RABBI JUDAH HAI ALKALAI: HIS LIFE AND WORKS

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PREFACE

On May 14, 1948 the twenty five year League of Nations' mandate came to an end, closing the final chapter of British mandatory rule in the Holy Land. A new chapter began with the realisation of the Third Commonwealth.

The establishment of the State of Israel was viewed by the world as the realisation of the Zionist idea-- an idea, many Jews said, that had been kept alive in the hearts and minds of Jews for twenty centuries. For some people Zionism took root as early asAbraham, while others found traces of it in the Psalms composed'by the waters of Babylon,' or in the poetry which was kept alive by the poets and rabbis of Spain. For the historian, however, the story of Zionism, as a nationalist movement, originated relatively late. The movement began during the eighteenth century and in a land far removed from Zion. Essentially, Zionism began in France of the Enlightenment!

Zionism did not spring full-grown from the mind or pen of any one individual; nor was it a straight-line development as it may appear. Zionist origins are complex; the movement developed as an organism. Many sub movements, which were opposed to the original were later coalesced by that branch which was to ultimately survive bearing the " pure " title, Zionism.

My purpose, in this paper, is to analyse one such branch of the early proto-Zionist movement and the beginnings of religious Zionism, through the life of one of the pre-cursors, Judah Hai Alkalai.

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To Faye, who has been a constant source of inspiration, I dedicate this thesis.

CHAPTER I

Historical Background: Nineteenth Century Europe

Prior to the eighteenth century, nationalism was selected by the loyalty of the people toward its kind or the feudal lord. With the French Revolution in 1789, the last vestiges of feudalism and the old estates were abolished. Loyalties were transferred from the ever-thrown monarchy to a metaphysical concept of "the land", for which people were ready to give up their lives. As Napoleon swept through Continental Europe, establishing markets and trade, he succeeded in spreading nationalism as an idea. Nationalism continued even after Napoleon's defeat. Since nationalism was tied to capitalism, the new leaders realized that in order for the new economic system to succeed they would have to unify their own countries within the common bonds of capitalism and nationalism.

The Jews at this time were spread throughout Europe. The majority were in the East; under feudalism, while the minority were in the West in a capitalistic society. The Jews, having participated in the revolutionary forces were granted emancipation and equality before the law. As Jews received equality throughout Western Europe, the

ghetto walls began to crumble. Jews proclaimed their loyalties to the countries in which they resided. Nationalism was not a problem for the Jews of Western Europe. They considered themselves to be a religious entity while denying any other nationalistic ties. By 1870 the emancipation was completed.[1]

Western culture had a great impact upon the Jews. Emancipation did not only mean an end to restrictions and disabilities, it also meant an end to the privileges of an autonomous society.[2] Having undergone a change in status, the Jew attempted to cope with his new identity, and by so doing, to redefine the very essence of Judaism within the context of the age. There arose a scientific, historical approach to religion. An analysis of history proved that Judaism had always undergone changes and readjustments to the times. A series of rabbinical synods were held, beginning with the Brunswick conference in 1844, to clarify the Reform position on matters of theology, and ritual. Certain reforms were introduced such as the deletion of the mention of "Zion" from the liturgy. Certain rituals were eliminated and the use of the Hebrew language was limited. As a result of the scientific approach to religion, Orthodoxy was dealt a serious blow.[3] There arose another split within Judaism and Conservative Judaism emerged. Judaism was now divided into three distinct religious groups in Western Europe; yet, they were all united in their loyalty to the state, which had granted them equal rights.

> In these countries, France, Italy, and England as well as in Germany, the Jew assimilated European culture with all its advantages and its drawbacks. He was active on diplomatic fields, he devoted himself to economic investigations, he produced intellectual creations of all kinds--first and last he felt himself to be a citizen of his own country. Nevertheless, he was a loyal son of the Jewish people. . . .[4]

Perhaps nothing helped the cause of nationalism so much as did the emergence of modern romanticism. Romanticism appealed to man's emotions over his reason and venerated his history. Throughout Europe, scholars were awakened to a renewed interest in their own historic and cultural heritages. Within each country people were engaged in the study of their own ancient folkways and traditions--sharing in their common past and their common destiny. The nation was now looked at as something old as compared with Napoleon's view of the nation as something new. This led to the nationalist movements which spread throughout Europe. In the 1830's uprisings under Mazzini triggered off the fight for Italian nationalism. In 1848 intellectuals hailed the dawn of a united Germany; in Bohemia, the Czechs overpowered the Austrians and a series of uprisings in the Balkans marked the beginning of a new era.

