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THE LAW IN TALMUDIC ESCHATOLOGY

by Stephen I. Forstein

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion

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Referee, Prof. Alexander Guttman

## Digest

Many scholars have assumed that the Rabbis used the terms "Future to Come", "Messianic Age", and "World to Come" as interchangeable. This essay treats them as flexible "value-terms", expressing "value-concepts." The "Future to Come" is indefinite, referring to either the Messianic Age or the renewed world which follows general resurrection and judgement. Two contrasts in conception of the Messianic Age are shown: (1) between politico-national salvation and religio-spiritual redemption, and (2) between the horizontal and vertical advents of the Messiah. The term, "World to Come" is deliberately ambiguous, expressing both the concept of the world of souls after death and that of the renewed world of resurrected life. One basic framework of rabbinic eschatology is the sequence of This World, Messianic Age, World to Come. Another basic framework is where the soul follows the sequence of This World, World to Come (of souls after death), Days of the Messiah.

Non-fulfillment of Law during life may forfeit life in World to Come. Performance of certain laws will bring the advent of the Messiah, as certain sins delay his coming. During the Birth-Pangs of the Messiah the Law would be forgotten and then remembered again. Before the Messiah's advent Elijah would appear to decide disputed and doubt-

ful cases. Many passages presume that the Law would still be operative during the Messianic Age, and those passages which seem to suggest its abrogation have been misunderstood. God would not give a new Torah. Changes in the Law were anticipated, since circumstances would change. Even in the World to Come God would teach His people Torah.

for my parents

In their home I first learned of Israel's longing  
for Messianic redemption.

"Behold, I will send you  
Elijah the prophet  
Before the coming  
Of the great and terrible Day of the Lord.  
And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children,  
And the heart of the children to their fathers; . . ."

(Malachi 3:23f.)

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## THE LAW IN TALMUDIC ESCHATOLOGY

## Introduction

At the outset of this essay on "The Law in Talmudic Eschatology" a few remarks on usage and method are perhaps in order. The individual nouns of the title have been taken in their broadest possible sense. Thus by the word "Law" I mean the Rabbinic conception of Torah in all its manifold connotations, as well as the concept of Halakah and individual halakot. By the word "Talmudic" I refer to all Rabbinic material which can be dated within the time-span during which the two Talmuds were compiled. It is true that the great majority of material cited in this essay comes from the Babylonian Talmud. But I have not felt constrained to limit my researches to that great library of material when attractive grist could be found for my mill outside it. I have, however, limited myself to sources within the Rabbinic literature. Finally, I have understood the word eschatology and its adjectival form to include what might more properly be called "messianic expectation." To do otherwise would be to impose artificial and misleading restrictions upon the subject.

In general, the Jewish Encyclopedia system of transliteration is employed. As with all systems of transliteration, a foolish consistency would limit its usefulness. The Babylonian Talmud is cited by the letters "T. B." followed by

Tractate and folio number. The Palestinian Talmud is cited by the letters "T. J." followed by Tractate, chapter and halakah numbers, and by page and column number in the Krotschkin edition. The notes will be found at the end of the essay. Full bibliographical entries will be found for all works mentioned in the bibliography. Abbreviated listings are used in the notes.

The basic question which this essay seeks to answer is simply this: What role does the Law play within the messianic and eschatological thought of the Rabbis? The relevance of this question to historical investigations of the origin of Christianity is immediately evident to the concerned. As we shall come to see, our answer will not be a simple one. Rabbinic thought is not often noted for its lack of complexity. Nowhere is this more true than in the areas of Law or Torah and Eschatology, at whose intersection this essay is aimed. Regrettably, many have been led astray in the complex maze of the messianic hopes and eschatological expectations which the Rabbis pursued. Therefore, the first chapter shall be devoted to an investigation of the terms and concepts of Rabbinic eschatology. Only with the second chapter shall we begin our subject proper.

## Chapter 1

### Value-Terms and the Eschatological Frameworks

#### I

Anyone even passingly acquainted with the literature of the rabbis is well aware that they were not systematic thinkers in the western vein. Max Kadushin has characterized their thought in terms of a concept which he calls "Organic Thinking."<sup>1</sup> In Particular, Kadushin has called attention to a characteristic of that thought which he terms "indeterminacy of belief".<sup>2</sup> Indeterminate belief is "qualified or modified belief".<sup>3</sup> Indeterminacy of belief allowed the rabbis to maintain as legitimate differing interpretations of the same Biblical verse, especially in the realm of Haggadah. These two characteristics of the Organic Thinking of the rabbis, lack of system and indeterminacy of belief, are frequently evident in their eschatological discussions.

All this is meant in terms of a caution. As Moore states:

"It must be premised that these utterances (of the Tannaim) themselves are occasional, touching on particular points as they arise; they are not topics of a doctrine of the Messiah or of the Last Things. In exhibiting them here it is necessary to give them a semblance of system which they have not in the sources themselves."<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, we should not blind ourselves to the fact that the eschatological expectations of the rabbis crystallized

around certain concepts, more or less indeterminate, which were expressed by the terms *מֶלַח הַמָּשִׁיחַ* or Messianic Age and *הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא* or The World To Come. In addition the rabbis employed a somewhat indefinite term *לְעוֹלָם לְבָרָכָה*. The Future to Come. In this respect Kohler remarks,

"Owing to the gradual evolution of eschatological conceptions, the Rabbis used the terms "olam ha-ba" (the world to come), "le-'atid la-be" (in the coming time) and "yemot ha-Mashiah" (the Messianic days) promiscuously or often without clear distinction."<sup>5</sup>

That the difficulties to which Kohler alludes are real is evident from a brief consideration of two texts, taken from Sanhedrin 99a:

(i)\*

R. Hiyya B. Abba said in the name of R. Yohanan: All the prophets only prophesied in respect to the Messianic Age; but in respect to the World To Come, Eye has not seen what God, oh Thou alone, will do for him who waits for him. (Isaiah 64:3)

(ii)

...for Samuel said: There is no difference between This World and the Messianic Age except subjugation to the [foreign] kingdoms [in This World].

In these two passages we note the use of the concepts Messianic Age, World to Come and This World. The first passage contrasts the Messianic Age and the World to Come. R. Yohanan assigns the wonderful prophetic visions of a rejuvenated Israel to the Messianic Age. Samuel, in the second passage, implicitly contradicts R. Yohanan; and so the Ge-

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\*Complete Hebrew or Aramaic texts for cited materials will be found under corresponding Roman numerals in the Appendix. Except as otherwise indicated, the translations are the work of this author.

mara understands him. Commenting on this passage Moore notes that "this, if taken as a principle of interpretation, would leave all the prophecies of a different order of things to the eschatological hereafter."<sup>6</sup> In other words, Samuel would assign the fulfillment of prophecy to the World to Come. Thus we may deduce that there were real differences among the Rabbis as to the assignment of events to the various stages within the overall eschatological framework. So, it is not correct to assume, as Kohler does, that the Rabbis made no distinctions within that framework. By the third century C. E., in which both Yohanan and Samuel lived, the framework had become fixed in its general outlines. It had three major divisions: This World, the Messianic Age and the World to Come. Such a tripartite division is implicit in the passages already cited. R. Yohanan talks in a way which implies that the Messianic Age precedes the World to Come. Samuel implies that This World precedes the Messianic Age.

This triple scheme is made explicit in a number of places in Rabbinic Literature. Thus in the Sifre on Deuteronomy, #47, commenting on Deuteronomy 11:21 we find:

(iii)

That your days may increase, in This World; and the days of your children, in the Messianic Age; as the days of the heavens upon the earth, for the World to Come.

Again, in Zebahim 118b, commenting on Deuteronomy 33:12:

(iv)

Rabbi [Judah ha-Nasi] said: He covers him; this refers to This World; all the day; this is the Messianic Age; And He dwells between his shoulders; this is the World to Come.

This then is the general framework of the eschatological thought of the Rabbis. Within it there were drastic disagreements, as to the sequence of events, and even differences in terminology. Thus in Tosefta 'Arakin 2:7 we read of this tripartite division, except that the term for the last era is לָבוֹא לַמָּחָד, the Future to Come.<sup>7</sup> In a parallel passage in the Gemara, 'Arakin 13b, the term employed is הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא, the World to Come.

This framework was in common usage by the end of the Tannaitic Era, since the redaction of the Mishnah by Judah ha-Nasi, whose statement is quoted above, marked the close of that age. Some scholars have asserted that the earlier Tannaim knew of but one post-historical era. So Cohen writes:

The earlier generations of the Rabbis identified the Messianic era with the World to Come. The promised Redeemer would bring the existing world-order to an end and inaugurate the timeless sphere in which the righteous would lead a purely spiritual existence freed from the trammels of the flesh.<sup>8</sup>

Moore agrees:

In an earlier stage of the development [of the ideas under consideration], the national golden age, here called the Days of the Messiah [Messianic Age], was the final period of history, and the names the World to Come or the Future [to Come] were applied to it, and this usage continued in later times.<sup>9</sup>

Klausner offers proof of this point of view from variant readings of a Mishnah and other parallel passages.<sup>10</sup> He cites the last clause of Berakot 1:5 (in our printed editions of the Mishnah) which expounds Deuteronomy 16:3 and reads:



(v)

But the Sages say: The days of your life [refers to] This World. All the days of your life to include the Messianic Age.

Klausner then points out that the Mishnah text of the Palestinian Talmud contains a variant reading.

(vi) Mishnah of Palestinian Talmud, Berakot 1:9

But the Sages say: The days of your life [refers to] This World. All the days of your life [refers to] the World to Come, to include the Messianic Age.

Thus he draws the conclusion that "according to this passage in the Palestinian Talmud, therefore, 'the World to Come' and 'the Days of the Messiah' [the Messianic Age] cannot be separated."<sup>11</sup> Klausner uses this passage as supporting evidence in his contention that "throughout the post-Biblical literature the Messianic age, the life after death, and the New World...are constantly interchanged."<sup>12</sup>

In fact, the passage offers very little support for Klausner's position. As he notes, the reading in the Palestinian Talmud is exceptional. The parallels in the Mishnah of the Babylonian Talmud (Berakot 12b) and the Mekilta (Pisha 16), which he mentions, as well as those in the Sifre to Deuteronomy (#130) and the Tosefta (1:12), which he does not mention all read "to include the Messianic Age"; and make no mention of the World to Come. The phrase העולם הזה להבא

ימות המשיח "the World to Come, to include the Messianic Age" which appears in the Palestinian Talmud may well represent a conflate reading. Danby, in the Introduction to his translation of the Mishnah remarks that:

Although the Cambridge, Kaufmann and Parma MSS. belong to the Palestinian type of text they all bear marks of revision under the influence of the Babylonian type; and the same applies to the Mishnah printed in the first (Venice, 1523) edition of the Talmud Yerushalmi and the subsequent Cracow (1609) and Krotoschin (1866) editions.<sup>13</sup>

Thus we may conjecture that the original reading in the Palestinian version was הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא, the World to Come, which is frequently contrasted with This World. The complex reading now in our hands may have been produced by a harmonizing copyist.

In addition, the discussion does not end as we have it in the Mishnah. It continues in the Mekilta, the Tosefta and the two Gemaras. The Mekilta reads:

(vii) Mekilta, Pisha 16

Ben Zoma said to the sages: In the future, in the Future to Come, Israel will not mention the Exodus from Egypt, as it is said Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that it shall said no longer "As the Lord lives, Who brought up the children of Israel from Egypt" but instead, "As the Lord lives, Who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the North." (Jer. 16:14-15)

R. Nathan says Who brought up and Who led (Jer. 23:8) indicated that in the Future to Come they will mention the Exodus from Egypt.<sup>14</sup>

The Tosefta however shows a different reading.

(viii) Tosefta Berakot 1:12

Ben Zoma said to the sages: Will the Exodus from Egypt be mentioned in the Messianic Age? Behold, it says: Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that it shall be said no longer "As the Lord lives, Who brought up the children of Israel from Egypt" but instead, "As the Lord lives, Who brought up and Who led the seed of the house of Israel from the north country, etc." (Jer. 23:7-8)<sup>15</sup> [Ben Zoma's question implies a negative answer.] They said to him: This does not mean that the Exodus from Egypt shall be uprooted from them [i.e. it shall continue to be mentioned] but that Egypt shall be added to the [other] kingdoms. The kingdoms shall have primary importance and Egypt secondary importance.

The readings in the two Gemaras are similar to the Tosefta, except that the Palestinian Talmud employs the term "The Future to Come." Here then we have a clear indication that there has been an interchange between the terms "the Future to Come" and "the Messianic Age." But we cannot conclude from this interchange, and others like it, that the two terms were equivalents. It may well be that one term is inclusive of the other; that the Messianic Age is part of the Future to Come.

## II

To support this hypothesis we should examine a selection of passages in the Rabbinic literature.<sup>1</sup> In the Mishnah the phrase לְעָתִיד לָבוֹא, the Future to Come is found eleven times, in ten different tractates. It is employed in the Tosefta a total of sixteen times in fourteen different tractates. Thus we have a total of twenty seven passages. We may divide these into three major divisions: (1) passages which are clearly neither messianic nor eschatological, (2) passages which are clearly either messianic or eschatological, (3) passages which are indefinite or ambiguous.

Of the passages which are neither messianic nor eschatological we count five in the Mishnah: 'Erubin 9:3; Rosh ha-Shanah 1:6; Ketubot 9:6; Nedarim 8:1; and Shebuot 3:5. The Tosefta contains ten such passages: Berakot 7:17; Shebit 2:6; Maaser Rishon 1:5; Shabbat 17:6 and 17:9; 'Erubin 10:9; Nazir 3:11 and 3:14; Shebuot 2:4; and Parah 7:4.

In all of these fifteen passages the phrase למחר לבוא is not employed as a "value-concept" in any sense whatsoever.<sup>2</sup> Here the phrase merely means "in the future." Some of the passages explicitly state a contrast, past and future. This passage from Mishnah Ketubot 9:6 will serve as an example.

(ix) Mishnah Ketubot 9:6

If she went from her husband's grave to her father's house, or if she returned to her father-in-law's house and was not made an administratrix, the heirs may not exact an oath from her. But if she was made an administratrix the heirs may exact an oath from her concerning [the estate] in the future [after her husband's death], but not concerning the past [before her husband's death.]

Some of the passages merely use the phrase in the sense of "the next occurrence of". So this passage.

(x) Mishnah Nedarim 8:1

If a man say 'Konam! if I taste wine today', it is forbidden only until nightfall; [if he said] 'this week' it is forbidden the entire week and the [next] Sabbath is included in the past week [in which it is forbidden]; 'this month', it is forbidden the entire month and the next Rosh Hodesh; 'this year', it is forbidden the entire year and the coming Rosh haShanah;...etc.

Of the passages which are clearly either Messianic or eschatological we count four in the Mishnah; Mo'ed Katan 3:9; Eduyot 2:10; Abot 2:16; and Tamid 7:4. The Tosefta contains two such passages: Makkot 3:10 and 'Arakin 2:7. Here we should make a distinction between those passages which use the phrase למחר לבוא as an indefinite "in the future", leaving us to deduce the eschatological import from the context and those passages which use the phrase in a conceptual sense, as "The Future to Come". As an example of the former let us examine Mishnah Eduyot 2:10.

(xi) Mishnah 'Eduyot 2:10  
 He [Akiba] also used to say: There are five things  
 [which have a duration] of twelve months:...The judge-  
 ment of Gog and Magog which is to come [will have a  
 duration] of twelve months;....

An example of the passages which use the term in a conceptual sense is Mishnah Tamid 7:4.

(xii) Mishnah Tamid 7:4  
 The song which the Levites used to sing in the Temple  
 [was thus] :. . . On the Sabbath they sang A Psalm:  
 a Song for the Sabbath Day; (Ps. 92) a Psalm, a song  
for the Future to Come, for a day which shall be com-  
 pletely a Sabbath of rest for life eternal.

Of the passages which are indefinite or ambiguous we find two in the Mishnah: Berakot 9:4 and 'Eduyot 8:6; and four in the Tosefta: Sotah 13:1; Kiddushin 5:4; 'Eduyot 3:3; and Menahot 11:10. Tosefta Kiddushin 5:4 shows the difficulties clearly.

(xiii) Tosefta Kiddushin 5:4  
 Individuals of natin status<sup>3</sup> and bastards will be pure in the future. These are the words of R. Yosi. Rabbi Meir says: They will not be pure. R. Yosi said to him: But does it not say And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean? (Ezek. 36:25) R. [Meir] said to him: [the verse continues with the words] from all your uncleannesses and from all your idols [which implies not from natin status or from bastardy.] R. Yosi said: Scripture says I will purify you [the conclusion of the verse] to mean even from natin status and from bastardy. . .

The difficulty here is that in the partial parallel to the continuation of the passage in T.B. Yebamot 78a the discussion is in terms of possibility of purification of bastard stock within the present order. This would seem to imply that the term לְבָנִים לְנִכְרִים in this passage is to be understood in a non-eschatological sense. But the verse quoted,

Ezekiel 36:25, has eschatological connotations which are unmistakable, and this is shown by its use in Leviticus Rabbah 15:9. It may be, then, that our passage should be interpreted eschatologically.

Surveying the twenty seven passages from the Mishnah and Tosefta, we note that we may scale them according to the degree of conceptualization which they show. Thus passages like Mishnah Nedarim 8:1 would be the least conceptualized and passages like Mishnah Tamid 7:4 or Tosefta 'Arakin 2:7<sup>4</sup> the most conceptualized. Here it is natural to conjecture that the more highly developed form grew out of the simpler form.<sup>5</sup>

Whatever the case, it seems clear that the term

לְבָא לְמָחָר in its more conceptualized form points to the existence of what Kadushin has called a "value-concept,"<sup>6</sup> in spite of the fact that he seems loath to designate it as such. He writes:

These "hereafter concepts," as we may call them, constitute a special group of concepts in themselves. All of them are, unlike the value-concepts in general, obviously not experiential concepts but beliefs. It is even a question whether, strictly speaking, they may be said to be value-concepts at all. . . . The hereafter concepts are beliefs that are tied together in a series. Value-concepts are never connected in a series.<sup>7</sup>

Now it is not clear whether Kadushin would hold this view in respect to the term "the Future to Come," since he does not mention it in his discussion of the hereafter concepts. Even if he would not designate it as a value concept, it is possible to show that he is mistaken in his characterization of hereafter concepts. At least one hereafter concept is in some

sense experiential for the Rabbis, since we find a statement in T.B. Berakot 57b that "The Sabbath is one-sixtieth part of the World to Come." Klausner has attempted to show that the concept of the Messianic Age was influenced by the experience of the people under Roman rule. So he writes:

The time of misery following the fall of Bethar inevitably caused the revival of Messianic hopes; but - and this point deserves emphasis - this time of misery necessarily imparted a new coloring to these hopes. . . Inevitably but unconsciously the Days of the Messiah became associated with the idea of pain and sorrow in the minds of all those who survived the execution of R. Akiba.<sup>8</sup>

Also, it is not always true that these hereafter concepts were always "connected in a series." Nor is it true that true value-concepts "are never connected in a series."

