Theological Realism and Internal Contradiction: A Reply to Kepnes

Yehuda Gellman
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Recommended Citation

THEOLOGICAL REALISM AND INTERNAL CONTRADICTION: A REPLY TO STEVEN KEPNES

JEROME YEHUDA GELLMAN

Emeritus, Ben-Gurion University

Steven Kepnes's manifesto on behalf of realism about God, "A Program for a Positive Jewish Theology," deserves wide praise. Too often in Jewish theology we are witness to what the American philosopher William Alston called "transcendentalitis," a determined desire to refrain from saying anything at all about God, which for some folk might be but one small step from or equivalent to agnosticism. I have argued elsewhere for theological realism in Jewish thought and thank Kepnes for this important endeavor.[1] Kepnes also endorses positive predications of God, in a rejection of negative theology that allows only negations (God is not this, God is not that). Negative theology is not robust enough for the religious life.

---

[1] See Jerome Yehuda Gellman, *This Was from God, A Contemporary Theology of Torah and History* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2016), 16-21; Jerome Yehuda Gellman, *Perfect Goodness and the God of the Jews, a Contemporary Jewish Theology* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2019), chapter 1.

In my simplest understanding of the terms, a *realist* engaging in discourse about God in traditional Judaism affirms that God is real, genuine, actual, and existent independent of our or anyone else's thinking of God. A *non-realist* engaging in discourse about God in traditional Judaism denies that God is real, genuine, actual, and independently existent. A non-realist could be a "fictionalist," thinking of "God" as an imaginative fiction designed to express and encourage one's commitment to a particular religious way of life.[2] Or a non-realist might treat "God-talk" as an emotively fitting way to relate to well-appreciated features of life and the world with some combination of gratitude and wonder at being alive, or the like. Or a non-realist, pining for Kant, might "posit" God from a desire to motivate morality, yet not *really* believe there is such a thing at all.[3]

Kepnes finds a logical difficulty in an *apparent* contradiction between God as a perfect, absolutely transcendent being (Kepnes calls this the "God of Being," one non-personal in nature) and God as a person (who in the Torah paradigmatically interacts personally with the Israelite nation). If this *is* a contradiction, and if we are required to believe *both* components of it, that would seem to finish off theological realism. On the one hand, a God with logically inconsistent attributes cannot be real. On the other hand, if you are a non-realist you might shrug your shoulders and say that these are only images to guide our behavior, or something like that, and that these images do not refer to any reality outside themselves. All we have to do is to make sure to focus on each image by itself when present to our minds. The images of God as Absolute Being and as personal have different life-guiding tasks in different contexts, and there is no more to be said.

---

[2] For a good review of theological fictionalism see Michael Scott and Finlay Malcom, "Religious Fictionalism," *Philosophy Compass* 13 (2018): 1-11.

[3] For a thorough critique of some of the main arguments for theological non-realism in a mostly Christian setting, see Peter Byrne, *God and Realism* (Aldereshot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003).

Unflinchingly, Kepnes affirms that there is indeed a contradiction between the God of Being and God the personal, and he boldly advocates affirming the contradiction: "I simply see no way out of the dilemma of accepting contradiction as the price to pay for a Jewish theology that is true to the fundamental source of Judaism, i.e., the Torah." To defend his embrace of the Being-person logical inconsistency, Kepnes graciously endorses an idea I wrote about when I was quite young, that of the possibility of "double-mindedness." [4] When a person is in double-mindedness, he or she believes both sides of a logical contradiction, all the while aware that they are indeed logically inconsistent. (Kierkegaard endorsed double-mindedness about believing that the infinite God is also a human being.) [5] Further on, Kepnes seems to modify his stark endorsement of believing an inconsistency by recruiting Pierce's notion of the "third," a possibility lying in the middle, as it were, between contradictory assertions. At this point, Kepnes wants to affirm "a mindset beyond binaries and dichotomies." This, Kepnes avers, "requires a different logic than traditional philosophy with its law of contradiction." I surmise that now we are no longer quite talking about believing a flat-out inconsistency in ordinary logic, but about retreating from asserting the law of noncontradiction in the first place.

