

tance and Relation,” and “Guilt and Guilt Feelings.”¹³¹ He also conducted a special seminar on “The Unconscious” for the faculty of Princeton University.

Buber visited the United States again in 1958. He held a seminar for academics on “Key Religious Concepts of the Great Civilizations” and participated in another seminar on existentialism and his own philosophy at Princeton University, given by professors of that institution and Hans Jonas, a guest professor. On the way back to Israel, he also spoke at the adult education school in Cologne and at the University of Frankfurt.

Before his return, Buber experienced the greatest loss of his life: in Venice, shortly before the family was to board a ship for Haifa, his wife, Paula, fell ill and died. Buber’s own health was severely shaken by the death of his companion of almost sixty years. On all his tours, he had been able to take on strains that far exceeded the normal capacities of an octogenarian. The loss of Paula brought on at last the weakness of old age. After having spent the entire winter more or less ill, in the summer of 1959 he took a convalescent trip to Europe. He managed to work for a few weeks in Tübingen on the Bible translation. But then he fell ill again in Flims and was unable to attend the dedication of the gravestone for Paula in Venice at the end of August.

The years 1957 and 1958 were high points in Buber’s creative vigor and world renown. A clear indication was his inclusion in the Library of Living Philosophers, a prestigious series of critical studies published in the United States under the general editorship of Paul A. Schilpp.¹³² The volume of essays devoted to Buber’s thought was planned and largely completed between 1956 and 1958. The German edition was published in 1963 and the English version shortly after Buber’s death. Twenty-nine (thirty in the English edition) noted scholars from the United States, Canada, Europe, and Israel joined to produce a faithful exegesis and criticism of Buber’s philosophy. But, as Walter Kaufmann stressed, it was a somewhat dubious procedure to attempt, as the volume did, to “carve up” Buber’s life’s work “into such fields as ethics and epistemology, philosophy of history and social thought, or even philosophy in general as separate from Buber’s other interests.”¹³³ Nonetheless, in examining Buber’s writings from the varied perspectives, his “atypical thinking” was greatly illuminated; further, as with the other volumes of the series, Buber was able to “respond” to each of the essays, to amend the interpretations he found wanting, and to amplify and elaborate aspects of his thought. Moreover, at the behest of the editors, he prefaced the volume with a number of “autobiographical fragments.” It was unquestionably an excellent idea to introduce the element of dialogue in the form of this exchange between Buber and his critics. And the presentation of respectful academic

¹³¹ These lectures are included in *Knowledge of Man*.

¹³² See note 3 above.

¹³³ Walter Kaufmann, “Buber’s Religious Significance,” in Schilpp and Friedman, eds., *The Philosophy of Martin Buber*, 667.

portrayals by European and Israeli scholars side by side with the views of American critics resulted in a portrait of Buber's influence extending across the continents. He had become, as the Swiss Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar put it, one of the "founding fathers of our age." Buber's old friends, followers, and students—such as Hugo Bergmann, Robert Weltsch, Ernst Simon, Max Brod, and Nahum N. Glatzer—were joined by newly won disciples in the United States, such as Walter Kaufmann, Malcolm Diamond, and Maurice Friedman, who edited the volume along with the general editor of the series.

It may be regarded as a further sign of the importance Buber had acquired in the New World that the two best books about him that were written between 1950 and 1960 were both by Americans: *Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue*, by Maurice S. Friedman,¹³⁴ and *Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist*, by Malcolm L. Diamond.¹³⁵ In the foreword to the 1960 paperback edition, Friedman calls his book the result of a twofold dialogue: with Buber's work and with Buber himself. The dialogue with Buber himself dealt largely with a discussion of Buber's work, and Friedman's book was the first general survey of Buber's philosophy. It arose out of a doctoral dissertation that he sent to Buber in 1950—the beginning of a voluminous correspondence extending over fifteen years.

At first reading, Buber was delighted with the comprehensiveness and seriousness of the dissertation Friedman had sent. He replied at once, and, during the long period in which the work was being reshaped into a general account in book form, Buber patiently answered at length all the questions Friedman addressed to him. On a great many controversial points in Buber's works, Friedman had in his hands the authentic written explanation. He was entrusted with the English version of the lectures Buber delivered on his tours in the United States and he continued to translate other books that were published in the United States during the following years.

