

Karma Ben-Johanán
Jacob's Younger Brother:
Christian-Jewish Relations after Vatican II

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Review of Chapter 8,
“The Orthodox World and Christian-Jewish Dialogue”

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This essay responds to chapter 8, “The Orthodox World and Jewish-Christian Dialogue,” which concludes Karma Ben-Johanán’s exploration and analysis of developments in Christian-Jewish dialogue following the Second Vatican Council. Just as the first half of the book focused on Catholic Christians and their contributions to interreligious understanding in this period, the second half of the book focuses on Orthodox Jews and, for the most part, the teachings that lead to their avoidance of dialogue. After her review in chapter 5 of “Christianity in the Jewish Tradition,” Ben-Johanán provides two chapters that cover sources previously published only in Hebrew and Yiddish. Chapter 6, entitled “Christianity in Contemporary Halakhic Literature,” is on contemporary *haredi* (ultra-Orthodox) teachings about Christianity.¹ Chapter 7, entitled “Christianity in Religious Zionist Thought,” deals with teachings of the religious Zionist followers of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook. The materials in these chapters constitute “difficult texts”² for me and many other Jews engaged in dialogue with Christians, but, as Ben-Johanán points out, for the groups she studies here Christianity “is more an image than a reality” (229). Thus, while they constitute important (and, as of this writing, politically

¹ Note that this title is misleading as there are other producers of contemporary halakhic literature, even in the Orthodox world, let alone outside of it.

² I discuss this technical term in my *Cursing the Christians?: A History of the Birkat HaMinim* (New York: Oxford, 2012), 11-12. The question of the limits of such publication of “difficult texts” is a topic worthy of discussion in the period covered by this book which has seen much recovery of precensored versions of Jewish texts. For example, the controversy over Ariel Toaff’s 2007 study of the blood libel, *Pasque di sangue: Ebrei d’Europa e omicidi rituali*, aroused so much controversy that it was withdrawn for revisions.

powerful) voices among the cacophony of contemporary Jewish voices, their impact on interreligious thinking itself is circumscribed.

Chapter 8 examines another sector of Orthodox Judaism, modern Orthodoxy, analyzing the members of this community who, in recent decades, have become increasingly important contributors to dialogue with Christianity. These men respond to “actual encounters” (229), even as many set limits upon it. While all three chapters present aspects of Israeli Orthodox thinking, the Jews whose voices we hear in this chapter all spent formative years of their careers in the diaspora, mostly in the United States. There, a potpourri of factors is unique. Ben-Johanan notes the presence of Catholic theologians seeking to engage constructively with Judaism, the academic centers that they have established in which to pursue this work, the realities of intermarriage, the integration of Jews into the American “Judeo-Christian” tradition, and evangelical Christian outreach to Israel. All these, she says, “carry specific challenges and symbolic meanings for Orthodox Jews” (230-31). However, Ben-Johanan never develops more than an implicit discussion of any but the last of these factors. Instead, she organizes the chapter around the Modern Orthodox reception of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik’s teaching about interreligious dialogue, especially his expectation that Jews will avoid doctrinal discussions with non-Jews.

Soloveitchik himself was, for his sector of American Orthodoxy, the leading theologian of his generation. He was trained in western philosophy at the University of Berlin before fleeing the Nazis. In the United States, he was called by the honorific “the Rav” and was known for his teaching and institutional leadership, particularly at Yeshiva University (in its rabbinic program) and its affiliated rabbinic body, the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA). Ben-Johanan suggests that it is Soloveitchik’s philosophical concerns about the possible consequences of interreligious dialogue that drive American Modern Orthodoxy’s official avoidance of it, more than the history and the textual traditions it shares with the *haredim*. These philosophical concerns address the reality that Modern Orthodoxy’s engagement with the greater world, its lack of insularity, requires constant negotiation about the boundaries of its interactions with non-Jews.

