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Winter Retreat. "The Messiah." March 1989.

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TheWexnerHeritageFoundationWinterRetreat

MARCH
10 through 12
1.9.8.9
Peachtree City
GEORGIA

The Messiah

CONCEPTIONS OF THE ULTIMATE LEADER

What do Jews mean by the Messiah and the Messianic Age?

Should the Jewish people continue to believe in Messianism?

How have failed and false Messiahs transformed Jewish and World history?

What are the contemporary manifestations of Messianic politics and how might they affect us in the coming decade?

As we explore the Messianic views of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, these questions will be analyzed and discussed.



"MESSIAH" RETREAT

PEACHTREE CONFERENCE CENTER

SUMMARY - HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN

March 12, 1989

- I. Belief in Messiah provides great hope, for Jews and mankind. This belief promises:
 - a) A restoration of Jews to their ancient land.
 - b) A regenerated world, where peace and prosperity will prevail.
 - c) A rebuilt Temple.
 - d) A resurrection of the dead.
- II. There are two basic positions regarding the Messianic doctrine:
 - 1. Personal and Miraculous
 - a) Personal Messiah of Davidic line.
 - b) Preceded by Elijah announcing his coming.
 - c) Miraculous intervention by God, achieving all four items above.
 - d) None of this will occur except when the world is in the most terrible condition imaginable, namely when the final battle of Armageddon (Gog and Magog) (nuclear destruction) has been fought.

- 2. An Era, An Age, A Condition in the World
 - a) No personal Messiah necessary. The Jewish people is the Messiah (Is. 45).
 - b) Humankind, as God's partner in the world, achieves items 1.a) and 1.b) above, through human progress and perfectibility.
 - c) No Armageddon is required rather the opposite. Gradual growth toward peace.
- III. A basic division can be discerned in Jewish world today. Haredi religionists tend to believe in personal messiah. Liberal religionists, secularists, Zionists tend to believe in a Messianic age. Modern centrist Orthodox are split - a minority probably tending toward the personal, and a majority veering toward the age.
- IV. If you ask whether belief in the Messianic idea is a good ideology, or bad - whether it should be retained in the arsenal of major tenets, or discarded, the answer, it seems to me, is clear: the idea is good and useful, if not abused by fanaticism or intolerance.
- V. The fanatical position is dangerous. Gush Emunim has introduced a new kind of Jewish fundamentalism into Israel. Since its establishment in Marach 1987, at Kfar Etzion, it has led the way to resettlement of Judea and

Samaria, and spearheaded the struggle against territorial concessions to the Arabs.

By 1978, they were convinced Camp David was a sell-out - a <u>punishment</u> from God because of the Muslim infidels in their mosques on the Holy of Holies (TEMPLE MOUNT).

Early in '82, they planned to blow up the Dome of the Rock, but couldn't get rabbinical authorization. They were already committing acts of anti-Arab terrorism.

Between 1980-84 they conducted many operations of "holy terror". Some of the members of their underground are still in jail.

Gush has been messianic and fundamentalist from its inception. The six-Day War convinced Zvi Yehuda Kook's students that they were living in a messianic period. The Land of Israel became the center of their holiness. Every inch was sacred. Settling J and S was participation in the process of redemption.

The Palestinian Arabs do not constitute a nation, are not entitled to political rights, are at best resident aliens (gar toshav). The State of Israel was not established to be another democracy in the world, but has only one purpose: to redeem the nation and ultimately the world.

The only reality that exists is Jewish redemption, to be realized by massive aliyah, negation of the Diaspora and building Third temple.

There may even be a temptation to hasten Armageddon in order to bring the Messiah now. Blowing up the Mosque of Omar might be pleasing to God, and incidentally bring on world War III.

VI. The achieving of a messianic age could result in:

- a) Regeneration of Eretz Yisrael the most important thing we can do.
- b) Improvement of the whole world for the whole human race.
- c) Providing room for Israel to serve as a light to the nations.
- d) Giving meaning to the Jewish people to carry out their role as a chosen people to spread the knowledge of God.
- e) Giving each human a sense of his/her own value as a partner in a huge inspiring mission.

Thus, belief in a world with messianic possibilities provides a <u>VISION</u>, a <u>DREAM</u>, a <u>HOPE</u>, a sense of USEFULNESS and FULLNESS to every person. This is gorgeous, inspirational.

I had a professor once, Henry Slonimsky, who used to inveigh against the Jewish people, comparing their shortcomings, against their potential.

Here was the greatest group ever produced by the human race, the moral genius of mankind, ding far below its own creative level.

Then he would sigh and say: Not every pushcart peddler in the ghetto was a Messiah, but he could be....

Not every Wexnerite is a Messiah, but he/she could be.

That's what we wanted to expose to you. Build and

strengthen Israel. Make the world a better place for all

people. Improve yourself - turn inward - Hartman's

closing point.

EASYLINK 8831845C001 20MAR89 15:43/15:56 EST

FROM: 62622950

MIRKOV PUBLISHING INC

TO: 2127513739

Wexner Heritage Foundation 551 Madison Avenue New York, NY 10022

Dear Herb and Natan:

The mid-winter conference in Atlanta was terrific and I just had to write to you with some observations:

- the thematic unity of the conference enabled all participants to really dig into the subject - there's nothing like a good gestalt;
- the topic itself was relevant, interesting and perceived to be important by all the participants - you saw the level of involvement yourselves;
- 3. the superb organization of every detail was astonishing you left nothing to chance and everything flowed unimpeded and with true perfection (extra praise is due the Wexner support staff, especially Amy Raditz!!);
- 4. I have noticed a quite perceptible upgrade in the quality of the Wexner Fellows having interacted with them to a great degree and having led three workshops, I am now trying to figure out just what the differences are: are they brighter?...more Jewishly aware?...more Jewishly educated?...more motivated?? I don't know yet what it is, but the differences are unmistakable and whatever you're doing in the Fellow selection process keep it up!
- 5. there is a wonderful air of excitement, purpose and direction that infuses Wexner activities you two, Herb and Natan are to be complimented for your vision, forbearance, enthusiasm and sense of mission I don't know where you get the strength to manage all the activity you are responsible for!! With every good wish for a happy Purim and for abundant blessing upon you and your families,

Warmly,

RON BRAUNER

MMMM



Elmhurst Memorial Hospital

Mark D. Weiner, Vice President-Administration

March 15, 1989

Amy Raditz THE WEXNER HERITAGE FOUNDATION 551 Madison Avenue New York, New York 10022

Dear Amy:

Please find enclosed a check for \$100. This check covers the additional cost of my plane ticket to Atlanta.

Thank you again for a great weekend. The programming was excellent. It was good to focus on one subject. The faculty was simply outstanding. Thank you for providing me such an enjoyable and stimulating weekend. The Wexner Program is a wonderful gift. Also, thanks to you and the entire staff for always receiving us with a smile and having everything so wonderfully organized.

Have a great spring. I look forward to seeing you in Aspen.

Warm Mishes,

Mark D. Weiner

Vice President - Administration

MDW:cs

Enclosure

DRISHA INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

March 15, 1989

Rabbi David S. Silber, Director

Amy Raditz Wexner Heritage Foundation 551 Madison Avenue New York, NY 10022

Carol Kaufman Newman, President

Frederick L. Gorsetman, First Vice President

Helene Isaacs, Second Vice President

Benjamin Belfer, Treasurer

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Board of Directors Rabbi Jack Bieler Esther Farber Jack Flamholz Tamar Gindis Rita Kaufman Susan Lachman Belda Lindenbaum Melvin D. Newman Nechi Shudofsky Amy Wolf Dear Amy,

Thank you for arranging the Wexner Weekend. Thanks to your planning and careful attention to detail, everything ran smoothly. Please convey my thanks to Felicia Rosen, Jean Forman, and Julia Leibis as well.

Keep up the good work!

Best regards,

David Silber



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you are LEADING WORKSHOP(S):

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WORKSHOP I





A LIVING COVENANT

The Innovative Spirit in Traditional Judaism

David Hartman



THE FREE PRESS
A Division of Macmillan, Inc.
NEW YORK

Collier Macmillan Publishers

Two Competing Covenantal Paradigms

american jewish <mark>A R C H I V E S</mark>

See esp, pp 249ff

ARLIER, WE SAW how the rabbis expanded the range of human responsibility in the covenantal relationship with God so as to involve the intellect as well as the moral will. For them, the autonomy of the human partner to the covenant was expressed by a twofold attitude of accepting the divine norm and creatively interpreting it. Such autonomy was made possible by God's readiness to limit His say in human decision making and to grant the Jewish community the right to decide for itself how it should understand the commandments that it had received from Him in the Torah. Human reason, employed in clarifying and elaborating the halakhah, was seen as sufficient for that, without any need for divine intervention. Human responsibility for the conditions of life, moreover, was not confined to the religious sphere in the narrow sense, but included mastering sciences and establishing institutional frameworks for alleviating disease, poverty, illiteracy, and other social evils.

... it was taught in the school of Rabbi Ishmael: "[It is written:] 'He shall cause him to be thoroughly healed' [Exod. 21:19]; from this we learn that permission has been given to the physician to heal." (Berakhot 60a)

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The permission granted to the physician to heal signifies the legitimacy and importance of acting to alleviate human suffering. The broad network of helping agencies that Jews created in the diaspora exemplifies how Judaism fostered a responsible orientation to personal and communal needs.

Whereas the rabbis felt that they had superseded the biblical prophets in their manner of regulating social behavior, the two preceding chapters have shown that ultimately they remained with the prophets in their outlook upon human history. They had eliminated the need for ongoing prophetic revelation in determining the halakhah, but they retained and even intensified the prophetic expectation of a "day of the Lord" in which the humiliating relationship between the Jewish people and their foreign rulers would be reversed.

Following the tragic failure of the Bar Kochba rebellion, rabbinic authorities discouraged all attempts by the Jewish people to regain their political independence by human means. The reestablishment of a Jewish polity in the ancient homeland had to await an act of massive divine intervention that would take place sometime in the indefinite future. In the meantime, the community could do nothing toward ending its exile beyond remaining loyal to the covenant and the life of mitzvot despite whatever it might suffer at the hands of the nations. It had to wait patiently until God decided that time was ripe for the advent of the Messiah.¹

The paradigmatic model for redemption and providence in history became the Exodus from Egypt, whose theme is certainly not divine self-limitation for the sake of human responsibility, but rather the manifestation of overwhelming divine power, which rescues the Hebrew slaves from their helpless subjection to Pharaoh.² This model is found, for instance, in the Passover Haggadah.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who redeemed us and redeemed our fathers from Egypt and Who has brought us to this night to eat therein unleavened bread and bitter herbs. So, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, bring us to other festivals and holy days that come toward us in peace, happy in the building of Thy city and joyous in Thy service.

Here the implication is that the rebuilding of Jerusalem depends upon divine intervention no less than did the Exodus. The memory of redemption in the past becomes in this prayer the ground of the certainty of future redemption.

In this chapter, I shall suggest that the Exodus from Egypt is not the

only available Judaic paradigm for understanding how divine providence or the messianic hope operates in history. The covenantal moment of Sinai can also serve as a paradigm. This paradigm has the advantage that it enables one to find the same relationship between divine self-limitation and human responsibility in Jewish history as in the normative affairs of the Jewish community. It enables one to pass beyond the prophetic outlook equally in both areas.

The giving of the Torah at Sinai can be understood as constituting a radical shift in God's relationship to human history. The Torah turned the mass of Hebrew slaves into a distinctive value community by providing them with a framework of communal organization. This may be seen as a shift by God away from influencing history through direct miraculous intervention, since He now began to influence it through the continuing historical existence of a normative community. Just as Maimonides considered that God founded the orderly processes of nature at the moment of creation and made them into a vehicle of His will, so too one may regard Sinai as the place where God made the Torah into a vehicle of His directive influence in history. God is present in the community as an active force because His Torah is a guiding influence in its way of life. Just as one is not committed to thinking of God's power in nature as a series of miracles produced by repeated acts of the divine will, since the one act of creation suffices to establish the course of nature, so too is one not committed to regarding the divine will as operating in history through repeated miraculous interventions. but can instead regard God as having assumed a permanent presence in history by the one act of establishing the eternal covenant of His Torah.

In contrasting this Sinai model for understanding God's relationship to history with the dominant Exodus model, I do not wish to imply that only the Sinai model can be a basis for an active participation of the Jewish people in history. At various times during the centuries of diaspora existence, the belief that the Messiah had arrived or would shortly appear impelled smaller or larger segments of the Jewish community to begin upon a return to the historical arena, because they assumed that God would ensure the ultimate success of their efforts. The difference between the two models is that the Exodus model makes Jewish activity in history dependent upon a perception of direct divine intervention, whereas the Sinai model holds that God has conferred responsibility upon the Jewish people to decide for themselves when they have found realistic opportunities for involvement in history—with all the risks involved. My reason for preferring the Sinai model is that

I do not wish to divide my world into two separate realms, one of which is characterized by autonomous action based upon human understanding of the divine norm and the other by anticipation of and dependence upon divine interventions. I prefer to see God's will for Jewish history, just like God's will for Jewish communal life, as channeled exclusively through the efforts of the Jewish community to achieve the aims of the Torah given at Sinai.

Mitzvah and Human Responsibility

The notion that the mitzvot given at Sinai represent divine self-limitation for the sake of expanding the range of human responsibility is given clear expression in Maimonides' profound and radical interpretation of the talmudic statement that "everything is in the hands of heaven except fear of heaven." Although his examples—marriage and theft—are drawn from communal life, it will become clear that he applies the dictum to the course of history as well.

The statement of the sages saying, "Everything is in the hands of heaven except fear of heaven," is correct and is similar to what we have discussed. However, people often err about it and think that a man is compelled to perform some actions which are in fact voluntary; for instance, marrying a certain woman or seizing a sum of money illegally. That is incorrect, because if someone takes a woman by a marriage contract and betrothal and she is permitted to him and he marries her to be fruitful and to multiply, then this is fulfilling a commandment; God does not preordain performing a commandment. I there were some wickedness in marrying her, it would be a transgression; God does not preordain a transgression. The same applies to a man who robs someone of his money, or steals it, or deceives him about it and denies it and swears an oath on him about his money. If God had preordained that this money would go from the possession of the latter to that of the former. He would have preordained a transgression. This is not the case. Rather, obedience and disobedience [to the law] can undoubtedly be found throughout man's voluntary actions. We have already explained in the second chapter that the commandments and prohibitions of the law concern actions which man can choose to do or not to do. "Fear of heaven is not in the hands of heaven," but in this [appetitive] part of the soul. Indeed, it is given over to man's choice, as we have explained. Thus, in saying "Everything [is in the hands of heaven]," they [the sages] mean the natural matters about which a man has no choice, such as his being tall or short, or a rainfall or drought, or the air being putrid or healthy-and so too with respect to everything in the world, except for the movement and the rest of man. ("Eight Chapters," 8)

It is important to note that, according to Maimonides; the category "fear of heaven" includes more than those acts enjoined by the explicit norms of Judaism. The domain of "the fear of heaven" includes not only explicit divine commandments, but also a vast range of social and economic activities. Only those activities that human initiative and effort cannot in any way alter, such as a person's height or eye color, are "in the hands of heaven." Consequently, only those areas which do not undermine human freedom and initiative are subject to divine determination. Whereas the rabbinic statement seems at first sight to make "fear of heaven" a tiny exception from what is "in the hands of heaven." thereby restricting human freedom to a minimum, Maimonides packs all of human behavior into "fear of heaven" and thus turns the statement into a far-reaching affirmation of human free will.5 Maimonides' treatment of the statement "All is in the hands of heaven except the fear of heaven" shows that mitzwah can be understood as God's way of expanding the range of human freedom and responsibility in relationship to divine power. The sphere of unilateral divine intervention. whether in the community or in history, therefore shrinks as the range of activities and areas of life subject to mitzuah increases. Jews can be encouraged and energized to act when they become conscious of the broad range of activities for which they are autonomously responsible by virtue of the Sinai covenant of mitruah.

For Maimonides, belief in human freedom is the cornerstone of the Torah. A theology that would negate the significance of human freedom would in turn undermine the mittoot, the Torah, and the halakhah.

If a man's actions were done under compulsion, the commandments and prohibitions of the law would be nullified and they would all be absolutely in vain, since man would have no choice in what he does....

The truth about which there is no doubt is that all of man's actions are given over to him. If he wishes to act he does so, and if he does not wish to act he does not; there is no compulsion whatsoever upon him. Hence it necessarily follows that commands can be given. (Ibid.)

Maimonides is aware, however, that certain biblical texts seem to contradict his radical approach to human freedom. These are texts in which God announces the future course of human history as if it had already been decided. On the face of it, they suggest a theology of history that is incompatible with the view that human beings have a choice between doing good and evil. God's revelation to Abraham that his

descendants would be enslaved and oppressed (Gen. 15:13) is an example, as Maimonides puts it (ibid.), of "verses that lead people to fancy that God preordained and compels disobedience." If the enslavement in Egypt was preordained by God and if, consequently, the Egyptians necessarily oppressed Abraham's descendants, then God's punishment of the Egyptians not only violates our basic intuitions about justice, but also contradicts Maimonides' claim that freedom is a necessary presupposition of the Torah. For Maimonides, a predictive necessitarian theory of history would destroy the normative framework of the Sinai covenant.

Maimonides resolves this apparent contradiction in the Bible by arguing that none of the predictions mentioned in the Torah entailed the necessity of the actions predicted. No individual was compelled to act in a particular way as a result of any of these predictions. While they are expressed as unconditional statements about what will inevitably occur in the future, they are logically no different from correct predictions based upon the moral habits of human beings.

The answer is that this is like the Exalted saying that some people born in the future will be sinful, some will be obedient, some virtuous, and some bad. Now this is correct, but it does not necessarily follow from this statement that a given bad man is bad without fail, nor that a given virtuous man is virtuous without fail. Rather, whoever is bad is so by his own choice. If he wishes to be virtuous, he can do so; there is nothing preventing him. Similarly, if any virtuous man wishes to, he can be bad; there is nothing preventing him. The prediction is not about a particular individual, so that he could say: "It has been preordained for me." Rather, it is stated in a general way, and each individual remains able to exercise his choice upon his original inborn disposition. . . .

The existence of the judgment of death by stoning in the Torah does not make us say that the man who profaned the Sabbath is compelled to profane it, nor do the curses force us to say that those idol worshipers upon whom the curses fell were preordained to idol worship. Rather, everyone who worshiped [idols] did so by choice and punishment befell him. "Just as they have chosen their ways . . . I too shall choose, etc." [Isa. 66:3-4]. (Ibid.)

Maimonides lumps God's prediction to Abraham that Israel would be enslaved and oppressed in Egypt together with legal judgments conditional upon the violation of specific norms. Just as in the latter case there is no presumption that violations of the laws in question must occur necessarily, so too in the cases involving divine predictions there is no presumption that particular individuals must necessarily act in predetermined ways. The crucial point of this argument is that predictive judgments concerning human behavior and divine predictions concerning the future course of history share a common logic. In neither case does necessity replace contingency. Regardless of the accuracy of the divine predictions related in the Torah, history remains within the domain of freedom and not "in the hands of heaven."

Because the Sinai covenant limits the scope of divine power in history, it also for Maimonides transforms and limits the concept of miracle as the way God relates to man.

Though all miracles change the nature of some individual being, God does not change at all the nature of human individuals by means of miracles. Because of this great principle it says: "O that they had such an heart as this," and so on [Deut. 5:26]. It is because of this that there are commandments and prohibitions, rewards and punishments. We have already explained this fundamental principle by giving its proofs in a number of passages in our compilations. We do not say this because we believe that the changing of the nature of any human individual, is difficult for Him, may He be exalted. Rather it is possible and fully within [His] capacity. But according to the foundations of the law, of the Torah, He has never willed to do it, nor shall He ever will it. For if it were His will that the nature of any human individual should be changed because of what He, may He be exalted, wills from that individual, sending of prophets and all giving of a law would have been useless. (Guide 3:32)

Here Maimonides is careful to distinguish between the claim that God cannot change human nature and the claim that he does not change it. Had he made the former claim, philosophers and theologians could have accused him of denying divine omnipotence. He makes instead the lesser claim that God's gift of the Torah presupposes that God has decided to act in history in ways that leave human nature unchanged. The fact that God gave the Israelite community mittor and prophets shows that He has decided to give human beings the opportunity to play an autonomous, responsible role in history. To obtain human obedience by miraculously changing someone's nature would be to take back the responsibility conferred upon Jews through the giving of the Torah and the sending of prophets.

Maimonides does not eliminate the category of miracle. As we saw in the opening chapter, he holds that the covenantal election and revelation at Sinai can be made intelligible only in terms of the freedom of God that was manifested in the act of creation. The Sinai covenant of mitzuah presupposes a divine miracle, but also implies limitations upon the subsequent occurrence of miracles in history. In granting that cov-

enant, God chose to limit His infinite power of intervention in human affairs. Sinai marks a shift away from spontaneous divine miracles in history to an immanent structured communal framework that enables an orderly development of history based on the human freedom to act—with all the uncertainty that may result.⁷

Dependency and the Covenant

It is important to be aware, however, that Maimonides' understanding of the covenantal moment of Sinai and his neutralization of miracles did not go unchallenged. Nachmanides argued for an undiminished importance of miracle after Sinai.* Starting from the curses and blessings of Leviticus 26:3-45, where the Israelite community is told that the whole promised land will be fruitful if and only if it keeps the mitzvot faithfully, Nachmanides argues that the Sinai covenant implied that there would henceforth be a miraculous connection between the observation of the mitzvot and the processes of nature. The argument is presented in his commentary on Leviticus 26:11.

Now we have already explained that all these blessings are miracles, for it is not natural that the rains should come [in their due season], and that we should have peace from our enemies, and that they should have faintness of heart so that a hundred of them flee before five, as a result of us observing the statutes and commandments of God, nor that everything should be the opposite because of us planting in the seventh year [which we are forbidden to do].

The same miraculous connection applies, he adds, in the case of the curses that fall upon the whole land and the whole community when the latter fails to observe the commandments. One such curse is sickness. Nachmanides therefore goes on to claim, in particular, that after Smail Israel had no need of human medicine: the covenant implied that sickness was caused by iniquity, and the remedy for it was to have recourse not to physicians but to God.

Above I argued that the rabbinic statement that "permission has been given to the physician to heal" signifies that the halakhah encouraged human attempts to alleviate suffering. Nachmanides understands the statement quite differently: it makes, he argues, a magnanimous concession to those Jews whose reaction to sickness is to consult a physician. Since they have become accustomed to taking medicaments, the physician is permitted to treat them instead of simply telling them to reflect upon their iniquities and repent.

Nachmanides radically reinterprets the rabbinic dictum that "permission has been given to the physician to heal" so as to make it conform to the biblical worldview. He retains the prophetic outlook in cases where the rabbis had been prepared to pass beyond it. The dictum, he says, must be seen as merely a forced accommodation to existing circumstances: since people have become accustomed to consulting physicians, one allows the doctor to respond to their requests for healing. But this is not the ideal religious situation. Dependency of human beings upon doctors in the doctor-patient relationship undermines the total dependency that one should feel toward God. Trust in God implies placing oneself totally under His miraculous guidance and relying upon the promise that all who observe the Torah and follow its commandments will enjoy health and well-being. When Jews cannot turn to any source of help except prayer, are totally dependent upon the efficacy of the mitzuah to change the world, and have no autonomous power bevond obeying the will of God, they are in an ideal situation for covenantal spirituality.

What Maimonides thought of those who interpreted the dictum, about the physician in the manner of Nachmanides may be seen from a passage in his Commentary on the Mishnah, where he discusses the putative reasons for a halakhic ban (mentioned in the Tosefta) on a certain "book of remedies" associated with King Hezekiah. He suggests two possible reasons. Either it was a book of talismans, which the author had intended as a theoretical study of that superstition, but which was banned after Jews began to use it to make talismans for themselves; or it was a book describing poisons and their antidotes, which was banned after murderers had consulted it to learn about poisons. Having offered these explanations, Maimonides goes on to castigate all those who see the ban on that particular book as extending to all kinds of recourse to medicine."

The reason I chose to comment at length on this matter is that I heard, and have had it explained to me, that Solomon composed a book of remedies, such that if anyone fell ill with any malady he could turn to it and do as it said and become healed; but that when Hezekiah saw that men did not trust in God to heal their sicknesses, but in that book, he hid it away. Aside from the utter nonsense of this explanation, and from its being utterly fantastic, it should be pointed out that those who hold it attribute to Hezekiah and his party an idiocy that should not be attributed except to the dregs of the masses. Now then, according to their stupid and corrupt fantasy, if someone suffers from hunger and turns to bread and, by consuming it, heals himself from his great suffering—shall we say that he abandoned trust in God?! They should be

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condemned as great fools! For, just as I thank God when I eat for his having provided something to satisfy my hunger and to give me life and sustain me, thus should I thank him for having provided a remedy that heals my sickness when I use it. Indeed, I would not have taken the trouble to contradict this base interpretation, were it not so widespread. (Commentary on the Mishnah, Pesahim 4:10)

Maimonides wholly rejects the view that Jews can experience God only in that which is extraordinary and outside of the patterns of the everyday. A recurring feature of Maimonidean religious sensibility is the awareness that divine power manifests itself within the orderly structures of reality.10 From a Maimonidean viewpoint, faith in God should not be an excuse for Jews to break with structure and necessity. Religion should rivet them back into a world where natural causality has to be taken seriously." It is not a flight into fantasy, into "All is possible." Maimonides does not see God's providence in the strange and the unpredictable. He repeatedly tells his readers to perceive God's mercy, justice, and graciousness within the processes of nature. He also insists that the prophets knew and accepted the principle of causality, seeing it as an intermediary of God's will.

Know that all proximate causes through which is produced in time that which is produced in time, regardless of whether these causes are essentral and natural, or voluntary, or accidental and fortuitous-I mean by the vulumery cause of that particular thing produced in time, the free choice of a man-and even if the cause consists in the volition of an animal other than man: that all these causes are ascribed in the books of the prophets to God, may He be exalted. And according to their manner of expressing themselves, it is said of such and such an act that God did it or commanded it or said it. (Guide 2:48)

In speaking of God's judgment and God's commanding will, one need not therefore presuppose a universe without order and causal pattern. The prophets' references to God's will were not meant to deny the causal empirical structure of reality. For Maimonides, the prophets only omit intermediate causality. They see all events, both in nature and in history, in their immediate direct relationship to divinity. The biblical langauge of reward and punishment need not be understood as a miraculous response by God to human actions, but rather as a description of the sufferings and benefits that are intrinsic to human behavior.

To give an example in the spirit of Maimonides, whoever cheats or steals or lies sets into motion a breakdown of human trust, and as a result human suffering will be inevitable. The punishment that God speaks of for lying and cheating and violence is therefore intrinsic to the norms of the Torah. 12 If God promises reward for virtuous actions. it is because virtuous actions are contagious and they set examples for imitation by others. Whoever performs a good act elicits good behavior on the part of other people and therefore benefits by contributing to a decent human world. The promise of reward for practicing virtue is thus intrinsic to the very activity.

God and the Ordered Patterns of Reality

In the thought of Maimonides, creation is a founding moment that has permanent consequences. Once established, the world is subject to itsown causal structure.13 Where there is no notion of necessity nor serious appreciation for the normal patterns of nature and history, religious hope can indulge itself in every fancasy (Guide 2:29). One of Maimonides' major achievements was the restoration to covenantal Judaism of a respectful appreciation for natural causality and for what empirical observation of reality suggests is possible.

Implicit in the religious anthropology behind Maimonides' thinking there is a suggestion that the development of human responsibility, the expansion of intellectual understanding of the world, the ability to cope with unpredictable features of reality, the sense of personal adequacy to handle one's environment, do not weaken covenantal religious conaciousness, but rather express its fullest sense. It is not in self-negation. in feeling crushed, in denying oneself any worth, that a human being can truly grasp the redeeming power of God. For a Maimonidean religious sensibility, the giving of the mittyot implies not that their observance is the only means that Jews have of controlling their environment, but that lews are encouraged to employ all rational means of control that are consistent with the teachings and spirit of the mittyot.

It is on these grounds that Maimonides censured the Jewish leaders of the second-temple period in his Letter on Astrology; the Jewish people were defeated because those leaders based their expectance of victory upon mythical and unempirical frameworks and did not learn the art of war. He might have claimed that the only reason for their defeat was that they did not study Torah, did not perform mitzvor.14 Instead, he emphasized a very simple consideration of realpolitik: If you wish to maintain the independence of your nation, then you must not neglect the art of war. In no way did Maimonides feel that by urging the Jewish community to be awake to natural explanations of political reality he was weakening covenantal loyalty. As he implicitly pointed out in his justification of recourse to medicine quoted above, when Jews offer thanks to God for the bread they eat, they do not feel that they lost trust in God because the food for which they are blessing God required planting, irrigation, and other human initiatives.

