

THE SOUL-CONCEPT IN TALMUDIC LITERATURE.

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submitted

as graduation thesis

1915

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NOTE:

The conclusions I have come to as to the views of the soul-concept found in Talmudic Literature, I base on a careful analysis of the material I gathered directly from the sources. The material in the Talmud - Palestinian and Babylonian - and some of the minor Midrashim I gathered with the aid of Frankel's "Zion Lidrash", M. Hyman's "Beth - Vaad", and Jellinek's "Beth Hamidrash".

The other sources of Rabbinic Literature I have perused without any such aid; using the following editions:-

Mishna	Wilna, 1909.
Tosefta	Zuckermann
Sifra	Weiss
Sifre	Friedman
Mekilta	Weiss
Tanhuma	Buber
Pessikta.d..R.Kahana	"
Pessikta Rabatha	Friedman
Aboth d' R. Nathan	Schechter
Midrash Rabba	Warsaw, 1873
Midrash Tehillim	Buber.

INTRODUCTION.

In considering the question of the conception of the soul found in Talmudic literature one is on much less terra firma than he would be in the case of a question of ethical or halachic import, for two reasons: first, because of the peculiar nature of the subject; second, because of the characteristic type of mind of the rabbinic thinkers. The first needs no further expatiation; the second I will touch on briefly.

The Rabbis - or at least those of their numbers who left the deepest and most lasting impress on their contemporaries and future generations - were primarily interested in Halakha. Even if they did indulge occasionally in Haggadah it served but as a temporary diversion, only to return with added enthusiasm and concentrated application to the all-engrossing halachic problems. Some of the greatest Halachists among them engaged also at times in haggadic speculation and distinguished themselves similarly there, but they soon returned to the real, "serious" task - the exacting, but enduring Halacha. (If ^{any} it had'nt been the case, their period of influence would have been curtailed.) Johanan b. Zachai, we told¹, was master alike in both; and so were also the two tannaim of the generation immediately following (1st half of second century C.E.) R. Eliazar b. Azariah and R. Tarfon².

That R. Akiba, that great halachist, was second to none in the field of Haggadah, the well-known " Pardes " story testifies³ - leaving little room for doubt - but that this was considered a much inferior branch of thought is born out quite convincingly by the very interesting incident related in Hag. 14:19 where the other master of Haggadah, his contemporary Eli'azar b. Azariah, exhorts him not to spend any of his valuable time on Haggadah but apply himself entirely to the study of Halacha (Negaim and Ohaloth)⁴.

Indulgence in Haggadah was at first encouraged at the time when Christianity assumed a menacing aspect, in order to fight it with its own weapon - mysticism. But the adapted means to ward off the encroaching menace soon assumed, itself, a suspicious aspect, and hence the effort was made to discourage it. Thus the haggadic zeal was dampened; and it never flourished in Babylonia (except for brief spurts owing to Palestinian influence), and even in Palestine it did not flourish as it might have done, had not the attempt been made to discourage it⁵. It must be added that it was not the ethical phase of it that was looked upon with such disfavor but the mystic/- to which part, our subject in the main belongs.

Owing to this attitude on the part of the Rabbis ^{there} on Haggadic mysticism, the results of such speculation was deprived of authoritativeness. Hence the views expressed by different Tannaim or Amoraim represent merely the opinions of their individual authors (reflecting frequently the views held by some of their contemporaries),

But they do not represent authoritatively settled beliefs. Hence it might be more truly said, the "soul-concepts" in Talmudic Literature, instead of, the "soul-concept".

The question as to what degree a view voiced by a certain Tanna or Amora was influenced by a foreign element (Greek, Babylonian, or Persian), and to what degree it represents his own original contribution, is not an easy one to determine. Of course, they were undoubtedly influenced by some ideas which came to them from outside of their own camp, - especially if the new thought, or mode of expression, resembled in some respects their own way of thinking.--- This is why Plato exerted considerable influence on Talmudic thought?---(I will try to draw attention to such wherever I suspect that this is the case). -- In the last analysis, however, there always remains the possibility, no matter how slight in some instances, that two men (even of different environment and temperament) may arrive at the same conclusion; and hence we can never be certain as to the one influencing the other.

Finally, just a word as to the ^{historical} chronological significance, bearing on the soul-concepts in Rabbinic times, of opinions cited definitely in the name of certain tannaim or amoraim. Their significance is not so great as it might, at the first thought, appear. In the first place, an opinion quoted in the name of a certain one, does not always mean that it had been entertained by that one. It may frequently represent the opinion of the one who did the "quoting". The error may have been wilful or accidental, as is the case with similar errors in modern times. (However,

the difference between the errors found in "quotations" in rabbinic literature, - due to the paucity in recording means in those days,- are more often of the accidental kind; while those of modern times are more often of the other). Secondly, even in those case where the quotation deserves the name, it does not always mean that the view expressed would characterize the generation of its author as adherents of it. It sometimes represents the view of only a very few thinkers of his day who were of the same opinion. Nor does it always mean, in case we do not meet with a similar citation in the name of one who had preceded him, that he was the first rabbinic representative of that idea. There may have been one preceding him who entertained such a view, but it did not was not recorded. We must, therefore, be extremely reserved about this phase of any view recorded in this historical thesaurus of knowledge, and so much more so when we have to deal with so delicate a subject as soul-concept.

- Notes-1. Ab. d. R. Nathan (ed. Schechter) XXVII B, p. 29b. - See note 3, ib. for other references.
2. ib. XVIII A, p. 34a; Eleazer belonged to second generation of tannaim; Tarfon, to the 3rd.
3. Y. Hag. XI, 77b. Babli, ib. 14b, Tosefta, ib. 11, 3.
4. See Neumark, "Gesch. d. Jued. Phil." vol. 1, p. 55.
5. Cf. ib., p. 60 - See note 3, sup., Y. Sab. XVI, 15c; R. Joshua b. Levi (P. Am., 3rd cent.) declares that one who writes it will be deprived of "olam - haba", and he who discusses it will suffer injury.

6
Notes(continued):

6.Cp."Gesch.d.j.Phil."vol.1,p.61 - and note 3,ib., Ab.d.R.

Nathan XXXI A(ed.Schechter) p.46a: Jose the Galilean's (middle
2nd cent.) original version of the idea of Man as a microcosm.

7. Cf. ib. Vol. 1. p.29 ff.

I. ESSENCE AND ORIGIN.

1. The Soul-Substance.

What is the conception of the soul-substance met with in Talmudical literature? Aristotle said that he could not define the essence of the soul*. And to him the essence and functions of the soul constituted a most serious problem, the solution of which -if such a solution were possible by man - would surely crown him who discovered it as one possessing the most perfectly developed and highest intellect among men. How much the less, then, would one expect to find a definite, exact, and concrete definition of what constitutes the substance of the human soul, among those early Jewish thinkers whose thoughts are recorded in that unique thesaurus of Jewish thought known as Talmudic Literature. For, first, to the Rabbis (even those among them who indulged in Hagadah) metaphysical speculation, in general, was by far not so engrossing a subject for thought as it was to Plato and Aristotle. Secondly, there was an additional deterrent to the unchecked flow of the imagination, in the case of speculation on such a subject as the substance of the human soul, in that it was shielded by a halo of holiness - it was too closely related to God to permit free dialectic dissection. Of course, Scriptural tradition and their

* De An. 414 b, 20 seq.; "No proper definition for the soul is possible if the definition is to define the generic form, which remains identical with itself in all its specific manifestations"

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daily experiences taught them that man was a dual creature, composed of tangible, inert, powerless, earthly matter, called body (guf, golam) and an attenuated, active, powerful something, called soul, spirit(ruah, neshamah),-- the latter, when present in the former, making the performance of the necessary human functions possible.¹ But as to the exact substance of this life-endowed something(Gen. R. 14:11) This must remain undefined, even as is God Himself.

However, though they have'nt given us a definitely precise description of what manner of substance they thought the soul was constituted, we can get quite a definite idea of what notions they entertained about it. We can get this from the terms they employed to characterize it and the incidents told by them of the Soul as a distinct entity. Let us analyse some of those and then see whether we can state directly those notions about the soul-substance which they expressed indirectly.

We are told (Gen.R. 14:10) about the mode of procedure in the creation of man, that God first formed a life-less figure(golam) out of the earth and then injected a soul into it by breathing it in(zarak bo neshamah....binfiha).

In another instance, we are told about the death of Moses that God drew out his soul by a kiss.² According to these writers the soul is something that can be introduced into a certain circumscribed area by breathing it into it, and can be drawn out again by inhaling it at the mouth of that receptacle.

