Translating Goldschmidt: The German-Jewish Legacy in a Multicultural Age

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According to the theory of translation advanced by Walter Benjamin and Franz Rosenzweig, a universal, divine language undergirds all human difference and makes the enterprise of translation possible. Though such a redemptive, "pure" language lays beyond human ken, no translation bridging the seemingly untranslatable abyss between human tongues and cultures is possible without a belief in such an "Ursprache," the original unity any translation seeks to approximate in its halting way. Translation thus evokes the multicultural problem as a problem of language. The "Ursprache" that both Benjamin and Rosenzweig posited evoked both the universalist longings of the Bildung tradition—Benjamin's piece was a preface to his Baudelaire translation—and the Jewish songs of Jehuda Halevi, which, Rosenzweig argued, demanded preservation of the particular: "we must translate so that the day may come when there shall exist among languages the accord that can grow up out of all individual languages but never out of the empty spaces 'between' them."[1] For Benjamin, translation was testimony to the universal, as it "serves the purpose of expressing the central reciprocal relationship between languages," but made that universality perceptible through difference, which Benjamin called "the hallowed growth of languages," and what we today call the multicultural fact; preserving this tension is what both Rosenzweig and Benjamin, using the identical phrase, termed "the task of the translator."[2]

The German-Jewish theory of translation advanced by Benjamin and Rosenzweig thus insists on a universality that quite literally underwrites the right to difference, since different languages could be "translatable," only by an indirect assumption of what Benjamin calls "God's remembrance" —the notion

that all cultures share an orignal language, of which the translation becomes the fragmentary approximation. Preserving this fragmentary nature of translation, however, is crucial for Rosenzweig, as it is for Benjamin, lest the assumption of a divine language become presumption, and lead to the erasure of cultural particularity in the name nationalism, culture, or some other false embodiment of the universal: "Die Aufgabe des Uebersetzers," Rosenzweig insists, "ist eben ganz missverstanden, wenn sie in der Eindeutschung des Fremden gesehen wird."[3] That is: "The task of the translator is wholly misconceived if thought of as Germanizing what is foreign." Hermann Levin Goldschmidt's account of the German-Jewish legacy reminds us that this problem of "Eindeutschung" was more than a linguistic affair; Goldschmidt's The Legacy of German Jewry, (1957), helps us see that the German-Jewish theory of translation can itself be read as a kind of shadow-language for a unique dialectic. In Goldschmidt's terms, German Jewish culture was to be understood as an unresolved and contradictory dialogue, full of future potential—between the idea of a universal culture and the Jewish particularity that German Jews created, recollected, lived, and imagined.

The German-Jewish legacy itself, as Goldschmidt argued, stood under a shadow, not just that of Auschwitz, but of Jewish interpretations, like Gershom Scholem's of 1966, that seemed to make "Jews and Germans" an historical dead end, even if Scholem's work on Jewish mysticism, as I have argued, represents his own secret argument for the secret and powerful transmission of the particularity of Jewish tradition by German Jewry. For Goldschmidt, The Legacy of German Jewry remains alive precisely to the extent it remains unfulfilled in the multicultural present, because it signifies the historical project that underlies the theory of translation—the historical project of carrying a universal message, while keeping faith with the idea of the remnant, the critical notion that any "universal" culture worth its name cannot erase the particularity in whose name

it speaks. The legacy of German Jewry, for Goldschmidt, contests the false closure of any universalist conception of culture, and argues against the notion Scholem would popularize of German Jews as wholly assimilated to the Bildung tradition; Goldschmidt's work likewise contests the contemporaneous nostalgia for a "German-Jewish symbiosis," a nostalgia that forgets the contestatory assertion of Jewish particularity that German Jewry bequeaths as part of its legacy to all Jews and minorities today.

This concept of "legacy" argues for a specific kind of minority identity. The concept of "legacy" Goldschmidt develops in 1957, begun in his post-war meditation of 1946, may seem to argue for a Jewish "essence" that can contribute to the multicultural debate; instead, the German-Jewish legacy for Goldschmidt stands as a reminder of the un-worked through problem of today's multiculturalism and a sign of its forgotten antecedent. I want to highlight the uniqueness of Goldschmidt's conception of German Jewry by concentrating on two of its central themes: first on the idea of Jewish history that informs Goldschmidt's interpretation of German Jewry, an conception of history that sees the achievements of German Jewry as something worthy of preservation, but also as something that was missed, and therefore lives on; in charting the German Jewish struggle for equal rights in Germany as Germans, from Moses Mendelssohn forward, Goldschmidt argued that this project was itself part of an ancient and Jewish legacy. Secondly, I want to argue here that Goldschmidt's notion of that "legacy" is a model of difference, not as essence, but, in his terms, as "remnant," as what is left over in every struggle for universal inclusion, the mark of a contradiction which for Goldschmidt becomes the critical substance of a tradition, a remnant without which no vision of the future is possible.

