Introduction

> The concept "God" invented as a counter-concept to life, – it makes a terrible unity of everything that is most harmful, poisonous, slanderous, the whole deadly hostility to life!
>
> (*EH* IV:8)

> Of all that has been done on earth against "the noble," "the mighty," "the lords," "the power-holders," nothing is worthy of mention in comparison with that which the *Jews* have done against them; the Jews, that priestly people who in the end were only able to obtain satisfaction from their enemies and conquerors through a radical revaluation of their values, that is, through an act of *spiritual revenge*. This was the only way that suited a priestly people, the people of the most suppressed priestly desire for revenge.
>
> (*GM* I:7)

> [T]he Jews are without a doubt the strongest, purest, most tenacious race living in Europe today. They know how to thrive in even the worst conditions (and actually do better than in favorable ones) due to some virtues that people today would like to see labeled as vices, – above all, thanks to a resolute faith that does not need to feel ashamed in the face of "modern ideas."
>
> (*BGE* 251)

In the popular mind, Friedrich Nietzsche's notoriety is based, in large part, on his announcement of the "death of God," and much of his career's work forms a none too complimentary obituary. And then there are the Jews, striving, in the main over the course of their history, to keep that God alive, and responsible for inventing the façade behind which, Nietzsche believed, the traditional theistic God could take refuge – "slave morality" (even if it was Christianity that subsequently developed that morality into

"an *idiosyncrasy of degenerates* that has caused incalculable damage"; *TI* V:6). To seek from within Nietzsche's thought the conceptual basis for a modern philosophy of Judaism may seem, therefore, to be a fool's errand. The argument of this book, however, is that something close to such an attempt is made by one of the leading Orthodox thinkers of the twentieth century, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik.

Although the question of Nietzsche's relationship with Jews and Judaism has long been a focus of scholarly interest, it has largely clustered around the question of the presence or absence of anti-Semitism in his writings, with the consensus shifting from the early misrepresentation of Nietzsche as a proto-Nazi[1] to at worst a more ambivalent picture.[2] Our goal in this study is conceptual rather than focused on the issue of Nietzsche's alleged (or otherwise) anti-Semitism,[3] attempting to bring the content of Nietzsche's philosophy into conversation with philosophical and

[1] The purported links of Nietzsche's thought with Nazi ideology were developed by the likes of Alfred Bäumler, the main Nazi liaison with the German universities, into a "carefully orchestrated cult," as described in the introduction to Jacob Golomb and Robert S. Wistrich (eds.), *Nietzsche: Godfather of Fascism*? (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 2. For more detailed discussion of the roles of Nietzsche's sister, Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, and the Nazi regime in associating Nietzsche's thought with National Socialism as well as discussion of the scholarly literature, see Robert C. Holub, *Nietzsche's Jewish Problem: Between Anti-Semitism and Anti-Judaism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), ch. 1. Holub himself argues that Elizabeth was not responsible for Nietzsche's association with Nazi anti-Semitism.

[2] Examples of this more moderate approach can be found in Arnold Eisen, "Nietzsche and the Jews Reconsidered," *Jewish Social Studies*, 48/1 (1986), 1–14; Siegfried Mandel, *Nietzsche and the Jews* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1998); and Menahem Brinker, "Nietzsche and the Jews" in Golomb and Wistrich (eds.), *Nietzsche*, 107–25. See also Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Dark Riddle: Hegel, Nietzsche, and the Jews* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), chs. 7–10. Some scholars, such as Donna Weaver Santaniello, go as far as to turn the accusation of anti-Semitism on its head by arguing that Nietzsche's contempt for anti-Semitism was one of the driving forces behind his critique of liberal Christianity, which in its use of "conservative theological concepts . . . perpetuate[s] anti-Semitism" (Donna Weaver Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews: His Critique of Judeo-Christianity in Relation to the Nazi Myth* [Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994], 133). Holub's recent book referred to in the previous note bucks these trends, however. Holub accepts that Nietzsche vehemently rejected the political anti-Semitism of his day but argues that he was not free of the conventional anti-Jewish prejudice of his time. There is some evidence for Holub's view in some of Nietzsche's unpublished writings, but we disagree with Holub that there is genuine evidence in the published works, with rare exceptions such as the remark about Polish Jews at the beginning of *A* 46. The Golomb and Wistrich collection contains a good selection of views on the topic.