Now, when I wrote about double-mindedness way back then, I was a mere lad; everything was possible, even believing in contradictions. However, now that I am much older (sigh!), no longer does everything seem possible, as it did in my naive youth. It is not only a matter of my having grown into grumpiness, for in standard systems of logic, a major problem arises in believing a contradiction. This is the problem of so-called "explosion," viz. that supposing both sides of a contradiction to be true will imply, in standard logic, the truth of every statement *whatsoever*.

---

[4] Jerome I. Gellman, *The Fear, The Trembling, and The Fire, Kierkegaard and Hasidic Masters on the Binding of Isaac* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), chapter 4.

[5] For the leap of faith and believing a contradiction in Kierkegaard, see Jerome Gellman, "Constancy of Faith? Symmetry and Asymmetry in the Kierkegaardian Leap of Faith," in *The Authenticity of Faith in Kierkegaard's Philosophy*, ed. Tamar Aylat-Yaguri and Jon Stewart (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 49-60.

Thus, one who believes a contradiction will be called to believe every statement whatsoever to be true.

So, from the contradiction, "Today is Tuesday *and* today is not Tuesday," in standard logic we can derive any statement you please, such as "Frogs are pink." (I will not bore you with the derivation. But if you like to be bored look at the footnote.)[6] So, if you believe a contradiction, you must believe in the truth of every statement whatsoever (including, by the way, the statement that you should *not* believe every statement whatsoever). This is the problem of "explosion."

Various logicians have proposed non-standard logics, sometimes called "paraconsistent" logics, which block explosion.[7] However, such logics are varied and require counter-intuitive restrictions on obvious logical moves.[8] In any case, I am reluctant to make believing a contradiction or accepting paraconsistent logics a requirement for new

---

[6] The derivation begins with the premise

1.   Today is Tuesday and Today is not Tuesday And proceeds as follows:

2.   Today is Tuesday (derived by separation of the first part of premise 1).

3.   Today is Tuesday or Frogs are pink (derived from 2).

By the rule of "disjunction introduction," 3 says that at least one of the two sides of the "or" is true. This is true of Today is Tuesday or Frogs are pink," since, by 2, it is true that Today is Tuesday. So, one side of the "or" is true.

4.   Today is not Tuesday (derived from 1 by separation of the second part of 1).

5.   Frogs are pink (derived from 3 with 4).

By the rule of "disjunction elimination," since 3 tells us that at least one of the two sides of the "or" is true, and 4 tells us that the first side of 3 is not true, then it is the second side of 3 that must be true. But that second side says that Frogs are pink. So, from the contradiction in 1 we have derived that Frogs are pink as conclusion. In the same way one can derive the truth of any statement whatsoever.

[7] The most well-known of these is "relevance logic" developed most importantly by Alan Anderson and Nuel Belnap. See Alan Ross Anderson and Nuel D. Belnap, *Entailment: The Logic of Relevance and Necessity*, Volume 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975) and Alan Ross Anderson, Nuel D. Belnap, and J. Michael Dunn, *Entailment: The Logic of Relevance and Necessity*, Volume 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

[8] These include a proposal to restrict disjunctive introduction or disjunctive elimination (see footnote 5 above.) A corollary is to limit antecedent elimination: If X then Y. But X, so Y.

recruits signing up for theological realism in Judaism. For the same reason, if at all possible, I would want to avoid proclaiming the death of the law of non-contradiction. Those solutions might be no more successful with outsiders than would having opened campus recruitment centers for the Vietnam War. Theological realists should try to avoid believing a contradiction if at all possible. So, in what follows, I propose ways of proceeding with positive realist attributions of God while preserving the Being-person dichotomy, but without the contradiction.

I begin with Kepnes's own definition of "theological realism," which has three parts:

1. God is an independent Being separate from the cognitive structures of the human mind.[9]
2. God is separate from the world as its creator.
3. Rational knowledge of God is attainable, and human language is capable of addressing God.[10]

In 3, I take Kepnes to be saying, at least, that we humans can *understand* some positive truths about God and God's nature. While this may be true, we should not insist that the positive words we use to talk about God have the very same meaning or the same range or manner of application as when we use those words to talk about ourselves and other things apart from God. Accordingly, I want to focus on three escape routes from believing an inconsistency between God as Being and God as person. Each escape route involves positive statements about God. I choose these because they are rather under-represented in contemporary Jewish theology and in theology in general, and they are worthy of our attention.

