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SATAN IN RABBINIC LITERATURE

ARYEH AZRIEL

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

1983

Referee: Prof. Edward Goldman

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to my thesis referee, Dr. Edward Goldman, for the guidance and help which he has so freely given me.

I want to thank my special friend and editor, Joanne Hemmer, whose role was one without which I might never have finished this project. Her assistance cannot be put into words.

לאליס-קרן

היא השכינה

שמעתי מרבינו ז"ל שבימי אברהם אבינו היתה
השכינה נקראת בשם שרה, ובימי יצחק בשם רבקה, ובימי
יעקב בשם רחל ולאח. וכן מובא בזוהר הקדוש מעין זה.

(מתוך "תיקון הלב" לנחמן מברסלב)

Digest

This paper is concerned with the sages' treatment of Satan in their literature. The investigation begins with a look at the concept of Satan as it appears in its kernel form in the biblical stratum. There the sages found only a faint portrayal of Satan, the leanness of which is not surprising when one understands the pervasive monotheism in those writings. Chapter one demonstrates that the Satan of the Bible appears primarily as the adversative nature of God; but in Satan's later biblical appearances, he begins to take on the character which reaches fruition in the midrashim.

A study of the sages' handling of Satan would be remiss if it did not consider other biblical and non-biblical factors which played a part in the formulation of the sages' system of beliefs. The second chapter of this thesis examines ancient demonic myth, Iranian/Persian dualism, Hellenism, Apocalypticism, Gnosticism, and a plethora of post-biblical divinations, and highlights the aspects of these systems which may have played a role in shaping the sages' point of view regarding Satan. The other factor which bore upon the sages' treatment of Satan derived from the plight of post-biblical Jews: the cessation of prophecy, economic difficulties, and the destruction of the Temples. Widespread

despair among the Jews in the face of these problems left them susceptible to the influence of foreign beliefs and practices which the sages saw a need to combat.

The last two chapters of this thesis show how the sages used Satan in their literature. Their usage of him fell into two categories: 1) they used Satan as a homiletic device in order to teach concepts which they wished to stress to the Jewish populace; such usage was *לצרכי המקום* -- for the sake of the Omnipotent; 2) because Satan was a popular motif/myth among gentiles and Jews alike, the sages adapted and used Satan in such a way as to bolster the power of their authority over the Jews, thereby preventing their abandonment of Judaism; such usage was *לצרכי ציבור* -- for the sake of the people.

The thesis concludes that the sages formulated and utilized a concept of Satan that concurred with their monotheism, a concept not unlike the biblical Satan -- the adversary in the service of God. But the sages' Satan was much more sophisticated than the one-dimensional concept in the Bible; he was a retaining wall holding back the flood of assimilation; he was a catalyst, aiding in the solving of rabbinic controversies; he was a warning light, cautioning against indulgence in earthly pleasures and possessions; he was a masquerader who served to emphasize the importance of repentance and the study of Torah; he was a spyglass through which values could be

clarified and magnified.

Satan was one of the sages' primary vehicles for illustrating their beliefs regarding evil, and as such was perhaps their most fascinating literary device.

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the sages' use of Satan in their literature required an investigation of Jewish and non-Jewish sources, both literary and cultural. The obvious starting point for such a study was the Bible, which had to be considered within the framework of the period in which it was written. Concurrently, in order to gain an understanding of that period, one had to become acquainted with the prevalent cultures in the locale in which the writing took place.

Having pinpointed the references to Satan in the Bible, and having examined the literary and cultural context in which they occurred, my next step was to survey post-biblical life, times, and writings in order to understand the foundation on which the sages' concept of Satan was formed. Such a survey involved the tracing of Satan through the multitude of non-Jewish, apocryphal and pseud-epigraphic writings, and understanding the usage of Satan therein.

With a thorough perspective of the context in which the sages were living and writing, the investigation could proceed to the midrashim themselves (see bibliography). Using appropriate indices and concordances (as noted in the bibliography) I collected those passages, verses, and citations of which Satan/Angel of Death/Sammael was the

major focus. Upon scrutinizing these sources, I was able to discern two dominant trends in the treatment of Satan by the sages, one being the usage of Satan as a homiletic device and the other being the usage of Satan as a hedge against Jewish desertion from the normative Jewish camp.

In the process of categorizing the midrashim into one or the other (or both, in some cases) of these trends, the Hebrew citations for which English translations were not available were translated into English, and those already in English were carefully examined against the original Hebrew source, with modifications being made for the sake of clarity.

Having realized, in my research, the scarcity of Jewish secondary sources dealing with my subject, I am hopeful that this work will provide new insight regarding Satan's role in midrashic literature.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DIGEST	i
INTRODUCTION	iv
CHAPTER 1: SATAN IN THE BIBLE	1
CHAPTER 2: SATAN - LITERAL ENCOUNTERS IN THE POST BIBLICAL ERA	19
CHAPTER 3: SATAN FOR THE SAKE OF THE OMNIPOTENT	41
I. MIDRASHIC TREATMENT OF SATAN'S ACTUAL APPEARANCES IN THE BIBLE	42
A. BALAM'S MIDRASHIC SATAN: A WARNING AGAINST ASSIMILATION	43
B. JOB'S MIDRASHIC SATAN: AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE "GOD'S SERVANT"	45
C. ZECHARIAH'S MIDRASHIC SATAN: A PROPOSED SOLUTION FOR THE PRIEST- HOOD CONTROVERSY	53
D. SOLOMON'S MIDRASHIC SATAN: AN INDICTMENT OF EARTHLY PLEASURES	56
II. MIDRASHIC INTERJECTION OF SATAN INTO THE SAGES' EXEGESIS OF THE BIBLE	58
A. THE MIDRASHIC ACCOUNT OF SHUSHAN'S JEWS: SATAN AS ACCUSER	59

B. DAVID'S MIDRASHIC SATAN: SATAN AS TEMPTER	64
C. THE STUDY OF TORAH: SATAN AS INVEIGLER	74
D. ABRAHAM'S MIDRASHIC SATAN: A STIMULUS FOR LOVE OF GOD IN THE FACE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE	78
E. MOSES' MIDRASHIC SATAN: A TAKER OF LIFE IN THE SERVICE OF GOD	89
CHAPTER 4: SATAN FOR THE SAKE OF THE PEOPLE	102
CONCLUSION	121
NOTES	125
BIBLIOGRAPHY	151

CHAPTER 1
SATAN IN THE BIBLE

Before discussing the biblical Satan -- i.e., the Satan which appears in the Bible¹ -- one must identify exactly what is meant by the word שׂוֹן in that context.

It is generally accepted² that the name שׂוֹן comes from the verb שׂוֹן , "to persecute, to be hostile to" and more specifically, "to accuse." As a verb, שׂוֹן appears only six times in the Bible: five times in Psalms³ and once in Zechariah.⁴ From those usages one meaning emerges: "to be an adversary to." In addition to the verb שׂוֹן , we find in the Bible another root -- סוֹן which appears in five Biblical passages.⁵ A related noun, שׂוֹןָה , which means "harassment," appears in Genesis.⁶ Its usage aids in the translation of the verb שׂוֹן as "to persecute, to pursue." Another meaning emerges out of Genesis 27:41 and 49:23 where the meaning becomes "to entrap," in the sense of setting a snare or a trap, or putting fetters on the feet.⁷ The only justification for this meaning can be found from the reading of the following verse in Hosea 9:8:

מִשְׁטָמָה בְּבֵית אֱלֹהֵיוּ
on all his path's harassment מִשְׁטָמָה in the House of his God."

Consequently, from the basic meaning of the secondary form of Satan and the Arabic ⁸عَطَلَ as parallel forms to שָׁטַח, it can be concluded that the primal meaning of the verb שָׁטַח is: "to persecute by hindering free forward movement": i.e., "to hinder, to oppose an existing intention." This meaning can be understood best from a reading of Numbers 22:22 where malak yahweh -- an Angel of the Lord -- literally interferes with Balam's intentions: "...So an angel of the Lord placed himself in his way as an adversary (שָׁטַח)." ⁹

There are those scholars ⁹ who oppose Gesenius and Even Shoshan, and claim that Satan is to be derived from שָׁטַח, "to rove about." Tur-Sinai (Torczyner), in his article, claims: ¹⁰

...it is conceivable that the accusing activity of Shaitan (Torczyner takes as the original form and refers to the change between s and 's in Hebrew and also between Hebrew and Arabic) or Satan led to formation of a new verb, stn, which means "accuse, be hostile" and from which later a substantive, sitna, "accusation" developed. ¹¹

The derivation of the noun שָׁטָן from שָׁטַח and the concept of Satan as a roving messenger is taken from the relatively late book of Job; this so-called folk-tale cannot, according to most scholars, ¹² be dated earlier than 600 B.C.E.,

rendering this interpretation the less feasible. On the other hand, the noun ~~יָוֵד~~ and the concept of Satan as an adversary appear in much older texts.¹³ Using this interpretation, I intend to clarify the theological and historical concept of Satan in the Bible.

My quest for the biblical adversary Satan will start in the book of I Samuel 29:4. In this chapter, a military revolt almost takes place in the Philistines' camp. The officers are angry with Achish, their king, who wants to use the military services of David in his war against King Saul. The officers claim: "...let him /David/ not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary (~~יָוֵד~~) to us." This same meaning -- i.e. "adversary in war" -- appears in I Kings 5:18. King Solomon sends a message to Hiram: "But now Yahweh my God hath given me rest on every side, so there is neither adversary (~~יָוֵד~~) nor evil occurent." But ironically, an adversary does appear only a few chapters later in the book of Kings. In I Kings 11:14, after the Lord tells Solomon that he will tear down his kingdom: "Yahweh stirred up an adversary(~~יָוֵד~~) unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite." Similarly in I Kings 11:23: "And God stirred up another adversary (~~יָוֵד~~), Rezon." And a few verses later: "And he /Rezon/ was an adversary (~~יָוֵד~~) to Israel all the days of Solomon..."

The "adversary" of these verses constitutes the opposite of tranquility and quietude. Solomon, who rules over a safe and secure kingdom and who intends to build a House for the Lord, is troubled by enemies -- human adversaries who try to destroy his dreams. God is the one who puts those flesh-and-blood adversaries in the king's way. God holds them in his palm and uses them as weapons in His vengeance.

In II Samuel 19:23 we discover a new feature in the concept of the adversary. Simei begs for his life before King David, but the sons of Zeruah remind David of the past sins of Simei. David says: "What have I to do with you ye sons of Zeruah, that ye should this day be adversaries (וְעָדָו) unto me?" The sons of Zeruah are in opposition to the king. In this confrontation the hostility does not emanate from God, as in the previous citings. It resides among humans. From this verse, the concept takes on a meaning more readily identified with humans.¹⁴

So far we have traced "Satan" as an abstract concept, as evil opposition which comes from God or humans. Further study will reveal Satan in a different light.

In Numbers 22:22 we discover Balam in a mission not approved by God, on his way to Balak, King of Mohab: "But God was incensed at his going: so an Angel of the Lord placed himself in his way as an adversary (וְעָדָו)..."

For the first time in the Bible, a "satanic" function is performed by an angel. The angel's role becomes clear when he explains to Balam the strange behavior of his ass: "Why have you beaten your ass these three times? It is I who come out (יָצָא) as an adversary (יָדוֹן), for the errand is obnoxious to me" (Numbers 22:32). These verses bring us closer to the concept of an adversary who belongs to a higher metaphysical sphere, i.e., an angel who has a role as a messenger of God. In order to understand the adversary's role in that sphere, we must first acquire an understanding of the role and the identity of the Angel of the Lord.

A great many books and articles have dealt with the subject of angels in the Bible and Judaism and with man's belief in them.¹⁵ The following summary will highlight ideas regarding angels which are essential to a greater understanding of Satan.

Angels in the Bible appear in two ways: first, as congregations, groups which compose the celestial entourage of God¹⁶ and who perform duties in the presence of God;¹⁷ second, angels appear as singular angels, each of whom is sent by the Lord in order to fulfill a decree or a mission.¹⁸ This simplistic picture belies the complexity of an entire science -- Angelology -- which deals with the classification and categorization of angels in a given

religion. Out of this science emerges a whole range of theories on the source of the biblical belief in angels.

Most scholars conclude that the celestial angelic court as it exists in the Bible resulted from the demotion of the pantheon of the pagan religions.¹⁹ Other scholars claim that the angels are an original creation of the ancient Israelites themselves.²⁰ There are also those who insist that the belief in angels came to the Israelites by way of the Assyrians²¹ or the Persians.²²

As for the singular angel, identified in Numbers 22:22 as "the Angel of the Lord," his place and function among the Heavenly Court in the Jewish faith is also the subject of numerous theories. A discussion of "the Angel of the Lord" sheds considerable light on the evolution of the "adversary -- Satan."

There is a great lack of clarity in the biblical text concerning the distinction between God and the Angel of God.²³ The confusion arises out of the fact that sometimes the angel, literally identified as an angel, conveys God's words using the personal pronoun "I."²⁴ At other times, God is substituted for the Angel of the Lord in the middle of a conversation.²⁵ There are also times when people identify God's presence in the appearance of the angel.²⁶ By and large, the Angel of the Lord appears

as a messenger of God. This variety of forms taken by the Angel of the Lord elicits the following theories;

- 1) The Angel of the Lord is not a separate entity from God. It could be either the way God's emanation appears to humans,²⁷ or an "outside soul" separated from God.²⁸
- 2) The "Angel of the Lord" is a biblical idiom used by the redactors to remove anthropomorphic images and forms from God in His dealing with humans.²⁹
- 3) The distinction between the Angel of the Lord and God is just stylistic, and is used to identify the messenger with the sender.³⁰

Out of these theories the following characteristics of the Angel of the Lord emerge and help us to understand the biblical account in Numbers 22:22: 1) The Angel of the Lord is not an autonomous creature. The Angel is under God's control; he is the product of God's will.³¹ 2) The activity of the angel is not limited in its scope, nor confined to a certain area of expertise. 3) Because of the commonality of the words and deeds of God and the Angel, they take on a homologous nature.³²

The indistinguishable identity which we discover between the Angel of the Lord and God Himself will aid in the understanding of Balam's revolt against God, as well as the "adverse" nature of God. Balam -- despite God's instructions -- dismisses God's decree, and decides to continue toward the fulfillment of his own will; his journey to

Balak in order to curse the Israelites! The Angel of God -- God as an adversary -- appears and stands in his way in an attempt to prevent Balam's action. Balam, who is human, does not recognize the presence of God or the meaning behind the mission of his adversary. Only the ass, who converses with the adversary, is able to comprehend the awesomeness of the encounter. And then only by the will of God: "...the Lord uncovered Balam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way, his drawn sword in his hand; thereupon he bowed right down to the ground. The Angel of the Lord said to him, 'Why have you beaten your ass these three times? It is I who came out as an adversary...If she had not shied away from me, you are the one I should have killed, while sparing her.'" In other words, the penalty for disobeying God's will is death. The point at which the human will departs from God's wishes is made by the sword of death. For the first time a human being faces a celestial adversary. No more symbolic adversary of foreign enemies -- as in the days of David, or Solomon -- but an adversary in God's image. In this passage, God -- i.e. an angel from God -- functions as "Satan!"

The adversative quality of "Satan" appears in the Bible as the outcome of the relationship between an almighty God and His subservient creatures. Humans who refuse to

obey God's edicts, or who misinterpret God's will stumble time and time again because of the adversative facet of God. At times the adversary takes the form of individuals or armies: other times it is expressed directly, in an open conflict between God and people.

A very different Satan appears in the verses in the book of Job (and especially in the framing story³³), a Satan who is in contradiction to the aforementioned images and concepts. In order to understand the changes in Satan and to recognize the direction of Satan's development, there is a need to sketch the scholarly foundation out of which Satan emerges in the book of Job.

Out of the enormous numbers of books and articles on Job,³⁴ we learn that even before the book was redacted (about 600 B.C.E.) there already existed the "Job-legend." The hypothesis of most scholars is that in ancient times there was a righteous man who was tried by God and was able to stand up to the trial.³⁵ These events supposedly preceded the writing of the book which we have in our hands. The book of Job contains both prose and poetry. Some scholars try to distinguish between the two by pointing out the irreconcilable gaps between them³⁶; many others³⁷ find the book to be one cohesive work: without the frame story one would not be able to understand the moral implications of the poetry or the complaints of

Job's friends. If the poetry were lacking, a dull story would remain.

Satan appears in only the framing story. Job and his friends are not aware of Satan's existence or deeds. There are those who claim that Satan was a late addition during the redaction.³⁸ Many theories attempt to explain the intent of the writers who would have Satan appear in the book of Job: 1) The redactors wished to introduce some humor and amusement into a serious and troublesome book;³⁹ 2) Satan and his accusations are popular naïve notions which were infused into this book of wisdom, in order to introduce that wisdom in the framework of the current biblical belief system;⁴⁰ 3) Satan's appearance is needed in order to represent the pessimistic ideology of the ancient philosophy;⁴¹ 4) Satan's appearance was important in order to explain the source of illnesses and plagues to the Ancients;⁴² 5) The redactors used Satan in order to introduce in an historical context the source of evil in the world. Satan is therefore a "scape-goat" who symbolizes the changes in theological approaches of that era.⁴³

For the purpose of this work, the book of Job will be viewed as an organic unit. It is advantageous, at this stage, to put aside the above theories and to look into the verses themselves, without a smoke screen of theological

biases, or psychological interpretations.

In the first chapter of the book is written: "One day the divine beings (בני האלוהים) presented themselves before the Lord and the adversary (השטן) came along with them (בתוכם); The Lord said to the adversary (השטן), 'Where have you been?' The adversary answered the Lord, 'I have been roaming all over the earth.' The Lord said to the adversary, 'Have you noticed my servant Job?...a blameless and upright man...' The adversary answered the Lord, 'Does Job not have good reason to fear God?...' The Lord replied to the adversary, 'See, all that he has is in your power, only do not lay a hand on him.' The adversary departed from the presence of the Lord." (Verses 6-13)

For the first time in the Bible, God and Satan are standing face to face! Unlike the homologous God and Angel of God in the previous books, Satan is not simply an aspect of God who stands in the way of man, but a figure of substance -- the Satan in the court of God. In the heavenly scene, Satan joins the divine beings (בני האלוהים) in their regular appearance before God. Satan, who appears twice⁴⁴ before God, is a semi-independent character with some freedom in his action. In his job description in the heavenly entourage, Satan travels on earth, at times

without God's knowledge or without specific instructions from God: "Where have you been?" (Verse 7)⁴⁵. However, Satan's independence is restricted in his dealings with humans and is under constant supervision by God, the employer. An extensive dialogue between Satan and God can take place only after permission is granted by God. In the midst of the divine beings Satan appears somewhat isolated:

...betok is not infrequently tantamount to: (one) of the number of, with others of the same class; see Gen. 22:10; 42:5; Num. 17:21; 26:62; I Sam. 10:10; Ezek. 29:12. But as in several of the passages just cited, the person or persons in question are peculiar or pre-eminent in the class to which they are referred, as is the Satan here; he is one of the sons of the gods, or angels, and as such subject to and under the control of Yahweh, and incapable of acting beyond the terms of Yahweh's permission; but there are perhaps germs of the later idea of Satan, the opponent of God, dividing with him the allegiance of men (Wisd. 2:24), in the freedom with which he moves about in the earth, so that Yahweh asks where he has been (1:7; 2:2), in contrast to the angels who are sent to definite persons and places.⁴⁶

In the second appearance of Satan in Chapter 2 verses 1-7, the tension between God and Satan seems to rise, and Satan becomes more daring and fearless: "One day the divine beings presented themselves....: The adversary (~~7077~~) came along... 'He /Job/ still keeps his integrity: so you / ~~7077~~ / have incited me against him to destroy him for no

good reason.' The adversary answered the Lord: 'Skin for skin...; But lay a hand on his bones and his flesh, and he will surely blasphemy You to Your face.' So the Lord said to the adversary, 'See, he is in your power, only spare his life.' The adversary (יָדוֹנָה) departed from the presence of the Lord and inflicted a severe inflammation on Job from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head."