Malcolm L. Diamond's book also sprang from a reworked dissertation. As the subtitle, "Jewish Existentialist," suggests, Diamond considers Buber's particular personality and achievement to consist in the integration of the I-Thou experience of God with Jewish religion. When Buber speaks of God as the "eternal Thou," this expression must not be interpreted as a modern concept different from the living God of Judaism. His interpretation of the Bible and his existentialist I-Thou philosophy confirmed and supplemented each other.

Diamond wrote his first enthusiastic letter to Buber after Buber had given his Bible course at Columbia University in March 1957. The three months of Buber's stay in Princeton in 1958 had been, Diamond said, "a revelation" to him. Buber had corresponded perfectly with the image his works communicated; but beyond that, his irrepressible humor and the freshness and lack

¹³⁴ Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955.

¹³⁵ New York: Oxford University Press, 1960.

of constraint with which he responded to everyday life in America had surpassed all expectations.

According to Buber, the fundamental religious attitude of Jews is their experiencing in "the dialogical situation" the ultimate insoluble contradiction of life as a theophany. Judaism has survived, he contends, by accepting the world of contradictoriness—without shortcuts or simplifications—as the world that by God's will in due course will be perfected into "the kingdom." Judaism views the whole of world history as the dialogue of God with his creation. Diamond regards the consonance of Buber's own I-Thou experience with the fact of biblical man's being summoned as the essence of this "Jewish existentialism." He lays weight on Buber's having passed the existential testing of his faith during the Holocaust. Buber was later to draw a parallel between the trials of those years and the question put to Job: How is a life with God possible in an age in which Auschwitz exists? Buber points out that Job, too, received no answer to his remonstrating with God—for the true answer was that his "eyes saw him" (Job 42:5).¹³⁶ The awaited answer is for God to appear once more to his people; this people, remonstrating with God like Job, must call for God's help: "Though His coming appearance resemble no earlier one, we shall recognize again our cruel and merciful Lord."¹³⁷

Walter Kaufmann first became acquainted with Buber as an interpreter of the Bible. He heard him lecture in July 1934 in Lehnitz, when Buber was discussing the four principal forms of biblical style: narrative, prophecy, psalm, proverb.¹³⁸ Kaufmann, later a professor of philosophy at Princeton, came to the United States from Germany as a young man in 1939. He was never Buber's disciple, but he occasionally sounds like a rebellious son. The image of Buber remained a fixed point that he kept before his eyes when he undertook one of his "philosophical flights" into the realms of religion and philosophy—flights that often turned into breathtaking nosedives.¹³⁹

Through Buber, Kaufmann became aware of the breadth of the Bible. It alone would not fail him when the rest of the world's theologies buckled under the strain of his critical rationality. Kaufmann called the Bible "religious poetry" and thus went a step beyond Buber, as he usually did—but, as is almost always the case with Kaufmann, it is necessary to append some additional statement in order to understand him. Thus we might also cite: "Prayer is poetry or blasphemy." From Buber he learned that God cannot be conjured, or possessed by objectifying him; he knew that the God of Moses must manifest himself through a summons. But the most Kaufmann himself was capable of was a "dialogue without faith," in the mood of the Ninetieth

¹³⁶ *The Prophetic Faith*, 195.

¹³⁷ "The Dialogue between Heaven and Earth," in Buber, *On Judaism*, 225; "Zwischen Himmel und Erde," in Buber, *An der Wende: Reden über das Judentum* (Cologne, 1952), 107.

¹³⁸ On Buber's classes on the Bible in Lehnitz and elsewhere in Germany during these years, see Simon, *Building in the Ruins*, 66.

¹³⁹ See Kaufmann, *Critique of Religion and Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday, 1958), sections 65, 71, 77, 83, 89, 98.

Psalm, or coming as a sudden rapture. He said further that to write a good poem would be the best language of this dialogue, but, if he did not manage to produce one, he was nevertheless speaking with God, despite his lack of belief. Paradox as the medium of experiencing God, which Buber makes a point of, was in Kaufmann carried to its extreme.

Buber's "question of Job" presented an existentialism of waiting and enduring; but Walter Kaufmann truly took issue with God. For Buber, the God of Israel who conceals himself is an indubitable certainty; he couches this difficult concept in his image of the "eclipse of God." The book of Job comes up again and again in Kaufmann's correspondence with Buber. And Buber cites as his own that profession of faith expressed in Job 19:25-26:

*But I know that my Vindicator lives,
In the end he will testify on earth;
This, after my skin will have been peeled off.
But I would behold God while still in my flesh.*

God's appearance, coming though it will immediately before his death, will redeem Job from the remoteness of God.

