

To my grandchildren:

Tair

Elkayam

Hibat

Uriya

Tzfanya

Liron

Noya

Berechya

Yuval

Oz-Haim



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# Translator's Note

**I**n this final part of the third volume in his trilogy, Dr. Chamiel discusses four thinkers who wrote much or all of their work originally in English, and a fifth, Eliezer Goldman, whose native language was English, though most of his writing—including the texts discussed in this book—appeared in Hebrew. I have endeavored to translate Dr. Chamiel's discussion as if it was directed at the English quotations from these authors. When I have succeeded imperfectly, the fault is of course mine and not his. In the case of Michael Abraham, who wrote in Hebrew, I translated whatever of his work is cited here myself. I hope he will forgive me if I have inadvertently put words in his mouth that he himself would not choose to write.

I would like to offer my thanks to Dr. Chamiel for the opportunity to collaborate with him on this fascinating volume. I would also like to thank him, along with Dr. Adrian Sackson of Academic Language Experts, and Prof. Marc Shapiro, the series editor, for their assistance with the translation. I, of course, am ultimately responsible for it.

**Michael Carasik, Tamuz 5780—June 2020**

## CHAPTER ONE

# Introduction

### DENYING THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN REASON AND REVELATION: THE POSITION AND ITS SOURCES

In this book I continue my discussion of the different approaches in contemporary Jewish thought regarding the notion of a possible contradiction between reason and revelation. Here I shall discuss the approaches that do not accept the possibility of such contradiction, including the various identity approaches, the compartmental approach, and the transcendental approach. I began the discussion of this issue in part 1 of my book *Between Religion and Reason*,<sup>1</sup> in which I discussed the dialectical approach in contemporary thought, which recognizes and accepts the contradiction between the two realms. In my book *The Middle Way*, following my teacher Shalom Rosenberg's model<sup>2</sup> of the relationship between religion and science, reason and revelation, I discussed the various approaches that either deny the possibility of such contradiction or accept it.<sup>3</sup> I showed that those thinkers who accept the identity approach can be further divided among three secondary approaches.

1. According to the *full identity* approach, the content of revelation and the scientific and philosophical conclusions reached by human

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1 E. Chamiel, *Between Religion and Reason*, part 1: *The Dialectical Position in Contemporary Jewish Thought from Rav Kook to Rav Shagar*, trans. A. Kallenbach (Brighton, MA, 2020).

2 See idem., *The Middle Way: The Emergence of Modern Religious Trends in Nineteenth-Century Judaism—Responses to Modernity in the Philosophy of Z. H. Chajes, S. R. Hirsch, and S. D. Luzzatto*, ed. A. Abelman, trans. J. Green (Brighton, MA, 2014), 351–357. See also idem., *The Dual Truth: Studies on Nineteenth-Century Modern Religious Thought and Its Influence on Twentieth-Century Jewish Philosophy*, trans. A. Kallenbach (Brighton, MA, 2019), xii; idem., *Between Religion and Reason*, 1:4–6.

3 Chamiel, *The Middle Way*, 351–357.

reason are perfectly identical, and there are no problems or contradictions whatsoever between the two realms. According to some scholars, the originator of this position is Saadia Gaon. It must be emphasized here that this is not the Haredi position, according to which reason has nothing whatsoever to say about theological or normative subjects or any other subject on which revelation and religion take a stand. On all such topics, truth is transmitted exclusively through revelation—written and oral—and through those who carry it forward, the great scholars of Torah.