[3] One approach that combines historical and conceptual elements with a focus on the complex issue of Nietzsche and anti-Semitism, is that of Michael Duffy and Willard Mittelman. Their nuanced and persuasive thesis is that a comprehensive analysis of the Nietzschean canon reveals a threefold distinction between historical periods that only emerges fully in

theological teachings of the Jewish tradition. Even here, one finds some prior scholarly engagement, with Jonathan Sacks, for example, forcefully arguing:

> I, for one, find Nietzsche the very antithesis of Jewish values. I take no pleasure in the fact that, from time to time, he found nice things to say about Jews ancient and modern. The man who expressed contempt for "pity, the kind and helping hand, the warm heart, patience, industriousness, humility, friendliness" defined for all time what Judaism is not. I read him to know what Judaism is the battle against, then, now, and for the future.[4]

The central contention of this book will be that readings such as Sacks's are neither the only nor the best option in assessing the implications of Nietzsche's philosophical legacy for Judaism. And while their relaxation of halakhic demands and reinterpretation of many of the more supernatural theological concepts might make progressive denominations of Judaism appear the most likely candidates for some sort of Nietzschean revaluation,[5] we argue in what follows that it is in the writings of the

some of Nietzsche's later writings, such as *Beyond Good and Evil* and *On the Genealogy of Morality*. A youthful and immature flirtation with anti-Semitism that Nietzsche himself later described as "a short and risky stay in a badly infected region" (*BGE* 251) is quickly replaced by admiration for both the pre-prophetic sections of the Old Testament and the nineteenth-century European Jewry of his own day. His scorn, on the other hand, is reserved for the priestly-prophetic Judaism of later biblical times, although his criticisms in this context are "almost always directly connected to his criticisms of Christianity. That is, they are the features which, in his view, Christianity went on to develop" (Michael F. Duffy and Willard Mittelman, "Nietzsche's Attitudes Toward the Jews," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49 [1988], 307). Duffy and Mittelman's threefold distinction is substantially anticipated in Israel Eldad, "Nietzsche and the Old Testament" in James C. O'Flaherty, Timothy F. Sellner, and Robert M. Helm (eds.), *Studies in Nietzsche and the Judaeo-Christian Tradition* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 47–68. A closely similar position is articulated by Yovel, *Dark Riddle*, 117. Yovel presents this analysis in earlier works also, e.g., "Nietzsche and the Jews: The Structure of an Ambivalence" in Jacob Golomb (ed.), *Nietzsche and Jewish Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 118. The influence of Wellhausen (unacknowledged by Nietzsche) on Nietzsche's view of ancient Judaism as basically positive until the priestly era in the early Second Temple period, when it becomes a negative phenomenon – Nietzsche often expressed his preference for the Old Testament over the New (see, e.g., *D* 38; *BGE* 52; *GM* III:22) – is also significant; see, e.g., Dylan Jaggard, "Nietzsche's *Antichrist*" in Ken Gemes and John Richardson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 344–62, esp. 347–51.

[4] Jonathan Sacks, review of *Nietzsche and Jewish Culture* (ed. Jacob Golomb), *Le'ela* 47 (April 1999), 62.

