

The Ethical and Religious Revelation of the *Akedah*

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Abstract

This paper first advances a Kantian, and then a Levinasian critique of Johannes de Silentio's admiration for Abraham's faith in his *Fear and Trembling*. Kant and Levinas fear that Silentio's praise for Abraham may be misdirected. However, I propose that Kierkegaard's authored text, *Works of Love*, helps us to understand the story more fully. One goal of this paper is to advance a critical rereading of Silentio, Kierkegaard, Kant, and Levinas and their understandings of the first and second great commandments, in terms of loving God and loving the neighbor. Another goal of this paper is to critically engage nineteenth century Christian (Kierkegaard) and contemporary Jewish (Levinas) philosophies and theologies, and to explore their terrains of convergence, specifically that to love God in the proper way is equivalent to loving one's neighbor.

The relation to God is already ethics; or, as *Isaiah 58* would have it, the proximity to God, devotion itself, is devotion to the other man. – Levinas (*ITN*, 171)

... the love that has undergone the change of eternity by becoming duty and loves because it shall love – that love is independent and has the law for its existence in the relation of love itself to the eternal. – Kierkegaard (*WL*, 38)

I. Introduction: The Problem

This paper will first advance a Kantian critique of Søren Kierkegaard and his pseudonymous author and dialectical poet, Johannes de Silentio, with regard to their praise for Abraham's teleological suspension of the ethical, as most clearly presented in *Fear and Trembling*. Second, I shall sketch out a Levinasian rereading of the *Akedah*, which will add a different dimension to the Kantian critique. It will be argued that a Kantian-Levinasian exegesis and interpretation of Abraham's trial yields a more plausible story, one more worthy of praise than Silentio's rendering of the *Akedah*. "Why did

Abraham lower his knife and stay his sacrifice of Isaac?” is a question that will be addressed from a few different angles. Third, I will argue that Kierkegaard, once we get to his more Christian *Works of Love*, takes a different path toward the ethico-religious than Silentio had advanced earlier, and that this provides a fitting response to the Kantian-Levinasian critique. The religious dimensions of ethical behavior, and the ethical dimensions of religious behavior, are the stakes for this investigation. Before the Kantian critique, however, I will offer a brief reconstruction of Silentio’s account of the *Akedah*.

II. The Religious Revelation: Abraham’s Teleological Suspension of the Ethical as Narrated by Johannes de Silentio

The paradox of faith, then, is this: that the single individual is higher than the universal, that the single individual...determines his relation to the universal by his relation to the absolute, not his relation to the absolute by his relation to the universal. – Silentio (*FT*, 70).

The dialectical poet Johannes de Silentio, the author of *Fear and Trembling* (1843), eulogizes Abraham for displaying heroic faith in face of the absurd. God had commanded that he offer his son as a burnt offering of sacrifice to God, and Abraham consented to this divine order. As read in Genesis 22, the commandment by God to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, clearly transgressed societal-ethical norms (*Sittlichkeit*) of human sacrifice (murder). However, assuming (or believing) that (1) there is a God, (2) God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-loving, and (3) God’s commands dictate what is morally right and obligatory, as Abraham does, the “ethical” qua *Sittlichkeit* needed to be teleologically suspended in favor of a higher telos — obedience to a direct command

from God. Silentio observes, “the absolute duty can lead one to do what ethics would forbid, but it can never lead the knight of faith to stop loving” (*FT*, 74). Abraham was earlier promised by God that his descendents would be as numerous as the sands (*Gen.* 15:5). Somehow, even though Abraham had only one son, he had faith that Isaac would somehow return, or be given back, to him. God would provide. One moment before Abraham ends the life of his son, an angel intervenes, declaring “Do not lay a hand on the boy. Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son” (*Gen.* 22:12). It is through his existential pathos and obedience to God that Abraham truly receives Isaac and finds favor with God. He received Isaac, however, in a qualitatively different way than he was given him before. Silentio declares, “By faith Abraham did not renounce Isaac, but by faith Abraham received Isaac” (*FT*, 49).