Accordingly, Maimonides denies that there is any antipathy between Torah and halakhah, on the one hand, and natural science and philosophy, on the other; rather they are united in seeking to overcome the painful ignorance and pathetic gullibility that make human beings fall victim to every kind of superstitious belief and abhorrent idolatrous practice. His position may be contrasted with that of Nachmanides, who saw the Torah as standing alone against both superstition and human wisdom. We saw how Maimonides took the dictum "permission has been given to the physician to heal" to affirm the utility of the medical art, whereas Nachmanides interpreted it as making a concession to those whose faith was too weak to allow them to entrust their health to God alone. The difference between their two positions is also manifest in their understanding of the biblical prohibition against consulting sorcerers and diviners. In his commentary on Deuteronomy 18:9ff. Nachmanides describes sorcerers and diviners as people who have genuinely effective knowledge. Their powers are "matters publicly demonstrated before the eyes of witnesses," even though they are people "whose words are not all true and who do not provide all necessary information." The Israelite community would have "had complaint" about the prohibition against consulting them, were it not that God had provided it with alternative and more reliable sources of information in the prophets and in the Urim and Thummim, the device used in temple days for obtaining oracles.

For Nachmanides, the biblical verse "You shall be faultless with the Lord your God" (Deut. 18:13) demands of the community that they should rely only on God's direct providential guidance. Means of acquiring knowledge possessed by other peoples (e.g., astrology) therefore cannot be used by Israel, because the future of Israel is determined by the degree to which it approximates to faultless service of God, understood as living exclusively by direct dependence upon God's revealed instructions. The election of Israel creates a unique ontological structure; it creates a community with its own God-given ways of coping with reality. It is a community that is cut off from the universal rhythms of reasonableness found in those who do not live by the covenant. In that sense, the position of Nachmanides is similar to Soloveitchik's claim

that the logos of the lonely community of faith is unique and can only be understood by those committed to the covenantal faith structure.

Maimonides, discussing the same passage from Deuteronomy in his Mishneh Torah, adopts a thoroughly different view of the powers of sorcerers and diviners.

These things are all false and deceptive and they are what the ancient idolaters used to mislead the peoples of the countries and to deceive them into following them. And it is not proper for Israel, who are wise among the wise, to be attracted to those inanities or to imagine that there is any profit in them. . . . Whoever believes in these things and in their like and considers in his heart that they are true and pertain to wisdom, but that the Torah has forbidden them, is nothing but a fool, deficient in understanding. . . . But wise people of faultless understanding will know by clear proofs that all these things which the Torah has prohibited do not pertain to wisdom but are worthless and inane; the deficient in understanding are those who are attracted by them and abandon the ways of truth on their account. Therefore the Torah, in warning us against all these inanities, has said: "You shall be faultless with the Lord your God" [Deut. 18:13]. (MT Hilkhot Avodah Zarah 11:16)

According to this explanation, Israel was forbidden to consult sorcerers and diviners, not in order to emphasize its subjection to God,
but in order to free it from inanities that have no basis in reality. The
Torah seeks not to increase the dependency of Israel upon God by depriving it of useful knowledge, but rather to liberate Israel from pseudosciences that in point of fact cannot serve the true needs of humanity.
Observance of the mitzuot goes hand in hand with the rational thought
employed by the philosopher and with the genuine empirical observation underlying medicine. Jews can be "faultless with the Lord your
God" when they understand the connection between the purpose of
the law and the structure of reality, when they recognize the harmony
between reality and the teleological framework of revelation. In living
by the mitzuot, they are not living outside of the empirical structure of
the world, but rather are getting closer through practice to the essential
nature of reality.

Maimonides held that the rabbis of the talmudic period shared his view that observance of the mitzvot in no way obliges one to ignore proven knowledge available to all human beings. This is how he explains the ruling of Rabbi Meir that permits one to cure sleeping problems by hanging a fox's tooth over the bed or to assuage inflammations and fevers by applying a nail taken from the stake of a crucified criminal

(Shabbat 6:10). Although these practices smack of sorcery, Rabbi Meir had permitted them, Maimonides claims, because experience seemed to confirm their efficacy and therefore sorcery could not be involved.

You must not consider as a difficulty certain things that they have permitted, as for instance the nail of one who is crucified and a fox's tooth. For in those times, these things were considered to derive from experience and accordingly pertained to medicine and entered into the same class as the hanging of a peony upon an epileptic and the giving of a dog's excrements in cases of the swelling of the throat and fumigation with vinegar and marcasite in cases of hard swellings of the tendons. For it is allowed to use all remedies similar to these that experience has shown to be valid, even if reasoning does not require them. For they pertain to medicine, and their efficacy may be ranged together with the purgative action of aperient medicines. (Guide 3:37)

The community is permitted by Maimonides to utilize any means that enlarge its ability to deal with disease and overcome insecurity. Its commitment to the mitzvot does not exempt it from utilizing any knowledge regardless of its source. Israel should not view mitzvot as a substitute for experience. A keen respect for reality as experienced by all human beings goes hand in hand with the covenantal community's faith allegiance to God in history. The more Jews through their own efforts are able to banish uncertainty and unpredictability in their lives, the more they unite the guidance of the Torah with the wisdom of God as implanted within reality. Revelation does not excuse Jews from the need to learn from practical experience, nor does it make unnecessary all knowledge gained through human reflection.

In the religious awareness of Nachmanides, by contrast, the Maimonidean God Who is revealed through the regularities of nature is replaced by the free power of God to operate independently of the structures and patterns of the world. The divine principle is a principle of spontaneity that breaks with regularity; it encourages Jews to feel free from the given framework of experience and orderly patterns of observed regularity in nature.

It is therefore understandable why miracle plays such an essential role in Nachmanides' understanding of mitzvah, why the Exodus from Egypt in his paradigmatic example for the religious consciousness of the covenantal Jew. The Exodus from Egypt mirrors divine power and providence, the ability of God to transform the world in order to fulfill His promises to His elect people. The election of Israel is grounded in a metanatural category, a new power in the universe that should in no

way be defined by what the Jew sees happening to other nations and to the surrounding world.

Crisis, Prayer, and Renewal

The differences we have distinguished in Maimonides' and Nachmanides' respective approaches to the covenant can also be seen in their approaches to prayer. Nachmanides sharply disagreed with Maimonides' ruling that daily prayer is a commandment deriving from the Torah. He held that if any kind of prayer is commanded, it is only that which issues from situations of national crisis. For Nachmanides, prayer in situations of national crisis is obligatory because it has the educative function of making the community realize that its survival in history depends exclusively on God's providential guidance. Maimonides, however, ascribes a completely different function to crisis prayer. For him, crisis is not an occasion that highlights dependency on God, but exclusively an occasion for teshavah (repentence and return to God). The community should always react to times of trouble by examining its own past moral failures so as to rectify them.

A positive scriptural commandment prescribes prayer and the sounding of an alarm with trumpets whenever trouble befalls the community . . . be it famine, pestilence, locusts, or the like.

This procedure is one of the roads to repentance, for as the community cries out in prayer and sounds an alarm when overtaken by trouble, everyone is bound to realize that evil has come upon them as a consequence of their own evil deeds . . . and that their repentance will cause the trouble to be removed from them. (MT Hilkhot Ta'anit 1:1-2)

The point of crying out in prayer in times of trouble is not merely to petition for divine grace, but also to create awareness of the relationship between the moral level of the community and the conditions of its history. Such prayer is "one of the roads to repentance" because it reaffirms belief in the connection between the well-being of the community and adherence to the covenant of mitzwah. The course of a fast day must therefore combine supplications to God with a determined attempt to remedy social injustices.

On each feast day undertaken by a community beset by troubles, the court and the elders should remain in session at the synagogue from the end of the morning service until midday, to examine into the conduct

of the citizens and to remove the obstacles to righteous living provided by transgressions. They should carefully search and inquire after those guilty of extortion and similar crimes, in order to set them apart, and those who act high-handedly, in order to humble them, and after other such matters. . . . For the third quarter of the day, the scriptural blessings and imprecations [for observance and nonobservance of the commandments] should be read. . . . During the last quarter of the day, the afternoon service should be held and everyone, to the best of his ability, should recite supplications, cry out in prayer, and confess his sins. (Ibid., 1:17)

If the community cannot, through its own efforts, end a famine or ward off a foreign army, it can at least correct those features of its social life that fall short of its covenantal obligations. Tragedy and terror are to be met not with resignation and paralysis, but with an energetic process of seeking out and uprooting all forms of evil that members of the community have inflicted on one another.

While most of Hilkhot Ta'anit concerns the special fast days proclaimed in situations of communal crisis, the last chapter deals with the five fixed fast days, which are the anniversaries of past national traumas such as the destruction of the two temples. Here again, Maimonides channels the whole significance of the day of prayer and fasting into the need to "open roads to repentance."

There are days which are observed by all Israel as fasts because tragic events happened on them, the object being to stir the hearts to open roads to repentance, and to remind us of our own evil deeds, and of our fathers' deeds which were like ours, as a consequence of which these tragic afflictions came upon them and upon us. For as we remember these things, we ought to repent and do good. . . . (Ibid., 5:1)

"The World Pursues Its Normal Course"

In the rabbinic tradition, it is also possible to understand the national fast days primarily or simply as commemorations of past sufferings. The memory of those tragedies may seem reason enough for spending a day in mourning and dejection. But Maimonides mentions the commemorative aspect only to subordinate it immediately to the purifying influence of repentance. His main concern is not to recall past sufferings, but actively to reshape the present. The action of declaring a public fast in times of calamity is indeed placed by Maimonides in the class of commandments that promote correct opinions and belief in the Torah.

... the commandment given us to call upon Him, may He be exalted, in every calamity... likewise belongs to this class. For it is an action through which the correct opinion is firmly established that He, may He be exalted, apprehends our situations and that it depends upon Him to improve them, if we obey, and to make them ruinous, if we disobey; we should not believe that such things are fortuitous and happen by chance.... For their belief that this is chance contributes to necessitating their persistence in their corrupt opinions and unrighteous actions, so that they do not turn away from them.... (Guide 3:36)

A community that describes calamities as pure chance, that misses the opportunity for scrutinizing its past ways and repenting, lacks an important means of combatting moral decay within its midst. As Maimonides puts it in the Mishneh Torah, such a community will set itself on "a cruel path" when disasters happen.

If, on the other hand, the people do not cry out in prayer and do not sound an alarm, but merely say that it is the normal course of the world for such a thing to happen to them, and that their trouble is a matter of pure chance, they have chosen a cruel path which will cause them to persevere in their evil deeds and thus bring additional troubles upon them. (MT Hilkhot Ta'anit 1:3)

By "the normal course of the world"—minhago shel olam—Maimonides means the ordinary course of human experience, which includes our familiarity with orderly patterns in the world, such as the seasons of the year and the growth of children to adulthood, but also our familiarity with unpredictable disasters, whether occurring in nature or inflicted by other human beings. Maimonides does not deny that unseasonal drought, premature death, and invading armies belong to the normal course of the world. What he objects to is the further inference that they are "a matter of pure chance" without moral implications. As another section of the Mishneh Torah shows, Maimonides commends those who have no illusions about "the normal course of the world," whereas "cruelty" consists in a false reaction to its impact upon our lives. Human death is part of the way of the world. The bereaved are cruel if they refuse to recognize that the laws of mourning are meant to stimulate them to reconsider their own way of life.

One should not include in excessive grief over one's dead, for it is said: "Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him" [Jer. 23:10], that is to say, [weep not] too much, for that is the normal course of the world, and he who frets over the normal course of the world is a fool. . . .

Whoever does not mourn the dead in the manner enjoined by the

rabbis is cruel. One should be apprehensive, troubled, investigate his conduct, and return to repentance. . . . During the first three days the mourner should think of himself as if a sword is resting upon his neck, from the third to the seventh day as if it is lying in the corner, thereafter as if it is moving toward him in the street.

Reflections of this nature will put him on his mettle, he will bestir himself and repent, for it is written: "Thou hast stricken them, but they were not affected" [Jer. 5:3]. He should therefore be wide awake and deeply moved. (MT Hilkhot Evel 13:11-12)

With the two questions from Jeremiah, Maimonides implies that it is also the message of the biblical prophet that God's providence is mediated through the normal course of the world. Much of the above passage is taken directly from the Babylonian Talmud, where it is immediately preceded by an admonitory story about excessive mourning.

There was a certain woman who lived in the neighborhood of Rabbi Huna. She had seven sons, one of whom died; she wept for him rather excessively. Rabbi Huna sent word to her; "Act not thus." She did not heed him. He sent word to her: "If you heed my word it is well; but if not, are you anxious to make provision for yet another?" [Another son] died and they all died. In the end he said to her: "Are you fumbling with provision for yourself?" And she died. (Moed Katan 27b)

Obviously, Maimonides was aware of the story when he wrote his own censure of excessive mourning. But his manner of censure is different from that of the Talmud. When the Talmud goes on to prescribe "Three days for weeping, seven for lamenting" and so on, it adds: "Therefore the Holy One, blessed be He, says: 'You are not more compassionate toward [the deceased] than I'" (ibid.). People who mourn excessively are implying that God is not compassionate enough. They are questioning the divine decree that allowed someone's death. In their behavior, as the Talmud sees it, they purport to contrast the sensitive compassion of human beings toward their beloved with the harsh rule of God's justice for His creatures. God's patience with such blasphemy is not unending. When the woman ignored repeated warnings, she was punished by seeing all her other sons die and eventually by dying herself. Maimonides, however, would see the woman's fault quite differently. He would agree with the Talmud that her excessive mourning mirrors a mistaken attitude to divine providence. But he would censure her not for being a blasphemer who denies God's compassion and justice, but as "a fool who frets over the normal course of the world." To be human is to be subject to mortality. The halakhah, with its fixed periods of mourning and its urging to repentance, provides a disciplined

and constructive way to respond to the death of a loved one. Those who reject the guidance of the halakhah have a mistaken appreciation of reality and so will bring unnecessary sufferings upon themselves.

For Maimonides, excessive mourning is not so much a sin against God as it is a foolish error. The Talmud describes death as resulting from divine judgment. Maimonides is able to translate that theological language into a framework of the normal course of the world, as he does in the Guide when he translates the prophetic language of will into the ordered patterns of causal regularity within nature. In Hilkhot Avelut he cites Jeremiah's declaration "Thou hast striken them, but they were not affected," because death, although it is part of the normal course of the world, can nevertheless mediate the call to repent. One who does not mourn as the rabbis commanded is cruel, since that person has not utilized death and suffering as an opportunity to investigate his or her conduct. The cruelty referred to in this context is similar to the cruel path taken by those who did not respond to all forms of crisis with repentance as described in Hilkhot Ta'anit.

Providence and Moral Responsibility

Maimonides' rejection of Aristotle's position on providence is based on the fact that Aristotle cannot educate a community to respond in any meaningful way to seemingly unexpected intrusions of suffering in human life. It is not necessarily the daily hardships and suffering that weaken the will and numb one into moral passivity as much as it is the invasions of unanticipated suffering. One's initiative and moral will can be sapped of all vitality by unanticipated tragedy. Events such as the sudden death of a child often crush the will of a human being to build for the future. The unanticipated mocks the seriousness of one's moral aspirations.

To Maimonides, it would appear that for such occurrences not to create a mood of dejection and moral disillusionment, they must in some way be absorbed and integrated within a covenantal perception of life. To Aristotle, the predictable mediates divinity; the unpredictable, however, cannot be absorbed within a providential picture of God's relationship to being. A disastrous earthquake and the foundering of a ship at sea that takes the lives of hundreds of people remain for Aristotle unintelligible features of reality that we must learn to live with.

... if a hurricane or a wind of less than hurricane force should blow, it would indubitably bring some leaves of this particular tree to fall, break

a branch of another tree, topple a stone from a certain fence, raise up the dust so that it covers a certain plant and causes its destruction, and agitate great waves in the water so that a ship that is there would founder and so that all the people that are on board, or at least some of them, would be drowned. Consequently, according to him, there is no difference between the fall of a leaf and the fall of the stone, on the one hand, or the drowning of the excellent and superior men that were on board the ship, on the other. Similarly, he does not differentiate between an ox that defecates upon a host of ants so that they die, or a building whose foundations are shaken upon all the people at their prayers who are found in it so that they die. And there is no difference, according to him, between a cat coming across a mouse and devouring it or a spider devouring a fly, on the one hand, or a ravenous lion meeting a prophet and devouring him, on the other. (Guide 3:17)

Through these repeated vivid examples of how the life of a human being appears to be of minimal significance, Maimonides tries to bring home to the reader the important fact that unless human suffering is placed in some intelligible framework, the grounds for taking human communal and moral action seriously will be undermined. He believes that "the ruin of order in human existence and the obliteration of all good qualities in man, both the moral and the rational" is brought about by "the opinion of those who abolish providence with respect to human individuals, putting the latter on a par with the individuals of the other species of animals" (ibid.).

Maimonides considers that if we look upon human suffering and death in the same way as we view the death of flies, then ultimately the scriousness with which the community takes moral norms will be undermined. If the community is to be influenced to build human life on the principles of the Torah, a way must be found to relate these occurrences of suffering to a larger scheme of justice. For moral reasons, therefore, Maimonides is prepared to utilize the model of reward and punishment, while admitting at the same time that he is unable to understand how this justice model of reward and punishment in fact works.¹⁷

But whereas [Aristotle] states that the foundering of a ship and the drowning of those who were in it... are due to pure chance, the fact that the people in the ship went on board... is not due to chance, according to our opinion, but to divine will in accordance with the deserts of those people as determined in His judgments, the rule of which cannot be attained by our intellects. (Ibid.)

Ignorance of the workings of the divine mind need not undermine belief in order or disturb an orientation to existence organized around

the call to restore the proper moral balance to one's actions. Living permanently under the rule of divine judgment moves one to live continuously with the challenge of self-renewal. Aristotle's notion of necessity leaves us no alternative but to adjust to the fact that there will be occasions in human life when a mouse or a fly appears no different from a saintly man engaged in devout prayer. A prophet can be subject to the same indignities as an ant. This, for Maimonides, will bring havoc to the moral life of the community. The biblical notion of God's free will, however, enables invasions of the arbitrary, irrational, and fortuitous to be brought into a justice model that establishes the theme of repentance as a guiding principle in the life of community.

Aristotle's and Maimonides' distinct pictures of providence reflect two different political judgments as to how one is to build a society. Maimonides, in contrast to Aristotle, is able to build a total culture in which the orienting principle that guides its response to all the vicissitudes of human life is the theme of teshsuah. He agrees with Aristotle that providence is manifested in the ordered framework of causality and necessity, such as the motions of the heavenly bodies. At the same time, he realizes that it is crucial for a religious moral political order that the community remain firm in its belief that all human suffering occurs within the framework of divine judgment. Without that belief, the loyalty of the individual and the community to the Torah could be undermined. With that belief, on the other hand, the community can even be strengthened by tragedy, since it will react to disasters with repentance and moral self-renewal.

Messianic Hope in Maimonides and Nachmanides

The fundamental question separating a Maimonidean religious anthropology from a Nachmanidean one is: what is the most authentic way of keeping alive the living relationship with God that grows from the biblical tradition? Both inherit covenantal immediacy from the Judaic tradition. The question is then: can the vividness and vitality of the theistic passion of the biblical tradition be preserved only through a category of miracle in which God remains independent of order and structure? Must a religious vision that sees the divine will present in the autonomous structure and order of the world spell a weakening of the vitality of the personal God of the Bible! Must one mythologize the world by believing that mittuah has cosmic powers in order to create an appreciation of the seriousness of the divine word?

Ir is nor my concern at this moment to judge whether Maimonides



or Nachmanides was more successful in molding and strengthening the Jewish religious community. What I am concerned about showing is that there is a tradition of Jewish thought that understood divine providence and the implications of the covenantal principle within categories that neutralize the need for unilateral divine action and for the ongoing biblical mythologization of reality.

Maimonides, to whom the Jewish community gave such great authority to define its halakhic life that he may be said to have shaped the development of Jewish behavior for the last eight hundred years, believed that the theistic vision intrinsic to Judaism can be absorbed within a philosophy that recognizes the will of God in the ordered regularities of the world of nature. It is unimportant whether the Aristotelian philosophical and scientific conceptions embraced by Maimonides are seen as valid today. What is important is that here is a master authority of the Judaic normative tradition who struggled to give vitality to covenantal halakhah through a perception of the world that does not restrict divine immediacy to the miraculous. In this respect, therefore, Maimonides provides a more than adequate precedent in the Judaic tradition for seeing the Sinai covenant as an operative model for understanding God's action in history.

The contrast that I have drawn between Maimonides and Nachmanides, however, would be incomplete if I did not also consider their differing approaches to the Jewish messianic hope. For whereas the Nachmanidean emphasis on miracle might seem implausible in the conditions of Jewish exile, when there was little sign of miraculous divine intervention in history, it is more obviously appropriate to the messianic era, which Jews traditionally expected to be characterized by miracles of many kinds.

In other words, do traditional Jewish beliefs about the coming of the Messiah oblige even a Maimonides to resort to the model of history suggested by the miraculous redemption from Egyptian bondage? I believe that the interpretation of messianism which one finds in Maimonides shows that here, too, the philosophical worldview of Maimonides deliberately eschews the category of miracle. His understanding even of messianic hope is controlled by the category of the covenant at Sinai rather than by the concept of the miraculous divine intervention in the Exodus from Egypt.¹⁹

The framework in which Maimonides locates messianism is his description of the ideal political kingdom, which forms the climax of his discussion of the laws applying to kings. He conceived of the messianic kingdom as a social-political reality that, unlike the conditions of his own time, would permit Jews to give full expression to their commitment to mitzuah. Maimonides completely rejects the view that some of the mitzuot may be modified or abrogated in the messianic world. His rejection is not motivated by any polemical struggle with Christianity. Rather, he sees the whole messianic hope as springing from the frustration felt by Jews whose economic and political situation prevents them from implementing the Torah in all its fullness. It is the eternal binding quality of mitzuah that creates the impetus to struggle to create a society that will wholly exemplify the covenantal ideal.

For Maimonides, therefore, messianism is a covenantal category motivated by the urge to keep the mittoot given at Sinai; it is not a redemptive category presupposing a radical transformation of history. There is no qualitative break in the reality of the world when the Messiah appears. Messianism does not involve the creation of a "new man," since human nature, according to Maimonides, does not change. The basic human capacity for evil is constant. We can only aspire to inhibit the expression of evil by creating the best political society that we can. The ideal political society for Maimonides was a society constituted by the rule of Torah. If the Torah is to reign fully in a Jewish polity, moreover, one must establish a world political order from which exploitation and war have been banned, since otherwise the Jewish polity will be too preoccupied with its own survival.

Maimonides thus agrees with the Jewish tradition that the messianic era will be a world order of a kind never seen in the past. Nonetheless, implicit in the Maimonidean messianic idea is a realistic evaluation of the potential for evil to resurge again. In building a messianic society and world, one will not have eliminated the problems of the human condition. One will only have created an order that is capable of dealing adequately with those problems. It will be the optimal reality for the implementation of the Sinai covenant, but human nature itself will not have been redeemed. The potential for evil and sin will not have been eliminated. Human freedom, with the consequent possibility of choosing evil, will remain as operative in the messianic era as in the premessianic ages. The difference is merely that the range of opportunities for expressing human powers of love will have been greatly expanded because the majority of human energies will not be exhausted in the battle to survive.

In Maimonides, messianism is a normative category of history. It is the category that characterizes the ideal model of a society that is capable of realizing the fullness of the covenantal challenge. The principle of hope that is essential to Maimonides' understanding of ludaism springs from the desire to be loyal to the covenant of Sinai. Hope grows from a commitment to responsibility, not from a yearning for ultimate peace and resolution. There is a heroic impulse in the messianic conception of Maimonides, since he rejected all dreams portraying the messianic era as a time of miraculously guaranteed ease and comfort.²¹

Maimonides welcomed all attempts to build toward a messianic reality, provided that those attempts were realistic. Although he denounced messianic pretenders whose baseless fanaticism merely imperiled the Jewish community, he regarded the Bar Kochba rebellion as a risk that had been worth taking. He envisaged that there might be several more justified but failed attempts to establish a messianic kingdom in the land of Israel. His only criterion for identifying some individual as the Messiah was practical success: if there arose a Jewish king who succeeded in creating a polity satisfying the definition of a messianic kingdom, he would be the Messiah; if he failed somewhere on the way, he would not be, though he might nonetheless be a great Jewish king.

Messianism in Maimonides is therefore simultaneously a heroic and a realistic principle of hope anchored in the eternal covenant of Sinai. It is important for him because it does not allow Judaism to become merely a private existential experience. Messianism counteracts the heresy of turning Judaism into a faith for isolated human individuals. It springs from the essential concern of Judaism with the sociopolitical drama of the community. It also expresses the dimension of Judaism that goes beyond the tribal and national framework, since it makes the Jewish community aware that Judaism's fullest expression requires a changed world order if there is to be a reign of peace.

Nachmanides, on the other hand, uncompromisingly embraced the assumption that Maimonides resolutely sought to eliminate: in the messianic era human nature will be changed. It will be redeemed such that human freedom will no longer lead to sin, as his commentary on Deuteronomy 30:6 argues.

But in the days of the Messiah, the choice of their good will be natural; the heart will not desire the improper and it will have no craving whatever for it. This is the "circumcision" mentioned here, for lust and desire are the "foreskin" of the heart, and circumcision of the heart means that it will not covet or desire evil. Man will return at that time to what he was before the sin of Adam, when by his nature he did what should properly be done, and there were no conflicting desires in his will. . . .

In the continuation of this passage, Nachmanides quotes Jeremiah and Ezekiel to the same effect. Clearly, for him the messianic age will be

characterized by a fundamental transformation of human nature. The problematics of human freedom will be overcome, as all will then yearn to live always in accordance with the will of God. Since Nachmanides, as we saw, also held that the course of nature is influenced by the observance of mitzvah, a fundamental change of human nature implies for him a correspondingly fundamental change in the world as a whole. When "man returns to what he was before the sin of Adam," it is implied that the world will become a new Garden of Eden.

The messianic age envisaged by Nachmanides is thus the culmination of his conception of the mitzut. The unity between the natural and the historical, between the powers manifested in nature and the powers contained in mitzuth, will have achieved its ultimate redemptive goal. The final age of history must make God's presence in the world fully visible, as the culmination of the process that began when the liberation from Egypt first made God's power visible in the history of the people of Israel. Therefore Nachmanides' controlling model for the messianic era is the Exodus from Egypt. His controlling category for messianic hope is openly a new liberation, a new creation, a new unity between nature and history, a new human being who is not troubled and threatened by his evil instinct (yetzer ha-ra), by the powers of imagination that lead to sin.

In Maimonides, by contrast, I suggest that the controlling category for messianic hope is the eternal covenant of Sinai, which demands of Jews that they seek to create a society that will enable them to be loyal to the total covenant of Judaism. Since the covenant of Judaism does not only deal with the individual in personal and family life, but with the individual in a total community, hope is manifested by a readiness to resume the struggle toward a messianic society whenever historical conditions permit.

The messianic vision, as formulated in the Guide of the Perplexed, is fully compatible with a perception of God's relationship to the world in terms of the principle of olam ke-minhago noheg, "the world pursues its normal course."

These great evils that come about between the human individuals who inflict them upon one another because of purposes, desires, opinions and beliefs, are all of them likewise consequent upon privation. For all of them derive from ignorance, I mean from a privation of knowledge... For through cognition of the truth, enmity and hatred are removed and the inflicting of harm by people on one another is abolished. It holds out this promise, saying: "And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and so on. And the

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cow and the bear shall feed, and so on. And the sucking child shall play, and so on" [Isa. 11:6-8]. Then it gives the reason for this, saying that the cause of the abolition of these enmities, these discords and these tyrannies, will be the knowledge that men will then have concerning the true reality of the deity. For it says: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" [Isa. 11:9]. (Guide 3:11)

If violence is seen as stemming from a privation of knowledge, then the movement in history from a world dominated by violence, war, and exploitation to one in which mutual understanding, the pursuit of justice, and the love of God prevail need not be based on a theology whereby God breaks into history and brings about the messianic reality. Reason, the image of God in every human being and the ground for the individual's love of God, can also serve as the ground of the hope of establishing a community whose central political focus will be the growth of the knowledge of God. Through that knowledge, human violent tendencies will be controlled.

It is not my concern here to determine whether Maimonides' understanding of violence is naive or possibly even utopian. What is important for my purposes is that this leading halakhic thinker perceived
messianism in a way that does not require one to adopt the Exodus
model of divine intervention in order to aspire to radical changes in
human history. Maimonides taught his feader to see God's gracious
power in history in the natural powers of human beings. He provides
a precedent in the Judaic tradition for not allowing even messianic hope
to force us to adopt a model of history that presupposes unilateral grace
and a return to direct divine miraculous action. As I shall show in the
remaining chapters, messianism is the spirit of Maimonides provides a
viable way of understanding the modern national renaissance of the
Jewish people. It enables Jews to attach a religious significance to their
national renaissance in Israel without reverting to the biblical emphasis
on miracle and eschatology.

