

The Problem with Rabbinic Judaism

The more one comes in contact with Jews of all kinds, the more one becomes aware that "the Jewish Problem" – and, by extension, "the Problem of Judaism" and "Who or What is a Jew" – has been approached from and dealt with in the wrong framework. It is certainly a problem that cries out for solution or, at least, redefinition. Jews young and old cry out to be told who they are, what they are, what is the meaning of the experience they are upholding, why they should even bother to uphold it, and where they should go from here. The problem is the same in Israel as it is in California; the problem is the same in England and France as it is in Morocco or Syria, Russia or Roumania.

The symptoms might vary, its expression might differ, but always one encounters the same sort of groping towards some understanding of their personal experience – some synthesis – a solution that will make sense to the individual involved in terms of environment, family, friends, and their own spirituality. In the *Diaspora*, the problem usually expresses itself around issues like intermarriage – why they should not, if they should not, and what they should do with the children if they do; while in Israel, why they should continue getting into the tanks, the Phantom airplanes, war after war after war.

This discussion will not be an attempt to provide a solution to all these problems which is probably impossible. Rather it will be an attempt to show that, by definition, these problems cannot be solved within the present framework – that the framework has a defect at its very source which has defeated and will defeat the efforts of "Reformers", past and future; and, by so doing, redirect concerned opinion in another direction.

On the West Coast of America, where Fundamentalist Christianity is very strong and there are various charismatic "Jesus Cults" (even "Anti-Jesus Cults", Satanism, Devil Worship, etc.), this synthesis very often expresses itself in peculiar phenomena like "Jews for Jesus" or by outright conversion to Christianity or by avoiding one's origins

altogether – changing one's name beyond any chance of Jewish recognition or by avoiding all mention of the problem and its relevance, yet still not being anything else – not being able to fit in anywhere else.

In Israel, the problem very often expresses itself in a kind of intense Nationalism or Patriotism: "We are Israelis!", the implication being, we are not then "Jewish". And perhaps they are right – they aren't. In certain circles of *Kibbutzim*, an intense secularism is cultivated and, to a certain extent, a conscious Atheism or at least Agnosticism. In urban life – particularly in Tel Aviv – the problem expresses itself by avoidance: avoiding all or any consideration of the problem, since it is insoluble, and instead drifting into – though perhaps not consciously – an Elitist Pan-Cultural Cosmopolitanism: the desire to be Modern at all costs, to be "European" – "European", by any yardstick, having more snobbish or Elitist appeal than "American" – one never hears of anyone desiring to cultivate "Americanism".

There is in Israel, of course, the opposite tendency – intense Traditional Religious Fervor sometimes overlapping into Nationalism, Land of Israel-type Movements, people returning to live in Hebron, *Yeshiva* students, *Hassidim*, the sort of student one might expect to find at Bar Ilan University – the last not necessarily Nationalistic although not necessarily anti-Nationalistic either. By any accounting, secular to religious, the latter are in the minority and to suggest a sixty-forty ratio – "religious" taking in all shades of religious opinion – might be generous. At times, the ratio – to judge from Political Parties – might go as high as eighty to twenty.

The problem in Europe runs the range between similar extremes of expression. Sometimes – as in Scandinavia – attempts are made to avoid the problem altogether, to blend in with the local population – yet still to feel a gnawing kinship with Modern-day Israel. Among college-age youth – as has been the European tradition for the last hundred years – an intense Socialism or identification with Left-Wing causes is

cultivated almost everywhere in Western Europe (although, curiously enough, usually with Trotskyism over what is referred to as present-day "Stalinism" – were the Russians right in seeing in Trotskyism some sort of "Jewish" plot even though Trotsky himself would have been the last to understand it that way?); and yet still some concern is shown for current Jewish problems by attempting to relate these interests to the "National Liberation" aspect of Zionist ideology.

In France, where many traditionally-minded Jews from North Africa have settled as well as refugees from the Holocaust in Eastern Europe, there are, of course, the traditional expressions of Orthodox Judaism among the older generation. But, even here, many of the younger people – if not yet willing to opt out of the Jewish Fold altogether – still are caught up in the vogue of Modern European Cosmopolitanism. As an expression of this, the attempts of the French avant-garde cinematographer, Claude Berri, to amalgamate the two are a good example.

In England which by its very nature is more insular, one encounters a very strong Traditional Jewish apparatus – the complement of quite an intense Anti-Semitic bias on the National level. But still many of the youth evince the same attitudes of youthful European Jewry generally.

That "Jews" should have a problem with "Judaism" is not surprising. First of all, the majority of Jews, though calling themselves Jews and acknowledging their own Judaism, do not for the most part know what the latter even is except that it is an inheritance of the blood hallowed by its antiquity. The texts that might clarify this problem are to a large extent inaccessible to them.

Here, it must be remembered that what is known as Judaism in Modern Times is not for the most part based on the Old Testament which, by and large, is accessible to the general mass; but rather on more "esoteric" sources generally grouped under the catchword "the *Talmud*" but including *Midrashic* and other Literature as well. Access to the requisite texts can only be achieved after long years of study and the acquisition of

two difficult languages. Hebrew and Aramaic, if at all; and most people – whether Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform – generally rely on a "Specialist" for their knowledge.

It is easier in Israel but even here widespread knowledge of the sort we are describing is limited. This "Specialist" has been known for two thousand years, even among the New Testament writers, as the "Rabbi," i.e., "Teacher," "Master," or "Scholar." The average Jew is totally dependent on him for guidance and explanation being, for the most part, completely ignorant of the Fundamental Principles of the Religion he is supposedly practicing; and this has been his hold over the Jewish Community and the Jewish mind and spiritual being.

This hold of the Rabbi over the minds of his parishioners can be compared, to a certain extent, with the hold of the practitioner of the occult over the minds of the uninitiated. Most Jews remain incapable of explaining not only to themselves but also to the outsider, who might question them, what the basic tenets of their Religion even are. Their position is somewhat similar to modern men's dilemma with secular Law, that is, they hardly gain any benefit from it at all since, in the first place, they hardly know what the Law on a given subject is and, in the second, they cannot even get into the Courts where the Law is being practiced without consulting a lawyer.

If you were to tell the average Jew that he believed in the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and the afterlife, he would be utterly dumfounded and yet this is one of the beliefs and precepts of Rabbinic Judaism. It is not, for instance, the belief of another of the Schools of Jewish thought in the Second Temple Period, the Sadducees, as the New Testament correctly is at pains to point out. He would probably tell you that he thought this was a Christian Doctrine and, for the most part, that he believes in no such thing. But then, strictly speaking, he is not a Rabbinic Jew as, by whatever reckoning, this is one of the basic Principles, But then most Jews are really not "Rabbinic", but simply

Jews, i.e., Jews by blood, descent, or cultural inheritance.

Since Judaism is not a Ceremonial Religion, except perhaps in Old Testament Times and in some of the modern attempts at a reworking, and has no clear-cut Sacraments or "Pillars" – as is the case with Christianity and Islam – but is rather based on a system of Legal Prescriptions and Customary Procedures known collectively as "the Law" or *Halachah*; it is not surprising that this state of affairs exists. Even in Reform and Conservative Judaism where some updating has supposedly taken place the ignorance of the constituents and the, therefore, even greater inaccessibility of the texts themselves makes them even more dependent on the intermediation of "the Rabbi" than their Orthodox Brethren for interpretation, spiritual sustenance, and exposition.

Of course, this problem of who is a Jew or what is a Jew had its own solution expressed thirty or forty years ago in a manner which gives no one any pleasure to recall and should not be jested about. Still, Hitler's attempt to solve what he and others in his entourage euphemistically referred to as "the Jewish Problem" was an attempt to solve this very problem for the Jews themselves. Their solution, of course, was – since they could not get rid of them – to eradicate them.

They clearly felt very intensely about this problem since, even when all else was lost in the last days of the *Gotterdammerung* at the close of the War, they still went about very zealously, even maniacally, continuing their shipments to the Death Camps and keeping to their timetables for their "Final Solution" to the Jewish Problem. One has only to refer to the huge mass of documentation stemming from the Eichmann Trial to obtain a convincing picture of this.

Yet one should not forget a thing which is often overlooked – that is, that the idea of "the Jewish Problem" was not an idea that originated with Hitler or his followers. It had simply come of age. It had found its time. One has only to read almost the whole range of Jewish-oriented

secular literature from the period of Napoleon onward – even before in the works of Moses Mendelssohn and others – to realize that the "Jewish Problem" was a concern that occupied the greater part of the mental activities of most serious European Jewish writers of the Nineteenth Century and even some American. It is a concern of Geiger's; it is a concern of Luzzatto's; it is a concern of Hess'; it is a concern of Pinsker's. As one comes closer and closer to the days of the Final Reckoning, the days of the Holocaust – perhaps really in the wake of the Dreyfus Trial and the growing realization of the failure of the attempts at assimilation of the late Nineteenth Century – the references to it rise even to a fever pitch.¹

Strangely enough, though not surprisingly, since these people really had a greater experience of assimilation's lack of success in the West than the majority of their Eastern Brethren did, this is particularly evident in the works of Herzl and Nordau – two seemingly Cosmopolitan Jews more in the variety of today's young Jews in Europe and America and even in Israel than of the kind of their contemporaries among Zionist thinkers.

This is perhaps the striking difference between Eastern European Zionist thinkers, like Ahad Ha-Am, Weizmann, etc., and Western. The former are still recognizable as "Traditional" Jews – and one means here by "Traditional", traditional in mental structure and outlook – despite their attempts at secular posturing; and perhaps, therefore, Jews that the mass of Eastern European Jews could identify with in their time. The latter – Jews like Herzl, Nordau, Hess, Heine, even Pinsker and Jabotinsky, and others from the Odessa Culture Sphere – were not.

Odessa was outside the "Pale" of Eastern European Jewish Settlement and, therefore for all intents and purposes, Western and at least people living there held Russian Citizenship and were not confined to certain areas for a livelihood. It was perhaps the very "newness" of this latter group of people that permitted them the necessary contact with Western

Norms of society, allowing them to perceive the shallowness of the success of assimilation and Emancipation from the Ghettos. This increased the shrillness of their cries as the time of the Final Reckoning draw near, allowing them the perception that assimilation or the desired citizenship was but a superficial form of progress.

