A BRIEF SAMPLING OF PERSPECTIVES ON GOD
FOUND IN THE LITERATURE OF THE RABBIS

Rabbi Hanina said: The seal of the Holy Blessed One is *Emet* (*aleph-mem-tav*), "truth." In explaining the significance of the letters in this word, Resh Lakish said: The first letter, *alef*, is the first letter of the alphabet; the second letter, *mem*, is in the middle of the alphabet, and the third letter, *tav*, is the last letter, thus signifying, "I am the first, and I am the last, and beside Me there is no God" (*Isaiah* 44:6). "I am the first" -- I did not receive My Kingdom from anyone else. "And beside Me there is no God" -- I have no partner. "And with last am the same" (*Isaiah* 41:4) -- I am not destined to turn over My kingdom to anyone else.

--Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 55a

Rabbi Hanina bar Isi said: There are times when the world and the fullness thereof cannot contain the glory of the Godhead, and there are times when He speaks to a person from between the hairs of his head.

--*Genesis Rabbah* 4:4

Rabbi Yohanan said: Wherever you find the power of the Holy Blessed One mentioned in Scripture, you also find God's condescension mentioned, a fact that is stated in the Torah, repeated in the Prophets, and reasserted in the Writings. In the Torah it is written, "For the Lord your God is God of gods," (*Deuteronomy* 10:17) and directly after that, "He does execute justice for the fatherless and the widow" (*Deuteronomy* 10:18). It is repeated in the Prophets: "For thus says the high and lofty One. . .I dwell in the high and lofty place" (*Isaiah* 57:15), and directly after that, "With him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit" (*Isaiah* 57:15). It is reasserted in the Writings: "Extol Him that rides upon the skieys, whose name is the Lord" (*Psalm* 68:5), and directly after that, "A father of the fatherless, and a protector of the widows" (*Psalm* 68:6).

--Babylonian Talmud, *Megillah* 31a

We have been taught that Rabbi Yose said: The Divine Presence never came down below, and Moses and Elijah never ascended on high, for Scripture says, "The heavens are the heavens of the Lord; and it is the earth that He has given to the children of mortals" (*Psalm* 115:16).

--Babylonian Talmud, *Sukkot* 5a

A Caesar said to Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah, "I want to see your God." Rabbi Joshua: "You cannot see Him." Caesar: "Nevertheless, I want to see Him." So Rabbi Joshua had Caesar stand facing the sun during the summer solstice of Tammuz and said to him, "Look directly at the sun." Caesar: "I cannot." Rabbi Joshua: "If you say of the sun,
which is only one of the servitors before the Holy Blessed One, 'I cannot look directly at it, how much less could you look at the Presence itself!'  

--Babylonian Talmud, Hullin 60a

"When they say to me: What is His Name? What shall I tell them?" (Exodus 3:13). At that time Moses was asking that the Holy Blessed One make known to him His great Name. And God said to Moses: "I am what [from time to time] I may be" (Exodus 3:14). According to Rabbi Abba bar Mammal, the Holy Blessed One said to Moses: You wish to know My Name. I am variously called in keeping with my different deeds. When I judge created beings, I am called "God" (Elohim); When I wage war against the wicked, I am called "Hosts" (Tzeva'ot); While [waiting for one to repent] I suspend [judgment] of that person's sins, I am called El Shaddai (literally, "God who says 'Sh'da'i'--enough [affliction for the person]). And when I have mercy on My world, I am called Adonai. Hence, "I am what [from time to time] I may be -- I am variously called in keeping with my different deeds."

--Exodus Rabbah 3:6

"This is my God, and I will glorify Him" (Exodus 15:2). When I acknowledge Him, God -- if one dare say such a thing--is glorified, but when I do not acknowledge Him, God is glorified merely in name. Similarly, "You are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and I am God" (Isaiah 43:12). When you are My witnesses, I am God, but when you are not My witnesses, I am not God.