Despite the anger and wrath of God, permission is granted to Satan to present Job with another trial. The resourceful Satan skillfully uses a line of arguments to raise doubts in God's mind about the righteousness of Job. God's uncertainty brings up Job's name before Satan, and consequently, through Satan, Job suffers a "severe inflammation" (Chapter 2:7). Job believes that God is responsible for his affliction. The evil in Job's world and in the world of his wife and friends is thought to be a result of God's intentions.⁴⁷ If Job knew Satan was responsible, the trial would not accomplish its goal: proof of Job's faith.⁴⁸ As Moshe Greenberg writes:

For Job to have learned that his family and his possessions had been annihilated because of a mere wager with Satan -- that he had been a pawn in a celestial game -- would have been far harder to accept than was the mystery of a God part known, part hidden, whose overall work is nevertheless good. For it is easier to bear a mixture of benignity and enmity, with their ultimate meaning clouded in mystery, than to accept a cold-blooded toying with the fortunes and lives of man.⁴⁹

At this point in the evolution of Satan we find Satan with a proper name, and in accordance with God's will. God and Satan maintain a curious comradeship: they seem to work for the same purpose! Because Job's trial originates with God, Satan never appears again in the book to discuss his failure to subvert Job.⁵⁰

Satan therefore appears in the book of Job as a metaphysical being, whose purpose is to disturb the proper order in the world, and to put divinely ordained obstacles in the way of human happiness, in order to bring to humans a greater awareness of God's role in the universe.

From this rapport and mutual tension between God and Satan, a new and different relationship emerges in the book of Zechariah. The working conditions between an employer -- God -- and an employee -- Satan -- become hostile. In a vision to the prophet in Chapter 3, we find the following: "He further showed me Joshua, the high priest, standing before the Angel of the Lord, and the Accuser (הַשָּׂטָן) standing at his right to accuse him (לְיָמֵינוּ). But the Angel of the Lord said to the Accuser (הַשָּׂטָן), 'The Lord rebuke you, O Accuser (הַשָּׂטָן), may the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you...'" (Verses 1-3).

In order to understand the role and development of the biblical Satan, there is no need to understand the essence of and the meaning behind visions generally and those of Zechariah in particular. Rashi in his introduction to the

book states: "The prophecy of Zechariah is very vague, because it contains similar visions to a dream that can be easily solved, but we cannot understand the truth of the solution until a righteous teacher (מורה צדק) will come to our aid..."⁵¹ Investigating Satan in this chapter does not require a scrutinizing of the vision itself.

The scene deals with the reinstating of the high priest Joshua to his previous position as a judge and priest in the service of the people, with the approval of God.⁵² The sin which brought the downfall of the high priest is not clear, and therefore different theories about the sin exist, out of which Satan's role can be understood. There are those who claim that the scene is a reflection of a political dispute resulting from a false charge against the high priest, a charge which came from the court of the Persian king.⁵³ Scholars identify in the dispute traces of the tension between the Jews who returned from the exile and those who remained in the land.⁵⁴ Others recognize in the scene the existing animosity regarding rituals in the land (i.e. the desire of some to follow strict ritualistic practice vs. the desire of others for greater laxity in ritual worship). This animosity is transformed into a trial -- in heaven -- which also reminds us of the personal confession of the high priest on Yom Kippur.⁵⁵ Others see the trial as parallel to the rituals in the Babylonian religion.⁵⁶

Out of those theories and the unbiased reading of the verses themselves emerges the following description of Satan in the book of Zechariah: Satan fulfills the role of a prosecutor in the heavenly court. Satan's role is not limited to presenting testimony, nor does he simply raise doubts before God, as in the book of Job. Rather, he tries (without success) to lay blame on and to demand justice for the high priest.⁵⁷ Before our eyes appears a Satan obsessed with the execution of justice for a man who sinned. This obsession separates Satan completely from the divine beings in the book of Job. God -- the Angel of the Lord -- does not even allow Satan to bring up his accusation: the trial becomes unilateral. The dialogue which was the hallmark of the relationship between God and Satan in Job vanishes because of the perversion of justice in the heavenly court.⁵⁸ The embitterment in the relationship becomes permanent, when God rebukes Satan in front of the Angel, and shows the cruelty in Satan who even attacks the priest who is: "...a brand plucked from the fire" (Zec. 7:3). A new scenario takes place: God appears as merciful and compassionate while Satan comes to be an arch-enemy, a foe to the human being. Satan, who received his limited independence from God and fulfilled God's will, reveals himself as an independent entity who acts on his own. God's scolding of him leads to the further polarization of God and Satan. Satan not only appears as the enemy of humanity but appears for the first time as an enemy and an

adversary to God himself.⁵⁹ Because of their differences, Satan will have to separate himself from the angelic congregation who serves God's needs, and to look for his own meaning in a different world!

Satan appears one final time in the Bible. In I Chronicles 21:1, we read that "Satan (~~יָדוּ~~) arose against Israel and incited (~~נִסָּה~~) David to number Israel," the result of this census being that "God was displeased about this matter and struck Israel with a plague."⁶⁰ The significance of this verse becomes clear when it is viewed in contrast to an earlier verse in II Samuel.

In II Samuel 24:1 a similar incident occurs: "The anger of the Lord again flared up against Israel; and He incited David against them, saying 'Go and number Israel and Judah.'" In this earlier book, the result of the census is also a plague, but a change takes place between this and the later I Chronicles account: the inciter in II Samuel is God, while in I Chronicles the inciter becomes Satan. The difference in the two books provokes various conjectures: perhaps the redactor of I Chron. wanted to introduce a loving and merciful God and therefore replaced God with Satan⁶¹; or perhaps the widespread belief in demons and evil spirits which increased during the time of the Second Temple (the period when Chron. is thought to have been edited⁶²) caused the editors to attribute the plagues

and diseases to such demons -- i.e. Satan.⁶³

* * * * *

Despite the infrequent mention of Satan in the Bible, we are nevertheless able to detect therein the development of the character of Satan. In the context of the whole of biblical writings, the concept of Satan is merely a fragment in the prevailing theology: "The Satan of the Hebrew Bible is part and parcel of monotheism; there is but one power."⁶⁴ Satan's limited appearances always originate from God's will. As he is a creature in the service of the omnipotent God, Satan's agenda imparts a disturbing feeling: the feeling that evil is caused to exist (in the Bible) by God. "The Satan is the servant of Jehovah, and the idea is rather that he is zealous for God's honor, than that he is the covert and sneering foe even of Jehovah himself."⁶⁵ Significantly, the books of the Bible in which Satan's last three appearances take place -- Job, Zechariah, and I Chronicles -- are "post exilic and are to be dated probably between 519-300 B.C. / sic/."⁶⁶ It is in these books that the concept of Satan takes on a character which tends toward that concept of him which appears in midrashic literature.

CHAPTER 2

SATAN - LITERAL ENCOUNTERS IN THE POST BIBLICAL ERA

Each life time is the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.
for some there are more pieces.
for others the puzzle is more difficult to
assemble.
Some seem to be born with a nearly completed
puzzle.
And so it goes.
Souls going this way and that
Trying to assemble the myriad parts.¹

In examining the sages' concept of Satan as it emerges out of their literature -- the halachic and the midrashic -- one must painstakingly gather the pieces of a complicated jigsaw puzzle not only from the Bible but from a period of time which stretches over 900 years -- from the time which preceded the Hasmonian era until the time of Arab conquest.² The Satan which so rarely enters the pages of the Bible appears countless times in the sages' literature; Satan's frequent appearances in this literature are a by-product of the "population explosion" which occurs among the angels in those writings. Here, angels, demons, and spirits take their permanent seat in the heavenly entourage and fulfill regular chores in the world below.³

In scholarly research as well, references to Satan or the devil, relatively sparse in biblical research, become overwhelming in research of the post-biblical period. Every period stands in the shadow of the preceding period, and is locked into the rules of inheritance.

Outside of the Bible, two dominant factors played a part in the development of the sages' concept and usage of Satan: first, the interchanges which took place between Jews and foreign cultures; second, the concomitant reactions within Judaism to those interchanges.

* * * * *

Besides Satan, the angels, and bene-elohim, a vast array of demonic elements, often subtle or concealed, exists in the Bible. This network of demons may have been taken on by the ancient Hebrews either by force or by choice, through contact with ancient cultures in the Near East during the Bronze and Iron Ages.⁴ Or it may well have been created by individuals, or by the Hebrew nation as a whole.⁵ Either way, those demons were incorporated by the redactors of the Bible and were introduced at the time of its canonization, although in comparison to the predominating monotheism of the Bible, demons received little or no fanfare. Because remnants of these demons

and other sources of evil resurface in post-biblical literature, it is important to note their appearance in the Bible.

In addition to sea-creatures like לויתן, תנין, בהמות and רחב,⁶ there appear land creatures like שעירים⁷, and air-creatures like נחש-שרף, נחש-אש, נחש-אדום.⁸ These creatures, in addition to the עזאזל, נפילים, לילית⁹ will come to be mentioned in the literature of the sages. Geographical locations should be noted as well: עמק-רפאים, גי-הנחם, שאול¹⁰ will be resurrected during the next generations as components of new systems of belief. We encounter in the biblical stratum concepts like משטמה¹¹ which will come to fruition in later writings as sources of calamity and destruction.¹¹

On one hand the above network of evil has been shown to be derived from the demonic array in ancient cultures.¹² On the other hand, Yechazkel Kaufman attempts to clarify and delineate their similarities when he explains the process of "Judaizing" which took place in biblical and post-biblical times:

What is fundamental and peculiar to Jewish demonology is that its spirits and devils derive, not from the primordial evil root, but from *śān*. Its Satanic symbol is the land serpent, the tempter of Adam, not the sea serpent (the dragon, or Rahab), the primeval against God. Biblical religion was unable to reconcile itself with the idea that there was a power in the universe that defied the authority of God and that could serve as an antigod, the symbol and source of evil. Hence, it strove to transfer

evil from the metaphysical to the moral realm, to the realm of sin. The serpent of Eden is no rival of God, but a "beast of the field" who entices to rebellion against the divine command. This is why he could become a central figure of later demonology. Satan became the chief of the devils, not as the symbol of a cosmic principle, but by virtue of his biblical rôle of seducer and tempter. Later legends connect him with the fallen angels who took human wives; he was "the first of the sinners." His hosts are his angelic followers in sin and their illicit progeny. It is they who seduced men to sin, who incited them to idolatry, and taught them divination and magic, and all the other wicked ways. These are no Tiamat or Kingu, no Seth or Apophis, no primeval beings radically hostile to God or capable of challenging his dominion. Judaism's demons are the offspring of sinful creatures; their power is only to entice man into sin and thereby bring divine judgement upon him.¹³

But despite whatever truth may exist in Kaufman's convictions, the demonic myth was not erased totally from the collective historic memory or the individual psyches of our forefathers and mothers.¹⁴ The censorship of the biblical redactors could not demolish with the stroke of a pen the monsters and spirits which continued to reside among the ancients and later to penetrate the world and the literature of the sages. Satan was probably not adopted from the Babylonian tradition¹⁵ or from Egyptian belief¹⁶ but simply remained in cold storage for a while in the biblical demonology network and lay in wait for its opportunity to thaw and reappear.

The interchange which took place between the Jews and the Iranians/Persians further shaped the sages' concept

of Satan. In his book Demonology and Devil-Lore, Conway claims:

The Iranian agriculturists believed that the Aryan nomads prevailed against them by potency of their great Soma-sacrifice; the supernatural beings so brought to their aid, the Vedic deities, were supposed to be agents of "the hurtful spirit," which was personified to be their chief. Thus the devil was theologically born in Persia about B.C. 900 /sic/.¹⁷

Not only did the Persians' fear of shepherds cause a devil-figure to be invented, but this fear precipitated an entire religious revolution shortly before 600 B.C.E. which overwhelmed a world struggling to understand the source of good and evil. This new Persian/Iranian religion brought with it entirely new beliefs and rituals whose traces can be found in every major religion.

The prophet Zarathushtra...laid the basis for the first thoroughly dualist religion. Zarathushtra's revelation was that evil is not a manifestation of the divine at all; rather it proceeds from a wholly separate principle. While thus moving from monism to dualism, Zarathushtra also moved from polytheism in the direction of monotheism.¹⁸

Zarathushtra's religion, in its various forms,¹⁹ contained a very important component which aids the understanding of religious beliefs and literature; dualism, or in its Hebrew equivalent תורת שתי הרשויות.²⁰ For the purpose of this study, it is important to take note of the concept of the evil spirit or power which came about as a result of the emergence of dualism. In the Iranian religion the

Angra Mainyu, ("Destructive or Tormenting Spirit," later known to be Ahriman) is an independent power, totally separated from the godhead or the Ahura Mazda (which in a later version becomes Ohrmazd, the good spirit). Ahriman is the chief of a great army of demons, evil spirits, and monsters who are led also by minor evil demonic officers. The demons are hostile to humans and to the godhead. The hostility brings with it terror and destruction. Ahriman has a creative power which of course is used as a negative force: "He creates all loathsome things, such as scorpions, toads, and vipers; he creates ugliness, and he unleashes all destructive forces, storms, drought, disease and death. He creates the whole host of demons."²¹ He is identified with the snake and death,²² and his character is that of trickster, tempter, and master of lies and disguises. Lying is what brings about his total destruction.²³ The tricks that Ahriman plays on humans, who have free will, lead to total destructive war, in which Ohrmazd successfully instigates internal strife among the demons and later causes the fall of Ahriman, bringing peace to the world.²⁴ Kaufman Kohler remarks:

A deeper meaning was attached to the doctrine of God's unity under Persian rule, in contact with the religious system of Zoroaster. To the Persians, life was a continual conflict between the principles of good and evil, until the ultimate victory of good shall come.

This dualistic view of the world greatly excels all other heathen religious systems, insofar as it assigns ethical purpose to the whole of life.²⁵

Kohler, however, goes on to point out the limited influence of the Iranian demonic system on the Jewish Satan in comparison to its ponderous influence in Christianity.²⁶

Diaspora Jewry and the Jews in Palestine during the Hellenistic period were differently influenced by dualism.²⁷

But we must be cautious in our attempts to show what influence Jewish and Persian beliefs had on one another. The late canonization of the "Avesta," the Persian writing, which took place in the 3rd century C.E., does not preclude the earlier existence of the beliefs which it contains, and its possible interchanges with other religions. One can assume that out of internal dialectical needs or the "needs of the hour," some beliefs about the nature of evil were absorbed and "Judaised" by our sages. As such, an Iranian piece is placed into the conceptual puzzle, while recognizing that:

Persian belief verges closely upon the "dualistic" theodicy which was developed in its most consistent form in Zoroastrianism... But dualism endangers either the unity or the moral nature of the idea of God.²⁸

The interchange which took place between the Jews and the Greeks added a new dimension to the sages' concept of Satan. In the Babylonian Talmud we find ascribed to Rabbi Simon Ben Gamliel the following remark: "A thousand

children were in my father's house; five hundred of them study Torah and five hundred study Greek culture."²⁹

The above citation, along with phrases and sentences in rabbinic literature³⁰ and evidence outside of that literature,³¹ testify beyond any doubt to the enormous influence of the Greek world on Jews and Judaism during the Hellenistic period. The Greek language was on the lips of all the Jewish social classes.³² Greek culture in all of its diverse forms penetrated the Jewish world not on the edges of spears alone but with the full approval and encouragement of the Jewish political and spiritual leadership.³³ But the proximity of the two cultures bred, during the later years, hostility and fear on the part of the sages over the hellenization of the Jews.³⁴ Judaism and Hellenism were:

Two separate cultural complexes. But this dichotomy should not be overstated or oversimplified. Judaism absorbed hellenistic elements and Hellenism was so far from being a religion or a culture, that one must be aware that this great complex of ideas and movements also absorbed Judaic elements. Hellenism...was a way of thinking, a complex of ideas, a modifier of a substantive. Therefore both diaspora and Palestinian Judaism were hellenized, though the degree varied.³⁵

Before the appearances of the Greek philosophers there existed a very crowded ancient Greek pantheon, the gods of which functioned in both positive and negative manners. In every god there were both ouranic (heavenly)

and chthonic (underworld) characteristics.³⁶ One god of particular interest to investigators of Satan is Pan, the son of Hermis who was "born hairy and goat-like, with horns and (cloven) hooves. A phallic deity.../he/ represented sexual desires which can be both creative and destructive."³⁷ During the years which followed, this pagan stream evolved into a plethora of demons and spirits who were agents and messengers between deities and humans; out of this mainstream came^a mystic-orgiastic cult which was associated with Dionysis. In the midst of these hedonistic practices, the philosophers appeared, rejecting the pantheon and offering rigid, intellectual approaches to the matter of evil. Their theodicy varies throughout the different philosophical schools of thought but one major trend emerges; Greek philosophers replaced Iranian dualism, which incorporates two rival spirits, with Orphic Dualism. The crux of Orphic Dualism is the identification of two realms -- spirit and matter -- later adapted into the concept of a soul imprisoned in a body. Evil was viewed as absence of God, and as the result of a person's ignorance. The existence of evil in the world was blamed on the weakness of the soul in the face of the powerful, tempting body. Evil identified as the nemesis of the free will which is implanted in every human being. The combination of an ignorant mind and a free will susceptible to temptations of the body was an invitation to evil.

This philosophy failed to unseat the flourishing mythology which continued during those years to fill the air with demons, lost souls and oracles as vehicles of communication between gods and people. Russel writes:

Greek religion, legend, and mythology thus produced a number of concepts of the Devil, but nowhere any being who approximated the personification of the principle of evil. This was not because the Greeks were uniquely free from evil thoughts, but rather because the refinements of theodicy in Greece passed out of the hands of the mythologists and into those of the philosophers. It was the Greeks who first asked in a rational and systematic way the question POTHEM TO KAKAN: Whence does evil come?³⁸

So in its interchange with the Greeks, Jews and their sages encountered two distinct and powerful elements -- Greek philosophy and Greek mythology.

Apocalyptica as a spiritual and literal framework, introduced in the century before the common era and the one that followed, saw Jewish values and beliefs being combined with the rituals and concepts drawn from Persian and Middle Eastern cultures and religions. Jews who took part in this fusion were in bitter conflict with the normative Judaism of the time. In the midst of the Apocalyptic period stands a lonely mass of humanity whose eyes are lifted in anguish toward retreating heavens and a distant God.

In this period, the question of man's destiny is removed from the earthly-historical realm, limited and chained by time and space, to the metaphysical-cosmological

realm which is unlimited in its dimensions. In the Jews' struggle to answer this question, we rediscover in the prolific writings of this period Satan and his gang of demons, spirits, bene-elohim, nefilim and all the rest. The following examples are representative of apocalyptic and apochryphal literature.

In the book of Jubilees we encounter the watchers -- angels who are sent by God to assist and instruct the people on earth regarding earthly functions.³⁹ Those angels of God marry, during their time on earth, בנות האדם who give birth to the nefilim.⁴⁰ Besides those creatures appears an angel of God who is named Mastemah and who functions as a tempter, accuser, punisher and executioner.⁴¹ Mastemah puts Abraham through a trial⁴²; later in the book he goes to the desert to kill Moses.⁴³ These actions and others cause God to command the destruction of the evil spirits. Raphael and Michael, the good angels, bind the evil spirits; before they can be killed, Mastemah comes before God to plead on their behalf, and God pardons from death one tenth of the evil spirits.⁴⁴ So evil continues to reside on earth with God's permission. But Isaac's promise to Jacob that evil will cease⁴⁵ and the prophecy that a Messiah will incapacitate Mastemah (and cause him to cease his accusations about the children of Israel)⁴⁶ raise the notion that peace will eventually come to the world.