Kadushin himself cites such a series, quoting from T.B. Niddah 17a.<sup>9</sup> We therefore conclude that in its most conceptualized form, the term לַמָּוֶת לְבָנָיִם represents a value-concept, or something very close to it.

The character of the term, the Future to Come, as a value-term representing a value-concept gives us a clue to the reason for its frequent interchange with other terms, such as Messianic Age, and World to Come. Very simply, these concepts are overlapping, at least partially. By its very indefinite character the Future to Come merely expresses a contrast to the present. Obviously, the Messianic Age is in the future, at least for Rabbinic Jews,<sup>10</sup> and the term Future to Come could be applied to it. Also in the future is the great eternity of the Kingdom of God, frequently expressed by

the term World to Come.<sup>11</sup> The term Future to Come could also be applied to this concept, since it too was in the future. In the light of the controversy between R. Yohanan and Samuel<sup>12</sup> on the nature of and the distinction between the Messianic Age and the World to Come, it is not surprising to find our term, The Future to Come, used ambiguously, as referring to both or either. Such usage by the Rabbis may well have been deliberate, to avoid the appearance of having decided one way or the other.<sup>13</sup> It well served their purpose when they wished to concentrate their attention on the content of future hope without regard to the era of its advent. This flexibility in usage is a direct result of the nature of value concepts,<sup>14</sup> and the substitution of one term for another in parallel passages is proof, not of disorder, but of the characteristic coherence of the Rabbinic mode of thought, manifesting itself in overlapping concepts.<sup>15</sup>

In all this, we must be careful to distinguish between the differing connotations of our set of terms; for as Kadushin remarks:

However closely related certain concepts may be, the very fact that they are represented by different conceptual terms is an indication that they are to be distinguished one from another.<sup>16</sup>

The basic connotations of the term the Future to Come have already been outlined. In the following sections we shall discuss the terms Messianic Age and World to Come.



## III

Of all the "Hereafter Concepts", that of the Messianic Age, יְמוֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ, is the most clear in its general outlines within the framework of Rabbinic Thought. Not being as sophisticated as modern thinkers, the rabbis could not imagine a Messianic Age without a Messiah. So it is around this central figure that the concept of his time, his age, grew. For the vast majority of rabbinic thinkers this time was still in the future.<sup>1</sup> It follows This World,<sup>2</sup> and in the full blown later version of the eschatological scheme is itself followed by the World to Come. As we have shown above, the Messianic Age itself may sometimes be regarded as a part of the Future to Come, and in occasional usage as identical with the Future to Come.

A number of scholars, relying quite heavily on extra-Rabbinic sources, have intimated that the separation of the World to Come from the Messianic Age was not complete and final. Thus Moore writes:

In its original conception the national golden age inaugurated by the coming of the Messiah was of unmeasured duration. The newer eschatology with its general resurrection, last judgement, and final and endless Age to Come, did not supercede it; and, when the two were more clearly distinguished, could find place only beyond it.<sup>3</sup>

But no matter what origins the Rabbinic concept of the Messianic Age may have had, by the time we meet up with it in the literature it has become part of a highly structured, yet flexible system. As such it is a time-limited concept, and much speculation is devoted to the discovery of just

how long its duration would be.<sup>4</sup> Again to quote Moore:

There was no orthodoxy or consensus in such exegetical ingenuities. In one thing, however all agree: the Days of the Messiah are of limited duration.<sup>5</sup>

Since the concept of the Messianic Age had become an intermediate era in the eschatological sequence of the rabbis, it is not surprising to discover that in some versions it itself is time-structured in a sequential manner. In particular a number of rabbis elaborated their conceptions of events which had to take place before the Messiah could come. On the whole these prerequisites were not thought of as eras, but as happenings, conditions to be fulfilled, or impediments to be removed.

Despite all the disagreement over particulars most Rabbinic sources are in agreement that the Messiah will be completely human in character. Indeed, this is so taken for granted that it is difficult to discover explicit statements concerning his humanity. Klausner attempts to prove it from a Baraita at the close of the minor tractate Derek Erez Zuta.<sup>6</sup>

(xiv) Derek Erez Zuta, end of Chapter 1.  
Nine entered into the Garden of Eden [i.e. Paradise] during their own lifetime; and these are they: Enoch son of Jared, Elijah, the Messiah, Eliezer the servant of Abraham, Hiram King of Tyre, Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, Yabez son of R. Judah the Prince, Bithiah daughter of Pharaoh, and Serah daughter of Asher, and there are those who say also R. Joshua ben Levi.<sup>7</sup>

He goes on to state that "the very fact that the Messiah could be put on the same level with persons like Eliezer and Serah proves that the Messiah is 'a man from among men'."<sup>8</sup> Moore is more to the point when he states:

There is no trace in the Tannaite sources of any idea that the Messiah himself was . . . regarded otherwise than as a man of human kind. . . . He might be, by God's singular favor, a wiser and better and greater king than was ever seen, but not a supernatural being. . . . If the Messiah wrought miracles, that was no more than Moses had done, and Elijah, and many others. It was God who really did it, by what instruments he chose in ancient or modern times.<sup>9</sup>

This does not mean to say that the Rabbis were in complete agreement as to the character of the Messiah and his mission. Klausner has distinguished two main streams within their thought.

In the course of the long evolution of the Jewish Messianic idea, two different conceptions were inseparably woven together: Politico-national salvation and religio-spiritual redemption. . . . The Messiah must be both king and redeemer.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless it is clear that there were times when individual rabbis emphasized one or another of these conceptions; even to the virtual exclusion of the other. When Samuel says "There is no difference between This World and the Messianic Age except subjugation to the [foreign] kingdoms [in This World],"<sup>11</sup> he clearly implies that religio-spiritual redemption is not part of the Messianic Age. We would infer from this that Samuel viewed the Messiah mainly in his role as king over and saviour of the Jewish people. At an opposite pole is the conception of the Messiah revealed in this passage:

(xv) Genesis Rabbah 98:9

R. Hanin said: Israel will not need the teaching of the King-Messiah in the Future to Come, for it says, Unto him shall THE NATIONS seek (Isa. 11:10), but not Israel. If so, why is the King-Messiah coming, and what is he going to do? [He comes] to assemble the

exiles of Israel and to give to them [to the non-Jewish nations] thirty commandments, as it says, And I said to them: 'If it pleases you, give me my wage; and if not, do not.' So they counted out my wage, thirty pieces of silver. (Zech. 11:12) Rab said: These are thirty mighty men. R. Yohanan said: These are thirty commandments. . . . In Rab's view And I said to them means to Israel. In R. Yohanan's view And I said to them means to the nations of the world.<sup>12</sup>

In this passage we find a very exalted spiritual conception of the role of the Messiah, for nothing could be considered as more expressive of the essence of religion for the Rabbis than the teaching of Torah. Yet even here the politico-national salvatory aspect is not missing, for the Messiah's first task is to assemble the exiles of Israel. We must also remember that his title in this passage is King-Messiah, so that the regal element is still present. Still we must judge that the spiritual conception of the Messiah clearly dominates in this passage. In another passage we find clear emphasis on the universal redemptive nature of the Messiah's mission.

(xvi) Genesis Rabbah 12:6

R. Berekiyah said in the name of R. Samuel [b. Nahman]: Even though these things were created in their fullness when Primeval Man sinned they were spoiled. They will not return to their proper measure until the son of Perez [viz. the Messiah] comes.<sup>13</sup> . . . These are they: his radiance, his life, his height, the fruit of the earth and the fruit of trees, and the luminaries.

Here the politico-national salvatory aspect of the Messiah's mission is almost entirely missing; being retained only in the somewhat obscure reference to David - ben Perez. Instead, the coming of the Messiah is conceived of as the establishing of a new order, or rather the restoration of an

ancient one. The blessings of the Messianic Age are not restricted to the Jewish people alone. Here redemption comes to all mankind, symbolized by the figure of Primeval Man, and also to nature. And although the redemption is described here in purely physical terms it is clear from the cause of the original decline, the sin of Primeval Man, that a spiritual redemption is also intended; since restoration of stature surely could not take place without some type of atonement.

Alongside this contrast between the Messiah as King and the Messiah as Redeemer we find another significant difference of opinion concerning the manner of the Messiah's advent. Baeck has phrased it so:

In the thinking and the aspirations of the prophets, this [messianic] idea meant a tension between the present and the future; between what existed and was still there now, and that which was becoming and yet to be. In the Book of Daniel, however, the idea signifies an opposition between the here below and the there above, between this world and the beyond. . . . There the expected one, the object of longing, is a scion of the house of David who will fulfill history; here he has become the supernatural being who descends from the heavenly heights to end history. There, in the prophetic world, the line of longing is horizontal; here - and this is the essence of the apocalyptic orientation - it is vertical. Yet it is noteworthy that in the course of time the later attitude did not suppress or supplant the earlier one in the soul of the Jewish people. Both retained their place and direction, though at times they fought with each other: the son of David and the one like unto a man on the clouds of heaven.<sup>14</sup>

The prophetic conception of the messiah, as expressed in a passage like Zech. 6:12-13, is one which assumes the continuity of future human history with the past. Thus when R. Akiba proclaimed Bar Kochba as the Messiah<sup>15</sup> he was

asserting that the messianic task, here national salvation, would be accomplished without explicit, or in Baeck's term, vertical, Divine intervention. Now this is a dangerous doctrine, for it seems to place in the hands of men the tools of their own salvation; namely sword and shield. With the final great calamity at Bethar the doctrine was eclipsed in its pure form and retained only as a theme interwoven with the apocalyptic.

Many have pointed out the reliance of later Jewish apocalyptic on the Book of Daniel. The "vertical" conception of the Messiah, in particular, finds its origin in Daniel 7:9-14.<sup>16</sup> The Christian Church made use of it in its characterization of Jesus. The Rabbis too were aware of the messianic connotations of Daniel 7:13, as is shown by this passage from T. B. Sanhedrin 98a:

(xvii) T. B. Sanhedrin 98a.  
R. Alexandri said: R. Joshua threw [two verses in opposition]. It is written: And behold, one like a son of man came with the clouds of heaven (Dan. 7:13), and it is written: [behold thy king cometh unto thee...] lowly, and riding upon an ass. (Zech. 9:7) If they are worthy, [the Messiah will come] with the clouds of heaven. If they are not worthy [he will come] lowly and riding upon an ass.

As Baeck has shown<sup>16</sup> the phrase "son of man" eventually comes to signify a Divine Being for the Christian Church. In certain respects this is a natural development of the "vertical", apocalyptic version of the Messiah's advent. But as noted above, the Rabbis maintained the fully human character in their conception of the Messiah. Many did insist that the

Messiah would be endowed with great gifts.

(xviii) T. B. Sanhedrin 93ab

R. Tanhum said: Bar Kappara expounded in Sepphoris: Why is it written, These six of barley he gave to me? (Ruth 3:17) . . . . He [Boaz] symbolically told her that six decendants were destined to come forth from her, who should each be blessed with six blessings: David, Messiah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azarish. . . The Messiah, as it is written: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord, (Isa. 11:2)

Indeed, some felt that Bar Kochba's messianic claims were rejected precisely because he did not show the requisite talents.

The passage quoted above continues:

(xix) T. B. Sanhedrin 93b

And his delight [literally "smell"] shall be in the fear of the Lord, and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears. (Isa. 11:3) Raba said: He smells and judges.<sup>17</sup> . . . Bar Koziba<sup>18</sup> reigned two and a half years. He said to the Rabbis "I am the Messiah." They answered, "Of the Messiah it is written that he smells and judges; let us see if he smells and judges." When they saw that he could not smell and judge, they killed him.<sup>19</sup>

With the passage of time, the "vertical" or apocalyptic version of the Messiah's advent became the dominant one. Why this occurred it is not possible to say with certainty. Perhaps it was because of the influence of the Church, perhaps because of the memory of the disaster at Bethar, which could not have happened at all except for the "horizontal" or historically continuous conception of the Messiah. Whatever the case the increasing concern with calculations of "the end",<sup>20</sup> which means the advent of the Messiah, indicates that the underlying attitude of the people had changed. The time of the

advent was something preordained by God, since those who claimed to know the time of the advent usually derived their knowledge from Scripture.<sup>21</sup> Even those who claimed that man still could influence the time of the advent described this role in religious and spiritual terms.

(xx) T. B. Sanhedrin 98a

R. Alexandri said: R. Joshua b. Levi pointed out a contradiction. It is written, in its [proper] time [will the Messiah come.] (Isa. 60:22) and it is written, I [the Lord] will hasten it. (ibid.) If they are worthy, I will hasten it; if not, [he will come] at the proper time.

More explicit is Rab's statement in T. B. Sanhedrin 97b, to the effect that all the set dates for redemption have passed, and that everything now depends on repentance and good deeds; on repentance and good deeds, but not on force of arms. Man's role cannot be political or military.

Thus we have found two basic contrasts within the conceptions of the Messianic Age which were held by the Rabbis: the contrast between politico-national salvation and religio-spiritual redemption, and the contrast between the horizontal advent of the Messiah, continuous with history, and the vertical advent of the Messiah, an apocalyptic break with the past. It was a part of the "indeterminacy of belief" of Rabbinic thought that no sustained effort was made to eradicate any side of these contrasts. Individual rabbis could hold views in accordance with any combination of these views, even weaving together opposing conceptions. Thus the content of the term "Messianic Age" might be remarkably different for various rabbis. Here, as in the case of the



term the Future to Come, the Rabbis may have deliberately chosen the flexibility of ambiguity, so that the characteristic organic coherence of their thought could be maintained.

## IV

Any discussion of the term העולם הבא, the World to Come, must start with a clear realization that, like the terms Future to Come and Messianic Age, there was no unanimity among the Rabbis as to how this World to Come should be conceived. As Klausner puts it,

For the two latter conceptions (the life after death and the New World) the Talmudic and Rabbinic literature has only one phrase, "the World to Come" ('Olam ha-Ba), corresponding to the Gospel expressions "the World to Come" [KJV] or "the Age to Come" [RSV]. Both the Hebrew and the Greek phrases express merely a contrast to "this world."<sup>1</sup>

Finkelstein has traced this ambiguity to a rather basic disagreement.

Indeed, it can be shown that . . . the two concepts existed side by side. Akabiah ben Mahalalel and other scholars apparently believed that the soul after death descends into the Sheol or grave, and there awaits the Resurrection . . . On the other hand, there existed in earlier times and among the later Rabbinic Sages, a widespread belief that the souls of at least the righteous ascend to heaven immediately after death.

. . . . .  
The reference to the two contradictory doctrines in Scripture indicates that they were known to the authors of the Proclamation.<sup>2</sup> Why then do they fail to specify whether the Paradise of Souls immediately after death, or the Paradise of resurrected bodies is under discussion? The answer is that in their time the members of the Great Synagogue were divided on the issue. Both doctrines were considered possible, and were permitted. As frequently happens in the Mishna and other ancient Rabbinic and Pharisaic documents, the authors avoided commitment on an issue regarded as open.

The term, *le 'olam haba*, may have been invented by the authors to cover this ambiguity.<sup>3</sup>

That some sages believed that the World to Come referred specifically to the New World which was to follow the Messianic Age is proven by the passages, quoted above,<sup>4</sup> which utilize the tripartite framework of This World, Messianic Age and World to Come. This sequential progression, in which the phrase "World to Come" can refer only to the New World which will come after the Messianic Age, is made quantitative in a Talmudic passage.

(xxi) T. B. 'Arakin 13b  
 R. Judah said: The harp of the Sanctuary had seven strings, as it is written, In Thy presence is fulness [soba] of joy; (Ps. 16:11) do not read fulness [soba] but seven [sheba].<sup>5</sup> The harp of the Messianic Age will have eight strings, as it is written, For the Leader [the Messiah is understood], on the eighth [string]. (Ps. 12:1) The harp of the World to Come will have ten strings, as it is written, With an instrument of ten strings, and with the psaltery; with a solemn sound upon the harp. (Ps. 92:4) And it is written, Give thanks to the Lord with harp, sing praises to Him with the psaltery of ten strings. Sing unto Him a new song. (Ps. 33:2-3)

The harp of the Sanctuary, of course, is the harp of This World. From this numerical sequence, seven, eight, ten; and from the known fact that the Messianic Age follows This World, we may make the plausible inference that the World to Come referred to in the above passage can only follow the Messianic Age. It cannot be part of the world of souls after death.

Although it is not the primary purpose of this essay to explicate the Rabbinic notions of the disposition of the soul after death, some attention must be paid to the various doctrines held by the Rabbis so that the underlying ambiguity of the term, World to Come may be clarified. Those who

held that the World to Come was the New World, which followed after the Messianic Age, were faced with the problem of what disposition was made of the soul during the interim which followed the death of the individual and ended with the general resurrection which marked the beginning of the New World.<sup>6</sup> There were two general solutions to this problem. Some of the sages held that the soul was placed in the "Treasury" beneath God's Throne of Glory.

(xxii) T. B. Shabbat 152b

It was taught, R. Eliezer said: The souls of the righteous are stored up beneath the Throne of Glory, as it is written: Yet the life of my Lord [Abigail is speaking to David] shall be bound up in the bundle of life. (I Sam. 25:29) But those of the wicked continue to be imprisoned, while one angel stands at one end of the world and a second stands at the other end and they sling their souls to each other, as it is said, and the souls of thine enemies, he shall sling them out, as from the hollow of a sling. (ibid.)<sup>7</sup>

(xxiii) Sifre to Numbers, #139

R. Eliezer, the son of R. Yosi the Galilean, said: . . . All the while a man is placed in life his soul is deposited in the hand [or entrusted to the power] of his Owner [God], as it is written, In His hand is the soul of every living thing (Job 12:10); [when] dead it is placed in the "Treasury."<sup>8</sup>

Others among them thought that the soul remained in or near the grave, with the body. This is proved by stories which tell of conversations with the sainted dead at or near their graves.

