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SOME PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES
OF
THE RABBINIC VIEW OF MAN.

by

Stanley M. Davids

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
requirements for the Degree of Master of
Arts in Hebrew Letters and Ordination.

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE-JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
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Referee:

Professor Robert L. Katz

DICTAST

This thesis seeks to gain a more adequate notion of the rabbinic view of man by applying to selected rabbinic passages a framework derived from Freudian psychology. This framework is the summation of key insights and principles culled from a careful probing of the writings of Freud. So as to realistically confine the area to be considered within the rabbinic view of man, we have submitted to scrutiny only those passages which deal with the Evil Inclination - the a priori or given within each of us.

In viewing man, Freud was driven to ask: what are the components of his mental life? How do the instincts function within a biological and psychological setting? But man is a pleasure-seeking animal, and life will obviously frustrate the release of instinctual energy - how can man deal with the unsatisfiable? This question will lead to a discussion of the topographical approach to the mind developed by Freud: the interrelations among the id, ego, super-ego, and ego-ideal.

Man can erect defenses against himself, and these defenses can either lead to health or to illness. Wherein lies the difference? How does one choose?

Turning then to the rabbinic material, we will find that though sin is considered to be universal, it still arises out of each man's failings, and not due to Original Sin. The rabbis developed the notion of an Evil Inclination to represent the totality of those drives which are deemed to need careful control. Without control, the Inclination would

cause us to commit the three most grievous sins: murder, incest, and idolatry. The Evil Inclination goes by many names and it manifests itself in a rather large number of activities - all of which could easily become destructively habitual.

Here, too, defenses can and should be erected. As God is ultimately responsible for the existence of all evil, so does He provide a number of ways to neutralize it. But man cannot wait for God's intervention; he must find his own way.

The concluding sections of this thesis will deal with the meaningful parallels which can be drawn between the two approaches. The overall picture is strikingly similar, yet strikingly different. Both would declare lust and aggression to be operative on the most basic levels of human nature and both would encourage man to deal with his a priori as best he can. But only the rabbis hold out to man the hope of ultimate redemption.

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Handwritten drafts do not meet scholastic requirements. To my wife, Kesa, went the task of typing this paper as she awaited the imminent birth of our first child. She has fulfilled both tasks with love and dedication, as well as with great skill. My debt to her will be repaid over a period of many years, and with great pleasure.

Necessarily, the final responsibility is mine, and I willingly bear it.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis will seek to determine whether Freudian psychology can illumine the conclusions of the rabbis regarding the essential nature of man. That is, it will attempt to probe and to explore the biological and psychological aspects of man's mind. To achieve this objective, it will first be necessary in Chapter One to closely examine the key principles of Freudian thought, as exemplified by the writings of the master. What are the components of man's mental life? How do these components function, and from whence are they derived? Forming the very basis of Freud's theory is his concept of the instinct, and the instinct must therefore be scrutinized with regard to its activities, no matter how they are manifested. What, then, is an ego instinct, a sexual instinct, an instinct to love and an instinct to hate?

Man will be shown to be a pleasure-seeking animal, but the realities of life make it impossible for him to uninterruptedly pursue pleasure. How, then, can man achieve pleasure in the face of life? How is he trained to choose between two possible modes of behavior in view of their long and short range effects? These questions necessarily lead to a consideration of the structure of the mind. What are the contents and functions of the id? How does the ego carry out its role of executive and mediator? What is the difference between super-ego and ego-ideal, and how did they spring into being?

Man, confronted by an a priori within his mental being, must somehow cope with it. He builds defenses, some which render his situation more healthy and some which create havoc within him. But wherein lies the difference between healthy and unhealthy defenses? In sum, our consideration of Freudian psychology will seek to discover the principles governing man's drives to build and to destroy.

Utilizing the data obtained through a consideration of the aforementioned questions, it will then be possible in Chapter Two to systematically approach the problem of the rabbinic view of man. The central issue for this thesis will be whether or not, according to the rabbis, there is an a priori within man's nature. Our starting point will be a consideration of the universality of sin, for if sin is ultimately omnipresent among men, it must have some primary cause or origin. What is this cause? Who must assume responsibility for it? Did we become accursed through Adam and redeemed through the Patriarchs, or does each man live and die according to his own merits? And if sin is indeed found within all men, how can it be reconciled with the doctrine of freedom of the will? We are thus logically led to a study of the Evil Inclination, a drive within man to transgress Divine commands.

Of quintessential import is the question: is the Evil Inclination considered to be an actual entity or not? To answer this question, it will be necessary to evaluate the

various activities and names ascribed to it, with special attention being paid to man's yearning for lust and aggression. Human mortality, idolatry, murder, and incest are some of the consequences of the Evil Inclination, yet the world could not endure without it.

Defense against the Evil Inclination is possible only in limited ways, and the very expectations of success in dealing with it must be sorely tempered. Man must consider himself, in the final accounting, as being alone in his struggle with himself. Yet, while maintaining this demand for individual initiative, the promise of ultimate Divine help is never challenged.

Following the statement of the Freudian and rabbinic positions, parallels will be drawn between the two in Chapter Three, with the intention of explicating and elucidating the views held by the rabbis. Here is the crux of the thesis. Besides a great number of preliminary comparisons, significant parallels will be found to exist between the positions held by both groups regarding the strength of sexuality and aggression within man. The rabbis had therefore noted through their technique of observation that which Freud scientifically and in much more detail described after careful analysis. Even the points wherein the two views differ are found to be quite informative, and help greatly in the final structuring of the rabbinic concept of man.

It should be noted that we have limited the rubric 'rabbinic' to mean only the contents of the Babylonian and

Jerusalem Talmuds, as well as the major Midrashim. The Babylonian Talmud had its origins in the oral interpretations of the Mishnah, as constructed by the rabbis. Once reduced to written form, the Babylonian Talmud quickly gained ascendancy, and has remained as the classical source for rabbinic law and lore. The Jerusalem Talmud, as its Babylonian contemporary, has also retained the six-fold structure of the Mishnah. It has never become fully authoritative, however, due to the fact that it arose in a Jewish community weakened and torn, and thus was never able to creatively evolve. This Jerusalem Talmud has suffered greatly from the ravages of time, and has come down to us in a reduced state. It is therefore customary, when speaking of the Babylonian Talmud, to call it THE Talmud.

The Midrash ('exposition') had as its purpose not only the accomodating of biblical law to contemporary circumstances, but also the filling in of new law to meet hitherto unthought of circumstances. Its halachic as well as its agadic sections have had a profound influence on Jewish homiletics. Though it is true that the process of creating Midrashim has certainly continued until our day, we will only utilize those Midrashim which were compiled before approximately the 10th century, C.E.

It is through midrashic materials that we can gain some useful insights into rabbinic psychology. Though there certainly is no formally organized system such as those possessed by the Greeks, it will yet be our task to give order.

We will not attempt to smooth over or ignore inconsistencies, but rather will show them to be integral parts of the material. 'Rabbinic' viewpoints will be established according to the majority views.

It should be noted that all translations within this thesis are, unless otherwise noted, original.

On studying human nature: a note.

It is the task of this thesis to draw illuminating comparisons between two bodies of material, which have been separated by approximately 1500 years. It is therefore proper to ask whether any trans-cultural bridge exists which can make such a comparison tenable. Enough difficulty is present in reconstructing the systems themselves! How can common ground be established so that the rasha' of the Talmud can be compared to the neurotic and psychotic of modern coinage? This problem, though not fatal to the intent of this thesis, could have prevented the attainment of full clarity. Individuals and societies differ widely, and without some framework within which observations could be integrated and systematized, our conclusions would be marred by their doubtful utility and applicability.

A great debt must therefore be acknowledged to the article "Value Orientations" by F. Kluckhohn and J. P. Spiegel.¹ While considering the development of a conceptual structure which would meet the aforementioned need, the authors included our area of innate human nature. Ordinarily, one would divide human nature as follows: as Evil, as a Mixture

of Good and Evil, or as Good. The article rightfully points out that within each of the three possibilities, there are two other possibilities: the mutability or immutability of the condition. Subsumed under the category Evil, would therefore be Evil-Mutable or Evil-Immutable. That is to say, a culture may hold that man is evil, and either is capable or incapable of having the evil meliorated. The same two possibilities exist for those cultures which hold man to be neutral or good. Therefore, when describing in summary form the attitudes of Freud and the rabbis, this thesis will use the Kluckhohn and Spiegel terminology as a means of establishing a more firm basis for comparison.

CHAPTER I

FREUDIAN PSYCHOLOGY AND MAN

The goals and purposes of this chapter.

Freudian psychology has made certain discoveries with regard to the nature of man. It will be the primary purpose of this chapter to derive from these discoveries key principles. These principles will, in turn, be utilized (1) as a frame of reference to be kept in mind during the discussion in Chapter II of the rabbinic view of man, and (2) as the basis for a comparison of the two approaches in Chapter III, a comparison which is intended to more fully clarify the rabbinic material.

It will therefore be necessary to determine what is meant by an instinct, how it functions, and what effect the various instincts have upon an individual. The two major types of instincts will be shown in their roles as potential builders and destroyers of both civilization and life. The structure of man's mind, a product of the interaction of heredity and environment, will be examined so as to determine its impact on behavior. The concluding section of this chapter will pursue the possibilities available to man as he struggles to alter his human situation.

A bird's-eye view of the Freudian stance.

Sigmund Freud dedicated his life to the discovery and elucidation of the a priori aspect of human personality. Man is born with certain predetermining factors already in force, and he cannot live his life divorced from what he has

previously experienced. He walks the earth, as it were, with a bundle upon his back: he cannot empty the bundle and he cannot prevent it from becoming heavier; he bows beneath its weight; now he deals with the bundle will largely determine his relative degree of mental and emotional health. Freud saw the human mind as being akin to an iceberg: much of it lies beyond the range of unaided human vision. Through the development of psychoanalysis, Freud was able to chart the topography of the mind, to reveal that about which men for centuries before could merely conjecture.

Man's personality is a dynamic system, and the study of behavior should therefore be resolved into a study of the manner and mode of exchanging energy within the system. Utilizing a most refined method of reification, Freud labelled three basic subsystems within the human personality: the id, the ego, and the superego. It was the interaction of these three subsystems which accounts for behavior. Childhood was considered by most pre-Freudians to be a period of idyllic enjoyment. Within the Freudian scheme it was given a different emphasis, for it was during childhood that the blueprint for future psychological development was etched. One can never escape the first few years of one's life.

Freud saw man as a complex individual, with forces and drives operating ambivalently within him - forces and drives which if left unchecked would bring man to destruction. The appeal of his theory of man most probably lies in the fact of its relevance to contemporary life. It provides both goals

and means, warnings and expectations. While not a totally new approach to man, it is yet fuller and more complete than what came before.

Terminology.

Every man who seeks to blaze a new path is burdened with the necessity of coining or somehow deriving terms to describe his work. The maze of scientific verbiage pouring out of laboratories across the world point to this unfortunate but necessary truth. 'Unfortunate' is used advisedly, for the new terms quickly become easy targets for carping critics who feel that a superficial attack on language is ultimately devastating. Dr. Gregory Zilboorg has said that, "the vigor of Freud's thought, stimulating as it has always been and is, is frequently obscured by his at times too hasty terminological innovations."² To this must be added the problem of translating coined words into other languages, an oftentimes impossible task. Lewis Brandt³ has raised great complaints against those who translated Ich as ego, Es as id, and Überich as superego. Interestingly, he considers such retreats into Latin as anti-intellectualizing, as setting up defenses against the true import of the terms as well as against psychoanalysis itself.

Freud was careful in his choice of terms, yet apparently had the master's touch in choosing literarily attractive analogies. "Freud repeatedly used analogies from warfare to illustrate his psychodynamic concepts",⁴ as is especially recognizable in a term such as Abwehr - signifying

the active warding off of an aggressor (defense). Since the function of this thesis is not to give a full explication of Freudian phenomenology, the attempt will be made to avoid unnecessary linguistic intricacies.

The term 'instinct' is a convention which represents an attempt to account for the drive behind personality.

"Instinct (Trieb) is the most important dynamic concept in most schools of psychology including psycho-analysis...

Trieb conveys the ideas of action, motion, and energy. It is a force...only its derivatives can become conscious".⁵

Instinct has been termed a transitional concept between biology and psychology, because it not only is the mental representative of stimuli arising within the organism and seeking expression and release, but it is at the same time a measure of the demand for energy which the mind makes of the body. It can therefore be seen how the instinct is related to both pleasure and pain. The instinct ceaselessly seeks expression: an increase in the amount of stimuli would cause pain, a decrease would be pleasure. This being the case, the instinct serves as the drive behind personality, a drive which causes the individual to seek certain stimuli and to avoid others.

Generally speaking, an instinct has four distinct features: (1) the source, a bodily need from which there results a stimulus which is represented in the mind as an instinct; (2) the aim, which is obviously to obtain pleasure by decreasing the stimulus, though this is rarely fully

achieved; (3) the object, which is that object or condition which is needed to achieve the aim; and (4) the impetus, which is the motor element, the amount of energy demanded by the instinct.

Originally, Freud had thought that instincts resided in what he called the Ucs or the unconscious system of the mind. As his research continued and broadened, it became obvious that this solution was not sufficient. He therefore postulated that there was originally an undifferentiated ego-id which was the first reservoir of an individual's instincts. Then, with differentiation, the id (which had come to replace Ucs) is left alone with this task. This reformulation greatly clarified Freud's study of the interrelationship between narcissism and conscience, for the primary narcissism is displaced and can therefore help energize the ego-ideal, the projection of the lost perfection of childhood. That is to say that self-love is the first love and is a love never lost; with emotional growth, it becomes a drive toward an enduring goal.

Summary.

For future reference, we need recall the following: (1). The connection which Freud has made between mind and body; (2). The fact that man can never be totally free of the demands placed upon him by his body, though he may strive to ease these demands to such an extent that the bulk of his attention might be given over to 'higher' concerns; and (3). The fact that the standards for which one strives are at least partially self-derived.

There are different types of instincts.