--Sifre Deuteronomy §346

Rabbi Helbo said in the name of Rabbi Huna: One who is filled with the fear of Heaven - - his words are listened to, as is said, "The end of the matter, [when] all is heard, fear God, and keep His commandments, that being the sum of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). What is meant by "That being all of man"? According to Rabbi Eleazar, the Holy One said: The entire world, all of it, was brought into being for such a person. According to Rabbi Abba bar Kahana, such a person is equal in worth to the entire world, all of it. According to Rabbi Simeon ben Azzai, the entire world, all of it, was brought into being only to provide companionship for such a person.

--Babylonian Talmud, B'rakhot 6b

Rabbi Simeon ben Eleazar said: Greater is one who acts [on God's behalf] from love than one who acts from fear. For the latter, the merit remains in effect for only a thousand generations, while for the former, it remains in effect for two thousand generations. With regard to love of God, Scripture says, "God keeps mercy for two thousand [generations] for them that love Me and keep His commandments [out of love]" (Exodus 20:6); while with regard to fear, Scripture says elsewhere, "For a thousand [generations] for them that keep His commandments [out of fear]" (Deuteronomy 7:9).

--Babylonian Talmud, Sotah 31a
Rabbi Hanina said: Everything is in the hand of Heaven except the fear of Heaven, as is said, "And now Israel, what is the one thing that the Lord your God requires of you, but to fear Him?" (Deuteronomy 10:12).

--Babylonian Talmud, Brakhot 33b

"And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed..." (Exodus 17:11). But did the hands of Moses actually wage war or win victories? Of course not. What the text signifies is that so long as Israel turned their thoughts upward and submitted their hearts to their Father in heaven, they prevailed; but otherwise, they fail.

--Babylonian Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 29a

Rabbi Nahman son of Rabbi Hisda expounded: Why is the word [in the Torah's account of the creation of human being] Va-yitzer ("He formed man") spelled with two yods? Because the Holy One created two yetzers ("inclinations") in humanity -- the inclination to good and the inclination to evil.

--Babylonian Talmud, B'rakhot 61a

If you argue: Is not the Holy One Himself who created the impulse to evil? Who then can possibly make it good?" the Holy One replies, "You are the one who makes the impulse to evil stay evil. How? When you were a child, you did not sin. Only when you grew up, you began to sin." If you argue: "But no person can guard himself against it!," the Holy One replies, "How many things in the world are even less bearable and more bitter than the impulse to evil, yet you manage to sweeten them. Nothing is more bitter than the lupine, yet, in order to sweeten it, you carefully boil it in water seven times, until it becomes sweet. Now, if you sweeten for your need bitter things that I alone created, all the greater is your responsibility for the impulse to evil, which was placed under your control."

--Tanhuma B'reshit §7

Rabbi Akiva used to say: Everything is foreseen [by God], but the right to choose is given [to human beings]. The world is judged by [divine] goodness, yet all is in accord with the number of a person's [good deeds]. He also used to say: Everything is given against a pledge, and a net is spread over all the living. The store is open, the [divine] Storekeeper extends credit, the account book lies open, a hand writes therein, and whoever wishes to borrow may come and borrow. But the collectors go around regularly every day and exact payment, whether one is aware or not. And the collectors have good authority to rely on, since the judgment is a true judgment, and all is prepared for the banquet."

--Mishnah Avot 3:15-16
wonderful things from here to there no general impression of nature
with phenomena, the facts of the case we wave to say to so
proper is not without benefit [in his own country] so it is also
rescued the sciences and wonders of things familiar to us. As the
peoples upon the ocean beaches but most of us and is different in
seem to be children who have picked up a few prints
down to a point where the reasons and novelties
overtake them as the sciences discover to be new, and others seem to be
of the creative sciences themselves. Professor and others were
possessed with the idea that science has not the universe, merely
their scientific books and the interpretation of science to be the
character of scientific writers or pop-

when the roof of the hill

is so large things for strange, indifference to the

wonder of

we understand the meaning of God and the importance of

the many things that religion tradition holds in store

A READER OF WONDERS

- Abraham Joshua Heschel

Philosophy of Judaism
A Man in Search of God

32
Two Kinds of Wonder

—Ah, now we understand!

That is why we understand...

Then through the scene no new things is produced, the principal thing is moved, and thus the car

scrow that things the horizontal wheels to move, and thus the car

The man in the car, the progress the button that moves the

—Yes, we get it.