(xxiv) T. B. Babba Batra 58a

R. Bana'ah used to mark out caves [in which there were dead bodies, so that people should not walk over them and contract ritual uncleanness.] When he came to the cave of Abraham, he found Eliezer, the servant of Abraham standing at the entrance. He said to him, "What is Abraham doing?" He replied, "He is sleeping in the arms of Sarah, and she is looking at his head." He said, "Go tell him that Bana'ah is standing at the

entrance." Abraham said to him [to Eliezer], "Let him come in. It is well known that there is no passion in this world [the world of the soul after death]. He went in, surveyed, went out.

But whatever the case, it is clear that the soul after death was not truly alive in the way it was in life, at least in this conception. How different is this saying attributed to R. Yohanan b. Zakkai.

(xxv) Abot d'Rabbi Natan, version A, chapter 25  
When Rabban Yohanan b. Zakkai was about to die he lifted up his voice and wept. His students said to him: "O master, O tall pillar, light of the world, strong hammer, why do you cry?" He said to them: "Am I going before a king of flesh and blood, who if he becomes angry with me, his anger is but for This World alone, and if he should imprison me, his imprisonment is only for This World, and if he should kill me, his slaying is only of This World? And whom, moreover, I may appease with words, or bribe with money? Behold, I am certainly going to greet the King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He. If He should become angry with me, his anger [endures] for This World and the World to Come. I am unable to appease Him with words or to bribe Him with money. Moreover, there are two paths in front of me, one to Paradise and one to Gehenna; and I know not if He will sentence me to Gehenna, or admit me to Paradise.

It seems from this passage that R. Yohanan b. Zakkai assumed that immediately after death he would enter into a judgment before God, and that if he was found worthy he would enter Paradise immediately.<sup>9</sup> Here is a passage from the Midrash which shows a similar conception.

(xxvi) Genesis Rabbah 100:7  
In the Future to Come the mouth and the stomach argue with one another. The mouth says to the stomach, "All that I robbed and took with violence, I have given to you." But after three days it is split open, and it says to it [to the mouth], "Behold what you robbed and took with violence," as it is written, And the pitcher is broken at the fountain. (Eccl. 12:6)

As we have noted above,<sup>10</sup> the phrase Future to Come can inter-

change with either the Days of the Messiah or the World to Come. Here, of course, it can only mean that understanding of the World to Come which intends the world of souls after death. It is also quite probable that these Tannaitic passages refer to the world of souls after death.

(xxvii) Mishnah Abot 4:16

R. Jacob said: This world is like a vestibule before the World to Come. Prepare yourself in the vestibule so that you may enter into the banquet hall.

(xxviii) Tosefta Berakot 7:21

All conclusions of benedictions in the sanctuary used to [include] "for everlasting." After the heretics had taught corruptly and said that there is but one world, it was ordained that one should say "From everlasting to everlasting," and [thus] proclaim that This World in comparison with the World to Come is but a vestibule in comparison with a banquet hall.

The images of vestibule and banquet hall and their immediate juxtaposition suggest that one passes from the vestibule into the banquet hall with no interruption. That is to say, one passes from This World and immediately enters the World to Come, if one is eligible. This state of affairs would occur only if it was possible to enter the World to Come immediately after death, which would imply that this World to Come is the world of souls, and not the New World which will arise after the general resurrection and final judgement.

This deliberate ambiguity in the meaning of the term World to Come is employed to good effect in the discussions found in Sanhedrin: Mishnah, Tosefta and both Gemaras, on who does and does not have a "portion" for the World to Come.<sup>11</sup> Finkelstein<sup>12</sup> calls our attention to a passage in the Tosefta which seems to show awareness on the part of the ancient

author that there were two different doctrines understood by the phrase World to Come.

(xxix) Tosefta Sanhedrin 13:6-8

The generation of the flood has no portion for the World to Come, and will not live for the World to Come. . . . The generation of the Tower [of Babel] has no portion for the World to Come, and will not live for the World to Come. . . . The men of Sodom have no portion for the World to Come, and will not live for the World to Come.

Here "portion for the World to Come" represents the opinion that the World to Come is the world of souls, immediately after death. The phrase "will not live for the World to Come" refers to the resurrection in the New World after the general judgement. Indeed, Finkelstein suggests that the phrase לעולם

הבא should not be translated as World to Come in these passages. He states,

Contrary to the interpretation generally placed on this passage, 'olam here does not mean "world," but "eternity." The words, le-'olam ha-ba, can properly be rendered only "for the future eternity." The word, helek, therefore, does not mean a "portion," in the sense of a part; it means rather "existence," "being," or "portion" in the sense of "destiny." . . . In later theology, the word, 'olam, assumed in this phrase, as generally, the spatial meaning of "world"; and 'olam ha-ba came to mean a world which will replace our own.<sup>13</sup>

Since the focus of this essay is specifically on the conception of 'olam ha-ba as the "world which will replace our own" there is no need for us to employ Finkelstein's suggestion. It is sufficient to recall that at least in the earliest sources the phrase, World to Come, may refer to the eternity of souls after death. As with all doctrines of this kind ambiguity of terminology probably led to a blending of conception in the

minds of some. In later times the eternity of souls comes to be called יְיָ יֵא, the Garden of Eden, or Paradise, as in the story concerning Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, cited above.

If the phrase World to Come can refer both to the New World and to the eternity of souls after death, we may be tempted to believe that it also can refer to the Messianic Age. We have already dealt with the one passage which seems to state quite clearly that the Messianic Age is part of the World to Come, and have shown that it probably resulted from deliberate alteration by a copyist, giving a conflate reading.<sup>14</sup> In the Mekilta we find a passage which contrasts the World to Come with the New World, seeming to imply that the World to Come is identical with the Messianic Age.

(xxx) Mekilta WaYassa' chapter 4 (edition Hr-R. p.169) R. Eleazar of Modi'im says: If you succeed in keeping the Sabbath, the Holy One, blessed be He, will, in the future, give you six good portions: The Land of Israel, the World to Come, the New World, the Kingdom of the House of David, the priesthood and the office of Levite.

But on closer examination we may see that the World to Come mentioned in this passage does not refer to Messianic Age; since the passage also makes mention of the Kingdom of the House of David, a phrase used quite often to refer to the Messianic kingdom.

Nevertheless, there are some who believe that the phrase, World to Come, can refer to the Messianic Age. So Moore writes:

Where the great feast on the flesh of Leviathan and Behemoth, or allotments of land for cultivation, or

the enormous fertility of the land of Israel, and the like, are assigned to the World to Come or to the Future, it is clearly the national golden age (Days of the Messiah) that is described, not that new order of things that is to endure after the general resurrection.<sup>15</sup>

But an argument from content is not conclusive. It may well be that, as there were differing conceptions of the events and conditions of the Messianic Age, so there were differing conceptions of the conditions of the World to Come. Indeed, Samuel's statement in T. B. Sanhedrin 99a<sup>16</sup> seems to indicate that he was of the opinion that conditions like "the enormous fertility of the land of Israel" would not occur in the Messianic Age, which is identical with This World except in the matter of political arrangements. This would leave the fulfillment of the Biblical prophecies of renewal to the World to Come, when the fabulous banquet and the rest of the miraculous events to which Moore refers would occur. That various individuals held differing views as to the stage in which the various events of the eschatological scheme occurred is clear. There is no justification for the statement or the implication that they confused the identity of the stages. There is no conclusive evidence that the Messianic Age was ever equated with the World to Come. Even granting that those who claim that some early Tannaim thought that the Messianic Age was the final period of history<sup>17</sup> may be correct; we are not justified in saying that they identified the Messianic Age with the World to Come. For these must be precisely those who believed that the World to Come was the world of souls after death, as Finkelstein has shown. They



used the same three terms: This World, the Messianic Age, and the World to Come; as those who believed in the three stages were sequential in world history, and they maintained distinctions among the terms. But their sequence was different, as were the distinctions.

All this is but further evidence of the extraordinary flexibility of Rabbinic thought; a direct result of the indeterminacy of belief so characteristic of the use of value terms and their corresponding value concepts.

## V

While it is not within the scope of this essay to relate all the details of the various Messianic and eschatological schemes found within Rabbinic thought or popular imagination of the times, yet it may be useful to discuss those eschatological beliefs which interact with the ideas of Torah and Halakah.<sup>1</sup> At the very outset we must recognize that the disagreement as to the nature of the World to Come lies deeper than terminology. The true grounds of the disagreement have to do with the future careers of the individual soul and the people Israel, both within world history and after its conclusion. Thus we may distinguish two basic frameworks of messianic and eschatological speculation, as well as a number of subtypes.

One basic framework is that of the sequence: This World, the Messianic Age, the World to Come. Here the three stages follow each other in time-sequence; a time sequence which is world-encompassing and, so to speak, objective in

its consequences. The major protagonist is the people Israel, which, will collectively experience redemption.

The other basic framework is that in which the World to Come is the world of souls after death. While the people Israel is still an important protagonist, the career of the individual soul is determinative. The only sequence we may trace out is that of the individual soul, which at death leaves This World and enters the World to Come. At some time in the future, with the coming of the Messiah, the soul and the body are re-united in resurrection and the Messianic Age begins.

A number of basic differences between the two frameworks emerge. In the first type resurrection takes place at the close of the Messianic Age, as part of the transition to the beginning of the Messianic Age, since that is the last stage of history. In the first type judgement occurs after resurrection, at the end of the Messianic Age. In the second type judgement occurs after death, when the soul is brought before God. In the first type resurrection is for the purpose of judgement, so that we find the strange anomaly of people being resurrected for judgement and then condemned to oblivion.<sup>2</sup> In the second type those who are condemned are not resurrected, since they have already been judged. In the first type the fate of the individual soul after death is a matter of little consequence; it is placed under God's Throne of Glory, or into the "Ozar" or Treasury. In the second type the career of the soul after death is the subject of intense interest.

There are, of course, a number of subtypes of these

basic frameworks. One such is an attempt to merge the two into a four-stage process. This is probably the explanation of the passage in Mekilta WaYassa<sup>f</sup>, quoted above.<sup>3</sup> Here we found both the expressions World to Come and New World. Thus we may postulate an eschatological framework in which the People Israel follows the sequence: This World, the Messianic Age, the New World; while the individual soul passes from This World to the World to Come. When resurrection is to take place is not clear from the passage.

Another area for variation is in the conception of the Messianic Age, as discussed above.<sup>4</sup> There we noted the contrasting themes of religio-spiritual redemption, and politico-national salvation. In the first type of framework, where the stages occur sequentially in the history of the people Israel, the Messianic Age may be purely one of politico-national salvation, in which the great dreams of a renewed and redeemed world are postponed to the World to Come. It is probably true that those descriptions of the World to Come which still seem to imply a semblance of physical existence belong to this sub-type of the first framework. The reason for this is that in this conception world-renewal is still physical. But where world-renewal is conceived as occurring during the Messianic Age, the World to Come can become a purely spiritual existence. Indeed, sometimes it is difficult to ascertain whether a particular statement of spiritual existence in the World to Come refers to the world of souls after death or to that sub-type of the first

eschatological scheme in which world-renewal occurs in the Messianic Age.

This serves to explain why the Messianic Age is sometimes considered as part of This World; for where politico-national salvation alone distinguishes the Messianic Age from the present, then the Messianic Age becomes a repetition of the days of the Davidic monarchy; which were certainly part of This World. On the other hand, when world-renewal is part of the Messianic Age a drastic change is envisioned. Thus the Messianic Age is no longer part of This World, but becomes part of the Future to Come.

We must be careful to remember that for various reasons the Rabbis did not outline these schemes in the manner done here. The Rabbis did not write philosophical or logical treatises. They were concerned with practical problems and with the spiritual needs of their co-religionists. The only dogma in this area was belief in the resurrection of the dead.<sup>5</sup> But as Kadushin notes,

Acceptance of the dogma does not mean that there was no room for difference of opinion. Some hold that only those who died in the Land of Israel will be resurrected; others, also basing themselves on a biblical verse, declare that those who died outside the Land will be resurrected as well. Still another opinion has it that the resurrection will take place first in the Land of Israel. There are also further views, mainly variations on the opinions given here.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, it seems clear from the analysis presented above that real differences of opinion existed in this area. These differences developed within the overall structure of organic coherence characteristic of Rabbinic thought. Within their unique world of thought they hoped for redemption and

deliverance. The shape of their hope crystallized around certain basic value-concepts and their corresponding value terms: The Future to Come, the Messianic Age, The World to Come.

One element which each of the frameworks contains is the idea of the Messianic Age.<sup>7</sup> Before this age could commence, certain conditions, political, moral or religious had to come about. Some held that the time of the Messiah's advent was fixed. Others held that it was dependent on man's action. Just before the Messiah's advent, severe afflictions would come upon the world and upon Israel. Before the coming of the Messiah, Elijah would come to announce him and to resolve certain legal disputes and uncertainties. With the coming of the Messiah the exiles of the Jewish people would return to Palestine. Sometime during the Messianic Age, the war with Gog and Magog would occur. Some passages mention a certain Messiah ben Joseph who would be slain in battle. He is not to be identified with the Messiah ben David who does not die.

All of the Rabbis would probably have agreed with this sketch in its broad outlines. There would have been disagreement as to the nature and scope of the changes which the advent of the Messiah would bring upon the world. They also would have disagreed as to when the resurrection was to take place, who would be resurrected, when the judgement was to take place, and whether that judgement was to be individual or general. Among those who held to the framework of the first

type, there would have been disagreement to the time of world renewal; either in the Messianic Age or in the World to Come.

## Chapter 2

### The Role of Law Within the Frameworks of The Messianic and Eschatological Thought of the Rabbis.

#### I

Any investigation of Rabbinic thought must begin with a realization of the centrality of the concept of Torah.<sup>1</sup> As Moore writes:

The comprehensive name for the divine revelation, written and oral, in which the Jews possessed the sole standard and norm of their religion is Torah. It is a source of manifold misconceptions that the word is customarily translated 'Law,' though it is not easy to suggest any one English word by which it would be better rendered. 'Law' must, however, not be understood in the restricted sense of legislation, but must be taken to include the whole of revelation - all that God has made known of his nature, character, and purpose, and of what he would have man be and do. The prophets call their own utterances 'Torah'; and the Psalms deserved the name as well. To the unwritten law the religious and moral teachings of the Haggadah belong no less than the juristically formulated rules of the Halakah. In a word, Torah in one aspect is the vehicle, in another and deeper view it is the whole content of revelation.<sup>2</sup>

Understood in its broadest sense, Torah was conceived of as part of the basic structure of the world, in that the Torah served as God's blueprint for the Creation.<sup>3</sup> The Torah thus preceded the world in existence,<sup>4</sup> and the world was created for its sake.<sup>5</sup> The Torah was a basic unity. It could not contradict itself. In all its aspects it was given to Moses at Mount Sinai, so completely that "even what an attentive

student would ask his teacher" was revealed by God to Moses at Mt. Sinai.<sup>6</sup>

This last comment is of particular interest to us because it intimates that the Rabbis were well aware of the fact that the Oral Torah, in particular, had undergone development from generation to generation. Indeed, a close analysis of the saying<sup>6</sup> will reveal its polemic character, for it is part of a passage in which the Oral Torah is defended as equally Divine in origin as the Written Torah, but distinctively Jewish; the Scriptures by that time having become familiar to the Gentile world as well. The statement that "even what an attentive student would ask his teacher" was revealed to Moses at Sinai" is an attempt to extend the claim of Divine origin to cover teachings previously unknown; which thus are not merely implicit in the Torah, but were given explicitly at Sinai, and only discovered anew by the "attentive student" and "his teacher." Further evidence of the awareness on the part of the Rabbis of development of the Oral Torah may be found in the statement of R. Aha that "things which were not revealed to Moses were revealed to R. Akiba."<sup>7</sup> We must be careful not to push the implications of this saying too far. It does not mean that a new Torah was revealed to Akiba, rather new explanations of the old Torah; which, since they are interpretations, exist implicitly in it.

Thus the "doctrine of the immutability of the Torah"<sup>8</sup> or the idea of the "Perpetuity of the Law"<sup>9</sup> is not as simple as might first appear. In particular, when viewed from the



standpoint of the various commandments, it was clear to the Rabbis, no less than ourselves, that changes had occurred. Thus seven (or thirty) commandments were given to Noah (or to Adam)<sup>10</sup> but six hundred thirteen to Israel on Mount Sinai.<sup>11</sup> The laws of sacrifice had practical importance at the time the Temple was standing. Some of the Rabbis lived in the generation in which those laws became theoretical; for with the destruction of the Temple sacrifices could no longer be offered. Indeed, it is clear that some men perform few of the commandments, while others perform many. In a phrase, it is not the Torah which changes, but man's relationship to it.<sup>12</sup> This relationship depended on many things: on a man's legal status, for the laws which applied to a priest did not apply to a non-priest; on his location, for laws relating to walled cities did not apply to un-walled towns; on the circumstances of the times, for a generation which lived when Israel had no king could not fulfill the laws relating to the king's person and activities. We should not be surprised then to discover that as the situation of Israel was to change in the Messianic Age and the World to Come, so would Israel's relationship to the Torah. In particular we will discover that various rabbis thought that some of the commandments would be modified, or would no longer apply in the Future to Come. As in any investigation in the area of rabbinic eschatology, we must attempt to identify the particular scheme of eschatology employed in each statement as well as the stage within that scheme to which the statement applies.

Before we come to a discussion of the particular modifications in the practice of the Law which the advent of the Messianic Age or the World to Come might bring, we must discuss the relationship between that advent and Torah as it is practiced in This World. For example, there are a number of statements which intimate that non-performance of particular commandments exclude an individual from participation in the World to Come. There are also statements which seem to intimate that performance of particular laws guarantee individual participation. In addition, there are a number of statements which intimate that performance or non-performance of the Law, or particular commandments within it, affect the coming of the Messiah. Indeed, the process of the advent of the Messiah is itself related to Law in a number of ways. Finally, we shall deal with a number of passages which seem to indicate that at some time during the eschatological process the commandments would lose their obligatory force, or that a new Torah would be given.