Freud's original postulates called for the presence of at least two types of instincts: ego (self-preservative) and sexual. The latter, being the more accessible, became the focal point for much of his study. It is here that the term 'libido' originated, as referring to the manifestation of the sexual instinct. The sexual instincts were considered to be numerous, having many organic sources, acting at first independently but later in synthesis with the ego instinct, and being susceptible through sublimation of being directed toward other objects.⁶

The holocaust which was World War I cannot be denied its positive features, and one of these features was the fact that it influenced Freud to reconsider his theory of instincts. He had discovered within individuals and groups of individuals a compulsion to repeat, a compulsion to repeat experiences which cannot possibly be construed as pleasure-producing. This presented a new characteristic of the instinct: a repetition-compulsion. "It seems, then, that an instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the pressure of external disturbing forces".⁷ Freud pursued studies in heredity and embryology, coming to the conclusion that there is indeed a conservative factor operative in all nature, striving to return to the original state of being. He is therefore driven to conclude that, "The aim of all life is death",⁸ that is, that all organic life seeks to return to an

inorganic state. The death instinct is thus given supremacy over the life drives. The ego instinct only is operative as a factor permitting the organism to choose its own time and mode of death. There is a "vacillating rhythm"⁹ between life and death, a constant opposition by one of the other. Life can only be understood by postulating such a mode of interaction. The libido is the energy of the Eros. The ego uses libido to strive against threatened death.

In his Civilization and its Discontent,⁵ Freud declares civilization to be the product of Eros in its fight against Thanatos; as the death instinct struggles with the drive to endure, culture is produced. Without this struggle, man would have no desire to be bound together with other men. In fact, man's natural aggressiveness, the turning outward of his own drive toward self-destruction, is in pitched battle against civilization. "This struggle is what all life essentially consists of...."¹⁰ Freud's last works are sprinkled with comments regarding the contemporary application of these thoughts. It seemed apparent to him that Thanatos was emerging victorious. Would this signal a revitalization of Eros?

It is in this aspect of his theory of man that Freud has encountered the greatest lack of support. He is accused of underestimating the role of Eros, of making it but a handmaiden when it is really a full partner - at least. Ernest Jones, biographer of Freud, notes that from its inception this theory has had little support, and now has even

less. There seems to be little biological or psychological evidence to support it.¹¹ Even Menninger's use of the term is vastly different from what the master originally had intended.

Summary.

The points to be recalled include the following: (1). The fact that Freud's thought is not unitary, but rather reflects development and change; (2). The assumption that there are two major instincts, one striving for life, one for death; (3). The growth of civilization is attributed to this struggle, for without the struggle man would have no cause to join together with his fellows; and (4). The drive to aggression rests in the innermost being of every man.

Pleasure Principle vs. Reality Principle.

It has previously been mentioned¹² that pleasure is the result of a decrease in stimuli and that pain is the result of an increase in stimuli. It can thus be seen that the individual would attempt to keep the quantity low or at least constant (this is called the principle of constancy).

'Pleasure principle' is used by Freud to describe the original, infantile strivings of the id. Through "wish-fulfilling mental images"¹³ the id thrusts forward toward the attainment of the pleasurable wherever possible. But pictures are not enough. The pleasure principle cannot provide for the full well-being of the individual. Reality must intervene. And it does - through the ego-mediated reality principle. The ego postpones,

rechannels, and abandons certain attempts at pleasure, and will even tolerate unpleasure for a while. What the reality principle ultimately accomplishes is a more stable base for pleasure. We therefore have a picture of man driven to seek his own pleasure, yet forced to make himself more prudent than he would instinctively have been.

Summary.

We will need recall that, (1). Man is portrayed as a pleasure-seeking animal; (2). Man, driven by the desire to preserve himself, can and will establish firm contact with reality; and (3). Therefore, the keys to unlock the chains of mental distress can be already dimly ascertained.

The structure of man's mind.

With regard to the structure of man's mind, Freud's thought changed greatly over the years; a recording of these changes in itself is worthy of scientific consideration (as was done in the Jones biography). Here we need only summarize. The original and over-riding differentiation that was made between the systems of the mind was made on the basis of the manner in which each system contained ideas. In the Ucs (which later became the id) are contained latent ideas which cannot penetrate into the conscious mind. That is, here are ideas either incapable of expression or already repressed. In the Pcs or preconscious (which later is subsumed under the ego), the ideas either are capable of becoming conscious or have already become conscious but are in some way inhibited. The

Cs or conscious mind (that is, the ego), is aware of its contents. Therefore, ideas, representatives of the driving instincts, are those entities which seek expression throughout the areas of the mind through the creation of tensions.

The id, container of the repressed and the censored, has no concept of time, no contact with reality. It seeks to gain its way through the pleasure principle by investing its energy in objects which will gratify it. The ego is in the same basic relationship to the id as a rider is to his horse. It can prevent the body from moving in the service of the id through its control of certain movements. Though it is in a way the agent of the id, bringing it delayed pleasure, it is yet molded by the real world. The id contains the given - through heredity and through birth; the ego is the mind's executive, and its original task is to become aware, and then to integrate its perceptions in terms of past experience. Topographically, the cortex of the ego contains consciousness, while 'inside' the ego is the preconscious.

The super-ego is to be considered as a further differentiation within the ego itself: this differentiation occurs when the ego treats itself as an object, steps back, and examines itself critically. The super-ego represents the internalized "no's" of society, and is so cruel in its enforcement of strict morality that it can even dominate the ego at times. Most importantly, the super-ego is a residue of the resolution of the Oedipal conflict, a conflict which we need to examine briefly.

Freud saw the personality as a dynamic organization within each individual of those psycho-physical systems which determine his unique adjustment to his environment.¹⁴ This personality develops in a purposive, orderly fashion, in a fairly tight chronological scheme. Freud determined that there were rudimentary sexual impulses and activities from birth, impulses and activities which then developed according to the nature of the individual's contact with his environment. Each stage of psychosexual development during the first five years of life is closely related to an erogenous zone of the body - zones which give what Freud would call sexual pleasure. Fixation at any stage results in the creation of definite personality patterns.

The oral stage, with the mouth as the principle erogenous zone, is first. The aim of the child is incorporation, eating and chewing, and Freud holds that such activity reveals the aggressiveness which is present in everyone at birth. Previous studies had already pointed to the existence of an oral passivity as well. The anal stage, with the anus as the major physical source of pleasure, is marked by the process of toilet training. Here the first regulating of instinctual drives begins, and the infant feels real frustration. To submit to training, a love relationship with the other must necessarily have been established. The third stage, lasting from approximately years three to five, is the phallic or Oedipal stage. The child discovers his penis, which now becomes his most treasured possession, and

he simultaneously feels a strong sexual yearning for the parent of the opposite sex. The boy yearns for his mother, hates and is jealous of his father, fears castration as a punishment, and feels guilt; the girl yearns for her father, hates and is jealous of her mother, feels penis envy, and is guilty. Simultaneously, due to the bisexuality which Freud was certain existed within us all, the child has a positive sexual attraction to the parent of the same sex. Amidst this maze of fears, hatreds, and loves, a resolution is achieved either because of the painful facts of reality, or possibly because the individual is hereditarily driven past this stage. Repression of guilt-provoking thoughts as well as reaction-formation bring this stage to a close.

When the phallic stage is concluded, the boy will have identified with his father, thus preserving intact his close feelings for his mother, and will have identified with his mother, thus preserving his close feelings for his father. The hatred which was felt, and its resultant guilt, will have become permanent features, though in distorted form, of the personality. The hatred is turned outward as aggression, and in conjunction with the guilt is also turned inward in the form of the super-ego. It must be added that the guilt is present despite the fact that the child may actually have DONE nothing at all; the feeling, the yearning, the fantasy, the impulse itself created the guilt.

The degree to which the Oedipal complex is resolved and the manner in which it is resolved will determine the nature

of the super-ego. The super-ego "of the child is not really built up on the model of the parents, but on that of the parents' super-ego; it takes over the same content, it becomes the vehicle of tradition and of all the age-long values which have been handed down in this way from generation to generation".¹⁵ This super-ego in itself has two distinct subsystems: the conscience, earlier described as the internalized "no's" of society, and the ego-ideal, which consists of the internalized "yes's".

The phallic stage is followed by latency, a period of sexual quietitude which is ended by puberty. Latency is marked by a peculiar form of childhood amnesia, wherein the previous stresses and yearnings are 'forgotten'. Adolescence reactivates the problems with regard to the discovering of adequate sexual objects, and if the object choice is properly made, the individual enters the genital stage of maturity.

We have therefore seen the three major systems of the mind, as well as the phases of psychosexual development with which they interact. The ego is left with three harsh masters: the world, the id, and the super-ego, yet it has the potentiality of bringing order out of chaos by mediating among them.

Summary.

We need recall the following: (1). The impact of unconscious material upon behavior; (2). The necessity of a firm contact with reality; (3). The importance of education; (4). The early onset of sexuality and its pervasive influence;

(5). The importance of the type of relationship formed with one's parents; and (6). The pervasiveness and function of guilt and aggression.

Defenses employed by the individual against his own drives.

It has been noted that the individual must protect both himself and society against the threats of his uncontrolled drives. There are a number of defense mechanisms which we might mention. The first is repression, which entails the withdrawal from an idea of its instinctual energy and its being driven through the counter-charges of energy utilized by the ego into the unconscious. If possible, the ego might find a substitute manner of release, which would then inhibit the development of any anxiety. This 'forgetting' is highly effective, but once begun it can never be stopped; and the presence of a repressed idea, constantly seeking expression, will continually burden the individual with anxiety. It works, but at a price.

If energy is merely shifted from one object to another, the process is known as displacement. If the displacement produces a higher form of cultural achievement, it is then termed sublimation. An obvious example of this is the diverting of frustrated sexual desire into the energy to study or to compose music. But neither the displacement nor the sublimation provides a completely satisfactory release of energy; thus, there will be an inevitable residue of anxiety. Freud crowned these two processes with the responsibility for

bringing about in man a wholesome response to intellectual activities.

If an individual is unable to face the challenge of growing into a new situation, he may very well fixate at his present stage of development. If a person would deny his own thoughts and attribute them to someone else, then he is projecting. This permits him to more satisfactorily handle his problems - more satisfactorily, that is, as it seems to him at that moment. If one recognizes the anxiety-provoking thought as one own, yet cannot cope with it, the mind is capable of totally reversing the idea's contents through reaction-formation. The true instinct is hidden from the conscious mind, and its opposite is put in its place. The individual does not hate his father, he actually loves him; he does not wish to hasten the death of an invalid brother, he wishes to cure him - and he might even throw himself deeply into debt to prove it! If all else fails, an individual may retreat from the tribulations of present existence into an earlier and happier period of life. This regression may take an almost infinite number of shapes, and may or may not be ultimately harmful to the personality. All of us use regressions to a certain extent, at certain periods of tension.

In sum, we note that these mechanisms play a vital role in channeling the drives and energies of the individual into what we would call 'higher' activities. Neither man nor his world could withstand the devastating effects of human nature unleashed.

Summary.

We need bear in mind that: (1). Man can and must exercise control over his own inner drives and yearnings; and (2). Growth for humanity can be achieved through further refinement of this control.

General Summary.

The picture of man which Freud seems to have drawn is one of 'evil-mutable'. Applying the value-judgment 'evil' to behavior which could result in destruction of both man and society, we can note that there are ways for man to draw in on his own reins, for there is an unbroken tie between mind and body. Man strives for both life and death, but death will out. Yet, Eros does not give in easily. Struggling to turn man's own destructive drive away from him, a well-functioning Eros will transmute it into aggressiveness toward other men. "The result is that their neighbour is to them not only a possible helper or sexual object, but also a temptation to them to gratify their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without recompense, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him. Homo homini lupus; who has the courage to dispute it in the face of all the evidence in his own life and in history?"¹⁶ Ignorance of this facet of man's behavior leads to blindness in the interpretation of the meaning of existence.

Man seeks his own pleasure. He is wrapped up in concern for his loves and hates. Love is the emotional representative of the drive to exist; hate is the emotional representative of the drive to destroy. To cope with man's inner nature, a firm grasp of reality is necessary, and a sound education is quintessential. The evil can be ameliorated to some extent.

CHAPTER II

MAN AND THE RABBIS

The goals and purposes of this chapter.

The insights contained within Freudian psychology have previously been delineated, and these will now serve as our tools for an examination of the rabbinic view of man. The possibilities of gaining enriched insights must now be confronted by the biblical, talmudic, and midrashic material, and the success of our investigations will be dependent upon the outcome of the confrontation. It will be the task of this chapter to determine whether or not rabbinic thought can be so arranged and examined as to be susceptible to further enlightenment. Is there a 'given' within man's nature? Is man inherently, irrevocably, evil, or does he have a chance to break the fetters which appear to constrain him?

In specific, it will be first necessary to determine whether or not man is sinful by nature, as well as whether the concept of Original Sin greatly influenced the rabbis. Whatever his relative degree of sinfulness, it will then be necessary to see whether man has been accorded a free will sufficient in strength to be ultimately effective against the pressures of his surroundings. The core of this chapter must therefore be a close examination of the Evil Inclination, the term applied by the rabbis to that in life against which man must pit his will if he is to be a moral being. The origins, names, and manifestations of the Evil

Inclination will provide a guide to understanding it, and its drive toward lust and aggression will be shown to be both unseemly and necessary. In the ultimate resolution of the conflict between man and Inclination, the broad strokes necessary for a full picture of the rabbinic view of man will be found.

The universality of sin.

In general, the rabbis believed that to be human is to be susceptible to sin. Their contentions were based on what they found in the Bible, as well as what they encountered in life.

That they may know from the rising of the sun
to the going down thereof, that there is none
besides Me; I am the Lord and there is none
else. (I am He Who) forms light and creates
darkness, makes peace and creates evil; I am
the Lord, Who does all these things.
(Isaiah 45:6,7)

For there is not a righteous man upon the
earth - who does good and does not sin.
(Ecclesiastes 7:20)

Eliphaz is given the task in Job 4:17 to express the orthodox point of view of his day: how could mortal man ever appear as pure before God? Therefore, he must pay for his sins. In Chapter 14, Job sinks into great despair; he feels that man is indeed born to suffer. Bildad, in 25:4, is responsible for that well-known passage stating that he who is born of woman cannot be clean. I Kings 8:46 as well

as Proverbs 20:9 reiterate the impossibility of a man being sinless, and both Psalms 130:3 and 143:2 remark that if God would exercise pure justice, no man would endure.

