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THE *AQEDAH* AT THE "CROSSROAD": ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN THE JEWISH-CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM DIALOGUE*

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The memory of the *Aqedah* lies close to the heart of three religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It is reflected in the liturgy of the Jews at Rosh-Ha-Shanah, of the Christians at the mass (Catholic) or holy communion (Orthodox and Protestant), and of the Muslims at the great sacrificial feast *ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā* (*ʿĪd-al-Kabīr*).

The same sacred story is remembered in these three traditions as an important element of their religious identity, yet the commemoration takes place at different times and represents variant meanings. In a sense, the *Aqedah* can be looked upon as standing at the crossroad of these three traditions as one significant sign of their common origin and also of their theological divergence.

The present study examines the genesis and nature of this "crossroad." I first examine what has generated the Jewish-Christian and Jewish-Muslim controversies on the *Aqedah*, and what the specific character of each controversy is. Then I go back to the common source of these three traditions, namely, the Bible—and also the Qur'ān for the Islamic tradition. This is in order to probe and/or enrich the lessons that can be learned from the controversies.

The purpose of this study is modest. I will not enter into all the rich nuances of texts, traditions, and debates. Rather, I will take notice of the significant trends that relate to the Jewish-Christian and Jewish-Muslim encounters, in order to discover as far as possible the mechanisms involved, and also to serve as a basis for suggesting lessons which I believe we can learn from both the historical and present-day dialogue.

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1. *The Dialogue in the Jewish-Christian Controversy*

The Jewish-Christian controversy initially revolved mainly around the theological meaning of the *Aqedah*. In early documents (Jubilees, Philo, Josephus, Maccabees, and the Mishnah[1]), the accent lies mainly on Abraham as the example of faith. Then, as the controversy intensified, the accent shifted gradually from Abraham to Isaac.[2] In addition, the expiatory element of the *Aqedah*, which originally was only allusive, became more obvious in focusing the entire Jewish-Christian debate on the *Aqedah*.[3]

It is significant indeed that in Jewish sources the word *Aqedah*, which technically refers to the tying of the *tāmîḏ* lamb,[4] is first attested in relation to Isaac late in the second century A.D., perhaps by the end of the Tanaitic period. An early reference with the emphasis on Isaac is found in the *Mekilta of Rabbi Ishmael*. On Exod 12:13, this comment is made: "And when I see the blood, I will pass over you. . . . I see the blood of Isaac's *Aqedah*." The offering of Isaac is thus not only identified as a *tāmîḏ* lamb, which "suggests that a cultic and sacrificial theology is implicit,"[5] but is also connected with the Passover. This connection gives evidence that the expiatory sacrifice of the Passover was understood to be a memorial of the sacrifice of Isaac.[6] Likewise in the Amoraic period, the expression "ashes of Isaac," which refers to the offering of Isaac, alludes to the burnt offering of the *tāmîḏ*.[7] According to the later rabbis, Abraham called Isaac "a burnt offering."[8] But it is

[1]*Jub.*, 17:15-18:19; Philo, *On Abraham*, 167-204; Josephus, *Ant.* 1. 222-236; *4 Macc* 16:18-20; m. *Ta'anith 2:4*.

[2]G. F. Moore has pointed out the difference: "In Genesis it is Abraham's faith and obedience to God's will even to the offering of his only son, the child of promise, that constitutes the whole significance of the story: Isaac is a purely passive figure. In the rabbinical literature, however, the voluntariness of the sacrifice on Isaac's part is strongly emphasized," *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927-1930), 1:539; cf. M. Givati, "Binder and Bound–Bible and Midrash" (in Hebrew), *Beth Mikra* 27 (1982): 144-154.

[3]See P. R. Davies and B. D. Chilton, "The Aqedah: A Revised Tradition History," in *The CBQ* 40 (1978): 517-529.

[4]See Shalom Spiegel, *The Last Trial*, trans. J. Goldin (New York: Pantheon, 1967), xix-xx.

[5]Davies, 515; cf. Philo, *On Abrahame*, 198.