## II

As noted above<sup>1</sup> there appears in the Mishnah, Tosefta and both Gemaras of the tractate Sanhedrin an extended discussion of who does and does not merit a "portion" in the World to Come. Bearing in mind the basic ambiguity contained in the phrase העולם הבא, which can either refer to existence in the world of souls after death or resurrected life in the New World which follows the general judgement<sup>2</sup>, we

still must conclude that a discussion of these passages belongs within the scope of our essay; since some, at least, understood them in an eschatological sense from the time of their composition. At the outset, our Mishnah is very reassuring; for it states "All Israel have a share in the World to Come."<sup>3</sup> Almost immediately however, the exceptions start.

(i) Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1

All Israelites have a share in the World to Come, as it is said, Your people shall be completely righteous, they shall inherit the land forever; the branch of My planting, the work of My hands that I may be glorified.

(Isa. 60:21) And these are they who have no share in the World to Come: he that says that there is no resurrection of the dead [derivable] from the Torah, and [he that says] the Torah is not from Heaven, and an Epicurean. Rabbi Akiba says: Also he that reads heretical books, or that utters a charm over a wound and says, All the diseases I put upon the Egyptians I will not put upon you, for I am the Lord your healer. (Ex. 15:26) Abba Saul says: Also he who pronounces the [Divine] name with its [proper] letters.<sup>4</sup>

The reasons why the performance of the specified actions would deprive one of his share in the World to Come is not immediately evident. Finkelstein contends that

. . . the persons mentioned . . . as having forfeited future life symbolize transgressions especially rampant and dangerous in the Hellenistic period.<sup>5</sup>

He also notes that the phrase מן התורה, "derivable from the Torah" was not part of the Mishnah originally.<sup>6</sup> Kadushin<sup>7</sup> relates this clause to a Baraita quoted in the Talmudic discussion of this passage,<sup>8</sup> to the effect that God deals with man "measure for measure". Having denied the resurrection of the dead, one will not share in that resurrection.

It is more likely, however, that the trio of scoffers are disqualified because they tended to undermine some of the

basic doctrines upon which Pharisaic Judaism was built. The idea of resurrection, here made into a kind of a dogma, is basic to the Pharisaic conception of reward and punishment. As we have seen above, the purpose of the resurrection, at least in that scheme which placed it at the close of the Messianic Age, was for the purpose of judgement. Thus the person who denies the resurrection is equivalent to he who states that there is no judgement and there is no Judge;<sup>9</sup> that man is not accountable for his actions. That man is accountable for his actions is one of the basic ideas of Pharisaic Judaism.

The seriousness of the "Epicurean's" offence is demonstrated by the discussion of the Mishnah in the Gemara of the Babylonian Talmud.<sup>10</sup> Basically three different definitions of the "Epicurean" are offered: (1) a person who insults a scholar or acts familiarly toward a scholar, (2) a person who insults his neighbor in a scholar's presence, and (3) a person who takes credit for what another scholar has done. In a certain sense these are summarized in a saying attributed to the family of "Benjamin the doctor." They said "Of what use are the Rabbis to us? They have never permitted us the raven, nor forbidden us the dove."<sup>10</sup> In other words, the Rabbis have no authority, and thus they are mere parasites. Indeed, the other three definitions also describe actions which either express the idea that the scholar has no authority and no special status, for he can be insulted without consequence or can be dragged into an ordinary argument like any other man; or they directly contribute to the disruption of that authority, which was based on the in-

dividual learning of each scholar, by taking partial credit for what another had taught. But the entire Pharisaic tradition is based on the Rabbis' claim that they alone possessed the authoritative tradition of scriptural interpretation.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, to deny the Divine origin of Torah would be to deny the very basis of Judaism as revealed religion. Implicit in this denial is a denial of reward and punishment and of the authority of the scholars. For if the Torah is not from Heaven, the commandments contained therein are Divine in origin. If they are not Divine in origin, then God will not judge men in accordance with their fulfillment of the commandments. If men are not judged according to their fulfillment of the commandments, then there is no secure basis for reward or punishment. If the Torah is not from Heaven, then there is no authoritative tradition of scriptural interpretation, and thus no authority for the scholars. To deny the Divine origin of Torah is equivalent, for the Rabbis, to denying that there are any certain standards of conduct. To deny the Divine origin of the Torah is thus to sanction the flouting of its commandments. In this sense we may say that our Mishnah denies entrance into the World to Come to those who lay an intellectual basis for the breaking of all Divine Law, by denying its Divine origin.

A clear statement that the breaking of certain laws disqualifies an individual for life in the World to Come is this.

## (ii) Mishnah Abot 3:11

R. Eleazar of Modi'im said: He who profanes the Hallowed Things and despises the set feasts and puts his fellow to shame in public, and makes void the covenant of Abraham our father, and discloses meanings in the Torah which are not according to the Halakah, even though he possesses [knowledge of the] Torah and good works, he has no share in the World to Come.<sup>12</sup>

Here we notice that the offences are both ethical and ritual. A great number of statements, citing various transgressions, could be added to this one.<sup>13</sup>

If some transgressions disqualify a man for the life in the World to Come, there are also statements to the effect that the performance of particular commandments assure a man of his place therein.

## (iii) T. B. Sanhedrin 92a

R. Sheshet said: Everyone who teaches Torah in This World will merit to teach it in the World to Come, as it is said, He who waters shall himself be watered.<sup>14</sup> (Prov. 11:25)

## (iv) T. B. Berakot 4b

The Master said: Let him recite the Shema and say the Tefilah. This agrees with R. Yohanan, for R. Yohanan said: Who is a son of [viz: eligible for] the World to Come? He who joins the Ge'ullah to the Tefilah of evening.

Here too, a great number of similar statements could be added. Of such statements Cohen declares:

It must be obvious that in these utterances we cannot have a dogmatic verdict on the eternal fate of the persons concerned. They are nothing more than a hyperbolical expression of approval or disapproval. More importance must, however, be attached to this extract: (He then quotes Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1).<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, it does seem as if most of the statements which relate who does and does not have a share in the World to Come are

homiletical conceits. But Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1 has a different force, perhaps because the offenses cited would tend to uproot the very basis of Pharisaic Judaism. Indeed, Finkelstein would hold that the clauses of that Mishnah which begin with the phrase, "And these are they who have no share in the World to Come", are not really exceptions to the general rule that "All Israelites have a share in the World to Come." He states:

The statement ["All Israel, etc."] has a further implication, which to its authors had preeminent significance, namely, that those who sinned so greatly as to be denied a share in the future life also forfeited the name of Israelite.<sup>16</sup>

Such a view is consistent with the view of R. Eliezer reported in Tosefta Sanhedrin 13:2, to the effect that Gentiles have no share in the World to Come.

In summary, we may say that the basic passage in Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1 intends to exclude from the World to Come those who held beliefs which would undermine some of the basic principles of Pharisaic Judaism; especially the Divine, and hence obligatory, character of the Torah and its laws, the authoritative character of the Rabbinical interpretation of those laws, and the principle that men would be judged by God on the quality of their performance of these laws. Later ages, misunderstanding the intent of the authors of the passage, added other transgressions to the list. Also, corresponding to the transgression which would deny a man future life a number of commandments or good deeds were conceived of as assuring future life. We may doubt whether these later ut-

terances were meant in full seriousness.

### III

Somewhat akin to these statements concerning actions which qualify or disqualify an individual for participation in the World to Come, are those statements which relate the performance of certain actions to the advent of the Messiah.

(v) T. J. Ta'anit 1:1, 64a

R. Aha said in the name of R. Tanhūm b. R. Hiyya: If Israel would make repentance [only] one day, immediately the son of David [viz: the Messiah] would come . . . . R. Lewi said: If Israel would observe one Sabbath according to its ordinance, immediately the son of David would come.

(vi) T. B. Shabbat 118b

R. Yohanan said in the name of R. Simeon B. Yohai: If Israel were to observe two Sabbaths according to their Halakah, immediately they would be redeemed.

These statements must be taken within the context of the extensive debate on the date of the Messiah's advent in which the Rabbis engaged.<sup>1</sup> We may distinguish a number of basic opinions on this subject. For some sages, the date of the Messiah's advent was fixed and known, or discoverable. Thus these statements from T. B. Sanhedrin 97b: "The world shall exist not less than eighty five jubilees,<sup>2</sup> and in the last jubilee the son of David will come: " and "In it (a scroll found in the Roman archives) is stated that four thousand, two hundred and ninety one years after the creation the world will be orphaned."<sup>3</sup> Another opinion was that one should not attempt to calculate the coming of the Messiah.

(vii) T. B. Sanhedrin 97b

R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Yohanan: Blasted be the bones of those who calculate the end.<sup>4</sup>



For they would say that since the ordained time has arrived and he has not come, he will never come.  
But [we should] wait for him.

Still another opinion was that the advent of the Messiah was dependent on the conduct of Israel. Thus

(viii) T. B. Sanhedrin 97b  
Rab said: All the predestined dates of the ends have gone by, and now the matter only depends on repentance and good deeds.

But others held that Israel would be redeemed whatever their actions. This is the view of R. Joshua.

(ix) T. J. Ta'anit 63d  
R. Eliezer says: If Israel does not make repentance they will never be redeemed . . . . R. Joshua said to him: Really, if Israel stays as it is, and does not make repentance they will never be redeemed!!<sup>5</sup>  
R. Eliezer said to him: The Holy One Blessed Be He will raise up over them a king as hard as Haman, and immediately they will make repentance and be redeemed.

In a sense, this is the position of R. Eliezer as well, for he holds that although redemption is dependent on repentance, the Jews will make repentance, willingly or unwillingly.

Thus the statements quoted above, that the correct observance of one or two Sabbaths would bring the advent of the Messiah, belong to that stream of Rabbinic thought which held that the historic process is dependent on the conduct of Israel. We may doubt that they were meant in a dogmatic fashion. Instead the underlying idea seems to be that Israel must demonstrate its desire for the Messianic advent in some fashion. The two examples given are the performance of repentance and the observance of the Sabbath. It is clear that the performance of repentance is linked with the idea that

Israel was exiled because of the sins it committed.<sup>6</sup> The performance of repentance would be an indication to God that Israel truly had recognized its guilt, and desired to re-establish in its completeness its unique relationship to God, and thus to perform all of God's commandments, which it cannot do during this time of exile. Such a desire may also be indicated by a conscientious observance of the commandments which it is still in Israel's power to perform; the Sabbath, for example.

Whatever the date of the Messiah's advent, and whether or not it depended on the conduct of Israel, some scholars were of the opinion that close to that advent one would be able to discern "signs of the times." Thus we have a goodly number of sayings which commence with the words "The son of David will not come until . . ."<sup>7</sup> These statements are related to the time of the advent, and also to the concept of the Birth-Pangs of the Messiah, since most of the signs to be looked for are signs of misfortune. Thus we have this statement:

(x) T. B. Sanhedrin 98a

R. Yohanan said: If you see a generation which continually dwindles, wait for him . . . . If you see a generation upon which troubles come like a river, wait for him.

R. Yohanan said: The son of David will come only in a generation wholly meritorious or wholly culpable.

The meaning of this latter saying is not completely clear. The terminology is partially legal, for the word חַיִּיב, culpable, is often used in a legal sense,<sup>8</sup> as meaning guilty of transgressing a commandment. The word זָכַי, meritorious, also has a legal usage in the meaning of not guilty.<sup>9</sup> But it

also means worthy or deserving in a general sense. It seems most likely that the passage is related to the discussion between R. Eliezer and R. Joshua in T. J. Ta'anit 63d, mentioned above. That is, the generation in which the Messiah will come must demonstrate that it desires the Messianic advent. It can do this, of course, by leading exemplary lives and observing every commandment. It can also do this this by being so wicked that God will subject it to a cruel king, and so turn it to repentance. Whatever the case, it seems clear that this statement too is not meant in a dogmatic manner.

There are a number of statements to the effect that certain actions can delay the coming of the Messiah. Thus we have this Baraita:

(xi) T.B. Sanhedrin 97a.  
The Tanna debe Eliyyahu<sup>10</sup> taught: The world will exist six thousand years: Two thousand years chaos, two thousand years Torah, two thousand years the days of the Messiah; but since our sins have become numerous some of them [the days of the Messiah] have already passed.

That is, the Messiah should have come by now, but our sins have delayed him. In some passages particular sins are mentioned.

(xii) T. B. Niddah 13b  
Our Rabbis have taught: Proselytes and those that play with children delay the Messiah. The statement about proselytes agrees with the view of R. Helbo for R. Helbo said: Proselytes are as hard for Israel as a sore. But what does "those who play with children" mean? . . . . The meaning rather is: Those who marry minor girls who are not capable of bearing children, for R. Yosi said: The son of David will not come until all the souls in the "Guf" have been expended.

This is a very difficult passage to understand, but Klausner

has shown a great deal of insight in his treatment.<sup>11</sup> He relates the statement about the souls in the "Guf" to a passage in Leviticus Rabbah 15:1, which says that the Messiah will not come until all the souls which God intended to create had been expended. Thus the "Guf" is a Divine treasury of souls which have not yet been born, just as the "Ozar" is the Divine treasury of souls after death, awaiting the time of resurrection.<sup>12</sup> At any event, in a version of our Niddah Baraita in Kallah Rabbati, chapter 2, we find a statement that "Proselytes and those who emit semen without purpose delay the Messiah." In this view, the time of the messianic advent is quantitatively dependent on Israel's actions, and not qualitatively dependent.

As to the statement that proselytes delay the coming of the Messiah, Klausner contends that is because "they do not meticulously observe the ceremonial laws."<sup>13</sup> He offers proof from this Tannaitic passage.

(xxx) T. B. 'Abodah Zarah 3b  
It is taught in a Baraita: R. Yosi says: In the Future to Come Gentiles will come and make themselves proselytes . . . and they will put phylacteries on their heads and on their arms, fringes on their garments, and a mezuzah on their doorposts. When they see the war of Gog and Magog, he [the proselyte] will say to them [Gog and Magog] "Why have you come here? They will say to him Against the Lord and His Messiah (Ps. 2:2) . . . And each one of them [the proselytes] will tear off his [ritual object of] commandment and go away.

#### Klausner comments:

The distrust which the Tannaim felt for the Gentiles who became proselytes and then found it hard to stand the test and keep the ceremonial laws like the Jews could hardly be shown more clearly than in this post-

Hadrianic Baraitha.<sup>14</sup>

While it is not absolutely certain that the statements concerning proselytes who delay the Messiah's advent are related to those which criticize them for lax performance of the ceremonial laws, the explanation is consistent with other statements about the Messiah's advent, and is probably to be understood in their light.

Thus we have seen that some Rabbis held that the performance or lack of performance of certain commandments, either by all of Israel or by certain segments of it, could cause or prevent the advent of the Messiah, or hasten or delay his coming. In addition some felt that the time of the advent would be marked either by great conscientiousness in observance or by total unconcern for the Law.

## IV

As the time of the advent of the Messiah comes closer signs of the impending event begin to appear. These signs of the times are conceived in terms of the dissolution of the various bases of life in organized society.

(xiii) T. B. Sanhedrin 97a

It has been taught: R. Nehorai said: In the generation when the son of David comes, young men will insult the old, and old men will stand before the young [to render honor to them]; daughters will provoke their mothers, and daughters-in-law will provoke their mothers-in-law. The face of the generation will be like the face of a dog, and a son will never be abashed in his father's presence. It has been taught: R. Nehemiah said: In the generation when the son of David comes, impudence will increase, esteem be corrupted, the vine will give its fruit, but wine will be costly, the kingdom will be turned to heresy and there will be no rebuke.

The conditions pictured here intimate that the entire social order will be in the process of breakdown. In the ancient world, as is well known, the basis of this social order was the deference paid by the younger generations to the older. Lack of such esteem would signify the impending collapse of the social order. Further troubles are indicated by the vine yielding its fruit, but the wine being costly. Either everyone is drinking too much or the processes of distribution of commodities have broken down.

The upheavals of the time are known by the phrase "The Birth-Pangs of the Messiah." It is of importance to note that during the Birth-Pangs the Messiah has not yet arrived. Quite characteristic are the repeated themes of the scarcity of scholars and the consequent forgetting of the Torah.

(xiv) T. B. Sanhedrin 97a

He said to him: Thus did R. Yohanan say: In the generation when the son of David comes, scholars will be few in number; and as for the rest [of the population] their eyes will fail because of sorrow and grief. Many troubles and evil decrees will come forward afresh, so that while the first is still decreed, the next hastens to come. Our Rabbis taught: In the seven year cycle in which the son of David will come - in the first year this verse will be fulfilled: And I will cause it to rain upon one city, but on another city I will cause it not to rain. (Amos 4:7); in the second, the arrows of hunger will be sent forth; in the third, a great famine, in which men and women and children, pious and religious men will die, and the Torah will be forgotten by its students; in the fourth, plenty and no plenty; in the fifth, great plenty - eating, drinking and rejoicing, and the Torah will return to its students; in the sixth, [Heavenly] sounds; in the seventh, wars; and at the close of the seventh the son of David will come.

This passage is also of interest because of variant readings in several parallel versions. Of particular interest is the version in Song of Songs Rabbah on 2:13, #4 where the phrase in the Sanhedrin version "and the Torah will return to its students" is replaced by the phrase והתורה חוזרת לחדושה ומהחדשה לישראל, which can conceivably be translated as "and the Torah shall return to its new form and be made anew for Israel". This would seem to imply that a new Torah was to be given in the years before the advent of the Messiah.<sup>1</sup> But, in fact there is no reason to understand the phrase in this way. The word חידוש means not only "renovation"; but also "restoration," as it is used in T. J. Ta'anit 65c.2 The verb להתחדש generally means "to renew". Thus the phrase is probably to be rendered as "and the Torah will return to its restoration and be renewed for Israel." This rendering would not imply any new Torah that might be given, but would signify that man's relationship to the old Torah was to be renewed. Besides, it would be quite odd to find a new Torah given in This World, and the seven year cycle which ends with the coming of the Messiah is still part of This World. So it is probably best to understand the passage in Song of Songs Rabbah as a minor variant of the passage in Sanhedrin, with no essential difference in meaning.

If the years before the coming of the Messiah were to see acute social disorder, the forgetting of Torah and the diminishing of scholars it is no wonder that some sages remarked "Let him [the Messiah] come, but let me not see him."<sup>3</sup>

But as we might imagine, there is a remedy for the evils of the Birth-Pangs.