All these nationalist activities affected the Jews no less than other Europeans. Jews participated openly in all revolutionary uprisings. It must not be concluded, however, that the nineteenth century spirit of nationalism affected all Jews alike. While the majority of Western Jewry participated in the revolutions as French, German,

or Italian nationalists, there were Jews who saw in the European movements a sign for a distinct Jewish nationalism. The 1840 Damascus Affair and the 1857 Mortara Case convinced such men as Moses Hess (1812-1875), Joseph Salvador (1796-1873), the Ashkenazic rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer (1795-1874) and the Sephardic rabbi Judah Alkalai (1798-1878) that the so-called Emancipation referred only to Jewish civil liberties but that Jews would never be fully accepted as Europeans.

> In Germany, the Jews have striven, since Mendelssohn, for political and social equality with their German brothers. But despite their participation in German cultural life, despite the denial of their national culture, despite all efforts to become Germanized, it has all been in vain![5]

Pro-Jewish nationalism was not restricted to Jews alone. Non-Jewish philo-Zionists carried on propogandistic work as well in political and literary fields. In France, Ernest Laharanne, the private secretary of Napoleon III pleaded for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. In England, George Eliot made the situation of the Jew the central theme of Daniel Deronda, while Lord Byron compassionately wrote:

> The white dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
> mankind their country, Israel but the grave.

II

The seeds of a proto-Zionist movement were beginning to bud in the West, from where the eventual leadership was to come; however,

> "Zionism arose as a historic force in the response of the situation characteristic not of Western, but of Eastern Jewry. In ideological terms, it was a reaction against the Emancipation, a denial of it as a rational solution of the Jewish problem.[6]

The situation of the Jews of Eastern Europe was quite different from that of the West. In Western Europe nationalism tended to unite countries; in Eastern Europe it divided countries. In the East there were many nationalities, each one attempting to show its own specific contribution, its own customs, art, etc. The Jews were excluded from other nationalities and were treated as a separate group. As a result they acted as a separate group. They turned to their own language and customs. They had to seek a land as well.

The Jews lived in their own autonomous societies in the Pale of settlement. There, Jews lived their own parochial and religious life. Jewish education in the Pale was likewise parochial with little or no secular education until the late nineteenth century. Children began their early religious training in the dismal Heder, (Hebrew "room"). From there they went to the Talmud Torah, a school for more advanced studies and then perhaps to the Yeshiva, the academy.

After the partition of Poland, the Russian czars found themselves with an inherited one million Jews.[7] To solve the problem of Jewish separatism, and amalgamate the Jews into Russian life, the czars issued a series of edicts limiting the power of the Jewish community.

Catherine II, Alexander I, and Nicholas I each attempted in his own way to destroy Jewish solidarity through scientific means of "Russification".[8] Nevertheless, all endeavors failed.

When Alexander II ascended the throne in 1855, the Jews of Russia sighed with relief. The new czar declared his intention to grant tolerance and equality to all the Russian peoples. During the first half of his reign the Jews, relieved of the burdens imposed upon them by the previous czars, reached to this new liberalism by adopting the dress, language, and mannerisms of the Russians. This period of liberalism, however, did not last. Following Poland's unsuccessful revolt against Russia in 1863, Alexander II resorted to a reactionary program, rescinding most of the liberal ordinances which he had issued during the first half of his reign.[10] The Jewish response was one of disillusionment. Once again the Jews withdrew into their own society, clinging tenaciously to their Jewish traditions, while attempting to cope with their own Jewish problem. Their solution was the Haskalah.