Eichmann and Hitler and the like are not, however, to be blamed for their usurpation of the phrase "the Jewish Problem" however much it grates on us today. Even the anti-Semites of late Nineteenth Century Germany are not to be blamed for their use of this phrase. They were simply taking over the terminology the Jews themselves were using for perhaps a hundred years since the time of Mendelssohn. The only thing they should be blamed for – and, of course, we do blame them for this, endlessly – is the use they made of the phrase, the resolution they imposed.

We left it to them to impose their solution on us from the outside to a problem they could not understand, they did not understand, they would never understand. But, then, we had not solved it for ourselves internally had we? We still have not solved it for ourselves even in the wake of this terrible tragedy, "the Holocaust", so that new and terrible disasters still lurk upon the horizon coming from perhaps different quarters and different aspects same problem. We see them coming. We see the vague outlines of the problems but we do not wish to see them. We do not wish to solve the problems.

We are almost in an analogous position to the Jews in the Twenties and Thirties who perhaps saw a problem coming but did not wish to see it. Only the rare ones wished to see it and their alarms of warning sound like pathetic foghorns on a sea of indifference or, at least, inactivity. No one is suggesting that the position today is anywhere near as tragic or as intense or that the danger is anywhere near as imminent as fifty years ago. No one really wants to say that lives are seriously threatened in the manner that those lives were threatened then

– and taken – though lives are at stake in the successful resolution of this problem.

Lives are under threat and it is clear to anyone who would but trouble to look from what direction the most obvious threats are coming. But the reaction is the same as then. The reaction is always the same. We do not want to know about the problem. We do not want to solve it. We wish to put the problem off and solve it in some succeeding generation when the time will be more propitious, when we are not so divided, when we are not so beset by various stresses, when we do not have so many of our own little concerns to attend to and the problems of the Modern World's pollution, environment, economy, inflation, nationalisms, etc. are not so completely shattering.

This problem can wait. Perhaps it will even solve itself if we do not bother with it. We must deal with Arabs, we must deal with oil cartels, us must deal with pseudo-Jewish Secretaries of State and the American Congress, we must deal with factions among our own youth, we must deal with self-hatred, we must deal with our own Trotskyites Revolutionaries, we must deal with intermarriage, we must deal with assimilation. Perhaps the problem will even solve itself if we do not bother with it. But the problem will not solve itself – it will not go away.

This has been the situation for quite some time in Israel with regard to numerous problems. Everyone knows that the Israelis have been grappling on the political level for a long time with the problem of "Who is a Jew". Even in the aftermath of The Yom Kippur War, this to the exclusion of the terrible results of that War, seemed to be the problem uppermost in the minds of many of the political factions in Israel, whether pro or contra.

Of course, much criticism has already been directed at such petty inter-party strife at a time of such emergency and the imminent National danger of annihilation. But of course the problem is not petty. Only the terms in which it is delineated in Israel are petty – only the political

juxtapositioning that underlies the real struggle going on about the problem is petty. To be sure, the real solution to the problem will be put off for some future day, the assumption being that we will then be in a better position to solve the problem than we are in today. The expression one always hears in Israel regarding such matters of vital national concern: the economy, the Arabs, the internal social strife, the balance of payments deficit, is always the same: "*Yihyei tov. Al tid'ag, yihyei tov. Yihyei beseder, Adoni*" ("It'll be all right. Don't worry, it'll be all right. It'll be ok, my friend").

How many people have heard phrases such as these while visiting Israel or living there for any length of time? They smack very alarmingly of Jewish passivity of the Ghetto or *Shtetl* – their probable origin, and, of course, the Ghetto and *Shtetl* exist no more, annihilated in the course of the greatest Holocaust the Jews have ever known in their long history. The implication is, of course, clear. The problem will be swept under the table for the time being. Chewing gum will be placed over the cracks for the short-run in order to cover them over in expectation that a more propitious moment will arrive when these problems can be dealt with by the Grace of God, i.e., "When the Messiah comes."

This is the real import of a doctrine so widely accepted in Jewish circles as the "Messiah" – whatever form he is to take. But, of course, the Messiah does not come – whatever one may think such a conception implies – without men to bring him into existence. This, for instance, is the present-day position of Orthodox Judaism with regard to the ban on visits to the Temple Mount and the possibility of rebuilding the Temple such visits imply.

In Israel, the solution to the problem of "Who is a Jew" will be a political one that will allow a greater Majority for the Labor Party in the Knesset. The Religious Party, under the tutelage and influence of Rabbi Shlomo Goren – former Military Chaplain and Army Confidant – will be brought back into the Cabinet Fold so other more pressing social and

political problems can be dealt with. A face-saving formula will be found – one that everyone can live with but with which no one is satisfied – and, barring this, the problem will be swept under the rug and the *status quo* will continue until another more propitious time comes when the problem can be dealt with directly.

But the more propitious time will never come and the problem will never be dealt with directly; and, in the meantime, the face-saving formula will suffice. This is what has been done with the Constitution of Israel, a Document which has never been written. Perhaps it is just as well – it would no doubt cause more controversy and do more harm than good. This, too, is what has been done with regard to matters like deficit financing – keep borrowing. Keep borrowing – pile up debts upon each other with the hope that they will never catch up with you and perhaps they never will.

It is also the approach taken with regard to the Socialist-Capitalist split in Israel. Let us call ourselves Socialist, but let us by all means be Capitalist. In the meantime certain elements of the population get richer and richer. Certain elements in the population have the means and the wherewithal to avoid all taxes while the greatest part of the burden falls upon the general mass, the group least able to pay in view of the present configuration of economic forces in Israel.

It is then argued by way of explanation that it is necessary to go on in this manner so that the Land becomes quickly industrialized. Capitalists and industrialists must be allowed to make profits (in some cases no matter how big); otherwise, why should they invest? They must be given incentives in order that Israel should be viewed as a lucrative place for such investment to go on, when such economic problems as there are might better be solved by battening down the hatches in the Chinese Communist style – all sink or all swim but all sink or swim together equally.

Yet in present-day Israel the gap between rich and poor continues to

widen and this just 25-30 years after Independence was declared. These are just some of the concomitants of following stop-gap, face-saving policies; of not knowing what policy to follow and, therefore, following no policy at all; of sweeping things under the rug and hoping for a better day to come when these things will solve themselves more or less miraculously while all the time biding one's time and going along the present tried-and-true fashion for want of anything better or a clearer, more generally acceptable, path to follow.

Nobody is saying that this is a characteristic Jewish problem. It is a world-wide problem but, perhaps, it affects the Jews in a more crucial manner. We, the Jews, cannot afford any more *Holocausts*. We cannot afford to drift – to drift in the direction we have been drifting in for some generations without any clearer solutions or directions presenting themselves. We cannot afford any longer the “*yihyei tov*”/“*yihyei beseder*” attitude – God Himself will provide. Has He not always in the past provided? Has He? Perhaps more than any other National Entity – except perhaps groups like the Biafrans the Estonians, the American Indians, the Armenians, etc. – our existence is at stake.

In Israel, on the one hand, we are faced with a terribly serious physical peril. Almost the whole of the World's Oil Cartel which controls vast sums of capital and much of the future working of the Earth's economic system -- add to this the Communist World and to this the vast hordes of the Arab Peoples and, by extension if the relationship holds,, the Islamic peoples (Pakistanis, Malaysians, Africans, Indonesians, Serbians, Turks) – are against the Jewish People in Israel. Even if the hostility of most of these others is placatable, which is debatable, the hostility of the Arabs is not.

Whatever the lulls or seeming abatements in this hostility that might seem to occur – this was the mistake of the original Zionists in their early forecasts; they did not foresee the passionate resistance of the Native People of Palestine to their coming, for they did not know or

understand them – it is not in the end placatable for it is based on two continuous and never-ending phenomena. One, religious, i.e. *Jihad* – Holy War, the original National Irredentism of the Arabs. Israel is a bone in the throat of the heartland of the Arabs. It will always be – however big it becomes or however small, no matter how the talk of a Palestinian National Entity is assuaged or left un-assuaged, no matter what compromises are embarked on to bring such face-sawing devices into existence. These can only lessen the problem relatively speaking or ease it over a given time span. They cannot solve it.

Two, Blood Vengeance (*Diyya*). This is not necessarily an Islamic or peculiarly Arab concept. It was originally even a Jewish one, or more precisely a Hebrew one, though we have bred it out of ourselves; and it is certainly a Mediterranean one. But the point is that the Arabs feel it at this time in History more intensely and more intimately than most other Peoples do and are not likely to part with such feelings for a long time to come. If anyone doubts such an assessment, it should suffice him just to speak to individual Arabs, regardless of how modern, and see what impression is received. It is not a matter of being wrong or right in their feeling this. They feel it. That is enough and, whether one approves or disapproves of it, is besides the point. Whatever one's own personal opinion, it is always admirable to see strong sentiments strongly felt and these sentiments are not likely to abate.

On the other hand, there is *Diaspora Jewry*, threatened on all sides with disintegration, threatened as it has been with assimilation for one hundred and fifty years since the so-called "Emancipation" – the emancipation from *Ghetto* or *Shtetl* existence and the gradual participation in National European and American secular life on a civic scale – and through it along with intermarriage and conversions disappearance as a separate Ethnic Entity. *Diaspora Jewry* has only just survived the terrible tragedy of the annihilation of some six million

Jews and already it is beset on all sides by further destructive forces.

Who can doubt, when visiting the situation in America where the process of social absorption has gone far beyond the point reached even in the most advanced European Countries, that assimilation and with it the concomitant problems of intermarriage and just plain apathy and indifference are gradually leading to the disappearance of any separate Jewish existence overseas (by 'overseas" is meant here – overseas from Israel)? Before one grows concerned about the problem, of course, one has to become convinced or determine for oneself that a separate Ethnic Jewish Existence is worth preserving and that its disappearance among the various Cultures and Existences on the Earth would constitute an impoverishment to mankind.

Take the case of Sarah Jane Moore, who recently tried to shoot the President of the United States for whatever reason. One would have had no knowledge of anything significantly Jewish about her. She was, if you like, completely indistinguishable from the mass of Americans among whom she moved. It was only by digging a little further that a different name became apparent and the roots of her previous existence were unearthed and an alternate picture emerged. She is perhaps one of hundreds of thousands of such alienated Jews in America today – perhaps even millions.

