyper*-unified and *hyper*-existent). The removal of divine names from God reveals their preeminence, thereby drawing us closer and closer to the *hyper-being* God. The ascent to God is therefore at one and the same time an ascent into darkness with respect to the things of being and an illumination of the *hyper*-being God. What remains to be shown, however, is how these contrasting uses of height are resolved at the metaphorical level. Here, it is crucial to see that height is a metaphor that serves to symbolize not only divine unknowability but also divine preeminence. In the above passages from *Mystical Theology* Dionysius draws the primary metaphor *more is up*, which has its experiential basis in "the observation of rising and falling levels of piles and fluids as more is added or subtracted" (as well as the primary metaphor *good is up*, which assigns a positive valence to such rising piles and fluids).[51][15, p. 51] Now, it would seem that this is in contradiction with the primary metaphor *unknowing is up*.[52] One and the same thing cannot be both unknowably removed and preeminently superabundant. But, as has been shown in the preceding chapters, this is just what the Dionysian corpus says. And here it is the metaphor of height that gives semantic expression to this theological claim, doing double duty by signifying not only God's utter unknowability (according to the things of being) but also God's preeminent superabundance. Thus, we can emend our earlier gestalt as follows:

Table 5: Gestalt of the Dionysian Metaphor *God is Up and More*

Participants	Christian as seeker, God as that which is being sought
Parts	Base of mountain where God does not dwell, enshrouded summit where God does dwell
Stages	First seeking for God by climbing up the mountain by removing the things of being, then finding God on the mountain as that which is *hyperbeingly* preeminent
Linear Sequences	Progressive climbing up the divine mountain
Purposes	Finding God by climbing to the enshrouded summit where God is revealed as *hyperbeingly* preeminent
Causes	Seeker reaches the enshrouded summit by removing the things of being from God, after which God is revealed as *hyperbeingly* preeminent

Here, two things should be mentioned. Firstly, Dionysian metaphors of height more or less coincide with Dionysian metaphors of light: on the one hand, the metaphors *unknowing is up* and *unknowing is darkness* symbolize God as unknowable according to the things of being; on the other hand, the metaphors *more is up* and *knowing is light* symbolize God as *hyper-nous* knowable in *hyper-being* preeminence. Secondly, it is the enshrouded divine mountain, Dionysius' favorite example of both height and light, that serves as a common entailment between these otherwise

conflicting metaphors: mountain peaks make outstanding examples of the unknown, especially when they are enshrouded in dark clouds that obscure vision of them from the bottom; in ascending a mountain one ascends over more and more of the mountain, thereby getting closer and closer to the "unknown" summit; but upon reaching the summit, one sometimes finds it penetrated by the light of the sun.

There is therefore a logic or rule to Dionysius' application of metaphors to God. Such metaphors must be able to do double duty, conveying not only the ineffability and unknowability of God with respect to the things of being but also the *hyper-nous* knowing of the *hyper-ousia* God that is the cause of all things of being.

- Dionysian Metaphor Rule: God is properly metaphorized as that which is both ineffable and unknowable from the perspective of being and preeminently effable and knowable from the perspective of *hyper*-being.

As in the cases of reference, predication, and illocution, this rule constitutes an intra-textual logic or grammar, regulating Pseudo-Dionysius' otherwise antinomian techniques of symbolization. This rule therefore shows that the Dionysian God is not absolutely ineffable.

But the symbol of the divine mountain serves as more than just a harmonizing entailment of Dionysian metaphors of height and light; it generates a *story of ascent* that offers a "narrative isotopy" for the entire Dionysian corpus.[53] As the Christian climber ascends the divine mountain, removing more and more things of being from God, she progressively enters into the unknowing darkness – a state in which nothing of being can be said or known about God. But upon arrival at the summit of the enshrouded divine mountain, the Christian climber "knows" God *hyper-nous* as the *hyper-ousia* cause of all things, a cause that precontains its effects in a manner that is *hyper*-existent and *hyper*-unified. This is the narrative isotopy of the Dionysian corpus, a single story that makes possible a uniform reading of the corpus, reconciling not only these metaphors of darkness and height but also the other grammatical techniques considered above: *hyper*-names, negation, ineffability assertion, and ineffability direction. This isotopy constitutes a textual narrative, regulating all of Dionysius' techniques of ineffability. This isotopy therefore shows that the Dionysian God is not absolutely ineffable.

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Notes

1. The Dionysian corpus is composed of four treatises – *Celestial Hierarchy* (*CH*), *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* (*EH*), *Divine Names* (*DN*), and *Mystical Theology* (*MT*) – and ten epistles (*EP*). Although its author claimed to be the first-century Dionysius whom the book of Acts reports converting to Christianity after hearing the apostle Paul's sermon about the unknown God at the Areopagus in Athens (*Acts* 17:34), contemporary scholarship has definitely dated this unknown author's work to the early-sixth century and conclusively established its dependence on both late Neoplatonic and Patristic texts and motifs. Due to the literal inaccuracy of Colm Luibheid's Paulist Press translation of the Dionysian corpus, I have translated all quoted passages from the Dionysian corpus directly from the critical edition of the Dionysian corpus. See [21], [19], [20].

2. *Absolute ineffability* applies to that about which nothing can be said (except, perhaps, that it is ineffable). As soon as that something gets identified or predicated or asserted or metaphorized as a certain something (e.g., a *hyper*-being cause) or as doing a certain something (e.g., causing all things), it ceases to be absolutely ineffable. To provide the rules that govern such identifying or predicating or asserting or metaphorizing is

therefore to show how that which is so identified or predicated or asserted or metaphorized is not absolutely ineffable.

3. Although an account of singular definite referring expressions is avowedly "incomplete," Searle believes it constitutes a necessary point of origin for other kinds of referring expressions (p. 72).

4. If I had the space here, I would side with Searle against his causal-theory opponents: not only do the causal critiques of descriptivism fail to hit their mark, but the causal theory of reference in fact depends upon and therefore is a type of descriptive theory of reference. But this hardly matters for the sake of an analysis of referring expressions *in texts* since such an analysis can only proceed by way of the analysis of identifying descriptions. Put differently, textual identifying descriptions are linguistic-empirical phenomena that may be identified and analyzed using concrete tools, whereas casual "connection" is not (unless it is rendered in terms of possession and provision of identifying descriptions, which is to confirm Searle's claim that the causal-historical theory of reference is just a variant form of the descriptive theory of reference. See [24], pp. 244–246.

5. A quick preliminary issue is first in order: since every identifying description serves not only to pick out a referent but also to raise the question of the truth of itself of the referent, and since every predication serves not only to raise the question of the truth of itself of the referent but also to pick out the referent, referential and predicative techniques will be considered at one and the same time.

6. A Thesaurus Linguae Graecae search reveals 728 total occurrences of *hyper* in the Dionysian corpus, 559 of which are *hyper*-prefixed terms. Much less frequent are the preposition *epekeina* (22 occurrences) and the comparative *kreitton* (22 occurrences).

7. Very similarly, the spatial direction of *up* has two different metaphorical applications in everyday discourse, as it is used to convey both a sense of *more* and a sense of *unknown*. According to Lakoff and Johnson, these two metaphors – *more is up* and *unknown is up* – have very different experiential bases: the former, that of observing rising and falling levels of piles and fluids; the latter, that of finding it easier to grasp something and look at it if it is on the ground. See [14], p. 21; [15], pp. 51, 54. For Dionysius' use of height as a metaphor for divine transcendence, see section III below.

8. I've gone with some of the more standard translations of *hyperbolē* (excess), *hyperexō* (preeiminence), and *hyperairō* (exceeding) here. But note that if the *hyper* prefix is retained on each of these terms, they translate, respectively, more like *hyper*-throwing, *hyper*-having, and *hyper*-raising.

9. See, for example, [4].

10. In translating from the Dionysian corpus, I translate *aphairesis* as *removal* and *apophasis* as *negation*, as seems to be common translational practice outside of Dionysian studies. (Note that the Paulist Press translation translates *aphairesis* as *denial*; this, however, does not properly preserve the semantic distinction between *aphairesis* and *apophasis*.) But in my own prose I leave the Greek term *apophasis* un-translated so that the English term *negation* can function inclusively of both *apophasis* and *aphairesis*. For stylistic ease, I also sometimes translate *aphairesis* as *removal* in my own prose.

11. The register of Greek terms in the critical edition of the Dionysian corpus lists twenty-six occurrences of ἀφαίρεσις/ἀφαιρέω and eight occurrences of ἀπόφασις/ἀποφάσκω. A Thesaurus Linguae Graecae search reveals an additional adjectival appearance of *apophasis* (ἀποφατικαῖς, at *CH* 2.3, 140D).

12. According to Aristotle, both infinite or indefinite names (e.g., not-wise) and alpha privatives (e.g., wise-less or un-wise) are instances of predicate-term negation. See Aristotle's *Categories* 11b17ff, 11b38ff, 13b12ff; *On Interpretation* 19b20ff, 20a31ff; and *Prior Analytics* 51b5ff. See also [10], pp. 6–21, 102–103, 110.

13. Note that it is the individual who sees divinely *hyper*-mind who knows this. More will be said about such *hyper-nous knowing* in the next two sections.

14. See my paper "Not Not" for the claims that (1) *aphairesis* is properly contrasted with *thesis* as the difference between a method that removes properties from God and a method that posits properties of God, and (2a) *apophasis* is properly contrasted *syntactically* with *kataphasis* as the difference between a negative predicate-term and a positive predicate-term, and (2b) *semantically* with *sterēsis* as the difference between a negative predicate-term that signifies excess and a negative predicate-term that signifies lack [12]. This is how I render these distinctions in tabular form:

	Method	Logic
Positive	*Thesis*: the position of a positive (*kataphatic*) predicate-term of God (e.g., God is wise)	*Kataphasis*: a positive predicate-term (e.g., wise)
Negative	*Aphairesis*: the removal of a negative (*apophatic*) predicate-term from God (e.g., God is not-wise)	*Apophasis*: a negative predicate-term of excess (e.g., not-wise *qua hyper* wise)
		Sterēsis: a negative predicate-term of lack (e.g., not-wise *qua* lacking wisdom)

15. *MT* 2, 1025AB. Here are two other pieces of evidence in support of my claim that *aphairetic* removal discloses divine preeminence. First, Dionysius' discussion of the two ways of approaching God at *Divine Names* 7.3 combines *aphairesis* and *hyperochē* in one and the same way (contrasting it to the way of causation):

> It is never true to say that we know God in its nature since this is unknown and *hyper*-raised (ὑπεραῖρον) all reason and intellect; but rather out of the order of all beings as projected out of it and as having some likenesses and similarities to its divine paradigms, we approach, as far as we have power, to that which is beyond (ἐπέκεινα) all by a way and order in the removal (ἀφαιρέσει) and *hyper*-having (ὑπεροχν) of all, and in the cause of all. Therefore God is known in all and apart (χωρὶς) from all (*DN* 7.3, 869D–872A).

In this passage Dionysius says that one of the two ways of approaching God not only removes properties of God but also interprets these removed properties *hyperochically* (rather than *steretically*). He says that *aphairesis* itself states preeminence. Thus he effectively says that removed properties should be interpreted *apophatically*.

Second, Dionysius twice conjoins the terms *aphairesis* and *hyperochē* together in the phrase *hyperochē aphairesis*.

> It is permissible for no one who is a lover of the truth *hyper* all truth to hymn the thearchic *hyper*-beingness – whatever is the *hyper*-subsistence (ὑπερύπαρξις) of the *hyper*-goodness – as word, power, mind, life, or being, but as *hyper*-havingly removed (ὑπεροχικῶς ἀφςρημένην) from all condition, motion, life, imagination, opinion, name, word, thinking, intellection, being, rest, foundation, unity, limit, non-limit, and whatever else has being (*DN* 1.5, 593C).

> As we showed in the *Theological Outlines* with many examples from the sacred writings, the things unified of the whole divinity are the *hyper*-good, the *hyper*-god, the *hyper*-being, the *hyper*-life, and the *hyper*-wise and whatever else is of the *hyper*-having removal (τῆς ὑπεροχικῆς ἐστιν ἀφαιρέσεως) […] (*DN* 2.3, 640B).

In these passages Dionysius indicates that *aphairesis* states *hyperochic* preeminence. To remove from God condition, motion, and life is to interpret these properties *hyperochically*, just as to name God as *hyper*-good, *hyper*-god, and *hyper*-being is implicitly to remove these names (in their non *hyper*-prefixed form) with respect to being. To *aphairetically* remove in a *hyperochic* manner is therefore to remove *apophatically*.

16. It is also so since Dionysius uses *hyperochē* ambiguously. See, for example, *DN* 12.4, 972AB; *DN* 11.1, 949AB; *EP* 5, 1073A; *EP* 9.5, 1112C; *CH* 13.4, 304C; *DN* 7.1, 865B.