---

[9] Here I would be happy to broaden the characterization to include acosmic and panentheistic versions of creation and theological realism. These are to be found in the kabbalah, in Chasidic literature, and in the writings of Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook. These are realist conceptions of God because they fulfill the basic requirement that God exists and has a nature unbeholden to how anybody else thinks of God.

[10] Here I would be happy to allow simply *belief* in God, rather than requiring "rational knowledge," and would emphasize the second conjunct of 3—that we are able to truly say positive things about God and are not limited to negative theology or silence.

These three are what I am calling *Modal-Realism*, *Authority-Realism*, and *Functionalist-Realism*.

Modal-Realism

In particle physics there is a duality problem sufficiently like our Divine duality to be instructive. The duality is that physical "particles" prove to have both wave and particle characteristics. In some ways they act as particles and in others as waves. In a famous experiment, what otherwise acts like particles will pass through two slits as waves and also make a typical wave interference pattern on a photographic back plate. Yet, they hit the back plate as discrete particles (albeit in a wave pattern). So, while the "particle" travels through space as a wave, it becomes a particle at contact while displaying a wave interference pattern on the plate. One "thing" cannot be both a wave and a particle, just as *it seems* that one thing cannot be both an Absolute Being and personal.

There have been varied ways of interpreting the wave-particle duality. The scientific details need not occupy us here. One approach in effect has it that we are not to think of a "thing" here but of "processes," or "events," that display partly wave characteristics and partly particle characteristics. There is no place to ask anything more about an enduring "it" beneath or behind the process or event. In that case there will be no contradiction in the wave-particle duality, since we are not applying inconsistent properties to the very same "thing." We have only phenomenal modes of appearing.

A variant of this solution, useful for God-realism, would be that there is indeed *something* that has both wave and particle modes, but *in itself* it is neither a particle nor a wave. Its very nature, "essence" if you will, is beyond our ability to discover or conceptualize, or it is vastly unlike anything we know. Based on the evidence, though, we have strong reason to affirm the duality of its *modes*. In this, we are free from contradiction, because we are endorsing a mode duality rather than a substance duality. We are not saying that *it* is a particle and a wave, only that it assumes a particle-like existence and assumes a wave-like existence. These are real

modes of what underlies them and interacts with the environment in each mode.

An analogous course for God-duality would be that God truly features both in the *mode* of Being and in the *mode* of personhood. However, God, in God's essential self, is neither *an* Absolute Being nor *a* person. Theological realists of this kind believe there is a real God, an "it," behind these two modes, and we are able to make affirmative attributions about God—namely, that God takes on these two modes, respectively, at various times. It is only that we can *know* nothing about the "itness" of God's own self. We thereby escape inconsistency in the God-duality by asserting modal duality but not substantive duality in God. [11] This assertion is affirmative about God, that God possesses both modes.

This escape route from contradiction means thinking of God as a *person* rather differently than we think of a human being as a person. With a human, he or she *is* a person—that is her substance, as it were— whereas with God, on the present proposal, we can say only that God takes on a personal *modality.* And to say that God is Absolute Being would be to say that God has such a *modality* of being. This way we would be saying something about a real God, something positive, and something true of God independently of how we think of God. So, the application of "person" here would differ somewhat from our ordinary usage. There should be nothing in Kepnes's realism to prevent us from so proceeding.

Authority-Realism

On the Authority-Realism way of avoiding a contradiction in the Divine duality, we move a step away from Kepnes's austere realism and also modal realism, yet we retain what can properly be called a "realist" conception of God. On the present option, the subject of our realist attributions is an independent God, and now we mean to be making substantive rather than merely modal statements about God. However,

---

[11] This modal realism is first cousin to a declared heresy by most Christian Churches: "modalism" concerning the Trinity. On this view, the Trinity consists not of three persons, but of three modes of the one God. These modes occur only serially, not simultaneously.

the authority-realist does so solely on the instruction and guidance of religious authorities. Admittedly, this solution will apply only when a person already has gained trust in the relevant authority and will not apply to others.[12] That is, this realist about God takes it on authority that both sides of the Being-person duality apply to God's own *substantive* self, and not just to modes that God assumes. It is only that this realist is not able to know what it is about God that makes the attributions appropriate to God's very substance.