It is not the point or intention of this discussion to try to decide or to ascertain whether this is a good or bad thing. That is for each individual Jew to decide for him or herself. It is assumed, however, that once having made the determination that the disappearance of the Jewish People would be a negative cultural and historic event, and that the survival of this People both in the *Diaspora* and in Israel – it being very probable that the two are by now inextricably entwined – is not only desirable, but something the individual would consider worth striving for and that he or she would like to find out the most useful means of doing so.

In contrast to the situation illustrated above with regard to America, it is acknowledged that in Europe there is still some semblance of communal unity brought on in no small measure by the smallness and intimacy of the Communities themselves and the hostility they are still forced to struggle against from without. It is, however, assumed that the cultural and social forces that brought about the present situation are irreversible and that the individual Jew would still prefer, whether in Israel or the *Diaspora*, the survival of his People even if only on an ethnic or secular basis to nothing at all.

How can solving the problems of who is a Jew or what is Judaism help in solving any or all of the problems referred to above? The point is that for survival in the contemporary World we need a whole new range of spiritual and moral values that will take into consideration the new constellation of forces and events we presently face. It will be the writer's contention that Rabbinic Judaism just does not contain the range of values necessary nor the requisite flexibility to sustain Jewish life any further either in Israel or the *Diaspora* in the face of the changes and new circumstances that are overwhelming it.

The singular failure of Rabbinic Judaism, either in its Orthodox embodiment or in its Conservative or Reform updatings to either deal effectively with the process of Emancipation, to even anticipate or head off the disaster of the *Holocaust* (if it did not, on the contrary, actually contribute to it), and its present' failure to render either spiritual or moral sustenance to the vast majority of those acknowledging themselves to be Jews should be proof enough of this statement if any proof were needed. We shall give more.

So what then is the solution? How can we even dare at this stage to propose a new approach to the problem? The approach is very simple as is the problem and was enunciated by more than one Nineteenth Century Jewish thinker, catching their inspiration from the Movement we knew as "Scientific Judaism".

Actually in the Nineteenth Century – perhaps because of the relative clarity of the problems then being dealt with and the complexity of those we face today, the speed with which events seem now to overtake us even *Holocausts* and creations of new National Territories – the more sophisticated and far-seeing thinkers of that time were further along the way towards solving the problem than we are today. They, or at least some of them, understood that – regardless of a Jew's Religious Persuasion whether in their terms or the terms we have inherited today you were Conservative, Orthodox, Reform (or Hassidic, Reconstructionist, Fourth Movement, Liberal, Progressive, etc., etc.) – being Jewish was a Nationality.

This was the root of the Zionist Movement that swept over Central and Eastern Europe in the late Nineteenth Century in the wake of the clear failure of Emancipation and attempts at Cultural Integration short of assimilation and conversion. And what do you do with a Nation – you find them a Homeland. This was the root of the thought of every Jewish Zionist Thinker of that time or the Early Twentieth Century, whether from a Religions standpoint like Luzzatto or Kook or from a more secular standpoint like Nordau, Pinsker, or Hess.

The problem for the Jewish People was that men like Hitler and other individuals in the Nazi Movement recognized the Jewish Problem as being fundamentally one of Nationality also and this was our tragedy, they won the race of such recognition. They didn't ask the people they put to death in the Concentration Camps whether they believed in Judaism, as we presently know it, or not or what form of Judaism they practiced – Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform. No, they asked them who their grandmothers were or who their grandfathers were (they didn't even observe the niceties of Rabbinic distinctions on these points) and that was enough for them. From there, it was into the gas chambers. They understood the root of the Jewish Problem. Since that time and since the time of the Second World War, particularly, the problem has once more

been clouded over in obscurity. But in these times of hostile National pressures mounting against the Jewish State, oil embargoes, and a supposed situation of "Détente" between West and East, we ignore such problems at our peril.

Our confusion is that we have mistaken – perhaps for two thousand years – *Being a Jew with Judaism*. By "Judaism" is understood – at least for the last nineteen hundred years since the Romans obliterated our National Homeland and promoted the least obnoxious to them of the multiplicity of sects (Essenes, Sadducees, Zealots, Jewish Christians, etc.) – Phariseism. Rabbinic Judaism or Judaism, as we know it today whatever its updated variation, was the natural descendant of the Pharisaic Jewish Tradition as their own reckoning on this score in the *Pirke Abbot* of the *Mishnah* attests; and the Pharisees were clearly the most peace-loving and least troublesome to the Romans – even after their own revolt in 132 CE – of all the various National and Religious Groupings and the natural choice by them to be the arbiters of the National Fate and the sole National Administrators.

Hillel, the most celebrated Pharisee of his day – and he lived at a time when the Romans were tightening their grip on Palestine, a contemporary of the monstrous, Judaized Arab Puppet King, Herod and, probably aside from Akiba, Judah the Prince, and a few others, the most celebrated Rabbinic Teacher of the Tannaitic Period – was a peace-loving gentleman indeed. Almost every aphorism or parable attributed to him reflects this attitude and it is not for naught that he is often very aptly compared with the Teacher from Nazareth who became the focus of a completely alien, though parallel Religious Tradition. The Christianity that developed during this period, though Hellenistic in origin and texture, was not altogether opposed to its brother tradition of Rabbinic Judaism on certain points of political policy – namely, the advisability of "Rendering unto Caesar what was Caesar's" and "Turning the other cheek", i.e., of preferring more peaceful means of gaining desired ends

than "Zealot" or War-like ones. Both even went so far as to evince a very pro-Roman, i.e., anti-Nationalistic Stance for the purposes of political gain.

It is not surprising then that many of the statements that turn up in Hillel's mouth or under his aegis in the Talmudic Tradition have often been noted to repeat themselves – admittedly in somewhat altered form – in Jesus' teaching in the New Testament though it is not at all clear in the latter case, that of the so-called "Teacher from Nazareth," that these are a legitimate reflection of his doctrine and not a later emendation. Even in modern times, the seemingly docile way in which the Jewish masses of Eastern Europe went to their deaths at the hands of Hitler has surprised and even baffled many contemporary observers. They seemed to display the epitome of "Christian" behavior. In this case, the Jews were more "Christian" than the Christians,

The New Testament's version of Pontius Pilate's non-responsibility for the execution of the Christian Teacher is not much different in political import for the period in question and its fawning upon the Roman Overlords than the famous Rabbinic/Pharisaic story of the smuggling of Yohanan Ben Zacchai out of Jerusalem in a coffin during the Jewish Revolt of 67-70 C.E. The coffin in this story is appropriate. No shame is seen in this behavior but rather it is seen as heroic – as if the enemies were within the walls of Jerusalem and not without – and this is the event proclaimed as the cornerstone piece of the Foundation of Rabbinic Judaism, the Judaism of Jews after the destruction of the Temple primarily in the *Diaspora*.

Yohanan's subsequent appearance before the Roman Commander Vespasian in the legend and his proclamation of the latter's coming Emperorship has much in common with Josephus' own similar escape story in his autobiographical *The Jewish War* – no doubt for similar political motives. Josephus' account includes the very same appearance and proclamation before Vespasian. This Vespasian must have become very

tired of turncoat Jews coming before him and proclaiming in public his private yearnings for power. Poor Josephus. Whereas his behaviour is roundly condemned by all subsequent observers as treacherous and cowardly, nothing is heard in this vein concerning Rabbi Yohanen Ben Zacchai's behavior – the future founder of modern Judaism. Whatever else might be said of Josephus, he certainly cannot be faulted on his passion for and pride in his People and their culture as his *Against Apion* and long history of the Jewish People, *The Antiquities*, attest. So, in what sense is his conduct any more reprehensible than Yohanen's? In what sense is he more of a traitor than the Pharisees, except that he is more upper class and politically somewhat Sadducean though he claims to be a Pharisee just like Yohanen?

The Pharisees were also hardly above supporting Roman entry into Palestine over a hundred years earlier in the 60's B.C. with their support of the weaker Maccabean Prince Hyrcanus II in his struggle with his more Nationalistic brother Aristobolus (representing the Sadducean Party and whatever else, at this point, that can be properly called "Zealot"). It was the destruction and chaos wrought by this dispute that paved the way for the Roman takeover of Palestine and the rise of the interloper and Roman satrap, Herod – under their sponsorship. Hillel and Shammai, the most famous "Legal Pair" in Rabbinic History, both probably owe their rise to Herod's favor and his destruction of the earlier Sanhedrin that preceded them and certainly both thrived, if traditions on this score can be credited, at the Head of a Sanhedrim completely contemporaneous *with* Herod.

Herod, who was probably the single most responsible person in the downfall of the Jewish People and the destruction of their National Existence in Palestine, seems to have been particularly smitten with Hillel. This is hardly surprising in view of the latter's generally docile and clearly untroublesome personality. It is also consistent with the anti-Priestly anti-Temple Cult, pro-Hyrcanus, and pro-(at least not

anti-) Roman policy of the Pharisee Party previously.

Herod seems to have spoken approvingly of both Hillel and Shammai² and excepted them from numerous restrictive measures of the Period. It can hardly be doubted that the admiration was mutual especially in view of the well-documented support of the Pharisees for Herod's sponsors and their clear ability – subsequently demonstrated – to live, nay thrive, under Foreign Rule.

This was, after all, the virtue always claimed for Rabbinic Judaism – that it was they who preserved Judaism over Centuries of *Dispersion*. They certainly never thrived so well under the Maccabeans, the Native Home Rule that preceded Herod which he destroyed. It is also in conflict with the burgeoning Movement of Christianity, Gentile and Jewish of the First and Second Centuries C.E. that much of our subsequent and present understanding of the term "Jew" to mean, quite simply, "Rabbinic Jew" rests. The early Rabbis wished to disassociate the bulk of Jews from what they saw as a pernicious and thoroughly disreputable Movement.

Similar hostility was encountered by Jews attempting to emancipate themselves from the shackles of the Ghetto (not simply those imposed, from without but also those from within) from Spinoza's and Mendelssohn's time onward. Spinoza was excommunicated for his troubles and other more forward-looking Jews who perhaps disagreed with the traditional line were considered quits simply not to be "Jews" – not by those outside of Judaism (they never made any mistakes in such matters), but by those within Judaism.

