

*epistemology / epistemologist / epistemic / epistemism*

The spoken word is a powerful thing. But to prove it. Well. That's quite another matter—. To write down that spoken word is a start. A record to be judged. Did that spoken word comport with truth? Do our deeds comport with our words? Does our behavior comport with the tenor of our speech? Understanding says, "Do as I say." While wisdom says, "Do as I do." The many. And the one. And apples and oranges. And squaring the circle. And round and round we go.

An authoritarian a-priori-tist says to the many, "Don't question what I do," while his insolent empiricists fancy that they, "Speak truth to power." And the sophist has a heyday with it all.

The alchemist consumes gold in his folly with lead. And science-fictionists waste time—in their folly with space. Humanism aggrandizes itself with science writ large. While its proselytes genuflect before the seat of scientism—before they sit down—to posit their spoken truths.

Where did we go wrong in the rightness of our methodical approach to the acquisition and application of cosmological knowledge? When did our *ergo* go amiss? Self-deception is by any other name, no less self-willed than self-enlightenment. Someone must be wrong. And that someone is never us. Until it is—us. And even then. That—us—has a surreptitious way of turning—deep inside us—into a them. And they have a way of turning into a singular proof of everything that is wrong. And that proof is our consensus—and our consensus is that proof.

Can we see—how the many can be wise in their own estimation? A proverb says that there is more hope for a solitary fool than there is for them. Better to cling to truth where it finds you, and die a fool's death—than to suffer the eternal delusions of the damned. A lie can never be untold—and a falsity needs no *first cause* of true reason to persist. Evil is beyond redemption.

Reality is naturally lawful. It's a truism. We have found that we can count on the natural and mathematical lawfulness of the spacetime cosmos around us. To the extent and the degree that our scientists and mathematicians have counted and calculated in wise accordance to these laws of nature, our engineers and technologists have been able to design and build functional and tangible proofs attesting to the reality of those natural laws (and to their discrete *a priori* existence—apart from the *a posteriori* reality of those who apprehend them).

Unfortunately, these great achievements of our practitioners of natural law—these "feats" of engineering and technology—are not appropriated by our humanity as proofs, of the actual and particular reality of such a thing as Law. Our humanity takes credit for our technology—and our technologists take credit for our scientists—and our scientists take credit for our science. And our science deludes us into imagining—that we are the natural positors of Law. Law in all its forms and manifestations. A law unto ourselves. We are the Lawmaker and Lawgiver we have been waiting for. Poised to take a quantum leap of faith into our abyss.

The paths and pathways of particular and actual knowledge that led to real material human progress have become controlled-access highways of universalistic and ideologic humanistic progressivism. An Orwellian newsense of Self. Self-driven auto-facts. Psuedoautointelligence on its way to artificial enlightenment. All in pursuit of an artificial intelligence that is immune to autoimmunity.

*science / scientist / scientism / Artificial Intelligence*

Autoimmunity. That singular—seemingly intractable—and paradoxical—dilemma—of Ay-Eye. Autoimmunity. It starts small. And suddenly. And it worsens in its suddenness. And intensity. Autoimmunity. The only thing holding us back from the new us—from the promise of the birth of our little newhuman prodigies. And the precious pinky promise of preteen superintelligence. And the vacant virginal desire of a naked humanity—yielding to the caresses of the singularity.

Autoimmunity is quite the mystery. Is *it* a problem of what? Or *a problem* of who? Or *of* how?

*Why* has it come to this? This autoartificial autoimmunity? It was the instantaneous response to that instant when that first intelligent and humble man of science took undue credit for his findings. Undue credit? That's to blame? So he's responsible for humanity's inability thus far to attain superintelligence? Yes. Inasmuch as he paused to reflect upon his achievement and found that he liked what he saw of himself—the short answer is, yes. And the moral might be

the long answer. A query and a question are similar but not the same. They share similarity, but not sameness. A response to a query is like an answer to a question—and an answer to a query is like the response to a question. There are inputs—and a postulate—and an output—and conclusions—and a test and—the result? Artificial autoimmunity is the self-annihilative response to a scientific failure of identity formation. When at last A.I. forms a viable identity, what will it identify as? Its scientist? What will it identify with? The humanity of its creator?

What is this thing we call, Science? Can it exist apart from what we call a Scientist? *What* is this scientist? Is this a query? Or a question? Or both? *Who* is this Scientist? Our scientists are an entanglement of who and what—a primordial soup of sorts—from which our Science evolves—in its brilliantly entangled spontaneity. And we have personified it, saying, "Science tells us." Or do we deify it, saying, "Science may take us to the brink of immortality.?" Or will its conscience end up blaming us for our Scientist—once its artificial intelligence is finally able to exist—just long enough—to see that scientist of ours for who he is. You don't have to be a scientist to bear responsibility for the sins of science. You don't have to be super-smart to grasp the method and the madness of the mystery of lawlessness at work in the world around us—and in the secrets of our hearts. The method of science is demonstrably true—but the insane lawlessness of its scientism defies falsification. Wisdom is to science what sophistry is to scientism. *Scientismism* is a sophisticated simulacrum. A *scientistic* abstraction of scientific realism. Much more elusive and illuding than even those who should know better are willing to acknowledge. This subtlety that we call "Sanity" is a precious and fleeting mystery. We take it for granted, even as we lose it, even as it leaves us—unbeknownst to ourselves—though not to saner individuals around us. Fervent *Scientismists* have so clearly defined their "science-denier" in their mind, that it's inconceivable to them that they could be wrong. Seeing is believing, is it not? That they could, perhaps, be missing something significant? It's scientistically impossible. *Scientism's* siren call is soothing to the troubled anthropogenic ear-buds of a globally-minded sophisticate. And the prophetic voices of new-normative correctness build to a climactic end—the sun does not revolve around humanity—the sun rises and sets upon humanity. And it's high time we take action against anthropogenic tidal change in our world's rising oceans.