Our realist, on this suggestion, trusts the authority of the tradition and its most respected figures that the following are true:

1. God is more like an Absolute Being than unlike an Absolute Being.
2. God is more like a person than unlike a person.

And this realist accepts on authority that, given our conceptual limitations and inability to comprehend how 1 and 2 are true of God, we accept that it is best to *think* of God *both* as an Absolute Being and as a person. This is the closest to the truth we can get within our finite limitations, knowing that somehow these terms describe God for us in the best way they can. We have this on the authority of our religious tradition.

This gives us a way to avoid contradiction. For here, when I believe that God is both an Absolute Being as well as a person, I am employing "absolute being" and "person" with semantic literalness but am not *attributing* these to God in semantic literalness. Rather, what I believe, on authority, is that God sufficiently *resembles* an Absolute Being for it to be best *for us* to think of God *as* an Absolute Being. And I am saying that God sufficiently *resembles* a person for it to be best *for us* to think of God *as* a person. As a realist, I believe that there are positive, actual, real, facts about God that correspond to the way I intend what I am saying. Our present realist is an authority-realist.

---

12 I do not deal here with the issue of competing authorities. However, elsewhere I have defended in detail the epistemic legitimacy of trusting one's religion and its authority figures rather than competing ones. For this see, Jerome Gellman, "In Defense of a Contented Exclusivist," *Religious Studies* 36 (2000):401–17.

This sort of thinking should not be unfamiliar from ordinary conversation. Suppose you ask me to describe to you a friend of mine you have never met. "What is she like?" you ask. Now my friend is so extraordinary and her character so deeply familiar to me that I find it difficult to convey to you just what she is like. This is what I might say to you:

> The best way to think of her, although this does not really do justice to the facts, is as a very creative, courageous person. Yet, you must also understand how conservative she is, how she follows the crowd and stays in line. It's hard for me to explain to you just how these two describe her personality. She is so special and so complex. But take my word for it. You will have to meet her and get to know her to understand exactly what I am getting at.

From what I say, you would get *some* idea of what my friend was like from these clashing descriptions. She is more like courageous than not, more like creative than not, and also more conservative than not. You would understand that there was much more to know that makes the descriptions appropriate to my friend before you have ever met her. No contradiction here, for there is more to know. Just so for our authority-realist and God. The present duality about God is appropriate, but there is vastly more to know that we cannot know. We trust those who know better than us, for we believe they know God better than we do, partly through links to revelational moments, partly through their own experiences of God and their own insightful understanding of what has gone before, and so we follow their lead.

There is a sense of "true" in Authority-Realism in which "It is *true* that God is both absolute and personal." This is when "true" means something like "warranted assertability," a term used in the pragmatic theory of truth by John Dewey.[13] In this sense, to say that something is "true" is to endorse its being warranted to assert. It is to say that this statement can be relied on for the matter at hand. But that is precisely what our present God-realist is prepared to say: that it is warranted to *assert* that God is both an

---

[13] John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (New York: Henry Hold and Company, 1938).

Absolute Being and a person. The warrant for assertion is for the purposes of the religious life. Thought of in this way, we can say, along with Kepnes, that in the religious life and theology, we make true (i.e., warranted) claims about God.

Functionalist-Realism

Another way to avoid contradiction in the Being-person duality of God while making positive attributions would be to recognize our ascriptions to God as *functionalist*, rather than as straightforwardly descriptive. To apply a term to X with a *functionalist* meaning is to refer to X by way of the prominent functions X fulfills and not by bare descriptions irrelevant to X's functionality. So, for example, consider "screwdriver" taken as a functionalist term. To qualify as a screwdriver, functionally speaking, X must be suitable for driving screws into a material that resists screws. That is a reference entirely about the functions of X. Something counts functionally as a "screwdriver" without regard to such non-functional attributes as what it looks like, of what it is made, or how exactly it works, or anything about what it is "in itself." A screwdriver can be tiny or large, made of plastic or metal, can be manual or electric, can drive screws by a head that fits and turns the head of the screw or by innovatively using compressed air to drive a screw, and so on.[14] All of these are screwdrivers. "Screwdriver" is then a functionalist term. "Mountain," on the other hand, is not a functionalist term. To call something "a mountain" is not thereby to refer to it by any of its functions. It is just to say what it is, in itself, a "mere" mountain. "Mountain" is a purely descriptive term.