The Book of Ethiopic Enoch introduces the reader to a cruel angel named Azazel who personifies the evil which ruins human life on earth.⁴⁷ The nefilim which are born out of the lust of the watcher-angels are slaughtered by the archangels, but the ghosts of the nefilim continue to hover over and to damage the world along with Azazel.⁴⁸ For the first time we encounter "Satanim" -- the plural of Satan⁴⁹ -- as well as the singular! Out of this book, a confused, twofold message comes across regarding the evil of the world: on the one hand evil is said to come from man, not from God⁵⁰; on the other hand, it is said to be the result of the active role performed by Semyaza⁵¹ and Azazel, God's own angels who have become corrupt.⁵² Here also one can see a clear association between evil and nighttime -- the time when demons lurk,

In the Testaments of the Tribes, we meet a "respectable" line of demonic characters in Belial, Sataniel, etc. In this book, Satan appears as an angel who is sent by God to supervise and instruct the watchers in their mission to the people.⁵³ Belial⁵⁴, the angel of darkness, is in constant conflict with the angel of light, God.⁵⁵ Satan is in charge of the spirits named Wrath, Lying, and Hatred⁵⁶ and functions as the agent of fornication, terror and destruction on earth.⁵⁷ He causes people to be in error and then to be punished.⁵⁸ The Testaments predict that

this cruel reign will vanish after a destructive war between the angel of God and the "Angel of Satan." God will overcome evil, and a new kingdom will be established in heaven and on earth.⁵⁹ A Messiah will free the world from Satan's actions.⁶⁰

Out of other apocalyptic literature come confused ideas and terrifying visions. Some writings contend that Satan was punished not only because of his lust but also because he was too proud and jealous to have a common existence with man, who was created in God's image. Some writings support that bene-elohim and the evil powers were cast onto earth, while in others they are said to be thrown under the surface of the earth.⁶¹

In the Apocalyptic movement which started as an Eschatological break off from normative Judaism and later became Theosophy, a faction emerged which believed that suffering and terror are just measures meted out from God to try to make humans stronger.⁶² This splinter group which went to the Judean desert not far from Jerusalem was to become known through their scrolls which were found in Qumran. They retreated from society and constructed a sophisticated and rigid system of beliefs and rituals. Their only hope for survival was to maintain their moral code in isolated communities. In the Common Rule -- one of the writings of this splinter group -- we read:

From the God of knowledge comes all that is and shall be...He has created man to govern the world and has appointed for him two spirits in which to walk until the time of his visitation; the spirits of truth and falsehood. Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of falsehood spring from a source of darkness. All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of light and walk in the way of light; but all the children of falsehood are ruled by the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness.⁶³

The dualism in the Qumran documents is not regarded as merely a psychological conflict within the individual between good and evil inclination. It is a dualism between good and evil people who are led by good and evil spirits of cosmic dimensions.⁶⁴ Those who held to this philosophy believed that sin and evil are a result of Satan's dominion, and that he is the one who implanted the evil inclination within men.⁶⁵ They believed that a universal war would break out between the spirits and their followers, with God's knowledge,⁶⁶ and that during this war the world would be delivered to the Devil; it would be the age of Satan and Belial, an "age of tribulation and war during which Satan would do his utmost to lead astray the children of God."⁶⁷ During the final war Satan "shall be unleashed against Israel."⁶⁸ But the Lord who created Satan and used him for his vengeance against sinners⁶⁹ will cast him down and bind him in darkness forever. Believers claimed that the Messiah would save and rule the righteous while the others -- the Gentiles and faithless Jews -- would remain under the dominion of Satan.⁷⁰

By the end of the Apocalyptic period, the devil is tied with darkness, the underworld, sexual temptation and molestation, the goat, lion, frog or toad, and serpent or dragon.

It was "Gnosticism, one of the last great manifestations of mythology in religious thought, and definitely conceived in the struggle against Judaism as a conqueror of mythology, which lent figures of speech to the Jewish mystic."⁷¹ The main preoccupations of the second and third century gnostics and heretics were "the ascent of the soul from the earth, through the spheres of the hostile planet-angels and rulers of the cosmos, and its return to its divine home in the 'fullness' of God's light, a return which, to the gnostic's mind, signified redemption."⁷²

Gnosticism, with its diverse beliefs and mystery cults, was a strange mixture but an explosive blend of practical philosophy, and it had an enormous impact on the historical development of Judaism and Christianity. It was an intricate composite of Iranian elements, platonic philosophy and Egyptian fetishism.⁷³ Gnosticism as a belief tried to explain evil in the world while at the same time offering methods to humankind for overcoming it in order to join true "Gnosis" -- knowledge.

Gnosticism introduced two contrary principles which were thought to lead the cosmos. One principle is the lesser god, Demiurge, who was sent to create a good world,

but after consulting with angels and demons decided to challenge and remove itself from the sender. Out of matter, the evil material of the cosmos, the Demiurge created human beings formed from evil substance without themselves being evil. Gnostics believed that evil emanated from this lesser god, and not from humans themselves. An imperfect world thus was created! The second principle in Gnostic philosophy is the good god, who out of its wisdom -- "gnosis" -- ordered Demiurge to create a good world, but who went to hide from the eyes and hearts of the human race after Demiurge's betrayal. The good God's existence is "...the realm of divine 'fullness.'" ⁷⁴

In the Gnostic belief system, the existence of the "incomplete" world caused by Demiurge's treason could not be changed. Only some individuals were thought to be able to overcome this imperfection by means of astrology, cosmology ⁷⁵, amulets, spells, ⁷⁶ letter codes and number codes ⁷⁷ which would expedite their ascent to the god of the illuminate nature. These methods were not revealed but to the few and the chosen. Early gnostics admitted the superiority of the Scriptures, and, by means of exegetical inquiry similar to that done by the sages, demonstrated dramatically their understanding of creation, and biblical figures like Esau, Cain, etc.; ⁷⁸ they even influenced rabbinic Gnosis. ⁷⁹ Later gnostics attacked primitive Christianity, as well as Tannaitic and Amoraic traditions,

and pointed out that the god of the Jews was the Demiurge, **יְיָ בְרֵאשִׁית**, who handed down the law in order to chain the human soul, preventing its ascent to higher spheres.

In Gnosticism, Satan, demons and evil spirits continue to play a role in the evil realm. Interestingly enough, the serpent is regarded as a positive figure, a bearer of wisdom, who is in conflict with evil.⁸¹

The Tannaitic and post-Tannaitic periods were fertile ground for the blossoming of Gnosticism in general and Jewish gnostics in particular,⁸² who offered a remedy for the evil in a world striving with all its power to be at peace.

And so we discover during the second Jewish Commonwealth and in the period after the destruction of the Second Temple -- the first few centuries of the common era -- a variety of religions and beliefs which challenged, opposed and threatened to overtake a pagan world, and which interacted freely with normative Judaism. The philosophies and the sophisticated dialectic of Hellenism, fused with gnostic cultic practices and nomian-Hindu myths, hovered menacingly in the face of monotheistic Jewish faith, which was founded on historical and religious determinism. How would the leadership of normative Judaism come to grips with these foreign elements?

Unfortunately for the spiritual leadership -- the Tannaim and Amoraim -- the Jewish community in Palestine and

in the Diaspora was open to foreign philosophies and strange mythologies, and was ripe for changes in their way of life. Between the First and Second Temples, the politically independent state of the days of the Hasmoneans collapsed. The economic condition of the community could not withstand the abuse of the decrees of foreign rulers. Optimism and the feeling of common destiny which bound those who returned to Zion melted away. Even prophecy, the primary communicative vehicle for the multitude, eventually ceased.

The hopelessness of the time accelerated with the destruction of the Second Temple, the link between the holy and the profane; the dimensions of that catastrophe permeated the consciousness of the people.⁸³ Into this vacuum swept philosophical values and mythological images. The hellenistic culture went to war to convert and reach out to Jewish hearts, to scholars and common people alike. In the midst of this human drama, an erosion of the Judaism of that period occurred; Apocalyptic visionaries, fortune-tellers, Jewish-Christian sects and magicians were "vending their wares."⁸⁴ Astrology, sorcery and the making of amulets by Jews became widespread. The frenzy of this Jewish assimilation was compounded by its clash with normative Judaism, itself divided into several impotent factions. The reaction of normative Judaism to this phenomenon was soon to follow. The boldness and

creativity of the post-exilic period, which was manifested in the choices made during the canonization of the Bible, enticed the spiritual leadership and caused them to take up the struggle for Jewish survival against hostile religions and tempting myths. Out of this bitter struggle by the sages, which has been described and scrutinized by many scholars, several facts and assumptions aid in the tracing and understanding of Satan in halachic and midrashic literature. Those beliefs and ideas which were fundamentally irreconcilable with the dogmas of normative Judaism were vehemently attacked and rejected by the sages. The followers of such beliefs too were rejected and pushed to the margin of history: a Messiah of flesh and blood, a prophet -- "son of God" -- or his Jewish-Christian followers, were destructive anti-Jewish powers which, in the guise of Judaism, were attempting to destroy an age-old Jewish heritage. But by declaring that

משמחו הנביאים

85

האחרונים חגי זכריה ומלאכי נסחלקה הנבואה מישראל

and by using a derogatory name מינים to refer to followers of non-normative sects, the sages were able to uproot these threats from their community.⁸⁶

In reacting to those foreign elements which did not threaten the fundamental dogmas of Judaism, the sages were less defensive. The sages were confronted with widely popular superstitions, myths, and magic which were deeply

ingrained in the consciousness, and life of not only the common people but the rabbis as well: "What we must not do, however, is to assume that intellectuals, whether then or now, are completely free of superstition or of reflections of popular religion...in addition to being permeated by Scripture, the populace also had an elaborate angelology and, related to it, a demonology."⁸⁷

Demons, evil angels, and satans were "everywhere." They became in the eyes of the beholders the sources of evil and the means of its conveyance, and around them a whole industry of spells, amulets, witchcraft and other divinations prospered.⁸⁸

Before the sages were two choices: one choice was to attempt to stifle foreign myths and practices, a move which could drive followers to mysterious cults such as primitive Christianity or mystic-gnosticism. The other choice was to reconcile and mutually coexist with a demonic world -- while controlling and supervising it.

The sages chose the latter and consequently, in their literature, engaged in a twofold process. First, they uncovered ancient biblical mythological concepts which remained in the collective historical consciousness of the nation and which become "kosher" at the time of the canonization of the Bible. Second, they assimilated foreign demons and spirits into the Jewish value system while interpreting them in accordance with the sages' line

of thinking.

Biblical Satan, whose character was scrutinized in the first chapter, was treated diligently and skillfully in the sages' literature. Those sages did not, of course, identify Satan as the source of evil or blame him for human suffering. They believed with a perfect faith that good and evil reside with the Creator. However, they conjured the biblical Satan for the sake of Jews and Judaism, carefully adapting new foreign motifs; they thus were able to bind Satan to the needs of their generation, while preventing the infiltration of Christian-Satanic images.

The literary usage of Satan or demons⁸⁹ by the sages achieved two significant goals. First, the sages used Satan to close the gap between a hopeless people and a distant God. Satan became a tool for explaining the importance of glorifying God through Torah and Mitzvot which were steps on a ladder that can unite man and God. In the process, therefore, Satan serves לצרכי המקום -- for the sake of God.

The second goal in the sages' using of Satan was לצרכי

ציבור -- for the sake of the people. By infusing Satan into a Jewish context under the supervision of the rabbis, and by placing him into the popular life of the Jews, the sages prevented the creation of and imitation of mythologies contrary to the "official line" of the sages. At the same time the sages in their usage of Satan added

a mythological flavor to the rigid halachic life, thus satisfying the Jewish populace.

Although at times it is difficult to determine whether the sages' employment of Satan in their literature was

לצרכי ציבור or לצרכי המקום , and although the literature bears the traces of (and problems of) oral transmission,⁹⁰ the intention of the next two chapters will be to clarify Satan's purposes in the sages' literature.

CHAPTER 3

SATAN FOR THE SAKE OF THE OMNIPOTENT

If Satan was to be ^{an} effective tool for bringing Jews closer to their monotheistic God, he could not be treated as an entity independent from or in external conflict with God. Representing evil and temptation as he does, Satan's efficacy as a homiletic device derived from his being placed, as a servant of God, into confrontation with familiar biblical characters. Satan is always used in the midrashim to bring to the surface a pertinent religious value or concept, providing numerous opportunities for the sages to comment on doctrines which they wished to emphasize. Although Satan was presented in midrashim with heroic figures such as Abraham and David, the sages depicted Satan in such a way as to show that he operated not as an antagonist in the heavenly sphere, but in the service of God in the routine lives of the Jews. This was one major area in which the sages, as interpreters

of the Torah, wished to exert their authority, affecting the Jews behavior לצרכי המקום and thereby bringing them closer to their God.

I. MIDRASHIC TREATMENT OF SATAN'S ACTUAL APPEARANCES IN THE BIBLE

The biblical sources for Satan, which were dealt with thoroughly in the first chapter of this work, became in the hands of skillful sages of the post-biblical period a fertile ground for new interpretations and the source for innovative insights. The verses through which the reader of the Bible was able to understand the evil qualities in man and angels continued to attract interest and stimulate thought among the sages, the results of which are expressed in halachic and midrashic literature. Satan, as well as other biblical and non-biblical concepts, became a device by which the sages introduced their own beliefs and teachings into the public opinion. The sages wished to explain the appearances of Satan in the biblical narrative to Jews and non-Jews alike, following the canonization of the Bible and its spread among the nations. The following exegesis treats those biblical incidents which contain an actual appearance of the adversary/Satan, namely, the encounters of Balam, Job, Zechariah, and Solomon.

A. BALAM'S MIDRASHIC SATAN: A WARNING AGAINST ASSIMILATION

The biblical Balam was a stumbling block and nuisance for the rabbis. Balam's biblical appearance as a gentile prophet in the service of the Jewish God provoked repeated attempts by the sages to explain and to justify the source and the intensity of Balam's prophecy and actions. His character and prophecy are undermined and diminished in midrashic literature to such an extent that any attempt on our behalf to identify in the midrashim the original biblical Balam will end in failure. By means of their literary adaptation, the sages were able to defame the character of the false prophet, while emphasizing and dignifying the role of God in the biblical story. At the same time, the sages attempted to explain the function and purpose of the Angel of God, and to warn the Jews of their generation of the danger in assimilating among gentiles and imitating gentile religious practices.

In the midrashic literature God appears to Balam in a night vision, a vision of lesser quality. The sages write that God hides from Balam the bitter ending of his journey: in doing so, they imply that Balam is not able (because of the weakness of his prophecy) to see his fate on his own. Balam's agreement to fulfill Balak's request is by his own will -- not God's. Balam's journey is like

that of a man who is "on the way to commit a sin and Satan dances /encouragingly/ before him until he completes the transgression; and after /Balam/ is destroyed /God/ reappears to inform him /of his fate/." ¹ When Balam reveals his eagerness to fulfill the mission against Israel by awakening early, an angel appears as an adversary (לַיְלָה וְלַבֹּקֶר). But that angel, in the midrash, is "an angel of mercy and because of /Balam/ /the angel/ turns into Satan. And thus /the angel/ tells Balam 'you caused me to serve an occupation which is not mine, as it is said: "It is I who came out as an adversary."'" ² In other words, the Angel of the Lord serves for a short time in an unpleasant role -- that of Satan! More light is shed on this biblical angel in a later midrash, which bears the traces of an earlier talmudic midrash. ³ In the later midrash we discover the reason behind Satan's name: "Why was he called Satan? Because he taunts (לְמַשָּׁה) man and causes him to lose his mind, as it is written: Avoid it...pass it by. How? (שָׁמָּה מֵעַלְיָו וְעֵבֹרָו 'גַּלְגַּל) /Satan/ descends, he misleads, he ascends, he accuses, he receives permission, and he takes a life." ⁴ Satan's job description as "taker of life" is further clarified by the author of this midrash. In I Chronicles "an Angel of God stands with a sword in his hand drawn against Jerusalem (21:16):" in Numbers, "/Balam/ saw

the Angel of God standing in his way with his drawn sword in hand." (22:31). Out of these parallel verses the author derives the following conclusion: "As there /in I Chronicles/ is an Angel of Death, such is here /in Numbers/ an Angel of Death. As here /in Numbers/ is Satan, also there /in I Chronicles/ is Satan."⁵ This interchange of angels of God, Satan, and the Angel of Death will continue to be developed in my investigation.

At the same time that the sages are making "cosmetic changes" in Balam's personality and are elucidating the essence of the Angel of God as Satan, they issue a warning for Jews in the post-biblical period: the sages' literature regarding Balam and his mission contained a moral lesson for Jews of the post-biblical era, and was intended to curb the current widespread assimilation. The sages also wished to warn that "idle minds are Satan's workshop."⁶ Herein lay the usage of Satan לְצַרְכֵּי הַמְּקוֹם .

B. JOB'S MIDRASHIC SATAN: AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE "GOD'S SERVANT"

Job's origin, his character, the authorship of this biblical book, its timing, and the fact that it includes Satan's first impressive appearance in the framing story provoked theological difficulties among the sages and created obstacles to the sages' intentions as they interpreted the book of Job. Early Tannaim and their later

associates -- the Ammoriam -- engaged in heated arguments, traces of which we can find in their literary strata from the early days of the post-biblical era. The widespread coverage of the book of Job in the sages' literature brought with it the presentation and circulation of ideas and beliefs by the sages to the generations which they served as spiritual and national leaders. The body of literature and sermons through which they conveyed their thought includes articles and homilies on the relationship between God and man, the sources of evil and the reasons for sufferings which befall the nation, and the forces behind temptations and tempters in the life of the individual. Satan was snatched from the biblical stratum -- the book of Job -- and skillfully woven by the crafty hands and vigorous minds of the sages into the literature and culture of the post-biblical era.

As early as the tannaitic period, disputes were widespread regarding Job the man, and the book which was ascribed to him. Years earlier, the book's acceptance (at a late stage) into the biblical canon was surrounded by enormous disagreements among the scribes and spiritual leaders of those days. These disagreements were passed on to the sages whose task was to interpret the book to their listeners and followers. In the ammoraiic literature we stumble upon tannaitic discourses which testify to

that struggle. After a laborious discussion, a tentative conclusion is reached: "Tannaim agree that Job was from Israel /an Israelite/."⁷ Other Tannaim add immediately an insert which points out that Job lived in the days of Jacob and therefore he was a heathen.⁸ In a different midrash (identified as originating in the tannaitic period although edited at a later date)⁹ we learn that God himself claimed that Job was "blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil (Job 1:1); he built in them פלטרין on the roads and put four openings so every wayfarer will enter, eat, drink and bless the name of God for heaven's sake."¹⁰ The Ammoraim who followed the Tannaim continued in their disputation over Job. Job's positive image, which is evident in the literature of the Tannaim, is widely undermined by outright attempts to minimize Job's importance and to disclaim Job's righteousness by accusing him of blasphemy. They comment, for instance, that "Job used to rob orphans of a field /although/ improving it and restoring it to them."¹¹ But the widespread knowledge of the book among the Israelites, as well as their awareness of the sages' disputes, obligated the sages to deal with other theological problems, and not just the existence of Job.