[6]See G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 215.

[7]See b. *Ta'an.* 16a; cf. *b. Ber.* 62b, "Samuel [third century] says: 'He beheld the "ashes of Isaac,"' as the verse says 'God will see for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.'"

[8]*Gen. Rab.* 56:4.

in the Targums that the expiatory interpretation of the sacrifice of Isaac finds its fullest expression. The *Palestinian Targum* comments on Gen 22:14, "And now I pray mercy before you, O Lord Elohim, when Isaac's sons shall come to the hour of distress, remember for them the binding of Isaac their father, and loose and forgive their sins."

Interestingly enough, we find a parallel picture in the Christian sources. In the NT, the accent also lies on Abraham as an example of faith (Heb 11:17-10; Jas 2:21-23); the expiatory element of the story is only implicit (Rom 8:32; John 3:16) and even debatable.[9] Just as in Judaism, we must come to the second century to see the accent shifted from Abraham to Isaac, whose sacrifice then began to be viewed as a type of Jesus' sacrifice. The first typological interpretation of the *Aqedah* in Christianity occurs in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, in which it is clear that Barnabas is, in part, responding to the Jewish interpretation of the *Aqedah*. In this document Isaac's atonement is replaced by Jesus' atonement.

It is with Melito of Sardis, however, that the use of the *Aqedah* receives its first extensive treatment in Christian literature. Undoubtedly responding to the strong Jewish community of Sardis, Melito argued that the sacrifice of Jesus was better than the sacrifice of Isaac, for Jesus actually suffered and died, while Isaac was spared. The bishop developed his argument in the context of a discussion of the Levitical sacrifices, and he looked upon Isaac as an incomplete precursor of what was to come—as only a typological reference to Jesus, who corresponds more closely to the lamb that was slaughtered.[10]

This typology was more fully developed by Church fathers such as Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, etc., who called attention to the parallel between Isaac's bearing the wood and Christ's bearing the cross.[11] Hence, in Christian literature and art the sacrifice of Isaac was traditionally depicted in connection with the crucifixion.[12]

The parallel development of the Jewish and Christian traditions concerning the *Aqedah* suggests that these two exegetical traditions moved in close relationship to each other. Moreover, just as the

[9]See R. J. Daly, "The Soteriological Significance of the Sacrifice of Isaac," *CBQ* 39 (1977): 45-75; Davies, 529-533.

[10]Melito in a fragment from the *Catena on Genesis* (ANF 8:759-760).

[11]Irenaeus, *Ag. Heresies* 4.5.4; Tertullian, *Answer to the Jews* 10; and *Ag. Marcion*, 3.18; and Origen, *Homily on Gen. 8.*

[12]See Jo Milgrom, *The Binding of Isaac: The Akedah, A Primary Symbol in Jewish Thought and Art* (Berkeley, CA: BIBAL, 1988), 208-209.

Christians responded to the Jews, the Jewish texts give evidence of the Jewish reaction to the Christian apologetic. In order to show that the *Aqedah* of Isaac was at least as effective as the sacrifice of Jesus, the ancient rabbis arrogated to the *Aqedah* details borrowed from the story of the Passover. Isaac also willingly offered himself as an atonement, crying out and suffering in agony. A passage of *Gen. Rab.* (22:6) goes so far as to describe Isaac as bearing his own cross, just as a condemned man would. "This detail," comments E. R. Goodenough, "[so] strongly brings to mind the crucifixion of Jesus that it seems impossible that there was no relationship."[13]

The typological interpretation was also adopted, with Isaac being viewed as a type of Israel. In *Pirke Aboth* 5, the ten trials of Abraham (the *Aqedah* being the tenth one) anticipate the ten miracles of the Exodus. In the Palestinian Talmud (*y. Ta'an.* 2.4.65d), the salvation of Isaac is a type of the salvation of Israel, the sacrifice of Isaac is a type of the sacrifices,[14] and the victim Isaac is a type of the suffering Servant and of the Messiah.[15] In his commentary on Gen 22:11, Ibn Ezra quotes an opinion that Abraham actually did kill Isaac, who was later resurrected from the dead.[16] The basis for this interpretation is the observation that Isaac did not return home with his father. The wide circulation of this story shows the Jewish polemical attempt "to deny that the sacrifice of Isaac" was of "less value than that of Jesus."[17] The rabbis of that period were concerned about the Christian apologetic and responded with their own:

> R. Abin said in R. Hilkiah's name: How foolish is the heart of the deceivers who say the Holy One, Blessed Be He, has a son. If in the case of Abraham's son, when He saw that he was ready to slay him, He could not bear to look on as He was in anguish, but on the contrary commanded "Do not lay your hand on the lad"; had He a son, would He have abandoned him? Would He not have turned the world upside down and reduced it to tohubohu?[18]

[13]E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, 13 vols. (New York: Pantheon, 1953-1968), 4:178.

[14]J. Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature* (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969), 232.

[15]See *Tg. Jonathan* of Isa 52 and 53; cf. *Tg. Job* 3:18.

[16]The tradition of Isaac's resurrection is preserved in both ancient Jewish and Christian texts; see *Pirke R. El.* 31:3; Origen, *Homily on Genesis* 8:1; and Augustine, *Exposition on Psalm 51:5.*

[17]*Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Encyclopedia Judaica, 1971-1972), s.v. "Akedah."

[18]Spiegel, *The Last Trial*, 83, n. 26.

The fact also that the *Aqedah* is at times related to the Passover and at times to Rosh-Ha-shanah may reflect the liturgical hesitations generated by the controversy. Either the Passover setting was original (hints of the Passover connection can be found as early as *Jub.* 17:15, cf. 49:1) and it was then shifted to Rosh-Ha-shanah in reaction to the Christian claims, or the Rosh-Ha-shanah setting was original (the connection is attested in the *musaf* of the New Year liturgy[19]) and, was changed to the Passover under Christian influence. The same observation can be made about the concept of expiation, which apparently came late in the process, but which can also be detected in earlier documents, such as Pseudo-Philo (*Bib. Ant.* 18.5).

Indeed, the dynamics of influence and reaction are difficult to trace, and the debate still rages over whether the Jewish interpretation predates Christianity or whether it is an apologetic-polemical reaction to the Christian claims.[20] One thing is clear, however: namely, that the *Aqedah* controversy gives witness to a mutual interaction between Christianity and Judaism during the early Christian centuries. The *Aqedah* theology in both Judaism and Christianity was built up under the influence of, and in reaction to, each other's traditions. In many respects, it is a product of the Jewish-Christian dialogue.

2. *Dialogue in the Jewish-Muslim Controversy*

The Jewish-Muslim controversy revolves essentially the identity of the historical victim of the *Aqedah*. Already in the Qur'ān the accent on the son is more pronounced than it is in the Hebrew Scriptures, for more is said about the son and he is not the passive figure that he appears to be in the Bible. The Qur'ānic *Aqedah*, then, is closer to the Jewish tradition than it is to the biblical story. The interest has already shifted from Abraham to his son, who in the Muslim tradition, in contrast with the biblical story and Jewish and Christian tradition, was not Isaac, but Ishmael.

The Muslim tradition, however, does not appear to be totally unanimous on this point.[21] In the Qur'ān, the name of the son who

[19]Joseph H. Hertz, *The Authorized Daily Prayer Book* (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1948), 880-883.

[20]See, e.g., C. T. R. Hayward, "The Sacrifice of Isaac and Jewish Polemic against Christianity," *CBQ* 52 (1990): 292-306.

[21]Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *Quar'ān*: Text, Translation and Commentary

was intended to be sacrificed is not mentioned. And in any case, Isaac is still held in high esteem, being referred to by name seventeen times, while Ishmael is named only twelve times. Ishmael, on the other hand, is not the excluded son that he is in the Hebrew Scriptures. Like Isaac, he is identified as a prophet,[22] but he is the only one to be associated with the prestigious act of building the Ka'ba.[23] In one passage, Ishmael is situated between Abraham and Isaac in the hierarchy of the fathers; possibly he is even regarded as the father of Isaac.[24] Both Isaac and Ishmael, then, were equally qualified to serve as the intended sacrifice.