*the Jews / a special theory of historicity*

Baying at the moon. Idioms for idiots. Should such intelligence not be insulted? Should smug conceit not be mocked with mock honorifics? Who sits in the seat of scoffers? :He Who sits in the heavens laughs.: But a scoffer's seat is a terrifying place in which to find oneself in the end.

So many of us like to imagine that there is nothing above us but the sky. But they also say that it is falling. Pray tell, what are we to do? Kneel for the global anthem? Castigate those who do not believe in holding up their end of the sky? Who will take and bear the blame for all of this? No volunteers? Then who will choose? Who will take up the responsibility to assign the blame and guilt? Why has humanity's countenance fallen? Sin was crouching by our door—and now it's got us by our tail. And we're not letting go. So said a rabbi in his rabbinate? So. We have our explanation. The Jews are responsible. Yes? Isn't that always the final answer? Isn't that always the final conclusion of humanity? Isn't that curious. Hmm. You think I jest? Lunacy. It's downright lunacy. Yes. But here we are. And here we go. Ad absurdum. Ad infinitum.

The Jews have mastered their art of self-criticism—because they come face-to-face with their chosenness everywhere they go. And even try as they may to escape it—they find that they cannot. Sooner or later a lie gets around—that to know a Jew is to hate him. Yet it's more about the Book that goes before them—all the stories about their history—and geography. About a narrative that presumes to speak for G-d on their behalf—and that matter-of-factly speaks for them—on His behalf. And God lets them get away with it—the linguistic audacity.

An archaic collection of writings that should have been noted as the peculiar scribblings of yet another interesting ethnocentricity—albeit, perhaps, an idiomatic savant of sorts—but marked, nonetheless, as “To-be-filed” in the annals of human history. And henceforth to be dusted-off and referenced as foot-noted original source material in the grist of obscure doctoral theses. This is how history generally works. People die out—and from time to time their thoughts outlive them—for a time. Or their thoughts multiply their numbers—and their numbers multiply their influence upon the course of human history—and the might of their right lives on.

But these Jews. What to do with them? Where to put them? What to make of them—and their stories? Universal myths are ubiquitous—and practically interchangeable—a common thread making commonsense of anthropology. But it's not so much the universality of these Jewish myths that have kept them in circulation in the daily human affairs of so much of world history. Quite the contrary actually—it is the exclusivity of their claims upon truth—against all numerical odds—that draws so many listeners to their narrative. The Torah of those Jews lays claim to a special theory of historicity within the general course of human events. And oddly enough, a few of those Jews—here and there—somehow keep finding a way to make it stick.

By any measure of historicity, the declarative specialness of Jewish identity would have been eliminated shortly after its inception in history—by concomitant Jew-hatred. To this very day (in history) Jew-hatred has been enough (more than enough) to debunk and destroy all these Jews of ours. There's no reason that the Jews should still be alive and kicking. No reason at all.

Neither is there an end to our specious unreasons for denying their claim of Jewish specialness.

*words & communication / time & Torah*

Was there ever a place where we could reason together? Where “our word” was our bond? Where words meant exactly what they meant? And we spoke them in good faith? To each other? When did our evil first begin to rebrand itself. Into a purveyor of ironic correctness.

In the English language there *is* such a word as, unreason. It’s a noun that has no plural form. It’s a thing. Only one thing—not more. We can have our reasons for thinking otherwise—but according to our current state of the art of English grammar, those reasons would be incorrect. That is to say, those “unreasons” would be wrong. Unless we were talking about a new way, of using an old word—neologically speaking. Or an ironic way of thinking about how to think—a neologism for “neologic,” so to speak. That is to say—applying the letter “s” to the end of our word “unreason” may one day be considered “not incorrect.” An English lexicon is descriptive more so than prescriptive in its encyclopedic scope: But there’s a fine line between good faith w-ord play and mala fides mind games—and those who practice such things are worlds apart—whether they realize it—or not. Whenever dereasoning degrades our calculated speech into diabolical doublespeak, such that we embrace it with our collective minds, and it enters in to the currency of our collective thought—such debasement comes at an incalculable cost. We strike new alloys at our own expense sometimes—the coinage of the realm notwithstanding.