Amidst the turmoil Satan reared his head. Satan's appearances in the Bible intimidates the sages, as evidenced in their handling of him in the tannaitic,

ammoraic, and later midrashim. Such was the case with the following verse in Job: "You /Satan/ have incited Me /God/ against /Job/ to destroy him for no good reason" (Job 3:3). In his attempt to interpret this verse, R. Johanan said: "Were it not expressly stated in the Scriptures, we would not dare to say it. God is made to appear like a man who allows himself to be incited against and is persuaded."¹³ In another passage we discover that when R. Johanan came to that verse in the Book of Job, he wept.¹⁴

Just as the Tannaim and Ammoraim deliberately interpret the Angel of God/Satan in the Balam story in a way that would glorify God, so do they emphasize Satan's cruelty and jealousy in their interpretation of the Job story in order to raise Job to the level of a saint in the service of an omnipotent God. Such is the tannaitic midrash: "Job was observed by Satan who became jealous. Satan went and said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, I traversed in all the world and could not find a /more/ loving man before you, just Job himself...from now on, grant me a power over him and I can remove his heart away from you."¹⁵ The midrash goes on to say that after listening to a further plea, God grants Satan that permission, while declaring Job's righteousness among humankind. Satan, disguised as Job

while destroying Job's property, returns to God, asking for one more chance to prove Job's falsehood. God explicitly warns Satan to spare Job's /soul/. In the midrash, Satan objects, and replies as a "skillful rabbi;" "It /God's warning/ is like a king of flesh and blood who told his servant (Satan) to go and break the cask but not let any of the wine spill; How can I /Satan/ do it?"¹⁶ But despite God's stipulation, Satan descends from heaven "with great joy" to commit his crime, bringing a severe inflammation on Job. The midrash states that Job nevertheless declares the glory of God and prays for mercy. That prayer of a suffering man is heard by God; as a result He brings a severe punishment on Satan: "He /God/ rebuked him, and threw him from heaven, as it is written 'The Lord rebuke you, O Accuser (*שׂוֹנֵא*) (Zech. 3:2).'" That (verse) refers to Satan who was thrown by God from heaven."¹⁷

In another early midrash, in Genesis Rabbah, we encounter a cruel Satan in his prime. Satan is denouncing the right of Israel in Egypt to be redeemed from slavery. As a help to the Israelites and Moses one sage formulates a convenient solution: Job (who according to this midrash and others, is a contemporary of Moses, and lives in the period of the Jewish drama in Egypt) is used by God as bait to satisfy the needs of Satan and to prevent Satan

from denouncing the right of the Israelites to be redeemed:

"R. Hanina, the son of Aha, said: 'It /the treatment of Job by God/ may be compared to a shepherd who stood watching his flocks, when a wolf came to attack him

(וַנִּיזְדַּוּג לֹ), whereupon he ordered: "Throw him a he-goat on which to vent his rage."'"¹⁸

In the same midrash another comparison is made "to a king sitting at his meal when a dog came and attacked him (וַנִּיזְדַּוּג לֹ

), whereupon he ordered, 'Give him one bone to worry him (וַאֲיָבֵר אֹתוֹ שִׁתְּגִרָה בֹנֶה)'"¹⁹

While Tannaim and Ammoraim emphasized Satan's cruelty and jealousy, later sages and darshanim had mixed reactions to Satan's appearance. The midrash which compares God to a loving shepherd takes on a different tone in the hands of later sages. Job (who appears as an Egyptian advisor to Pharaoh) discovers that he is used as a pawn to vent Satan/Sammael's rage in order to save the Israelites.

That shocking discovery causes Job (not only Satan) to denounce the Israelites himself, saying: "He /God/ hath delivered me into the hands of Satan in order that Israel would not emerge guilty from the trial. He hath delivered me into his hand" hence, 'And casteth me /God/ into the hands of the wicked' (וַתַּגִּידֵנִי אֱלֹהִים אֵל אֵל יִסְגִּירֵנִי אֵל אֵל)" ²⁰ (Job 16:11)

In a different place in the same midrashic exposition we find a different perception of Satan's role in the trial

of Job. According to this midrash Satan slanders Job before God, but his role ends there. Into the midst of the action, God takes over, saying to Job: "'What dost thou wish, poverty or suffering?' Job replied: 'Lord of the Universe! I am ready to accept all the sufferings in the world, but not poverty: for if I go into the market without a perutah what will I be able to buy? (לקנות מה

ארכל') /Job/, when suffering came upon him, he began to complain (צורח) against God's measure of justice (מידת הדין)...Elijah said to him: 'Why do you complain? Did you not say that you preferred all kinds of suffering to poverty? Did you not yourself choose suffering?' -- as it says, Beware! Do not turn to mischief: because of that you have been tried/chosen/by affliction (בחרת מעוני)."²¹ According to this midrash, the trial which was incited by Satan passed to the divine realm, thus minimizing the role of Satan. The anonymous author of this midrash mocks the distorted choice made by Job in order to point out the insincerity of Job's righteousness.

In the Babylonian Talmud, in the tractate Baba Batra, where we already encountered some of the disputes concerning Job, we find various remarks about Satan. Out of the reading of this aggadic material, one can discern that not all of the sages saw Satan as a negative figure: R. Levi said: 'Both Satan and Peninah -- had a pious

purpose in acting as adversaries. Satan, when he saw God inclined to favor Job, said: "forbid it (אין ושלום) that God should forget the love of Abraham." ²²

This notion which connects Job with Abraham reappears in a dialogue which bears little resemblance to the biblical source in the book of Job; the dialogue takes place between God and Satan, who appears in the midst of bene-elohim:

"/Satan/ said: 'Sovereign of the Universe, I have traversed the whole earth, and have not found one like thy servant, Abraham...and yet he did not complain against the ways.'" ²³ In this exegesis, Satan is used to emphasize the righteousness of Abraham, opposing those sages who claim, like R. Johanan, that: "Greater praise is accorded to Job than to Abraham." ²⁴ According to the midrash, Satan is delighted in the change of attitude toward him by some sages. Upon hearing favored exposition given by R. Aha b. Jacob in Papumia "/Satan/ came and kissed his feet" ²⁵ as a show of gratitude.

Because of the dispute between the sages (those who claimed that Job blasphemed God and those who claimed that he cursed only Satan) a codified behavior in the literature and the culture has to be established for Satan's activities. One Tanna thought: "/Satan/ comes down to earth and misleads (וּמְחַדֵּשׁ), then ascends to heaven and awakens wrath: permission is granted to him and he takes away the soul." ²⁶ Resh Lakish also remarked while using biblical

proof texts: "Satan is the evil prompter, and the Angel of Death -- he is Satan."²⁷ In another later edited midrash,²⁸ which could be from an early source, a special touch is given to the reconstruction of the midrashic Satan, who is discovered in a celestial setting, a touch very different from the one Satan encountered in the book of Job. On the eve of Rosh Hashanah, God orders Satan: "Bring /Me/ the merits and vices of all creatures." To Satan, who appears in heaven, "permission is granted to enter /before God's presence/."²⁹ But the anonymous author of this midrash continues to moralize: "And thus it is said, regarding Cain: 'sin couches /sic/ at the door' (Gen.4:7). All is from you, if you desire and your urge is toward him, behold he /Satan/ enters your body. But if you will, your fright is upon him. Thus said the Holy one Blessed be He: /the evil inclination/ ruled over all generations; when the evil inclination ruled over man, sin ruled over /man/, but when /man/ ruled over his evil inclination, and /he/ controlled /his desire/, /man/ watched /the evil/ running from him."³⁰ Satan never ceases to be a controversial topic in the eyes of the sages.

C. ZECHARIAH'S MIDRASHIC SATAN: A PROPOSED SOLUTION FOR THE PRIESTHOOD CONTROVERSY

The third actual appearance of Satan in the Bible, in the Book of Zechariah, was also treated by the sages.

The brief appearance of Satan in this book (3:1-2) did not cause great anxiety among the sages -- the interpreters of the Bible -- as did the extensive appearance of Satan in the framing story of the book of Job. The relatively small number of midrashim on Satan's appearance in the book of Zechariah and the shallow treatment of Satan in them seem to indicate that the sages did not regard this appearance of Satan as a significant theological difficulty. Their attention and energies shift from Satan to the High Priest. The sages' exegesis focuses mainly on the "brand plucked from the fire" (3:2) rather than on the statement: "The Lord rebuke you, O Accuser /Ha-Satan/" (3:2).

The trial of Joshua the high priest, which is the center of Zechariah's vision in the third chapter, was the predominant vehicle with which the sages were able to introduce a line of important topics on their agenda, topics with moral and political tone, in order to improve and establish social and political norms among the Jewish society of their days.

One important moral issue was that introduced in the following midrash. The "biblical" sin of Joshua the high priest, for which he is on trial, is seen by the sages as buried in the biblical stratum under a mysterious cover which interferes with the correct

understanding of Zechariah's prophecy. To aid in their attempt to remove this interference, the sages "mobilize" two prophets from the time of Jeremiah and "throw" them into the heated discussion. The two prophets who "prophecy falsely to you in My name" (Jer. 29:21) are ordered by the decree of Nebuchadnezzar into the royal fire because of their immoral behavior (a behavior which was exaggerated by the sages). The midrash goes on to say that the last wish of these two false prophets is that Joshua the high priest be put into the fire with them: "/Joshua's/ merit is great, that he may protect us."³¹ But Joshua's righteousness does not prevent their being roasted. The priest is saved from the fire while his garments are singed (a hint of his moral imperfection). This midrashic rendition of the biblical event enables sages to interpret, to their satisfaction, the identity of "the brand plucked from fire" -- Joshua the High Priest. The author of the midrash claims that the false prophets embody Satan who was "standing at his right to accuse him" (Zec. 3:1).³²

The sages felt obliged to explain Satan's silence during the trial in the book of Zechariah. Resh Lakish uses the issue of Satan's silence to attempt to solve a political dispute which concerns the appointment process in the priesthood. This attempt might have been a reaction to debates among the rabbis, causing Resh Lakish to declare: "It was for the benefit of the Sanctuary

that Ezra did not go up /as a High Priest/ at that time, For had Ezra gone up at that time, it would have given Satan /an opportunity/ to accuse and say 'it is better that upon Ezra will the high priesthood be bestowed than on Joshua son of Jehozadak. Joshua son of Jehozadak was a high priest son of a high priest, while Ezra was simply a righteous man and was not so fitting to be invested with the office as he.'" ³³ In other words, the silence of Satan at the time of the trial, according to Resh Lakish, is due to Satan's understanding of the importance of a proper bequest of the priesthood dynasty from father to son. By saying that Satan could comprehend the rightful succession of priestly inheritance, Resh Lakish defies any person to challenge the bequest lest he/she reveals greater ignorance than Satan. Rabbi Simon adds: "It is impossible for a hereditary claim to be uprooted before God." ³⁴

In the midrashic literature on Zechariah, we begin to see a connection being made between Satan and sexually immoral behavior: ³⁵ this connection comes to fruition in the sages' commentary on King Solomon.

D. SOLOMON'S MIDRASHIC SATAN: AN INDICTMENT OF EARTHLY PLEASURES

In the book of I Kings 11:14-25 Hadad the Edomite and Rezon the son of Eliada -- Solomon's enemies -- are

described as adversaries (Satans) in the service of a God who desires to bring Solomon's kingdom to an end. But if the relationship of the immoral behavior of a king, the early collapse of the kingdom, and the appearance of those "human" Satans is vague in the biblical literature, the relationship is clarified, as one might expect, in the sages' literature.

After an exhaustive investigation among the sages about gentile women in the life of Solomon, the midrash adds: "Three adversaries (שׂטנים) were mated (הזדווגו) to him (Solomon). As it is written 'So the Lord raised up an adversary (שׂטן) against Solomon, the Edomite Hadad...' (I Kings 11:14) and 'Another adversary (שׂטן) that God raised up against Solomon was Rezon.' (I Kings 11:23)... and it is also written, 'He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon (I Kings 11:25).'"³⁶ Who, wondered the sages from their reading of the Bible, was that adversary who was active during "all the days of Solomon?" With a careful reading of the biblical verse (I Kings 11:25) one can assume that the adversary /Satan/ is Rezon. But that did not suit the sages' purposes and therefore was not their interpretation. They saw in the "adversary" (I Kings 11:25) a direct result of the perverted life of Solomon who "acquired an excessive number of horses, as it says, 'A chariot imported from Mizraim cost 600 shekels of silver, and a horse 150' (ibid. 10:29)."³⁷

Solomon, according to the midrashic literature, in his passion for horses or in his marriage to Pharoah's daughter, is the one who brought upon him and Israel the decree that "Edomite's Kings continued to be ד'יטו to Israel."³⁸ From the reference to Satan in I Kings, the sages are once again able to formulate a warning to their constituents against communing with gentile women and acquiring earthly wealth. Some sages obviously intended to imply that just as was the case with Solomon, so likewise the element of "Satan" can surface in each person's deeds.

II. MIDRASHIC INTERJECTION OF SATAN INTO THE SAGES' EXEGESIS OF THE BIBLE

Until now I have only introduced expositions in the sages' literature which correlate to biblical verses in which the common denominator is Satan (in different embodiments). The next pages will reveal a totally different trend. In the sages' literature one can find references to Satan which do not correlate to any biblical sources. Although several prominent biblical figures appear in the Bible with no reference whatsoever to Satan, the sages and the darshanim, for various reasons, interject Satan into the lifetimes of those biblical figures. The following examination is an attempt to find and identify such fabricated appearances of Satan and the

meaning behind them in those hálachic and midrashic texts.

A. THE MIDRASHIC ACCOUNT OF SHUSHAN'S JEWS: SATAN AS ACCUSER

The sages who read the book of Esther had difficulties understanding the reasons which underlay the decree of Haman and King Ahasuerus: "to destroy, massacre, and exterminate all the Jews, young and old, children and women, on a single day..." (Esther 3:13). Those difficulties became therefore a subject for exegesis by the sages: first, what was the source of Mordecai's knowledge, as it is written, "When Mordecai learned all that had happened..." (4:1). Second, did all the Jews in Shushan deserve to be punished by this awful decree? And third, why and how did an omnipotent God need Mordecai and Esther to act in order to avert the decree? Those and other questions confronted the sages, who as usual tried to emphasize in their writings their beliefs for the benefit of the populace for whom they wrote. Satan fulfilled a significant role in the unraveling of those difficulties.

Mordecai, according to the Bible, knows only about the decree of the king, nothing more. To his aid came the sages who constructed through a painstaking work an elaborate stage on which they introduced their interpretation of the book of Esther to heterogenous readers in a number

of historical periods. I will attempt to reconstruct their interpretation of the book in the midrashic literature, transcending the boundaries of time, but knowing perfectly well the hazards of gathering material which has passed through many generations.

The work of assembling the midrashic material begins with the Babylonian Talmud, in tractate Megillah 11a. The sages first present a long exposition which traces the chronology of Kings' genealogies. In the Babylonian Talmud, the King of Persia is said to be Belshazar, not Ahasuerus. The tractate continues: Belshazar confiscates the gold and silver vessels of the Temple for his own use, because he no longer fears that he will be punished for interfering with the process of redemption for the Jews. The result of that bitter mistake was that "Satan came and danced among /the vessels/ and slew Vashti /Ahasuerus's queen/."³⁹ The sages edited the original story from the Book of Esther to include a transplanted king from a different time and a previously unmentioned Satan who would be used to serve the sages' needs.

Mordecai discovers, according to some midrashim, the immoral trap which is set before Shushan's Jews by Haman and the king. All the Jews in the city are invited (some sages claimed that they were ordered)⁴⁰ to participate in a feast at the court of the king. That feast that is mentioned vaguely in the book of Esther

(1:5) was, those midrashim say, planned carefully by Haman who told the king: "'The God of these /Jews/ hates lewdness. Make a feast for them and set harlots before them and order them that they should all come and eat and drink and do as they please,' as it says: 'to comply with each man's wishes.'" (1:8)⁴¹

Great is the confusion which exists in the different midrashim regarding the essence of the royal invitation which was issued to the Jews in Shushan. The conflicting midrashim on whether or not the Jews had an option to attend, or were ordered to attend the feast, testify to the disputes of the sages themselves. There are those who point out that the Jews had a choice and thus condemn them for their reaction; there are others who believe that the Jews appeared by decree, and thus are inclined to soften the harsh criticism of the Jews. Writes one sage in the midrash: "Whoever wants to come will come and whoever does not wish to come should not come."⁴² Stresses an author of a different midrash: "So /the Jews/ do not have an excuse to say that they were forced to come to /the king's feast/."⁴³ But in opposition to those who criticize Shushan's Jews stands a midrash which tries to polish the reputation of Shushan's Jews in the eyes of future generations: "/Ahasuerus/ orders them that they should all come and eat and drink and do as they please."⁴⁴ (my underlining)

Mordecai, as a trained teacher of morals who knows "all that had happened" (Esther 4:1) orders the Jews, in an early edited midrash, as follows: "Do not go to partake of the feast of Ahasuerus, since he has invited you only in order to be able to lodge complaints (**קטרוגים**) against you, so that the Attribute of Justice (**מידת הדין**) should have an excuse (**פתחון פה**) for accusing you before the Holy One blessed be He."⁴⁵ In a parallel midrash Mordecai suggests to the Jews: "My sons, since it is up to you, do not go lest Satan will have an excuse (**פתחון פה**) against you."⁴⁶

But the reaction of the Jews in all the midrashim is the same. In spite of their choice and the warning from Mordecai, all of the Jews (or only "eighteen thousand and five hundred" according to R. Ishmael) went to the banquet and "ate, drank and became drunk and debauched."⁴⁷ Another sage adds scoldingly: "/They/ diverted their minds from the destruction of their Temple."⁴⁸ The punishment was not delayed: "Immediately Satan arose and tattled on them before the Holy One, blessed be He"⁴⁹; or it may have been the Attribute of Justice (**מידת הדין**) which accused them before God.⁵⁰ In any case, after a great commotion in heaven God emerged, saying to Satan: "bring me a scroll and I will write on it annihilation."⁵¹ Satan, who appears in the midrash to be a loyal servant

of God, brings those scrolls on which God writes and seals the verdict for the Jews. The Torah, the celestial bodies, Elijah as the go-between and finally Moses are able to persuade God to avert the decree and calm God's wrath -- God repents!

Once again, Satan has become a device with which the sages can complete their agenda -- "לצרכי המקום" -- the moral instruction of their constituents so that they might become closer to God. The feast at the king's palace and the struggle in the heavens to avert the evil decree never took place in the biblical stratum. It was the sages' will alone to offer repentance as an option to each Jewish person. The introduction of the idea of free will for the first time on the historical stage by the rabbis (an addendum to Divine Providence) necessitated the establishment of repentance and fast as an immunization for possible wrong choices. Repentance, according to the sages, did not reside only in the metaphysical realm but as a viable option for humans, too. For the purpose of stressing this option for humans one sage in his midrash even mobilizes the Patriarchs who were "sound asleep...said to /Elijah/: 'Why is this decree for annihilation?' He replied: 'Because Israel partook of the feast of Ahasuerus and for this a decree has been issued to destroy them from the world and to wipe out their memory.' Abraham, Isaac,

and Jacob then said to him: 'If they have transgressed the law of the Holy One, blessed be He, and their doom is sealed, what can we do?'⁵² (my underlining) And a later midrash answers: "At the same time Mordecai went and gathered into the synagogue all the school children, and he afflicted them in a fast, and dressed them in sack-cloth, and sat them on ashes and all were wailing in a loud cry as lambs all day and all night, until their outcry ascended to the highest heaven and immediately compassion for them overcame God, who tore the scroll and annulled Haman's /evil/ intentions."⁵³ The "What can we do?" of the befuddled Patriarchs were answered by the actions of Mordecai and the children.

B. DAVID'S MIDRASHIC SATAN: SATAN AS TEMPTER

The dissemination of the doctrine of free will as a legitimate and authoritative doctrine by the sages caused, through its implementation, some theological difficulties in the lives of the Jews. The emphasis by the sages was on the importance of repentance as one of the antidotes for a misguided free will. But the legends of a distant God who repents, and of fasting and wailing by children were only part of a large arsenal which the sages employed to get their point across. The sages' "bag of tricks" (labeled " לצרכי המקום ") contained still other measures

for achieving repentance: one measure provided Jews with an opportunity to observe the actions of well-known characters, both biblical and contemporary, in order to learn a lesson from the behavior of beloved people; another measure dictated the constant study and repetition of the Torah which, according to the sages, would build a protective shield for the purpose of resisting the temptation implied by a free will doctrine -- immoral acts and uncontrolled sexual appetites. King David was used by the sages as an example of both of these measures.