It seems that at an earlier stage of the Muslim tradition, Isaac was the intended sacrifice; but as Ishmael began to assume importance, during the early second Islamic century (i.e., after the Muslim exegete Ṭabarī [d. 923]), the view that Ishmael was the sacrifice "*al dhabiḥ*" prevailed, and became almost universally accepted by the end of the third Islamic century.[25]

The Muslim explanation for this change indicates a polemic against the Jews, and it pertains to an ethnic rather than theological concern. According to Muslim apologetics, it was only an ethnic preoccupation that had led the Jews to change the original version so as to substitute Isaac for Ishmael: "because Isaac is their father while Ishmael is the father of the Arabs."[26] It is also noteworthy that the same ethnic argument was used in the Persian-Arabic controversy (during the period of Sh'ūbiyya). The Persians, who claimed descent from Isaac, defended the Isaac thesis, while the Arabs defended the Ishmael thesis because of their Ishmaelite origin.[27]

The Muslim view was based on two main kinds of arguments. The first is interpretational. This involves two aspects: (1) In regard to the value of the text, the Muslim version of the *Aqedah* was judged superior to the biblical one in that the Jewish Scripture implied the possibility

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(New York: Hafner, 1938), 2:1204.

[22]*Qur'ān* 37:112 on Isaac and 19:54 on Ishmael.

[23]Qur'ān 2:177.

[24]Qur'ān 21:85.

[25]R. Firestone, "Abraham's Son as the Intended Sacrifice (Al-Dhabīḥ, Qur'ān 37: 99-113): Issues in Qur'ānic Exegesis," *JSSt* 34 (1989): 117.

[26]Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr* 4.14.

[27]See Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 2 vols., trans. C. R. Barber and S. M. Stern (London: Allen & Unwin, 1967), 1:135.

of God's implementing *naskh* ("abrogation").[28] This observation not only undermined the entire status of Judaism but was also used to show that Islam had in fact superseded Judaism. In the Qur'ān, on the other hand, the *naskh* is not implied, inasmuch as in its account the sacrifice was intended to be only symbolical.[29] Since the same sura mentions the birth of Isaac a few verses after it describes the attempted sacrifice of the son, the sacrifice in question can only concern the elder son Ishmael.

The second main kind of argument is that tradition as conveyed in stories suggests the genealogical connection; in other words, it is an ethnic argument. An example is the interesting story in which Muhammad presents himself as "the son of the two intended sacrifices." Not only Ishmael but also Muhammad's father Abdallah experienced the trial of being the "intended sacrificial victim."[30]

Both of the above arguments received attention in the Jewish camp. I will refer here to two representative reactions. The interpretational argument is treated by Saadia Gaon in his commentary on Gen 22. For Saadia, God's commandment was only a trial, and God's future plan was not to require sacrifice. "This then is not abrogation, because the ruling was not intended to be implemented in the first place."[31] It is also significant that Saadia, who was contemporary with Ṭabarī and was often engaged in polemics,[32] does not appear to have been aware of the Ishmael-Isaac controversy. This silence seems to parallel and confirm the actual situation in the Muslim tradition.

The ethnic argument can be detected also in the *Tg. Pseudo-Jonathan*, a document which displays a number of points of connection with Islam (identification, for example, of the names of the wives of Muhammad as the wives of Ishmael).[33] The Targum of Gen 22:1

[28]See John E. Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 110-112.

[29]Ali, 2:1205.

[30]The full tradition is found in Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, 23, 85; cf. Zamakhshari, 3.350; and Al-Baidawi, 37.102.

[31]Andrews Rippin, "Sa'adya Gaon and Genesis 22: Aspects of Jewish-Muslim Interaction and Polemic," in *Studies in Islamic and Judaic Traditions*, ed. William M. Brinner and Stephen D. Ricks (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 40.