To prevent misunderstandings, I must emphasize again that I am not claiming that Maimonides provides the only possible way whereby an observant Jew can participate in a return of the Jewish people to history such as has occurred in modern Israel. I do not wish to be identified with the socialist Zionist critique of traditional Judaism, according to which the attitude of waiting for the Messiah necessarily prevented the religious Jewish community from undertaking any activity in history. Although there are times when Nachmanidean Jews wait passively and Maimonideans decide to act, the converse may happen. If the Nach-

manideans believe that the hour of redemption is close and that God has now decreed irresistible triumph for the Jewish people, they may hurl themselves into an activism that the Maimonideans would reject as imprudent. Similarly, Marxist revolutionary activism has its source in the belief that the hour is close for the inevitable triumph of the working class in history. The activism inspired by a mythic appreciation of the mitzuot is exemplified by those religious groups in Israel whose current eagerness to fulfill the mitzuah of settling the land brooks no objections on political, economic, or demographic grounds.

My interest in the Maimonidean model of history is motivated not by concern to promote political activism as such, but by the wish to demythologize the biblical perception of history and to develop a Judaic appreciation of history that is grounded in a serious respect for empirical considerations. We have already seen how rabbinic Judaism was able to neutralize the Exodus model as an operative daily category for the community, while retaining it as the basis of messianic hope. My aim has been to show that the autonomous spirit of the talmudic sage can pass beyond the biblical prophet also in the shaping of Jewish history. The living God of Judaism can be experienced in a world in which His providential love and guidance are discovered and felt as "the world pursues its normal course."

lence when there is a gap between present experience and an authoritarian tradition.

- See E. Bickermann, Four Strange Books in the Bible (New York: Schocken, 1967), pp. 211-218; H. L. Ginsberg, The Five Megilloth and Jonah (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1969), pp. 82-88; G. Cohen, Five Megilloth (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1973; in Hebrew), pp. 3-22; S. Talmon, "'Wisdom' in the Book of Esther," Vetus Testamentum 13 (1963), 419-455.
- 9. See Berakhot 60b and MT Hilkhot Tefillah 7:1-9.
- 10. For example, Psalm 19, used in the morning service for the Sabbath.
- Compare A. J. Heschel, The Earth Is the Lord's and the Sabbath (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1962), chap. 8 of the second essay.
- 12. Scholem, The Messianic Idea in Judaism, p. 35.
- 13. See A. H. Silver, A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel (New York: Macmillan, 1927). Also Scholem, The Messianic Idea in Judaism, p. 21, describing messianism as "a kind of anarchic breeze" that blows into the "well-ordered house" of the halakhah. Behind the sobriety of halakhic practice lies a repressed world of religious fantasy. Maimonides' antipathy to that fantasy is indicated at the beginning of his introduction to Helek.

Chapter 10. Two Competing Covenantal Paradigms

- See especially Ketubbot 110b-111b. This text serves as an ideological foundation for anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodox Jewish groups. Also Sanhedrin 97a-99a.
- See Bright, Covenant and Promise, pp. 28-29, 46-48; J. L. McKenzie, A Theology of the Old Testament (New York: Image, 1976), p. 150.
- See the suggestive statement of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi in Pesahim 118a and compare Urbach, The Sages, pp. 303-304.
- 4. Berakhot 33b and Niddah 16b; also Tosafot on the latter.
- 5. Compare Altmann, Essays in Jewish Intellectual History, pp. 47-59.
- Contrast Maimonides' approach with that of Nachmanides commenting on Gen. 15:13.
- Maimonides insists that belief in creation is a foundation of the entire law, but that belief that this world will come to an end is not (Guide 2:27).
- 8. Compare D. Berger, "Miracles and the Natural Order in Nachmanides," in I. Twersky, ed., Rabbi Moses Nahmanides (Ramban): Explorations in His Religious and Literary Virtuosity (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 107-128. Also C. Henoch, Nachmanides: Philosopher and Mystic (Jerusalem: Torah Laam, 1978; in Hebrew), pp. 53-62.
- 4. The view denounced by Maimonides is found in Rashi on Pesahim 56a.

The attempt of Soloveitchik to harmonize Rashi, Maimonides, and Nachmanides ("Lonely Man of Faith," p. 53) cannot be maintained.

- 10. See my Maimonides, pp. 149-160.
- 11. See Maimonides' criticism of the mutakallimum in Guide 1:71.
- 12. Compare Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishnah, Auot 2:7 and Peah 1:1.
- Compare Strauss's introduction to Pines's translation of the Guide, p. liii;
 A. Nuriel, Ha-ratzon ha-elohi be-More Nevukhim, Tarbiz 29 (1970), 39-61.
- As in JT Hagigah 1:7; Mekhilta, be-shallah 3 (2 in some editions); Sanhedrin 44a-b, and Bava Batra 76a-b.
- See especially his commentary on Exodus 13:16 and 20:2. Also Henoch, Nachmanides, pp. 107-113.
- In his Book of Commandments, Maimonides lists obligatory prayer fifth in his enumeration of the positive commandments.

... we are commanded to serve God, exalted be He. This commandment is repeated several times in Scripture, e.g., "And you shall serve the Lord your God" [Exod. 23:25], "And Him shall you [pl.] serve" [Deut. 13:5], and "And Him shall you [sing.] serve" [ibid., 6:13], "And to serve Him" [ibid., 11:13].

The injunction to serve God, Maimonides goes on to explain, is not itself one of the 613 commandments, but rather a general charge that covers the whole body of commandments of the Torah. Nonetheless, he adds, it does imply specifically one of those commandments, namely, that of prayer, as we may see from what the midrash Sifre says about the last of the four verses just quoted.

... it nevertheless imposes a specific duty, namely, that of prayer. Sifre says: " 'to serve Him' [Deut. 11:13] means prayer."

Nachmanides, in his commentary on the Book of Commandments (ad loc.), sharply disagreed with Maimonides.

But certainly the whole matter of prayer is not obligatory at all. Rather, it belongs to God's grace toward us that He hears and responds whenever we call out to Him. And what was learnt by the rabbis in Sifre—" 'to serve Him' means prayer"—is but an asmakhta [textual support]; or perhaps it is to teach that included in our service to Him is that we should study His Torah, pray to Him in times of trouble, and turn our eyes and our hearts toward Him "as the eyes of servants toward the hand of their masters" [Ps. 123:2].

Fo. Nachmanides, to treat daily prayer as a commandment from the Torah would be to do violence to the essential grace quality of prayer. If any kind of prayer is commanded, he continues, it cannot be the daily prayer exemplified by the Amidah, but only crying out to God for help in times of trouble.

Soloveitchik maintains that there is a common denominator between Maimonides' and Nachmanides' approaches to prayer. In Reflections of the Ray, he suggests that both Maimonides and Nachmanides relate prayer to

Notes

tzarah (crisis, distress), only they concern themselves with two distinct kinds of tzarah that arise in human life.

The views of Maimonides and Nachmanides can be reconciled. Both regarded prayer as meaningful only if it is derived from a sense of tzarah. They differ in their understanding of the word. Maimonides regarded daily life itself as being existentially in straits, inducing in the sensitive person feelings of despair, a brooding sense of life's meaninglessness, absurdiry, lack of fulfillment. It is a persistent tzarah, which exists behol yom, daily. The word tzarah connotes more than external trouble; it suggests an emotional and intellectual condition in which man sees himself as hopelessly trapped in a vast, impersonal universe. . . .

... Thus while Nachmanides dealt only with "surface crisis," public distress, tzarot tzibbur, Maimonides regarded all life as a "depth crisis," a tzarat yahid. (pp. 80-81)

"Surface crisis," Soloveitchik adds, is an external crisis which may be experienced by anyone, such as poverty, illness, famine, war or death. "Depth crisis," on the other hand, is experienced only by those sensitive and intelligent people who are prepared to face it and even to seek it out, whereas superficial people evade it. Unlike "surface crisis," which may be overcome by social, political, or economic means, there is no way of combating "depth crisis" except by prayer.

According to Soloveitchik, then, Maimonides made prayer into a daily obligation because intelligent and perceptive people daily encounter the situation of existential crisis. The crisis can be alleviated by daily repetition of the Amidah in the spirit demanded by Soloveitchik: the spirit of insignificance, helplessness, and self-sacrifice. Such a prayer experience gives expression to the worshiper's sense of metaphysical unworthiness. It enables one to find an anchor point in eternity and provides the cathartic release that liberates sensitive human beings from their finite existential condition.

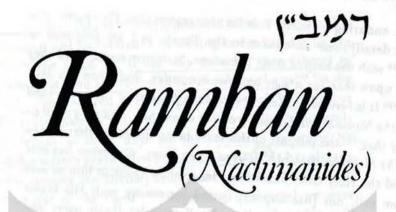
While Soloveitchik is correct in his claim that crisis plays an essential role in Nachmanides' approach to prayer, existential "crisis" is not what moved Maimonides to make prayer so central to his halakhic and philosophical works. As I have shown in chapter 7, he saw daily prayer as an essential means by which the Torah would achieve its purpose of educating individuals and the community toward love of God.

- 17. The same view is implied in MT Hilkhot Teshuvah 3:2: it is "the omniscient God" Who "alone knows how to set off merit against iniquities." Compare H. M. Schulweiss, Evil and the Morality of God (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1984), chap. 3, especially pp. 46-47.
- Compare G. Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (New York: Schocken, 1941), chap. 1.
- For a detailed discussion of Maimonides on messianism, see my Leadership and Crisis: Three Epistles of Maimonides (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985).

- As against the view of A. M. Herschman, "Textual Problems of Book Fourteen of the Mishne Torah," Jewish Quarterly Review 40 (1950), 401– 412.
- See Aviezer Ravitzky, "Kefi koah ha-adam," in Tzevi Bras, ed., Meshihiyut ue-eskhatologiyah (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 1984), pp. 191–220.

Chapter 11. The Celebration of Finitude

- Succinctly put in L. Kolakowski, Religion (Glasgow: Fontana, 1982), p. 158:
 "if nothing remains of human effort, if only God is real, and the world,
 after meeting its final fate, leaves its creator to the same void or plenitude
 He has always enjoyed, then truly it does not matter whether this hidden
 King exists at all."
- This is a recurrent theme in Hermann Cohen, Rosenzweig, Buber, Heschel, Soloveitchik, and others. It is seen as the typically Jewish view by P. M. van Buren, A Christian Theology of the People Israel (New York: Seabury, 1983), pp. 69-70.
- E.g., Guttmann, Philosophies of Judaism, pp. 171-182; I. Husik, A History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy (New York: Meridian, 1958), p. 300. Similar criticism of Maimonides was expressed by Samson Raphael Hirsch; see N. H. Rosenbloom, Tradition in an Age of Reform (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1976), pp. 128-133.
- 4. See Mackie, The Miracle of Theism, pp. 261-262.
- 5. James, Essays on Faith and Morals, p. 284.
- See also Shabbar 31a-34a and 55a-b; Urbach, The Sages, pp. 265-266 and n. 39 thereto.
- See Scholem, "The Messianic Idea in Kabbalism," in The Messianic Idea in Judaism, pp. 37-48.
- Compare R. Tucker, Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), pp. 41-42 and 52-53 (in reference to Hegel).
- 9. There are many passages in Judaic sources that allow themselves to be understood in this sense. In case after case, however, one finds that the passages concerned can also be understood quite naturally in other ways, e.g., in Berakhot 35b: "To enjoy anything of this world without a benediction is like making personal use of things consecrated to heaven, since it says: 'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof' [Ps. 24:1]." This may mean that such persons are arrogantly ignoring the fact that the world is God's creation. Compare other sayings there and in the Jerusalem Talmud, Berakhot 6:1; Midrash on Psalms 16:1; Shabbat 50b; Tosefta to Berakhot 4:1 and Liebermann's comments in Tosefta Kifshuta (New York: Jewish The-



Writings & ES S S Discourses

VOLUME I

Translated and Annotated with Index by Rabbi Dr. Charles B. Chavel, Ph.B., M.A., LL.B., D.H.L., D.D.

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miracles, enduring wonders. It is for this reason that He enumerates [in great detail] these assurances in the Torah, as I am prepared to explain219 with the help of G-d. Therefore, Scripture states, And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed forever. 120 It is further written, And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the Name of the Eternal is called upon thee, and they shall be afraid of thee, 221 the purport of this verse being similar to that of The G-d of the Hebrews hath met with us. 222 In short, no person has ever entreated the Holy One, blessed be He, to show favor to him or save him from evil, nor [has anyone] cursed his enemy with His Name unless he believed in [the reality of] all miracles [both overt and covert], as I have said, and that they occur by an alteration in the natural order of the world and not by any other means. In the case of an overt miracle as the parting of the Red Sea, [everyone readily concedes that] it constitutes a change in the natural order of the world. These, [the daily occurrences] however, are not recognized as being wondrous because they are covert miracles; man is not aware that a certain person's recovery from illness was due to the charity he gave while another healthy person's demise was due to the forbidden fat which he ate, since all [of these events] appear to be alike [and are classified as "natural" events].

Therefore, we are at a loss to understand Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, of blessed memory, who tended to minimize the [covert] miracles and augment [the laws of] nature, 223 and who further stated that the miracles are not of a permanent nature but are only temporary. Yet all these [instances mentioned above] are established

(219) At the end of this discourse. (220) Deuteronomy 28:46. (221) *Ibid.*, Verse 10. (222) Exodus 5:3. (223) "... we believe that this universe remains perpetually with the same properties with which the Creator has endowed it, and that none of these will ever be changed except by way of miracle in some individual instances, although the Creator has the power to change the whole universe, etc." (Moreh Nebuchim, II, 29, p. 140, Friedlander's translation).

and enduring wonders! [Maimonides] himself, of blessed memory, has conceded as much and has stated it in writing in his "Letter on the Resurrection of the Dead."224 If so, why does he state [there] in reference to the verse, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox 115 [in the Messianic era]: "Now, see you, O congregations of Israel! Will it occur to anyone [that the prophet is saying] that the lion, who is presently wicked, will repent in those days [of the Messiah], recognize his Creator, and desist from preying [on human beings]? (226) It has already been recorded [among the Divine] assurances, and I will cause evil beasts to cease out of the Land. 227 [Regarding this verse] we were taught in a Beraitha: 226 "Rabbi Yehudah says that He will [completely] remove evil beasts from the world. Rabbi Shimon says that He will effect their desisting to cause harm. Rabbi Shimon said [further]: 'When is the Holy One, blessed be He, to be praised? [Is it] when there are no offenders who cause damage or when there are offenders who cause no damage? [I must say that He is to be praised more for His miraculous intervention when the latter possibility is the case.] Similarly, it is stated, A psalm, a song, for the Sabbath-day, 226 [meaning a psalm and a song] for Him Who will compel the offenders of the world to desist from effectuating harm. It is likewise stated, And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, 130 and so too it is said, And the

(224) In defending his belief in the resurrection of the dead, one of the Thirteen Articles of the Creed of Judaism. Maimonides there simultaneously defends both the possibility of all miracles as well as of the resurrection of the dead. See Rambam L'am, Mosad Harav Kook, Vol. 20, pp. 370 and 381. (225) Isaiah 11:7. (226) In other words Maimonides contends, that the prophetic assurances in Scripture must be taken figuratively. This is in accord with his theory "that most prophecies were given in images" (Moreh Nebuchim, II, 47). Isaiah's prophecy about the lion eating straw metaphorically tells us that in the days of the Messiah, "all the nations will return to the True Religion, and they will no longer commit robbery nor destruction. Instead, they will enjoy permissible things in quietude as will Israel" (Mishneh Torah, Hilchoth Melachim 12:1). What follows in the text is Ramban's answer to Maimonides' thesis. (227) Leviticus 26:6. (228) Torath Kohanim, Bechukothai, 2:1. See Ramban, Leviticus, pp. 456-457. (229) Psalms 92:1. (250) Isaiah 11:6.

sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp. 231 This instructs us that a Jewish child [in the Messianic era] will be [capable of] stretching forth his finger [and thrusting it] into the eyeball of an adder, [extracting the viper's gall through its mouth, and the child will not be harmed].' "This is the Beraitha taught in the Sifra, 232 and yet "the congregations [of Israel]" have not agreed to reject it!

We must therefore say that whether we follow the interpretation of Rabbi Yehudah or that of Rabbi Shimon, the verse, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, 225 is to be taken literally. Since it is explained in the Torah that it is [the people of] Israel that worship their Creator and not other nations, 254 hence when it is written, and I will cause evil beasts to cease out of the Land, 227 it means the Land of Israel. In the opinion of Rabbi Shimon, He will effect their desisting from causing harm in all the Land of Israel as in Jerusalem, just as the Sages have said: 235 "Never did a serpent or scorpion injure anyone in Jerusalem." In the days of the Messiah—concerning which it is written, For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the Name of the Eternal, to serve Him with one consent 256—He will cause them to cease from [doing harm in any part of] the world. It is with reference to this [condition in the Messianic era] that the

(251) Ibid., Verse 8. (252) The Sifra—equivalent to the Torath Kohanim, mentioned in Note 228—is the Tannaitic Midrash on the Book of Leviticus. (255) This is a reply to what Maimonides wrote in his "Letter on the Resurrection of the Dead," quoted above: "Now, see you, O congregations of Israell Will it occur to anyone, etc." To this, Ramban replies in effect: "That the prophecies of Isaiah concerning the Messianic era are to be understood literally is an opinion indeed taught by one of the Sages mentioned in the Sifra. Yet, the congregations of Israel have not considered this text to be contrary to our teachings, and they have not rejected it. Consequently, we must say that whether we follow the interpretation of Rabbi Yehudah, etc." The discussion is now continued in the text. (254) Deuteronomy 4:19: which the Eternal thy G-d hath allotted unto all the peoples under the whole heaven. See Ramban, Leviticus, pp. 268-269. (235) Aboth 5:8. (236) Zephaniah 5:9.99

Beraitha [of the Sifra mentioned above] said: "Similarly, it is stated, A psalm, a song, for the Sabbath-day . . . 229 It is likewise stated. And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb . . . 230 This instructs us that a Jewish child will be [capable of] stretching forth his finger [and thrusting it] into, etc." Thus the Sages brought proof for the Messianic era from the verses of the blessings [mentioned in the Book of Leviticus]. These two eras [one when the Scriptural blessings will follow in the wake of obedience of the Torah, the other in the days of the Messiah] are identical [with the exception] that one applies to the Land of Israel and the other encompasses the whole world. The reason for this condition would appear to be that the advent of dangerous beasts preying [on human beings] resulted from the sin of the first man, as it is written, And I will put enmity between thee [the serpent] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise their heel. 257 Thus you see that the serpent strikes at the heel of man only because of this enmity [which was engendered between them due to the serpents role in arousing man's instinct to sin]. The same is true of all other wild beasts. Perhaps it was not part of their nature to prey on each other until Adam sinned, and as a result, the ground was cursed for his sake.258 This [state of affairs] is destined to be annulled in the days of the Messiah, 239 as I shall mention 240 with the help of the Creator.

(237) Genesis 3:15. (238) *Ibid.*, Verse 17. (239) Then man will be "in a state of perfection, and [the beasts] will cease from their harmful way and revert to their original nature with which they were endowed at the time of their creation" (Ramban, Leviticus, p. 457). (240) The fact that Ramban does not return to this theme in the present discourse—he discusses it only in his commentary on Leviticus (26:6) pp. 456-457—may suggest that at the time the discourse was delivered, the aforementioned section of the commentary had not yet been written. Hence, this could be the reason for his expression here, "as I shall mention with the help of the Creator." Alternatively, it may be that the entire original of this discourse as written by Ramban has not reached us; certain segments, because of their repetitive nature, were omitted by the copyists. See the Introduction concerning the El Escorial manuscript.

WORKSHOP II



THE MESSIANIC IDEA IN ISRAEL

From Its Beginning

to the Completion of the Mishnah

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APPENDIX

The Jewish and the Christian Messiah

REMARK ONE:

The subject of this article would require a whole book for its elucidation. Within the limits of a short article I can only indicate the general outlines of the problem and restrict myself to certain important principles. Also, for the sake of brevity, I shall be compelled to cite from the extensive literature on matters pertaining to this subject only what is most relevant.

REMARK TWO:

The conception both of the Jewish Messiah and of the Christian Messiah has changed from period to period. The Jewish Messiah of Isaiah and Jeremiah is not the same as that of Daniel or the Ethiopic Enoch; nor is the conception of the Jewish Messiah in all these like that in the early Talmudic Aggadah, the Misbneh Torah of Maimonides, or the Kabbalistic books. It is likewise with respect to the conception of the Christian Messiah: Jesus himself understood his Messiahship very differently from the way in which Paul understood it. The later Church Fathers greatly modified what Paul taught; and the Catholics, Greek Orthodox, and Protestants differ greatly among themselves about how to conceive of the Messiah.

In this brief article I shall deal only with the conception of the Jewish Messiah as it has become crystallized in Biblical-Talmudic Judaism and accepted by most Jews; and with respect to the Christian

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conception of the Messiah I shall deal only with those features now shared by all three branches of the Christian faith. Then I shall attempt to present these two conceptions, the Jewish and the Christian, in contrast with each other, in order to show the difference between them.

I

The Jewish Messiah is a redeemer strong in physical power and in spirit, who in the final days will bring complete redemption, economic and spiritual, to the Jewish people—and along with this, eternal peace, material prosperity, and ethical perfection to the whole human race.

The Jewish Messiah is truly human in origin, of flesh and blood like all mortals. Justin Martyr in his time put this clearly into the mouth of Trypho the Jew, thus: "We Jews all expect that the Messiah will be a man of purely human origin." This human conception of the Messiah remains normative in Judaism to this day. To be sure, a Talmudic Baraitha numbers the name of the Messiah among the seven things which "were created before the world was created"; there is also something of this sort in the "Parables" of the Ethiopic Enoch. But no doubt what is intended is the idea of the Messiah or the idea of redemption through the Messiah.

The Messiah is full of the spirit of wisdom and understanding, counsel and might, knowledge and the fear of the LORD. He has a special feeling for justice: he "srnells and judges" [that is, he can almost tell a man's guilt or innocerace by his sense of smell]. He "shall smite the land (or, the tyrant) with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." For "the war against Gog and Magog," who come to destroy Israel, there is a special Mes-

1 "Arsperor & arsperor. See Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, Chap. 49, beginning.

2 Pesahim 544; Nedarim 39b.

siah—Messiah ben Joseph, who is slain in the war. But Messiah ben David is the king of peace:

When the King-Messiah is revealed to Israel, he will not open his mouth except for peace, as it is written (Isa. 52:7), "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger of good tidings, that announceth peace."

Also, "the Messian shall be peaceful in his very name, as it is written (Isa. 9:5), 'Everlasting father, prince of peace.'"

What in essence is the task of the King-Messiah?

He redeems Israel from exile and servitude, and he redeems the whole world from oppression, suffering, war, and above all from heathenism and everything which it involves: man's sins both against God and against his fellow man, and particularly the sins of nation against nation. For in the Messianic age all peoples will be converted to Judaism—some of them becoming "true proselytes" and some only "proselytes hanging on" (from self-interest). In the Alenu prayer, which is offered by Jews three times daily, we find the hope that speedily

... the world will be perfected under the kingdom of the Almighty, and all the children of flesh will call upon Thy name, when Thou wilt turn unto Thyself all the wicked of the earth. Let all the inhabitants of the world perceive and know that unto Thee every knee must bow, every tongue must swear ... and let them all accept the yoke of Thy kingdom.¹¹

And in the Shemoneh Esreh prayer for "Solemn Days" [New Year and Day of Atonement], Jews say: "And let all creatures prostrate themselves before Thee, that they may all form a single band to do Thy will with a perfect heart." In this prayer the Jew prays:

Give then glory, O LORD, unto Thy people, . . . joy to Thy land (Palestine), gladness to Thy city (Jerusalem), a flourishing horn unto

Ethiopic Enoch 48:3.

⁴ See M. Friedmann, Introduction to Seder Eliyahu Rabbah, Vienna, 1902, p. 114; M. Vernes, Histoire des idées messianiques, Paris, 1874, pp. 268-269, 281, note.

Sanhedrin 93b; see above, p. 468.

⁴ Isa. 11:4.

Sukkah 52a; see above, pp. 483-501.

^{*}Derekh Erets Zuta, Chap. 11 (Section on Peace). See M. Higger, Minor Tractates [Heb.], New York, 1929, p. 101, and notes on p. 148; Lev. R., Chap. 9, end.

Derekh Erets Zuta, Section on Peace, Text B (M. Higger, op. cit., p. 104).

10 Gerim gerurim. Cf. Berakhoth 57a and Tosephta, Berakhoth 7(6):2 (and Zuckermandel's notes ad loc.) with Abodah Zarah 24a. [See p. 481 above.]

11 Singer, Standard Prayer Book, American ed., p. 94.

David Thy servant, and a clear shining light unto the son of Jesse, Thine anointed.

But at the same time he also prays that "all wickedness shall be wholly consumed like smoke, when Thou makest the dominion of arrogance to pass away from the (whole) earth." 19

Along with redemption from servitude, from evil, and from heathenism, that is to say, from the evil in man, the Messiah will save man from the evil in nature. No longer will poisonous reptiles and beasts of prey exist; or rather, they will exist, but will do no harm."

There will be great material prosperity in the world: the earth will bring forth an abundance of grain and fruit, which man will be able to enjoy without excessive toil. As to the Jewish people, not only will they freely dwell in their own land, but there will also be an "ingathering of exiles," whereby all Jews scattered to the four corners of the earth will be returned to Palestine. All nations will acknowledge the God of Israel and accept His revelation of truth. Thus the King-Messiah, the king of righteousness, will be in a certain sense also the king of all nations, just as the God of Israel will be King over all the earth because He is the One and Only God.

Not every book of prophecy mentions an individual human Messiah. In the books of Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Malachi, Joel, and Daniel, God alone is the redeemer. In the books of Amos, Ezekiel, Obadiah, and in the Book of Psalms, there is only a collective Messiah: "deliverers" and "saints" redeem the world by their righteousness and piety. In the books of Haggai and Zechariah, the Messiah is none other than Zerubbabel, a person who is not out of the ordinary except that he is of the house of David. In Deutero-Isaiah and Daniel, the Messiah is not a person at all, but is the whole Jewish people. Likewise, in the Apocryphal books (as distinguished from the Pseudepigrapha), there is no individual Messiah. In the Talmud, Rabbi Hillel (to be distinguished from Hillel the Elder) makes bold to say: "There shall be no Messiah for Israel, because they have already enjoyed him in the days of Hezekiah." ²⁸ To be sure, Rab Joseph rebelled against

this opinion, saying: "May God forgive R. Hillel for saying this." 16
But the fact remains that it was possible for a Jew faithful to his nation
and his religion to conceive of redemption without an individual human redeemer: God Himself would be the redeemer. 17

This view did not prevail in Judaism. Belief in the coming of the Messiah is the twelfth in the thirteen "Articles of Faith" of Maimonides. But the fact that at one time Judaism could have conceived of redemption without a Messiah is not surprising. For redemption comes from God and through God. The Messiah is only an instrument in the hands of God. He is a human being, flesh and blood, like all mortals. He is but the finest of the human race and the chosen of his nation. And as the chosen of his nation, who is also the choicest of the human race, he must needs be crowned with all the highest virtues to which mortal man can attain.

As the Messiah, he exemplifies both physical and spiritual perfection. Even such an extremely spiritual and ethical person as Philo of Alexandria sees in the Messiah not only the spiritual and ethical side, but also finds in him "all-powerful strength of body" and "might" (Sarrings); for "leading his host to war he will subdue great and populous nations." At the same time Philo finds in the Messiah "holiness and beneficence" (συμφότης καὶ εύεργεσία).18 Both with respect to holiness, righteousness, truth, and goodness, and with respect to might and authority, the Messiah is the "supreme man" of Judaism, which is very far from Nietzsche's "blond beast." But with all his superior qualities, the Messiah remains a human being. Within the limits of a constantly improving humanity, Judaism has devised the ideal man, or, if we may speak in the language of Kant, "the conception of the [upper] limit of man"-concerning whom we may say with the divinely inspired psalmist, "Thou hast made him but little lower than God." 19 But this "little" leaves the Messiah within the bounds of humanity and does not allow him to pass beyond.

¹² Ibid , pp. 350-351.

¹³ Siphra, Behuqqothai, Chap. 1, beginning (ed. Weiss, 1114).

¹⁴ See on all this above, pp. 505-512.

¹⁶ Sanhedrin 98b and 99a.

¹⁰ Loc. cit.

¹⁷ See on this, James Drummond, The Jewish Messiah, London, 1877, pp.

¹⁸ See Philo, On Rewards and Punishments, Chap. 16, Sects. 95-97 (ed. M., II, 423-424; ed. C.-W., V, 357). See also J. Klausner, Philosophers and Thinkers [Heb.], I, 87-88; above, p. 493.

¹⁰ Ps. 8:6.

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The kingdom of the Jewish Messiah is definitely "of this world."

