



ISSUES IN JEWISH THOUGHT

ISRAEL AND THE JEW

— a personal view

SECOND SERIES

By Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks MA (Cantab)

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Booklets in *this* series:

- Israel and the Jew
- Explaining Suffering
- The Chosen
- Future Worlds
- The Place of Doubt

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Jewish young people growing up at the end of the twentieth century face challenges and opportunities never before encountered. The break up of European Jewish communities and the simultaneous availability for many of academic and professional careers was swiftly followed by mass defection from Jewish faith and Jewish living as the outside world beckoned. But the optimism of the nineteenth century gave way to the grim reality of the twentieth century as war and holocaust proved that intellectual and scientific progress did not inevitably lead either to peace or to justice. As a result, post war generations have a healthy and sometimes radical cynicism towards modernity. The rise of modern Israel has complicated and deepened the dilemma for the generations of the 60's, 70's and 80's. Modern nationalism is frequently seen as morally degenerate, yet a commitment to and a feeling for Israel is normally asserted as the lowest common denominator of Jewish life.

Many young people are now being thrust into this maze with little hope of finding the way through. Their Jewish education and knowledge is normally inadequate to respond with any degree of cogency to the intellectual probing of a modern western upbringing and education in which the critical faculty is well developed and even glorified. But in many cases the home inheritance is enough to point in the direction of Jewish tradition or Israel without being able rationally to support such a life style. The resultant confusion explains an intermarriage rate of over 20% and a negation of Jewish values from all segments of the Jewish population.

For 40 years Jewish Youth Study Groups has attempted to provide for its membership a movement whereby young people could grow up within a stable and supportive Jewish environment and equip themselves with at least some clues to form a way through the maze described above. Local Study Groups with their study courses and shiurim, national events and Shabbatot and the annual Summer and Winter Schools together build a model of Jewish life both residential and non-residential through which Study Groupers can expand their Jewish horizons. Many complete this surrogate Jewish education by spending time in Israel on a Study Group Israel Summer School or a period in a yeshiva/girls college. As a further contribution to this process we are happy to offer this series of "Issues in Jewish Thought" by Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks. Our author was carefully chosen as he exemplifies the path trodden by so many Study Groupers in his own life and can write with both erudition on his chosen subjects and empathy towards his readers. We are happy to acknowledge with grateful thanks the assistance of the United Synagogue Youth and Community Department and its director Mr. Jeffery Blumenfeld. His cooperation and help in the production of this series has been invaluable. It is our hope and prayer that this series will provide for both Study Groupers and the wider Jewish public a beginning to the mystery of the life and survival of the Jew in the twentieth and twenty-first century.



Tze u'Lemad

Joel Portnoy
JYSG Organiser

What does Israel mean to Judaism? The answer must lie in the complex of longings that are the Messianic idea. But this in turn raises the question: what hold does that idea have upon us? If it is — as Maimonides ruled — one of the principles of our faith, why should it be so? And if we are not yet standing on the threshold of that age — in itself a debated question — does Israel have any *religious* significance at all? What relation is there between Judaism and *nationalism*?

A hundred years ago the non-orthodox world was offering an extreme range of answers. Reform Judaism, for example, was convinced that nationalism was a product of the most benighted past: "We recognise, in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect, the approaching of the realisation of Israel's great messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice, and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine... nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state." So declared the 'Pittsburgh Platform' of 1885.

Such a statement was rooted in a deeply paradoxical view of the nature of *Galut*. On the one hand it had brought about an unprecedented era, almost two millenia in duration, of rootlessness and persecution. On the other, though, in its more benign moments, it had brought Jews into contact with the great cultures of the world, with reciprocal benefits: a widening of Jewish horizons, and the conferral of 'Jewish contributions to civilisation'. Was it not possible to separate out these two elements, in such a way as to see the sufferings as *Galut*, and their termination as messianic? If so, then the position of Jews in post-emancipation Europe and in America might well be the disclosure of a new meaning in history. The dispersion, for so long understood as a punishment to be followed by the return of Jews to Zion, might bear a different interpretation. It was now to be seen as the mission of Judaism to mankind, inspiring others by our living among them. And the granting of civil rights and recognition to Jews surely marked a new and messianic era in which we became citizens of the world and its teachers in the path of truth.