As Ben-Johanan summarizes, Soloveitchik continued the traditional Jewish suspicion of Christian mission, deeply doubting the sincerity of the Catholic conciliar endeavor to rethink its teachings about Jews and Judaism (235). But his own trajectory was more complicated, and this requires more attention. Relevant here is that he did participate in private discussions with Catholic leaders on various occasions, especially during the early years of the council.³ The lecture that underlay his book *The Lonely Man of Faith* (1965) was delivered at a Catholic seminary. His philosophical training in Berlin prepared him for these interchanges.

Ben-Johanan appropriately focuses on Soloveitchik’s much cited 1964 essay “Confrontation.” This was a philosophical discourse on Jewish interactions with non-Jews. Even though Soloveitchik did not generally function as his community’s

³ See, for instance, Reuven Kimelman, “Rabbis Joseph B. Soloveitchik and Abraham Joshua Heschel on Jewish-Christian Relations,” *Modern Judaism* 24, no. 3 (2004): 253-255.

poseq (halakhic decisor), the impact of this essay emerged from its published version having been reframed in halakhic terms by an appendix, added by the RCA, that presented the main argument in normative language (240). In the process, the philosophical subtlety and nuance of the Rav's arguments were effectively lost. His acknowledgement that Jews today have a mandate to engage with the greater world over practical matters yielded to his concerns that a historically oppressed minority community, struggling to rebuild in a post-Holocaust world, needed to set limits on its engagement with the majority.

Most of the rest of Ben-Johanan's chapter traces the reception of "Confrontation" and the diverse ways that various Modern Orthodox (mostly) rabbinic dialogue participants negotiated with Soloveitchik's restrictions. Most of the men she discusses were directly or indirectly students of Soloveitchik, Americans, and on the liberal end of the Orthodox spectrum. Thus, to have credibility in their own communities, they needed to justify their contributions to dialogue in light of the Rav's perceived ban. Ben-Johanan argues that the complexity of Soloveitchik's discussions in the original—more than in the RCA distillation of it—left room for negotiation around the edges. She identifies and discusses these various methods of negotiation in the work of rabbis Irving (Yitz) Greenberg, David Berger, Yechiel Eckstein, Eugene Korn, and Shlomo Riskin, with briefer mentions of David Hartman, Alan Brill, Shalom Carmy, Meir Soloveitchik, Yehiel Poupko, Michael Wyschogrod (not a rabbi), and David Rosen.

Ben-Johanan begins with a summary of the reception of "Confrontation" from the writings of pro-dialogue Modern Orthodox rabbis, indicating how they justified their moving beyond the perceived prohibition on it (240-45). She then dives more deeply into four exemplars and the responses they received from the Modern Orthodox establishment, with the recurring objections of the socially and halakhically conservative Rabbi Herschel Schachter of Yeshiva University.⁴ These exemplars seem to have been chosen mostly because they occupy identifiable points along a spectrum rather than for their influence either on Modern Orthodox discourse and reality or on the larger dialogue between Jews and Christians.

Ben-Johanan begins with Yitz Greenberg, who, like most of the rabbis she discusses, understands Soloveitchik's original essay to have opened the door to deep dialogue (243). Greenberg's own work is theological, not halakhic. He seeks a positive Jewish understanding of Jesus and Christianity that is not only respectful of Christian belief but also understands Christianity as a positive part of God's plan for the world (246). Ben-Johanan describes two significant critiques Greenberg received as a consequence, from Herschel Schachter and the RCA and from David Berger.

However, some larger perspective on the reception of Greenberg's work would have been helpful. While Ben-Johanan identifies Greenberg as a former professor at the Orthodox Yeshiva University and the former rabbi of an Orthodox synagogue, she does not mention that these were early steps in a long career trajectory,

⁴ Rabbi Schachter is a dominant rabbinic voice at Yeshiva University, but also a regular critic of any justification of social change. This has been particularly marked on issues of women and gender.

and they largely preceded his major contributions to dialogue. His academic career continued outside the Orthodox establishment, first in a public university and then in Jewish communal organizations. Only the very liberal fringe of the Orthodox world gave him any platform. While Greenberg's influence on the larger Christian-Jewish dialogue has been substantial and his ideas are given serious attention there, his influence in the Orthodox community has been negligible.

