

Judaism

Like The soil, everyone treads upon the Jew but God hod in this very soil put the power ro bring forth all kinds of plants and fruits wherewith ro sustain ail His creatures. In the soil are also to be found all such treasures as gold, silver, diamonds and all other precious and important metals and minerals. So too are the Jewish folks: they are full of the finest and most precious qualities that man can possess, even the most ordinary among them. As our Sages said: 'Even the unworthy among you are full of virtue as a pomegranate is full of seeds!'

Israel ben Eliezer '

I. JUDAISM AFTER THE NEW TESTAMENT

MOST CHRISTIANS fail to grasp the full sweep of Jewish history because their knowledge is cut off by the reverence which they have for the New Testament. But Jewry did not end with Jesus and Paul. Christianity never attracted the Jewish leadership class or the masses. From the Jewish standpoint Christianity was nothing but a tiny stream off the river of Hebraic life and thought, a stream moreover, soon disappearing in the Gentile sea.² However, the main chapters in Jewish history have become part of western man's treasury of memories, i.e. the stories of the patriarchs, the Joseph epic, Moses and the Exodus, the conquest of the promised land, the Babylonian exile. But part of the story continues after the disastrous revolts of 70 A.D. and 135 A.D. (the date of the final destruction of the temple of Jerusalem) on up to the establishment of the Zionist State in 1948. Modern Jewish theology, which we will discuss, is heir to that total tradition."

Hillel the elder, leader of the Pharisaic liberals prior to the time of Jesus, set the tone for later Rabbinism. The Sadducees disappear from sight after the burning of the temple. Rabbi Akiba escaped from Jerusalem during the Roman siege by hiding in a casket. He got Roman permission to set up a religious academy at Jamnia which became the spiritual center of Judaism before he was martyred in Hadrian's campaign to extinguish sparks of resistance to the Empire of the Caesars. Refugee scholars established new academies inside the Parthian empire and from these came the vast compendium of Jewish law, practices, proverbs and stories called the *Talmud*. Even to the present day to be a recognized Jewish

² The standard book on early Jewish-Christian thought is J. Danielou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*. Regnery, Chicago, 1964.

³ For Jewish interpretations, see I. Epstein, *Judaism*. Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1959. pp. 11-120; Abba Eban, *My People*, Bhrman House, N.Y., 1968. pp. 1-104; L. Finkelstein, ed., *The Jews: Their History*. Schocken, N.Y., 1971, chaps. I, II; Y. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1960.

scholar is to be a Talmudist.⁴

In the later Roman Empire to the time of Constantine, Jewish colonies were found in most cities, especially in Alexandria. Philo represents the major synthesizer of Jewish ideas and Graeco-Roman philosophy, particularly that of Plato. Hellenistic Judaism provided the synagogues in which St. Paul preached to get converts to Christianity and it also, through Philo, greatly influenced the Christian Platonism of Clement and Origen. In most ways, Hellenistic Judaism gave more to the church than to the rest of Jewry.¹ Judaism as a whole relied on Babylonia and to a lesser extent Palestine for religious guidance. With some isolated exceptions the Parthians tolerated Jews because both were anti-Roman; later though, the empire of the Caesars was also more or less willing to ignore the Jewish colonists. Now and again, however, Latin intellectuals lamented the fact, as they put it, that Rome was being inundated with garbage from the sewers of the Near East. Anti-semitism long antedates the Christian era and the same stereotype of the "alien, clannish, intolerant, money-grubbing" Jew was used then. In spite of this popular hostility, Judaism's stern moralism and single God won friends in high places. One story has it that Constantine seriously toyed with the idea of converting to Judaism and making it the faith of the empire. When he chose Christianity instead and his successors made it the sole legal faith, Jews were again fated to suffer.

Beginning with Constantine, the idea that a secure government rested on one religion for all citizens was promulgated and often enforced. For this reason Byzantine emperors were rather ruthless in suppressing religious dissidents: Arians, Monophysites, Nestorians, Monothelites, and Jews. Again Jews fled to Persia for protection. In Jewish eyes, Christian Rome was the new Edom, the virtual incarnation of all the evils the coming Messiah would destroy. Only one emperor after Constantine was a friend of the Jews—Julian sympathized with anyone who could not get

Cf. Eban, *Ibid.* pp. 85-99, 108-123; Epstein, *ibid.* pp. 111-131.

¹ Cf. Moses Hadas, *Hellenism*, also books by H. Wolfson and E. Goodenough.

along with the Christians. ⁶

Emperor Antoninus Pius had recognized a new Jewish Sanhedrin in Galilee under an official called the Patriarch. Judah the Prince I (135-217 A. D.), the second to hold this post, compiled traditional teachings in a single great work, the *Mishnah*, which soon became almost as authoritative as scripture.⁷ With a commentary added it became the *Talmud*. The Palestinian version was completed by the middle of the 4th century; the more highly respected Babylonian one was available by 500 A.D.

Islam came as a blessing to Judaism by and large. While there were sporadic outbursts of anti-Jewish feeling, the Muslims used Jews as advisors, physicians, international traders, and something like cultural attaches. Babylonian Jewry flourished. When the Muslims advanced across North Africa, sweeping into Spain, that land became the major European outpost for a distinctive type of Jewish life and thought. Of course, this favored treatment of Jews in Islamic lands was a drawback for the little pockets of Jewish life in Christendom. In part at least, the hostile attitude of Christians toward the synagogue came from the half-justifiable feelings that Jews constituted a potential fifth column.

Babylonian Jewry enjoyed a large measure of autonomy and almost complete freedom of religion when the Muslims were building their very impressive civilization. Leaders at two great academies compiled legal codes which were widely distributed. About 860 A.D. the first complete Jewish prayer-book was produced in Babylonia at the request of Spanish rabbis. Naturally there was rivalry between the Babylonian Talmudic academies and those established in Palestine. A division in Jewry resulted. Those who looked to the Babylonian scholars for advice became known as *Sephardic* Jews. This group controlled the synagogues in the

⁶ Hadrian who so savagely suppressed the Jewish rebellion of 135 A.D. and Julian who had nothing but contempt for Christians have both been the subjects of recent semi-fictional biographies: *Memoirs of Hadrian* by Marguerite Yourcenar; *Julian* by Gore Vidal. Both provide a window into the mind of the imperial Roman, the first explaining why the Jews were a mystery and a menace, the second revealing a reaction to the Christians.

Cf. Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1949, v. II, pp. 450-478.

Muslim world which stretched from the border of India, across the Near East and North Africa, to the most northern city in Spain. Others, called the *Ashkenazim*, followed the Palestinian Talmudists and dominated Jewish life in Poland, France, Germany and Italy.⁸

Concentration on Talmudic learning led to a major schism in Jewry.' Under Aran ben David, the Karites (readers of scripture) separated from those who studied their Bibles in the light of the oral and written tradition. In one sense, they were a rebellion of fundamentalists against the dominant moderates. In another, they represented something vaguely comparable to the Protestant revolt within Roman Catholicism.

By the year 1000 A.D. Spain had succeeded Babylonia as the heartland of Jewish learning. The original work of the Talmudists had been completed. Jewish philosophy now began to dominate the horizon. Philo much earlier tried to reconcile the wisdom of the Greeks and the faith of the Jews. Almost nine centuries later Saadia ben Joseph of Egypt (d. 942), a brilliant leader of the most famous Babylonian academy, became the father of Jewish philosophy when he produced the first systematic treatment of doctrine and practice in the light of reason. Hiwi al-Balkhi had asked two hundred searching questions about the five books of Moses and finding no convincing answers denied the unity, omnipotence and omniscience of God, man's free will, the possibility of miracles, and the value of circumcision. Saadia wrote *Faith and Knowledge* as a defense of Judaism against that kind of destructive rationalism with considerable help, it should be noted, from a school of Muslim theologians who were using reason to support the claims of Islam. The right topic was chosen for discussion—the relationship of faith and reason. Muslim, Jewish and Christian theologians spent centuries struggling with the conflict between revelation and natural knowledge. The believer can be a rationalist who interprets his faith in terms of its essential conformity to the prevailing

⁸ Epstein, *Ibid*, pp. 180-194, Eban, *Mid*, pp. 124-160. A. Heschel contrasts the Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews, *The Earth is the Lord's*, Schuman, N.Y., 1950, pp. 23-38.

⁹ H. Graetz, *Ibid*, pp. 127-159.

philosophy. Or he can be an anti-rationalist pointing out the contrast between one's faith and ordinary reason to extol the superiority of the religious vision. Or he can attempt to recognize the values of both reason and revelation, provided each stays inside its own special area of competency. At various times and with different degrees of success, Jewish philosophers have championed each of these attitudes.

The details can be found elsewhere. For our purpose it suffices to report that for almost exactly four centuries Judaism was gifted with a remarkable series of philosophers who argued with skill and distinction. The famous names are Saadia, Gabirol, Pakuda, Halevi, Ibn Daud, Maimonides, Gersonides, Crescas and Albo. The Jewish philosophic classics bear the titles: *Faith and Knowledge*, *Fountain of Life*, *Duties of the Heart*, *Kuzari*, *Exalted Faith*, *Guide for the Perplexed*, *Wars of the Lord* and *Book of Fundamental Principles*. From the first half of the 11th century to the middle of the 15th, Judaism produced its major thinkers. Spinoza, Marx, Bergson, Freud, Einstein, and Buber are their somewhat less orthodox heirs."

If Jewish philosophy represents a religion of the mind, Jewish mysticism signifies the no less important religion of the heart. The mystics of the synagogue, of course, claim with considerable justification to go all the way back to Moses. By meditating especially on the mystery of the Genesis creation account and Ezekiel's vision of the divine chariot, they produced the vast library of Kabbalist literature of which the *Zohar* is the most influential example. At first mysticism in the Jewish tradition seems to have been limited to select teachers and their carefully-picked disciples. What began as secret doctrine restricted to the few by the 14th century was the pursuit of the many. In Eastern Europe the Hasidim" represented a popularized mystical faith

¹⁵ Epstein, *ibid*, pp. 195-222, Salo Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, Columbia University Press, N.Y., 1958, vol. VIII, pp. 55-137.

" Note: The transliteration of Jewish names varies greatly from one author to the next. For example, Iamnia = Jabneh, Hasidim = Chassidim, Gersonides = Levi ben Gerson; Shabbethai Zvi = Shabbetai Zevi, Sabbatai Zevi, Sabbatai Tzevi, Shabbetai Zebi; Shekhinah = Shechinah, etc.

once restricted to an occasional sage and his immediate circle of admirers.¹²

Jews started to move into northern Europe by the 9th century and for the next thousand years that continent rather than Asia or Africa would be of primary importance to them. Charlemagne encouraged Jews from the Arab world to settle in his empire, probably because he was sincerely interested in using them as a means of elevating the cultural standards of his realm. In most cases, however, the Jews were invited to settle in an area because Christians were forbidden to engage in money-lending. Besides, the Jews had a reputation for skill as merchants. They excelled in international trade simply because they had ready-made contacts. By the 10th and 11th centuries, there were firmly established Jewish communities in every French and German town of any size or importance. Settlements usually followed the trade routes along the rivers and overland roads.

At first and for a couple of centuries Jews provided a useful stimulus for economic development. But by the time the national states began to appear, Christians could expand trade, encourage local industry and build cities on their own. Whereas once the Jewish outsider was very useful and almost indispensable, now he was unnecessary and often a dangerous competitor. With the growth of the Italian city-states and the appearance of the German Hanseatic League, the role of the Jew as an international trader disappeared. When Jews were first invited to Europe they were offered and assured the privileges of living together in their own quarters. This separateness was now held against them. Abba Eban sums up the situation: the Jew was "now no longer needed, and hence no longer wanted."¹³

In the medieval world the theory was that Jews as a distinct religious group from Christians should have official charters which guarantee them self-government in communal matters. Most of the time the theory was practiced. The Jew could, nevertheless, not rely on the faith of his royal protector, the respect of the masses or

¹² Epstein, *Ibid*, pp. 223-251; Eban, *Ibid*, pp. 231-232, 238-243.

¹³ Eban, *Ibid*, p. 169.

the good will of the local Christian clergy.

Much ink has been used to relate what the Catholic Church did to persecute the European Jews. Abba Eban quite fairly points out that the appearance of heresies at the end of the 12th century compelled Catholicism to strengthen its organization and reassert its power as a cohesive factor in society. At the Fourth Lateran Council Pope Innocent III sponsored a number of decrees directly affecting the Jews of Europe. To discourage Christian dissenters, the Church flexed its muscles by showing how it could repress Jews. No Jew was to be appointed to any civil office. Jews were to remain in their homes on Easter behind shuttered windows. Jews and Christians were forbidden to live together in the same part of the city. All unbelievers were ordered to wear a special badge which distinguished them from the faithful. Degrading ghettoization was enforced. Christians themselves have often questioned the high-handed way in which a strong-willed Pope demonstrated the authority of the Church. The Jews were far from Innocent's only victims. But they were less powerful than others in opposing him.

Before Innocent III Judaism had suffered the ill-effect of the Crusades. Many reasons have been brought forward to justify the Christian efforts to wrest the Holy Land from the Muslim Turk. In addition to destroying the power of the infidel outside Christendom, the crusaders assaulted the infidels within. From northern France to the Rhineland, Jewish communities were massacred. Zeal to attack the Muslim was matched with determination to subjugate his Jewish ally. Tens of thousands of Jews were murdered by mobs. But one should not ignore the fact that Eastern Orthodox Christians also fell prey to the same crusaders. What fanatics did to Jews they did to fellow-Christians.

Prominent rabbis were often compelled to debate publicly learned Christian theologians; the Jew knew full well that if he argued too persuasively he could lose his life. In some ways, open debates between Jews and Christians was a cruel form of popular entertainment—like dog fighting or bull-baiting. Repeatedly, huge piles of Jewish books were put to the torch to the delight of the crowd. Probably the day by day badgering of the defenseless Jews

was more demoralizing than the unpredictable explosions of violence. Berkovits'⁴ argues convincingly that no one has a right to criticize the Jew who lost his faith in the dehumanizing Nazi concentration camps. Nor can the Christian condemn the medieval Jew who abandoned his Torah for nominal allegiance to the Jesus of his tormenters. The "Christian" record in regard to their treatment of the Jews is indefensible on every ground. In fact, no one for two hundred years has even attempted to justify medieval intolerance.⁵

Of course, Jews did convert under pressure. But many, the Marranos, for example, publicly professed the religion of their intolerant society, while privately continued to practice the religion of their fathers. In Spain and Portugal particularly, the converted Jews proved that outward conformity, however useful, is no substitute for inner conviction. When 4000 Jews were baptized in a single day, as at Toledo, Spain, who gained a victory? God or Satan?"

Expulsion of the Jews from western Europe began in England in 1290 under orders from Edward I; 16,000 were involved. In France they were commanded to depart four times from 1182 to 1321, again in 1322, and once more in 1394. Ferdinand and Isabella drove the Jews from Spain in 1492. The very day Columbus set sail for America the last of the Jews departed from the nation which had once produced their golden age. None were left by 1497.

Over 300,000 Jewish refugees sought shelter in Eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire of the Levant. Before 1800, Jewry was located principally in the Crimea, Ukraine, White Russia, Poland and Lithuania. The Khazar kingdom between the Caspian and Black Seas was converted to Judaism as early as the 7th century but disappeared three hundred years later. Jews from Germany settled in Poland and Lithuania. During the 16th century the Council of Four Lands (Great Poland, Little Poland, Russian

⁴ E. Berkovits, *Faith after the Holocaust*, Ktav Publ., N.Y., 1973.

⁵ Eban, *Ibid.*, 161-187.

⁶ Eban, *Ibid.* pp. 187-197.

Poland and Lithuania) became the supreme legislative and executive body of east European Jewry. In 1648 Tartars, Cossacks, Muscovites and Swedes devastated Poland; at least 100,000 Jews perished and great numbers fled to Hungary, Turkey, Holland and Germany." Despite this, Russian and Polish Jewry were of enormous significance until the Nazi period."

When driven from Spain and Portugal, Jews sought refuge in the Ottoman Empire. Some 100,000 found asylum in Turkey. Joseph Hamon of Granada became physician to Sultan Selim I, and Joseph Nasi, chief advisor to Suleiman the Magnificent. Within decades the refugees had taken control of international trade in the eastern Mediterranean. A Jewish colony was begun at Tiberius in Palestine; a more lasting one, at Safed where the mystical Rabbi Isaac Luria and Joseph Karo, the author of the *Shulan Arukh*, a code of religious practice still in use, were among many resident scholars.

Large scale immigration into the Netherlands began soon after 1579 when that country freed itself from Spanish rule. Marranos built a synagogue in 1598 and Amsterdam became the center for the Jewish book trade. One fourth of the stockholders in the Dutch East India Company and 37 out of 41 members of the Amsterdam Stock Exchange were Jews. Oliver Cromwell allowed Jews to return to England; by the end of the 17th century they were influential in the East India Company and London Stock Exchange.

In Renaissance Italy individual Jews became highly honored. A cardinal taught Greek to a Jew and learned Hebrew in return. Popes Sixtus IV and Nicholas V collected Hebrew manuscripts for the Vatican library. Bologna in 1488 established a chair of Hebrew at its university. Luther in 1523 published a pamphlet entitled "That Jesus Was Born a Jew" when he believed Jews would flock to join the Protestant cause; later his attitude changed drastically. ¹⁹

" Eban, *Ibid*, pp. 198-230.

¹⁸ Cf. A. Heschel, *The Earth Is The Lord's*, a tribute to eastern European Jewry written after the Nazi Holocaust.

Eban, *Ibid*, pp. 220-230.

For Judaism the most important event of the 17th century was probably the appearance of Shabbetai Zebi (b. 1626), a native of Smyrna, acclaimed by large numbers as the Messiah they had awaited. In 1648 he entered a synagogue, uttered the ineffable name of God and announced himself as the Messiah. With the invaluable help of Nathan of Gaza, he won adherents all over the Ottoman Empire and far beyond. The new age would begin in 1666. A Polish Jew denounced him to the Sultan who promptly had Shabbetai arrested. On September 16, 1666 he became Mohmet Effendi, a Muslim. Many of his followers could scarcely believe the news and soon worked out a theology to show why the Jewish Messiah should turn to Islam. Sabbatian Jews persisted in Turkey, the Balkans, Italy, southern Poland and Lithuania.²⁰ In the 18th century Jacob Frank (b. 1726) gathered adherents, nowhere near so many as Shabbetai, when he proclaimed his messiahship.

Hasidism, a movement of continuing influence, was begun by Israel ben Eliezer (b. 1700), known as the Baal Shem Tov, in the very area where Sabbatianism had been strong. Hundreds of thousands of Polish and Russian Jews rallied to the cause. Jewry was split asunder. The rabbis pronounced a ban on Hasidism and the remaining conservative Jews were called "Mitnagdim" (the opponents). Gradually, hostility between the two groups lessened.²¹

With the French Revolution a new era dawned. For Christians the fall of the Bastille may mark the beginning of a war on God and the birth of an atheistic mobocracy. For the ghetto Jew, the same revolt heralded a day of hope. What Christians condemned as the birth of secularism was the era of emancipation for Jews. If you have had everything on your side, a radical social change becomes a shaking of the foundations; but if you have always been a despised outsider, the collapse of the traditional social order offers the chance for liberation.

In the French National Assembly legislation was introduced and passed removing all of the traditional restrictions on the Jews.

²⁰ G. Scholem has published the definitive work on Shabbetai Zebi.

²¹ Cf. M. Buber's many books and articles; Epstein, *ibid.*, pp. 270-281.

In the debate, one of the delegates favoring emancipation coined a slogan which was long remembered: "To the Jews as Jews, nothing; to the Jews as men, everything." Another motto, equally celebrated, was created by the Jews who welcomed the destruction of the ghetto walls: "Be a Jew in your tent and a man abroad."²²

For many the disappearance of the ghetto meant assimilation of Jews into the surrounding Gentile culture. As Heine put it, baptism is the entrance ticket to European civilization. Between 1800-1810, a tenth of the German Jews had turned Christian. Reform Judaism was born in this period and saved many for the ancestral faith in modern dress. In western Europe Jews took an active, often prominent part in political life: two became French cabinet members; Disraeli served as British prime minister; Stahl founded the Prussian conservative party and Reisser was chosen vice-president of the German constitutional parliament.²³

The Muscovite Czars refused to admit Jews inside their realm; by 1795 their annexation of Poland gave them 900,000 Jewish subjects. All sorts of discrimination were practiced. Alexander I and Nicholas I were particularly notorious anti-semites. Among the Jews who favored enlightenment of the western European sort, most were to be found in Lithuania and the Ukraine. The Hasidim were staunch conservatives who resisted innovation.

The 19th century was to a considerable degree a reaction against the excesses of the Age of Reason. Since many western European Jews were enthusiastic exponents of the Enlightenment philosophy, they suffered the consequences. When the Congress of Vienna (1815) tried to turn back the clock to pre-Napoleonic days, Jews faced persecution. They were also blamed for the revolution of 1848 and Karl Marx's Communism. It is true that many Jewish intellectuals favored social reform and Marxism had powerful Jewish advocates.²⁴

Anti-Semitism took a semi-philosophic form in this period.

²² By Judah Leib Gordon, the poet of Russian Jewish modernization.

²³ Eban, *Ibid*, pp. 246-267, a one-sided interpretation which should be read with great care. Assimilationism and Zionism are born enemies.

²⁴ Einstein once declared it was the Jews who gave us Socialism.

By and large the Slavophiles of Russia (Dostoievski, Soloviev, etc.) were opposed to Judaism because they believed in a holy Russia whose soul was the Eastern Orthodox faith. German nationalists were also often anti-Jewish: i.e. the composer Richard Wagner and his son-in-law, the ideologist Houston Chamberlain. French anti-Semitism was spread by Edouard Drumont (1844-1917) and Charles Maurras (1868-1952), both of whom claimed to be rightist philosophers.²⁵

On the other hand, Jews held numerous positions of trust and great influence in the last century and our own. In the fine arts who can forget musicians like Felix Mendelssohn, Darius Milhaud, Arnold Schoenberg, Leonard Bernstein? Or artists like Marc Chagall? Or scientists like Einstein, philosophers like Bergson, Benda" and Buber, psychiatrists Freud and Fromm, novelists like Proust, poets like Gertrude Stein? A Jew, Leon Blum, became prime minister of France; another was vice-president of the Confederacy, two (Felix Frankfurter and Louis Brandeis) were famous justices of the U.S. Supreme Court.

The 19th century also saw the birth of two important schools of Jewish thought. Beginning in Germany, Reform Judaism reinterpreted Mosaic religion by abolishing the dietary laws, abandoning Hebrew worship services, calling synagogues temples, dropping the nationalistic features of traditional Judaism, and re-emphasizing the great Hebrew prophets.²⁷ Conservative Judaism reacted against what was felt to be Reform extremism but refused to go back to Orthodoxy.²⁸ Great exponents of Reform were Isaac and Stephen Wise, Claude Montefiore, Abba Silver and Joshua Loth Leibman; equally famous advocates of Conservative Judaism were Samuel Hirsch, Solomon Schechter, Louis Finkelstein, Ab-

²⁵ Cf. J.S. McClelland, ed., *The French Right*, Harper Torchbook, N.Y., 1970, pp. 85-116 (Drumont), 213-304 (Maurras).