This optimistic vision for the first time sharply differentiated between Judaism as a religion and as a national identity. Jews were to assimilate into the culture and society of their local environment, preserving a minimalist Judaism as a private religious persuasion. This accorded thoroughly with the most characteristic features of nineteenth century European thought, in particular with two dominating ideas: evolution and liberalism. The evolutionary theme went far deeper than Darwin's biology, and led to an identification of the ancient with the primitive in

many disciplines. Jewish nationalism, and with it all the commandments which served to make us a people apart, were amongst its casualties. They were seen, again by the 'Pittsburgh Platform', as "a system of training the Jewish people for its mission during its national life in Palestine" prior to the destruction of the Temple, but "not adapted to the views and habits of modern civilisation". The evolutionary undertone is clear.

Alongside this went the liberalism whose exposition by Lessing had had so profound an impact on Moses Mendelssohn, and whose great English articulator was John Stuart Mill. The object of liberalism is man as man; humanity in the abstract. Its enemy is intolerance. The liberal programme was to draw a distinction between law and morality, between public and private life, to recognise the common humanity of all members of society while allowing for their individual idiosyncracies. Jews were bound to welcome so benevolent a radicalism. Yet in effect the price of identifying with the philosophy and the social and legislative changes it inaugurated, was to consign Judaism to the most private of contexts.

This is already evident in Moses Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem*, published in 1783. It remains a fascinating book, for it illustrates how a presentation of Judaism can appear to be wholly consistent with tradition, and yet by a shift of emphasis, move faith into a quite new orbit. He distinguishes between the faith of Judaism and its practices. Its faith is universal and does not depend on the revelation at Sinai. Belief in God, Providence and the immortality of the soul is "the universal religion of mankind, and not Judaism." What was revealed were the laws and practices of Jewish people, which remain peculiar to it. They sustained the nation when it had a land. Now, most of them are inapplicable. "But personal commandments, duties which were imposed on a son of Israel without any consideration of the Temple service or landed property in Palestine, must as far as we can see be observed strictly to the letter of the law until it shall please the Most High to make our conscience easy, by loudly and openly proclaiming their abrogation."

In the event, waiting for the Most High proved to be unnecessary: within fifty years Reform Judaism had done the abrogation for Him. There is a real tension in Mendelssohn between what is universal in Judaism (reason: our common heritage with humanity) and what is particular (the irrational, sectarian domain of the commands). One can hardly fail to sense in him the ambivalence of liberalism towards the particular forms of religious life: they are to be tolerated, but they are, in the end, little more than an eccentricity. Arthur A. Cohen accurately

describes the differences between Mendelssohn and the philosopher whom he most closely followed, Moses Maimonides: "Whereas Maimonides considered reason to be most pure and uncorrupt where it approaches prophecy and viewed the halachah as the regimen which assists the unreasoning to a life pleasing to God, Mendelssohn was to reverse the order, making its reasonableness that which commends Judaism to all men, while reserving the halachah, with all its irrationality, for that sectarian expression which differentiates Jew from non-Jew." (The Natural and Supernatural Jew, p.25).

Cohen is equally to the point when he speaks of the 'enlightened' background against which such thinking is set as being one which had "determined that what was human about the Jew was separable from and independent of what was Jewish about the Jew." (ibid., p.23). A century and a half after Mendelssohn, Martin Buber was to say that Jews had been emancipated individually but not collectively, and that therein lay its failure.

Whilst it is easy to be dismissive of Mendelssohn, of Reform Judaism, and of the assimilationist urge, we should not be blind to the evidently seductive idealism which accompanied them. For the first time the Jew was being — or so it seemed — invited to participate in humanity, in a utopian thrust whose aim was the establishment of a rational universalism in which the differences between cultures and religions would take second place to the shared concerns of man as such.