The Haskalah was a Jewish, humanist movement which revived an interest in secular affairs. Similar to their coreligionists in the West, these Enlightened Jews, called Maskilim, attempted to create a modern religious society through enlightened secularism. The movement began in Galicia, but this was only introductory to the Russian period.[11] The Maskilim believed that such a society of

enlightened Jews would be more readily accepted by their non-Jewish neighbors. These Maskilim unlike the Western Enlightenners did not appear as religious reformers, nor did they substitute Russian culture and Western education for Hebrew and Jewish learning.[12] The advocates of Haskalah in the nineteenth century, rather than turn to Russian returned to the language of Jewish history, the language of the Bible, and fostered a new secular Hebrew literature. This literature, at first, was of somewhat primitive character; gradually it widened in scope to approach the character of the normal European literature. Melitzah, the flowery, contrived, conventionalised style became the fashion of the day.[13]

At the beginning, the Haskalah made no pretense to any Jewish nationalism. For most Jews, the thought of a physical return to Palestine was as remote as the arrival of the Messiah. With the rise of Hebrew literature and the persecutions under the czarist regime, there arose a need to convert the idea of a return from a dream to an actuality, and to transform messianism from a religious hope to a political reality.

> Political Zionism is merely a renewed form of Messianism that was transmitted from the enthusiastic minds of the religious Kabbalists to the minds of the political communal leaders.[14]

While the masses in Eastern Europe were not specifically interested in nationalism, as it was nationalism that caused their problems, they needed help and guidance.

The upper echelon leaders of the East were not interested either in nationalism nor did they offer any practical solution to their problems. In the West there were non-Jews who were interested in a Jewish nationalist movement as they wanted an entree into the Ottoman Empire; there were also second echelon Jews who could only assume leadership in the East. There were, however, in the East other rabbis who appealed to the masses to return to Palestine as a solution to their problems. On the basis of a religious ideology these men argued for the creation of a nationalist movement. They stirred up the commitment to a common destiny, within a religious context, in much the same way as did Mazzini, within a secular context, in Italy. The need to transform such a religious ideology into a viable movement was undertaken by these emerging proto-Zionists of the nineteenth century---among whom was Judah Hai Alkalai.

CHAPTER II

A Biography: The Life, Works and Travels of Judah Alkalai

Judah Alkalai[1] was born in the city of Sarajevo,[2] the capital of Bosnia in 1798. He was the fourth son of Solomon Hai Alkalai, the Hacham,[3] or chief Sephardic rabbi of that city. Judah received his earliest education in the yeshivot of Sarajevo. He proved himself to be a promising student and was brought to Jerusalem to continue his religious studies. Little is known about this first period in Palestine. His teacher was Eliezer Papo,[4] the author of Pele Yoetz, whom young Alkalai admired and respected. While in Jerusalem Alkalai studied in the Yeshivat haHachamim, the Academy of the Scholars. There he came under the influence of the Mystics and the Kabbalah, the mystical religious stream in Judaism. This influence was later to play a great role in his life and his writings.

At the age of twenty seven, in 1825,[5] Alkalai was accepted as the Rabbi and Hacham of the Sephardic congregation in Semlin,[6] Croatia, which was situated on the Hungarian-Serbian border. On the other side of the Danube was Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, which had recently begun her rebellion for independence from Turkey. Semlin

was the city of refuge for renegades and defectors from the Turks. Not far away the Greeks were fighting for their independence. It was in this setting, in the Balkans--the very center of revolutionary activities--that Alkalai began his literary career, propogandising for the creation of a national Jewish homeland in Palestine.

Alkalai's first two treatises, actually, contained little of the systematic philosophy that was to later characterize all his works. Implicit within them, however, were the foreshadows of his later writings. His first treatise,[8] Darke Noam (Pleasant Paths), written in Ladino, was dedicated to the instruction of Hebrew grammar to the children of the community. Alkalai abridged those texts which he himself had used to make them more palatable for the modern society. After a considerable amount of encouragement by friends, and after receiving sufficient funds, Alkalai published his treatise in 1839 in Belgrade. Alkalai based much of this work on his training in Kabbalah, referring very often to the Zohar, the handbook of the Mystics, and employing Gematria, a mystical method of biblical exegesis--whereby words are explained according to the numerical value of their letters. In Darke Noam, Alkalai already gave evidence of his understanding of the Jewish problem, although he did not yet offer any concrete, formalized solution to ameliorate the situation. He alluded to Palestine as the focal point of Judaism and cited endless examples of the place of the Holy Land in the

mystical lore. He claimed that "one cannot attain the world to come without first enduring affliction . . . but then in order to enter into the next world, "one must first go to the land of Israel, for the gateway is there."[9]