²⁶ Author of the enormously influential *Betrayal of the Intellectuals* (Le Trahison des Clercs).

²⁷ A.M. Heller, *The Jew and His World*. Twayne Publ., N.Y., 1965, pp. 152-166.

²⁸ A Jewish wit has observed, Conservatism means a rabbi who is a little to the right of Reform serving a congregation a little to the left of Orthodoxy. Cf. Epstein, "Modern Movements in Judaism", *!bid*, pp. 287-318 (a Conservative view).

raham Heschel and Mordecai Kaplan."

Twentieth century Jewry witnessed three momentous events: the virtual destruction of European Jewry at the hands of Hitler, the establishment of the state of Israel, and the growth of American Judaism to its present preeminent financial, organizational and theological position. Nazism destroyed 6 million of the 9,500,000 European Jews from 1935-1945. Israel was established by the United Nations in 1948. America replaced Europe as the center of Diaspora Jewry following World War II, in part because of the flight of Jewish intellectuals here, in part because of large-scale refugee movements from Nazi-occupied Europe. ²⁹

II. THE JEW AND HIS GOD

The Nontheistic Jew

An age known for its rapid social changes, ideological confusion and institutional decay tempts man to abandon the traditional faith in God. The modern Jew must go through the test within his own religious community. Erich Fromm is a case in point. If you believe that God is but one of many different expressions for the highest value in human experience—though not a reality in Himself—or that modern thought necessitates nontheistic humanism, then you would be sympathetic to the radical interpretation of the Old Testament promulgated by Fromm. The thinking of this psychoanalyst is indicative of a rather new form of Judaism. He is a Jew, but one entirely divorced from the synagogue—be it Orthodox, Conservative or Reform. Why is a humanist's position under consideration in a book about theology? Because, it is constructive to know the type of attitude and viewpoint adopted by some of the most influential Jewish minds of our time. Consider just a partial listing of these non-observant Jews: Karl Marx, Leon Trotsky, Sigmund Freud, Bernard Berenson, Marcel Proust, Gertrude Stein. The percentage of Jews in this category is large, and growing.

²⁹ Cf. H. Parzen, *Architects of Conservative Judaism*, J. David, N.Y., 1964.

³⁰ A.M. Heller, *Ibid*, pp. 318-359 gives a useful survey of Jewry in all parts of the world, population figures, history, etc.

For Fromm, the Old Testament depicts the evolution of a small and primitive nation whose spiritual leaders in denouncing idolatry espoused a monotheism which proclaimed a nameless God, the final unification of all men and the complete freedom of each individual. What is to be treasured in Judaism is not conservatism or nationalism, but the seed of 'radical humanism' found in the scriptures. By radical humanism, Fromm means the philosophy of humanity's oneness, the capacity of man to be completely independent, and the possibility of achieving inner harmony as well as a peaceful world. Implied too are freedom from ancient illusions and a skeptical attitude regarding the use of force in solving social problems.

An interesting insight into Fromm's thinking is obtained when we understand what he means by the capacity of man 'to be independent'. In Genesis, according to this writer, God is visualized as an absolute ruler, who, since He has created both man and nature, can destroy them if He is not pleased. However, when man eats of the fruit of the tree of knowledge and the tree of life he will become like God. At that point he is a potential rival of God, whom God attempts to control by an act of force. Man rebels, but must yield to God's superior power. He does so, nevertheless, without regret or repentance. This first act of disobedience really marks the beginning of an independent life for man, the origin of human freedom. The more he unfolds, the more he finds potential divinity within himself and frees himself from God.

Man's next decisive step is the covenant he makes with Yahweh. God is henceforth changed from an absolute monarch to a constitutional one. He loses His freedom to be arbitrary. He is bound, as man is, to the conditions of the compact. Even God cannot change the right of all creatures to live; thus, reverence for life is established as the first and ultimate law. Therefore, when God wants to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham challenges Him to abide by principles of justice. With the daring of a hero Abraham asks, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Abraham accuses God of violating His own promises and principles, an act which marks his right as a man to make demands which

God cannot refuse.

When Moses received the revelation at Sinai a third stage in the development of radical humanism was reached. According to Fromm, when Moses asked God for His name, God declared "My name is Nameless; tell them that Nameless has sent you." Only idols have names because they are things. God is by contrast a living process, a becoming, a reality that has not reached its final form.

What this implies was crystalized by Moses Maimonides (1135-1204 A.D.); for him God has no essential attributes. We can see His actions but never understand His essence; therefore, Fromm concludes, the acknowledgement of God is fundamentally just the negation of idols. Idols, for the psychoanalyst, represent the object of man's central passion: the desire to return to the earth-mother; the drive for power; or the modern idols of production and consumption. In venerating idols, man worships a partial and limiting aspect of himself, hence loses his totality as a human being, and ceases to grow. For this reason, Jews have given the name God to the X which man should approximate to realize his full potential. The long evolution from the God of Adam to the God of Abraham to the God of Maimonides concludes with pure humanism. Man is independent from God. Man lives for himself. Radical humanism becomes the natural and final end of the Bible, the Talmud and Jewish philosophy, in Fromm's opinion.'

Needless to say, other Jews see God in a different light.

The Jewish Theist

However plausible Fromm-like doctrines may sound to the secular Jew, Fromm's conclusion that Judaism leads to nontheistic mysticism is refuted by the majority of Jewish theologians today. They do not seem ready to let go of God; rather, they place the doctrine of God dead center in their system of beliefs.

' Erich Fromm, *You Shall Be as Gods*. Fawcett Premier Book, N.Y., 1969, pp. 17-51.

In *A Jewish Theology*, Louis Jacobs outlines the meaning of theism:

Theism involves the rejection as untrue of: *deism*, the doctrine that God is only transcendent; *pantheism*, that God is wholly immanent; *polytheism*, that there are many gods; *dualism*, that there are two gods, one good the other evil; *atheism*, that there is no God; and *agnosticism*, that man by his nature cannot know whether or not there is a God.²

Will Herberg adds more to the conception of what the God of Judaism is not. The Hebraic God is not conceived of in terms of an ultimate metaphysical principle or an impersonal force. Certainly not as an all-embracing soul of the universe or a divine essence within us or the exalted ideals toward which we strive. And definitely not a philosophic idea, or cosmic process. He should never be identified with the "insides" of nature or history; He is not dependent upon the creation in any way. Any attempt to withdraw something from divine rule (the absolute sovereignty of God) or any effort to absolutize anything except God must be condemned as sheer idolatry.

Hebraic religion, according to Herberg, is utterly unlike that of the Far Eastern or Greek philosophers. God is personal. He is a transcendent but living Being. Ever-active, ever-conscious, ever-willing, He is a forceful and dynamic Power in life and history. He is a decision-making Being who plunges into human history and encounters men at a personal level in their activities. Being transcendent, He is lord over all; therefore He must be thought of as the Unconditioned. Between Creator and creation a vast gulf exists which can be bridged only from God's side. He stands over us, above us.

Because God is Creator, He exercises divine sovereignty. "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe" is the

L. Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology*, Behrman House, Inc., New York, 1973, p. 15.

prayer formula constant in Rabbinical literature and the Jewish liturgy. God is King. *All* men must bring *all* their lives under His sovereign rule. God is Master; man is servant. Because God is Creator, He is King; because He is King, He is absolute Lord; because He is absolute Lord, He and He alone is absolute; because He and He only is absolute, everything in the world, every society, institution, belief or movement is marked by relativity and at best can only have partial validity. Thus, man's ultimate loyalty is to God alone.

However, history is *not* meaningless, nor is matter illusory and sinful. History is the theatre of divine activity. Time represents purposiveness and should not be deprecated in a mystical quest for timelessness. Because God is King, society has a goal.³ As one sees, between the Jew without God and the Jew with God there exists a deep chasm. Among the Jews faithful to God, Talmudic Judaism has often been considered the normative expression of the faith.

The Talmud

There is a Rabbinic saying:⁴ "When you pray know before Whom you stand." Through the Talmud, the Jew comes to know the 'Whom.'

Rabbi Judah the Prince (135-217 A.D.), as we have mentioned, was the one to compile the traditional interpretations of the Torah which became the backbone of the Palestinian *Talmud* (from a Hebrew root which means 'to study'). At the same time Babylonian rabbis worked out a far more extensive commentary. Completed by Rabina II (d. 500 A.D.), the *Talmud*—in an English translation—numbered *37 volumes*. Since both the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds were so bulky and unmanageable, medieval rabbis produced standard abridgements. That of Moses Maimonides was completed at Cairo in 1190. That of Joseph Karo, in 1565.

According to the principal of Jews College, London, Tal-

³ W. Herberg, *Judaism and Modern Man*, Farrar Strauss and Young, N.Y., 1951, pp. 47-69.

Quoted, L. Jacobs, *Mid*, p. 192.

mudic Judaism rests on two basic assumptions: 1) belief in one and only one God; 2) the divine election of the Jewish people to proclaim this monotheism. ^s Talmudic Judaism elaborates and explains the *Shema* in Deuteronomy 6:4,

Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.

This is Israel's primal confession of faith. The Torah, the Talmud, the writings of the medieval philosophers, and all the modern schools of Judaism are a vast commentary on that confession which for over four thousand years has been recited twice a day by devout Jews. The Jewish child is taught it as soon as he can speak. The dying Jew repeats it if he is still able to utter a sound. Jewish martyrs recited it as they prepared to die for their faith.

Like Herberg, Rabbi Epstein reminds us that the *Shema* does not refer to the unity of God in a merely metaphysical sense, nor is Judaism vitally concerned with the abstract philosophical idea of God as pure being. Going further Epstein criticizes those who think that the *Shema* asserts that the one God belongs to Israel alone. Rather, what Judaism insists is that there is only one God and that He *alone* is the object of worship. Such a faith negates the notions of deity included in polytheism, dualism and the "Trinity in Unity" of Christianity. Historically, the *Shema* is seen as a corrective to very popular views of deity taught by Gentiles with whom Jews came into contact.

For example, if God is one, He is not many. With the conquests of Alexander the Great, Hellenism swept the Near East. As evidenced by Maccabean literature, Greek culture permeated Palestine and was adopted by many of the fashion-conscious aristocrats. Polytheism too was the belief of the Romans who, though usually tolerant of the different divinities of their subject peoples, could not understand the exclusive monotheism of the Jews and often scoffed at their seeming narrow-mindedness. However, among Graeco-Roman intellectuals, the traditional pantheon

^s Epstein—/bid. p. 134.

was gradually replaced by a philosophic belief in one God. How much Jewish monotheism aided this redefinition is difficult to determine.

Going further, if God is One, He is not two. During the Babylonian exile, Jews came in contact with Zoroastrian dualism, for a time the official religion of the Middle East. Some Biblical scholars believe that Zoroastrianism was a crucial influence on the Jews during this period. Later Talmudic Judaism, however, was marked by a decidedly anti-dualistic emphasis. The idea of a cosmic battle between a god of light and a god of darkness was strictly opposed. (Satan was never thought of as a god). Similarly, the majority of Jews never contrasted the goodness of spirit with the basic evil of matter: as they were anti-Zoroastrian, they were also anti-Gnostic and in spite of all the respect paid to Plato, they could not accept his thesis that matter was evil.

Finally, if God is One, He is not three. During the medieval period the Trinitarian dogma was attacked by Jews, who accused Christians of worshipping three gods. Christian theologians with no greater wisdom claimed that the Jewish *Shema* itself testifies to the Trinity because it refers to God three times. Jacobs⁶ admits that crude attacks on Christianity as tritheism are unfounded because that idea is a heresy from the Christian standpoint. But, he adds, all Jewish thinkers reject trinitarianism as incompatible with monotheism as Judaism understands it.

In the third century Rabbi Abahu illustrated the blasphemy of calling a man God with his comment on Isaiah 44:6 ("I am the first, and I am the last, and beside Me there is no God."):

God says I am the first because I have no father. And I am the last for I have no son; And beside Me there is no God for I have no brother.'

Unlike Fromm at this point, Epstein, Herberg, Jacobs and Talmudic Judaism see God's creative energy ever at work. This

⁶ L. Jacobs, *!bid*, p. 26.

⁷ Jacobs, *!bid*, p. 25.

power was first manifested when God "called the world and man into existence". Epstein, aware that Maimonides maintained that the universe is eternal in the Platonic sense, that Gersonides argued in favor of the theory of an uncreated pre-existing matter, and that Crescas thought the universe an absolute necessity determined by the eternal will of God, asserts that the problem of creation—whether *ex nihilo* or out of primordial matter—is a philosophic controversy which does not directly concern Judaism. For Judaism, what is essential is that creation is "not the product of chance, the outcome of accidental collocation of atoms, but the handiwork of God. .."⁸

Correlative with the Jewish doctrine of creation is the recognition of God's providential activity. Without it existence would collapse into non-being. To illustrate this, Epstein quotes the rabbinic claim that "No man wounds his finger below, unless it has been so decreed against him above." God deals with nations and individuals on the basis of two primary principles—justice and mercy. According to the rabbis the Torah employs the name "Elohim" to refer to the God of Justice and the name YHWH to refer to the God of Mercy and Love. As God is one and indivisible, justice and mercy are inseparable, complementary aspects of God's character. They testify that there is no moment in history in which God does not serve as our Judge, nor is there a time in which His role as Redeemer is not characterized by loving-kindness.

The faith of the Talmud further maintains that God (in the Talmudic phrase— "The Might") is omnipotent. According to Epstein, this means that divine power has no limit other than His will. Nature and events alike—all forces, all events—are equally the *immediate* work of His hands. In another Talmudic term, *Shekhinah* ("The Indwelling"), God's omnipresence is stressed. The rabbis teach that God is both near and far. Transcendent, He is far off in Heaven; immanent, our Father, He is ever close to His Children on earth. This paradox is the point of Judah Ha-Levi's famous poem:

⁸ Epstein, *ibid*, p. 135.

⁹ Quoted, L. Jacobs, *Ibid*, p. 63.

Lord where shall I find thee? High and hidden is thy place. And where shall I not find thee? The World is full of thy glory.

One of Maimonides' thirteen basic propositions essential to Judaism is Epstein's next point: in Jewish teaching, God is pure spirit, and remains free of all limitations of matter and weakness of flesh. God is intangible, invisible. Judaism thus prohibits the making and worship of idols because physical representation of God denies the divine incorporeality. If the Bible refers to God's hands, feet, face or back, these anthropomorphic descriptions are merely figures of speech. The Talmud explains that we borrow terms from His creation simply in order to make Him intelligible to the human ear.

For Talmudic Judaism, then, God is the ever-active and involved Creator, who is omnipotent and incorporeal. Going further, Epstein explains that the Talmud stresses God's omniscience (man's innermost thoughts are known to God) and God's eternal nature (God does not die and rise again—as found in other religions like the Greek mysteries or Christianity). All of these affirmations are made by Talmudic Judaism for pragmatic religious reasons—rather than philosophical ones. They lead to a practical goal—God's purpose for creation.

Then, what would be His purpose? Judaism lives by its vision of the coming Kingdom of God. This does not mean a celestial existence divorced from the problems and the possibilities of the present. Terrestrial, and formed through personal and social righteousness, it is a kingdom built by the hand of man serving as partner (*shuttaf*) with God.

Epstein writes that the Kingdom of God provides the key to understanding the Jewish people: "This belief is not a product of a later age, born from the sense of a disillusion and despair seeking relief in the vague hope of better days to come. It is a genuine historical tradition, based on the conviction that this is God's world chosen by Him to become the scene of a divine order wherein goodness and truth are to reign supreme." Therefore, says

¹⁹ Epstein, *Judaism*, p. 139.

Epstein, the Jews never lost hope—no matter how severe their torment—in man's ultimate perfection and regeneration.

How will this age be ushered in? Through the Messiah. The "central dominating figure" in a time of peace and plenty, he will be neither supernatural nor divine. A mortal, he will lead Israel to its rehabilitation and, through a restored Israel in its ancient homeland, initiate the moral and spiritual regeneration of humanity."

What is unique about Judaism is its insistence that the Kingdom must be established on this earth. What Judaism has in common with other religions is its belief in the next step of providence: the terrestrial kingdom is but a preparation for the consummation of God's will in a suprahistorical and supernatural world to come where earth and heaven are joined in harmony.

Maimonides and Hasidism

Moses Maimonides attempted to formulate the normative Jewish credo in part at least to distinguish Judaism from its Muslim and Christian rivals. It also represented a determination to distinguish God from anything human. This 12th century philosopher drew up thirteen basic propositions which constitute the most important Jewish creed: **1)** belief in the existence of a Creator and providence, **2)** belief in the oneness of God, **3)** belief that God is incorporeal, **4)** belief in God's eternity, **5)** belief that He alone should be worshipped, **6)** belief in the revelation of God given to the prophets, **7)** belief that Moses was the greatest prophet, **8)** belief in the revelation of God to Moses at Mt. Sinai, **9)** belief in **the** immutability and finality of the revealed Torah, **10)** belief in the omniscience of God, **11)** belief in the law of reward and punishment in this world and hereafter, **12)** belief that the Messiah will come, **13)** belief in the resurrection of the dead.

Though these principles go beyond the doctrine of God as such to indicate the Jewish position on revelation, worship, ethics and eschatology, such secondary topics as the finality of Mosaic revelation or the messianic hope are derived from and flow out of the primary assertions of God's existence, unity, incorporeality,

eternity, omniscience, creative activity, providence and justice. By contrast with the standard Christian creed of Nicea, which devotes only a preliminary article to God the Father, six of Maimonides' thirteen essential Jewish principles are directly concerned with the nature and attributes of deity.

This Jewish philosopher lived in the Islamic part of the Mediterranean world when Muslim civilization was in full bloom. Being under Islam afforded the Jew a much greater chance to express himself than if he had lived under Christian rulers. Yet he was not unaware of the Christian world. Consequently, several of his key doctrines were designed to refute the errors of church and mosque, as well as synthesize Moses and Aristotle, whose philosophy had been reintroduced in Islamic and Jewish civilization. Implied in Maimonides' definition of what God is, is what God is not.

By the propositions of Maimonides, then, if Moses were the greatest prophet, Muhammad (or Jesus) could not be his superior successor. Or if the Torah received at Mt. Sinai was God's final and immutable revelation, Christians were mistaken to believe in a New Testament (or Muslims, a Quran). If Jews still waited for a Messiah to come, Christians were deluded to follow Jesus as the Messiah who had arrived. If God alone should be worshipped, then prayer to Jesus or Mary and veneration of icons or statues were equally idolatrous.

Though he encountered opposition, Maimonides was later favorably compared to Thomas Aquinas and was praised as an equal of the earlier Moses. However, as St. Francis of Assisi and Aquinas represented two different aspects of Catholic devotion, an astonishing movement arose out of a remote corner of the Ukraine in the eighteenth century to represent another side of Judaism from the analytical rationalism of Maimonides.

That extraordinary movement was Hasidism. Israel ben Eliezer (1700-60)—the Baal Shem Tov ("Master of the Good Name")—caught and conveyed the natural warmth of Judaism and within decades had injected it into the surrounding countries and near half of the world's Jewry. A mystic, claiming to have been

visited by a divine spirit when he was 36, later a faith healer and herb doctor, he taught men by memorable stories and aphorisms.

Those who do not see God everywhere, the Baal Shem explained, are like deaf mutes looking through a window where a party is going on. They see musicians going through strange motions they cannot understand. They are playing music that the viewers cannot hear. The guests appear to hop and whirl about without rhyme or reason. But if they recognized *theShekhinah*, the divine presence pervading creation, men could hear the tune—and dance with the guests. Because of the nearness of the *Shekhinah*, a cheerful countenance should characterize all one's life, particularly his worship.

Hasidism therefore introduced ecstatic singing and dancing in its devotional activities—as if to rebuke asceticism and intellectualism—and much to the horror of its critics, encouraged eating and drinking as a religious festivity. Spontaneity, depth, passion and enthusiasm became its watchwords.

One story found Rabbi Levi Isaac (1740-1810) stopping the solemn Rosh Hashanah service at the very moment the sacred Shofar (ram's horn) was to be blown. "Why?" asked his surprised congregation. The Hasidic leader pointed out that an illiterate worshipper at the rear of the synagogue had just offered this appeal: "I can recite only the letters of the Hebrew alphabet which I shall repeat over and over again. I entreat Thee, O Lord, weave Thou beautiful and appropriate prayers out of the letters of the holy alphabet—prayers that befit Thy grace and glory."

Not until this simple but devout man concluded his prayers would the rabbi resume the formal New Year service."

In connection with Hasidism, it is fitting to recognize the tender relationship between the Jew and his God." Nothing quite

¹² David Rudaysky, *Modern Jewish Religious Movements*, Behrman House, N.Y., 1967, p. 128.

¹³ Yet, by and large, Jews seem to have ignored God's need for man's love, which, according to Unification theology, the Jewish concept of *skturaf* ("panner") only begins to touch. Divine Principle proposes a final revelation of God's Heart. Until man can come to understand God's sorrow and God's longing for him, he cannot liberate God from the isolation which his infidelity and Satan's treachery have inflicted upon a most personal Father. For most Jews as for most Christians, God could get along without man. For Divine Principle, there can be no joy for God until the ones He created and loves requite that affection.

upsets the Jew so much as to hear that he believes in a distant, stern and strict God, while the Christian believes in a God of love. Such a caricature of Judaism goes at least as far back in time as the heretic Marcion in the 2nd century, but is repeated regularly by Christian apologists even to the present day.

A Jew asks, have they not heard of Shneur Zalman's songs about *Tatenyu*, "God our Darling Father?" Did they not hear his cry "Master of the Universe: I desire neither Paradise nor Thy bliss in the world to come. I desire Thee and Thee alone." Did they not hear the song of our Hasidic master, R. Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev?'⁵

Where I wander—You!/ Where I ponder—You!/ Only
You, You again, always You!/ You! You! You!! When I
am gladdened—You!! When I am saddened—You!/ Only
You, You again, always You!/ You! You! You!/ Sky is
You! Earth Is You!! You above! You below!! In every
trend, at every end,/ Only You, You again, always
You!/ You! You! You!

Could not they hear the cry of an Eastern European Jew?

You can take everything from me—the pillow from
under my head, my house—but you cannot take God
from my heart.'⁶

The Feminine Aspect in Jewish Divinity

Raphael Patai"⁷ points out that comparative religion reveals that man represents the nature of God in both masculine and feminine ways. Post-biblical Jewish mysticism, Near Eastern archeology, and scripture itself attest to the fact that Judaism is no

¹⁴ Epstein, *Ibid.* p. 279.

¹⁵ Jacobs, *ibid.*, pp. 67-70.

¹⁶ A. Heschel, *The Earth is the Lord's*, p. 91.

¹⁷ R. Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, Ktav Pub., N.Y., 1967. In the light of some of the material in this book, the reader should realize that the author is a well-recognized scholar whose articles are published regularly in the best of the learned journals.

exception to this pattern.