David the biblical king, who in the hands of skillful sages was turned in times of public despair into the symbol of messianic hopes, was a beloved and admired figure in the hearts and on the lips of the nation. David -- a character who possessed seemingly unlimited power -- was absorbed from the pages of the Bible into the sages' literature, but not until he had undergone changes which would facilitate the spreading of the principle of repentance in the Jewish world. Satan, an old acquaintance, came once again to the aid of the sages in executing that mission. In the hands of the sages, Satan becomes the foil of David. Using Satan at times in full view and at other times in various "midrashic disguises," the sages are able to survey a line of sundry temptations

which can befall a creature of free will; at the same time, the sages offer remedies to overcome such temptations. This sophisticated examination was created out of the inner convictions of the sages, who believed that through the watching of the "struggle" between David and Satan in the midrashim the spectators would be able to improve their moral fabric.

It appears that the sages were interested in creating an early literary connection between Satan and David and therefore composed the following story which is implied to have occurred even before David's conception. In Genesis chapter 38 we read about the unfortunate life of Tamar the wife of Er the son of Judah. At the center of the biblical plot we discover the "seal and cord and staff" which were left behind by Judah in Tamar's tent -- objects which will later become evidence to prove Tamar's justice. It is a typical biblical story. But to the "surprise" of the sages they "discover" that King David is the progeny of Tamar. That "unpleasant fact" brought two difficulties to the surface: the first was uncertainty over whether Tamar deserved to be "a fountain of life" (מקור) for David and a future messiah. The second was that if in fact she is David's ancestor, how could her image and her biblical status be repaired? The following midrashic passage is a testimony to the wisdom of the sages in solving both difficulties: "'When Judah

saw /Tamar/ he took her for a harlot for she had covered her face.'" (Gen. 38:15) But what of this? "R. Eleazar said: She had covered her face in her father-in-law's house /so that Judah had never seen it and did not recognize her/. R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Jonathan: Every daughter-in-law who is modest in her father-in-law's house merits that kings and prophets should issue from her."⁵⁴ But if this evidence was not sufficient to prove Tamar's modesty and worthiness, the midrash adds the following to show that even the metaphysical realm favors her: "...R. Eleazar said that after her proofs -- the seal, cord and staff -- were found, Sammael /Satan/ came and removed them, and Gabriel came and restored them..."⁵⁵

Satan in the midrashim continued to accompany David's life and action as a threatening shadow. Once in the biblical narration we hear David's outcry while he is a fugitive from Saul: "But why does my lord /Saul/ continue to pursue his servant? What have I done, and what wrong am I guilty of? Now let my lord the king hear his servant out, if the Lord has incited you /Saul/ against me (**הֲסִיתָךְ בִּי**)..." (I Samuel 26:18-19). The sages take hold of the insolent language of David against the Creator in order to fulfill two of their needs: first, to soften and reduce in the midrashic David the rebellious

nature of the biblical David and by so doing to put, **לצרכי המקום** , a clearer definition of the role of God in Jewish history. Second, they needed to interpret another verse from the Bible: "Satan arose against Israel and incited David to number Israel (I Chron. 21:1)." Expands the midrash: "R. Eleazar said: Said the Holy One blessed be He to David: 'Thou callest me an "inciter" (**מְסִית**)? Behold, I will make thee stumble over a thing which even school-children know, namely, that which is written: "When you take a census of the Israelite people according to their enrollment, each shall pay the Lord a ransom for himself on being enrolled /to avoid a plague/..." (Ex. 30:12)".⁵⁶ But when David out of "ignorance" failed to collect the ransom for them "immediately Satan arose against Israel and incited David to number them." In other words, the sages insert Satan as the punishment for David's insolence. Threads of the above midrashic rendition are picked up by a later edited midrash where the Angel of Death/Satan is brought to the scene: "...And 70,000 men fell as a result of the plague in Israel (Chron. 21:14)... And David heard and rent his garments, and clothed himself in sackcloth and ashes, and he fell upon his face to the ground before the ark of the covenant of God."⁵⁷ According to the midrash, David's repentance was accepted, but not before the Angel of Death "took his sword and

cleaned it with the garment (טלית) of David. David saw the sword of the Angel of Death, and he trembled in all his limbs until his death..." Added R. Joshua: "Know then the power of repentance."⁵⁸

Not only did David's boastfulness stand in the way of his moral perfection, but his immoral behavior also bothered the sages. The moral erosion of his character in the story of Bath-Sheba (II Sam. 11) alarmed the sages and drew their immediate attention toward "saving" David's image and teaching a lesson in morality and repentance. The shameful biblical event is underplayed in a homily which once again employs Satan. Declares R. Judah in the name of Rab: "One should never /intentionally/ bring himself to the test (נסיון), since David king of Israel did so, and fell. He /David/ said unto Him: 'Sovereign of the Universe! Why do we say /in prayer/ 'The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, " but not he God of David?' He replied, 'These were tried by me, but you were not!' Then, he /David/ replied, 'Sovereign of the Universe, examine and try me. (בחנני ונסני) as it is written, "Probe me O Lord, and try me. Test my heart and mind" (Psalm 26:2).' He answered 'I will test you, and yet grant you a special privilege (ועכידנא מילתא בהדיך), for although I did not inform them about the nature of their test, yet I inform you that I will try you in a matter of adultery' (דבר ערוה).

Straightaway '...David rose from his couch and strolled on the roof of the royal palace; and from the roof he saw a woman bathing.' (II Sam. 11:2)"⁵⁹ Once again the sages pointed out that "David forgot the **הלכה**: 'There is a small organ in man which satisfies him in his hunger but makes him hunger when satisfied (**אבר קטן יש באדם משביעו-רעב ומרעיו-שבוע**)."⁶⁰ David's uncontrolled sexual desires were seen through the writings of the sages as the outcome of David's boastfulness toward God. The sages "brought" Satan and a verse from the Psalms (11:1) to the aid of God: "Bath-Sheba was cleansing her hair behind a beehive, when Satan came to /David/ appearing in the shape of a bird. He shot an arrow at him, which hit /the object which obstructed his vision/, thus she stood revealed, and he saw her. Immediately, 'David sent and inquired after the woman'... (II Sam. 11:3-4)."⁶¹ In other words, had Satan not appeared, David would not have sinned. David in the sages' literature understands his transgression and promises: "Would that a bridle had fallen into the mouth of mine enemy /i.e. myself/ that I had not spoken thus '/i.e. 'Why do we say...but not the God of David/'"⁶² After considerable minutiae, the principle of repentance is finally introduced by the sages: "David pleaded before the Holy One, blessed be He; 'Sovereign of the Universe! Forgive me that sin, that no one may say, "Your

mountain /David as a king/ has been put to flight by a bird
/Satan/ (Psalm 11:1). ""⁶³

But David did not "learn his lesson" according to the sages. Despite the regret and vow not to be boastful, David in the midrashic literature continues to be punished and saved over and over again while the sages follow to the letter their religious agenda. The escape of David to Nob, the city of Priests (I Sam. 21), results in a blood bath by King Saul (I Sam. 22:17-20). In the Bible David escapes a punishment, but in the midrashim he is not as lucky. Again a choice is put in front of him: "The Holy One, blessed be He, had said to David, 'How long will this crime be hidden in thy hand?...would you rather want thy seed to cease or that you be delivered into the enemy's hand?' He replied: 'Sovereign of the Universe! I would rather be delivered into the enemy's hand than that my seed will cease.'"⁶⁴ David's choice, as afforded him by the sages in the midrash, puts Satan to work once again. The midrash continues: "One day, Satan appeared before him on the guise of a deer. He /David/ shot arrows at him, but did not reach him and was led on until /he reached/ the land of the Philistines."⁶⁵ Satan in a different literary disguise leads David to unavoidable confrontation with Ishbi (Goliath's brother)

who lived in Nob, the city of priests, which was the scene of the bloodshed. Two midrashim from different periods of editing describe the story similarly until the struggle between David and Ishbi begins. At this point, variations occur in the midrashic renditions of the story which reflect differing lines of transmission through the generations. In one midrash, Ishbi "bound him, doubled him up and cast him under an olive press."⁶⁶ In the parallel midrash of later editing, Ishbi "tied him up, pressed his mouth down upon his knees, and having thus fastened him, placed blocks of wood upon him, and sat on him."⁶⁷ But a miracle occurs in both midrashim. The earth under David spread out (or softened) under him,⁶⁸ and absorbed the unharmed body of David: "As it is written 'You have let me stride on freely; my feet have not slipped. (Psalms 18:37)'"⁶⁹ The midrashic David did not repent as a result of this last trial. One can assume that the sages were interested in categorizing sins according to their severity and in attaching appropriate measures of repentance to each. David's sins against God (the census) and against Bath-Sheba were considered, in the eyes of the sages, more serious sins than the sin he committed by his indirect involvement with the priests from Nob.

In every midrash about David in which Satan appears, the sages embedded a message to the Jewish populace: each person's free will, in a religious life, must be managed carefully so as to avoid being overcome by evil temptations, but as with David, a person who succumbs to temptation has

"a way out" -- תשובה ותפילה וצדקה מעבירין את אדם מן הדין

הגזירה (But repentance, prayer, and charity temper judgment's severe decree).⁷⁰

David's repeated contact with Satan/Angel of Death continued, according to the midrashim, until the very end of his life. Even as David approaches his death the sages use him, as well as Satan/the Angel of Death, to introduce still another measure through which people can repent for their sins (besides fasting and weeping, as in the midrashim about Mordecai). In two parallel midrashim, David is completely aware of his approaching death. David "knows" -- with the sages' assistance -- that only by studying the Torah day and night without a break, will he be able to postpone and perhaps prevent his final day. But "On the day that his soul was to be set free, the Angel of Death stood before him but could not prevail against him, because learning did not cease from his mouth. 'What shall I do to him?' Now, there was a garden behind his house; so the Angel of Death went, ascended and made a disturbance (והושיע) in the trees. /David/ went out to see; as he was ascending a ladder,

it broke under him. Thereupon he became silent /from his studies/ and his soul had repose /he died/." ⁷¹ And so many events of David's life -- many of which would have been "news" to him in the biblical context -- serve the sages well in their efforts to provide a role model for Jewish generations.

C. THE STUDY OF TORAH: SATAN AS INVEIGLER

Having used the David/Satan midrashim to teach the importance of Torah and its study to the Jews of the period, the sages continued rigorously to utilize Satan as a reminder of the consequences of not studying Torah or keeping its commandments. The giving of the Torah to Israel, in the eyes of the sages, was even affected by Satan, because according to their "testimony"; "Tushiyah /the name used for Torah/ was given to Moses in secret, on account of Satan." ⁷² From the time of creation: "The Holy One, blessed be He, made a condition with all creation, saying, 'If Israel will accept the Torah all will be well, but if not, I will turn you /evening and morning/ to void and without form.'" ⁷³ One sage, R. Jose, goes too far (according to his colleagues) by claiming: "The Israelites accepted the Torah only so that the Angel of Death should have no dominion over them, as it is said: 'I/God/had taken you for divine beings, sons of the Most High,...(Psalm 82:6) '" ⁷⁴ In contrast

to this midrash some sages were compelled to stress in many midrashim the idea that Israel had no knowledge whatsoever of the "gentleman's agreement" which was made between God and the Angel of Death. In other words, these sages emphasized that Israel was not aware, before accepting the Torah, that God had arranged that death would have no dominion over them. In early edited midrashim, God says to the Angel of Death: "...Even though I made you a universal ruler over earthly creatures, you have nothing to do with this nation...because they are My children."⁷⁵ In those early edited midrashim the Angel of Death is silent, seemingly out of respect for God.⁷⁶ But that silence is not the only reaction by the Angel of Death. In later edited midrashim the Angel of Death "complained to the Holy One blessed be He: 'I have then been created in the world to no purpose.'"⁷⁷ This outburst by the Angel brought the sages to write the following: "I /God/ have created you in order that you shall destroy /other/ nations of the world -- except this nation of Jews, for you have no jurisdiction over them."⁷⁸

According to the sages, Jewish life after the receiving of the Torah was a life without Satan/the Angel of Death, and therefore was very pleasant: "He /God/ clothed them with royal cloaks. The Ineffable Name was engraved on them and as long as they possessed

it no evil thing could touch them, neither the Angel of Death nor anything else."⁷⁹ Adds a later midrash: "All those days, while they had not done that deed /the golden calf/ they were as good as /better than/⁸⁰ the ministering angels before the Holy One, blessed be He. The Angel of Death did not hold sway over them, and did not discharge any excretions (יוצאין לנקיבתם) like the children of man..."⁸¹ The sages' prolific midrashim about the days following the receiving of the Torah were intended to motivate the Jews to "repossess" the Torah through study and thereby ward off Satan/the Angel of Death.

The truce between Israel -- the guardian of Torah -- and the Angel of Death did not last, according to the sages. "They did that deed /Golden Calf/ and the Holy One, blessed be He, was angry with them, and He said to them: '/I/ thought that you would be /before me/ like the ministering angels, as it is said: "I had taken you for divine beings..." (Psalms 82:2). But now, after the sin, you shall die as men do, fall like any prince'" (ibid., verse 7).⁸² Another midrash tries to appease the anger of Jews of the post-biblical period toward the biblical Jews who caused the Angel of Death to reenter the lives of Jews of all generations. R. Natan said: "A dread of the Angel of Death, He set in their hearts."⁸³ That is, were it not for the fear of

death, a man might not see the necessity of begetting children to perpetuate his name. The midrash goes on: "The Evil Inclination /Satan/Angel of Death/ is 'very good.' It is in truth to teach you that were it not for the Evil Inclination, nobody would build a house, marry and beget children."⁸⁴

Despite the efforts of some sages to redress the crucial mistake of the forefathers in the desert, most of the midrashim mourn the missed opportunity for eternal freedom from the Angel of Death.⁸⁵ But some of the Jews were, after all, saved from the dominion of the Angel of Death. Perhaps for ritual or political reasons, the sages tried to exempt the tribe of Levi from the control of the Angel of Death: "It was manifest to the Omnipresent (המקום) that they /Israelites/ would all die in the wilderness and their heads would be taken off... so the Holy One blessed be He, said to Moses: 'Do not on any account enroll the tribe of Levi or take a census of them with the Israelites (Num. 1:49)...Why? -- The Holy One, blessed be He, thought: 'if the tribe of Levi is numbered with the rest of Israel and is mixed up with them, the Angel of Death, coming to slay Israel.../will/ put them /the tribe of Levi/ to death together with Israel.' For this reason He did not number them..."⁸⁶

The sages did not wish to open old wounds from past days. While claiming: "From the giving of the Torah they,

Israel, inherited idolatry. And because of the idolatry in which they were engaged, the Angel of Death came upon them."⁸⁷ They still stressed that "אין לך בן חורין, אלא" ⁸⁸ "מי שאין מלאך המות שולט בו" Since, according to the midrashim, David, Moses, Elijah and Elisha,⁸⁹ and others were able to prevent the coming of the Angel of Death through the study of Torah, the sages suggested to the Jews of their time: "If you engaged in the study of Torah, then evil things can not have dominion over you."⁹⁰

D. ABRAHAM'S MIDRASHIC SATAN: A STIMULUS FOR LOVE OF GOD IN THE FACE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

The study of Torah and the observing of mitzvot which were contained in it were not only a barricade against moral deterioration in the characters of Jews, but, the sages claimed, they were also useful tools through which an individual who is immersed in a religious life can demonstrate his true relationship toward the Creator. Besides the doctrine of free will (which was made public by the sages in the post-biblical era, and of which the principles and the functions quickly found a stronghold in the minds and deeds of the Jews) there existed simultaneously the doctrine of Divine Providence. Just as fasting, mourning, repentance, and the study of Torah

were deemed necessary guidelines for the free will imbedded in humans, so were the mitzvot and their uncompromised observance considered the means of demonstrating the total dependence of man on the Divine Providence.

The existence and the influence of foreign religions and ideas hostile to Judaism, as well as social and economic difficulties for the Jews (as noted in Chapter 2) brought about many reactions by the sages. The worsening of the influence of **דְּוָלִיזְם** (dualism) alarmed the sages and prompted them to redefine and narrow the scope of Divine Providence (and thereby its responsibility for evil), stressing further the importance of man's free will.⁹¹ Nonetheless, the sages struggled constantly in their writings and sermons to sustain the doctrine of Divine Providence, emphasizing the insignificance of humans and the power of God, in order to maintain it as the essence of normative Judaism at this time of quickly changing values.

The suffering of Job in the Bible, Job's response, and his friends' reaction toward the source of the suffering -- God -- were utilized by the sages in their literature to demonstrate one way for humans to exist under Divine Providence. This avenue to an intimate relationship with God, which would enable humans to survive under the watchful eye of God by fearing Him, was called **פִּיגַת ה'**.

The sages suggested that man should behave toward God with fear, awe, and reverence, in order to find meaning within the framework of Divine Providence. Only by observing all the commandments, said the sages, would man be able to achieve a meaningful existence. This system of mitzvot formed the basis for the idea that a relationship between God and man is founded on fear (יראת).

In addition to the concept of יראת , the sages offered another path to the confused and troubled individual --

אהבת ה' -- the love of God. Not only through suffering or fear can a man move closer to God, but by incorporating in his free will a sincere unconditional love for God, one can achieve a closer and intimate relationship with the Divine.

In order to introduce this new concept to their followers, the sages used three old reliable devices: 1.) A well known biblical plot which embodies seeds of faith which are accepted by the sages and which can be expounded upon by them; 2.) A biblical character, well-known by Jews and Gentiles alike, through whom the sages could illustrate their points. 3.) A motif or myth which is thought to bring calamities upon humans and which is familiar to them and thereby easily understood by them. The well-known story which the sages used was that of the binding of Isaac -- the Akedah. The well-known character was Abraham, and the popular motif/myth

which the sages utilized was Satan.

The Akedah, Abraham, and Satan are the subjects of voluminous interpretations by scholars, poets, writers, survivors of the Holocaust, etc. My intention is not to survey the vast literature or to try to analyze human experiences, but rather to examine the role of Satan as it was defined and utilized by the sages for "צרכי המקום".

Satan, until this time, was rendered of little significance by the sages, and spends his time (in the midrash) day and night doing minor chores for God. He is discovered for the first time, in the midrashim about the Akedah, as an intelligent, resourceful creature, and more importantly as a character who refuses to abandon the fulfillment of his mission, even when faced by "midrashic" obstacles. Satan's part-time position as it was previously defined by the sages -- bringing scrolls for divine signature, announcing and causing evil decrees, and getting dressed in embarrassing animal costumes -- is redefined in the sages' literature. The new job description which the sages assign to him is to prove beyond any doubt the superiority of Abraham's unconditional love for God over his fear of God. Some sages wanted to make it perfectly clear that the אהבה 'ה equals (if not excels) 'ה ראה. In essence they

used Satan to prove that "There is nothing more beloved than the nature of Abraham's love to God."⁹² But an ulterior motive for using Satan existed in the sages' minds; they wished to shift responsibility for the bloodthirsty Akedah (as it appeared in the Bible) from God, who demands absolute obedience, to someone else -- Satan.⁹³ For this twofold job, Satan was commandeered by the sages, and carefully injected into the biblical narrative of the Akedah. While trying to evaluate the role of Satan in achieving those goals, one must keep in mind the following:

For we have here the remains of an additional detail in the stories of wiles and wars of Satan, stories which have been cut down, abridged, and possibly altogether withdrawn from our literature -- in the first place, in order to have nothing contradicting what the Torah says plainly in regard to the Akedah; in the second place, to deprive heretics of any excuse to say, it seems that on high there are two dominions. Nevertheless, here a speck and there a speck survives, stray traces of the Epic of the contest of Satan at the Akedah, a haggadic product of folk imagination, taking sip and sustenance from pagan streams and ancient Persian beliefs regarding the war of light and darkness. And whatever of this alien heritage could be converted to Judaism's purposes was admitted and permitted in the various homilies to serve as fragrance and spice for the essentials of Torah and the commandments. Sometimes you can not even recognize that the details come from a distance, and they appear as proper as proper can be.⁹⁴

It seems that the biblical Akedah, with its plot and characters, did not in its original form fulfill the needs of the sages. The trial of Abraham in the Bible reflected, according to the sages, a compulsive religious response by a leader toward a demanding and threatening God. The God-fearing image of Abraham in the Bible had to undergo some changes in midrashic literature if Abraham was to serve the sages' purposes. Therefore with the help of Satan and other devices they presented a trial within a trial. On top of the biblical trial (Genesis 22) which appears to be the most important and meaningful trial of Abraham, they built a second trial, sheerly the product of midrashic minds, and thrilling by its own merit. Through the second trial they were able to reflect a new and different meaning for the Akedah, a different relationship between a Creator and His creatures. Onto the biblical trial, which reflected only Abraham's fear of God as the reason for his obedience, they were able to add another dimension to Abraham's obedience -- the love of God! To the biblical portrait of Abraham as a devout and disciplined disciple of God, the sages add (by using Satan and other devices), a different hue. By having Satan place obstacles in the way of Abraham, the sages were able to illustrate that despite the knowledge that Satan gives Abraham about the purpose

of his mission (i.e. the slaying of his son) Abraham continued to his destination out of love for God, knowing perfectly well the result of his actions. Equipped with precise instructions and given by the sages unlimited power to maneuver, Satan goes on his mission -- instilling in the heart and deeds of Abraham the love for God -- determined to succeed. In Satan's way stand three characters, who according to the midrashim, differ from one another intellectually and spiritually; more importantly, they differ in their reactions as they anticipate the Akedah. The sages provided Satan with a variety of innovative methods to adapt and use in handling these differences. Having Satan operate by means of plagues, immoral temptations and slander did not seem to the sages to be appropriate or useful against the likes of Abraham, Isaac and Sarah. The sages therefore had to devise new and sophisticated traps for Satan's arsenal of temptations for the midrashic trial of Abraham. The sages knew, of course, that the heroes would not succumb to the temptations: if they did, the entire midrashic Akedah would end in an embarrassing failure. The midrashim which I surveyed were usually interpretations from the viewpoints of Abraham, Isaac, and Sarah. However, I will attempt to review the midrashim of the Akedah from the perspective

of Satan's involvement: in other words, the way in which the sages implemented Satan for their purposes.