¹ See analogy between soul and body and the two watchmen of the orchard, one lame, the other blind.² Tan. Veethhan. 56. For other references see Buber, note, ib.

Sangha
Tan. Veethhan.
Veethhan. 56

When R. Tanhuma (B. Am.-4th cent.) once thought about the relation existing between body and soul, the image of an air-bag and its enclosed air occurred to him. A comparison of the two combinations evoked in him an expression of admiration for the human organism: "For even the smallest hole in the bag would cause the air to leak out, while the body of man was full of pores and still the soul does not leave it" (Gen. R. 1:4). Here we see the "something" which can be exhaled and inhaled identified with air, the view held by many of their predecessors in Biblical times (Gen. 2:7 et al.) We furthermore find R. Meir (Middle 2nd century) literally interpreting the word *neshamah* in its original meaning.¹

Some of the rabbis² believed that the exit of the soul from the body produces an extremely loud sound. R. Samuel *Sam.* (B. Am 250 C.E.) said he knew of no greater strain than the attempt of the soul to "squeeze" its way out of the body. (Tan Miketz, 115)³ In order to give a more concrete, though of course inadequate, idea of it in terms of human experience more familiar to most people, the comparison is suggested of the tugging of the cable holding a ship moored to the wharf and it rubbing against the ship's side.³ According to this the soul is something that was compressed, as it were, into the body, and later finds it very hard to force

¹ Deut. R. 2:26 he interprets the verse, "Every Soul" (*Neshamah*) shall praise God (Ps. 150:6): "With every breath that man inhales". This is preceded by another interpretation (*amen*) "*Bekal nefesh venefesh shebara bach*" (Is the idea meant to convey that of Democritus: that every inhaled breath = new soul?)

² Rabanan, in Yoma 20b, Levi (beg. of 3rd Cent.) in Gen. R. 6:12.

³ *ib.*, Kohel. R. 6:7, M.Q. 29a, Ber. 8a (anon).

* Numbers in refs. to Tanhuma (Babli) refer to the end letters. I did this to make identification much easier.

its way out through a narrow opening--probably the ^{wind-}pipe. — Air fits in quite well with such characteristics.

Furthermore when the destruction or annihilation of the soul is found necessary, burning seems to be taken as the means resorted to. In the case of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:2) we are told¹ that "their souls were burnt but the body remained whole". According to R. Samuel b. Nahmani (P. Am. 4th cent) Rabbi was of that opinion.² Aba Jose b. Dositai (X. T. 2nd cent) gives us a more detailed account of the manner in which the souls of those two guilty sons of Aaron were burnt. He believed that two fiery threads came forth from the Holy of Holiness, each then separated in two and entered through the nostrils, and burned the soul out, but left the body and clothes intact.³ The manner of the destruction of the souls of the wicked was believed by some to be as follows: After being punished in Gehenna for a period of twelve months together with the body, it was then burned and the remains strewn under the feet of the Righteous in Gan Eden.⁴ For one whose imagination conceived of such a plight befalling — a soul, the human soul, was something that had a very definite form,

¹ Sifra 46a (Ed. Weiss), San. 94b.

² S. ab. 113b.

³ Sifra 45c.

⁴ R. H. 17a (anon)

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which was affected only by fire and even the fire did not destroy its original essence—the soul-atoms,"as it were, remained to serve a definite purpose(though no longer a soul-purpose)". To him the soul substance was something rather tangible,—though not for human hands.

R. Benaia(Tanna, 2nd cent.) who conceived demons to be composed of soul(nefesh) without body(guf) still believed that they increased their kind in the same way as man, and also die, as man does.¹ What he understood by the conception of "soul" would be hard to guess. However, the conception of soul-substance entertained by another writer of a demon story is much clearer—and perhaps gives us also R. Benaia's conception. It tells of a demon killing a rival who intended to dispossess him from his established haunt. The established demon had invited the aid of Abba Jose(here called Abba B. Dosai — (Tan. 2nd cent) on the ground that he had not harmed any one in the vicinity while his rival surely would. The help requested from Abba was to try to scare the rival by hostile words as soon as "the more desirable incumbent" of that territory announced the former's coming. Abba did as requested and then saw "something" like a drop of blood on the well's surface and knew that the rival had been killed.² Here we have a smouldering trace of that early conception which identified the soul with

1. Tan. Beresh, 120, Gen. R. 7:5, Yolk, 12.

2. Midr. Tihil. 20:7. In Lev. R. 24:3 it is told about

"Abba Jose, ~~Abba~~ Zitor;" in Tan. Kedosh. 48, about "Jose" ish Zitor".

the blood(Lev.17:14,Deut. 12:23).

Those notions as to the soul-substance denote little originality on the ^{part} of their possessors and a readiness to retain popular notions of the time. But we also find examples denoting a conception much more advanced. In Deut.R. 2:26, we find the following analogy by the rabbis between the human soul and God. "God fills the universe, the soul fills the body; God bears with the world, the soul bears with the body; God is one in the universe, so is the soul in the body; God never sleeps nor does the soul; God is pure, so is the soul; God sees but is invisible, so does the soul see but cannot be seen.

In Ber.10a¹ where we find almost an identical analogy by Simeon b. Pazi²(P.A.3-4cent.)it concludes with the exhortation to the soul, having characteristics similar to those of God, to render praise to Him. We see here that those who gave expression to such an analogy, although they did not consider the human soul absolutely a part of God could not think of the soul but in the same terms as they did.

1. except that (a) instead of "sobel", it has "hakadosh

baruch - hu zan eth kol haolam af nashamah zan eth kol haguf". (b) "Hakadosh-baruch - hu^{ano}yashan" is omitted.

(c) instead of "Yahid" it has "yosheb behadre hadarim".

It seems very likely that the author of the version in Deut.R. intentionally changed through Ber. version owing to some different(advanced ?) views as to the nature and functions of God and the Soul. 2. it is not certain as to who said it.

It seems to me from the context that it is Simeon b. Pazi.

of God. And as they would not attempt to define the essence of God(except in terms of bodily qualities) they would very probably not try to do so in the case of the essence of the soul, to which they assigned divine qualities. This was most probably the predominant view among all the advanced Rabbinical thinkers. They felt the soul to form a most important part and significant part of their life, but they could have no conception of its essence, just as they felt God to be an indisputable reality in the universe though they could not name the essence. They felt it to embody the best, highest, noblest and purest part of them, shedding a divine radiance on things earthly but as to giving expression to its essence in human terms this could be done only in figurative language, to be taken at no time in the literary meaning. The phenomenon in their human experience that resembled their conception, the closest was light. Hence we find that symbolic synonym for the soul oft reiterated: "The Soul of Man is called a light, a light of God". Thus we see that there was not one conception as to the soul-substance common to all of the rabbinical thinkers ranging through the long period of centuries. We might say perhaps that to all of them it was something that occupied space but as to what it resembled

1. Sab.32a(Hisdap.A.4th cent.) Deut. R.45(Bar Qapara,Tan.2nd, cent) Tan.Noah 15(anon.) Y.Sab.II.6(5b) has "ner olam" but probably to be amended to "Ner Elohim" as Buber suggests (Tan. Supp.Noah Note 15). 2. Sab.30b.Literally known a candle light(ner)^{The} soul of Messiah described as a light seen by the guardian angels and souls of the ^{the} thinking of the nations. (Midr.Konen)Jellinek B.H.11-29.Sedar Gan Eden-1h.111 13-1.15

in our known daily experienced phenomena opinions ranged from that crude conception that its ultimate essence could at least be seen if not felt, ^{(found as late as the 2nd cent) (beginning in end of 3rd cent & developing with time)} to the conception that it was the source of light illuminating the entire visible universe, but its essence had to remain a mystery even as was that of the Supreme Power.