(xv) T. B. Sanhedrin 98b

But it has been taught: R. Eleazar's students asked him: What should a man do to escape the Birth-Pangs of Messiah? Let him engage in Torah and in benevolence.

So study of the Law prevents the forgetting of the Law.

# V

Shortly before the advent of the Messiah, the prophet Elijah would appear. Among his functions would be the clarification of doubtful matters within the Law.<sup>1</sup> Even a superficial reading of the Talmud will serve to indicate just how many doubtful or disputed matters there were. Since the Rabbis were of the opinion that the Birth-Pangs would be characterized by a forgetting of the Law, the need for clarification, which is fairly great now, would become even more pressing.

Thus we find several versions of this Baraita.

(xvi) T. B. Shabbat 138b

Our Rabbis taught: When our Rabbis entered the vineyard in Yabneh, they said: In the future the Torah will be forgotten in Israel, as it is said, Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord God, when I will send a famine in the land; not a famine for bread, or thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. and it is written, And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north to east; they shall wander to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it. (Amos 8:11-12) The word of the Lord, this is Halakah [a final decision on disputed rules of conduct], The word of the Lord, this is "The End" [the time of the Messiah's advent], The word of the Lord, this is prophecy.

In the partial parallel in Tosefta 'Eduyot 1:1 the phrase "the Torah will be forgotten in Israel" is replaced by a statement that "In the future there will be a time when a



man will seek a [particular] word of the words of the Torah or of the words of the Scribes, and not find it." In addition, the interpretation of "The word of the Lord" as referring to a Halakah, is replaced by this phrase: "That there will not be one word of the words of the Torah which will resemble its fellow." Taken by itself this would be puzzling, but in context it is quite clear, for the passage continues with the first of a series of decisions in cases which had been disputed. Of particular interest is the fact that in both versions there is an interpretation of "The word of the Lord", which is not to be found, as referring to the time of the Messiah's advent. Even on the opinion of R. Simeon B. Yohai, reported a few lines below the Shabbat version of the Baraita, that the Torah would never be forgotten in Israel, the verses from Amos mean that "They will not find a clear Halakah or a clear Mishnah in any place," that legal controversy would increase and many rulings would be in doubt. The kind of difficulty which was anticipated is well illustrated by the Amoraic discussion which follows the Shabbat Baraita. There it is stated that "In the future a woman will take a loaf of terumah and go around to the synagogues and academies to find out whether it is clean or unclean, and none will know whether it is clean or unclean." Thus whether the future difficulties will be due to the forgetting of Torah or to the multiplication of legal controversy and the resultant doubt of the correct rulings in particular cases, it is clear that there would be con-

siderable confusion as to the correct course of action in particular circumstances.

Elijah's role would be to end this confusion and to clearly declare the correct Halakah. So, in a discussion of why the blessing before partaking of wine is different than the blessing said before the eating of fruit of trees, the question arises if wine may be the basis of a meal; in which case grace should be said after drinking it. The answer is given that the question is theoretical; people do not make wine the basis of their meals. But one questioner persists: "Suppose a man makes it the basis of his meal, what then?" The answer is, when Elijah comes he will tell us. Until then the question will probably remain theoretical.<sup>2</sup>

Elijah's role would be broader than the answering of theoretical questions. He would decide in cases of documents of unknown meaning or importance<sup>3</sup>, in cases of disputed property ownership,<sup>4</sup> or the disposition of property whose ownership is unknown.<sup>5</sup> Thus Elijah would also render decisions in which the law of the case was clear, but the facts were not. Elijah could be presumed to know the facts because of his prophetic gifts or because of his heavenly activity after his ascent.<sup>6</sup>

Among the most important of Elijah's legal activities would be the clarification of rulings of ritual purity. Thus we have the statement, "How can we burn even that which is doubtful together with that which is unclean? Perhaps Elijah will come and declare it clean."<sup>7</sup> He would also

decide questions of family purity.<sup>8</sup> But there were those who disputed this, and claimed that Elijah's functions would be quite different.

(xvii) Mishnah 'Eduyot 8:7

R. Joshua said: I have received as a tradition from Rabban Yohanan b. Zakkai, who heard from his teacher, and his teacher from his teacher, as a Halakah given to Moses from Sinai, that Elijah will not come to declare unclean or clean, to remove afar or to bring nigh, but to remove afar those [families] that were brought nigh by violence and to bring nigh those [families] that were removed afar by violence. The family of Ben Zerefa was in the land beyond Jordan and Ben Zion removed it afar by force. And yet another [family] was there and Ben Zion brought it nigh by force. The like of these Elijah will come to declare unclean or clean, to remove afar or to bring nigh. R. Judah says: To bring nigh but not to remove afar. R. Simeon says: To bring agreement where there is matter for dispute. And the Sages say: Neither to remove afar, nor to bring nigh, but to make peace in the world, as it is written, Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet . . . and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers. (Mal. 3:23f)<sup>9</sup>

Commenting on this passage, Klausner says:

Elijah will come to bring back to their people all those who have been wrongfully excluded from the Jewish community . . . , or to expel those actually unfit . . . , or "to bring agreement where there is matter for dispute" . . . , or even . . . to make peace in the world in general.<sup>10</sup>

Nowhere is it mentioned that Elijah will abrogate the Law, or give a new Law, or even annul parts of the already existing Law. His role is that of judge, not legislator, for his sole legal task is to decide doubtful and disputed cases. This conception of Elijah's activity is related to the Rabbinic discussion of the preconditions for the Messiah's coming, for Elijah helps to create those conditions. The disagreement concerning the scope of Elijah's activity is

partially based on a disagreement as to those preconditions.

## VI

There are a number of passages which suggest that the Law will play the same role in the Messianic Age as it does in This World. Thus Moore writes:

Inasmuch as the days of the Messiah are the religious as well as the political consummation of the national history, and, however idealized, belong to the world we live in, it is natural that the law should not only be in force in the Messianic Age, but should be better studied and better observed than ever before; and this was indubitably the common belief.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it is not surprising to note statements to the effect that the priesthood, the Temple, the altar and the sacrifices, among other things, will endure "forever and ever and ever".<sup>2</sup> Hope for restoration of the Temple and its sacrificial system is mentioned over and over again in the liturgy, forming an essential part of the Amidah, Judaism's basic prayer.<sup>3</sup> If the Law is to be practiced in the Messianic Age, there must be schools to teach it. But since the population of Palestine would increase, due to the return of the Exiles, the resources of the educational system would be strained. A natural solution would be to transport the schools from where they were no longer required, in the lands in which the Exiles had formerly lived, to Palestine.

(xviii) T. B. Megillah 29a  
R. Eleazar ha-Kappar says: The synagogues and academies of Babylon will in the future be planted in the land of Israel.

Indeed, in the most highly spiritual conceptions of the

Messiah he appears as a teacher of Torah - not to Israel, for they have no need of his teaching, but to the Gentiles, who will receive thirty commandments from his hand.<sup>4</sup> This but confirms the impression one gathers from their own literature that the Rabbis did not think that the advent of the Messiah would abrogate the Law, or that he would bring a new Law.

In the light of this understanding we should proceed to the consideration of certain passages which seem to suggest that the Law would not be in effect during the Messianic Age. Here is one which we have taken up for other purposes.<sup>5</sup>

(xi) T. B. Sanhedrin 97a

The Tanna debe Eliyyahu taught: The world will exist six thousand years: Two thousand years chaos, two thousand years Torah, two thousand years the days of the Messiah; but since our sins have become numerous some of them [the days of the Messiah] have already passed.

At first glance this passage appears to imply that with the advent of the Messiah the reign of Torah would cease. This is what Baeck seems to conclude.<sup>6</sup> Davies discussion is balanced, but noncommittal.<sup>7</sup> Freedman writes: "This does not mean that the Torah should cease thereafter, but is mentioned merely to distinguish it from the next era."<sup>8</sup> Now, it is possible to infer from this passage that we are already living in the Messianic Age; certainly in the time allotted for it. But we should not then conclude that Torah is not now in effect. Indeed, the delay in the Messianic advent is caused precisely by our nonfulfillment of the commandments. ("Since

our sins have become numerous some of them have already passed.") If one were to hold that the Torah will not be in effect in the Messianic Age, then this passage would have to be interpreted to mean that one should cease transgressing the laws of the Torah now, in order to bring on the time when those laws would be abrogated. Certainly this would be an odd position. It is more likely that we should interpret this passage in accordance with Freedman's view that "chaos", "Torah", and "days of the Messiah" are to be understood as convenient labels for the various world-eras, and that the coming of the Messiah will not mean the disappearance of Torah.

Another passage which has sometimes been interpreted to mean that the laws of the Torah will be abrogated in the Messianic Age is this:

(xix) T. B. Shabbat 151b

It is taught: R. Simeon b. Eleazar said:<sup>9</sup> Perform while you can find and it is found for you and it is still in your power, and so Solomon said in his wisdom: And remember your Creator in the days of your youth, while the evil days have not yet come (Eccl. 12:1) - these are the days of old age, nor have the days arrived in which you will say "I have no pleasure in them." (ibid.) - these are the days of the Messiah, in which there is neither merit nor guilt.<sup>10</sup> He disagrees with Samuel, for Samuel said: There is no difference between This World and the Messianic Age except subjugation to the [foreign] kingdoms [in This World], for it is said: For the poor shall not cease out of the land. (Deut. 15:11)

Astonishingly, Klausner states:

The meaning of this is, of course, that the Law and the ceremonial regulations will no longer be in force in the Messianic Age.<sup>11</sup>

He also attempts to relate this statement to those which assert

that, during the Birth-Pangs of the Messiah, the Torah will be forgotten or neglected.<sup>12</sup> This is impossible, for the passage under consideration specifically mentions the Messianic Age, and the Birth-Pangs are part of This World, not the Messianic Age. In a parallel passage in Ecclesiastes Rabbah (on 12:1) two explanations of the phrase "nor have the days arrived, etc." are offered. One, given in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi of Siknin, refers the phrase to the time of the "troubles," which means either the troubles which are pre-conditions for the Messianic advent or the Birth-Pangs themselves. The other interpretation, in the name of R. Hiyya b. R. Nehemiah, refers to the phrase to the Messianic Age, "in which there is neither merit nor guilt." Since the Messianic Age is clearly distinguished from the time of "troubles" Klausner cannot be correct in equating them.

Davies' treatment of the passage is judicious and deserves quotation.

The meaning of R. Simeon b. Eleazar's dictum is difficult. Bonsirven would seem to take the words to mean that in the Messianic Age the capacity to sin is obliterated, . . . It seems to us that there are two possibilities as to the interpretation of the phrase [no merit and no guilt] . . . First, the meaning may be that in the Messianic Age the Torah will be so fully obeyed that there will be no guilt, and so spontaneously or easily fulfilled that there will be no merit, . . . The second meaning is the one that seems to us perhaps the most satisfying, namely, that the Torah no longer holds in the Messianic Age, so that questions of reward for observing it and guilt or punishment for refusing to do so do not arise.<sup>13</sup>

These interpretations are indeed possible, but a

fourth interpretation seems more likely and most satisfying, and that is the one implied by the Amoraic statement at the close of our passage. It is an old friend, of course, but here we have it in a more complete version. Let us start from the verse in Deuteronomy, "For the poor shall not cease out of the land." Samuel takes this verse to apply to the Messianic Age, as well as This World. Thus he holds that poverty will not cease in the Messianic Age. An anonymous Amora then compared his statement to that of R. Simeon and stated that the two disagreed. The disagreement can only be on the question of the existence of poverty in the Messianic Age. If Samuel held that poverty would still be present, then R. Simeon must hold that poverty would not be present. His statement then belongs in agreement with that of R. Yohanan in T. B. Sanhedrin 99a that "All the prophets only prophesied in respect to the Messianic Age." That is to say, R. Yohanan held that the wonderful prophetic visions of a redeemed Israel and a renewed world held for the Messianic Age. This implies that poverty would be no more at that time.

Now, it is possible to discover such an assertion within our passage also, if we follow the translation of H. Freedman.<sup>14</sup>

(xix) T. B. Shabbat 151b  
 It was further taught, R. Simeon b. Eleazar said: Perform [righteousness and charity] whilst thou canst find [an object for thy charity], hast the opportunity, and it is yet in thy power, and Solomon in his wisdom too said: Remember also thy creator, in the days of thy youth, or ever the evil days come, - this refers to the days of old age; and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure



in them.' - this refers to the Messianic era, wherein there is neither merit nor guilt.

According to this interpretation, which at least is consistent with the Amoraic understanding of the passage, R. Simeon's statement refers to philanthropy. Its meaning is that one should be charitable now, for in the days of the Messiah charity will not be possible, since no objects for charity will be found. The statement "neither merit nor guilt" means that since there will be no need for charity in the Messianic Age, one will not be able to acquire merit by giving it or guilt by withholding it. Understood in this light the passage says nothing at all about the abrogation of the Law.

Yet another passage which has been understood to state that the law will not be in effect during the Messianic Age is this:

(xx) T. B. Niddah 61b

Our Rabbis taught: A garment in which kil'ayim [material containing both wool and linen] was lost may not be sold to an idolater nor may one make of it a pack-saddle for an ass, but one can make from it a shroud for a corpse. Rab Joseph said: This implies [Hebrew: זאת אומרת] the commandments are abrogated in the Future to Come. Said Abaye (and some say R. Dimi) to him: Did not R. Manni say in the name of R. Yannai: It [the ruling that such a garment should be made into a shroud] was only taught to lament for him [for the time of his eulogy], but to bury him [in it] is forbidden. He [Rab Joseph] said to him: But was it not said about it, R. Yohanan said: Even to bury him [in the shroud made of kil'ayim material is permitted]. And R. Yohanan follows his own reasoning, for R. Yohanan said: What does Free among the dead (Ps. 88:6) mean? When a man dies he is rendered free from the commandments.

The important phrase here is "This implies the commandments are abrogated in the Future to Come." As we have seen, the phrase, the Future to Come, is the most fluid in meaning of all the "hereafter concepts." It can refer to either the Messianic Age or to the World to Come, or to both. It even can refer to the world of souls after death, as it is employed in Genesis Rabbah 100:7.<sup>15</sup> Is it possible to specify its connotation in this passage?

Slotki<sup>16</sup> states that the phrase refers to the time of the resurrection. He writes "Had they [the commandments] remained in force the revived dead would be transgressing the law of kil'ayim." Davies first states "It seems clear, therefore, that in this passage the phrase [The Future to Come] merely means 'in death'."<sup>17</sup> In continuation, however, he states:

But that the idea contained in T. B. Niddah 61b may refer to the Age to Come and not merely to the life after death is highly probable, if not certain. It may be permissible for us to refer here to our argument in Paul and Rabbinic Judaism that the Age to Come was regarded both as an event, which came into being in time, and also as an eternally existing reality in the heavens, as it were. Hence, in one sense, one entered the Age to Come at death when one became free from the obligation to obey the [commandments]. It is to this that T. B. Niddah 61b explicitly refers. But in another sense the Age to Come was to come into history and when this would happen the commandments, . . . , would also cease then, and by implication T. B. Niddah 61b can be referred to this Age to Come that is to come.

He then goes on to discuss whether the Age to Come to which our passage should be referred is the Messianic Age or the post-Messianic World to Come.<sup>17</sup> Now, it is certainly not

established that all the Rabbis considered the World to Come of souls after death identical with the World to Come which was to follow the Messianic Age. Indeed, we have referred above<sup>18</sup> to Finkelstein's theory that the early Pharisees were sufficiently aware of the non-identity of the two conceptions to reconcile disagreement between their proponents by the use of deliberate ambiguity. In any case, the meaning of the phrase "This implies the commandments are abrogated in the Future to Come," which Rab Joseph enunciates, can only be discovered by close attention to the context in which it occurs, and not by mention of some general hypothesis.

Again, things become clearer if we start with the final statement. R. Yohanan holds that the dead are free from the commandments, strange as it seems, in This World; and that others do not have to break commandments to see that the corpse keeps commandments. This is shown by a passage in T. B. Shabbat 151b which deserves quoting.

(xxi) T. B. Shabbat 151b

It was taught: R. Simeon b. Gamaliel said: For a day-old infant the Sabbath is desecrated; for David, King of Israel, dead, the Sabbath must not be desecrated... "For David, King of Israel, dead, the Sabbath must not be desecrated": When he dies a man is idle [from doing] the commandments, and thus R. Yohanan said: Free among the dead (Ps. 88:6) When a man dies he is rendered free from the commandments.

Thus the Gemara here understands R. Yohanan's statement as in agreement with the common sense utterance "When a man dies he does no more commandments." Now it matters little whether R. Yohanan's statement is merely a rephrasing of

this quaint observation, or whether he intends to say that in addition to the fact that a corpse keeps no commandments, it has no commandments to keep. The clear implication is that R. Yohanan's statement is understood to refer to This World.

To return to our passage in T. B. Niddah 61b, R. Yohanan's position in regard to the shroud made of kil'ayim material is that the Baraita reported at the beginning of our passage applied to corpses at burial as well as to corpses during eulogies. This happens to coincide with R. Yohanan's position that in This World the dead perform no further commandments. Rab Joseph is merely the reporter of R. Yohanan's views. He reports those views because R. Yohanan's views have been opposed by others, who restrict the scope of the Baraita and wish to rule that such kil'ayim shrouds can not be employed for burial. The reason they would wish to do that is, as Tosafot on the passage points out, were men to be buried in such shrouds they would be resurrected in them; for the dead are resurrected in the clothes in which they are buried.<sup>19</sup> This attempt at restricting the Baraita's scope, to avoid the implication that the pious dead would be resurrected in ritually impure garments is occasioned by Rab Joseph's original remark, usually translated as "This implies the commandments are abrogated in the Future to Come."

Now the question arises as to whether it was really Rab Joseph's view that "The commandments are abrogated in the Future to Come." Offhand there seems no reason to deny that

this was his opinion. But on closer examination we may find reason to doubt that he actually held this position. The key to the understanding of this entire passage is the two words

זאת אומרת which stand at the beginning of Rab Joseph's statement. They are usually translated by "This implies . . .", and indeed this is a correct translation, except that it does not give the full force of the Hebrew. It is also possible to translate them in interrogative form, as "Does this imply . . .?" Whichever translation is chosen it is clear that Rab Joseph is not reporting his own opinion, but is pointing out one possible implication of the Baraita.