In the midrashic Akedah, Satan initiates the confrontation with Abraham, a biblical Patriarch, stable and stubborn. Many temptations will have to bombard Abraham before Satan can accomplish his mission of bringing Abraham to a love of God. Satan, in order to drive away some of Abraham's God-fearing attitude and to replace it with more of a God-loving attitude, uses sundry midrashic disguises. Satan appears as Sammael⁹⁵, an old man⁹⁶ who is modest and humble⁹⁷, and as Satan himself.⁹⁸ But not only do the midrashic disguises keep changing; Satan's lines of argument also vary from one another. At times they are just polite overtures for a conversation⁹⁹ and other times they are burdensome, bearing all the weight of theological and emotional reasoning. Satan, in the hands of the sages, is perfectly aware of Abraham's weaknesses, and does not hesitate to attack them straightaway. Satan reminds Abraham of his advanced age and of the fact that his only child was born to him at an old age.¹⁰⁰ Satan continues to torment him, saying that he can not possibly hope for another child.¹⁰¹ When the emotional approach fails, Satan changes his strategy. He points out that all of Abraham's honor among people and nations will vanish if he proceeds toward fulfilling his

bloody mission: the people Abraham brought close to him, the advice he gave, the respect he gained from kings and minister -- all will melt when the news about the execution of his son be known.¹⁰² Despite the soundness of Satan's reasoning, the Abraham of the sages remains untempted. So, the resourceful and clever midrashic Satan once again changes his tactics. This time he attacks Abraham directly, with painful personal insults. Satan accuses Abraham of being a murderer who looks forward to killing his son.¹⁰³ Satan adds: "Should not thy fear of God be thy confidence (הלא יראתך

כסלתיך)?"¹⁰⁴ In other words, Satan berates Abraham for flaunting his God-fearing attitude by this meaningless act.

When Satan's devices are almost exhausted, and all of his temptations thwarted, Satan tries in desperation the following device: "Now a thing was secretly brought to me: thus have I heard from behind the curtain /close to the Source/, 'the lamb will be for a burnt-offering but not Isaac for a burnt offering.'"¹⁰⁵ Even this last revelation, by which Satan tries to take away the meaning of the trial (and by which the sages lessen God's cruelty) and which totally negates Abraham's God-fearing posture, ends to no avail: "It's the penalty of a liar, that should he even tell the truth he is not listened to."¹⁰⁶

Abraham "survives" the midrashic trial, even though Satan still creates obstacles like a river¹⁰⁷ and a runaway ram¹⁰⁸. Satan's midrashic mission is over. Abraham proves to have the spark of 'אברהם! As a good sport who recognizes his defeat, Satan comes to Abraham and says: "I did not come but to try you, and did not approach you but to witness your deeds after I heard /about them/ from the Holy One blessed be He, who was praising you, saying: Is there any one as my loving Abraham... /and Satan tells Abraham/ what I had to say against you I already said..."¹⁰⁹

Two remaining characters were touched by ^{the} midrashic Satan. By having Satan appear to Isaac, the sages wished to raise the son-father tension and thus cause more anxiety for Abraham. It appears that they wanted to instill also in Isaac, the future Patriarch, a taste of love (not just fear) of God.

To Isaac, Satan appears as a lad,¹¹⁰ as a young beautiful youth,¹¹¹ and as Satan himself¹¹². But his argumentation is different than that which was used against Abraham, as though Satan is aware of Isaac's adolescence and of his capacity for understanding. Satan concentrates his attack on stimulating in Isaac the emotions of love and jealousy -- love toward a loving mother and jealousy toward a rivalrous brother.¹¹³

And when Satan believes he has confused Isaac, he says "...You should feel pity on yourself and not be destroyed."¹¹⁴ But even when this approach is unsuccessful, Satan turns to Isaac, claiming: "This old fool /Abraham/ is senile and he is about to slaughter you..."¹¹⁵

In the Bible, the events surrounding Sarah's death are a mystery (Genesis 23:1-2). Sages tried in their interpretation of the Akedah to provide the details of her death. Satan, who is identified with the Angel of Death, is called upon in the midrashim to bring Sarah's life to an end. But the varying responses of the sages to the Akedah, and especially to the human drama on the altar, are followed by as many varying renditions of her final suffering and death.

In some midrashim, it is Isaac who comes back to his mother to tell her about his ordeal, and upon hearing it, she dies.¹¹⁶ Even in the midrash in which Satan comes as a messenger disguised as Isaac her reaction is the same.¹¹⁷ Still another midrash reveals a more brutal Satan/Sammael: "When Abraham returned from Mount Moriah in peace, the anger of Sammael was kindled, for he saw that the desire of his heart to frustrate the offering of our father Abraham had not been realized. What did he do? He went and said to Sarah: Hast thou not heard what has happened in the world? She said to him: No. He said to her: Thy husband Abraham has taken thy son Isaac

and slain him and offered him up as a burnt offering upon the altar and the lad wept and cried aloud because he could not be saved. She began to weep and cry aloud three times corresponding to the three sustained notes /of the Shofar/ and she /gave forth/ three howlings corresponding to the three disconnected short notes חֲרוּצָה /of the Shofar/, and her soul fled, and she died."¹¹⁸

Satan's mission thus ended in the midrashic narrative. In its telling, the sages were able to offer to Jews a new avenue for religious behavior -- אַהֲבַת ה', an avenue which the sages believed would balance the choices which Jews could make about their religious conduct (אַהֲבַת בָּצֵר (לְרֵאשִׁית)). By the end of this account, the sages had sculpted and polished Satan into an effective, dependable literary device which they used repeatedly to promulgate the concept of לְצַרְכֵי הַמָּקוֹם.

E. MOSES' MIDRASHIC SATAN: A TAKER OF LIFE IN THE SERVICE OF GOD

In the general religious instruction of the sages, the following statement served in the post-biblical era as the basis for two central doctrines: " הַכֹּל צֶמֶד וְחֵירוּת

" בְּחֵירוּתָהּ " (All is forseen but freedom of choice is given)."¹¹⁹ The recognition by man that not only

is his life revealed to but his actions are directed by an omniscient, omnipotent God gave sway to the belief that "no one does the least thing on earth unless it was so decreed in Heaven."¹²⁰ Just as the sages needed to create devices by which to infiltrate the idea of free will into the minds of the Jewish populace, so did they need to formulate ways for Jews to cope with and behave within the doctrine of Divine Providence. Repentance, prayer, and the study of Torah were the sages' most highly recommended behaviors for living with free will. For living with the doctrine of Divine Providence the sages offered to Jews a sophisticated network of reward and punishment. This network, with its variety of religious expressions, was woven into the literature and teachings of the sages as they promoted the doctrine of Divine Providence among the Jews in their generation.

The Jews in the post-biblical period, skeptical about God's desire for their redemption and surrounded by pagans content to worship idols, had difficulty accepting the doctrine of Divine Providence as it was taught by the sages. To relieve this anxiety, the sages' system of reward and punishment taught the Jew that everything that is allotted to man in his life or after his death is a direct result of his good or evil

deeds as they are evaluated by God. In the midst of the system, the sages placed a particular emphasis on the phenomenon of death. In the hands of the sages, death, the common destiny of each living creature, became a crucial event, the outcome of which was determined by human deeds in the physical world:

Even death, the fate of all living creatures, was regarded as a punishment which the first pair of human beings brought upon all their descendants through their transgression of the divine commandment. The Talmudic sages clung to the view of the paradise legend in the Bible when they held that every death is due to some sin committed by the individual.¹²¹

Coupled with this concept of death, the sages introduced a second, equally important aspect of death. Contrary to popular beliefs and competitive religions, the sages wanted to implant in believers the idea that just as earthly life flows from an endless divine source, so is death God's creation and intention for all humans. Against a dualistic doctrine which claimed that a schism existed between a principle of good which sustains life and a principle of evil which brings death, the sages wished to teach that the existence of death in a world of Divine Providence is only the natural cessation of a life allotted by a divine united source.

As usual, the sages did not present to the Jews their beliefs about death and their system of reward and

punishment without imbedding it in their midrashic exegesis of the life and death of a biblical figure. For the purpose of conveying their ideas about these issues they mobilized, with painstaking deliberation, Moses -- the only true prophet, according to the sages. Moses was used in midrashic literature not only to explain death as the sages thought it should be introduced to the Jews, but also to rebut and to silence the views of gentiles and factionalized Jews who tried to integrate Moses and his teachings into their religions' fundamentals. Moses, in the hands of the sages, was their only justification for their political religious authority over the Jewish people in the generations after the canonization of the Bible. To the generations who accepted the **תורה שבכתב** (the Written Law) of Moses, the sages wanted to introduce and implement **תורה שבע"פ** (the Oral Law), implying as they did so that it came from Moses. By connecting the biblical Moses to their documents, the sages felt they had proof of their authenticity and superiority over other claims to Moses' law. Normative Judaism became such because of the sages' incorporation of Moses the prophet, of God's revelation to him, and of his receiving of Torah, into their teachings. The sages saw in themselves the end of **שלשלת הקבלה** (a chain of tradition)

which was supposedly entrusted to them by Moses.

In opposition to these Jewish beliefs and all that accompanied them stood the Samaritans, the Jews' factions, and early Christians who claimed ownership and exclusive rights to Moses and his teachings; the sages had to reject and suppress these claims.¹²² One popular belief was that Moses will be the Messiah who will bring another redemption to a generation in turmoil;¹²³ another belief claimed that there will be a new prophet "the same as Moses" who will bring a new revelation from God.¹²⁴ Both of these beliefs emerged from the unanswered questions about Moses' death as it is related in the biblical stratum. In order to counteract these beliefs the sages, in their midrashic literature had to resolve the problems surrounding Moses' death (Deut. 34). To prevent gentiles and factionalized Jews from mythologizing Moses' death for their own purposes, the sages felt obligated to clarify the circumstances of Moses' death in order to maintain their ownership over him.

So Moses and the sages' doctrine on death were brought together in order to teach a lesson in human conduct and to reject ideas hostile to normative Judaism. Once again Satan appears on the midrashic scene as a device to convey those teachings.

Satan, in many appearances in the midrashim, is known as the Angel of Death or as Sammael ("There is no one among the accusing angels so wicked as Sammael")¹²⁵. Satan evokes a variety of reactions from the midrashic Moses. Moses, despite the fact that "there is none so righteous among the prophets as he,"¹²⁶ displayed typical human responses when faced with death, according to the sages. Moses' rich midrashic experience in successfully confronting the Angel of Death/Satan was of no assistance to Moses when he heard God announcing to him his own death.¹²⁷

Even before the expected arrival of Moses into heaven, the excitement by Sammael in anticipating his death was great: "Sammael the wicked angel, the chief of all accusing angels, was awaiting the death of Moses every hour, saying 'When will the time or the moment arrive for Moses to die, so I may descend and take away his soul from him.'"¹²⁸ Sammael was, according to a midrash, "like a man who has been invited to a wedding feast, and looks forward to it, saying 'When will their rejoicing come that I may share therein.'"¹²⁹ This excitement of Sammael might be a result of many disappointing midrashic encounters that he had with Moses. On one occasion, Sammael went to look for the Torah and was mocked and sent away by Moses empty-handed.¹³⁰ The

Angel of Death was stopped by Moses from killing more Israelites in the desert (Num. 17:2),¹³¹ and Satan was the loser when "Israel made the Golden Calf, and Satan stood within /before God/ accusing them, while Moses stood without. What then did Moses do? He arose and thrust Satan away and placed himself in his stead..."¹³²

In contrast to Satan's happiness at awaiting the death of his worst enemy, we discover in the midrashic Moses a man who fears his pending death. The sages created and used the fearful Moses as a character who represents all humans, and who therefore can assist the sages in teaching a lesson to Jews about facing death. They created a very fragile, anxious Moses who is a different character from the one who was introduced in the Bible.

Moses' midrashic reactions in facing death take various forms.¹³³ One of Moses' reactions is a feeling of isolation. Moses feels lonely and deserted by God and therefore goes on a midrashic journey through the biblical memories of his life in order to ask for mercy: "When Moses saw that no one was watching him he went to the heavens and earth...the stars in their constellations...the mountains and hills...the great sea...even the Minister of Internal Affairs asking for mercy. Then Moses placed his hands on his head and was yelling,

crying and asking 'to whom should I go to beg for mercy?'"¹³⁴ Another of Moses' reactions to death is anger. Moses, out of anger and self-pity over his misfortune, prays with such intense sincerity that "his prayer was like a sword which tears and cuts its way through everything and spares nothing (ואינו מעכב)."¹³⁵ But when the prayers are not answered to the full satisfaction of Moses he then "plucked his beard, rolled his head in the dust, took his garment and covered his head as a mourner, then entering his tent, voicing a loud outcry and clapping his two hands..."¹³⁶ Moses also responds to the idea of his own death by bargaining. Moses uses many different ploys to try to postpone or even prevent his death.¹³⁷ He is especially concerned with the pain which could be suffered during the process of dying: "do not hand me over into the hand of the Angel of Death."¹³⁸ Still another of Moses' reactions to death is confusion and despair. According to the sages, when Moses discovers the spiritual strength of Joshua as a teacher for Israel, "Moses could not understand what Joshua was teaching. Afterwards, the Israelites stood from sitting and listening and said to Moses, 'Explain (ונד) us the Torah.' Moses told them, 'I don't know what to answer you.' And Moses, our Rabbi failed and stumbled..."¹³⁹

The sages, who wanted to emphasize that "one reign

does not interfere with the 'other' and that the length of life is rationed, continued in another midrash that "at the hour when Moses was to die, God said to the Angel of Death,¹⁴⁰ 'Go and bring me the soul of Moses.' The Angel of Death went out and stood before him /Moses/ and said: 'Moses, deliver your soul to me.'"¹⁴¹ The midrashic versions of what ensued from this injunction are extremely diverse in their descriptions of Moses' reaction. Some midrashim remark: "What did Moses do? He seized the Angel of Death and cast him down in front of him, and blessed the tribes, each according to its blessing..."¹⁴² Some midrashim detail an actual war between Moses and Sammael: "Sammael drew his sword from the sheath and placed himself at the side of Moses. Immediately Moses became wrathful, and taking hold of the staff on which was engraved the Ineffable Name he fell upon Sammael with all his strength until Sammael fled from before him, and Moses pursued him with the Ineffable Name and removed the beam of glory (177

177) from between Sammael's eyes and blinded him."¹⁴³

The sages felt obligated to add: "Thus much did Moses achieve. At the end of a moment, a heavenly voice was heard declaring: The end, the time of your death has come!"¹⁴⁴ And another voice said, according to the sages: "Moses, your life has had enough of this world,

the world to come awaits you since the six days of creation..."¹⁴⁵ Only then Moses accepts in obedience and submission the decree of God and simply "asks" that God Himself take care of his death as He did that of Aaron.¹⁴⁶ The sages then add "The Holy One, blessed be He, took the soul of Moses and stored it under the Throne of Glory...when He took his soul it was with a kiss, as it is stated, 'By the Mouth of the Lord' (Deut. 34:5)." ¹⁴⁷

The sages were able by skillful use of Satan/Angel of Death to explain through their literature that death is not necessarily a result of a sin in earthly life, but rather the closing of an expended human life by the One divine entity. Not forgetting their need to rebut the gentiles' and factionalized Jews' claim to Moses, the sages, by their laborious, intricate description of Moses' death, were able to show that he was exclusively the prophet of the Jewish God for the Jewish people. The sages were careful to mention that God promised (in the midrash) that His Torah, which was entrusted to Moses, was not to be allowed to become a fraud in the hands of untrustworthy people. Their detailed account of Moses' heavenly burial was the sages attempt to put a stop to the belief in the resurrection of Moses and in his coming as a Messiah for the redemption of mankind.

In order to suppress any attempts to announce the appearance of a new prophet "like Moses," the sages formulated midrashim such as the following, which describes Satan's unsuccessful search for Moses (before discovering his death): "God has hidden him away for life in the world to come, and no creature knows his whereabouts; as it is stated, but wisdom, where shall it be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living. The deep saith: It is not in me; and the sea saith: It is not with me (Job 28:12-14).. Destruction and Death say: We have heard a rumour thereof with our ears (Job 20:22) Joshua also was sitting and grieving over Moses... Until the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him 'Joshua, why do you grieve over Moses? Moses my servant is dead.' (Joshua 1:2)"¹⁴⁸

* * * * *

The sages, distinguishing themselves through their halachic and midrashic literature, directed the Jews of their generation toward channels of belief through which a perplexed Jew might embrace and practice his religion. By their extensive exegesis, they were able

not only to solve biblical 'textual difficulties, both real and fabricated, but also (and more importantly) to promote a collection of beliefs and to encourage the observance of those beliefs so that the vitality of the Jewish religion at the time of the sages might be maintained. With the aid of their highly refined literary talent and by their courageous thought, the sages conveyed the essence of their faith through biblical figures and events which they wove into their literature and reintroduced to the eyes and hearts of the Jews.

Satan, in addition to other literary devices, was the "eye of a needle" through which the sages tried to thread their ideas among the populace of whom they were the leaders. Satan, along with the heavenly entourage, was an important component in the spiritual world which the Jews believed accompanied their lives; Satan was the subject of a vast number of popular tales and legends, and as such was used extensively by the sages in their midrashic expositions.

The sages utilized, **לצרכי המקום**, biblical figures in familiar scenes from the religious and cultural history of the Jews. They placed these characters, after considerable literary adaptation and revision, into confrontations with Satan, who behaved in a manner appropriate to the sages' understanding

of him, and suited to their purposes. Every midrashic confrontation which involved Satan brought to the surface an important belief or idea to which the sages wished to give particular emphasis. The doctrines of free will and Divine Providence, as well as modes of moral and social behavior, became pillars in the sages' religion, pillars which rested in part on the shoulders of Satan. As you will see in the following chapter, that burden was not **לצרכי ציבור**, but also **לצרכי המקום**.