17. For Dionysius' claim that causes do not participate in their effects, see *DN* 2.8, 645D; *DN* 4.7, 701C–704A; *DN* 9.6, 913CD. (Note, though, that *DN* 2.6, 644BC indicates that divine names themselves give themselves whole and the same to that which participates in them.). And here are Dionysius' terminological varieties of precontainment: *pro-hyparxis* (*DN* 4.10, 708B); *pro-hypostasis* (*DN* 1.4, 592D; *DN* 4.7, 704A; *DN* 4.12, 709D; *DN* 5.5, 820B; *DN* 5.6, 820D; *DN* 5.8, 824C, *DN* 6.3, 857B; *DN* 7.2, 869B); *pro-(en)eimi* (*DN* 2.8, 645D; *DN* 4.14, 712C; *DN* 5.5, 820A; *DN* 5.5, 820B; *DN* 5.8, 821D; *DN* 5.8, 824A; *EP* 9.5, 1112C), *pro-echō* (*DN* 1.6, 596B; *DN* 2.10, 648C; *DN* 4.6, 701B; *DN* 4.7, 704A; *DN* 5.5, 820B; *DN* 5.8, 824B; *DN* 5.9, 825A; *DN* 5.10, 825B; *DN* 7.2, 869B; *DN* 8.2, 889D; *DN* 8.6, 893C; *DN* 9.4, 912C; *DN* 13.1, 977B), *prolambanō* (*DN* 1.4,

593A; *DN* 1.5, 593A; *DN* 1.7, 597A; *DN* 4.12, 709B; *DN* 5.4, 817D; *DN* 5.8, 824B; *DN* 5.8, 824C; *DN* 7.2, 869A; *DN* 7.2, 869B; *DN* 7.4, 872C; *DN* 9.10, 917A; *DN* 13.3, 980B).

18. When Dionysius needs to differentiate between divine names *qua* causes and divine names *qua* effects, he does it the way any good Platonist would – by *auto*-prefixing the divine names *qua* causes (see, for example, *DN* 2.8, 645CD; *DN* 5.5, 820B; *DN* 5.5, 820BC; *DN* 11.6, 953C–956B). In fact, Dionysius sometimes employs three different grammatical devices to designate three different respects of divine names: divine names are prefixed with *hyper* (beyond) to refer to them as they are precontained in and substanced out of God prior to or independent of their causal roles; they are prefixed with *auto* (itself) to refer to them as causes apart from the participation of beings in them; and they are suffixed with *ōsis* (making) – or, less frequently, *poiēsis* (producing), *gonos* (begetting), or *dōros* (giving) – to refer to them as they actually flow forth to participating beings. *DN* 11.6 is the most sustained treatment of these distinctions. But for passages that auto-prefix divine names, see also *DN* 2.1, 636C; *DN* 2.8, 645D; *DN* 4.16, 713C; *DN* 4.21, 724C; *DN* 5.5, 820ABC; *DN* 6.1, 825C; *DN* 6.1, 856B; *DN* 6.2, 856C; *DN* 6.3, 857C; *DN* 7.1, 865B, 868A; *DN* 8.2, 889D; *DN* 9.6, 916A; *DN* 9.10, 917A; *DN* 11.2, 949C. And for passages that refer to particular divine names as the sources or causes of particular properties, see also *DN* 4.1, 693B; *DN* 4.4, 697CD; *DN* 4.7, 701C; *DN* 4.12, 709CD; *DN* 5.1, 816B; *DN* 5.2, 816C; *DN* 6.3, 857B; *DN* 7.1, 868A; *DN* 8.7 83D–896A; *DN* 8.9, 896D; *DN* 9.6, 913D; *DN* 9.8, 916B; *DN* 10.3, 940A; *DN* 11.1, 948D–949A; *DN* 12.4, 972AB; *DN* 13.2, 977C–980A. And for other uses of *ōsis*-, *poiēsis*-, *gonos*-, and *dōros*-suffixed divine names, see also *DN* 2.4, 640D; *DN* 2.5, 641D–644B; *DN* 2.7, 645A; *DN* 2.11, 649AB, 652A; *DN* 4.7, 701C; *DN* 11.6, 956AB.

19. Plenty of passages attribute causal activity of the Dionysian God. Consider, for example, the following four: *CH* 4.1, 177C declares that the *hyper*-being thearchy hypostatizes the beings of all beings, bringing them into being; *EH* 3.III.4, 429C says sacred scripture teaches, among other things, the generated constitution and order of things from God; *DN* 1.3, 589C, "speaking simply," asserts that God is the source and cause of every life and being; and *DN* 8.2, 889D–892A makes it clear that even though God is in some sense before and beyond power, God is still the cause of every power. Moreover, not a single passage denies causal activity of the Dionysian God. Not even in the concluding chapters of the *Mystical Theology* (chs. 4–5), wherein Dionysius removes every ostensibly conceivable property from God, does Dionysius remove from God any variation of *aitia* (cause), *archē* (source/principle), *hypostasis* (substance, give substance to), or *hyparxis* (constitute, make subsist). In fact, all the properties that are removed in these chapters are removed from a God that is said to be at once "cause of all and being *hyper* all." Further, even when *Divine Names* 1.5 predicates thearchy itself as *hyper-hyparxis*, it goes on to say that this *hyper-hyparxis thearchy* is the *hyparxis* of goodness and *hypostasis* of the whole (*DN* 1.5, 593CD). And further still, although nine passages in the corpus prefix *archē* with *hyper* (*DN* 1.3, 589D; *DN* 4.10, 708A; *DN* 11.6, 953D–956A; *CH* 1.2, 121B; *CH* 7.4, 212C; *CH* 9.1, 257B; *CH* 10.1, 273A; *CH* 13.4, 304C; *EP* 2, 1069A), none calls into doubt the claim that God is cause and source of all (and all but one employ some variation of the phrase *hyper-source source*, thereby suggesting that the *hyper*-being God is a source that is preeminent to ordinary sources, i.e., a *hyper*-being source).

20. When Dionysius does remove divine names from God in *Mystical Theology* 5, what he removes is only the properties that the divine names themselves source, not the divine names themselves. This is so for three reasons. Syntactically, these terms are not *auto*-prefixed (as divine names themselves often are). Semantically, these terms are referred to as "beings" (and therefore cannot refer to divine names themselves, which are *hyper* being), and also seem to be of a similar logical type as the perceptible symbols removed in the preceding chapter (which, unlike divine names, do not possess a causal respect). And logically, as mentioned above, if divine names themselves are removed from God then causality itself must be removed from God; but causality itself is not removed from God; so the divine names themselves cannot be removed from God.

21. Laurence Horn, explicating the position of Otto Jespersen, provides the following example of an excluded non-middle: If someone believes that *War and Peace* is an excellent book, she may in certain circumstances deny both that *War and Peace* is a good book (since it is more than just good) and that *War and Peace* is not a good book (since it is not a bad book) [10], p. 204. See here Horn's treatment of scalar predication (pp. 204–267). But note that Horn believes scalar predicates are pragmatically, not semantically, ambiguous – i.e., in certain contexts they can be used to mean "exactly *p*" rather than "at least *p*" (pp. 243, 250, 266–267).

22. Another way of understanding *hyperochē* mind is as *mind hyper being* (or *hyper-being mind*, or *hyper-mind mind*, or *mind hyper-mind* – Dionysius uses all such combinations). It's not surprising, then, to find Dionysius not only making frequent and key use of the adverb *hyperbeingly* and the formula *hyper-dn dn* (e.g., *hyper-being being*, *goodness hyper-good*) but also objecting to the application of things of being both to the divine names themselves and to the persons of the Trinity. For uses of *hyperbeingly*, see *DN* 1.3, 589C; *DN* 2.10,

648CD; *DN* 2.11, 649BCD; *DN* 4.7, 704B; *DN* 5.8, 824AB; *DN* 9.8, 916B; *DN* 11.6, 953C; *DN* 13.3, 980BC; *DN* 13.3, 980D–981A; *CH* 7.4, 212D; *CH* 9.4, 261D; *MT* 1.2, 1000A; *EP* 1, 1065A; *EP* 4, 1072AB. For uses of *hyper-dn dn* formulas, see *DN* 1.1, 588B; *DN* 1.3, 589C; *DN* 2.4, 641A; *DN* 2.11, 649C; *DN* 4.7, 704A; *DN* 5.1, 816B. And for objections to the application of things of being to that which is *hyper* being, see the following: *DN* 2.7, 645AB; *DN* 7.1, 865C–868A; *DN* 7.3, 869C–872A; *DN* 11.1, 949AB; *DN* 13.3, 981A; *MT* 1.1, 997B–1000A; *MT* 1.2, 1000AB; *CH* 2.3, 140D–141A; *CH* 13.4, 261C; *MT* 2, 1025AB; *EP* 1, 1065AB; *EP* 5, 1073A–1076A.

23. If space permitted, I would argue on behalf of a modified-Searlean fourfold typology of illocutionary force, one that recognizes (1) that assertives *as well as expressives* possess a word-to-"world" direction of fit and therefore have their foundation in the intentional state of perception, (2) that directives and commissives have a world-to-word direction of fit and therefore have their foundation in the intentional state of action, and (3) that expressives and commissives both concern the self whereas assertives and directives both concern the world/other; and (4) that declaratives do not constitute a distinct type (but rather function as a subtype of each of the four main types). This is how I render this typology in tabular form:

	Target = external/other	**Target = internal/self**
Fit = word-to-"world"	Assertive	Expressive
Fit = world-to-word	Commissive	Directive

24. The critical edition of the Dionyaisn corpus lists 6 occurrences of *nameless* (*DN* 1.1, 588B; *DN* 1.6, 596A (3 occurrences); *DN* 1.7, 596 C; *DN* 7.1, 865C), 11 occurrences of *unspeakable* (*DN* 1.1., 585B (2 occurrences); *DN* 2.4, 641A; *DN* 2.5, 641D; *DN* 2.10, 648D; *DN* 2.10, 649A; *DN* 6.3, 857B; *DN* 8.2, 892A; *DN* 11.1, 949B;*CH* 4.4, 181B; *MT* 3, 1033C), and 21 occurrences of *ineffable* (*DN* 1.1, 588B (2 occurrences); *DN* 1.3, 589B; *DN* 1.4, 592A; *DN* 1.5, 593B; *DN* 2.6, 644C; *DN* 2.9, 648A; *DN* 2.10, 648D; *DN* 3.3, 684B; *DN* 5.1, 816B; *DN* 7.1, 865C (2 occurrences); *DN* 11.5, 953B; *DN* 13.3, 981A; *CH* 2.3, 141A; *CH* 15.9, 340A; *EH* 2.I, 392B; *EH* 2.III.8, 404D; *EH* 4.III.10, 484A; *EP* 3, 1069B; *EP* 9.1, 1105D. A Thesaurus Linguae Graecae search confirms these and also finds 27 occurrences of *logos-less* (*alogos*).

25. Both cases occur at *MT* 5, 1048AB.

26. Perhaps then their psychological conditions are also impossible to express since expression of one's belief in the ineffability of God would require being able to identify God in some way.

27. There are four occurrences of *hyper position and removal* in the Dionysian corpus: *DN* 2.4, 641B; *MT* 1.2, 1000B; *MT* 3, 1033CD; *MT* 5, 1048A–1048B.

28. The register of the critical edition of the Dionysian corpus lists 4 instances of *hyper*-ineffable (*hyperarrētos* – *DN* 1.4, 592D; *DN* 2.4, 640D; *CH* 13.4, 304C; *EP* 7.2, 1080C).

29. See here especially [9] and [18].

30. Even better, the *hyper*-being God is (a) sayable *qua* being through the "position of all" the properties that the divine names themselves source; (b) unsayable *qua* being through the "removal of all" the properties that the divine names themselves source; and (c) sayable *hyper* being as the *hyper*-existent and *hyper*-unified divine names themselves, which are "*hyper* all position and removal" insofar as position and removal are of things of being. And note that this saying *hyper* being is, technically speaking, not a saying at all, since all saying is of things of being. Thus it is a silent saying, a saying beyond *logos* (e.g., *MT* 3, 1033BC; *DN* 1.3, 589AB). Still, it is a communicative something that makes possible the transmission of *hyper-nous* knowledge of divine things.

31. Another, initially plausible solution is that of taking Dionysius' ineffability assertions as second-order assertions about first-order assertions about God. One problem with this solution, though, is that it renders God in some small way effable from the perspective of being. Another problem with this solution is that it fudges passages that indicate that the *hyper*-being God is both ineffable and transcendently effable.

32. In addition to the passages quoted below, see *MT* 1.3, 1000C; and *DN* 13.3, 981AB.

33. A good many of the passages that speak of God as ineffable or unknowable explicitly state not only that such ineffability-unknowability is due, at least in part, to human limitation but also that it can be – indeed, is – overcome through divine revelation through the celestial and ecclesiastical hierarchies. This is a common motif in the opening chapter of the *Divine Names*, a chapter that is often said to concern the problem of naming an utterly ineffable and unknowable God. Instead, Dionysius indicates right from the get-go not only that ineffable-unknowable things may be known through divine revelation but also that they are so known in a state of union that surpasses our ordinary rational and intellectual powers.

And now, O blessed one, after the *Theological Outlines* I will proceed to the explication of the divine names as far as I am able. And now let the law of the scriptures, which limits us beforehand, bind us fast to the truth of what is said about God, "not in persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration" of the spirit-moved "power" of the theologians, by which we are unspeakably (ἀφθέγκτως) and unknowingly (ἀγνώστως) conjoined to unspeakable things (ἀφθέγκτοις) and unknowable things (ἀγνώστοις) through a union (ἕνωσιν) that is superior (κατὰ τὴν κρείττονα) to our rational and intellectual power and activity (*DN* 1.1, 585B–588A).

The second paragraph of *Divine Names* 1.1 then picks up and develops these themes.

Therefore, in general one must dare neither to say nor, indeed, to conceive anything about the *hyper*-being and hidden divinity over and above that which has been divinely revealed to us in the sacred scriptures. For one must attribute to the *hyper*-beingness unknowing (which is *hyper* speech and mind and being) the *hyper*-being science (ἐπιστήμην), looking up to this great height as much as the ray of the thearchic scriptures gives itself, drawn together to the higher splendors by temperance and piety for the divine things. For if one must trust the all-wise and most-true theology, the divine things are revealed and contemplated, according to the analogy of each of the minds, of the thearchic goodness, which divinely distributes the immeasurable (as that which cannot be contained) in saving justice of those things that are measured (*DN* 1.1, 588A).