An illustration helpful to us is a functionalist theory of mind, which comes in varied forms. Roughly, mind-functionalism defines psychological concepts in terms of the functions they perform. Take for

---

[14] Truly, the functional term "screwdriver" has come to be identified with a well-known tool that works in a particular way. But that is only because that is pretty much the only kind of screwdriver that most of us know. That should not prevent us from applying the functional term to other tools that work in an entirely different way from our familiar screwdrivers.

example the term "sensations" (experiences of the senses). The mind-functionalist defines "sensation" solely as that which functions in certain ways in our relevant responses and behavior.[15] This is not behaviorism, since it refers to something that is involved in the causing of behavior, which itself is not behavior. Psychological terms, on this theory, leave aside the intrinsic nature of what is fulfilling the function.

Crucially, the *concept* of a sensation for the mind-functionalist does not relate to whether a sensation is "physical," "non-physical," or both, since these are substantive and not functionalist terms. This opens the possibility that what is a sensation, in the sense of what it is made of, so to speak, in itself, and not functionally, is entirely physical, such as brain states or brain processes. Thus, one can coherently maintain that a sensation is a brain process, thus claiming that it is precisely brain processes that serve the sensation-functions. [16] Mind-functionalism is controversial; I do not mean to endorse it, only to illustrate the way functionalist language can been used to further a philosophical program.

A "theological-functionalist" is a theological realist who employs functionalist language when thinking about God.[17] When this realist says "God is a person," he means to say that there is something in or about God, we know not what, that *functions* in the way personality functions in us. So, what he says amounts to no more than that it is true that God has the functional equivalent of how being person-like functions in us. These functions might include reacting to events, reacting to people's actions and moods, initiating actions that affect people both in action and in mood, and functioning in various ways as do some emotions.

On theological functionalism, to say that God functions personably is a positive statement about God, while restricted to functionality. This does not contradict that God is at the same time an absolute being, for there is

---

[15] This is a simplification but will do for us here.

[16] A classic statement of this position is J.J.C. Smart, "Sensations and Brain Processes," *Philosophical Review* 68 (1959): 141-156.

[17] For a pioneering proposal of theological functionalism, see William P. Alston, "Functionalism and Theological Language," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 22 (1985): 221-230.

no inconsistency in saying that an absolute being has the property of *functional* person-likeness. This is to be distinguished from God having personhood considered as substantively the same as ours.

Once again, this escape route from contradiction means thinking of God as a *person* rather differently than we think of a human being as a person. With a human, he or she *is* a person. Being a person is her intrinsic substantive nature, as it were, whereas with God, on the present proposal, we can say only that God has what functions as personal-ness. In so saying, we succeed in saying something true about a real God and true of God independently of how we think of God—namely, that there is something about God that functions in this certain way. "That way" is how something in us functions in the same way, but without God having the relevant intrinsic substantive nature. It turns out that on this type of realism, God might not quite be what Kepnes would want to acknowledge as a "person." Yet, an argument could be made for imaging a functionally person-like God *as a person* for purposes of the religious life. We need to picture God to ourselves in ways that enhance prayer and devotion. So, we picture God as a person when the reality is that God only functions in a person-like way. For practical purposes God is "a person." In actual fact, there is something about God that functions as personable-ness.

Invoking theological functionalism will help us to untangle the following theological puzzlement. In his commentary to Avot, in the *Guide for the Perplexed* 1:57, and in his *Mishneh Torah* Yesodei Hatorah 2:10, Maimonides tells the reader that God "knows," alright, but "does not know by means of knowledge." Now, this declaration is mystifying. Knowing, after all, should entail knowledge. If one "knows" something, he or she must have "knowledge" regarding that something. If God knows without having knowledge, then why say God "knows" at all? What could "knowing" mean here? Well, you might say, God's knowing is very different from ours. Fine, but if God's knowing does not imply knowledge, then how can there possibly be anything about it warranting the label "knowing"? What is "knowing" about it? Were we to be engaging in anthropomorphic language, then *inside* that discourse

knowing should entail knowledge. Otherwise, within anthropomorphism, how could the metaphor of "knowing" work?