It was also one of the problems that bedeviled the Zionist Movement that formed within the secular vanguard of the Emancipation Movement in its early days as it is to a certain extent in Israel today. Particularly those referred to as "Political Zionists" – people like Herzl, Jabotinsky, Nordau, and their contemporaries – were considered not "Jewish" enough, not to mention the difficulties experienced by the more traditionally-minded advocates of the Zionist Sentiment, people

like Ahad Ha-Am, Luzzatto, Weizmann, and others. The point is that we have always willy-nilly accepted the identification of being a Jew with Judaism (that is to say, Rabbinic Judaism) without a careful examination of this presumption or assumption.

Only the Karaites in more recent history did not – though, in time, they developed their own Rabbinical Leadership and the fate of that fairly ineffectual Movement has not been a very happy one. Their Jewishness has, as well, repeatedly been called into question – admittedly often by their own choosing. But being a Jew or Judaism has not always been coincident with Rabbinic Judaism, and this is part of our problem today. We fail to make this distinction critically enough with the effects and resultant dislocations that have already been described: the hostility between Religious and Non-Religious segments of the population in Israel, the mass disaffection of much of our youth – whether Orthodox, Conservatives or Reform – from their roots, the wholesale intermarriage with other social groupings, and the almost total rootlessness most young Jews feel – particularly in America but also in the various countries of Europe and, surprisingly enough, even in Israel itself.

Judaism was not always monolithic.. Even the word "Judaism" is perhaps inappropriate here for the very suffix "ism" implies something Greek in origin – an idea, an abstraction. What is meant by "monolithic" in this context is, of course, Rabbinic; for, no matter how fragmented or pluralistic Judaism might appear today to the outside observer, it is still pluralism within the single bond of this monolithic approach or heritage. Even such seemingly different offshoots as Hassidism, Karaism, Reconstructionism, etc., as has already been implied, are for all intents and purposes Rabbinic – there might be some argument here about Karaism but to little end since it is hardly a consequential force in Modern Jewish life – though displaying anomalous characteristics.

Still these characteristics are in the final analysis constricted by

the very framework in which they are forced to express themselves. Even in Karaism, the Leadership are referred to as "Rabbis". Something of this problem also besets the whole edifice of Christianity, though the comparison might not be appreciated in some quarters. There, too, the very doctrinal structure of the Institution imposed on it at a fairly early stage in its development defeats almost all efforts at any real reform.

In the Second Temple Period, as almost everyone who is conversant with the Period knows, Judaism was a multilithic structure. There were Sadducees, Essenes, Pharisees, Zealots, and if one would like to go so far *Therapeutae* (as they are euphemistically called for lack of a better term), Jewish Christians, *Sicarii*, and who knows what others? Leaving aside for the moment the question of exactly who or what all these groups were – whether Religious Parties or Political Groupings, or both – it can be said almost without hesitation that the differences between at least several of these groups were not simply peripheral or on questions of detail (as one might really term the differences between Conservative and Reform Judaism, though the adherents of both would disagree strenuously), but intrinsic. The very fact that two of the World's great Religious Traditions probably developed from two of these groupings, Essenism and Phariseeism, i.e., Christianity and Judaism, is proof enough of how intrinsic the differences were.

The fact of this great variety no doubt added to the social and political problems of that time but it also affords us a rare picture of Judaism – or what is perhaps a better term Jewish Culture – at the height of one of its richest Periods. Almost anyone who has studied this Period, even our Reformers of the late Eighteenth Century and early Nineteenth like Zunz or Geiger, to whom it presented a kind of paradigm, agree that it was perhaps the high point of Jewish History – certainly from a National point-of-view, if not also from a Spiritual or Religious one.

Once again, the fact noted above that two of the great Religious Traditions of the Western World (perhaps even three for there is little doubt that Islam is vitally wrapped up, from its own perspective to be sure, in many of the doctrinal disputes raging at this time. Anyone who would doubt this need, only compare the imagery of the Book Enoch or similar Apocalypses of the Period to convince him or herself at least texturally of this proposition) are derived in large part from many of the doctrinal positions developed in this Period is attestation enough of the richness of the intellectual and national ferment going on at that time.

No doubt Jewish life reached a highpoint in the Old Testament Period, too, particularly sometime during the Davidic Monarchy either during the Solomonic Period or sometime thereafter during the Period of Kings both North and South. One hesitates to even apply the term "Judaism" to this Period for this was certainly not what was going on but rather relates to a later crystallization. If one can get any picture at all of the reality of this Period of the Monarchy or Monarchies, there was a good deal of richness in the texture of religious life and ferment in religious thought with Rechabites, Nazirites, Aaronite Priests, Levites, Prophetic Brotherhoods or Ascetic Prophets of the Elijah/Elisha variety, Written Prophets, and Royal Psalmists.

But in retrospect, this was probably in no way as rich in a doctrinal manner as the Second Temple Period – rather rich in its ceremonial and informal, more charismatic, expressions of Religious Sentiment – and probably too, though the myth of the Davidic Kingdom perpetuates the conception of a geographical expansion of grandiose size, in no way as territorially effective or significant as the Second Temple Period. The expansive war which the Maccabees carried on for several generations with surrounding Powers like the Syrians, Nabataeans, Egyptians, etc., and the final several wars with a Power as overwhelming as Rome gives some idea of the staying power and intensity of Jewish National

Existence developed during the Second Temple Period.

What has this roundabout exposition to do with present-day problems concerning Judaism and the future effectiveness of the Jewish People? The point is quite a bit. The Second Temple Period was the last period in Jewish History up until the present where the Jews existed as a Territorial Power with a National Existence. The parallel can even be carried further if one considers the vast *Diaspora* spawned and functioning during this Period – the masses of Jewish Population in Alexandria and Babylon and the outposts of settlement in Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, the Mediterranean Islands, Spain, Germany, North Arabia, Yemen, Ethiopia, and India and who knows what around the Black Sea and beyond, Persia, the Steppes of Central Asia? In this Period there was a rich fabric of National growth – if one considers all the sects, movements, political parties, circulating literature, etc. – despite the fact that some of the doctrinaire conflicts between several of these Groups no doubt facilitated the eruption of the Romans on the scene.

The crucial point is that this rich national and social fabric did not die a natural death. Rather, it was cut off brutally by an alien incursion perhaps more violent and certainly with more far-reaching effects as far as the Jewish People as a whole were concerned even than the Babylonian one of the 6th Century B.C. The Romans ruthlessly and without pity severed the fabric of Jewish national and social existence much the same as Hitler did nineteen centuries later to a large segment of Jewish *Diaspora* Existence. It is indeed a brutal irony that the Jewish People perhaps had its *Diaspora* brought to an end by the Third Reich in much the same manner that it had it begun by what the Third Reich would have termed the "First Reich".

What then happened to this rich texture of national existence in the wake of this great cataclysm nineteen hundred years ago? In the first place, the most obvious and long-term effect of this murder was that the Jews, as they have come to be known, i.e., the People from *Yahud*, were

sent packing in a wholesale manner. They were made into an Exile People and from that time on they have been forced to live a vagabond sort of existence with all its consequent problems – which have become so well known and clear in the interim.

In the second place and perhaps more crucially for the points we are attempting to make, most of these various parties and sects that contributed so vitally to the National picture, we have been at pains to reconstruct, were cut off almost without a trace. The Sadducees, the Zealots, the Essenes, even the Jewish Christians – all groups with particularly strong nationalistic or territorial tendencies (the first, of an upper-class character, the second of an extreme nationalism, the third of an apocalyptic nature, and the fourth perhaps related to the third but certainly anti-Gentile in composition and tone as the Letters of Paul, Luke's Acts, and the Gospels of the Nazoraeans and the Hebrews show. Particularly in relation to the fourth, it might be surmised that the whole nature of present-day Christianity might have been different had not this group been almost totally decimated in Palestine in the wake of this 67 C.E. fiasco) – for all intents and purposes ceased to exist as national forces after the 67 C.E. Uprising and the Roman repression of it.

This cannot be said to have been a natural death. Some, the Zealots and the Jewish Christians, were obviously butchered and cut down at the height of the power of their National Movements. It is difficult to say anything of certainty about the National influence of the Essenes or the Sadducees in that Period, though Josephus tells us that the former group were heroic in the martyr-like manner with which they faced death by torture at the hands of the Romans.³ As well, if the Qumran monastery was Essene, then certainly we know this structure perished under Roman assault at this time which is doubtless the reason for the rich legacy of the Dead Sea Scrolls left behind for us to find in latter days.

The Sadducees, upper-class as they were, certainly disappeared after

this Period; and, though some prominent families like Josephus himself or the Herodian-Maccabeans to whom he was allied both in sympathy and employment, no doubt succeeded in settling themselves abroad in Alexandria, Rome, or Babylonia, even in these places what was left of them were obviously absorbed into the Pharisaic Structure already functioning. Without the Temple and the Cult it represented and without Jewish territoriality, there was no basis for their survival.

Josephus himself (like Paul) tells us he was a Pharisee which is hardly credible in terms of his upper-class orientation, his participation in the Uprising, and the obvious power he held in his younger days. He also tells us he was a Priest, which is more appropriate to his make-up and the position he occupied and would no doubt put him in the Sadducee Camp until such time that the disappearance of a National Existence made the position of the Sadducee Camp untenable.

What all of these groups had in common was that none of them survived the disappearance of a National Homeland, of a Jewish Territoriality. In the light of the historical evidence, one might even go so far as to say that their very existence was predicated on the existence of a National Territoriality and, when this collapsed, they too collapsed with it. In later years, the Karaites under Islam tried to put out the fiction that they were the ongoing representatives of the Sadducean Party and, considering their upper-class and nationalistic characteristics and tendencies, there might have been some truth to such a claim at least on the spiritual level. But practically, as we have already suggested, they were a splinter group from within the Rabbinic Tradition itself, a throwback, and they went on functioning in all outward respects like another version of the Rabbinic Party until they too slowly declined over the centuries into ineffectuousness.

Only one group can be said to have survived the 67 CE cataclysm, the Pharisees. The Christians survived overseas as a counterpart to the

Pharisaic survival in the *Diaspora* and, indeed, Paul and his followers always went first in each town they visited to the Jewish or Pharisaic Synagogue to preach their "Gospel" if the "Gentile" literature on this subject can be believed. Paul, in fact, always portrayed himself as a reconstructed "Pharisee", but the doctrine that survived overseas was "Gentile Christianity" with a vengeance and in complete contradistinction to Jewish Phariseeism as the Gospels are at pains to point out. "Jewish Christianity" was obliterated in Palestine along with the other national groupings.