Here we are first told that the *hyper*-being and hidden divinity has been revealed in the sacred scriptures, but that we are not to say or conceive anything about it over and above this revelation. Then we are told that we must attribute to this *hyper*-beingness unknowing, which is *hyper* speech and mind and being, a *hyper*-being science (*epistēmē*). Clearly, then, the fact that God is a *hyper*-being and hidden divinity, a *hyper*-beingness unknowing *hyper* logos and intellect and being, is not the end of the story for human knowability and effability about God. For this *hyper*-being and hidden divinity is revealed in the sacred scriptures, which are a *hyper*-being "science" of divine things. And it is revealed, as the last sentence tells us, in accordance with the analogical position of our intellect. Although humans cannot know the *hyper*-being God through their natural rational-intellectual powers, they can know God in divine revelation by means of power that exceeds these powers. See the rest of *Divine Names* 1, especially *DN* 1.2 and 1.4, for more.

34. The preparatory conditions of a direction are two: (1) Hearer is able to do the action, and speaker believes the hearer is able to do the action; (2) It is not obvious to both speaker and hearer that hearer will do the action in the normal course of events of the speaker's own accord [25], p. 66.

35. The register of the critical edition of the Dionysian corpus lists 4 instances of *hyper*-unknowable (*hyperagnōstos* – *DN* 1.4, 592D; *DN* 1.5, 593B; *DN* 2.4, 640D; *MT* 1.1, 997A). Thesaurus Linguae Graecae reveals an additional occurrence of *hyperagnotatēs* at *CH* 10.3, 273C. Note that Dionysius never says that God is *hyper* not-removal or not-position.

36. See the discussion of *MT* 1.3's phrase "according to what is greater" in [7]. For sources that identify the reference of this phrase with a certain *hyper-nous* faculty in humans, see also [28], [22], [1].

37. For my argument that the hymns of the *Mystical Theology* probably served a theurgical role in the liturgy, see my forthcoming paper [13]. And for more on hymns as theurgic devices, see [27].

38. Consider here the uses of *now* in *MT* 3, 1033BC:

I think you have noticed how the last things are more wordy than the first things; for it is necessary that the *Theological Outlines* and the unfolding of the *Divine Names* are less wordy than the *Symbolic Theology*. Since the more we look upward, the more words are constricted by the synopsis of the intelligibles; just as *now*, entering into the *hyper* mind darkness, we will find not few-words but rather complete a-logos and unknowing. Descending from what is above to the last things, the logos widens according to the measure of the descent with analogical multitude/number. But *now*, ascending from what is below to that which *hyper*-lies, [the logos] is shortened according to the measure of ascent and, after all ascent, is wholly soundless and wholly united to the unspeakable.

39. Although Searle believes there is no "algorithm" for calculating the value of a metaphorical utterance (p. 149), he does provide eight "principles" for computing metaphorical meaning, six of the more notable of which

follow: (1) Things which are P are by definition R; (2) Things which are P are contingently R; (3) Things which are P are often said or believed to be R; (4) Things which are P are not R, nor are they like R things, nor are they believed to be R; nonetheless it is a fact about our sensibility, whether culturally or naturally determined, that we just do perceive a connection, so that P is associated in our minds with R; (5) P things are not like R things, and are not believed to be like R things; nonetheless the condition of being P is like the condition of being R; (6) There are cases where P and R are the same or similar in meaning, but were one, usually P, is restricted in its application, and does not literally apply to S (pp. 107–112).

40. Lakoff and Johnson speak of metaphors as conventionally fixed means of understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another, they use the term quite broadly, denying any substantial difference between novel and lexicalized metaphors [15, 66–70]. It is here that Lakoff and Johnson's work is at its weakest as it fails to give an adequate explanation of the production and comprehension of novel, complex metaphors (as well as the lexicalization of novel metaphors).

41. Thus although Lakoff and Johnson do not think that primary metaphors are innate, they do state that there appears to be "at least several hundred such widespread, and perhaps universal, metaphors" [15, p. 57].

42. Complex metaphors are also composed of "commonplace knowledge" (cultural beliefs, empirical facts, etc.) [15], p. 60.

43. According to Lakoff and Johnson, abstract concepts have two parts: "(1) an inherent, literal, nonmetaphorical skeleton, which is simply not rich enough to serve as a full-fledged concept; and (2) a collection of stable, conventional metaphorical extensions that flesh out the conceptual skeleton in a variety of ways (often inconsistently with one another)" (p. 128).

44. Lakoff and Johnson speak instead of the "natural dimensions" of human experience, which, in the case of concepts pertaining to action, activity, event, and experience are the "component parts" listed above [14, p. 176].

45. In fact, Lakoff and Johnson believe that most concepts require multiple metaphorical structurings insofar as no one metaphor is extensive and supple enough to "do the job" [14, p. 95].

46. And when two different metaphors do not possess overlapping entailments, "mixed metaphors" result (p. 95).

47. This said, a couple of caveats are in order. First, in referring to these concepts or predicates as *metaphors*, I want to be clear that I do so in the Lakoff-Johnsonian sense of cross-domain mappings that employ direct sensorimotor experiences (darkness, height) to conceptualize and speak about subjective experiences (unknowing) or abstract concepts (God); put differently, these mappings are semiotically codified; they constitute (in most cases) conventionally-established, literally-coded meanings of their respective terms (even if not their primary or original meanings), not novel metaphors. Second, if we are to speak about these conventionalized, cross-domain mappings as *metaphors*, we must be careful not to think that they do not make (literal) truth-claims about their subjects. It is hard to know how to read Lakoff and Johnson on this point: although they oppose the reduction of metaphors to literal language, the fact that they map a subjective judgment such as unknowing to a sensorimotor experience such as darkness seems to entail that darkness can be reduced to unknowing (along with an accompanying gestalt and set of entailments) ([15], p. 122); and although they assail a correspondence theory of truth, the fact that metaphorical truth rests on true judgments about sensorimotor experience seems to presuppose some sort of correspondence theory of truth (as do the three assertions with which they begin *Philosophy in the Flesh*: the mind is inherently embodied; thought is mostly unconscious; abstract concepts are largely metaphorical) (p. 128, 3).

48. This metaphor is also reinforced by Dionysius' use of metaphors of light – the contrary of darkness – to symbolize knowing. (Although Dionysius chiefly uses metaphors of light (sun, fire) as symbols for God's causation and illumination of celestial and terrestrial beings, he says in the *Celestial Hierarchy* that fire is an appropriate symbol for God for a number of other reasons (e.g., omnipresence, invisibility, inexorability, power, dynamism; *CH* 15.2, 329ABC). *Celestial Hierarchy* 13.3, after explicitly using the light of the sun and the heat of fire as symbols for knowledge, declares that God is really and properly by nature the source of illumination (*CH* 13.3, 301D). And although *Divine Names* 4.1–4 tends to use light more broadly as a symbol for all divine procession, *Divine Names* 4.5–6 narrows the meaning of light to that of knowledge. Moreover, still other passages oppose light to darkness as contrary symbols for knowing and unknowing, respectively. *Epistle* 1 says that darkness disappears in the light just as unknowing is removed by light (*EP* 1, 1065AB). And the above passage from *Mystical Theology* 1.3 indicates that Moses enters the divine darkness of unknowing only after passing beyond "the many pure lights that flash forth and the greatly-flowing rays" (*MT* 1.3, 1000D).

49. For the first and second metaphors (*similarity is proximity*, *intimacy is proximity*), see [15], pp. 51, 50; and [8], pp. 283, 293. And for the fourth metaphor (*degree is distance along a path*), see [8], p. 285. Although I cannot find the third metaphor (*knowledge is proximity*) in either of these sources, it seems obviously primary insofar as the sensorimotor experience of getting closer to something is constantly conjoined with the subjective experience of better knowing what that thing is.

50. According to Lakoff and Johnson, *understanding is grasping* and *seeing is touching* are also part of this family of metaphors ([15], p. 54). Interestingly, these metaphors also have a phonetic manifestation: the rising intonation used in questions, and the falling intonation used in statements ([14], p. 137).

51. Note that Lakoff and Johnson do not provide an experiential basis for *good is up*. They do however say that the primary experience of another related metaphor, *important is big*, is the realization that big things (e.g., parents) are important and can exert major forces on a child and dominate a child's visual experience (p. 50).

52. According to Lakoff and Johnson, the *more is up* and *unknown is up* metaphors "have a very different experiential basis" ([14], p. 21).

53. For more on the notion of an *isotopy*, see [6] and [5]. *Isotopies* are the semantic properties of texts that make possible their disambiguation through abductive inferences known as *topics*. Put differently, topics are pragmatic devices used to by readers to identify the semantic properties of texts called *isotopies*. Thus topics make possible the uniform readings of stories. As such, Eco understands isotopy to be "an umbrella term," a general category under which various parallel (autonomous yet interactive) levels of textual coherence or sense can be subsumed ([5], p. 189). Of the eight isotopies that Eco provides in *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, the one that is most useful to a disambiguation of Dionysian metaphors of darkness and height is *narrative isotopies connected with discursive isotopic disjunctions that generate complementary stories*, since it provides a way of reconciling apparent conflicts at a discursive level simply by showing how such disjunctions generate a complementary story at the level of the text.

Theorizing Jewish Ethics

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Abstract:
The concept of Jewish ethics is elusive. Law occupies a prominent place in the phenomenology of traditional Judaism. What room is left for ethics? This paper argues that the dichotomy between law and ethics, with regard to Judaism, is misleading. The fixity of these categories presumes too much, both about normativity per se and about Judaism. Rather than naming categories "law" and "ethics" should be seen as contrastive terms that play a role in fundamental arguments about how to characterize Judaism.

Keywords: Judaism, ethics, Jewish philosophy

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The concept of Jewish ethics is chronically ill defined. As a category, what should Jewish ethics include? What should it exclude? How should the concept guide our interpretation of Jewish texts? Indeed, does it have heuristic value or does it misdirect us, prompting us to lay on a Procrustean bed materials that are better suited to other rubrics? Does the concept even have legitimacy?

From a point of view external to Judaism, the concept seems unproblematic. Any number of comparative religion books, such as Charles Matthewes's recent *Religious Ethics* speak in a descriptive way of Jewish ethics, alongside those of other world religions. Matthewes assumes that the term picks out relevant normative features of the Jewish textual inheritance and that these form a substantial sub-field of Jewish thought. He assumes that 'Jewish ethics' is fully comparable to 'Christian ethics;' that these are meaningful and fruitful terms. From an internal point of view, however, matters are not so straightforward. Consider, as our point of departure, Michael Wyschogrod's statement, in his neo-Orthodox theological tour de force, *The Body of Faith*, that 'ethics is the Judaism of the assimilated' [11, p. 181]. For Wyschogrod, the urge to construct a category of Jewish ethics, to theorize it, and to accord it centrality is typical of liberal, non-halakhic modern Jews. Jewish law, halakhah, should be the authentic category of Jewish self-understanding. The Jewish ethics project of liberal modernity is an attempt to substitute something purely rational, universalizing, cross-culturally intelligible and respectable for the highly particular, divinely revealed law to which pre-modern Jews gave their allegiance. Jewish ethics is, on this view, a kind of political statement, a polemic on behalf of a reconstructed non-offensive Judaism.

This essentially ideological argument has a point.[1] At least since the time of Moses Mendelssohn, Jewish modernists have de-centered Jewish law and emphasized ethics as the salient category of Jewish representation both to insiders and outsiders. Any diminution of the central role

of halakhah is an historic break with the time honored model of Jewish self-understanding. But this is not to say that pre-modern Jews understood themselves solely within the framework of what we call law. Our concepts of law are no less problematic, when applied to traditional Judaism, than our would-be concepts of Jewish ethics. Common modern concepts of law are often positivistic; they are often tied to political concepts, such as sovereignty. They are in many ways ill-suited to map halakhah. How to sort this out constitutes a deeper problem than may be apparent from the ideological polemics of modern Jewish discourse. A number of modern Jewish thinkers have applied themselves to this nest of problems. I want to consider the work of a few of them here, assess the strengths and weaknesses of their approaches, and then propose my own approach to any putative concept of Jewish ethics. First, however, let me clarify more fully what is at stake.

At stake here is more than traditionalist Jews continuing to assert the indispensability of halakhah. Bundled into the "traditionalist" claim is the view that halakhah is not only necessary but *sufficient*; that halakhah comprises *all* norms relevant to human conduct, at least for Jews. To assert that some other body of norms pertains, indeed, that some non-halakhic ways of thinking about norms are required is to detract from the omni-sufficiency of halakhah. The omni-sufficient view is not just about how we categorize those norms which govern Jewish conduct. It is about the origin of such putative norms; the metaphysical background from which normativity per se emerges. The partisans of an omni-sufficient halakhah claim that the halakhah is God-given. Mere ethics seems to have a lesser pedigree or at least a more circuitous one. At issue then are old and weighty controversies about revelation, reason, and nature. The tension among these terms is not insuperable, but it is deeply felt. Issues of moral anthropology and moral epistemology are also in play. Who is the subject of norms? Why is such a subject so bound? What relation does the subject's own reason and will have vis-à-vis norms? How do we, how can we know what is legitimately normative? If there is an independently cognizable realm of moral normativity over and against the halakhah, then what do we need halakhah for? If ethics is available to critique halakhah or if it serves as the telos of halakhah, then the majesty and sovereignty of halakhah – what a German Jewish philosopher called *der Totalitätsanspruch der Thora* (the Torah's claim to totality) – is impugned. The scope and embodiment of norms is also at issue. Perhaps halakhah, while irrefragably central, is not sufficient. Perhaps it recognizes its own insufficiency by commanding ethical counterweights, balances, and corrections. Halakhah, one might say, needs ethics as a supererogatory modality; the two complement one another. But then again, if the halakhah stipulates a need for a normative framework in excess of its own standards, ethics remains a creature of the halakhah. If Jews are commanded (as they are) to go beyond the letter of the law (*lifnim me-shurat ha-din*), and the latter is thought to constitute ethics, then in what sense is ethics really separate from law? Ethics would be a moment internal to halakhah.