It had its effect on orthodoxy too. Samson Raphael Hirsch, the great intellectual leader of nineteenth century German-Jewish orthodoxy, propounded a view of Judaism as *Torah im Derech Eretz* not in the original sense of a combination between study and work, but in the sense of a combining of Jewish and secular studies. "Pursued hand-in-hand, there is room for both, each enhancing the value of the other and producing the glorious fruit of a distinctive Jewish culture." In the words of Norman Lamm: "For Hirsch, it was important to produce a Westernised Orthodox Jew in order to refute the charge that Judaism is a collection of old superstitions." (Faith and Doubt, p.72). The Jew must not only participate in Western culture, but must take its criticisms of Judaism seriously: he must expound Judaism in terms acceptable to the world.

In Hirsch there is the same tension, felt by so many nineteenth century thinkers, between the Jew as Jew and the Jew as man. His resolution, says Lamm, was to want "Torah and Derech Eretz to live in a neighbourly, courteous and gentlemanly fashion" (ibid. p.75). Yet here too is incipient schizophrenia. Clearly, at few times in history was it as difficult to sustain the idealism of orthodoxy as a self-sufficient worth

and total culture. Neither of the available alternatives was attractive: a cautious synthesis with secularity or a determined withdrawal from it. To the outside, the one must have seemed half-hearted, the other, ghettoistic.

The prevailing mood, then, was to confine Judaism within the narrow space afforded to the *private religious concerns of individuals*. Orthodoxy retained its belief in the eventual return to Israel; others did not. But culturally and nationally Jewish identity took an awkward second place.

In fact, of course, the assimilationist programme was hopelessly overoptimistic. In the very year that the Pittsburgh Programme was being announced, 1885, Nietzsche was writing his *Beyond Good and Evil*, in which he stated prophetically: "I have never met a German who was favorably inclined towards the Jews . . . That Germany has an ample sufficiency of Jews, that the German blood has difficulty (and will continue to have difficulty for a long time to come) in absorbing even this quantum of 'Jew' . . . is the clear declaration and language of a universal instinct to which one must pay heed, in accordance with which one must act." (*Beyond Good and Evil*, pp.162-3). He was not here endorsing antisemitism; merely stating it as a fact.

The reaction was Zionism, of a particular kind. Its prophet was Leon Pinsker, who in his *Autoemancipation* argued the case that antisemitism was endemic and that if Jews wished to become normal and accepted citizens of the world, they would have to do so in their own country. This idea, taken up powerfully by Theodor Herzl, could still be caught in curious echoes as late as the 1960s. Richard Rubinstein, an American Reconstructionist theologian deeply influenced by Freud, wrote that "Zionism's real significance lies in the fact that twenty centuries of self-distortion, self-estrangement and self-blame have ended for a people which is now free to live its own life at every level of emotional and cultural experience." What this freedom means, for Rubinstein, is a rejection of the terms in which Jews saw their own history — as guilt and Divine punishment — and a return to nature and paganism. "Israel's return to the earth elicits a return to the archaic earth-religion of Israel." He speaks of "the Zionist return to the pagan, the primitive and the earthly."

This is a precise reversal of the nineteenth century assessment of the primitive. Caught between the twin onslaughts of post-holocaust trauma and Freud's indictments of civilisation, Rubenstein sees Israel as offering not merely the civil normality which Pinsker desired, but the psychological normality which had been denied to Jews in their role both as inhabitants and as outcasts of modernity.

What is common, then, to the ideologies set in motion a century ago is a marked sense of the Jew as *divided being*, and whether the answer lay in his becoming a normal European or a normal Israeli, it was this inner divide which dominated the search for wholeness. Even a philosophy like Hirsch's, which affirmed the tension between Judaism and secularity, remained edgy and unstable, a programme by which only the relatively sophisticated could live, and even then only by firm cultural compartmentalisation.

It is against this back drop of predominantly non-orthodox thought that we can best see the nature of one side of orthodoxy's own desire to return to Israel; the side, that is, that is independent of Messianism as a view of *history*, and which concentrates on the *psychology* of Jewish existence.

In a remarkable Talmudic passage, the rabbis taught: "One should always live in the Land of Israel, even in a town most of whose inhabitants are idolators, but let no-one live outside the Land, even in a town most of whose inhabitants are Jews; for whoever lives in the Land of Israel is as if he has a God, but whoever lives outside the land is as if he has no God." (Ketubot 110b). Two proof-texts are adduced, the first the Divine promise, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan to be your God" (Vayikra 25:38), suggesting that only there would He be their God; the second, David's lament, "For they have driven me out this day that I should not cleave to the inheritance of the Lord, saying: Go, serve other gods" (I Samuel 26:19) implying that his enforced refuge in Moab and the land of the Philistines was a severance of the link between himself and God.