But the Pharisees, the progenitors of Rabbinic Judaism, the "*Tannaim*" of the Talmud, were precisely that one group most suited to *Diaspora* survival – precisely that group which had grown up in response to a *Diaspora* life-style and *Diaspora* needs. They even survived their own Revolt in Palestine of 132 CE and elsewhere in Cyrenaica and Alexandria; however, even though this revolt was Pharisaic in inspiration and sponsored by the renowned Rabbi Akiba, many of his own contemporaries in the Tannaitic Tradition felt he had gone too far in participating in it and giving it his blessing. But this Revolt was also to a certain extent probably in response to the now mounting threat of Christian "Messianic" pretensions, so one possessed of Nationalistic character traits and a martyr's sensibility like Rabbi Akiba felt it incumbent upon himself to designate his own Messianic Pretender, Bar Kochba, "Son of the Star", a claim subsequent History has taken very lightly and a pretension the participants in the earlier 67-73 Revolt did not even feel obliged to make.

The 132 CE Revolt in Palestine was also probably in response to an undercurrent of hostility that the Pharisees had not participated in the previous Uprising or, at least, deserted it in midstream and. perhaps too, to the fact that by this time conditions in Palestine had grown so bad that even the Pharisees could no longer tolerate them. But so little effect did this Uprising have on Pharisaic/Rabbinic life in Palestine

that it was able to continue there in various centers for another four or five centuries until Byzantine intolerance became almost insupportable. It was as if the Bar Kochba Revolt had never even been as far as the position of Rabbinic Judaism in Palestine at that time was concerned. They even adjusted very flexibly to the Roman ban on Jewish entry or presence in Jerusalem from that time on, except once a year, The Ninth of Ab, the purported anniversary of its several falls, making this day a Holiday and National Day of Mourning from which the present tradition of the "Wailing Wall" is descended.

But what made the Pharisees so efficient at surviving under such circumstances when all other Parties had perished? Even today, statements like it was the Pharisees who transformed Judaism and gave it the staying power to survive nineteen centuries of history are taken as the norm in most Jewish History books. The Pharisaic Party is generally painted as heroic by comparison with its poor benighted compatriots of that Period. It is almost the Pharisees single-handedly who have a monopoly on virtue, wisdom, and excellence as far as the writers of Jewish History (from a Jewish point-of-view) are concerned.

Concomitant to this, it is the Rabbi and the Synagogue – whatever manifestation they took – that carried the Jewish People down through the Ages and enabled them to survive. One of the reasons for this heroic and perhaps valid portrayal is – it is generally the Rabbis themselves or their descendants or successors who are writing the History Books, the direct descendants of the Pharisee Party itself. In addition to this, since the Pharisee Party has been denigrated to the extent it has been in the New Testament – almost to the point where the term "Pharisee" among untutored Gentile Circles has come to mean "Hypocrite", a certain amount of defensiveness became inevitable in the carrying on of this age-old struggle between these two sects, both originally grounded in the superstructure of Judaism of that Period.

Few people would argue with the fact that it has been Rabbinic Judaism

that has enabled the Jewish People to survive over the centuries, just as the Rabbis and their apologists contend it was. Of course, Spinoza did not accept this analysis which is perhaps one of the reasons he was excommunicated by them. He felt that circumcision alone was powerful enough to explain the mysterious survival of the Jewish People living in an extraterritorial situation down through the Ages – should we argue with him? But this is missing the point. At least it is after the fact.

Of course, the Pharisees were able to carry the torch of Judaism in the *Diaspora* down the centuries because they along with the Christians in another sphere were the very ones most suited to survive in a *Diaspora*-like situation. It might even be contended here that they preferred a *Diaspora*-type situation. The implications of the last statement are, of course, tragic in the light of the lethargy of the Jewish masses in Eastern Europe in the face of the development of Nazism in the third and fourth decades of this Century. It certainly cannot be denied that in the Nineteenth Century and the early part of the Twentieth Century, it was Reform Judaism's deletion of the necessity of a "Return to Zion" from the Prayer Books and Orthodox Judaism's contentment to continue to place the time for such a "Return" further and further into the Messianic future when, so-to-speak, the "Messiah" would arrive, that accounted for much of the difficulty people like Herzl, Weizmann, and Brandeis encountered in moving a largely phlegmatic Jewish Mass in the direction of Palestine and, if you like, salvation.

In view of these assertions, let us analyze the ambivalent response on the part of the Pharisees, the founders of Rabbinic Judaism-to-be, towards the dual issues of National Sovereignty and Territoriality. Josephus tells us that the Pharisees found great support in the countryside⁴ and there is no reason to argue with his contentions. They were, to a certain extent, the Party of the People and their teachers certainly adapted a very down-to-earth role in communicating with the masses as can be seen from the general texture of Rabbinic Literature.

The Christiana make the same contention on the part of their contestant, which may or may not have been the case in Galilee; but there is nothing surprising in this, since certainly the teacher from Nazareth (if there ever was such a place in Jesus's time) was approached by his followers in much the same way a Pharisaic teacher would have been approached and was even addressed as "Rabbi" by his intimates. If the parallel portrayals can be believed, he preached the same personal, more-or-less informal Religion that they did, both agreeing on the point of Resurrection of the Dead and both being to a certain extent anti-Priestly, that is to say, provincial. They only differed from each other on points of detail, as the New Testament is at pains to show in its scrupulous legal debates which could, of course, be very significant.

But there can be little doubt that the Pharisees, to a certain extent, represented an anti-Priestly sentiment for of what benefit could a Temple up in Jerusalem be to the poor masses spread out over the Countryside or in the Galilee. Passover would seem to have been one of the few times that people in the countryside ever went up to Jerusalem, if they went up at all.

The Maccabees too had something of this charismatic informality about their character (or, at least, at the start), for they too are pictured as being from a family of Provincial Laity, i.e., Levites. They are not Priestly, that is High Priestly, though they are pictured in the Maccabee Books as fulfilling something of the function of priests in the countryside. They, too, were at odds with the Jerusalem Priesthood – for all intents and purposes represented by the Sadducees: the Jerusalem aristocracy of merchants, scribes, and priests – until they arrogated the Priesthood to themselves in Jonathan's or Simon's time.

But this is exactly in agreement with what we would expect for the Maccabees seem for a time to have enjoyed Pharisaic support, if indeed such a Party can be conceived of as existing as such at such an early time. At least the rudiments, though, would have been in formation and

the Rabbis themselves are fond of tracing their descent from "the Hassidaeans" – early supporters of the Maccabees – though the Essenes and Zealots too can just as easily be traced to such an origin, both groups of whom Rabbinic Judaism is not inordinately fond. All then, Pharisees, Maccabees, and Early Christians, seem to have been fulfilling something of the role of levitical teachers in the countryside.

By the second and third generation of Maccabean Rulers (c. 132-63 BC), John Hyrcanus and Alexander Oannaus, the Maccabean family position seems to have become more and more legitimized in upper-class Jerusalem elitist circles, which is the natural way of the development of power, as is their somewhat dubious claim to the position of the High Priesthood (not being Aaronite much less Zadokite High Priests), validated for us by books like Maccabees I and The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs. With successive generations, their Party allegiance seems to have become more and more Sadducean.

The ramifications of this can be seen in the cruel civil strife during the reign of Alexander Jannaus and his inhuman treatment of the Pharisees – seemingly his family's former supporters. Josephus tells us he hung 800 of them up on wooden poles⁵, i.e., crucified them – a thing heretofore unheard of in Israel – and the Dead Sea Scrolls echo these words when referring to "the Furious Young Lion", whether alluding to Alexander Jannaus or not.⁶ At his death in 78 B.C., his wife Alexandra is pictured as re-cultivating, being an astute politician, some of the family sympathy for the Pharisaic Party since, as Josephus puts it, the Pharisees were strong by this time among the People. But it would seem that the Pharisees, the Rabbinic party-to-be, never really forgave the Maccabean Family for this execrable crime and very little mention of them is made in the *Talmud*; and Judas, perhaps the foremost representative of the family – despite his heroic stature – is hardly mentioned at all.

One may also detect this anti-Maccabean feeling on the part of the Pharisaic Party in the fact that the pro-Maccabean books were not included in the Pharisaic Canon of the Bible though they appear in the Latin Vulgate via the Greek Septuagint. This canon was fixed about 100 CE after the destruction of the Second Temple around the time of Akiba and came down to us latterly as the Massoretic text of the Bible though, strangely enough, the Maccabean Holiday of Hanukkah continued to be celebrated on their part (could it already have become too deeply rooted among the People to be exorcized or was it instituted at a time when relations between the two, Maocabbees and Pharisees, were on a more cordial footing? In any event, all mention of the Institution of this Holiday and its significance, Maccabees I and II, were deleted from the Bible text, but such an anomaly on the part of the Pharisees is not surprising. On the contrary, it has become part and parcel of their behavior.

With the advent of Alexandra's two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, there is little doubt that the Pharisees took the part of the duller Hyrcanus, who was also obviously the more manageable, and his mother had him appointed High Priest in her lifetime. But clearly, the Sadducees and whatever Nationalistic Sentiment had already formed in the guise of Zealotism were on the side of the more colorful Aristobulus.

Nothing in the annals of Jewish History is more painful to reread than the tragic conflict between these two sons — a theme which seems to haunt Jewish History even in Old Testament times. This conflict opened the way for Roman intervention and finally Roman subversion in the Holy Land. Weak as he seemed to be, Hyrcanus was not above turning for aid to an Arab Chieftain and Notable named Antipater, the father of Herod, who in the situation that then existed with Judaized Arab Edomites ("Idumaeans") and Nabataeans, was clearly quite a force to be reckoned with and something of a power broker.

The Pharisees would seem to have had nothing against this, being

undeniably on Hyrcanus' side. When the crucial act was to be played out and Pompey, in the course of his Eastern Campaigns against the Persian Parthians, appeared in Palestine, Josephus informs us that Aristobulus – young, proud, and hotheaded – could not stomach humbling himself before this Roman General and turned aside from meeting him.⁷ Hyrcanus with Antipater's aid could and herein began the sympathy for Antipater and his son Herod that was to show itself through four successive Roman commanders: Pompey, Caesar, Anthony (who had been an officer in Pompey's original conquering Army), and Octavian.