Rereading our Bible we discover that for about six centuries from the arrival of Israelite tribes in Canaan to Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., the Hebrews worshipped the goddess Asherah as well as Yahweh. Asherah was the chief goddess of the Canaanite pantheon. Her husband El was the god of heaven and she ruled the sea. She was represented as the great mother by a carved wooden pillar placed next to the altar of El. Later, her statue was put in the temple at Jerusalem.

When Elijah killed 450 prophets of Baal, it is significant that he did nothing to the 400 prophets of Asherah. Because Asherah was believed to promote fertility and facilitate childbirth, her worship seems to have been popular in all segments of Hebrew society throughout the period of judges and kings. Numerous small clay figurines of the goddess have been unearthed by Palestinian archeologists. Patai concludes that she must have been regarded as the inevitable, necessary, or at least tolerable female counterpart of Yahweh.

Asherah worship, however, had a turbulent history. According to Patai, she was worshipped at hilltop shrines under leafy trees from the first days of the settlement in Canaan. She survived the conquest of the kingdom of Israel, until King Josiah burned her statue in the old royal shrine at Bethel. In Judah, the son of Solomon introduced her statue in the temple at Jerusalem. King Asa removed it. Joash restored it, but Hezekiah banished her. Manasseh then brought her back and worship of her lasted until the Yahwist reform of Josiah (620 B.C.) when she was again driven out. Persistent, she reappeared in the temple after his death where she remained until the destruction of the sanctuary itself. For almost two thirds of the time worship was conducted in Solomon's royal shrine (236 out of 370 years), devotion to Asherah was part of the legitimate religion approved by the king, the court, the priesthood and the populace."

In Canaanite mythology Asherah had two children by her husband El. Astarte, her daughter (her son was Baal, who sub-

¹⁸ Patai, *Ibid.* pp. 29-52.

sequently married his sister), claims Patai, also was worshipped by the Hebrews. After the fall of Jerusalem, refugees in Egypt explained to Jeremiah that all of the troubles of their prostrate nation were due to the fact that they had sinned against the queen of heaven Astarte. They insisted that when the king and the people had burned incense and poured libations to Astarte they were secure and well-fed. But when Judah ceased her worship the Hebrews were consumed by sword and famine. Two hundred years later, however, like her mother Asherah, this patroness of war and 'queen of heaven' turned up again at a Hebrew military colony at Hermopolis in Egypt. ¹⁹

Patai uncovers the feminine aspect of the Godhead in his study of cherubim. In spite of the protest against graven images, these winged female genii figured prominently in temple ritual from the time of Solomon to the bloody end of the Second Jewish Commonwealth in 70 A.D. They stood guard in gold on both sides of the ark-cover. And their figures were also depicted on the curtains which formed the sides of the tabernacle, as well as on the veil in front of the Holy of Holies. Solomon's temple contained cherubim carvings on the outer and inner doors, as well as on the decorations of the wheel bases of the ten lavers. For the Talmud, the cherubim were supernatural females, symbolizing the clouds out of whose midst God spoke and also served as His chariot. However, Philo the Alexandrine Jew went further, suggesting that the cherubim symbolized two aspects of God: God the Father (Reason) and God the Mother (Knowledge). When the Torah uses the name Elohim to denote God, it refers to the Divine Father, Husband, Begetter and Creator. He is characterized by reason, goodness, gentleness and beneficence. When the scripture speaks of God as Yahweh, it indicates the divine Mother, Wife, Bearer, and Nurturer, whose qualities are wisdom and sovereignty as well as legislative, chastising and corrective powers. This unusual contrast between the "hard" feminine aspect of God and the "soft" masculine aspect later typified Talmudic theology and the medieval theosophy of mystical Judaism.

¹⁹ Patai. *Ibid.* pp. 53-100.

The Kabbala²¹—a medieval bible of mysticism—had roots that went back as far as Philo. It appeared above ground in 7th and 8th century Judaism and flowered in *theZohar* (Book of Splendor) published in 1286 A.D. In it, somewhat to the embarrassment of the Reform Jew, the tendency to recognize God's feminine aspect is even more concretely systemized. However, the reaction of someone like Jacobs is mild and almost tolerant (the Kabbala and its sequel in mystical Judaism are more or less dismissed because very few modern Jews share such views) compared to that of the earlier critics. Their consternation at the idea of ten emanations coming from God known as the *Sefirot* was understandable. The Kabbalistic doctrine of the Ten who are One was a more serious heresy than the doctrine of the Three who are One, the Christian Trinity.

The tenth of these emanations was the *Malkhut* otherwise known as the *Shekhinah*. In one reference it is said that when the mystical adept cannot be with his wife, then the *Shekhinah* is with him so that there can be "male and female."²² Another tradition has Moses leaving his wife and becoming wedded to the *Shekhinah*—with whom he lived in the most literal sense as her husband.²²

Kabbalistic Jews also document the feminine aspect of the Godhead in explaining the ancient Hebrew Tetragrammaton, YHWH. In this name for God they discovered an abbreviated symbol of four distinct elements in His nature: Wisdom, Understanding, Beauty and Kingship. YHWH became the divine Father (Y), the divine Mother (H), their equally divine Son (W) and daughter (H). Out of His inner nature, the Father created a wife whom He mated with to beget twins—a boy and girl. According to the *Zohar*, the union between the "Father" and the "Mother" is so close that they give the impression of being a single reality. Joseph ben Abraham Gikatilla (d. 1305) earlier wrote similarly:

²¹ For a good introduction to the Kabbala, see Gershon Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, Schocken Books, N.Y., 1961, pp. 119-350.

²¹ Quoted, Jacobs, *ibid*, p. 162.

²² *Ibid*, p. 162.

that YHWH has a feminine power of receiving and a masculine power of emanating so closely united that God becomes androgynous. An early Midrash (commentary) declared as a corollary to this that man too was originally created as an androgyny.

The perpetual union of the male and female aspects of God was believed to give birth to and sustain heaven and earth. Their eternal embrace points to the validity of human love. Every earthly marriage is the visible embodiment of the supernatural. However, this idea was carried further to imply that every human act of adultery or divorce separates the divine couple in heaven. And by contrast, a successful union, producing children, completes below the pattern above. In marriage, the pious Jew engages in an *imatio dei*, an emulation of God.²³

In this Kabbalistic tetrad, the "daughter" is identified with the *Shekhinah*. In medieval literature this aspect of God was called the "Matronit." The Zohar compares her to the biblical "red heifer" (Num. 19:2) which had no blemish and was never yoked. Besides being with the sages when they had no women, "she" was also recognized as the chieftain of the heavenly armies waging war against the agents of evil. During Talmudic times the *Shekhinah* would give meritorious Jews a sweet kiss of death so that they could avoid being cut down by the angel of destruction. In the *Zohar*, "she" drives the Egyptian chariots into the Red Sea, leads the attack upon Sisera and metes out bloody punishment to sinners.²⁴

The *Shekhinah* began as a divine attribute which was personalized, often by uneducated and credulous believers. Nevertheless, the original concept of the feminine aspect of God is genuine and can be seen not only in the thought of Philo and the Jewish Gnostics, but also, as we have seen, in the *Zohar*. Patai and others, of course, do not point out what Jews *should* believe, but rather what they once believed.²⁵ Sixteenth century Safed Kabbalists

²³ Patai, *Ibid.* pp. 137-156.

²⁴ Patai, *Ibid.*, pp. 186-206.

²⁵ Rabbi E. Gendler noted that Patai's *Hebrew Goddess* highlights the need to recover the lost Natural and Feminine dimensions of the Jewish heritage. In developing this point, however, he spoke only of the value of a positive assessment of the theonomous character of Nature and ignored the value of the feminine as a clue to the components of God (J. Sleeper and A. Mintz, ed., *The New Jews*, Random House, N.Y., 1971, p. 234).

went out to the apple orchard each Sabbath eve because it was there that the divine Bride would mate with God to reproduce the souls of the just." Reb Qetina, a Babylonian Talmudist of the late 3rd or early 4th century, provides information that when the Jews made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the priests would roll up the veil hiding the Holy of Holies to show a huge statue of cherubim entwined with one another and announce, "Behold your love before God is like the love of male and female."²⁷ This aspect of Jewish belief could not be omitted from any comprehensive study of Judaism.

III. MAN, SIN AND SPIRIT

Man: His Nature

The Mishnah notes that all the vegetables and animals were created en masse, whereas man was created as an individual. This means that each of us can say "The whole world was created for my sake." The Tannaitic rabbinical schools described man as a miniature cosmos—with as much value as the entire universe. "He who takes a single life—is as if he destroyed a whole world. He who saves one human being—is as if he preserved a whole world." To quote *Abot d'R. Natan*,

Whatever the Holy One, blessed be He, created in the world, He created in man. . . . He created forests in the world and He created forests in man. . . . He created a

²⁷ G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, Schocken, N.Y., 1973, pp. 118-157.

²⁸ For believers in *Divine Principle*, Patai provides valuable factual information from the Jewish tradition confirming the polarity within the Godhead which parallels the polarity within the creation. One major doctrinal obstacle to a fair-minded consideration of Unification theology has been the widespread assumption that both synagogue and church are unalterably committed to belief in the exclusively masculine God. From the mystical tradition in Judaism valuable information and insights can be derived for a Messianic theology of the Bridegroom and Bride mentioned in the Gospels but never developed. Patai's historical reconstruction also casts light from a Jewish perspective on the way a doctrine of divine polarity can reinforce a social ethic based on the centrality of the family.

¹ Quoted Heller, *The Jew and His World*, p. 43.

wind in the world and He created a wind in man. . . . A sun in the world and a sun in man. . . . Flowing waters in the world and flowing waters in man. . . . Trees in the world and trees in man. . . . Hills in the world and hills in man. . . .²

It is impossible to deal with the essence and nature of God, sin, and immortality in Judaism without touching on the main points concerning the nature of man—his partnership with God, the good and evil impulse within him, and his dual nature of eternal spirit and physical body. In this section, though, we will consider some special aspects of man's character—how it was fashioned and how it is to be perfected—as Jews understand it.

Some early commentators on Genesis thought that the angels themselves posed as models for the creation of men. For other rabbis men far exceed the angels in appearance and wisdom when men are in a pure state. Further, though even the gnat is older than man (and therefore, man should never become too proud), from the beginning a light on man's spirit illumined his future greatness. In what does man's superiority consist? asks Saadia, a Babylonian Jew of the 10th century A.D. Nothing on earth is superior to man, he said, because beasts lack reason, and water and earth are inanimate. Man is the ultimate object of creation. God is like an architect who builds a palace, furnishes it and then invites the owner to occupy it. The earth is the palace; man is the owner. "Be fruitful, multiply. . . and *have dominion*." He is entitled to dominion by virtue of his God-given wisdom. Wisdom in man preserves the memory of past deeds to foresee the course of the future. By his wisdom man can subdue the animals to till his fields. With the same faculty he can construct mansions and create magnificent garments. What other being can prepare delicate dishes, establish order and civilization, or study the path of the planets?

Therefore man's superiority for Saadia is not a mere delusion, a bias of our inclination to judge in favor of ourselves, but rather a claim that is demonstrably true. However, because of our position

² J.A. Sleeper and A.L. Mintz, ed., pp. 239-240.

we bear a responsibility—we are endowed with this excellence in order to be recipients of God's divine commandments and prohibitions. And because of that, righteousness is in the foundation of the world and man must expect to be rewarded or punished according to his actions.³

Rabbi Leo Baeck also highlights the moral imperative. You are divine, so prove yourself to be divine, he declares. Because man is created in the divine likeness, the highest may be expected of him. Though life on earth is the creation of God, it needs man's deeds to become His kingdom. To do what is good is the beginning of wisdom.⁴

Abraham Mayer Heller⁵ colorfully notes man's wayward tendencies and Talmudic methods to correct them. The arrogant, conceited person offends God so much that He says, "I cannot dwell with him in the same universe." Envy is likewise an obstacle to spiritual maturity: "Envy has a thousand eyes but none with correct vision." Or, from another sage, "He who harbors envy in his heart will cause his bones to rot away." Even God prays (according to the Talmud), "May My mercy overcome My anger." An evil tongue may likewise be venomous: "if you hear an evil matter, bury it seven fathoms under the ground." Even if you do see wrong, one rabbi comments, "Be not like a fly seeking sore spots; cover up your neighbor's flaws and reveal them not to the world."

The antidote for human pride is to remember that God created man with two eyes: one to behold God's greatness and the other to behold his own insignificance. Other faults can be corrected by emulating God, imitating Moses, following the sages, and studying the Torah. The Talmud, then, tells man who he is, what to do, and why to do it.

³ Nahum Glatzer, ed., *The Judaic Tradition*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1969, p. 318-321. Our summary of Saadia's argument omits his numerous Biblical prooftexts.

⁴ Leo Baeck, *The Essence of Judaism*, Schocken, N.Y., 1948, pp. 150-161. For a critical evaluation of Baeck, see Arthur A. Cohen, *The Natural and the Supernatural Jew*, Pantheon, N.Y., 1962, pp. 102-120.

⁵ Heller, *Ibid.*, pp. 46-49. The following discussion contains several passages quoted by Heller.

To understand the Jewish view of man, we must understand where the ethical thrust of Judaism stems from. The Torah and its centrality are the subjects in a section to follow.

Sin and Satan

Modern Judaism is rediscovering the awful reality of sin. Kaufman Kohler's account of the existence of evil—"If God is the Father watching over the welfare of every mortal, all things are good, because all serve a good purpose in His eternal plan" rang somewhat hollow after the Nazi holocaust. His assertion that "But one belief illumines the darkness of destiny, and that is that God stands ever at the helm, steering through every storm and tempest toward His sublime goal"—seemed overly optimistic in the wake of the destruction of one third of the world's Jewry. History made Kohler the last giant of classical Reform Judaism.'

His apparent lack of concern about evil (he devoted 3 1/2 of 500 pages to it in *Jewish Theology*), however, was not at odds with the Hebraic tradition as a whole. He records that the medieval thinkers like Abraham Ibn David and Maimonides ascribed no reality to evil at all. He is eager to point out though that such optimistic metaphysics "does not equip man with strength and courage to cope with either pain or sin." ⁷

Why, then, does God allow us to suffer evil? Rabbinic Judaism says:

The evil strokes of destiny come upon the righteous, not because he deserves them, but because his divine Friend is raising him to still higher tests of virtue.'

Holiness transforms every evil. Even Job's sufferings were trials of divine love. To quote a Midrash:

If thou but seest that both good and evil are placed in thy

⁶ Kohler, *Jewish Theology*, Ktav Pub. House, N.Y., 1968, pp. 176-179.

Kohler, *Ibid*, p. 177.

* */bid*, p. 177.

hand, no evil will come to thee from above, since thou knowest how to turn it to good.⁹

Though the Kabbalistic mystic recognizes primordial sin or separation from God, there is no doctrine of original sin in mainstream Judaism. Kabbalists record that Adam was by nature a purely spiritual figure possessing a body of light. He was a microcosm reflecting the life of both divine and earthly worlds. His mission was to return to God all of the fallen sparks of divinity caused by a primeval fall. Vessels which were to carry the brilliance of the Infinite (*En Sof*) to all creation could not endure the onrush of light and were broken. Divine harmony was thus disrupted. Instead of light evenly illuminating the universe, part of creation was left in darkness. Then evil and good began their contention for mastery. Adam, though, by his concentrated power of meditation and spiritual action, could have restored everything to its proper state. If he had done this, the cosmic process would have been completed on the first Sabbath. However, Adam fell, sinned, and all souls that were destined for humanity "became tainted in varying degrees according to the power of resistance within them."

However, for Kohler, "Jewish doctrine teaches that no one is sinful by nature. That is, there is no inner compulsion to sin in the structure of man's being. In his frame of reference, if the "Fall of man" has any meaning at all, it only refers to the inner experience of each person who falls from the *ideal* of purity and divine

⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 176-177. This explanation is not limited to Jewish Reform circles. I. Epstein the British Conservative rabbi displays the same optimism.

¹⁰ Epstein, *Judaism*, p. 245, Cf. G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, pp. 99-109. This basic Zoharic doctrine supplies the only close parallel (besides apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature) in a major school of Judaism to *Divine Principle's* conception of original sin. (Cf. Y.O. Kim, *Unification Theology and Christian Thought*, Golden Gate, N.Y., 1975, pp. 41-44, 51-54.)

" Kohler, *Ibid*, pp. 218-225. The author blames Paul for the 'dismal' Christian doctrine of original sin which required a blood atonement for an accursed humanity and found it in the pagan sacrifice of a dying god (p. 221). For other Jewish denials of original sin, Cf. Epstein, *Ibid*, pp. 220, 228, 306; Gordis, *Judaism in a Christian World*, McGraw-Hill, N.Y., 1966, pp. 162, 172, 174-175.

nobility into transgression and sin. An early apocalyptic writer wrote similarly: "Each is his own Adam and responsible for his own sin." When men went to Adam, as the Talmudic anecdote goes, to complain to him about what he had done to the human race, he replied that he only committed one sin whereas they were guilty of a multitude of transgressions.

Though there have been many explanations of evil in general by Jews, none is normative. Therefore, Judaism is more interested in right action than speculation. Man has a free will and can resist sin. Rabbinic religion stresses *teshubah* which can be translated as repentance or more properly "returning." God says to the penitent:

Inasmuch as ye come before Me in judgment and departed from Me in peace, I do reckon it unto you as if ye had been created anew.

Though it is recorded that in the circle of Judah the Saint (12th or 13th century) repentance was demonstrated by such practices as rolling naked in the snow, smearing their bodies with honey and allowing themselves to be stung by bees, physical mortification is not ordinarily a Jewish penitential practice. Rather it is desired that the Jew draw "near to God from the distance of sin,"¹² by remorse for the wrongdoing, resolve not to repeat it and freely taking the antidote for all sin, devoted study of the Torah."

Ironically, though Judaism sees evil as not being inherent in man's nature, it does not expect perfection from man. To be totally free from error and evil is not a human trait, the rabbis say. Nobody has attained perfection," not even Moses. The Torah specifically accused him of misdeeds and errors of judgment for which he was punished.

¹² Quoted, Jacobs, *A Jewish Theology*, p. 257.

" For a detailed exposition of one view of repentance, see A.A.Z. Metzger. *Rabbi Kook's Philosophy of Repentance*, Yeshiva University Press, N.Y., 1968.

" Kohler, *Ibid.* p. 6, however, quotes the Talmud to say that four Jewish saints died without sin.

According to Kohler, the modern Jew has no place for a concept of Satan and/or evil spirits, even though there are numerous examples of just such beliefs in historic Judaism. Satan and evil spirits cross the pages of scripture and the writings of the apocalyptists, Essenes, Talmudists, Kabbalists and Jewish philosophers like Halevi, Crescas and Nahmanides. While Jacobs—a less liberal Reform Jew—does not dismiss their existence so summarily as Kohler, he feels that belief in them is rooted in superstition and can hardly play a positive role in the theology of a Jew today.¹⁵

Mystical Judaism, however, had an intense awareness of the power of Satan. In the version of the Kabbalah expounded by the followers of Isaac Luria (1534-1572 A.D.), Jewish rites restore the right order of creation and eliminate the power of the demonic. As a result of their tragic expulsion from Spain, Jews were well aware that the holy was locked in a desperate struggle with Satan.

Hasidic Judaism was less serious about the need to battle Satan. In their tales he is often the butt of levity. One story goes that when the Riziner (a famous rabbi) was in jail he at last understood why scripture dubs Satan a fool.

There I was in prison and Satan wouldn't leave me for a moment. He was a fool because I had to be behind bars while he stayed there of his own free will.

Another tale concerns the Berditschever (a noted rabbi, then a young man) who was invited to lead the synagogue prayers.

He ascended the pulpit, stood there silently for a few minutes, and then returned to his bench.

¹⁵ Folk Judaism if not the thinkers recognized the existence and power of the Satanic. If Jewish tradition is taken in an all-inclusive sense, i.e., the faith of the Catholic Israel that Solomon Schechter championed, one can discover all the main features of *Divine Principle's* understanding of Satan's role in cosmic history, his part in the Fall, influence in human affairs and predicted final defeat at the hands of God's Messiah. Yet one who is familiar with both religions easily senses a deep disparity in emphasis. Though Judaism's conception of evil as a tool for God to allow us to grow is also shared by *Divine Principle*, the latter goes further in its recognition of evil as a force diametrically opposed to anything that God intended, and what's more, that the depth of corruption caused by evil is a source of continuing pain and sorrow for God Himself.

His father-in-law angrily asked him to explain his action.

When I was ready to begin my prayers, I suddenly felt Satan wanted to recite them with me. Naturally I demanded, 'Who are you to dare pray before the entire congregation?'

'And who, pray tell, are you?' Satan answered.

'I am a man learned in the Torah,' I insisted.

'So am I' reported Satan, 'And when you studied I never failed to keep you company.'

But I am a Hasid,' I boasted.

'So am I; I was your constant companion,' he said.

'Well then since you are such a scholarly student and a Hasid, go and say the prayers by yourself,' I told him. Then I left the reading desk."

Up to this point we have referred frequently to Kohler. But Kohler never lived to see Auschwitz and the "God after Auschwitz" controversy that has ensued. It is very likely that if he had, he might have devoted more than a few token pages to evil in his writings. It is also very likely his optimism would have been more subdued. But how could he—coming from the relatively comfortable intellectual and religious climate of the nineteenth century Jew in America—have foreseen the conditions which would shake and resettle the world's Jewry?

Perhaps Jacobs was thinking of men like Kohler when he observed: "It is generally acknowledged in contemporary theological discussion that while the terrible problem of how God, the All-good and All-powerful, can tolerate evil in His creation, has always been the most difficult the theist has to face, the problem as it confronts twentieth-century man is so acute as to render banal most of the earlier attempts at a solution. '⁷

Why does man need a deeper insight into the problem of evil?

L.I. Newman, ed., *The Hasidic Anthology*. Bloch Publ., N.Y., 1944, pp. 414-415.

⁷ Jacobs, *Ibid.* p. 131.

"First, there is the sheer nakedness of the evil our generation has witnessed. Babies have suffered cruel deaths in former ages, but it was left to the Nazis to hurl them alive into gas-chambers and burn their bodies in crematoria. . . Secondly, the colossal scale of evils embracing large areas of the earth's surface tends to weight the dice against the possibility of ever finding a satisfactory solution. . . . Thirdly, the emergence of such evils in this century, when men had been thought to have reached a high level of mature moral and intellectual development, has shattered the hopes of those thinkers who were groping for a solution in evolutionary terms.⁸ Jacobs provides no satisfactory solution. One can feel his sympathies lie in silently leaving the matter in the hands of God.

Rabbi Richard Rubenstein veered in another direction. He visited Germany in 1961 and interviewed Dean Heinrich Gruber of the Evangelical Church of East and West Berlin. Gruber was known as an important help to Jews in the Hitler era and a resolute anti-Nazi. He had been an inmate of the Dachau concentration camp and a witness against Eichmann, the war criminal. What Gruber said to Rubenstein shocked him into re-examining his faith. The Protestant pastor quoted the psalmist about the fate of the Jews: ". . .for Thy sake are we slaughtered every day" (44:22). Hitler like Nebuchadnezzar was a rod of God's anger. The Dean said that the situation of Germany and Israel was analogous. Germans in 1938 smashed the synagogues; in 1945 bombs destroyed German churches. From 1938 on, Germany drove the Jews out into exile; since 1945, fifteen million Germans experienced homelessness.