2. Seat of the Soul.

The ancients, feeling that the soul represented the most vital part in man, and believing that it was something that had a distinct form, felt called upon to assign to it a dwelling place in the body. Being that it was the source of vitality, that secreted abode would naturally be taken to be that organ in the body which according to their anatomical knowledge was the most important asset in the human organism in the process of maintaining their existence. Hence the liver, heart and brain harbored the soul, each in its turn as it succeeded in substituting its predecessor in physiological importance. The Babylonians and Assyrians had the two stages: first placing it in the liver, then in the heart! In the Bible the conception of the blood being the seat of the soul is found in unmistakable terms (Lev. 17, Gen. 94). There are found traces, however, of a former view confining it to the liver (Thr. "Prov. 7:23")²

1. Jastrow, "Rel. Bel. in B. & A" pp. 151, 196.

2. See Jastrow l.c.

In Plato we find an attempt to have the three. Hence the immortal soul is placed in the brain, the higher mortal in the heart and the appetitive in the region of the liver.¹

In Talmudic literature we find instances denoting three different views. Hiya bar Abba (P.Am. 3rd. Cent.) expressed the belief (Gen.R. 26") that in the time of the millenium that will follow the coming of Messiah, the soul will inhabit the whole body instead of, as it does now, one part of it. What part that is we are not told. According to Ber.10a² it is in an "innermost part" of the body. According to Hag.18a a man's bosom contains it. At any rate all those who had such a conception surely believed that it was a well-sheltered place. The belief that the soul fills the whole body is quoted (Gen.R.14") in the name of R. Meier (T.2nd cent) by Bism (P.Am. 4th cent.) Aha (probably Aha III, P. Am. 4th cent) and Johanan (Meriya? P.Am. 5th cent.) shows an advance over the view of Hiya Bar Abba for whom such a condition was only possible in a generation far superior to his. In Deut.R.2:26 version of Ber.10a³, the omission of the statement that the soul dwells in the "innermost part" or any^{other} attempt to localize it, was very probably due to an advance in the conception, as to the possibility of locating the soul in any definite place in the body. Those who held the highest conception in the essence of the soul most probably would not attempt to localize it. But we could not tell the time when the higher conception was first found. If R. Mayer is quoted correctly - and this may be the case - in spite of the less developed view found with Hiya Bar Abba, who came after him - it was at an early date.....

1. Tim. 69-71. 2. Supra p 6 note (b). 3. ib. 4. See Introd.

3. Origin of the Soul.

When we come to the question of the existence of the soul outside of the body, both before it is entered into it and after it leaves, we are on considerably more terra firma than we are in the question of the soul substance or the seat of the soul in the body; for here we have so much more ~~and~~ numerous expressions of definite opinion. Its existence after it leaves the body I shall treat later under the heading of Life after Death. Its existence before it enters the body I shall treat now.

When does the soul's existence begin? Examples directly expressing the belief in preexistence¹ are found in sufficient number to need additional indirect proof of such a belief by trying deductions from expressions used when ~~speaking~~ ^{speaking} of the soul in other instances.¹ R. Asa (~~probably~~ P. Am. 3rd to 4th cent.) says² the Messiah will not come until the "guf" (compartment containing all the unborn souls) will be emptied of all its soul occupants.

However, in another version of the same idea, (by "R. Tanhuma or Rabbis"), in Gen. R. 24⁴, the latter part of the statement is considerably modified. Instead of "until all the souls in the "guf" had been created", ^{it says "until all the souls that had been intended to be"} This modification may be

1. Weber Jud. Theol. 2nd ed. p. 212, tries to deduce this belief from the use of "Zarak" (Gen. R. 1410) instead of "afah" (which is rather far-fetched.) About this belief among the Rabbis and Philo being influenced by Plato. - See Newmark, "Gesch. d. j. R." (Vol. II P. 429 f.) ^{The} statement "uneshamah hozrah be'arbaim" ^{just} as the Torah was given in 40 days" (Men. 99b) does not mean that the soul is created in that time, but most probably means

17.

intentional, due to a different view as to the time of the actual creation of the human soul. But I do not find any instances where it shows presence of a belief that the soul was ever created just at the time when it had to unite with the body. R. Johanan (1st cent.) in describing the process of the birth of a child (Tan. Pikude, 3) makes God command an angel to go and fetch a certain soul from among the souls kept in the celestial Gan Eden, and bring it down into the sub-lunar world, ^{and} place it in its destined embryo in the mother's womb. The soul of R. Akiba recalls to Moses something he had forgotten. (Yalk Reub.-Pikude). In Midr. Kenen and Seder Gan Eden (Jellinek, B.H. 11, 29:111, 152 f. 195) the preexistent soul of the Messiah causes a considerable amount of trepidation to the souls of "the kings of the nations" and their heavenly guardians, when they see it under God's Throne.

Of course all of these souls were created by God. To none of the rabbinical thinkers would such a conception even occur, as the coeternity of the souls with God, the creator of all things. But as to the exact time of their creation we find different opinions. R. Jehoshua of Sachnin (1st cent.) quotes R. Samuel (2nd cent.) as saying that God consulted with the righteous souls, before the creation of the world, as to the advisability of it (Gen. R. 8:6)¹.

that it is put into the embryo 40 days after conception, which (according to Nid. 30a) is the time necessary for the ylad. to be fully formed. (see also Nu. R. 9:1.), Yeb. 62a, 63b, Ab. Z. 65a.

¹ In Zend -Avesta, Ahura-mazda takes counsel with the souls of the heroes (fravashis) before creating the world. Is R. Joshua's version an example of Judaized Ahura mazdaism? (see JE X 181b)

According to this, human souls existed before the earth was created.

But there are several other instances showing opinions that differed from such a view. R. Eleazer b. Pedath^{P. Am.} (3rd cent) voiced the belief that the soul of Adam was created on the 6th day. According to this belief, the earth and most of the things on it were created before any human soul. Again ~~there were~~ there are seven things enumerated that were created before the earth¹. According another opinion (ib.) only two, the throne of Glory and the Torah, were actually created before the earth, but as to the others, only the intention to create them preceded the creation of the earth. But neither of them mentions the soul among the things existing before the earth. R. Jochanan (cent.) voices a belief that all the souls were created during the days of creation, and placed in the celestial Gan Eden^{ed. warsaw, 1875. (Tan. Pikude 3)}.

Where are the souls kept before their appointed time arrives to be entered into their destined body? Of course, they would be kept in heaven where all agree that the soul comes from a place where the highest purity dominates². But we are given even more specific details as to their abode in the heavens. According to the citation from R. Asa³, all the souls that are ever to be created are kept in a definitely prescribed compartment for the purpose (guf) and Rashi supplies the addendum (Yeb. 63b.) which tells us ex-

1. Torah, Repentance, Gan Eden, Gehenna, Plan of the temple Name of the Messiah, (Pes. 54a Ned. 39a.)

2. See Tan. Emor. 168 and notes Buber, ib.

3. Supr. p. 10, 6p. Pseudo-esdr. 4:3, 36.

actly where that compartment was situated, -- between the the Shekenah and the angels. The soul of R. Akiba is seen by Mosess in the Ozar, the treasure house containing the unborn souls, in the 18th row (Men. 29b.) In Hag. 12b, we are told what part of the "heavens" they were in, though we are not told specifically about a special place being reserved for them. They are kept in the highest heaven⁴ (Arabot) having among their companions the storehouses of the Righteous after death, Life, Peace, and the Dew with which the dead will be resurrected. These are examples of what those rabbinic minds delving in the mystic could conceive. Many of the halachic, sober minds would not take such conceptions seriously. They would treat it as they did most of haggadic speculation. However, it would be safe to say that even they believed the souls' abode before coming on earth was in heaven, the abode assigned to all sources of purity experienced by man.⁵

4. As to Rabinical views to number of heavens, see Weber, Jud. Theol, 2 ed., p. 204.

5. See Introduction.

4. Grades of Souls.

Are all the unborn-souls in heaven absolutely and undistinguishably identical, so that it would make no difference at all as to which one of their numbers was placed in a certain body? Are all the differences pertaining among men in character, knowledge and conduct due, in their entirety, to forces not resident in the soul? Is every soul equally equipped to cope with those forces as any other soul, when in its pristine purity¹ it enters the body? According to those who voiced their conceptions bearing on this point, every soul in the Ozar was as different from any other, even before it had entered its destined body, as the living organism, of which it would later form so significant a part, was different from any other.

When R. Johanan² described the process in the creation of every child, he makes God tell an angel to fetch a certain definitely described and distinguishable soul which is to be placed in a certain embryo.

In the belief expressed by R. Joshua of Sachnin (Shiknin) in the name of R. Samuel³ that God consulted with the souls

1. Ber. 10a, 60b, Sab. 152b, Ned. 30b, Mekilta (ed. Weiss) 43b, et al.

2. Supra, "Origin".

3. Id.

of the righteous before he created the world as to the advisability of the act, the conception implied is very clear that certain class^{of} souls were to be distinguished, receiving different consideration at the hands of God.

Moses, according to Men.29b, singles out the soul of R.Akiba from among all the other souls. The soul of R.Akiba helped Moses with the solution of a difficult problem, according to this belief of some rabbis(Supra "Origin"). Thus R. Akiba's soul even before it entered its bodily shell was by far superior to all the others. Those that entertained such conceptions evidently believed that the individual souls were originally differently constituted and disposed. Were it not so, why send for a certain soul rather than another, or certain souls be consulted with rather than others¹, or one soul know more than others even before it descended on earth into its body and acquired or "recalled" knowledge.