- 2a. According to the *restrictive identity* approach, the two realms are identical in principle, but problems and even apparent contradictions do often appear. In these cases, the scientific or ethical assertion whose source is in human reason is for its part mistaken. The source of the problems is usually that the scientific discussion has encroached on areas that are beyond its scope, or that a philosophic or ethical discussion, lacking conclusive evidence, nonetheless has treated a hypothesis as a truth. In these cases, one must rather turn to knowledge that is based on revelation, whose source is divine and therefore cannot be questioned, as a touchstone for truth. In my book *The Middle Way*, I demonstrated that the source of this position is Judah Halevi. Hasdai Crescas and Philo took this approach as well. In the nineteenth century R. Zvi Hirsch Chajes held this position.<sup>4</sup>
- 2b. The modern period saw a shift in this fundamentalist position among several thinkers. In the Middle Ages, the statements of revelation remained unquestioned, since science had great difficulty in formulating a firm basis for its conclusions and believers took it as established fact that revelation was God's direct word to humanity. This applied to both the Old and New Testaments, as well as the Quran. But when, from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth, biblical criticism began to loom larger and science succeeded in many instances in proving its conclusions beyond doubt, the question again arose among fundamentalists of what to do in such cases of contradiction, since it was impossible to refute them the old way. That is when the *neo-fundamentalist identity approach* appeared, which holds that in such cases of contradiction we have to turn to position 3 (described below), despite the flaw that this makes the

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4 Ibid., 211–216.

approach inconsistent. The fundamentalist criterion asserts not that the biblical text is always consistent, but that it is inerrant—it cannot be mistaken, either in theology and morality or in physical, geological, or historical facts.<sup>5</sup> I identified R. Samson Raphael Hirsch as one of the nineteenth-century thinkers who took this approach.<sup>6</sup>

3. According to the *interpretative identity approach*, the two realms are in principle identical. But the solution that this approach suggests for instances of apparent contradiction between the two realms is the opposite one. According to this approach, the contradictions stem from a misunderstanding of the meaning of those statements in revelation that appear to contradict the conclusions of reason and science. In such cases, it is precisely to the conclusions of reason that one must turn as a touchstone. In this way the stories and beliefs expressed in the Bible take on an interpretation opposing the straightforward one, that is, a symbolic, allegorical-philosophical, or mystical-kabbalistic interpretation. I will not discuss these sorts of interpretation in this book. In *The Middle Way* I showed that this philosophical approach came to its full expression in the thought of Maimonides.<sup>7</sup>

According to the identity approach, it is unnecessary to speak of a contradiction between revelation and reason/science, since they are in principle identical. This approach is the opposite of the *dialectical approach*, discussed in the first part of *Between Religion and Reason*, according to which there is a contradiction between the two realms. But there are two other approaches according to which there is no contradiction between them. The first one is the *compartmental approach*, which comes from the thought of Moses Mendelssohn and Franz Rosenzweig and was adopted as well by Yeshayahu Leibowitz.<sup>8</sup> According to this approach, we have two sections of a single greater truth. They are partially or entirely separated and they speak in different languages and discuss different worlds, to the extent that it is impossible for either to question the other. The second one is the

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5 On this shift, see J. Barr, *Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia, 1978); and also Chamiel, *The Middle Way*, 150–151.

6 See Chamiel, *The Middle Way*, 402–422.

7 Ibid., 354–357.

8 On Mendelssohn's compartmental approach, see *ibid.*, 357–361. On Rosenzweig on this subject, see Chamiel, *The Dual Truth*, 328–332; and on Leibowitz see *ibid.*, 257–258.

*transcendental approach*, which comes from Kant and is held by Isaac Breuer and R. Shagar. According to these latter two, since the divine, religious realm represents the *Ding an sich*, things as they really are beyond the material reality and human comprehension, it does not come within the purview of reason, which is concerned solely with the world of appearances.

These identity or compartmental approaches are preferred by most modern believers who face the contradiction between the two realms—so much so that sometimes thinkers unconsciously confuse them. By contrast, the dialectical approach, especially that according to which there is no solution, no way to patch together the contradictions and the dialectical tension in this world—for there are two truths involved—is less accepted and more difficult to understand and to digest than its predecessors. In my opinion, however, this is the one approach that is not apologetic or illusory, as are the other approaches, according to which harmonization is always possible.