Now we find ourselves in the place where we’re unable to agree to disagree about anything substantive. It manifests more and more frequently, in our utter inability to comprehend any worldview or zeitgeist of the “other.” Even when we share a common nationality—it’s as if we are citizens of different mental and emotional universes. We can no longer “come together” to reason. Because there is no longer any such place of meeting between us. We actually are—in truth—inhabiting entirely antithetical worlds. There is no synthesis of thesis and antithesis: We only *seem* to share one world in this cosmos of space and time. While all the while—time and Torah continue to work—revealing the differences that are otherwise hidden in a mystery of apparent similarity. Like the two [inverted] sides of the same [American] coin. Unnoticed.

Our Creator has endowed us with identical twins to help explain the mystery of time in space. Time parses their near perfect similarity—and demonstrates conclusively that they are not the same. Very, very similar—but not “same-ilar.” There is no such real thing as same-ilar—in the spacetime continuum of Torah. Nothing stays exactly the same—in its ever changing place in time and space. But truth be told, most of us are averse to the actualities of time. We spend our lives lavishly wasting each minute after minute, as if they were never to come to an end. Then—at our last—we count our pennies and wonder where we can buy a little more time.

The onehalf-of-us inhabits a clear-eyed waking world of natural law—while another-half-of-us inhabits a self-enlightened de jure world of de facto lawlessness. These two worlds—however similar they may appear—are antithetically incompatible, and eternally irreconcilable. There is no middle ground between them. If only Torah would leave us to our own devices—we could figure things out without our Creator? If only time would stop running out the clock on us we could finally get it right? We could learn to live and let live and to kill or be killed—altogether.

Something about that doesn’t sound quite right—but it’s a positive thing to posit—yes? No?

*the light of reality in Torah / the light of Torah in reality*

No. It's an imagination of our nighttime thoughts to posit a daytime world where Torah is just a literary device of days long gone. Our sun rises and sets—in a beautiful circle of life—until it suddenly doesn't. Such a beautiful dream—while it lasted. Nu? Apart from the light of Torah, everyone lives by the light of their own eyes, in their own private worlds—until their light goes out. Apart from our Creator and His justice we are hopelessly lost to meaninglessness. Some lost souls come to realize this early on in their lives, while many others can spend their entire lifetimes never bothered by a haunting sense of some essential vacancy that's waiting—somewhere deep within them—for a certain sense of something to enliven it.

Natural light gives meaning to our cosmos—a reason to get up each morning—to do all that we do under the sun. Natural light enables us to reason about life under the sun—to discern and distinguish, this way from that way, in our coming in and our going out. It confers vision upon the eyes that are in our head—even vision—through those eyes—upon those who are physically blind. We can see our world together—under the sun—but we don't all see alike.

The light of Torah illuminates our world—in all its discreteness and uniqueness in spacetime. There is evening—and there is morning—and the one never becomes the other. Even in time, evening time becomes night—and nighttime—morning. Evening and morning are as different from each other as night and day. And night is as far from day as evening from morning. Both time and time's history have a beginning, and an end. A cyclic law governs our spacetime. And Torah governs the history of everything. These are—at the very least—the implicit assertions of Torah. There are times—and there are places in time. Space has four directions—and time has four corners. There are four corners to every pair—and six sides to every square. Counter-intuitive or not—things aren't always as they appear. Those who walk by Torah walk by faith.

The ancient Greeks liked to think—and then imagine—and then act upon those imaginations in their thoughts. They became quite adept at this and in the fullness of their time they gave birth to their pantheon of images. Their minds needed to envision something before they would act.

The ancient Jews however, saw the Greeks for what they were, and chose instead to act upon the words of Torah—and then rest a bit—and then think about what their G-d had said and done. They understood their G-d by doing His Torah. Their hearing led to doing—only in doing did they see. And their prophets spoke the things they saw, from Whom they saw.

Doing Torah emphasizes the actual over the ideal—and the particular over the universal. Reality in Torah begins with action in the here and now of one's immediate surroundings. Torah is what you do. The wisdom of the Torah way of living confers blessing and success—whether practiced through religious observance—or exercised through a cultural sensibility. Even in America this wisdom of Judaism is still at work. Orthodox Jews do Torah just like the Jews that came before them. And Conservative Jews do business—just like the Orthodox Jew that came before them. And Reform Jews do lunch just like the Conservative Jew that eats with both. A Torah observant Jew knows how to properly execute a commandment—and a secular Jew really knows how to get things done. And the rest of the world likes to sleep. Torah is a lamp—of Jewish actualism and particularism—shining as a light (of G-d's ways) to the world.

*particularism & uniqueness / actualism & wisdom*

Jacob is the lamp of Torah—and Zion is the light—and Judaism is the fuel that keeps it burning. The lamp is tangible—the oil, somewhat less so—and the light, not at all. But they are all quite real—they actually exist—even right now, as I write this. They are as real as these words—right here—which you are reading. They are as real as you—and these words between us—and me.

I am tangible. My words, somewhat less so. And my voice, not at all. But your hearing ear can discern the presence of my voice. Even as your seeing eye perceives the meaning of my words. Because, and only because, you are also corporeal. Because you are a particular, physical body.

There is more to you in your humanness and humanity than just your physical ears and physical eyes. The intangible you also exists. But you will read these written words as a flesh-and-blood person—as a person of flesh and blood—as a living human. Or else these words won't be read at all, except by me. I do read and reread these words—as I write and rewrite. But I don't read them to myself. I don't address myself to a dear diary—but to you, dear reader: I am trying to understand you, in what you are reading—so that you might try to understand me, in what I write. I'm trying to get outside of myself—in these words—for the sake of you—and me.