Of course there were many who would not have taken seriously such an account as given by R. Johanan of the process of the birth of a new member of society, nor would the other two products of the free play of the imagination fare any better. R. Simlai(p.A.^{3d}cent.) tells us that every

1. One might say God knew they would return from their respective earthly bodies righteous; but then why should they do so rather than others; why would they have greater power to rule over things earthly, if not originally differently disposed.

soul is taught the entire Torah, which it is made to forget just before leaving the mother's womb by the angel swapping him on his lips¹ According to R. Simlai², all souls are equally equipped originally. The same idea of the equality of all souls is implied in the characterization of all souls as absolutely pure(supra) also in the idea that all the unborn souls were kept in the seventh heaven (Supra, "Origin"). Even R. Johanan, in the passage cited, has every newly born soul alike taken by an angel appointed by God for that purpose, and shown first the Gan Eden and the blissful happiness reigning therein, then the Gehenna with its gruesome tortures; and the angel tells this prospective arbiter of man's fate, the *raison d'être* of those two institutions. Then the same angel takes this soul down into the mundane sphere of beings and shows it the mode of life of the different classes of men - rich and poor, righteous and wicked. — All this is done so as to equip every soul alike with the necessary knowledge to shape for itself its future destiny. For he admits that although all other phenomena in life are predestined, God leaves man to his freedom of conduct good or bad² (for which the soul is responsible).³

1. Ned. 30b, Hag. 12a (et al.) 2. This doctrine of the free will of man he believed in, together with most of the other rabbinical thinkers, in order not to render untenable the inviolate belief in God's justice. However, it evidently did not occur to him nor to any of the others who entertained a similar conception, that, being there were original differences in the disposition of the individual soul, one that was better disposed for learning, for instance, was "more free" than another less so disposed (and through

Gentile-soul:

Most of these speculations about the soul were undoubtedly about those that were privileged to enter the bodies of the Jews. What was their conception, or it might be more correct to ask, what were their conceptions, as to the soul that was to enter the body of a heathen? Did it also come from heaven? Was it of the same "stuff" originally as that of the Jew? It could not be answered with certainty, owing to the fact that when the Rabbis speculated about a subject like "Soul" they usually thought about the Jewish soul, but it might be gathered from the general attitude, or attitudes entertained by the Rabbis towards the heathen of their days.

We find different and radically opposed attitudes,— due most probably to the different classes of heathens encountered by the authors. We find such apparently irrational and inexplicably narrow views, that if an uncircumcised gentile should observe the Sabbath-day, like a Jew, he deserves death (R. Jose b. Hanina, ^{Am, 3rd Cent.} and ^{Tan. 2nd Cent.} Hiya b, Abba ^{Quoting R. Johanan, Deut. 10:18.}) The same idea is expressed — though in a calmer tone — in the passage immediately following. It tells Moses asked God

no fault of his): for learning would certainly affect freedom of will. Where then would be God's justice? This is why many undoubtedly believed that originally "all souls" were equal".

3. Tan. Vayikra, 69. See Buber ib., Note, for other refs.

whether an uncircumcised gentile who observed the Sabbath would be rewarded, and God answered " Even if they would perform all the commandments in the Torah, I will in the time-to-come cast them low before you".¹ On the other hand R. Jeremiah(P., 4th cent.) insists that "a gentile who practises² the teachings of the Torah ranks as high as the High Priest".—He substantiates this view by Scriptural verses. (Lev.18:5, "These are the laws which man,- Adam - not Israel.-shall live by.")—The general attitude however, was that the heathen was quite an inferior being to the Jew. This is expressed with no shadow of ambiguity, in Nu. R.4:2, where the heathen is compared to common glass and the Jew to costly diamonds.

On the basis of this general attitude it would be safe to maintain that there were a good number who entertained the view that the soul of the heathen was of not much superior "stuff" than that of the animals (Sifre Haazinu, 306:46). -- these coming probably at an early date.

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1. These may have been ^{views} ^{expressed} at that time because of the rise of neo-Christians advocating the idea that gentiles could be admitted as "Jews", even if they were not circumcised, if they accepted the other essential teachings in the Torah.
2. This is the Sifra version Ahare Xlll, 86b., ed, Weiss. The Bible version has "osek" instead of "oseh". (San.59a, 77a.)

But there were many undoubtedly who would not countenance such a view. They would unhesitatingly include the gentile in R. Simeon^{ab} (2nd cent.) expression of the prevailing conception of his time, characterizing man (Adam) as a wondrous being combining in him both the earthly and the divine; being as Aristotle characterizes him, a combination of dust and deity. (πρόσμιχται καὶ θείον)¹ Even the others, if closely pressed would have to accede a much superior essence to the "gentile souls" than they did. For they believed that the gentiles would be punished most severely for their conduct by God; and their indisputable conviction of God's justice would have compelled them to accept the more rational view.

Before leaving this phase of the soul-concept in rabbinic times it might be interesting to try to ascertain what the rabbinic mind conceived to be the status of the soul which was destined to enter into the earthly form of the more "humble" member of the species - the woman? Were they no different in their essence, ipse facto, than those who were to enter the bodies of men, or were they superior, or inferior? We do not find any direct expression of opinion on the question and therefore, ^{the answer} on our part could not be given with any great degree of positiveness.

The rabbinical thinkers most probably never thought directly about that phase of the question. Woman in general did not form a very worthy and important subject for thought in those days, - not nearly so important as in

1. C. P. Sifre Haazinu 306:46.

modern times. They considered the woman much inferior to themselves. The thought, desires and aspirations of the Jewish women in rabbinic times are not given much space in rabbinical literature. In the main they were considered in the light of simple-minded,^A physically grown but mentally undeveloped children, whose desires never reached much further than their daily needs. A story in Ber. 18b. is characteristic of the general attitude towards the women. It tells of a dead woman asking R. Zaira who visited her grave, to have her comb sent to her with another woman who was to die the next day.

However, we might say that most of them if they had expressed themselves definitely on the subject would not have drawn any essential distinction, *per se*, between the souls that were to enter into men and those that were to enter into women. When they spoke of the unborn souls "in heaven, in the "Ozar" or in the "guf", they drew no distinction between masculinity and femininity. It is true that we would not be far from the truth in assuming that when they speculated about such subjects it was not the "womanly" soul that they had in mind; but this was not necessarily because they entertained a belief that it was not among the same souls but because of their general attitude. It is true that their functions in life were considered inferior to those of men, but it was not because their souls were of an inferior "substance" but because of God, in His Wisdom, assigned such functions to them, - ranking just as high as men in the sight of God, if they performed those tasks dutifully.

In regards to ethical and ritual laws, (although ^{not} in all respects in the case of civil laws), they are held thoroughly responsible, and accountable for both in this world and the next.¹ In regards to all sins and violations of civil law, there is no distinction between man and woman.

Some Rabbis had a very exalted opinion of womankind, as is shown by the fervent assertion by one of their number, that it is the virtuous women of each generation who redeem that generation.² We might say in conclusion, that most probably the more advanced thinkers in rabbinic times held that all souls, whether those of men or women, Jews or Gentiles were in their original essence all alike.

1. Pes. 43a, Sifre Masse 11, et al.

2. Yalk Shim. 606.

11 Functions of the Soul.

5. When the Soul enters the Body.

When does the soul begin functioning in the body? Even ^{from} the scanty material found bearing indirectly on the subject, it is quite certain that there were two views and that one preceded the other perhaps by two hundred years, but it is not certain whether the latter ever entirely took the place of the former. The former may have retained a large number of adherents - though it is quite probable that the latter ultimately became the stronger, owing to the accededly greater authority of its adherents.

We are told¹ that Rabbi was asked by Antigonus (Antoninus) whether he thought the soul entered the body at the time of conception or after the embryo is formed. Rabbi answered that the latter was the case. However, when Antigonus interspersed the objection that flesh would begin to decay even if left for only three days without a preservative, and therefore, urged that the soul entered the body at conception, Rabbi admitted that he had entertained a wrong idea; adding: "This thing I have learned from Antigonus," From this concession on the part of Rabbi we see ^{that} his idea of the relation between the soul and the body contained a belief that the growth of the body was made possible

1. San. 91b, Gen. R. 34:12 et al.

only by the presence of the soul, one of whose functions is to serve as a source supplying the sap of vitality to the body, - the view expressed in the analogy between the tree and ~~man~~^{man} (the soul corresponding to the roots and the body to the branches.) Without the sap of life the tree, of course, could not grow. - Having such a conception of one of the soul's functions, it is easy to see why Rabbi felt called upon to concede the plausibility of his opponents' view. - But it shows ^{also} that the other view had been held - and, (if this incident be a true record of history), that up to about 200C.E. the view voiced by Antigonus had not been known to the Rabbis, (Were it otherwise Rabbi would have known of it.) That the Nassi was expressing the prevailing view is further born out by Men.99b. where R. Johanan seems to take it for granted as a long established fact that the soul is entered into the body at the time the embryo is formed.