Now the passage emerges in full clarity. The Baraita is stated: One makes shrouds of a garment in which kil'ayim is lost. Rab Joseph points out that this may imply that the commandments are abrogated in the Future to Come. The idea is so horrifying that a memra is quoted which would restrict the ruling of the Baraita, thus avoiding Rab Joseph's implication. Rab Joseph opposes the attempt to restrict the ruling of the Baraita by citing another memra, attributed to R. Yohanan, which asserts that the Baraita was taught to apply to burial. Finally it is recalled that the memra attributed to R. Yohanan is in harmony with his exposition of Psalm 88:6 to the effect that dead men fulfill no commandments.

Thus we may see that this passage does not lend support to the hypothesis that the Torah or the commandments

will be annulled in the Messianic Age or the post-Messianic World to Come. On the contrary, the vigorous attempt by Abaye (or R. Dimi) to restrict the ruling of the Baraita so that the possible inference pointed out by Rab Joseph could not be drawn is eloquent evidence that the idea of the future annulment of the Torah was decisively rejected by the Rabbis.

## VII

Since the Rabbis anticipated no abrogation of the Torah within future world history, it would be surprising indeed if we were to discover passages which implied that a new Torah would be given. Nevertheless, there are a few statements which, at first glance, give the impression that a new Torah is contemplated.

(xxii) Ecclesiastes Rabbah on 2:1, #1  
R. Hezekiah said in the name of R. Simeon b. Zabdi:  
All the Torah which you learn in This World is  
"vanity" in comparison with the Torah [which will  
be learnt] in the World to Come; because in This  
World a man learns Torah and forgets it, but with  
reference to the World to Come what is written  
there? I will put my law in their inward parts.  
(Jer. 31:33)1

(xxiii) Ecclesiastes Rabbah on 11:8, #1  
The Torah which a man learns in This World is  
"vanity" with the Torah [which will be learnt in the  
days] of the Messiah.1

But, as Davies notes, relating a comment from Dr. A. Guttmann, the phrase, Torah of the Messiah, should not be understood as a new Torah which he gives, but the old Torah which he teaches.<sup>2</sup> And, he continues:

Even if this be not admitted, it is not the Torah that is to be changed in the Age to Come (the Messianic Age here), but the relation of man to the

Torah: that is, the Torah will then be differently and more satisfactorily studied.<sup>2</sup>

There is also a passage in Song of Songs Rabbah on 2:13, #4, which seems to say that "the Torah shall return to its new form and be made new for Israel." But, as we have shown above,<sup>3</sup> it is probable that the passage should be rendered as "the Torah will return to its restoration and be renewed for Israel." It does not necessarily imply that a new Torah would be given.

### VIII

All of this should not be taken to mean that the Rabbis foresaw no changes within the Law. We have already cited the statement of Ben Zoma to the effect that "in the Future to Come Israel will not mention the Exodus from Egypt."<sup>1</sup> The "Exodus from Egypt" here mentioned is the third section of the Shema, Num. 15:37-41, which is to be read at least twice a day by observant Jews. Although, his opinion did not prevail, Ben Zoma felt that the Future to Come would bring changes in the liturgy. We have also noted the statement of R. Yosi; who said that "Individuals of natin status and bastards will be pure in the future."<sup>2</sup> R. Judah thought that the Temple harp would become a progressively larger instrument through the stages of the eschatological process.<sup>3</sup>

But other and more drastic changes were contemplated by some Rabbis.

(xxiv) T. J. Megillah 1:7, 70d  
R. Yohanan said: The prophets [the second division of Scripture] and the Writings [the third division

of Scripture] are destined to be abolished, but the Five Books of the Torah will never be abolished.

This is to be understood in the light of the previous discussion, which reiterates the familiar Rabbinic idea that everything found in the Prophets and the Writings could be found in the Torah, if one was sufficiently learned. On this view the Prophets and the Writings were in some sense superfluous, and thus could be discarded with no legal consequences.

(xxv) Tosefta Sanhedrin 4:7

And he shall write for himself a copy of this Torah (Deut. 17:18) In the future the Torah will be changed. And why is its name called Assyrian script? Because it went up with them [the returning exiles] from Assyria. R. (Meir)<sup>4</sup> says: In Assyrian script was the Torah given to Israel, and when they sinned it was turned into Samaritan script, and when they became worthy in the days of Ezra it went back for them to Assyrian script.

One would suppose then that the change would be back to Samaritan script, because of some great sin. In any case, the substance of the Torah will remain unchanged.

(xxvi) Leviticus Rabbah 9:7

R. Pinhas and R. Levi and R. Yohanan said in the name of R. Menahem of Gallia: In the Future to Come all sacrifices will be abrogated, but that of Thanksgiving will not be abrogated; all the prayers will be abrogated but that of Thanksgiving will not be abrogated, as it is written (Jer. 33:11).<sup>5</sup>

Here the era to be understood by the phrase, Future to Come, is probably the Messianic Age; not only because the Jeremiah proof-text comes from a Messianic passage, as Davies would suggest<sup>6</sup>, but also because Yohanan held that the prophets only prophesied for the Messianic Age.



(xxvii) Yalkut on Proverbs 9:2

. . . for all the festivals will in the future be abrogated, but the days of Purim will never be abrogated. R. Eleazar said: Also the Day of Atonement will never be abrogated, as it is said (Lev. 16:34).

This startling assertion is probably based on phrases in the text of the Bible.<sup>7</sup> One wonders if it was not said with tongue in cheek.

(xxviii) Leviticus Rabbah 13:3

R. Yudan b. R. Simeon said: Behemoth [a mythological beast] and Leviathan will stage a wild-animal fight for the righteous in the Future to Come, and anyone who has not seen a wild-animal fight of the gentile nations in This World will merit to see one in the World to Come. How will they be slaughtered? Behemoth will pull down Leviathan with its horns and split it, and Leviathan will pull Behemoth down with its fins and stab it [to death]. And the Sages say: Is this a valid slaughtering? And have we not learned in a Mishnah: All may slaughter and one may slaughter at all times and with any [instrument] except with a sickle, or with a saw or with teeth because they cause agony. R. Abin b. Kahana said: The Holy One, Blessed Be He said: [This is a mis-quote] "A 'new' Torah shall go forth from Me" (Isaiah 51:4 [sic.]), a novel interpretation of Torah shall go forth from Me.

In the Masoretic text of Isaiah 51:4, the word "new" is not present. Davies devotes a great deal of discussion to this passage.<sup>8</sup> Among other things, he writes:

. . . V. Aptowitzer argues, it refers not to the Messianic Age but to the Age to Come. But the picture of the wild beast contest probably refers to a Messianic Age on earth, not to the final Age to Come . . . ., although the possibility is not to be ruled out that the Age to Come itself might be on earth.<sup>9</sup>

But the text clearly states that the era will be the World to Come. Davies discusses the various interpretations of this passage offered by the scholars, and comes to the conclusion that the phrase translated above as "a novel inter-

pretation of Torah shall go forth from Me," should probably be understood as meaning that a new Torah would be given. Thus, he would like to retain the sense of the misquote from Isaiah 51:4, even though he acknowledges that there is scanty manuscript evidence for it. Without the word "New" in the Isaiah quote there would be a great deal of difficulty in proving the doctrine of a "new Torah" from this passage. Difficulties remain in the phrase translated above as "a novel interpretation of Torah", חדוש

חורר. This is probably the best that can be made of the passage. Here especially, one can sense the playfulness of the Rabbis.<sup>10</sup>

## IX

No matter what changes in the Torah the future was to bring, the Rabbis could not bring themselves to the belief that Torah as Instruction from God would ever cease to be. Indeed, why should it, even in the most highly spiritualized conceptions of the World to Come, when the tasks of universal redemption had been long completed, when "there is no eating and no drinking, no begetting of children and no trading, no jealousy, no hatred, and no strife, but the righteous sit with crowns on their heads, taking pleasure from the radiance of the Divine Presence"?<sup>1</sup> As Moore states,

No one can read the works in which the results of the scholastic occupation with Scripture are embodied without feeling that teachers and learners not only took keen intellectual pleasure in their labors, but that many approached the subject in a truly religious spirit, and sought edification as well as enlighten-

ment in the profound study of God's character, will, and purpose, as revealed in his word. It is not strange, therefore, that they should have imagined this study, the occupation of mind and heart with religion, as continuing in the Age to Come, and that then God himself would be their teacher.<sup>2</sup>

(xxix) Tanhuma, ed. Buber, Yitro #13; vol. II, 38b  
The Holy One, Blessed Be He, said to them: On this day I have given them the Torah, and they shall work at it individually. But in the World to Come I shall teach it to all Israel, and they shall not forget it.

כן יהי רצון

Notes

(Full bibliographical entries for all works cited  
will be found in the Bibliography.)

## Notes to Chapter 1, Section 1; pp. 3-9

- 1 Kadushin, Max, Organic Thinking, The Rabbinic Mind.
- 2 Kadushin, The Rabbinic Mind p. 131ff.
- 3 Ibid. p. 135
- 4 Moore, George Foote Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era. II p. 346 (Hereafter cited as Moore)
- 5 Kohler, Kaufmann, article "Eschatology" in Jewish Encyclopedia vol. V, p. 216.
- 6 Moore, II, 379.
- 7 The passage is repeated in Pesikta Rabbati, chapter 21. Edition Friedmann, pp. 98b-99a.
- 8 Cohen, A. Everyman's Talmud p. 364
- 9 Moore, II, 378.
- 10 Klausner, Joseph The Messianic Idea in Israel, pp. 410-411. (Hereafter cited as Klausner)
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid. p. 408
- 13 Danby, Herbert, The Mishnah, p. xxxii (Hereafter cited as Danby)
- 14 The disagreement between Ben Zoma and R. Nathan may be traced to the verse each cites. Jer. 16:14-15, which Ben Zoma cites, and Jer. 23:8-9, which R. Nathan cites, are practically doublets. The passage in chapter 23 contains one extra verb, and R. Nathan expounds this seeming superfluity to his advantage. See Lauterbach's note on this passage in his edition of the Mekilta, vol. I, p. 136. In the parallels to this passage in the T.B. (Berakot 12b), the Yerushalmi (T. J. Berakot 4a) and the Tosefta (Berakot 1:10) R. Nathan is not mentioned and it is Ben Zoma who

quotes Jer. 23.

- 15 The verses quoted in the Hebrew of this passage show minor variants from the Masoretic text. Perhaps this is due to a conflate reading of Jer. 23:7-8 with 16:14-15.

Notes to Chapter 1, Section II, pp. 9-14

- 1 It would certainly be best to examine all passages in Rabbinic Literature which use the terms Messianic Age and the Future to Come. But this is beyond the scope of a master's thesis. I have chosen to examine the passages in Mishnah and Tosefta because concordances exist for these works.
- 2 For a discussion of "value-concepts" see Kadushin The Rabbinic Mind. On concepts of the hereafter, note especially pp. 361-365. Kadushin maintains that the hereafter concepts are never, strictly speaking, value-concepts at all. In these passages however the phrase לעתיד לבוא cannot be considered a value-concept, even loosely speaking. On this, see below p. 12ff.
- 3 See Danby, p. 795.
- 4 See above, p. 6.
- 5 Louis Ginzberg in "The Mishnah Tamid" Journal of Jewish Lore and Philosophy, Vol. I pp. 33-44, 197-209, 265-296; attempts to prove that our Mishnah tractate Tamid, from which I quoted 7:4 (above p. 4) does not properly form a part of Rabbi's Mishnah but is older. However, he specifically excludes 7:4 from the original compilation of Tamid; p. 283. He cites the parallels: T. B. Rosh haShanah 31a and Abot d. R. Nathan A, (ed. Schechter p. 3a). It is of interest to us that neither of these passages uses the term לעתיד לבוא, but both are clearly eschatological, even though they differ as to the precise stage of the eschatological process to which Psalm 92 will apply.
- 6 Kadushin, Rabbinic Mind, pp. 14-34.
- 7 Ibid, p. 364.
- 8 Klausner, p. 400.
- 9 Kadushin, Rabbinic Mind, p. 39f.
- 10 Except the Amora Rab Hillel. See T. B. Sanhedrin 98b.

- 11 The term World to Come also expressed the concept of the world of souls after death. See below, p. 23.
- 12 See above, p. 4.
- 13 Louis Finkelstein, in Mabo le-Massektot Abot ve-Abot d'Rabbi Natan, p. 220, makes a similar point in reference to the two meanings of World to Come. I have adapted his insight to the term Future to Come.
- 14 Kadushin, Rabbinic Mind, p. 31f.
- 15 Ibid. p. 29.
- 16 Ibid. p. 39

Notes to Chapter 1, Section III, pp. 15-23

- 1 The Amora Rab Hillel is an exception. He maintained that the Messiah had already come during Hezekiah's time. See T.B. Sanhedrin 98b & 99a.
- 2 We must be cautious here, for in some of its aspects the Messianic Age is but a continuation of This World.
- 3 Moore, II, 375.
- 4 A collection of such speculations may be found in T.B. Sanhedrin 99a.
- 5 Moore, II, 376.
- 6 Klausner, p. 466.
- 7 The English translation of Klausner's work translates the first clause as "Nine persons ..." This translation, if it were a faithful representation of the original Hebrew, would decide the case completely. Unfortunately, there is no justification in the Derek Erez Zuta passage for a translation such as "persons."
- 8 Klausner, p. 467.
- 9 Moore, II, 349.
- 10 Klausner, p. 392.
- 11 T.B. Sanhedrin 99b. See the discussion above, p. 4f.
- 12 The current editions seem to suffer from a lacuna after the first statement of R. Yohanan. I have adopt-

ed the reading of Theodor's edition. In Yerushalmi 'Abodah Zarah 2:1, 40c a statement is quoted in the name of Rab on this very verse, in which it is he who understands thirty pieces of silver as thirty commandments, which the non-Jews will take upon themselves "in the future." One exposition of this verse in T.B. Hullin 92a places the time of acceptance of these thirty commandments in the past. See also Buber's edition of the Midrash on Psalms, p. 26 and p. 177. The matter is investigated further in Y. M. Guttman's work Behinat Kiyum ha-Mizvot, pp. 2-3.

- 13 The exegesis here is omitted. It is based on the word מַלְלִין, which occurs with full spelling in the Bible only in Genesis 2:4 and in Ruth 4:18. This later verse is understood messianically, since Perez is the ancestor of David, and one group of rabbis thought that David himself would be the Messiah. See Yerushalmi Berakot 2:4, 5a.
- 14 Baeck, Leo Judaism and Christianity, p. 31
- 15 Lamentations Rabbah on 2:2 #4 and elsewhere.
- 16 Moore, II, 334 and Baeck, pp. 23-38.
- 17 This probably means that the Messiah will have an instinct for guilt and innocence.
- 18 This is the name given to Bar Kochba in rabbinic literature.
- 19 In a note on this passage Klausner claims that this is a reference to Bar Kochba's killing of R. Eleazar of Modi'im. (See Klausner, p. 468, note 47.) But the source of this incident in Lamentations Rabbah on 2:2 #4 is full of semi-miraculous details and is certainly not accurate in others. On the other hand, it is not likely that the Rabbis killed Bar Kochba, as is intimated in our passage. Indeed, the passage in Lamentations Rabbah gives a different account of his death. It does not seem as if it will be possible to discover the correct account from these sources. What is clear is that some people rejected Bar Kochba's claim because he did not show the gifts required of the Messiah.
- 20 See Klausner, pp. 420-426.
- 21 See T.B. Sanhedrin 97ab.

## Notes to Chapter 1, Section IV, pp. 23-31

- 1 Klausner, p. 408f. For a further discussion of this conception, see Davies, W.D. Paul and Rabbinic Judaism pp. 314-317.
- 2 Finkelstein contends that the first chapter of Mishnah Abot, in combination with some passages now found in Mishnah Sanhedrin, chapter 10, is based on a Proclamation of the Men of the Great Synagogue, appealing to the people to join them. See his Mabo le-Massektot Abot ve-Abot d'Rabbi Natan throughout, and especially p. xxvii.
- 3 Finkelstein, pp. xxxii-xxxiv.
- 4 p. 5
- 5 In the Hebrew this can be accomplished merely by a change in vowel pointing.
- 6 Some aspects of the concept of resurrection are treated below. See pp. 31-36 and 40-46.
- 7 Here I have followed the translation of H. Freedman, in the Soncino translation of the Babylonian Talmud, edited by I. Epstein, 1938; Sabbath, p. 779.
- 8 Here follows an exegesis similar to the one given in the Shabbat passage.
- 9 This analysis follows that of Finkelstein, p. 216.
- 10 pp. 9-14.
- 11 Chapter 10 in the Mishnah and the Palestinean Talmud, chapter 11 in the Babylonian Talmud, and chapters 12 and 13 in the Tosefta.
- 12 Finkelstein, p. 218 and p. xxxiv.
- 13 Finkelstein, p. xxxvf.
- 14 See above, pp. 6-8.
- 15 Moore, II, 378. See Klausner, pp. 408-411.
- 16 And elsewhere. Discussed above, p. 30.
- 17 See above, p. 6.



## Notes to Chapter 1, Section V, pp. 31-36

- 1 For the most useful discussion in English of the details of Rabbinic Messianic and Eschatological thought see Moore, G. F. Judaism, vol. II, pp. 279-395. His treatment is entirely objective, but relies quite heavily on non-Rabbinic sources for the discussion of Retribution After Death. In addition, Moore is of the opinion, shared by most, that the Rabbis were not careful in their use of the terms World to Come and Future to Come; a view which this paper rejects. J. Klausner, The Messianic Idea in Israel, pp. 388-517, is very full in his discussion of material which he thinks applies to the Messianic Age. Unfortunately, his work suffers from the same methodological shortcomings as Moore's, and much material is included which does not properly belong to a discussion of the Messianic Age, to which Klausner intends to limit his discussion. In addition, the work is marred by a persistent disparagement of Amoraic thought on this subject, and by a consistent nationalism. In A. Cohen Everyman's Talmud, pp. 346-389, we find a great mass of material, not properly digested. The approach is overly pious and seldom evaluative. Kaufmann Kohler's article "Eschatology" in the Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. V, pp. 209-218, is still useful, although modest in scope.
- 2 Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:3.
- 3 p. 29.
- 4 pp. 15-23
- 5 Kadushin, p. 361ff.
- 6 Kadushin, p. 362.
- 7 This account is taken from the works cited in note 1 above.