Even such tacit pro-Zion sentiments were not in vogue in Alkalai's day, neither with the Reform movement nor with Alkalai's Orthodox coreligionists in Europe and in Palestine. Such statements as "whoever lives outside of Palestine is to be considered as one who has no God",[10] although based on the tradition,[11] were met with much scorn by Alkalai's contemporaries. The Jews who lived in Palestine were afraid that the increase in colonization--which would have resulted from Alkalai's encouragement--would detract from the charities which they were receiving from the Diaspora. The Jews of Europe who were in positions of leadership, on the other hand, were afraid that such a colonization effort would undermine their own positions. Alkalai's enemies, therefore, attacked his first book with a series of derisive articles, mocking Alkalai and his mystical undertones.

The following year, 1840, his second work, Shelom Yerushalayim (The Peace of Jerusalem) was published to defend his position in Darke Noam and to answer those who mocked him.[12] In Shelom Yerushalayim--also written in Ladino--Alkalai claimed that his attackers had failed to understand him. In fact, he went on to say, this very distrust and unwarranted enmity between Jews was the cause

of disunity, and the afflictions and persecutions during the ages. "God, Israel, and the Torah are one", he said; "one cannot stand without the other."[13] Alkalai contended that is the obligation of every Jew to support his less fortunate brothers in Palestine by giving the biblically prescribed tithe, for "the Messiah will not come until the last peruta is gone from the purse," nor may even one peruta be wasted on the Diaspora, he added. This answer, although based on the tradition, Jewish commentaries, and philosophy was rejected by Alkalai's enemies. Rather than mend the breach caused by his first treatise, the appearance of Shelom Yerushalayim further alienated Alkalai from those whom he had tried to reach.

His first two treatises contained the uncultivated seed of a nationalist philosophy. These ideas were obscured somewhat by the use of Kabbalah and "Melitza"--the contrived flowery style which was popular during the Haskalah period[14]--and lacked the concrete methodology which was to characterize his later works; yet, Alkalai's modus operandi was established. He had opened a Pandora's box, and "Hope" remained inside--a hope which was to sustain him throughout the many arduous years ahead. That same year, however, saw an event which was to affect Alkalai's life far more than did those who mocked his works' in fact, it was an event which was to temporarily place both he and his enemies into one camp.

The Damascus Affair of 1840 shook the entire Diaspora.

Repercussions were felt throughout Europe, where Jews suddenly awakened from their lethargy and realised their financial responsibilities toward their coreligionists in the East. All hearts were with Sir Moses Montefiore and Adolphe Cremieux on their mission to Syria, Palestine and Egypt, where they met with Mohammed Ali, to eradicate the stain of the libel. For some Jews, however, philanthropic assistance was not sufficient to ameliorate the problem. An interest in a Jewish national homeland arose. These Jews saw other small nations throwing off their shackles and felt that this was an ideal opportunity to propogandize for a Jewish homeland. Cosmopolitanism was being replaced by a more pragmatic philosophy of particularism.

Alkalai, from his youth, had seen the Serbian battle for independence. Now, seeing the persecutions and the anti-Jewish libels, Alkalai was awakened to formulate some solution to the problem. He had vacitly alluded to a solution in his earlier treatises; by 1840, Alkalai was thoroughly convinced that the time was ripe for action and that this was the acceptable time of the Lord.

In 1843 he wrote Minhat Yehudah, (An Offering of Judah), prefaced by an introduction entitled Mizmor LeTodah, (A Hymn of Thanksgiving), as a tribute to the saviours Montefiore and Cremieux. It was in this book that Alkalai began to crystalise some of the ideas which were contained in his former works. These ideas were to appear and re-appear in various forms in his later writings during the

following thirty-five years. In Minhat Yehudah Alkalai reiterated the claim that the year 1840 was, according to the tradition, the year for the Redemption--"the year that has come to stir up our hearts to the absence of Jerusalem." He began this work with a discussion of the Damascus Affair. The reason for the blood libel, he claimed, was that Jews had failed to keep the covenant of brotherhood.