It is not certain whether all the contemporaries of Judah Hanassi, or even those that came years after him had been similarly converted to the Antigonus belief, but this is quite certain that the rabbinical scholars believed that the growing form within the mother's body was not long in want of a soul. If it was not there immediately after conception, it was there soon after. In fact some of the Haggadically inclined minds conceived that the time spent in the mother's womb was the happiest that the human organism

1. Which is 40 days after conception, ib. Nid. 30a, Nu. R. 9:1

2. San. 110 b.

would ever experience after leaving it. They painted a glowing picture of the bliss enjoed in that state. The embryo is pictured with a radiant light on its head enabling it to behold the whole Universe. (Hag.12a,Nid.30b).

2. THE SOUL'S FUNCTIONS.

6. Tripatriite Nature.

The Platonic and Aristotelian idea of the tripatriite nature of the soul is found also in rabbinic literature. However, the material that I shall present here will show apparently, that it counted its most faithful adherents in the earlier period, but with the succeeding generations its hold on the rabbinic mind gradually waned. First it lost one part, then the next higher element receded into the background, until the term "soul" became synonymous practically with that which constituted according to Plato and Aristotle its highest function,- the rational faculty.

In Y.Kil.VIII, 31c, we are told that there are three partners in the creation of a child: God, the father, and the mother. From the latter two, are derived the physical part, God supplies (more directly) "the ruah, the nephesh and the neshamah". In Gen.R.14:11, we find a distinct meaning for each of those last three terms. According to that writer,¹

1. Here it is found anonymously. The different terms for the soul are given in the name of R.Simeon (Am.-4th cent.) in Deut.R.2:26, et al. but there the explanation of the significance of the different terms is missing.

"nephesh" would correspond to what Aristotle called (vital or nutritive), "ruah" comes the closest to Plato's (higher spiritual), and finally what both Plato and Aristotle called λογικόν (rational), is understood by the term "neshamah". It is not certain whether the author in Kil. VIII meant by the terms ruah, nephesh, neshamah exactly what the author of Gen.R.XIV understood by those terms respectively². It is very likely that he did, approximately.³ It is quite certain from the context, that he meant to designate by those three terms three different faculties of that part of man which is not body. And it shows, as well as the passage in Gen.R., that at one time the idea of the tripartite nature of the soul claimed some of its adherents among the Rabbis.⁴

2. See K.Kohler: Grundriss, etc. p.160 ff.

3. Though judging from the style of expression in both, he would have expressed himself much less crudely, especially in regard to "nephesh". It may be that "ruah" he designated the state of the soul before it descended into the body, including in "nephesh" the two lower faculties and under "neshamah" the highest.

4. That the thought of some of the Rabbis flowed in grooves similar to those of Plato and Aristotle in such speculations, (most probably due to the fact that the thoughts of the latter two had found in Palestine one of its numerous harbors) is brought out quite convincingly by an analysis of the nature of man found in rabbinic literature very much like that expressed by those greek thinkers. Aristotle said, that man like the animal had the "sensitive, appetitive, motive soul," but the "intellective" was his alone. The rabbinic counterpart says: Man partakes of the nature of the animal and angel; like the animal he eats and drinks and increases his species; like the angel he possesses Reason. (Ab.d.R.N.XXXVII A, ed.Schechter, p.55a. For other refs. see ib.note 2.)

There is another version⁵ of the Kilayim passage, slightly modified, given in the Babylonian Talmud, in the name of the "Rabbis". It enumerates some additional parts of the human anatomy that are supplied respectively by the father and the mother; but among the elements supplied by God, only ruah and neshamah are mentioned. From the enumerated different properties of man, immediately following the two terms ruah and neshamah, (divine image, sight, hearing, speech, motion, rational faculty), it seems that by "soul" they understood primarily those faculties which Aristotle would include under "aisthetikon" and "logikon". Such instances are very much more frequent than those where all the three terms are used.

However, it is the highest function of the soul - logikon which was the meaning most generally understood by that lofty designation among the Rabbis, when applied to man. Many instances could be cited showing this fact directly and indirectly. I will cite two which I have selected because they contain a comparison between the soul of man and the "soul" of other living things and hence show more clearly the absence of the two lower faculties in the conception of the human soul as understood by their authors. In the interpretation of the expression "nephesh-haiya" used in Gen.2:7 to characterize man, both Targum Onkelos and Targum Jerushalmi I convert it into "nephesh memalla", - a speaking (i.e. rational) soul. This was done evidently

5. Nid. 31a.

to distinguish it from the term "nephesh - haiya" applied previously to the non-rational animals. (Gen.1:20,24.) The fact that the authors felt called upon to introduce such a radical interpretation on the same word which had just previously been used with apparently the same meaning to apply to all living things, could be explained only by the hypothesis that to them man's soul meant primarily the intellectual faculty. The same idea evidently underlies R. Simai's (T. end 2nd Cent.) distinction between man and all other living beings; in that in the case of the others "both their soul and body came from the earth", while in the case of man his body alone came from that inferior source but his soul came from heaven like that of all the heavenly beings. (Sifre, Haazinu, 306:46). To one who would draw such a distinction between the soul of man and that of beast, the idea of resemblance between the former and its animal namesake was mighty dim.

There were no definitely marked off periods when one of those stages in the conception of the soul's faculties prevailed exclusive of the others. It is quite probable that the conception of the three-fold nature existed in its unadulterated form among some of the Palestinian Rabbis in the early part of the tannaitic period. Then as time went on the emphasis that was continually laid on the intellectual faculty caused the other two gradually to become dissociated from the idea of the human soul. At no time, however, could we say that the disassociation was complete among all the rabbinic representatives of the period. It was merely a question of emphasis. Some would have uppermost in mind

only the highest faculty, to others the perceptive and nutritive faculties were just as real⁶. But this is unquestionably true that as time went on the emphasis gradually became to be laid exclusively on the highest faculty. Whether this was first in Palestine or in Babylonia is not certain - probably in both simultaneously owing to the periodical interchange of views between the scholars of the two lands. It is interesting to note, in conclusion, bearing on this fact, that Rashi, a man whose mind was so saturated with talmudic lore that he might be taken to be absolutely one of them in spirit if not in time, did not admit any distinction implied in the use of the three different terms, ruah, nephesh, neshamah in the Talmud. He believed that one word alone might have been used - "neshamah", the harbinger of Reason.⁷

6. Mar Zutra as late as the fifth century, in Babylonia believed - as according to him Rav, two hundred years before him, also believed - that the soul ~~enjoyed~~ a pleasant scent. (Ber. 43b)

7. See his exposition of the use of the two terms ruah and meshamah in Ber. 10a, Meg. 14a.

7. Vitality.

Life was generally accounted for by the presence of the soul. Life was impossible where it was not. This is why Rabbi agreed with Antoninus that the soul began functioning in the growing existence of the newly conceived individual right after conception.¹

However, this did not mean that they believed the soul was a life-principle. They believed the soul was the carrier of life to the body but it had to obtain it from a definite external source. This is expressly told by three Palestinian Amoraim of the third century, Bisi, Aha and Johanan, in the name of R. Meir, a Tanna of the century preceding them. It expresses the naive belief that during sleep the soul ascends to heaven to absorb new life from there.² Such a belief is also found in the Babylonian Talmud. In Hag. 12b two distinct compartments are assigned to the seventh heaven, one containing the "treasures of life", the other sheltering all the unborn souls.³ The relation which they conceived to exist between the soul and the body in regard to the mysterious phenomenon of life, is brought out clearly in their⁴ analogy between the soul and God. One of the five characteristics in which the former is analogous to the Supreme Being, is that it "feeds the body as God does the world".