I turn now to a survey of those thinkers who hold the various positions that oppose the possibility of contradiction. I will devote a separate chapter to each of them. I prefer, as far as is possible, to permit each thinker to speak on his own behalf. But I will precede or follow his own thoughts with whatever words of explanation may be necessary. The reader will certainly note that I am not accustomed to preserving academic distance from the subjects of my research as other scholars do, and I often respond to them or dispute with them. This stems both from my own unusual character and from my way of being direct with regard to the explanations of others and expressing my own opinion as to whether these explanations are correct or in error. It stems as well from the fact that we are talking about contemporary thought and about topics that are still at the heart of discussion and debate today, still in the soul of every modern believer. Therefore, I cannot avoid getting involved with them. My own critical opinion, whether positive or negative, I withhold from no one, speaking clearly and looking you in the eye. But I emphasize here at the beginning that this is of course only my personal opinion. The reader, in turn, is invited to read my words with a critical eye and to formulate his own opinion on the topic under discussion.

I take this opportunity to thank the team at Carmel Publishers, led by Yisrael Carmel, for the work they have devoted to the publication of my trilogy. Thanks to the tireless Maayan El-On Fedder, to Amram Peter, the remarkable editor of this book, to its page designer Ella Cohen, to the talented cover designer Yael Bar-Dayana. The important London artist and painter David Breuer-Weil has once again permitted me to use one of his wonderful philosophical paintings to decorate the book, and for this I am deeply grateful.



Thanks also to my family for their patience and support, especially to my dear wife Gulie.

Jerusalem, I Adar 5779—February 2019

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all those who took part in the translation and publication of my book in English. Firstly, to my series editor, Prof. Marc B. Shapiro, for accepting this book to his series and providing important comments on the translated text. Marc's comments on the manuscript, as well as those offered by the translators of the book's two parts, drew my attention to a few errors in the original Hebrew version of the book. I have corrected those mistakes in the digital Hebrew version as well. I also want to thank Avi Staiman, CEO of Academic Language Experts, Dr. Adrian Sackson, managing editor, and translator Dr. Michael Carasik, who did a wonderful job in translating this book. Last but not least, I want to acknowledge the management of the ASP publishing house and its dedicated staff, including Alessandra Anzani and Kira Nemirovsky, for their great work on this book.

Jerusalem, Tamuz 5780—June 2020

## CHAPTER TWO

# Prof. Eliezer Goldman

Eliezer Goldman was born in 1918 in New York. He attended the Talmudic Academy high school and then Yeshiva College; at the same time, he acquired his Torah learning at R. Isaac Elhanan Theological Seminary. He immigrated to Palestine in 1938 and studied at the Hebrew University. In 1941, he and some friends established Kibbutz Sde Eliyahu, where he worked in the vegetable garden and for a while was the kibbutz secretary. He taught at the joint high school of the religious kibbutzim in the Beth Shean valley. In the course of time, Goldman became the chief ideologue of moderate religious thought in the religious kibbutz movement. He continued his own studies at Bar-Ilan University and also taught there, in the departments of general and Jewish philosophy. His doctorate, on Pragmatism, was published in book form in 1980 in English. His research focused on the thought of Maimonides, Saadia Gaon, R. Kook, and R. Soloveitchik. He developed his own pluralistic, post-modern, non-illusory religious thought, firmly planted in this world and free of fundamentalism, mysticism, and messianism. In 1988 he won the Bialik Prize. In 1996 he published *Mehkarim Ve'iyunim: Hagut Yehudit Be'avar Uvahoveh* (Studies and examinations: Jewish thought in the past and the present), edited by his students (and, later, his colleagues) Daniel Statman and Avi Sagi. Goldman died in 2002. In 2009 his students published another collection of his articles under the title *Yahadut Lelo Ashlayah* (Judaism without illusion).<sup>1</sup>

Among scholars of Jewish thought, Goldman was known as a pluralistic religious thinker who did not shut his eyes to the difficulties with which modernity presents the believer. At first glance, I took his thought to adopt the dialectical approach. According to this approach, we cannot ignore the contradictions between the conclusions of modern science and philosophy and the statements of revelation. After giving the matter second thought, I was

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1 E. Goldman, *Yahadut Lelo Ashlayah* (Jerusalem, 2009).

