Response to reader 2

Thank you for your instructive comments and insights. They have given me much food for thought.

I agree that the subject of the genealogical method was not sufficiently developed in the article and was therefore somewhat unclear. It was never my intention to make a causal connection—certainly not a concrete one—between civil disobedience in Israel today and the ancient roots of obedience in Jewish religious texts, and I do not wish to make any sweeping and simplistic assumptions about contemporary Israeli society. I have now omitted this implied premise (that the apparent increase in civil disobedience in Israel has its roots in ancient Jewish texts illustrating a religious imperative to obey God's commandments). I only mentioned it in the introduction as a way of broaching the topic of obedience as one that is currently culturally relevant without meaning to imply any distinct causal link. This has now been fixed, thanks to your clarification, including an alteration of the title of the article.

Similarly, I had no intention of presenting a comprehensive genealogy linking the past and the cultural present along a timeline comprising all the sources on obedience and disobedience in Jewish culture from the Old Testament to the present day. It would, of course, be impossible to present a complete genealogy of this topic in one article. I completely agree that my explanation of my methodology and its goals was not clear enough.

I have now clarified and emphasized in the article that the issue of obedience and disobedience arose on the cultural agenda during the pandemic, which is why it is an interesting issue to examine genealogically even without establishing a causal connection to the cultural present. I have also explicitly stated that the article presents a preliminary genealogy alone, based on a limited number of cultural patterns that appear in the foundational biblical texts with the understanding that the Jewish cultural past is comprised of many other sources. The present article has no intention of examining present-day Israeli society and the only mentions of present-day reality appear in the introduction and conclusion to indicate that the social phenomena that arose as a consequence of the pandemic led me to examine the cultural past.

The updated version of the article also emphasizes that genealogy does not necessarily always examine processes and can sometimes only point to conceptual roots in the culture. Therefore, a genealogist must be careful not to present these conceptual roots in a causal context with regard to the present, but to illuminate the subject and bring it into the present by the very act of exposing and presenting it. In “On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life” (1980), Nietzsche claims that the observation of the past is essential for us as individuals and as a society. I have now expanded the explanation of the methodology based on Nietzsche and Foucault. The genealogical method used in the article relies on the Nietzschean conception, which is based on a reflection on customs, thoughts, and behaviors (Blondel 1994, 309–310). In my understanding, Nietzsche’s genealogy is a hermeneutic strategy that requires careful attention to our historical traces and not necessarily to processes (Conway 1994, 321–328). It is a criticism wherein the critic establishes their own criteria. For example, Nietzsche examines the values of morality and culture based on the standards he presents, such as the will to power (Rusinek 2004, 423).

Of course, the narratives and constructs examined in the article are not necessarily ahistorical and there is no attempt to argue this, even if it were possible. The purpose of the article, which I have refined based on your instructive comments, is to present contradictory themes on the subject of obedience and disobedience in the biblical sources of culture while relying on the works of Fromm, Shoham, Hazony, Rotenberg, and others. Cultural analysis here refers to the secular interpretation of the biblical text as a foundational text in Jewish culture.

Beyond the exposure of the cultural constructs present in the biblical text, the article asks a related question—are the ostensibly contradictory constructs of obedience and disobedience are in fact in dialogue within a dialectical context and arise as a conflict, or are they two sides of the same issue because dialectical understanding has the function of presenting two contradictory sides within one greater truth. I hope that I have now explained, both in this response and in the expanded methodology section in the body of the article, my purpose in presenting a limited genealogy that looks at biblical roots alone, rather than a broad, procedural genealogy attempting to explain Israeli society today. I have also sharpened my conclusion to focus on this limited biblical genealogy with no connection to contemporary Israeli society.

Regarding your other comments, thank you for introducing me to the fascinating 2016 study regarding the belief in God in Israeli society, which you mentioned in your response. As mentioned, I am not researching contemporary Israeli society but only directing a spotlight from the present toward the cultural past embedded in the biblical text. James’s statement regarding the elements of religion was accordingly mentioned insofar as it pertains to observing the mitzvot, a dominant element in the roots of Jewish culture. I recognize, of course, that the observance of mitzvot is a widely recognized form of Judaism and one that is not practiced by the majority of Israeli Jews. The claim that genealogy makes is that we must research the deep roots of culture because sometimes cultural patterns originating from religion go through a secularization process and remain intact even in secular society. It is possible to identify patterns originating in the biblical text that are still held by the secular public—for example, man’s attitude towards nature and his separation from nature, which is a pattern that I researched in the context of the ecological crisis. This pattern originates in the biblical text, in the story of creation, among others; it is a pattern that has been assimilated into the entire cultural space in the West and dominates Western thought to the present day without any connection to faith.

Regarding your comment on lines 88–92, concerning conceptions of God and religion, these lines were written in order to explain the disparity between the secular cultural interpretation of the biblical text and the religious interpretation of those who read it as a sacred text. Without this specification one might encounter paradoxes since cultural analysis, such as the one presented in the article, does not make a distinction between the sacred and the profane, a distinction that is almost the default position of religion.

The comments regarding the differences between ultra-Orthodox Jews, observant Jews, and religious Zionist Jews are now irrelevant since the article does not examine obedience in the context of contemporary Israeli society and its various segments. Any such implications have been removed, thanks to your insights.

Regarding lines 202–213 in the section titled “All of Israel Are Responsible One for the Other,” thank you for your astute comment regarding other sources illustrating the idea that one member of Israel can be directly responsible for leading others astray (e.g. Deuteronomy 13). I have added them to the article since, indeed, they point to the same narrative, albeit in a negative context.

I take this opportunity to reiterate my sincere gratitude for your time and informed insight.