1. San. 91b. Gen. R. 34:12.

2. Gen. R. 14:11

3. Hag. 12b.

4. Ber. 10a

Just as in the case of God they did not mean that the life of the world emanated from Him, so in the case of the soul they did not mean that the life which it imparted to the body it drew from its own essence. But here the analogy stops: In the case of God they believed that He^{had} created all that constituted the world, but the soul did not create that which it gave. It merely served - as some rabbis concretely expressed it - a similar purpose to that which the root served its tree. It was the means of supplying the sap of life to the body.⁵

Some statements strewn here and there over this vast sea of rabbinic knowledge would lead one to think that the belief was held that the body even when divorced from the soul contained life properties: it could feel and hear, and even breathe. I am referring to such a belief as mentioned above that during sleep the Soul ascended to heaven, without (as it would seem apparently) cutting off the stream of life. And I am referring also to two other beliefs, even more widely current: one, that the body in the grave felt the gnawing of the worms very keenly; the other, that its hearing powers were less limited by space than were those of the living organism. R. Isac (P. and B. Am. beg. 4th cent.) expresses the first very graphically by comparing it to the prick of a needle.⁶ R. Johanan, a leading Palestinian amora in the third century, gives us a good example of the second

5. San. 110b.

6. Sab. 13b, 152a, Ber. 18b. R. Eliezer b. Jacob (T. beg. 2nd cent.) subscribes his name to the general idea in Ab. d.

R. N. XIX A, ed. Schechter p. 35b.

in stating that when one mentions a saying of Akiba or Si-
meon b. Johai in their name, their lips in the grave move⁷.

These surely seem to hint at such a belief if we take them by themselves. But if they are looked upon in the light of other concomitant beliefs, they furnish perhaps no adequate cause for such an assumption. First, in the case of their idea of soul's ascension to heaven during sleep, they did not believe that sleep was merely a temporary lull in the consciousness, but they believed that it was really a temporary state of death. In the morning prayer thanks were offered to God for returning the soul so that life could begin anew. Man was also to feel grateful to God for His long-suffering mercy in returning the soul after sleep in spite of the fact that the sins committed during the waking day deserved the sleep be protracted into the permanent death⁸. Again, in the case of death, many did not believe that it meant a complete severance of body and soul. There was an idea that even after death the soul kept pretty close at least within the vicinity of the body, when it was not within the body⁹.

But even if this were granted that there was a belief that the body could perform certain living functions because of its own essence, it is safe to say that it was most prevalent in the earlier period, -- up to about the fourth century. At a later period there were those who

7. Pessik.R.11,ed.Friedman p.5b.

8. Ber.60b.Tan.Mishp.1X.Deut.R.5:14.

9. See context in which R.Isac's statment is found in Ber.18b.whose one spirit tells another that it can't get out from the grave due to the body having been buried in a read coffin.

would shun such a conception. This is unmistakably proven by the following: The above mentioned statement of R. Isaac is preceded in Sab.13b. by an opinion ("dabar-ahar"-others say) that a dead body does not feel any thing -"even if cut with a knife". Together with the belief of the three amoraim of the third century that the soul ascends to heaven every night, Gen.R.14:11 also contains a statement by an Amora of the fourth century, Joshua b Nehemiah, that the soul during sleep warms the body thus making life possible¹⁰.

10. Cp.San.91a where the body is compared to a stone.

8. The Yetzer-hara and the Yetzer tob.

The Yetzer-hara is that "strange" force in man which craves for things that are forbidden, thus causing a constant moral struggle.¹ It is a strange God entrenched in man's body at whose shrine he must not worship, is the manner in which R. Jannai (Pal. Amora 3rd cent.) and R. Abin (Pal.-Bab. Amora, latter part of 4th cent.) described its nature and the part it plays in the life of man.² It is the force which is opposed to God's will and spells evil.³ This is ^{the} thought that called forth the prayer by R. Alexander⁴ ("Alexandri", latter part of the 3rd cent.) that God forgives him his sins, "for it is known to thee, Creator of the Universe, that it is man's desire to do Thy Will, but it is the leaven in the dough (i.e. "y.h.") that prevents us."

As we have seen in the last citation, this force of evil had its seat in the body. (This is why angels were free from the Yetzer-hara, because they had no body.)⁵ However, they did not believe that it was a part of the very essence of physical matter. They believed that the yetzer-hara was "injected" in the matter after it was first formed.⁶ There was even an idea current that the animal had none; - that it was especially pitted against man. R. Reuben Iztrubli

1. Y. Yoma VI. 4. 43d. 2. Sab. 105b. Y. Ned. 41b.

3. Man's defense is that the Yetzer-hara doesn't let him repent of his evil ways. San. 105a (according to one version this was said by R. Kahana - B. Amora of latter part of 3rd cent. According to another it was said by Rabba bar Bar-Hana - B. Amora, 3rd-4th cent.)

4. Ber. 17a.

5. Nu. R. XIII. Ex. R. XV.

6. Ab. d. R. N. (Schechter) XXX B. p. 32a.

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("Aristobulos") says so expressly.⁷ It is quite probable that some identified the yetzer-hara with Satan ("seor sheb' issa"-note 2.)⁸ The greater number conceived it as an indefinable force in man stimulating his lower desires. This is the only way we could explain the statement in Ber.1X,5, "Love God with both the forces in thee, the yetzer-hara and the yetzer-tob". Those who identified the yetzer-hara with Satan, could not have made such a statement. As to the time when it was first put in the body the opinion was held first that it was immediately after conception. Rabbi himself tells us⁹ that he had held that view, but Antoninus convinced him that it did not enter the physical organism until the child emerged into the open world. That this incident is authentic is very likely. We know, indeed, that the view which it claims Rabbi had entertained at first, was held at his time. The above named Aristobulos who lived about that time, voices such¹⁰. After Rabbi's time the view of Antoninus probably became general.

The yetzer-tob was placed in opposition to the yetzer-hara. While the latter stimulated sensual desire making man a slave to passion, the former urged the curbing of the physical, restless propensities and the substitution of intellectual calm, making man free¹¹. The latter was

7. In the text it is "Iztrubli". (See Bacher.1b.XVI A.p.32b. Tann.2.383f)

8. Cf. L. Bernhardt, Empyrische Psychologie d. Juden in Talm. Zeitalter. (Zunz, Zeitschrift, vol.1. pp.518f.)

9. San.91b.Gen.R.34:12.

10. Ab.D.R.N.XVI A,32a.

11. Tan.Vayig.2-8. Aboth VI,2.

better entrenched than the former. Rami bar Abba (Bab. Amora, 4th cent.) uses Ecc. 9:14 f as a literary vehicle for the expression of the conception of the relation existing between these two forces and man: "A small city, the body, is beset by a powerful king, the yetzer-hara, - who entrenches himself very strongly in the body; but there is a little wise man present, the yetzer-tob, who can save the city.¹² That "little wise man" was probably identified by some rabbinical thinkers as the rational faculty of the soul. Such a hypothesis would explain very well the oft-repeated idea that the yetzer-hara was thirteen years older than the yetzer-tob¹³. In other words, the yetzer-tob came with the age of discretion, at the time when the irresponsible, "unthinking" child passed over into the deliberative man amenable to law. This view would be further borne out by the fact that in the incident related of the two things learned by Rabbi from Antoninus, the soul and the yetzer-hara seem to be set off against one another.¹⁴ Again the yetzer-tob being called a "prisoner"

12. Ned. 32b, Tan. Ber. 292 -96, ib. Vayig. 2f, Kobel. R. on Ecc. 9:14.

13. ib. et Ab. d. R. N. (Schechter) XVI A, p. 32a.

14. See notes 9 and 12.

in the body sounds very much like the characterization given by Plato to the soul as "looking out through the bars of a prison."¹⁵ But most of them evidently regarded the yetzer-tob as an external force not resident in the soul. They looked upon the two forces of good and evil in man somewhat in the light of the Zoroastrian conception of an Ahura-mazda and Ahriman struggling for the mastery of the soul. The righteous are those ⁱⁿ whom the former gets the upper hand and the wicked are those in whom the latter holds undisputed sway.¹⁶

The question of the origin of this force of evil constituted for the rabbinical thinkers no such perplexing problem as it did for the philosophers of all ages, before them and ever since. They believed in a general way that God created it as He created all things else.¹⁷— The problem how a Being that was perfect could create something that was evil did not occur to most of them and those to whom it did occur did not have their minds properly attuned to trace it to a logical conclusion.— But we find three general attitudes taken towards the existence of this "evil" known as yetzer-hara. One ^{we} might term the extremely utilitarian. It adopted the quite original view that the yetzer-hara was a necessary and even useful force in life.