Two meanings of the German-Jewish legacy make themselves apparent in the title of Goldschmidt's history, or more particularly, in the problem of translation it represents. Das Vermaechtnis des deutschen *Judentums*, demands that we

recognize an historical difference: the ambiguity of "Judentum"—whether it refers to the particular Jews who made up German Jewry, or the universal message of Judaism they carried—makes it the "task of the translator" to explain a dual conception of Judaism: a specific minority culture, but a remnant that never represents the particular alone. Das deutsche Judentum thus tasks the translator with recognizing a right to universal stature—the claim of Judaism, as world religion, as Goldschmidt takes the term from Leo Baeck—but also the claim of German Jewry, as a specific, national community that claimed a countervailing, critical identity, and asserted its particular history. It is this question of difference—as promise not yet fulfilled, and thus a future-oriented legacy, as well as remnant—that constitutes the legacy of German Jewry for Hermann Levin Goldschmidt. It is the specifically Jewish outlines of that universal problematic he traced, in a language that was unique, that I hope to outline here tonight.

Jewish History and the German Jews: A Legacy of Critique

As Goldschmidt's reading of Sinai suggests, the Jews from the giving of the Torah forward represented a dynamic historical contradiction, existing from the exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah as both an historical people, and the bearers of a trans-historical, universal message; the task of the English translator is thus to decide whether Judentum should be rendered by the more particular, historical term, "German Jewry," as Goldschmidt's work sometimes seems to intend, as it charts the specific, historical course of a minority Jewish community in Germany, from the settlement that existed from Roman times forward, the crusades, the emergence of Yiddish, the advent of the Baal Shem Tov, and the complex origins of modernity forward; or whether to translate his title as Judaism, in keeping with the trans-historical, prophetic, universal and

redemptive religious message carried by the Jews. Goldschmidt's title, in other words, presents a problem of translation because it yokes the universal message of redemption, to which Judaism bears witness, and Judaism's claim to a particular history, together into a single word. Judentum, as Goldschmidt later puts it, refers to nation, and to a religious idea at once, while refusing to identify the two.

Legacy is Goldschmidt's name for this model of the right to difference. For Benjamin's and Rosenzweig's translation theory, that legacy was expressed linguistically, as the "Ursprache" that allowed cultural difference to be overcome, without erasing cultural particularity. For Goldschmidt's Legacy of German Jewry, however, this right to difference is not so much an abstract problem of language but of history, and of the particular, lived form of historical consciousness and minority identity that was shaped by German Jews in connection with the East European Jewish civilization that became so influential in this period. As Goldschmidt put it in his essay on de Saussure, whose linguistic theory was contemporaneous with Benjamin and Rosenzweig, "the weakness of de Saussure that has passed into contemporary linguistics is that it forgets—or represses—the fact that language is also conversation."[4] An important contribution of The Legacy of German Jewry is to remember and recover the actual conversations about Jewish and European language which throw the shadows of abstract linguistic theory, "conversations" in which German Jews are participants as well as students, and which Goldschmidt analyzes with care: from the debates held in Basel in 1897 by the Zionists, or by the Bundists in Vilna that very same year, or in Czernowitz in 1908, home to Aharon Appelfeld, Paul Celan, Dan Pagis, Rose Ausländer, debates over which language Jews in the modern world would speak: over whether Jews could become part of a universal, historical culture, and retain their particular cultural distinctiveness at the same time.[5]

Simon Dubnow therefore takes pride of conceptual place in Goldschmidt's chapter on German Jewish historiography, entitled "Historical Stages." Goldschmidt reads Dubnow, author of World History of the Jewish People (1929) not as a proponent of the diaspora and Yiddish against Western assimilation and Zionism, nor as an Eastern Jew somehow opposed to the Wissenschaft des Judentums. For Goldschmidt, Dubnow is the exponent of a modern historical self-consciousness that recognizes the critical gap between the promise of a "universal" history and the stories—and thereby the national rights—of particular peoples. German Jewish history is thus for Goldschmidt like all history, not a narrative of what has occurred, but a critical legacy, demonstrating the gap between promise of equal rights and its non-fulfillment, a legacy that can be experienced negatively, and critically, by the particular culture as the exclusion of its story. Writing Jewish history therefore implies self-consciousness about historical narrative, because history itself consists in part of measuring this gap. As Amos Funkenstein argues, an awareness of the difference between a redemptive claim to a total history, and the history of particular experience, makes Jewish culture historically self-conscious early on, long before the critical, academic study of Judaism began with Zunz and the Wissenschaft des Judentums.[6] Goldschmidt's concept of the legacy, with its reliance on Biblical sources, similarly argues that Jewish historical consciousness emerges long before its official advent in the 19th century. Writing "universal" history, the world-history of the Jewish people, for Dubnow, springs from a critical awareness that the "universal" claim of historical narrative is always incomplete.