of the view that, having been influenced by Leibowitz, Goldman had adopted the compartmental approach. But, after carefully studying both his own writing and Gili Zivan's book, *Dat Lelo Ashlayah* (Religion without illusion),<sup>2</sup> I came to the conclusion that his religious hero was Maimonides. In my opinion, Goldman, like Maimonides, held the interpretative identity approach. Indeed, most of Goldman's writing is devoted to an attempt to reinterpret the Bible, Halakhah, and other religious statements in accordance with contemporary philosophy. His work on contradiction is peripheral. Nonetheless, it is important to note that Goldman abandoned the medieval and modern "meta-narrative" approach, according to which the world is directed at some sort of ultimate purpose. He adopted a pluralistic, postmodern approach of narratives dependent on context, culture, government, and society. Goldman does indeed advocate a far-reaching pluralism, but he applies it to all realms of reality except for the religious realm, which, in his words, transcends human comprehension. But I am getting ahead of myself. First let me focus on an analysis of his writing on the topic of the relationship between the realms, in order of their publication.

In an article that Goldman published in *De'ot* 12 (1960) called "Al Ha'emunah Habilti Ashlayatit" (On non-illusory belief),<sup>3</sup> he begins, in agreement with Leibowitz, by refuting illusory redemptive religiosity. According to this position, religion can redeem humanity from the defects and fetters of reality and thereby make possible a genuine closeness to the divine. Instead, Goldman adopts a non-illusory religion that acknowledges the contrast between created reality and the Creator, and the unbridgeable gulf between the human and the divine. "Human reality must be accepted as it is, without any illusion that we can extricate ourselves from it, and while in it one must serve God; 'for that is the whole of man' [Eccl. 12:13]. Such service expresses the sole possible path from man to his Creator."<sup>4</sup> The human intellect, which operates technically and makes use of the scientific method, is discontinuous with divine wisdom. Even practical reasoning, which attempts to establish ethical norms, operates technically; experience proves that there are no established goals or definite commandments (of the kind sought by Kant) but only

2 G. Zivan, *Dat Lelo Ashlayah: Nokhah Olam Postmodernisti: Iyun Behagutam shel Soloveitchik, Leibowitz, Goldman VeHartman* (Jerusalem, 2005).

3 E. Goldman, "Al Ha'emunah Habilti Ashlayatit," in his *Mehkarim Ve'iyunim: Hagut Yehudit Be'avar Uvahoveh* (Jerusalem, 1996), 361–371.

4 Ibid., 361; see Zivan, *Dat Lelo Ashlayah*, 105–106.

conditional ones.<sup>5</sup> Nor is human law fixed and complete. It is merely a groping toward orderly action in the human social reality. It is certainly an attempt to put into action ethical principles such as justice and honesty, which, in fact, reflect only the many meanings, the disorder, and lack of clarity of the principles of justice themselves. “Law is one of the foundations of culture that reflect, in clearest form, the human situation as it is, both with regard to its possibilities and to its essential limitations.”<sup>6</sup> Religious beliefs are likewise illusory and meaningless inasmuch as they relate to a world that is beyond human reach and outside of human experience. Only serving God by fulfilling the commandments as a religious act has any meaning, since that is what makes possible an attachment between the Creator and creation that is not illusory. Observing the commandments “*is* faith. The most profound content of faith is the Jew’s confidence that it is possible to serve God by observing His Torah. On that he casts his lot. Without such confidence, his whole life, as he lives it, loses all sense and meaning.”<sup>7</sup> This non-illusory religious approach does not resemble any human cultural configuration—such as language, art, or science—that operates within reality and cannot go beyond it. It is only via the religious approach that we can relate to that which is beyond any human configuration without speaking in words or specifying formulas.

Goldman asserts this pluralistic approach with regard to all areas of human culture under discussion: “The most dangerous illusion is the one expressed in the arrogance of those who think that their method is certain in every detail, that they have in their hands a clear-cut answer to everything, and that only a lack of faith is the source of all confusion. Uncertainty is basic to the human condition. It accompanies us wherever we turn—in intellectual awareness, in ethical choice—in our fundamental assumptions and in every detail. Faith does not alter this. The believing person certainly takes a clear position toward the various possibilities. He relates his life, his stance toward the world and to reality, his standards of importance and ‘success,’ to his religious stance. But taking a decisive approach has nothing to do with certainty.”<sup>8</sup>

At the conclusion of the article, Goldman adds to the various cultural realms he has been discussing—practical reasoning, ethics, law, and faith—the realm of Halakhah. In his opinion Halakhah, too, is part of human culture. It is

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5 On the pluralism of morality, see Goldman, *Yahadut Lelo Ashlayah*, 186, in the article “He’arot al Hapluralism,” as well as *ibid.*, 191, in the article “Hapluralism Vehayehudi Hamoderni.”