Something is being suggested here, about the limits of real religious relationship outside the land. And this was to be further articulated by the poet of Zion, Judah HaLevi. In the *Kuzari* he sets out his conviction that just as in the natural order, not every soil is suited to the production of a particular crop, so spiritually not every land can bring forth the presence of God. Israel is unique as the home of the Divine: "No other place would share the distinction of the Divine Influence, just as no other mountain might be able to produce good wine." (II,12). It was an essential part of Abraham's perfection that he leave his homeland and journey to the territory of Israel. Jacob and Joseph, who died outside it, insisted on being buried there. Moses longed to be allowed to cross into it. Even the fact that, before his death, he was able to look down on it from the mountain-top was a consolation. Although the Divine Presence was no longer visible in Israel, the invisible *Shechinah* was still there. The land "is especially distinguished by the Lord of Israel, and no function

can be perfect except there. . . heart and soul are only perfectly pure and immaculate in the place which is believed to be specially selected by God." (V,23).

In Judah HaLevi for the first time we find explicit expression given, subsequent to the destruction of the second Temple, to the idea of *Galut* not merely as exile and punishment but as *alienation of the Jew from the roots of his religious existence*. To be sure, he finds a positive meaning in the experience. The Jewish people in dispersion is, in HaLevi's image, like a seed which falls to the ground "where it undergoes an external transformation into earth, water and dirt, without leaving a trace for him who looks down on it." (V,23). Although it seems to be dissolving into its environment, it is in fact incorporating and transforming into itself the very elements in which it is sunk, gaining strength and the capacity to flower. But even this image shows *Galut* to be a marking time and preparation for the return. What is more, in HaLevi's own imagery, we are bound to conclude that the seed is in the wrong soil, and can never there flower as it should.

Such sentiments are not to the fore in the greatest of the medieval sages, Moses Maimonides. Nonetheless they are to a certain extent implicit in his work. The very project by which he acquired immortality — the composition of the massive and masterly law-code, the *Mishne Torah* — was consciously the product of *Galut*. "In our days, many vicissitudes prevail, and all feel the pressure of hard times. The wisest of our wise men has disappeared; the understanding of our prudent men is hidden." (Introduction). It was not merely that exile had caused an estrangement between Jews and their religious literature; at another level the collapse of Jewry's religious structures had brought a new condition of uncertainty into the whole of the Oral Law. "The great *Bet Din* in Jerusalem constitutes the key element of the Oral Law. . . So long as it existed, there was no argument in Israel. . . When it ceased to function, disputes multiplied." (Hilchot Mamrim, 1:1,4).

Maimonides' code was an attempt to restore that lost coherence to the Torah. Moreover, it covered the whole of Jewish law, including such areas as were no longer in practice: the laws dependent on the land, the Temple, the sacrificial order and so on. He was not to be followed in this respect by either of the two great codes which followed his, the *Tur* and the *Shulchan Aruch*. Only in Maimonides can we see the halachah as a *total system* in which the Jew's intellectual, moral and religious life all take their place within a complete society and its comprehensive institutions. It is impossible to read even the headings of the *Mishne Torah* without becoming aware of how fragmentary Jewish life was when set against the full programme — a few selected chapters, instead of the whole Torah.

Here and there, within the code itself, we catch a glimpse of the secondary nature of *Galut* Judaism. The calendar, no longer fixed by eyewitnesses since "Israel lay in ruins and there was no fixed *Bet Din*", now operates by calculation; but even this has no independent significance, except as a way of arriving at what the sages of Israel would have computed: "It is the determination made by the inhabitants of the land of Israel which decides the date of new moons and festivals, not our calculation." (Hilchot Kiddush Ha-Chodesh 5:3,13). Elsewhere, in a ruling that was later to become the subject of a major controversy, he contemplates the procedure by which *semichah* or judicial authority might be reconstituted in Israel to allow the reinstatement of the Sanhedrin and the fulfilment of the prophecy of "I will restore your judges as at the first." (Commentary to the Mishna, Sanhedrin 1:3; Hilchot Sanhedrin 4:11).