> Therefore, the milk of Palestine has turned to blood . . . and instead of milk and honey . . . we are sucking blood, and evil decrees have befallen us in the lands of the dispersion.[16]

Alkalai was disturbed by the insincerity of his coreligionists. He accused them of merely paying lip service to the idea of the Restoration to Zion. He argued that they were only deluding themselves if they believed in a supernatural Restoration. For this Redemption, he argued would come through the will of man, with God's help.

> There is no difference between this world and the days of the Messiah, except that during the latter there will be no bondage under foreign powers.[17]

Similarly, he argued for the renaissance of the Hebrew language and the unification of Israel into one band.

Such opinions as the negation of the Diaspora and the return to Zion through natural means did not find ready acceptance by those Jews "who dwelled quietly and securely in the West." Alkalai's mystical speculation brought upon him the derision of many people who failed to understand that he was less interested in fixing the date of the Redemption--as were many of the Kabbalists--and more

interested in showing the way by which it could be effected. When Minhat Yehudah first appeared, it was immediately attacked by Ignatz Einhorn (1825-1875), a Hungarian religious reformer and economist. If Alkalai's first two treatises, written in Ladino, for a small, limited audience, met with so much scorn, how much more so did Minhat Yehudah, which was written in Hebrew and addressed to all Israel!

Four years later a new treatise, Kol Kore[18] (A Pronouncement) appeared. The ideas expressed were similar, at times verbatim, with those of his former writings. Alkalai directed his sharp protestations against the rabbis of Jerusalem, who were preventing the Redemption with their hypocritical piety. He appealed to the leaders of western Jewry to petition the Sultan of Turkey for a parcel of land in Palestine and to begin the process of colonisation; but his appeals were frustrated.

A short treatise entitled Petah Kettuda Shel Mahat[19] (An Opening of a Needle's Point), appeared the following year in 1849. This work was also dedicated to Montefiore. Alkalai envisioned Montefiore as the embodiment of the Redeemer. This was dynamic Messianism. The treatise was characterized by a dialectical discussion of the traditional attitude toward repentance, (Teshuva), which Alkalai interpreted to mean "return". He made a distinction between individual return or repentance, and collective return or colonization. Again he appealed to the rabbis to "attest to the validity" of his words, but the militant mendicants

of Palestine refused to assist in the colonization project.

With the passage of a few years--years in which Alkalai saw neither leadership arise, nor Jews awaken, he took to travelling throughout Western Europe to propogandize and to "awaken the slumberers" to action. In 1852 he left Semlin. Even in his travels he did not meet with great success. In Leipzig he met with Julius Furst (1805-1873), the publisher of Der Orient, the literary organ of the German Jewish conservative orthodoxy. Furst had obtained a signed permit from a steamship line to transport immigrants from Europe to Palestine--via the Mediterranean--for one third the regular fare. This venture, however, did not succeed. In Berlin, the capital of Prussia, Alkalai met with Michael Sachs (1808-1864) a rabbi and outspoken anti-reformer. Throughout his travels he stopped and lectured in Vienna, Breslau, Leipzig, Berlin, Paris and London. He met with the important leaders of nineteenth century Jewry: Gedaliah Tiktin, Leopold Zunz, Charles Netter, Adolphe Cremieux, Eleazar Horowitz, Jacob Etlinger, Mendele Stern, Albert Cohen and Adolphe Yalink. While in Paris, Alkalai allegedly visited with Napoleon III, however, this is doubtful.[22] In London in 1852, Alkalai founded a society for the Colonization of Palestine called Shalom Yerushalayim.[23] According to Alkalai the society was composed of both Jews and non-Jews and flourished only while he himself was in London. It disbanded soon after he left. The lack of support by the majority of British Jews

was due to their attempt to participate in the Parliament and make England their homeland. Alkalai's attempt to establish the ancestoral homeland in Palestine was hardly in consonnance with their self-interests. His stay in London was not completely fruitless. Alkalai did meet with the leaders of Britain--both Jews and Gentiles--and was promised monetary support by a number of non-Jews who were interested in assisting a Jewish nationalist movement by investing in the projects of such a movement. It is not certain whether Alkalai met Montefiore personally but an exchange of correspondence did transpire between them.[24] During that year, also, Alkalai published another treatise entitled Mevasser Tov (A Harbinger of Good Tidings) which was a synopsis of his earlier work Kol Kore (1843), with an English translation for the British Jews. It had little affect, nevertheless, on the complacent Jews of Britain who were vying for power within their own country and were not ready to assume the leadership of the proto-Zionist movement.