[32]See A. S. Halkin, "Saadia's Exegesis and Polemics," in *Rab Saadia Gaon: Studies in His Honor* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 117-141.

[33]See Robert Hayward, "Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Anti-Islamic Polemic," *JSSt* 34

reports a discussion between Isaac and Ishmael, with each of them arguing his own right to inherit the father, Abraham.

> And it was after these things when Isaac and Ishmael argued, that Ishmael said, It is right that I should inherit Father since I am his first born. But Isaac said, It is right for me to inherit Father because I am the son of Sarah his wife and you are the son of Hagar my mother's maid. Ishmael answered saying, I am more worthy than you because I was circumcized at age 13; if it had been my will to hold back I would not have risked my life to be circumcized. But you were circumcized when you were 8 days old; had you known what it was all about you would not have risked your life. Isaac replied, Today I am 36 years old. If the Holy One, blessed be He, were to ask for all my limbs I would not hold back. Immediately these words were heard before the Lord of the universe and immediately the word of the Lord tested Abraham and said to him, Abraham![34]

The Targum goes on to emphasize the value of Isaac—so much so, in fact, that he even surpasses Abraham: "The eyes of Abraham looked at the eyes of Isaac; but the eyes of Isaac looked at the angels on high. Isaac saw them, but Abraham did not" (v. 10). Also, the blessing of the nations is no longer based on Abraham's faith as indicated in the biblical text, but on Isaac's merits (v. 18). It is noteworthy, as well, that the Targum suggests the same kind of ethnic concern as is indicated in the Muslim apologetic. Isaac is "taken by the angels to the school of Shem the Great" (v. 19). This last reference to the father of all Semites constitutes, indeed, a powerful argument in the genealogical/ethnic discussion.

3. *Dialogue in the Sacred Texts*

A stylistic analysis of the two sacred texts, the Bible and the Qur'ān, which have laid the foundation for the Jewish-Christian-Muslim traditions and controversies, reveals the importance of dialogue. This is true concerning both of these texts.

(1989): 77-93; cf. A. Shapira, "Traces of an Anti-Moslem Polemic in Tg. Ps. J. on the Binding of Isaac" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 54 (1984/85): 293-296.

[34]Milgrom, 91.

The biblical story of the *Aqedah* (Gen 22:1-19) is terse[35] and dynamic. Of the 306 words, 75 are verbs. This amounts to one verb in three to four words. Such frequency of verbs, and especially of the keyword *'mr*, gives the text its dynamic character and suggests a particularly nervous dialogue.

Besides, the literary structure of the text reaches its apex in the center (vv. 7 and 8), i.e., in the pathos-filled dialogue between Abraham and Isaac. I have been able to establish this literary movement in a previous study[36] on the basis of four observations: (1) the chiastic structure A B C B_1 A_1; (2) the framing of the central passage by the same stylistic wording, *wayyel'kû šnêhem yaḥdāw*; (3) the symmetrical distribution of the key words *'mr* and *hlk* in A B and A_1 B_1; and (4) the concentration in the center of the key word *'mr* (five occurrences) This central section (C) of the chiasm consists essentially of questions and silences.

It is interesting that the Qur'ānic rendition of the *Aqedah* (Sura 37, *Saffat*, vv. 100-112) seems to convey a similar emphasis. Like the Hebrew text, it is noteworthy for its terse style[37] and for the fact that it consists essentially of dialogues (Abraham with his friends; Abraham with God; Abraham with his son), and places a special accent on the dialogue between Abraham and his son (this is the longest verse of the section). Here also, in the Qur'ānic version, the pathos-filled dialogue is set forth at the center of the text (v. 103) and is framed by the same stylistic expression *fa-lamma* ("and when"), the first word of both vv. 103 and 104, and by the "we" spoken by God before and after the dialogue. Thus, this text, too, is in a chiastic structure similar to the biblical one, consisting of A B C B_1 A_1:

A "we" (of God), v. 102
B "and when," v. 103
C dialogue: Abraham with the son, v. 103
B_1 "and when," v. 104
A_1 "we" (of God), vv. 105-112

[35]Erich Auerbach, *Mimemis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953), 19.