Buber was again in Europe in the summer of 1960. He spoke at the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts as part of the lecture series "The World and Reality." His subject was "The Word That Is Spoken."¹⁴⁰ In September he participated in a conference in Paris arranged by the World Jewish Congress on the situation of Soviet Jews. Here he delivered the major address "The Jews in the Soviet Union."¹⁴¹

The conference was prompted by concern over the Soviet government's policy toward Russian Jews, who were not being permitted to lead their own cultural and religious lives. In addition to well-known Jews, prominent non-Jews were invited, persons whose names carried moral weight. In October of the same year, in spite of poor health, Buber also traveled to the Mediterranean conference on cultural cooperation arranged by Mayor La Pira of Florence. Here he had unofficial talks with cultural representatives of the Arab world. He made a dignified and moving presentation of the Jewish cause, doing his best for international reconciliation.

In 1961, Buber's health was so unsatisfactory that his doctors forbade him to travel to Europe. A planned rest cure in 1962 at the Sonn-Matt Sanatorium near Lucerne was nearly canceled when he fell gravely ill, but he went after all, and the stay proved remarkably effective in restoring him to health. In 1963 he received one of his greatest honors: the Erasmus Prize was conferred on him by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands. In his address, "Believing

¹⁴⁰Both lectures appear in Buber, *Logos: Zwei Reden* (Heidelberg, 1962). The second, "The Word That Is Spoken," is included in *Knowledge of Man*, 100-110.

¹⁴¹"Discours sur la situation des juifs en l'Union soviétique," *La Terre Retrouvée* (September 1960): 36-40; "The Jews in the Soviet Union," *Forum* (Jerusalem) 5 (1962): 7-15.

from writing to you to express my gratification. It seems almost too good to be true that at last I will have the opportunity of making your personal acquaintance.

You probably do not remember my name, although you were good enough to comment on my writings to some friends [. . .] who met you at the Hebrew University early in 1948. At any rate, I am able to spare you an account of myself since Ernst Simon, with whom I became well acquainted when he was here last year, will, I hope, tell you something about me. All I want to say at this time is that I am indebted to you as to no other living man for the spiritual revolution in my life that brought me back to Jewish religion. Your writings and the writings of Franz Rosenzweig—as well as the personal inspiration of your creative life—have had an immense effect upon me, not merely on my thinking but on my very existence. It is a kind of debt that in its very nature can never be fully repaid.

I am looking forward with the greatest eagerness to your coming here in the fall, when I shall at last be able to see and speak with the man to whom I owe so much.

576. Martin Buber to Walter Kaufmann
[original in English]

« Jerusalem, February 27, 1949 »

Dear Doctor Kaufmann,

I have read with pleasure the article¹ you kindly sent me. It is written with real knowledge and understanding. But I think more should be done in order to answer the question: Why this ambivalence? It could be shown, for instance, that Nietzsche wished to be a Socratic man and did not succeed, because he had no immediacy in human relationships; and then, that "Socrates" means devotion to eternal values by asking about them without accepting any formulated one[s], and Nietzsche despaired more and more of being able to deal with eternal values, till out of this despair he came to deny their very existence and to proclaim in their stead "new" values, which, of course, were no values at all. The two motives could even, I think, be shown as being ultimately one, the only human place for the living reality of the eternal values being the immediacy of relationship.

I hope to meet you next autumn or winter, when I shall have to lecture in New York.

¹"Nietzsche's Admiration for Socrates," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 9, no. 4 (1948): 472–91.

par excellence, as the God-ordained challenge to the world. What you aroused in us, my dear Professor Buber, was thus not curiosity or scholarly cognizance; your responses to me, which pleased me so much at the time, have permitted us to become much richer in all our thoughts and actions, because they challenged us. And this letter is intended to permit myself to thank you for it. May you accept this thanks.

680. Walter Kaufmann to Martin Buber
[original in English]

“ Seattle, April 26, 1958 ”

Dear Professor Buber,

Just now I started a letter to you in German and suddenly find that after citing the first English book title I lapsed into English. So I begin all over again—in English, because it comes to me so much more easily when I write.