A man's soul covets and lusts for two things: robbery and incest. But in the case of incest, the urge is always present; with robbery, the opportunity awakens the desire.
(Talmud Babli, Hagigah 11b)

Man's sinfulness was recognized but, as shall be shown, the theoretical possibility of sinlessness is never totally denied. But if man is universally capable of reaching the depths of depravity, is it possible that the cause rests in some original corruption of human nature?

The so-called Original Sin is founded upon the actions of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Falling prey to the seductive wiles of the snake, Eve ate of the forbidden fruit and immediately persuaded Adam to imitate her. God, upon discovering this blatant act of rebellion, drove both forth from the Garden. The question which arises is, In Adam's fall, did we sin all?

Cohon has separated three possible conceptions of sin that struggled one time or another for acceptance within Judaism. The first was that there was indeed an hereditary corruption of the race of man (as accepted by Paul). The second possibility was a vaguely asserted connection between the sin of Adam and the liability of future generations for punishment. The third possibility was that all sin is the result of man's own actions. Cohon held that whereas

Judaism never wholly disregarded the first two, it most generally upheld the third.¹⁷ This would point to the fact that Ezekiel's doctrine of individual responsibility had apparently gained the fullest currency among the rabbis. What, then, was the punishment given for this first manifestation of sinfulness?

First and foremost, all men would henceforth be cursed with the pains of human existence: man would be on his own, to make his own way in the world. George Foot Moore points out that death also was brought into the world through the Fall.¹⁸ This is evident from the fact that God had the original couple expelled from the Garden before they could eat of the tree of life, and so gain immortality. Full divinity alone could insure life immortal, and the God of the Garden jealously protected his prerogatives.

The sin of Adam and Eve must be viewed not only as rebellion against God, but as sexual sin as well. Tennant¹⁹ has seen fit to search out the specific phallic symbols utilized, but the presence of some sexual content is never doubted. In Talmud Babli, 'Abodah Zarah 22b, we find that the rabbis held to a similar position: "As R. Johanan said: When the serpent came unto Eve, he cast lasciviousness (or: sensuality) into her". The rabbis recognized sexuality as having had a key role in the first transgression of man.

If the story of the Fall was to be accepted as condemning all men to sinfulness, it would be logical to expect biblical writers to be aware of this. But they

obviously were not. Hosea 6:7 makes a vague reference to Adam as a sinner. Joel 2:3 utilizes Eden to symbolize the antithesis of a wilderness. Micah 7:17 finds the snake to be a fitting symbol for all 'dust-lickers'. Ezekiel 28:13 describes an Eden found more in the legends of other Middle Eastern lands, an Eden adorned with hangings of precious stones. Ezekiel 31:8,9 describes the classic sylvan splendor of Eden, and in 36:35 uses the Garden as the convenient antithesis to desolation. Isaiah 43:27 contains a possible reference to Adam as the sinning first Father, and in 51:3 refers to Eden's splendor. In 65:25, Trito-Isaiah finds that even in Messianic times the serpent will only eat dust. Job 31:33 has another possible reference to Adam as a sinner, and in 34:15 he has all men returning to the dust from whence they came - a theme repeated in Ecclesiastes 12:7. Proverbs contains a number of references to a 'tree of life', but of course it is not the one located within the Garden. Psalms 82:7 has a possible reference to the death of Adam, and 90:3 has a possible reference to Adam as a penitent sinner. And that is all. If there was a dogma connected with the Fall, these writers knew it not. Above all else, Ezekiel did not find it necessary to refute a doctrine of hereditary sinfulness when he propounded his own theory of individual responsibility. If the rabbis were to develop a theory of man, they could not depend upon the Genesis story as a support for an hereditary taint.

Summary.

It will be recalled that: (1). The rabbis considered man as being capable of sinfulness; (2). The fall of Adam brought with it the pains of human existence and death; and (3). The biblical record contains but a trace of a belief in an hereditary trait resultant from an Original Sin, a trace but no doctrine.

How did the rabbis, in general, picture man?

man is composed of equal elements of the divine and of the mundane. Though God has at times cried out in anguish (that is to say, 'repented having made man') over the frustrated potentialities of this peculiar creation, he apparently never changed its original formula.

R. Tifdai said in the name of R. Aha: The Holy One, blessed be he, said: If I create him of the celestial (elements), he will live and not die; (if I create him) of the terrestrial (elements), he will die and not live (i.e. an afterlife). Therefore, I will create him from both. If he will sin, he will die; and if not, he will live.

(Genesis Rabbah 14:3)

As Kaufmann Kohler has pointed out, it came to be believed that man is in the image of God from the point of view of his spiritual side, and he is of the earth from the point of view of his faculties and powers.²⁰ This is not a dualism; rather, it is the recognition that man might indeed scale the loftiest heights, if he should so desire. He can also sink into the quagmire of depravity.

Part heaven, part earth. Also, part male and part female. man, who could attain to immortality, intellectuality, and mastery over physical creation, also originally united within himself both sides of the coin of sex. "R. Jeremiah b. El'azar said: When the Holy One, blessed be He, created Adam, he created him androgynos (i.e. bisexual), for it is said: male and female He created them and called their name Adam" (Genesis Rabbah 8:1, on Genesis 5:2).

With the choices of life set before composite man, it was necessary for the rabbis to grant him a great degree of free will. "Everything is foreseen, and freedom of choice is given" (Abot 3:15). Even though Josephus has, in Antiquities xiii:5,9, constantly been a reminder to historians that the Pharisees differed with other groups on the matter of determinism, yet passages such as makkot 10b and Shabbat 104a seem to indicate that the rabbis found no difficulty in asserting that God leads man in the way that man chooses to go. The strictness of philosophic logic was not as yet a rabbinic possession. man is accorded free will, but with strings attached. To choose placed man above the animals, to choose poorly condemned him eternally; free will brings responsibility in its train. But as that famous passage in Berakot 33b points out, all is in God's hands - except for the fear of God itself. "See, I have set before you this day life and good and death and evil" (Deuteronomy 30:15); "I call

heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you may live, you and your seed" (Deuteronomy 30:19).

God has provided for man a worthy task: to choose his own mode of existence. To help him choose, God provided man with a model: "And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying: Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel and say unto them: You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:1,2). Through Imitatio Dei the people could learn how to choose the good, and through choosing the good to choose life eternal. God is THE Holy One, blessed be He. As He is just, so man should be just; as He is merciful, so man should be merciful. But holiness also means separateness, separateness from that which is impure, from that which defiles. It would seem that many of the Mizvot of the Torah were aimed at promoting just such a separateness. And the ultimate of separateness is expressed in Yebamot 20a: "Sanctify yourself even in that which is permitted to you". By refusing at times to do even those things which he is by law permitted to do, a man can perfect himself. How much more perfect would man then be if, in his search for holiness, he so trains himself that he can control most occasions of temptation!

But there is something else. There is an element which will forever hinder the exercise of mortal man's free will, an element with which he is condemned to cope: the Evil Inclination.

"Teach me, O Lord, Your way"...R. Isaac said, (though) there are those who state that he said it in the name of R. Manina b. Abahu: If a man has two heifers, one (which is willing to) plow and one (which is unwilling) to plow - and he wishes the latter to plow, what does one do? He takes the yoke off the two of them (leaving only the recalcitrant heifer yoked) and makes the unwilling (one) plow. Likewise, any creature which does not wish to receive the Yoke, You force it against its will and direct it where it is meant to go. But the Evil Inclination - that You do not direct. Therefore, "Teach me, O Lord, Your way".
(Midrash Tehillim 86:5)

Here we find the connection in the rabbinic mind between the universality of sin and man's free will. In fact, Rashi tried to show that the Evil Inclination itself was the hereditary taint derived from Adam, as is shown by his commentary to Genesis 2:25:

And the two of them were naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.
"and were not ashamed". For they did not know the way of modesty, to differentiate between good and evil. And even though there was put into him understanding to give names, the Evil Inclination was not put into him until he ate from the tree; and the Evil Inclination entered into him, and he knew the difference between good and evil.

Ginzberg's Legends of the Jews similarly records a number of instances wherein the Evil Inclination is considered to have become part of our heritage because of Adam.

The term Yezer or Yezer ha-ra' is biblical in origin, and it thus becomes necessary to determine the sense in which it was used by various biblical authors.

And the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination ("Yezer") of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
(Genesis 6:5)

...for the imagination ("Yezer") of man's heart is evil from his youth.
(Genesis 8:21)

For I (that is, God) know his imagination ("Yizro"), how he does even now. (God states that because of the people's prior sinfulness, they will probably continue to sin in Canaan).
(Deuteronomy 31:21)

The mind ("Yezer") that relies upon You, You keep in perfect peace. (neutral).
(Isaiah 26:3)

For He knows our inclination ("Yizrenu"); it is remembered that we are dust. (The Targum renders Yizrenu as Yezrana Bisha - our Evil Inclination, though Mitzudat Dawid and JPS accept "frame" as the translation.)
(Psalms 103:14)

(God searches all hearts) and understands every inclination ("Yezer") of thoughts.
(I Chronicles 28:9)

(David prays to God to watch) the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of your people, and direct their hearts to you.
(I Chronicles 29:18)

It is therefore seen that in most cases, Yezer represents Yezer ha-ra' in the biblical texts. This was then an aspect of man untamed, yearning to do evil. From these texts, the rabbinic notion of man derives what will come to be the central theme of this thesis: the given, the a priori within each of us.

Summary.

We will need to recall that, (1). Man is regarded as a composite: both of the heavenly and of the mundane as well as of the masculine and of the feminine; (2). In order to give man responsibility for his own actions, he was accorded free will by the rabbis; (3). Man's choices should always be directed at an imitation, however faulty, of the divine attributes; (4). Man's freedom is limited by God's omnipotence and omniscience, as well as by the given within man, the Evil Inclination; (5). Biblical writers were almost unanimous in their use of Yezer to signify Yezer ha-ra'; and (6). The Evil Inclination will be shown to occupy a central location in the human personality as described by the rabbis, and will therefore be the primary concern of this thesis in its discussion of the rabbinic view of man.

The onset of the Evil Inclination and the Good Inclination.

It does not seem that the rabbis placed children on pedestals of virtue. As Porter has already noted, "The Jews did not see in children types of virtue".²¹ They were willing, if not anxious, to attribute the onset of the Evil Inclination to some period within childhood. The extreme position was taken in Abot de R. Nathan, Pereḳ 16, wherein R. Reuben b. Iṣṭrobli is quoted: "How shall a man remove himself far from the Evil Inclination which is within him, since the first drop (of semen) which a man ejaculates into a woman IS the Evil Inclination?" Much more popular is the

view that the Evil Inclination seizes the baby at birth.

(In this oft-quoted passage, Antoninus and Rabbi discuss the period of onset. Rabbi at first espouses the position that it is from conception. Afterwards, Antoninus convinces him that it is from the moment of birth. Rabbi is now able to use Genesis 4:7 to support his new position).

(Talmud Babli, Sanhedrin 91b)

(A rather interesting proof that the Evil Inclination holds sway from birth. An animal will attempt to avoid falling off a roof, while a child seems to seek out accidents: near a fire, the child will run to get his hands burned; near hot coals, the child will yearn to touch them. Why? Because the Evil Inclination is within him).

(Abot de R. Nathan, Perec 30, Nusha Bet)

The Evil Inclination is thirteen years older than the Good Inclination. (This view is further expounded: the Evil Inclination comes forth from the womb, desecrates the Sabbath, murders and transgresses for thirteen years, with no one to stay his hand.) After thirteen years, the Good Inclination is born.

(Abot de R. Nathan, Perec 16, Nusha Alef)

(This passage supports the one immediately above, and in turn finds support in Genesis Rabbah 34:10).

(Midrash Tehillim 9:5)

A rather unique position is held by those who claim that the Evil Inclination first manifests itself at age ten. The classical statement is found in the Tanhuma, Bereshit 7:

And if you would say why did He create the Evil Inclination....You say that it is evil. Who is able to make it good? The Holy One, blessed be He, said: You make it evil. How is this? Children aged 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 do not sin - only from 10 on, and then he raises the Evil Inclination. And if you would say that man is unable to watch himself, the Holy One, blessed be He, said: You made it evil. How is this? You were an infant and did not sin; you grew

older and sinned. And (note) how many things more difficult than the Evil Inclination there are in the world, and more bitter than it - and you sweeten them... And just as the bitter things which I created you sweeten for your need, the Evil Inclination which is given over to your hands how much the more so.

This passage confused two of its commentators. 'Ez Yosef notes that it contradicts accepted view-points concerning who made the Inclination evil. 'Anaf Yosef, similarly puzzled, has recourse to the Zohar for help. Apparently the speaker was outside the mainstream of thought.

Other authorities, recognizing the sexual content of the Evil Inclination, would assign its onset to whatever age the child begins to develop the secondary sex characteristics. This view is expressed in Talmud Babli, Kiddushin 81b, where it is also stated that if a girl is too shy to stand nude before her father, she is already subject to desire. Kohler appears to support this view,²² though he apparently is taking a minority position.

But what or who is responsible for the onset of the Evil Inclination? The most obvious possibility is that the "Yezer" is a creature of Satan. Indeed, we will examine 'Satan' as another name for the Yezer in another context. For the purposes of this discussion, it is possible to rely upon F. C. Porter's conclusions.²³

If the yezer in a measure displaces Satan in the rabbinic account of sin it must be regarded as a movement in the direction of a more ethical and rational conception. For the yezer, however vividly it is personified, always remains the tendency and disposition of

a man's own heart. Satan cannot be appealed to for the purpose of explaining the origin of the yezer.