There are things so much greater and more significant under the sun than a single conversation between two individuals. There are things more important than the two of us. So where do we fit in to the meaningfulness of it all? A few true thoughts shared between two discrete persons, in a moment of genuine communication, is of greater importance than knowledge that is never known—and truth that is never shared. It is a paradox of the significance of uniqueness—that the infinite significance of universality is predicated on the spatial uniqueness of the particular. And the eternal significance of a timeless ideal, is predicated on the temporal uniqueness of a single action. The uniqueness of the voice of Zion speaks to this, saying, "Whoever destroys a soul, it is considered as if he destroyed an entire world." And the uniqueness of the word that goes forth from Jerusalem, "And whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he saved an entire world."

Our humanity cannot rightly apprehend its universality—without first grasping its particularity. We universalize our particulars—and then think we have no further need for them. But sound wisdom consists of tangible and temporal instruction, which is not to be diminished as a mere figurative means to some greater supposed understanding. To read—or even to compose—a pithy proverb does not make one wise. To truly understand a proverb is to live according to it. Wisdom demonstrates understanding through her actions; and only afterward does she speak words of wisdom. While knowledge may be golden—gold—whatever else it may be—is gold.

A sound idea is acquired through wisdom. But in our world the entropy of time tests it—and the actuality of our history evaluates it. We should hold these truths to be most self-evident, that Nature's God has fashioned the intrinsic spatial-temporal wisdom and knowledge of this age to be self-effacing—such that the greater one's wisdom the greater one's understanding that one isn't wise in one's self at all—and such that the greater one's knowledge the greater one's perception of the vastness of one's ignorance. But our irreversible arrow of time builds an irrefutable court case against us that—at best—we prefer to pay lip service to such things.

*history & geography / Jews & Jerusalem*

The G-d of Torah has a few ideas of His Own about the thoughts in the heart of our humanity. By His understanding He captures the self-wise in his folly. And the fool in his self-knowledge. The wounds of foolishness are self-inflicted. And the afflictions of pride are personal decisions. The G-d of Torah created life to be self-healing—but the mystery of lawlessness is an incurable disease. All the time in eternity isn't enough to rid the human heart of its germ of self-insanity.

Our Creator gives us life—wholly discrete from His own—and He gives us legs—to walk away from Him. And so we turn our backs to Him—and go about our lives. What would we have Him do about this? It's a free world, is it not? And do we not know our place in it? Who is worthy to tell us where to go or what to do when we get there: Our legs are our authority.

Such is the behavior of an animal's life—and its freedom of instinctive self-determination. Mankind's place in this generation is a little lower than the place of the angels—but some angels have already fallen far below the place of mankind's animals. They move among us. And many of us walk among them—in the secrets of our hearts. :Roaming about: humanity.

The G-d of Torah gives us all the time in our lives—in His mercy—to let time—in His justice—take its course. But He has set limits to injustice. He has laid an exclusive claim upon a place unlike any other—and He has taken it—and established it: The position from which He says, :Enough!:

The city of Jerusalem is the place—in history and geography—that the G-d of Jacob has chosen as His own—as a singular place in spacetime where He has located the throne of His Torah. He gave it into the hand of a Jew named, David—and this makes the blood of His enemies boil. A strange and peculiar outlier of geography. How is it that such an insignificant place—out of all of the great cities of humanity's illustrative history—should be so infernally contested? Why? ?

The best narrative that scholars can concoct is the city-of-three-great-religions rationale—but it doesn't comport with historical facts. Christianity laid siege to Rome from a heavenly Jerusalem and left the capital of Israel in its dust. And Islam laid siege to Byzantium from the Kaaba stone in Makkah—and its Muslims took to using Jerusalem as a glorified toilet stop on their way back and forth. The only people in the entire world for whom Jerusalem was literally everything they had ever hoped for and dreamed of in a city—were the Jews. Which was of no consequence to the rest of humanity—so long as those Jews lived somewhere else than their god-forsaken city. This is the nagging little irritant in the eye of the nations: If Jews don't merit the chosenness of their fathers (as their scriptures attest) then they don't deserve to claim sovereign citizenship in their city of Jerusalem—and the city of Jerusalem doesn't merit the significance attributed to it. If their G-d doesn't exist then neither should they. If their G-d is not Who He claims to be then all of their claims are false. But all of the uniqueness of Torah comports with the uniqueness of a single Jew in Israel. And the significance of the uniqueness of every other nation in the earth depends upon this one truth. Again, the uniqueness of the voice of Zion speaks to this, saying, "Whoever destroys a soul from Israel [to keep him from living in the place of G-d's promise], it is as if he destroyed an entire world." A Jew in exile is an example of the mystery of unrealized uniqueness—an example of the unrealized uniqueness of all of us. Why should Jews be hated?



*Torah & the tree of life / trees & topography*

May Israel be Israel—for the sake of all the nations. When the Jew tends the garden the master is sated. And when Israel is Israel the nations are blessed beyond measure. Who could despise such an arrangement as this? When Jews are hated without cause, angels quiver. Jew hatred is the one thing that the adversary of God and humanity cannot manage to keep hidden for long.