Another kind of consideration that bears on our definitional question invites the perspective of political theory. What kind of social world does the halakhah assume, require, or intend? Spinoza famously argued that Jewish law was law only insofar as it comprised the statutes of an ancient commonwealth. Law requires not only jural agencies but a fully articulated polity. In the absence of that political infrastructure, for Spinoza, Jewish law no longer has legal – or any – authority. Maimonides also framed the halakhah as a constitution. His code, the Mishneh Torah, culminates in the laws of kings and warfare – halakhah ideally requires a full political instantiation. The Princeton scholar, Leora Batnitzky, in her recent book, *How Judaism Became a Religion*, sees most of the modern Jewish thinkers from Mendelssohn on engaged in a program of de-politicizing Judaism, indeed, of creating "Judaism." On this account, the transformation of Torah into religion *simpliciter* was designed to provide a medium whereby Jews could nullify the political impulses of classical Jewish self-understanding and render their Judaism compatible with the overarching political claims of modern nation states. Given a Westphalian Judaism so to speak, a Judaism qua religion, ethics fills the space where a comprehensive, politically instantiated legal order once prevailed. Even the truncated exilic forms in which Jewish political expression persisted were unacceptable to someone like Mendelssohn. Although Mendelssohn did not seek, like the 19th century Reformers, to abolish

the law, he did reframe its significance. Whatever power the law retains, it does so in order to promote moral development and cultivation – *Bildung*. As Judaism becomes religion and religion is segregated from the political, halakhah is domesticated to ethics. In short, fundamental questions of the nature and meaning of Torah are at stake in the question of Jewish ethics. No wonder the question is so fraught.

There are, it seems to me, three broad positions that modern thinkers have taken on the relation of ethics to halakhah/law. The first is that ethics ought to be the dominant category. Ethics forms the content, point, and purpose of halakhah. "Ethics" is given an expansive rhetorical and conceptual role in the representation of Judaism, both to insiders and outsiders. To speak of Judaism is to play a moral language game. The great works of Jewish thought deriving from liberal Jews such as Moritz Lazarus and Hermann Cohen in the 19th and early 20th centuries exemplify this position. Let's call this position the sovereignty of ethics. The second point of view, which arguably arises historically as a reaction to the excesses of the first, is what I have called the omni-sufficiency of the halakhah. On this view, Judaism is all law – ethics, as an independent normative sphere, cannot gain a toehold. All relevant normative reasoning takes place within the four ells of the halakhah. There might well be an independently cognizable or theorizable sphere of ethics, but it is *irrelevant* for Jews. Talk of a Jewish ethics is, at best, merely a way of speaking about the halakhah as applied to topics the non-Jewish culture calls ethical. There is, for example, a great deal of Jewish biomedical ethics today which consists entirely of halakhah applied to medical topics. On the view that advocates the omni-sufficiency of halakhah there is nothing wrong with calling such work "Jewish biomedical ethics" as long as we understand "ethics" as a proxy for "halakhah." This view assumes that all ethical problems are resolvable into legal problems and that legal problems can be resolved to greater or lesser satisfaction with the tools of, in this case, the rabbinic trade. Here, the term "ethics" may linger on but its content is attenuated; it is not much more than a verbal gesture. The strongest case for the exclusive dominance of the halakhah was made by Joseph Soloveitchik. Disciples such as Aaron Lichtenstein and Sol Roth, as well as Marvin Fox make the case as well.

A third position sees a division of labor between the two categories. Ethics picks up where the law leaves off. This is the view of the great medieval exegete, Ramban, and may also be said to characterize the whole tradition of *sifrut ha-musar* (the literature of moral exhortation). On this view, halakhah is necessary but not sufficient. *Raḥmana liba ba'ei* – God seeks the heart – as the Talmud puts it. Performance of commandments is not enough. *Mitzvot tzrikhot kavannah*: the commandments require intention. Intention itself is complex and requires cultivation. The inward dimensions of love, fidelity, enthusiasm, awareness, devotion, and aspiration are required. Some thinkers thus see a natural divide between law and ethics along the lines of outer (action) vs. inner (attitude). The Musar Movement in the 19th century argued that although Torah was studied and obeyed, *yirah* (fear of God) was absent. Without *yirah*, Torah study and observance were almost useless. The inner had to be pursued with the same intensity as the outer. Baḥya ibn Paquda made a similar case in the 11th century. This division of labor between the inner and the outer is tacitly or explicitly assumed by those like Joseph Dan, who write on the history of Jewish ethics. Dan, in trying to constitute his subject matter, relegates ethics to an attitudinal accompaniment of the performance of mitzvot.[2] There is something to be said for this view, of course, but it is also deeply problematic. It assumes, for example, that "ethics" and "halakhah" are rather static terms that describe two categorically distinct domains of content, one explicable in terms of intentionality, the other in terms of performance. It probably fails as an incipient theory of action with its rigid dichotomy between act and intent. It also fails to grasp the ethical content of the halakhah, relegating it to the attitude of those who enact it rather than to the inherent qualities of the law per se. Nor does it take notice of the purposes of the law. Its agent-centeredness is both a strength and a weakness.

Another way of sustaining a law/ethics distinction, which avoids the inner/outer dichotomy, is to say that law is sustained by coercion and sanction while ethics is sustained by voluntary

consent (albeit consent to fully normative imperatives). This is essentially a Kantian approach, distinguishing between perfect and imperfect obligations. Both forms of obligation are necessary for social order. Ethics is a device which acknowledges the limits of law at least insofar as its enforcement mechanisms are concerned. This position, call it ethical-legal complementarity, is exemplified by the work of Shimon Federbush in his Hebrew study, *Ha-Musar ve Ha-Mishpat b'Yisrael (Ethics and Law in Israel)*.

The first position is given a paradigmatic expression in a great 19th century work, Moritz Lazarus's *Die Ethik des Judentums*.[3] Lazarus, a German-Jewish professor of psychology and a leader of Liberal (Reform) Judaism in the Second Reich, was immensely popular among his acculturated German coreligionists in the 19th century but is largely forgotten today. He presents, far more sweepingly and robustly than Mendelssohn, a thorough ethicization (*Versittlichung*) of Judaism. Judaism is essentially, if not exclusively, ethics. Ethics becomes the master category to which all other aspects of Judaism are ordered or, should that not succeed, discarded (as in the case of mysticism). His main work, *Die Ethik des Judentums* (*The Ethics of Judaism*) is the first modern systematic effort to interpret Biblical and rabbinic religion entirely through the prism of ethics.

Lazarus is concerned, on the one hand, to show that Judaism qua ethics is in broad accord with Kantian ethics. On the other hand, he is dismissive of those who would equate or subordinate Judaism to Kant.[4] He thus walks a narrow line between Judaism as a form of autonomous moral consciousness and Judaism as a heteronymous religious system. He attempts to preserve the naïve, authentic voices of traditional Jewish texts and to relate them to the most compelling contemporary intellectual voices. As a psychologist rather than a philosopher, Lazarus seeks a more or less empirical basis for ethics. Ethical consciousness is not intuitive or naturalistic; it is informed by the "ought" not the "is," by reasons not causes, as we would say. The concept of ethics signifies an ideal sphere above natural existence toward which human beings, both personally and socially, ought to strive. Nonetheless, Lazarus does not go in a fully Kantian direction and divorce moral imperatives from human drives, feelings and desires.[5] Ethics arises from a drive toward the Good (*Trieb zum Guten*), from a feeling of obligation (*Gefühl der Verpflichtung*), which issues into rational assent [7, Vol. I, p. 115]. There is no small risk of incoherence in Lazarus's view; it is also immediately problematic with respect to Judaism. If Judaism is equivalent to ethics and ethics arises from a sentiment of obligation, then the entire theistic framework of Judaism becomes irrelevant. Lazarus therefore attempts to preserve the distinctive monotheistic assumptions of Judaism by making God, the author of ethics, pervasively moral. Lazarus, like Cohen after him, removes all traces of divine voluntarism. That God commands an imperative does not make it right; God commands it because it *is* right. God too is subject to moral law. For a human being then, to will the moral law of one's free will is simultaneously to do God's will. 'Morally good and pleasing to God; moral law and divine command – for Judaism these concepts are completely inseparable' [7, Vol. I, p. 85], translation my own. Inseparable but, he adds, not identical. God's command and the moral law are related through a third term, the concept of holiness.

Holiness plays a critical role in Lazarus's thought. For Lazarus, the Biblical expression for the conjunction of divine command and the moral law is 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy' (*Leviticus* 19:2). God does not say 'you shall be holy because I will it' or '…because I command it.' God's own being as holiness is morality.

> The fundamental teaching of Judaism runs: because the moral is divine, therefore shall you be moral and because the divine is moral, therefore shall you be become like God…. The highest form and the final end of all human life is imitatio dei (*Gottähnlichkeit*) [7, Vol. I, p. 89], translation my own.

The being or nature (*Wesen*) of God is not an object of Biblical or rabbinic speculation. What we are given instead is God's holiness and holiness is explicated by moral attributes. The call

to holiness is a call to participate in the creative power of the moral world-order; a call to bring about the fulfillment of the purpose of creation.

The holy God is 'primordial form of all morality' (*Urgestalt aller Sittlichkeit*). As much as he invokes 'God' as the giver of the moral law, 'God' also seems to be nothing more than the Jews' way of speaking about 'the idea of the Good,' 'the Spirit of morality' (*Geist der Sittlichkeit*) [7, Vol. I, pp. 89–90], translation my own. Similarly, the concept of revelation is deflated into the deliverances of moral reason. Long before the revelation of commandments at Sinai, Abraham kept the entirety of the law (*Mishnah Kiddushin* 4:14), which he attained through his own reason [7, Vol. I, p. 91]. Autonomous moral reason is thus the source of moral instruction. Given his penchant for modernist demythologization, what role other than a notional one does Lazarus reserve for God? The answer is that God and religion provide a conceptual framework which does not infringe the independence and self-sufficiency of ethics (*Selbstständigkeit des Ethischen*) but rather sharpens (*Einschärfung*) its authority. Ethics does not derive its authority from God. We are, rather, to take the self-sufficient ethics which our reason discovers and dedicate our lives to the furtherance of ethics *for the sake of ethics*. We imagine this autonomous, self-sacrificial, total commitment as dedication to God, the highest possible object of our intentionality [7, Vol. I, pp.109–110]. Our ethical intentionality thereby never serves our mere self-interest. As a quasi-Kantian, Lazarus eschews any prudent or hedonistic ground for ethics, insofar as it would compromise the majesty and freedom of the ethical realm. Our moral aloofness from the pursuit of self-interest, which attests to the objectivity and universality of the moral law, is also given a vivid portrayal in the notion of a sovereign God.

The idea of holiness, the hallowing of all of life, is the master principle of Jewish ethics. 'Holiness means nothing other than the complete ethicization [*Versittlichung*] of human society, of humanity as such' [7, Vol. I, p. 187], translation my own. The principle of holiness directs us to take life seriously and to identify those values which we ought to take with utmost seriousness. In Judaism's construal of holiness, we find two domains: the ritual and the ethical per se. For Lazarus, the ritual domain – expressed in the numerous Biblical *ḥuqim*, which he calls, following 19th century Reform usage 'ceremonial laws' – is not moral per se but nonetheless serves a moral telos. The ritual laws build a notional world on top of the natural world such that they remind the Jews that they belong both to the natural world and to something beyond. Insofar as the ritual laws order and transform natural human functions, such as eating or resting, they have a broad pedagogic role; they are pointers toward both nature and transcendence [7, Vol. I, pp. 191–192]. The ethical and the religious are inextricably intertwined. Neither concept is fully intelligible without the other in Judaism although it is clear that the concept of the religious, of religious holiness, is dependent upon the concept of ethics, of ethical holiness. Ethical holiness has its own abstract self-sufficiency. An integrated, flourishing human life, however, requires that ethical holiness be enacted within the framework of religious holiness. Why? Because although we can give ourselves fully to the life of morality, we cannot fully cognize the sublime mystery (*erhabenes Geheimnis*), that is, the divine, at the heart of that life [7, Vol. I, p. 196]. For Lazarus, it seems, the fully flourishing life is a life cognizant of that mystery. Religion, Judaism, brings us to the conceptual boundary at which the mystery can be acknowledged. Thus, Lazarus tries to preserve the category of religion from assimilation to the category of ethics. At the same time, he orders all of the normative contents of Judaism to an ethical paradigm. The views of Hermann Cohen and Emmanuel Levinas are philosophically much more complex than Lazarus's but they plow, I would submit, the same furrow. Ethics is sovereign.

The second position is a reaction to the first. One of its exponents is the famous Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik. In *Halakhic Man*, Soloveitchik sets up a dichotomy between 'religious man' and 'halakhic man.' This sounds a bit surprising, since ordinarily one would think that Judaism is a religion and the halakhah is a religious law. Soloveitchik's dichotomy draws from similar dichotomies prevalent in the German culture in which he received his university education. The liberal rabbi, Leo Baeck, for example, wrote a famous anti-Christian or at least anti-Pauline

polemic called 'Romantic Religion.' Baeck contrasted the sober, ethical, rational Apollonian religion of classical Judaism – the essence of which he found in an autonomous morality of a vaguely Kantian kind – to the impassioned oceanic spirituality of the Romantics. Paul, on Baeck's account, becomes the *Urvater* of romanticism. Baeck was in turn using and 'transvaluing' Nietzsche's dichotomy from *The Birth of the Tragedy* of Apollonian and Dionysian cultures. Soloveitchik was probably also aware of Christian theologians such as Troeltsch, who in *Die Absolutheit des Christentums*, exempted Christianity from the category of religion – religion was reserved for everything other than Christianity. From such presumed sources, Soloveitchik constitutes a halakhic sphere that is not only essentially other than the sphere occupied by 'religious man,' but it is also higher. In this, he follows Kierkegaard, adapting Kierkegaard's stance of faith vis-à-vis the ethical as the stance of halakhic man vis-à-vis religious man.