Dubnow in this way represents history as critical legacy: he affirmed, as Goldschmidt points out, the particular story of Eastern European Jewry. Dubnow the "autonomist," Goldschmidt shows, wanted to "keep faith with the vast majority of his people," and affirm the "historic ground" of their existence. "In Switzerland" when he received an invitation in 1897 to go to Basel and

participate in the First Zionist Congress, Goldschmidt points out, Dubnow "remained in Zurich." The gesture was not opposed to Zionist universalism as much it sought to dramatize, in a critical way, what such a political appoach lacked. And when the first volume of Dubnow's World History of the Jewish People appeared in Germany in 1925, Goldschmidt reminds us, Dubnow affirmed his affinity with the universal "science" of German Jewish scholarship, without seeing any conflict between that affinity and his autonomist, Yiddishist stance. "If I depart from my predecessors both in my general conception as well as in many particulars, I am at the same time remain steadfastly aware," Dubnow wrote, "that without a full century of research by the school of Zunz, Geiger, Frankel and Graetz the current level of Jewish historiography could not have been attained."

Both Goldschmidt and Dubnow therefore work with a concept of history as "legacy," as the difference between the promise of a universal history, inclusive of all peoples, and the assertion of national, particular stories and memories that show—as Dubnow did for Jewish Europe—that the "narrative" of European national liberation was incomplete, leaving out the Jewish nation altogether, or the redemptive particularity of the Yiddish-speaking diaspora. As such, Dubnow's and Goldschmidt's projects both owe something to Leo Baeck, as Goldschmidt announces:

> ....the watchword of Dubnow's World History is already to be found in Baeck's first edition of The Essence of Judaism, published in 1905, a work that also lays claim to "World Religion," its watchword for Judaism's redemptive truth. Of course, this "world religion" is at the same time the "people's religion" --just as Dubnow's World History of the Jewish People simultaneously remains the world history of the Jewish people, that is, a history of the Jews as a people --but in both cases this term does not

represent an end in itself, but instead Judaism as both bearing witness to revelation and acting out a history of its own.

Dubnow "made history" for Goldschmidt by pointing out this difference between universal and critical history. In Funkenstein's contemporary terms, Goldschmidt's claim was that by bringing the "history" of the Jewish settlement in Europe to the fore, Dubnow helped close a gap between "memory" and "history," but without voiding the critical, historical self-consciousness that remains skeptical about the conflation of the two:

....Dubnow's historia rerum gestarum also belongs the res gestae of the Jews: World History of the Jewish People was a work that itself made history. This is a fact that cannot be observed without recalling Leo Baeck, if we are to grasp the full significance of Dubnow's achievment. The claim announced in the title World History signified an advance over the era's severely cramped and obviously limited history of the Jewish people, corresponding to the claim advanced in Baeck's masterful notion of Judaism as a "world religion." The "particularity" of Judaism --which differentiates itself as a religion from other religions, because here belonging to the covenant also constitutes belonging to a people --***this particularity of Judaism exists only for the sake of the "universal" message that Judaism in particular bears, simply to be able to bear witness to the fact that

...the Lord shall be king
Over all the earth.
On that day the Lord shall be one,
And his name one.

Zechariah 14:9

The scriptural reference in Goldschmidt's historical text is a typical touch: Biblical prophecy, apparently retrograde, stands ahead of historical consciousness for Goldschmidt—is more historical, in a paradoxical way—since such theological universalism remains aware of the gap between the universal dream and political reality; put differently, theology for Goldschmidt remains the critique of false claims to universality, a reminder of a promise not yet fulfilled, very much as Benjamin asserts the critical force of the messianic in his "Theologico-Political Fragment," that "nothing historical can relate itself on its own account to anything messianic."[7] Supposedly secular claims to "universal" history, like Hegel's, by contrast, needed to brand the Jews as relics or remnants to have their claims to universal narration ring true.

19th century German Jews like Gabriel Riesser were historical figures in this sense of asserting an incomplete project, against the repressive force of a supposedly more universal present. Like historians, practical German Jews make history in Goldschmidt's terms when they interrupted the false march of universal history, and confronted the lure of progress. Leaders of Jewish emancipation like Riesser then reconnected with their own historical tradition, in all its particularity, and found Jewish sources that authored the modern push forward after all. This definition of German Jewish history as a move backward, that is paradoxically the most modern, is exemplified in Goldschmidt's interpretation of Riesser, who had as a 24-year old, published a pamphlet that avoided the word "Jew;" the title of this piece, published in 1831, was "On the Position of Those Confessing the Mosaic Faith in Germany." As Goldschmidt reminds us, "to his contemporaries, the word "Jew" was almost exclusively a pejorative term—an insult, and nothing more—and to a certain extent carries that charge to this very day; 'Jew' was painful to Jews themselves who, as

citizens of modernity, sought to leave behind the shame and humiliation that the ghetto had attached to their Jewishness." But Riesser, as Goldschmidt argues, recovered his legacy in 1832, and moved forward, giving his Blätter für Religion und Gewissensfreiheit (Journal for Religion and Freedom of Conscience), a "new" name: "Der Jude!" Goldschmidt quotes Riesser's eloquent rationale at length, as I will here, to define the historical difference Riesser made: those who prophesied a universal future for the Jews, he argued were themselves the archaic ones, superstitiously afraid of the name "Jew" and its particularity. Holding onto the past, by contrast, secure in its future promise, was for Riesser the far more modern and liberated point of view:

> You claim that so much that is hateful and despicable has attached itself to this name that it must be avoided, so that unpleasant connections and memories are not aroused. But does not the hate that seems to attach itself to the name derive more fundamentally from the state of affairs, and men, and must not men fight against that hate and cast it away, if it is to end? If unjustifiable hatred clings to our name, should we then disavow it, instead of setting all of our energies to the task of bringing it honor? And what if this very name is a historical one, which can never be forgotten, not the name of some unknown, whose name can disappear along with the person? And if it is the same name with which we have designated our manner of worshiping the divine, and with which we have taught our children to designate it, a name we thus owe respect and love—should we disavow it to please those who hate it and those they remember under that name? ...We laugh at the childlike custom our ancestors had of changing the name of the mortally ill, as if the Angel of Death would then not know where to find him. Are we not just as foolish with our modern, rewritten designations? Believe me, hate knows where to look just as well

as the Angel of Death, and as long as he's looking, he will
recognize the right name amidst thousands of pacifying expressions.

By refusing to reject their "archaic" name, and the fearful associations it aroused, German Jews like Riesser, German Jews in fact became modern, making history and redeeming the future and making it more inclusive by finding their critical, redemptive energy in the past. The name "Jew" for Riesser makes history: holding on to it allows him to see those who would abandon the ancient as themselves under the spell of archaic fears; yet Riesser was modern and prophetic enough to recognize that the wish to erase linguistic difference and the angel of death—the actual desire to erase Jews from history—were not all that far apart. "Judaism's new hour," Goldschmidt points out, "tolled not just for Jews alive at the current historical moment, but for Judaism's historical existence as such." [8] Preserving the past stands up for the right of difference to exist in the future.

German Jews like Riesser became most progressive when their recovery of the past became a critique of the present, and released energy for change that would be fulfilled only in the future. In a subtle turn, Goldschmidt therefore shows us how Riesser "greatest deed"—his critical reclamation of the name "Jew"—itself became limited, an unfulfilled legacy, set on individual rather than national emancipation for German Jewry: the legacy that moved forward by turning to the past itself became a past that was incomplete, and thus precisely the legacy on which Martin Buber seized 84 years later when he named his new German-Jewish journal Der Jude, invoking Riesser historical promise as well as his limits, arguing that the time for national liberation had come. Riesser's "greatest deed," as Goldschmidt called it, invoked both and emancipatory promise and a falling short of the promise of his name. German Jewish history, understood as "legacy," works in precisely this fashion for Goldschmidt: a legacy

always involves a left-over meaning of the past: something that failed in part, yet something that nonetheless calls the supposed superiority of the present into radical question, and thus turns out to be "past" the modern to a radical degree. Such is Goldschmidt's view of German Jewish history. To understand the postmodern, multicultural difference this concept of history makes today, it is necessary to turn backwards to the Bible, and the specific notion of "remnant" on which Goldschmidt's thought is based.

The Biblical Remnant and Multicultural Difference

In his "Afterword" to Philosophy as Dialogics, the first volume of the new edition of Goldschmidt's collected works, Willi Goetschel reminds us that Hermann Levin Goldschmidt's critical philosophy "out of the sources of Judaism" means philosophy from the standpoint, or positionality, as we would say today, of "difference."[9] Characteristically, Goldschmidt's most postmodern philosophical works always work from biblical sources, and always contain a register of biblical citations. Goldschmidt's argument for the liberation of contradiction, as his Freiheit für den Widerspruch of 1976 is best translated, itself reminds us that the theme of contradiction and the problematic of minority identity in the postwar world cannot be separated from one another. Goldschmidt's language for considering the pressing problem of minority identity, however, turns us toward the past. If German Jewish figures such as Buber, Rosenzweig, Benjamin and Margarete Susman were paradigmatically modern, Goldschmidt suggests, working out thematics of language, national existence, historical catastrophe as well as critique, they were also self-conscious heirs to a Biblical legacy. Jewish modernity, Goldschmidt argues, depends on a past that "that consistently explodes every confining and external framework," a past which inheres in "this people's unique fusion of a decided particularity with

the most decisive kind of universality."[10] Judaism for Goldschmidt was neither a particular "history," capable of finding absolution in philosophy, nor a separatist tradition standing outside of the philosophic tradition of the West, but rather the "remnant," in Isaiah's as well as philosophy's terms, the remainder that critiques the false claim of a "universal" culture, and thereby preserves the powerful, future-orientation of the past.