Perhaps most poignant is his definition of the function of the public fast, proclaimed in response to impending military or climatic disaster: "This is part of the paths of repentance. For when calamity approaches, and the people cry out and sound the alarm, everyone knows that the evil has come because of their evil ways. . . But if they say that this is the way of the world and mere chance. . . then further sorrows will ensue, and this is the meaning of the verse, 'If you walk with Me in chance, then I will walk with you in the anger of chance' (Vayikra 26:27-28)." (Hilchot Ta'anivot 1:2-3). The public fast is the formal recognition that the fate of the nation is governed by Divine Providence. Outside Israel, however, there is no public fast as such: at most the Jewish community is a collection of individuals' (see Nachmanides' comment cited in *Maggid Mishne* to Hilchot Ta'anivot 3:11). The normal laws of Providence are not fully in operation until Jews are a collective entity in their own land.

This theme was to be taken up most forcefully by Nachmanides. So far, indeed, went his sense of the ties between Torah and Israel, that he was led to assert that the patriarchs were bound by the Torah only while they were in the land. For this reason Jacob was able to marry two sisters, Leah and Rachael, although this was later to be forbidden. For while the patriarchs observed the Torah before it was given, Jacob was then outside Israel; and for this reason, Rachel died as they were about to enter the land. (Commentary to Vayikra 18:25).

The Torah speaks of the land 'vomiting out her inhabitants' in connection with sexual immorality, even though this is a matter of personal conduct, not part of the 'commands dependent on the land'. For in a sense, the Torah is a *code for living in Israel*, and *all* of the commandments have primary application only there. Nachmanides

quotes the radical midrash, which attributes to God the words, "Even though I banish you from the land to outside the land, still remain distinctive by the commandments, so that when you return they will not be novelties to you." (Sifre, Ekev, 43). On this reading, the fulfilment of commands in *Galut* is a mere rehearsal for the return; or in his words: "the main realisation of the commands is only when dwelling in the land of God."

This, says Nachmanides, was the argument against Ezekiel by his contemporaries: "If a master sells his slave, or a husband divorces his wife, has he any further claim on them?" (Sanhedrin 105a), which Rashi interprets: "Since God sold them to Nebuchadnezzar and banished them from before Him, does He have any claim on His people?" What force, in other words, can the Torah have upon us in exile? The question must be rejected, for otherwise Jewish history would indeed have no meaning. Yet Nachmanides sees its point. For outside Israel a metaphysical barrier exists between Jew and God; he is no longer immediately and directly in touch with a Providence which lifts him above nature and makes his life a succession of 'hidden miracles'.

Unlike Maimonides, Nachmanides counted as one of the 613 commands, the duty "to inherit the land which God, may He be exalted, gave to our forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; not to leave it in the hands of others, nor to let it stay uninhabited." This applied in all generations, and it "obligates every individual among us, even in the time of *Galut*." Living in Israel — he reminds us — was counted by the sages as 'being equal to all the commandments'. (Comment to Maimonides, *Sefer HaMitzvot*; ed. Chavel, pp.244-246). It is not merely at the end of days that the Jew will sense the spiritual deprivation of living in exile. It is a constant of our experience.

By the end of the sixteenth century R. Judah Loew, the *Maharal*, of Prague, was suggesting that *Galut* profoundly contravened the laws of nature, and that nature itself would conduce towards the restoration of Jews to their land. A thing can only be understood through its opposite; redemption is to be understood through *Galut*. Every nation has its natural location assigned by God; exile is therefore unnatural. Every part naturally tends to return to the whole; the dispersion of Jews is therefore unnatural. Every nation was created as a separate entity; therefore it is unnatural that Jews be subjected to the dominion of others, unable to fulfil its own destiny. All things which are removed from their natural state are not in equilibrium until they have returned to it. Therefore, by understanding *Galut* as an anomaly, a disequilibrium, we see the redemption implicit in the fact of exile. (Netzach Yisrael, ch.1).