For Soloveitchik, religious man, *homo religiosus*, is also ethical man. Ethical man construes the world as a domain which one yearns to ameliorate, escape or transcend. *Homo religiosus* strives for moral perfection; he sees the world as an obdurate obstacle to his moral-religious quest. Halakhic man, by contrast, is unencumbered by such romantic passions. He sees the world as a field of problems to be cognized and of opportunities to be exploited through halakhically defined action. *Homo religiosus*

> longs for a refined and purified existence. The riddle in existence and the eternal problem that hovers over the face of being leads him beyond the bounds of concrete reality.

By contrast, 'halakhic man's approach to reality… is devoid of any element of transcendence' [9, pp. 16–17]. Halakhic man is not on a quest. He already knows where he will end up because he knows from whence he starts out: with an a priori body of

> fixed statutes and firm principles… [a]n entire corpus of precepts and laws guides him along the path leading to existence. Halakhic man, well furnished with rules, judgments, and fundamental principles, draws near the world with an a priori relation. His approach begins with an ideal creation and concludes with a real one [9, p. 19].

Soloveitchik likens this phenomenon to mathematics. Mathematics exists, in his view, in an a priori ideal way but is applied to a correlative, concrete world.

Although Soloveitchik as a thinker deeply influenced by Neo-Kantianism – he wrote his dissertation on Hermann Cohen – is careful not to reify or ontologize the Torah in the manner of mysticism, he does constitute Torah as an a priori transcendental principle of normativity. No independent ethic, certainly nothing answering to the term 'Jewish ethics,' is needed. And yet Soloveitchik *has* to allude to ethical considerations. He asserts, for example, that

> Halakhic man's most fervent desire is the perfection of the world under the dominion of righteousness and loving-kindness – the realization of the a priori, ideal creation, whose name is Torah (or Halakhah), in the realm of concrete life.

'The great Torah giants,' he tells us, 'the halakhic men par excellence, were indeed champions of truth and justice. They glowed with a resplendent ethical beauty' [9, pp. 94–95]. Is he being inconsistent? How can his view accommodate this assertion of ethical values vis-à-vis the halakhah? In brief, Soloveitchik sees the cognitive activity of halakhic man, which resembles that of the mathematician or the scientist, as tending always toward a normative goal. The astronomer studies the heavens to understand the motion of the heavenly bodies. Halakhic man wants to understand this too – in order to know how to apply the Jewish calendar or sanctify the new moon. The very pursuit of knowledge, both among scientists and halakhic men, has a normative

motivation and thrust. Ultimately, the halakhic man wants to cognize the universe in order to know how to act within it; there is a seamless fit between knowing and doing. To know the world is to know God's glory, which means to know God's emulable attributes of action – which are the source of 'the ethical life.' When we fix on the 'whole of being and cognize it' we implement the ethical ideal [9. p. 64]. Thus Soloveitchik bundles normative, specifically ethical purposes into his philosophical anthropology of halakhic man. He uses terms such as 'ethical beauty,' 'ethical ideals,' and 'ethical life' but such terms do not significantly qualify, complement, let alone criticize or oppose the skein of life of halakhic man. They arise from that life and are nestled within it. Indeed, Soloveitchik contrasts the resistance of religious man to ethical norms, which *homo religiosus* feels as external and coercive, with the internal, voluntary, near autonomous acknowledgement of the commandments by halakhic man. The commandments seem to him 'as though he discovered the norm in his innermost self' [9, p. 65].

The ethical has no independent standing in Soloveitchik's thought despite his pervasive, foundational concern with normativity. A similar view, albeit expressed in a more discursive fashion, is found in his son in law, Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein's important essay, 'Does Jewish Tradition Recognize an Ethic Independent of Halakhah?'[6] Lichtenstein's argument is highly nuanced. He acknowledges that the rabbinic tradition recognizes a *lex naturalis* or, more minimally, a natural morality, see *Lichtenstein* in [6, p. 104]. The question is whether that independent pre-Sinaitic ethic has any relevance, legitimacy or authority for a post-Sinaitic Jew. Lichtenstein's position is that this independent ethic is effectively *aufgehoben* in the halakhah. His question is whether

> the demands or guidelines of Halakhah are both so definitive and so comprehensive as to preclude the necessity for – and therefore, in a sense, the legitimacy of – any other ethic, see *Lichtenstein* in [6, p. 105].

The answer is yes, given a suitably capacious conception of the halakhah. The phrase 'any other ethic' is quite deliberate. For Lichtenstein at once asserts that 'Halakhah constitutes – or at least contains – an ethical system,' see *Lichtenstein* in [6, p. 106]. He categorically rejects views such as those of Yeshayahu Leibowitz, which anchor halakhah in pure divine command. Such 'quasifideistic voluntarism' is not consonant with the 'main thrust of the tradition' in Lichtenstein's view. Halakhah must not be divorced from a recognizable morality. Is halakhah then parallel to morality; is morality a complement or an alternative to halakhah? Lichtenstein rejects this line of thinking. The fact is that the 'Halakhah is multiplanar and many dimensional; that, properly conceived, it includes much more than is explicitly required or permitted by specific rules.' And thus, 'we shall realize that the ethical moment we are seeking is itself an aspect of halakhah,' see *Lichtenstein* in [6, p. 106]. Those elements of supra-legal obligation in the halakhah, such as acting *lifnim me-shurat ha-din*, are themselves parts of halakhah. A highly textured, 'multiplanar' halakhah leaves no conceptual space for Jewish ethics. Thus, on the view of the omni-sufficiency of halakhah ethical considerations are not absent, bracketed, or neglected. They are firmly subordinated to an expansive conception of Jewish law which deprives them of any independent standing.

The third view is that of complementarity between a halakhah thought to require some additional normative warrant and ethics. As I mentioned, there are at least two ways of constituting this view. The first is based on a presumed distinction between inner attitude (ethics) and outward action (law). The second is based on the fact (and limits) of enforcement mechanisms, that is, ethics picks up where law must, in the nature of human social life, leave off. Nachmanides appears to exemplify this view in his comment to *Deuteronomy* 6:18:

Do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD that it may go well with you and that you may be able to possess the good land that the LORD your God promised on oath to your fathers.

Nachmanides takes doing what is 'right and good' (*ha-yashar v'ha-tov*) to mean seeking compromise (*peshara*) and renouncing one's full legal rights (*lifnim me-shurat ha-din*) for the sake of comity. He acknowledges the limits of the law and the need for an internal sense of moral duty or virtue. But note, however, that ethics in this sense is *commanded by the law*. The imperfect duty, to use Kantian language, of seeking compromise and acting *lifnim me-shurat ha-din* is a consequence of the perfect duty of 'doing the right and the good.' Ethics is given a certain standing on the complementarist account but it is consigned to the penumbra of the law. Perhaps its standing is so dependent on the law that this view is simply notional and reverts to the affirmation of the omni-sufficiency of halakhah.

A determined effort to keep law and ethics conceptually distinct yet practically related is found in the work of a neglected Jewish moral and political theorist, Rabbi Shimon Federbush (1892–1969). In his posthumously published work *Ha-Musar ve-Ha-Mishpat b'Yisrael* (*Ethics and Law in Israel*), Federbush argues that law and ethics are *identical* in content [3, pp. 11–21]. The distinction between them arises from the different contexts in which they are employed. Federbush considers that the distinction between law and ethics may be that of act and intention, but he rejects this – rightly, in my opinion – in favor of an integrated view of action. Intention is integral to the description of an act, as exemplified in Biblical criminal law which distinguishes between manslaughter and homicide on the basis of intention. If law and ethics care equally for the integrated expression of intention and performance, then the distinction between them must lie elsewhere. He also rejects Stammler's distinction between acts that are essentially private, which on Stammler's account constitute ethics and acts that are essentially public, which constitute law. Individuals cannot be neatly distinguished from their social milieus, he argues. Nor does ethics lack a social address. The Biblical prophets, whom he portrays as moral critics, spoke to the public. The Torah intends a social ethics, which Stammler's view must fail to take into account.

The view that Federbush settles on distinguishes between acts that are capable of being coerced by an external authority and acts that have no functional sanction other than conscience. Coercion (*kefiyah*) distinguishes between law and ethics. This is to say that the content of law and ethics is in principle identical; the post facto availability of coercion is what allows for the distinction. Federbush senses that the criterion of coercion is necessary but not sufficient, however. Is there no criterion that allows for an *essential* distinction between law and ethics, as opposed to an adventitious, contextual one? He holds that there is such a criterion and locates it in social need. In any given human society, there is an underlying dynamic of normativity (*ḥoq*). Social actors over time decide how much of this normativity must be structured into law and how much can remain rather less structured as ethics. What are the necessary minima for social order? The underlying norms (*ḥuqim*) without which society cannot survive become laws; the ones that are best left at large are ethics. Context, history, and human interest determine the dichotomization of normativity into ethics and law. This is a rather thin essentialism, which in my judgment is the best kind to have.

Now all of these views, their differences notwithstanding, share a common interest – to distinguish theoretically between ethics and law and to fix their conceptual relations. All thus presume that the terms designate categories which have in principle independent, identifying features. The categories of law and ethics, whatever the eventual relations between their contents, are prima facie separate and distinctive. It is this assumption that I want to criticize. It is not my purpose to argue in a global way that ethics and law are identical. Rather, I want to expose the presupposition of their categorical difference in Jewish thought to criticism.

To begin, Jewish thinkers who ponder the problem of Jewish ethics all seem to assume that ethics in the Western context is a discrete, distinguishable, stand-alone endeavor. Ethics must either

rule, be conquered or be yoked in partnership to law. They do not seem to have noticed that modern Anglo-American philosophical ethics is full of criticism of what Bernard Williams mordantly called 'the morality system.' Philosophers such as Williams, MacIntyre, and already in the 1950's, G.E.M. Anscombe raised serious questions about whether ethics can be a coherent category. For Williams, the obsession of 'the morality system' with obligation, with what one ought to do (in some special sense of 'ought'), orients ethics away from questions of how one should live toward questions of what agents must do. It fixes ethics on the judgment of agents, which resembles 'the prerogatives of a Pelagian God.'[7] Both MacIntyre and Anscombe have also tended to construe ethics as a false religion. (Although, unlike Williams, they each want a true one.) MacIntyre would explode the compactness and categorical integrity of ethics and conduct moral enquiry through historical, literary, anthropological and sociological interrogation. He questions the idea that morality is a distinct phenomenon, separable from, for example, the purity taboos of archaic societies. The very act of distinguishing an identifiable domain labeled 'morality' to be studied by a conceptually distinct method known as 'ethics' is a matter of historical contingency. Anscombe found the allegedly unique moral sense of 'ought' incoherent. It is a survival from a Christian age, in turn shaped by the Torah. For Anscombe, without a belief in divine law, 'ought' and 'obligation' in the commanding sense ethics ascribes to these terms cannot be sustained. 'It is as if,' she writes 'the notion "criminal" were to remain when criminal law and criminal courts had been abolished and forgotten.'[8]

Views such as these suggest that the modern Jewish thinkers, whatever their position on ethics and law, have too much confidence in the concept of ethics as such. Kant looms too large for them. Whichever tack they take, they believe that they need to reach an accommodation with ethics. A putative concept of ethics makes demands on them and they must respond. But if ethics itself is a historically contingent category, if it develops meaning only through intensional contrasts with other normative terms and if none of these are fixed, why should Jewish thinkers have to respond to the demand? Rather than assume that the ethics/law dichotomy is a formidable problem, why not see the whole business as a contingent semantic matter? There are several reasons that impede that Wittgensteinian resolution.

One reason the dichotomy seems so formidable is because the normative rules and conclusions of halakhah sometimes violate the modern sense of justice, equity, fairness, and so on. Halakhic approaches to the status of women are a leading example of this. Insofar as halakhah is particular to the Jews and ethics is thought to be universal, it is easy to frame this tension as one between law and ethics, a particular norm versus a universal standard. Conceptually, however, it would be just as easy to frame the tension as one between competing impulses, values, principles and goals within the halakhah. The Jewish moral tradition is rich with such tensions and with the resources to negotiate them. Casting conflicts of value into the dichotomous terms of law and ethics can aggravate tensions rather than render them productive.

I suspect that 'law' and 'ethics' are proxies for Jewish uniqueness and particularity as against the standards, however idealized, of the general culture. The terms are needed rhetorically to protect distinctive Jewish territory or to subject it to criticism, whether internal or external. The real conceptual work that is being done with these terms is pragmatic rather than semantic: there is a fight going on over who represents Judaism, who has authority, what is the normative view. If you are a halakhist, you can be dismissive of a view if you can characterize it as mere ethics. If you are a liberal Jew, you get to critique the harshness of law in the name of something presumably higher and nobler. 'Law' and 'ethics' thus seem to be contrastive terms. They derive some of their sense, in these modern Jewish treatments, from their contrast to one another. One member of the pair acts as a foil for the other. If the writer holds to the omni-sufficiency of halakhah, he needs 'ethics' as his whipping boy. If the writer holds to the sovereignty of ethics, she needs 'law' to provide the raw material for her idealizations or criticisms. Rhetorical and polemical needs drive the hypostatization of the terms.