[36]Jacques Doukhan, "The Center of the *Aqedah*: A Study of the Literary Structure of Gen 22:1-19," *AUSS* 31 (Spring 1993): 17-28.

[37]Firestone, 98.

The central section (C) again consists of questions and silences, as is the case in the biblical *Aqedah*:

A question from Abraham to his son, "What do you think?"

A question from the son to God, implied by *in shā 'a-Llah* ("God willing").

A silence from Abraham, who does not explain his vision.

A silence from the son, who submits himself and does not argue with his father.

A silence of both of them in the phrase, "They both submitted" (v. 103).

4. *Assessment and Conclusion*

History has shown the importance of the *Aqedah* in the Jewish-Christian-Muslim controversy. All the ingredients and dynamics of dialogue are found in this confrontation. The three traditions refer to the same story dealing with the common origin of the three religions (in Abraham). They describe more or less the same historical evolution. They echo each other and react to each other on specific points. To a great measure they are interrelated and even dependent on each other. The Jewish-Muslim polemics include reference to the Jewish-Christian polemics,[38] and the Muslim-Christian polemics show dependence on the Jewish-Christian polemics.[39] Only the Jewish-Christian polemics were independent, for obvious historical reasons. Indeed, the Jewish-Christian-Muslim discussions on the *Aqedah* stands at a crossroad for the three traditions.

Also, the interest in the *Aqedah* occurs at the birth of the three Abrahamic religions, serving the purpose of justifying their respective claims to absolute and exclusive truth. Conversations among the three Abrahamic religions was vital, because at this early stage of their history

[38]See Moshe Perlmann, "The Medieval Polemics Between Islam and Judaism," in *Religion in a Religious Age*, ed. S. D Goitein (Cambridge, MA: Assoc. for Jewish Studies,1974), 106.

[39]There is little evidence of Muslim-Christian dialogue on the *Aqedah*. Perhaps one can perceive a hint it through the Muslim-Christian controversy on the crucifixion of Jesus, which seems to imply the same typological connection between Isaac and Jesus as is found in Christian sources (see T. A. Naudé, "Isaac Typology in the Koran," in *De fructu oris sui: Essays in Honour of Adrianus van Selms*, ed. I. H. Eybers et al. [Leiden: Brill, 1971]: 121-129). From that standpoint, the Muslim apology was directed to both Jews and Christians. For the Jews it meant that Jesus was the Messiah since he was not killed (see Qur'ān, Sura 4: 152, 154-156). For the Christians, it meant the denial of his divinity and of the Trinity, as well as the denial of the expiatory value of his death (see Qur'ān, Sura 4:169; cf. Mahmoud M. Ayoub, "Towards an Islamic Christology II: The Death of Jesus, Reality or Delusion," *The Muslim World* 52 [1980]: 94).

their very existence and survival were at stake in the discussions. The Jewish-Christian dialogue concerning the *Aqedah* focused on theological meaning; the Jewish-Muslim one focused on the ethnic identity of the victim. Thus, the Jewish-Christian-Muslim dialogues concerning the *Aqedah* not only were necessary because of the differences among the three parties, but also were possible because of the connections existing among them.

In fact, the *Aqedah* is in essence a dialogue; for that matter, it contains an eloquent appeal for dialogue. This is one of the lessons we may infer from a careful reading of the two sacred texts.

Ironically, it appears that the basic texts themselves point in a completely different direction from that which is indicated in the controversies. In the texts, the accent is not at the end of the passage and does not concern the theological meaning or solution. Nor is it at the beginning, and it does not concern the identity of the son (the Qur'ān does not even mention his name). Rather, it is in the center of the dialogue, which consists of the human questions and silences of the victims.