Is the Evil Inclination then the product of man's materiality, in accordance with Greek notions of duality? This notion must likewise be abandoned, for such a dualism did not hold sway over Jewish thinkers of the rabbinic period. Leviticus Rabbah is one of the many rabbinic sources which wrestles with the possibility, before rejecting it. The story is told of the two watchmen who commit a crime together which neither could have committed alone. The moral is that body and soul, matter and spirit, have equal responsibility. If anything, the soul, which comes from heaven, should know better - and thus might ultimately deserve the more severe punishment for a crime. Man is seen as a unity, the body of dust and the soul of God's breath function as one. The rabbis frequently have recourse to Ezekiel for proof of the soul's culpability: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20).

Not Satan. Not materiality. One factor which the rabbis did isolate as a cause for sin was the lack of rationality. Sotah 3a tells us that no man would sin were it not for the spirit of folly which entered into him. We will see that this cause is regarded quite seriously, as many remedies for the Evil Inclination will involve perfecting the rational faculty. A second factor is vanity. When discussing this point, it would be worthwhile to recall that narcissism was pointed to by Freud as an infantile phase of personality development, a phase which must be outgrown for

maturity to be achieved. A properly used narcissism could help activate the ego-ideal. Vanity, for the rabbis, is the gateway through which sin enters - sin which had been crouching at the gates. Numbers Rabbah 10:7 contains one of many accounts of the temptations suffered by the comely of appearance. This particular incident has much in common with the story of Narcissus: a young lad beholds his fair appearance in a stream of water and is almost overcome by his Evil Inclination. To fend against this calamity, he shaves his head and becomes a Nazir. Berakot 20a recounts several stories of men totally above the call of vanity, but it is obvious that these are merely intended to serve as exceptions to the rule. Vanity can give rise to the Evil Inclination, as can irrationality.

But it is to God that we must turn as the source of the Yezer, according to the great majority of views.

Rab, the son of Samuel, said in the name of Samuel: "And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31): This is the Evil Inclination. But can the Evil Inclination be called 'good'? Rather, it (comes) to teach that were it not for the Evil Inclination, a man would not marry a woman, nor would he beget children with her, nor would the world endure.
(Midrash Tehillim 9:1)

As Cohon has stated: "The Rabbis generally hold that God endowed man from the very beginning with two Yezer, one good and one evil."²⁴ The following is a typical rabbinic comment on the subject.

R. Hunia said in the name of R. Dosa b. Tevet: the Holy One, blessed be He, created two Inclinations in His world - the Inclination toward idolatry and the Inclination toward unchastity. The Inclination toward idolatry has already been uprooted, and the Inclination toward unchastity endures. The Holy One, blessed be He, said: Whoever is able to withstand the (Inclination toward) unchastity, I account it to him as if he withstands both of them.

(Song of Songs Rabbah 7:8.1)

God is responsible and He does not deny His responsibility. In fact, He sometimes regrets this particular creation greatly, and even offers remedies.

R. Hana b. Abba said: They state (the following) in the School: The Holy One, blessed be He, regrets that He created four things, namely, Galut, the Chaldeans, the Ishmaelites, and the Evil Inclination...
(Sukkah 52b)

Rabba bar bar Hana said: The prophet said to Israel, "Return in repentance". They said to him: "We are not able to do so; the Evil Inclination rules over us." He said to them: "Curb your inclinations." They said to him: "Let your (literally: his) God teach us."
(Here we have an example of the people impudently demanding that God bear full responsibility for His own acts.)
(Sanhedrin 105a)

Our rabbis taught: Wesantem (Deuteronomy 11:18) (has the meaning of) sam tam (that is, a perfect remedy): the Torah is likened to a life-giving remedy. This is comparable to a man who hit his son a great blow, and placed a plaster on his wound and said to him: "My son, as long as this plaster is upon your wound eat what would please you and drink what would please you, and wash either in hot or cold water - fear not. But if you remove it, behold it will break out into sores." Thus did the Holy One, blessed be He, to Israel. "My son, I created the Evil Inclination and I (also) created the Torah (in order to) season (probably: temper) it.

And if you occupy (yourselves) with the Torah, you will be delivered over into its hand... Moreover, he will be totally occupied with you... But if you will, you may rule over him..."

(Kiddushin 30b)

After God thought to create the Evil Yezer He began to regret it, but prepared the cure before the affliction, and created repentance. (This is quoted by Schechter from a commentary to Abot²⁵).

Whatever reasons that God might have had, He did create everything, including whatever evil there is in the world (Isaiah 45:6,7). As Moore has commented: "That the impulse is created by God is the constant assertion or assumption".²⁶

In discussing the onset and origins of the Evil Inclination, we have infrequently encountered references to a Good Inclination, apparently the antithesis of the Evil Inclination, if not its antidote. The material regarding the Good Yezer is quite sparse in the rabbinic sources. It would appear that the major function of the Good Inclination is to combat its evil counterpart. It also seems that angels as well as men have a Good Inclination; the Evil Yezer cannot, however, influence the angels (Genesis Rabba 48:11). God is generally agreed, at least implicitly, to be the source of the Good Inclination,²⁷ unless its function is simply as man's alter ego - a voice whispering into his ear telling him to perfect his ways. If this is the case, then the Good Inclination is merely an hypostatization of the conscience.

"Better is a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king." "Better is a poor and wise child" - this is the Good Inclination. And

why is it called "child"? Because it joins itself to man only from the age of thirteen and onward. And why is it called "poor"? For not all listen to it. And why is it called "wise"? Because it teaches men the proper way. "-than an old and foolish king". - this is the Evil Inclination. And why does he call it "king"? Because everyone listens to it. And why does he call it "old"? Because it joins itself to him from his youth to his old age. And why does he call it "foolish"? Because it teaches man the way of evil.
(Ecclesiastes Rabbah 4:13)

The passage in Abot de R. Nathan, Perek 16, Nusha Alef has previously been referred to. In it we find that from the time of the thirteenth birthday, the Good Inclination will maintain a constant, if not always successful, vigilance against the Evil Yezer. But the latter controls the 248 limbs of the body, and thus is in a better strategic position. The Good Inclination is, so to speak, imprisoned by the Evil Yezer.

At best, the Good Inclination is a hard fighter for a difficult cause, perhaps invented by the rabbis as a means of toning down the evil that man has always manifested. As Midrash Tehillim 41:1 has stated, not only does the Good Inclination seek to motivate man to take care of the needy - but it itself is called needy, for not all pay heed to it.

Summary.

We need recall that, (1). The rabbis realized full well that children were far from being 'pure as angels'; (2). The rabbis seem to agree that the Evil Inclination begins to manifest itself at birth; (3). There is a definite connection between the Evil Inclination and the desire to transgress sex codes; (4). The Evil Inclination is brought on not by Satan

or through materiality, but rather due to vanity, lack of rationality, and - most importantly - by God; (5). God acknowledges His responsibility and provides ways for man to aid himself; (6). The Good Inclination appears to have been more a device rather than an actuality in the minds of the rabbis; and (7). The Evil Inclination has a strong edge over the Good Inclination.

Possible physical locations of the Evil Inclination.

If the Evil Yezer actually existed, it must be possible to locate it. It is thus important to next examine the conceivable locales, so as to learn more of its nature.

Most frequently, the Evil Yezer is said to dwell in the heart - or is even identified with the heart. Genesis Rabbah 34:10 states, "The wicked stand in subjection to their heart...but the righteous have sway over their heart." No direct connection is mentioned, but the implication is clear that in this passage "heart" is actually 'Yezer'. Midrash Tehillim 14:2 makes a similar point that the wicked are ruled by what is in their hearts. Yet, this identification cannot be totally carried through. Rab caught the spirit of this, according to Berachot 61a, when he said, "The Evil Inclination resembles a fly and dwells between the two entrances of the heart...." The heart as a physical organ is not being condemned by the rabbis as an inherent source of evil. Rather, it is the place which symbolizes potential evil. This might very well be because the heart was sometimes regarded as the seat of the rational faculties - the mind.

Frequently, both Inclinations are said to have their home in the heart. Deuteronomy 6:5 has often been referred to as the proof text for the theory that the heart is a two-family dwelling. After all, does it not say, "bekal lebabeke"? The repetition of the letter Bet indicates duality; duality indicates the two Inclinations. Also possible to reconcile with the passage from Deuteronomy is the theory that man has two hearts, with each one providing a resting place for an Inclination. Numbers Rabbah 22:9 indicates that the Evil Inclination resides in the left hand side of the body, and the Good Inclination in the right.

And thus David said: And you, Solomon, my son, know the God of your father and serve Him with a whole heart and with a deserving soul, for the Lord searches all hearts (I Chronicles 28:9). What is the meaning of "all hearts"? These are the two hearts (and) the two Inclinations: the evil heart with the Evil Inclination and the good heart with the Good Inclination.

(Midrash Tehillim 14:1)

Song of Songs Rabbah 4:9.1 states in the same vein that man should serve God with both hearts - that is, with both Inclinations. The failure of Israel to do so led to its enslavement in Egypt. Since the Talmud is in itself a compendium, it contains many statements which have the appearance of dogma, but which do not seem to have carried much weight in the final accounting. We can find, for example, in Berakot 61a, "Our rabbis taught: Man has two kidneys; one counsels him to do evil, and it is reasonable (to assume that) the good one is on his right side and the evil one on his left."

If the Evil Inclination was but casually assigned a location in the body, then this would have great bearing on the comments earlier made with regard to the possibility of inherited sinfulness. According to the 'genetics' of the rabbinic period, it is highly doubtful that anything could have been considered capable of being passed on from generation to generation without a specific physical base. Now the heart was not shown to be evil, to be sinful. It was not considered any more sinful than any other limb of the body. "It is only because of the heart's various functions... that it is more often liable to be enlisted in the service of the Evil Yezer than any other organ, and therefore more blamed than any other part of the human body, but not on account of a special depravity attaching to it."²⁸ We have seen that the rabbis held to no general theory of inherited sinfulness; therefore, they could not have literally meant that any specific organ harbored the Evil Inclination.

Summary.

We need recall that, (1). The heart was often referred to as the residence of the Inclinations; (2). God was quoted as desiring to be served with both hearts - that is, with both Inclinations; and (3). There was no biological intent in the assigning of the Inclinations to the heart.

Characteristics of the Evil Inclination:

A. As seen through its names.

We have shown to this point that the central issue with regard to the rabbinic view of man was the concept of the Evil Inclination. When discussing it, the rabbis managed to reveal their own inner thoughts concerning man's essential nature. Since we are in search of this nature, the most profitable course is obviously to delve deeply into the material relevant to the Evil Inclination. This we now continue to do by first examining the names frequently assigned to the Evil Yezer.

R. Abira, and there are those who say R. Joshua b. Levi, expounded: The Evil Inclination has seven names. The Holy One, blessed be He, called it EVIL, as it is said: For the imagination of a man's heart is evil from his youth." (Genesis 8:21). Moses called it THE UNCIRCUMCIZED, as it is said: "Circumcize therefore the foreskin of your heart." (Deuteronomy 10:16). David called it UNCLEAN, as it is said: "Create for me a clean heart, O Lord." (Psalms 51:12), which implies that there is an unclean one. Solomon called it THE ENEMY, as it is said: "If your enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat and if he is thirsty give him water to drink." (Proverbs 25:21; Rashi explains this rather obscure proof text by showing that the enemy hungers and thirsts to transgress, but the study of Torah will curb his appetites)...Isaiah called it STUMBLING-BLOCK, as it is said: "Cast up, cast up, clear the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of My people." (Isaiah 57:14). Ezekiel called it STONE, as it is said: "And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and I will give to you a heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 36:26). Joel called it THE HIDDEN ONE, as it is said: "But I will remove far off from you the hidden one." (Joel 2:20).

(Sukkah 51b)

This list is more than just marvelously intricate. It reveals much about the rabbis' image of the Evil Inclination. It is that which hinders man from being good. If cut off, if removed from the path, or taken from the heart, man would not be tempted to do wrong. It is the tempter within, the seducer. It is unclean, in the sense that it is not religiously suitable (though God wants man to use it in His service, since it is a part of man). It is man's enemy, against which God and His Torah can successfully wage war. We have previously mentioned that the Evil Inclination was called an old and foolish king, when compared to the Good Inclination, which is a poor and wise child (Ecclesiastes Rabbati 4:13). Leviticus Raobah 34:1 contains a parallel passage. Nedarim gives a variant.

R. Ammi b. Abba said: What is the meaning of, "There is a little city, etc.?" (Ecclesiastes 9:14f.). "There is a little city" - is the body; "a few men within" - are the limbs; "and there came a great king against it and besieged it" - is the (personification of the) Evil Inclination; "and built great bulwarks against it" - refers to sins; "Now there was found in it a poor wise man" - refers to the Good Inclination; "and he by his wisdom delivered the city" - refers to repentance and good deeds; "yet no man remembered that same poor man" - for when the Evil Inclination (holds sway), none remember the Good Inclination.

(Nedarim 32b)

In Shabbat 105b, we find a reference to the Evil Inclination as an El Zar - a strange god, an alien force among the people of God. Again and again we are shown that the Yezer itself is but meant to be a personification of forces

found within the individual. The Evil Yezer, as we will come to discover, is not without its utility.

R. Simon b. Eli'ezer says: I will draw an analogy for you. To what is this matter similar? The Evil Inclination is similar to iron which is cast into the midst of the fire. As long as it is in the fire, whatever vessels desired are made from it. Such is the case with the Evil Inclination: it has not perfecting besides the words of the Torah.
(Abot de R. Nathan, Perec 16, Nusha Alef)

The iron can be worked; in fact, it must be worked so as to help the progress of man. So, too, the Evil Inclination. Not only does one appellation show the possible positive side of the Evil Inclination, but another will show that it is not nearly as strong as one might think.

R. Abba said: This Inclination is like an enfeebled robber who was sitting at the crossroads. To whomever would pass by he would say, "Give me your possessions!" A shrewd person passed by and saw that he was of no capacity to rob him at all, and began to crush him. Similarly, the Evil Inclination has destroyed many generations: the generation of Enosh, the generation of the Separation, and the generation of the Flood. When our Father Abraham stood and saw that he was of no consequence, he began to crush him...
(Genesis Rabbah 22:6)

If man would only realize that he at least has the capacity to fight back, and perhaps even to win, his life would be much easier for him. Prayer has been used by many individuals throughout the years as a means of inspiring resistance.