An inner theological explosion rocked the rabbi. If Israel is God's Chosen People, then God was somehow responsible for the Nazis. As long as Jews retain the doctrine of divine election, they leave themselves open to the charge that God wanted Hitler to punish them. Therefore, Jews should give up the Chosen People myth; then the vicissitudes of their history need not be considered God's will. That conclusion was startling enough to Conservative

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 131.

Jews, but Rubenstein went even further. He announced the death of God as a Father. He contended that Israel and God had no I-Thou relationship. He insisted that the idea of an immortal soul was a deceptive myth. He argued that Judaism must henceforth come to terms with the ambiguity, irony, hopelessness and inevitable meaninglessness of life." The effect of Rubenstein's difficult questions and painful honesty was predictable. The Florida State University professor was subject to an unprecedented torrent of personal abuse.²⁰ However, Rubenstein did stimulate other Jews to try to come to grips with God, good, and evil.

Theologian, critic, and history seem to be urging a more realistic view of sin and evil on the Jew. It becomes harder and harder to believe that evil exists only inside man as a test of his freedom and willpower—and that there is no supernatural power intrinsically hostile to God.

Professor Frederick S. Plotkin of the University of Nevada is one of the modern Jews recognizing that old-fashioned Reform optimism is not adequate. For him, the fact that all men are sinners and must die is taken in bitter earnest by Judaism. Certainly Jews could never endorse facile phrases about evil somehow being good: a faith born in the shadow of the Golden Calf is too aware of tragedy for that. What could be more appalling than the fact that a man can destroy his own soul, spread corruption into the souls around him, and perhaps bring ruin upon a generation? It is utter nonsense to call such calamities somehow good. Nor is it a 'Jewish' sentiment to deceive ourselves into thinking that evil or death 'do not matter'. Plotkin thought that though it seems to be 'religious' to talk like that, it is but false and hollow sentimentalism; and what's more, it's shockingly un-Jewish.²¹

For Plotkin, the problem of evil can be solved only by returning to Jewish messianism. The problem is to determine how God

¹⁹ R.L. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism*, Bobbs-Merrill Co., Indianapolis, 1966, chaps. 2, 4, 13, 14.

²⁰ J. Neusner, ed., *Understanding Jewish Theology*, Ktav Pub. House, N.Y., 1973, p. 184.

²¹ F.S. Plotkin, *Judaism and Tragic Theology*, Schocken, N.Y., 1973, p. I.

can be related to the world in such a way as not to be so transcendent that he can have no actual contact with it, nor so completely present within it as to be the prisoner of his own creation. For him, only a messianic faith is capable of responding effectively to that question.²²

Spirit World and The Hereafter

Generally speaking, it is fair to suggest that the reality and nature of the afterlife is not of paramount significance for Jews. By tradition and preference, they have been consistently this-worldly. They accept a concept of the hereafter or dismiss it without much fuss. For example, when the noted author Rabbi Joshua Loth Leibman wrote that death represents an eternal sleep for a worn-out body and tired soul there was no bomb-burst of controversy.²³ The reaction was not even remotely comparable to the explosive effect of **Rabbi Elmer Berger's** sharp attack on Zionism or Rubenstein's "Death of God theology." However, when Jews have been concerned, they have never been of one mind. Every hypothesis has been advanced: resurrection of the physical body at the Last Judgment, immortality of the soul, reincarnation, transmigration of souls, mystic absorption in the Oversoul, biological immortality (a man lives through his children), collective immortality (Jews live on through the social organism), ideological immortality (a person living on through his ideals—cf. Spinoza), as well as the negation of one or all of the above. Each of these notions can be found somewhere in the ideological manifold of Catholic Israel.

Rabbi Epstein identified immortality with man's partnership to God: "The conception of man as co-worker with God, both now and in eternity, gives a new and higher significance to the doctrine of immortality which, as we have seen, is indigenous to Judaism. It is grounded in God and in His purpose in which man is called upon to cooperate. Immortality is thus no longer merely a survival beyond the grave, but the homegoing of the spirit or the soul of man to the further cultivation and development of the divine

/bid, p. 48.

²³ J.L. Leibman, *Peace of Mind*, Simon and Schuster, N.Y., 1946.

relationship made manifest on this stage of life. "Then shall the dust return to earth and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it' (Eccl. 12:7)".²⁴

Kohler carefully supports the vision of man that is "directed upwards and forwards" and who will not "resign himself to decay in the dust like the beast." While denying the concept of rabbinic Judaism, i.e. the resurrection of the dead (inherited from Persian dualism), as well as that of medieval philosophy (influenced by the Aristotelian notion that there is no individuality in immortality), Kohler bases his belief in the hereafter on reason, but more importantly the image of the eternal God which is implanted in the human soul. From our likeness to God we justify our immortality.²⁵ Fifty years after Kohler's work, Jacobs verifies the direction Kohler was taking by noting that the tendency among modern Jews who do believe in an afterlife is to place the stress on the immortality of the soul rather than on the resurrection of the dead.' The older Reform theologian contended that a resurrection of the body contradicts immutable laws of nature discovered by modern science.

What, then, is the nature of this afterlife? Somewhat surprisingly the Hebrew scriptures give little indication. Unlike their Egyptian neighbors who lavished their money, thought and art on the life beyond, Israel preserved little written conception of the hereafter other than its brief accounts of a shadowy nether world called 'Sheol' where ghosts lived a sad and probably semi-conscious existence. There is no counterpart to the pyramids of Gizeh or *The Book of the Dead*. Later though, in the rabbinic age more clear-cut notions were popular. The soul was said to linger near its extinct body—for three days, seven days or a year. Other souls hover between heaven and earth and are able to overhear God's decrees about the future and are willing to reveal them to us below. The righteous were believed to be welcomed by a sumptu-

" Epstein, *Ibid*, p. 141.

²⁵ Kohler, *Ibid*, pp. 295-296.

²⁶ Jacobs, *Ibid*, p. 318.

ous banquet in Paradise at which the leviathan (a huge crocodile, dragon or sea monster) would be the principal dish. Another version sees in heaven no eating nor drinking along with no begetting of children, no bargaining, no jealousy, hatred or strife; instead the righteous sit with crowns on their heads, enjoying the radiant splendor of the *Shekhinah*.²⁷

Though the Jewish scriptures give little picture of the nature of the hereafter, they do give us clear images of effects, phenomena, and personages connected with it. The spiritual world and its beings appear and disappear on many pages of sacred writ giving unmistakable signs of a colorful folk Judaism that is often hidden behind the facade of Biblical orthodoxy. Angels are with God at creation, guard the entrance to Eden, eat with Abraham, walk the streets of Sodom, wrestle with Jacob, appear to Moses and lead the Hebrews from Egypt. A serpent (demon? Satan?) tempts Eve, Satan talks with Job, offerings are made to a wilderness spirit named Azazel, and *bete elohim* seduce the daughters of men.

Communication with (and travel to and from) the spirit world is likewise recorded. Enoch and Elijah ascend to heaven. King Saul commissions a medium to recall the spirit of Samuel. That shamanism existed and was widespread is verified by the Mosaic commandment to kill witches; this was possibly because they were priestesses of Canaanite paganism—but more likely because they were rivals to the official priests of YHWH. At any rate, we also learn that Saul and others killed or exiled mediums.

Reading dreams was commonplace and prophets were thought of as direct channels for God. Visions were expected and accepted. Ezekiel, Isaiah and Daniel predicted in detail the immediate and distant course of history. Faith cures and other wonders were also a normal feature of biblical religion. Priests and prophets could cure illnesses like leprosy. Moses was a master magician. Joshua made the sun stand still. Elisha had the uncanny power to make an ax-head float on water and to kill children with a curse.

²⁷ L. Newman, *The Talmudic Anthology*, Behrman House, N.Y., 1945, pp. 3, 5.

Post-biblical Judaism was an even richer storehouse of occult and esoteric matters. Angels as well as evil spirits were identified and classified. Amulets and charms were available to guarantee the birth of a child, heal sickness or ward off evil spirits. Some men were said to have seen and heard 'supernatural' beings. Joseph K aro, the 16th century mystic and codifier of Talmudic Law, was in daily contact with a spirit. Four rabbis were named and praised because they penetrated all the secrets of the spirit world and visited Paradise while still alive. Moses de Leon was said to have believed that the *Zohar* he prepared was actually the work of Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai who had been dead for ten centuries. And beginning with the great rabbinical academies of Babylonia, astrology swept the Jewish world. Signs of the Zodiac were employed to prove predictions of the last days based on a secret reading of scripture. In Hasidic Judaism their spiritual leaders, the Zaddik, were open to the spirit world and could control it through prayer and ecstatic dancing. It was natural for the Zaddik to heal, cast out demons, bless, provide effective charms, and produce wonder-working amulets. Reaction to these phenomena ranges from Heinrich Graetz's denunciation of the *Zohar* as "the book of lies" to a kind of patient tolerance by modern exegetes.

Concerning the dynamics of the spiritual world, a striking parallel with *Divine Principle* is seen in the teachings of Isaac Luria and the mystics of the Safed school, particularly regarding the theory of *Ibbur* (Impregnation)²⁸. *Divine Principle* calls the same principle "the Law of Spirit Return." Luria taught that man must initiate his restoration to the original spiritual state of harmony with God. If a soul does not complete its task on earth, it must return and work with the soul of another living person so that it can receive support from it in its own striving to overcome its shortcomings. Or conversely, a stronger soul may come to the earth to work with a weaker one, nourishing it with its own substance as a mother nurses a child in the womb. In this process, the soul in the spiritual world "impregnates" the soul of the person

²⁸ Epstein, *Ibid*, pp. 286-87.

on earth. For *Divine Principle* great men are assisted by great souls. However, on the other side, wicked men can be in league with or pawns of evil spirits. Thus, the struggle of good and evil on earth is a reflection of the struggle in the spiritual world and vice versa. This concept of "impregnation" suggests a partial explanation at least for various spiritual phenomena, from speaking in tongues, healing and precognition to unfortunate cases of multiple personality, schizophrenia and other psychic aberrations.

IV. FOUNDATIONS OF THE BIBLICAL HERITAGE

The Torah

Moses Mendelssohn declared that the Jew has no divine doctrines, only divine legislation. The point is well taken. Judaism consists in primary obedience to God's commandments—revealed at Mt. Sinai, written in the Pentateuch, explained in the Talmud and applied in "responsa."

In the five biblical books traditionally ascribed to Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy) rabbinical Judaism discovered 613 specific divine commandments: 365 were prohibitions corresponding to the number of days in a solar year and 248 were positive commands corresponding to ancient physiology's number of members in the human body. According to the Orthodox Jew, the whole Torah is direct revelation; therefore, all 613 commandments are of equal merit and eternal validity. As one can see, this poses problems for the modern Jew. Today a 'Torah-true' Jew by the Orthodox definition would be prohibited on the Sabbath from driving a car (even to the synagogue), answering the telephone, turning on the electric lights or paying for a meal in a restaurant. In Israel, Orthodox farmers let their fields lie fallow during the Jubilee year, though the Chief Rabbi at Jerusalem advised against it. History has seen that the authoritative source of Judaism has also been one of its greatest problems. The distinction between Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jew comes from their distinctive interpretations of the Torah's authority.

¹ Responsa are authoritative applications of Torah rules in situations not explicitly covered in earlier pronouncements.

Orthodoxy, of course, adheres strictly to past ritual and tradition and is uncompromising in its obedience to the Torah. Reform Judaism took root in the Western world to liberalize and revolutionize the practices of Orthodoxy. Those who opposed the "extreme" trends of the Reform movement (substitution of Sunday for the Sabbath, abrogation of circumcision, abolition of Hebrew) as a break with historical Judaism, found a refuge in Conservative Judaism. Solomon Schechter lifted this movement to its present position. Schechter looked at Reform Judaism with a critical eye. He remarked that modernist rabbis had done such a thorough job amputating diseased limbs and useless organs that it was doubtful if their Judaism were still alive. (Maimonides in a famous comment had urged modification or abrogation of certain ritual laws in order to save Judaism, "even as the physician will amputate the hand or foot of a patient in order to save his life," *Mamerin II*, 4.) Conservative Judaism is considered the middle path between the Orthodox and Reform synagogues.

A Talmudic sage declared that he who denies the heavenly source of one verse or one letter in the Torah despises the Word of the Lord. When Maimonides prepared his thirteen basic principles of Judaism, he was savagely attacked for suggesting that some commandments were secondary to others. The American Jew Heller looks at the problem from this angle: historically, he says, a monolithic interpretation of the Torah has rarely prevailed. The Pharisees created the Oral Law which recognized the dynamics of life and met its new demands. Rabbinic authorities introduced "amendments" (*Takkanot*) which harmonized Law with life. The Hasidim have prospered with modified forms of worship. Talmudic interpreters and Reform Jews alike draw distinctions between ritualistic and ethical laws.

Because of this diversity in Judaism there is no unified opinion or central authority. Heller advises his readers that the Jew is confronted with two alternatives: either anarchy—do what is right in your own eyes—or standard interpretations by each of the three main groups in contemporary Judaism. The latter he prefers to

"confusion and chaos." ²

Professor Eliezer Schweid ³ seems to advocate what Heller would prefer not to see. Looking at the matter of Torah observance from an Israeli point of view, this philosopher at Hebrew University of Jerusalem demonstrates how far the modern nonobservant Jew is from tradition. He rightly notes that the majority of contemporary Jewish people (even in Israel) have not received the totality of the Torah. Part of the Mitzvot seem inviting while others appear alien. The mitzvah or directive given by God must be considered in light of external circumstances and our inner readiness. Thus, the only general rule is for the individual to perform what in the Torah is *right for him*. Schweid would argue that the Orthodox must be willing to come out to meet the nonobservant Jew and encourage him to return to the Torah with a Jewish Law which is coordinated with the social and cultural reality in which we now exist. Orthodox unwillingness to behave within the reality of our generation damages Jewish Law and alienates most Jews from the Torah.

The gravity of this problem is indicated by the fact that the standard codification of Torah regulations is the *Shulan Arukh* (the Prepared Table) written by Karo in 1565 with glosses by Isserks in 1578 (*Mappah*: the Tablecloth). Their world and ours are completely different. Dr. Hans Joachim Schoeps observes that contemporary Jews live in a *post-Jewish* situation. Simple and direct experience of Jewishness has become impossible. Eight hundred years separate us from Maimonides and thousands separate us from Moses. And they cannot be rolled back. Mendelssohn's generation at the close of the 18th century was the last to regulate their lives according to the unabridged Mosaic Law fixed by Karo and Isserks. Schoeps, however, argues against the all-or-nothing approach. The Orthodox insist we accept everything, all 613 commandments; the Jewish atheist wants to retain nothing from the religious past. Schoeps quotes Frank Rosenzweig who contends that modern Jews, unable for conscience's sake to believe every-

² A.M. Heller, *Mid*, pp. 67-85.

³ E. Schweid, *Israel at the Crossroads*, Jewish Pub. Society of America, Philadelphia, 1973, pp. 85-99.

thing and unwilling to be reduced to nothing, can still obey something. Schoeps applies this principle in a specific case, observing that if the great rabbis of the past see us sitting in quiet conversation with friends on Friday evenings instead of lighting Sabbath candles or attending the synagogue service, they may smile in astonishment at their modern descendants but will surely not despise them."

The attempt to simplify the Jewish Law goes back into the distant past. Rabbi Hillel, called the father of classical Judaism, defined it as:

That which is hurtful to thee do not to thy neighbor.
That is the whole doctrine. The rest is commentary.

Rabbi Simlai⁵ noted that in the Torah Moses handed down 613 commandments. King David reduced them to eleven (Psalm 15), Isaiah cut the number down to six (33:15), Micah summed everything up in three (6:8), Deutero-Isaiah found two (56:1), and Amos condensed all the requirements into a single commandment: "Seek ye Me, and live" (5:4). Unfortunately, such abridgements—though perhaps catching the spirit of the Torah—cannot bridge the gap between Reform, Orthodox or Conservative Jews. The minimum something which demonstrates one's loyalty to the Torah and one's Jewishness varies from individual to individual. It may mean simply being circumcized or attending Yom Kippur service at the synagogue, celebrating Hanukkah instead of Christmas, encouraging one's son to complete his Bar-Mitzva or wearing a necklace with the star of David. El iezer Schweid lists the external marks of Jewish identity: circumcision, the marriage laws, dietary regulations, plus observance of the Sabbaths and festivals. American Jews would be less strict⁶ And some in Israel, more demanding.

A.A. Cohen, ed., *Arguments and Doctrines*, Harper and Row, N.Y., 1970, pp. 451-466.

M. Steinberg, *Basic Judaism*, Harcourt, Brace, and World, N.Y., 1947, pp. 12-14, 16.

⁶ Schweid, *Ibid.* p. 47.

The Prophets

In one sense the prophets represent a distinctly secondary part of the Bible. Moses sees God face to face; the prophets merely hear His voice or are possessed by His spirit. In *rare* instances do they see His throne or His angels.' The Mosaic Torah is the heart of Judaism; everything else, however important, are its limbs, so to speak. Since the latter part of the last century Protestants have often thought of the prophets as the mountain top exemplars of Old Testament faith and Reform Judaism has generally agreed. Not so with rabbinic, Talmudic, even mystical Judaism. We do not stand where most Jews do nor see from their perspective if we ignore the fundamental status of the Torah and the lesser, derivative character of everything else.

At the same time, because of the fact that the prophets are included in the canon, Jewish writers today try to explain their value and interpret their message. Three of the great modern interpreters of Judaism have written on this subject: Yehezkel Kaufmann, Abraham Heschel, and Martin Buber. By summarizing their conclusions, we can obtain insights into the minds of Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah as well as understand their significance in the context of the whole range of Hebrew religious thought.

Professor Yehezkel Kaufmann of Hebrew University, Israel's most famous Biblical scholar, treats classical prophecy as an important part of the religion of his people. For Kaufmann classical prophecy is deeply rooted in the early popular religion. This idea is intended to combat the Reform Jew's contention that the prophet represents a radical break with the past and a new type of religious experience. Men like Isaiah who have a purely *mantic* element in their work are to be found in every period of Jewish history. They

In order to protect the primacy of Mosaic revelation, mystical Judaism declared that Moses received his knowledge from face-to-face contact with God; the prophets derived their inspiration from YHWH's *Word*; the psalms and other writings came from the Holy Spirit; the Talmud was inspired by the *bath kol* (heavenly voice) and all later religious insight depended upon the spirit of Elijah. This thesis never won universal adoption even among the mystics: one at Safed claimed to be visited daily by the spirit of the pre-existent Torah and others were given revelation from Enoch, Seth and Adam. G.G. Scholem, *On The Kabbalah*, pp. 19-20.

interpret, as their forebears, the grand design of history and predict events for individuals as well as for the nation. Furthermore, the classical prophets were known and revered as wonder workers and faith healers, like their predecessors. And finally they themselves saw their role as links in the chain of divine messengers beginning with Moses.

Kaufmann is concerned to topple another misconception. Against those who say that the prophets were universalists rather than nationalists, he insists that they shared the ordinary historical and moral presuppositions of their time. The prophets announce no new God nor do they teach a new concept of His nature. They are no less nationalistic than the people around them, though, admittedly, Amos and others reached a new height in affirming the primacy of morality. Men like Jeremiah were not cosmopolitans or citizens of the world. Their concepts of Israel, Jerusalem, the temple and the dynasty of David were *national* expressions of an essentially universal idea. Israel, the elect of God, becomes the arena of God's self-disclosure to the nations. The national symbols are supranational only in the sense that they are beyond the power of any political disaster to destroy.

Kaufmann suggests that classical prophecy arose because of a type of societal decay new to Israel. Early Israel was founded upon an agricultural economy. With the monarchy came the rise of a bureaucracy based on office alone. A sharp cleavage was introduced into society, a gap between rich officials and ordinary people which widened as a result of a century of war from Ahab to Jeroboam II. The dispossessed and impoverished masses watched the corruption and wantonness of a wealthy aristocratic class of royal officials. While a few war profiteers amassed great fortunes, many common people were sold into slavery or reduced to a miserable proletariat. Kaufmann confesses that social circumstances cannot entirely account for an Isaiah, yet he underscores the fact that classical prophecy was born in a certain historical situation, addressed itself to a given people and grew out of their cultural roots. Again, above all else, the distinctive feature of the prophet is not his universalistic ethical monotheism, as the

Reform rabbis declared to be the case, but rather a vehement denunciation of social corruption.⁸

According to Abraham Heschel, the main task of the prophet is to bring the world into divine focus. Consequently he becomes censor, accuser, defender and consoler. In the presence of God he takes the part of the people. In the presence of the people he takes the part of God. He hears God's voice and feels His heart: God's pathos becomes as important as His logos. For Heschel, the fundamental fact of prophetic experience is that Hosea or Amos sympathizes with the feelings of God. As a result the soul of the prophet overflows with compassion for Him.

Anyone can read the Bible to find specific teachings of the prophets: the attacks upon the callous rich, denunciations of sacred ceremonies with no moral effect, verbal blasts against the cruelty and folly of war, etc. Heschel discovers a deeper and more profound element—the response to transcendent sensibility.⁹ Amos, for example, does not judge Israel on the basis of an abstract ideal or impersonal norm. He speaks for the living God who cares. God is plaintive and disconsolate. The Redeemer feels pain because of the misdeeds and thanklessness of those whom He has redeemed. If the Bible student thinks only of Amos' social idealism or his exalted ideas about justice, he misses the whole point. God is alive, personal, a Being with a heart. This is as clearly demonstrated by His anger and hurt as His pervading affection. Amos and God understand one another; they are in the most intimate contact. The prophet inwardly has identified with divine disappointment and aversion; out of this comes his compassion for man and sympathy for God."

So too with Hosea. God is the selfless, exalted Being whose sensibilities are pained. Spontaneous emotions well up from the depths of the divine. Hosea glimpses into the inner life of God and gives us a supreme expression of the vision of the *subjective* God: Israel's partner, lover and husband with all the affections those relationships signify on the human level.

⁸ Y. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1960, pp. 343-362.

⁹ A. Heschel, *The Prophets*, Harper Torchbook, N.Y., 1962, p. 26.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 38.

In his treatment of God in history, Heschel also insists upon the personalist" factor. History is not simply the place where moral ideas are demonstrated or universal ideals exemplified. For the prophet, whatever happens to nations illustrates man's personal defiance of the living God. History is His search for a way of reconciliation. Even where His power is absent or invisible, His care is present. God is at work on man, consciously intent to refashion history in accord with Himself, though the divine side of history is often indiscernible. Nonetheless, the suffering of man sears His conscience.

What prophets therefore proclaim is God's intimate relatedness to man. *Pathos* should be seen as the very *ethos* of God. Injustice is not sinful because a law has been broken or a duty left undone—it is evil because someone is hurt. Divine concern is reflected in human sympathy, for goodness implies mercy in the prophet's eyes. In line with rabbinic teaching Heschel concludes with a reminder that justice is a standard whereas mercy is an attitude, justice is detachment while mercy is attachment, justice is objective but mercy is personal. For prophetic religion the Judge of men is also their merciful Father.