Judaism is not only a religion, but is also the view of life of a single nation that holds to this religion alone, while the other religions include various nations. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, that Judaism's ideal for mankind should require first of all the realization of the yearning of its oppressed, suffering, exiled, and persecuted nation to return to its own land and recover its former status. But this ingathering of exiles and this national freedom are closely linked with the emancipation of all humanity—the destruction of evil and tyranny in the world, man's conquest of nature (material prosperity and the elimination of natural forces of destruction), the union of all peoples into "a single band" to fulfill God's purpose, that is, to do good and to seek perfection, righteousness, and brotherhood. This is the "kingdom of heaven" or the "kingdom of the Almighty"; it is the Messiah's reign or the "Days of the Messiah." But the Messiah is not the primary figure, although he occupies a central place in this "kingdom of heaven"; "heaven," that is, God, is the primary figure. (The word "heaven" is used here as a surrogate for God, to avoid blasphemy; hence "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God," or "kingdom of the Almighty," are used interchangeably in the literature of the end of the period of the Second Temple and later.)

Finally, the "kingdom of heaven" will come only "in the end of the days." The chief difference [on this point] between Judaism and Hellenism is that the Greeks and Romans saw the "Golden Age" m the past, at the beginning of history, while the Jews saw it in the future, at the end of history. Humanity is steeped in wickedness and injustice, and hence is incomplete, or lacking in fulfillment. This fulfillment will come "in the end of the days," when wrongdoing, insolence, and conflict will pass from the earth, when "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb" and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea." Then those national achievements for which Israel longs in its exile and bondage will be realized: the return of the banished, the recovery of the homeland, the revival of the Hebrew language," and the restoration of the

20 Testaments of the Twelve Pstriarchs, Judah 25:3. See on this above, p. 316; I. Ostersetzer, The Outside Books [Heb.], ed. Kahana, I, 1, p. 180; R. H. Charles, kingdom (the kingdom of the house of David or the kingdom of the Messiah).

This notion of perfection stems from the ardent progressivism that belongs to the very foundation of Judaism. Both present-day Judaism and present-day humanity require completion, that is, they demand and are prepared for development and progress. This completion, the fruition of improvement by means of repentance and good works, will be achieved in the Messianic age. To be sure, the Messiah is reckoned among "three things that come unexpectedly"; 21 but among the "seven things hidden from men" is included also this: "when the kingdom of David will be restored to its former position." 22 Therefore, "unexpectedly" is not to be interpreted to mean that the Messiah will come without preparation, but that it is impossible to know in advance when the preparation will be complete, so that the Messiah will be able to come. And therefore, "the advent of Messiah" is not to be contrasted with "the end of the days": "the Messianic time of the end" and "the end of the days" are one and the same. The elimination of imperialistic oppression, the cessation of wars, everlasting peace, the fraternity of nations in "a single band," the removal of evil in man and nature, economic abundance, the flowing of all peoples to "the mountain of the LORD's house"-this whole complex of material and spiritual well-being is the Messianic age or the "kingdom of heaven"; for "heaven" (God) will bring all these things to the world through the Messiah, the exalted instrument of the Divine Will.

This is the Jewish Messiah and these his characteristics and activities.

11

And now by contrast—the Christian Messiah.

Christianity is wholly based on the personality of the Messiah. This statement needs no proof. When the people of Antioch began to

Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English, Oxford, 1913, IL, 324, Note 3.

²¹ Sanhedrin 97a.
22 Mekhilta, Wayyassa, Chap. 6 (ed. Friedmann, 51a; ed. Horowitz-Rabin, p. 171); Pesahim 54b, beginning.

make a distinction between the believers in Jesus on the one hand, and Jews expecting the Messiah along with pagan Greeks on the other hand, they could find no more fitting name than "Christians"—a term derived from the Greek translation (Christos) of the Hebrew word "Messiah" (Māshiah). For at first the only difference between Jews and Christians was that the former believed that the Messiah was still to come, and the latter that the Messiah had already come.

But because of the fact that the Messiah who had already come was crucified as an ordinary rebel after being scourged and humiliated, and thus was not successful in the political sense, having failed to redeem his people Israel; because of the lowly political status of the Jews at the end of the period of the Second Temple and after the Destruction; and because of the fear that the Romans would persecute believers in a political Messiah—for these reasons there perforce came about a development of ideas, which after centuries of controversy became crystallized in Christianity in the following form:

- The Messiah did not come to redeem from political oppression and economic wrong, but to redeem from spiritual evil alone.
- 2. Political oppression is a special problem of the Jews, but spiritual evil is world-wide. Hence Jesus came to redeem the whole world; not to redeem the Jewish people and their land first, and then as a consequence to redeem the whole world, which will forsake idolatry and become like Israel in every respect. And hence the kingdom of the Christian Messiah is "not of this world."
- 3. Jesus was scourged and humiliated as a common rebel. But he was not a common rebel; he only preached repentance and good works. Therefore, he was a true Messiah and not a false Messiah. Then why did God allow His Chosen One, the Messiah, to undergo frightful suffering and even to be crucified—the most shameful death of all, according to Cicero 24 and Tacitus 28—and not save him from all these things? The answer can only be that it was the will of God and the will of the Messiah himself that he should be scourged, humiliated, and crucified. But whence came a purpose like this, that

- 4. But the Messianic suffering which Jesus took upon himself by his own will and by the will of God cannot end in a shameful death. After the Messianic age comes the resurrection of the dead, according to Jewish doctrine. Therefore, of course, the Messiah rose from the dead—the first of men so to rise ("the firstfruits of them that slept," "the firstborn from the dead")." And therefore, Jesus is not mortal like other men. The will of God has been revealed in the will of the Messiah, and hence the Messiah is related to God in a special way.
- 5. God says to the Messiah, "Thou art My son, this day have I begotten thee." 24 And Jesus during his lifetime spoke much of "my Father who is in heaven." For Jews this was a common poetic-figurative expression. But the Gentiles, who asserted that certain of their eminent men—Alexander the Great, Plato, Pythagoras—had been fathered by gods who had visited mortal women, saw in this expression an actual genetic relationship of Jesus to God. Saul-Paul of Tarsus, who was a Jew, but one steeped in Greek culture, began to employ the concept "son of God" in a sense close to but not identical with the pagan concept: as Messiah, Jesus is "son of God" in the sense

would bring about suffering and death without sin? The answer can only be that the suffering was vicarious and the death was an atoning death. Jesus the Messiah suffered for others, for many, for all humanity. With his blood the Messiah redeemed humanity from sin, inherited sin, the sin of Adam, sin which became a part of Adam's nature, bringing death upon him and upon all his descendants. The Messiah went willingly to a disgraceful death in order that humanity might be redeemed from evil, from sin, from suffering, from death, and from the powers of Satan that prevail in the world—that Satan who by his enticement to sin brought death to the world. Support for this belief that the Messiah suffers for the iniquity of others (vicarious suffering) was found in Isaiah 53, which was interpreted not as referring to the persecuted people Israel, but to the suffering Messiah: "Yet he bore the sin of many." 26

²³ Acts 11:16.

²⁴ See Cicero, Against Verres, V 64.

³⁵ See Tacitus, Histories, IV 3 and 11.

³⁶ Isa. 53:12.

[#] I Cor. 15:20; Col. 1:18.

Ps. 1:7.

of a "heavenly man" not susceptible to sin nor even to death. By his temporary death he atoned for the sin of Adam, and in his resurrection for eternity he ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God because he is closer to God than are the angels. This was the first step toward deification. But Paul the Jew did not go so far as to call Jesus "God."

The second step was to identify Jesus with the "Word" by which the world was created according to Judaism, or with the "Logos," which is a sort of angelic being according to Philo of Alexandria. This identification we find in the Gospel of John. But it was natural that the Gentiles whom Paul brought into Christianity should take the third and final step and make Jesus a "God-man"—"one person with two natures"—God and man at one and the same time. Thus Jesus' Messiahship was gradually obscured: Jesus the Messiah gave way to "Jesus the God-man," or "the God Jesus"; and matters finally reached such a pass that the name "Christ" became the essential cognomen of Jesus ("Jesus Christ" and not "Jesus the Messiah"). The Messiahship of Jesus became secondary to his deity.

6. Although Jesus has been elevated to a rank fully equal to that of "God the Father," he still remains "Redeemer," and hence is still Messiah also. He has already come once into the world in the form of a man and has redeemed the world from sin and evil and death and Satan. Yet sin and evil and death and Satan still prevail in the world; therefore we are to expect his second coming, his "Parousia," at which time the Day of Judgment will occur, and Jesus, having taken his seat at the right hand of "his Father," will judge all persons that have ever lived, and will deliver those who believe in him. Then will Satan be conquered, evil will come to an end, sin will cease, and death will pass away; all the powers of darkness will vanish, and the kingdom of heaven will be fully established, though it had already begun with the first appearance of Jesus in the world.

7. Meanwhile, in "this world," men may turn in prayer to Jesus as to God his Father and instead of God his Father. In this sense he is

"mediator" and "Paraclete" between God and man, although actually he himself is God and the true mediator is none other than Mary his mother, the Holy Virgin, "the mother of God" (Theotokos) by the Holy Spirit.

This is what happened in Christianity to the Jewish conception of the Messiah. The Christian Messiah ceased to be only a man, and passed beyond the limitations of mortality. Man cannot redeem himself from sin; but the Messiah-God, clothed in the form of a man, is the one who by his own freely shed blood has redeemed mankind. And he will come a second time to redeem humanity, since his first appearance, and even his death on the cross, did not suffice to eradicate evil from the world and to convert all men to belief in him. The first Christians expected this "Parousia" in their own time, and hence would pray, Marana Tha—"Our Lord, come!" (and not Maran Atha—"Our Lord has come")." When their prayer failed to be answered, and the Messiah-God did not again appear, they began to hope for the "thousand-year kingdom" or millennium (chiliasm); and finally they postponed the "Parousia" to an indefinite time."

Ш

The Christian Messiah is in essence only a further development of the Jewish Messiah. For from Judaism Christianity received the ideas of redemption, the redeemer-Messiah, the Day of Judgment, and the kingdom of heaven. And much of what was common to Judaism and Christianity with respect to Messianic thinking remained even after estrangement and separation between them took place. Nevertheless, the difference between the Jewish and the Christian Messiah is very great.

First of all, Jewish redemption can be conceived without any individual Messiah at all—something which is absolutely impossible in Christianity. Also, "the Redeemer of Israel" for Judaism can mean God alone; in Christianity the Redeemer is Jesus only. Without the

²⁰ Aboth 5:1.

See on this in detail J. Klausner, op. cit., I, 78-83.

^{*1} John 1:1-14

^{**} I Cor. 16:22. Cf. Rev. 22:20.

as See on this J. Klausner, History of the Second Temple [Heb.], Va (1952), 125-129; idem, Jesus of Nazareth, 5th Heb. ed., Jerusalem, 1945, pp. 432-441 [Eng. ed., pp. 398-407].

Jewish Messiah, Judaism is defective; without the Christian Messiah, Christianity does not exist at all.

Second, there is an irrational side even in the Jewish Messianic conception: where there is no mysticism at all there is no faith. But the irrational and mystical element in the Jewish Messiah is only unnatural, but not anti-natural, not opposed to nature. The unity of God is not affected in any essential way by the Jewish Messiah. In the last analysis, the Jewish Messiah is only, as said above, the instrument of deity—although of course a choice and superb instrument. But in Christianity monotheism is obscured by the Messiah, who is "Son of God," the "Logos," "the Lord," a "God-man," and "one person with two natures." And from this spring the rest of the marked differences between the Jewish and Christian Messiahs: one cannot pray to the Jewish Messiah, he is not a mediator between God and man, he is not a "Paraclete" for man, and so on.

Third, the Jewish Messiah is the redeemer of his people and the redeemer of mankind. But he does not redeem them by his blood; instead, he lends aid to their redemption by his great abilities and deeds. Even Messiah ben Joseph, who is slain, affords no atonement by his blood and his sufferings are not vicarious. Judaism is familiar with "the sin of Adam," but the Jewish Messiah does not with his blood redeem from "original sin," nor from death, nor from Satan. To be sure, Satan will be vanquished in the Messianic age-not by the Messiah, but by God. Man must redeem himself from sin not by faith alone, but by repentance and good works; then God will redeem him from death and Satan. (Generally speaking, Satan does not occupy in Judaism the central place that he takes in Christianity; Satan in Christianity is almost like the God of Evil of the Persians.) Each man is responsible for himself, and through his good deeds he must find atonement for his sins. He cannot lean upon the Messiah or upon the Messiah's suffering and death."

Fourth and finally, since the Jewish Messiah is only "a righteous man ruling in the fear of God," and since he brings only ethical perfection to the world, the progress of humanity does not depend on him, but on humanity itself. Numberless times the Talmud returns to the idea that redemption depends on repentance and good works; well known is the interpretation of the verse "I the LORD will hasten it in its time": "If they are worthy, I will hasten it [the redemption]; if not, it will come in its [own good] time." * And the Hebrew people, who were the first to acknowledge faith in One God, the God of goodness, and to whom came prophets of truth and righteousness, can and will be the first to "hasten the redemption" by repentance and good works. In other words, the Jews can and must march at the head of humanity on the road of personal and social progress, on the road to ethical perfection. This will be possible only when they have returned to their own land, have gathered in their exiles, have reestablished their own state, and are no longer under the oppression of foreigners; but the "kingdom of heaven" is their goal and their highest aspiration, and without this goal Israel would never be freed from "bondage to foreign powers"—cessation of which will be the obvious external sign that the Days of the Messiah are near."

Therefore, we can say, without being suspected of undue bias toward Judaism, that the Jewish Messianic faith is the seed of progress, which has been planted by Judaism throughout the whole world.

³⁴ See A. Büchler, Studies in Sin and Asonement, London, 1928, pp. 375-461.

⁸⁴ Isa. 60:22.

Sanhedrin 98s; and Yerushalmi, Taanith 1:1 (63d) says, "If you are worthy, I will hasten it; if not, it will come in its [own good] time."

at "There is no difference between this age and the Days of the Messiah except bondage to foreign powers" (Ber. 34b and parallels).

THE MESSIANIC IDEA IN JUDAISM

and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality

GERSHOM SCHOLEM

Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism

JEWISH

I

ANY DISCUSSION OF the problems relating to Messianism is a delicate matter, for it is here that the essential conflict between Judaism and Christianity has developed and continues to exist. Although our discussion will not be concerned with this conflict, but rather with internally Jewish perspectives on Messianism, it will be of value to recall the central issue of this conflict. A totally different concept of redemption determines the attitude to Messianism in Judaism and in Christianity; what appears to the one as a proud indication of its understanding and a positive achievement of its message is most unequivocally belittled and disputed by the other. Judaism, in all of its forms and manifestations, has always maintained a concept of redemption as an event which takes place publicly, on the stage of history and within the community. It is an occurrence which takes place in the visible world and which cannot be conceived apart from such a visible appearance. In contrast, Christianity conceives of redemption as an event in the spiritual and unseen realm, an event which is reflected in the soul, in the private world of each individual, and which effects an inner transformation which need not correspond to anything outside. Even the civitas dei of Augustine, which within the confines of Christian dogmatics and in the interest of the Church has made the most far-reaching attempt both to retain and to reinterpret the Jewish categories of redemption, is a community of the mysteriously redeemed within an unredeemed world. What for the one stood unconditionally at the end of history as its most distant aim was for the other the true center of the historical process, even if that process was henceforth peculiarly decked out as Heilsgeschichte. The Church was

convinced that by perceiving redemption in this way it had overcome an external conception that was bound to the material world, and it had counterpoised a new conception that possessed higher dignity. But it was just this conviction that always seemed to Judaism to be anything but progress. The reinterpretation of the prophetic promises of the Bible to refer to a realm of inwardness, which seemed as remote as possible from any contents of these prophecies, always seemed to the religious thinkers of Judaism to be an illegitimate anticipation of something which could at best be seen as the interior side of an event basically taking place in the external world, but could never be cut off from the event itself. What appeared to the Christians as a deeper apprehension of the external realm appeared to the Jew as its liquidation and as a flight which sought to escape verification of the Messianic claim within its most empirical categories by means of a non-existent pure inwardness.

The history of the Messianic idea in Judaism has run its course within the framework of this idea's never-relinquished demand for fulfillment of its original vision. The considerations I would like to set forth in what follows concern the special tensions in the Messianic idea and their understanding in rabbinic Judaism. These tensions manifest themselves within a fixed tradition which we shall try to understand. But even where it is not stated explicitly, we shall often enough find as well a polemical side-glance, or an allusion, albeit concealed, to the claims of Christian Messianism. A number of the things which I would here like to sum up briefly are obvious and hardly constitute an object of learned controversy; of others, however, this can hardly be said, and much as the history of Messianism has been discussed, there is room for a sharper analysis of what it is that makes up the specific vitality of this phenomenon in the history of the Jewish religion. I shall not try to compete with historical and mythological analyses of the origins of Messianic belief in biblical texts or in the history of religion in general; such studies have been undertaken by outstanding scholars like Joseph Klausner, Willi Staerk, Hugo Gressmann, Sigmund Mowinckel, and many others.1 The object of these remarks is not the initial development of the Messianic idea but the varying perspectives by which it became an effective force after its crystallization in historical Judaism. In this connection it must be emphasized that in the history of Judaism its influence has been exercised almost exclusively under the conditions of the exile as a primary reality of Jewish life and Jewish history. This reality lends its

special coloring to each of the various conceptions with which we shall be dealing here.

Within rabbinic Judaism as a social and religious phenomenon three kinds of forces are active precisely at those points where it is the most alive: conservative, restorative, and utopian. The conservative forces are directed toward the preservation of that which exists and which, in the historical environment of Judaism, was always in danger. They are the most easily visible and immediately obvious forces that operate in this type of Judaism. They have established themselves most effectively in the world of Halakhah, in the construction and continuing preservation and development of religious law. This law determined the nature of the Jew's life in exile, the only frame in which a life in the light of Sinaitic revelation seemed possible, and it is not surprising that it drew to itself, above all, the conservative forces. The restorative forces are directed to the return and recreation of a past condition which comes to be felt as ideal. More precisely, they are directed to a condition pictured by the historical fantasy and the memory of the nation as circumstances of an ideal past. Here hope is turned backwards to the re-establishment of an original state of things and to a "life with the ancestors." But there are, in addition, forces which press forward and renew; they are nourished by a vision of the future and receive utopian inspiration. They aim at a state of things which has never yet existed. The problem of Messianism in historical Judaism appears within the field of influence of these forces. To be sure, the conservative tendencies, great and even crucial as their role and their significance were for the existence of the religious community of Judaism, have no part in the development of Messianism within this community. This is not true, however, of the two other tendencies which I characterize as restorative and utopian. Both tendencies are deeply intertwined and yet at the same time of a contradictory nature; the Messianic idea crystallizes only out of the two of them together. Neither is entirely absent in the historical and ideological manifestations of Messianism. Only the proportion between them is subject to the widest fluctuations. Among various groupings within Jewry entirely different points of application for such forces and tendencies are emphasized. There has never been in Judaism a measured harmony between the restorative and the utopian factor. Sometimes the one tendency appears with maximal emphasis while the other is reduced to a minimum, but we never find a "pure case" of exclusive influence or crystallization of one of

these tendencies. The reason for this is clear: even the restorative force has a utopian factor, and in utopianism restorative factors are at work. The restorative tendency, per se, even when it understands itself as such—as for example in the case of Maimonides whose statements regarding the Messianic idea I shall shortly discuss in greater detail-is nourished to no small degree by a utopian impulse which now appears as projection upon the past instead of projection on the future. The reason for this, too, is clear. There is a common ground of Messianic hope. The utopianism which presents the Jew of that epoch with the vision of an ideal as he would like to see it realized, itself falls naturally into two categories. It can take on the radical form of the vision of a new content which is to be realized in a future that will in fact be nothing other than the restoration of what is ancient, bringing back that which had been lost; the ideal content of the past at the same time delivers the basis for the vision of the future. However, knowingly or unknowingly, certain elements creep into such a restoratively oriented utopianism which are not in the least restorative and which derive from the vision of a completely new state of the Messianic world. The completely new order has elements of the completely old, but even this old order does not consist of the actual past; rather, it is a past transformed and transfigured in a dream brightened by the rays of utopianism.2 Thus the dialectically linked tension between the utopian and restorative factors provides us also with deep tensions in the forms of Messianism crystallized in rabbinic Judaism, to say nothing of the interiorization of these impulses in Jewish mysticism. I shall now elaborate several principal structures of these forms and in so doing try to

II

clarify the tensions they express.

When the Messianic idea appears as a living force in the world of Judaism—especially in that of medieval Judaism, which seems so totally interwoven with the realm of the Halakhah—it always occurs in the closest connection with apocalypticism. In these instances the Messianic idea constitutes both a content of religious faith as such and also living, acute anticipation. Apocalypticism appears as the form necessarily created by acute Messianism.

It is self-evident and needs no justification that the Messianic idea came into being not only as the revelation of an abstract proposition regarding the hope of mankind for redemption, but

rather in very specific historical circumstances. The predictions and messages of the biblical prophets come to an equal degree from revelation and from the suffering and desperation of those whom they addressed; they are spoken from the context of situations and again and again have proven effective in situations where the End, perceived in the immediate future, was thought about to break in abruptly at any moment. To be sure, the predictions of the prophets do not yet give us any kind of welldefined conception of Messianism. Rather we have a variety of different motifs in which the much emphasized utopian impulsethe vision of a better humanity at the End of Days-is interpenetrated with restorative impulses like the reinstitution of an ideally conceived Davidic kingdom. This Messianic message of the prophets addresses man as a whole and sets forth images of natural and historical events through which God speaks and in which the End of Days is announced or realized. These visions never involve the individual as such, nor do these declarations claim any special "secret" knowledge gained from an inner realm not accessible to every man. By contrast, the words of the apocalyptists represent a shift in this view of the content of prophecy. These anonymous authors of writings like the biblical book of Daniel, the two books of Enoch, Fourth Ezra, the Baruch apocalypses, or the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs—to name only a few documents of this at one time seemingly over-flourishing literature-encase the words of the ancient prophets in a frame which they mold and furnish in their own way.

Here God no longer shows the seer individual instances of historical occurrence or only a vision of history's end; rather he sees all of history from beginning to end with particular emphasis on the arrival of that new aeon which manifests itself and prevails in the Messianic events. The Pharisee Josephus had already seen Adam, the first man, as a prophet whose vision encompassed not only the flood in Noah's day but also the flood of fire at the end of time and thus included all of history. The talmudic Aggadah saw things very much the same: God shows Adam-but also Abraham or Moses—the entire past and future, the current and the final acon.4 Likewise, the priest of the End of Days (the priestly Messiah) who appears in the Habakkuk commentary of the Dead Sea sectarians, will be able to interpret the visions of the ancient prophets regarding the total course of the history of Israel as all of their features now become fully visible. In this interpretation of the visions of the ancient prophets or even in the work of the apocalyptists themselves, motifs of current history, which refer to contemporary conditions and needs, are closely intertwined with those of an apocalyptic, eschatological nature, in which not only the experiences of the present exercise an influence, but often enough ancient mythical images are filled with utopian content. As students of apocalypticism have always noted correctly, in this process the new eschatology moves decisively beyond the ancient prophecies. Hosea, Amos, or Isaiah know only a single world, in which even the great events at the End of Days run their course. Their eschatology is of a national kind: it speaks of the re-establishment of the House of David, now in ruins, and of the future glory of an Israel returned to God; also of everlasting peace and the turning of all nations toward the one God of Israel and away from heathen cults and images. In contrast, apocalypticism produced the doctrine of the two aeons which follow one another and stand in antithetical relationship: this world and the world to come, the reign of darkness and the reign of light. The national antithesis between Israel and the heathens is broadened into a cosmic antithesis in which the realms of the holy and of sin, of purity and impurity, of life and death, of light and darkness, God and the anti-divine powers, stand opposed. A wider cosmic background is superadded to the national content of eschatology and it is here that the final struggle between Israel and the heathens takes place. There arise the conceptions of the Resurrection of the Dead, of reward and punishment in the Last Judgment, and of Paradise and Hell, in which notions of individual retribution at the End of Days occur in conjunction with promises and threats addressed to the nation. All these are conceptions which are now closely tied to the ancient prophecies. The words of the prophets, which in their original context appear so clear and direct, henceforth become riddles, allegories, and mysteries which are interpreted—one might say, deciphered-by an apocalyptic homiletic or an original apocalyptic vision. And thus we have the framework in which the Messianic idea now begins its historical influence.

But there is an additional factor. As the meaning of the Greek word indicates, apocalypses are revelations or disclosures of God's hidden knowledge of the End. That is to say, what reached the prophets as knowledge which could hardly be proclaimed with sufficient loudness and publicity, in the apocalypses becomes secret. It is one of those enigmas of Jewish religious history that have not been satisfactorily solved by any of the many attempts at

explanation just what the real reason is for this metamorphosis which makes knowledge of the Messianic End, where it oversteps the prophetic framework of the biblical texts, into an esoteric form of knowing. Why does the apocalyptist conceal himself instead of shouting his vision into the face of the enemy power as did the prophets? Why does he load the responsibility for those visions, fraught with danger, on the heroes of biblical antiquity and why does he convey them only to the select or initiated? Is it politics? Is it a changed understanding of the nature of this knowing? There is something disturbing in this transcendence of the prophetic which at the same time carries along with it a narrowing of its realm of influence. It cannot be coincidental that for nearly a millennium this character of apocalyptic knowing has also been preserved by the heirs of the ancient apocalyptists within rabbinic Judaism. For them it takes its place at the side of the gnostic knowledge of the merkabah, the throne-world of God and its mysteries which, explosive as this knowledge in itself was, could be reported only in a whisper. Not without reason the writings of the merkabab mystics in Judaism always contain apocalyptic chapters.5 The stronger the loss of historical reality in Judaism during the turmoil surrounding the destruction of the Second Temple and of the ancient world, the more intensive became consciousness of the cryptic character and mystery of the Messianic message, which indeed always referred precisely to the re-establishment of that lost reality although it also went beyond it.

In an almost natural way Messianic apocalypticism orders the old promises and traditions, along with the newly adhering motifs, interpretations, and reinterpretations, under the two aspects which the Messianic idea henceforth takes on and keeps in Jewish consciousness. These two aspects, which in fact are based on the words of the prophets themselves and are more or less visible there, concern the catastrophic and destructive nature of the redemption on the one hand and the utopianism of the content of realized Messianism on the other. Jewish Messianism is in its origins and by its nature—this cannot be sufficiently emphasized a theory of catastrophe. This theory stresses the revolutionary, cataclysmic element in the transition from every historical present to the Messianic future. This transition itself becomes a problem in that, beginning with the words of the prophets Amos and Isaiah, the really non-transitional character of it is pointed up and emphasized. Isaiah's Day of the Lord (chapters 2 and 4) is a day of catastrophe and is described in visions which stress this catastrophic nature in the extreme. But we learn nothing about how that Day of the Lord, on which previous history ends and on which the world is shaken to its foundations, is related to the "End of Days" (promised at the beginning of chapter 2 of Isaiah) on which the House of the Lord shall be established at the top of the mountains and the peoples flow unto it.

The elements of the catastrophic and the visions of doom are present in peculiar fashion in the Messianic vision. On the one hand, they are applied to the transition or destruction in which the Messianic redemption is born-hence the ascription of the Jewish concept of "birth pangs of the Messiah" to this period. But, on the other hand, it is also applied to the terrors of the Last Judgment which in many of these descriptions concludes the Messianic period instead of accompanying its beginnings. And thus for the apocalyptist's glance the Messianic utopia may often become twofold. The new aeon and the days of the Messiah are no longer one (as they still are in some writings of this literature); rather they refer to two periods of which the one, the rule of the Messiah, really still belongs to this world; the other, however, already belongs entirely to the new aeon which begins with the Last Judgment. But this doubling of the stages of redemption is mostly the result of learned exegesis which seeks to put every saying of the Bible harmoniously into place. In an original vision catastrophe and utopia do not twice follow after each other, but it is precisely by their uniqueness that they bring to bear with full force the two sides of the Messianic event.