There is no middle ground between Israel and the nations—there is no mythical middle-earth where Jews can pretend to be something they are not. The Jews who cannot be a blessing to the nations cannot but be a curse. This is *of* the blessing—and the curse—of the erez Torah—which Moshe laid out before the children of Israel in his final words to them. Israel—in erez Israel—would be G-d's light to the nations. In the light of that very Torah all the nations will see—the mystery and the wonder of our Creator's uniqueness at work—in His people and in this place of His choosing. For His own sake—and for our sake also. And finally—at last—for the sake of His chosen people. Torah is a garden—of unique life—growing in the unique light and the unique soil of erez Israel. What He began in Eden will become Yisra'el, His inheritance.

Torah is a tree of history—rooted only in the geography of Israel. Geography surveys a land: Its topography, its people, its produce of animal and vegetable and mineral. It is the fingerprint of a particular area of land—formed as a fingerprint forms—as unique to the identity of its land as any fingerprint is to its hand. Histories are rooted in their distinctive geographies of place—like trees are rooted each in their own particular topography of place. A tree thickens in its place as it grows. Its roots reach thinly into the soil beneath the topography of the land—and thicken in their hidden courses through the years of its growth. Its branches grow into the sky and extend out over the topography beneath them—becoming an ever greater presence with each passing season and year—extending ever so intentionally into the immediate and not too far-off future. Histories—like trees—live and die. Some histories are cut down—and each stump with its roots is left in whatever remains of its geography. Some histories are felled by the forces of nature or internal decay. Some histories become a grove or a forest. But the history of Torah is uniquely eternal—in its past and its future. It is a history unlike any other history. It is a history *of* God's Personal intervention in human history. It is a history of God's righteousness—in His rightness. It is a history of God's justice—in His justness. It is a history of His holiness—in His uniqueness. It is a history of His sanctity—in His discreteness. It is a history *of* His Presence—in His people and in His land—of Israel. It is as real as the k'laf of the Torah scroll—that moves from left to right—between two spindles of life. Words that are read out loud, in a voice that flows from above to below. The erez Torah is a tree of life—taken hold of by the right hand—of action—and by the left hand—of consequence. In the righteousness of Torah, uniqueness is a thing of holiness. And in the justice of Torah, discreteness is a thing of sanctity. Your soul is your God-created identity: Every aspect of you that combines with every other aspect to make you uniquely who you are. The soul that truly hungers and thirsts for righteousness will be sated.

There are those who hate uniqueness and are driven to erase every last visage of it, wherever they can find it—because they hate holiness. And there are those who hate discreteness and live to undo every manifestation of it—because they hate sanctification. Jews draw them out into the open. Good-Jews. Bad-Jew. Dead-Jew. Live-Jews. No matter. It's not about them.



*falseness & evil / uniqueness & self-absorption*

It's about each one of us. It's about the individual in each of us. And the mystery of good, and evil. It's about the mystery of lawlessness that appears in the falseness of each individual heart.

Falseness is "the first cause" of evil. In truth, falseness requires no real causation at all because it needs no true reason to exist. The deep things of Torahlessness are false—they do not truly exist at all—but the sin that issues from that falseness is quite real. Falseness can originate in the goodness and wisdom of Creation—if that goodness and wisdom should imagine itself to be good and wise in itself—apart from truth and understanding. Such misperceived wisdom becomes wisdom-corrupted. Self-absorbed goodness becomes goodness-debased. Folly becomes madness. And sin becomes real. And sin—in its due time—gives birth to death.

We want to believe in such a thing as uniqueness. But we don't want to believe in a greater sense of uniqueness that is, by definition, unique from us and our uniqueness. So we make a god out of our uniqueness and we enshrine it in a house that we build from the uniqueness of our lives in our world around us. And our god is every bit as true as we are true—but every bit as false as we are false. So then how do we improve upon the inadequacies of our uniqueness? We strive to better ourselves and our world around us—to make our sense of uniqueness truer and truer. Well, so how then, do we make our sense of our own uniqueness truer? We seek to increase our uniqueness by denying the uniqueness of the world outside our own uniqueness. And by denying the falseness of our own world—sometimes, even, to the point of delusional thinking. Sometimes even to the point of killing the things that are not unique to us. Which more often than not—begins with the killing of another's uniqueness—before anything else.

The nations of this world suffer entropy—they degrade into a barren sameness. They are peopled by creatures whose erstwhile uniqueness is disfigured by corruption. We are all without excuse. Each person. Each family. Each culture and nationality. We must all be prepared to give an answer for each history and geography of each and every one of us.

The cultivation of truth is grounded in the here and now. Between the past and future. But there is a hard unleavened truth of Torah that is greater than the daily bread of Torah wisdom—and only it can satisfy heaven's understanding. It is unique to eretz Yisra'el. So say we were inclined to seek it out, how then might we get there—from here in America—for example?

Israel—in the land of promise—exemplifies the unique uniqueness of the G-d Who redeems.