Since the middle of the 19th century Reform Jews have concentrated on the prophets as the apex of biblical religious development in opposition, as we have mentioned, to the traditional understanding of the centrality of the Torah. Martin Buber resolves this dichotomy, to his satisfaction at least, by interpreting the whole Hebrew Bible as an expression of the prophetic faith. If Judaism begins with Moses it is because he was a great prophet. And scripture concludes with the hope for the Messiah, a new prophet like Moses but greater.

At every landmark in the history of Israel's faith the central persons are designated by the term *nabi* (prophet). What this important title means is two-fold: the nabi serves as an intermediary bearing the message from heaven to earth and also as a mediator conveying petitions from earth to heaven. As for the literary prophets, their purpose was to hand down the core of the

" Cf. M. Buber: "In order to speak to man, God must become a person; but in order to speak to him, He must make man into a person." *The Prophetic Faith*, pp. 164-165.

teaching of the earlier nebiim." Because of the nabi, the leader God of the semi-nomads becomes the God of the agrarian state and finally the God of the sufferers.

Hosea calls Moses a nabi. In the kingship or leadership covenant between God and people, one must not ignore the person of the mediator. The revelation, covenant and statutes were given through 'a mortal. Inversely, the questions and requests of the people are presented to God through this specific mediator. According to Numbers, Moses is superior to ordinary visionaries because he speaks to God and God speaks to him "mouth to mouth." However, whatever else Moses is and does, his ministry of God's word and man's is the center of his work; he represents the Lord as a prophet speaking His message and commanding in His name.

According to Deuteronomy, in times of necessity there would be raised up again and again prophetic leaders like him. The judges had to receive the divine spirit. However, after the establishment of the monarchy, the nabi was pushed out of his place unless he was content to be "paid court minister of spiritual affairs." Hence the prophet often became a powerless opponent of the rulers, and a critic of false government. He taught true principles of leadership which were so badly distorted in the conduct of the reigning kings. Gradually, disappointment with actual rulers led to disillusionment with the institution of the monarchy in Israel. For the prophet, the king had lost his right to be God's chosen representative. The nabi henceforth considered himself to be the real deputy of God's kingdom encompassing the entire world. ¹³

From the prophets a greater faith flowered. The nabi was willing to face opposition and even martyrdom because as a suffering servant he would become the antecedent type of the Messiah to come. ¹⁴ Sooner or later the nabi-Messiah would fulfill the promise of the God of sufferers. Thus, for Buber, the concept of the prophet

¹² M. Buber, *The Prophetic Faith*, Macmillan Co., N.Y., 1949, p. 2.

¹³ *Ibid*, pp 230-231.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 139-142: Isaiah's "Immanuel" passage and its Jewish meaning.

explains the whole history of Israel's faith.

In line with most Biblical criticism, the Jewish philosopher thinks of Deutero-Isaiah's suffering servant poems as the high water mark of Hebrew prophecy. Buber has no interest in the heroic messianic conqueror of Jewish expectancy. However, for many this may look like a retreat from the dream of a triumphant Messiah ruling a transfigured earth. Nevertheless, from Buber's point of view, the suffering servant reflects the tradition, drive and life of the prophet—whose spoken word, whose attentive ear, has been the real source for the Bible, its faith, and Judaism's continuing virtue.

V. THE MESSIANIC HOPE AND HISTORY

Awaiting the Messiah

According to Louis Jacobs the doctrine of **the** Messiah is one of the most distinctive of Judaism's teachings and it involves the basic conviction that human history will be fulfilled here on earth. Since God will not abandon His world to moral chaos, eventually He will intercede directly to halt tyranny, oppression and the pursuit of evil. Sooner or later the Messiah will be sent by God to redeem Israel and usher in a new era of bliss like that of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.'

Messiah, meaning "the anointed one," originally referred to any individual consecrated with sacred oil such as the king of Israel and the high priest. But it was also applied to any person for whom God had a special purpose—Cyrus of Persia, for example (Isa. 45:1). The Biblical prophets clearly envision a messianic age to come but not until the appearance of apocalyptic literature can one find the idea that the Messiah will be a *supernatural* redeemer sent by God to free Israel from bondage. ² There are therefore two distinct doctrines: that of a personal Messiah and that of a messianic age. Joseph Klausner of Hebrew University is one of the

¹ See G. Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Israel*, Schocken, N.Y., 1971.

² Later Judaism found Messianic passages within the Pentateuch of Moses: Gen. 12:2-3, 26:4, 28:14; Ex. 19:5-6, Lev. 26:3-45, Num. 24:17-19, Deut. 28:1-68, 30:3-10.

scholars stressing the difference between the general messianic expectation and explicit belief in a specific Messiah. On the one hand, the prophets looked to the end of this age after which the people of Israel in their own land (and the world at large) will enjoy political freedom, moral perfection and earthly bliss. On the other hand, there was also hope for a strong human redeemer who by his power and spirit would bring complete political and spiritual redemption to Israel as well as material blessings and religious enlightenment to all mankind.

For the prophets Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah, God is the redeemer, and the Messiah-King; a human possessing lofty spiritual qualities, is but the leader of the redeemed people. In Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Malachi, Joel, and Daniel, there is no mortal figure at all, because Yahweh alone is the redeemer. In Amos, Ezekiel and Obadiah, the Davidic dynasty serves as a collective Messiah.

Rabbinic literature generally believes in a personal Messiah to come. Rabbi Hillel (3rd century), however, declared: "There shall be no Messiah for Israel, because they have already enjoyed him in the days of Hezekiah." Rashi (1040-1105) interpreted this strange remark to mean that Hillel denies belief in a personal Messiah but believes in the coming of the messianic age. All the medieval Jewish thinkers however, affirm their faith in a personal Messiah.

While apocalyptic literature emphasizes the supernaturalistic character of the Messiah and his Kingdom, rabbinic authorities often stress the naturalistic aspects.³

Rabbi Akiba recognized Bar Kochba, the rebel leader in the disastrous insurrection of 132-135 A.D., as the Messiah even though he was obviously a human being and one who could perform no miracles. Samuel of Babylonia (3rd cent.) taught: "The days of the Messiah do not differ from the present except for the fact that in that age Israel will no longer be in bondage to the

³ The Jew as opposed to the orthodox Christian is right to insist on the humanity of the Messiah, according to Divine Principle. The Messiah is not to be confused with the notion of a supernatural figure, a co-eternal Son of God, an angel visitant or a god in human flesh.

kingdoms of the world."

Medieval Judaism refined messianic speculation considerably. For Maimonides, the King Messiah will not be obliged to perform miracles. As for the Biblical marvels predicted for the kingdom, the miracle of the lion laying down with the lamb merely means that the Gentiles will be at peace with Israel. Maimonides also discourages guesswork about the exact time of the messianic appearance. All Jews should do is believe in a general sense the fact of his coming but not bother with details which are unessential.

How will the Messiah be recognized? Maimonides answers: "If a king arises of the house of David, meditating in the Torah and performing precepts like his father, David, in accordance with the Written Torah and the Oral Torah, and if he will compel all Israel to walk in the way of the Torah and repair its breaches, and if he will wage the wars of the Lord, it can be assumed that he is the Messiah. If he succeeds in rebuilding the Temple and gathering the dispersed ones of Israel, it will then be established beyond doubt that he is the Messiah who will perfect the whole world to serve God together. . . ." (Yad, Melakhim, 11:4).

Maimonides believed that this view was taught explicitly in the Torah or derived from universally agreed upon rabbinic tradition. From two standpoints the formulation is noteworthy. First, it ignores most of the supernaturalistic wonders of Jewish apocalyptic. No mention is made of the return of Elijah, the war with Gog and Magog, the trumpet of the Messiah or the transformation of the earth. Secondly, however, it includes enough very difficult feats to discourage Jews from easily accepting the claims of messianic pretenders.

Joseph Albo (1380-1444) claimed that belief in the coming of the Messiah is not an integral part of Judaism, quite possibly because he opposed Christians who were committed to a messianic interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Rabbi Moses ben Joseph di Trani called the Mabit (16th century) argues that in the messianic age all men will acknowledge the law of Moses as the true religion and the miracles accompanying the arrival of the Messiah will be

so powerful as to convince the greatest skeptic.

Reform Judaism in its classic form opposed Jewish nationalism and the dream of a return to the holy land. The messianic hope would be realized naturally as man creates a new world of universal education, social progress, liberalism and greater opportunity. Classical Reform rejects belief in a personal Messiah. Moses Mendelssohn (d. 1791) denied that Jews were a nation and spoke of Germans, Frenchmen, or Englishmen "of the Mosaic persuasion." David Friedlander (d. 1834) urged the abolition of all prayers with a Jewish national coloring and wanted Hebrew discarded in favor of German in public worship. Abraham Geiger's 1854 prayer book eliminated all petitions for the restoration of the Jewish state in Palestine, the rebuilding of the temple, and the ingathering of the exiled. In the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 Rabbi Isaac Wise and other leaders of Reform Judaism in America officially repudiated Jewish nationalism. Hermann Cohen, the famous neo-Kantian philosopher, (d. 1918) argued that the Zionist plea for a Jewish state stands in opposition to Jewish messianic religion.

Zionism too generally conceived of the messianic age in secular terms. Committed to the ideal of a Jewish homeland, it rejected the doctrine of a personal Messiah while thinking of a Jewish state as the fulfillment of the messianic dream. Louis Jacobs, nevertheless, pointedly warns of the greatest danger in indentifying the State of Israel with the messianic age. Nor does he even like the attempt to identify the foundation of the State of Israel with "the beginning of redemption." To confuse the present state of society even in Israel with the kingdom of God, he maintains, is ridiculous. The prophets dreamed of a *perfected world* and were not in error. The messianic age requires a divine summing-up of the whole human enterprise on a transfigured earth.

Jacobs, however, like the classical Reform rabbis and the secular Zionists, denies the doctrine of a personal Messiah to come, First, because not all the Biblical prophets conceived of a personal Messiah. Secondly, because a democratic age cannot accept the value of a restoration of the Davidic monarchy. Thirdly,

he thinks a rebuilt temple at Jerusalem in which animal sacrifices are offered is far from the highest aspiration of contemporary Judaism. Jacobs longs and prays for God's direct intervention but admits frankly we cannot know what will occur in the messianic age.⁴

The Jewish Case for a Personal Messiah

Even in their prayer books Reform Judaism and the Reconstructionist party within Conservative Judaism changed the traditional hope that God will bring a redeemer into the generalized faith that He will bring redemption. Professor of Judaic Studies Steven S. Schwartzchild of Washington University in St. Louis has argued for a return to belief in the personal Messiah. He gives four reasons which prompted liberal Judaism to transform the doctrine of an individual Messiah into the doctrine of the messianic age. None of these is any longer valid, he believes.

First, Reform Jews regarded the personal Messiah as part of the obsolete Jewish nationalism they were determined to eradicate. Since they were laboring for acceptance as full citizens of the countries in which they dwelt, why declare that they awaited a person to lead them from their present homes and reconstitute them as a separate nation in a distant land? In Germany, France and America, Reform rabbis declared, "We know no fatherland except that to which we belong by birth or citizenship." Frankfort Jews put their case even more strongly and not without a touch of humor: if the Messiah arrived in our city we would have to meet him at the gate and urge him to remove himself since his presence would obstruct the complete emancipation of German Jewry.

Two historical facts weaken this argument. On one hand, some Reform Jews have since become ardent Zionists without abandoning their essential commitment to liberal Judaism. On the other, right-wing Orthodox Jews have rejected Jewish nationalism because they rely on the arrival of a personal Messiah for salvation. One can conclude that whether one believes in the personal Mes-

Louis Jacobs, *Ibid*, pp. 292-300.

siah or not has nothing whatever to do with the Zionist cause.

Secondly, belief in the coming of an individual Messiah implied expectation of a miracle. Nothing less than signs and wonders would enable a man or single supernatural visitor to carry out the functions scripture and Talmud associate with the Messiah. Since modernist Jews had given up belief in miracles they logically abandoned the idea of a Messiah.

Again, Schwartzchild advances two counter-arguments. For Hermann Cohen the philosopher and most 19th century thinkers, history was an *infinite* process of striving for the ideal. If messianism designates the completion of this process, how can it be manifested except through an end-point of history decided by a divine act? Human history as such merely goes on and on; we swim in an ocean striving to reach a shore that logically does not exist. Perfection cannot come from human endeavor alone. God must set the goal of progress and guarantee that man within some future time will reach it.

Not less important is the fact that at least one strand of Jewish tradition denies the startling character of the messianic age. Maimonides himself insisted:

Let it not occur to anyone that in the days of the Messiah a single thing will be changed in the natural course of the world or that there will be any kind of innovation in nature. Rather, the world will continue to exist as it always has.... The Messiah will come exclusively in order to bring peace to the world. (Mishnah Torah, Laws of the Kings, 12:1)

Reform Jews could therefore believe in the coming of a personal Messiah, as did the medieval philosopher, without accepting any of the extravagant miracles tradition ascribes to the end-time.

Thirdly, Reform Jews discarded the doctrine of a personal Messiah so they would remove a bone of contention between Judaism and Christianity. Joseph Albo centuries earlier recognized

that a messianic interpretation of the Hebrew Bible played into the hands of the Christian apologists. Our foes used the messianic hope to refute the authority of the Mosaic Torah, he complained. Liberal Judaism was determined to halt irrational pseudo-messianic movements, Christianity or others, and therefore excised from its understanding of fundamental Judaism all of the theological preconditions which might lead to the recurrence of wild messianic claims. Dr. Schwartzchild contends that if one must abandon theological ideas like that of the Messiah because they are subject to misrepresentation and abuse, we would have to reject likewise the idea of God.

Rosenzweig and Buber point out the value which even pseudo-Messiahs have had in Judaism. For Rosenzweig, the false Christ divides each generation of the pious into those *whose faith* is so strong in a coming redeemer that they give themselves up to an illusion and those whose *hope* is so strong that they do not allow themselves to be deluded. Martin Buber explains that a pseudo-Messiah is God's way of comforting and nursing His people until the night passes at last and the real Messiah appears.

Fourthly, according to Schwartzchild, the substitution of a messianic age for a personal redeemer grew out of the all-pervasive yet mistaken optimism of the 19th century. For Judaism messianism appeared as a result of overwhelming catastrophe: the fall of the kingdom of Judah and the Babylonian exile. It reappeared as a lively hope in periods when a solution to the human predicament seemed to be beyond natural power: the Roman suppression of the Zealot rebellion, the bloody persecutions of European Jewry during the Crusades, the expulsion from Spain in 1492, the savage pogroms conducted by Cossacks and Russians—and the Nazi holocaust. By contrast, the 19th century was a time of hope and progress. Men had no need for a Messiah when they had evidence they were getting better and better every day. Liberal Jews especially felt no need for a supernatural savior—hence the doctrine of a coming Messiah looked like a useless relic from an outmoded past. When the pervasive optimism of the last century was succeeded by the dominant pessimism of our times, the underlying

reason for discarding the individual Messiah concept lost its cogency. In the 20th century Christian and Jewish supernaturalism has again won a hearing simply because men generally doubt that they can get out of the social mess without God's direct aid. If persecution, pogroms and social disaster provide the rationale for messianism, then our age ought to be the most messianic of all in Israeli history.

For Hermann Cohen and other 19th century thinkers the problem of the personal Messiah was connected with philosophic perplexities concerning the personality of God. Schwartzchild perhaps rightly notes that the depersonalization process begun in the age of technology infects our ideas of God, the Messiah and even the meaning of man. By returning to the doctrine of a personal Messiah we underline the supreme value of persons. Concrete individuals are superior to ideas, social forces and historical trends.

Those who find hope in a coming Messiah have been accused of moral quietism. If everything can only be worked out by the divine agent to come, why not sit back and wait for him? Rabbinic Judaism, however, has always insisted upon man's role in the preparation for the messianic advent. Whether the Messiah comes soon or later depends upon man's actions. Samuel Hirsch declared, "It is up to us to turn to God, for the Messiah cannot come before we have become completely good." Some even went so far as to maintain that he will arrive after men have created the messianic state for him and his work will be to guarantee the maintenance of what ordinary men have established.⁵

The Antichrist: The Jewish Experience

Ever since messianism became a standard feature of Jewish thought—possibly since the Babylonian Exile, but assuredly after the annexation of Palestine as part of the Roman Empire—there were always Jews calculating the date of the Messiah's advent. Almost as often there was someone who announced that he was the

⁵ S.S. Schwartzchild. "The Personal Messiah", A.A. Cohen, ed., *Arguments and Doctrines*. pp. 519-537.

expected Anointed One. Rabbi Abba Silver has conveniently recorded the history of messianic speculation in Israel and a whole series of messianic pretenders from the first through the 19th centuries. For Christians and Jews, Jesus of Nazareth may occupy center stage as a self-proclaimed Messiah, but it is important to note that he was only one of many whose appearance aroused messianic expectations. In fact, others may well have attracted a wider response from within the Jewish community than did Jesus during his lifetime. There is evidence that Bar Kochba (during the reign of Hadrian) and Shabbetai Zebi (d. 1676) won far more disciples among their fellow-Jews than did the Nazarene.

The Jew in exile never forgot the divine promise of redemption and never ceased praying for liberation with the help of God. In line with most Jewish commentators, Rabbi Silver reminds us that messianism was essentially a political ideal bound up with restoration of the Davidic dynasty and reconstitution of the independence of Israel. Even if certain eschatological and supernatural features were attached to it, essentially the messianic hope represented a this-worldly, temporal and national ideal. Therefore every social upheaval intensified messianic speculation and enthusiasm.

During the Roman procuratorship of Cuspius Fadus, Theudas appeared and won many Jews to his presumably messianic movement (44 A.D.). Fadus sent Roman cavalry against the rebels, slew many, captured more, executed Theudas and carried his head to Jerusalem as a trophy and grisly warning to would-be insurrectionists. In the procuratorship of Felix (52-60 A.D.) more messianic outbreaks took place, including that led by an Egyptian Jew whose messianic career was brief but brought sharp reprisals upon the Palestinians. The following of Theudas, the Egyptian prophet and Jesus of Nazareth show that many Jews expected the messianic age to dawn in the second quarter of the first century. Silver explains that according to the Jewish creation calendar then in use, that time corresponded to the year 5000—the date which would usher in the sixth millenium, the kingdom of God.

Josephus, Tacitus and Suetonius report on the intensity of

Jewish messianic expectancy during the period prior to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Even the wise and saintly Rabbi Akiba was seized with messianic expectancy and championed the pseudo-messiah Bar Kochba. His ill-starred rebellion against Rome ended with a second destruction of Jerusalem (135 A.D.). Many rabbis, some of them prominent, calculated that the Day of the Lord was imminent on the basis of three factors: interpretations of *Daniel*, the dawn of the 6th millenium in their creation calendar and the messianic significance of the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah predicted the advent of the Messiah 70 years after the destruction of the temple (that is, c. 140 A.D.). Rabbi Jose the Galilean was certain the long awaited coming would take place 60 years after the fall of Jerusalem (130 A.D.). Rabbi Ishmael calculated only three generations would pass after 70 A.D. before the appearance of the Messiah. These claims were based upon a complicated interpretation of the secret meaning of Biblical texts like Isaiah 23:15, Psalms 72:5 and Psalms 80:6. Other rabbis were equally mistaken in their deciphering of the hidden meaning of Daniel 7:25. A few rabbis announced what day the Messiah would arrive—the 14th day of Nisan according to Rabbi Joshua, New Year's day in Tishri according to Rabbi Eliezer. When these predictions were proved false, Jews changed their calendar. Time was moved back a millenium so that they were living at the close of the 4th millenium rather than at the end of the 5th when the Messiah would appear.

Jews looked for messianic signs in the decline of the Roman empire. They particularly hoped that Parthia would defeat Rome and hence herald the long-awaited time of redemption. During the fifth century a Jew in Crete announced he was the Messiah. Appropriately named Moses, he won many followers among the Jews on the island and they prepared to return to the Holy Land. On the day they were to leave, Moses led them to a cliff overlooking the sea and commanded them to hurl themselves into the waves. The sea will open for you and me, he declared, as it did for the earlier Moses and his followers. Unfortunately the miracle did not occur and many perished.

Messianism blossomed again when Islam swept across the Near East and Africa, especially since the Arabs so effectively conquered the Christians for whom the Jews had nothing but hatred. Every Muslim victory was a sign of the Messiah's approach. Naturally, pseudo-Messiahs appeared among the expectant Jews. Abu Isa of Persia (8th century) was an illiterate tailor who won a large following in the Mideast when he announced he was the fifth and last messenger of the Messiah to deliver Israel from the Gentile yoke. While he opposed certain rabbinic doctrines and practices, Abu Isa recognized that Jesus was a legitimate prophet to his people as Muhammad was a true one for Islam. Encouraged by the favorable response he received from his fellow-Jews, the Messiah declared open rebellion against the government, whereupon the Caliph sent an army against the messianists, killed their leader and scattered his followers (755 A. D.).

About thirty years later another Persian Jew, Serene, proclaimed himself the Messiah. His announced plan was to restore Palestine to the Jews after defeating and expelling the Muslims. Like Abu Isa, Serene won a large number of Mideastern Jews to his cause. In fact, even as far away as Spain and France, Jews abandoned their homes and possessions to join him. Caliph Yazid II captured the messianic pretender and interrogated him. Desperate, Serene tried to persuade the Muslim ruler that he had only wanted to mislead and mock the Jews. Appropriately, the Caliph promptly turned him over to the Jews for punishment.

During the Crusades, at least eight messianic movements arose. At the time of the first crusade, Jews in Salonica believed that Elijah, the Messiah's forerunner, had appeared in their midst. He claimed to be in possession of the prophet's staff. At Chazaria, seventeen Jewish communities marched out into the desert to welcome the Ten Lost Tribes. French Jews sent a special messenger to Constantinople to learn if the Messiah had actually arrived.

Karaite Jews welcomed a Messiah in northern Palestine about 1121 A.D. and at least some Karaites expected the liberation of Israel within two and one half months. Solomon ben Doudji

announced he was the herald of the Messiah and his son was the Messiah. A Baghdad Jew, ben Chadd, also claimed to be the Messiah but the Caliph put an end to him. In Yemen, a messiah appeared in 1172 who told the Arab ruler he could prove his claim. "Cut off my head and I will return to life again," asserted the Jewish Messiah. The Muslim put him to the test, which was unsuccessful.

David Alroy, an adventurer, a magician and warrior, announced to the Jews of Babylon (c. 1147 A.D.) that he was the Messiah and won the hearts of many of them. Assured of widespread support he led his followers in a revolt against the Muslim government of Persia. Jews who lived in the mountainous region of Chaftan seem to have been among his most ardent disciples. Among other things, he was able to demonstrate his powers by showing miraculous signs to his fellow Jews. They confidently expected him to capture Jerusalem. Rabbis in Baghdad and Mosul were unimpressed, however, and pleaded with him to cast aside such messianic pretensions. Undaunted, Alroy waged war against the army of Sultan Muktafi and tried to storm the citadel of his native town in Kurdistan. Modern scholars conjecture that he may have been killed in this unsuccessful military adventure, but one of his contemporaries reports that he was murdered by his father-in-law who had been bribed by the local Muslim governor.