Apparently Alkalai was not discouraged by the poor response to his appeals in Europe. Four years after his return to Semlin, Alkalai published his largest work entitled Sefer Hayyim (A Book of Life), prefaced by an introductory chapter Sukkat Shalom (A Tabernacle of Peace). As he did in his previous works, Alkalai again praised England as the country which would be the first to recognize the Jews as a separate nation. Alkalai realized that in order to strengthen

his own position he would have to align himself with the West; therefore, he spoke of Britain in glowing terms: "The Kingdom of Great Britain will be the first of all the house of Joseph to care for us."[25] Alkalai also knew that he would need the support of the West---England, France and Austria---countries which already had a tradition of Enlightenment and Nationalism.

Goral la-Adonai (A lot for the Lord) published in 1857[26] became Alkalai's most celebrated work. Although neither the ideas nor the central theme of unity were new, Goral la-Adonai became his classical treatise because of his clarity of purpose and the lucidity in which Alkalai proposed the practical solution to the Jewish problem. He advocated the organization of a stock company, a national loan and a national tax to raise enough money to purchase land and begin colonization. Nebulous concepts were transformed into concrete working plans.

The unity of which Alkalai had first written did not come until a few years after the appearance of Goral la-Adonai. A total of twenty years had passed between the Damascus Affair and the founding of the Alliance Israelite Universelle in 1860. Unfortunately, the inception of the Alliance was due to another Affair, which also shocked world Jewry in realising its unstable position; this second shock was the Mortara Case in Italy in 1857. The Alliance, headed by Adolphe Cremieux, immediately captured the hearts of all Israel and soon became the unofficial spokesman of the

Jewish world. After its founding, other societies suddenly sprang up throughout the world, and Alkalai attached himself to these societies and appealed to their leadership to unite into one band. He encouraged the masses to affiliate with these societies, which, he claimed were for one purpose: to unite Israel and begin the colonization of the Holy Land. With renewed optimism, Alkalai returned to his writings and began his most prolific period. Between the founding of the Alliance in 1860 and its agricultural school, Mikveh Israel in 1870, Alkalai wrote several treatises in addition to numerous articles which appeared in the periodicals of the day. Some of these articles were later reprinted as separate treatises such as Nehmat HaAretz which appeared originally in HaMevasser in 1866 and Kibbutz Galyyot which was published in HaLevanon in 1869. Alkalai hailed any attempt of Jews to influence their own destiny, and the Alliance seemed to be the beginning of the Redemption. Alkalai called this beginning the opening of a small doorway "which the Almighty would, in turn, enlarge." "Though our beginning be modest," he wrote, "our end will greatly increase." Alkalai compared this unification of Israel, through the Alliance, to Hosea's promise: "Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together . . . " The following year, 1861, Alkalai wrote two short treatises. The first, Mashmia Shalom[27] (An Announcement of Peace) was a tribute to Ludwig Philippson (1811-1889) a liberal rabbi who

advocated traditionalism. Philippson convened an assembly in Paris which Alkalai hailed as the work of God. Only eight years later, Alkalai bitterly attacked Philippson in his Kibbutz Galuyot,[28] after Philippson presided over the Reform Rabbinical Assembly of Cassel. The second treatise which appeared in 1861 was Shema Yisrael[29] (Hear O'Israel), a mystical treatise which reflected his earlier works more than his later ones.