For Goldschmidt, in other words, multiculturalism—though he would never use such a word—was the politics of the remnant. Writing in 1946, Goldschmidt argued that commemoration of the past, the need to mourn in the present, and the Jewish people's future oriented mission all demanded that tradition be recovered. For despite the loss of the "intellectual center" of Germany and the "center of national life" that had been eastern Europe, the "remnant," as the Jewish people itself, lived.[11] The philosophy of the "remnant," however, could not be a traditional "history" of the German Jews as such, for it was precisely the quest for such a totalizing history, Goldschmidt argued, that philosophers like Hermann Cohen, or historians like Dubnow, finally opposed. Instead, Goldschmidt argued, what was to be discovered in their work was better described as "legacies," all marked by the non-correspondence between the universal promise and the destiny of an historically specific people. What remains in each of these analyses in The Legacy of German Jewry is not failure, but a series of acts, like Gabriel Riesser's "greatest deed," which have not yet come to full fruition. Difference is for Goldschmidt not what one is, not one's "identity" as handed down, but a past whose promise for the future lives on because the substance of its claim is yet to be achieved.

Moses Mendelssohn takes pride of place in Goldschmidt's account as the first modern German Jew on modernity's ground, but not, needless to say, for having solved the problem of Jewish identity in Germany. Instead of the Aristotelian vocabulary that reads Mendelssohn's program of citizenship as leading to a

crisis, where the need to remain Jewish, and the need to be accepted as German, are tragically split, Goldschmidt reads assimilation as the legacy of a failed promise: what remains, however, is not a teleology of doom, but a legacy of future emancipation for Jews and all peoples, a future in which the "remnant," rather than assimilated, is truly allowed to remain. In a section entitled "Equal Rights, not Loss of Identity," freedom "tolls" in the era of emancipation for the Jews, Goldschmidt remarks, but also for "for peasants, for workers, for women, for blacks, for slaves, for all the ...'colonized peoples,' for the Catholics in Protestant lands, the Protestants in Catholic lands, for the Jews in all the lands of the earth into which they have been dispersed, and for all those whose hour of acquiring equal rights unveils itself as the crest of a spreading movement."[12] No movement, as Goldschmidt's following analysis suggests, can achieve such liberation by erasing the "remnant" whose suffering it promises to cure, be they Jews or any other people. Properly understood, the "remnant" is thus the past that remains to remind us that emancipation is not yet complete:

> Emancipation demands freedom for each and every person in order to replace the self-alienation felt by each. Yet the complete "equal rights" needed to realize such freedom carry a double meaning that is not completely benign. For the seductive demand for equality—leading to an assimilation that submerges one's identity—insinuates itself all too eagerly into the emancipatory demand for a right to difference and an enfranchisement of the diverse. For the tempting, secondary claim of the program of equal rights for all is that a mutual erasure of difference might be the path toward absolute equality. This secondary meaning seeks an end to all forms of diversity, from race all the way to the peculiar particularity of a Judaism that explodes every framework imposed upon it. Such a smoothing out of all difference, the goal of assimilation and its

> conformity, represses those disparities and inequalities visible from both sides of the process while the achievement of equal rights and "emancipation" are underway. The pretense is that—with equality supposedly having been attained—difference no longer has any claim to persist. But the fact that the right to the same freedom of others brings with it the freedom to become like others, that the seductions of becoming like others are to be found on every path leading to equal rights, cannot and ought not therefore to harm the project of emancipation: neither its significance, nor its necessity, which must, under all circumstances, be fought for and won.

Difference, in this passage, is not a rejection of the universal, but in the example of Jewish assimilation in Germany, a turn to the past that grasps the remnant not as failure, but as the preservation of a promise. A postmodern theorist of multiculturalism like Charles Taylor, by contrast, sees a stabilization of the universal and particular identities of citizens as the substance of the multicultural impulse: "there must be something," Taylor writes, "midway between the inauthentic and homogenizing demand for recognition and equal worth, on the one hand, and the self-immurement in ethnocentric standards, on the other."[13] Taylor imagines, in other words, that the postmodern era might transcend the modern contradiction in which cultural erasure become the price of equal rights: or that, since the threat to difference is over, the assertion of difference in postmodernity can somehow reach an Aristotelian middle, achieve catharsis, and come to an end. Goldschmidt argues instead that a remnant, historically different and contradictory, should always remain in the process of universal liberation, since the point of a more "universal," multicultural society itself is to allow the remnant, and what is different, to be heard. "Where we observe contradiction to emerge," as he once put it, "we imagine something must

be amiss, instead of realizing that something is wrong only where contradiction fails to make itself heard."[14] The "something" left over in the process of liberation, in other words, is always a reminder from the past, a "self-immurement" that seems archaic, but is in fact liberating, since it serves as a critical reminder that the "universal" culture is only worth its name if a countervailing, minor voice can be heard to speak. Multiculturalism, in other words, for Goldschmidt runs the risk of become dialogue without difference.