In my view, the better way forward is to say that both 'law' and 'ethics' are terms that do not map entirely well over traditional Jewish materials. The Jewish tradition did not develop such a categorical distinction in the way that Western thought did. There is a holism about the Jewish normative order. We see that holism expressed along another fault line – the modern distinction between deontic and aretaic ethics. Anscombe is herself too categorical in describing traditional Christianity and the Jewish tradition out of which it developed as a 'law ethic,' for there is far more than what corresponds to law going on in Judaism. Like other traditional normative orders, Judaism did not distinguish between obligation and virtue; it did not see an opposition between obeying public norms and cultivating human excellence. The falling out of justice and virtue that marks modern ethics would be wholly unintelligible to a traditional Jewish moralist. It is an obligation of halakhah to cultivate character, as much as it is an obligation to observe the Sabbath. Indeed, Sabbath observance as far back as *Deuteronomy* 5:12–15 seems intended to develop virtuous dispositions toward sympathy, understanding, and solidarity. While a Western legal system wants to inculcate the attitude of law-abidingness, even law-affirmation, it is typically unconcerned with dispositions such as love, self-criticism, or awe. *Ahavat ha-briyot, ḥeshbon ha-nefesh,* and *yirat shamayim* as these dispositions are called in Hebrew are as much elements of halakhah as kashrut and festivals. It is impossible to decide which Jewish norms should be allocated to ethics and which to law because these categories are ill-suited to those norms. The integration of those norms into a complex whole requires theorizing in its own terms not in terms of borrowed oppositions and dichotomies.

What then of theorizing Jewish ethics? Is Jewish ethics a legitimate concept or should we avoid it? To the extent that we want to continue to speak about the normative dimensions of Judaism, and to speak of them in English, the use of such terms is unavoidable. Our aim should be to avoid using them thoughtlessly, using them in such a way as to generate confusion. A capacious and minimalist approach to the notion Jewish ethics would be best. I would suggest that we employ the term 'Jewish ethics' to indicate 'reflection on character and conduct.' Such reflection occurs in 'legal' sources; it occurs in traditional virtue literature (*sifrut ha-musar*); it occurs in liturgical and secular poetry; it occurs in philosophical texts where it becomes highly reflexive and thematic. Jewish ethics thus directs us to look for thought about a broad range of ethical considerations, but not only those. It cannot be separated from metaphysics, theology, narrative, and streams of authoritative texts descending from the past.

'Jewish ethics' should not rival, dominate, or compete with other ways of thinking about the normative in Judaism. It should integrate not isolate those perspectives. It is not, properly conceived, the Judaism of the assimilated. It is that form of inquiry which seeks to evoke the wisdom of Judaism as it pertains to conduct and character, to what is entailed by the quest to live rightly and well.

Acknowledgement

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Notes

1. Wyschogrod's complete argument is a great deal more complex than the headline that I am extracting from it. In fact, he condemns the abstraction of a universalizing, rationalistic ethics from Judaism *and* he condemns seeing Jewish law as ethically irrelevant. Jewish ethics is tied to law but also tied to the Jewish people. The law entails divine commands that can be immoral from the point of view of "pure ethics." Jewish ethics becomes a kind of tribal normativity, shaped by God-given Jewish law and the incarnation of divinity in the Jewish people.

2. Dan, in *Jewish Mysticism and Jewish Ethics*, first argues that it would be right to call the halakhah as a whole 'a comprehensive system of ethical behavior.' But he finds that constitution of Jewish ethics too sweeping and so retreats to the more restrained view that ethics is a supererogatory complement to halakhah. Halakhah establishes a legal minimum while 'ethics and the aggadah describe the unending road toward perfection.' His view thus combines the idea of ethics as a higher, more exigent standard rooted in inwardness with the idea that ethics issues into going beyond the law in one's action. He also wants to ground ethics on aggadah, broadly speaking, which complements in classical terms the halakhah [2, pp. 3–4].

3. The material on Lazarus is partially taken from [8, pp. 181–184] and is used with the kind permission of Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

4. As Baumgardt explains, Lazarus followed an early post-Kantian philosopher named Johann Friedrich Herbart. Herbart eschewed the speculative metaphysics of Fichte and Schelling. He provided a more congenial model for a moral philosophy, such as Lazarus's, that tried to remain anchored in empirical, psychological observation. See Baumgardt, *The Ethics of Lazarus and Steinthal*, p. 205.

5. Rotenstreich, *Jewish Philosophy in Modern Times*, p. 46. The extent to which Kant divorces the noumenal moral law from the phenomenal condition of human psychology seems to me easy to exaggerate. See, for example, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Part II, section XII where Kant discusses 'concepts of what is presupposed on the part of feeling by the mind's receptivity to concepts of duty as such.' See [5, p. 159ff.]

6. This essay is found in (*Kellner* 1978), pp. 102–123.

7. [10, p. 38]. For his sustained criticism of modern ethics as a 'morality system,' see Chapter 10.

8. Originally in *Philosophy*, 33 (1958), reprinted in [1, p. 30]. So too [4], Chapter 3. On Geuss's view, the central question of philosophical ethics – what ought I to do? – derives from a medieval world in which doing God's will was the paramount human task. With the loss of that world, a secularized equivalent takes its place. Ethics becomes an ever more total domain, compensating for the absence of the divine. It is difficult, although worthwhile for Geuss, to get 'outside' ethics.

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Varieties of Religious Visualizations

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Abstract:
In this paper, I describe several distinct visualizations that I recognize in Jewish prayers. By the term prayers, I mean the texts recited by Jews in religious ritual contexts. By the term visualizations, I mean the formation of mental visual images of a place and time, of a narrative activity or scene, or of an inner disposition. The goals of the visualizations can include: (1) professed communication with God, articulation of common religious values for (2) personal satisfaction or for (3) the sake of social solidarity, or (4) attainment of altered inner emotional states or moods.

Keywords: Judaism, prayer, Jewish philosophy

Dedicated in loving memory of my father Rabbi Dr. Zev Zahavy, a leading rabbi of his generation, a masterful speaker and teacher and a spiritual beacon to his family, friends and congregants.

1. The Main Meta-Visualization of Prayer

The overarching meta-visualization of prayer is that the acts of recitation of prayer texts constitute a dialogue with God. The former Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, Sir Jonathan Sacks, summed this up saying, "Prayer is the language of the soul in conversation with God. It is the most intimate gesture of the religious life, and the most transformative."[1]

Sacks characterized the Jewish prayer book saying, "The Siddur is the choral symphony the covenantal people has sung to God across forty centuries from the days of the patriarchs until the present day." He called it a "calibrated harmony."

This representation articulated by Sacks and many others before him is the general and foundational meta-visualization of all acts of prayer, the contextual background music in which I find the more detailed and specific visualizations that I discuss in this paper.

2. Visualizations Prior to Prayer

The Talmud discusses how rabbis shifted their attention from their academic activities to move on to their ritual activity. The preparatory visualization exercises that they employed were to take place prior to the performances of prayers. The concern the rabbis show toward the goal of orienting one's attention, highlights for us the overall emphasis that rabbis put on the interiority of imagery for prayer.

In a pericope in the Yerushalmi, with a close parallel in Babli, the Talmud develops on the proposal that one may start to pray only after engaging in "words of wisdom." The source gives us the following:

> [IV. A] R. Jeremiah said, "One should stand to pray only after [speaking of a] decision of the law."
> [B] R. Jeremiah said, "He who is involved with communal needs is like one who is involved [in the study of] words of Torah. [And he may pray immediately after he finishes serving a communal need]" (*Y. Berakhot*, *Chapter* 5, *Mishnah* 1).

The passage opens with an apparent explanation and addition to the Baraita in the Tosefta which says that one may pray after "words of wisdom." The Talmud extends this to include the suggestion that one may pray after "a decision of the law" or "involvement with communal needs." Yerushalmi then continues with specific examples of rules that illustrate the principle of praying after speaking of a rule of law:

> [C] R. Huna said, "[Before praying one should speak of a law such as the following:] 'A woman who sees [a discharge of] a drop of blood the size of a mustard seed must sit and keep seven clean days [where she sees no discharge, then immerse herself before resuming regular marital relations].' [After reciting this law] then one may go and pray." [After reciting this stringent decision one will be able to turn one's attention away from further deliberation on the laws of the Torah.]
> [D] Zeira bar R. Hinenah said, "[Before praying one should speak of a law such as the following:] 'One who lets blood from animals dedicated to the Temple [and uses the blood for ordinary purposes] has misappropriated Temple property.' This too is one of the [stringent] fixed laws [which one may recite to divert his thoughts from his studying before praying]."
> [E] We learned: Bar Qappara said, "[Recite this stringent law before praying:] 'The [minimum number of] eleven days [which by law one must reckon] between one menstrual period and another, is based on a tradition received by Moses at Sinai.'" [A woman who saw a flow in any of the eleven days after the seven days of her menstrual period, must reckon that to be the flow of a Zabah, subject to a stricter law of abstinence. S.H.][2]
> [F] We learned: R. Hoshaia [said], "[Recite this lenient law before praying:] 'A person may mix his grain with stalks [before bringing it into his storehouse] as an artifice to free it from the tithing requirement [since thereby it will resemble grain which has not been winnowed, which does not become liable to tithes when brought into storage].'" [According to Hoshaia, reciting a lenient law puts one in the proper frame of mind for prayer.][3]

The Babylonian Talmud has a slightly different version of this pericope:

> [A] Our rabbis have taught:
> [B] They may not stand to pray after judging [a case], or after [discussing] a matter of law, but only after [speaking of] a decided law.[4]
> [C] What is an example of a decided law [which one may speak of before reciting his prayer]?
> [D] Said Abaye, "[It is a law] like that of R. Zira."
> [E] R. Zira said, "The women of Israel imposed stringency upon themselves. For if they observe a [discharge of a] drop of blood [even as small] as a mustard seed, they

sit and observe seven clean days [during which no new discharges are observed before resuming marital relations].”[5]

[F] Raba said, “[It is a law] like that of R. Hoshaia.”

[G] For R. Hoshaia said, “A person may mix his grain with its chaff [before bringing it into his storehouse] so that his animal may eat it[6] and so that it will be free from the tithing requirement [since thereby it will resemble grain which has not been winnowed, and will not become liable to tithes when brought into storage].’“ [According to Hoshaia, reciting a lenient law puts one in the proper frame of mind for prayer.][7]

[H] Or if you wish, an alternative [law which one may recite before rising to pray is one] like that of R. Huna.

[I] For said R. Huna, Said R. Zeira, “One who lets blood from animals dedicated to the Temple, one may derive no personal benefit [from the blood and one who uses the blood for ordinary purposes] has misappropriated Temple property.”[8]

Putting aside the minor variations between the two versions,[9] the renditions in Babli and Yerushalmi represent a common approach to visualization in preparation for praying. That is, one should turn to ponder certain legal rulings in order to prepare for mindset to be achieved for the recitation of prayer.

Two additional pericopae in Yerushalmi deal with aspects of visualizations for prayer.

The passage cited above from chapter 5, *Mishnah* 1 [IV] of *Yerushalmi Berakhot* continues as follows:

[Before he went to pray,] Abdan asked Rabbi, “How many levels of holy things are there?”

And he said to them, “Four.”

“How many levels of Heave-offering are there?”

He said to him, “Three.”

Then [after speaking of these straightforward facts of the law, Abdan] went and prayed.

A previous text in the tractate gives us a related tradition:

[VIII] Said R. Hiyya the great, “In all my days I never concentrated [properly on my Prayer.][10] One time I wanted to concentrate [properly]. So I meditated. And I said to myself, ‘Who goes up first before the king? The Arkafta [a high dignitary in Persia][11] or the Exilarch?’“ [He used this imagery to help him prepare for his Prayers. To induce the proper state of mind he imagined the Persian hierarchy.]

Samuel said, “I count birds [to help me prepare for prayer].”

R. Bun bar Hiyya said, “I count rows of bricks [in a wall to aid me in achieving the proper state of mind].” (*Y. Berakhot, Chapter* 2, *Mishnah* 4).

Ostensibly, Yerushalmi speaks here of various imagery used to modify a person’s state of mind. In light of this latter passage in *Yerushalmi Berakhot* 2:4, we may explain more amply the questions attributed to Abdan in the former text from *Y. Berakhot* 5:1. That brief exchange between Abdan and Rabbi regarding the number of levels of holy things and of heave-offering, also served as an alternative means of visualization, in preparation for prayer.

With the main texts before us, the following additional issues concerning the Talmudic conception of visualizations for prayer need to be resolved:

1. The connection between *kavvanah* and speaking or thinking of undisputed legal sayings
2. The value for a person to think of a legal decision prior to praying
3. The rationale for choosing the three or four specific rules cited in the passage

4. The grounds for the dispute between Abaye, Raba, and the alternate opinion in Babli. [In Yerushalmi: between Huna, Hoshaia, Bar Qappara and Zeira.]
5. The conceptual difference between the views of the Baraita in the Talmud [which recommends attention be paid to undisputed laws prior to prayer] and the regulations of Mishnah [which refers to "a solemn disposition"] and of Tosefta [which recommends praying after speaking of "words of wisdom"].

The connection between *kavvanah* and the act of speaking about an undisputed legal ruling (1) makes sense within the context of rabbinic culture. The Talmud in general addressed itself to the average "disciple of the sages." The ideal scholar within a rabbinic circle of learning was expected to occupy himself throughout the day with the study of Torah. This meant that his mind was expected to be constantly busy with the questions and answers, the give and take of the Talmudic argument. No doubt, for this ideal rabbinic Jew it was a difficult task to desist from the intricate deliberations of such study and to turn one's perspective to thanksgiving and praise in prayer.