However, before I devote a few remarks to these two sides of the Messianic idea as they characterize Messianic apocalypticism, I must preface a word intended to correct a widespread misconception. I am referring to the distortion of historical circumstances, equally popular among both Jewish and Christian scholars, which lies in denying the continuation of the apocalyptic tradition in rabbinic Judaism. This distortion of intellectual history is quite understandable in terms of the anti-Jewish interests of Christian scholars as well as the anti-Christian interests of Jewish ones. It was in keeping with the tendencies of the former group to regard Judaism only as the antechamber of Christianity and to see it as moribund once it had brought forth Christianity. Their view led to the conception of a genuine continuation of Messianism via the apocalyptists in the new world of Christianity. But the other group, too, paid tribute to their own prejudices. They were the great Jewish scholars of the nineteenth and early twentieth cen-

turies, who to a great extent determined the popular image of Judaism. In view of their concept of a purified and rational Judaism, they could only applaud the attempt to eliminate or liquidate apocalypticism from the realm of Judaism. Without regrets, they left the claim of apocalyptic continuity to a Christianity which, to their minds, gained nothing on that account. Historical truth was the price paid for the prejudices of both camps. Attempts to eliminate apocalypticism completely from the realm of rabbinic Judaism have not been lacking since the Middle Ages and in what follows we shall even deal with the most consequential of these attempts, that of Maimonides. Such attempts represent one tendency among other, entirely different ones which have also been active in the history of Judaism. By themselves these attempts can claim no value as a truthful representation of the historical reality of Judaism. For this denial of apocalypticism set out to suppress exceedingly vital elements in the realm of Judaism, elements filled with historical dynamism even if they combined destructive with constructive forces. The idea that all apocalyptic currents of the pre-Christian age flowed into Christianity and there found their real place is a fiction which cannot be maintained against more careful historical examination. Just after the origin of the known apocalypses, especially those of the first pre- and post-Christian centuries, an undiminished mighty stream of apocalypticism rushes forth within the Jewish rabbinic tradition; in part it flows into the channel of the talmudic and aggadic literature, in part it finds its expression in its own literature, preserved in Hebrew and Aramaic. There can be no talk of a discontinuity between these later apocalypses and those ancient ones whose Hebrew originals have until now remained lost and which have only been preserved in translations and in the adaptations of the Christian churches. While one may question to which Jewish circles these independent writings that preserve their pseudepigraphic literary form really belong-nothing in them contradicts the spiritual world of the rabbis even if it is not possible to bring them into close relationship with it—there remains no doubt about the entry of apocalyptic tradition into the House of Study and the range of ideas of the traditional scholars. Here the cover of anonymity is again thrown off, the secretive whisper turns into an open exchange of ideas, into formal instruction, and even into pointed epigrams whose authors, with their often wellknown names, take responsibility for their words. The significance of these two sources of rabbinic apocalypticism for an understanding of Messianism in the world of the Halakhah cannot be estimated too highly.

I spoke of the catastrophic nature of redemption as a decisive characteristic of every such apocalypticism, which is then complemented by the utopian view of the content of realized redemption. Apocalyptic thinking always contains the elements of dread and consolation intertwined. The dread and peril of the End form an element of shock and of the shocking which induces extravagance. The terrors of the real historical experiences of the Jewish people are joined with images drawn from the heritage of myth or mythical fantasy. This is expressed with particular forcefulness in the concept of the birth pangs of the Messiah which in this case means the Messianic age. The paradoxical nature of this conception exists in the fact that the redemption which is born here is in no causal sense a result of previous history. It is precisely the lack of transition between history and the redemption which is always stressed by the prophets and apocalyptists. The Bible and the apocalyptic writers know of no progress in history leading to the redemption. The redemption is not the product of immanent developments such as we find it in modern Western reinterpretations of Messianism since the Enlightenment where, secularized as the belief in progress, Messianism still displayed unbroken and immense vigor. It is rather transcendence breaking in upon history, an intrusion in which history itself perishes, transformed in its ruin because it is struck by a beam of light shining into it from an outside source. The constructions of history in which the apocalyptists (as opposed to the prophets of the Bible) revel have nothing to do with modern conceptions of development or progress, and if there is anything which, in the view of these seers, history deserves, it can only be to perish. The apocalyptists have always cherished a pessimistic view of the world. Their optimism, their hope, is not directed to what history will bring forth, but to that which will arise in its ruin, free at last and undisguised.

To be sure, the "light of the Messiah" which is to shine wondrously into the world, is not always seen as breaking in with complete suddenness; it may become visible by gradations and stages, but these gradations and stages have nothing to do with the history that has gone before. "It is told of Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Simeon that they walked in the valley of Arbela early in the morning and saw the dawn breaking on the horizon. Thereupon Rabbi Hiyya said: 'So too is Israel's redemption; at first it will be only very slightly visible, then it will shine forth more

brightly, and only afterwards will it break forth in all of its glory." 6 Such a belief was very common among apocalyptic calculators in all ages whenever they sought schemata according to which the different stages of the redemption would occur within the frame of the Last Days. But the apocalyptic calculation which relied upon numbers and constellations expresses only one side of this point of view and many teachers repudiated it again and again, not without reason, though with little success. In opposition to it stands the no less powerful sentiment that the Messianic age cannot be calculated. This was most pointedly expressed in the words of a talmudic teacher of the third century: "Three things come unawares: the Messiah, a found article, and a scorpion."7 And with sharper stress on the always possible End, the immediacy to God of each day, we find: "If Israel would repent even for a single day, they would be instantly redeemed and the Son of David would instantly come, for it says (Ps. 95:7): Today if you will listen to His voice."8

Such words add to the concept of the spontaneity of the redemption the idea, expressed in numerous moral dicta of the talmudic literature, that there are deeds which, as it were, help to bring about the redemption, somewhat like a midwife at a birth. Whoever does one thing or another (whoever, for example, cites what he has heard, stating the name of his source), "he brings redemption into the world." But here it is not a matter of real causality, only of an already established frame for pointed, sententious formulations which are directed less at the Messianic redemption than at the moral value of the suggested conduct. Indeed, statements of this kind stand totally outside the realm of apocalyptic thought. They present a moralism which must have been welcomed by later reinterpretations of Messianism in the sense of a rational and sensible utopianism. But in fact there can be no preparation for the Messiah. He comes suddenly, unannounced, and precisely when he is least expected or when hope has long been abandoned.

This deep feeling of the impossibility of calculating the Messianic age has produced in the Messianic Aggadah the idea of the occultation of the Messiah, who is always already present somewhere and whom a profound legend, not without cause, allows to have been born on the day of the destruction of the Temple. Beginning at the moment of the deepest catastrophe there exists the chance for redemption. "Israel speaks to God: When will You redeem us? He answers: When you have sunk to the lowest level,

at that time will I redeem you."9 Corresponding to this continually present possibility is the concept of the Messiah who continually waits in hiding. It has taken many forms, though admittedly none more grand than that which, with extravagant anticipation, has transplanted the Messiah to the gates of Rome, where he dwells among the lepers and beggars of the Eternal City.10 This truly staggering "rabbinic fable" stems from the second century, long before the Rome which has just destroyed the Temple and driven Israel into exile itself becomes the seat of the Vicar of Christ and of a Church seeking dominion by its claim to Messianic fulfillment. This symbolic antithesis between the true Messiah sitting at the gates of Rome and the head of Christendom, who reigns there, accompanies Jewish Messianic thought through the centurics. And more than once we learn that Messianic aspirants have made a pilgrimage to Rome in order to sit by the bridge in front of the Castel Sant' Angelo and thus enact this symbolic ritual.

III

This catastrophic character of the redemption, which is essential to the apocalyptic conception, is pictured in all of these texts and traditions in glaring images. It finds manifold expression: in world wars and revolutions, in epidemics, famine, and economic catastrophe; but to an equal degree in apostasy and the desecration of God's name, in forgetting of the Torah and the upsetting of all moral order to the point of dissolving the laws of nature. Such apocalyptic paradoxes regarding the final catastrophe were accepted even into as sober a text as the Mishnah, the first canonical codification of the Halakhah.

In the footsteps of the Messiah [i.e., in the period of his arrival] presumption will increase and respect disappear. The empire will turn to heresy and there will be no moral reproof. The house of assembly will become a brothel, Galilee will be laid waste, and the people of the frontiers will wander from city to city and none will pity them. The wisdom of the scribes will become odious and those who shun sin will be despised; truth will nowhere be found. Boys will shame old men and old men will show deference to boys. "The son reviles the father, the daughter rises up against the mother . . . a man's enemies are the men of his own house" (Micah 7:6). The face of the generation is like the face of a dog [i.e., brazenness will reign]. On whom shall we then rely? On our Father in heaven.¹² The pages of the Talmud tractate Sanhedrin which deal with the Messianic age are full of most extravagant formulations of this kind. They drive toward the point that the Messiah will come only in an age which is either totally pure or totally guilty and corrupt. Little wonder that in one such context the Talmud cites the bald statement of three famous teachers of the third and fourth centuries: "May he come, but I do not want to see him." 13

Though the redemption, then, cannot be realized without dread and ruin, its positive aspect is provided with all the accents of utopianism. This utopianism seizes upon all the restorative hopes turned toward the past and describes an arc from the re-establishment of Israel and of the Davidic kingdom as a kingdom of God on earth to the re-establishment of the condition of Paradise as it is foreseen by many old Midrashim, but above all by the thought of Jewish mystics, for whom the analogy of First Days and Last Days possess living reality. But it does more than that. For already in the Messianic utopianism of Isaiah we find the Last Days conceived immeasurably more richly than any beginning. The condition of the world, wherein the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9), does not repeat anything that has ever been, but presents something new. The world of tikkun, the re-establishment of the harmonious condition of the world, which in the Lurianic Kabbalah is the Messianic world, still contains a strictly utopian impulse. That harmony which it reconstitutes does not at all correspond to any condition of things that has ever existed even in Paradise, but at most to a plan contained in the divine idea of Creation. This plan, however, even with the first stages of its realization, came up against that disturbance and hindrance of the cosmic process known as the "breaking of the vessels" which initiates the Lurianic myth. In reality, therefore, the Last Days realize a higher, richer, and more fulfilled condition than the First Days, and even the Kabbalists remain bound to a utopian conception. The contents of this utopia differ in the various circles. The model of a renewed humanity and of a renewed kingdom of David or of a descendant of David, which represents the prophetic legacy of Messianic utopianism, is often enough combined by the apocalyptists and mystics with a renewed condition of nature and even of the cosmos as a whole. The escapist and extravagant character of such utopianism, which undertakes to determine the content of redemption without having experienced it yet in fact, does of course subject it to the wild

THE INTELLIGENT SKEPTIC'S GUIDE TO JUDAISM" - HERMAN WOUK

Question 4

HOW DOES JUDAISM DIFFER FROM CHRISTIANITY, MARXISM AND COMMUNISM, AND HUMANISM?

These three movements have three things in common. Each was founded by a Jew, each is a derivative of Judaism seeking to fulfill the messianic and utopian goals which Judaism introduced, but each changed the Jewish way of attaining these goals.

NOTE TO FACULTY:

We've included this excerpt from The Nine Questions People Ask About Judaism for its organizational value in delineating the differences between Judaism and Christianity.

BY DENNIS PRAGER

JOSEPH TELUSHKIN

CHRISTIANITY

FAITH OVER WORKS

Whether or not Jesus was the Messiah is not the most important question that divides Judaism and Christianity. The major difference between Judaism and Christianity lies in the importance each religion attaches to faith and actions.* In Judaism, God considers people's actions to be more important than their faith;† acting in accordance with biblical and rabbinic law is the Jews' central obligation. As Christianity developed, however, it did away with most of these laws, and faith became its central demand.

Though faith became the essence of Christianity, Christian history reveals that this emphasis on faith over works was held by neither Jesus nor his immediate followers. The New Testament often notes that Jesus and his early followers stressed and observed Jewish law: "Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets," Jesus declared to his early disciples, "I tell you solemnly, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, shall disappear from the Law [the Torah] until its purpose is

* The question of whether or not Jesus was the Messiah prophesied in the Bible—the issue with which most comparisons of Judaism and Christianity are concerned—is discussed later. achieved." Jesus then concluded his message with a warning against anyone who violates Jewish law: "Therefore, the man who infringes even the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:17-19).

After his death, Jesus's disciples continued to heed their teacher's message to observe Halakha (Jewish law). Acts 2:46 and 3:1 state that the disciples regularly prayed at the Temple; Acts 10:14 records Peter's scrupulous observance of Kashrut (the Jewish dietary laws); Acts 15:1 teaches that "some men came down from Judea," (these men, in line with Galatians 2:12, appear to have been sent by James, Jesus's brother) to teach that "unless you have yourselves been circumcised in the tradition of Moses, you cannot be saved." In Acts 21:24, James says to Paul, "... let everyone know there is no truth in the reports they have heard about you, and that you still regularly observe the Law."

However, in the year 70, when the Jewish community in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, a new ideology regarding God's law became dominant in Christianity. The formulator of this new ideology was Paul of Tarsus, and he theorized as follows:

- a. all the laws of the Torah must be observed—therefore breaking one of them renders one cursed: ". . . scripture says: Cursed be everyone who does not persevere in observing everything prescribed in the book of the Law" (Galatians 3:10);
- b. man, being imperfect, will sin by violating a law: "We

[†] This constitutes one of the few beliefs in Judaism that is affirmed across the Jewish religious spectrum, from the most Reform to the most Orthodox. In any synagogue, on any Shabbat or holiday, the emphasis in the rabbi's sermon is almost always on deeds. The nature of the deeds being emphasized might differ: in the Reform synagogue there might be greater emphasis on social action, and in the Orthodox, on the proper observance of the Shabbat, though increasingly it could be the other way around. But it is inconceivable that a rabbi would deliver a sermon on salvation through faith, a most common subject of Christian sermons.

^{*} The law's purpose is, of course, the universal recognition of the rule of God, a goal which neither Christianity nor Judaism believes has been realized.

could have been justified by the Law if the Law we were given had been capable of giving life, but it is not: scripture makes no exceptions when it says that sin is master everywhere . . ." (Galatians 3:21-2);

c. man is cursed by the Law: "... those who rely on the keeping of the Law are under a curse ..." (Galatians 3:10); and

d. man must be redeemed from the Law, a redemption which can come only through belief in Jesus: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law . ." (Galatians 3:10)."... we conclude that a man is put right with God only through faith and not by doing what the law commands" (Romans 3:28).

Judaism's differences with this ideology are profound. The Pauline idea that a person is cursed by God for breaking any law (see Galatians 3:10-3) was a new one, not to be found anywhere in the Bible or in normative Judaism. From where, then, did Paul develop this notion? It appears from Galatians 3:10 that he derived it from a mistaken reading of a verse in the Bible, Deuteronomy 27:26. The eleven verses before it, Deuteronomy 27:15-25, list eleven basic ethical obligations (prohibitions against violence, bribery, idolatry, incest, oppression of the defenseless, and so forth) and declare the transgressor of any of them cursed by the Jews and Moses (not by God). At the conclusion of these verses the Bible says, "Cursed be he who does not maintain all the words of this Torah to do them . . . "-"this Torah [Teaching]" referring to the eleven laws just listed. However, Paul understood this verse to mean, "Cursed be everyone who does not persevere in observing everything prescribed in the book of the Law" (as it is translated in Galatians 3:10). Paul misunderstood (or intentionally changed) the verse to mean that anyone who violates any law in the entire Torah (Five Books of Moses) is eternally cursed, a mistranslation which remains in the New Testament.*

The Bible appreciates that no human being can perfectly fulfill all its laws at all times, and it therefore understands that people will occasionally sin. Hundreds of years before Paul, the Jews were assured that God recognizes that "there is no man so righteous who does only good and never sins" (Ecclesiastes 7:20). Furthermore, the Bible repeatedly tells of Jews who sinned (including Moses and David) and who, after repenting and returning to observance of the law which they violated, were restored to God's grace, certainly without being eternally cursed.

Needless to say, Judaism does not want people to violate its laws. But if a Jew does violate them, Jewish law enables him or her to return to God and right action through repentance—in Hebrew, teshuvah, from the word for "return."

^{*} Anyone familiar with Hebrew will immediately perceive the mistranslation. But one need not know Hebrew to understand Paul's error; a simple reading of Deuteronomy 27:15-26 makes it clear, since, among other reasons, (a) there would have been no need to relist eleven commandments if Deuteronomy 26:26 referred to every law in the Torah, and (b) the Hebrew Bible frequently uses the words "Torah" and "this Torah" in reference to a specific group of laws (for the term "Torah," see Leviticus 6:2, 6:18, 7:37, 11:46, 13:59, 14:2, 15:32, and Numbers 6:21; for the expression "this Torah" see Deuteronomy 1:5, 4:8, 28:61; 31:9, 11).

the notion of being eternally cursed by God raises two other new issues, hell and eternal damnation, concerning which it should be noted that the word hell never appears in the Hebrew Bible, and eternal damnation is unknown to Judaism. The Bible does speak of sheel, a Hebrew word which has been mistranslated as "hell," but this word means "grave." In Genesis 37:35, for example, Jacob speaks of going to sheel, his grave, without seeing Joseph. Jacob, the Patriarch, did not say he was going to hell. Also, the notion of a hell where sinners suffer eternally is foreign to Judaism and entered the Western world's religious consciousness through the New Testament.

Teshuvah consists of three steps: the sinner must recognize his sin, feel sincere remorse at having sinned, and resolve to return to fulfilling the law. There was also a fourth step during the time of the Temple—the bringing of a sacrifice—but since the destruction of the Temple this step has been unnecessary, a fact long foreseen by the Bible. In the words of Hosea (14:3), prophesying of a time when the Temple would no longer be standing, ". . . turn to the Lord, say to Him Forgive all iniquity and receive us graciously, so we will offer the prayers of our lips instead of calves." Hosea's statement is paralleled by Proverbs 21:3, "To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to God than sacrifices," and by the book of Jonah, which recounts that when the people of Nineveh repented, their sins were forgiven by God despite the fact that they brought no sin-offering.*

Finally, the doctrine that God would curse men whom He created imperfect for being imperfect is one which depicts God as cruel and sadistic,† notions utterly foreign to Judaism.

As noted at the outset, Judaism considers people's actions more important than their faith. The Talmud, basing itself on Jeremiah 16:11, stated: "Better that they [the Jews] abandon Me [God] and continue to observe My laws," because, the Talmud adds, through observance of the laws they will return to God (Jerusalem Talmud, Hagiggah 1:7).

Despite the Bible's emphasis on deed more than creed, Paul declared (Romans 3:28) that "we conclude that a man

* There are numerous other biblical passages referring to the possibility of forgiveness and redemption without sacrifices, e.g., Leviticus 26:40-5; Deuteronomy 4:29-31; Jeremiah 10-20; Ezekiel 22:15.

is put right with God only through faith and not by doing what the law commands."

Owing to the Pauline doctrine as formulated in Romans, the criterion by which Catholics came to judge people was faith plus sacraments; and the father of Protestantism, Martin Luther, differed from the Church not in stressing the supremacy of good deeds, but in stressing that faith alone, without sacraments, is sufficient. In On Christian Liberty, a pamphlet issued in 1520, Luther declared, "Above all things bear in mind what I have said, that faith alone without works, justifies, sets free and saves."

As a result, millions of Christians to this day believe that in God's eyes, a person's conduct is less important than his beliefs and many Christian clerics in the past accordingly persecuted people for their beliefs.

It may be objected that Christians who have committed evil acts have misconstrued Paul. Perhaps they have, for Paul certainly advocated loving behavior. The fact remains, however, that whereas in Judaism the good people of all nations attain salvation (Tosefta Sanhedrin 13:2), in Christianity, belief in Christ, not good deeds, had to become the sole means to salvation since, as Paul reasoned, if good deeds could achieve salvation, there would be no purpose to the crucifixion and "Christ would have died in vain" (Galatians 2:21).

CHRISTIAN DOGMAS AND JUDAISM

Three major dogmas distinguish Christianity from Judaism: original sin, the Second Coming, and atonement through Jesus's death. To Christians, these beliefs are needed to solve otherwise insoluble problems. For Jews, however, these beliefs are not needed because the problems do not exist.

[†] This caricature of God which results from Paul's caricature of the law, is the major source of the pernicious myth which contrasts the "vengeful Jewish God of the Old Testament" with the "loving Christian God of the New Testament."

1. CHRISTIAN PROBLEM: ORIGINAL SIN

Christian Solution: Acceptance of Christ through baptism.

Paul wrote: "Sin came into the world through one man. . . . Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:12, 18-19). The baptismal solution was confirmed in the "Decrees of the Council of Trent" (1545-63): "Since the Fall caused loss of righteousness, thralldom to the devil and liability to the wrath of God, and since original sin is transmitted by generation and not by imitation, therefore all which has the proper nature of sin, and all guilt of original sin is removed in baptism."*

In Judaism, original sin is not a problem. The notion that we are born sinners is not a Jewish one. Each person is born innocent. He or she makes his or her own moral choice to sin or not to sin.

2. CHRISTIAN PROBLEM: THE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES WERE NOT FULFILLED WHEN JESUS CAME

Christian Solution: The Second Coming.

For Christians a Second Coming is necessary so that Jesus can fulfill the messianic prophecies which he was supposed to have fulfilled during his lifetime. Jewishly speaking, this is not a problem since the Jews never had reason to believe that Jesus was the Messiah (see pp. 86–90). The solution is also untenable to Jews, since the Jewish Bible never mentioned a second coming.

3. CHRISTIAN PROBLEM: PEOPLE CANNOT ATTAIN SALVATION THROUGH THEIR ACTIONS

Christian Solution: Jesus's death atones for the sins of those who have faith in him.

This problem does not exist for Judaism, since according to Judaism people can attain salvation through their actions.

In the solution to this problem, Christianity differs profoundly from Judaism. First, for what sins of mankind was Jesus's death supposed to atone? Since the Bible obliged only Jews to observe its man-to-God laws, the non-Jewish world could not have committed such sins. The only sins which non-Jews could have committed were against people. Does Jesus's death atone for people's sins against other people? Apparently so.

This doctrine directly opposes Judaism and its perception of moral culpability. According to Judaism, God Himself cannot forgive us for our sins against another person. Only the person or persons whom we have hurt can forgive us.

JESUS'S TEACHINGS AND JUDAISM

Since Jesus generally practiced Pharisaic (rabbinic) Judaism, most of his teachings parallel Jewish biblical and Pharisaic beliefs. There are, however, a number of innovative teachings attributed to Jesus in the New Testament—it is of course impossible to know whether these statements were actually uttered by him, or merely attributed to him—which differ from Judaism.

1. Jesus forgives all sins: "The Son of man has the authority to forgive sins" (Matthew 9:6). Even if one equates Jesus with God (itself a heretical notion to Judaism), this belief is a radical departure from Judaism. As already indicated, Judaism believes that God Himself does not forgive all

Cited in Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics IX, p. 562.

sins; He limits His power and forgives only those sins committed against Him alone. As the Mishnah teaches: "The Day of Atonement atones for sins against God, not for sins against man, unless the injured party has been appeared" (Yoma 8:9).

2. Jesus's attitude toward evil people: "Offer the wicked man no resistance. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well" (Matthew 5:38-9) and "Love your enemies and pray for your persecutors" (Matthew 5:44). Judaism, in contrast, demands that the wicked man be offered powerful resistance. One of many such examples is the biblical approval of Moses's killing of the Egyptian slavemaster who was beating a Jewish slave (Exodus 2:12). A second example is the oft-repeated biblical injunction "you shall burn the evil out from your midst" (Deuteronomy 7:17). Similarly, Judaism does not demand that one love one's enemies—though it is completely untrue to claim as Matthew does that Judaism commands one to hate one's enemies (see Matthew 5:43)-but it does command that one act justly toward one's enemies. A Jew is not, for example, commanded to love a Nazi, as the statement in Matthew demands.*

3. Jesus's claim that people can come to God only through him: "No one knows the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him" (Matthew

11:27), differs from the Jewish belief that everyone has direct access to God, for "God is near to all who call unto Him" (Psalms 145:18). The implication of the former statement, and to this day the belief of many Christians, is that only one who believes in Jesus Christ, i.e., a Christian, can come to God. Judaism holds that one can come to God without being a Jew.

WHY DO JEWS NOT ACCEPT JESUS AS THE MESSIAH?

Judaism does not believe that Jesus was the Messiah because he did not fulfill any messianic prophecies. The major prophecy concerning the messianic days is that "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they learn war anymore" (Isaiah 2:4; see also Isaiah 2:1-3, 11:1-10). World peace must accompany the Messiah, and should peace not come, the Messiah has obviously not come. The Talmud records that in the second century, Rabbi Akiva, the greatest rabbi of his age, believed that Simon Bar Kochva was the Messiah. Yet when Bar Kochva's revolt against the Romans was crushed, Rabbi Akiva recognized that Bar Kochva could not have been the Messiah (though he was still regarded as an essentially righteous man), because the Messiah, according to the Bible, will establish universal peace and enable the Jews to lead a peaceful and independent existence in Israel.

It has been obvious for over nineteen hundred years that the messianic days of peace have not arrived, yet Christians still contend that Jesus was the Messiah. What is the Christian explanation? There will be, according to Christians, a second coming, at which time Jesus will fulfill the messianic functions originally expected of him. For Jews, however, this explanation is logically unsatisfactory and the idea of a second

^{*} In stress situations, Jesus himself seems to have found it difficult to follow this principle (e.g., Matthew 10:32, 25:41), and virtually no Christian group has ever found it possible to utilize this principle in directing its behavior. Nor is this a moral ideal. One of the few Christian groups to incorporate "offer the wicked man no resistance" into its everyday life, the Jehovah's Witnesses, was used in the concentration camps as barbers by SS men confident that the Jehovah's Witnesses would do nothing to harm them or other Nazi mass murderers (see Evelyn Le Chene, Mauthausen, Fakenham, Norfolk, Great Britain: 1971, p. 130).

coming is nowhere to be found in the Bible. In fact, it appears likely that this idea was not even known to Jesus himself, for he told his followers that some of them would still be alive when all the messianic prophecies would materialize (Mark 9:1; 13:30). This idea of a second coming was apparently formulated by later Christians to explain Jesus's failure to fulfill the messianic prophecies.

As for Christian attempts to cite the Jewish Bible to "prove" that Jesus was the messiah, David Berger, a scholar in the field and Associate Professor of History at the City University of New York, has written: ". . . we have overwhelming evidence that the Messiah has not come, and against this evidence we are confronted by a dubious collection of isolated verses, forcibly wrenched out of context and invariably misinterpreted."*

A common example of such misinterpretation is the translation and meaning which Christians have given to Isaiah 7:14, "Behold a young woman (almah) shall conceive. . . ." In Matthew 1:22-3, the verse was changed to read "a virgin shall conceive," and for nearly two thousand years this has been cited as "proof" that the virgin birth of Jesus was prophesied in the Bible. But almah does not mean virgin; the Hebrew word for virgin is betulah (see Leviticus 21:3; Deuteronomy 22:19; 23:28; and Ezekiel 44:22). Had Isaiah referred to a virgin he would have used betulah. The context in which the passage occurs also renders the Christological meaning untenable. The verses in Isaiah describe events that Ahaz (a king of Judah in the time of Isaiah) was expected to witness, seven hundred years before Jesus.

A second and more significant example of an attempt to

make a Jewish text Christian is the use of Isaiah 53 as a Christological reference. In this chapter Isaiah speaks of a suffering and despised "servant of God." The contention of some Christians that this refers to Jesus is purely a statement of faith. It has no logical basis in the biblical text. The "servant of God" is either the prophet himself who, like all the Jewish prophets, suffered for his service to God, or the people of Israel, who are specifically referred to as the "servant of God" nine times in the previous chapters of Isaiah (41:8,9; 44:1,2, 21, 26; 45:4; 48:20; 49:3). This Christianizing of such a significant Jewish concept led the Jewish philosopher Eliezer Berkovits to write: "God's chosen people is the suffering servant of God. The majestic fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is the description of Israel's martyrology through the centuries [and] the way Christianity treated Israel through the ages only made Isaiah's description fit Israel all the more tragically and truly. Generation after generation of Christians poured out their iniquities and inhumanity over the head of Israel, yet they 'esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." "*

Fortunately, in recent years many Christian scholars have also acknowledged the illegitimacy of attempts to "prove" Jesus's messiahship from the Jewish Bible. J. C. Fenton, in his The Gospel of St. Matthew, wrote: "It is now seen that the Old Testament was not a collection of detailed forebodings of future events, which could only be understood centuries later: the Old Testament writers were in fact writing for their contemporaries in a way which could be understood by them, and describing things that would happen more or less in their own lifetime. Thus Matthew's use of the Old

^{*} Unpublished manuscript.

^{*} Faith After the Holocaust (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1973) pp. 125-6.

Testament . . . is now a stumbling-block to the twentieth-century reader of his Gospel."* The distinguished Christian scholar and theologian W. C. Davies likewise noted that the Gospels quote the Jewish Bible selectively: "There were some prophecies which they ignore and others which they modify."† Another Christian scholar, R. Taylor, noted in his commentary on Psalms 16:8–10 in The Interpreter's Bible that the New Testament interpretation misreads the clear intention of the Psalmist.

In sum, to call anyone who does not actually bring about the messianic era the Messiah is untenable to the Jews. To equate anyone with God, as normative Christianity does, is to Jews more than untenable. It compromises their ideal of monotheism.

CONCLUSION

Though there are significant differences between Judaism and Christianity, these differences should not constitute an obstacle to the development of close relationships between Jews and Christians. Indeed, many Christians are in the forefront of the struggle for an ethical monotheistic world; and we share more values with them than with some of our fellow Jews. And as regards the differences between Judaism and Christianity, as Trude Weiss-Rosmarin has written: "The notion that Judaism and Christianity, to maintain harmonious relations, must be 'truly, basically one,' is really a totalitarian aberration. For democracy is predicated on the conviction that dissimilarities and differences are no cause or justification for inequality. . . . After all, we don't demand that all

Americans vote for the same ticket in order to promote national unity."*

This last point is crucial. While we must not demand that all Americans vote for the same party, we do feel it legitimate to demand that all Americans feel committed to the democratic process. Once this appreciation for democracy is shared, there is room for disagreement. The same is true of religion. Just as we presuppose a commitment to the democratic process on the part of Republicans and Democrats, so we presuppose that Christians and Jews are committed to live by and advocate ethical monotheism.