Goldschmidt's philosophy of the remnant—the biblical term I am using for his critical multiculturalism—is thus oriented toward the past. First, as his reading Jewish historiography suggests, it was only the recovery of Jewish history within Europe as an autonomous entity, secure in its particularity, that grounded Judaism's critical claim to participation in the universal ideals of the West. Judaism, Dubnow showed, had always followed an historically double track, "bearing witness to revelation and acting out a history of its own," a people who testified to the universal ideals that motivated Europe and the contradiction of those ideals their own history represented, both in deeds done to them and in their own failures as a people. Without the particularity of one's own history in hand, Goldschmidt argued, the modern individual and people would be powerless, that is, bereft of the national history and self-confidence both nations and individuals need to wage their struggles for universal rights. This first meaning of the past in Goldschmidt's philosophy of the remnant meant recovering the particular history of Jews in the West against the forces of erasure. Goldschmidt gave existential backing to this fight against erasure, and recovery of Jewish sources, through his directorship in the 1950s of the Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus in Zürich, a crucial background to his voluminous writings on Jewish culture and history.

But the second meaning of the past for the "remnant" as multicultural model was inherent in the term "legacy," as used by Goldschmidt in 1946 and later as

well. In choosing to call his masterwork of 1957 the "legacy" rather than the "history" of "German Jewry," Goldschmidt looked at the past not through the lens of an apoclalyptic disaster that had befallen "this people,"[15]—as if the abyss of Auschwitz had severed Jews from their past—but instead regarded the past as the unrealized content of the Jewish future, and thus the pressing model of Jewish difference as a culture that would live on. The remnant, as model for minority culture therefore argues for a particular notion of tradition and its transmission. The past remains alive as tradition in its crucial sense, paradoxically, not as what has happened, but as what has not yet fully occurred, as a liberation that has not yet fully taken place, precisely in the traditional sense of the Passover Haggadah's admonition that each generation is to regard itself as if it were the one going forth from Egypt. "Legacy" as Goldschmidt's term for tradition, is a history that concerns us in present—something from the past that remains, as a remnant—a past whose meaning is not fully present to us, because its task has yet to be fulfilled.[16] History's remnant is always a historical thought out of season, a redemptive Unzeitgemässigkeit that defines the goal of post-Auschwitz, forgotten to an extent, but thereby preserved:

> The right to their own particularity fought for by German Jewry would achieve a universal legitimacy after them, applicable to all groups throughout the world. Indeed, it is this right that constitutes the outstanding legacy of German Jewry, for it came to be recognized by the world only through them, though it has indeed yet to be realized in practice.

It is therefore a subtle but also a polemical gesture that brings Goldschmidt's philosophy of the remnant to refuse to write a "history" of German Jewry at all, but to write its "legacy" instead. The claim of a universal legitimacy for

difference, for Jews and all peoples—in 1957, as today—are far from having been achieved in the present, and thus cannot be regarded in "historical" terms as such.

The Bible, a source both ancient and marking a future freedom, thus stands at the center of Goldschmidt's account of German Jewish culture: the biblical covenant joined by Moses is for Goldschmidt the inauguration of a timeless message, but also the obligation to carry it forward into history in the voice of a particular people. The difference between these two aspects of the covenant represents a constant, critical dynamic of tradition: the Bible is not a fundamental guide to what has been, but a legacy that can be meaningfully appropriated only as a critique of the present. In this respect, Bible translation for the German Jews represents an assertion of particular Jewish identity, but also a critique of the Christianization of Jewish scripture, and Goldschmidt carefully follows the history of Jewish biblical translation into German, from Jekutiel ben Issak Blitz of Wittmund and Josel Witzenhausen's work of 1676 and 1679, printed in Amsterdam, to Moses Mendelssohn's German translation, printed in Hebrew letters, through the work of the founder of the Wissenschaft des Judentums, Leopold Zunz and his collaborators Heymann Arnheim, Julius Fürst and Michaels Sachs, to Ludwig Phillipson's Israelitische Bible, completed between 1839 and 1853, Samson Raphael Hirsch's efforts of 1867 and 1882, as well as the work of lesser-known figures, through the Buber-Rosenzweig translation completed in our own time. What Goldschmidt aptly titles "Das Jüdisches Ringen um eine deutsche Bible," "The Jewish Struggle for a German Bible," is specifically described as an unsettling of a false kind of universality. Becoming part of "other" languages, Goldschmidt points out, had long been part of a very Jewish tradition, one that it was the "role of German Jewry" to continue:

> ...Jews freed from the ghetto's isolation once again got their bearings in the world and were stamped by its changing character. Jews immersed themselves in the language of one nation after another, becoming citizens of a different state in each. Occuring as it did amidst the depths of what were still deadly and lurking dangers, the transformation itself still followed a very Jewish path. It was the path, as it were, taken by the twelve tribes who embodied the single people of Israel of the Bible, "both houses of Israel" that according to Isaiah (8:14) formed two states but one and only one Israel, the same course followed by many other Jewish communities at the end of antiquity—whether Babylonian, Palestinian, or Egyptian—who nonetheless continued to comprise a single Israel !