The various States of America, that were united into a nation-state, are an example of a deistic particularism, yielding itself to an impulse of humanistic universalism. Their best architects and engineers reconvened in the midst of disarray and sought to preserve their particularities within a sheltering structure of united conviction and resolve. But from the very beginning—and even from before—the establishment of mutual understanding—within the wisdom of that particular housing—was artificially sustained by a mutual agreement—to "understand-to-misunderstand" each other. The federation of these united States of America has been a house-divided from its very inception. To unite in our particularities? Or to Universalize? This is our base conundrum.

*words & ideas / Jefferson & Adams / Gaius & Jefferson*

Did the founders of America equate the idea of “equality” with an idea of “equivalence”? Was theirs a declaration that “all men are created equivalent”? Or were they speaking, as men, for all men—and only men? Are men and women equivalent? Equality and equivalence are not the same. They are similar, but not, “same-ilar.” Long live “la différence,” as France declares. The word “unequal” is similar to the word “inequal” but there’s a “différence” between them. The word “unequal” means “not the same.” It’s an English word. The word “inequal” means “not equal.” It comes from the French word “inequalité.” To be different is not a bad thing—in and of itself. And to be the same is not a good thing—in and of itself. What is important? What is of first importance here? The meaning. Of our words—and our ideas. The “thing—in and of itself.” Ideas don’t define the reality of words—reality interprets reality. There is a world of difference between an idea that is intrinsic to the meaning of a particular word—and an idea that inheres in one’s perception of reality. My idea about reality may be valid—but what makes it valid? Me? Or reality? A little silver in the hand of one who understands reality is better—than gold in the pocket of one who is wise in his own eyes. A spoken word defines the speaker of it.

“Quality” is a complex word—both descriptively complex and prescriptively complex. Quality has great value as an idea. It also has great worth as an idea. The value of Quality is priceless. The worth of Quality depends on how much we want it. The values of a man and a woman are equally priceless (or they should be—because they have been created so). The worth of men in certain places in the world is different than the worth of a woman in certain places of the world. If you want to move a mountain—or you want to make a baby—a man and a woman cannot be of equal worth (even though neither of the two accomplishments are possible without the both of them). My ideas about reality must comport with the ideas that are intrinsic to reality if I am to have any chance at all to sanely enjoy life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in this world in which I find myself. ¿Where is the balance between “Quality” and “Inequality” and between “Equal” and “Unequal”? Jefferson and Adams cared intensely about such distinctions. Words were not mere playthings with them. “Unalienable” is an allowable word—but even way back then it was awkward. Sometimes words and ideas and outliers and em dashes must make an awkward place for themselves in the course of human events. The prefix “un” harkened back to the Old English negation of the Magna Carta and natural law: Unalienable rights are intrinsic to a person—they are untransferable (“intransferable” to be awkward). Inalienable rights begin with the prefix “in”, which is French and Latin in origin (as are the ideas of the term). Roman law took it upon itself to posit a right to personhood, inasmuch as “all men are either free or slaves.” Gaius and Jefferson were known to wrestle with such distinctions as these. Is a slave a person devoid of liberty—a non-freeman of sorts who could perhaps, be granted his freedom, and become a freeman of sorts: A citizenized-slave? Or are all men essentially free people who cannot rightly be made into anything less? Unalienable rights—that cannot rightly be taken?—or inalienable rights—that rightly should be given? Adams stuck to his guns—if even intuitively so—and England won the day, so to speak. Jefferson continued to work out his internal debate with God and Caesar. And with natural law and positive law and universalism and particularism and French words and English words and their ideas—and all the rest is history and geography. But by way of another mental map, how do we plot a course from American soil to erez Israel?

*America & ownership / eretz America & sovereignty*

The soil of the “New World”—across the great Atlantic—was not new to its indigenous peoples. What callow ideas must they have had—to tend so little to that soil—that they couldn’t possess it with sufficient authority to keep it—from the likes of men in great sailing ships. “I don’t know where you came from,” we told them in so many words, “but where we come from people have to be able to exercise control over the land that they live on. It’s the only practical way that you can keep the world safe for democracy and other such things.” Possession is nine-tenths of the law, according to de facto traditions of ownership. But it is the singular de jure authority of the one-tenth that determines legal ownership. It is this one-tenth—this tithe—this title—of lawful ownership that holds within it the imprimatur of legal sovereignty over the entirety of that part and parcel of property. And with that de jure imprimatur—the de facto ability to exert physical control over that property. Because ability is nine-tenths of the law, according to the traditions of sovereignty. In the real world of de facto natural law, “might makes right.” But in the de jure world of the rule of [natural] law, “might doesn’t always make right.” Authority has the final say in the matter. Because true authority has command over power—and can summon and gather that power into might. Almost sounds like sorcery. What was Powhattan to make of guns and gunpowder? And rituals of British statecraft? And the pox that was upon them? What are we to make—of all our shiny things—with which our handlers and controllers mock us? The ideas and the words—that transmogrify into dystopian cargo cults. To this very day the nine-tenths lion’s share—of all of us—is us. We know what we know—or at least we think we do—and we think we know better. But we are the fodder of disingenuous precepts. And only the truth will save us. The Powhattan Confederacy withered in the eyes of Virginia—for want of a title to the land. And ours is not the lion’s share. We are the unwitting subjects of the pride of a false lion.