What differentiates the knight of faith from the knight of infinite resignation, according to Silentio, is that, on the one hand, the knight of infinite resignation “is a stranger and an alien” (*FT*, 50).¹ On the other hand, the knight of faith has faith; that is, he believes that God will provide — this makes him happy. The tragic hero, such as Agamemnon, “relinquishes himself in order to express the universal,” whereas the knight of faith “relinquishes the universal in order to become the single individual” (*FT*, 75). With his teleological suspension of the ethical, Abraham became the single individual. There is not an absolute duty being fulfilled by the tragic hero, only a “higher expression of duty” (*FT*, 78). In a sense, then, we could say that “Abraham’s test both succeeded and failed. It

succeeded in that it proved Abraham to be a man of faith and obedience. And it failed in that Abraham's understanding of God's nature remained deficient."² Here we move to Kant's interpretation and critical analysis of the *Akedah* story.

III. The Religious or the Ethical Revelation? A Kantian Critique of Silentio and Kierkegaard

Before we commence with a Kantian critique of Silentio and Kierkegaard's praise for Abraham's teleological suspension of the ethical, it should be noted that there are strong parallels between Kantian and Kierkegaardian ethical thinking. In the *Religion*³, Kant describes one's predisposition toward animality, which resounds in Kierkegaard's aesthete; the predisposition toward humanity is akin to the ethical man; and the predisposition toward personality has echoes in religiousness A, as described in Climacus's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. While the aesthete in *Either/Or* I is led by his inclinations, the ethical man in *Either/Or* II acts from duty. These notions neatly coincide with the Kant's bifurcation of the heteronomous individual, who allows others to choose for him, or one who wanders from place to place, from the autonomous moral agent, who acts as though he is the legislator of a universal law of human conduct. In the *Groundwork*, Kant writes,

If the will seeks the law that is to determine it *anywhere else* than in the fitness of its maxims for its own giving of universal law ... heteronomy always results.... Among the rational grounds of morality or those based on reason, the ontological concept of perfection is nevertheless better than the theological concept, which derives morality from a divine, all-perfect will (*PP*, 89, 91).

Clearly, for Kant, the autonomous moral agent is to consider herself the legislator of her universalizable maxims. To allow another, even God, to decide one's moral maxims, for oneself is to become immature (*unmündig*), and willingly refuses to claim authorship of one's life.⁴

Leading the autonomously moral life, for Kant, "inevitably leads to religion, and through religion it extends itself to the idea of a mighty lawgiver outside the human being, in whose will the final end (of the creation of the world) is what can and at the same time ought to be the final human end" (*RRT*, 59-60). Mariña has observed that, for Kant, God's grace *is* the moral law.⁵ Grace is an unmerited gift that initiates an original relationship between man and God. The moral law merely points to, or redirects the moral agent's attention to, God's grace. Therefore, there is no need to teleologically suspend the ethical-universal. The ethical-universal, i.e., the moral law, on this rendering, *is* God's grace. The human individual as essentially equal to every other individual should respect this gift and not treat someone else as any better or worse than she treats herself. Abraham should not have accepted the command to offer his son as a sacrifice to a God who would apparently desire such behavior. Here the allusions to the "Golden Rule" are evident.

Kant could denounce Silentio's rashness to follow in the footsteps of Abraham, the "knight of faith," by questioning how an all-loving God would command such violent behavior, and why someone would allow another entity to dictate one's moral precepts.

Did Abraham almost make a huge mistake? Some say “yes,” whereas Silentio clearly states “no.” However, we need to recall that within the corpus of Kierkegaard’s writings, Silentio is an early writer, a “dialectical poet” who is still in the aesthetic stage of existence. Is Silentio’s position equivalent to that of Kierkegaard? The quick response to that question is, “Clearly not. They are different voices in the larger drama of actors.” Another critical question remains: does this critique of Silentio as praising those who obey God’s command, no matter what is exacted of such obedience, extend to Kierkegaard himself? If we look to *For Self-Examination*, a later “signed” text, we see Kierkegaard himself praising Abraham’s faith and obedience to God.

In his writings on practical philosophy, Kant notes that the moral agent acts from duty; that is, she loves the moral law for its own sake. The moral agent treats other individuals as ends in themselves, and not merely as means to ends. It appears that Abraham used his son as a means to the end of glorifying God, and that does not sit well with Kant. Does Abraham’s *Akedah* qualify as a legitimate exception to this formulation of the categorical imperative? Kant believed that, strictly speaking, moral rules can have no exceptions. His famous example of the madman knocking on someone’s door, asking for the homeowner’s friend, who happens to be hiding out in the house, is telling. We have a duty to tell the truth, no matter what. Kant asserts that “truthfulness in statements that one cannot avoid is a human being’s duty to everyone, however great the disadvantage to him or to another that may result from it; ... truthfulness (if he must speak) is an unconditional duty” (*PP*, 612, 614).⁶ If a person violates a universal moral rule – whether

it is through the act of lying or using others as ends – then she acts wrongly, indefensibly.