## Notes to Chapter 2, Section I, pp. 37-40

- 1 See Schechter, S. Aspects of Rabbinic Theology pp. 116-218, and Moore, I, 235-280.
- 2 Moore, I. 263.
- 3 Genesis Rabbah 1:1
- 4 Genesis Rabbah 1:4 and many others.

- 5 Genesis Rabbah 1:4 and 1:10.
- 6 Tanhuma, ed. Buber, Ki Tissa, #17, p. 58b.
- 7 Pesikta d'Rab Kahana, ed. Buber, p. 39b. See also T.B. Menahot, 29b.
- 8 Davies, W.D. Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the World to Come, p. 51.
- 9 Moore, I, 263-280.
- 10 T.B. Sanhedrin 56a and elsewhere. See the references in Ginzberg, L. The Legends of the Jews, vol. V, p. 92, note 55.
- 11 Genesis Rabbah, 24:5 and frequently.
- 12 For an exhaustive study, full of insight, of the question of the commandments and their relationship to the varied conditions of men, see Y. M. Guttman. Behinat Kiyum ha-Mizvot.

Notes to Chapter 2, Section II, pp. 40-46

- 1 See above, p. 27.
- 2 Finkelstein, pp. xxxii - xxxvi and pp. 212-238, and see the discussion above, pp. 23-31.
- 3 M. Sanhedrin 10:1.
- 4 This translation is modified from that of H. Danby in his translation of the Mishnah, p. 397. See his notes there.
- 5 Finkelstein, p. xxxvi.
- 6 Ibid, p. 229, end of note 5.
- 7 Kadushin, Rabbinic Mind, p. 361.
- 8 T.B. Sanhedrin 90a.
- 9 Genesis Rabbah 26:6.
- 10 T.B. Sanhedrin 99b - 100a.
- 11 Mishnah Abot, chapter 1.

- 12 This translation is modified from that of H. Danby in his translation of the Mishnah, p. 451. See his notes there.
- 13 See Cohen, Everyman's Talmud, p. 368.
- 14 This is the usual translation of the verse, but I wonder if R. Sheshet did not understand it this way, He who teaches shall teach. As it stands now in our printed texts of the Talmud it is a mis-quotation, in that the word יִרְאֵה, which is the last word of the verse is spelled יִרְאֵה. Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 432 derive it from the root יָרָא, and parse it as a Hophal meaning "shall be watered." I would suggest that whatever the original spelling, R. Sheshet understood it as יִרְאֵה, derived from the root יָרָא, in the Hiphil, meaning "shall teach." He may also have understood the word יִמְרֹךְ, taken from the root, מָרַךְ, meaning "he who waters" as יִמְרֹךְ, from the root יָרָא, meaning "he who teaches."
- 15 Cohen, A. Everyman's Talmud, p. 368
- 16 Finkelstein, p. xxxviii

Notes to Chapter 2, Section III, pp. 46-50

- 1 See T.B. Sanhedrin 96b to 99a.
- 2 A jubilee is fifty years. Eighty five jubilees would give us 4,250 years.
- 3 This is probably a reference to the troubles which it was believed would precede the Messiah's advent, known as the Birth-Pangs of the Messiah. See above, p. 35. In the continuation of the passage it is clear that the process will end with the Messianic Age.
- 4 This calculation of the end is a calculation of the advent of the Messiah.
- 5 R. Joshua is utterly astonished.
- 6 See the paragraph "Umippne ha'taenu". "But because of our sins . . ." in the Musaf of the Festival Amidah. Hertz, J. H., Authorized Daily Prayer Book p. 820.
- 7 See T.B. Sanhedrin 98a.
- 8 See Jastrow, M. Dictionary, p. 454.

- 9 Jastrow Dictionary, p. 397
- 10 A work not completely identical with the work of that name which we possess. See Strack, H.L. Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash p. 227.
- 11 Klausner, p. 429f.
- 12 See above, p. 25.
- 13 Klausner, p. 478.
- 14 Klausner, p. 480f.

Notes to Chapter 2, Section IV, pp. 51-54

- 1 See the rather full discussion on this point in Davies, W.D. Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the World to Come, (cited as Torah) p. 75f. and Davies, W.D. The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount, (cited as Sermon) p. 178f. and in Klausner, p. 446f. and the notes there.
- 2 Jastrow, Dictionary p. 451.
- 3 T.B. Sanhedrin 98b.

Notes to Chapter 2, Section V, pp. 54-58

- 1 See Klausner, pp. 451-457, and Davies, Sermon, p. 158ff.
- 2 T.B. Berakot 35b.
- 3 Mishnah Babba Mezi a 1:8.
- 4 Mishnah Babba Mezi a 3:4, 3:5.
- 5 Mishnah Babba Mezi a 2:8
- 6 See Ginzberg, L. The Legends of the Jews, IV, 195-235 and notes in VI, 316-342.
- 7 T.B. Pesachim 20b.
- 8 This may be inferred from the discussion in T.B. Kiddushin 72b.
- 9 This translation is adapted from that of H. Danby, The Mishnah p. 436f.

- 10 Klausner, p. 455.

Notes to Chapter 2, Section VI, pp. 58-68

- 1 Moore, I, p. 271.
- 2 Sifre, Numbers #92, edition Friedmann p. 25b.
- 3 Hertz, J. Prayer Book p. 148.
- 4 Genesis Rabbah 98:9, discussed above, p. 17f.
- 5 p. 49.
- 6 Baeck, Leo, The Pharisees p. 72f.
- 7 Davies, W.D. Torah, p. 78f and Sermon, p. 180f.
- 8 Freedman, H. Soncino Press translation of T.B. Sanhedrin, p. 657, n. 9.
- 9 The translation given is extremely literal. Because R. Simeon's statement is laconic it requires interpretation. To give my interpretation at this point would be to decide the case before consideration of the evidence.
- 10 R. Simeon's statement is concluded. The next statement is Amoraic, not Tannaitic. R. Simeon was a Tanna and was contemporaneous with R. Judah ha-Nasi. See Strack, Introduction p. 117.
- 11 Klausner, p. 449. I find this astonishing in view of his explicit statement further on in his book that "... the Law will not be forgotten in the Messianic Age. Even its ritual requirements will be in force as before." (p. 513) He cannot have it both ways.
- 12 Ibid. and see above, pp. 51-54.
- 13 Davies, W.D. Sermon p. 169f.
- 14 Freedman, H., Soncino Press translation of T.B. Shabbat, p. 773.
- 15 Quoted above, p. 26.
- 16 Slotki, Israel W., Soncino Press translation of T.B. Niddah, p. 434, n. 4.
- 17 Davies, W. D., Torah pp. 80-84 and Sermon, p. 181ff.

18 p. 23 and see p. 26.

19 See Tanhuma, ed. Buber, book I, p. 208f. and Ecclesiastes Rabbah on 5:10, #1.

Notes to Chapter 2, Section VII, pp. 68-69

1 Adapted from the translation of Dr. A. Cohen, Soncino edition of the Midrash Rabbah, Ecclesiastes, p. 51 and p. 295.

2 Davies, W. D. Torah p. 71ff. and Sermon p. 174f.

3 p. 52f.

Notes to Chapter 2, Section VIII, pp. 69-72

1 Mekilta, Pisha 16, see above p. 8.

2 Tosefta Kiddushin 5:4, see above p. 11.

3 T. B. 'Arakin 13b, see above p. 24.

4 So Davies, Torah p. 63, and Sermon p. 168.

5 Another proof text is cited from Ps. 56:13.

6 Davies, W. D. Torah, p. 55 and Sermon p. 162.

7 Davies, W. D. Sermon p. 162f.

8 Davies, W. D. Torah p. 59ff. and Sermon p. 165ff.

9 Davies, W. D. Sermon p. 166.

10 See C. G. Montefiore's Introduction to A Rabbinic Anthology p. xlv.

Notes to Chapter 2, Section IX, pp. 72-73

1 T. B. Berakot 17a.

2 Moore, I, p. 273.

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# Appendix

## I Passages Cited in Chapter 1

(1) and (ii) T. B. Sanhedrin 99a

יוחנן יכל הנביאים כולן לא נתנבאו אלא לימות המשיח אבל לעולם הבא (ס' ק') עין לא ראתה אלהים זולתך (אלהים) יעשה למחכה לו ופליגא דשמואל דאמר שמואל יאין בין העולם הזה לימות המשיח אלא שעבוד מלכיות בלבד

(iii) Sifre on Deuteronomy, #47

בז.

(כא) למען ירבו ימיכם בעולם הזה וימי בניכם לימות המשיח כימי השמים על הארץ לעולם הבא

(iv) T. B. Zebahim 118b

רבי אומר חופף עליו זה העולם הזה כל היום  
אלו ימות המשיח ובין כתיפיו שכן זה העולם הבא

(v) Mishnah Berakot 1:5

וחכמים

אומרים ימי חיך העולם הזה כל ימי חיך  
להביא לימות המשיח [ינ]:

(vi) Mishnah of Palestinian Talmud, Berakot 1:9

וחכמים אומרים ימי

חיך העולם הזה כל ימי חיך העולם הבא להביא לימות המשיח:

(vii) Mekilta, Pisha 16

אמר להם בן זומא עתידים ישראל שלא להוכר יציאת מצרים לעתיד לבוא  
שנאמר לכן הנה ימים באים נאם יי ולא יאמר עוד חי יי אשר העלה את בני ישראל  
ממצרים כי אם חי יי אשר העלה את ישראל מארץ צפון (ירמיה מז יד—מז) ר' נתן  
אומר אשר העלה ואשר הביא מניד שמוכרים יציאת מצרים לעתיד לבוא

(viii) Tosefta Berakot 1:12

אמר להם בן זומא לחכמים וכי מזכירים יציאת מצרים לימות המשיח

הרי הוא אומר לכן הנה ימים באים נאם ה' לא יאמר עוד חי ה' אשר העלה 15  
את בני ישראל מארץ מצרים כי אם חי ה' אשר העלה ואשר הביא  
את זרע בית ישראל מארץ צפון וגו' אמרו לו לא שתיקרו יציאת מצרים מהם  
אלא שתהא מצרים מוסיף על מלכיות מלכות עקר ומצרים מפילה.

(ix) Mishnah Ketubot 9:6

ן הלכה מקבר בעלה לבית  
אביה או שחורה לבית חמה ולא נעשית  
אפטרופא אין הורשין משביעין אותה יואם  
נעשית אפטרופא (ס' ה' הורשין) משביעין  
אותה על העתיד לבא ואין משביעין אותה  
על מה שעבר :

## (x) Mishnah Nedarim 8:1

פרק ח קונם יין (נמ' ירו' טלחי) שאני טועם  
היום אינו אסור אלא עד  
שתחשך. שבת זו אסור בכל חשבת ושבת  
שעבר' (נ"א לשעבר) חדש זה אסור בכל החדש  
וראש חדש להבא שנה זו אסור בכל  
השנה וראש השנה לעתיד לבא.

## (xi) Mishnah 'Eduyot 2:10

אף הוא היה אומר חמשה דברים של שנים  
עשר חדש משפט דור המבול שנים עשר  
חדש משפט איוב שנים עשר חדש  
משפט המצריים י"ב חדש משפט גוג ומגוג  
לעתיד לבא י"ב חדש

## (xii) Mishnah Tamid 7:4

ד השיר  
ושהיו הלויים אומרים במקדש ביום הראשון  
היו אומרים לה' הארץ ומלואה תכל ויושבו  
בה בשני היו אומרים גדול ה' ומחולל  
מאד בעיר אלהינו הר קדשו בשלישי היו  
אומרים אלהים נצב בעדת אל בקרב אלהים  
ישפוט ברביעי היו אומרים אל נקמות ה'  
אל נקמות הופיע וגו' בחמישי היו אומרים  
הרנינו לאלהים עזנו הריעו לאלהי יעקב  
בששי היו אומרים ה' מלך גאות לבש וגו'  
בשבת היו אומרים מזמור שיר ליום השבת  
מזמור שיר לעתיד לבא (נ"א לעולם) ליום  
שכולו שבת ומנוחה לחיי העולמים

## (xiii) Tosefta Kiddushin 5:4

נחנין ומטורים

טהורים הם לעתיד לבוא דברי ר' יוסי ר' טאזי אט' אין טהורים ואט' לו ר' יוסי  
הרי הוא אט' וורקתי עליכם טים טהורים וטהרתם אט' לו ר' טכל  
טוטאותיכם וטכל גילוליכם אט' ר' יוסי שאין תלמי לט' אט'הר אחכם אלא  
אפילו מן הנתינות ואפילו מן הממורות

## (xiv) Derek Erez Zuta, end of Chapter 1

ומרח כת אשר ובתיה כת פרעה  
ויש אומרים אף ר' יהושע בן  
לוי (א')

תשעה נכנסו בחייהם (א' לגן עדן (א'  
ואלו הן חנוך בן ירד (א' ואלהו (א'  
ומשיח (א' ואליעזר עבד אברהם (א'  
וחירם מצור (א' ועבד מלך הכושי (א'  
ויעבץ בנו (א' של ר' יהודה הנשיא (א')

## (xv) Genesis Rabbah 98:9

אמר ר' חנין

6 אין ישראל צריכין לתלמודו של מלך המשיח לעתיד לבוא שנאמר אליו נזים ידרושו (ישעיה י"ז)  
לא ישראל, אם כן למה מלך המשיח בא, ומה הוא בא לעשות, לכנס גלויותיהן של ישראל וליתן  
להם שלשים מצות הה"ד ואמר אליהם, אם טוב בעיניכם וגו' [וישקלו את שכרי שלשים  
כסף] (זכריה י"ב) רב אמר אלו שלשים גבורים, רבי יוחנן אמר אלו שלשים מצות, אמר ליה לר'  
יוחנן לא שמיא לרב שאינו מוכר אלא באומות העולם, [על דע' דרב ואמר להן לאשרגל, על דע'  
10 דר' יוחנן ואמר להן לאומות העולם].

## (xvi) Genesis Rabbah 12:6

רבי ברכיה בשם רבי

שמואל אמר אע"פ שנבראו הדברים על מליאתן כיון שחטא אדם  
נתקלקלו • ועוד אינן חזרין להקנות עד שיבא בן פריץ שנא' (חז"ל)  
אלה תולדות פריץ מלא • בשובל ר' דברים שיוחזרו • ואלו הן • זיו •  
היו • קומתו • פירות הארץ • ופירות האילן • ומאורות •

## (xvii) T. B. Sanhedrin 98a

אמר רבי אלכסנדר רבי

יהושע בן לוי רמי כתיב (ויאל"ז) וארו עם ענני שמיא כבר אינש אתה וכתוב (זכריה ט) עני ורוכב על חמור זכו  
עם ענני שמיא לא זכו עני ורוכב על חמור

## (xviii) and (xix) T. B. Sanhedrin 93ab

אמר רבי

תנחום דרש בר קפרא בציפורי מאי דכתיב (חז"ל) שש השעורים האלה נתן לי מאי שש השעורים אילימא שש  
שעורים ממש וכי דרכו של בועז ליתן מתנה שש שעורים

יפנה ירשיע ובדוד כתיב יובכל אשר יפנה יצליח  
מנלן דדואג הוה כתיב הכא (ס"ט) ויען אחד  
מהנערים מיוחד שבנערים וכתוב התם (ס"ט) כה  
ושם איש מעבדי שאל ביום ההוא נעצר לפני  
ה' ושמו דואג האדומי אביר הרועים אשר לשאול  
משיח דכתיב (ישעיה י"א) ונחה עליו רוח ה' רוח  
חכמה ובינה רוח עצה וגבורה רוח דעת ויראת  
ה' וגו' [ב] וכתוב (ס"ט) והריחו ביראת ה' אמר  
רבי אלכסנדר מלמד שהטעינו מצות ויסורין  
כריחיים רבא אמר דמורח ודאין דכתיב (ס"ט) ולא  
למראה עיניו ישפוט (ס"ט) ושפט בצדק דליהוה ויחיה  
במישור לענוי ארץ בר כוזיבא מלך תרתין שנין  
ופלגא אמר להו דרבנן אנא משיח אמרו ליה  
במשיח כתיב דמורח ודאין נחוי אנן אי מורח  
ודאין כיון דחזיהו דלא מורח ודאין קטלוהו

אלא שש סאין וכי דרכה של אשה ליטול שש  
סאין אלא וימו [רמז] לה שעתידין ששה בנים  
לצאת ממנה שמתברכין בשש [שש] ברכות ואלו  
הן דוד ומשיח דניאל חנניה מישאל ועזריה דוד  
דכתיב (ס"ט) ויען אחד מהנערים ויאמר הנה  
ראיתי בן לישית בית הלחמי יודע נגן וגבור חיל  
ואיש מלחמה ונבון דבר ואיש תוארה עמו [א] וגו'  
ואמר רב יהודה אמר רב כל הפסוק הזה לא אמרו  
דואג אלא בלשון הרע יודע נגן שיודע לישאל  
גבור שיודע להשיב איש מלחמה שיודע לישא  
וליתן במלחמתה של תורה [א] איש תואר שמראה  
פנים בהלכה ונבון דבר שמבין דבר מתוך דבר  
וה' עמו שהלכה כמותו בכל מקום בכולהו אמר  
להו יהונתן בני כמוהו כיון דאמר ליה [וה' עמו]  
מילתא דבדידיה נמי לא הוה ביה חלש דעתיה  
ואיקניא ביה דבשאל כתיב (ס"ט) ובכל אשר

## (xx) T. B. Sanhedrin 98a

אמר רבי אלכסנדר רבי

יהושע בן לוי רמי כתיב (ס"ט) בעתה וכתוב אחישנה זכו אחישנה לא זכו בעתה

## (xxi) T. B. 'Arakin 13b

דבי יהודה אומר כנור של מקדש של שבעת  
 נימין היה שנאמר "שובע שמחות" [את] פניך אל חיקי שובע אלא שבע ושל  
 ימות המשיח שמונה שנאמר "למנצח על השמינית על נימא שמינית של  
 עולם הבא עשר שנאמר "עלי עשור ועלי גבל עלי הגיון בכנור ואומר  
 "הודו לה' בכנור בגבל עשור זמרו לו שירו לו שיר חדש