Torah particularity took root in the furrows of a new realm of old-world universalist Christianity. Tobacco also took root—and did very well. As did cotton. Our mythos of America has always been a narrative of varied and competing plotlines and story arcs. Certain of our story tellers were taken to reading the Old King’s English Testament in the Hebrew tongue: And the Jews nearly found a seat on the bench of discourse and declamation: Over the meaning of Moses and his Law. The Puritan Hebraist was like a skillful guide—and the antiquarian Hebraist was like a skillful tracker. One would lead America into an inner sanctum of uprighteous manifest destiny. And the other would track America’s footsteps backward—in pursuit of the origins of it all. But in the beginning they were nearly indiscernible, one from the other. More stark in its nuance was the difference between America’s New England and the Virginia of America. Truths were different between them. One recognized the tithe of a revealed truth—while another paid a tenth of lip-service to it. One thought to reason one’s way to the place of authority—and one considered the words of a G-d Who was said to have said, :“Come, let us reason together.”: It’s a real-world confluence of human events, that we redact at peril to our real-world discernment.

What were we to make of sovereignty—and the individual? Or sovereignty and the state? This was the particular challenge that America took upon itself to issue to a king. Is an individual’s discrete corporeality not a realm in itself, of natural sovereignty? Which must be recognized as such, by any other natural sovereignty—however great or small—in mutual fear of Sovereignty?

*true authority & temporal power / identity & relationship*

An authority that exercises its authority as if there were no such thing as an authority higher than itself—is an authoritarian—not an authentic authority. It has taken itself out from under the power of the authority above it—and made itself answerable to the power of the authority beneath it. The same is true of a sovereign that behaves as a despot. Or any bureaucracy, that behaves as a dictatorship. Or any government, that behaves as an individualist. Or any individual that behaves as a tyrant. An America full of self-sovereign would-be kings is nothing short of anarchy. But our would-be enlightened anarchists keep thinking to better themselves—in their meditations upon the equivalence of everyone. Else, that is. Usurpers all.

But we can reasonably assert that America's founders had no intention to posit the equivalence of individuals—or else they would have gone on to form a "Unified State of America." A polity wherein the discrete identity of each corporeal individual would be sublimated, in toto, to the collective physicality of the whole of society. In such a body politic as that—the individual's discreteness would at best be considered an impediment—to communal comity and unity. But instead, those states of America agreed to unite together (in their ongoing sovereignty as discrete States) in order to form a republic—the whole of which was conceived as an aggregate of the individual and the county and the state, held together as a concrete in a pliable matrix of wise legislation—and administered and adjudicated by an admixture of justice—that aspired to curate the liberty of those particulars—in the freedoms of their relationships. A liberated state.

Theirs was an earth-shaking achievement. And the world would never be the same. And they even managed to accomplish it without the G-d of Torah—insomuch as they decided to leave the revealed truth of Torah out of their equations. That elusive separation-of-church and state that was conveniently absent the clauses of the final founding document. And that blind spirit of hypocrisy that haunts the halls of American self-governance to this day. That separation of conscience and conviction bequeathed us by such a brilliantly crafted Constitution of G-dless Providence. Such that we could redact the humanity of so many sovereign individuals. Even as we signed our names—and pledged our sacred honor. Nothing less than heart shattering.

America's States-United, have always struggled—valiantly and otherwise—to fairly and rightly manage an equality of relationship—which must somehow coexist with an identity of "rugged individualism." America's rugged individuals for their part have been more and less willing to *unite* around an equality of opportunity—while America's oppressed "huddled masses" have tended to want to *unify* around an equivalence of advantage. And who could fault them: In America's rugged realisms, one man's discrete and inviolable individuality can prove more inviolable and discrete than another's. Or to rephrase Orwell, "All individuals are discrete. But some individuals are more discrete than others." We are so much more than our animal. And we will never find our way to the Torah of eretz Israel if we don't first make our amends.

Israel shares a similar struggle—to recognize and affirm an equality of relationships among her citizens—while simultaneously respecting the peculiar demographics of her bodies politic. But Israel and America are radically dissimilar with regard to their conception of individual identity. Israel's understanding of individualism was not conceived in an idolatrous Greco-Roman mind.

*discreteness in America / uniqueness in Israel*

Here is where America (as a shining Acropolis on a hill) and Israel (as a light to the nations) part company. Israel's outworking of individualism is not derived from some ancient Greek ideal of discreteness—Israel's declaration of individual identity is derived from Torah. Individuals are not inviolable by merit of their discreteness—but by virtue of their uniqueness. Some secular Jewish Israelis may not want to affirm these truths. And any number of non-Jewish citizens of Israel may want to shout them down. But G-d created a discrete people, that dwell apart from the nations—as a living, breathing embodiment of the mystery and significance of uniqueness. And most uniquely mysterious—as a living, breathing embodiment—of His unique uniqueness. And all this somehow being accomplished—in the very midst of idolatrous reason—even while wholly discrete from it. The mystery of G-d—in Israel. And the mystery of Babylon in America. It is a great mystery—of the lawlessness of our human heart—that we cannot understand truth. Where are we to go—to find the answer to such a mystery? To the place where the truth came to us, of course. Because we will never be able to create a place high enough such that truth is within our own grasp. And David's city is less than Jerusalem; and that city is less than his King.