If we enlist functionalist language, we could untangle this saying. Consider that Maimonides means to use the verb "to know" in a purely functionalist sense. That is to say that "knowing" refers to something in God—*whatever it might be we do not know*—that *functions* just as does "knowing," taken functionally, does in us. (More accurately, Maimonides would say that knowing is not something within God, but that God's very self is what functions as knowing. That is because God is undividedly simple for Maimonides and so is identical to God's knowing.) God's knowing functions as does ours in that, for instance, if God *knows* (functionally considered) that P is true, then P is true. So, God's knowing (whatever that is), ensures the truth of P. And if God *knows* (functionally considered) that P is true, God is warranted in asserting that P is true. And if God *knows* (functionally considered) that P is true, then God can fully rely on P being true. Just like us. God's knowing is functionally similar as ours, but whatever it is in non-functional terms (compare non-physical sensations to brain-processes[18]), it simply must be very different from what knowing is in us.

On the other hand, Maimonides in the above quote would be using "knowledge" to refer to what we recognize as knowledge *in ourselves*, now thinking of "knowledge" as referring to a familiar substantive, inherent, non-functionalist reality in us. This is perhaps clearer in a kabbalistic adaptation of Maimonides' dictum: "It is said [of the Infinite] that it knows but not with knowledge *familiar to us*; understands but not with understanding *familiar to us*; is kind but not with *kindness familiar to us*; is strong but not with strength *familiar to us*." [19] God does not have knowledge familiar to us. So, Maimonides would be denying that God has our "knowledge," thought of as something inherently substantive in us, even though God has what it takes to know, functionally considered. This is rather parallel to the philosopher of mind who agrees that we have

---

[18] There is more than that to the position of Maimonides here, but that need not delay us.

[19] Zohar Hadash, Exodus, Page 43a. My translation and my emphases.

sensations (functionally) and denies, substantively speaking, that sensations are non-physical. The difference between the two is that the philosopher might want to say just what sensations are, namely brain processes, whereas Maimonides wants to deny being able to think anything substantive about God.

This resort to functional language about God is different from what Maimonides writes in the *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:54, for example, about God being "angry." There, Maimonides says God is said to be "angry" because of perceived similarities between the effects of some of God's actions and the effects of our actions when we are angry. Where a person brings great human destruction or suffering, we see it as coming from being angry, or the like. Just so, when natural calamities destroy life and cause great suffering, God is said to be "angry." But this is not a functional equivalence.

This is a similarity only between effects. For Maimonides, there is nothing about God that truly functions as does anger in us. That is because anger functions in us immoderately and without justice. But, says Maimonides, God acts always with perfect moderation and with utter justice. So, there is nothing in God that functions as anger functions in us. There is only a similarity in outcomes, from a human point of view. Functionally, there is nothing in God that is properly called being "angry," aside from the effects. However, in the case of knowing and knowledge, there are no visible effects of God's knowing something to which to compare our impression of our knowing. And, as opposed to being angry, there *is* something about God (for Maimonides it is God's own self) that *functions* as does knowing in us, concerning the relationship between God's knowing and truth and warrant.

So, I hereby put forward theological functionalism as a promising way of analyzing at least some attributions of God to avoid inconsistency in a realist conception of the God of the Jews.

To conclude, I have suggested three ways to be a theological realist supporting a Being-person duality in God while avoiding logical inconsistently and retaining a concept of God sufficiently robust for the fullness of the religious life. Before ending, I must mention briefly one

more approach that strove mightily to accommodate both the personal God and Kepnes's God of Being, and that is the explicit Hasidic teaching of there being the Infinite in Itself and the Infinite Light that proceeds from the Infinite Itself. The Infinite in Itself corresponds to the impersonal, absolute being of Kepnes. The character of personhood takes place in the realm of the Infinite Light that emanates from the Infinite Itself. Contradiction is avoided by having the elements of the Being-person duality in different locations. Neither the Infinite Itself nor the Infinite Light should be called "God" in this scheme. Rather, the two together may be called "The Godhead" or "The Infinite" as a term encompassing both the Infinite Itself and the Infinite Light. But that is a long story best for another time.[20] Thank you to Steven Kepnes for his most stimulating essay.

---

[20] The long story occurs in the literature of the Chabad Hasidic movement. See an English translation of a treatment of this topic by Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch (1789 – 1866) in *Lessons in Derech Mitzvosecha, A Mystical Perspective on the Commandments*, Volume 2, trans. Eliyahu Touger (Brooklyn, NY: Kehot Publication Society, 2018).