[5] Indeed, elements of Duffy and Mittelman's threefold distinction coincide with the four eras of Judaism discussed by one of the most significant early Reform theologians, Abraham Geiger. Geiger is similarly well-disposed towards the pre-prophetic era for the rather

Modern Orthodox Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik that we find an interpretation of *halakhic* Judaism, grounded in traditional sources that, in effect, serves as a response to the Nietzschean critique, and one that does not allow itself to fall into the life-denying forms of religion that Nietzsche so excoriates but instead brings a life-affirming (Nietzschean) sensibility to the religious life. Conceptually speaking, Soloveitchik's interpretation of Jewish tradition can be seen as a response to Nietzsche that accepts key Nietzschean moves.[6] Thus, reading Soloveitchik alongside Nietzsche is often particularly illuminating, even at times allowing us to better understand key elements of Soloveitchik's thought that might be overlooked when viewed through the more frequently applied Neo-Kantian and Existentialist lenses. More important for us, however, read in this manner, Soloveitchik can be seen to indicate interesting pathways for contemporary Jewish thought that might well go beyond his own philosophical conclusions – not to mention comfort zone – but are nonetheless indebted to significant preliminary steps that he took. Both Nietzsche and Soloveitchik, we contend, are thinkers worth taking seriously in Jewish philosophy.[7]

Nietzschean reason that it was a period "of vigorous creation, unfettered and unhindered"(Abraham Geiger, "A General Introduction to the Science of Judaism" in Max Wiener, *Abraham Geiger and Liberal Judaism* [Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1981], 156). Geiger also has high hopes for the era of liberation that corresponds to Nietzsche's modern Judaism. Interestingly, though, the second period, that of tradition, which takes in Duffy and Mittelman's priestly-prophetic era, but for Geiger lasts until the sixth-century completion of the Babylonian Talmud, is seen as one that "took root in the spiritual heritage of the past and at the same time *still maintained a certain degree of freedom in its approach to that heritage*" (Geiger, "A General Introduction," emphasis supplied). Geiger's ire is reserved for the period of rigid legalism "characterized by toilsome preoccupation with the heritage as it then stood" (Geiger, "A General Introduction"), which, he argues, lasted from the sixth until the eighteenth centuries.

[6] David Shatz makes a formally similar point with respect to *Halakhic Man* and modern culture as a whole: "[Soloveitchik's] philosophically inclined reader learns that when judiciously read, modern culture actually fortifies commitment. The very values that modern critics felt could be realized only by leaving the *dalet amot shel Halakhah*, the four ells of Halakhah, could, in fact, be achieved by remaining squarely within them. *It is as if modernity is being turned against itself; its value system is revealed not to oppose tradition, but to support and vindicate it*" (David Shatz, "A Framework for Reading *Ish ha-Halakhah*" in Michael A. Shmidman (ed.), *Turim: Studies in History and Literature Presented to Bernard Lander*, vol. 2 [New York: Touro College Press, 2008], 198).

[7] The obstacles toward taking Nietzsche seriously in Jewish thought are those already noted, and this book is devoted to dismantling them. In the case of Soloveitchik, and speaking *not* as students of Soloveitchik – indeed neither of us ever met him – there seems to be a peculiar marriage of convenience between secular academics and elements of the Orthodox Jewish world based on the shared belief that an Orthodox rabbi cannot possibly be a genuine philosopher. We can only surmise that this dismissive attitude toward

Most notable among the writers who, before us, have turned in detail to Nietzsche's philosophy to support a more philo-Semitic reading is Jacob Golomb, who observes how Nietzsche's praise for the Jews is usually based on the positive uses to which they put what he once described as "their capital in will and spirit accumulated from generation to generation in a long school of suffering" (*HH* I:475). As one who reminds us that "[p]rofound suffering makes you noble" (*BGE* 270), it is unsurprising that Nietzsche admires the Jews for what Golomb calls the "patterns of positive power"[8] that they exhibit despite, or indeed *because* of, their history of suffering.[9] Reciprocally, it is notable just how large a role Nietzschean thought played not only among individual Jews but within the Jewish world more generally from as early as the 1890s.[10] But while such admiration, in both directions, was and is conceptually based, it is rarely explicitly grounded in any detailed consideration of specific Jewish theological or religious commitments.[11] We will, in contrast, be forging a new path for the study of Judaism in connection to Nietzschean thought, one that goes beyond analyses that tend to construe the relationship between Nietzsche and Judaism in very general terms. We intend to engage