We need more discussions today between Jews and Christians to formulate a program to "perfect the world under the rule of God." The Western world is sinking into secular moral relativism, materialism, and hedonism. Our dialogue must therefore be motivated not by a desire to convert each other, but by a desire to convert a secular amoral world into a religious moral one.

MARXISM AND COMMUNISM

Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and the cultural development thereby determined. We therefore reject every attempt to impose on us any moral dogma whatsoever as an eternal, ultimate and forever immutable moral law. . . .

-KARL MARX, Capital

^{*} Baltimore: Westminster, 1963, p. 178.

t "Torah and Dogma-A Comment," Harvard Theological Review, April 1968, p. 99.

^{*} Judaism and Christianity—The Differences (New York: Jonathan David, 1965), pp. 11-12.

WORKSHOP III



Is Messianism Good for the Jews?

Jacob Katz

Perhaps it is permissible at this point to say, with all due caution, that Jewish historiography has generally chosen to ignore the fact that the Jews have paid a very high price for the messianic idea.

-Gershom Scholem, Sabbetai Zevi: The Mystical Messiah

E ver since biblical antiquity, messianism has been an integral component
in the making of Jewish history. This much is impressed upon the reader of any treatment of
Jewish experience. But what function, exactly,
has messianism fulfilled in Jewish history? And
specifically, what positive contribution has it
made to the maintenance and survival of the

Jewish community?

The nature of Jewish messianism can best be seen by comparing it with parallel phenomena, and perhaps especially with its historical competitor, Christian messianism. From the point of view of dogma, the main difference between the two of course concerns the advent of the messiah, with Christianity claiming that this occurrence has already taken place, Judaism placing it in the indefinite future. The two also differ in their essential notions of what constitutes messianic redemption; Christian messianism emphasizes the concept of individual, otherworldly salvation, while Jewish messianism stresses the fate of the nation within the unfolding affairs of this world.

Revealing as such distinctions are, however, they expose merely a few facets of Jewish messianism. To arrive at a more comprehensive evaluation, we need to view it in the light of messianism as a general anthropological phenomenon.

The expectation of some ideal state of human affairs, to be ushered in by a legendary hero in

some undefined future, is a very common, almost universal, human idea. The specific features of this visionary state tend almost always to conform to the image of some ideal early phase in the development of a society; the future deliverance is thus pictured not as something absolutely new but rather as the recovery of a lost possession. Finally, the messianic vision, complete with its projection into the future of an idyllic primordial past, offers a kind of inverse picture of the unhappy present; all the want and suffering with which we are burdened will vanish, to be replaced by the order and repose and plenty now painfully missing from our lives. It is thus no accident that the idea of messianism is often subsumed by scholars under the heading of "utopia."

All messianic imaginings involve such utopian elements, Jewish messianism not excepted. In the popular mind, the messianic era is embellished with all sorts of fantastic, supernatural blessings, clear compensations for what the individual or the nation feels to be lacking in the present. But while in the common run of messianic utopias these unrealistic elements constitute the main substance, in Jewish messianism they are accretions added on to a basic nucleus of what one can only call historical realism. With others, the utopian imagination has had to invent a place where ideal life once existed, and where it will once again come into being. In Jewish messianism, the point of reference in the past, as well as the scene of future reconstruction, is a concrete spot on earth—the land of Israel. This by itself sets Jewish messian-

ism apart from all its parallels.

As with geography, so with other details of the expected reconstruction of Jewish life. These include the restoration of the national body with all its presently defunct institutions: the Temple in Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin, the lower courts of Jewish law, and all the rituals connected with them. True, over the centuries of messianic speculation these institutions in their future incarnation were not always conceived as simple replicas of their former selves: according to a midrashic tradition popularized by the 11th-century commentator Rashi, for instance, the Temple of the messianic period would not be built by human hands but would be sent down in its entirety from

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heaven. The reestablishment of the Sanhedrin, too, was mostly thought to be dependent upon a miraculous event, namely, the appearance of the Prophet Elijah, who was believed to be living in heaven. In the 12th century the philosopher Moses Maimonides purged the messianic vision of its supernatural accretions, yet he too endowed the messianic era with a spirituality transcending the normal cast of life.

Indeed, no vision of the messianic future was wholly without some supernatural dimension. Yet even those who openly indulged in the fantastic and the miraculous always retained a foundation of realism. Remote as the national homeland and its ancient institutions had become to a people in dispersion, a certain fund of real knowledge about them was transferred to later generations through the literary and religious tradition. Simply by listening attentively to the weekly reading from the Pentateuch and Prophets in the synagogue, a Jew would become acquainted with the scene of his people's historical past and their longed-for future. Those who studied the Mishnah and the Talmud learned what a life regulated by the old institutions was like. Moreover, a good part of the ancient religious and even the juridical constitution of Jewish life continued to operate, if in edited form, in every Jewish community: one need only mention the synagogue with its rituals of worship and the local rabbinical court whose jurisdiction derived from talmudic law.

It was not simply the antiquity of these institutions that commended them. After all, the Christian Church, too, molded its service according to that of the Temple in Jerusalem-although by claiming for its liturgy the same expiating effect as Temple sacrifice, the Church also meant to confirm the obsolescence of its forerunner. The synagogue, by contrast, presented its worship service as a mere temporary substitute, and pointedly included supplications for the future restoration of the bygone paradigm. The rabbinical courts as well remained permanently alert to their fragmented condition, and self-consciously aware of their limited authority compared with that of the Sanhedrin. In schools and academies, the course of rabbinical studies embraced laws concerning now-suspended topics having to do with life in a Jewish commonwealth-another steady reminder of the expected reconstruction.

If messianic expectations received support from Jewish ritual and law, the reverse is also true: Jewish institutions were strengthened in far-reaching ways by the fact of their expected revival. There exists an obvious interdependence between the two phenomena—the adherence of the Jewish community to its present religious configuration and its committed belief in a messianic future. The hope that Jewish ritual and law would one day recover their pristine integrity served to endow their present practice with significance, while this same practice, however neces-

sarily truncated, served as a reminder of what would some day be made whole.

The combination of the two goes a long way toward accounting for the much marveled-at survival of Jewry during its ever-lengthening years of exile. It is at the same time an answer to the question of why the prolonged exile and even the repeated disappointment suffered by the Jews when prognosticated messianic dates failed to bring deliverance, and messianic pretenders were exposed as frauds, proved unable to uproot the messianic faith. For abandoning messianic belief would have meant rejecting Jewish ritual itself, the consequence of which would have been to drop out of the Jewish community and join the surrounding Christian or Muslim society. Such crucial steps did, as we know, occur, both in connection with messianic crises and independently of them. Still, genuine or pretended conversions to another religion remained the way adopted by individuals and did not endanger Jewish communal survival.

Why did not the failure of earlier prog-nostications and pretensions prevent their recurrence in later times? The answer is simply the incapacity to learn from the experience of former generations, an almost universal human shortcoming. In any society, as long as the general conditions and intellectual climate remain constant, similar paths will again and again be followed to resolve social problems, no matter how many times they have failed in the past. The tangible circumstances of Diaspora Jewry consisted of political impotence and socioeconomic degradation, while its intellectual universe was circumscribed by its commitment to religious tradition, the sacred texts of which were understood in a super-fundamentalist manner. In line with this approach it was believed that the writings of the Bible and the Talmud, as well as of the Kabbalah, might contain hidden meanings and messages which could and should be deciphered. To a people convinced of ultimate redemption, the predetermined date of which might be coded in one of the holy documents, discovering this date became a coveted objective.

The Jewish literary tradition also contained overt statements concerning preconditions for the advent of the messiah: the strict observance of the Sabbath by the entire community, a general repentance, and the like. These statements, too, were taken literally. Often, it is true, they were invoked by preachers or moralists mainly to emphasize the importance of those religious obligations on which redemption was said to depend. At times, however, the declared intention was to help usher in the messianic era by fulfilling its traditionally fixed prerequisites.

A case in point is the endeavor of an itinerant preacher in 16th-century Italy to oblige the Jewish communities of that land to be especially punctilious in observing two Sabbaths in a row. To this category also belong the attempts by adepts of practical Kabbalah to force the hand of the Almighty by sheer magical procedures. All such undertakings, prompted though they may have been by the recurrent tribulations of exile, also drew on the prevailing acceptance by Jews of the messianic tradition in its strictly literal interpretation. As this tradition also predicated the appearance of a personal redeemer, the ground was laid for pretenders, sincere and otherwise, to present themselves as such. The long line of false messiahs is a feature of traditional messianism; their activity ceased at the dawn of the age of rationalism with the undermining of the entire system of belief of which traditional messianism was a part.

Before we get to this point, however, we should cast an eye on the consequences, or rather the side-effects, of traditional messianism. The messianic belief projected a radical change in the life of the community in an undefined future. For the present, however, it paradoxically seems rather to have secured the status quo. This is true not only with regard to religious practice concerning which any suggestion of possible change, insofar as it was deemed conceivable at all, was postponed to the messianic era. Even in the relatively neutral sphere of external political and social conditions, belief in a messianic deliverance served to enforce an extreme quietism. Whatever dreams and fancies may have evolved within the Jewish communal world were channeled into the projected messianic vision, and never crystallized into a humanly realizable scheme of redemption. Political passivity came, indeed, to be taken for granted, as something intrinsic to Jewish fate in the Diaspora. The 17th-century Venetian Jewish apologist Simone Luzzatto was not unjustified in pointing to this characteristic of the Jewish community as evidence for his argument that the incumbent political powers could confidently rely on the silent submission of the Jews to their desires.

Yet while the messianic utopia stultified the will to seek ways and means for relieving the pains of exile, it did little to help Jews endure those pains with equanimity. On the contrary, the conviction that they were in a state of temporary abandonment, from which they could and should be redeemed, made their present suffering only the more depressing. Prayers and supplications are replete with complaints about and protests against the undeserved agonies of exile, sometimes confused with the normal trials of human existence. Thus, one well-known prayer in the Yom Kippur liturgy, which enumerates all the bitter consequences of the destruction of the Temple, includes such calamities as famine and plague, not unknown in biblical times, either. The idea of messianic redemption, with its promise of a reestablished Eden, must have made present conditions appear even blacker and less bearable than they were in reality.

D espite the obvious incongruities involved in the traditional messianic concept, it held sway well into the early modern age. Not even the deep despondency wrought by the spectacular apostasy of the messianic pretender Sabbetai Zevi in the mid-17th century, after having mobilized the hopes and expectations of Jews all over the settled world, was able to sweep away the basic commitment to traditional messianism.

In the course of time, however, this belief encountered two explicit adversaries. The first was rationalism, in whose light fundamentalism of all sorts came to look more and more dated. The second was the effort, on the part of Jews and non-Jews alike, to secure for the Jews a permanent home in their present lands of domicile. In reaction to these two forces there began a critical reinterpretation of Jewish messianism, the results of which ran the full gamut of intellectual possibilities from outright rejection to an embrace of the messianic impulse as a central theme in the Jewish "mission" to the world.

These reinterpretations were the work of Western modernists, Reform-minded theologians, and philosophers. In more traditional circles, especially in Eastern Europe, the fundamentalist trend lingered on, though there too it lost its former dynamic. Thus, following a kabbalistic text, the year 1840 was fixed as a messianic date, and rumor of the impending wonderful event spread practically through the entire Jewish world, finding committed adepts especially among Hasidim but also among Sephardi kabbalists and others. Yet the excitement remained rather subdued. Similarly, although a number of charismatic hasidic rabbis may have been regarded by their followers and possibly even by themselves as potential candidates for the role of messiah, such fancies failed to be formulated as actual claims.

Orthodox Judaism did continue to adhere to the dogma of a personal messiah, defending the concept repeatedly in various controversies with modernist opponents. On one occasion, it even became a central issue in a lawsuit. The suit was brought in 1864 by an anti-Semitic Catholic priest, Sebastian Brunner, against Leopold Kompert, the publisher of a Jewish periodical in Vienna. This periodical had published an essay by the Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz arguing that the carrier of the messianic mission spoken of in the prophecies of Isaiah was the Jewish people and not an individual person. Graetz's interpretation, according to the priest, amounted to a denial of a central tenet of Orthodox Judaism as well as of Christianity.

Two experts were called in behalf of the defendant: Isaak Noah Mannheimer, the modern preacher of the Vienna Jewish community, and its Orthodox rabbi, Eliezer Horowitz. Both testified to the effect that although messianism was a central Jewish tenet, the details—including the issue of a personal messiah—were open to legitimate debate. An outcry thereupon arose against such latitudinarianism. Typically enough, it was orchestrated by the two leaders of modern Orthodoxy in Germany, Azriel Hildesheimer (then residing in Hungary) and Samson Raphael Hirsch. It was in this curious way that Orthodoxy came explicitly to reaffirm its adherence to a fundamentalist conception of the personal messiah.

If the Orthodox could thus boast of carrying on an unbroken tradition, their claim would scarcely bear critical examination. In fact, even with the Orthodox, adherence to the messianic tenet was becoming a formality; the old longing for redemption, conditioned as it had been by the sociopolitical status of Jewry and bound up with its entire religious constitution, was on its way to becoming a mere abstract dogma. Thus Rabbi Moshe Sofer, rebutting the argument of Reformers that belief in a messianic deliverance was impeding efforts by Jews to be accepted by the state as citizens, declared that the longing for redemption stemmed not from any sense of material deprivation from which Jews hoped to be liberated but rather from an aspiration to spiritual elevation.

This statement, originally perhaps no more than an apologetic device, in the course of time became literally true. For the Orthodox no less than their Reform-minded opponents came to envisage the alleviation of their material disabilities not in a return to their ancient homeland but rather in the expansion of their foothold in the lands of their present sojourn. The degree to which the changed sociopolitical circumstances of Jewry had sapped messianism of its vitality could be seen no less in Orthodox dogmatism than in the watereddown, universalistic exegeses of Reform theologians.

The overt neutralization of messianism and even its denial did not, however, imply the demise of its influence. So basic a belief was bound to leave traces in the mentality of later generations, estranged though they were from its formal concepts. True, traditional and modern times are divided by the intervening process of secularization, often conceived of as obliterating all tokens of tradition, especially those connected with the tenets and prescriptions of religion. But this is in fact a misreading of the nature of secularization, under whose auspices outmoded religious patterns may be abandoned but often only after the underlying emotional impulses have been transferred to more timely objectives.

For example, historians who have dealt with the disproportionate part played by Jews in modern socialist movements have pointed repeatedly to a possible link between Jewish messianism and the socialist idea, both of which promise a this worldly solution to the problems of the oppressed and the disinherited. A similar affinity has been proposed between Jews and other avant-garde movements striving for a better future for mankind. Though such suggestions are hardly susceptible of proof, neither should they be dismissed as pure fantasy. Traces of a culturally inherited mentality may be present and active without the carriers of this mentality being conscious of it.

It is true that the Jewish champions of socialism and other such movements have seldom if ever linked their chosen ideas with their Jewishness; some, such as Karl Marx, would have scorned the very idea. And it is also true that the marginal position of the Jews in most societies to which they gained access in the wake of their emancipation may have impelled them to join movements bent upon reforming or even revolutionizing social conditions generally. Still, the operation of such motives does not exclude the contribution of less obvious but no less potent forces deriving from an inherited mentality. Does not the sheer prophetic pathos revealed by some of the modern Jewish social reformers and revolutionaries indicate an influx of energy from a hidden, premodern source?

Obviously the tracing of a Jewish influence in the actions of people operating within the arena of non-Jewish society, often after having renounced their ties with their Jewish background, is a delicate and highly speculative exercise. We are on firmer ground in surmising a messianic impetus behind the ideas and ideologies of Jews who set out to realize their vision of a just society within the Jewish sphere itself.

The early Zionist pioneers neglected the religious tradition of their forefathers no less radically than did their socialist peers; they may have also derived their socialist doctrines and utopian fancies from the same sources as did other followers of Marx. But by fixing the locus of their ideals in the ancient homeland, the scene of the long-awaited messianic denouement, they revealed their indebtedness to tradition. In fact, this indebtedness was not just an implicit one. The ideological pronouncements of the early Zionists, convinced that their struggle for a just Jewish society was extending the legacy of the Hebrew prophets of old, often carried explicit messianic overtones.

It could be said that the selective fashion in which secular Zionists related to Jewish tradition in general and messianism in particular—retaining only the connection with the ancient homeland and whatever could be integrated into the vision of a nationally grounded culture, while rejecting all the rest—was no less reductive than the universalistic reinterpretation of the liberal religious reformers. Still, there was a difference. What Reform provided was (to use the terminology of

Kael Mannheim) a new ideology, one which served to vindicate a sociopolitical position already or son to be achieved. The Zionist vision, on the other hand, was a utopia, the achievement of which called for an unwavering commitment in the face of extremely great difficulties and repeated setbacks. It is a historical fact that these requirements were met, and more than met. Even in its derivative form, perhaps only in its derivative form, Jewish messianism revealed its true dynamic power.

In the last analysis, what facilitated the repeated permutations of Jewish messianism in modern times was the continuing oscillation in the sociopolitical status of the Jews. The promise of civic emancipation led to an enervation of the messianic emotion; but the granting of emancipation, and the subsequent disappointment at its failure to "solve" the problem of Jewish existence in the Diaspora, opened the way to a recovery of mes-

sianism's hidden potential.

A CRITICAL look at the effects of emancipation was initiated as early as the 1860's by such perceptive thinkers as Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer and the socialist Moses Hess. The latter expounded upon the meaning of Jewish social disabilities despite the fact of emancipation, while the former, committed to the unimpaired validity of Jewish tradition, argued that civic liberation could not substitute for national liberation but should rather be understood as a phase in the divinely promoted

scheme of redemption.

Both these thinkers evolved a proto-Zionist vision, Hess of a secular and Kalischer of a religious coloration, and both regarded themselves as legitimate interpreters of the messianic tradition. As a modern thinker Hess was of course unimpeded by dogmatic commitments and felt free to select from the messianic tradition whatever tallied with his imagination. Kalischer had to grapple with the fundamentalist concepts, and the result of his struggle was a remarkable compromise. He retained the dogma of a personal messiah but postponed the date of his arrival to a later point in the redemptive process, while the immediate steps to be taken—that is, the ingathering of the people in its homeland-were understood by him to be a human assignment.

At the time, both these views were regarded as highly idiosyncratic. They had to lead a kind of subterranean existence until well into the 1880's, when in the wake of emerging anti-Semitism in Germany and bloody pogroms in Russia a more critical attitude toward emancipation gained currency in the West, while in the East Jews despaired of ever achieving it. Zionism, as a way out of this predicament, now acquired fresh credibility with substantial sectors of the Jewish community in the East and with some groups in the West as well, even though (as its opponents were quick to point out) it failed to offer an immediate solu-

tion to the pressing problems of the present. In that sense Zionism remained a utopia; that despite this it succeeded in retaining the fidelity of its adherents was due to the widespread belief in its divinely or historically predetermined character—an unmistakable indication of its genetic connection with the messianic tradition.

Still. Zionism's clear historical background notwithstanding, there was never any lack of attempt to present it as something removed from messianic connotations of any sort. Paradoxically, such attempts were often prompted by the desire to gain for the movement the support of Orthodox circles that still adhered to the formal tenets of fundamentalism and looked askance at Zionism for its more or less overt trespassing on traditional messianic ground. To meet this objection, Orthodox Zionists, defying the conception of Rabbi Kalischer and his followers, presented Zionism as a mere rescue operation designed to benefit deprived sections of Jewry and having nothing whatsoever to do with messianism.

The effectiveness of this argument may well be doubted. The practical aspect of the Zionist enterprise—providing a haven for refugees—evolved only in later stages of development. Initially, when the very practicability of the enterprise was still in doubt, a commitment to it demanded reserves of endurance and self-sacrifice that could only come out of an almost irrational belief in its historical necessity, a belief nourished in turn by some variant of the messianic tradition.

WITH the establishment in 1948 of the Wescular state of Israel, the messianic issue would seem to have lost all actual point. The leaders of the new country, though imbued with the messianic pathos of Zionist ideology, set out to conduct the affairs of state according to rational principles, granting Jewish tradition only a partial and in many respects an emblematic role. But then, in the wake of the Six-Day War of 1967, in a dialectical turn of history, there arose in Israel a new, quasi-fundamentalist messianism, one that has claimed for itself an authority to determine major policies relating to the fate of the country.

The term "quasi-fundamentalist" seems justified here since, unlike their Diaspora forebears, the proponents of this new trend, the leaders of Gush Emunim, are hardly the passive adherents of an abstract messianic concept but rather men and women of political action, who are impelled by the belief that the determination of Israel's geographical boundaries is a matter of messianic significance. Given this belief, it is considered unnecessary by them to weigh all the possible consequences of actions taken to further their goals, since those goals have in any event been ratified by the force of divine will.

The danger of granting such people a leading influence in the conduct of the state has been

clearly enough recognized. But in reaction to them their opponents have gone so far in the other direction as to formulate a revised view of Zionist history that denies the role of traditional messianism altogether. Obviously such a view is contradicted by historical fact, and as a strategy aimed at countering the influence of Gush Emunim it is doomed to failure.

Zionism need feel no embarrassment over its association with Jewish messianism, understood as the longing for regained independence in one's own country. This was, as we have seen, the common feature of Jewish messianism in all its premodern variants, and was so transmitted to later generations. That the Jewish national movement was deeply nourished from this source can be seen in the collective popular reaction to some of the decisive events in Zionist history—the appearance of Theodor Herzl, the promulgation of the Balfour Declaration, the installation of a Jew, Sir Herbert Samuel, as the first High Commissioner under the British Mandate, and the 1947 decision of the United Nations in favor of a Jewish state. Contemporaries invariably described the climate created by these events as messianic, no doubt because they were identified in the popular mind as steps toward the coveted goal, the restoration

of Jewish self-rule in the ancient Jewish homeland.

True, more far-reaching expectations of a religious, national, and social character were also attached to the hoped-for culmination of the historical process. Yet about the desirability of these objectives there was never any unanimity. On the contrary, these particular goals became bones of contention among factions and parties struggling with one another in democratic fashion for cultural and political preeminence. A dissonant tone has been introduced into this legitimate contest by the faction now claiming fundamentalist messianic warrant for its own political objectives. But the proper response to this claim cannot be a repudiation of the historical connection of Zionism with messianism.

THE political challenge represented by the new fundamentalism can in the last resort be met only on the ground of politics. But the ideological component of the new fundamentalism calls also for an appropriate ideological response. Such a response is, indeed, a historical imperative, lest by ceding this ground to the fundamentalists the Jewish people come indeed to pay a heavy price for their lasting commitment to the messianic idea.

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Contemporary Hermeneutics and Self-Views on the Relationship between State and Land

URIEL TAL, 2"1

lEditor's note: The premature death of Dr. Uriel Tal was a tragic loss to the scholarly community, and to the larger world of men and women committed to humanitarian concerns of which the author was a prominent champion; he insisted throughout his lifetime on concerning himself with the things that matter most, the monumental ideas which, he believed, imprint history with their train of consequences. Of late, the Land of Israel loomed ever larger as such an idea, so Tal trained his scholarly sights on how it was becoming a formative factor in the contemporary range of ideologies that motivate Israel's intellectuals as well as its politics. He reported his findings in several arenas of public debate, both written and oral, including the chapter that follows, which was prepared originally in 1982 as part of the International Colloquium in Memory of the Late Professor Jacob L. Talmon. Shortly before he died, he gave permission to have it reproduced here. We gladly include it, despite some lacunae in the manuscript which the author left with us before he died.

Taking as his starting point Peter Berger's sociology of societal crisis, which posits the decisive role of "religious symbolizations" that direct mass movements at such times. Tal surveys contemporary treatises that center on the critical question of whether "our era is one of eschatological fulfillment or even apocalyptic salvation, or are we in the realm of historical time?" His essay provides a guide to the ideological debate underlying the headlines of today's newspapers, as he surveys the essays, bulletins, tracts, and speeches of representatives of the State of Israel's various parties, from Gush Emunim (on the one hand) to Oz Veshalom (on the other), for both of whom the sacrality of the Land is still an issue that commands political action in one way or another. His findings lead him to survey the relationship between theology and politics, and to conclude with a statement of "the dilemma of political theology" by which categories of history are transformed into political mythology, with consequences—either destructive or redemptive, depending on one's perspective—for actual societies engaged in the historical process.]

I. Introduction

The texts which are dealt with in this treatise reflect two divergent trends in Jewish religious nationalism in Israel—one of political messianism and one of the politics of religious restraint. Both revolve about different assumptions regarding the way in which the fact of a now-existent State of Israel alters the Jew's historical relationship with the Land of Israel.

The first group of texts is characterized by the collection of essays entitled Eretz Nachalah ("Land Possessed as an Inheritance"), written, among others, by leading teachers and members of the Gush Emunim movement.1 They postulate that the Six Day War brought about radical changes in both our physical and metaphysical status; that the military victory was an astonishing and divine miracle; that the end of days-the eschatological era of redemption - has already begun and is being realized here and now. Using mystical terminology it is said that through the conquest of the Land Eretz Yisra'el has been redeemed from oppression by the Sitra Actra (literally, the "other side," or the "side of evil") and has entered the realm of all-embracing sanctity. Through the war, the Sbekbinab, the Divine Presence dwelling among us, was elevated from the dust, for it too had been in exile. Hence, if we were to return one single strip of Land to the Nations, we would give control back to the forces of evil.2 In this same strain, some of the leading participants in Nekudab (the journal of the settlements in the West Bank), interpret the latest campaign, the Shalom Hagalil War, as another sanctified war, another religious duty,3 while Israel's military presence in Southern Lebanon is interpreted as evidence of the divine promise to the holy congregation of Israel to own " ... every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread . . . from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be. . . . "

The second group of texts expresses the attitude of religious Zionists, such as the members of the Oz Veshalom movement, who oppose the stand of the Gush Emunim, yet also accept the Halakbab as the unquestionable binding authority in Judaism. They conceive the religious law as liberating the Jew from excesses of piety, zeal, and ecstasy. They argue that, ultimately, the mystification of social and political reality, as propounded by the Gush Emunim, is likely to retard the rational character of religious, social, and intellectual life, as well as the growth of an open society and of a democratic state. They are apprehensive of the possibility of a totalitarian political authority which could easily arise from fanaticism, and they warn of danger

to the moral character of the society, and of the loss of political realism and civil responsibility should politics be mystically consecrated.

The methodological point of departure used herein is similar to that used by Peter L. Berger in his studies of the social aspects of a theory of religion. He points out that one of the social functions of religion is the legitimization of "situations in terms of all-encompassing sacred reality." Accordingly, situations of crisis, of tension, of threat to realities previously taken for granted and to the stability of one's existence, are often characterized by the experience of spiritual ecstasy. While ecstasy is usually thought of in terms of an individual phenomenon, in times of crisis entire societies have been known to experience it. When crises, such as natural catastrophes, social upheavals, or wars, give rise to the use of violence, it is frequently "accompanied by religious symbolizations" interpreted in mystic, ecstatic, and often (as Thomas Luckmann would have it), self-imposed totalitarian forms of political culture.

At this point, Berger emphasizes that these observations do not imply a sociologically deterministic theory of religion; nor do they constitute a behavioristic oversimplification claiming that any religious system applied to social and political institutions is nothing but the reflection of socio-political needs. Rather, if religion functions as a consecrating agent for social and political structures, those structures turn into totalities, into nondemocratic or antidemocratic forms of political behavior. Berger points out that the interrelationship of society and politics, on the one hand, and of consecrating religion, on the other, is a dialectical one. Accordingly, in a particular historical development, a social process is the effect of religious ideation, while in another situation, the reverse may be the case.

This last point is of great significance in the study of the two different and opposing trends in religious Zionism-that of political messianism, which conceives of the State of Israel as a metahistorical phenomenon realized in concrete history, and that of political democracy, which conceives of the State of Israel as a historical phenomenon symbolizing, inter alia, metahistorical values. If human activity and the individual within the larger social reality are conceived not merely in terms of reacting functions, but also as acting factors-initiating, forming, conditioning their concrete "Lebenswelt" as the social phenomenologist Alfred Schutz emphasized? - we may assume that the dichotomy, if not schism, between these trends cannot be reduced to a function of social background only. Indeed, the social backgroundethnic origin, social stratification, age group, economic status, professions, education, and cultural milieu-of the members of both trends is practically identical. Hence, one of the major factors creating the split between these two camps may be what Berger calls "religious ideation." Or, it may be defined as the hermeneutical interpretation of the same religious norms according to different, sometimes opposing, interpretations, which are chosen, applied, and accepted by the believer. The ability to develop alternative explications of the same source and then to accept the yoke or consequences thereof, is perhaps one of the major strengths of Halakhic Judaism. A significant example is the drastic difference of positions taken by Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli and the late Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook.