6 *Ibid.*, 366.

7 *Ibid.*, 367.

8 *Ibid.*, 370.

dynamic. It is passed down to us, in order for us to direct it and develop it. And, therefore, it is akin to any other kind of legal framework. It has room for the decisor's own subjective thought and reasoning. Moreover, even the sources on which decisors must rely are not clear cut.<sup>9</sup> I would say that Goldman is a pluralist in all areas of human existence in reality, except for the divine-religious area, which comes from a transcendental source.<sup>10</sup>

In an article from the same year called "Hamitzvah Kenatun Yesodi shel Hadat" (The commandment as a foundational datum of religion), Goldman presents, in greater detail, his position—that what is unique in Judaism is its commandments. In this he continues the path of Saadia Gaon, Maimonides, Moses Mendelssohn, and S. R. Hirsch. He adds two assertions. First, according to modern thought, there is no meaning in discussing the reasons for the commandments, in the manner teleological rationalism was discussed during the Middle Ages. Second, Halakhah and observing the commandments are perhaps the sole possible expression of faith. In this, of course, he follows in the footsteps of Leibowitz. With regard to the question of whether the source of the values and obligations placed on a human being is his own reasoning or revelation, in the Middle Ages they answered that

The command or the value that is revealed autonomously by reason is "natural law," planted by the Creator of the world. They express natural purposes. Prophecy as well is in a sense autonomous, an exercise of the potential that is within human nature. It is heteronomy, being the product of an overflow of the divine wisdom, but this is the nature of the mind in general. The opposition between autonomy and heteronomy is here an opposition that is in the "characteristics," not an opposition in the essence.<sup>11</sup>

But in the modern era the situation has completely changed:

By contrast, in the framework of our own ideas, this opposition is in fact one of essence. Anyone who wants to avoid a purely empirical approach to the commandments, which relates to them solely as cultural, historical phenomena, must view them either idealistically as autonomous

9 See also *ibid.*, 294–305, in the article "Hamusar, Hadat Vehahalakhah" (1962–1963).

10 See Zivan, *Dat Lelo Ashlayah*, 175–185.

11 Goldman, *Meḥkarim*, 310–311.

legislation of the human spirit, or theistically as divine legislation. [. . .] Divine revelation of the Torah and the commandments is a complete innovation—it is not a shorthand way to reveal truths that in principle could have been acquired in some other way [Saadia]. In such conditions, any attempt to use human reasoning to substantiate the contents of revelation is ultimately absurd. And yet the fact that the problem of the reasons for the commandments has been rendered meaningless does not mean that the problem of the meaning of the Torah as a whole has been rendered meaningless. Not at all! We are confronted with a serious dialectic situation, which demands a radical solution.<sup>12</sup>

In Goldman's view, it is Judaism that provides the radical solution necessary to bridge the gap between the divine world and the human world in a physical universe that is emptied of all religious meaning, and that provides an answer to the feeling of cosmic loneliness that is characteristic of contemporary man:

As far as I understand, Judaism makes possible a radical solution to the same basic question of the relationship between divine reality and human reality. It essentially accepts the situation that we have described—that is, that from an ontological perspective divine reality annuls the reality of human-natural reality. But the idea of the giving of the Torah tells us—and this of course is a matter of pure religious content, not of intellectual content—that the divine gives a certain meaning to human life and activity, when they are organized around one basic activity—that of serving the Creator. The divine revelation through the Torah and the commandments, which shapes the religious norms of Judaism, is a complete innovation. It is not connected with the ontological situation, given that what is normative is not decreed by reality. It does not stem from human culture, as is evident from its radically heteronomous nature. It is, however, aimed at human culture and directed toward it. As such, it imparts a religious meaning to this culture that it does not intrinsically have, and that the ontology of faith on its own must in fact negate. [. . .] The essence of revelation through Torah and commandments makes it possible for us to relate directly to the Creator in both of these two aspects: *will* and *love*. The aspect of will—in that the Torah is His commandment; of love—in that this commandment