Soloveitchik as a philosopher in certain quarters is based on (what is likely actually a misinterpretation of) Strauss's statement of the "old Jewish premise that being a Jew and being a philosopher are two incompatible things"; Leo Strauss, "How to Begin to Study *The Guide of the Perplexed*" in *The Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. Shlomo Pines, 2 vols. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1963), xiv. We echo instead William Kolbrener's recent attempt "to accord [Soloveitchik] the status he deserves as . . . a religious philosopher of consequence, independent of his rabbinic title"; William Kolbrener, *The Last Rabbi: Joseph Soloveitchik and Talmudic Tradition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), xii.

[8] Jacob Golomb, "Nietzsche's Judaism of Power," *Revue des Etudes Juives*, 146–7 (July-December 1988), 354.

[9] See, for example, *D* 205.

[10] Detailed in Steven E. Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany 1890–1990* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 93ff. The emphasis on power, together with Nietzsche's more generally iconoclastic ideas, made him especially attractive to many early Zionist thinkers. For a fuller account of this phenomenon, see Jacob Golomb, *Nietzsche and Zion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).

[11] Which is not to say that religious strands of Judaism were entirely absent from this phenomenon. Moreover, while Aschheim explains that most of the "early adopters" of Nietzsche were of a liberal Jewish persuasion, an exception was the Orthodox Rabbi Nehemiah A. Nobel (1871–1922), who could be seen as something of a precursor for our project, albeit with much less detailed engagement with specifics of Jewish thought. We should point out, however, that as Aschheim notes, Nobel's attempt to claim Nietzsche for Orthodox Judaism was termed "laughable" by a contemporary of his – the well-known scholar David Neumark (Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany*, 99 n. 58).

in detail with specifics in Jewish philosophy and theology and attend to the neglected issue of the compatibility of Nietzsche's philosophy[12] with *Jewish thought itself*, with particular emphasis on the thought of Soloveitchik.

If one *does* turn to Jewish religious commitments, however, one would immediately be confronted with the apparent (and sometimes real) conflicts between Nietzsche's philosophy and Jewish tradition. Although we ought not simply to dismiss a religious appropriation of Nietzsche on the basis of a simplistic appeal to the headlines – and even with regard to these issues, it turns out that there is rather more to say than one might at first have thought – no discussion of Nietzsche and religion can ignore the herd of elephants in the room, most notably his views on God and traditional morality. Section 125 of *The Gay Science*, perhaps Nietzsche's most celebrated declaration of atheism, featuring the madman's announcement that "God is dead," is hardly likely to strike a responsive chord with a religious tradition based on uncompromising monotheism. And Nietzsche's atheism is of course far from incidental; rather it constitutes a fulcrum of his philosophy.[13] Moreover, he has no patience even with agnosticism: in *Z* III:8 he writes regarding doubting the existence of God: "Is not the time long past for all such doubts too? . . . For the old Gods, after all, things came to an end long ago." In the moral arena, Nietzsche appears deeply opposed to the classical Jewish *Weltanschauung* in crucial ways, inter alia criticizing the notions of a moral world order, sin, conscience, guilt, and compassion as outgrowths of such phenomena as priestly *ressentiment*, cruelty and "life-denial." And regarding reward and punishment, a cardinal principle of Judaism, Nietzsche writes that the virtuous "have lied reward and punishment into the foundation of things" (*Z* II:5).

[12] We will be quoting primarily from the works written from the 1880s onward, although mainly in the service of focusing on Nietzsche's mature philosophy, which begins around the middle of that decade. Quite where the mature period begins can rather depend on the subject at hand. Although the *Gay Science* – or at least its first four books – is standardly taken to close Nietzsche's "middle period," Clark has argued that at least with respect to Nietzsche's perspectivism, it is only from the *Genealogy* onward that we find his fully mature formulations. See Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 103ff. The mature period is therefore something of a movable feast.