David Berger, Ben-Johanan's next focus, represents a polar extreme from Greenberg. His own scholarly contribution to the history of Christian-Jewish relations is significant, deepening our understanding of Jewish traditions of thinking about Christians. His work contributes often "difficult" data to the Christian-Jewish discourse, data that occasions necessary Jewish self-criticism. However, Ben-Johanan's reason for highlighting Berger is not this but his involvement in contemporary Christian-Jewish relations. She identifies Berger as "arguably the most prominent policymaker in the area of Christian-Jewish relations within Modern Orthodoxy" (247). This is true, but she leaves it unexplained. In fact, Berger has long represented the Rabbinical Council of America at the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC), a committee that among other things forms the official Jewish delegation to the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee (ILC),⁵ as well as, since 1998, at a regular Orthodox meeting with the U.S. Catholic Bishops.⁶ It is in this capacity and significantly from the relationships developed in these contexts that Ben-Johanan accurately states that "Berger does not miss an opportunity to rebuke both Christians and Jews whenever they cross the lines that confine the dialogue to each party's affirmation of its own identity" (249).⁷ Examples of such rebukes include both his pointed, clearly Soloveitchik-influenced, critique of *Dabru Emet* ("A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity" [2000]) for apparently granting theological reciprocity with Christians (249-50) and his readiness to speak out when Catholics cross the line and advocate mission to the Jews (132).⁸

Ben-Johanan claims that Berger's critique of *Dabru Emet*, adopted by the Modern Orthodox establishment, "significantly curtailed its authority" (250-51). In this assertion, she makes category errors. In 2000, when *Dabru Emet* was published, few Orthodox Jews were engaged in Christian-Jewish dialogue, let alone its leaders (see below). The four scholars (not all rabbis) who issued the statement each signed only with their academic credentials. The document itself functioned as an initial response to Christian advances in dialogue, but it made no claim to

⁵ See their websites: <https://ijcic.net/> and <http://www.christianunity.va/content/unitacristiani/en/commissione-per-i-rapporti-religiosi-con-l-ebraismo/ilc---international-catholic-jewish-liaison-committee-.html>. Neither names committee participants. I thank Rabbi Dr. David Sandmel, current chair of IJCIC, for verifying Berger's role.

⁶ Introduction to the document "Response to Statement of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on Covenant, Mission, and Dialogue," <https://ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/themes-in-today-s-dialogue/conversion/berger09june29>.

⁷ See Berger's 2009 response to the U.S. Catholic bishops' "Note on Ambiguities Contained in *Reflections on Covenant and Mission*," available at <https://ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/themes-in-today-s-dialogue/conversion/berger09june29>.

⁸ Ben-Johanan apparently alludes to this (271).

“authority,” certainly not in the Orthodox rabbinic sense.⁹ This is in stark contrast to the specifically Orthodox documents issued in 2015 and 2017 for the fiftieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*.¹⁰ *Dabru Emet*’s heavily Reform list of initial issuers, let alone its subsequent signatories, was itself enough to preclude much Orthodox involvement, given inter-movement dynamics.

Ben-Johanan shifts next to two examples of Modern Orthodox rabbis and their organizations whose intersections have primarily not been with the Catholic world but rather with Evangelical Christians, in both cases in more pro-active ways and with a very specific focus on Israel. All the rabbis discussed are American-born and trained, but they moved to Israel.

The logic for including Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein in this discussion should be better explained. Yes, he was an Orthodox rabbi apparently transgressing Soloveitchik’s ruling, but his International Fellowship of Christians and Jews does not present itself as a dialogue organization.¹¹ Rather, it solicits Christian (read Evangelical) financial support for Jews and Israel, asking Evangelicals to express their love for Israel through their donations instead of through missionary work. In this, Eckstein disregarded Soloveitchik’s concern that if Jews make theological demands of Christians, Christians might expect Jewish theological concessions as well. But Ben-Johanan does not suggest that these Evangelicals made any such demands. She focuses most of her discussion, instead, on the opposition of *haredi* Orthodox rabbis to accepting the tainted funds raised by Eckstein’s work.