## (xxii) T. B. Shabbat 152b

חניא ר' אליעזר אומר נשמתן של צדיקים  
 גנוזות תחת כסא הכבוד שנאמר והיתה נפש אדני צרורה בצרור החיים ושל  
 רשעים \*וּמְמוֹת וְהוֹלָכוֹת\* [ומלאך אחד עומד בסוף העולם ומלאך אחר עומד  
 בסוף העולם ומקלעין נשמתן זה לזה] שנא' ואת נפש אויבך יקלענה בחוך כף  
 הקלע

## (xxiii) Sifre to Numbers, #139

ר' אליעזר בנו של ר' יוסי הגלילי אומר סימן זה יהיה בידך שכל זמן שאדם  
 נתון בחיים נפשו סקורה ביד קונו שנאמר אשר בידו נפש כל חי (לוי י"ב) מת נתונה באוצר

## (xxiv) T. B. Babba Batra 58a

ר' בנאה  
 היה קא מציין מערתא כי ממא למערתא  
 דאברהם אשכחיה לאליעזר עבד אברהם  
 דקאי למי בבא א"ל מאי קא עבד אברהם  
 א"ל גאמי בכנפה דשרה וקא מעיינא ליה ברישיה א"ל זיל אימא ליה בנאה  
 קאי אבבא א"ל ליעול מידע ידיע דיצר בהאי עלמא ליכא עייל עיין ונפק

## (xxv) Abot d'Rabbi Natan, version A, chapter 25

בשעת שמירתו של רבן יוחנן בן זכאי היה מגביה קולו וזוכה. אמרו לו תלמידיו רבי עמוד הגבוה  
 נר העולם (י) פטיש החוק מפני מה אתה זוכה. אמר להם וכי פני מלך בשר ודם אני הולך להקביל (י) שאם  
 יכעס עלי אין כעסו אלא בעולם הזה ואם יאסרני אין איסורו אלא בעולם הזה (ח) ואם ימיתני אין מיתתו  
 אלא בעולם הזה (ט). ולא עוד שאני יכול לפייסו (ז) בדברים ולשחרו בממון. הא איני הולך להקביל אלא  
 פני מלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה (א) שאם יכעס עלי כעסו בעולם הזה ובעולם הבא (ב) שאיני יכול לפייסו  
 בדברים ולשחרו בממון (י) ועוד שיש לי שתי דרכים אחת לנן ערן ואחת לניהנם ואיני יודע אם יכריעני  
 לניהנם או אם יכניסני לנן ערן

## (xxvi) Genesis Rabbah 100:7

לע"ל הפה  
 והכרם מדיינין זה עם זה הפה אומר לחרם כל מה שגזלתי וחמסתי  
 בך נתתי ולאחר ג' ימים היא נבקעת והיא אומרת לו הא לך כל  
 מה שגזלתי וחמסתי שנאמר (קלס יב) ותשבר כד על המבוע

## (xxvii) Mishnah Abot 4:16

מזן רבי יעקב אומר העולם הזה דומה  
 לפרוודור בפני העולם הבא התקן עצמך  
 בפרוודור כדי שתכנס למרקלין :

## (xxyiii) Tosefta Berakot 7:21

י' כל חותמי ברכות שבמקדש היו  
עד העולם מי שקלקלו חמינין ואמרו אין העולם אלא אחד התקינו שיהיו אומרים מן  
העולם ועד העולם ומדיעין שאין העולם הזה במני העולם הבא אלא כפרודור ממני  
מרקלין :

## (xxix) Tosefta Sanhedrin 13:6-8

י' דור הטבול אין להם חלק לעולם  
הבא ואינן חיינן לעולם הבא שנ' ויטח את כל היקום אשר על פני האדמה

בעולם הזה ויטחו מן הארץ בעולם הבא ר' יהודה בן בתירא אומר ויאמר י"י  
לא ידון רוחי באדם לעולם לא ידון ולא רוחי בהם לעולם דבר אחר ויאמר  
י"י לא ידון אדם המקום אני מחזיר להם רוחם לנדנה ר' טנחם בר' יוסי אומר  
לא ידון אדם המקום איני דן בשעה שאני משלם שכר טוב לצדיקים אבל רוחן של  
רשעים קשה להן יותר מן הכל שנ' רוחם אש תאכלם : דור הטבול אין להם  
חלק לעולם הבא ואינן חיינן לעולם הבא ענ' ויפץ י"י אותם משם על פני כל  
הארץ בעולם הזה ויחדלו לבנות העיר בעולם הבא : אנשי סדום אין להם  
חלק לעולם הבא ואינן חיינן לעולם הבא ענ' ואנשי סדום רעים וחטאים בעולם  
הזה לי"י טאר בעולם הבא דבר אחר רעים איש על חבריו וחטאים בגילוי  
ערוות לי"י בעבודה זרה, טאר בשפיכות דמים :

(xxx) Mekilta WaYassa<sup>1</sup> chapter 4

ר' אצלר המודעי אומר אם תזכו לשמור את השבת עתיד הקב"ה  
ליתן לכם שש מדות טובות ארץ ישראל ועולם הבא ועולם חדש ומלכות בית דוד  
וכהונה ולוייה לכך נאמר אכלוהו היום.

## II Passages Cited in Chapter 2

## (i) Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1

פרק י' כל ישראל יש להם חלק לעולם  
הבא שנאמר (ישעיה ס') ועמד  
כולם צדיקים לעולם ירשו ארץ נצר ממעי  
מעשי ידי להתפאר : ואלו שאין להם חלק  
לעה"ב : האומר אין תחיית המתים מן  
התורה : ואין תורה מן השמים ואפיקורוס  
ר' עקיבא אומר אף הקורא בספרי החיצוני :

וחלוצש על המכה ואומר (שמות ט') כל  
המחלה אשר שמתי במצרים לא אשים עליך  
כי אני ה' רופאך : אבא שאול אומר אף  
ההוגה את השם באותיותיו :

(ii) Mishnah Abot 3:11

י"א ר'  
אלעזר המודעי אומר המחלל את הקדשים  
והמכזה את המועדות והמלבין פני חברו  
ברבים \* וחמיסר ברית של אברהם אבינו  
עליו השלום \* והמגלה פנים בתורה שלא  
בהלכה \* אף על פי שיש בידו תורה ומעשים  
טובים \* אין לו חלק לעולם הבא :

(iii) T. B. Sanhedrin 92a

אמר רב ששת  
כל המלמד תורה בעולם הזה זוכה ומלמדה  
לעולם הבא שנאמר (משלי יב) ומרוה גם הוא  
יורה

(iv) T. B. Berakot 4b

אמר מר קורא ק"ש  
וכתפלל מסייע ליה לר' יוחנן \* דאמר ר' יוחנן  
י"א וזוהו בן העולם הבא זה המוכר גאולה  
לחפלה של ערבית

(v) T. J. Ta'anit 1:1, 64a

רבי אחא בשם רבי הנחום כי רבי חייה אילו ישראל  
עשים תשובה יום אחד מיד היה בן דוד בא \* מה טעמא  
היום אם בקולו תשמעו \* א"ר לוי אילו היו ישראל משמרים  
שבת אחת \* כתיקנה מיד היה בן דוד בא \* מה טעמא ויאמר משה  
אכלוהו היום כי שבת היום ליי וגו' ,

(vi) T. B. Shabbat 118b

אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יוחי  
\*אלמלי משמרים ישראל שתי שבתות כהלכתן מיד נגאלים

(vii) T. B. Sanhedrin 97b

א"ר שמואל בר נחמני אמר ר'  
יונתן \* תיפח עצמן של מחשבי קיצין שהיו  
אומרים כיון שהגיע את הקץ ולא בא שוב אינו  
בא אלא חכה לו

(viii) T. B. Sanhedrin 97b

אמר רב כלו כל הקיצין ואין הדבר תלוי אלא  
בתשובה ומעשים טובים

(ix) T. J. Ta'anit 63d

ר' לעזר אומר  
\*אם אין ישראל עושין תשובה אין נגאלים לעולם שני בשבועה ונחת  
הושעון. אמר לו ר' יהושע וכי אם יעמדו ישראל ולא יעשו תשובה  
אינן נגאלין לעולם. אמר לו ר'א הקב"ה מעמיד עליהן מלך קשה  
בהמן ומיד הן עושין תשובה והן נגאלין

## (x) T. B. Sanhedrin 98a

אמר

ר' יוחנן אם ראית דור שמתמעט והולך חכה לו שנאמר (שמותל ז כג) ואת עם עני-תושיע וגו' אמר רבי יוחנן אם ראית דור שצרות רבות באות עליו כנהר חכה לו שנאמר (ישעיה נט) כי יבא כנהר צר (ו)רוח ה' נוססה בו וסמיך ליה ובא לציון גואל ואמר רבי יוחנן אין בן דוד בא אלא בדור שכולו זכאי או כולו חייב

## (xi) T. B. Sanhedrin 97a

יתנא דבי אליהו ששת אלפים שנה הוי עלמא שני  
אלפים תוהו שני אלפים תורה שני אלפים ימות המשיח  
ובעונותינו שרבו יצאו מהם מה שיצאו

## (xii) T. B. Niddah 13b

תנו רבנן הגרים והמשחקין  
בתנוקות מעכבין את המשיח בשלמא גרים  
כדרי חלבן דא"ר חלבן קשין גרים לישראל  
כספחת אלא משחקין בתנוקות מאי היא אילימא  
משכב זכור בני סקילה ניהו אלא דרך אברים  
בני מכול ניהו אלא דנכבי קטנות דלאו  
בנות אולודי ניהו דא"ר יוסי אין בן דוד בא  
עד שיכלו כל הנשמות שבגוף

## (xxx) T. B. 'Abodah Zarah 3b

דתניא רבי יוסי אומר  
לעתיד לבא באין עובדי כוכבים ומתגירין  
ומי מקבלינן מיניהו והתניא \*אין מקבלין  
גרים לימות המשיח כיוצא בו לא קבלו גרים  
לא בימי דוד ולא בימי שלמה אלא שנעשו  
גרים גרורים ומניחין תפילין בראשיתן תפילין  
בזרועותיהם ציצית בבגדיהם מזוזה בפתחיהם  
כיון שרואין מלחמת גוג ומגוג אומר להן על  
מה באתם אומרים לו על ה' ועל משיח  
שנאמר \*למה רגשו גוים ולאומים יהנו ריק  
[וגו] וכל אחד מנתק מצותו והולך

## (xiii) T. B. Sanhedrin 97a

תניא ר' נהוראי אומר דור שבן דוד בא בו נערים ילבינו  
פני זקנים וזקנים יעמדו לפני נערים ובת קמה באמה וכלה בחמותה ופני הדור כפני כלב ואין הבן  
מתבייש מאביו תניא רבי נחמיה אומר דור שבן דוד בא בו העזות תרבה והיוקר יעות והגפן יתן פרי  
והיין ביוקר ונהפכה כל המלכות למינות ואין תוכחה מסייע ליה לר' יצחק דא"ר יצחק אין בן דוד בא  
עד שתתהפך כל המלכות למינות



## (xiv) T. B. Sanhedrin 97a

א"ל הכי אמר רבי יוחנן  
 דור שבן דוד בא בו תלמידי חכמים מתמעטים  
 והשאר עיניהם כלות ביגון ואנחה וצרות רבות  
 וגזרות קשות מתחדשות עד שהראשונה פקודה  
 שניה ממהרת לבא ת"ר שבוע שבן דוד בא  
 בו שנה ראשונה מתקיים מקרא זה (עמוס ז)  
 והמטיתי על עיר אחוז ועל עיר אחת לא  
 אמטיר שניה חיצו רעב משתלחים שלישית  
 רעב גדול ומתים אנשים ונשים וטף חסידים  
 ואנשי מעשה ותורה משתכחת מלומדיה  
 ברביעית שובע ואינו שובע בחמישית שובע  
 גדול ואוכלין ושותין ושמחין ותורה חוזרת  
 ללומדיה "בששית קולות בשביעית מלחמות  
 במוצאי שביעית בן דוד בא

## (xv) T. B. Sanhedrin 98b

והתניא  
 שאלו תלמידיו את רבי אלעזר מה יעשה אדם  
 וינצל מחבלו של משיח יעסוק בתורה ובגמילות  
 חסדים

## (xvi) T. B. Shabbat 138b

ת"ר \*כשנכנסו רבותינו לחרם ביבנה אמרו עתידה  
 תורה שתשתכח מישראל שנאמר הנה ימים באים באים נאם ה' אלהים והשלחתי  
 רעב בארץ לא רעב ללחם ולא צמא למים כי אם לשמוע את דברי ה' וכתוב  
 "ונעו מים עד ים ומצפון ועד מזרח יושטמו לבקש את דבר ה' ולא ימצאו  
 דבר ה' וי הלכה דבר ה' זה הקץ דבר ה' זו נבואה

## (xvii) Mishnah 'Eduyot 8:7

אמר רבי יהושע  
 מקובל אני מרבן יוחנן בן זכאי ששמע מרבו  
 ורבו מרבו • הלכה למשה מסיני • שאין  
 אליהו בא לממא ולמהר לרחק ולקרב • אלא  
 לרחק המקורבין בורוע • ולקרב המרוחקין  
 בורוע • משפחת בית צריפה היתה בעבר  
 הירדן ורחקה בן ציון בורוע

ועוד אחרת היתה שם • וקרבה בן ציון בורוע  
 כגון אלו אליהו בא לממא ולמהר • לרחק  
 ולקרב • רבי יהודה אומר לקרב • אבל לא  
 לרחק רבי שמעון אומר להשוות המחלוקת •  
 וחכמים אומרים לא לרחק • ולא לקרב • אלא  
 לעשות שלום בעולם • שנאמר (מנא י) הנני  
 שוכח לכם את אליה הנביא וגו' והשיב לב  
 אבות על בנים ולב בנים על אבותם •

(xviii) T. B. Megillah 29a

ר"א הקפר אומר עתידין בתי כנסיות ובתי מדרשות שבבבל שיקבעו בא"י

(xix) T. B. Shabbat 151b

ותניא רשב"א אומר

עשה עד שאתה מוצא ומצוי לך ועורך בידך ואף שלמה אמר בחכמתו יזכור את בוראך בימי בחורותיך עד [אשר] (ש) לא יבוא ימי הרעה יאלו ימי הזקנה והגיעו שנים אשר תאמר אין לי בהם חפץ אלו ימי המשיח שאין בהם לא זכות ולא חובה ופליגא דשמואל \*דאמר שמואל אין בין העולם הזה לימות המשיח אלא שיעבור מלכיות בלבד שנא' כ"ל לא יחדל אביון מקרב הארץ

(xx) T. B. Niddah 61b

\*ת"ר יבגר

שאבד בו כלאים. הרי זה \*לא ימכרנו לעכו"ם ולא יעשנו מרדעת לחמור : אבל עושה ממנו תכריכין למת אמר רב יוסף זאת אומרת מצות במלות לעתיד לבא א"ל אב"י ואי תימא רב דימי והא א"ר מני א"ר ינאי לא שנו אלא לספרו אבל לקוברו אסור א"ל לאו איתמר עלה א"ר יוחנן : אפי' לקוברו ורבי יוחנן למעמיה \*דא"ר יוחנן מאי דכתיב \*במתים חפשי כיון שמת אדם נעשה חפשי מן המצות

(xxi) T. B. Shabbat 151b

תניא רשב"ג אומר תינוק בן יומו חי מחללין עליו את השבת דוד מלך ישראל מת אין מחללין עליו את השבת תינוק בן יומו חי מחללין עליו את השבת \*אמרה תורה חלל עליו שבת אחד כדי שישמור שבתות הרבה דוד מלך ישראל מת אין מחללין עליו כיון שמת אדם בטל מן המצות והיינו \*דא"ר יוחנן \*במתים חפשי כיון שמת אדם נעשה חפשי מן המצות

(xxii) Ecclesiastes Rabbah on 2:1, #1

ר' חזקיה בש"ר סימון בר

ובדי אמר כל התורה שאת למד בעוה"ז (ג) חבל הוא לפני תורת שבעולם הבא : לפי שבעולם הזה אדם למד תורה ושובת אבל לעתיד לבוא מח כתיב תמן (ימיו ל"א) נתתי את תורתך בקרבם :

(xxiii) Ecclesiastes Rabbah on 11:8, #1

\*תורה שאדם למד

בעוה"ז חבל היא לפני תורתו של משיח :

(xxiv) T. J. Megillah 1:7, 70d

ר' יוחנן אמר הנביאים והכתובים עתידין

ליבטל. וחמשת ספרי חורה אינן עתידין ליבטל :

(xxv) Tosefta Sanhedrin 4:7

וכתב לו את משנה החורה הזאת וג' חורה עתידה להשתנות ולמה נקרא

שמה אשורי על שום שעלה עמה מאשור ר' אוטר בכתב אשורי ניתנה חורה לישראל

ולשחטאו נהפכה להן לדועץ וכשוכו בימי עורה חורה להן אשורית

(xxvi) Leviticus Rabbah 9:7

ר' (ב) רבי פנחס ורבי לוי

ורבי יוחנן בשם ר' מנחם דגליא לעתיד לבא כל הקרבנות במדין

וקרבן תודה אינו בטל כל החפלות במלות ההודאה אינה במלה

## (xxvii) Yalkut on Proverbs 9:2

שכל המועדים עתיד  
ליבטל וימי המורים אינן בשלים לעולם, א"ר אלעזר אף יום הכפויים  
לא יבטל לעולם שנאמר קדושה זאת לכם לחקת עולם.

## (xxviii) Leviticus Rabbah 13:3

א"ר יודן ברבי שמעון כל בהמות ולויתן הן קניגין  
של צדיקים לע"ל וכל מי שלא ראה קניגין של אומות העולם בעוה"ז  
זוכה לראותה לעוה"ב כיצד הם נשחטים בהמות נותין ללויתן בקרניו  
וקורעו ולויתן נותין לבהמות בסנפיריו ונוחרו וחכמים אומרים זו

שחיטה כשירה היא (ז) ולא כך תנינן הכל שוחטין ובכל שוחטין ולעולם  
שוחטין חוץ ממגול קציר והמגרה והשנים מפני שהן חונקין אמר רבי  
אבין בר כהנא (ח) (ט) אמר הקב"ה תורה חדשה מאתי תצא חדוש תורה  
מאתי תצא

## (xxix) Tanhuma, ed. Buber, Yitro #13; vol. II, 38b

אמר להם הקב"ה ביום הזה נתתי לכם את  
התורה והיו יגיעים בה יחידים, (סג) אבל לעולם הבא אני מלמדה לכל ישראל ואין  
שוכחין אותה.