Abraham Abufulia of Sicily announced in 1284 A.D. that he was the Messiah and would inaugurate the messianic age in his own lifetime. According to this interpretation of history, the Muslim king of the south will slay the Christian king of the north who in turn will be destroyed by the Mongolian king of the east in preparation for the messianic king of the Jews who will rule the whole earth. Abufulia even tried to persuade Christians, including Pope Nicholas III. He seems to have had little impact upon Christendom, but Silver thinks he influenced a mass emigration of German Jews to Palestine in 1286 A.D. Two of his disciples, Samuel the Prophet of Segovia and Abraham of Old Castille, spread the news of the messianic advent among the Spanish Jews. The latter predicted the exact day the Messiah would make his

dramatic appearance in 1295. Jews of Avila, a center for Spanish mysticism—Christian as well as Jewish—assembled in the synagogue at the appointed time. They waited. . . waited. . . waited. . . . By 1393 A.D. Spanish Jewry was again ready to welcome a Messiah in their midst. Moses Botarel, a learned scholar and famed Kabbalist, announced he was the Messiah, performed miracles to prove it, and is said to have convinced the Jewish philosopher Hasdai Crescas to be a disciple.'

In the 16th century, another time of troubles for European society, Jewish messiahs appeared. Asher Lammlein, a German Jew, showed up in Venice to announce that 1502/1503 would be the messianic year. Both Jews and Gentiles accepted the new Messiah. One Jew smashed the oven in which baked his matzot because he was firmly convinced that the next year he would celebrate the Passover in Palestine. In Israel, some rabbis decreed fasts and days of penitence in preparation for the great deliverance. When Rabbi Lammlein died and still no messianic age had occurred, numerous Jews, it is said, converted to Christianity.

David Reubeni (c. 1490-1535) was rather unique in fanning the flames of messianic enthusiasm while denying he was the Messiah. Coming from Arabia, this fascinating Jew shows up in Nubia, southern Egypt, with news that he is a descendant of Muhammad with the power to insure places in Paradise for his Muslim friends. To Jews Reubeni declares that he is the brother of King Joseph of the long lost tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh (a nation of 300,000) who has sent him to emancipate Jewry and lead them to Palestine. For Christians, he promises the help of his brother's armies to fight the Muslims and expel the Ottoman Turks from the Holy Land. The story was just wild enough to gain eager listeners. Pope Clement VII gave Reubeni an audience and accepted his credentials. King John II of Portugal was so impressed temporarily that he promised him eight ships and four thousand cannon. Marranos (Catholic Jews) in Portugal entertained Reubeni lavishly; Jews in Fez, Morocco hailed him as the Messiah. In 1532,

However, A. Silver doubts that Crescas would swallow "such miracle-mongering and Messianic phantasies."

the year some interpreters of the *Zohar* said the resurrection of the dead would take place in Palestine, Reubeni met Emperor Charles V. His days were, however, numbered. The Inquisition arrested him, tried him at Mantua in Italy, and shipped him off to a Spanish prison.

Solomon Molko (c. 1500-1532) came from a Portuguese Jewish family forcibly converted to Christianity. A secretary in a court of justice, he was enchanted by Reubeni and offered to become his disciple. Visions came to him nightly concerning the messianic age about to dawn. To impress Reubeni, Molko even had himself circumcized secretly. In a dream God commanded him to leave Portugal on a mysterious mission. Molko visited Salonica in Greece where he won the friendship of the equally mystical Joseph Karo. He went on to Turkey and finally to Safed in Palestine, the seat of mystical Judaism. In a sermon published in 1529, Molko predicted the advent of the Messiah in 1540. At Rome he met Pope Clement VII and prophesized correctly the great Tiber River flood of 1530. When admirers hailed him as the Messiah, unlike Reubeni, Molko accepted the title gladly. He thence decided to meet Emperor Charles V to persuade him to war on the Turks and liberate Palestine for the Jews. The Holy Roman emperor had more pressing concerns. Since Molko had left Christianity for Judaism, the Inquisition arrested him, convicted him, and burned him at the stake.

In the 17th century a new reading of the *Zohar* and the testimony of numerous rabbinic scholars revealed that God would send His Messiah about 1648. Palestinian rabbis then sent a written prayer to all parts of Jewry asking for the restoration of the Davidic monarchy and a letter urging the cultivation of peace and good will in preparation for the messianic advent.

When Shabbetai Zebi arrived on the scene as the new Messiah, Jews flocked to his banner, from Safed in Palestine to London, from Morocco to Poland. Samuel Pepys, the famous British diarist, reports that in 1666, a London Jew was giving away £10 to any man with a promise to increase it to £100 within two years when Shabbetai Zebi the Messiah would be recognized by all the

princes of the East as the King of the world. When the Messiah was taken to Constantinople to be examined by the Ottoman sultan, the British government received an official report that a pillar of fire with several stars hovered over the place where he was. However, events took an unexpected turn. Shabbetai Zebi converted to Islam in 1666 and remained a guest of the Turks until his death a decade later. Thousands refused to believe the possibility that their Messiah would become an apostate; those who did argued that he did so deliberately to atone for the sins of the Jewish people and rescue the divine sparks imprisoned in the realm of evil. Even when his messianic role was not completed in 1668, 1673, 1674 or 1675 they kept faith. After 1676, they looked forward to his return from the dead before 1690. One Shabbetian apostle tried to persuade Dutch Jews that the Messiah would redeem them when he returned sometime before 1740. A Palestinian disciple insisted Shabbetai Zebi would arise from the dead in 1706, exactly forty years after his first appearance.

The Shabbetai Zebi movement shook Judaism to its very foundations. While some Jews remained faithful to their Messiah down to the opening decades of the 20th century, most Jews were disillusioned.

In 1861, a poor middle-aged artisan from Yemen claimed to be the messenger of Elijah preparing Jews for the near advent of the Messiah; his contemporaries considered him slightly unbalanced. But because he had miraculous powers, some Jews wondered. In any case the Muslim emir had him waylaid in one of the mountain passes near his village and exposed his severed head at Sana on the gate leading to the Jewish quarter. Three years later another Yeminite Jew claimed to be the resurrected artisan-Messiah Judah bar Shalom and men believed him. On Passover 1867 he announced he would attack Sana with an army made up of men from the Lost Tribes of Gad and Reuben. Angered, the 'man of Yemen threatened to wipe out every Jew in the country. Terrified Jews changed his mind by offering him a large sum of money. But Jews in Arabia, Egypt, Palestine, Babylon and Bombay retained their belief in the messianic claims of neo-Judah bar Shalom.

Finally, the Malbim (1809-1879) tried to persuade eastern European Jewry that the beginning of the messianic age would take place in 1913 and would extend to 1928. Rabbi Silver concludes his survey by noting that some attribute messianic significance to the State of Israel established in 1948.⁷

Jewish messianism indirectly if not directly shows that the Messiah does not have to come from Palestine. Jews at different times acclaimed a Messiah from Crete, Morocco, Turkey, Iraq, Yemen, Sicily, Spain and elsewhere. The place of his birth or the land in which he reveals himself is not limited by geography. Equally pious Jews were ready to welcome him when he manifested himself in Egypt or Lithuania or Italy. At least in the case of Shabbetai Zebi, the Messiah could outwardly be a Muslim while carrying out the mission to which God had called him. Admittedly, many Jews would insist on a Jewish Messiah but subtle hints of a far less exclusivist position are not lacking.

The Jewish Jesus

Until the past half century, the famous "quest for the historical Jesus" chronicled by Albert Schweitzer was conducted largely by Christians—in part because the long sad record of Christian anti-Semitism made the very name "Jesus" distasteful to Jews, in part because Jewish historiography set for itself a different task, in part because most Jews were in no position to pursue scholarly studies in the great European universities. Julius Wellhausen, the father of biblical criticism, laid down the dictum that Jesus was a Jew and died a Jew. Except for the notable contributions of C.J. Montefiore,⁸ the recovery of the Jewishness of Jesus depended on the whole upon Christians.

At least four live options were open for scholars wishing to portray the Jewish Jesus.

⁷ A. Silver, *Messianic Speculation in Israel*. Beacon Press, Boston, 1959. Our summary omits the author's valuable study of the sort of Biblical exegesis used to predict the Messiah's advent, the Christian parallels to Jewish messianism, the political background, and Jewish opposition to messianic speculation.

⁸ See his *Studies in the Synoptic Gospels*, an epoch-making work of lasting value.

1. Jesus was really one of the Pharisees, in basic outlook a gifted rabbinic Jew
2. He was an Essene or Jewish sectarian like the authors of the Dead Sea scrolls
3. He was a militant Zealot, a freedom-fighter for an independent Israel
4. He was an apocalyptic prophet, proclaiming the imminent advent of the long-awaited messianic age for which he was the herald and/or the anointed Messiah.

The Christian advocates of one or other of these theses are discussed elsewhere. ° Our concern is with the Jewish variants.

Montefiore's thought would fit in with the first option. He believed Jesus to be the heir of prophetic Judaism, a warmhearted exponent of the broad-minded rabbinism associated with the name of Hillel the Elder. A more recent expositor of this position is Rabbi Elmer Berger. Berger unabashedly defends the universalistic strain in historic Judaism and denounces its nationalistic features; in his opinion, Jesus fits rather nicely into that framework. For this anti-Zionist spokesman, the prophets were those admirable "rebels who changed the world." By contrast the later Ezra and Nehemiah represent a swing of the pendulum away from universalistic prophetism to separatistic Jewish nationalism. Though not eliminating the ethical monotheism of Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah, this state-enforced, Jewish segregationism tended to submerge universalism. In Jesus' time, the Pharisees defended the universalistic interpretation and application of Judaism to a changing civilization. From them came the Mishnah and Talmud which embodied an adaptive, evolutionary religious spirit. Pharisaism, however, divided into reactionary and liberal schools, that of the strict, narrow-minded and legalistic Shammai and that of the generous-spirited Hillel. As for Jesus, if he attacked the ultra-

° See Kim, *Unification Theology and Christian Thought*, Chap. III, The Mission of Jesus."

conservative wing of the Pharisees, he had many friends among the liberals.

Was Jesus unique in any way then? Berger admits that Jesus added one important ingredient to Hillel-type Judaism. Judaism has always had a certain cold rationality and abstractness about it. Reform Judaism especially so, but even the Orthodox faith. Jesus enriched the prophetic strain with the warmth of personal experience—what Christian theologians call love. The teachings of Jesus for this rabbi reveal a more constant intimacy with the spirit of man than the canonical prophets. Even Hosea spoke of love in a more abstract sense than Jesus, and Amos lacked such an intimate concept as the prophet from Nazareth. This distinctive contribution of Jesus to religious thought does not mean Jesus and the earlier prophets are utterly different. Rather, they belong in the same tradition. Together they raise man's spiritual sights from *tribalism* (Jewish philosopher Morris Cohen's description of Zionism) to the sublime universalistic truths at the very marrow of all civilized living.

Berger also tackles the vexatious problem of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus—a most unwelcome topic for Jews who for centuries were reviled as "Christ-killers" or worse, guilty of deicide.¹⁰ For this rabbi it was the priestly, legalistic Jewish group in first century Palestine that succeeded in banishing Jesus. Those who thought of him as a great man and popular leader were not much concerned with the theological question of whether or not he had ushered in the messianic age. Jesus was no heretic from the standpoint of the prophetic principles of Judaism. Nevertheless, it was the messianic problem which led to a conspiracy hatched between the priests and the Roman government, much as earlier monarchs in Israel and Judah tried to liquidate Amos and Jeremiah."

¹⁰ See E. Berkovits, *Faith After the Holocaust*, Ktav Publ., N.Y., 1973, pp. 7-50 for an emotion-charged example of Jewish resentment toward Christianity on the basis of the old deicide accusation against Jews and its logical application—the genocide programme of the Nazis. Berkovits accuses *all* Christians, especially Catholics, of at least theoretical Hitlerism, much as too many churchmen once accused *all* Jews of being Christ-killers.

¹¹ E. Berger, *A Partisan History of Judaism*, Devin-Adair Co., N.Y., 1951, pp. 86-90. This sort of interpretation of Jesus is standard fare in Reform Judaism.

Another Reform rabbi—with decidedly Zionist sympathies—interprets Jesus apocalyptically. Rabbi Silver includes Jesus in his study of absurd messianic speculation in Israel and a motley assemblage of pseudo-messiahs. This rabbi of America's largest Reform synagogue does not necessarily intend to display an anti-Christian bias. He may simply agree with many modern scholars that Jesus cannot be understood apart from apocalypticism. Also from a Jewish perspective, Jesus does belong with other messianic pretenders.

When Jesus came into Galilee saying that the kingdom of God was at hand, he was merely voicing the universally-held Jewish opinion that in the sixth millennium God would inaugurate the messianic age. Many believed the millennium would begin about 30 A.D. Here Silver notes a factor overlooked by most scholars—the significance of the Jewish creation calendar for the apocalyptic timetable. In any case, Jesus' essential message was eschatological rather than prophetic.

John the Baptist was hailed by Jesus as the Elijah announcing the millennial advent. Both preached repentance because such an act must precede the dawn of the apocalyptic age. Jesus had no interest in reconstructing society; his sole purpose was to save men from the retributive judgment to come prior to the messianic aeon. Whatever ethical counsel he gave was for a world *in extremis*. As Schweitzer put it, Jesus taught an interim-ethic.

Since the crash and doom of the world was at hand, why worry about ordinary pursuits of life? Man must disentangle himself from everything which ties him to the affairs of a perishing society. Most difficult in Jesus' eyes was the burden of wealth. But also, why waste one's last moments burying his father?

Jesus' attitude toward the Torah was of central importance for Jews. According to Silver, he neither opposed it nor sought to abrogate it. The millennium itself would do away with the Mosaic Law. In the meantime it should be obeyed with soul-searching intent and intensity. However, Silver insists that Jesus' reason for calling on his disciples to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was solely to escape the birthpangs of the messianic

times. This same awareness of apocalyptic expectancy determined Jesus' attitude toward the Roman government. If he made no attempt to break the conqueror's yoke, it was because God would crush Caesar and other malefactors in the immediate future.

For Silver, Jesus may have doubted he was the Messiah and looked forward to a coming Son of Man who would play that role. But the converted Pharisee Paul added a dogma of faith to the original code of eschatological ethics—he believed that the death and resurrection proved the messiahship of Jesus.

The New Testament becomes inexplicable apart from the eschatological framework. From Jesus the Christians accepted the idea of the imminent Kingdom. To it they attached their conviction that the dead Jesus would return to complete his messianic work. Christian devotion centered around the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come."

As Reform Judaism specifically denies that there will ever be a personal messiah and has no sympathy for apocalyptic Judaism, Silver, in rooting Jesus and his movement in eschatological soil, effectively nullifies Jesus' importance.. Also, since Jesus was no Judean freedom fighter he would not serve as a Zionist hero. Jesus' complete disregard for necessary social institutions like government, family, money-making, etc. would alienate him from responsible citizens, as his lack of reforming zeal would separate him from idealistic proponents of social reconstruction. Finally, this rabbi plants Jesus amid a crowd of pseudo-messiahs, all deluded, some crazy, a few opportunists, and one or two definitely indecent. Of course, Silver's interpretation may be an exercise in objective scholarship, as it was for Schweitzer and Klausner.

Another Jewish writer, Robert Eisler, championed the view of Jesus as king, a Zealot insurrectionist crucified by the Romans as a typical rebel. Though Eisler's view was dismissed by Montefiore as "a monument of mistaken scholarship", two addenda need to be recognized: 1) Eisler's main contention, on different grounds and with more reliable scholarship, has been revived by S.G.F. Brandon, a reputable professor of comparative religions at the University of Manchester; 2) the Zealots have become Israeli folk

heroes since 1948 and their Masada stronghold—where 2000 Jews committed suicide rather than submit to the Romans—made a national shrine; thus there may be some new *raison d'être* for showing Jesus' affinities with the first century underground movement against Rome.¹²

A non-observant Jew, Edmund Wilson, famed as a literary critic and historian of ideas, initiated a new understanding of Jesus, John the Baptist, and the first Christians as well by bringing to public attention the Dead Sea Scrolls. Not a New Testament scholar but a persuasive writer, Wilson relied on the conjectures and conclusions of Dupont-Sommer,¹³ a French expert in the field. Wilson probably read his source hastily and he undoubtedly pushed the hypotheses further than the Frenchman intended; yet the chief argument is generally conceded to have considerable merit. And that is, if one reads early Christianity in the light of the Qumran manuscripts, Jesus can rather easily be made to resemble a Jew influenced by Essene and/or similar sectarian groups within Judaism during the Herodian period. Certain eminent Jewish scholars have contributed to this continuing discussion.

Was John the Baptist an Essene, at least for a time? The experts' consensus seems to indicate this as a very real possibility. Then, what about Jesus? Here the debate continues to rage. While there are marked dissimilarities between Jesus' ideas, practices and life-style by comparison with the Qumran colony, everybody agrees that the Dead Sea Scrolls throw valuable light on the religious milieu out of which Jesus came and in which he proclaimed his message. That he was an Essene at the time of his ministry and up to his death finds almost no scholarly champions. Beyond such generalized agreements one can find little solid

¹² R. Eisler, *The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist*, Methuen, London, 1931. Cf. Y.O. Kim, *ibid*, Chap. HI; Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, University of Manchester Press, Eng., 1967, and *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church*, 2d ed., London, 1957.

¹³ A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1961,

evidence. The final verdict may never be handed down."

In Dr. Hans Joachim Schoeps' study of the history of Jewish and Christian theologies in conflict" one can find valuable materials unavailable elsewhere in such convenient form. He charts this debate from New Testament times to the public dialogue of Buber and Lutheran clergyman Karl Ludwig Schmidt at the Jewish Academy at Stuttgart, Germany in 1933. Particularly worth noting are the four areas of disagreement between the church and synagogue from the earliest records we possess:

1. Jesus was the Messiah foretold in scriptural prophecies (Gen. 49:10, Isaiah 53, etc.)
2. Since the crucifixion, the Church became the elect people of God replacing the Jews of a previous time
3. The punishment God inflicted upon the Jews for rejecting Jesus was the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 A.D. and 135 A.D.
4. According to Paul, the first Christian theologian, the Jewish Law was nullified by God's new revelation in Jesus Christ.

Jews contested all four pivotal beliefs with vigor, skill and bitterness; Christians have defended them with conviction, enthusiasm and all the logic at their disposal. It is fair to point out that by and large Christians still champion these four theses and Jews just as persistently challenge them. Each merits brief attention in regard to the Jewish position.

For the Tannaitic rabbis, early Talmudic authorities, *Yeshu ha Nosri* (Jesus of Nazareth or Jesus the Nazarene) "burned his food in public"—that is, caused a public scandal, became an apostate, and led the people of Israel astray. Rabbi Eliezar har-Kappur

" Many scholars praise Prof. Millar Burrows of Yale for balanced judgment on this subject: i.e. *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (Viking, N.Y., 1955), *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Viking, 1958).

¹⁵ H.J. Schoeps, *The Jewish-Christian Argument*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, N.Y., 1963.

(c. 250 A.D.) accused Jesus of elevating himself to the status of divinity. Jews added that he could not possibly be the Messiah because of his crucifixion: "he that is hanged is a reproach to God" (Deut. 21:23). By the third century rabbis were arguing that the Incarnation and Trinity contradicted strict Jewish transcendental monotheism. Furthermore, Jesus was not the Messiah because the Jews expected a human being, a royal heir to the throne of David accomplishing a supranational end to sin." That God becomes man and suffers was for Jews inconceivable.

On the chosen people doctrine, Christians maintained that Israel was rejected because of her sins. Jews replied that their opponents misinterpreted scripture and ignored the equally authoritative oral tradition. They admitted the chosen people would be punished, but not rejected by God (Lev. 26:44). As for especially terrible disasters, like the Babylonian exile or the 70 A.D. loss of the temple, these are compassed within the divine plan. As Joshua ben Levi asserted, "Not even a wall of iron can effect a separation between Israel and its Father in heaven." Besides, all Israel's afflictions will be as nothing to the rewards God promises to those who endure numerous severe trials.

On a specific disaster, the 135 A.D. destruction of the temple, the oldest Jewish sources are silent about the Christian accusation that it was the result of the crucifixion. Jews asserted that even such a calamity contained traces of God's redemptive purpose. Nine different explanations were given for the destructive acts of Titus.

1. Jews had profaned the Sabbath
2. They failed to recite the Shema every morning and evening

.. For Divine Principle, the Jew is correct when he claims Jesus of Nazareth did not meet all the conditions laid down in the Jewish Bible, which was also scripture for the Christian in the Apostolic Age. As one medieval rabbi asked in a public debate with church authorities, if Jesus is the Messiah, why are we not at peace? The very fact that Christians expect a second coming of Christ provides direct proof that the first time he did not do all that was expected of him and promised by God. The ministry of Jesus of Nazareth must be completed. At this fundamental point, the Jew and the student of Divine Principle agree, and the synagogue has reason to look for a Messiah-to-come.

3. They neglected to give proper religious instruction to the children
4. They had lost their fear of evil
5. They made small and great equal
6. They stopped admonishing one another
7. They looked down on the scribes, the authorized interpreters of the Torah
8. Men of faith had disappeared
9. Jews were senselessly fighting each other.

However, Rabbi Johanan and Rabbi Eleazer declared that God's justification for the ruin of the temple had not been revealed. Taken separately or added together the explanations deliberately avoid the Christian accusation.

Besides the three major differences between Jewish and Christian theology based directly on the meaning of Jesus' life and death, a final one is derived from St. Paul—the abrogation of the Torah because of the messianic advent. From the Jewish perspective the apostle to the Gentiles is guilty of a misconception of monstrous proportions. For Judaism the Law does not in any sense propose justification by works because God not man is the source of salvation. Pauline doctrine is as un-Jewish as original sin, the concept of a Son of God and the Trinity. His hypothesis lies outside all Jewish possibilities. However, Rabbi Silver states that it was a common belief in Jewish circles that the messianic age would nullify the validity of the Torah."

Yet, neither Paul nor later Christian thinkers propose the *total* abrogation of the Torah: the secondary or transient features are distinguished from the primary, permanent ones. Judaism has always done likewise. Sometimes theoretically, like Reform Judaism or Maimonides when he selected the key Jewish affirmations, or pragmatically, as Talmudic responsa prove, Jews focus on certain central mitzvot and thereby treat others as of less crucial significance. To cite a specific example in present-day

" G. Scholem applies this to mystical Judaism and shows its effect on Shabbetai Zebi, *On the Kabbalah*, pp. 32-86.

Judaism, no theologian advocates a return to the animal sacrifices of Mosaic Law. Indeed, as Jesus' death led to Paul's conversion and the Gentile mission, so the destruction of the temple with its sacrificial system led to a world-wide Jewish fellowship and an indirect mission to the Gentiles. Judaism in diaspora enriched Jewry from within and improved by the example of a monotheistic and highly moral faith the Gentile religious atmosphere in the whole Mediterranean and Middle Eastern worlds. The exile (*galut*) brought to the fore universalistic ingredients of Judaism virtually impossible to express fully when Jews were tied to animal sacrifices, a Palestinian priesthood and a single temple. From many standpoints, Gentile Christianity was a different manifestation of the same Jewish universalism. Rosenzweig, who at a crucial moment had to make up his mind whether to accept Christianity or remain Jewish, offers the stimulating suggestion that Judaism is a star of David whose light for Gentiles is provided by Christianity.