Thus Kant thought that the story of Abraham and Isaac has to be either false or misunderstood:

... and even if it were to appear to him to have come from God himself (like a command issued to Abraham to slaughter his own son like a sheep), yet it is at least possible that on this point error [a mistake] has prevailed. But then the inquisitor would risk the danger of doing something which would be to the highest degree wrong, and on this score he acts unconscientiously (*RRT*, 204).

Abraham's ill-fated willingness to slaughter Isaac, according to Kant, should never have taken place. Geoffrey Clive has found and translated a passage from Kant's collected works in which Kant went so far as to write what he thought that Abraham should have replied to God's initial command:

That I ought not to kill my good son is certain beyond a shadow of a doubt; that you, as you appear to be, are God, I am not convinced and will never be even if your voice would resound from the (visible) heavens.⁷

In a way, we could say that Kant loved the ethical order more than a supernatural command to carry out a holy duty, especially one in which human sacrifice was commanded. Why would an all-loving God require human sacrifice as a test of faith, especially after such a binding covenant had been made as to require Isaac to remain alive and multiply?

IV. The Ethical Revelation: The *Akedah* as Seen through a Levinasian Lens

The dimension of the divine opens forth from the human face.⁸ A relation with the Transcendent free from all captivation by the Transcendent is a social relation. – Levinas (*TI*, 78)

Certainly, no religion excludes the ethical. Each one invokes it, but tends to place what is specifically religious above it, and does not hesitate to ‘liberate’ the religious from moral obligations. Think of Kierkegaard. – Levinas (*BV*, 5)

We might be able to interpret this story [the *Akedah*] as Abraham having already turned his back to the ethical, or maybe having turned toward it for the first time, if the ethical is to mean something different here than it does for Kierkegaard. ... Abraham saw, at the moment he raised the knife, the face of Isaac, that is; saw it in a way that demanded response, that commanded him, a command greater than God’s command, to respond to a face that signified the particularity of the Other. – Claire Elise Katz⁹

One critique of both Silentio and Kierkegaard’s reading of the *Akedah* comes via Emmanuel Levinas, a twentieth century Jewish existential-phenomenologist. For Levinas, to be ethical (i.e., to be responsible to another human being) is tantamount to being in a proper God-relationship. Levinas writes, “There can be no ‘knowledge’ of God separated from relationship with men. The Other [individual] is the very locus of metaphysical truth, and is indispensable for my relation with God” (*TI*, 78). Elsewhere, he writes, “The personal responsibility of man [Abraham] with regard to man [Isaac] is such that God cannot annul it”; that is, there can be no teleological suspension of the ethical in favor of a higher telos (*DF*, 20). In his well known essay, “Loving the Torah More than God,” Levinas rehearses a popular Jewish trope – the Torah is to be venerated above even God’s direct commands. Levinas writes, “Loving the Torah even more than God means precisely having access to a personal God against Whom one may rebel – that is to say, for Whom one may die” (*DF*, 145). To transgress, or even to teleologically

suspend the ethical, even at the behest of God Himself, is never to be done. “Thou shalt not kill,” for Levinas, means that causing the needless suffering and murder of another individual is never to be done. “The path that leads to the one God,” Levinas observes, “must be walked in part without God” (*DF*, 143).

Levinas has written directly on Silentio’s and Kierkegaard’s praise for Abraham’s teleological suspension of the ethical. In the 1963 lecture “Existence and Ethics,” Levinas writes that Kierkegaard’s “violence” irritates him. He contends that

... it is not at all clear that Kierkegaard located the ethical accurately. As the consciousness of a responsibility towards (autrui), the ethical does not disperse us into generality [or Silentio’s term, “the universal”]. On the contrary, it individualizes us, treating everyone as a unique individual, a Self. Kierkegaard seems to have been unable to recognize this, because he wanted to transcend the ethical stage, which he identified with generality [“the universal”] (*EE*, 34).

Levinas contends that the key element of the *Akedah* was *not* Abraham’s obedience to the first voice of God that exacted the slaughter of Isaac. The “highest point of the whole drama may be the moment when Abraham paused and listened to the voice that would lead him back to the ethical order by commanding him not to commit a human sacrifice” (*EE*, 34). For Levinas, human subjectivity is always and ever in a relationship of infinite responsibility to the Other. He remarks, “it is only here in the ethical that an appeal can be made to the singularity of the subject, and that life can be endowed with meaning, in spite of death” (*EE*, 35).