15. Phaedo (Jowett) 83. Ab. d. R. N. (Schechter) XV 1 A, p. 32a (See note 8 ib. for other refs.)

16. Ber. 61b. Lev. R. 34:1. Deut. R. 2:24, et al.

17. Sifre 82b. Ber. 61a. San. 91b.

As one of their exponents expressed himself, "Remove the yetzer-hara and you remove the incentive for most forms of human effort." Or as another expressed it, "Destroy the yetzer-hara and you destroy the world".¹⁸ Another group found that the yetzer-hara served an essential ethical purpose. "God has given it so that we may be rewarded for conquering it" is the way some of them put it, voicing the common sentiment. "He who succeeds in conquering it gains the right to be called a mighty man". Some of those who belonged to this class went so far as to claim for man superiority over the angels owing to the fact that the latter had no yetzer-hara to contend with.¹⁹ Finally, there was the third class who (probably due to Greek influence, as its exponents are found mainly among the Palestinians) looked upon the yetzer-hara as an evil in the real sense of the term. They felt that it was a great burden superimposed upon the soul, holding it back from the realization of its highest powers. It weighed down a man "like a stone" is the light in which it was looked upon by many, according to Simeon b. Lakish (Pal. Amora, latter part of 3rd cent.)²⁰ They would have unhesitatingly repeated after Plato, that "as long as the soul is mingled with this mass of evil our desire will not be satisfied. For them one of the greatest hopes to look forward to in time of the millenium was that the yetzer-hara would be removed forever from the heart of man".²¹

18. Gen.R.1X.Yoma 69b. 19. San.64a, Lev.R.34:1. Deut.R.2:24, Tan.Vayik.8 Aboth 1V,1. San 94b. 20. Suk.52a. Tan.Miketz 3,ib.Behaal.88. 21. Gen.R.48:11(Hiya-Pal.Amora, latter part of 3rd cent.) Nu.R.15:12(Tanhuma -Sab.Amora, end of 4th cent.) Nu.R.17:7, Deut.R.2:21 et al.

8. Arbiter of Man's Moral Life.

Man's destiny was determined by the soul. It determined its own destiny and that of the body in which it was entered. It determined whether the individual should be good or bad, righteous or wicked, endowed with knowledge or ignorant. It was primarily responsible for man's conduct. This was the view held by the most advanced rabbinic thinkers whose views on this phase of the subject are contained in the talmud and its kindred literature. The rabbis of talmudic times did not have their belief in man's freedom quite clearly and consistently developed. They had the idea that man was free as far as the real essential principles of right living were concerned, - all of which they included under the general term "fear of God" (Yirath-Adonai), - but they did not analyse this idea of "freedom" more thoroughly and let it come to its logical conclusion. They held that every other phenomenon in man's life was predetermined by God. They evidently did not realize that moral freedom and many other human phenomena are intricately bound up. However, they did believe uncompromisingly in man's moral freedom, though they believed in the predetermination of all else. They say no problem. "All things were predetermined by God (whether one was to be weak or strong, poor or rich, etc.) but whether the individual was to be ^agodly or ungodly being was left in the hands of man himself"¹ It was in the exercise of this last named divine prerogative that the most advanced rabbinic thinkers held that the soul

1. R. Johanan (Palestinian Amora in latter part of 3rd. Cent.), Tan. Pirk. de 111 (Warsaw, 1875). Cp. Ber. 33a, Mid. 16b, Ab. 3:15:

was the prime arbiter.

I said "prime arbiter", because it would not be safe to say that all even among these advanced rabbinical thinkers had an emphatic conviction that the soul was the "sole arbiter". The fact which experience impressed subconsciously upon their minds daily, left impressions too deep to be entirely erased by conscious thought on the subject. As far as they actually knew of the life of the soul it was within the body. It was only when body and soul were together that sins - especially - were committed. The body alone could not err in any practical way; it was as helpless "as a stone" when the soul was absent.² To the soul alone which is absolutely pure, the idea of sin was preposterous.³ Hence there were many who seem not to have looked upon the body at all times merely as a thoroughly irresponsible instrument in following the bidding of the soul. Some held that "both sinned" and would be punished together, - which view was expressed in the Nassi's answer to Antoninus on the latter's objection to the idea of post-mortem retribution, on the ground that neither

 "Everything is ordained, except ~~The question of the making of the soul and the body and the soul and the body, which is the subject of the present inquiry. Here I am concerned only with the question of the general relation of the soul to man's conduct.~~

2. San. 91a, Tan. Vayik. 12. R. 4:5 (in name of R. Ishmael T. 2nd cent.)

3. ib., Ber. 10a, 60b, Sab. 152b, Nid. 30b, Mekilta 43b.

would have sinned without the other⁴. Others believed that while both sinned, only the soul would be punished, as it was the more guilty one in that it came from the pure heavens - from a place "where there is no sin or guilt". It knew what real purity was and therefore should ^{have} restrained the body⁵. From the manner in which they expressed themselves, it would seem that there was a vague notion entertained that the body was a "blind" follower, to be true, but that it might have exercised some will of its own and not followed. However, it was the soul that did the seeing. It was the one that performed the sovereign function. They believed that it was the one primarily responsible, even if they had not advanced to the view which some of their colleagues had reached that the body without the soul was both "blind" and "lame" - the view implied in Antoninus' question. These latter would have said it was the "sole arbiter".

But both those who entertained the higher view and those whose views were more like Rabbis, believed that whatever acts bearing a moral import were executed by the physical organs, it was this intangible but therefore much more mysterious, all-controlling part in man that ^{was} held account-

4. San.91b, and Tanhuma and Rabba -See note 2. In R.H.17a (See Supra p.10) it is expressly told that the soul together with the body of both the Israelitish and heathen sinner would be punished in Gehenna. (This instance of impartiality to Israelite and heathen is particularly interesting, for there was a strongly entrenched belief that the former would be spared. See Hag.27a, Erub.19a, Tan.Lech-Lecha 23b, Pikude 39, Midr.Tehil.46:1).

5. Tan.Vayik.69. It is quoted in Yalkut, Vayik 564, in name of Tanhuma.

able for by the Supreme Judge of men. It was the one at whose door were laid any acts of violence and wrong committed by man. R. Joshua of Shiknin (Amora, 3rd. cent.) voiced this higher sentiment when in his terse Haggadic style he makes God reproach the human soul for its backsliding in these severe terms: "All that I have created has been for thy sake and thou dost sin, and commit violence." Thus according to R. Joshua, though it was the hands that robbed and the mouth, eyes, etc. that sinned, still it was not credited to them but it was the soul that sinned, and robbed, and committed violence⁶. And rightly so, for it is certainly the one who issues the orders and not the one who executes them in whose name they are recorded. This was why some of those who believed that the soul ascended to heaven during man's sleep, believed that it was then taken to account for all the wrong deeds perpetrated during the day by the individual of which it was a part⁷. According to this belief, the body, the earthly shell, the form moulded out of clay, the tool of action, was left in peace as was befitting its nature, but the autocratic master, the sovereign power, the guide of conduct, the invisible self, had to furnish its reasons

6. Kohel. R. 6:7. According to Lev. R. 4:2 he quoted R. Levi (3rd-4th cent.) Here the words "gozalta vehomastka" are omitted. This was probably the original version. I quoted the Kohel version because it is more specific. The same idea is found (anonymously) in Lev. R. 4:4, where the author points out more specifically his conception of the relation existing between soul and body in regard to man's moral conduct. Instead of "I have created everything for thy sake", it has "thou art above all of them" (i.e. the physical organs). Whether the author had seen the Joshua version could not be told. Perhaps not, but it is probably a product of a later date.

7. Ber. 60b. Tan. Mishp. 1X, B. Lev. R. 4:4 (anonym.).

for directing such actions. The best rabbinic expression of this idea I find in the definitely and clearly expressed analysis found in Leviticus Rabba of the manner in which the soul functions in the body. The anatomical and psychophysiological knowledge displayed by the rabbinic author⁸ may not square with the most modern scientific results, but it gives us a perfectly clear idea of the function he thought the soul exercised in the body. According to him the soul functions through the bodily organs: "The gullet receives food, the wind-pipe emits sound, the liver supplies heat, the lungs help in the absorption of liquids ("reish-lishtiya") the brain thinks, and the heart decides, — but the soul is above all of them". The underlying idea he meant to convey by the statement that the soul was "above them all" was most probably that which was expressed in better form, by a coreligionist of his who was a greater adept at physiological expression, the Alexandrian Graeco-Jewish philosopher Philo⁹, that the soul "was the eye of the eyes the sense of the senses". The bodily organs only served to realize its will. — This is a conception which many in the present day would subscribe to unhesitatingly.¹⁰ But we also find instances which show that there were rabbis who entertained the idea that it was not the soul which controlled the destiny of man but it was man who controlled the destiny of the soul¹⁰. In their idea of the nature and functions of the soul we get the impression of a pure