[13] As Shalom Rosenberg points out, "God is dead" is a more ambitious claim than "God does not exist." The latter is a metaphysical thesis, the former also an anthropological one that hints at the human need for God and the tragic implications for humanity of his "death." See Shalom Rosenberg, "Nietzsche and the Morality of Judaism" in Jacob Golomb (ed.), *Nietzsche, Zionism and Hebrew Culture* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2002), 317–45, esp. 319.

Nietzsche's views on metaphysical issues are no more sympathetic to traditional Jewish approaches, his strong rejection of the idea that there is any kind of world beyond this one[14] – whether of a Platonic, Kantian, or religious variety – being an obvious case in point.[15] Zarathustra, "the Godless" (*Z* III:13, 1), asserts that "It was the sick and decaying who despised body and earth and invented the heavenly realm" (*Z* I:3). And although he refers often to the soul, Nietzsche does not intend this in the sense of a metaphysical entity separable from the body that survives the death of the body: according to Zarathustra, "body am I entirely, and nothing else; and soul is only a word for something about the body" (*Z* I:4) and "The soul is as mortal as the body" (*Z* III:13, 2).

It is worth emphasizing that for Nietzsche, many beliefs central to traditional Judaism are not just false – "[a]s the art of the holy lie," writes Nietzsche in *A* 44, "Christianity brings to perfection the whole of Judaism" – but are pernicious human inventions. The idea of life after death, eternal life, is invented by the weak to recoup their losses in this life and especially to rejoice in the suffering of their opponents (*GM* I:15). Nietzsche singles out Christianity but would no doubt consider the origins of the Jewish belief in the afterlife to be pernicious as well. In *GM* II:22, Nietzsche writes that the idea of the "holy God" is invented by man to guarantee his total unworthiness and guilt. *EH* IV:8, cited in our epigraph, complains about a whole series of fundamental religious concepts regarded by Nietzsche as harmful inventions:

> The concept "God" invented as a counter-concept to life . . . The concept of the "beyond," the "true world," invented to devalue the *only* world there is . . . The concept "soul," "spirit," finally even "immortal soul" invented in order to make the body despised, to make it sick – "holy" . . . The concept of "sin" invented along with the associated instrument of torture, the concept of "free will."[16]

[14] See, to cite just two examples, Zarathustra's famous injunction to remain faithful to the earth and not to grant credence to those who speak of otherworldly hopes (*Z* "Zarathustra's Prologue," 3), and Nietzsche's condemnation of "[t]he concept of the 'beyond,' the 'true world,' invented to devalue the *only* world there is, – to deprive our earthly reality of any goal, reason or task!" (*EH* IV:8).

[15] Early on in his career, largely through the influence of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche actually accepted a form of Kantian idealism according to which there is some "metaphysical" world beyond our world of appearances. See Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, ch. 3. For more on this Kantian influence as mediated by Schopenhauer, see Ivan Soll, "Schopenhauer as Nietzsche's 'Great Teacher' and 'Antipode'" in Gemes and Richardson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche*, 160–84.

[16] See also *A* 38; *A* 47; *EH* II:10; *EH* III, "Daybreak," 2. Moreover, Nietzsche constantly and deliberately uses the religious language of Judeo-Christianity as a weapon against

Finally, Nietzsche's insistence that the universe is not a lawful cosmos but is rather characterized by constant change, flux, and struggle, means that human beings inhabit a chaotic and purposeless universe in which they are called upon to create their own values, in apparent conflict with the more conventional religious appeal to teleological accounts of a purposeful universe imbued with meaning.