The wonderful *Erzählungen der Chassidim*¹ have arrived. Many thanks! The small size of the volume had led me to suppose, when I saw it in Europe, that it could not be more than a selection from *Die chassidischen Bücher*.² What a difference in appearance between this little book and *Hasidism and Modern Man*, which the publisher has managed to stretch out over 256 pages, presenting it as volume 1! *The Way of Man, According to the Teachings of the Hasidim* is quite as wonderful as Friedman, in his introduction, claims it is. But though it seems especially well translated, he withholds the translator's name.³ Who was it? And he changes the title by substituting *of Hasidism*, for *of the Hasidim*.⁴ Such a small step—and yet surely in the wrong direction. I still hear you making fun of “isms” in the dining room in Lehnitz⁵ and feel sure that you did not only mean “Nationalsozialismus.” But to the American public you are being presented in terms of “isms” and doctrines.

If by now you have read my essay on you for the Schilpp volume,⁶ I should, of course, love to have at least a brief reaction to it. I suppose, as always in my work, the positive and the negative are mingled in your reaction: surely, you must feel some sympathy for at least some of what I am trying to do—in that essay, in my *Critique*,⁷ in my work generally—but from your persistent

¹ *Tales of the Hasidim*.

² *Hasidic Books*. The first edition, published in Hellerau in 1928, contains 717 pages; the second edition, issued by Schocken Verlag of Berlin, is 750 pages in length.

³ The translator was Ronald Gregor Smith.

⁴ The original German is *Der Weg des Menschen nach der chassidischen Lehre*—literally, “The Way of Man According to Hasidic Teaching.”

⁵ In July 1934 Kaufmann attended a conference for teachers and youth leaders at Lehnitz bei Oranienburg, organized by Buber's Center for Adult Education. The conference, conducted by Buber together with Ernst Simon and Adolf Leschnitzer, dealt with pedagogical questions pertaining to the instruction of Bible, Jewish history, Hebrew, religion, and German.

⁶ Walter Kaufmann, “Buber's Religious Significance,” in Schilpp and Friedman, eds., *The Philosophy of Martin Buber*, 665–85.

⁷ *Critique of Religion and Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday, 1958).

silence (never one word of comment since you wrote me a few lines about the first article I published, on Nietzsche and Socrates, ten years ago) I gather that, all in all, you feel more repelled than sympathetic. But your disapproval—and apathy or lack of interest is surely a form of disapproval, too—does not help me as long as it remains so totally silent. In spite of the unforgettable hours in your house and the colloquia in Lehnitz, Columbia, and Princeton, your attitude toward me is somehow more in keeping with that of the old Goethe than with that of Martin Buber. To be sure, one does not deserve or merit anything more, but it is a disappointment.

I should not mail this if I were not still hoping. [. . .]

681. Martin Buber to Walter Kaufmann

« Princeton, April 28 [1958] »

Dear Professor Kaufmann,

I was very dismayed that such a misunderstanding could arise between us. You must surely have felt at our last meeting that you have been accepted by me *in toto*. For some years now, it has been technically almost impossible for me to write letters about writings. I have repeatedly read your *Critique*¹—some statements of your position with decided agreement, others with decided disagreement, everything with a strong feeling *for* this uninhibitedness and *directness*. I did hope that I might be able to discuss the Schilpp essay²—which I had to read along with more than twenty-five others—with you after all (someone told me you would probably be here for a while in May. In writing, then. Your essay is undoubtedly one of the very best in this book, and it is gratifying that it discusses some things not treated elsewhere in it. (I have pointed out a few factual errors to Friedman with a request to forward them to you; since he has evidently not done so, I am enclosing them on a separate sheet.) As you see, this is by no means “a mixture of positive and negative things,” but I have simply read your essay with enjoyment and profit. And now please practice a little “imagining the real”³ and consider the entirely different time dimension of a man my age.

682. Atallah Mansur to Martin Buber [original in Hebrew]

« Acre, May 4, 1958 »

My dear Mr. Martin Buber, *Shalom!*

Forgive me for bothering you with this letter. I am a young man, a son of this country, and on my identity card I am designated as an Arab. I was born

¹ *Critique of Religion and Philosophy*.

² “Buber’s Religious Significance.”