In all of these thinkers, then, we can trace the presence of the idea that *Galut* creates an inner division in the Jew so that he is no longer capable of finding in his Judaism the wholeness which ideally it creates. The harmony between individual and nation, between nation and land, between land and Providence, has been shattered, and can only be recovered when Judaism is reconstructed as the law of a complete society, in charge of its own affairs.

The sense of schizophrenia and the longing for normality which surfaced so intensely in the nineteenth century had already been diagnosed within the tradition many centuries before. But if the psychological undercurrent was the same, the conception of normal health differed. For HaLevi, Maimonides, Nachmanides and Maharal, the Jewish soul could only be at peace in the expression of its traditional identity, within the Divinely ordered social structure of a state governed by Torah norms.

It is hard, in fact, to see how it could be otherwise. For even without presupposing a commitment to Torah, there is something incoherent in advancing a concept of self-fulfilment without reference to the cultural-religious heritage with which we are born. As a non-Jewish, secularist philosopher has recently put it — and as a general truth — "The story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity. I am born with a past, and to try to cut myself off from that past. . . is to deform my present relationships. The possession of an historical identity and the possession of a social identity coincide." (Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p.205).

Israel therefore represented the possibility of a new-old fullness of the Torah personality, one in which his private and public life, his faith and his surrounding culture, the language of prayer and the language of the street, were reunited. This prognosis was shared by two influential thinkers quite different in their religious orientations. Moses Hess, the father of Zionist socialism, wrote in 1862 that in a new Israel, "The forms of Orthodox Judaism, which until the century of rebirth were perfectly justified, will disintegrate naturally by themselves, through the power of the living idea of Jewish nationalism and its religious history. Only from the national rebirth will the religious genius of the Jews draw new powers. . . and be again animated by the sacred spirit of the prophets." (Rome and Jerusalem, 5th letter).

Rav Kook, the great spiritual inspiration of modern Israel, clearly could not accept this dismissal of the halachah, but he too wrote, "The delusion of centring our religion on its outer forms, which, because of its weakness of perception, despises all wealth in the mystical realm, has darkened the eyes and reduced our spiritual vision by building a wall of

dross for the free spirit." He predicted that among the first symptoms of Jewish revival in Israel would be a recovery of the prophetic sense, and that this would express itself initially in "a reaction, a pronounced disdain for the particulars" of Jewish law. "This will continue until the radiance of prophecy will re-emerge from its hiding and reveal itself. . . as the first fruits full of vitality and life." Then there will be possible the recovery of the real Judaism of Moses: the figure in whom rabbi and prophet were combined.

The revival of the prophetic imagination stands, for both thinkers, as a symptom of a new psychological-spiritual richness, grounded in the fact that the Jew in Israel is no longer severed from the sources of his creativity. Both agreed that an anti-halachic mood would hover over the State in its earlier years; but Rav Kook clearly saw that this would be a passing phase and that the new Torah personality which evolved would be at home in both the halachah and the poetry, mysticism and moral idealism which is the domain of the aggadah. There would be, within Judaism, a "transcending of one-sidedness".

A tension, then which had been sensed since Judah HaLevi and before, cried out for resolution. For by the nineteenth century it had grown unbearable. Until then Jews had lived largely in close autonomous communities, within which the traditional norms of social and cultural life could be preserved. They carried with them at least a substantial fragment of what life would have been like in Israel. But emancipation offered to tear down the ghetto walls; and few could refuse the offer. Once within the mainstream of society some cultural accommodation seemed inevitable. The result was that Judaism could no longer be lived on its own terms, as a totality. For while each of the 613 commands is a separate imperative, each has its meaning in the context of all the others, and in the context of a society to which they can relate. The very terms in which they were defended in post-emancipation thinking — symbolism, subjective experience, abstract moral values — shows the degree to which the life of the commandments had become estranged from its real setting. For hitherto, it had always been seen as the code of differentness, of a people apart. Now it was being justified in terms which would *not* keep Jews apart; and the strain showed in every version of the synthesis between Judaism and European secularity.