NeOded Anavim, (The Upholder of the Humble), appeared in Vienna in 1864, a work which was his finest treatise since Goral la'Adonai. Many of the kabbalistic references which were found in Shema Yisrael were deleted from this work. In 1865 in Belgrade another classical work appeared. Regle Mevasser, (The Feet of the Messenger of Good Tidings), was a tribute to the Alliance. Alkalai expounded on the theme of Redemption through auto-emancipation--without super-naturalism. He attacked those who hindered the work of the Alliance. Shivat Tzion (The Return to Zion), printed in Vienna, 1863, was an appeal for financial aid. Alkalai suggested revivifying the biblical tithe. His final treatise appeared in 1870. In Menahem Tzion(The Comforter of Zion), Alkalai assailed both the Reformers in Germany and his own Orthodox colleagues in Palestine. He argued that his colonization project would erase the shame of the Exile. He urged the societies to unify into one united front to begin the process of colonization of the Holy Land. Palestine, he said, was like "a large hospital

. . . that would cure all the ills of the house of Israel . . ."[30]

Alkalai prepared to leave for Palestine to continue his campaign directly from the center of his project. His departure was cancelled by a telegram which he received from Kalischer. The Ashkenazic rabbi wired Alkalai to meet with Nathan Friedland, Kalischer's collaborator, in Paris. The purpose of this trip was to help the Jews of Shabatz, who had recently been expelled from Serbia.[31] The Jews of Shabatz turned for help to the Turkish Government and asked for permission to settle in Palestine. Alkalai and Friedland labored hard on behalf of the Jews of Shabatz, but despite their work and the protestations of the British consul in Belgrade, and the Alliance, the Turks refused. Possibly the Turkish decision was influenced by the Palestinian Jewish community, who opposed large scale immigration for fear that it would jeopardize their own economic security in Palestine. Alkalai, somewhat dejected, returned to Semlin to continue his work.

The founding of Mikveh Israel by the Alliance under Carl Netter in 1870 was a disappointment to some. The project was met by opposition from the members of the Hovevei Zion, particularly David Gordon (1831-1886), its head. Those who opposed the establishment of the agricultural school near Jaffa did so because they had expected something more than a school to emerge from all their labors. Had the establishment of Mikveh Israel been but a

beginning, they might have held back their displeasure; but they felt that the Society was satisfied only with this modest beginning. Alkalai, too, began to dispair of the Alliance and its agricultural school, as a false dawn, just as he had dispaired earlier of Montefiore.

In 1871, therefore, at the age of seventy-three, Alkalai left for Palestine to concentrate his efforts on the organisation of a society whose roots would be planted in the soil of the Holy Land. Greatly moved by the condition of the country and its poverty-stricken inhabitants, Alkalai became even more convinced that Colonization was the means whereby the problems of Palestine would be ameliorated. He convened several joint sessions of the Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities and after repeated recalcitrance--particularly by the latter--Alkalai succeeded in establishing the Society Kol Yisrael Haverim LeYishuv Eretz Yisrael, with main offices in Palestine and branched in the Diaspora. The majority of the administrative committee was Sephardic. The Society, however, from its inception was in a precarious position, and when Alkalai left Palestine for the consecration of his synagogue in Semlin,[32] both the Sephardic and Ashkenazic heads withdrew their support and the society disbanded. A bitter feud raged between Auerbach, the head of the Ashkenazic community and Alkalai, with personal accusations hurled back and forth. Alkalai, was compelled, therefore, to travel throughout Europe in an attempt to combat and counter the assults of the Jerusalem Rabbinate.

In the summer of 1874, Alkalai and his wife emigrated from Semlin, and a post which he had served for over fifty years--to Palestine. After a short period in Jaffa, they settled in Jerusalem. At about the same time as Alkalai's arrival in Palestine, the society Maskeret Moshe was founded in London to perpetuate the memory of Moses Montefiore. In 1876, two representatives, Samuel Montagu and Dr. Asher Asher[33] were sent by the society to Palestine to evaluate the condition of the Palestinian Jewish Community and to suggest methods for its improvement. Alkalai, at first, dispaired of this mission but then advised Montagu that if he sincerely wanted to do something of a practical nature, it should be accomplished in Jaffa rather than in Jerusalem which was the seat of contention. The society, however, was too weak to establish anything on the grand scale that Alkalai had hoped for, and it satisfied itself with building dwellings in Jerusalem. While in Palestine, Alkalai appealed to the Jews of Poland to begin the work of colonization by emigrating to the Holy Land. He warned them that their persecutions were merely to awaken them to the task of colonization and that he failed to understand why they--who were composed of artisans and farmers--should wait so long in the face of impending doom.