Only Caesar of this list, as is expectable in a man of his character, seemed to sympathize with Jewish Nationalistic sentiments.⁸ In the course of this strife with Pompey, also understandable in the context of this struggle, he had Aristobulus freed from captivity in Rome in order to return to assume the rightful position of his forebears in Palestine. Unfortunately for him and no doubt the whole course of subsequent Jewish History, Aristobulus was poisoned on his way back to Judea obviously either by pro-Pompeian elements or anti-Jewish Nationalist elements en route. This tragedy opened the way for Herod, who next received Caesar's blessing representing as he did a family that had always been loyal to Rome, though he had originally been a supporter of Pompey (Rome always repays those who are loyal to it – much as Great Britain did and still does in Jordan), to turn on his family's alliance with Hyrcanus and fight his way to power and Kingship in Jerusalem. But we are getting ahead of ourselves.

Pompey, taking Hyrcanus' part as we have said – he clearly being the pore manageable – and his co-sponsor Antipater's, proceeded to take Jerusalem by storm in 63 BC. In his account of this affair, Josephus even paints us a picture of the High Priests' continuing to go about their duties on the Temple Mount as the soldiers slaughtered them.⁹ Thus began Roman overlordship of the affairs in Palestine until the time of the disastrous Uprising of 67 CE with the consequent disastrous

effects for the Jewish people – with one exception.

In 40 BC, the Persians always the supporters of Jewish Nationalism from Deutero-Isaiah's, Zerubbabel's, Nehemiah's, and Ezra's time to the present interestingly enough (as well as for a short period around 610 C.E. when they overthrew the Byzantines in Palestine just prior to the eruption of the Muslims into the Land), for a short time in the Forties deposed Hyrcanus and replaced him with Aristobulus' son, Antigonus. The latter promptly proceeded to bite off his uncle's ear, i.e., mutilated him as a sign of disrespect and as a means of disqualifying him henceforth from the High Priesthood.

But what was the Pharisee part in all of this? Firstly, they showed no real love the Maccabean Family – certainly not for Alexander Jannaeus or Aristobulus – and only seemed to have sided with Hyrcanus (and, for that matter, his mother Alexandra) because of his pliability. They appeared to have few, if any, objections to his alliance with Antipater, nor did they seem to mind very much the coming of the Romans. Herod, the most barbarous and destructive King and the final perpetrator of the Jewish National downfall by butchering of his Maccabean wife Mariamme and his Maccabean heirs by her, seemed to have been, as we have already noted, received by them with equanimity.

They were certainly not an anti-Herodian Party just as they were clearly not anti-Roman – at least not until much later at the time of the futile efforts of Akiba and his pseudo-Messianic pretender, Bar Kochba. Hillel, again as we have already noted, perhaps the archetype for Pharisaic and ultimately Rabbinic Piety through the descriptions of him in the *Talmud* does not in any way seem to have been opposed to his regime. Hillel, after all, was a contemporary of Herod's and seems to have thrived during the latter's Roman-sponsored Rule.

He even seems to have favored the Herodian Regime. If it is true, it is not surprising, but rather fits in more or less with some of the attitudes one begins to suspect on the part of the Pharisaic Party.

Perhaps Hillel's own very peaceful attitudes as commemorated for us in the *Talmud* – later reappearing quite substantially in the teachings attributed to Jesus: for instance, "Do not do unto others as you would not have them do unto you" and Jesus' appositlve of this statement, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" – are most indicative of the attitudes of the Pharisee Party to Jewish Nationalism generally and to political strife in particular.

Another statement, which in the New Testament winds up in the mouth of Jesus, is perhaps the strongest expression of what the Pharisaic attitude had become by the time of the Romans and Herod (it might have been different earlier under the Maccabees), that is, "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's." If anything were to represent the Pharisaic attitude in a nutshell, this would be it.

Interestingly enough, it does not really represent Jesus' attitude as it emerges in other parts of the New Testament: for instance, the episode concerning paying the Temple Shekel. He prefers to have a fish bring it to him from under the waters of the Sea of Galilee rather than dirty his own hands or principles by paying it from his own pocket. The point of the statement in the New Testament – and, not surprisingly, it is to be found in Luke – is that, by the time this statement was written down, the Christians were actively seeking to conciliate themselves with and insinuate themselves into large portions of the Roman Empire. It would be impossible to accomplish such an aim with any other policy. The Pharisees too, the early representatives of Rabbinic rule, were content to live under foreign rule which is, no doubt, one of the reasons Rabbinic Judaism later (a development out of Phariseeism) was so successful in assimilating itself to local conditions wherever it had to survive.

The very basis of Jewish behavior for the long centuries of the Exile and *Diaspora*, wherever Jews were settled, was very really this: "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's." It was not the

essence of Christian behavior either during or following Jesus' time since they became Caesar. Moses Mendelssohn, in his essay *Jerusalem*, was very successful in picking up this characteristic of Jewish survival in presenting the case for tolerating the Jews, nay enfranchising them, to his friends. In doing so, he was telling them that you see, in this respect, we Jews are more "Christian" than you Christians or, at any rate, just as "Christian". He very appropriately recognized this as the essence of Rabbinic Jewish behavior (it is not clearly the essence of present-day Zionist Jewish behavior – let us hope not).¹⁰

No doubt, the Jews during the *Holocaust* acted out by their behavior the very essence of this dictum almost *en masse* to the extent that many of their contemporaries marveled at the almost "Christian" aspect of their sacrifice, that is, they went like lambs to their slaughter, almost six million of them, and behaved at all times even at the final end almost punctiliously according to the dictum of "rendering to Caesar what was his (in this case their very lives) and unto God what was His." They also reflected very admirably the central Christian virtue of non-resistance to Evil and/or turning the other cheek. Again, as I have been at pains to point out, this should not surprise anyone since there is quite an intrinsic relationship between the teachings of Hillel and his subsequent Rabbinic followers and the teachings of Jesus – whether true or concocted.

Another aspect of Pharisaic behavior was their anti-clericism. Not Priestly themselves – if anything their teachers were Levitical and sometimes Davidic -- they had very little in common with and very little sympathy for the Jerusalem Priesthood despite their support for Hyrcanus. The very reason they supported him may have been his ineffectually. In later years after Hyrcanus had been deposed from the High Priesthood through the actions of Herod and Aristobulus' son Antigonus, he spent his old age wandering about and being fairly well received among the different Communities of Jews in Babylon,

particularly strong Rabbinic territory as the later development of the *Talmud* there demonstrates. It may even have been as a result of the original Babylonian Captivity that the Pharisaic Movement got its start. The fact that Hillel, the final paragon of Rabbinic virtue, came from there and received his early training there, cannot be insignificant.

The origins of these Parties are too clouded in history to be uncovered with any certainty but, whatever the conclusion, the Babylonian exiles were most certainly thrown back on their own resources to develop a religious expression which did not need to make use of Temple Cult, sacrifice, and Priesthood. Even when Ezra made his return in the Fourth Century, this perhaps archetypical scribe and rabbi was a wary strong advocate of a rigorous observance of the Law – the Law, of course, as he saw it to be, the Law read from those scrolls to the original assembled members of the Jerusalem Community. But he was not a priest (though it would seem he was of priestly blood). He was, if you like, more in the nature of a Rabbi and in the succeeding centuries strict adherence to an ever more cumbersome Law was one of the foci of the Pharisaic creed. It was this that distinguished them from all other Parties.

It might be contended here that the Essenes and the Sadducees were perhaps equally keen observers of the Law – yes, but the Law without perhaps its various extensions, i.e., its "*fences*." For the Pharisees, it was the rigorous observance of what they considered "the Law" to be, with its "oral" and traditional accretions – these vary things which have become so familiar to us in latter days and are the bones of our contentions with each other within the ongoing framework of Rabbinic Judaism. Even in those days, these were the very things which gained the Pharisees the reputation of being knit-pickers, super-formalists in the sense of exterior show and observance. Even though the portrait of them in the New Testament is admittedly an attack on the Jewish antagonists of Gentile Christianity, still the picture of them raising their voices

loudly in prayer or parading the fringes on their garments is not too far from today's ultra-Orthodox.

The institutions of Synagogue (as a place of study, congregation, and prayer) and Rabbi developed apace, but these were both cultural additions that grew up in response to *Diaspora* life, that is, life without benefit of Central Temple, sacrifice cult, and Priesthood – all of which reflect the sensibilities of a Landed Society. Prayer very readily took the place of sacrifices and, for all intents and purposes, the Priest had become a superfluous relic. No doubt, this suited the Pharisee Party for, whatever they were in early composition, they were not Priests (though perhaps they were Levites, as has already been pointed out) as a good case could be made for arguing in relation to the Sadducees and Essenes. But this relatively informal set-up, too, no doubt suited the needs of the countryside and the charismatic teachers that there sprung up where rigorous observance of legal prescriptions took the place of sacrificial penitence, for the Temple Cult could hardly be considered to have satisfied the needs of a rural population.

This problem, too, was clearly an ongoing one from Old Testament times where Baals, *Bamahs* (High Places), sacred poles, local shrines, and the like were in continuous opposition to the Central Temple whether in Judea or Samaria. No doubt, by the time of the Second Temple when the Law had achieved a much more effective degree of actual expression in daily practice ever since the time of Ezra's return, this tension expressed itself in the being of the Pharisaic Movement.

It is the reason why someone like Joaephus could have considered them strong in the countryside and yet they were not particularly a Party of National Resistance. Though it cannot be proven that they were actually anti-Priestly *per se* (and, indeed, the *Talmud* is full of the ritual of the Jerusalem Priesthood), they certainly were not pro-Priestly and were able to function quite effectively in lieu of and in place of the Priestly Establishment that went by the boards as subsequent History has

shown us both in Palestine and the *Diaspora*. The Rabbinic/Pharisaic picture of themselves providing the wherewithal for Jewish survival is, therefore, not to be denigrated on this score, nor is the pretension one always finds in books by Rabbinic-orientated authors that without the benefit of law, rabbis, and synagogue, the Jewish People would not have survived to be gainsaid.