³ *Realphantasie*; see letter 567, n. 3.

686. Walter Kaufmann to Martin Buber
[original in English]

« Princeton, November 23, 1958 »

Dear Professor Buber:

When I got back to Princeton I heard that your wife had died. The day you came to Princeton the first time and talked with Einstein we had lunch together, the three of us, and later, at dinner, I sat next to your wife and felt somehow that we were not strangers, though I had never seen her before that day. From the dedication of a little *Schockenbändchen* bought in 1934,¹ I knew that many of the books that had helped to form me and become part of me in my teens had been *Zwiesprache* [dialogue] with her. I was happy to see her again last March, felt at home with her in your home here, and was stunned when I heard of her death. One often assumes that a man's work must be a great comfort to him at such a time; but perhaps there comes a weariness that makes one weary of one's work, too. I remember finding a degree of comfort—not more than that—reading the 90th psalm when my grandfather died, just a few days after I arrived in this country. I was all alone.

For all your books and essays that I have read, I am not at all confident that I quite understand your religion—or rather that the way I do understand it may not perhaps strike you as a transposition if not a distortion. For I have not remained an outsider, agnostically suspending judgment, but have appropriated and made my own much of your thought, but perhaps changed it in the process. There has been an intense dialogue between your writings and myself, but it was not possible on the very few occasions when we came face to face to continue this *Zwiesprache*, or at any rate to carry it as far as I might have wished.

Your good letter last April had all the warmth for which I could wish—and still was disappointing. You said that you simply lack the time “to write letters about writings,” and added that you had read a lot in my *Critique*, much “with decided agreement and other [parts] with decided disagreement, everything with a strong feeling for this uninhibitedness and directness.” I got the impression that you understood that for me this book was not merely something I had written but in a sense my life so far, and that in your hands it was a question—alas, more than one question—to you. Tantalizing words that I have quoted here: with what may you have agreed? with what disagreed? You did not say. [. . .]

“To write letters about writing”—it sounds so plausible and is for all that such a far-reaching rejection—a personal rejection in spite of all your kindness. In your house in Princeton you told me that one has to select the best

¹ *Zwiesprache* (Dialogue), Schocken Library, vol. 16 (Berlin, 1932), which bore a dedication “To P[aula]. The abyss and light of the worlds / Time's need and eternity's yearning / Vision, event, and poem / Were and are dialogue with you.” Translated in *Between Man and Man*, 1–39.

students for one's seminar [. . .] and that was the only way one could give them something—and I understand the difference between writing letters and talking with people in a seminar—but there are also human relationships in which a letter may be a better form of communication about some of the things that matter most to two men than a dialogue in a seminar before twenty other men and women. How many are there in my generation whom a few words from you about what they are trying to do and are doing might help as much as they would help me? Foolish question, neither capable of any answer nor at all rhetorical. If only I could get across to you the paradox I feel that troubles me. Having written so much, you clearly feel that there is so much more you want to write, so much more that must be said in print, that you cannot take the time to write me: of course, it would not be a paradox if it were almost anyone but you. But in explaining to me why you cannot write me about what matters most to me, you disparage writing—though your reason for not writing to me is precisely because writing is so much more important to you, meaning writing for publication. But what you write for publication concerns the absence of true dialogue and the need for true dialogue.

You know that I treasure this and that remark that you have made to me, though they are remarks you might have made in general. But to the questions which I have asked you “upon the knees of my heart,” albeit in what I have written and not orally (which makes the quoted words double appropriate), you have not answered, pleading lack of time. How can your age keep that from being a rejection?

In the October issue of *Commentary* I have published a little piece on you. They called it “The Stature of Martin Buber” after I objected to “The Theology of Martin Buber.” My original title—the piece is a multiple review and includes the paperback *Moses* as well as *Pointing the Way*—was “Martin Buber: Pointing a Way Back to Moses.” This review does not aim at any response, and I am not sending it to you. No doubt you have *Commentary* at hand in any case. A couple of weeks ago, the Jewish Publication Society finally published *Judaism and Christianity: Essays by Leo Baeck*, which I translated and wrote an introductory essay for. In the spring, probably in April, the Beacon Press [Boston] will publish my next book, *From Shakespeare to Existentialism*. It deals with Shakespeare, Goethe, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Rilke, Jaspers, Freud, Heidegger, and Toynbee. But the *Critique* is less of a book, just another book, than anything else I have done.