"Translation" into the other's culture is thus a long Jewish tradition, as Goldschmidt points out, with consequences that are universal and particular at once where Biblical translation is concerned. What German culture discovers, is that its "own" text, the Bible, belongs to the language of the "other," who reads it differently, while the Jewish "other" consolidates a particular sense of its own identity by apparently taking on a more "universal" language. Only by articulating its lost Hebrew voice in the "universal" modern German it speaks, Goldschmidt argues, does the German Jewish voice fully become the "one and only one Israel."

Historically, Goldschmidt points out, Jewish Bible translation in Germany unseated German Christianity's claim to a self-possessed universality. In terms of intellectual history, Goldschmidt falls neatly between Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber on biblical Judaism's timelessly universal or particularly national meaning. Unlike Rosenzweig, Goldschmidt does not opt to define the particular essence of Judaism as beyond history, "outside a bellicose temporality;" Judaism

does not, in other words, replace Christianity as a the more “universal” culture.[17] And unlike Buber, who argued that the "secret of the *nation* is that only in and through the nation can this [Jewish] distinction [of testifying to revelation] be converted into the fullness of life," Goldschmidt welcomed the national assertion of the Jewish people without ever rendering any Jewish language, or national program, as a singular, historical voice of the Jewish people that could stand alone.[18] Instead, Goldschmidt argues that the Bible represents a concept of tradition that is plural and alive, from Sinai forward, not because it resolutely insists on Jewish national and historical particularity, or because it announces a timeless message of redemption, outside of history, and universally inclusive of all peoples, but precisely because the Bible recognizes the critical difference between the two:

> In the distant past, the covenant Moses joined in the desert of Sinai under this message not only founded existence of his own people, but originated the idea of humanity's ultimate fulfillment; that same covenant obligated the Jews to carry that message forward into the present, thus inaugurating the demand for the unconditional Jewish devotion to history, a commitment that requires their continued existence as a nation as well as a religious community. This is a people, moreover, who must claim equality among the nations as a religion, while the equality with other religions it demands must be sought as a people.

The paradoxical claim that the Bible could be a source of the most modern, future-oriented claims made by German Jewry for the liberation of difference is one with which Goldschmidt would be entirely at home. Sinai for Goldschmidt in 1957 signified the ineradicable right of Jewish difference in history and the timeless perspective that measured that right's deferral: the legacy of that

message had been deferred, he had argued in 1946, but only ina way that laced difference on the future's agenda: in Goldschmidt's dialogical reading the particular points beyond itself, to the idea of a universal community, without sacrificing its particularity, and thus necessarily lives its tradition as critique. The repressed remnants of a "particular" legacy demand recollection by the contemporary culture, Goldschmidt argues, so that a universal, world culture can critically discover how "partial" and limited it truly is.[19]

Goldschmidt's concept of the German Jewish past as something surpassed, but persistent as a critical legacy, is also available in Theodor Adorno's notion that "what has been cast aside, but not absorbed theoretically will often yield its truth content only later;" without naming Goldschmidt, or his concept of the German-Jewish legacy, the first sentence of Adorno 's Negative Dialectics (1966), a summa of postmodern thought, and his own dialectical plea for the particular, parallels Goldschmidt's 1957 interpretation of the German Jewish legacy. Adorno's resonant first sentence of Negative Dialectics is therefore worth recalling, in many ways tonight, because it describes the contemporary significance of the German Jewish legacy as well: "Philosophy lives on, because the chance to realize it was missed."[20] In his particular and Jewish fashion, Hermann Levin Goldschmidt's legacy to the multicultural world was his insistence that the postmodern critique of universalism was both age-old, and post-contemporary, an "original" language for difference that we do not yet know how to speak, like the "Ursprache" that for Benjamin and Rosenzweig undergirds the right to linguistic as well as human difference, and their preservation in the future. Or as Goldschmidt's own aphorism puts it, in words with which I will close tonight: "The Jewish millennia: —the most contemporary form of the present."[21]

[1] Franz Rosenzweig, “Afterword,” Ninety-Two Poems and Hymns of Yehuda Halevi, ed. Franz Rozenzweig, trans. Thomas Kovach, Eva Jospe, and Gilda Gerda Schmidt, ed. with an Introduction by Richard Cohen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), xlvi. Portions of this lecture have been integrated into David Suchoff and Willi Goetschel, “Introduction” to Hermann Levin Goldschmidt, The Legacy of German Jewry, translated by David Suchoff (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 1-20.

[2]Franz Rosenzweig, ""Nachwort zu den Hymnen und Gedichten des Jehuda Halevi," (1922/23), in Rosenzweig, Kleinere Schriften, (Berlin: Schocken Verlag/Jüdischer Buchverlag, 1937), 201-2; Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator,” in Hannah Arendt, ed., Illuminations, (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 72.