But perhaps the best picture of the Rabbinic way of doing business is provided by the event, already mentioned, they themselves are so fond of eulogizing as the central event in terms of Jewish survival over subsequent centuries, that is, Rabbi Yohanan Ben Zacchai'a – considered a pupil of Hillel's – having himself smuggled out of Jerusalem during the siege and brought before Vespasian. Once there, he proclaims the latter's coming elevation to the Emperorship in much the same manner, as we have already noted, as Josephus following his desertion in Galilee – including the same Prophecy. At the same time Yohanan asked for asylum in Yavneh – a town near present-day Yafo – which he received, along with the recognition to set up the future organization and administration of Jewish life in Palestine.

If the legend is to be credited, then this must have been fairly early in the History of the Revolt and the Jerusalem siege – and not in its later stages. In any other civilization, this would be considered an act of the utmost cowardice and servility; in ours, it is considered heroic! Is there any wonder at the confusion in the hearts of our People in these days of holocausts and national regeneration attempting to draw inspiration from such behavior? This action and its subsequent effects, considered the cornerstone for future Jewish survival by all Rabbinic analysts, portrays in the vividest terms possible the attitude of the Pharisees towards the National Uprising of 67 CE. They did not participate. "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's." All other Parties, including the Sadducees and the Essenes, can safely be said to have participated in one in form or another which is

why they were destroyed and did not survive.

The Uprising can safely be said to have been a "popular" one, that is, the Zealot mentality cut across all segments of the population regardless of class or political party – even one of Jesus' Apostles was said to have been a "Zealot"; another a "Sicarii." The Pharisees did not participate in the Revolt which is why they survived to become the arbiters of Jewish existence both inside Palestine and without in the succeeding centuries. This is consistent with the fact that they clearly cooperated with and were sponsored by the Romans at least in Palestine from Herodian times and before as their non-opposition to and even support of such Roman figureheads and hirelings as Hyrcanus and Herod in previous stages and the rise of such Patriarchs as "Judah the Prince", the compiler of the *Mishnah* in succeeding centuries faithfully bears out.

Judah, his predecessors and successors, were Patriarchs of Palestine faithfully cooperating with Roman overlordship in matters of tax collection and administration. His successors in Eastern Europe in Modern Times did likewise with their civil overlords even when the yawning jaws of the *Holocaust* were staring them in the face. Only the Uprising under Rabbi Akiba in 132 CE with its deleterious results is at odds with this portrayal but even Akiba's contemporaries in various aphorisms¹¹ expressed their dubiousness at his being involved in such an undertaking.

In any event, his successors quickly fell into line with the after-effects of this disaster and the restrictions imposed upon them in the immediate wake of the Uprising were relaxed somewhat, all except the ban on entering Jerusalem but one day a year. This last was consolidated by them into a Holiday of National Mourning, as we have seen, including the perfectly disreputable practice of "wailing" with Roman permission at a wall built by Herod. Nothing could be more paradoxical. The fiction, of course, adopted was that the Ninth of Ab also commemorated the downfall

of the First Temple – a coincidence not altogether impossible but, without doubt, adding to the venerability and solemnity of the occasion. Nothing, too, could be more in keeping with the Pharisee mentality if the picture, we have been at pains to reconstruct, is correct since they would much prefer worshipping at the ruins of a Temple (particularly one built by an alien) than in the very Temple itself – a problem the Rulers of present-day Israel are finding they still have to contend with, much to their chagrin.

What then has this Phariseeism, concretized and institutionalized in the various Movements of Modern Judaism, got to contribute to the dilemmas which Modern Jewry presently finds itself in – a Party which did not participate in the 67 CE Uprising, cooperated with such unworthies as Herod, Vespasian, and Titus (for whatever the reasons), supported Hyrcanus and Antipater, and felt generally equally at home whether under Roman Overlordship or their own Native or Herodian Leadership, even Persian – nay, if the Truth were told, felt even more at home under alien Overlordship, a trait not unlike certain mentalities in Israel and *Diaspora* Jewry today?

The Pharisees on the whole were clearly the 'Party of Peace', the Party of political compromise (except for the aberration under Rabbi Akiba), the Party which really preferred life under Foreign Rule as long as they were left free to practice their own brand of religious Observance. When this did not happen in Rabbi Akiba's time, they themselves finally revolted – but only then. As long as they were left alone, as long as they were left to follow the strictures of Religious Law as they saw it, i.e., with the additions and precautions developed through centuries of customary practice – euphemistically called by them "the Oral Law" but equally binding with "the Written" (in many cases even more so since the subject of most of the Written Law or "*Torah*", the Temple, was no longer in existence – they were content to live under whatever Government presented itself.

Some of them clearly preferred to live under Foreign and Alien ones to Native National ones – whatever their shortcomings – since the former would generally be more sure to respect Native Religious Custom and Scruples than the latter might. This was the case with Herod. This was the case with the Romans. To a certain extent, this was the case more recently under the British. This is the case with certain groups of *Hassidim* today.

This was also, the behavior pattern that predominated among large masses of Eastern European Jewry in the last two centuries despite the warning sirens given by many precocious Zionist thinkers. It certainly was the case with the majority of the "Reformers" in Germany in the Last Century and was the case among large segments of the American Jewish Community until comparatively recently – and still is among some.

Let us then call Phariseeism by its name today – Rabbinic Judaism. What then does this approach and way of life have to say to a young Israeli tank commander who has seen war after war after war and five or six or even more of his friends or comrades die in battle and perhaps even been wounded himself? What does it have to say to a young Israeli aviator? In the *Diaspora*, Rabbinic Judaism has failed the Jewish People three times in recent History.

Perhaps it provided a yardstick for Jewish behavior in the Medieval Period, in the days of a segregated Jewish Life, in the *Ghetto* or the *Shtetl*; but it cannot provide a yardstick for Jewish Life today. It failed the Jewish People in the days after the Emancipation from the *Ghettos*. It did not provide them with a proper measuring tool from which to guide their behavior in the attempt to enter Nineteenth Century urban Western European Life as free and theoretically equal citizens.

Nor did it provide any sensing apparatus by which the newly-liberated participants in secular life could gauge the extent of the reaction against them their existence provoked. On the contrary, what occurred was that it was rent into various factions and Jewish Life was fractured

to its very core. It failed to anticipate the Holocaust, nor did it give the Jewish People the necessary sensibility to gauge the attitudes that gave rise to it and combat them in any meaningful way.

Moreover, once the latter became inevitable, it did not provide the Jewish People, nor the Jewish Community the requisite spine or adhesiveness, nor the requisite attitudes, to mount any sustained resistance and to face the prospect of certain death not crestfallen nor in humiliation or resignation but with pride, vengeance, and Honourable Heroism. The word "Honour", so well known in most European or Asian National Circles, is almost unknown among Jews. An Old Testament People could not have gone to their deaths so meekly and like sheep. It is impossible to conceive of a similar lack of ferocity among the People of Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Samuel, and Kings, not to mention the Second Temple Period – the Maccabees, *Hassidaeans*, and Zealots.

Finally, it in failing to cope with the present situation of the Jewish People in this time of the Resurrection of our National Existences, beset on all sides by hostile forces seeking, nay hungering, for our demise – the situation that exists today both in Israel and in the *Diaspora* that surrounds and lives in a state of mutual interdependence with it.

What can it tell us about how to deal with our multitudinous enemies either in Western Europe, the Soviet Union, Asia, or the like – whether to have stopped on the Suez Canal in the recent *Yom Kippur* War, whether to have caved in to international pressure, whether to have freed two trapped Arab Armies? How does it tell us to deal with international civil servants like Henry Kissinger or Hurt Waldheim (even the Pope) – some even refugees from our own culture who have different value structures and different aims in view than our own?

How does it tell us to deal with the Arabs, to cope with terrorist bombing after terrorist bombing and little children being thrown out of apartment block windows? Does it counsel us on the preferability of

retaliation or of turning the other cheek? How does it tell us to deal with economic pressures or oil embargoes? What does it know of respect, pride, Honourable dealing (i.e., Peace with Honour, not honesty – it tells us something about commercial honesty), courage, bravery, generosity, hospitality, etc.? What does it know of behavior patterns admired world-wide such as these? How can it address itself to the question of rebuilding the Second Temple when it, itself, is at its very core anti-Priestly and anti-sacrificial cult-orientated.

This is not to suggest that one wants to resurrect the Temple completely with its priesthood, sacrifice, and associated paraphernalia, as we have already noted; but it is a question that must be considered, if only for the purposes of National Unity and as a symbol of National Revival. How can a sect which has developed in lieu of a Temple and in lieu of a National State have much to contribute to the problems brought about by the Rebirth of that National State once again?

Even for *Diaspora* Jewry, Rabbinic Judaism is almost powerless to stem the tide of apathy, the tide of disaffections among all groupings, the tide of intermarriage. Only Hassidic Judaism seems able to make any significant inroads into today's *Diaspora* youth and this is mainly an outgrowth of young people's natural search for anything that will rekindle the fires of enthusiasm, the fires of Community and National Unity. As one young Reform Rabbinical student put it to me, the Hillel Representative on my campus, "How can they expect me to pray sitting down or standing still. I want to move when I pray, I want to move."

And that is the problem today – the Jewish People want to move and be moved. Unfortunately the writer considers this to be a problem beyond the scope of Rabbinic Judaism to deal with and the preceding Historical analysis was an attempt to show in some sense just why – what the constraints Rabbinic Judaism is operating under no matter what the Reform Movement, what the Neo-Conservatism.

The problem is Territoriality and the effect of Territoriality on

Jewish young people around the World. A Territorial People behaves differently from a Non-territorial People, thus evolving a different set of Religious Values. Unfortunately at this point in their History, after suffering the disastrous catastrophe of the *Holocaust*; the Jewish People need a Fighting Faith. Of course, it may be contended that "a Fighting Faith" is just what they have in the Old Testament and this is true. But the Old Testament, as the writer has been at pains to point out, is not the basis of Rabbinic Jewry; as a matter of fact, it provides a very small part of its basis.

From where is the Jewish People going to derive the moral fortitude and spiritual Uprightness to stand up to the forays of such conniving Secretaries-of-State as Henry Kissinger, even though he is one of their own, the hostility and open abuse of perhaps nine-tenths of the World's Population – the demands laid upon the People living within the National Boundaries of the State for further and further sacrifices, physical, economic, and spiritual?