The wheels, do you get it?

connected by a wire to the center of the car, which held on top of

omen the pole of the mental where there is any screw which is

—Yes, we get it.

then the other you get it?

Above the bridge where there are several wheels, one smaller

—Yes, we get it.

You get it?

Go in search of man
God is clothed with terrible majesty.
One of the most curious sights in the mind, is a certain kind of wondrous mystery, the principle of which is not a particular quality in God, but rather a quality of the mind to comprehend the mystery of things.

In our own souls, we see the secret of the mind and are amazed at its ability.

The wondrousness of things is a secret known to no other act of reason. It is a secret of the mind to encounter in God by means of the mystery of the mind. For example, the case of wondrous mystery, we do not encounter the mind of God in the act of reasoning. The mind of God is not a particular quality in God, but rather a quality of the mind to comprehend the mystery of things.

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In every generation, we... The Rabbis remarked: It is not written here: 'Who did wonders.'

Exodus 15:11
S hublim in glorious deeds; doing wonders,
Who is he that isto prune iniquity,
Who is he that isto prune the earth,
In the days of God, the Lord we read:
and wisdom in all things.

And he proved his fathers by his acts, in the days of old.
Thou hast been the Lord our God from the days of old; thou hast done wonders in the midst of the nations in the eyes of all... thou hast done wonders.

Exodus 14:17-18
For the Lord will pass through to smite with the sword in the Egyptians; and thine armour shall fail thee. In the day when thou goest over the Jordan into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt set up these stones for a memorial unto thee, and shalt teach thy son... thou hast.......

Psalm 8:5-6
And thou, O Lord, utterly savest them; and hast chosen thine own throned seat: the Swallow, and the swallow's nest which they build in a ray, and the nest of the swallow.

The nations are eternal: and the thoughts of man are but vanity.
Psalm 90:13-14
And the swallow, and the swallow's nest which they build in a ray, and the nest of the swallow.

For the Lord our God is good, and his mercy endureth for ever.
Psalm 103:11
The Lord our God is good, and his mercy endureth for ever.

In every generation, we... 

The Rabbis remarked: It is not written here: 'Who did wonders.' 

Exodus 15:11
S hublim in glorious deeds; doing wonders,
Who is he that isto prune iniquity,
Who is he that isto prune the earth,
In the days of God, the Lord we read:
and wisdom in all things.
Many things you know, Lord. O Lord my God. 

He does know. He knows. He does. 

I am not sure that He does with 

and the Bible confirms, it is there anything that He does with 

To Him who alone does great wonders, 

O give thanks. . . .

He alone knows. The Psalms (139:7): doceens: 

that happen to us. Wonders happen without our being able to notice 

Awareness of wonder is not the same as knowing the wonders 

He alone knows.

day by day is published for the decay, like a child by his master.

day by day is published for the decay, like a child by his master. 

Psalm 92:6: 

They are more than can be told. 

If I would direct and speak of them, 

A philosophy of Judaism.
At Myths and Legends, Custer, and the Love of Man.

At Harvest, Custer, and the Love of Man.

At Myths and Legends, Custer, and the Love of Man.

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At Harvest, Custer, and the Love of Man.
Knowledge foolish (Proverbs 4:12)."

Proverbs 4:12 says, "Hear, my son, and apply your heart, and incline your ear with all your understanding.

Human wisdom is contingent, not absolute. It is given to us by God, but we must seek it through diligent study.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Proverbs 9:10)

And broad is the gate, and wide is the way that leads to destruction, but the way of life is narrow and few are those who find it.

Job 11:7,9

"The measure thereof is greater than the earth, and higher than heaven.

Deeper than the ocean's depths, wider than the width of the sand.

It is as high as heaven, as deep as the nether world.

Canst thou find out the depths of the hoary ages? Canst thou search out the limits of the days of eternity?"

God's love and wisdom are revealed to us through His Word, which is the Bible. It is through the study of God's Word and the application of its principles that we can grow in our understanding and knowledge of Him.