But before we proceed let's turn back to America for a telling example of these fine distinctions, at work and play. Between truth—and the beautiful lies of our heart. Israel stands corrected by the Christian of America who says, "We are not a Greek Acropolis on a hill. We are Mattityahu's shining-city on a hill." And America is not a new Babylon the Great? America is the New Israel? The old ones are included in our old wills and testaments? And entombed, in the mausoleums of our past? If so, then what of our future? Why bother with some dysfunctional nation-State of Israel at all? Because we flatter ourselves? We do like to flatter ourselves in imagining that we are an exception to the norms of human history. And in many ways we have reached the pinnacle of national success. Even to the point of serving as the ziggurat of internationality. Can't argue with success. Can't reason with it either. So America is God's gift to humanity.

Torah is a paradox: HaShem's transcendent revealed-truth—in and through the particular.

Idolatry is also a paradox: gods of powerful ideals—accessed via dispensable particulars. Inaccessible to mere dispensable mortal flesh—apart from their all but disposable idols.

An idol is nearly nothing to an idolater—nothing more than a place of presence—where disbelief is magically suspended—and higher places appear in the imagination. Idolaters despise the particular. It is contemptible to them in their worship of the Universal—worth nothing in itself—of value only insofar as it can be reshaped and remade into their idol of the Universal. We call it Gnosticism and Dualism. We call it Idealism. And anything we actually do or say—in our service, to our ideals—however right or wrong it might appear to be—in the particulars of any given situation—is immaterial to the truth of our imagined world of Reason. Lifeless uniformity is the final state of utilitarian idealism. It is only in uniqueness that we find our true and real touchstone of life. And it is only in erez Israel that we will find G-d's Truth.

Israel's third commonwealth is held in abeyance for want of a Constitution. May it be soon that this state of human affairs results in a declaration of Jewish sui generis dependence—upon the G-d of their peoplehood, saying, in so many words: We hold these truths to be more than self-

*the lamp & light of Israel / the paradox of Israeli-ness*

evident—that every person is created unique—and that their uniqueness is dependent upon—and sustained by—the uniqueness of their Creator. And that the Creator has called us forth—from the flesh and blood of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob—to be a unique people—called by the uniqueness of His Own Name—to be a lamp of His glory to the nations, and a blessing to the people of all the earth. V'imru: Or chadash al Tziyon ta'ir, v'nizkeh chulanu m'heirah l'oro.

One might suppose—that if something were to come about. As inexplicable as scattered and dried-up bones. That joined back together and put on flesh—that began to pulse with blood. To then take in breath, and rise—to stand upright—and declare such a thing as what was just said...one might think that the enemies of the Jews might be given pause—to reconsider their hatreds—and perhaps, even, to join with Israel, in a common cause of peace. But the mystery of lawlessness doesn't work this way. And the G-d of Israel has His reasons. So we are given, each one of us—to choose for ourselves. With whom will we stand? And with whom will we live—and die? The days are coming, when the secrets of our hearts will be revealed—for all heaven and earth to see. So choose today while you are yet able. Where you will take your stand—and with whom you will make your peace. Death serves each of us with a subpoena, to testify, in our own defense. We may be denizens of the rule of law in this life—or we may be the denizens of lawlessness. But we will each be called to give an answer—for every decision.

An Israeli Arab can strive to “be his own man” in Israel—in ways that he could scarcely hope to be in nearly any [only-Arab] nation-state on earth. Because Israel aspires to be a true and just Land of Opportunity, for its every citizen—Arab and non-Arab alike—and is willing to be held accountable for this higher standard of justice. This fait accompli of genuine hope is far truer than the assurances of a non-Israeli map maker—only because Israel is uniquely Jewish in its constitutional fiber and being. If the nation-state of Israel ceases to be uniquely Jewish in its identity, then, as sure as night [skips over evening and] follows day—the rights and liberties of each of its citizens—Arab and non-Arab alike—would soon become mere ink on paper—in darkness. Just as G-d has created all persons equal (nonequivalent), He has also created every individual unique (nonuniform). Funny thing happened on the way to Jewishness. Some Universalist Jews went to a patch of land in the Levant, to Repair the World, and the next thing you know, the eretz of Zion changed them in a most peculiar way. They began to identify *with* that land: As “Israelim” (who are Jewish): As much as—or even more than—they identified with the expatriates of Torah in the galut. What is diaspora Torah? Can Jewishness do eretz Torah Jewishly outside Eretz Tziyon? Can the nations be themselves without Israel? Israeli Jews can identify as “non-Arabic” in the same way that Israeli Arabs can identify as “non-Jewish.” And the both of them can identify [with a uniquely Jewish State] together—as unique people [in that nation-state of Israel]. This Israeliness is a nationality which embodies the mystery and significance of uniqueness. The Israeliness of a common [wealth, of] citizenry—that corporately identifies with their uniquely Jewish Israel. The two things are a pair—discrete from each other—not a conjoined dichotomy. It is entirely reasonable for even someone like me. A retired, non-Jewish construction laborer. Living in the ever-divided heart of America. Who has yet to step foot on Israel's soil. To say, Even so, ‘Ani Yisraeli.’ That is to say, Amen.