CHAPTER 4

SATAN FOR THE SAKE OF THE PEOPLE

We are taught by the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berakoth (6a):

Abba Benjamin says: if the eye had the power to see them, no creature could fathom the /number of/ demons. Abaye says: They are more numerous than we are and they surround us like the ridge around a field. R. Huna says: Every-one among us has a thousand /demons/ on his left hand and ten thousand on his right hand.

During the time that some sages were diligently working in their midrashic literature on defining Satan's jurisdiction and assessing the limits of Satan's power, the post-biblical world was being exposed to an onslaught of angels, demons, and evil spirits.¹ Jews, living among gentiles and absorbing their culture, were experiencing great financial and spiritual distress. In an effort to find solutions to their problems, Jews created, with the aid of their prolific imaginations, demons and evil spirits which then became the objects of their belief, and which were even given names by them.²

The awareness of evil and the belief in demons were explained in part as a reaction to alien cultural and religious challenges, but were sustained and nourished by the sages, who themselves created an entire collection of harmful demons.³ Although there were sages who wanted to abolish such pagan beliefs⁴, many of the sages felt compelled to recognize the phenomenon and to admit their inability to overcome those popular beliefs which had a hold on every heart and mind during the second commonwealth. Realizing that they could not squelch widespread belief in demons as the source of evil, the sages launched a "limited attack," issuing a variety of edicts⁵ regarding such beliefs and the practices associated with them. The sages themselves were not immune to the popular belief:

When an authority prohibited traffic with demons, it was not in order to discourage belief in them but, according to another authority, because of the danger involved, and this danger is illustrated by an incident (Sanhedrin 101a). Nevertheless, the Rabbis, and presumably the folk in general also, attached but little valuational significance to demons.⁶

Recognizing the existence of demons as bearers of evil was an admission which caused great uneasiness among the sages, because it threatened to sweep the Jews into the arms of foreign cultures and religions. Until this time, spiritual leaders had been able to satisfy the

Jews' questions about evil by explaining to them that both good and evil emanate from their one God. With the advent of widespread acculturation (including rampant demonology) and the limiting of communication (in the persons of the prophets) between Jews and their God, traditional explanations were not enough to answer the questions of Jews attempting to survive as Jews in a rapidly changing and frequently hostile environment. Accordingly, the sages introduced such functional concepts as free will and reward and punishment. But in free will, one system for directing religious conduct, there lay a basic flaw. A monotheistic totally good Supreme Being could not create a world in which a man could sincerely choose between good and evil -- sometimes even choosing evil over good -- because the existence of such a choice would presuppose that the same God created evil. If the sages' aim was to offer to each individual the opportunity to achieve moral good by choice, two conditions had to exist for the religious person: a) good and evil choices had to be placed in front of him and b) he must have the freedom to choose between them.

The sages were well aware that by introducing the concept of evil into their system of beliefs, they ran the risk of appearing to contradict their own moral teachings. But because, aside from this possible contradiction,

the free will doctrine was basically sound and advantageous as a guideline for behavior during this era, the sages took the risk of introducing the concept of evil. They knew that that concept, like so many others, could be manipulated in such a way as not to negate their belief system. Furthermore, such manipulation was essential if the sages were to keep the Jews under their authority; they incorporated the concept of evil **לצרכי ציבור** -- for the sake of the people.

It was the existence of the biblical Satan in the collective memory of the Jews which enabled the sages to introduce the concept of evil into their doctrine without undermining the monotheistic foundation of Judaism. In contrast to dualism, Satan the servant or messenger of God, according to the sages, does not emanate from a separate evil principle. So by incorporating Satan into their teachings, the sages could effectively combat belief in dualism; the other advantage in incorporating Satan was that by recognizing him as the bearer of evil, the sages could issue decrees regarding belief in him, causing Jews to fear him, and thereby limiting the degree of influence he might have on the Jews, an influence which would otherwise go unchecked.

The sages, attempting to keep Satan and the demons within their jurisdiction, tried to demonstrate publicly

their own relationships with the spiritual realm. The sages wanted to be role models for the Jews; they wished to demonstrate that they too had to contend with worldly evil and its agents, and in so doing, establish their credibility (in the eyes of the Jews) as authorities on the subject of demonology. To bolster their image as "communicators" with Satan, demons, and evil spirits, the sages pointed out not only that the connections existed, but they also took great care to mention the frequency, the intensity, and the nature of those connections. If the sages could win the confidence of the Jews regarding Satan and evil, and could come to be thought of as authorities in such matters, then the sages could control the beliefs and perceptions of their constituents. At the same time, they could prevent the Jews from being enticed by "outsiders'" religious and moral interpretations of Satan.

One sage stands out from the others in his dealings with the spiritual realm: Joshua b. Levi, an Amora from the middle of the third century C.E., develops strong ties and fascinating conversations with creatures not of this earth.⁷ Many legends and traditions were carried through the generations about R. Levi and his special friendship with Elijah the prophet, his investigations into the mysteries of the world and his

interpretations of dreams and visions.⁸ R. Levi was loved and admired by numerous disciples, and by virtue of his tremendous popularity, his teachings were highly influential and widespread. He went so far as to claim that the edicts he issued came directly "from the demon's mouth:"

R. Joshua b. Levi says: Three things were told me by the Angel of Death. "Do not take your /robe/ from your attendant (~~who~~) when dressing in the morning, and do not let water be poured on your hands by one who has not washed his own hands, and do not stand in front of women when they are returning from the presence of a dead person, because I /The Angel of Death/ go leaping in front of them with my sword in my hand, and I have permission to do harm."⁹

As a preventive measure to this permission granted to the Angel of God, R. Levi suggests that upon encountering the Angel of Death one should:

/Let him/turn aside four cubits; if there is a river, let him cross it, and if there is another road let him take it, and if there is a wall, let him stand behind it; and if he cannot do any of those things, let him turn his face away and say: And the Lord said unto Satan: The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, etc, until /the women/ have passed by.¹⁰

According to the midrashim, the Angel of Death continued his comradeship with R. Levi and when his time came to depart from the earth, he received, while studying Torah, an unexpected visit from that Angel:

When /R. Joshua b. Levi/ was about to die the Angel of Death was instructed, "Go and carry out his wish." When he came and showed himself to him, the latter said: "Show me my place /in Paradise/" -- "Very Well" the Angel replied. "Give me your knife," the sage demanded, "/since otherwise/ you may frighten me on the way." The Angel of Death gave it to him. On arriving there the Angel lifted him up and showed him the place. The Rabbi jumped and dropped on the other side of the wall, /The Angel/ seized him by the corner of his cloak; but /Joshua b. Levi/ exclaimed, "I swear that I will not go back"... "Return to me my knife," /the Angel/ said to him; but /the sage/ would not return it to him. A **בן קול** went forth and said to R. Levi "Return the thing to him, for it is required for /killing/ the mortals (**בריות**)."¹¹

The above midrash appears in many different forms.¹² One of the variant endings with which it was written illustrates the great affection that the public -- and by implication, God -- had toward R. Joshua b. Levi:

The Angel approached R. Joshua and demanded from him the sword which was used by him to kill humans wherever he was able to find them. R. Joshua answered that he wouldn't return the sword until /the Angel/ will swear that from now on he would not kill human beings with such ease. (**ככה**). The Angel returned to God to tell him what R. Joshua said. God agreed, unwillingly, to fulfill his request. Only under that condition did R. Joshua agree to return the sword.¹³

There were other sages engaged in conversations and meetings with demons and Angels of Death. R. Bibe b. Abaye was known as "one who was frequently visited by the

Angel of Death"¹⁴ and there were sages like Jose and Baba who had their own private Demon /named/ Joseph.¹⁵

Rabbi Meir saw

...two men who, being egged on by Satan, quarrelled with one another every Friday afternoon. R. Meir once came to that place and stopped them from quarrelling there Friday afternoons. When he had finally made peace between them, he heard Satan cry: Alas for me, whom R. Meir has driven out from my domain (**בְּיָמַי**).¹⁶

With such midrashim, and countless others, the sages were able to demonstrate to the Jewish populace their "direct line" to the spirit world, and their facility in dealing with demons. But simultaneously, the sages, in their midrashim, also exhibited their own vulnerability to demons, in order to reveal their human side and thereby bridge the gap between themselves and the Jews who looked to them for spiritual leadership. The same Rabbi Meir who was able to drive "Satan from his domain" in the previous citing was not as successful in combatting Satan in his own affairs:

Meir used to scoff at transgressors. One day Satan appeared to him in the guise of a woman on the opposite bank of the river. As there was no ferry, /Meir/ seized the rope /stretched from bank to bank/ and proceeded across. When he had reached halfway along the rope, /Satan/ let him go /by resuming his normal shape he freed him from temptation/ saying "Had they not proclaimed in Heaven, 'Take heed of R. Meir and his learning! I would have valued your life (**דְּמִיָּךְ**) at two **מַעֲיָן** /worthless small coins/."¹⁷

Displaying their vulnerability to the Jews was one way in which the sages were able to gain the Jews' trust in their authority.¹⁸ But more important to their authority was the political power which the sages held by being the only rightful interpreters of the twofold law -- oral and written.

This twofold law differed radically from the Pentateuch, not only in acknowledging an authority unknown to the Pentateuch, the Pharisaic scholar class, but in spelling out for the individual a discipline embracing all human activities. No hour of the day or night was beyond its jurisdiction. It was a system of law that shifted the center of concern from the cultus to the conscience and that focused on social responsibility.¹⁹

With the Jews' entire lives -- their earthly and spiritual behavior, day and night -- under their jurisdiction, the sages attempted to instill fear and awe among the people with regard to Satan/the Angel of Death. They portrayed Satan/the Angel of Death as "the vanity under the sun..."²⁰ The Angel of Death is described as "the one who darkens people's faces."²¹ The sages add:

A man has no power over the wind of the Angel of Death to make /the Angel/ withhold it from him...Whence do we know that the angels are called "winds" as it is said, who maketh winds thy messengers (Psalm 4:4).²²

Some sages inculcated a fear of the Angel of Death by saying: "a man cannot make weapons /and hope/ to be

saved from the Angel of Death,"²³ because "He is above all humans."²⁴ The sages added: "He extends in length from one end of the world to the other, from the sole of his feet to the top of his head he is /covered/ all over with eyes."²⁵

In addition to describing the Angel of Death's nature and appearance, the sages go on to depict minute details of his fearsome activities. The following disclosure relates the consequences for the man who looks upon a woman, even an unmarried one.

It is said of the Angel of Death that he is all full of eyes. When a sick person is about to depart, he stands at his head (מראשותיו) with his sword drawn out in his hand and a drop of gall (מרה) hanging on it. As the sick person beholds it, he trembles and opens his mouth /in fright/. He then drops /the gall/ into his mouth. It is from this that he dies, from this that /the corpse/ deteriorates so that his face becomes greenish.²⁶

But once again the sages were not immune to the activities of the Angel of Death; they trembled even in mentioning his name.²⁷

In contrast to other (gentile and non-normative Jewish) religious treatments of Satan/the Angel of Death, the sages did not vest him with the enormous power of an arch-enemy of God. Instead of instilling in the Jews a fear of Satan which was of cosmic dimensions, they brought Satan to a manageable level, and apportioned

the fear of him into daily earthly existence.

The Devil is the hypostasis, the apotheosis, the objection of a hostile force or hostile forces, perceived as external to our consciousness. These forces, over which we appear to have no conscious control, inspire the religious feelings of awe, dread, fear, and horror. The Devil is as much a manifestation of the religious sense as are the gods.²⁸

Bringing Satan to the everyday lives of Jews required that the sages, in their midrashim, infuse Satan into a variety of typical earthly scenarios.

The sages claimed that Satan would come to a person during happy times: "As R. Isaac said: Whenever you find dwelling /tranquility/ Satan becomes active. R. Helbo said: Wherever you find contentment Satan brings accusation. R. Levi said: Whenever you find eating and drinking, the arch-robber (אֶרְכֵלֶסְטִים) /Satan/ cuts his capers (מְקַרְטֵעַ) /is up to mischief/."²⁹

But one should be wary of great happiness and joy, as in the midrash of R. Halafta who once participated in a happy occasion:

The father of the child made a feast and gave those present wine seven years old to drink; He also said: "of this wine, I will store away a portion for my son's wedding feast." The feast continued until midnight. R. Simeon b. Halafta, who also trusted in his own /moral/ strength, left at midnight to return to his city. On the road, the Angel of Death met him and R. Simeon noticed he was looking strange.³⁰

/Simeon/ asked him: "Who are you?"
 And the latter answered: "I am God's
 messenger." /Simeon/ asked him: Why
 are you looking strange?" He replied:
 "On account of the talk of human beings
 who say: 'This and that we will do,'
 and yet not one of them knows when he
 will be summoned to die. The man in
 whose feast you have shared, and who
 said to you: 'Of this wine I will
 store away a portion for my son's
 wedding feast,' lo, his /child's/ time
 has come, he is to be snatched away
 after thirty days..."³¹

The dangers of wine-drinking were treated frequently
 by the sages. They cleverly tied Noah's planting of a
 vineyard (Genesis 9:20) to Satan, who, in the midrashim,
 (by his evil deeds on the day of the dedication of the
 vineyard) causes later generations to sin by the drink-
 ing of wine.³²

The sages not only warned against Satan's interference
 in times of tranquility and celebrations but also
 created special warnings against Satan for times of
 danger. Sometimes danger could occur "along the wayside,
 but could not harm befall him at home? Said R. Eliezer:
 This proves that Satan accuses only in time of danger."³³
 R. Levi makes his contribution to the midrashim concern-
 ing danger: "And in three circumstances do men die:
 When dwelling in a dilapidated house (מרוע),
 travelling by road alone, and sailing on the ocean,
 because then Satan brings accusations against them."³⁴

The sages did not only bring fear to the hearts
 of men, but to women as well, who at times of childbirth

were vulnerable and therefore threatened by Satan:

A time to be born and a time to die
(Ecclesiastes 3:2) /The travailing woman
is such a danger because even the Angel
of Death/ becomes her accuser. R. Samuel
b. Nahman said: /The Mishnah states/:
For three transgressions do women die in
the time of childbirth: because they
are not careful with regard to their
periodic separation, or to /the making
of/ challah, and to the lighting of the
/Sabbath/ lamp.³⁵

By instilling in man a feeling of impotence in the
face of Satan/the Angel of Death, the sages put themselves
in the position of being looked to for aid during
troubled times: "Whosoever has a sick person in his
house should go to a sage who will invoke /heavenly/
mercy for him: as it is said: The wrath of a king is
as messengers of death, but a wise man will pacify it
(Proverbs 16:14)."³⁶

The sages not only proffered warnings concerning the
resistance of Satan, but also catalogued the many ways
in which humans must avoid provoking Satan: "A man
should never open his mouth against Satan."³⁷ They
also suggested not to stand before a gray ox who emerges
out of the water because "Satan is dancing between his
horns."³⁸ Even the raising of the Lulav on Sukkot to
the four corners of the world was prohibited lest you
enter by your deed a demonic space:

R. Aha b. Jacob used to wave it to
and fro saying "This is an arrow in
the eye of Satan." This, however, is

not a proper thing /for a man to do/
since /Satan/ might in consequence be
provoked against him.³⁹

The sages themselves were warned against visiting a sage on his death bed: "...when a scholar falls ill a study group (*שי"ב*) is to be held at his door. This, however, is not /always the proper/ thing /to do/ since Satan might thereby be provoked."⁴⁰ R. Hisda said once: "The reason that I am superior to my colleagues is that I married at sixteen! And had I married at fourteen I would have said to Satan 'An arrow in your eye.'"⁴¹

The sages were particularly zealous in their warning to Jews to avoid walking on streets of a city where plagues or diseases might be encountered.⁴² But it could be that a deeper meaning was hidden in those warnings:

We learn from a Palestinian baraita:
One should not go out alone at night.
Not on Wednesday nights nor on Friday
nights. For Igrath, the daughter of
Machalath and 180,000 destructive
angels go out. Each one is allowed
to destroy /humans/ independently of
the other.⁴³

It could very well be that this caution derived from the sages' desire to protect Jews from actual physical harm. During this era, early Christians were fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays because they believed that the Jews betrayed Jesus on Wednesday and crucified

him on Friday. Scholars point out that rather than specifying to Jews to avoid Christian clergy on those days, the sages simply warned the Jews that they might encounter "destructive angels" or Satan if they ventured forth; this warning then would be enough to accomplish the sages' purpose.⁴⁴ The sages also cautioned Jews not to walk at night on roads where an evil person or an enemy walks because "Satanic Angels accompany him."⁴⁵

These and many other halachot and midrashim illustrate how the sages took Satan from the cosmic realm of heavenly strife (as he was viewed in other religions) and turned him into a "household word," and something to be feared in everyday life. Satan, the external tempter, was frequently associated with "evil inclination," the internal tempter, and both were evil forces which had to be reckoned with by the Jews of the period. Satan was a useful tool for the sages who, in presenting the free will doctrine, needed to distinguish between the good and evil choices available to Jews. By connecting Satan (whom Jews feared) with the evil choices, the sages were also able to direct the Jews toward meritorious behavior and the performing of mitzvot. The free will doctrine provided the Jew with choices, but the sages tipped the scales heavily in favor of the "choices" which they dictated. So thorough

is Satan's involvement in the Jews' daily lives that he becomes a subject for special handling with regard to that one day of the year when, according to the sages, Jews are not influenced by Satan or the evil inclination -- the Day of Atonement.

The Day of Atonement was introduced by the sages as a day for the spiritual cleansing of the individual. The sages brought Satan into the midrashim about the Day of Atonement not to teach lessons or illustrate doctrines, but merely to enhance the dread and the awesomeness of the occasion.

After figuring the numerical value of Satan's name, the sages concluded that "the numerical value of שטן (Satan) is three hundred and sixty four, corresponding to the number of days in the year during which he has the power of slandering Israel, except for the Day of Atonement."⁴⁶ And why did the sages believe that Satan did not have the power to profane the holiness of the day?

...the Holy One blessed be He, says to /Satan/: "Thou hast no authority to touch them. Nevertheless, go forth and see wherein they busy themselves." Then he /Satan/ going forth, finds all of them at fasting and prayer, dressed in white garments and cloaked like the ministering angels, and forthwith goes back in shame and confusion. The Holy One, blessed be He, asks: "What hast thou found out about My children?" And he answered "Verily, they are like the ministering angels, and I am unable to touch them.

Thereupon the Holy One, blessed be He,
chains (**סוּבֵל**) him, and declares to
/His children/ I have forgiven you."⁴⁷

Satan's confusion was probably compounded by the customs of rising and sitting at the blowing of the shofar⁴⁸ in the Day of Atonement service: "If the shofar is not sounded at the beginning of the year, evil will befall at the end of it. Why so? Because Satan has not been confused."⁴⁹

The sages "protected" Israel from the accusations of Satan on the Day of Atonement, but they nevertheless reminded them to continue to accumulate merits in order to prevent human susceptibility to evil. Satan, the sages warned, does not stop accusing, even for a minute:

...Michael and Sammael both stand before
the Divine Presence; Satan accuses,
while Michael points out Israel's virtues,
and when Satan wishes to speak again,
Michael silences him...⁵⁰

And when Michael, the good angel, cannot achieve order in heaven, Aaron the High Priest comes and makes Satan withdraw from the realm of holiness.⁵¹ In still other midrashim, the sages even bring the Holy One blessed be He to the aid of his people!