The guilt of the Jews in regard to the crucifixion is one of the sore points of the contemporary Judeo-Christian dialogue. As Vatican Council II officially declared and Protestants have often openly admitted, *all* Jews were not "Christ-killers" in 33 A.D. and *no* Jews are guilty of the crime of deicide now. However, unless the New Testament reports of the passion are completely false, it is unhistorical to state, as some Jews seem to want, that Jesus died solely at the hands of the Romans. In some manner the opposition of the scribes and Pharisees was a major factor in the final sentencing of the Nazarene. The Sadducees in control of the Sanhedrin also were not totally blameless if we have any trustworthy gospel evidence. Christian scholars, with few exceptions, can find no proof for the theory that Jesus was tried solely for a *political* crime and was executed only because Rome crucified Zealots.

At various times in the past before the ecumenical spirit possessed Christianity, it has been claimed rather bluntly that not only the fall of the Jerusalem temple but all subsequent Jewish disasters are an inevitable consequence of the fact that the majority

party in first century Judea, the Pharisees, and the official leadership, high priest and Sanhedrin, were directly responsible for the death of Jesus. Can this be true? we ask.

Events trigger a long series of subsequent actions. Without in any way justifying the theology used to rationalize later Jewish history, do not Jews themselves in their attacks on the deicide charge prove that what happened to Jesus, rightly or wrongly, resulted in their frightful history? When Professor Eliezer Berkovits cites numerous examples of how Christian anti-Semitism led inevitably to Auschwitz, is he not in effect saying that what happened to Jesus has been of incalculable harm to the Jew ever since?"

At any rate, when Biblical scholar Samuel Sandmel of Hebrew Union College published his *Jewish Understanding of the New Testament*, he concluded his book very appropriately: "How Judaism and Christianity can live together in the fullest amity, but with dignity and adherence to principle, is a quest imposed by modern democracy. ... The course of harmony based on deep understanding must steer carefully past the perpetuation of old grievances, however justified in the past, and the partial perception of modern difficulties. It will need also comprehension and wider horizons."¹⁸

VI. THE MODERN WORLD AND THE JEW

The Promised Land

Since the end of the nineteenth century, another age-old determinant of Jewishness resurfaced in a way that was entirely unexpected. That was the religious duty to live in the Holy Land. The Talmudic folk sayings had always stressed the unique excellence of the Promised Land of Palestine, but never before had the possibility of resettlement been opened for such a large number of

¹⁸ E. Berkovits concludes, "One cannot help wondering whether, after all is said, Christianity is not by its fundamental doctrine bound to an anti-Judaic and anti-Jewish stance in history." (*Faith after the Holocaust*, p. 25).

¹⁹ S. Sandmel, *A Jewish Understanding of the New Testament*, Hebrew Union College Press, Cincinnati, 1956, pp. 320-321.

Jews as took place through the emergence and establishment of Zionism. Since the destruction of the Temple, Jewish peoplehood was understood in a universalistic religious sense rather than in national terms for the simple reason that Jews had been scattered for nineteen centuries. When there suddenly arose amidst them a movement that advocated the establishment of a secular dimension to their existence, in the form of a State in Palestine, the question quite naturally arose, was this movement truly representative of Judaism? Was Judaism a religion or a nation?

The word "Israel" or the common Hebrew expression *Eretz Israel* has no simple clear-cut meaning. It has been variously interpreted as the faith of the Hebrews, the race of Hebrews, the land of the Hebrews, the civilization of Hebrews, the State of Hebrews. Zionism today, though not endorsed by all Jews, is an accepted political fact. But it has had to counter and overcome opposition from every quarter of the Jewish world.

Franz Rosenzweig (d. 1929) for one argued against the concept that Jews needed a piece of land to survive. He felt that Zionists cling to the soil more than to their life as a people. Rosenzweig would rather define the Jewish community as one based on blood. For the Jew bearing witness and bearing children are but a single act in which eternal life is realized. A son or daughter is created by the Jew as living witness to the faith of his grandparents. In contrast with Christianity which can only secure a place in the future by will or by hope, Jews can be sure of their future simply through biological reproduction. For Rosenzweig, a community based on common blood can feel the warrant of eternity in its very veins.' Writing to his parents in 1917 Rosenzweig charged, "If Zionism were to gather all the Jews into Palestine there would be no Jews left after two hundred years." ² Sooner or later the earth betrays the people who trust their permanence to soil.

For him, Israel rather is a people in exile. Its peoplehood is

¹ Nahum N. Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig, His Life and Thought*, Schocken Book, N.Y., 1972, p. 293.

² From a letter to his parents, Dec. 18, 1917.

not based on indigenoussness. Abraham was a wanderer, a nomad. Jews are strangers and sojourners. They do not root in earth and thus are eternal wanderers, rooted deeply in their own body and blood. For Rosenzweig, it is this rooting in themselves and in nothing but themselves that vouchsafes eternity.³ For the Jew, being an eternal people in exile does not denigrate its existence, but rather brings it to the highest development, free of everchanging temporal conditions.

Rosenzweig stood apart from both Reform and extreme Orthodoxy. But Reform and Orthodoxy had their objections in the early days of Zionism also. One qualm among the non-Zionists was occasioned by the secular attitude of the Zionist leaders. Zionism itself was inspired by the rise of other nationalistic movements in Europe. Thus it attracted criticism such as the following from the Reform Jew Felix Goldman: "If Zionism frankly admits that in the sense of nationalism one can be a good Jew and at the same time an atheist who is contemptuous of religion, then in the same moment Zionism would be condemned to death in the eyes of all thinking Jews. The spread of Zionism under such conditions would mean death for Judaism. We non-Zionists frankly declare that we have no interest in a Judaism in which religion is not the first, highest and most important part. Therefore we have no interest in a mere nationalism, and not merely because of the purely theoretical reason that we believe the progress of civilized humanity will occur only by lessening nationalism and chauvinism. We therefore see no advantage for us or for anybody else if we add another nation to the world, a nation which in importance, capacity of cultural development and power would only be equal to the robber states of the Balkans."⁴

And from the Orthodox side: "From all these articles written by Zionists we can clearly see that their main aim and activity is to make—and unfortunately they do—the impression among the people of Israel that the whole purpose of the Torah and the

³ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

⁴ W. Gunther Plaut: *The Growth of Reform Judaism*, World Union for Progressive Judaism, New York, 1965, p. 147.

commandments is merely to strengthen collective feeling. This theory can easily be adopted by young people who regard themselves as instruments prepared for the fulfillment of the Zionist ideal. They naturally regard themselves as completely liberated from Torah and the commandments for now, they think, nationalism has replaced religion, and is the best means for the preservation of society."⁵

If the Zionists did not have enough opposition from within Judaism, there was the further opposition of the Gentile world. Arnold J. Toynbee objected to the establishment of the Jewish State on three grounds": one, the religious claims of Jews are questionable since Muslims and Christians make similar claims; two, since Jewish occupation of Palestine was historically of such short duration, their title to the land lacks legal validity; three, even if religious and historic rights could be supported, the statute of limitations would void their claims for all time.

How then did Zionism answer such disapprobation and eventually achieve its goal against the considerable authority of its critics?

First, the theses of Toynbee were refuted by Dr. Solomon Zeitlin, editor of the *Jewish Quarterly*.⁷ He argued that the claims of Islam and Christianity could not compare with Jewish claims. The Quran barely mentions Judea; Mecca is the holy capital of Islam. For Christianity, Rome is the eternal city and in Palestine Christians are only concerned with holy places; their vision is of a heavenly Jerusalem. On the other hand, the Hebrew Bible and prayer book are filled with Jewish yearning for Zion and Jerusalem. Palestine is rather incidental to Christianity and Islam, but in Judaism the Holy Land is central in history, thought and aspiration. Further, to Toynbee's assertion that Jewish occupation of Palestine was too brief to merit a legal claim, Zeitlin asserts that their historic claims to Palestine cannot be ignored or denied. They occupied the land for 1500 years and after their dispersion there

Words of a pre-state of Israel anti-Zionist quoted in Jacobs, *Ibid*, p. 278.

⁶ Heller, *Ibid*, p. 171.

⁷ Heller, *Ibid*, p. 172.

party in first century Judea, the Pharisees, and the official leadership, high priest and Sanhedrin, were directly responsible for the death of Jesus. Can this be true? we ask.

Events trigger a long series of subsequent actions. Without in any way justifying the theology used to rationalize later Jewish history, do not Jews themselves in their attacks on the deicide charge prove that what happened to Jesus, rightly or wrongly, resulted in their frightful history? When Professor Eliezer Berkovits cites numerous examples of how Christian anti-Semitism led inevitably to Auschwitz, is he not in effect saying that what happened to Jesus has been of incalculable harm to the Jew ever since?"

At any rate, when Biblical scholar Samuel Sandmel of Hebrew Union College published his *Jewish Understanding of the New Testament*, he concluded his book very appropriately: "How Judaism and Christianity can live together in the fullest amity, but with dignity and adherence to principle, is a quest imposed by modern democracy. ... The course of harmony based on deep understanding must steer carefully past the perpetuation of old grievances, however justified in the past, and the partial perception of modern difficulties. It will need also comprehension and wider horizons." ⁹

VI. THE MODERN WORLD AND THE JEW

The Promised Land

Since the end of the nineteenth century, another age-old determinant of Jewishness resurfaced in a way that was entirely unexpected. That was the religious duty to live in the Holy Land. The Talmudic folk sayings had always stressed the unique excellence of the Promised Land of Palestine, but never before had the possibility of resettlement been opened for such a large number of

¹⁸ E. Berkovits concludes, "One cannot help wondering whether, after all is said, Christianity is not by its fundamental doctrine bound to an anti-Judaic and anti-Jewish stance in history." (*Faith after the Holocaust*, p. 25).

¹⁹ S. Sandmel, *A Jewish Understanding of the New Testament*, Hebrew Union College Press, Cincinnati, 1956, pp. 320-321.

ary work among the Gentiles."

A colleague of Rosenzweig, the eminent philosopher Martin Buber, provides an eloquent religious rationale for Judaism's attachment to the *land* of Israel. Though Christians have been greatly influenced by Buber's "I-Thou" existentialism and impressed by his exposition of Hasidism, the Zionist side of his philosophy has not had the attention it deserves.

Buber joined the Zionists in his youth and took an active role in the recreation of the Zionist state after leaving the University of Frankfurt (1938) to become professor of social philosophy at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Buber disagreed with the Reform Jew who would limit Judaism to religious ideas and ideals. He contends that "Zion" signifies the holiness of a piece of earth. That which is an idea and nothing else cannot become holy. Palestine—a plot of land—can become holy and has always been considered such by pious Jews. When Gandhi in 1939 publicly opposed the Zionist plan for an independent Jewish state in the Near East, Buber wrote to the Indian holy man that a hundred adopted homes without an original and natural one makes a nation sick and miserable. Every nation has the right to possess a living heart. He told the Mahatma that Jews worked for the redemption of their mother soil as he labored for a free India.

For Buber, Judaism stands for the holy marriage of a holy people with a holy land. The Holy Land concept is of ancient origin, derived from the time when tribes living close to the soil believed that the twin supports of national existence—man and soil—radiated sacred powers. When Jews later understood that they were to be attendants of Yahweh through divine election, the land became His royal throne. Sacred soil became the sacred State. Jews reinterpreted the ancient concept in a theo-political fashion. Because of this understanding, the all-embracing range and reality of public life for Judaism has a numinous glow about it. Thus,

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Erich Isaac, "Judaism for the Nations," A.A. Cohen, ed., *Arguments and Doctrines*, pp. 501-518, R. Gordis, op. cit., pp. 89-95, 205-207. Isaac points out that Judaism may have an appeal for African and Asiatic peoples hostile to the Christian involvement with European imperialism of an earlier day. Gordis refers to the value of Jewish "information centers" for Jews and Gentiles alike.

Buber praised the *halutz* (the Palestinian pioneer) as the most striking example of the new Jewish man because he personified the social synthesis of people, land and labor. He exemplified the marriage between man (Adam) and earth (Adamah). Concerning the particular piece of earth, Palestine, Gandhi reminded Buber that it was occupied by the Arabs; to which Buber replied that conquered land is only lent to the conqueror who settles in it—and God waits to see what he will make of it."

Abraham Isaac Kook was the first Chief Rabbi for the Israeli pioneers prior to the creation of the Zionist State. Though he was himself an Orthodox Jew, he argued that the non-observant, anti-religious pioneers were *redeemed* by the work they gave to the recreation of Israel as a national homeland. By working with sacred earth—ploughing it, planting orchards and turning the desert into farmland, the Jewish secularist was blessed by God. As could be expected, he was beloved by the atheistic pioneers.'²

A different version of the religion of sacred Palestinian soil was expounded by the socialist and Zionist writer Aaron David Gordon." His vitalistic philosophy grew out of an awareness that the cosmos possesses a profound unity. The fact that nature and man are one at the deepest level is overlooked by the typical intellectual, a man of ideas only. Religion heals the breach between microcosm and macrocosm: man becomes aware of his soul when he recognizes his kinship with the totality of creation.

Gordon's mysticism was beyond the comprehension of the Jewish agricultural commune-ists (kibbutzim) among whom he labored. For the most part they were avowedly anti-religious: YHWH and the rabbi were antiques left behind in Russia, Poland and Austria. However, the Kibbutzim could understand Gordon's

¹ W. Herberg, *The Writings of Martin Buber*, Meridian Book, N.Y., 1956, p. 286. Since Buber labored long, often against bitter opposition from Jews, for an Arab-Jewish state in Palestine, his words should not be confused with chauvinistic Zionism. Repeatedly, Buber asked his fellow-Jews to decide for Jewish humanism rather than shallow, empty national egoism (see *Ibid*, pp. 293-299).

² Samuel Hugo Bergman. *Faith and Reason, Modern Jewish Thought*, Schocken, N.Y., 1961, pp. 121-141.

³ /*ibid*, pp. 98-120; also Nahum N. Glatzer, ed., *The Judaic Tradition*, pp. 678-682.

work ethic. Above all else Gordon was an apostle of the rural life. His reasoning for this appears sound. The Jews had been cut off from nature and for two millenia imprisoned within city walls. For understandable historical reasons—Christian persecution and ghetto existence—Jews had lost the ennobling experience of *manual* labor. Gordon realized that a people made up of shopkeepers, pawnbrokers, money lenders and rich capitalist financiers are unaware of the significance of work which attaches man to the earth in a natural, organic way. Jews are rootless precisely because they have lost contact with the soil. Like Hertzl though in a different way, Gordon rebelled against bourgeois Judaism, high finance Judaism and ostentatious salon Judaism." The Jewish renaissance means farming, building and roadmaking. Instead of leaving labor to Ivan or John or Mustapha, in Palestine Jews must do with their own hands all the work which makes up the sum total of life. Only when Jews are willing to do the dirtiest and most difficult work will they have a culture of their own.

The ideological father of political. Zionism", Theodore Hertzl, laid the foundation for an independent Jewish state without God, Torah or divine election. A Hungarian Jew with socialist leanings, he was converted to the idea that Jews must have their own homeland because of the disgraceful Dreyfus case in France. Prior to that, he entertained the notion that Hungarian Jews could solve their problem by converting en masse to Catholicism in a single dramatic worship service at St. Stephen's Church amid ringing bells. His best-selling book *The Jewish State* and his organization of the first Zionist Congress at Basle in 1897 were of lasting significance, however.

For Hertzl!" the Jewish question was primarily a national

"" Jewish writers today often ridicule the utopian Tolstoian idealism of Gordon and claim that the self-contained kibbutz has no relevance for contemporary Israel except as a refuge for a certain kind of Jew. In many cases Arabs or poor Jews from the Middle East are hired to work the agricultural communes which affluent Jews manage. (R. Sanders, Israel, *The View from Masada*, Harper and Row, N.Y., 1966, pp. 204.214.) The complaint against the kibbutz philosophy came from David Ben-Gurion, the Israeli statesman.

¹⁶ See Sanders, *Ibid*, pp. 23-65 for an enlightening portrayal of Hertzl.

¹⁶ For extracts from Hertzl', see N. N. Glatzer, ed., *The Judaic Tradition*, pp. 662-678.

question and an international political problem to be settled by the civilized nations of the world in council. The departure of Jews to their own land will rid the world of the spectre of a disquieting, unpredictable and inescapably competitive Jewish proletariat driven by poverty and political pressure from land to land, he declared. Previous colonization attempts serve on a small scale as an experiment foreshadowing the large-scale effort needed to create the Jewish state. Zionism represents a moral, lawful, humanitarian movement directed toward the long-cherished goal of the Jewish people. The settlement of Jewish masses on a large scale can be gained by plain language and upright dealing with the government (i.e. the Sultan of Turkey whose vast empire included Palestine).

Hertzl's purely political program for an independent Jewish state won adherents precisely because of its hard logic and chilly realism. In neither his book nor his speech to the first Zionist Congress was there much of an appeal to Jewish fear or sentiment. For that one must look to Leo Pinkster, a Ukrainian Jew and another pivotal figure in Zionist ideology. In his pamphlet "Auto-Emancipation", this writer sobbed: "With unbiased eyes and without prejudice we must see in the mirror of the nations the tragic-comic figure of our people, which with distorted countenance and maimed limbs helps to make universal history without managing properly its own little history. . . . Other nations, by reason of their natural antagonism, will forever reject us. . . ."¹⁷

With Hertzl's logic and Pinkster's cry from the heart, secular and political Zionism was born. Hitler's "final solution" to the problem of the ever-alien Jew provided the subsequent justification for the United Nations' resolution to authorize the establishment of the state of Israel."¹⁸

¹⁷ N.N. Glatzer, ed., *The Judaic Tradition*, pp. 534-535.

¹⁸ Jewish and Gentile literature on this subject is in abundant supply. Zionist authors correctly assert that Christians as a whole have not really accepted the fact of the Jewish State, although equally eminent Christians have argued for the Zionists and for the Arabs. It is important to note, however, that within the Jewish community the battle for and against Zionism has been waged with considerable heat and more than occasional bitterness. For a pro-Zionist treatment of Jewishness, see R. Sanders, *Ibid.*, a book both objective and informative; for a spirited and controversial apology for the Jewish State from 1948 through

The Jewish belief in an unalterable attachment to Palestine has been unshakable, though not always of premiere importance. Earlier, Hasidic Judaism in eastern Europe tended to favor a "realized eschatology" experienced in the ecstatic brotherhoods around specific zaddiks (the Jewish charismatic leaders) according to Gershom G. Scholem, the authority on Hebrew mysticism. To the degree that the Hasidim could attain union with God in the here and now, the messianic quest could be realized in Poland, Hungary or the Ukraine, so some future messianic glory associated with the land of Israel was of far less moment. Even Hertzl was not inextricably wedded to an independent Jewish state in Palestine and favored the British offer of Uganda in Africa as a homeland.¹⁹

From the perspective of Unification theology, Rosenzweig rightly reminds us of the implicit holiness of blood ties, reproduction and the God-centered family. Buber for his part correctly emphasizes the latent sanctity of the earth and its share in the transfigured world when God restores His sovereignty. Similarly, Gordon provides a useful reminder that work has a sacramental value when God and man cooperate to repair the broken unity of creation. Likewise, Hertzl was not wrong to highlight the political implications behind the Israelite prophets' vision of a reconstructed social order according to God's original pattern. Biblical Judaism dreamed of a new day when men would beat their swords into ploughshares, the lamb lie down with the lion, and the desert blossom like the rose. Apocalyptic Judaism's vision of a miracu-

the Six Day War of 1967, see Maurice *Samuel, Light on Israel*, Knopf, N.Y., 1968. The anti-Zionist position can be found in Rabbi Elmer Berger's *A Partisan History of Judaism*, Devin-Adair Co., N.Y., 1951, pp. 98-140 and his *Judaism or Jewish Nationalism: The Alternative to Zionism*, N.Y., 1957. An anthology of anti-Zionist articles by Jews was published under the title, *Zionism Reconsidered*, M. Selzer, ed., Macmillan, N.Y., 1970. Since 1948 the war of words over Zionism has taken a new form: the controversy over the relationship of Israel to Diaspora Judaism.

¹⁹ Hertzl got the Uganda plan accepted at the Second Zionist Congress by a vote of 295-177, whereupon the Eastern European delegates, the pietist wing, bolted the convention. Israel Zangwill, the distinguished Anglo Jewish novelist and playwright, continued to favor a Jewish homeland other than Palestine. Earlier, the wealthy Jewish philanthropist Baron de Hirsch gave liberally for Jewish resettlement in Argentina and one Jew lamented that his people didn't colonize America after the expulsion from Spain in 1492.

lously fertile earth and Hertzl's novel about a marvelous technocracy produced in Jewish Palestine resemble each other as poetic expression of a this-worldly possibility.

History and the Chosen People

Repeatedly we read that the Jew gave us a doctrine of meaning in history. Whereas the Buddhist, Hindu or Taoist denies the pattern of human events and Greeks thought only of meaningless cycles or gradual decline from some past golden age, for the Hebrews history has direction. The God of creation becomes the Lord of history, the kingdom of David serving as a foretaste of the inevitable kingdom of the Son of Man. Mysticism loses man in the cosmic rhythms of nature but messianism frees him for a life of purpose. Mysticism says, Take off your shoes for the ground on which you stand is holy; Messianism urges, Keep moving for you are on an upward road with a great destination. Abraham pulls up stakes. Moses leaves his palace home. The Jew restlessly wanders. Even the Passover signifies motion: leaving Egyptian slavery to enter the Promised Land. Finally, countless synagogue prayers depict the ultimate Jewish hope: sooner or later we will go home.

For contemporary Jewish theologians God's directive in history has to be reasserted. As Western man is no longer persuaded of the secular thesis of inevitable progress, the Jew can no longer take providential history as an unshakeable fact of faith. The matter becomes a subject of existential anguish and passionate debate especially with reference to the doctrine of divine election. What does it mean for a Jew in Tel Aviv, Miami Beach or Beverly Hills that he belongs to God's chosen people?²⁰ Predictably, there is a wide diversity of belief on this point—it is no less an issue than the significance of the Torah, the nature of the Messiah, or the meaning of the Promised Land.

Eliezer Berkovits enthusiastically tackles the problem by

²⁰ Will Hrcbrg observed that for most Jews the chosen people idea has no meaning these days. Reform Judaism from the beginning reinterpreted the election of Israel as the Jewish "mission" to proclaim ethical monotheism to the Gentiles. Reconstructionist Jews dropped the traditional concept entirely as misleading.

reaffirming the Jewish philosophy of history. Since the Holocaust posed the question of God's care for His people so poignantly, Berkovits argues in its aftermath just as movingly in favor of a renewal of the faith. What the Jew needs, he tells us, is self-understanding, particularly in appreciating the role he plays in world history and the principle he symbolizes in the human venture. To do this Judaism must interpret the three-fold experience it has had in our generation—Auschwitz, the establishment of the Jewish State and the capture of Jerusalem in the Six Day War. If God appears in history, His reality or His death can be tested here. Without a positive ethos of affirmation Jewry has little chance to face and overcome the challenge to its existence. For this, contemporary events need to be deciphered in the context of Jewish history, teaching and experience.