And yet, for all of the foregoing discussion, even within the religious realm, there are some for whom the Nietzschean critique strikes a chord; those for whom the mode of religious existence that Nietzsche describes is indeed problematic and symptomatic of a "sickness of the soul" – or to use Nietzsche's term, life-denying. For those who do accept the critique, the question then becomes whether their religion has the resources to parry it by arguing that it does not manifest the kind of life-denying themes toward which Nietzsche directs his ire but that on the contrary, it can be portrayed as an almost "Nietzschean" religion in some significant sense – a form of religion that is life-affirming. In this vein, we intend to argue for a Nietzschean Jewish response to the very critique of religion for which Nietzsche is the most totemic spokesperson, and aim to show that drawing conceptual parallels between Nietzsche and Soloveitchik reaps significant benefits,[17] yielding a distinctly Jewish form of modernism.[18]

it – terms such as "holiness" and "redemption" are applied to anti-Judeo-Christian perspectives. To cite just three of innumerable possible examples: "When will all these shadows of god no longer darken us . . . When may we begin to *naturalize* humanity with a pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature?" (*GS* 109). The use of "redeemed" here (*erlösten*) indicates a secularized piety, but even more clearly involves a deliberately ironic, provocative, and inverted use of religious language: a "redeemed" nature is one *without* God. Even more sharply, see *TI* VI:8: "We reject God . . . *this* is how we begin to redeem the world." See also *Z* I, "Zarathustra's Prologue" 9: "Fellow creators, the creator seeks – those who write new values on new tablets."

[17] In a sense, our approach is analogous methodologically to that taken by Peter Eli Gordon in his *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), the aim being to urge acknowledgment of – and in our case also to develop – significant affinities between two hitherto disconnected conceptual approaches.

[18] It will become clear as the book progresses that our Nietzsche is a "modern," albeit a particularly radical modern, rather than a postmodern thinker (*avant la lettre*); cf. Yovel, *Dark Riddle*, 217, n. 1. For a survey of some of the opposing postmodern interpretations, see Alan D. Schrift, "Nietzsche's French Legacy" in Bernd Magnus and Kathleen M. Higgins (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 323–55 (note, however, that Schrift prefers to use the term "poststructuralist"). For essays by the actual thinkers Schrift discusses, see David B. Allison (ed.), *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation* (New York: Dell, 1977). Although we present Nietzsche as a modern and in particular as an archetypal modern secular critic of religion, this is not to deny that he is of course in many respects

SOME BRIEF METHODOLOGICAL PRELIMINARIES

As noted in our introductory remarks, as philosophers our interests are primarily conceptual and relate to the challenge that Nietzsche poses for Judaism. Thus our claims are made in conceptual rather than historical space. Although this hardly needs stating when we are looking, for example, at Talmudic texts to ground our Nietzschean claims, generally we are not concerned to argue that Soloveitchik was directly responding to reading Nietzsche. Our claim, rather, is that Soloveitchik provides the conceptual tools for the creation of a quasi-Nietzschean Jewish response to Nietzsche's critique of religion.

It is worth saying, however, that in the case of Soloveitchik there is more than a little historical warrant for our study. Circumstantially, it is inconceivable that a doctoral student at the University of Berlin studying philosophy between 1926 and 1932 would not have been familiar with Nietzsche. Rather less circumstantial is the fact that Soloveitchik