The remedy prescribed by the Talmud to divert one's thoughts from rabbinic debate and logical analysis was the "undisputed legal ruling." A scholar could turn his thoughts to visualize a ruling which led him to contemplate to further debate, no questions and no answers, just a decided law. And through reflection on that law he could suppress further deliberations of study and clear his mind to properly visualize his prayers.

This is the first basic visualization concept in the main Talmudic passage which we have cited. To address the remainder of our issues we must advance more deeply into the theory behind the Talmudic dispute regarding which legal ruling one recites before turning to prayer.

Each example of undisputed laws given in the text illustrates a specific point. Abaye in the name of R. Zeira suggests that a person imagine the stringent rule regarding a woman who discharges blood leaving a stain as small as the size of a mustard seed. To interrupt thoughts of legal give and take, Abaye posits, one must picture an especially strict rule. This breaks one's train of thought in learning and enables a person to turn his attention to prayer out of a humble spirit.

Raba believed that one should not come to prayer out of humility triggered by reflection over a stringency of rabbinic restrictions. Rather he recommended another avenue to enhance the proper imagery needed for *kavvanah*. He advised the sage to consider a significant lenient rule such as an artifice to move his produce and to avoid tithes, a "tax loophole." Out of the satisfaction associated with visualizing such a benefit, one can more easily divert his thoughts from learning and turn to prayer.[12]

The third alternative of the Talmudic source provides us with another perspective on preparation for prayer. Neither the excessive lowliness associated with contemplating a strict rule, nor the gladness connected with cogitating about a lenient precept, prepares a person's mind's eye for prayer. Only meditating over a highly abstract principle of law such as the regulation that one is not permitted to let blood from an animal in the Temple, brings a person to the proper state of correct *kavvanah* for prayer.

Still, even if these interpretations of the views expressed in the Talmudic passage are correct, we have yet to clarify why those three specific legal rules appear in the text. There are numerous stringent, lenient and abstract undisputed rules in the Talmud. By selecting these illustrations the rabbis expressed additional elements of their conceptions of visualization for prayer.

Abaye and Raba saw the disciple's personality segmented by the tensions of everyday life. Ideally he lived in the world of Talmudic ideas and arguments in the study hall. In reality he also lived in the world at large, confronted by its many distractions.

From Abaye's perspective, concern over the everyday relationships between men and women constituted the primary distraction to prayer. To alleviate this a person might turn his thoughts to visualize a drop of blood and a stringent ruling that inhibits contact between the sexes, such as we have in Babli's text.[13]

In Raba's view, mundane monetary worries were the chief sources of interference with a person's mindset for prayer. The average person, scholar or householder, rich or poor, had some measure of anxiety about money or taxes.[14] To mitigate this disquiet a person could turn his thoughts to a great leniency in the law, the notion that he may free himself of the obligation to give tithes, a burdensome fiduciary responsibility. After reflecting upon such a concept, a person could turn his attention to prayer.

According to the third alternative opinion in the Talmud, another more complex realm of daily interaction perturbed the individual and disrupted his inner contemplation. This opinion proposed that the confrontation between a person and sources of authority might have created situations of frustration and helplessness and detracted from a person's ability to pray.

In our text, the Temple stood as a symbol of a source of authority, the priests represented all bureaucracy, and the rule cited in the Talmud suggested the futility of trying to combat the system. A person who let blood from a Temple offering, did so in order to benefit the animal, not for his own personal gain. Nevertheless, the Temple administrator saw only the minute requirements of the law. Accordingly, he declared such an action forbidden, and condemned a person who engages in it to be liable under the law.

According to this third view, out of pessimistic Temple visualizations, a person could turn his attention away from the distractions of the material world and its complex structures of authority and look with humble inner peace towards the more spiritual realms of prayer.

3. Varieties of Visualizations during Prayer

Ancient rabbis had many thoughts and prescriptions on the matters of visualizations in prayer itself. They expressed them in their own idiom through direct teachings and indirectly by formulating their rituals in certain ways.

A basic assumption in what the rabbis taught is that a person can and should use visualizations to alter his consciousness and to recite the different prayers. Hence starting back in antiquity, praying Jews engaged in a series of visualization exercises three times a day.

These are the varied visualizations that I associate with several major Jewish prayers.

The scribal visualization is the state of mind you need to attain when you study texts, or when you write new materials, or when you add columns of numbers, or when you conduct inventories. It is the target *kavvanah* for the Shema prayer, for which many Jews sit and shade their eyes so they may concentrate on reciting the designated Torah texts.

The priestly visualization is the state of mind you need to attain when you comport yourself for a public ritual or pageant. It is the target *kavvanah* for the Amidah, where the swaying that some practice is like a marching in place. You do not want to get out of step as you move through the procession of praises, petitions and thanksgivings of the multi-part Amidah prayer.

The mystical visualization is the state of mind you need to attain to imagine yourself in another place, when your praying carries you off to the heavens in search of God or back in time to our momentous Israelite historical episodes. It is the target *kavvanah* for the many passages of the prayers which invoke the heavenly angels or recount the great miracles in our past, such as the crossing of the Red Sea and the revelation at Sinai.

The triumphal visualization is the state of mind you need to attain to imagine yourself victorious in a grand global historical contest. It is the target *kavvanah* for the Alenu which declares the ultimate triumph of the one true God at the end of time.

The performative-mindful visualization is the state of mind you need to attain when you perform a personal ritual act. It is the target *kavvanah* for the many mitzvoth that a Jew performs throughout his or her life and for the recitation of blessings. Truly, all of the see numerated visualizations are mindful in their own ways. But the performative-mindful imagination takes sharp account for the here and now, the immediate physical facts of one's present circumstances, as for

example at the wedding canopy, in taking the *lulav* and *etrog*, in lighting the Hanukkah menorah, the Shabbat candles, blessing the *challah* and in other ritual instances.

The <u>compassionate-mindful visualization</u> is the state of mind that you seek to attain when reciting such prayers as the Tahanun, Grace after Meals or the Kol Nidre service – exercises in imagining a bond of loving-kindness with God, with oneself, and with other people.

In the next section I discuss at greater length these visualizations that I identify in the rabbinic prayers.

4. Visualization Exercises. The Scribal Visualization: Shema

The Mishnah discusses how to recite the short daily prayer of three paragraphs, called the Shema. The rabbis prescribe how to act while you recite the texts and they debated the finer nuances of how one must ideate and when one may talk while engaged in the recitation:

> "At the breaks [between the paragraphs of the Shema] one may extend a greeting [to his associate] out of respect, and respond [to a greeting which was extended to him]."
> "And in the middle [of reciting a paragraph] one may extend a greeting out of fear [of a person] and respond," the words of R. Meir.
> R. Judah says, "In the middle [of reciting a paragraph] one may extend a greeting out of fear and respond out of respect.
> "At the breaks [between reciting the paragraphs] one may greet out of respect and respond to the greetings of any man" (*Mishnah Berakhot* 2:1).

In my earlier analysis prior to this paper I was satisfied to explain that this liturgical law is the rabbis' way of discussing part of a religious ritual that they called *kavvanah*. I concluded that this is how the ancients talked about the visualization and concentration we need to attain so as to add solemnity to a prayer ritual.

But it vexed me that they spoke about greetings when they wanted to prescribe visualization necessary for the prayer. Through an anecdote I will explain how I changed my interpretation of this pericope.

While working one day at my computer, writing about Jewish prayer, my wife came in to tell me that she was going out to appointments and wanted me to know her plans for the day.

"Just a minute," I said. "I do want to hear what you are saying. Please just let me concentrate to finish writing this paragraph."

At that moment it became clear to me that when the rabbis spoke about *kavvanah* for reciting the Shema, they used a model of concentration that was familiar to a writer – to a person who is engaged in textual work, to a scholar sitting at his desk and trying to think through his complete thoughts.

In general terms, scribes work as follows. A writer needs to focus on composing a paragraph from beginning to end. Similarly, an accountant needs to finish scanning and calculating a column of numbers from top to bottom. A lawyer must complete the reasoning of the steps of an argument all the way through. A programmer must reach the end of writing a complex routine of computer code. All of those professions fit into the category of a reflective writing and calculating worker – which I roll up into the shorthand label "scribe."

5. The Priestly Visualization: Amidah

The Mishnah prescribes as follows for reciting the Amidah prayer:

> One may stand to pray only with a solemn frame of mind.

The early pious people tarried a while before they would pray, so that they could direct their hearts to the omnipresent God.

While one is praying, even if the king greets him, he may not respond.

Even if a serpent is entwined around his heel, he many not interrupt his prayer (*Mishnah Berakhot* 5:1).

In earlier analysis of this pericope prior to this paper, I was satisfied to observe that it spoke in rabbinic idiom to prescribe the correct intensity-level of the *kavvanah* – the visualization – for this prayer. Mishnah tells us that, because the Amidah is a more solemn prayer than the Shema, you need to concentrate more intensely when you recite it.

But it vexed me that the rabbis prescribed this kind of concentration and not some other. Why did they set forth these specifications regarding visualization for the person who is reciting the Amidah? Again, through an anecdote I will explain how I changed my interpretation of this pericope.

The insight came to me one day as I prepared for a lecture that I was to give about the meanings and purposes of the Amidah. I searched for a picture to put on a PowerPoint presentation, looking for a pose that illustrated the right *kavvanah* for this prayer. I did not want to insert an image of a man standing in prayer and wrapped around in a *tallit*. That seemed to be a redundant cliché that did not illuminate meaning.

What image would exhibit a person so intent and disciplined that he would not move, no matter how much distraction came into the context of his surroundings? And that is when I realized what this prayer-visualization demanded. I typed "palace guard" into Google's image search engine. I found and copied a picture of a stereotypical guard from Buckingham Palace in London, dressed in his red and black uniform and standing at attention. I inserted that graphic into my presentation.

I wanted to show the substance of the visualization – that the priest's requires a frame of mind of discipline and obedience for the recitation of the Amidah. This means a martial kind of self-possession, standing with erect posture, feet together, facing Jerusalem as specified by the rules for reciting this prayer. The person reciting the prayer needs to bow at the proper intervals, in keeping with his martial drill.

The Mishnah instructs us that not even a coiled serpent at his heel be allowed to distract a person during his recitation of the Amidah prayer; even if a serpent is nearby, he shall not pause his recitation. That means that through the priestly visualization he sees himself in authority, in soldierly control of his emotions and consciousness – not consequentially ecstatic or meditative in any particular way and yet guarded against distraction.

The visualization that one must strive for in reciting the Amidah is of a certain character and nature. Like the palace guard, the person who is engaged in this prayer visualizes a military personality, intent on particularized activities. He obeys what he is commanded to obey and deliberately ignores all other noises or intrusions into his material context.

6. The Mystical Visualization: Kaddish

A prominent Kaddish in the synagogue is the mourner's Kaddish (Yatom), the one that is employed as a mourner's doxology, a praise of God. The practice of associating this prayer with a mourner first appears in the thirteenth century. The synagogue authorities endorsed the custom that mourners during the first eleven months after losing a close relative ought to rise and recite a Kaddish on their own. In the case of this Kaddish Yatom, the mourner rises in his place in the synagogue and recites the doxology at a few appointed times in the daily, Sabbath, and festival services.

The prayer is an apt mystical visualization for the mourner who recites it. It is a mystical prayer litany of the right words of praise of God in the correct order. The mystical visualization of the Kaddish arises out of the knowledge that those lines that cite for us the adoration of God are imagined to be identical to the praises that are recited by the angels in heaven.

Reciting the Kaddish provides an appropriate vicarious association for the mourner – to stand and recite a prayer on behalf of the departed souls of the dead:

> Magnified and sanctified
> may his great name be
> in the world he created by his will.
> May he establish his kingdom
> in your lifetime and in your days,
> and in the lifetime of all the house of Israel,
> swiftly and soon – and say: Amen.
> May his great name be blessed forever and all time.
> Blessed and praised, glorified and exalted,
> raised and honored, uplifted and lauded
> be the name of the Holy One, blessed be he,
> beyond any blessing, song, praise and consolation
> uttered in the world – and say: Amen.
> May there be great peace from heaven,
> and life for us and for all Israel – and say: Amen.
> May he who makes peace in his high places,
> make peace for us and for all Israel – and say: Amen (*Koren Siddur*, p. 178).

This lilting and poetic passage does have a certain unique cadence, yet it is a standard glorification of God, adding nothing about death or dying or the deceased. I posit that this prayer is especially apropos for a mourner because reciting this heavenly angelic Aramaic praise is an epitome of a mystic's liturgy. It is a stand-in visualization by the mourner on behalf of the departed loved one. The mourner stands in place in the synagogue and recites the words.

But acting in the mode of the mystic, through the appropriate visualization of the prayer, the mourner achieves a level of mystical prayer, not just addressing God with the outpourings of personal anxiety and vexation, but imagining that he or she is standing aloft in heaven, representing the soul of her beloved departed, knocking on heaven's door to seek entry for that spirit into a secure, eternal place close to the divine light and near the warmth of God.

The visualization for mystical prayer requires that one who is addressing God from his or her pew, use the words authorized by the angels on behalf of the deceased. The visualization enables for the person who recites it an imagined ascent to heaven to plead there for the soul of the departed.

7. The Triumphal Visualization: Alenu

Performing on the world's center stage, the reciter of Alenu lets us know that he is a star member of the cast of the Chosen People. He is a confident monotheist who has an exciting story. As he tells it, the gods now are engaged in a continual conflict and competition. And, then, at some point in the future, there will be a final match when idolatry will lose. The victory will go to the one true God over his false and worthless competitors.