[3]Rosenzweig, “Nachwort,” Ibid.

[4]Hermann Levin Goldschmidt, Haltet Euch an Worte: Betrachtungen zur Sprache (Schaffhausen, Switzerland: Griffel-Verlag, 1977), p. 100.

[5]See Amir Eshel, "Ein Stern hat wohl noch Licht:´ German-Jewish Poets Facing the Shoah."

[6]See "Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness," in Amos Funkenstein, Perceptions of Jewish History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 3 ff.

[7]Walter Benjamin, "Theologico-Political Fragment," in Reflections, ed. Peter Demetz, trans Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), p. 312.

[8] Or as Benjamin put it: "*even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins." Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in Benjamin, Illuminations 255.

[9]Hermann Levin Goldschmidt, Philosophie als Dialogik: Frühe Schriften, hrsg. Willi Goetschel, Nachwort von Willi Goetschel, Werkeausgabe in neun Bänden I (Wien: Passagen Verlag, 1993), 286.

[10]Goldschmidt, Vermächtnis des Deutschen Judentums, 50.

[11]Hermann Levin Goldschmidt, "Das jüdische Volk auf der Schwelle zur Nachkriegszeit," in: Goldschmidt, Philosophie als Dialogik: Frühe Schriften, Hrsg. Willi Goetschel, Werkausgabe in neun Bänden I (Vienna: Passagen Verlag), 1992, 151-158 .

[12].Cf. Heinrich Heine, “Reise von München nach Genua,” Reisebilder 3, in Heinrich Heine, Sämtliche Schriften, ed. Klaus Briegleb, II, 376: “But what is the great task of our time? It is emancipation. Not only the emancipation of the Irish, the Greeks, the Frankfurt Jews, the West Indian Blacks and other repressed people but the emancipation of the entire world [...].” [was ist aber die große Aufgabe unserer Zeit? Es ist die Emanzipation. Nicht bloß die der Irländer, Griechen, Frankfurter Juden, westindischen Schwarzen und dergleichen gedrückten Volkes, sondern es ist die Emanzipation der ganzen welt...”]

[13]See Charles Taylor, "The Politics of Recognition," in Charles Taylor, Multiculturalism and the "Politics of Recognition" (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 72.

[14]"Wo ein Widerspruch vorliegt, dort, meint man, sei etwas flasch, statt zu begreifen, dass dort, wo kein Widerspruch laut wird, etwas falsch sein muss." Hermann Levin Goldschmidt, Freiheit für den Widerspruch, (Wien: Passagenverlag, 1993 [1976]), hrsg. Willi Goetschel, Werkeausgabe in neun Bänden, p.

[15]. In 1946, Goldschmidt's text already cites Isaiah 43:21: "This people which I have formed for Myself, that they might tell of My praise," which Leo Baeck would use to title his later volume, This People.
[16]For forms of this time-conception in 19th century German Jewish culture, see Nils Roemer, "Between Messianism and Despair: Conceptions of Time in German-Jewish Experience in the 19th Century," forthcoming.
[17]Franz Rosenzweig, Der Stern der Erlösung (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1988 [1921]), 368. Alexander Altmann traces the trajectory of Rosenzweig's historical thought this way: ""His theology of creation, revelation and redemption is but the conceptualized application of this historical vision. Creation, the Alpha of history, expresses the pagan world; revelation, though stemming from Judaism, transforms creation only through Christianity; and redemption is the goal toward which the world is moving. Judaism itself remains essentially outside history." See Alexander Altmann, "Franz Rosenzweig on History, " in Paul Mendes-Flohr, ed., The Philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig (Hanover New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1988), 128.
[18]Martin Buber, "The Gods of the Nations and God," in Israel and the World: Essays in a Time of Crisis (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), 210.
[19]Goldschmidt's biblical multiculturalism recalls Walter Benjamin's thesis on the philosophy of history, that reminded the post-war world that the "past" itself would not be safe if "conformism" triumphed, for it was only the past, for Benjamin as well as Goldschmidt, and its prophecy of universality, that could stand against the false closure and hostility to difference of the present. As Stéphane Moses notes, for Benjamin, "the sole hope that remains for us today...exists in the past. Redemption can only when we dare to awaken suddenly the endlessly deep and rich experience of the past and experience it in the present as new." Stéphane Moses, "Walter Benjamin and Franz Rozenzweig," in Gary Smith, ed., Benjamin: Philosophy, Aesthetics, History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 243.
[20]Theodor Adorno, Negative Dialectics, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1983 [1966]), 144, 3.
[21]Hermann Levin Goldschmidt, "Von der Weltschöpfung zur Weltvollendung—12 Thesen," in Hermann Levin Goldschmidt, 'Der Rest Bleibt': Aufsätze zum Judentum, Werkeausgabe in neun Bänden, Band IV (Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 1997), 19.