Following a Levinasian rereading of the *Akedah*, Katz asserts that it was not even the second voice of the angel of God that commanded Abraham to suspend the sacrifice — it was the pathetic presence of Isaac himself, looking up to his father, defenseless and afraid. Levinas adds credence to Katz's argument: "Infinity presents itself as a face in the ethical resistance that paralyzes my powers and from the depths of defenseless eyes rises firm and absolute in its nudity and destitution" (*TI*, 200-201). Katz confirms, "The test Abraham passed was to see the face of Isaac and abort the sacrifice." Moreover, she continues, "Abraham had to have seen the face of Isaac before the angel commanded him to stop."¹⁰ The primacy of the ethical over teleological suspensions of it is emphasized in this Levinasian rereading of the *Akedah*. "To love the Torah more than God," asserts Katz, "is precisely what prevents, or what should prevent, an act like the sacrifice of Isaac."¹¹ Whereas God is free to command at will, the human is similarly free to refuse an unethical command. For Levinas and Katz, to break the ethical code is to disconnect relations with God; conversely, "to act ethically is already to be in contact with God."¹² According to this rereading of the *Akedah*, the moral of the story is not that one's obedience to God's decrees is the test of faith, but rather that to act in a mode of infinite responsibility to the Other is to enact the Kingdom of God on earth. Katz concludes, "the face of Isaac is the face of God; responsibility to Isaac is responsibility to God."¹³

Rabbi Milton Steinberg, in a passage that would resonate with Levinas's critique of Kierkegaard, writes

What Kierkegaard asserts to be the glory of God is Jewishly regarded as unmitigated sacrilege. Which indeed is the true point of the *Akedah*, missed so perversely by Kierkegaard. While it was a merit in Abraham to be willing to sacrifice his only son to God, it was God's nature and merit that He would not accept an immoral tribute. And it was His purpose, among other things, to establish that truth.¹⁴

From one (not *the*) Jewish standpoint, and on this point Kant and Levinas are in wholehearted agreement with Steinberg, "the ethical is never suspended, not under any circumstance and not for anyone, not even for God. Especially for God!"¹⁵ A denial of the ethical responsibilities one has would be tantamount to a rejection of God himself, according to this view. From a Levinasian perspective, the "ethical" would not easily translate into Kierkegaard's "ethical" existence-sphere — Levinas's "ethical" would move one into Climacus's religiousness A, a new way of expressing ethico-religiousness.

V. The Ethico-Religious Revelation: Kierkegaard's *Works of Love* as a Fitting Response to the Kantian and Levinasian Critiques

Once we get to *Works of Love* (1847), Kierkegaard's "Christian deliberations in the form of discourses," we see a different and more robust second ethics than was proposed (and shipwrecked) in the first ethics in Silentio's *Fear and Trembling*. Itself a long meditation on the commandment "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," *Works of Love* has some interesting responses, both conciliatory and critical, to the Kantian and Levinasian challenges. To be in a proper God-relationship, for Kierkegaard, is to see that relationship extend to the neighbor. Who is one's neighbor? Kierkegaard's response is simple and direct: "the neighbor is the person who is nearer to you than anyone else" (*WL*, 21). He continues, "if there is one other person whom you in the Christian sense love *as yourself*

or in whom you love *the neighbor*, then you love all people” (*WL*, 21). The neighbor, essentially, is a “redoubling” of the self. When I love someone in the same way as I love myself, that other person is my neighbor.

In a critical response to Kant, who claimed that love as inclination cannot be commanded, Kierkegaard contested that love is not an inclination — it is a duty. As such, it can be, and is, commanded in Matthew 22:39: “But the second commandment is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (*WL*, 17). Kierkegaard continues, “A person should love God unconditionally *in obedience* and love him *in adoration*” (*WL*, 19). The law commands dutiful love, and the ethical edification of others is a key element to this command. Kierkegaard writes, “to love oneself in the divine sense is to love God, and to truly love another person is to help that person to love God or in loving God. Therefore, inwardness here is not defined merely by the love-relationship but by the God-relationship” (*WL*, 130). The true Christian for Kierkegaard is the truth-witness, who like Jesus, takes on the role of the suffering servant. Persecution and ostracism are essential elements in an authentic religious existence. In the *Journals and Papers*, Kierkegaard notes that

One must actually have suffered a great deal in the world and have been made very unhappy before there can even be any question of beginning to love the neighbor. The neighbor does not come into existence until in self-denial one has died to earthly happiness and joys and comforts. Therefore the immediate person cannot be properly censured for not loving the neighbor, because the immediate person is too happy for the neighbor to exist for him. Anyone who clings to earthly life does not love his neighbor — that is, for him the neighbor does not exist.¹⁶

The fruits of love are made manifest in the works of love. The individual who bears witness to her God-relation loves the neighbor, and loves the neighbor unconditionally, even in the face of persecution.