R. Tanhum bar Iskolastika prayed: May it be Thy will, O Lord my God and God of my fathers that You will break and bring to an end the yoke of the Evil Inclination from our hearts. For thus did Thou create us: to do Thy will, and we are obligated to do Thy will. You desire (this) and we desire (this), and who hinders us? The leaven which is in the dough. It is clearly known to You that we have not within us strength to withstand it. Rather, may it be Thy will, O Lord my God and God of my fathers, that You may remove it from upon us and subdue it, and we will (then) perform Your will as our will: wholeheartedly.
 (Jerusalem Talmud, Berakot Perek 4,
 Mishnah 2, §.4b)

The Evil Inclination is the leaven within the dough.. It makes the dough rise. It cannot be replaced. Yet its rising action leads to a sinfulness which man finds most difficult to control. And the Evil Yezer sits as a yoke upon our necks. We are enslaved by it. In the Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 52b, "Raba said: First it is called a passerby, then it is called a guest, and finally it is called a man." That is, the stranglehold of the Yezer begins very gently - since it is a guest, an invited guest whose services we need. But then it grows in strength until it alone is master of the home. This is why Resh Lakish could say in Baba Batra 16a, that, "Satan, the Evil Inclination, and the Angel of Death are one." For it is truly a satanic effect which the Yezer seems to bring about. Adam died for his sin, and from that point on each man must die. But it is quite obvious that due to the insidious work of our once-invited guest, we will all deserve the punishment of death due to our own misdeeds. (See also Exodus Rabbah 30:17).

Summary.

We need recall that, (1). The Yezer not only actively promotes evil, but also hinders man from doing good; (2). It is regarded as an alien force within man which the rabbis have personified; (3). It is not regarded as ultimately unconquerable; (4). It still retains a useful function; and (5). It grows in strength the longer it stays.

B. As seen through its activities.

The Evil Inclination tempts and seduces, entices and kills those who fall into its grasp. Examples of this, especially from Kiddushin 81a and b have already been given. The impulse struck down both great and small; only some of those who gave battle actually vanquished it. Elijah is quoted in Sukkah 52a as having stated: "Whoever is greater than his companion, his Evil Inclination is (likewise) greater." That is, the seductions which come with power are greater than, and bear more serious consequences than, the seductions of the common folk. Sukkah 52b shows that the seducer is also the accuser: "R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Johanan: The Evil Inclination entices a man in this world, and testifies against him in the world to come." This opinion is supported in Baba Batra 16a.

Ecclesiastes Rabbati 9:1 tells of a certain Abba Tahna who was confronted with a dilemma: should he aid a friend on the Sabbath and thus desecrate the most sacred of days, or should he shut his eyes to his friend's difficulties and thus

neglect the Mizwah of brotherly concern. The rabbis, in analyzing the case, felt that the Evil Inclination was enticing him - to keep the letter of the Law. When he finally did act so as to aid his friend, it was declared to be a case of the Good Inclination overcoming the Evil Yezer. So it is not always easy to determine beneath which rock the serpent lurks. 'Erubin 19a is quick to point out that all those enticed by their Evil Inclination into lustful acts have a resting-place set aside for themselves in Gehenna.

Lust. Sex. Aggression. These terms seem most suitable to describe the category of sins most generally connected with the activities of the Yezer. Kohler calls the Yezer "the sensuous desire of the body".²⁹ Sotah 8a grants to the Evil Inclination rule over that which the eyes see. This position is supported by Shabbat 62b, which declares that the sight of beautiful women and the scent of their perfumes can arouse the Yezer. The sense faculties are the vehicles of pleasure, and thus become the operatives of the Evil Inclination. One would assume that the situation would be the same for both men and women, but Ketubot 64b states explicitly that the male's drives are the stronger: after all, it is the man who hires the woman (that is, the harlot) and not vice versa. We are here reminded of the notion of active and passive sexuality found in contemporary psychology. The myth long has been that the male is - and should be - the active partner, and the female is - and should be - the passive partner. Today's conclusions seem to grant active

and passive desires to both sexes. Those who can control their Inclination should do so; but not everyone can do so at all times.

(According to R. Ilai) If a man sees that his Inclination is overcoming him, let him go to a place where he is not known, and let him put on black clothing, and let him wrap himself in black, and (then) let him do what his heart desires - and let him not profane the Name of Heaven publicly.

(Mo'ed Katan 17a; also, Hagigah 16a)

We should notice in this passage how the word 'heart' is actually parallel to 'Inclination'. It would be of interest to determine whether the black is prescribed, as some have suggested, as a token of mourning or whether, as others have suggested, as a means of disguise.

With this type of sinfulness, each erring act leads one into a stronger and stronger prison. In Sukkah 51b, R. Assi said: "At first, the Evil Inclination is like the thread of a spider, but ultimately (it comes to) resemble cart ropes...." A chilling description of a growing habit.

Our rabbis taught: The Evil Inclination is difficult (to bear), for even its Creator called it evil, as it is said: "For that the desire of man's heart is evil from his youth." (Genesis 8:21). R. Isaac said: Man's Evil Inclination grows in strength against him every day and seeks to kill him...and were not the Holy One, blessed be He, to help him, he would not be able to prevail against it.

(Kiddushin 30b)

Other passages repeat similar messages. The fight is unending. If the Evil Inclination cannot grasp firm hold of you in ten

years, then he may be able to do so in twenty years (Tanhuma, Beshallah, 28a). He never ceases to work, once given a toe-hold. Midrash Tehillim 16:2 relates that a righteous man should not be called 'holy' until the day he dies, for only then is he free of the continual threat of the Evil Inclination.

In examining the activities of the Evil Inclination, we have come to see it as insidious, as sensuous, and as unrelenting. But is it really evil, and if so, to what degree? Surprisingly, the majority of rabbinic opinions seem to hold that the Evil Inclination is truly neutral in character. Despite the heinous sins into which it may lead those who are not careful - it is not evil incarnate, residing within each of us. We have previously examined passages which refer to the Yezer as a traveller, a guest, a yoke, the leaven in the dough - all implicitly stating that the Evil Inclination, though only encountered within men and beasts (Genesis Rabbah 14:4), is actually not biologically one with man. It is not man who is corrupt; man is corrupted if he fails to handle this 'given' within his nature. The Evil Inclination is not totally a part of the individual, for the individual can transcend the Evil Inclination in order to cope with it. Porter recognizes this possibility when he states: "The usual view was that the yezer was good only to be subdued, and that the best men were without it, or free from its rule."³⁰ Cohon concurs: "With the rabbis we may speak of the Yezer

as a neutral endowment, which we ourselves turn into good or into evil."³¹

In *Sotah* 47a, the possibility for deriving benefit from the Evil Inclination is clearly recognized. Simon b. Eli'ezer was quoted as advising men to thrust the Inclination away with the left hand, but to draw it near with the right. Care and caution must be observed, but the evil can be ameliorated, the iron can be heated and worked, the mustard can be sweetened. Despite the passage in the Jerusalem Talmud, *Nedarim* Perek 9, Halakah 1, p. 41a, which states that, "The Evil Inclination desires only that which is forbidden to it," we generally hold with Kohler that, for the rabbis, the Yezer is "never a compulsion"³² which is beyond control. In commenting upon Zechariah 12:12, the question was asked as to why the people are mourning. One answer was that they mourned because the Evil Inclination was slain. Is this a proper cause for mourning?

(The explanation is) as R. Judah expounded: In the time to come, the Holy One, blessed be He, will bring the Evil Inclination and slaughter it in the presence of the righteous and in the presence of the wicked. To the righteous it will have the appearance of a high hill, and to the wicked it will have the appearance of a hair thread. The former will cry and the latter will cry. The righteous will cry and say: How were we able to conquer such a high hill? And the wicked will cry and say: How was it that we could not conquer this hair thread?...

(Talmud Babli, *Sukkah* 51b)

But what good can the Evil Inclination serve? Why is it necessary? The general rabbinic view is that without the

Yezer, men would not marry, would not build homes, would not have children, and would not engage in commerce. In Berakot 54a we find that a man is obligated to bless God even for the evil which he encounters in the world, for it seems that all Creation can be made to serve man's betterment. This coincides with a view earlier expressed that the "very good" of Genesis 1:31 is meant to include the Evil Inclination; God created it so as to help the world endure. The story is told in Sanhedrin 64a concerning the Israelites who were mourning over the fall of the Temple and the Galut. The people bemoaned the fact that these two disasters were brought about by that facet of the Evil Inclination that incites idolatry - and it still remained in their midst. The people fasted and begged for God to relieve them of their intolerable burden. They cared not for the reward awaiting those who conquered it on their own. We then read in the same passage: "The shape of a fiery young lion went forth from the Holy of Holies, and the Prophet said to Israel: that is the Inclination for idolatry." The people captured it. But then, flushed with success, they also tried to capture the Inclination for transgression. Unfortunately, they succeeded. There was a sudden, drastic decrease in fertility; obviously, sexual desire, a form of lust, was stilled with the capture of this Inclination. In the end, the people were driven to release it - which they did only after blinding it. One result is that to this day one does not lust after near relations. Yoma 69b contains a variant of this story, but it includes a

warning to the people that without the Evil Inclination the world would collapse.

According to Song of Songs Rabbah 1:2.4, when Israel was told that they might have no other gods besides God, the Evil Inclination was plucked from their hearts. The people were stricken with fear and cried out that this would cause their death. It was therefore returned to them. Apparently, the writer of this little tale felt that the Israelites' plea had great validity to it. For life to be maintained, the basic drives of man cannot be wholly stilled.

The individual is therefore placed in a most difficult situation. From one point of view, the aspect of sinfulness, the Evil Inclination must be attacked and subdued; from another point of view, the aspect of life-perpetuating natural drives, the Evil Inclination must be utilized in proper fashion. Whereas the former is most frequently emphasized, both positions are of equal validity.

...Simon b. Pazi said: Woe is me because of my Creator (Yozri), woe is me because of my (Evil) Inclination (Yizri).
(Berakot 61a)

This passage is an attempt to explain why there are two Yuds in Wa-Yizer of Genesis 2:7. The two Yuds in this example were made to stand for Yozer and Yezer, and thus reflects the problem confronted in the preceding paragraph. Man must confront his Yozer, his Creator, by becoming God's partner in the perfecting of Creation. On the other hand,

man must deal with his Yezer in such a way that would prevent his succumbing to it.

The final item to be considered under the general heading of the activities of the Evil Inclination is the relationship which it has with the Good Inclination. Ruth Rabbah, recognizing that the two are absolutely antithetical, states in 3:1 that helping one side automatically angers the other. Both make their demands upon man, and his decision to favor one over the other antagonizes and alienates the other. Here, as in Ecclesiastes Rabbati 4:13, the implication is that whenever one gains in power, the other loses. This is, of course, quite similar to the Freudian concept of the relationship between the id and the ego. There is only a certain given quantity of energy; when one aspect of the mind receives more of it, the other must receive less. We have previously discussed Nedarim 32b, wherein the poor wise man (the Good Inclination) defends the little city (the body) from the assaults of a great king (the Evil Inclination). It would thus seem that it is the fate of the two Inclinations to be forever at loggerheads, though they must be bound together by man in the service of God.

R. Levi bar Hama said in the name of R. Simon ben Lakish: 'One should always incite his Good Inclination against his Evil Inclination, as it is said: "Tremble and sin not." (Psalms 4:5). If he defeated it, well; but if not - let him occupy himself with Torah, as it is said: "With your heart." (ibid.). If he defeated it, well; but if not - let him recite the Shema', as it is said: "Upon your bed." (ibid.). If he defeated it, well; but if not -

let him remind himself of the day of death, as it is said: "And be still, Sela'." (*ibid.*).
(Berakot 5a)

It would seem that the Good Inclination is not strong enough, or - perhaps - not always strong enough to successfully cope with the Evil Yezer. Shabbat 63b goes so far as to say that the Evil Yezer has biblical support for its position: Ecclesiastes 11:9. The passage states the following.

Rejoice, O young man, in your youth; and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth, and walk in your willful ways, and in the sight of your eyes...

As we would expect, the Evil Yezer's passage is susceptible to absolute refutation by the Good Inclination. There is a definite nobility to this form of battle: the stakes are high and most worthy. Sanhedrin 111b suggests that the epitome of nobility is the reversing and transmuting of Evil Inclinations into Good Inclinations - not merely suppressing and ignoring them. Sublimation, though unnamed, certainly was a live possibility.

Through urging the individual to perform acts of charity and of lovingkindness (Exodus Rabbah 36:3), man might indeed be capable of enthroning the Good Inclination over its evil counterpart (Leviticus Rabbah 34:1). To do an effective job, the Good Inclination must be given a full understanding of the Evil Yezer's activities and characteristics, an understanding that God has promised to give it (Midrash Tehillim 41:2). We

therefore find that there is a note of optimism; the belief that an amelioration of the troublesomeness of the Evil Inclination can be achieved is accepted. But no one would deny that it is an awesome task, a task which man cannot ultimately fully accomplish while he lives.

Summary.

We need recall that, (1). The Evil Inclination seductively draws men into sins of lust and aggression; (2). The Evil Yezer is quite obviously closely connected with man's sexual drive; (3). When one gives in to the Evil Inclination, a pattern of habit is established which grows increasingly more difficult to break; (4). As unrelenting as it may be, the Evil Inclination's positive aspect cannot be ignored; and (5). It is the task of the Good Inclination to struggle mightily against the Evil Yezer, but in the end ultimate victory belongs to God and not to man.

The consequences of the Evil Inclination.

Our discussion of the rabbinic view of man has perforce led us to examine in full the notion of the Evil Inclination. As our discussion progressed, the rabbinic picture has become much clearer. We now are ready to look specifically to the types of acts provoked by the Yezer: the two major categories will be 'aggression toward man' and 'aggression toward God'.