It is the thing about which I feel: “But if once I have accomplished that which is holy and dear to me, the poem, then welcome, O silence of the world of shades! Contented I shall be, even if my lyre does not accompany me on that downward journey; *once* I lived as the gods live, and that suffices.”² I am doing lots of other things with heart and mind, but can still repeat Holderlin’s

²From Hölderlin, “An der Parzen” (To the Fates); italics in original.

words from my soul. Without any knowledge, I am hoping your wife may have felt the same way.

687. Martin Buber to Walter Kaufmann
[original in English]

« Jerusalem, December 7, 1958 »

Dear Professor Kaufmann,

I want to thank you for what you wrote me about my wife. But I am not well and not able to tell you everything I would wish to be told.

Nevertheless, I feel the need to clear up one point, and I can do it only, so to speak, autobiographically. In the last years I have been compelled to give up the writing of real letters (not only on books); they no longer have for me the character of "simultaneousness," of vital mutuality they had before; I want the "hither and whither," the "on the spot," the singular impact of speaking and listening.

But, as I do not know when we could talk again on the subject, and as I am deeply touched by your reproach (although it is unjust concerning my being more interested in "writing for publication"—I almost never was), tell me please what it is in your book that you would wish most now to know my opinion of, and I will answer you by writing as well as I can.

It is with great interest that I have read what you wrote in *Commentary*,¹ particularly what you say about Moses; it is very near to my heart. [. . .]

688. Ludwig Binswanger to Martin Buber

« Kreuzlingen, February 2, 1959 »

My very dear Professor Buber,

This year I come with my wishes for your birthday only very softly, for your solitude and the memory of your life's companion forbid any loud tone. All I want to tell you is that I shall think of you on February 8 in great friendship and with enduring sympathy, hoping that your health will keep up and your work will continue to help you along.

689. Martin Buber to Kurt M. Singer
[printed text sent to everyone who expressed sympathy
to Buber on the death of his wife]

« Jerusalem, February 1959 »

Soon after the death of my wife, I came under the spell of physical illness. I was able to feel better for only very brief periods, and I still do not feel free

¹"The Stature of Martin Buber," *Commentary*, October 1958: 355–59. In this article, Kaufmann argues that more than anyone else Buber pointed the way to a non-Hegelian, non-Greek, authentically biblical religion.

699. Martin Buber to Albrecht Goes

« Jerusalem, December 19, 1959 »

Dear Herr Goes,

Even before receipt of the book you sent me,¹ I should like to thank you from the heart for everything and at the same time inform you about what has happened to me during this time. While staying in Flims last summer, I took sick and had to spend weeks in bed, cared for by Eva—who cordially returns your greetings—and the doctor forbade me, with strict and exact reasoning, to go to Venice. Thus, only my son and his daughter Barbara were there, and near Civi they received your beautiful roses. I was under the weather for a while after my return, and when I was able to feel “recovered” I tackled the translation of the remaining books of the Scriptures. For the past two months or so, I have been occupied solely with Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Lamentations. That is where I am at present, and now I have given myself a few days for answering letters. The *Saint Gallen's Play*,² however, was read soon after its arrival, and of course with the attention it deserves. What I found strange was that Micah, whom I am tempted to regard as a disloyal pupil of Isaiah (cf. Micah 4:5 with Isaiah 2:5),³ comes last—but of course this is due to Bethlehem. One more word about your Hillel speech.⁴ In the Day of Atonement sermon by the hasidic master Rabbi Isaac Meir of Ger (d. 1866) about the Hillel text [. . .], it says: “When will this Now be?”⁵

P.S. I am planning to go to Venice via Munich in June, God willing!

700. Martin Buber to Walter Kaufmann

« Jerusalem, April 30, 1960 »

Dear Walter Kaufmann,

On January 28 I started writing my answer to your letter of January 19, and then it was interrupted by urgent work on the final volume of my Bible translation. Now that I have gotten over the worst, namely, Daniel, I have resumed my letter-answering. As important a question as the one about Job 19:25, at least, shall not wait any longer.

This is my translation of that passage:

¹Goes, *Von Mensch zu Mensch* (From Man to Man) (Frankfurt am Main, 1959).

²Goes, *Das Sankt Gallen Spiel von der Kindheit Jesu* (Saint Gallen's Play of Jesus' Childhood) (Frankfurt am Main, 1959).