In general, Eckstein’s work did little to enhance broad Jewish-Evangelical understanding, either in the United States or in Israel. This endeavor is thus only marginally relevant to the book’s overall discussion. Eckstein’s work also does not stand alone but needs to be placed in its larger context with organizations like Pastor John Hagee’s Christians United for Israel and the organization, lay-led on the Jewish side, Christians and Jews United for Israel. It should also be compared to the more significant but less public ongoing work with Evangelicals of Orthodox Rabbi Yehiel Poupko, Rabbinic Scholar at the Jewish United Fund / Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago. Poupko regularly convenes Jewish and Evangelical thinkers for dialogue. Ben-Johanan makes brief mention of him but not in this context (262).

⁹ See its official site of publication at <https://icjs.org/dabru-emet-text/>. Rabbinic authority is very much a factor in the Orthodox world, but in the Reform and even in the Conservative worlds, rabbinic teachings are at best advisory. The Conservative Movement’s Committee on Jewish Law and Standards often offers multiple simultaneous alternative rulings. Its website states, “Rabbis have the authority, though, as *marei d’atra*, to consider the Committee’s positions but make their own decisions as conditions warrant.” See <https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/jewish-law/committee-jewish-law-and-standards>.

¹⁰ “To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven: Toward a Partnership between Jews and Christians,” issued December 3, 2015 by an international group of Orthodox rabbis, and “Between Jerusalem and Rome: Reflections on 50 Years of *Nostra Aetate*,” issued August 31, 2017 under the auspices of the Conference of European Rabbis, the Rabbinical Council of America, and the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. Both are available at <https://ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/jewish>.

¹¹ See their website (<https://www.ifcj.org/who-we-are/about-ifcj>) which states that the organization “provid[es] Christians with opportunities to fulfill biblical prophecy by supporting Israel and the Jewish people with lifesaving aid.”

Ben-Johanan's final example is what she labels the Jewish Evangelization Project, led by rabbis Eugene Korn and Shlomo Riskin through an institution (the Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation) they founded in Efrat to educate Evangelicals about Judaism, even to encourage them to observe the Noahide laws. This example is also complicated. Both Riskin and Korn are Americans who moved to Israel, in Korn's case in retirement. The contribution discussed here is entirely located in Israel. Unlike Riskin who was a Soloveitchik student, Korn received only his undergraduate degree from Yeshiva University. His 2003 ordination from an Israeli program coincided with his entrance into leadership in the dialogue world.¹² He therefore had some independence from the worldview constructed by Soloveitchik.¹³ Riskin is an institution builder and this center was not his primary endeavor. Korn brought to this project his experience and leadership in the dialogue world, but others actually worked with Evangelicals while his primary outreach was to Catholics.¹⁴

Korn's contributions to the world of Christian-Jewish dialogue are indeed significant, much beyond his work at this center and especially in academic circles. His publications include discussions of important theological issues, both in explaining key elements of Judaism to Christians but also in developing Jewish thought about aspects of Christianity and bringing thinking emerging from dialogue to a wider audience. Trained in Jewish philosophy, he is one of the constructive Jewish theologians addressing Christian-Jewish relations. Especially because he publishes mostly in English, his impact is probably less in Israel than in the greater Anglo-world. Ben-Johanan only scratches the surface of his contributions, even those written before her project's chronological limit (254-55). She devotes much more space to Riskin's significantly secondary use of Korn's ideas (255-60), perhaps because Riskin was indeed more directly challenged to justify this work and its contradiction to Soloveitchik's teachings.

The chapter concludes with some addenda: brief mentions of three additional, more "conservative," rabbis who found ways to engage in interreligious relations¹⁵

¹² Ben-Johanan mentions only a few of the positions he held (242). His work as the Director of Interfaith Affairs at the Anti-Defamation League was particularly important as the leading Jewish voice in conjunction with Christian dialogue partners in the outcry over Mel Gibson's *Passion of the Christ*, but he was later undercut by internal ADL politics.