also a severe critic of modernity. See, e.g., *EH* III, "Beyond Good and Evil," 1, where Nietzsche describes *BGE* as "in all essentials a *critique of modernity*, not excluding the modern sciences, modern arts, and even modern politics, along with pointers to a contrary type that is as little modern as possible – a noble, Yes-saying type." Or again, in *BGE* 203, where Nietzsche refers to "the disaster that lies hidden in the idiotic guilelessness and credulity of 'modern ideas.'" He also of course worries that atheistic secular modernity will decline into nihilism. Notably, in *BGE* 251 Nietzsche praises Jewish faith in contrast to modernity: the Jews possess "a resolute faith that does not need to feel ashamed in the face of 'modern ideas.'" In somewhat parallel fashion, Soloveitchik, whom we represent in this book as archetypically Modern Orthodox and who praises "the *splendor* of the modern world" (Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Covenant and Commitment: Selected Letters and Communications*, Nathaniel Helfgot [ed.] [Jersey City, NJ: Ktav/Toras HoRav Foundation, 2005], 202, emphasis in original) is by no means uncritical of modernity. As *The Lonely Man of Faith* makes clear, the modern world understands only Adam I and not Adam II, and even tries to refashion Adam II's religious domain in the image of Adam I. Soloveitchik also writes of "the modern world, with all of its attendant beauty and ugliness, greatness, power and cruelty, the torrential currents of life within it, the desire and conquering might, its great scientific and technological prowess, along with the audacity and haughtiness, moral corruption and spiritual contamination of modern man." However, he continues to make clear immediately that this modern world with its positive and negative aspects must be engaged with by Orthodoxy: "We have not removed ourselves from such a world, nor have we withdrawn into a secluded corner . . . It is our desire to purify and sanctify the modern world by . . . expressing the transcendental perspective and Divine calm within the stormy seas of change and metamorphosis that is known as progress. It is our belief that Judaism has the means to give meaning and significance, value and refinement, to the multi-faceted existence of modern life. We do not fear progress in any area of life, since it is our firm conviction that we have the ability to cope with and redeem it" (*Community, Covenant and Commitment*, 203–4).

refers explicitly to Nietzsche a number of times in his writings.[19] Also highly significant is the influence of Max Scheler's work on Soloveitchik. Scheler (1874–1928), one of relatively few thinkers in Europe before the First World War to seriously engage with Nietzsche specifically as a philosopher,[20] was clearly an important thinker for Soloveitchik. Apart from the fact that Soloveitchik's fellow doctoral student and friend Alexander Altmann wrote his doctoral dissertation on Scheler, Soloveitchik explicitly notes that *The Halakhic Mind* "is indebted in several important points" (*HMD* 120, n. 62) to Scheler's *Von Ewigen im Menschen* (*On the Eternal in Man*). Indeed, Scheler is second only to Kant in number of citations in *The Halakhic Mind*. Furthermore, conceptually speaking there are significant parallels between Scheler's 1912 work *Ressentiment* and Soloveitchik's *Halakhic Man*; both books basically present the view that Nietzsche was right about a number of important problems but wrong to see their respective religions as exemplifying them, although in Scheler's work Nietzsche is the explicit foil in a way that cannot be said for *Halakhic Man*.[21] Although a work of intellectual history could examine the links referred to here with appropriate scholarly rigor, from our conceptual perspective, the interest is in Soloveitchik's reaction from a Jewish perspective to the critique that Scheler was

[19] For a detailed account of Nietzsche's prevalence in German culture before, during, and after this period, see Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany*. Aschheim stresses how Nietzschean appropriations by the radical right were dominant in the Weimar Republic (21 and 153ff.), which might both partly explain Soloveitchik's oft-expressed antipathy to the Nietzschean *Übermensch*, and render his occasional positive references to Nietzsche's ideas all the more significant. Soloveitchik's explicit references to Nietzsche will emerge as the book proceeds.

[20] From 1890 up to 1914, Nietzschean engagement was more prevalent in the literary and artistic worlds, albeit often with a political twist – quasi-political appropriations were also present from early on. See Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany*, chs. 2–3 and Ernst Behler, "Nietzsche in the Twentieth Century" in Magnus and Higgins (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, 281–322. Behler sees 1945 as the watershed, at which point Nietzsche begins to be treated primarily as a philosopher in the more narrowly academic sense.

[21] So, for example, we find Scheler writing: "We believe that the Christian values can very easily be perverted into *ressentiment* values and have often been thus conceived. But *the core of Christian ethics has not grown on the soil of ressentiment*" (Max Scheler, *Ressentiment*, trans. Lewis B. Coser and William W. Holdheim [Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2007], 53; emphasis in original); or again, speaking of modern humanitarian notions of love: "Nietzsche is perfectly right in pointing out that this way of living and feeling is morbid, a sign of *declining* life and hidden nihilism, and that its 'superior' morality is pretense. His criticism, however, does not touch the Christian love of one's neighbour" (Scheler, 88; emphasis in original).