³Cf. *The Prophetic Faith*, 150.

⁴“Die Frage des Rabbi Hillel” (The Question of Rabbi Hillel), in Goes, *Aber im Winde das Wort* (But the Word in the Wind) (Frankfurt am Main, 1963), 236ff.

⁵Reprinted in *Tales of the Hasidim: The Later Masters*, 306.

da ich doch weiss, mein Auslöser lebt,
und als der Spätgekommne wird aufstehn er überm Staub, —
und noch nachdem meine Haut, dies da, zerfetzt ist,
noch von meinem Fleische aus werde ich Gott schauen.

By way of an explanation:

1. [The Hebrew] *goel*, *Auslöser* [redeemer], is the designation of someone who rehabilitates a *verfallen* [decrepit] property or restores a *verfallen* widow to the proper mainstream of life.

2. *Staub* [dust] designates the ground on which Job sits.

3. Job has earlier spoken of the destructive effect of his illness on his skin; it becomes more and more *zerfetzt* [torn to shreds]; now he points to it as he talks: *dies da* [this here].

4. What Job's plaint ultimately involves is that God, whose intimate *Ein-nehmen* [concord] once was *über seinem Zelt* [over his tent], has removed himself from him (and thereby also withdrawn his—Job's—*Recht* [right]). That is why he can afterward be contented with the *Erscheinung* [appearance] of God, who does not explain or justify the injustice of the way of the world that Job has criticized.

5. Job complains: God stays away from me. But he is certain that God will come, no matter how late: And if my skin is then all torn to shreds, my eyes will see him in my skinless flesh. This appearance will *auslösen* [release] Job from his distance from God, from decrepitude, though this may not happen until just before his death. The *Lebende* [living one] will revitalize him, be it only at the last moment. This is what, I believe, Job *weiss* [knows].

That is all for today. It was hard for me to write this down. I shall return your manuscript shortly.

701. Martin Buber to François Mauriac
[original in French]

« Jerusalem, May 7, 1960 »

Dear Sir,

As you know, certain friends of mine, among them Dr. Nahum Goldmann,¹ are planning to bring leading non-Jewish personalities together in Paris in order to induce them to take a stand on the situation of the Jews in the Soviet Union.

The approximately three million Jews living in the Soviet Union find themselves in a position that makes it impossible for them to lead their own lives on a religious, cultural, or national plane—unlike other minorities, which have opportunities in these areas that are being denied to the Jews. Thus, the

¹Nahum Goldmann (1895–1978), German Zionist leader and statesman. In 1956 he was elected president of the World Zionist Organization, serving in this capacity until 1968.

tude to the great problems of Zionism in a certain measure with yours. But in truth the two are very far from one another. Our—by “we” I mean *Ichud*—criticism of the Israeli government’s Arab policy is one from inside; yours is one from outside. Our program of Jewish-Arab cooperation does not mean a lesser Zionism than what is officially called by this name, but a greater one. We want to bring the Jewish people to understand and to adopt this greater Zionism.

718. Walter Kaufmann to Martin Buber
[original in English]

« Princeton, March 24, 1962 »

Dear Professor Buber,

Since I agree with you about Eichmann, I want to ask you whether there is anything you think I might do in this connection. I do not believe in collecting signatures, as some people suggest, and hardly need to tell you why I don’t. Moreover, the great numbers are surely on the other side, in favor of execution. The obvious course that occurs to me is to write an article, but, however shameful that may be, at the moment I do not have the time to do justice to such an important topic. I could, of course, write a letter to the Prime Minister or the President; but I suppose that is rather pointless. It occurs to me that you might have an idea.

You may have heard that I am planning to spend the year 1962/63 at Hebrew University, on a Fulbright grant. [. . .] I am greatly looking forward to conversations with you. [. . .] The prospect of living so near you for a year is exciting.

719. Martin Buber to François Mauriac
[original in French]

« Jerusalem, March 25, 1962 »

Dear M. Mauriac:

I thank you very sincerely for your prompt consent to sign the petition to Mr. Khrushchev. Lord Russell¹ has also declared his readiness to sign the telegram; however, he proposed a minor modification in the last paragraph of the text, and I have accepted it. I am enclosing the text² that was telegraphed

¹ An anti-Zionist organization founded in 1942, the American Council for Judaism seeks “to advance the universal principles of Judaism free of nationalism.” Accordingly, it opposes what it deems to be the reprehensible “Zionist domination of American Jewish life.” Its journal *Issues* was discontinued in 1969 and resumed publication in 1982.