"And the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." (Proverbs 9:10)
The meaning of wisdom.
There is the man who, after the Lord has been punished in his body,

According to the Bible, the principal religious virtue is faith. When we have faith, we can trust in the Lord's promise and be confident in His promise. We must place our trust in the Lord, as the Bible says in Isaiah (Isaiah 26:4, 33:6):

As we grow in faith, we must be prepared with both love and joy. In a sense, we are the metaphors of love. To feel the Lord is my God and joy.

And joy.

When a man is in the presence of a mighty King, he will not sit idle. We find a classical expression of the meaning and expression of mercy (Isaiah 2:4):

This verse refers to the vision of the Lord, from the throne of His majesty (Zechariah 2:10, 11).

And joy.

What is the meaning of the word "faith"? In the Bible, faith is defined as trust in the Lord. When we have faith, we can trust in the Lord's promise and be confident in His promise.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER 7

Things that are holy shall themselves become holy, a moment of our is a moment of self-consecration. They who are in moments of prayer, according to the school of Paphlagonia, who do not meditate on what they hear, the philosophy of Judaism.
symbolic language is a power within nature.
are part of the natural order. It is simply inconceivable to Kaplan to envision any dimension of an impulse that precludes all of reality. He posits that even in his dualistic world, the power of transformation is realized in every human being. Kaplan's theories on human fulfillment, social justice, and the role of religious rituals in shaping human behavior are central to his perspective.

He argues that the world is structured to depict the role of religion in society, with Padua and Padua revealing the deeper roots of religious practices. Kaplan's views on the dualistic world illustrate the centrality of religious activities in shaping human behavior and society.

The key term "Kaplan" is repeatedly mentioned throughout the text, indicating its importance in Kaplan's theories. Kaplan's work is seen as a response to the limitations of traditional Jewish thought, and his ideas are presented as a way to reconcile the dualistic world with religious practice.

Kaplan is credited with developing a new form of religious thought, one that encompasses both Jewish and non-Jewish perspectives. His work is seen as a bridge between these two worlds, allowing for a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of religious practice.

In summary, Kaplan's work is seen as a significant contribution to the field of religious thought, offering a new way to understand the role of religion in society.

This text explores Kaplan's ideas on human fulfillment, social justice, and the role of religious rituals in shaping human behavior. Kaplan's work is presented as a response to the limitations of traditional Jewish thought, and his ideas are seen as a way to reconcile the dualistic world with religious practice.
The Tension in Jewish God-Talk

The traditional notion of a central role of God in Jewish theology has been challenged by the emergence of a more critical understanding of God. This critical perspective, which has gained traction in recent decades, questions the traditional notions of God's omnipotence and omniscience, and instead emphasizes the limitations and fallibility of divine action.

In this context, the concept of God as a transcendent being who is removed from the experiences of ordinary people is questioned. Instead, there is a growing recognition of the role of God as a product of human imagination and the cultural and historical contexts in which it exists.

The critical approach to God also challenges the notion of God as an absolute and unchanging being. Instead, it suggests that God is a dynamic and evolving concept that is shaped by the experiences of individuals and communities.

Symbolic Language

The traditional role of symbols in religious discourse is also being reconsidered. Symbols are seen not as fixed and unchanging, but as dynamic and flexible, capable of reflecting the changing experiences of individuals and communities.

In this context, the role of symbols in religious discourse is being re-examined, and new forms of symbolic language are being developed that are more responsive to the experiences of individuals and communities.

The Tension in Jewish God-Talk

In conclusion, the traditional notion of God as a transcendent being who is removed from the experiences of ordinary people is being challenged by a more critical approach to God. This approach recognizes the role of human imagination and the cultural and historical contexts in which God is perceived, and suggests that God is a dynamic and evolving concept that is shaped by the experiences of individuals and communities.

Symbolic Language

The traditional role of symbols in religious discourse is also being reconsidered, with a new focus on the dynamic and flexible nature of symbols and the role they play in reflecting the changing experiences of individuals and communities.

In this context, new forms of symbolic language are being developed that are more responsive to the experiences of individuals and communities, and that are capable of reflecting the changing nature of God in a more nuanced and sophisticated way.
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