Rav Soloveitchik has written powerfully of the two components of Judaism: the *Brit Avot*, the covenant with the patriarchs rooted in the land, and the *Brit Sinai*, the covenant expressed in the commandments which can be fulfilled and studied anywhere. Judaism in the diaspora lacks the *Brit Avot*, whose characteristic expression is a sense of what he

calls "the existential-historical differentness of the Jew"; the "irrational, absurd" but inescapable identification with other Jews over and above our rational identification with universal humanity. *Brit Avot* in exile is thrust upon us by antisemitism. But it would be painful indeed if we were to conclude that it could only be felt in persecution. Israel represents the only possible *positive* realisation of *Brit Avot*.

The awareness of the *necessity* of Israel, which began to grow a hundred or so years ago, belongs to a crisis in the psychology of the Jew whose effects can be traced in almost all of the movements of that most schismatic of periods. To be 'a man in the street and a Jew at home', to confine Judaism to the role of private religious discipline, was to prove untenable; and the idea that civilisation tends towards a universal human culture was equally misconceived. To read Moses' addresses in his *Mishne Torah*, the book of Devarim, or to read Moses Maimonides' own *Mishne Torah*, is to see how each part of Judaism derives its meaning from the whole: a whole people, a whole society, a whole personality. Israel is where Judaism *becomes lucid*; where, in Rav Kook's phrase, the "unity of existence" finds its root.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

A general summary of Jewish thinking about exile can be found under the heading *Galut* in the Encyclopaedia Judaica; and in Yitzhak Baer's *Galut*, Schocken.

Amongst the books referred to in the text are A.A. Cohen's *The Natural and The Supernatural Jew*, Vallentine Mitchell; Richard Rubinstein's strange plea for paganism is contained in 'The Rebirth of Israel in Contemporary Jewish Theology', in *After Auschwitz*, Bobbs-Merrill pp.131-144; Moses Hess' *Rome and Jerusalem* is available in M.J. Bloom's translation, Philosophical Library, New York; and the quotations from Rav Kook are taken from the collection of his writings translated by Ben Zion Bokser, Classics of Western Spirituality, SPCK.

Nachmanides' comments on Israel are to be found scattered throughout his *Commentary on the Torah*, available in Chavel's translation, Shilo Press.

For a sense of Judah HaLevi's feelings about Israel, as well as the *Kuzari* you might try his *Selected Poems* — in a somewhat antiquated translation — from the Jewish Publication Society of America. If your Hebrew is good, you will find a strong midrashic presentation of religious Zionism in Rav J.B. Soloveitchik, *Chamesh Derashot*, Jerusalem. The passages referred to in the text are taken from the chapter, *Brit Avot*, pp.85-103. Also referred to was Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, Duckworth, 1981. Although this is a work of moral philosophy, with no direct bearing on the subject of Israel or Judaism, it is an extremely powerful analysis of the way a certain way of thinking and speaking can break down in the wake of historical change, and its thesis (that the whole of our moral vocabulary is in a state of collapse) is curiously relevant to the argument presented above.

Norman Lamm's essay comparing S.R. Hirsch and Rav Kook is entitled *Two Versions of Synthesis*, and is printed in his *Faith and Doubt*, Ktav, pp.69-82. For a brief introduction to Hirsch's approach, see his *Nineteen Letters of Ben Uziel*, trans. Drachman, Bloch.