¹³ See, for instance, his contributions to the forum, "Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik on Interreligious Dialogue: Forty Years Later," (Boston College, November 23, 2003), available at https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/center/conferences/soloveitchik/index.html. More generally, his independence was demonstrated by his editing of the *Edah Journal: A Forum of Modern Orthodox Discourse*, sponsored then by a group seeking to establish a presence for a more liberal Orthodoxy than that supported by Yeshiva University.

¹⁴ As he stated in his response to this paper on March 1, 2023.

¹⁵ On Yehiel Poupko, see above. She mentions Shalom Carmy, a Yeshiva University professor who has been a significant editor and publisher of Soloveitchik's teachings, but whose own contributions to interreligious dialogue are limited. Finally, Meir Soloveitchik (whose last name she misspells) published some significant articles during his doctoral studies, but he has not to my knowledge remained a contributor to the world of dialogue. His website, meirsoloveichik.com, yields few hits for searches on "Jesus" or "Christianity" (as of January 12, 2023).

and a discussion of the dialogue between the Vatican and the Israeli Chief Rabbinate that began after the papal visit to Jerusalem in 2000. This provides a nice inclusio to the book as a whole as it brings the Catholic and a Jewish establishment into direct conversation, at least over a limited list of “safe” topics. The Vatican finds in the Chief Rabbinate its closest structural equivalent in its legitimacy and authority to speak for the Jewish world. However, in other ways, one might question the Vatican’s choice.

Ben-Johanan begins this final section by asserting, “Joseph Soloveitchik’s restrictions transcended the boundaries of American Modern Orthodoxy to provide a paradigmatic policy within larger circles of Orthodoxy with regard to Christian-Jewish dialogue” (265). Given the *haredi* domination of the Israeli Chief Rabbinate, not only nationally but in its subsidiary structures as well, this assertion requires specific demonstration. To what extent are Soloveitchik’s teachings, few transmitted in Hebrew until very recently, known in Israel and given importance, especially about dialogue? To what extent was the Chief Rabbinate’s participation simply pragmatic, driven by their own halakhic traditions, which of course also had informed Soloveitchik? Ben-Johanan admits that this discussion is based on conclusions drawn from “sparse sources” (265-66). Her statement, “Right from the outset, the Chief Rabbinate rabbis announced that they intended to adopt Soloveitchik’s approach to interfaith dialogue with the Vatican,” seems to derive from an interview with a leading participant, Rabbi She’ar Yashuv Cohen, that she does not quote directly. The printed article she also cites does not ascribe this policy decision to Soloveitchik (267, 343-44 n. 125).¹⁶ Whatever the source, the rabbis did remove theological discussion—the Catholics’ preferred discourse—from this dialogue table. As they also avoided internal Jewish halakhic discussions, “neither community speaks its natural language,” resulting in “diplomatic formulations rather than any products of joint thinking,” and even these are not publicized in Hebrew. As a result, this dialogue does not influence Jewish thinking (270).

Ben-Johanan’s discussion of the impact of Soloveitchik on Jewish participation in dialogue is a necessary piece of her discussion of contemporary Jewish thinking about Christianity and interreligious relations. However, is this discussion sufficient? Does the book require something more? Because of the centralized teaching structures of the Catholic Church, it is reasonable to center a discussion of Catholic teachings on the statements and teaching documents it promulgates. But is the dynamic studied in this chapter the Jewish equivalent? The Vatican, in looking to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and its representatives, sought an organized structure carrying some equivalent to its theological authority. However, the Israeli Chief Rabbinate is a political body whose teaching authority is very limited and, for the most part, ill-received. It emerged from British colonial needs in the pre-1948 era, not from internal Jewish modes of operation. Actual authority within the Orthodox Jewish world is much more local, driven by each community’s leadership

¹⁶ Yair Sheleg, “*Brit Hadashah*,” *Shabbat*, Musaf Meqor Rishon (11 April 2016), <https://musaf-shabbat.com/2016/04/11/%d7%91%d7%a8%d7%99%d7%aa-%d7%97%d7%93%d7%a9%d7%94-%d7%99%d7%90%d7%99%d7%a8-%d7%a9%d7%9c%d7%92/>

choices and / or traditions. Excluding those communities where leadership is mostly inherited, this authority is earned by individuals through demonstrations of competence in halakhic and spiritual leadership. Therefore, the chief rabbi, or even any local chief rabbi (a phenomenon rejected in the United States¹⁷), does not hold a hierarchical status equivalent to his Catholic equivalent.