While Satan is going about seeking iniquities, the Holy One, blessed be He, takes the iniquities out of the pan (**כַּף**) of the scales and hides them under His royal purple (**סוּרְפִירָה**). Then Satan comes and finds no iniquity on the scales...⁵²

The great significance of the celebration of the Day of Atonement led one scholar to question the sages' inclusion of Satan in the shofar ritual. This scholar provides a different explanation for Satan's participation in this ritual:

It appears that using Satan either as a mystical being or even as a homiletical figure is textually inadmissible... /therefore/ Understanding R. Yitzhak's statement in its historical perspective /that Satan represents a current political enemy/ adds greater meaning to the shofar ritual by reminding us of our forefathers' punctilious observance of law even in the face of danger.⁵³

Satan, demons and evil spirits were presented by the sages to the Jews as dreadful entities which were at the same time a creation of God and active only under his supervision. By doing so, the sages were able to suppress and to disaffirm any attempts to mythologize Satan as the head of the evil angels who were punished by God. But as usual, the mere repudiation of unacceptable popular beliefs was not sufficient to satisfy the sages. They created blessings and mitzvot for the Jews to utilize in order to prevent Satan's "taking hold" of them: "...May he be very prosperous...and may the ~~YHV~~ have no influence either over the works of his hands or of ours..."⁵⁴ One sage added: "...deliver us...from an evil companion, from an evil neighbor, and from the destructive Satan..."⁵⁵

They tied Satan to the giving of tzedakah⁵⁶, to the proper fulfillment of the circumcision⁵⁷ and even to financial affairs.⁵⁸ The sages left no stone unturned:

When a man pronounced the blessing over the bread immediately after washing of his hands, Satan will bring no accusations against him during the meal.../Finally/ when a man says the Eighteen Benedictions immediately after the blessing of Redemption, Satan will bring no accusations against him in the course of the day.⁵⁹

* * * * *

Recognizing that Satan was a significant figure in popular belief, the sages could do one of two things with him: 1.) they could ignore him, and lose their hold on the common Jew who in times of despair was inclined to embrace such a simple explanation for the cause of his troubles, or 2.) they could refurbish, **הצ'בור לצרכי**, the biblical Satan to conform to their system of beliefs, and thus control the degree of influence which he could exert on the lives of the Jews. The sages chose the latter, and came to such a "familiarity" with Satan that they were capable of promising to Jews who practiced their religion according to their teachings that "Satan shall not touch them."⁶⁰

CONCLUSION

In interpreting the Bible, the sages did not have the luxury of simply pondering over the ancient scrolls. Because the sages were expounding the biblical text for a generation that "did not know Moses," they were obligated to survey the current conditions in which the Jews were living, and adjust their interpretations and their teachings accordingly. Having taken upon themselves the task of preserving and transmitting normative Judaism, the sages regarded themselves and compelled other Jews to regard them as their only rightful political and spiritual authority.

As they examined the lives and the environment of their constituents, the sages saw the Jews befallen with rampant despair and misfortune, and confronted on all sides with religious belief systems and cultic practices which were in opposition to normative Judaism. The Jews were crying out for explanations and remedies for their misery. Iranian-Persian dualism, gnosticism, hedonism, and primitive Christianity offered answers to Jews on how they might overcome the evil in their lives. Common to many of these foreign beliefs and practices was the idea of an evil persona which is in

cosmic conflict with the 'powers of good -- God. For the sages, such a notion was irreconcilable with the biblical concept of God, i.e. monotheism. But the sages could not ignore the fact that these ideas which threatened normative Judaism were being met with widespread acceptance by the general public, and by many Jews as well.

The sages had to find a way to thwart these challenges to their brand of Judaism and at the same time to answer the needs of a despairing Jewish populace. Rather than imitating the concepts of evil as they were being portrayed by gentiles and factionalized Jews, the sages looked to their own sources for a concept of evil which would be in compliance with a monotheistic viewpoint and which could be adapted to suit the needs of their constituents, thereby preventing their conversions to foreign disciplines. That concept of evil was to be found, in its kernel form, in the biblical Satan, a servant in the entourage of God, and an adversary to man.

So the sages looked to the few passages in the Bible in which Satan appeared, interpreting them, expanding them, and introducing doctrines through them. Had their interpolations stopped there, one could infer that the sages' only purpose in discussing Satan was

to rebut foreign challenges to their religious standpoint. But in fact, the sages went on to inject Satan into a multitude of biblical accounts in which he did not originally appear. Their usage of Satan served various purposes: by depicting Satan as the bearer of evil the sages shifted some of the responsibility for negative events away from God; by involving Satan with familiar biblical figures they brought him to the earthly level and portrayed him as a common, less metaphysical, source of evil; by placing Satan in opposition to biblical role models, the sages found a way to draw attention to doctrines which they believed needed special emphasis.

The sages found, in Satan, a literary and homiletic device which was extremely effective in enabling them to promulgate their ideas. But Satan's power as a midrashic tool was not due solely to the sages' adaptations of the biblical Satan; it was also derived from the widespread folklore and mythology which currently existed among the common people. The sages were not so foolish as to ignore such a prolific resource for teaching the Jews what they wished them to know and how they wished them to behave.

With painstaking deliberation, the sages molded and shaped both the biblical Satan and the popular Satan

into a force which was in keeping with their religious doctrine.

The sages' concept of evil was twofold -- it was an external Satan, as personified by Satan himself, demons, spirits, etc., and an internal Satan identified as the "evil inclination." The Satan of the sages was a weapon which they could brandish before the Jews, frightening them into observing their sundry midrashic and halachic mandates. Not wishing the Jews to be left unarmed against the evil in the world (nor wanting them to be the victims of foreign religious challenges) the sages equipped the Jewish populace with a full range of mitzvot and rituals so that they might achieve moral good.

Thus we see the evolution of Satan from the biblical stratum through the Second Commonwealth. From an angelic, submissive infancy, Satan, in the hands of the sages, reaches a rambunctious, aggressive maturity, a testimony to the "devilish" ingenuity of the sages.

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16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Genesis Rabbah 57:32. See also Exodus Rabbah 21:7.
R
19. Genesis Rabbah 57:32.
20. Exodus Rabbah (Beshalach), 21:7.
21. Ibid., (Mishpatim) 31:11.
22. Baba Batra 16b.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.

Chapter 3 (cont.)

25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Midrash Iyob (Leket Midrashim) p. 4 side a.
29. Ibid., p. 4 side b.
30. Ibid.
31. Sanhedrin 90a.
32. Ibid.
33. Song of Songs Rabbah 5:1.
34. Ibid.
35. Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, Chapter 33 p. 52.
36. Song of Songs Rabbah 1:10. See also Seder Olam Rabbah Chapter 15, p. 64.
37. Seder Olam Rabbah, Chapter 15, p. 64.
38. Ibid., Chapter 16, pgs. 69-70.
39. Megillah 11a.
40. Aggadat Esther (Buber) 4:5. See also Abba Guryon (Bet Ha-midrash) Volume 1, Chapter 4, pgs. 11-12.

Chapter 3 (cont.)

41. Esther Rabbah 7:18, See also footnote 40.
42. Aggadot Esther (Buber), 4.
43. Abba Gurion, 4.
44. Esther Rabbah 7:18.
45. Ibid.
46. See footnote 42.
47. Esther Rabbah 7:18.
48. Midrash Panim Aherim le-Esther (Version 1).
49. Esther Rabbah, 7:18. See also footnote 43.
50. See footnote 42.
51. Esther Rabbah 7:18.
52. Ibid.
53. See footnote 50.
54. Sota 10b.
55. Ibid.
56. Berakoth 60b.
57. Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer 43 p. 57.

Chapter 3 (cont.)

58. Ibid.
59. Sanhedrin 107a.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Sanhedrin 95a.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. Psalms Rabbah 18:30.
68. Sanhedrin 95a.
69. Ibid.
70. מתוך תפילת מוסף ליום הכיפורים "המחזור לראש השנה ויום
כיפורים" מתורגם ומסודר ע"י בן-ציון בוקסר (ניו-יורק: חיברו
פובלישין קומפני, 1959), עמ' 403.
71. Sabbath 30b.
72. Sanhedrin 26b. See also Kallah Rabbati 54b.
73. Abodah Zarah 5a.

Chapter 3 (cont.)

74. Ibid.
75. Leviticus Rabbah (Metzora) 18:3.
76. Exodus Rabbah (Mishpatim) 32:7. See also Exodus Rabbah (Pikude) 51:8; Songs Rabbah 6:1.
77. Leviticus Rabbah (Metzora) 18:3. See also Tanhuma (Buber) the addition to Shalach p. 76; Tanhuma (Shalach) 69:13.
78. Numbers Rabbah (Shalach) 16:24.
79. Ibid.
80. In some of the manuscripts of Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer.
81. Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer 47:1.
82. Ibid.
83. Ecclesiastes Rabbah 3:3.
84. Ibid.
85. Tanhuma (Buber) the addition to Shalach p. 76; Leviticus Rabbah (Metzora) 18:13; Exodus Rabbah (Mishpatim) 32:1; Songs Rabbah 8:6; Tanhuma Shalach p. 69.
86. Numbers Rabbah (Bamidbar) 1:11.
87. Pseudo-Seder Eliahu p. 179.
88. Ibid.

Chapter 3 (cont.)

89. Seder Eliahu Rabbah p. 23.
90. Ibid.
91. אורח חיים, חז"ל, ע"ד 245 .
92. See Yerushalmi Berakoth 9:14.
93. Licht, Testing, pgs. 20-22.
94. Spiegall, Shalom, The Last Trial (New York: Behrman House, Inc. 1979) pgs. 107-108.
95. Genesis Rabbah 56:22 (pgs. 598-599).
96. Midrash Va-Yosha (Bet Ha-midrash) Volume 1, pgs. 35-38.
See also, Tanchuma (Va-Yera) 30.
97. Sefer Ha-Yashar, p. 38.
98. Sanhedrin 89b. See also Midrash Ha-Gadol (Genesis), Chapter 22.
99. Midrash composed under the Holy Spirit, pgs. 62-63.
See also Tanchuma (Va-Yera) 30.
100. Genesis Rabbah 56:27, Tanchuma (Va-Yera) 30, Sanhedrin 89b, Midrash Ha-Gadol (Genesis) Chapter 22. Satan "mentioned" to God about Abraham's advanced age.
101. Tanchuma (Va-Yera) 30, Midrash Ha-Gadol (Genesis) 22.
102. Midrash composed, pgs. 62-63, See also Midrash Ha-Gadol (Genesis) 22.

Chapter 3 (cont.)

103. Genesis Rabbah 56:22, Midrash composed pgs. 63-64.
104. Sanhedrin 89b; Midrash Va-Yosha, p. 36.
105. Sanhedrin 89b, Tanchuma (Va-Yera) 30, Midrash Ha-Gadol (Genesis) Chapter 22.
106. Ibid., See also Midrash Vo-Yosha, p. 36.
107. Genesis Rabbati (Va-Yera) 22:4. See also, Tanchuma, (Va-Yera) 30, where Satan does not appear at all.
108. Pirkei de-R. Eliezer 31:12, Midrash Ha-Gadol, (Genesis), Chapter 22.
109. Midrash composed, pgs. 64-65, Midrash Ha-Gadol (Genesis), Chapter 22.
110. Tanchuma (Va-Yera) 30.
111. Midrash Akedath Yitzchak, p. 71.
112. Pesikta Rabbati 40:67, Tanchuma (Buber) Va-Yera 30.
113. Genesis Rabbah 56:22 (pgs. 598-599), Pesikta Rabbati 40:67, Tanchuma (Buber), Va-Yera 30.
114. See footnote 111.
115. Tanchuma (Va-Yera) 30, Pesikta Rabbati 40:68, Tanchuma (Buber) Va-Yera 30. See also above footnote 114.
116. Ecclesiastes Rabbah 9:2, Leviticus Rabbah (A'chrey Mott) 20.

Chapter 3 (cont.)

117. Tanchumah (Va-Yera) 30.
118. Pirkei de-R. Eliezer 32:1, Leviticus Rabbah (A'chrey Mott) 20, Midrash Ha-Gadol (Genesis) Chapter 22.
119. Mishnah Avot, Chapter 3.
120. Hullin 7b.
121. Kohler, Jewish Theology, p. 177.
122. יוסף חיינמן, האגדות ותולדותיהן (ירושלים: חוצות כתר, 1974), עמ' 103-116.
123. N. Wieder, "The Law-Interpreter of the Sect of the Dead Sea Scrolls, 'The Second Moses'", J.J.S. IV, 1953.
124. חיינמן, האגדות, עמ' 114-115.
125. Deuteronomy Rabbah (Ve'zot Ha'Brachah) 11:10.
126. Ibid.
127. Shabbath 89a, Pesikta Rabbati 20:4, Exodus Rabbah (Ki Thissa) 41:6-7; 43. See also Tanchuma (Buber) Ki Thissa 32, Tanchuma (Ki Thissa) 22 Pirkei de-R. Eliezer 45, Numbers Rabbah (Bamidbar) 5:7.
128. See above footnote 125. See also Midrash Petirat Moshe (Bet Ha-Midrash) Volume 6, Version 2, pgs. 74-78.
129. See above footnote 125.
130. Shabbath 89a.

Chapter 3 (cont.)

131. Numbers Rabbah (Bamidbar) 5:7.
132. Exodus Rabbah (Ki Thissa) 43:1.
133. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, On Death and Dying (New York: MacMillan Pub., 1969) See table of contents.
134. Tanchuma (Buber) Va'Etchanan 46, Tanchuma (Va'Etchanan) 6. See also Midrash Petirat Moshe (Bet Ha-Midrash) Volume 1, Version 1, pgs. 125-126.
135. See above footnote 125.
136. Tanchuma (Va'Etchanan) 6.
137. Aboth D'Rabbi Nathan, Version 1 addition 2, p. 137.
138. Proverbs Rabbah 14:21, Deuteronomy Rabbah (Ve'zot Ha'Brachah) 11:10, Tanchuma (Buber) Va'Zot Ha'Brachah 38. See also the above footnote 37, and Baba Bathra 17a.
139. Proverbs Rabbah, 14:21; Tanchuma (Buber) Va'Etchanan 48, Tanchuma, (Va'Etchanan) 6. See also Midrash Petirat Moshe (Bet Ha-Midrash) Volume 1, Version 1, p. 124.
140. In some midrashim it is God who speaks to Sammael; Deuteronomy Rabbah (Ve'Zot Ha'Brachah) 11:10. In Aboth D'Rabbi Natan, Version 1 addition 2, God speaks to "Sammael Angel of Death."
141. Abot D'Rabbi Natan 32a, Deuteronomy Rabbah (Ve'Zot Ha' Brachah), 11:5.
142. Pesikta de-Rav Kahana (Ve'Zot Ha'Brachah) p. 144, Tanchuma (Buber) Ve'zot Ha'Brachah 2:20-21.

Chapter 3 (cont.)

143. See above footnote 125 and footnote 128.

144. See above footnote 125.

145. Abot D'Rabbi Nathan 23a.

146. Ibid.

147. Abot D'Rabbi Nathan Version 2 Chapter 25 and Version 1 Chapter 12. See also Deuteronomy Rabbah (Ve'Zot Ha-Brachah) 11:10.

148. See above footnote 145.

Chapter 4

1. Pesahim 112b, Shabbath 88a, Gittin 68b.

2. אייוק הירש ווייס, דור דור ודורשיו (ברלין: הוצאת פלאט ומינקוס, תרפ"ד), חלק ראשון, עמ' 224.

3. Mishnah, Avot 5:9, Pesahim 54a. See also, Genesis Rabbah 7:5 (p. 54).

4. Numbers Rabbah 12:3.

5. Gittin 66a, Yebamoth 122a.

6. Kadushin, Rabbinic Mind, p. 185.

7. בנימין זאב בכר, אגדת אמוראי ארץ-ישראל (תל-אביב: הוצאת דביר, תרפ"ח), כרך ראשון-חלק ראשון, עמ' 123.

8. שם. עמ' 185-188.

Chapter 4 (cont.)

9. Berakoth 51a.
10. Ibid.
11. Kethuboth 77b.
12. דרך ארץ-נוסח, סוף פרק א', מדרש "מעשה החורחה" (ביהמ"ד) חלק ב' עמ' 94-51.
גם, מדרש "מעשה דר' יהושע בן לוי" (ביהמ"ד) חלק ב' עמ' 48-51.
13. Saul Lieberman, Shkiin (Jerusalem: Wahrman Books, 1970), p. 42.
14. Hagigah 4b.
15. Hagigah 5a, Gittin 68a, Pesahim 110a. See also Yebamoth 122a, Erubin 43a, Langton, Essential, pgs. 91-94 writes about Socrates' private demon.
16. Gittin 52a.
17. Kiddushin 81a. On the same page a similar story can be found about R. Akiva.
18. אורכר, חז"ל, עמ' 530-584.
19. Ellis Rivkin, "Pharisaism and the Crisis of the Individual in the Greco-Roman World", The Jewish Quarterly Review, Volume 61, pgs. 45-46.
20. Ecclesiastes Rabbah 4:1
21. Derek Erez Zuta 59a. Tanchuma (Va-Yesev) 4, (Shmoth) 17, Exodus Rabbah 2:4. See also Bereshit Zuta Chapter 1, p. 6.
22. Deuteronomy Rabbah 9:3; Ecclesiastes Rabbah 8:11, 10:5. See also, Midrash Ecclesiastes Zuta (Buber) 8:8 (p. 118).

Chapter 4 (cont.)

23. Deuteronomy Rabbah 9:3.
24. Avot de Rabbi Natan, addition Number 2 to Version A (p. 160).
25. Kallah Rabbati 52b.
26. Abodah Zarah 20b. See also footnote 25.
27. Moed Katan 28a.
28. Russell, Devil, p. 34.
29. Genesis Rabbah 38:2 (p. 356).
30. In Yalkut Mishle, 10, Section 547, p. 982, the word "משחק" appears.
31. Deuteronomy Rabbah 31:14, Ecclesiastes Rabbah 3:2.
32. Tanchuma (Noah) 13, סימן כט, עמ' מח, במדרש משלי (בובר) פרשה כג, במדרש זוטא לקהלת (בובר) פרק ג', סימן ב' עמ' 96.
חמילה "שטן" אינה מופיעה בסיפור על נטיעת חכמים.
In Genesis Rabbah 36:2 (p. 338) the word "שמדון" appears.
33. Genesis Rabbah 91:42 (p. 1133), Tanchuma (Va'Yigash) 1, Ecclesiastes Rabbah 3:2 Yer., Shabbath 2:6 and Berakoth 4:8.
ראה גם, מדרש זוטא לקהלת (בובר) פרק ג', סימן ב' עמ' 96.
34. Ecclesiastes Rabbah 3:2, Midrash Ha-Gadol Genesis (Vayetze) Chapter 28.
35. Ecclesiastes Rabbah 3:2.
36. Baba Bathra 116a.

Chapter 4 (cont.)

37. Berakoth 60a, Kethuboth 19a, 8b.
38. Berakoth 33a, Pesahim 112a.
39. Sukkah 38a, Menahoth 62a.
40. Erubin 26a.
41. Kiddushin 29b-30a.
42. Baba Kamma 60b, See also Berakoth 4b.
43. Pesahim 112b.
44. H.W. Basser, "Alusions to Christian and Gnostic Practice in Talmudic Tradition", Journal for the Study of Judaism, Volume 12, No.1, 1981 pgs. 87-105.
45. Tosefta Shabbath 17, Avodah Zarah 1.
46. Numbers Rabbah (Korach) 18:21, Leviticus Rabbah (Achare Mott) 20:4, Yoma 19a, Nedarim 32a-33b, Psalms Rabbah 27:4.
47. Psalms Rabbah 27:4, Pirkei deR. Eliezer 46.
48. Rosh Hashannah 16a-16b.
49. Ibid.
50. Exodus Rabbah (Bo) 18:5, (Mishpatim) 31:2.
51. Leviticus Rabbah (Achare Mott) 21:10, Pesikta Rabbati, 47.

Chapter 4 (cont.)

- 52. Pesikta Rabbati 45:2.
- 53. Mayer Abramowitz, "The Satan and Rabbi Yizhak", Conservative Judaism, 35, 1 (1981) pgs. 22-23.
- 54. Berakoth 46a.
- 55. Berakoth 16b.
- 56. Midrash Mishe (Buber) 21:14.
- 57. Nedarim 32a.
- 58. Baba Bathra 70b.
- 59. Yer. Berakoth 1:1, Psalms Rabbah 4, 134.
- 60. Tanchuma (Bechukotai) 1, Numbers Rabbah (Naso) 11:7.

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