GLOSSARY

- ARAMA, ISAAC — Spanish rabbi and philosopher, 15th century C.E. His famous commentary to the Bible is entitled 'Akedat Yitzchak'.
- BET DIN — Jewish court of law.
- DERECH ERETZ — Literally, 'the way of the land'. Used figuratively to mean, variously, polite behaviour, a worldly occupation, involvement in matters of secular concern.
- EMUNOT VE-DEOT — '(The book of) Beliefs and Opinions', Saadia Gaon's philosophical treatise, completed in 933 C.E.
- GALUT — Exile; the condition of Jews outside Israel.
- GAN EDEN — Literally, 'the Garden of Eden'. Used figuratively to signify the resting-place of the soul after death.
- GEHINNOM — 'The Valley of Hinnom', a valley south of Jerusalem. Used figuratively as a name for the place where the wicked are punished after death.
- HALACHAH — A term signifying either a particular Jewish law, or Jewish law in general.
- HASSID — 'Pious man'. Often used specifically to refer to an adherent of the popular mystical movement in Judaism initiated in the 18th century C.E. by the Baal Shem Tov.
- JUDAH HALEVI — Poet and philosopher, born c.1075; d.1141 C.E.
- KUZARI — Title of Judah HaLevi's great philosophical dialogue, in which he sets out, in the form of an imagined conversation between a rabbi and the king of the Khazars, his view of the uniqueness of Jewish spirituality.
- MAGGID MISHNE — Commentary to Maimonides' Mishne Torah, by R. Vidal of Tolosa, 14th century C.E.
- MAIMONIDES — R. Moses ben Maimon (RaMBaM), 1135-1204 C.E., outstanding rabbi, philosopher and codifier of Jewish law.
- MEKHILTA — Collection of teachings from the Mishnaic period arranged as a commentary to the book of Shemot. There are two such collections, the MEKILTA DE-RABBI ISHMAEL and the MEKILTA DE-RABBI SHIMON BAR YOCHAI.
- MIDRASH — A generic name for rabbinic Biblical interpretation.
- MIDRASH RABBAH — Whenever there is a reference in the text to a book of the Bible, followed by the word RABBAH (e.g. SHEMOT RABBAH), the work referred to is a volume in the collection known as the MIDRASH RABBAH; a series of midrashim to the Five Books of Moses, and the five Megillot.
- MISHNE TORAH — Literally, 'repetition of the Torah', and used to refer either to the book of Devarim, or to the law code of Moses Maimonides (Rambam). Whenever there is a quotation from Maimonides, whose source is indicated as 'Hilchot. . .', the reference is to one of the books of his Mishne Torah.
- NACHMANIDES — R. Moses ben Nachman (RaMBaN), 1194-1270 C.E. Spanish rabbi, philosopher, and mystic. Author of a famous commentary to the Torah.
- ORACH CHAYYIM — Section of the Shulchan Aruch dealing with the laws of prayer, Shabbat and the festivals. Literally, 'The Way of Life'.
- RASHBAM — Acronym of R. Samuel b.Meir, c.1080-1158 C.E. French rabbi and author of a commentary to the Torah. A grandson of Rashi.
- RASHI — Acronym of R. Shlomo b.Yitzchak, 1040-1105 C.E. French rabbi, author of the most famous of all commentaries to the Torah, and of the indispensable systematic commentary to the Talmud.
- REBBE — Teacher; often used specifically of Hassidic leader.
- SAADIA GAON — Outstanding rabbi and leader of Babylonian Jewry, 882-942 C.E. A pioneer in many fields of study, including grammar, Biblical translation and commentary, halachic codification, and Jewish philosophy.
- SHECHINAH — The Divine Presence, a term usually employed to indicate the aspect of the Divine which is indwelling, rather than transcendent.
- SHEMONEH PERAKIM — 'The Eight Chapters': title of the introductory treatise to Maimonides' commentary on the Ethics of the Fathers.
- SHULCHAN ARUCH — 'Prepared Table'; name of Joseph Karo's law code, first published in 1564-5 C.E.
- SIFRA — Halachic midrash, of the Mishnaic period, to the book of Vayikra.
- SIFRE — Halachic midrash, of the Mishnaic period, to the books of Bamidbar and Devarim.
- TALMUD — 'Study' or 'Learning': the name given to the composite work of the Mishna (compiled by R. Judah HaNasi, early 3rd century C.E.) and the exposition and elaboration of it, the Gemarra. There are two such works, the Babylonian Talmud (Talmud Bavli), and the Jerusalem Talmud (Talmud Yerushalmi).
- TUR — Full title — Arba-ah Turim, 'Four Rows': the name of the halachic compendium written by R. Jacob ben Asher, c.1270-1340 C.E.
- TZIDDUK HA-DIN — Vindication or acceptance of the Divine judgement. In a more specific sense, the name of the prayer said at a funeral (S.P.B. 424-5).
- YALKUT SHIMONI — Anthology of midrashim, usually attributed to 13th century C.E.
- ZOHAR — 'Splendour': major work of Jewish mysticism, mainly arranged as a commentary to the Torah.