CONTEMPORARY HERMENEUTICS AND SELF-VIEWS

What, then, is the historical meaning of the State of Israel as understood by religious Zionists; what is the function of time and space in political realities? Is our time - our era - one of eschatological fulfillment or even of apocalyptical salvation, or are we in the realm of historical time? As far as the Land itself is concerned, is the sanctity of space, the domain in which the State of Israel expands, dependent on politically fixed boundaries, or are territorial boundaries conceived in terms of historical, hence changing, space?

II. Political Messianism

By its own self-definition, the messianic trend is radical and uncompromising. It can be found in the Gush Emunim, among large sections of the religious Zionist youth movements, in public schools, high school wesbipot, student bodies, military units of yesbroot, settlers in the territories, and members and supporters of movements such as Greater Eretz Yisra'el, the Techiyab political party, and others.10

This trend interprets time in terms of a metaphysical fulfillment. This meaning of time is explicated in rabbinic interpretations of the difference between this world and the messianic age. The Babylonian sage, Samuel, asserts (Ber. 34b) that the only distinction between this world and the messianic age is "political subjugation," or the "subjugation of the exiles," meaning that the messianic age is a historical and political concept which lends itself to embodiment in concrete reality. It is not primarily a cosmic concept. As Maimonides emphasized, in the era of political redemption the King Messiah should not be expected to perform wonders (Hilkhot Melakbim 20:3). It follows that cosmic, drastic changes in the order of creation, the universe, and nature, which are prophesied for the final stage of redemption do not refer to the messianic age, and should not be expected at the

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current stage of political messianism, for they are related to a distant, unknown future in the world to come (cf. San. 99a).

Therefore, according to Rabbi Shlomo Goren's Torat Hamoadim11 — which seems to be a major source for this trend's orthodox political philosophy—such prophecies of cosmic redemption are not yet relevant to our time; rather, our political, military, concrete, worldly situation constitutes the beginning of the messianic age. Hence, according to Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, we are already in the era of the Revealed End, and "we affirm the absolute certitude of the appearance of the redemption now. Nothing here is in the realm of the secret or hidden." Ezekiel's prophecy, "O mountains of Israel ye shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people of Israel, for they are at hand to come," renewed and reaffirmed in the eschatological yearnings of talmudic sages (as in Sanhedrin 98a), is—according to Rabbi Aviner and a growing number of political believers—being realized before our eyes. For indeed the agricultural settlement in our Land is generously bearing fruit.¹²

The thrust of this approach is that the mystique of the redemption has become tangible, concrete, and actual rather than covert. The commencement of the messianic age is revealed in the conquest of the Land, political sovereignty, and the ingathering of the exiles; only later will eschatological changes take place on a cosmic scale. Hence, our days should be understood in light of the Exodus from Egypt and the conquest by Joshua, for then too the events took place in a natural way, inaugurating the times of redemption through victorious warfare.¹³

A similar interpretation of redemptive time is related to the talmudic sage Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba who said in the name of Rabbi Johanan, "All the prophets prophesized only concerning the messianic age." This concept is now interpreted as a significant step forward in political messianism, as it claims that all prophecies, including those about changes of a cosmic nature, relate to concrete redemptive times—at which we have allegedly arrived. Indeed, Zvi Yehudah Kook and an ever-expanding number of disciples claim that since we are already in the New Era, in the era of personal salvation and national redemption, an existential political situation of totality, rather than of tolerance, has been inaugurated. This totality of holiness which now engulfs all aspects of reality was expounded in a symptomatic collection of sermons called Hama'alot Mima'amakim (published after the 1973 Yom Kippur War by Yeshivat Har Etzion): "We have to see the greatness of this hour in its biblical dimension, and it can be seen only through the messianic perspective . . . only in the light of the Messiah. . . . Why did

the war of Gog and Magog come?... After the establishment of the Kingdom of Israel the war can have only one significance: the purification, refining, and cleansing of the congregation of Israel."14

The second category of historical self-understanding is space. Space undergoes an exegetical reformulation similar to that of time. It assumes the form of and encompasses sanctified localities and neighborhoods and venerated sites such as burial grounds, gravestones, walls, and trees. It is the setting for events that took place or are believed to have taken place in the holy, promised, Land.

In recent years, the interpretation of the holiness of space has transcended the original halakhic meaning. According to the original meaning (stated for example in M. Kelim 1:6), the Land is holy because only there is it possible to fulfill the mitzvot bateluyot baianetz, i.e. to observe the religious and ritual laws concerning agriculture, socio-economic customs and ways of life related to rural economy. Now, however, following ancient or medieval folklore and folkways, the Land itself becomes holy rather than merely pointing to a metaspace; the space has actually become the incarnation of metahistorical holiness.

Among the sources of inspiration and political justification for this concept are biblical traditions related to the patriarchs. We read in Genesis of Abraham passing through the Land to Shechem, or Moreh; Sarah dying in Kiryat Arba ("the same is Hebron") and being buried in the cave of Machpelah. Eventually the land, the fields, the caves, the trees, the rocks and "all the borders round about" were "made sure unto Abraham for a possession," and promised by the Lord "unto thy seed." According to this perception, those places have become a metahistorical reality. Once these primordial roots are uncovered, the sanctification of place becomes a practical, political, not simply a theological, necessity."

A systematic and dogmatic point of departure in this matter is found in Nachmanides' notes to the fourth positive commandment of Maimonides' Sefer Hamitzvot, the code enumerating the commandments, and his commentary to Numbers 33:53, 54: "And you shall take possession of the Land and settle in it, for I have given the Land to you to possess it." Nachmanides teaches that "we are commanded to take possession of the Land... we should not leave it in the hands of any other people or allow it to lie in waste." The essence of this commandment, in the words of Nachmanides, is "that we are commanded to enter the Land, to conquer its cities, and to settle our tribes there... for this is the commandment of conquest...."

This source is cited as a binding normative authority in many studies, sermons, and treatises, including the Independence Day prayer book widely used by observant and nonobservant Jews and, recently, in a most significant ruling of the Council of the Chief Rabbinate headed by Rabbi Shlomo Goren and endorsed by Prime Minister Begin. Here, the oft-debated prohibition against withdrawing from the territories and surrendering parts of the Holy Land once they are conquered is strongly emphasized. In its session of March 1979, the Council ruled that this prohibition rests on the biblical commandment "... show them no mercy" lo techonnem. Deuteronomy 7:2 teaches that when the children of Israel were to have conquered the Land and dispossessed its inhabitants, they were commanded "thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them" (velo techonnem). The Talmud (AZ 20 aff.) as well as Maimonides (Hilkhot Akkum 10:3-6, the rules concerning relations with gentiles or idolaters) interpret this phrase in several ways, among them the one emphasized by the Council: "You shall not give them a place of settlement on the soil." Here, techonnem is derived from cbnb, "to encamp," rather than from cbnn, "to show mercy." Referring to the "Covenant Between the Pieces" (Gen. 15) and subsequent talmudic interpretations (BB 191ab, and AZ 53b), the Council, led by Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren and opposed by Chief Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, added that the prohibition against ceding any of the occupied territories is derived from the fact that the possession of the Land is a divinely ordained inheritance. Hence Rabbi Goren and the Council overruled the opinion that even according to the Bible, parts of the Land could be surrendered to non-Jewish political powers, as with Solomon's gift of twenty Galilean cities to Hiram (I Kings), for in II Chronicles we learn the contrary-that the cities which Hiram had restored to Solomon, Solomon built them and caused the children of Israel to dwell there."16

Thus, according to this trend, a total and uncompromising sanctity rests upon the current boundaries; we are in the era of messianic redemption, with the splendor and the glory and the total normative authority of eschatological salvation realized in our political situation.

III. Politics of Religious Restraint

The opposing trend in religious Zionism argues that contemporary political reality should be understood by applying rational and socio-ethical self-restraint, and that this approach is precisely what the *Halakbab*, the rabbinic law in its historical unfolding, requires. The proponents of this second trend tend to be moderate and to urge compromise, as far as politics are concerned, for the sake of a historical rather than a metahistorical self-understanding. They are found in the Oz Veshalom movement, among members of the renewed Torah Ve'avodah which hopes to revive the religious Labor Zionist tradition, in the religious kibbutz movement, among members of the recently founded Netivot Shalom ("Paths of Peace") movement, and also within circles mentioned in connection with the first trend.

A systematic point of departure, as Ephraim E. Urbach pointed out years ago, 17 is the interpretation of the Halakbab as a factor which throughout history has freed Judaism from an excess of ecstasy or asceticism, from political romanticism, from the totality of time and space structured as myths. Accordingly, it is now argued that a mystification of political circumstances cannot but disrupt the peace process in the Middle East. While the sanctity of the Land is firmly maintained, territorial boundaries are to be conceived as historical phenomena, as results of political and strategic as well as moral considerations, and hence, if necessary, subject to change.

From these primary assumptions, a restraining policy condemning extremism as being contrary to the spirit of true Judaism is derived. The Oz Veshalom movement - in its published Principles, and according to its leading members such as Moshe Unna, Uriel Simon, Yosef Walk-advocates territorial and political concessions rather than fanaticism and radicalism.18 Ethical rather than militant criteria are emphasized, due to the belief that prolonged imposed rule over ethnic or religious minorities such as the Arab population of the Land of Israel cannot but distort the democratic and ethical foundations of Jewish society. The personal and moral integrity of the rulers themselves, as of our youth, is at stake. Hence compromise, strongly commended in items 3 and 4 of the Principles, is understood as a religious value, as kibbutz member D. Elazar has shown referring to the Talmudic explication (San. 6b) of Zechariah's saying, "Execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates." Precedent for compromise as a peaceful solution to conflicts of interest is adduced in several halakhically strict juridical matters (Hill bot Sanbedrin 2:7 and the Sbulban Arukbis Ch. M. 12:2). As Uriel Simon points out, Abraham practiced compromise in order to make peace between his shepherds and those of Lot. The adoption of this policy for the sake of peace was rewarded by God's reconfirmation, in Genesis, of Abraham's right to the whole of the Land.19

Also, as Mordecai Breuer has pointed out, 20 from a strict halakhic point of view, there is no justification for the argument against territorial compromise if such compromise would indeed seriously enhance the peace

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process in the Middle East and thus the prospect of saving lives. Building his hermeneutical elaboration on authorities such as Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook and Rabbi Abraham Yeshaya Karelitz, Breuer shows that the lo techonnem clause, the prohibition from giving or selling land in Eretz Yisra'el to non-Jews, does not necessarily extend to the question of territorial surrender, especially if political and military experts are convinced that such an act may help avoid bloodshed. Moreover, in contrast to the late Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook, and to Rabbis Abraham Kahana-Shapira and Ya'akov Ariel Stiglitz who ruled that the conflict between Jews and Arabs is subsumed under the category of "religious persecution," which categorically calls for martyrdom, Breuer warns against the abuse of that motive. He says that inciting true believers to undertake unnecessary hazards simply out of zealous passion and ecstasy should be avoided. Referring to major halakhic authorities such as Maimonides (Hilkbot Avodab Zarab 5:2, 3, 4), Breuer argues, as does Rabbi Yishai Yovel,21 that the Jewish-Arab conflict is hardly motivated by what the Halakbab calls "religious persecution," the attempt of non-Jews (in this case, Moslems) to force Jews to transgress their law and/or to apostatize (here to Islam). Hence from the Shulchan Arukh, (Y.D. 157), we infer that what is required in this conflict is not blind martyrdom but a readiness to compromise, albeit with a firm stand on the Jews' right to the Land of Israel.

It is this understanding of the calling to fulfill the Halakbab in a socioethical way which leads these religious Zionists to a historical rather than
a metahistorical concept of time and space. Time is interpreted in the spirit
of Maimonides' restraining teachings about the messianic era. Accordingly,
the sages and the prophets await the days of the Messiah (Hilkbot Melakbim
12:3) not that they might rule over the world, nor that they might lord
it over other nations, but "that they might be free to engage in the study
of the Torah and its wisdom," thus establishing a better society firmly built
on the Law. This means that moral and intellectual achievements, not the
exercise of military might over a huge non-Jewish population, will eventually inaugurate messianic time.

The same criteria, and more, are applied to space. Nachmanides' frequently quoted critical comment on Maimonides—"we shall not leave it in the hand of others..."—is not necessarily and exclusively to be applied to maximal boundaries. As Rabbi Yishai Yovel points out, Scripture records a variety of boundaries for Eretz Yisra'el, the Promised Land, thus teaching us that it is not the changing political boundaries but the Land itself which is holy.²² For example, the boundaries of Canaan at the time of the sons

of Noah and their generations are not those promised to Abraham and his descendants at the "Covenant Between the Pieces" (Gen. 10:19; 15:18-21), and both of these differ from the boundaries promised to the children of Israel in the desert (Ex. 23:31); or prior to entering the Land (Deut. 1:7; 33:2-4). There is a further discrepancy between the various promises in the Pentateuch and those for the End of Days provided in Ezekiel (47:13). None of these boundaries coincides with those the tribes were to inherit by lot according to Numbers (34:2-12); nor are they the same as those of the inheritance and settlement found in Joshua (12) or Judges (3, 4). And none of these boundaries even compare with those of the second inheritance at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah or in the days of King Jannai and Agrippa I. Rabbi Yishai Yovel agrees with others, some of whom support policies quite different from his in matters of religion and state relations, that according to Maimonides (Hilkbot Terumot 1:5) the second inheritance is legally binding rather than the first; and if so, he concludes, Samaria, for instance, would not be included in the halakhically fixed boundaries, since it was not conquered by those who returned from Babylonia and was only briefly held by the Hasmoneans.

These religious Zionists are not alone in opposing the essential features of political extremism. They oppose the attribution of absolute sanctity to phenomena that they see as historical rather than metahistorical, and, thus, subject to temporary change in matters such as territorial boundaries. They are against the blurring of rational and critical thought by an excess of political romanticism and pious sermonizing. They are against taking a personal mystical experience—no matter how rich and elevating it may be—and transferring it to political events, as this may lead to undemocratic and totalitarian policies, confusing coercion with freedom, indoctrination with education, and radical nationalism (both secular and religious) with democratic national policy.

IV. Forms of Political Messianic Experience: The Conceptual Framework

Texts such as we have seen expressing political messianic attitudes and policies reflect a relatively new phase in the development of Zionism and, therefore, deserve special focus in the last section of this treatise.

First, it is necessary to keep in mind that the authors of texts like these
-the members of religious Zionist movements and of the Gush Emunim,

the religious members of the Techiyah party and of the Greater Palestine Movement, the religious settlers in Judea and Samaria, teachers in religious schools and yesbivab high schools-do not constitute a monolithic block. Among them can be found a number of approaches to the Land and to the State of Israel; some may even be changing their minds, especially when confronting the problems of their relationship to the Arab population or when pondering the latest war.24

Also, it is important to keep in mind, when studying their writings, that some believers tend to be reluctant to reveal their innermost creeds, convictions, and feelings to the general public or to the noninitiated. This reluctance is found not only among believers with romantic or mystical inclinations, as one would expect, but also in the realm of halakhic discourse, especially where religious motivations have political implications.25

Thus, some of the spiritual leaders of the Gush Emunim advocate deemphasizing-for the time being-their conviction that Southern Lebanon is actually the patrimony of the tribes of Naphtali and Asher, and therefore belongs to greater Palestine no less than any other place in Israel.26 They also play down, at this time, their contention that, in the light of the organic union of Israel the Land, and Israel the People, the liberal idea of equal rights, independent of ethnic or religious affiliation, can hardly be applied in a Jewish state. Civil rights, it would follow, should be granted to non-Jews only if and when they acknowledge the Noahide Laws according to their Judaic source. [Ed. note: i.e., the covenant said to be made between God and Noah, entailing certain universalistic precepts, such as the establishment of justice and the ban on murder.] Also, they suggest that the non-lew should be entitled to civil rights only as a Ger Tosbau, that is, a sojourner, a stranger in the Land who has renounced paganism and observes the seven Noahide Laws, and provided only that the non-Jew wishes to be an Israeli citizen "because of a tremendous admiration for the greatness and holiness of our nation," or if he or she demonstrates "acknowledgement of the great mission of the people of Israel." The non-Jew should not be granted the status of a Ger Tzedek who is a "proselyte of righteousness" and who would therefore be entitled to rights and duties equal to the Israeli Jew.27

And, finally, there are those who hint at a further position: their conviction that "the continuation of our existence in the Land is dependent upon the emigration of the Arabs," for we read, "They have no place here." Hence, in wartime one should not differentiate between warrior and civilian, for both are Israel's enemy.28 In short, the people of Israel are commanded to be holy-but not necessarily to be moral or humane according to ordinary criteria. The moral teachings which have been accepted by mankind, in principle at least, do not commit the Jew, who was chosen to be beyond them.29

In order to discern some of the emotive and noetic forms in which hermeneutics like these are made possible, it should be kept in mind that political messianism is not limited to the realm of personal, communal, or sectarian salvation. Rather, we are facing a historical process called by Jacob Talmon "the new dispensation" amidst a modern society. In this divine order of worldly affairs, religion and society are totally interdependent so that politics, like religion, tends "to embrace all walks of life." Therefore, the secular state is capable of restoring theocracy to its ancient glory, to its total authority. 10 We are presently facing the emergence of highly articulated and consciously conceptualized forms of consecration of the Land, the Nation, the State, the Wars-in fact of everything and everybody Jewish. A total and all-embracing sacredness of reality-a "mystical realism"-has become a growing factor in Israeli life, education, and politics. This development has a dualistic structure for, while the Gush Emunim trend bestows mystic meaning upon reality, it is not entirely devoid of practical rationality; while it enflames emotions, it is not entirely devoid of sobriety; though it incites to enthusiasm, it does not ignore the tactical need for temporary restraint. It bestows a sense of holiness upon everything and hence embraces even secularism, not on its own merits but as an integral part of God's creation, to be redeemed and converted once the true light is seen and acknowledged by all secularists.

Mystical realism, then, constitutes an organic union unfolding in the process of redemption, here and now. The mystical component of the union is said to be experienced in reality, while reality is said to be experienced in the mystique of being. Both are to be sensed in living action, in the joy of the mirzvab - of the devotional fulfillment of a total normative commitment; in the daily renewed experience of the miracle of creation, but equally in the harshness of fear, suffering, pain, sorrow and death; in the devastation -yet also the splendor-of the sanctified wars of Israel.

One of the major expressions of the duality of "mystical realism" is found in the intertwining of the need for personal growth with the commitment to national expansionism. Both reflect a deeply felt urge to escape from a sense of confinement; both are seen as a means to achieving a closer, truer, more authentic participation in the cosmic dimensions of one's concrete existence; both embody the act of the purgation of the soul

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and of the purification of the Land, both symbolize the union of time—the messianic future realized now—and of space—the political sovereignty over greater Palestine realized here. Eternity is reflected in current time while cosmology is reflected in the settled Land. The conquest of wider borders transcends the limitations of time, while the bestowal of eternal holiness upon the present confirms the absolute consecration of historical sites, soil, trees, stones, walls, waters, tombstones and burial plots.

The individual, the pious, the devoted, is seized by rapturous zeal, yet also by a sense of bliss, joy, happiness, or overflowing light and radiance; one's entire being longs to fuse in glorious communion with peers, congregation, community, settlement, movement, people, and nation. At the same time, divine inspiration emanates from the Land. The Land embodies God's sublime presence with overpowering clarity, with beauty and glory. At the same time, one is neither stricken dumb with amazement, nor overwhelmed by awe and rapture. Rather, this is an activating, invigorating, and exciting ecstasy, an exaltation and rapture of ultimate union with the Land, the Nation, and Jewish statehood.

Thus, the realm of secularism is by no means neglected. On the contrary, it is only through natural vitality, through the enjoyment of exuberant health, through the participation in the cosmic energy that pulsates in all corners of the world—everywhere—but most of all, in the holiness of the Land, that the divine purpose can be realized. Profane action and divine creation, physical power and divine might, warfare and waging the war of the Lord, have now become forms of worship and sacrifice not less than the ordinary ritual ceremonies. It is at this point that the term "possession" also acquires its dual meaning: the devotional settler on recently conquered land is possessed by his messianic zeal, while his zeal transforms the conquest into redemption, and temporary borders into eternal horizons, thus realizing the notion of eretz nachalab, of possessing the Holy Land by inheritance.

Like Jacob Talmon's perceptive statement about the language typical of "Messianic Nationalism," the articulation of this kind of mystical realism constitutes a "social slant" of theological modes of thinking. Accordingly, political messianism functions as "a system of social and moral truths expressing God's thinking. . . and when embodied in institutions, constitutes the Kingdom of God."

Indeed, the cognitive form of Zionistic political messianism is structured quite similarly; it constitutes a duality of intuitive knowledge and practical rationality. While the main source of knowledge, belief and intuition, is above pragmatic reasoning, its realization requires the use of pragmatism and, to some extent, discursive thinking. Thus, the cognitive dualism is expressed in the immediacy of experience, the illumination of insight, the intimacy of participation in divine creation, the confidence in revelatory apprehension, on the one hand; and in the bestowal of total holiness upon all aspects of statehood, including power, violence, warfare, and the rule over non-Jewish populations, on the other.

For the political messianists, the knowledge of divine purpose, revealed to the initiated and manifested in all worldly affairs, is accepted as the primary mode of political consciousness. This source of knowledge conditions—or controls, or if necessary, substitutes, for—all other sources such as logical discourse, factual, experiential knowledge, and even a priori transcendental and critical cognition; hence the total superiority and indisputable normative authority this trend claims.

As a result, a process of meaning reversal has taken place. The symbol has been transformed into substance and the substance has been elevated to the realm of the sacred. Political hermeneutics interprets symbolic as well as prophetic texts literally, and is uncompromising in the meaning it derives not only from halakhic texts but even from literary, legendary, poetic, and edifying texts that have not previously enjoyed legally binding authority.

Moreover, the symbol participates in the concrete object to which it previously referred so that the difference between matter and form, material and spirit, sign and signified, past and future, intrinsic and extrinsic, perception and imagination, mundane and spiritual, essential and accidental, is dissolved; the hidden meaning is revealed and the apparent revelation is concealed in everything. This entire framework embodies the new position in which political messianists find themselves.

Pious, devotional believers no longer stand at a distance in respect to themselves, to the Land, to the Nation or to the State; they cease to accept the multiplicity of meanings and the complexity of existence. An all-inclusive totality reduces every phenomenon to its singular level of signification, creating a feeling of absolute certainty, of divine justification, of joy and of peace amidst an agonizing historical reality of antagonism, conflict, and warfare.

V. Closing Remarks-on the Contextual Framework

In contemporary historical, political and religious thought, there is a growing tendency to link social reality and theology. A significant current in this development, especially in recent years, has been "political theology," which in itself includes a variety of trends. Semantically all are derived from one root, from the original expression as voiced by Terentius Varro, which is discussed in Augustine's City of God. Structurally, political theology takes mythic forms, contrary to the forms of critical rationalism, on the one hand, or of sheer metaphysics, on the other. Both language and form create a framework for the interpretation of the political community in terms of a divinized polis, even though its functions as such are secular, earthly, and concrete. Thus a dialectic structure evolves whereby secular socio-political needs are sacralized, while sacral, religious values are incorporated in secular, this-worldly affairs.

On this basis, political theology in our days has developed several systematic and dogmatic teachings.32 Some theologians consider the renewed term "political theology" a suitable framework for the awakening Third World and the protest movements against racial, ethnic, economic, or sexual discrimination. This trend is sometimes called "revolutionary theology," for it accords political theology the character of a liberation movement. For example, according to Paul Lehmann's The Transfiguration of Politics, religion should not be confined to the individual or to society, nor to intellectual historicism or critical demythologization, but should be politically involving, expressing civic and socio-ethical responsibility.

Others, such as Herbert W. Richardson and M. Darrol Bryant, consider political theology as a dialectical context for the constitutional separation of church and state, as opposed to the accepted historical interrelationship of religion and society. These dialectics have brought about a "civil religion" which enables a democracy to function in the light of sacred, social values, rooted in what Jonathan Edwards, back in the first half of the eighteenth century, called "America as God's Kingdom."

Still another trend-elaborated by Jürgen Moltmann and Johann B. Metz-considers political theology, in addition to its liberating function, as expressing a lesson to be learned from the historical experience of the Third Reich, an experience that was critically termed by Eric Voegelin, on the eve of World War II, "political religion." 11 As Jacob Talmon has shown, this entire development in the modern era is rooted in historical movements which at one and the same time prepared the ground for rationalism and irrationalism, political self-restraint and political messianism-that is, the Enlightenment, national Romanticism, and social Utopianism.

In the light of the interdisciplinary symposia on Religion and Political Society, held in Europe in 1970 and in Canada in 1974, which dealt with "the Enlightenment conceptions of rationalism and freedom . . . as principles for guiding political philosophy and theology today,"14 the dilemma of political theology may be summed up as follows: if religion is to be conscientiously relevant, it must be involved in socio-political life. Since the authority of religion is divine, and thus absolute, introducing religion into socio-political affairs frequently brings about the absolute sacralization of those affairs. As a result, political religions emerge which transform the categories of history-time and space-into categories of political myth. Thus, time and space transcend history with its concrete, empirical past and present, projecting politics into a future structured as the fulfillment of the past and as the realization of primordial, archaic myth. History is now understood as time and space reborn-hence, as metahistory.

Notes

1. Eretz-Nachalab-Zechutenu al Eretz Yura'el (Land . . . as an Inberitance -Our Right on the Land of Israel), Judah Shaviv, ed., (Youth Dept. of the Maidal, Jerusalem, 1976), 143 pp.

2. Ibid., pp. 111-12, the late Rabbi E. Hadaya, "Is it Permissible to Return Conquered Territory-All or part of it?" (from his article in Noism I); see also Gadolei Hatorab al Hachzarat Hashetachim (Rabbinical Authorities on Return of the Territories), (Bnei-Brak: 1980), p. 126. This pamphlet, published without name of editor or publisher, includes the expressions of rabbis, Chasidic leaders, leaders of Agudat Israel, et sim., on the prohibition of returning territories to non-Jews; some of the extracts seem to have been taken out of their context.

3. Netudab, Journal of the Settlements in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, published by the Association for Furthering the Colonization and Absorption in Judea, Samaria and Gaza Strip; Ofra, Doar Na Hills of Jerusalem. See, for example, Joel bin Nun, "Yesh gam Milchamah Musarit" ("There is also a Moral War"), Nehudab 47 (September 3, 1982), pp. 4, 5, 14. Also see Hagai Segal's interview of Rabbi Shlomo Aviner: "Leromem et Haruach" ("To Lift the Spirit"), Netudab 48 (1982), pp. 4, 5. Cf. Shmaryahu Arieli, Mishpat Hamilchamah (The Rules of War) (Jerusalem: Reuven Mass Pub., 1971), esp. the chapter: "The Wars of the State of Israel," pp. 107ff.

4. Deuteronomy 11:24; Joel Elitzur, "Hagam Levanon Hi Eretz-Yisra'el?" ("Is Lebanon also the Land of Israel?"), Nekudab 48, (the High Holidays' Issue of 1982), p. 12. A systematic and dogmatic definition of "the holiness of conquered areas according to Jewish Law," according to this trend is offered by Rabbi Shlomo Goren in the light of the Six Day War. He isolates the category of all areas and territories which were sanctified by the returnees from the Babylonian Exile, specifically with a view to the commandments that can be observed in the Land of Israel alone. The sanctity of such areas and territories continues to be valid and binding for our days and the days to come. This approach is based on Maimonides' Hilkbot Terumot, Chapter 1, Rule 5 and also on Chapter 1, Rule 2: "... the Land of Israel ... [denotes] each place conquered by the King of Israel or a prophet with the approval of the majority of Israelites, and this is called conquest by majority. ... "Cf. Rabbi S. Goren, Torat Hamo'adim (The Teachings of the Festivals), (Tel-Aviv. Abraham Zioni, 1964), p. 614. In the light of this approach see the detailed treatise by Rabbi Yigal Ariel on Trans-Jordan and the Golan in the Halakhah, Eretz Yarden Vehermonim (Land of Jordan and the Hermons), (Chaspit, Golan-Heights: The Golan Academy, 1979), 42 pp., especially: "... the second sanctity—the conquest by Ezra and the generations that followed," pp. 24ff.; also see there the map on the areas settled by the returnees from Babylon, p. 26.

5. Platform of Oz Veshalom (9 paragraphs); also see selected paragraphs of the "Platform" in Oz Vesbalom 3, pp. 15, 16. Moshe Unna "Mi Kove'a Adifuyot Le'umiot" ("Who determines National Priorities"), in Yedion Hachug Hara yoni-Medini Letsionut Datit (Bulletin of Oz Veshalom - Religious Zionists for Strength and Peace; henceforth: Yedion) 9 (November, 1977), p. 9 (reprinted from Hatsofeb, October 11, 1977); Uriel Simon, "Hahitnachalut Bihudah Uveshomron: Bechinah Musarit-Datit: ("The Settlement in Judea and Samaria-a Moral-religious Examination"), in Yedion 10, (1978), p. 4; Mordecai Breuer, "Hama'avak Leshalom Vehamachaneh Hadatit" ("The Struggle for Peace and the Religious Camp"), in Yedion 16 (1978), pp. 8-12. On the impact of these issues on parents of members of the religious Zionist youth movement "Bnei Akiva," see for example: Yedion 19 (June-August, 1979), pp. 4-15, and 21 (November-December 1979), pp. 3, 4; also Amudim, the Journal of The Religious Kibbutz, Vol. 27, No. 402 (1979), pp. 223-26. Cf. J. O'dea-Aviad, "The Messianic Problem," reprinted from the Jerusalem Post, in Yedion 16 (September-October, 1978), pp. 18-19. See also Z. Yaron, "A Criticism of 'Messianic Policy," in Immanuel 4 (1974), pp. 105-08.