The self-in-relation is the true self, for Kierkegaard as well as for Levinas. Responsibility, response to command, is the precondition for human freedom, and not vice versa. This is one point at which Kierkegaard and Levinas are in agreement, contrary to the Kantian teaching that “freedom [of the will] must be presupposed as a property of the will of all rational beings” (*PP*, 95).¹⁷ Kant continues, “Reason must regard itself as the author of its principles independently of alien influences” (*PP*, 96). Kierkegaard and Levinas respond by claiming that, prior to the emergence of human rationality (or consciousness), there is a responsibility (moral conscience) that awakens the ethical and epistemological subjectivity of the human individual. It is infinity that gives rise to finitude, absolute exteriority resides within absolute interiority, the eternal that fashions the temporal, and from Otherness and difference that selfhood and sameness are determined.

Kierkegaard, following Christian teachings, differentiates three forms of love: erotic, friendship, and neighbor-love. The first two forms are defined by the objects of love, are conditional, particular, and reciprocal. The third type of love is blessed and special because it is non-possessive, unconditional, and asymmetrical. This version of love is given as gift; that is, it is freely given without expectation of return or reciprocity. It is in

this light that Kierkegaard's agapic loving individual is a full-fledged member of Kant's Kingdom (or Realm) of Ends, treating every other person with respect and dignity. However, once one makes the move into the religious modality, there is a qualitatively different view of what constitutes one's ethical duties — rather than one's autonomous self-legislation as the author of moral responsibilities, the single individual realizes not only that God is love, but also that every relationship in which there is love, God's presence has always already been present. In this version of love, there are no friends, lovers, or enemies — there are neighbors, and we are commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves. From this new reading, we could reinterpret the *Akedah* as a case in which Abraham actually did lose Isaac as a son, but he was returned Isaac as his neighbor. This responds to Levinas's critique in a satisfactory manner.

Additionally, Mark Dooley has responded to Levinas's critique of Kierkegaard, contending that "Levinas missed what is most essential in Kierkegaard – his jewgreek ethics of singularity. ... Kierkegaard's philosophy is heavily punctuated by a Christian ethics of love."¹⁸ Kierkegaard's authentic Christian self is constantly putting itself into question in an effort to engender more concrete relations with one's neighbors. The "universal" moral state, which was suspended by Abraham, on this view, made an adequate response to the singular other who summoned him from beyond its walls. According to Dooley, "it becomes clear that Kierkegaard is far from being against the *ethical*, but is looking for a way in which the ethical can become self-critical."¹⁹ The religious existence-communication, for Kierkegaard, is one which is practiced on the

margins of the ethical-universal, keeping the *Sittlichkeit* in its proper perspective. What Levinas misses in his rereading of Silentio's story and Kierkegaard in general is the Christian ethic of justice, compassion, mercy and "love thy neighbor." When the Kierkegaardian single individual reaches the inner most sanctum of the soul, the highest level of interiority, she discovers an always already present dimension of infinite exteriority, absolute Otherness, God. The infinite is truly present within the finite. Kierkegaard insists, "when you love the neighbor, then you are like God" (*WL*, 63). This move is resonant with Levinasian ethics where he fuses the fifth commandment with the second great commandment: "'Thou shalt not kill' or 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor'... forbids the violence of murder." Elsewhere, he contends: "'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' or 'Thou shalt love thyself, that is what thyself is'" (*ITN*, 110). Within the self is the other, and conversely, within the other is the self.