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12 Ibid. See also *ibid.*, 145, in the article “Hagut Yehudit Ortodoksit mul Hamodernah” (1956).

is aimed at the human-cultural world, giving it meaning and value, which without the Torah we would be forced to negate, precisely because we are believers. This religious meaning of the commandments lies in the fact that they alone make it possible, and obligatory, to serve the Creator. Faith in the abstract cannot indicate a point where any link between man and his Creator is forged. In the human-cultural reality there is no action that can be seen as a natural expression of the service of the Creator. [. . .] Not a single deed, not a single thought, intrinsically has anything of service to the Creator in it, just as there is not a single object or a single place that is intrinsically holy. Only the commandment that we are commanded to serve the Creator in this or that way—that is what creates the possibility of such service.<sup>13</sup>

Goldman sums up his article by explaining that the reason for each and every commandment does not interest us, and that we seek in vain when we look for reasons outside the framework of the commandments themselves:

From such a point of view, the reason for this or that individual commandment holds no interest for us whatsoever. [. . .] What the results of the commandments are in the human reality—this question in and of itself has no importance for a person who means to serve his Creator. These results have no intrinsic value for him. Indeed, in and of itself this very reality is utterly lacking in value. But the special nature of the Torah and the commandments is that, after the fact, they imbue this reality with value even from a religious perspective, since the commandment of the Creator is to serve Him in, and from within, this reality.<sup>14</sup>

In conclusion, Goldman admits that he is not deceiving himself that it is possible to explain to the wider public this kind of approach to the commandments. But it is important to him that it should be clear to all that Halakhah needs no justification that comes from outside the framework of the commandments itself, and there is no basis for the claim that the necessities of life or human values can be used as justification for them. To the contrary—it is the human world that requires religious justification.

13 Goldman, *Mehkarim*, 313–315. See Zivan, *Dat Lelo Ashlayah*, 206–208.

14 Goldman, *Mehkarim*, 315. See Zivan, *Dat Lelo Ashlayah*, 235–236.

Goldman thus takes Liebowitz's principle of the uniqueness of serving God for its own sake as characteristic of Judaism and uses it against Liebowitz's own compartmental approach. The realm of human reason and reality has no intrinsic value without the divine commandments in the Torah. But the commandments of the revelation in the Torah are the bridge that Goldman sets up between the divine and the human, realms that are not compartmentalized and do not contradict one another. The following questions still remain open: Does reason operate only in the human sphere? How can the two realms be made identical? And what is the touchstone for this identity—revelation or reason?

Eventually, Goldman provided a specific answer to this, in an article he published in *De'ot* 32 under the title "Hegedim Madaiyim Vehegedim Datiyim—Mispar Hevdelim Yesodiyim Be'ofyam" (Scientific statements and religious statements—a number of fundamental differences in their nature). He explains at the beginning of the article that he intends to note four important differences between biblical-religious statements, in which God appears as the subject—statements which in fact have no meaning, since it is impossible to describe God at all in human language, but which are indispensable to the believing person, that is, prophetic statements—and scientific ones. The four differences are as follows:

1. A statement that is not meant to be comprehensible cannot be considered a scientific statement. Prophetic statements are therefore qualitatively different from scientific statements.
2. A scientific statement serves (among other things) as the basis for an explanation of a phenomenon. This kind of statement must be subject to the possibility of refutation. By contrast, it is impossible to reach conclusions that will make it possible to explain some phenomenon from a religious statement, which is in principle not meant to be comprehended and is not subject to refutation.
3. Confirmation of a scientific statement establishes not only the language of the statement. It also confirms the claim that it lays out. By contrast, confirmation of a religious statement, like a prophecy, establishes only its own combination of words and the content described. This meaning is changeable and dynamic.<sup>15</sup>

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15 See also Goldman, *Mehkarim*, 11.