We are all familiar with the types of crime one man can perpetrate against another: we now consider only the reason behind the acts. Shabbat 89a attributes adultery to the Yezer,

and this introduces for us the entire category of sins of sensuality. Numerous references have already been given which connected this with the Yezer. Lust began in the Garden of Eden, and has apparently been awakened anew in every man in every generation; 'Erubin 19a states emphatically that lust will unerringly lead man into Gehenna and eternal damnation. In an interesting attempt to discover the rationale behind those biblical laws which deal with the forbidden degrees of marriage, Kiddushin 21b suggests that the laws were originated solely in an attempt to regulate man's evil passions.

In our discussion of Original Sin, one of the major factors pointed to as a definite residue of the Fall was the onset of human mortality. But each and every descendent of Adam has sinned enough to deserve death in his own right. As R. Ammi has said in Shabbat 55a: "There is no death without sin;" and as R. Joshua has said in Abot 2:11, "An evil eye, and the Evil Inclination, and hatred for (other) creatures put a man out of the world."

R. Hama bar Haninah said: "If a man makes a goad for his cow, how much the more so (should he make one) for his Evil Inclination, which removes him from life in this world and from life in the world to come."
(Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin Perek 10,
Halakah 1)

So the Evil Inclination causes us to forfeit our own lives. This, and more. For Shabbat 89a points to the Evil Inclination as the cause behind one man's violently taking the life of another. Murder is to be numbered among the effects of the

Yezer. And not just the murder of others, but self-murder as well.

And let not your Inclination give you assurance that Sheol will be a refuge for you. For against your will you are formed, and against your will you are born, and against your will you live, and against your will you die, and against your will you are destined to give an account and reckoning before the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.
(Abot 4:29)

With regard to the sins involving the property of others, the Yezer is similarly regarded as the source of trouble. Shabbat 156b declares that the Evil Inclination drives one to robbery, though it suggests that a proper awareness of the possibilities inherent in divine support could give one strength enough to resist temptation. Jealousy, greed, and avarice have the same common source, as do revenge and anger. It becomes quite obvious that every form of sin of aggression against other men is considered to have been motivated by the Yezer. This gives us further proof that 'Yezer' was not truly regarded as something possessing a separate existence, but rather is a generic term, a kal bo, in which are lumped all of the evils of which man is capable.

Sin is regarded as rebellion against God, so that all previous material could have logically been included in this discussion of the sins of aggression against God. Yet there are several forms of sin which directly relate to one's relationship with Deity. The first and most obvious one is idolatry.

R. Simon b. Eli'ezer said in the name of Halfa b. Agra, who said in the name of R. Johanan b. Nuri: He who rends his garments in his wrath and he who breaks his vessels in his wrath and he who scatters his money in his wrath, consider him as an idolator, for such is the device of the Evil Inclination. Today he says to him: Do this!, and tomorrow he says to him: Do that!, until he says to him: Perform idolatry! - and he goes and worships (idols).
(Shabbat 105b)

This thought is seconded in Exodus Rabbah 41:7, and in many other texts as well.

Besides idolatry, there are those sins against God which revolve around skepticism. Disbelief, denying the 'Ikar, has long been ranked among the most terrible sins which a Jew could commit. And the Yezer lies at its root. Numbers Rabbah 15:7 states that the Evil Inclination can lead one to misinterpret the nature of God, and it was just such a misunderstanding which caused the tragedy at Babel. Tanhuma, Noah 19, remarks that the incident at the Tower was most certainly the work of the Yezer. But the attack upon God is not limited to doubt, to misunderstanding, and to idolatry. In the Sifra, 86a, we find that the Yezer is likely to attempt to incite Jews to think that the laws of the Gentiles are better than their own. In Abot 4:22, we note further that the Yezer entices man into sin by trying to assure him that there is no Reward and Punishment beyond the grave, that the grave is a sure refuge for saint and sinner alike. And, as was to be expected, the Yezer is also responsible for raising questions concerning the authenticity of the biblical

texts. Numbers Rabbah 19:5 lists four laws which the Evil Inclination points to as being irrational: (1). the law of the brother's wife; (2). the law of mingled kinds; (3). the law regarding the scapegoat; and (4). the law regarding the Red Heifer. It will of course be recalled that these four cases are listed in several places as being simply beyond the understanding of man. Only the Yezer would go so far as to term them 'irrational'.

The Evil Yezer, responsible for so much, is also found guilty of preventing men from studying and praying. In Tanhuma, 'Ekev 11, we find that God promises to remove the Evil Inclination in the world to come, so that what is studied can be remembered. Temurah 16a supports the view that the Yezer is anti-scholastic. In Abot de R. Nathan, Perek 16, Nusha Alef, is found the accusation that one of the major targets of the Yezer is the Sabbath observance, and in Tanhuma, Beha'aloska 10, we find the specific charge that the Evil Inclination was responsible for an attempt to encourage David not to arise early so as to pray.

In sum, it is the Yezer who says to man, "Sin, and God will forgive you" (Hagigah 16a) with regard to every possible category of sin. The Yezer entices man to do evil. It also lures men away from doing good. It seems here to represent everything in the world which would take man away from the paths of God, as carefully taught by the rabbis. It can be stated with a fair degree of certainty that no sin of any consequence was omitted from the bill of charges set by the

rabbis before the Evil Inclination. Of course, by attributing the motivation for sin to an ubiquitous inclination to do evil, the rabbis left the door wide open for man to seek to improve his own situation. After all, the Inclination joins itself to man; it is not constitutive of him. And though it exemplifies the most base drives of man, it can yet be brought to serve God.

Summary.

We need recall that, (1). Of all the sins attributed to the Yezer, the most common ones involve crimes of lust and of aggression - aggression against both man and God; and (2). The Yezer symbolizes the collectivity of all those factors which drive men to transgress, and as such implicitly leaves room for man to work out much of his own salvation.

Defending man against the Evil Inclination.

Psychology has taught us that man does more than merely give up in the face of threats to the integrity of his personality. He fights - by repressing, displacing, sublimating, projecting, and so forth. Only if all else fails him does he admit defeat and withdraw from the field of battle; he would then be in the depths of psychosis. The rabbis also found that they could not truly portray man as one passively accepting whatever outrage his internal and/or external environment threw at him. He had weapons, time-honored and proven, upon which he could rely with utmost confidence, and he did not hesitate to bring these weapons to bear in his

struggle against the wiles of the Evil Inclination. With God in the wings, and with the divine Torah as his prompter, man could successfully act out his existence upon the stage of life.

The basic assumptions are that man must erect defenses, and that these defenses can avail. As R. Simon b. Zoma has said, in Abot 4:1, "Who is mighty? He who subdues his Inclination!" No man can call himself mighty until he has met his Yezer in open combat and has bettered it. From such a statement, it is quite obvious that the task was considered to be indeed a difficult one. But man can do it.

If thou wilt mend thy actions in this world, everything shall be forgiven and pardoned in the world to come. But if thou wilt not mend thy deeds in this world, thy sin shall be preserved for the great Day of Judgment. And at the door of thy heart he lies, but in thy hand I have given the Evil Yezer, and thou shalt rule over him both for good and for evil.³³

R. Simon b. Yohai said: It is difficult to say (this) thing, and it is impossible for the mouth to state it explicitly. It (the situation involving both Yezer) is comparable to two athletes who were wrestling before the king. If the king wanted, he could have separated them, but the king did not wish to separate them. One overcame the other and killed him. He (the victim) cried out and said: Let my cause be pleaded before the king.
(Genesis Rabbah 22:9)

Those who exhibit the skill and determination necessary for victory will, according to Song of Songs Rabbah 4:4.4, become the leaders of their generation. And it can be done. But how?

One possibility has long been associated with the Doctrine of Original Sin; that is, the Doctrine of Imputed Merit, or Zekut Abot. The thinking involved in such a doctrine might be that since we bear within us traces of a sin in which we took no part, if we would also bear within us traces of merit for good deeds in which we similarly took no part, then the two would cancel each other out and we would be left as masters of our own fate. Zekut Abot is indeed mentioned in rabbinic literature, particularly with regard to the possibility of a most Christ-like redemptiveness flowing out of Isaac's willingness to submit to the divine will. Schechter has delineated three major forms of Zekut.³⁴ The first is Zekut Abot or Merit of the Fathers. This is a form of merit flowing not only from the pious acts of the three Patriarchs, but from the good deeds of any of our ancestors. As shall be seen, the Talmud goes to some length to show that this merit system, though it once existed, no longer is in force. Instead, we are bound by the doctrine of individual responsibility, as promulgated by the prophet Ezekiel. Each of us receives his own reward and/or punishment. The second possible form of Zekut was derived from a pious contemporary. Here it is possible to note the sociological implication of the actions of others partially determining the type and quality of life space which we will occupy. It is still the righteous few who maintain the world. The third possible form of imputed merit is the Zekut of a pious posterity, wherein the good deeds of future generations can have a retroactive influence on their progenitors.

For a period, then, it was assumed that at least the pious deeds of the Patriarchs actively bettered the contemporary situation. After all, does not Genesis Rabban 22:6 explicitly state that Abraham was the first to discern the weakness of the Evil Inclination? The Jerusalem Talmud, while commenting upon the reasons for a person joining the Perushim (Pharisees), the strict observers of the Law, had the following to say.

Of all of them, only one who is strict due to love (of God), like Abraham, is beloved. Abraham, our father, made the Evil Inclination good, as it is said: "And You found his heart faithful before You." (Nehemiah 9:8)...But David was not able to withstand it so that he (literally: and) killed it within his heart. What is the textual basis (for this statement about David?) "And my heart is stricken within me." (Psalms 109:22).

(Jerusalem Talmud, Berakot, Perek 9,
Mishnah 3, Halakah 7, p. 14a)

But whatever benefit future generations could have derived from the pious deeds of our great Ancestors, the process has been brought to an end. Man, as portrayed by the rabbis, could no longer depend upon Zekut in any form; it has ceased to function. The Babylonian Talmud, in Shabbat 55a, explicitly says that with the death of King Hezekiah, Zekut Abot came to an end. Other texts might differ as to the exact date and occasion, but there seems to be wide agreement among the rabbis that some time in the past, the flow of salvation from this particular source was cut off. Leviticus Rabban 36:4-6 discusses the great effect that Zekut Abot has had down through the years, and then quite matter-of-factly

explains when it ended. No question was entertained about its continued existence. It is no more. The only question worthy of learned discussion is 'when?'.

Man cannot depend upon the deeds of others to help him in his climactic struggle with the Evil Yezer and all that which it represents. As Berakot 61b points out, the righteous will continue to be swayed by the Good Inclination, the wicked by the Evil Inclination, and the common man by both - unless and until those grouped in the latter two categories bestir themselves and enter the fray.

To be able to fight effectively, the individual must maintain constant vigilance. As we find in Abot:

Ben Azzai says: Run (to perform) a light precept, and flee from transgression; for precept leads to (or: causes) precept and transgression to transgression. For the reward of a precept is a precept, and the reward of a transgression is a transgression.
(Abot 4:2)

Each false step places one into the power of habit-forming evil, while each performance of a Mizwah leads one to further good works.

But when, with due vigilance, one encounters temptation, it must be properly dealt with. With all regard to the troublesomeness aroused by the use of an anachronism, it is yet possible to say that the rabbis suggested sublimation - without using the term, of course - as the first line of defense. Sublimation is clearly prescribed in Sanhedrin 111b, when it is declared that the more superior act is reversing

Evil Inclinations into noble ones, rather than simply suppressing them. The first method of sublimation calls for the individual to immerse himself deeply in the study of Torah. The Torah has previously been referred to several times as a source of healing and consolation. Kiddushin 30b had called it a "life-giving remedy" prepared by God as an antidote for another of His creations, the Evil Inclination: this thought is echoed in Baba Batra 16a. R. Johanan, in 'Abodah Zarah 5b, states that when Israel is occupied with good deeds and the study of the Torah, it is possible to master the Evil Inclination.

R. Haninah b. Papa said: If your Inclination comes to cause you to be gay, thrust him away with words of Torah...If you do so, I will attribute merit to you as if you had created Peace.

(Genesis Rabbah 22:6)

When trouble and temptation first present themselves, turn to the Torah. In fact, it is not simply the Torah - but any study normally carried on in the Bet Midrash can have a very salutary effect. We find in Midrash Tehillim 119:7, 64, that the Bet Midrash is a safe refuge from the Evil Inclination.

The School of R. Ishmael taught: My son, if this ugly one (the Evil Inclination) meets you, lead him to the Bet Midrash: if he is of stone, he will dissolve, and if (of) iron, he will shatter.

(Kiddushin 30b)

By involving one's mental energies in study, the rabbis thought, perhaps correctly, that they could fend off most onslaughts of the Yezer.

The second basic use of sublimation in the combatting of the Evil Inclination is found in the realm of human relations. When one feels a growing need to strike out against one's fellows, it is just then when the practice of charity and deeds of lovingkindness can do the most good. Exodus Rabbah 36:3 informs us that these two can be very effective in the fight. This is a very important reason why Baba Mezi'a 32b proclaims it to be a Mizwah to load your enemy's donkey before helping your friends. This form of discipline will harden the defenses.

But when vigilance has been of no avail, and when sublimation has not fully grappled with the drives to commit sin, the rabbis never fail to mention that the Gates of Heaven are always standing open to receive the prayers of those who honestly repent. Man is not condemned to be dragged down by his sins to the grave. Human fallibility is recognized, and it can be dealt with meaningfully. As the Tanhuma, in Noah 8, tells us, every ill has its cure - and the cure for the Evil Inclination is sincere repentance. By undertaking to change one's conduct and to purify one's motives, by feeling sorrow, confessing one's sin, and by resolving to improve, by paying reparations and by giving charity - repentance can be achieved in a manner acceptable to God. "The 'broken channels' of divine grace can be repaired by repentance, good works, and Torah."³⁵

And there are other means. We have previously discussed the possible benefits derived from inciting the

Good Inclination against its evil counterpart. It is a healthy procedure, well recommended, but the rabbis never seemed to have waxed ecstatic over the ultimate possible benefits from such action. Ruth Rabbah 6:4 reports that Joseph, David, and Boaz overcame their Evil Inclinations through the use of an oath. Apparently the oath represented the true sincerity of their desire to overcome passion.