VI. Conclusion: Commanded Love and Ethico-Religious Faith as Responsibility

One can command love, but it is love that commands love, and it commands it in the *now* of its love, in such a way that the commandment to love is repeated and renewed indefinitely in the repetition and renewal of the very love that commands love. – Levinas (*DF*, 191)

...the face of man is the proof of the existence of God. – Levinas (*PN*, 95)

Is it the case that one reaches a religious relationship with God through human ethical behavior, as is the case with Kant and Levinas? Or is Kierkegaard correct in advocating the position that one can only experience authentic interhuman relationships once one is

in a proper God-relation? To pose these questions in a different framework, was it the religious revelation of God's angel that kept Abraham from sacrificing his son, or was it the ethical revelation of Isaac's defenseless face that saved his life and brought Abraham back? Abraham undoubtedly passed his test of faith in the absurd, but the response to "why" has not been fully addressed yet. I suspect that Kant and Levinas's response to this question will take us into the ethico-religious qua Abraham's duties to Isaac, whereas Kierkegaard will insist that Abraham had faith that his God both knows best and would provide in the face of an apparent paradox.

Perhaps we can employ Levinas to mediate between Kant's and Kierkegaard's divergent positions. To merge Levinas with Kierkegaard, we could amend Silentio's motto to read "the responsible subject is higher than the universal-ethical mode of reciprocity and *Sittlichkeit*." For Levinas, the face of the other *is* the trace of God, the rupturing of the finite by the infinite, such that one's proper relationship with another human being as infinite ethical responsibility *is* a proper relationship with God. The infinite (Torah for Jews, and Jesus for Christians) intervenes in the finite by way of the interhuman encounter of ethical responsibility. Levinas contends that "the ethical order does not prepare us for the Divinity; it is the very access to the Divinity" (*DF*, 102).

Living the good and virtuous life, for the ancient Greeks as well as for us today, is a dialectical convergence of ethical and religious responsibility and freedom. The two statements: 'you must love the neighbor through God' and 'one's love of God is

expressed through neighbor love' must not be seen as contradictory to one another – they mutually inform one another in a dialectical relationship which does not yield a subsuming *Aufhebung*, a sublation of the two, or a new synthesis. The two statements mutually inform one another. Whether religion proceeds from morality or morality proceeds from religion does not horribly matter – when we see the Other person as the face of God, we are automatically placed in an ethico-religious revelation of “thou shalt not kill,” which is equivalent to “you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

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NOTES

¹ Silentio: "By virtue of resignation, that rich young man should have given away everything, but if he had done so, then the knight of faith would have said to him: by virtue of the absurd, you will get every penny back again—believe it! And the formerly rich young man should by no means treat these words lightly, for if he were to give away his possessions because he is bored with them, then his resignation would not amount to much" (*FT*, 49).

² Jacobs, "The Problem of the *Akedah* in Jewish Thought," p. 7.

³ This text is sometimes referred to as Kant's fourth *Critique*.

⁴ See the "What is Enlightenment?" (1784) essay in *PP* 17-22.

⁵ See Jacqueline Mariña's "Kant on Grace" and "The Religious Significance of Kant's Ethics." She writes, "we cannot properly relate to God unless we have already grasped the worth of the second great commandment" ("The Religious Significance," p. 200).

⁶ Silentio's quick response to this statement would be that Abraham told no lie; in fact, he "remained silent – because he could not speak" (*FT*, 113).

⁷ Clive, *The Romantic Enlightenment* (New York: Meridian Books, 1960), p. 152. As cited in Duncan, *Sören Kierkegaard*, p. 65.

⁸ The term "face" has special significance for Levinas. Rather than seeing this term as a noun, Levinas insists on the verb-al, or activity, of facing. In various places in his writings, Levinas describes the facing of the Other as that which "regards" me, that which places me into question and authoritatively commands me to ethical responsibility through its uprightness, exposure, defenselessness, nudity, and destitution. Levinas: "The relation to the face is straightaway ethical... [T]he face is what forbids us to kill" (*EI*, 87, 86).

⁹ Katz, "The Voice of God and the Face of the Other".

¹⁰ Katz, op. cit.

¹¹ Katz, ibid.

¹² Katz, ibid.

¹³ Katz, ibid.

¹⁴ Steinberg, "Kierkegaard and Judaism," p. 176.

¹⁵ ibid.

¹⁶ Kierkegaard's *Journals and Papers* IV (4603) Pap. VIII A 269. As cited in *WL*, 468.

¹⁷ Although Kant earlier writes, "...a free will and a will under moral laws are one and the same" (*PP*, 95). We are here reminded that the moral laws of which Kant is considering are self-legislated and adjudicated.

¹⁸ Dooley, "The Politics of Statehood vs. A Politics of Exodus".

¹⁹ Dooley, op cit.

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