How is a young person in Israel, who has fought war after war – perhaps four in all – and looks forward to a fifth to be talked to? How can a person who has fought in a war himself then be told to go into another one and perhaps fight beside his son or sons – or some one who has lost one or two of his brothers or sons then be told to go ahead and lose a third?

How can the People of World Jewry who have given generously in the past be told this is not enough? They must give more and more, even if it means almost mortgaging themselves. Of course, they do not do this – but the point is that this cannot be dealt with by a mere complex of legalisms or personal ablutions or ritualized behavior. It could not be done in the Nineteenth Century when Zionism was first born and, with even more reason, it cannot be done today.

The Sadducees, on whom religion hung very lightly as it does on most old Established Orders in any society, e.g., the Conservative Classes of

present-day Italy or England, cannot be said to have been very strict observers of the Law – not even the Written One or, at least, they observed it in the breach, paying a kind of lip-service only to it. This seems to be the situation of most young Jews in the World today. They have affection for their people; they wish to express their emotions; they have affection for their culture and origins, and yet the external trappings or bonds of their Religion sit very lightly on them. For the Sadducee, this was simply dealt with by going up to the Temple Mount and offering a periodic sacrifice of one kind or another of greater or lesser expense as it is today in many of the older Nations of the World, like Roman Catholic Italy or Anglican England.

The Religions of these latter have a Territorial character – at least, they move or are practiced by a Territorial People. This is not the case with Rabbinic Jewry today. It was certainly attempted to a certain extent by the Reform Rabbi in Nineteenth Century Germany and Twentieth Century America but it did not succeed and raising or lowering the lights by a centrally-operated reostat under the Temple Altar for dramatic affect or delivering the Friday Night or Saturday “Sermon” in German or English or wearing flowing ministerial robes or having a mixed “Choir” – usually composed of Gentiles intoning cadences of Bach-like music with suitably impressive organ accompaniment – did not have the desired affect. This is the case in Israel today and this is the case in the Diaspora.

Much of the informalism of the Jewish or Hebrew (and I am using the latter word to refer to the Period of the Divided Monarchy or before) religious Spirit went out with the rigorism and legalistic hair-splitting of the Scribal and Pharisaic mentality. This is the spirit the young Rabbi is trying to recapture through his enthusiasm for *Hassidism* but it will not work. He is defeated by the irremovable contradiction at the core of the Religious Tradition of which he is a part. So are the *Hassids* in the final analysis.

Even today the Christians pay as much attention to the Prophetic Writings in the Bible, admittedly for their own ends, as the Jews – even more – and no one is more Old Testament-oriented or Prophetically-inclined than certain groups of American Evangelical Christians or English Cromwellian or Puritanical-style Zionists. This is the Spirit that went out of Judaism at the close of the Second Temple Period for whatever the reasons and this is the spirit we are at pains to repossess.

The fact that Early Christianity did lay claim to a part of the Prophetic Heritage, whatever its justification, and the increasing bitterness that punctuated the disputes between them and the Rabbinic Party even furthered the tendency towards Legalism on the part of the early *Tannai'im* which was, in any event, already far advanced. It is not a pleasant thing to have to admit, but it is almost in spite of the former Party that the latter went so far in one direction – just as it is so evident in relation to the Christians' debates over "Faith vs. Works" that they went so whole hog in the other.

It is the Second Temple Period that managed to contain all these tendencies and elements in an admittedly tenuous, but still ongoing, inner harmony; and it is to this Period that we must look for inspiration today as we resume the state of affairs that was so brutally interrupted and left off nineteen centuries ago.

Zealotism was Nationalistic but certainly not unspiritual and materialistic, espousing a conception of Martyrdom as part of their spiritual creed. The point is to know what they were "zealous" for – and perhaps, here, the Greek terminology of "Zealotry" is unfortunate. They were "zealous" for a Kingdom where no man ruled, but only God. They were zealous for the Kingdom of Heaven here on Earth.

Essenism was apocalyptic, spiritual, even monastically or communitically-oriented. They also possessed this streak of martyrdomism in their spiritual array of ideas if Josephus' descriptions and the Dead

Sea Scrolls can be considered properly representative. Sadduceeism was certainly Nationalistic, though upper class and Temple Cult-oriented. Religiously, it is not at all clear what they might have made of the Concept of "Holy War". They were probably not as Zealous as this but they certainly* participated to a certain degree in the 67 CE Uprising as their demise thereafter attests.

The "*Sicarii*" were Terrorists and Killers it is true, but there is no doubt that there was more Doctrine in their Spiritual Repertory than Josephus gives them credit for. It is much the same with National Liberation Groups today. They are not simply "Bandits" and "Criminals." People do not just kill for nothing. Phariseeism of present-day Rabbinic Judaism was just one part of the Spiritual Reservoir and Pluralism of the Jewish People at that time – as it is in actuality today. The point is that all these others in any crystallized Religious Form today are lacking and Rabbinism has a clear field all to itself.

Like it or not, the Arabs have a conception of "Holy War" to aid them in their ongoing struggle with Israel. The "War" they are waging is not just seen in political terms alone and this is part of the essence of its appeal to the Arab masses wherever they are found around the World – even in the non-Arab Muslim masses of Pakistan, Morocco, Indonesia, or elsewhere. One cannot sustain the sort of struggle the Jewish People are involved in for National and Spiritual Survival and Revival with just the rigors of Rabbinic legalism alone. The Jewish people must reach deeper into their Spiritual Repository of ideals, their heritage, and this means Prophetism – a form of expression almost non-existent in the Jewish Vocabulary since the Scribes, Rabbis, Scholars, and Legalists took over.

It might even involve an Apocalyptic Fervor of the kind of these earlier Sects and which even the Christians still possess to a certain extent. Some of the most vital supporters of Israel, which many pro-Israel Sympathizers and even the Israelis themselves fail to recognize

or tap sufficiently, are just these Evangelical and Apocalyptically-oriented, grass-roots Groups of Christians. They see Israel in purely Religious terms and they see the struggle the Israelis are involved in with the Arabs as a Spiritual One – almost on the level of *“The War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness”* of the people of the Dead Sea Sect.

Rabbinic Judaism cannot answer the question of whether to rebuild the Temple or whether not to rebuild it – a question which is vitally burning in the consciousness of young Jews as the writer is constantly reminded in his daily contacts with them. Rabbinic Judaism cannot answer it because to answer it would be an act of self-denial – nay self-suicide or destruction. The very rebuilding of the Temple would be the end of Rabbinic Judaism as we know it.

They do not have the spiritual resources to deal with this problem, nor the physical or ideological paraphernalia in terms of doctrine to accomplish it. Therefore, it must be placed further and further away into the Future until the coming of *“The Messianic Age”* (which is to say never). This is the basis of the Orthodox Rabbinic ban on anyone – even at the present day – setting foot on the Temple Mount.

Nothing is more disgraceful than the spectacle of Jews still *“Wailing”* at *“The Wailing Wall”* – the symbol of physical shame and degradation these Tens of Centuries – when, in fact, Jews of today should be dancing and laughing for joy because of the blessings which have been bestowed on them and they have received in terms of a second chance (even a third).

No one is condemning these people who do go to the Mailing Wall to express their sentiments or emotions or hopes since by this time, as we have been at pains to point out, the Wailing Wall has become a National Inheritance – something of a Family Heirloom, a Lightning Rod for such sentiments in the Jewish Consciousness. But, if these people were to consider properly the Institution of the Custom or consider that the

very atones they are worshipping at and kissing were laid down by Herod – the Archenemy of the Jewish People (as he was the Christians) and finally the Architect for Jewish National Disaster and Self-Suicide, their tongues would cleave to the roofs of their mouths.

Nothing represents the anomaly of the Jewish Mentality and the total paradox of the Jewish position at present than this sight – revered by Custom and hallowed by Tradition, and appreciated by all who behold it for the sincerity of the emotions they see being expressed.

All Territorial Peoples have had to fight for their survival. All Territorial Peoples have had the sort of Religious Sentiments I am here advocating as being necessary. We the Jews, when we were a Territorial People – particularly when we were "Hebrews" (i.e., before 600 BC), had the sort of Emotions and Religious Expression – aspects of which we are proposing here as being necessary to solve our present Religious, Moral, Spirituals and Political problems.

Obviously, I am proposing something of a return to the sentiments of the Old Testament and the value structure evident there whether Prophetic, Moral, Legal, Historical, or whatever the individual Jew in his individual consciousness sees it as, i.e., before the overlay of additional strata. Indeed, it is the Old Testament itself which is our only title deed in the sort of struggle we are presently engaged in and the sort of political position we find ourselves in. All else would have to be appealed for and justified on the basis of Human Charity and Pity, sentiments we have had quite enough of in our last Two Thousand Years.

It is not a disgrace to fight for or die for or even to support your Homeland but, in order to do this, you need the sort of Spiritual Staying-Power that is only to be found in the Literature of the Old Testament and which it alone presents – not the *Talmud*. Sometimes it is not Kind. Sometimes it is not Good. Sometimes it does not even appear to be Just – not in a Cosmopolitan or International manner – but it is the sort of Staying Power that Rabbinic Judaism, whatever it contributed to

our *Diaspora* survival and life-style, cannot provide at this time.

Eliezer Ben Yehuda and the people who followed him felt the need to adopt the Hebrew Language once more as a spoken Tongue, a process looked upon askance by many of the then Religious Authorities who saw Hebrew as being too Holy to be used as a Spoken Tongue – one had to use one of the latter-day vernaculars like *Yiddish* or *Ladino*.

But this Renaissance of the Hebrew Language was not enough. As a yardstick for future behavior, for survival in a National setting, we must adopt the very "Hebrew Spirit" itself and the paraphernalia of National Existence and National Self-Confidence that go along with it – and whatever vestiges of Nineteen Centuries of Exilic Religious Thinking, whatever nostalgia and sentimentality that coddle and nourish it, must be discarded.

This process is, as many have remarked, already far advanced among the younger generations of many *Kibbutzim*. The problem is that our Spiritual Progress and the mental apparatus of these young people to deal with questions of National Survival and Self-Confidence have not kept pace accordingly with where we are on a material and physical level in the Latter Part of the Twentieth Century – both as a Modern Nation State in Israel and in the *Diaspora* as a Mass of Jews dependent on the survival of that State for Religious and Spiritual Sustenance.