4. A scientific statement always stands in readiness to face the possibility of its being refuted by experiment. The readiness to obligate oneself to a statement without subjecting it to experiment contradicts the scientific method. A statement that is refuted is negated. By contrast, religious statements of the prophetic kind are accepted by the believer as correct despite what experience teaches in any particular period. "The conclusion from experience that contradicts the statement, as interpreted at any particular time, **is not a negation of the statement but a negation of the accepted interpretation.**"<sup>16</sup> Goldman clarifies that the verses that contain predictive prophecy must be reinterpreted from time to time. By contrast, theological assertions in a religious statement do not require reinterpretation as a result of personal or historical experience. From one era to another, the verses simply appear in a different light as a result of these experiences.

In fact, it would be possible to argue that Goldman makes a claim similar to that of Leibowitz and follows his compartmental approach completely.<sup>17</sup> But closer study will demonstrate otherwise. Leibowitz asserts that there can be no problems or contradictions between religion and science, since they speak of realms whose subjects are completely different from one another; each of them has its own language. Goldman, on the other hand, identifies problems and contradictions between conditional human reality and unconditional divine reality. What according to Leibowitz cannot be a problem at all is, according to Goldman, something that requires consideration and resolution. The resolution lies in reason and its perceptions. Goldman thinks that reason cannot bear contradiction. It enables us to re-explain the verses according to need and to alter our perceptions of what is said in them, in order to reconcile them with our personal and historical experience. Thus is built the interpretative identity approach (that of Maimonides), which resolves contradictions.

Goldman also implements this approach in addressing the tensions between the secular state and religion. In an article he published in 1978 in response to Gershon Weiler's book *Jewish Theocracy*, published a year earlier, Goldman opposes Weiler's contention that "Halakhah and government law are

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 344. See Zivan, *Dat Lelo Ashlayah*, 221–223, 234–235, 237–238.

<sup>17</sup> See Zivan, *Dat Lelo Ashlayah*, 107–108; also, A. Sagi in *Leibowitz Mitpalmes: Timplul Vet'ud Video shel 13 She'ot Pulmus*, ed. Y. Avisar (Jerusalem, 2013), 7.

two normative frameworks, each of which is seeking supremacy.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, “whoever accepts the sovereignty of Halakhah considers it superior to any other norm, including secular laws. When Halakhah and secular law collide, he will give preference to the former.”<sup>19</sup> In Weiler’s opinion, the *modus vivendi* that has been reached in Israel between the secular attitude to Zionism and the religious one—according to which the secular state has adopted certain halakhic norms in order to achieve in practice some coordination between religion and state—is just an illusion, since “the Jewish religion and the existence of this state are antithetical to each other by their very essence.”<sup>20</sup> Halakhah, which opposes politics, is a totalitarian framework which makes harmonious relations impossible. Goldman does not agree with these assertions. He points to the fact that Weiler’s evidence is not credible, his treatment of the sources is flawed and selective and reveals great ignorance, and therefore the contradictions he points at in the sources are imaginary. For example, the rabbinic ruling that “the law of the land is the law” is quite relevant for this discussion, since some of the grounds that underlie this principle can be applied equally well to a Jewish government not established on a halakhic basis. In Goldman’s opinion, most religious views other than the most fundamentalist ones, are of the opinion that Halakhah is not a totalitarian system:

It is precisely in areas that do not clearly involve ritual that there are broader legislative possibilities; and they have been exploited during the course of 2,000 years in a form that has changed many procedures and norms in quite radical ways. How were these legislative actions justified? If we turn to the Tannaim and the Amoraim, we find them speaking of “the betterment of the world,” “the enactment of the marketplace,” “the enactment of the borrowers,” “for the sake of peace,” and the like. That is, there are social needs that demand taking care of, economic interests that need to be protected. *The rules of the Torah do not answer such needs, and they therefore require completion or change, at which point an enactment of the Sages steps into the breach....* The commandments of the Torah are understood to be divine. A rabbinic enactment is taken to be obligatory by virtue of the authority that the Torah has granted to the Sages, but it is not in itself a divine command. The command here is an authoritative norm,

18 Goldman, *Mehkarim*, 387.

19 Ibid.

20 Gershon Weiler, *Jewish Theocracy* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), xiii.

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