 P. L. Berger, The Sacred Canopy – Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion, (Garden City, N.Y., 1967), pp. 44–47. See also P. Berger & T. Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality – A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge, (Norwich,

Penguin ed., 1979), pp. 122ff.

7. A. Schutz, "Some Structures of the 'Life World," in Collected Papers III, (The Hague, 1966), pp. 118-139. See also M. Natanson: "Alfred Schutz Symposium: The Pregivenness of Sociality," in D. Ihde & R. M. Zaner, eds., Interdisciplinary Phenomenology: Selected Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, No. 6, (The Hague, 1977), pp. 109ff.

8. H. G. Gadamer, Wabrbeit und Methode (Tübingen, 1965), II, 1, a, pp.

290ff.

9. U. Tal, "The Land and the State of Israel in Israeli Religious Life," in Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly, 76th Annual Convention, 38 (1976); pp. 1-

 See also idem, "Historical and Metahistorical Self-Views in Religious Zionism," in Self-Views in Historical Perspective in Egypt and Israel, S. Shamir, ed., (Tel Aviv, 1980), pp. 89–99.

10. Morasbab (Heritage) 9 (Jerusalem: Youth Department of the Mafdal, together with the Department for Religious Education and Culture in the Diaspora of the World Zionist Federation, Winter 1975), especially the part, "The Redemption of the People and the Land," pp. 8-65. The following are examples of selfexpression typical to this movement. Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, "Sha'ar ha-Aretz" ("Section: The Land') in Artzi (My Land), Journal for the Study of the Living Relationship between Israel and its Land in our Generation, 1, Jehudah Baharav, ed., (Jerusalem: Committee for the Deepening of the Land of Israel Consciousness, 1982), pp. 7-34. Also see Gush Emunim: Tokbnit-Av Lebityasbout Bibudah Uveshomron, (Gust-Emunim: Basic Plan for the Settlement in Judea and Samaria), n.d., p. 41; and Gush-Emunim: Harza'ab Letokbnit Hiryashvutit Bibudab Uvesbomron (Gush-Emunim: A Proposal for a Settlement Plan in Judea and Samaria), Jerusalem: Summer, 1979, p. 6. On Gush-Emunim in its beginnings see: Benny Gal, ed., Al-Emunim (Jerusalem, 1976), pp. 3-38; also Sefer Eretz Yisra'el Hasbelemab (The Greater Palestine Book), Ahron Ben Ami, ed., published by the Movement for Greater Palestine (Tel Aviv: S. Friedman Pub., 1977), Part one: "Israel's Right on its Land," pp. 38ff.; Part Two, "Security and Foreign Policy," pp. 155ff.; Part Three, "Demography and Zionist Revolution," pp. 308ff. See the following most helpful studies on the Gush-Emunim Movement: Tsvi Ra'anan, Gush Emunim (Hebrew), pub. by the kibbutz Artzi, the Shomer Ha-Tzair (Tel-Aviv, 1980), 229 pp. with supplements; Amnon Rubinstein, Miberzl ad Gush-Emunim Uvecbazarab (From Herzl till Gush Emunim and Back), (Tel-Aviv: Schocken, 1980), 180 pp., Danny Rubinstein, Mi Ladonai Elai - Gush Emunim (On the Lord's Side: Gush Emunim), (Tel-Aviv: Hakibbutz Hame'uchad, 1982), 197 pp.

11. Shlomo Goren, The Teachings of the Festivals, pp. 542-551.

12. Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, "Harealism Hameshikhi" ("The Messianic Realism"), in Morasbab 9, p. 63; also see his essays in Artzi 1—see above note 10. Here, as elsewhere, Aviner reflects the attitudes of Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook who said: "... People speak of the beginning of the redemption. In my opinion this is already the middle of the redemption ... "According to Zvi Yehudah, the return to Zion, its conquest and settlement and the "... Kingdom of Israel being rebuilt anew ... this is the revelation of the Kingdom of Heaven ... "Reprinted in the collection of essays Torab Umelukbab—al Mekom Hamedinab Beyabadut (Law and Kingdom—on the Position of the State in Judaism), ed. by Shimon Federbusch (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1961), pp. 102–3. In the same spirit, Yehudah Chazani too quotes Zvi Yehudah Kook's Lintivot Yisra'el (On the Ways of Israel), Part Two, p. 159; accordingly the State of Israel in our days is indeed the State foretold by the Prophets, among other reasons precisely because of the prominent place secularism fulfils in the process of salvation; see Nekudab 37 (December 18, 1981), p. 8.

13. Torat Hamoadim, p. 551; also see a parallel source: in "Torah Uge'ullah" ("Law and Redemption"), in the above mentioned collection of essays Torah Umelukbah, p. 108, Rabbi Israel Shchepansky asserts that indeed all the wars, whether of the time of the Exodus from Egypt or in our own day, are part of the overall program for redemption, the character of which is yet natural, "... that they conquer the Land in a natural way, with weapons, so as to lift the people from dejection of slavery and subjugation, the result of which was the habit of stretching one's neck out for one's annihilators.... So as to breathe in him the spirit of courage and an 'elevated soul'...."

14. Yehudah Amital, Hama'alot Mima'amakim Devarim Besugiot Hador al Hatesbuot vi'al Hamilebamot (The Ascents out of the Depths—Issues of our Generation on the Deliverances and on the Wars), pub. by the Association of the Har-Etzion Talmudic Academy, Allon-Shevut, (Jerusalem, 1974), p. 21 (also cf. p. 22) and p. 28. Rabbi Amital seems to have changed his mind recently: see Yehudah Amital, "Messer Politi o Messer Chinukhi" (A Political or an Educational Message"), in Torah, Ziomut, Shalom—Kovetz Ma'amarim, pub. by Tenuat Netivot Shalom (The Paths of Peace Movement), (Jerusalem, 1983), pp. 3–8. See especially Rabbi Yehudah Amital's more detailed deliberations in Allon Shevut, ed. by Jossi Eliav, Har-Etzion

Talmudic Academy, 1983, pp. 34-52.

15. Kiryat-Arba bi Hebron (Kiryat-Arba indeed is Hebron), Collection of Articles and Pictures on the Occasion of the Ten Year Anniversary since the Renewal of the Jewish Settlement in Hebron, Passover 1968-Passover 1978, ed. by Moshe Ozri, (Beer-Sheva: Mor, n.d.), p. 98. Also see Alon Moreb-Chidush Hayishuv Hayehudi Beshomron (Alon Moreb-The Renewal of the Jewish Settlement in Samaria), (Jerusalem, n.d.). Also, see the reports on discussions and polemics among members of The Religious Kibbutz such as in the aftermath of the conference entitled "Settlement - Foundation of Sovereignty," organized by the action-committee of the Hebron Hill Settlements, together with the Secretariat of The Religious Kibbutz, in Amudim, No. 388 (1978), pp. 155ff; also see Moshe Unna, "Settlement - Not Conquest," in Amudim, No. 390 (1978), pp. 221-23; and the response by Moshe Yogev of Kfar Etzion to Danny Lazar, "Shilo is Holier than Sa'ad," in Amudim No. 403 (1979), pp. 264ff.

16. "Communiqué to the Press," by Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren of April 1, 1979 (No. 213/79); "Communiqué to the Press" by the Council of the Chief Rabbinate on the decision of March 28, 1979; "Communiqué by the Council of the Chief Rabbinate" presided by Chief Rabbi Goren, of May 23, 1979 (No. 612). See the declaration by Chief Rabbi the Rishon Lezion Yosef Ovadia on "Hachzarar Shetachim lema'an Hashalom le'or Hahalakhah" ("Returning territorities for the sake of Peace in the Light of the Jewish Law"), of August 27, 1979; Cf. Jerusalem Post, August 22, 1979; August 23, 1979; September 5, 1979; and Rabbi Yosef's Radio Declaration according to Haiaretz, September 15, 1978. A most informative source is the list of Rabbinic declarations, decisions and rulings on: "Our Right on the

Temple Site," on the absolute sanctity of "Holy Places"; on the "Prohibition against Returning Territories of the Land of Israel to non-Jews," on the belongingness of Judea and Samaria to the Land of Israel; on "Prayer for the Wholeness of the Land of Israel," in Meorot, Quarterly of the Israel Chief Rabbinate on Issues of Jewish Law, Legend, Ethics and Judaism 1:1 (1979/80), Jerusalem, pp. 122ff. Also see an instructive example of political exegesis of the prohibition to technium ("and show no mercy to them" or "do not allow them encampment"): Joseph Mizrahi of Kiryat Arba Yeshiva, "Israeli Sovereignty over the Land of Israel," in the pamphlet Kiryat-Arba bi Hebron (Kiryat-Arba indeed is Hebron), p. 13.

17. Ephraim E. Urbach, "Mashma'utah Hadatit shel Hahalakhah" ("The Religious Significance of the Jewish Law"), in Al Yabadut Vacbinukb (On Judaism and Education), pub. by the School of Education of Hebrew University, (Jerusalem, 1967), pp. 127ff. This essay has been reprinted in a number of publications such as Erkei Hayabadut (Values of Judaism), a collection of lectures, pub. by Makhbarot Lesifrut (Tel-Aviv, 1963), pp. 24ff. Also see Ephraim E. Urbach, "Who is a Hero-The One Who Turns his Enemy into his Friend," a paper delivered at a Symposium on the Israel-Arab conflict, Van Leer Institute, (Jerusalem, January 1970), in Petachim, No. 3 (13) 1970, pp. 5ff. Also see one of the educational attempts at teaching constructive social values in the framework of Jewish Law: Torab Ve accordab-Leket Mekorot Uma'amarim (Judaism and Labor-A Collection of Sources and Essays), pub. by the B'nai Akiba Youth Movement in Israel, collected and edited by Jochanan ben Yaakov, (Kfar-Etzion, Spring 1979), (The 50th Anniversary Year: 1929-1979), pp. 129ff. The volume includes essays critical of the Torab Verroodab policies as well, such as by Rabbi Ya'akov Ariel Stiglitz, pp. 124ff. Also see Mordecai Breuer, "Hama'svak Leshalom Vehamakhaneh Hadati" ("The Struggle for Peace and the Religious Camp"), in Younn 16 (September-October 1978), pp. 8-12.

18. See above note 5, and also principles 3, 4. One of the earlier expressions of this attitude has been given by Pinchas Rosenblüth: "Lemahutah shel Medinah Datit" ("On the Nature of a Religious State"), Gevilin - lemachsbavah Datit Le'umit (Leaves - for Religious National Thought), No. 1 (Tel-Aviv, May 1957), pp. 13-16.

 Uriel Simon, "Religion, Morality and Politics," in Forum, (Jerusalem, Winter 1978), pp. 102-10. See also Simon's warning against"... the danger of false Messianism"; "Biblical Calling-Conditional Promises," in Petachim, No. 2 (32), Jerusalem, 1975, p. 24.

20. Af Sha'al-Mirzvah Min Hatorah (Not an Inch-According to the Law), pub. by Oz Veshalom (Jerusalem, 1978); the booklet includes questions by Moshe Unna and responses by Rabbis Shaul Yisraeli, Haim David Halevy, and an essay by Dr. Mordecai Breuer, pp. 10–16. Also see Rabbi Ahron Lichtenstein, "Reaffirming National and Israeli Pride—An Open Letter to the Prime Minister," in: Torab-Zionut-Shalom, pub. by the Tenuat Netivot-Shalom ("The Ways of Peace Movement"), (Jerusalem, 1983), pp. 9–12. Cf. the polemics between Abraham Abba Weingurt and Mordecai Breuer on the issue of returning territories of the Land

of Israel to non-Jews, in: Hama'ayan 18:4 (1977-78), pp. 1-29, pub. by the Isaac Breuer Institute of the Po'alei Agudat-Israel Movement, Jerusalem.

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Rabbi Yishai Yovel, "Hitnachalut - Ya'avor Ve'al Yehareg" ("Settlement Let one transgress [the law] and not be Killed," in Morasbab 9, p. 29 (cf. pp. 26-30).

22. Ibid., pp. 28, 29. On the entire issue of the borders of the Land of Israel, their religious significance, and their historical and political development, see two significant publications published by the Israel Defence Forces: a) "Al Eretz Yisra'el Ligvuloteha" ("On the Land of Israel According to its Borders") in Macbanayim, No. 127 (1972), pub. by the Chief Rabbinate of I.D.F.; b) "Eretz Yisra'el Beyahadut" ("The Land of Israel in Judaism"), in Sekirab Chodshit (Monthly Survey for the officers' corps of I.D.F.), No. 4–5, April–May 1979, pub. by the Chief of Staff, Chief Education Officer, pp. 1ff; pp. 37ff.; pp. 43ff. On the position of the Gush Emunim trend see Yoel Elitzur, "Hagam Levanon Hi Eretz-Yisra'el?" ("Is Lebanon also the Land of Israel?"), in Nekudab 48, The High Holy Days Edition, 1982/3, pp. 10ff.

23. Cf. Joshua Arieli, "Historical Attachment and Historical Right," in Forum 28-29 (Jerusalem, Winter 1979), pp. 90-101, and Nathan Rotenstreich, "Tizkoret al Ribonut" ("A Reminder on Sovereignty"), in the Literary Supplement of Yediot Acharonot (November 8, 1974); as to the critical and phenomenological approach of the author to the entire issue see Rotenstreich's significant study. Orzma Udemutab (Power and its Mould), (Jerusalem: Bialik Inst., 1963), pp. 94-123. Also see Sipuach O Sbalom (Annexation or Peace), a collection of articles on the future of the administered territories, (Tel-Aviv, December 1967), pub. by the Movement for Israel-Palestine Federation, 40 pp.; see especially the contributions by S. Yizhar, Shulamit Har-Even, Boaz Evron, Amos Elon, Moshe Unna. Cf. A. Plascov, "A Palestinian State? Examining the Alternatives," Adelphi Papers, No. 163 (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981), pp. 13-59.

24. See note 14; also cf. Chanan Porat's criticism of Rabbi Yehudah Amital: "Matai ein Cholkim Kavod Lerav" ("When does one not show Honor to a Rabbi-Teacher), in Nekudab 50 (November 22, 1982), pp. 6, 7. On the varieties of opinions among Gush Emunim members, see for example: Rabbi Moshe Levinger, "We and the Arabs," in Nekudab 36 (November 27, 1981), pp. 8-11, 15; Illan Tor, "A Remedy for a National Mental Disease," in Nekudab 39 (February 5, 1982), pp. 8, 9; also, Eli Sadan, "To Establish Once Again the Jewish State," in Nekudab 35 (October 30, 1981), pp. 6, 7, 11; Yehuda Chazani, "The Jewish State was Established in 1948," in Nekudab 37 (December 18, 1981); Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, "Under Certain Circumstances it is Necessary to Act Forcefully," in Nekudab 38 (January 15, 1982), pp. 6/7. A significant example of differences of opinion among Gush Emunim members is the following group of articles: Rabbi Yehuda Shaviv (the name of Gideon Erlich was erroneously ascribed to the author), "Go, Turn to the Jewish Law" (in Hebrew, the words "go" and "Halakhah," i.e. Jewish Law, share the same root), in Nekudab 45 (July 16, 1982), pp. 16, 17; Yedidya Segal, "Indeed, Do Go to the Jewish Law," in Nekudab 47 (September 3, 1982), p. 7; Uri Dasberg,

There is No Moral War," in Nekudab 49 (October 22, 1982), pp. 19, 20, 21. A woice against hatred and contempt towards the Arabs was raised by Miriam Shilo, Thou shalt not Hate," in Nekudab 34 (September 8, 1981), pp. 16, 17. As to the varieties of opinion among the Religious Kibbutz members, see the polemics following the talk of Rabbi Shlomo Aviner to LDF, officers, the summary of which appeared in Artzi 2 (Summer, 1982), pp. 4–13; cf. especially the contributions by Amnon Shapira in Amudim, the Journal of the Religious Kibbutz Movement, No. 443 (1982), pp. 48–49, and "Reacting to Rabbi Aviner," in Amudim, No. 444, pp. 89–93, and "The People of Israel and the Land of Israel," in Amudim, No. 445, pp. 131–39. Amnon Shapira disagrees with Shlomo Aviner's assertion that "... even if there is peace we ought to initiate a war of redemption in order to conquer it [the Land]... "Also see the source selection by Uriel Simon entitled "On Jewish Ethics of War," in his essay, Shedding of Blood—Legal-Ethical Perspectives, Oz Veshalom Publication Series, No. 2, pp. 10–16.

25. Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, "... That They May Not Understand One Another's Speech..." in Nekudab 27 (April 17, 1981), pp. 6, 7. Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, interviewed by Chaggai Segal, stated: "Let us, by no means, delete verses from the Torah which show that Lebanon is nothing but part of the Land of Israel, and that he who was killed in the latest war died on Israeli soil, kissing sacred ground. But, as we said, one should not say things that are unacceptable. A call for the annexation of Judea and Samaria, on the other hand, is indeed acceptable...," in Nekudab 48, the High Holy Days issue, 1982, pp. 4, 5. On the necessity not to reveal openly, in public, all that the Jewish Law commands in matters such as the conquest of the Land, its borders, etc., according to Gush-Emunim interpretation, see especially Rabbi Yehuda Herzl Henkin, "Halakhot Shelo Lefirsum" ("Jewish Laws not to be Publicized"), in Nekudab 50 (November 12, 1982), pp. 14, 15.

26. See above, Nekudab 48, pp. 4, 5; also, see the detailed argumentation according to which the holiness of the Land of Israel embraces also the territories of Transjordan, Lebanon and probably even more: Yoel Elitzur, "Is Lebanon also the Land of Israel?," in Nekudab 48, pp. 10-13.

27. Illan Tor, "A Remedy for a National Mental Disease," in Nekudab 39 (February 5, 1982), pp. 8, 9; cf. Rabbi Moshe Levinger, "We and the Arabs," in Nekudab 36 (November 27, 1981), pp. 8, 9, 11, 15.

28. As above, the essay by Illan Tor; also see Yoel bin Nun, "There is Also a Moral War," in Nekudab 47 (September 3, 1982), p. 14. An entirely different religious Zionist approach to the Arab population is shown by Rabbi Shilo Raphael, "The Rights of the Minorities in Israel According to Jewish Law," reproduced with some omissions in the booklet Hacbzarat Shetachim, Zekbuyot Miyutim (The Return of Territories, Minorities' Rights), Oz Veshalom Publications, No. 3, pp. 11-14.

29. Yehoshua Zuckerman, "The Realization Ambushes the Faith," in Notudah 43 (May 21, 1982), pp. 18-22. The metaphysical interpretation of the holiness of the Jewish people in the teachings of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook has been transformed into a political strategy by his son, Rabbi Zvi Yehudah, and his disciples. Accordingly, the State of Israel is exempted from ordinary, moral commitments, for the Jews' ethics are bound by a unique and exclusive relationship to God, totally different from universal ethics. See, for example, Nekudab 47 (September 3, 1982), pp. 4, 5.

- J. L. Talmon, Political Messianism The Romantic Phase (London, 1960),
 pp. 65ff.
 - 31. Ibid., p. 233.
- 32. S. Wiedenhofer, Politische Theologie, (Stuttgart-Berlin-Koln-Mainz, 1976), pp. 31-68; H. Peukert, ed., Diskussion Zur "politischen Theologie," (Mainz, 1969); A. Kee, ed., The Scope of Political Theology (London 1978), Chaps. 1, 2.
- 33. J. Moltmann, et. al., Religion and Political Society (New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London, 1970), pp. 49ff.; 95ff.
 - 34. Ibid., Preface.

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December 16, 1988

Rabbi Herbert Friedman The Wexner Heritage Foundation 551 Madison Avenue New York, New York 10022

Dear Herb:

Especially in light of the topic chosen for the March, '89 Winter Retreat in Georgia, I thought you would find the enclosed article to be of interest. This article appears in the Fall, 1988, MIDDLE EAST REVIEW sponsored by the American Academic Association for Peace in the Middle East. The article does an excellent job in explaining the concept of messianism as a principle ideological foundation of religious Zionism.

I am looking forward to seeing you and the rest of the "Wexner family" in March.

Very truly yours,

Kalman Wenig

MTP/14941

Enclosure

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RABBI IRVING (YITZ) GREENBERG



The National Jewish Center for Learning And Leadership

OFFICERS Robert Loup Chairman Rabbi Irving Greenberg President Aaron Ziegelman Associate Chairman Barbara Friedman Sanford Hollander Magda Shenberg Leuchter Norman Lipoff William Spier Martin Stein Vice Chairmen Donald Landis Moshe Werthan Treasurers Harvey Arfa Klara Silverstein Secretaries Paul Jeser Exec. Vice President PAST CHAIRMEN

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FOUNDERS Rabbi Irving Greenberg Elie Wiesel Rabbi Steven Shaw Rabbi Irving Greenberg is the President and co-founder of CLAL: The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership. CLAL offers Jewish education for community leadership and is the leading organization in intra-Jewish dialogue designed to reduce religious polarization and seek unifying solutions to the problems which divide the community.

An ordained Orthodox rabbi, a Harvard Ph.D and scholar, Rabbi Greenberg has been a seminal thinker in confronting the Holocaust as an historical transforming event and Israel as the Jewish assumption of power and the beginning of a third era in Jewish history. He has published articles and monographs on Jewish thought and religion. His first book, The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays, a philosophy of Judaism based on an analysis of the Sabbath and holidays, will be published by Summit Books in September 1988.

Before CLAL was founded, Rabbi Greenberg served as rabbi of the Riverdale Jewish Center, and founded and chaired the Department of Jewish Studies of City College. He was instrumental in the pioneering of numerous organizations in American Jewish life, including Yavneh, the National Religious Students Association; the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry; and the Association for Jewish Studies, the professional organization for Jewish studies in American universities.

Rabbi Greenberg is married to Blu Greenberg. They have five children.

CLAL is a North American based organization dedicated to preparing Jewish leaders to respond to the challenges of a new era in Jewish history, challenges which include the freedom to accept or reject Judaism, the liberty to choose from an abundance of values and lifestyles, and the exercise of Jewish power after the Holocaust and the rebirth of the State of Israel.

CLAL's basic principle is that education and renewed encounters with Jewish sources and vital Jewish experiences are the keys to personal choice and wise policy decisions. Uniquely, CLAL emphasizes that this can only be done on the basis of Clal Yisrael—a true Jewish pluralism built on dignity and mutual respect, and the ability of all groups to learn from each other. From its beginning, CLAL's staff, lay leadership, and participants have been recruited from every sector of the Jewish community.

CLAL's leadership includes not only Rabbis Irving (Yitz) Greenberg and Reuven Kimelman, but noted community leaders such as Herschel Blumberg, Robert Loup, and Ben Zion Leuchter.

DAVID HARTMAN: BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

Dr. David Hartman is the Founder and Director of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem. At the Institute, he leads a team of research scholars in the study of classical Jewish sources and in the study of contemporary issues of Israeli society and Jewish life.

David Hartman's writings in Jewish philosophy have received wide recognition. A Living Covenant, a treatise on traditional Judaism as a vital spiritual option in modern society, was awarded the National Jewish Book Award in 1986. For Maimonides, a scholary study published in 1976, he also received this Award. Through his current articles and interviews in the media, David Hartman is known to the public in Israel and abroad.

Born in 1931 in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, New York, David Hartman attended Yeshiva Chaim Berlin and the Lubavitch Yeshiva. In 1953, having studied with Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, he received his rabbinical ordination DAVID HARTMAN BIO Page Two

from Rabbi Isaac Elhanan Theological Seminary at Yeshiva
University. He continued to study with Rabbi Soloveitchik
until 1960 while pursuing a graduate degree in Philosophy
with Robert C. Pollock at Fordham University. From his
teacher Soloveitchik, David learned that Halakhic Judaism can
be integrated with a deep respect for knowledge regardless of
its source. From Professor Pollock he learned to joyfully
celebrate the variety of spiritual rhythms present in the
American experience.

After serving as the Rabbi of Congregation Anshei Emet in the Bronx, New York (1955-60), David Hartman became Rabbi of Congregation Tiferet Beit David Jerusalem in Montreal (1960-71). While in Montreal, he taught and studied at McGill University and received a Ph.D. in Philosophy. In 1971, he emigrated to Israel with his wife Barbara and five children, and joined the Department of Jewish Philosophy at Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Dr. Hartman founded the Shalom Hartman Institute in 1976, dedicating it to the memory of his father who was born in the Old City of Jerusalem. The Institute, rooted in traditional Judaism, is a center for higher Jewish education and a think-tank devoted to the research of important issues facing the Jewish people today.

DAVID HARTMAN BIO Page Three

David Hartman's publications include Mamonides: Torah

and Philosophic Quest (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication

Society, 1976); Joy and Responsibility: Israel, Modernity and
the Renewal of Judaism (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi-Pozner, 1978); The

Breakdown of Tradition and the Quest for Renewal: Reflections
on Three Jewish Responses to Modernity (Montreal: Gate Press,
1980); Crisis and Leadership: Three Epistles of Maimonides
(Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1985); A Living
Covenant: The Innovative Spirit in Traditional Judaism (New
York: Free Press, 1985).

Dr. Hartman's work emphasizes the centrality of the rebirth of the State of Israel - the challenge as well as the opportunities it offers to contemporary Judaism. Among these concerns is the difficulty of uniting Jews from diverse ideological backgrounds to form a viable nation. His teachings draw upon the tradition of Orthodox Judaism and emphasize religious pluralism, both among Jews and in interfaith relations. This spirit of tolerance is at the heart of Dr. Hartman's philosophy and at the heart of the teachings of the Shalom Hartman Institute.

Dr. Ronald A. Brauner

Ronald A. Brauner was born and raised in Philadelphia. He was graduated from Akiba Hebrew Academy and finished his undergraduate studies in Temple University's College of Education. Brauner earned a Teacher's Certificate from the Greenberg Institute in Jerusalem and completed his doctoral work in Semitics at Dropsie College, Philadelphia.

Dr. Brauner's professional career has been devoted entirely to Jewish education: he has been a religious school principal (Beth Tikvah, Erdenheim, PA 1963-67), a researcher-writer and teacher-trainer for the Melton Research Center of the Jewish Theological Seminary (1966-77) and Associate Professor of Bible and History at Gratz College (1967-78). Brauner has taught at Temple University and Beaver College; he was on the education staff of Camp Ramah, served as Assistant Principal of Akiba Hebrew Academy and as consultant to several boards of Jewish Education. Dr. Brauner was Dean and Director of the Rabbinic Civilization program at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College from 1972 to 1983. He has lectured to groups in more than sixty cities throughout the United States and Canada. Ronald A. Brauner has written numerous articles on Bible, religion; education, and Semitic studies; he has edited four books of essays dealing with all aspects of Jewish civilization through the centuries. From 1983 until 1985, Dr. Brauner was Director of the Brandeis-Bardin Institute in southern California and in July of 1985 became the Executive Director of the Hebrew Institute of Pittsburgh. He is married to Marcia Silver, also an Akiba Academy and Temple University graduate. The Brauners have two children, Yaakov and Miriam.

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Born: Philadelphia, PA August 5, 1939

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Education:

Temple University, Phila., 1962. B.S. Education
Hayim Greenberg College, Jerusalem, 1959/60.

Dropsie University, Phila., 1974, Ph.D.,

Dissertation: "A Comparative Lexicon of
Old Aramaic."

Employment:

Director of Religious Education, Temple Beth Tikvah Erdenheim, PA 1963-67.

Tutor in Biblical Hebrew, Dropsie University, 1965-66.

Researcher-Writer and Teacher Trainer, Melton Research Center of the Teachers' College, Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, 1966-1977.

Educational Staff, Camp Ramah in the Poconos, 1964-1971.

Consultant, Board of Jewish Education (Phila. Branch, United Synagogue of America) 1973-76.

Associate Professor of Bible and History, Gratz College, Phila., PA 1967-78.

Instructor in Hebrew Language and Literature, Temple University. 1968-70.

Assistant Principal, Akiba Hebrew Academy, Merion Station, PA, 1970-72.

Instructor in Bible and Hebrew Language, Akiba Hebrew Academy, 1967-72.

Director, Department of Rabbinic Civilization, Reconstructionist
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1972-1983.

Instructor in Judaism, Beaver College, 1976-78.

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Dean, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, 1978-1983.

Editor, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College Press, 1978-1984.

Director, Brandeis-Bardin Institute, Brandeis, CA, 1983-1985.

Executive Director, Hebrew Institute of Pittsburgh, 1985 to present.

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Jewish Civilization: Essays and Studies, (ed.) Reconstructionist Rabbinical College Press, Phila., 1979.

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Special Projects

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