8. Lev. R. 4:4 (anonym). 9. Cong. Erud. Gr. 25(1,540).

10. This later is not to be taken in the sense in which Socrates exhorted his friends (Phaedo. 107. Eng.) to "take care" of the soul. There it was an exhortation to the soul itself to strive to realize its purest self; as he says later (ib.) that the soul "should lead and master" the bodily affections

invisible, ethereal soul keeping itself aloof from the impure, tangible pitiful slave to passion, -the body. It would seem that the soul played in man not an active but a passive part. It was a sort of silent onlooker during all the vicissitudes in which the body found itself and with which it dealt in accordance with the best powers at its command. A statement like that of R. Hidka (T. middle 2nd cent.), that man's soul testifies against him "seems to sound such a note". It is pictured as an all-knowing accuser rather than what the above-mentioned rabbis would have considered the chief defendant. Another statement, under the general subscription "the Rabbis taught" (Tanu rabbanan), sounds a more pronounced note in a similar vein. It exhorts man to "return the soul as pure as it was given to thee". And the story that is introduced to illustrate the idea argues strongly for the fact of the presence of the belief that the soul was something to be taken care of rather than ^{it} it was the master of its own fate and that of the body in which it was contained. The illustration is that of a king who gave some spotlessly pure garbs to his servants for temporary keeping. (The analogy between the God of the Universe and a human king is rather a favorite one in the Midrashic literature.) Those of the servants who were wise "treasured them up" and then restored them in the originally pure state; those who were foolish wore them during their daily drudgery and returned them soiled. The consequences of course, were: In the case of the wise, the pure garb returned into the king's treasure-house and they themselves returned to their

humble but peaceful dwellings befitting their state; in the case of the foolish, they were to be cast into prison and the soiled royal garb was to be submitted to a cleansing process. So it was in the relation between body and soul: The bodies of the righteous, - who are the wise servants of God, - would after the severance of body and soul rest in peace(Is.57:2) and their souls would be stored up in the "treasure house of life"(Is.25:29); but the bodies of the wicked will have no peace(Is.48:22) and their souls "shall be slung out as from the hollow of a sling".(Is.25:29)¹² R.Simlai(P.AM.3rd cent.) apparently furnishes another example denoting this conception that man minus that part in him which was soul was responsible for the latter. According to him¹³ the foetus is warned before it leaves the womb, "Know thou that God is pure and the soul He has put into thee is pure. If thou wilt not preserve it pure, it shall be taken from thee". If we were to take such homilatically styled statements at their face value, it would mean that the human soul was "pure" in its essence, to be sure, but its functions were reduced to an almost negligible quantity. There were those who entertained some such vague notion as that. It meant, of course, that they had a decidedly hazy notion of what the function of that something "which lay in man's bosom"¹⁴ really consisted in. - It surely led a quite colorless existence while in the body. - But this is certain.

12. Nid.30b. 13. Sab.152b. What he meant by the latter is probably that which he intimated by the statement in the case of the soiled garb, that it would have to be washed; namely, that the polluted soul would have to be purified in some way before it could be admitted into the "Ozar".

14. This is the appellation that the above mentioned R.Hiikka applied to the soul(using the expression in Mic.7:5 with characteristic homilistical freedom.)

that they believed it to be an inevitable concomitant of the living existence of the human organism - though they were not quite clear as to its definite function.

The question as to when one phase of this belief ended and the other commenced could not be answered for the very good reason that there evidently were no such definitely marked periods. We have seen that Hidka, who lived about the middle of the second century, believed in the more naive view. But R. Ishmael whose period of greatest activity extended over the same time, entertained the more advanced conception. Towards the end of the second century Judah Hanassi voiced the same view as R. Ishmael. But this did not mean that Hidka's had been finally out-grown. Its echo sounded by Simlai in the following century. Nor could we maintain that this was a period of relapse, for we find that R. Joshua of Shiknin who lived about the same time, entertained the higher view. We must conclude, then, that both views were maintained side by side. While some believed that it was the physical organism that was responsible for the defilement of the original purity of the soul, others held it was the soul itself that permitted its pristine purity to become polluted. Some conceived it to be an invisible something leading a rather colorless existence within the narrow confines of the body walls. To others it represented the Ego, the "I", the Self, the invisible, intangible personality of that highest living unit on earth, fashioned in the divine image and partaking in a small measure of the nature of the divine. Both conceptions were held at the same time.

10. Acquiring Knowledge.

The rabbinic thinkers and that great greek thinker, Plato, may have differed radically as to what true knowledge consisted in, but they were thoroughly^{at} one in their constant and untiring emphasis on the inestimable significance of knowledge in the life of the soul-endowed man. They were at one in the conviction that knowledge was the only means in man's possession which would enable him to force the animal self into the background and get a closer view of the divine. However, in the manner of acquiring knowledge they differed. Plato tried to read the Will of God by going back unto himself and trying to discern Its reflection in his own soul. The rabbis thought they had a surer means of attaining the desired goal. They believed they were in possession of an eternal document which had God's Will recorded in complete and perfect form. Man had only to read this document aright in order to ascertain that eternal Will. This wondrous document was the Torah. For the rabbi, to acquire knowledge, meant to study the Torah. The degree to which knowledge was acquired, varied with the ability on the part of the individual to read the Torah aright. We must bear this distinction in mind when we try to ascertain what were the rabbis' conceptions as to^{the} acquiring of knowledge - or rather, what were their conception as to the acquiring of a know-ledge of the Torah.

It is interesting to note the close resemblance between the Rabbis and Plato in their general conceptions as to this highest faculty of the soul. That the intellectual faculty was considered by far the greater number of rabbis as the highest faculty of the soul, is shown by the fact that many instances which pictured the "life" of the soul when divorced from the body, as that of a purely intellectual being.¹ This, of course, was the first resemblance.

The second resemblance consisted in their belief as to the time of the origin of knowledge in the life of the soul. We find that Plato's belief that knowledge was indigenous in the soul, that its contact with sensible objects could at best recall only most imperfectly ideas which were present in the soul before it ever "mingled" with the body, and that it could realize its highest powers only in proportion to its withdrawal from all things bodily, finds its echo in rabbinic literature. The only difference is that here we find this belief in a mythological setting. To cite a few examples, which we have already met with in another instance,² but which

1. Cp. Gen. R. 8:6 (God consulting with the souls of the righteous); Deut. R. 1:10 (discussing Malachoth with God); Ber. 17a ("no eating or drinking in the "clam haba" but the righteous with crowns on their heads will enjoy the glory of the Shekinah"); B.M. 85a (in "Yeshiba-shel-malah")

2. Supra, "Origin".

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R. Simlai, a Palestinian Amora of the first generation tells us that while ~~in~~ the foetus is in the mother's womb it is taught the whole Torah, but it is made to forget it entirely just before it leaves the mother's body, by an angel snapping it on the mouth. This sounds very much like Plato's conception that the soul is dulled as it enters the world of matter. Joshua of Shiknin, another Amora of the third century, we have learned, believed that God had consulted with the souls of the righteous as to the advisability of creating the world. It might be assumed unreservedly that R. Joshua would have been extremely hesitant about making God consult with any living person. But it was different in the case of a soul not encumbered with a body - especially before it ever came down on earth and defiled its originally pure essence, no matter how slightly. Then it was in its pristine purity, and its knowledge was infinite; then it "could behold the entire world". - Thus it was possible for him to conceive the idea that God consulted with it. - R. Akiba's soul, we have found³, had imparted some necessary information to the lawgiver Moses. This again was the case before it came down on earth. It evidently forgot everything, - especially judging from the legend which paves his path leading to knowledge with added obstacles. We need no more examples to show that this Platonic conception is current in rabbinic literature.

3. Supra, "Origin".

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Finally, as to the function of knowledge in the life of man. Surely the Greek philosopher did not surpass the rabbinical thinkers as far as emphasis on its far-reaching significance is concerned.⁴ It towered in importance over all else. It loomed up as a bright light dispersing the thick clouds of gloom that had settled over depressed Israel in exile. Many of the Rabbis actually succeeded in so subordinating the physical to the intellectual as to have even satisfied a Plato. Knowledge of the Torah came to be the be-all and end-all of life. This imperial sway of knowledge over the rabbinic mind is epitomized in the epigrammatical dictum pronounced by one of their number, voicing the sentiment of all: "Have you acquired knowledge, what do you lack; do you lack knowledge, what have you acquired!" There was an ingrained conviction in their hearts that the study of the Torah, was a mighty irresistible power which spelled destruction to all the evil forces that surround man, aiming at his soul.⁶ As one Amora so well put it:⁷ "It is knowledge alone that can make man free"

4.Cp.Aboth 111,3-8,V1,2-5.

5.Tan.Vayikra 1.

6.Lev.R.35:4.

7.Aboth V1,2.

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