² “News has come to us, through the Soviet and international press, that in the Soviet Union the death penalty has been instituted for economic and other offenses it is not generally customary to punish with death.

“The undersigned belong to those who, as a matter of principle, are opposed to the death penalty.

me that you will come to see me in early July—for two reasons: it lets me conclude that you are feeling better, and I am sincerely looking forward to your coming.

721. Martin Buber to Walter Kaufmann
[original in English]

« Jerusalem, April 8, 1962 »

Dear Walter Kaufmann,

Because of my state of health, I can only now answer your letter of March 24.

I think it would be good if you wrote about Eichmann to Ben-Gurion. He has read one of your books and appreciates it.

I am very glad to know that you are planning to spend a year here. Talking is much more easy for me and even more natural than writing.

The doctors will, as it seems, allow me to spend the months July and August in a Swiss sanatorium (Sonn-Matt, near Lucerne). If you should be in Switzerland at that time, let me know please. [. . .]

722. Hiroshi Kojima to Martin Buber

« Tokyo, April 10, 1962 »

My dear Professor Buber,

Forgive me for not writing you for such a long time even though in my last letter I promised to send you promptly significant impressions made upon readers by my translation of *Between Man and Man*. Happily, about 1,200 copies of the book have been sold in the six months following its publication. But I must confess to you that the pronounced interest in the book in this country, at least thus far, has been confined almost exclusively to Christian circles. [. . .] Accordingly, the reaction has been limited to the Christian side. However, a periodical devoted to reviews of new books introduced the book: "Though it is a small volume, its content is immensely concentrated. This reader sometimes stood still because he was inflamed by a powerful breath emanating from these lines and struck by dazzling, intensive lightning. [. . .] With respect to the concept of man's nature, we would no longer be able to evade his answer, nor could the world of Christian thought ever be beyond his influence. If we wish to pose any question to him, we could do so only in the way he has shown us." [. . .]

723. Ludwig Binswanger to Martin Buber

« Kreuzlingen, May 8, 1962 »

My dear Martin Buber,

Thank you kindly for having the two addresses, *Logos*, sent to me; both spoke to me directly. What you say about the two truths is very true and

734. Walter Kaufmann to Martin Buber
[original in English]

« Jerusalem, February 7, 1963 »

Dear Martin Buber:

Living so close, it seems silly to write you a letter; but since I cannot hope to see you on your birthday, at least a short note seems appropriate—and there are some things that can be said better in a letter than *viva voce*.

We have talked about what human beings and books mean to us, and you mentioned that in your younger years books often meant more to you, too. I don't find that people in general encourage me to go on living; books, works of art, and some music offer more help and inspiration. No wonder: in those realms one can draw on all ages; when it comes to human beings, only on one's own time. What I seek and what helps me in art and literature is also human beings—but men whom I can meet only in their works.

It makes an immense difference to know in the flesh at least a very few human beings who have the wisdom and warmth and humanity that one is generally resigned to encounter without a living presence. Listening to you in Lehnitz, Germany, in the thirties, seeing you again in the United States in the fifties (at Princeton and at Columbia, and then again at Princeton), and now having conversations in Jerusalem, is not just a very pleasant experience; it adds a dimension to those other encounters, literary and artistic, and makes a difference throughout one's life. Our evenings together have been high points of my year in Israel.

So I am grateful to you not only for your work, which has meant a great deal to me, but also for your living presence. May it continue as a source of joy to you and a source of strength to many, many others.

As a very small token of gratitude and affection, I am giving you the reprint edition of my *Faust* translation,¹ which I received from the States since I last saw you. In a small way that seems fitting, because you have influenced me a great deal as a translator.

On your birthday I shall think of you, and soon after that I hope to see you again.

735. Martin Buber to David Ben-Gurion
[original in Hebrew]

« Jerusalem [February 19, 1963] »

Dear Mr. Ben-Gurion,

Your congratulatory letter for my eighty-fifth birthday gave me true joy, and I thank you very much.

You touched on an important theme from the complex area of so-called

¹ *Goethe's Faust*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1961).