Ben-Johanan's focus on Orthodox rabbis also distorts her history of this period. As is evident from her discussion, the Orthodox emphasis has been mostly on preserving high walls and limiting encounter, forcing her to discuss the exceptions. But during this same period, there has been significant Jewish participation in dialogue and contributions to it, much of it from Jews who either are not Orthodox or who are personally Orthodox but whose Orthodoxy is not their primary qualification for participation in dialogue. A discussion of Christian-Jewish relations in the post-Vatican II era and even before must take many of these figures into account. It is these figures who developed the personal relationships that resulted in productive dialogues and positive changes in Catholic and Jewish understandings of each other. In many ways, the Orthodox contributions discussed here occurred on the coattails of this broader community of dialogue participants and the openings they created.

Public Orthodox engagement in dialogue was significantly absent before c. 2000. Major Jewish organizations hired people to engage with Christians in the era of Vatican II, but these were mostly not Orthodox rabbis. Abraham Joshua Heschel, who was trained in an Orthodox seminary and lived as an Orthodox Jew, is a prominent exception, but his participation in interreligious dialogue, both with Catholics and with Protestants, was as a public intellectual and academic. He was affiliated in these years with the Conservative Movement, at whose seminary he taught. Rabbi David Rosen's significant contributions began in Israel in the 1990s when he served on the Israeli delegation to the Holy See that negotiated the fundamental agreements with the State of Israel. First at the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and then at the American Jewish Committee (AJC) he directed offices for interreligious dialogue, before in 2001 being appointed the AJC's International Director of Interreligious Affairs, a position he still holds. With Eugene Korn's appointment to the ADL's global position in 2003, these roles formerly held long-term by Reform rabbis James Rudin and Leon Klenicki respectively moved from Reform to liberal Orthodox hands.

Official American Jewish delegates to dialogue with Christians prior to this include a slew of other liberal Jews, including Marc Tannenbaum, who was Rudin's predecessor at the AJC and important in guiding Jewish advisors to the *Nostra Aetate* process. Major roles were filled by the Synagogue Council of America and its successor, the National Council of Synagogues, groups from which the RCA and other Orthodox rabbinic groups withdrew or never participated. Women were involved too, even before ordination became an option—a community that Ben-Johanan's Orthodox rabbinic (and Catholic clerical) focus leads her to sideline

¹⁷ On the rejection of chief rabbis in the U.S., see Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History*, 2nd ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2019), 181-83.

virtually entirely. An understanding of Jewish contributions to Christian-Jewish understanding is seriously lacking without examining the work of these communities who, in contrast to their Orthodox colleagues, do participate in theological dialogue and engage the thinking of their Christian dialogue partners.

This is especially the case in light of Ben-Johanan's claim that the Catholic world had come to favor broad symbolic statements and gestures, circumventing complex theological questions and leaving them of interest to only a handful of experts, mostly American theologians (e.g., 106-7). The Catholic Church especially often turns quietly to these theologians for guidance. What Ben-Johanan misses by her emphasis on Orthodox rabbis is that it is precisely these Catholic theologians, the majority of them situated in universities and seminaries, who were and are in deep, creative, and often theological dialogue with their Jewish academic equivalents. Ben-Johanan had named early in the chapter the academic centers founded to address matters of Christian-Jewish (and often also Muslim) relations but did not make further reference to this context (231).