The person visualizing triumph recites the words that exhort everyone in the synagogue simultaneously with both vivid and vague visions of a cosmic strugglein heaven and on Earth. The Alenu tells us about the coming state of affairs for the Jewish people. Our destiny will be fulfilled at the end of time in a promised culmination.

This drama is proposed in the first section of the prayer:

> It is our duty to praise the Lord of all things,
> to ascribe greatness to him who formed the world in the beginning,

since he has not made us like the nations of other lands,
and has not placed us like other families of the earth,
since he has not assigned unto us a portion as unto them,
nor a lot as unto all their multitude.
For we bend the knee and offer worship and thanks before the supreme King of kings,
the Holy One, blessed be he,
who stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth,
the seat of whose glory is in the heavens above,
and the abode of whose might is in the loftiest heights.
He is our God; there is none else: in truth he is our King; there is none besides him;
as it is written in his Torah, "And you shall know this day, and lay it to your heart that
the Lord he is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath: there is none else"
(*Koren Siddur*, p. 180).

Visualizing in this mode, the celebrant cheers on, urging his values on others like that of a team coach or captain in a locker room before a crucial game. However, there is an important vagary in this imagery. This is not yet a real game. In his synagogue prayers, the triumphal monotheist does not encourage and exhort his team of worshippers to go out in the street to trample the identified competing teams. The conclusion of the Aleinu prayer finally and forcefully proclaims the awaited details:

We therefore hope in you, O Lord our God,
that we may speedily behold the glory of your might,
when you will remove the abominations from the earth,
and the idols will be utterly cut off,
when the world will be perfected under the kingdom of the Almighty,
and all the children of flesh will call upon your name,
when you will turn unto yourself all the wicked of the earth.

Let all the inhabitants of the world perceive and know that unto you every knee must bow, every tongue must swear.

Before you, O Lord our God, let them bow and fall;
and unto thy glorious name let them give honor;
let them all accept the yoke of your kingdom,
and do you reign over them speedily, and forever and ever.
For the kingdom is yours, and to all eternity you will reign in glory;
as it is written in your Torah, "The Lord shall reign forever and ever."

And it is said, "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall the Lord be One, and his name One."

The visualization of this prayer calls forth in the liturgy a figurative competition. It calls upon the person who recites the prayer to imagine that the ultimate showdown is nigh, to conjure a vision of the minutes ticking down at the close of the game. This vividly imagined visualizations peaks of the end to the struggle at the end of time when the ultimate victory of the team of the one true God over the team of the false Gods is at hand.

8. The Performative-Mindful Visualization: Blessings

The fixed opening phrase of a *berakhah*, "Blessed art thou O Lord, our God, King of the Universe," semantically expresses the speaker's intention to bestow good wishes upon God or to exalt God, who is referred to in the formula by three names. The person who recites a blessing learned this formula when he or she was two or three years old and hardly pondered the theological meaning or even the simple semantics of this phrase each time he or she recited it as an older child or as an adult.

I see an added purpose or function of the *berakhah* formula for the more mature reciter, whom I call a meditator. These recitations serve as the known cues for many instances of daily, periodic, repetitive or occasional mini-mindful meditations. These provide meaningful visualizations of pauses in the rush of one's thoughts and to the meanderings of cognitive awareness.

A meditator recites individual blessings when eating foods, performing bodily functions, witnessing meteorological events, seeing flowers, or hearing good and bad news. Liturgical variants of blessings comprise many of the synagogue texts of prayer.

Here is a summary of a small sample of many of the actions and occasions for which one recites mini-meditations, blessings in daily activities.

Blessed are You…	Purpose	Meditation
Who creates the fruit of the tree	Before eating a fruit	Mindful eating
Who creates the produce of the ground	Before eating a vegetable	Mindful eating
Who gives pleasant fragrance to fruits	Upon smelling fruits	Mindful sensing of nature
Who has withheld nothing from nature and has created in it beautiful creatures and trees for the enjoyment of human beings	Upon seeing flowering trees in their first seasonal bloom	Mindful sensing of the special beauty of nature
Who creates the fruit of the vine	Before drinking wine	Mindful drinking
Who brings forth bread from the earth	Before eating bread – a full meal	Mindful dining, for a full meal
Who commanded us to light the Sabbath/ holiday candles	After lighting the candles	Purposeful ritual, mindful of the passage of time
Who heals all flesh and performs wonders	After bathroom visits	Mindful of one's body and health
Whose power and might fill the world	Upon witnessing thunder or a hurricane	Mindful of disruptive events of nature
Who is good and does good	For good news	Mindful of elevating emotions
Who is the true judge	For bad news	Mindful of emotional trauma
Blessings in the synagogue	Opening or concluding paragraphs of liturgy	Mindful of the markers of the elements of prayer

There are three generally mentioned classical categories for sorting out all the blessings: (1) blessings of performance of a mitzvah (ritual acts), (2) blessings of bodily satisfaction (intake of foods, drinks, etc.) and (3) blessings of praise (liturgy).

As part performative-mindful visualization, these blessings function to demand a meditative awareness of person, body and the immediate external world. For a simple example, a person takes the blessing he or she recites upon smelling fragrant fruit, "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe who gives pleasant fragrance to fruits" (*Koren Siddur*, p. 1000) as a cue to be highly aware of one's surroundings. A person takes another case, the formula spoken before eating an apple, "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe who creates the fruit of the tree," as a cue to mindfully savor the taste and texture of foods. In both cases, visualizations of loving kindness and compassion may accompany the awareness of the physical food.

These blessings serve as triggers. They tell the reciter to stop, to be mindful of his or her actions, to be thoughtful of what type of food is held in hand, how that food is to be regarded and classified, whether one is smelling it or eating it, and to recall what is its "correct *berakhah*."

All forms of mindfulness intensify the practitioner's moments of experience and elevate ordinary events from a background of awareness to a foreground of thinking. Mindful occasions of blessings help one savor one's conscious awareness – the consistency and flavor, the origins and essences of living.

Meir, a rabbi in the Talmud in the second century, spoke of his expectation for every Jew to experience each day one hundred triggers of mindful meditation – a life punctuated daily by one hundred blessings.

To be clear, this mindful meditation through *berakhot* that we have described is not identical to that which Kabat-Zinn and others teach. This mindfulness is adapted to a Jewish context. In fact, through blessings, a person engages in a form of mindfulness to the second power, mindfulness squared, that is to an intensified relationship to multiple worlds, both personal and cultural.

Let me explain. When a person holds an apple in hand and recites the blessing for it, they need to know which proper *berakhah* to make. That meant they have to relate first to that content from the Jewish cultural world, its law or *halakhah*. Still holding that apple in hand, they move through that relationship to look then at the fruit, to feel its heft and taste its tartness as they bite into it.

Mindful visualization exercises require that daily life not be defined only by the torrents of rushing thoughts. Mindful thinking is formed in a duplex relationship to that combination of both cultural and personal contents that are mindfully activated in a conscious mind, under its watchful control. Such visualization steers a person's thoughts and actions by meeting up with them, by making note of them, and then by becoming disentangled from those twisting currents of distractions gushing around one's life.

Blessing-meditation visualizations turn the rush of daily living into a series of discrete moments of experience, each savored fully with thanksgiving, gratitude and with compassion.

9. The Compassionate-Mindful Visualization: Kol Nidre

The legal text of Kol Nidre that Jews recite at the outset of Yom Kippur is actually a vivid emotional liturgical visualization of meditative intent. The worshipper announces the central theme of Yom Kippur at the outset of a set of long and complex performances that will follow throughout the evening and next day.

The inaugural declaration of the centerpiece of the entire Yom Kippur liturgy accomplishes the following. Kol Nidre is the declaration and visualization of a compassion that the liturgical practitioners will now seek for themselves. This mindset continues in the *selihot*, which continue as further repetitive declarations of compassion throughout the solemn services.

It is not an easy task for worshippers to find this emotional outlet for themselves, along with their entire community, together on the same day at the same time in the same place. As the

worshippers continue their extended visualizations of compassion, they ask God to help them attain this empathy and forgiveness. Their process extends into the *viduy*, the confessions of sin in which they list their shortcomings, forgive themselves and ask for forgiveness from their God.

The stoical legal declaration of Kol Nidre functions as a primary part of a warm liturgy. Worshippers say, "We release ourselves of our vows."Parishioners start with that form of proclamation because that is – in a scribal idiom – away to say that they have compassion on themselves, they forgive themselves. Here in this collective house of gathering, they speak about themselves. They emotionally – not legally – visualize that they can annul their own wrong declarations, intentions and acts of the past and of the future.

These words in nonfigurative legal idiom are then pragmatically used as a personal meditation of compassion – as clear as any such act in any other religious context. This is a Jewish meditation. There is no clear abstraction to which the liturgical users appeal to formulate a definition of Jewish compassion. They inductively learn what it is from the modes in which they practice it. The people in the congregation begin this meditative analysis and perception to trigger the realization that its liturgy in this instance on Yom Kippur Eve is a long diverse set of meditative practices seeking for themselves and for their fellow Jews "rahamim," "selihah," "mehilah." The worshippers prepare to have remorse, regret and true pain because they are trapped by their shortcomings, their bad deeds, their inability to find peace. They have been disappointed, traumatized and confused by what they see around them.

They seek compassion, which is commonly defined as, "sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others." In a process that they call "atonement" they turn this compassion inward to address their own case, to have mercy on their own souls. They perform this liturgy enmeshed in their cultural trappings, simple and ornate. The pragmatic metaphor of choice to start the engine of compassion is the conceptual legal process for the release of vows. The idiom of these most sacred prayers begins with that. Kol Nidre serves on a basic subconscious emotional level as the ordinal visualization and articulation of the Jewish meditation of compassion.

This begins the epic Jewish holiday of compassion. The worshippers employ a legal sounding idiom saying that they are releasing vows. With that visualization of Kol Nidre they are in fact starting a twenty five hour marathon of meditative compassion and forgiveness.

10. Visualization Circuit Training

The daily morning prayers in many synagogues often last no more than thirty minutes. During the short prayer services, Jews cycle through diverse visualization exercises, as we have discussed above.

With this final analogy I conclude my inquiry into the religious visualizations that I find in the major Jewish prayers. I compare the busy composite service with its rapid movements from one visualization to another to a session of circuit training exercises.

Physical circuit training in a gymnasium or other workout facility is a form of body conditioning or resistance training using high-intensity exercises for strength building and muscular endurance. In most circuit training, the time between exercises is short and the trainee moves on quickly to the next exercise. In a typical exercise circuit, one completes all the prescribed exercises in the program in a short span of time.

The inner spiritual circuit training of the prayers is a form of soul conditioning that uses high intensity exercises for visualization building and concentration endurance. In a prayer circuit, participants typically complete all the prescribed exercises in the program in a short duration. In most prayer circuit training the time between visualization events is brief. The performer moves on quickly to the next visualization event.

Jews who follow the recommended interior visualization regimens of Jewish prayer, which I have discussed above, may indeed, as Rabbi Sacks suggested, be engaged at a high level in prayer that is, "the most intimate gesture of the religious life, and the most transformative." I have

proposed here that in the details of the prayers the visualizations, images and gestures of the liturgy are complex, diverse and deep in specific ways that define many important aspects of what it is to be a believing and practicing Jew.

References

1. M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature*. New York, 1967.
2. *Koren Sacks Siddur*. Jerusalem, 2009.

Notes

1. See his essay introduction to the *Koren Sacks Siddur* (Jerusalem, 2009) entitled, "Understanding Jewish Prayer."
2. Babli's version omits this rule. Mareh Hapenim suggests that it may be because in Babli Niddah there is an explicit dispute over the rule between R. Yohanan and Resh Laqish. It therefore may not be an appropriate rule on which to reflect to divert one's attention from the distractions of study before turning to prayer.
3. In Babli's version, he may mix the grain together with its own husks. In that case the rule refers to grain that has not been winnowed which is not liable yet to tithes. From Yerushalmi's version here we may infer that the ruse to avoid tithes works even for grain that has been winnowed and has become liable to tithes. Even in that case one may mix the grain with straw and bring it into the house to avoid the obligation of tithes.
4. Rashi explains that if one deals with an undisputed law he will not be distracted to delve into it or ponder over it during his recitation of prayer.
5. They observed the more stringent law as required for a zabah who had seen discharges of blood on three consecutive days during the eleven day period between one menstrual cycle and another. See B. Niddah 66a, B. Meg. 28b.
6. According to R. Ephraim in the commentary of Tosafot to B. Menahot 67b, s.v. *kdy*, this is the language the householder uses for the artifice, even though he intends to use the grain for himself.
7. The obligation to tithe produce begins when one brings the grain into storage after it has been winnowed. See B. Pesahim 9a, B. Menahot 67b, B. Niddah 15b.
8. See B. Me'ilah 12b.
9. Notably, Babli omits Bar Qappara's view. His opinion in Y. [E] is similar to Huna's statement in Y. [C]. Both refer to strict laws regulating sexual relations. It appears that rather than to duplicate the point, Babli's editor simply omitted Bar Qappara's lemma.
10. The traditional commentators naturally mitigate this statement. Pene Moshe explains that he was involved deeply in his study. Sefer Haharedim observes that it is unthinkable that such holy masters did not properly concentrate on their prayer. This must refer to instances of unavoidable disruptions of concentration.
11. See M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature*, N.Y., 1967, p. 73.
12. Another form of happiness is associated elsewhere with preparation for prayer. A baraita says, "One stands to pray . . . only out of the joy of [fulfilling] a commandment."
13. The same may be said of Bar Qappara's view in Y.
14. Maimonides (in the *Guide for the Perplexed*, part 3, chapter 51) expresses this point directly: "Do not pray moving your lips with your face to the wall [as if you are engaged deeply in prayer] and all the while you are thinking of your business transactions. . . Do not think you have achieved anything [by doing these things]."