...and he who makes the blessing says: "... Who has sanctified the beloved one from the womb; He set a statute in his flesh, and his offspring he sealed with the sign of the holy covenant. Therefore, as a reward for this, O living God, our Portion, command to save the beloved of our flesh from the pit for the sake of Your covenant which You have set in our flesh. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Who makest the covenant."

(Shabbat 137b)

Rashi, in commenting upon this passage, equates 'pit' with Gehenna. It would therefore seem that the act of circumcision is a method of avoiding eternal damnation. The mark left by the circumcision serves as a reminder for the individual to curb his passions, as ordained by God through the Covenant with Israel. In searching for other defenses, Nedarim 32b notices that לעב is numerically equivalent to 364, and that there are 365 days in the year. One day is free from Satan's influence. One day? The day! Yom Kippur. It must therefore prove that on Yom Kippur the Evil Inclination does not hold sway, and that day must be especially appropriate for attempts at mastering the Yezer.

If all else fails, man should confront his finitude by pondering upon the fact that death awaits him; the shock of confrontation, the realization that man does not have infinite time in which to perfect his ways, should make resistance to sin a great deal easier. We have previously encountered a reference in Berakot 5a to the fact that the thought of impending death is sufficient to still the Yezer. Genesis Rabbah 9:5 similarly relates that death stands as a permanent reminder to an individual to repent.

'Akabya b. Mahalaleel says: Regard three things and you will not come into the power of transgression: know from whence you came, where you are going, and before Whom you are destined to give an accounting.

(Abot 3:1)

It is quite easy to regard this device as extremely practical not merely for men living 2,000 years ago, but for our own time. Confronting what one actually is, realizing the outer limits of one's potentialities, can indeed bring one into a more competent handling of the years allotted to one's existence.

Summary.

We need recall that, (1). Man has always recognized the possible gains to be derived from combatting his passions; (2). The rabbis recognized the necessity of struggling, as well as the possibilities of a limited, but vital, success; (3). Man no longer derives actual benefit from the meritorious acts of others; (4). Study and lovingkindness are two possible areas of sublimation suggested by the rabbis; (5). Confronting

one's finite limits can help curb the Yezer; and (6). The obvious impression is that these defenses are not, in the long run, sufficient.

Man cannot succeed wholly on his own.

The rabbis have sought out an involved set of defensive maneuvers, but it has become obvious that they were not firmly convinced that these maneuvers, either taken singly or as a totality, could work. That being the case, man could have recourse only to God, for did not God promise in Ezekiel 11:19 to remove the heart of stone and to replace it with a heart of flesh? We have already encountered numerous passages which proclaim both the necessity of God's intervention, as well as His willingness to intervene.³⁶ For God is the Creator of all, and is therefore responsible for both Good and Evil. It is up to Him to ameliorate our situation. In the Jerusalem Talmud, Shabbat, Perek 14, Halakah 3, we find a R. Abon expounding Deuteronomy 7:15: "And the Lord will remove from you all sickness". Playing upon the fact that 'on could mean both sickness as well as sweet, he concludes that the passage contains God's promise to remove the Evil Inclination. For it is the Yezer that begins with sweetness, but ends in bitterness.

To obtain divine help, man must somehow establish communication with the divine. Therefore, as a key element in the all-out assault against the Evil Inclination, the rabbis must rely heavily upon the efficacy of prayer.

(as part of a prayer recited before going to sleep:) And may the Good Inclination rule over me, and let not the Evil Inclination rule over me.

(Berakot 60b)

(part of a prayer by R. Eli'ezer:) ...and perfect us with a good friend and a Good Inclination in Your world....

(Berakot 16b)

(part of a prayer by Mar, the son of Rabina:) ...and do Thou save me from an evil occurrence, from the Evil Inclination, and from an evil woman, and from all the evils which threaten to come into the world....

(Berakot 17a)

...and R. Alexandri concluded his prayer (and) said thusly: O Lord of the Universe, it is clearly known to You that it is our will to perform Your will, and who hinders (us)? The leaven which is in the dough and political subjection. May it be Thy will that You will save us from their hand, and we will (then) return to perform wholeheartedly the statutes of Your will.

(Berakot 17a)

(part of a prayer as recommended by the School of R. Yannai:) My Master, I have sinned before (literally: to) You. May it be Thy will, O Lord, My God, that You give to me a good heart, a good portion, a Good Inclination, sense....

(Jerusalem Talmud, Berakot, Perek 4, Mishnah 2, p. 4b)

And so it seemed that many were the prayers offered up by the rabbis, in the hope that God, upon hearing them, would have compassion upon His creatures and come to their aid. Man, out of his weakness, is driven to plead his case before the Almighty, for in no other way can he totally subdue those pressures within him, those pressures driving him to do evil.

In the end, man must cry out unto God for a special dispensation of grace, grace unmerited and undeserved. Man is,

in the final accounting, helpless before his drives.

R. Isaac said: ...It is like the case of a warrior who was riding upon his horse (at full) speed and saw a child (in his path); he reined in the horse and did not injure the child. Whom do all praise - the horse or the rider? Surely the rider.

(Genesis Rabbah 52:7)

The warrior is God. He reins in man's Inclination, so as to prevent sin. No praise is accorded the horse, because in his blind plunging through the streets, he neither saw nor cared about what was in his path. The horse had grown accustomed to running, but he simply was not qualified to make decisions of life and death.

Should man then give up the struggle, being that final victory is not to be his? The rabbis would clearly answer 'no'. In 'Abodah Zarah 17 a and b, we find a story told of R. Hanina and R. Jonathan. As they made their way through the city, they were confronted with what could have been an uncomfortable choice for lesser men. To continue on their way, they had to walk past either a house of prostitution or a place of idol worship. They chose to walk past the former, for it would prove to be the more difficult test of the control which they had over their Evil Inclinations. They felt that there is more reward awaiting those who successfully withstand the test, than those who avoided the test. This is not a case of 'deliver me not into temptation'; rather, it is 'help me to successfully cope with the problems of actual life wherever encountered'.

A supporting opinion is to be found in Sanhedrin 43b. There, R. Joshua b. Levi (according to the interpretation of Rashi) greatly praises him who has been enticed by his Inclination and has successfully withstood the test. This person receives reward as one who has honored God in both worlds. Man may not always win; man may indeed be facing insurmountable odds. But the greater reward goes to one who enters the struggle and tests his defenses to the limit.

But there is a hope that transcends temporal trial and strife. There is a definite chronological conclusion to man's encounter with the Evil Inclination. When man has reached the end of his days on earth, the Evil Inclination has simultaneously reached the end of its power over man. As the Palestinian Talmud, Kiddushin, Pereq 4, Halakah 11, has succinctly pointed out: "The Evil Inclination is not found in cemeteries." Death brings the fight to an end forever. If man can meet the test during the span of time allotted to him on earth, then he need have no fears concerning life everlasting. For surely, as is found in Genesis Rabbah 9:5, death gives the righteous rest from his struggle with the Yezer.

In the Torah (scroll) of R. Me'ir was found written: "And behold, it was very good"
(וַיֵּן אֱלֹהִים): and behold, death was good.
(וַיֵּן אֱלֹהִים).

(Genesis Rabbah 9:5)

...the day of death is better than the day of birth.

(Ecclesiastes 7:1)

The Evil Inclination perishes with man, states Midrash Tehillim 78:8, but when man is resurrected, the Yezer is not. Therefore, the thought of impending death will not only bolster man's sagging efforts in his struggle, but will also afford him a picture of eternal release from struggle. R. Hiyya, in Genesis Rabbah 48:11, reiterates this hopeful comment when he reminds us that the Yezer will have no power during Messianic times. A consummation devoutly to be wished.

This challenge to the ultimacy of the Yezer is not hidden from it.

R. Judah the Prince says: I will draw an analogy for you: to what is this matter similar? The Evil Inclination is similar to two men who entered an inn, and one of them was seized as a robber. They said to him: Who is with you? He could say that my friend was not with me. But he said (instead): Since I will be killed, let my friend be killed with me. Such is the case with the Evil Inclination: Since I am to perish in the world to come, I will destroy the entire body.
(Abot de R. Nathan, Pereq 16, Nusha Alef)

It will therefore pursue the struggle with even greater vigor, since it knows it cannot win against the decision of God. Thus the rabbis make it possible for man to hope that God will create a situation in the future in which he will not have to struggle, but yet at the same time they bind man to a continuing struggle with his Yezer.

Summary.

We will need to recall that, (1). Man has been driven, because of his own fallibility, to seek relief in the bosom of God; (2). The rabbis still think it is necessary to continue

to perfect our human modes of defense; (3). After death, and during the Messianic times, the Yezer will no longer be present to torment man; and (4). In the face of this, the Yezer will struggle even harder to vanquish man during his lifetime, so that man must bend his efforts to perfect his skill with the traditional methods of defense.

General Summary.

The picture of man, drawn by the rabbis, is 'neutral-mutable', that is that man himself is not burdened with an hereditary or biological factor which condemns him to commit sin. Rather, man must cope with his drives and inclinations in such a way as to perfect them. The major Inclination of man is, indeed, Evil; it is closely connected with man's aggressive and sexual drives, and is central to the personality. Man must deal with this Inclination from the moment of birth, but the chances of his vanquishing it totally are nil. Only through the intervention of divine grace can man be saved. The Yezer remains during one's life as a promoter of evil, hinderer of good, and yet as a necessary component to the preservation of life.

CHAPTER III

THE APPLICATION OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES TO THE RABBINIC VIEW OF MAN

The goals and purposes of this chapter.

In the first two chapters of this thesis, we have examined, (1). The basic principles of Freudian psychology which are of interest to us, and (2). The view of man as held by the rabbis, with special emphasis having been placed upon an examination of the Evil Inclination. This chapter will present specific summaries of both categories of material, and will then point to the significant parallels in rabbinic literature to the discoveries made by Freud.

Definitive summaries of the Freudian and rabbinic views of man.

Man, for the rabbis, is a composite creature, containing within himself both masculine and feminine characteristics, as well as both heavenly and mundane characteristics. To develop his worthier aspects, man is expected to follow a pattern of Imitatio Dei, which is referred to as 'being holy'. Man is granted some large measure of free will by the rabbis, but they seem constantly to put restrictions upon it. The ultimate destiny of the world is in God's hands, not man's; God will also determine whether the wicked and the righteous will receive their reward in kind in this world or in the next. Man's will is also limited by the fact that it must in some way deal with man's nature. The Fall of Adam is probably only responsible for the introduction of death into the world; no other biologically oriented taint is accepted by the rabbis.

The central feature of man's personality is his Yezer, an inclination to commit sinful acts. Man does have a Good Inclination, but it is in many ways quite subordinate to its evil counterpart. The Yezer arises early within man, most probably as the baby emerges from the womb; every man is so greeted at birth - the tendency to sin is regarded as universal. The Yezer is actually a Kal Bo, a term signifying the multiplicity of passions and drives which struggle within each of us, seeking expression. It is therefore not to be considered as an actual existent, inhabiting some particular region of the body. To say that an individual is being driven to misdeed through his Evil Inclination, is most likely to mean that the individual is either indulging in aggressive acts against man or God, or else is giving free rein to his lust. Though this Inclination promotes evil and hinders good, it is nonetheless necessary for the perpetuation of life upon this earth. Without it, there would be no drive to create and procreate.

Man, in the face of the overwhelming nature of the power of this Inclination, may ultimately prevail only through the application of divine grace. Sublimation, through study and good works, can be of some help; confronting one's finitude might avail in breaking the deadly habit of sin. But without God's help, the pressures to do evil would simply be too great. Man is basically a neutral creature: as he acts, so will his fate and life be.

Residing at the heart of the Freudian view of man is the interrelation of mind, body, and instincts. The individual can never be freed from the demands that the body and mind place upon each other, though there are methods whereby the demands can either be suppressed or redirected into constructive channels. Through the struggle not only to maintain homeostasis but to act creatively as well, the individual is able to develop within himself standards by which he can judge and evaluate his human condition. Man seeks pleasure; our civilization may have made the search more complex and prolonged, but the search continues nonetheless. It is because this seeking for pleasure must grapple with the real world that the individual might be driven to adopt the reality principle as a roadmap for life.

The content of the unconscious is the given, the a priori within each man. There is much in Freud which reflects an attempt to pinpoint the specifics of our biological heritage, an attempt which has not met with much support among contemporary psychologists. The fact still remains that Freud felt that biological determinism was much more important than environmental influences. In the final analysis, two instincts were declared pivotal for the personality of man: the Life Instinct (Eros) and the Death Instinct (Thanatos). The struggle between these two is responsible for the elaboration of our civilization, though the apparently greater stature of Thanatos would imply that eventually man will fall prey to man. Love is the emotional representation of Eros and

hate the emotional representation of Thanatos. It was conceded by Freud that aggression, hate, and sexuality lie at the very core of the individual - making him what religionists might term 'evil'. These features of man arise early in childhood, and are apparently never truly headed. 2

All men are therefore as much a product of their aggressions as they are of the guilt feelings resultant from such aggressions. The defenses man can muster only deal with the symptomatic expressions of the problem, never with the problem itself. The resolution of the Oedipal conflict is a major factor in the development as well as in the harnessing of human aggression.

Significant parallels: Preliminary.

Freud taught that man is complex, that he must be understood with all the forces operating within him, or he could not be understood at all.

This would explain the difficulties encountered by the rabbis in their attempt to explain man through the use of one (and sometimes two) principles. The pre-scientific mind simply did not have the categories with which to work. There was simply no recognition of the full content of the word 'man'.

Freud taught that at the root of human behavior is man's instinctual nature. This motivates and underlies his behavior, whether or not the connections are obvious and manifest.

The rabbis used the Evil Inclination as a unifying symbol for whatever it was that caused man to act as he did. The very fact of the multiplicity of names ascribed to the Yezer makes it obvious that it occupied roughly the same position then as 'instinctual nature' does now. It is the rabbinic method of referring to the phenomena which they encountered. Significantly different is the lack of conclusive proof for an inherited tendency to sin. The rabbis thus move rather far afield from the biologically-oriented Freudians. Man becomes man as he lives. Both views would be universalistic in intention: all men are being described. The rabbinic defenses could be modified to meet the needs of Gentiles.