Some of the most significant recent contributions to dialogue have come from initiatives of these academic centers and the scholars associated with them. If one includes the independent ICJS (formerly the Institute for Christian & Jewish Studies, now the Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies) in Baltimore, their concrete contributions include *Dabru Emet* and its sister Christian document, *A Sacred Obligation*, issued by the Christian Scholars Group then sponsored by the Center for Christian-Jewish Learning at Boston College in 2002. Even more impactful have been the scholarly study groups and international collaborations such centers have jointly sponsored, including one whose publication deeply informs parts of the Vatican's 2015 statement "The Gifts and Calling of God are Irrevocable," an important text that unfortunately missed the cut-off for Ben-Johanan's volume.¹⁸ It is important to note that two major Jewish consultants for "Gifts and Calling" served unprecedented roles as speakers at the document's official promulgation. These included not only David Rosen but Edward Kessler of the Wolff Center, an academic center associated with the University of Cambridge. Kessler is not Orthodox and not a rabbi but has been a major contributor to the dialogue. This academic contribution to high-level influential dialogues began even before the Council and represents some of its most important breakthroughs.

An analysis of Jewish participation in dialogue should also consider the influence of academicians whose primary scholarly focus is not necessarily the contemporary dialogue. Rather their work provides important substance to the dialogue. An exhaustive list is not possible here but near the top of the list are the

¹⁸ Although not quoted explicitly in "Gifts and Calling," many significant points echo those of the volume *Christ Jesus and the Jewish People Today: New Explorations of Theological Interrelationships*, ed. Philip A. Cunningham et al. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans; Rome: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2011), the product of a multi-year consultation of Christian theologians with Jewish interlocutors. It is precisely these points that Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI sought to challenge in his "Grace and Vocation without Remorse: Comments on the Treatise De Iudaeis," *Communio* 45/1 (Spring 2018): 163-184 (German original), English available at https://ccjr.us/images/Ratzinger_Grace_Vocation_without_Remorse_-_English.pdf.

Jewish women scholars of New Testament whose contributions to dialogue have been transformative. Emblematic of this group and tirelessly reaching out to Christians is Amy-Jill Levine. She happens to be a member of an Orthodox synagogue but her voice in dialogue is that of a scholar and activist. Her publications, together with Jewish Hebrew Bible scholar Marc Z. Brettler, of the *Jewish Annotated New Testament*¹⁹ and even more accessibly of *The Bible With and Without Jesus: How Jews and Christians Read the Same Stories Differently*,²⁰ to name two books of many, have not only brought Jews to dialogue but have also had transformative impact on Christians. There are others like Levine who spend their careers teaching in Christian contexts and live lives of dialogue which cannot help but be transformative of the thinking of future Christian leaders.

Direct academic contributors to dialogue go well beyond Jewish Bible scholars. Ben-Johanán refers to Jewish theologian Michael Wyschogrod but does not investigate his contributions as a philosopher and dialogue participant. My teacher Jakob J. Petuchowski, a scholar of rabbinics and liturgy, had formative influence in this period especially in Germany, as did historian Michael Signer. There is a long list of medieval, early-modern, and modern historians who have transformed our understandings of how Jews and Christians thought about each other and interacted with each other.²¹ It also seems strange to neglect a number of European rabbis, not beholden to Soloveitchik, whose contributions in their own countries were formative to the thinking of their national bishops and enabled their production of their own documents.²²

Thus, while this chapter explores the tensions in the modern Orthodox world around contemporary Jewish engagement with Christians and Christianity, this is only an important piece of fuller picture. An understanding of the post-conciliar developments in the Jewish world requires a much broader focus than this book supplies, one that looks beyond the Orthodox world and beyond rabbinic contributions. Perhaps that is another book, or at least an addendum to this one. It is also a much more complex, more amorphous situation to analyze—but analysis is certainly one of Ben-Johanán's strengths. I would love to see her turn her keen historian's eye to this larger picture.

¹⁹ 2nd ed. Oxford University Press, 2017.

²⁰ New York: HarperOne, 2020.

²¹ Beyond David Berger, one can think, for example, of figures like Jeremy Cohen, Elisheva Carlebach, Robert Chazan, and many others.

²² See n. 12 above.