Little time is wasted on the deuteronomic belief in a God who on earth rewards virtue and punishes sin; Job and Jeremiah questioned that. Berkovits, however, explains the novel view of the hidden God. God hides His face from the sufferer. In tribulation man looks for Him and cannot locate Him. God seems indifferent, asleep, as it were. On one hand, God must be present in history and in creation; yet paradoxically in order to let man have freedom to be man, He must absent Himself from history. He hides His presence.

God must be present without being indubitably manifest, absent without becoming wholly inaccessible. If the ultimate destiny of man is not to be left to chance and if he is not to perish in the tragedy of self-made absurdity, God must not withdraw His providence. He must tolerate man; and for man to be free, God must exercise forbearance with the wicked and turn a deaf ear to the cries of their victims. All of which means God renounces the use of power so that history becomes the arena for human responsibility.

Quite naturally Berkovits sees God working in "the unique and absurdly irregular historic fact" of Israel. Whereas the history of other nations is self-explanatory, a purely naturalistic history explainable in terms of power and economics, Israel represents "a supernatural jutting into history" and hence possesses a sealed

secret." The rest of the world's peoples live mainly in the realm of the Is; Israel belongs chiefly to the realm of the Ought, holding on to existence only by the skin of its teeth. So long as Israel proves to be a this-world possibility, the Supernatural has a foothold in the natural; to that extent at least, the Is and the Ought are not at cross-purposes—so there can be hope for an ultimate merger.

The implication here is that God's own destiny in history is inextricably linked with the fact and fate of Israel; there is no other witness that God is present in history. Great empires are fully explained in terms of material resources and power politics. Israel is chosen ultimately because God needs a small, relatively weak people to introduce a spiritual dimension into history. All of which explains too why communist Russia is so anti-Jewish (more so than anti-Christian, Berkovits claims); the Jew is a living refutation of dialectical materialism. So long as God is around, any purely materialistic civilization can only be a passing phase in history. When one builds a culture against God, he must be venomously hostile to Jewish believers.

Hence, without Israel man becomes self-explanatory. Eliminate Israel from history and there becomes no need to refer to God.²² Everything else is explainable and expected. Because of Israel, the Jew knows that history is the course of messianism—wherein the guidance of God is never absent from the life of the nations.

²¹ Probably the angriest repudiation of the thesis that Jewishness consists primarily of the collective will-to-live (symbolized by commitment to the Zionist State) came from the strange modern Jewish mystic Simone Weil, a French woman whose writings were praised by T.S. Eliot and the radical Catholic Gustave Thibon. For Weil, who flirted with the idea of converting to Christianity, Judaism was a monstrous cult of the totalitarian Great Beast whose God was a vengeful, fearful dictator. She ultimately refused baptism as a Roman Catholic because Christianity was still far "too Jewish" in the Old Testament fashion. During the post-World War II years Weil was often hailed as a contemporary saint whose books *Waiting for God* and *The Need for Roots*, became popular in the left-wing Commonwealth and Crosscurrents Catholic circles (not for their anti-Semitism, of course). A. Cohen, ed., *Arguments and Doctrines* contains pro and con evaluations of Weil. When a favorable review of her *Notebooks* was published in the *New York Times*, Jews protested vigorously.

²² For Divine Principle the kingdom of God does not find its essential locus in Palestine. Previously, men may have thought Jerusalem was situated at the exact center of

Berkovits concludes his version of the chosen people concept with an anecdote. Among the millions of Jews loaded into cattle cars destined for the Nazi death camps was Itzik Rosenzweig, a poultry farmer. With despair all around inside and jeering neighbors outside the train, this Slovak Jew begged the crowd, "Please give food and water to the chickens. They haven't had anything all day." Because of what men did to Itzik, Berkovits sees no reason to have faith in man; but because of Itzik himself one can have faith in the future of man, in spite of it all.²³

Rabbi A. Cohen²⁴ presents a significant reinterpretation of the doctrine of election which he prefers to call the supernatural vocation of the supernatural Jew. When the Jewish vocation is abandoned, not theology but religious sociology takes over, he charges; Jewish survival then becomes a matter of stratagems, opinion polls and community surveys. After giving his own special history of Jewish theology, he maintains that the supernatural vocation of the Jew was rediscovered in the German Jewish renaissance of the 19th and early 20th centuries by Mendelssohn, Moses Hess, Ahad Ha-Am, Leo Baeck, Rosenzweig, Buber, Kaplan, Heschel, Herberg, among others. Jewish theology is the history of God's presence to the Jew but Jewish sacred history independent of world history is an illusion. At best it should be seen as a distillation and exemplification of possibilities in the total course of human events, serving as a parable by which Jew (or non-Jew?) can comprehend his existence. Since theology is directed toward the God of history it links the Jew to all history, interpreting God's

the world and drawn maps accordingly. Modern man can accept no such notion. For Unification theology, as for Christianity generally, the ethno-centric aspects of Judaism were invalidated by the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth and the subsequent triumph of Christendom. Here *Divine Principle* sides with the cosmopolitan Christian against the parochial Jew. God is not required to concentrate His love and attention on the Jews or Palestine in the light of the universalization of revelation and redemption taught in the New Testament.

²³ E. Berkovits *Faith after the Holocaust*. The author is particularly moving as he asserts that Auschwitz exhibited how even a death camp illustrated the nobility of existence as well as man's utter degradation. As a survivor phrased it, "...now I know gas cannot stop the breath of God" (p. 85).

²⁴ See A. Cohen, *The Natural and the Supernatural Jew*, London, 1967.

presence in the flow of time and the tale of man. Implicit in such an approach is the recognition that Jewish peoplehood was never sufficient in itself; its life was founded upon reaction to and intermingling with others.²⁵

The unique vocation of Israel grows out of its waiting for the messianic age. If the Jew stands astride time and eternity, it is because he is neither committed nor aloof, neither of this world nor of any other. That Israel is chosen means it is selected for an aristocratic mission: to outlast the world and its temporalities, to winnow the pride of the world, to testify to the fact that this time is incomplete. The Jew stands "in between": in between time and eternity, in between the sadness of any epoch and the joy of redemption.

In Cohen's eyes, the supernatural Jew is the last of the eschatologists. Each moment is full of unrealized meaning, and abundant with the un-embodied possibility of God in history. The actual God, he knows, is realizing new creation and new concreteness. But He cannot compel history to fulfillment. God does only what He can do; man can victimize Him by turning his freedom and his free destiny into stubbornness or folly. God, according to Cohen, is neither an eschatologist nor a messianist; that role must be played by man.

Abraham Kook expresses the meaning of Jewish self-identity and divine mission in lyrical, highly mystical terms: "The world and all that it contains is waiting for the Light of Israel. This people was fashioned by God to speak of His Glory; it was granted the heritage of the blessing of Abraham so that it might disseminate the knowledge of God. and it was commanded to live its life apart from

²⁵ At a commencement address for Hebrew Teachers College in Boston, Dr. Gerson D. Cohen spoke of the blessing of assimilation in Jewish history and ridiculed the shibboleth that Jewish survival or vitality derives from a tenacious adherence to all basic external traditional forms. That such a position would be expressed by the Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary is significant. Brown University theologian Jacob Neusner commended Cohen for reminding us that Judaism is not a static, one dimensional, unitary phenomenon and that fear of assimilation reveals lack of confidence in the Jewish capacity to adapt and make their own the best traits of human culture. J. Neusner, ed., *Understanding Jewish Theology*, pp. 249-258.

the nations of the world. God chose it to cleanse the whole world of all impurity and darkness; this people is endowed with a hidden treasure, with the Torah, the means by which the Heaven and Earth were created." ²⁶

Like most Jewish theologians, Kook insists on the practical this-worldliness of Hebrew faith. Israel's religion is no utopian dream, no abstract morality, no pious wish, no merely noble vision. Judaism "does not wash its hands of the material world." Most characteristic of the natural and supernatural Jew is a sense of world-transforming messianic mission: Lessing J. Rosenwald gave money and buildings to the University of Chicago; Mortimer Adler devoted his talents to the Great Books program; the Guggenheims patronized art museums; Heschel lent his name to the civil rights crusade; Ribicoff, Goldwater and Javits became politicians; Baron de Rothschild paid for Jewish colonies in Palestine, etc.

In the chief rabbi's opinion, outside Judaism the world is tattered and rent. Christianity divides body and soul. ²⁷ As for Communism, this Russian emigre to Turkish Palestine in 1904 recognized its "black evil" nature—a treasure chest of wickedness, a swamp into which even the Jewish world has contributed precious talent. How poor a world is, he exclaims, in which Marxism can pretend to be man's highest aspirations!

Kook next turns his attention to the Jewish secularizers, those who believe in Jewishness without God. Whereas strict Orthodox Jews would have nothing to do with the State of Israel, others of more militant spirit were determined to clericalize the Zionist nation. Kook would lend support to neither of these religious parties: he was equally unsympathetic to the Natore Kartha, "Guardians of the City," who refuse to recognize the legitimacy of

²⁶ Bernard Evslin, ed., *The Spirit of Jewish Thought*, Grosset and Dunlap, N.Y., 1969, pp. 197-199 (quoted from A. Kuk, *The Banner of Jerusalem*, Block Pub. Co., N.Y., 1946).

²⁷ For Divine Principle. Judaism rightly stresses the practical and this-worldly interpretation of God's will for man and His plan for the coming kingdom. Certain Christians, on the other hand, are sadly mistaken to the extent they think of religion as either a purely personal communion between man and God, the pietist error, or a simple longing for heaven after one's death.

the Jewish State, or to the Mizrahi, dedicated to establishing a government based on the Torah.²⁸ Kook restricted his quarrel with secularist Jewry to the specific task of pointing out their error. In the future if not immediately, the purely natural Jews will succumb to spiritual hunger, narrowed horizons and loss of any true sense of direction. Then they will realize the importance of a full Jewish life.

Rabbi Jack Cohen, for one, illustrates what upsets Kook so greatly. For Cohen, unlike Berkovits, every stage of Jewish history can be understood without reference to a supernaturalistic vocabulary. The uniqueness of the Jewish people can be recognized, appreciated and defended without recourse to a supernatural covenant or a supernatural God.²⁹ In fact Cohen insists that a low attendance at synagogue is often accompanied by increased Jewish creativity and communal activity. To the surprise of many, this Reconstructionist rabbi asserts that non-religious Jews are among the most creative forces in Jewish cultural life."

Nor does Abba Eban follow Kook. When that statesman wrote his history of the Jewish nation entitled *My People*, he gave minimal attention to the religious character of Jewry. Eban's loyalties and frame of reference came from the liberal secularism of western Europe. He, of course, had to mention religion when he dealt with Abraham or Moses, yet he wrote with the detached aloofness of an objective scholar. Eban lacked the vertical dimension; in brief, he was no "supernatural Jew."³¹

A final interpretation of Jewish self-identity should be mentioned. Called the "Canaanite" reformulation of the Jewish spirit and created by a small coterie of intellectuals, this movement was

²⁸ See Jacob J. Petuchowski, *Zion Reconsidered*, Twayne Publ., N.Y., 1966: a somewhat critical rabbinic interpretation of Israeli religion and society. Petuchowski describes the "two Israels" in the Jewish homeland: the Westernizers in power and the Oriental Jewish majority often consigned to menial work.

²⁹ For the rabbinic view of the election of Israel, see Solomon Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, Schocken Books, N.Y., 1961, pp. 57-64.

³⁰ J. Cohen, *The Case for Religious Naturalism*, Reconstructionist Press, N.Y., 1958, pp. 171-177.

³¹ A. Eban, *My People*, Behrman House, N.Y., 1968.

quite unique and it may yet be a stronger element in tomorrow's Israel than the rabbis suspect. By and large Judaism has been nourished by its Old Testament heritage reflected through the prism of rabbinic ideals and molded by the *galut* and the ghetto. Many analysts have suggested that this two thousand-year-old environment of persecution, self-withdrawal and rootlessness was bound to deform, disfigure and poison the Jewish soul.³² The famous Hebrew poet Saul Tchernichowsky and others sought to change that.

Tchernichowsky (1875-1943) moved from his native Crimea and settled in British-mandated Palestine in 1924. A prophet for "authentic Jewish manhood," Tchernichowsky was among the first to abandon the rabbinic ghettoized version of the Old Testament for the healthy earthiness of the Greek spirit. His poem "Before the Statue of Apollo"³³ became the magna charta for the intellectuals in revolt against a false model of man. By praying to Apollo the poet expresses his revulsion against everything ugly about the Jewish stereotype.

Depicting the Greek ideal—"a race of men divine with youth...strong generations of the sons of earth"—he praises the Hellenism which displays opposite values from those extolled by rabbis, shrewd traders, money lenders and scholars, opportunists who fawn over the powerful or simple "homebodies" for whom the good life meant a lot of children gathered about the family table. Apollo stood for that sort of world turned upside down. He was the handsome youth "whose right arm broke the bound of

³² Gabriel Ende says: "...how many people really know what 'lack of manhood' really means? . . .yet if we Jews take an intelligent look into our own experience, we can discover the meaning of this condition. In essence, 'lack of manhood' refers to a condition in which a person is abnormally inhibited in his self-expression or self-assertion." Ende concludes that American Jews live in abnormal exile and believes an increasing number of sensitive youths will seriously consider the option of life in Israel where their would-be integrated Jewish personalities will not be violated. A graduate student at the University of Chicago, he emigrated to Israel. J.A. Sleeper and A.L. Mintz, ed., *The New Jews*. Vintage Book, N.Y., 1971, p. 57.

³³ Leo W. Schwartz, ed., *The Menorah Treasury*, Jewish Pub. Society of America, Philadelphia, 1964, pp. 681-682.

Heaven."³⁴ By contrast with the obsequious ghetto Jews and their pale student sons, Tchernichowsky favored "strong sons with proud brows and set on thrones." Zionist nationalism with its twin aspirations, political power and a Hebrew cultural renaissance, inherently carried with it what the poet saw: being a *free* Jew and a *new* Jew signified casting aside "the burden of the Law" and never submitting to "the yoke of the Lord."

Tchernichowsky recognizes the gap between the Zionism of old Jews at the Wailing Wall and the Greek spirit. "Not all the multitudes of ocean's waters...could fill the dark abyss between us yawning." So the liberation of the Jew from the ghetto turned him to paganism.

And on that day my spirit burst its chains
and turned again toward the living earth.

He and Kook embody two radically unlike philosophies of authentic Jewishness—and one was as admired as the other in Israel. The poet and the chief rabbi were both mystic worshippers of the God of Light, but for Tchernichowsky Israel and Yahweh have aged together in "their prison of a hundred generations." Within normative Judaism, however, Hellenism could find no welcome. For the observant Jew Greece and Rome signified Antiochus Epiphanes, a pagan altar to Zeus on Mt. Zion, the unorthodox Philo of Alexandria, the traitorous Josephus, the despotic Herod, the conquering Titus.

The first Moses was prince of Egypt, Hebrew liberator and Lawgiver. The second Moses was Maimonides the philosopher and Jewish creed-maker. After the Six Day War Israel discovered a third Moses, the victorious Gen. Moshe Dayan, a folk hero. As Israeli and Diaspora Jewry reasserts its national pride and reinterprets its destiny, it may well decide that the Chosen are those who

³⁴ Rabbi Everett Gendler, in *The New Jews* (pp. 233-243) expresses a sort of Canaanite-ism on the basis of Tchernichowsky, William Blake and D.H. Lawrence. In American poetry Tchernichowsky's basic attitudes resemble those of Robinson Jeffers, the son of a Presbyterian Old Testament professor.

adore the god of love and courage, the Baal of Canaan. So thought Tchernichowsky. As for the present-day Israeli, for him Moses I could only view the promised land from afar, Moses II lived in exile, so only Moses III could symbolize the real Jew, prince of a resolute people in a free land. How many of the Jews will retain their concept of chosenness in the traditional sense remains to be seen.

Jews and Communism

Because Jews have been victims of numerous types of social orders, from the Hellenistic empire of the Seleucids to the Czarist absolutism of Russia, they have been keenly aware of social injustice and often have done what they could to further social change. The fact that Jews played a major role in the agitation leading to the Russian Revolution of 1917 has often given right-wing groups ammunition for their baseless charge that Jews engineered the Communist movement in order to take over the world. Jewish involvement in the black civil rights movement, the anti-Vietnam crusades, the "prayer in the public schools" controversy, the anti-censorship campaigns and the women's lib movement has unfortunately persuaded many Americans to look upon them as a disruptive faction in society. Yet outstanding Jewish spokesmen have emerged to participate in the ideological struggle against totalitarianism.

For Will Herberg, Marxism for many years provided a religion, an ethic and a theology. That is, it offered an all-embracing doctrine of man and his place in the universe—a world view by which he could understand what was going on around him. It gave him a passionate faith which endowed life with significance. By being a Marxist he committed his life to the ultimate ideals of freedom, justice and world brotherhood. As such, he believed that the inevitable dialectic of history would eliminate every evil and lead man to the final goal of uncoerced harmony amidst peace and plenty.

But put to the test, the Marxist faith failed. Herberg does not go into detail explaining exactly what events led to disenchantment

with Communism. He merely mentions in passing his disillusionment with the course of the Russian Revolution and the triumph of Hitler in Germany. Some idealists found it impossible to justify the change in the Soviet Union associated with the rise of Stalin. Probably more were shocked by the ease with which the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact was signed allying Hitler and Stalin for the purpose of dismembering Poland. The Nazis and Communists remained friends during the crucial early years of World War II including the occupation of Scandinavia and the Low Countries, the fall of France and the air battle for Britain. The Soviet dictator uttered no public criticism of the Fuhrer until June 1941 when Nazi tanks invaded Russia. Jewish opposition to the Soviet Union was later further stiffened after that country gave full military, economic and moral support to the Arabs and severely restricted immigration to Israel.

Whatever revealed to Herberg the moral bankruptcy of Marxism, by 1947 he could accuse his former faith of being infected with totalitarianism. The communist ideal of unlimited freedom had become the communist fact of unlimited despotism. In practice Marxists were cynical advocates of ruthless power politics. By their deeds they demonstrated the lack of an ethic transcending class interests.

Communism thus was part illusion because it proclaimed the possibility of secular heaven on earth in our time. Other Jews had already recognized the futility of this proclamation. Recalling his youth in Poland where Communist writers "dressed up old clichés in red clothing," Isaac Bashevis Singer notes:

Even a young boy like me, from the provinces, found the doctrine that the Bolshevik Revolution would do away with all evil incredibly naive.³⁵

From an even deeper perspective emerge the stories of the respected Jewish authors Arthur Koestler and Louis Fischer who

³⁵ Isaac Bashevis Singer, "Yes", *Esquire Magazine*, Dec. '74, p. 250.

journeyed into Communism and returned in disillusionment. Koestler eloquently makes his point: "I served the Communist Party for seven years—the same length of time as Jacob tended Laban's sheep to win Rachel his daughter. When the time was up, the bride was led into his dark tent; only the next morning did he discover that his ardors had been spent not on the lovely Rachel but on the ugly Leah." ³⁶

The Philadelphia Jew Fischer is no less emphatic in his denunciation of the dictatorship and the Soviet State bred by the Marxism he once embraced: "Dictatorship rests on a sea of blood, an ocean of tears, and a world of suffering—the results of its cruel means. How then can it bring joy or freedom or inner or outer peace? How can fear, force, lies, and misery make a better man?"

"Capitalism's trusts and cartels and monopolies are pygmies compared to the one mammoth political-economic monopoly which is the Soviet State. There is no appeal from its might because there is no power in the Soviet Union which does not belong to the government dictatorship.

"Russia, therefore, taught me that the transfer of property from private hands to government hands does not alone conduce to freedom or improved living. If all property is transferred to the government, and if in the process the middle class, a decisive factor in modern industrial civilization, is ruined, nothing is gained; much, indeed, is lost." ³⁷

As these men, Will Herberg rejects the worship of collective man. Marxists have a naive faith in the redemptive ability of economics and technology as well as a sinister fetishism of material production, he says. They are sentimental optimists in their doctrine of man but at the same time display devotion to a hard-boiled cult of power at any price.

Since Marxism provides only a two dimensional view of nature and history, Herberg sought a more secure spiritual foundation for mature and effective social radicalism. This he discovered

³⁶ Richard Crossman, ed., *The God that Failed*, Bantam Books, N.Y., 1965, p. 66.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 204-205.

in the Judaism of his ancestors. By recovering his Jewishness he found he could remain a social critic, social reformer and social transformer but base these activities on a more adequate world view.

Because Judaism worships the transcendent God, its followers are saved from shallow positivism, a pantheistic worship of the existing world and a sterile other-worldliness. Because Jews worship God alone and eschew idolatry, they are free from the obscene deification of race, nation and class which bedevil contemporary man. Judaism's doctrines of God and man combine freedom and responsibility.

Most significant for Herberg is Judaism's passion for social justice, an emphasis brought out by the Biblical prophets. If we seek a social order which fosters human equality we must base it on the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. In contrast to Marxism, Judaism is the sworn foe of the totalitarian state because it teaches man unconditional obedience to God and God alone.

The Jew can find in his Torah and Talmud the only way to escape the pitfalls of power-mad cynicism, illusory secular utopianism and other-worldly quietism. Israel was chosen by God to bring the highest reaches of the moral law to all the peoples of the world. Judaism teaches the world to be restless and discontented as long as we await the full manifestation of the kingdom of God. For this reason, the fact of his exalted vocation, the Jew must be prepared to undergo persecution, hatred, humiliation and even martyrdom as the Suffering Servant of God.³⁸

VII. IN RETROSPECT

Indeed, the enlightened religions of the Western world owe a great debt to the bearers of Judaism. For it is this small tribe, then nation, then universal brotherhood that has bequeathed to us the vision of one, personal God. Nor has this task been accomplished without a tremendous price. Few peoples have suffered more for a

³⁸ A.A. Cohen, ed., *Arguments and Doctrines*, pp. 98-113. Herberg was a greatly influenced by Reinhold Niebuhr who had earlier moved from a semi-Marxist orientation to an espousal of Biblical prophetism.

religious ideal. Few peoples have lived through greater anguish to preserve the seeds of truth which God revealed to them. Selected from a world of polytheism, animism, and idol worship to carry God's revelation across the centuries of the history we have known, the Jews have been given but few periods of glory or comfort. Their desperate course prompted Israel Zangwill to reverently but ironically remark that the Bible itself is an anti-Semitic book!³⁹

There is no doubt that the same mandate to band together to resist the ideas of their conquerors in order to protect their monotheism has been one of the causes for their suffering. Yet they succeeded for the most part in both shielding their truth and extending knowledge of one Father beyond the confines of Israel to millions throughout the world. Today Moses and the Torah, as well as the ethics and universalism of Judaism, are still important for the Jewish people and for the people of her daughter religions—who, one day, we hope, may come together along with their mother religion to realize that Kingdom which was initiated so long ago.

³⁹ Jacobs, *Ibid.*, p. 273.

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