Freud spoke of the unconscious as a system of the mind removed from reality, the contents of which are products of repression, deposits of heredity, or drives unable to find expression through ideas.

The rabbis realized that they could not root out the 'given' which they encountered in man. This given had begun to grow and manifest itself from birth; it could only be defended against, not destroyed. This was, perhaps, a step on the road toward the more modern position, for there is a tacit recognition of an untouchable trouble spot within the human personality. Man constantly had to react to the Evil Inclination; he never was left sufficiently alone so as to be able to take the offensive.

In the Freudian view of man, pleasure-seeking is a most primary need. Even the functioning of the ego, tied as it is to the Reality Principle, seems only in the end to be a way to obtain pleasure even in the face of complex existence.

The rabbis would never have granted man such 'evil' intent. There certainly were times when the Yezer seemed only after its own gratification, but to say that this was primary would be to deny the influences of the soul. Man is capable of operating on a spiritual plane removed from the allurements of physical pleasure.

Significant parallels: Sexuality and Aggression.

Here, then, is the culmination of the research and exposition of the preceding pages, for here is the most significant area of interaction between the two concepts of man.

Freud, through his investigation of the instincts and systems of the mind, came to place supreme importance on sexuality and aggression not only as products of the developmental process, but as producers in turn of a great deal of human behavior. He also placed much emphasis upon the influence that the resolution of the Oedipal conflict has in determining personality, for here intersect love and hate, masculinity and femininity, cravings for dominance and cravings for dependence, thoughts of incest and thoughts of patricide.

The rabbis did not see sexual motives as underlying nearly as much behavior as did Freud, yet they recognized the tendency for it to become pervasive. In the Jerusalem Talmud,

Kiddushin, Perek Rishon, Halakah 7, we find the statement, "The Evil Inclination is not found in a moment"; it was a response to a question regarding the minimum degree of contact necessary between a man and a woman for sexual desire to be aroused. That it is easily aroused - this the rabbis would consider correct; that it is always involved - this they would deny. In the Babli, Kiddushin 80b, the rabbis debate the question: what stills lust? In part, they concluded that nothing - neither grief nor religious gathering - can exclude the possibility of lust being awakened.

R. Johanan said: ...Man has a small organ which satisfies him (when he is) hungry, but (which) makes him hungry when satisfied.
(Sanhedrin 107a)

Here the cyclical nature of the sexual drive is referred to: satiation merely sets the stage for a renewal of tensions, which must in turn be released. We have previously discussed the fact that the rabbis will, in the case of a man who can in no way still his lust, permit him to go to another town and there find relief. And during any discussion of the rabbinic attitude toward sex, it is necessary to point out once again that incest yearnings were in no way foreign to man as studied by the rabbis. Hagigah 11b has previously been utilized to show the belief that the urge for incest is always present within each man.

He who has intercourse with his mother in a dream may expect (to obtain) understanding...
He who has intercourse with a betrothed maiden (in a dream) may expect (to obtain) Torah...He

who has intercourse with his sister in a dream may expect to obtain wisdom...He who has intercourse with a married woman in a dream can be sure that he is destined for the world to come, provided, that is, that he did not know her and did not think of her in the evening.

(Berakot 57a)

But the crux of the connection between the two attitudes regarding man is found in what has become known as the three Cardinal Sins, an appellation perhaps a little strange to Jewish ears, but one nonetheless used by Jewish scholars.

R. Johanan said in the name of R. Simon b. Jehozadak: It was decided by a majority vote in...Lydda that in every transgression (enumerated) in the Torah, if a man is told, "Transgress, and be not killed!", he may transgress and not be killed - except for IDOLATRY, INCEST, and MURDER (capitals inserted).

(Sanhedrin 74a)

These, then, are the three Cardinal Sins of Judaism. That they stand as the capstone of the hierarchy of sins, is shown in the following.

The School of R. Ishmael taught: whoever speaks slander increases his sins even up to the three transgressions: idolatry, incest, and murder.

('Arakin 15b)

The three sins are the most serious offenses possible for any man, whether or not he possesses God's revealed word. Yoma 67b tells us that even if they had not been found in Scripture, they should nonetheless be laws. Sanhedrin 56a

states that they are a part of the Noachian laws, and therefore incumbent upon all mankind.

Yoma 9b brings them much more clearly into focus when it points out that the three are to be considered in the same category as a groundless hatred. Sexuality and aggression. Can the Cardinal Sins bring disaster to mankind? They were responsible for the Flood (Genesis Rabbah 31:6) as well as for the destruction of the Temple (Yoma 9b). And they may not be transgressed even to save a life!

...for there is nothing that stands before saving a life, except idolatry, incest, and bloodshed.

(Yoma 82a and Ketubot 19:1)

One may cure oneself with all (forbidden) things, except for idolatry, incest, and murder.

(Pesahim 25 a and b)

Atonement for the three could not even be accomplished by the scape-goat on Yom Kippur (Shebu'ot 7b).

Idolatry, from the point of view of a revealed religion, is rebellion against the Father. It denies His sovereignty, and sets up competitors in His stead. In a sense, it kills the Revealing God by denying His presence, and therefore is of the same nature as the aggression against the primal father by the brother horde.³⁷ It is guilt-producing, whether it was carried out or merely toyed with in the mind.

The incest laws of course reflect rudimentary knowledge of what has since been formalized into the Oedipus Complex. The Bible itself contains allusions to the Oedipal situation.

What was the actual relationship between Jacob and his over-protective mother, Rebekah? What was the significance of the act recorded in Genesis 24:67: "And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her. And Isaac was comforted for his mother"? Why did the rabbis feel such a great need to rationalize incestuous dreams?

And murder, the turning outward of aggression, the diminishing of the image of God, is the most heinous sin against one's fellow man. The Evil Inclination, this same complex of restless strivings and desires, has already been pointed out as that which not only causes one man to kill another, but which also tries to make suicide attractive. The history of capital punishment within Jewish law, interesting from several points of view, is useful to us as an example of a step by step repression and sublimation of the aggressive drive. Beginning with the 'natural' tendency to repay a death with a death, it was ultimately capable of, for all practical purposes, legislating capital punishment out of existence. An appropriate message for our age is that advances in civilization are marked by advances in our respect for human life.

Both Freudians and rabbis have recognized that sexuality and aggression are not only in a state of interaction, but that they are central to the personality. The rabbis would not condemn man to remaining subject to these drives; man need not succumb. But the multiplicity of defenses which they offer clearly, if implicitly, reflects a more honest and basic

rabbinic position: only through God's grace can man be rescued from the temptation which is lodged within him. Man isolated from God would necessarily be pictured in a manner quite similar to the general Freudian manner.

Significant parallels: a supplement.

Freud saw in the interplay of instincts the causation behind the upbuilding of civilization. To hinder the destructive thrust of Thanatos, he recommended a revised system of education. Yet he harbored no desire for its ultimate removal.

The rabbis granted that the world could not survive without the Yezer, and similarly recognized that - due to its early onset - a sound education is vital.

Freud's faith in the efficacy of man's defenses was sorely limited; the better world which they helped create might not long endure.

The rabbis realized that even they, with the fullest possible grasp of what their times viewed God's demands to be, could not erect enduring defenses.

R. Judah said: Three (types of) individuals require guarding: a sick person, a groom, and a bride. It was taught in a Baraita: a sick person, a midwife, a groom, and a bride. And there are those who say: a mourner; and some even say: scholars at night-time.

(Berakot 54b)

Freud believed that man was determined by his biological endowment, as well as by his childhood experiences. He would therefore deny that man is free.

The rabbis give man his freedom, but admit that it is in no sense total. God's omniscience and omnipotence limit man's freedom, as does God's control of history and His design for Creation. By explaining away the unexplainable - the question: why, if God is so powerful and all-knowing, does He not bring about a more beneficent world - the rabbis do in fact force man to rely upon his own devices. Until the time that God does intervene, man had better work out his own destiny. This means that man will be confronted with his Yezer as given, thereby limiting man's freedom to a considerable extent.

Freud said that man is a wolf to man, and that the command to love one's neighbor is unnatural.

The rabbinic position here is that man has a soul. He is more than mind and body. And with his soul man is able to love and be loved. If man must work out his own destiny to a great extent without divine aid, he at least can turn to other men and work with them to fulfill the word of God upon earth.

The chart on the following page will exemplify the two positions.

Summary Chart.³⁸

	<u>PSYCHIDIAN</u>	<u>RABBINIC</u>
1. Man's Task	Utilize drives so as to overcome them.	Imitate God.
2. Unconscious Determinism	High.	High.
3. Motives	To be able to reach death on my terms.	Fulfill divine plan; Future pleasure; Avoid divine wrath.
4. Free Will	None.	Yes, but....
5. Defense Mechanisms	High, but limited.	High, but limited.
6. Nature of Basic Drive.	Neutral. ³⁹	Neutral.
7. Reliance upon Other Sciences	Especially biology and anthropology.	By implication.
8. Capacity of Reason to Exercise Control	Limited.	Rather high.
9. Uniqueness of the Individual	A great deal is biologically determined.	High.
10. The Place of Education.	Can be highly effective; Much change needed.	Necessary as a defense.
11. Future Hope	Severely tempered.	Apparently high.

CONCLUSION

Our study had as its major purpose the seeking out of psychological perspectives of the view that the rabbis held of man. These perspectives were obtained by searching the writings of Freud; they were then employed in illuminating the writings of the rabbis, as found in the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds, as well as in the early Midrashim.

Our findings have confirmed both the presence and accessibility of self-data, of information about the self which can be obtained through introspection. It is possible, therefore, to have some adequate knowledge of man; he is not to be considered as a closed book beyond understanding merely because he cannot be quantitatively analyzed in the laboratory. Somehow, by whatever objective and subjective tools were utilized, the images of man produced by two cultures both geographically and chronologically separate have much in common.

Man has been seen as complex, despite the fact that the rabbis do group all of man's drives under the catch-all heading of Yezer. In his complexity, man must deal with something which is beyond his ultimate control, and which perforce vitiates his freedom. Freud spoke of an unconscious, replete with instinctual yearnings; the rabbis spoke of an Evil Inclination. Both were considered building blocks out of which human beings might build either a monument or a sepulchre. Sexuality and aggression, declared unavoidable by both sides for different reasons, yet constitute a great part of man's personality.

It is true that basic and irreconcilable differences exist, not the least of which is the rabbis' unending insistence upon the existence and importance of God and soul. For Freud, morality is simply a reaction formation against man's inherent 'evil'. For the rabbis, it is an expression of the divine within man. Great differences also exist with regard to the place biological inheritance plays in the structuring of the human personality. Freud would accord it a position of highest importance; the rabbis tend to negate its importance.

Yet, the similarities exist, and their existence is exciting to the mind. The perspectives of psychology have not only led to an understanding of materials 1,500 years old, though this in itself is most praiseworthy, but they have also made quite clear the fact that the best source for the future understanding of man still lies within his own bosom. Man is on his own. He must make peace with that which is called the human condition. Not even the rabbis would have had man quietistically sit back and await the intervention of God. As long as there is a man, the battle with the given will continue. But with each advance of man's ability to harness his own potentialities, the world can be made a finer place in which to dwell.

FOOTNOTES

FOOTNOTES

1. In Katz, Robert and Lederer, Henry. Man, The Family, The Social and Cultural System. Cincinnati, 1957.
2. Freud, Sigmund. Beyond the Pleasure Principle. p. 11.
3. Brandt, Lewis. "Some Notes on English Freudian Terminology" (Journal of the American Psycho-analytic Association IX). pp. 331-339.
4. Ibid., p. 334.
5. Ibid., p. 337.
6. Freud, Sigmund. "Instincts and their Vicissitudes" (Sigmund Freud, Collected Papers, vol. 4). pp. 68-69.
7. Freud, Sigmund. Beyond the Pleasure Principle. p. 67.
8. Ibid., p. 71.
9. Ibid., p. 74.
10. Freud, Sigmund. Civilization and its Discontents. pp. 102-103.
11. Jones, Ernest. The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, vol. 2. pp. 276-280.
12. P. 10.
13. Hall, Calvin S. and Lindzey, Gardner. Theories of Personality. p. 33.
14. From the lecture notes of Human Relations 201, Hebrew Union College, as taught by Dr. Stanley Block.
15. Freud, Sigmund. New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis. p. 95.
16. Freud, Sigmund. Civilization and its Discontents. p. 85.
17. Cohon, Samuel. "Original Sin" (Hebrew Union College Annual XXI). p. 296.
18. Moore, George F. Judaism. p. 476.
19. Tennant, Frederick. The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin. p. 69.

20. Kohler, Kaufmann. Jewish Theology. p. 208.
21. Porter, Frank C. "The Yezer Hara: A Study in the Jewish Doctrine of Sin" (Biblical and Semitic Studies). p. 116.
22. Kohler, Kaufmann. op. cit., p. 224.
23. Porter, Frank C. op. cit., p. 122.
24. Cohon, Samuel. op. cit., p. 304.
25. Schechter, Solomon. Aspects of Rabbinic Theology. p. 314.
26. Moore, George F. op. cit., p. 481.
27. Cohon, Samuel. op. cit., p. 304.
28. Schechter, Solomon. op. cit., p. 260.
29. Kohler, Kaufmann. op. cit., p. 215.
30. Porter, Frank C. op. cit., p. 115.
31. Cohon, Samuel. op. cit., p. 330.
32. Kohler, Kaufmann. op. cit., p. 215.
33. Schechter, Solomon. op. cit., p. 270 (Quoting Pseudo-Jonathan to Genesis 4:7).
34. Ibid., pp. 170-198.
35. Cohon, Samuel. op. cit., p. 330.
36. See, for example, Tanhuma, 'Ekev 11; Kiddushin 30b; Shabbat 156b.
37. See Freud, Sigmund. Totem and Taboo.
38. Based on Hall, Calvin S. and Lindzey, Gardner. op. cit., p. 548.
39. Though, as pointed out above, the drives Freud postulated would be termed 'evil' by religionists.

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