I believe that Martin Buber had the intuition of this lesson in his critique of Kierkegaard's treatment of the *Aqedah*.[40] Whereas Kierkegaard saw in the *Aqedah* the principle of "the teleological suspension of the ethical,"[41] by which man reaches the religious level alone, Buber found in the *Aqedah* the existential urge for the "I and thou" encounter.[42] It is significant that the only trait of the *Aqedah* which has survived through the controversies, even to the present day, is the memory of the victim and his eternal questions and silences that reveal a yearning for communication.

This, perhaps, is why the *Aqedah* still plays an important role in the interreligious dialogue. Today, under the shadow of the Holocaust, reference to the *Aqedah* has been refreshed in Jewish thought[43] as well

[40]Jewish reactions to Kierkegaard are divided on the issue of to what extent Kierkegaard's view suits Jewish tradition. For Milton Steinberg, it is not compatible with Judaism, whereas for J. B. Soloveitchitz it is; Ernst Simon holds a middle position (see "*Akedah*" in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*).

[41]Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), 131.

[42]See Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. W. Kaufman (New York: Scribner, 1970), 123, and his *Eclipse of God* (New York: Harper, 1952), 149; cf. Aimee Zeltzer, "An Existential Investigation: Buber's Critique of Kierkegaard 'Teleological Suspension of the Ethical'," in *Church Divinity*, ed. J. H. Morgan (Notre Dame, IN: 1987), 138-153.

[43]See especially Emil Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections* (New York: New York University Press, 1970); cf. Michael Brown, "Biblical Myth and Contemporary Experience: The *Akedah* in Modern Jewish Literature," *Judaism* 31 (1982):

as in Christian theology.[44] And this has not only intensely affected the Jewish-Christian dialogue,[45] but has also to some extent influenced the Jewish-Muslim dialogue.[46] There is no doubt that the *Aqedah* has become an important part of the Jewish-Christian efforts toward reconciliation.[47] We can hope that the lesson of the *Aqedah* will at some time also find its way through the intricacy of the Jewish-Muslim dialogue, which at present is confused and disturbed by the Israeli-Arab conflicts.

99-111; Steven T. Katz, *Post-Holocaust Dialogues: Critical Studies in Modern Jewish Thought* (New York: New York University Press, 1983); Arthur A. Cohen, "Jewish Theology and the Holocaust," in *Theology* (March 1983); André Neher, *The Exile of the Word* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1981), 216-218; *Harry James Cargas in Conversation with Elie Wiesel* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 55-57, 85; Alvin H. Rosenfeld, "Reflections on Isaac," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 7 (1986): 241-248. The modern Israeli literature deserves special notice here since it witnesses to a domestic discussion concerning the relevancy of the *Aqedah* in regard to Israel's reality; see Edna A. Coffin, "The Binding of Isaac in Modern Israeli Literature," *Michigan Quarterly Review* (1983): 429-444; Ilan Avisar, "Evolution of Israeli Attitude Toward the Holocaust," *Hebrew Annual Review* 9 (1985): 31-52.

[44]See F. Talmage, "Christian Theology and the Holocaust," *Commentary* 60 (October 1975): 72-75; R. E. Willis, "Christian Theology after Auschwitz," *JES* 12 (1975): 493-519; reply by P. Chare in *JES* 14 (1977): 105-109; A. A. Cohen, "The Holocaust and Christian Theology: An Interpretation of the Problem," in *Judaism and Christianity under the Impact of National-Socialism (1919-1945)*, ed. Y. Mais (Jerusalem: Historical Society of Israel, 1982), 415-439.

[45]J. Peck, ed., *Jews and Christians after the Holocaust* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982); cf. I. Eraenberg, "Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity, and Modernity after the Holocaust," in *Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era*, ed. Eva Fleischner (New York: KTAV), 77.

[46]See M. H. Ellis, *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation* (Mary Knoll, NY: Orbis,1989), especially his afterword, "The Palestinian Uprising and the Future of the Jewish People," 123-124.

[47]See Harry James Cargas, *A Christian Response to the Holocaust* (Denver: Stonehenge Books, 1981), especially 167-168.