Until his last days, the pen never left Alkalai's hand. Never was there a sale of land without some reaction from him. He had convinced the Russo family to purchase land, which was made available by the Turkish government,

but the venture failed. Even with the death of Tzvi Hirsch Kalischer in 1874, Alkalai urged for the founding of a colony in his memory.

Judah Alkalai died in Jerusalem on November 2, 1878. A few days later his wife, Esther, also passed away. Alkalai died at eighty years of age. While he never lived to see the realization of the work he began, he was permitted--as was Moses--to see a glimpse of the future. A few months before he died, five men left Jerusalem and travelled westward to establish the first settlement--Petah Tikvah, the "Gate of Hope".[34]

CHAPTER III

Alkalai's Interpretation of His World

Alkalai was a product of the proto-Zionist movement; living during a period of Enlightenment and Nationalism, and in the midst of a revolutionary-torn section of Europe made an indelible impression upon him. Throughout Europe Alkalai saw small downtrodden peoples overthrow larger nations and emerge as independent states. This nationalistic fervor acted as a catalyst and inspired the young Sephardic rabbi to embark upon his own propogandistic campaign in favor of a Jewish return to Palestine. Alkalai's proposed solution of a Jewish national homeland, however, presupposed the existence of a problem.

The real problem, as Alkalai saw it, was the disunity of the Jewish community itself. This malady was not merely symptomatic of the nineteenth century, he argued, but was the result and the culmination of a chronic history of disunity, which came from self-abnegation. The inability of the Jewish community to unite in a common effort, he believed, was the real reason for the length of the Exile and the hardships which resulted from it. In 1843 Alkalai wrote:

> In the days of Reheboam there occurred a great schism that divided Israel into two kingdoms. Because of our

> great sins, we have not been purified of this iniquity even until today. Divisions still obtain among us, and we are once again one band.[1]

There were many reasons for the lack of Jewish unity in Alkalai's day. The political upheavals of the nineteenth century resulted in changing social and cultural conditions, which affected Jewish life. The increase in the Jewish population, the Enlightenment, and the Emancipation caused great readjustments in religious community living, and separated the Jewish community in the West from the Jewish community in the East. The breach which had previously existed between the Sephardic and Ashkenazic sections of traditional Jewry, likewise, became deeper. But, Alkalai was less interested in the general political cause and more interested in the particular manifestations of disunity and how to abolish it.

Throughout all his writings, Alkalai prefaced any practical solution to the Jewish problem with the dire need for unity. Obviously, his pleading went unheeded, for in 1863, at the age of seventy, he cited another example of disunity in the past, and he pointed an accusing finger at the new groups which were beginning to form.

> The second Temple was destroyed because of the sin of hatred; because there were several groups in the Temple which hated each other without cause . . . This sin exists among us in the guise of new groups. They have split the house of Israel into splinters, new and old . . .[2]

Alkalai's constant analogies and parallels between past and present were didactic means to "stir up the hearts

of all Israel to begin in the task of unification."

The greatest factors causing disunity, he felt, were the dissident ideologies which prevailed during the nineteenth century. With the Emancipation, Judaism became denominationalized, something unparalleled before in Jewish history. In the West, a religious reform began, taking its place along side of traditional Judaism, and undermining the uniformity of Jewish practice. Reform, in addition to its program to modernize and simplify, reflected the attitude of an enlightened, emancipated Western Jewry. In order to prove their devotion and loyalty to the country in which they resided, the early reformers deleted every mention of Zion or the Restoration from the Reform liturgy. Alkalai lamented that this act negated the very essence of Judaism and delayed any possible hope for a restoration to the Holy Land:

> "Our brethren have been inspired to request a portion of land in the countries in which they reside, because, being without a guide, they have become disgusted with the land of their ancestors; consequently, they have chosen a portion of land in the country of their sojourn . . . This decline has brought us down to the last rung and has thrown our souls into the dust![3]

This complete disregard for the centrality of the Holy Land in the Reform circles caused great agitation among the proto-Zionists. Alkalai looked with scorn upon the remarks made by some of the proponents of Reform. Sarcastically he answered Abraham Geiger's declaration of loyalty to Germany:

> "Rabbi Geiger expounded openly that Berlin is Jerusalem. These statements show disrespect for the capital city

> of Berlin, for Jerusalem, because of our sins, is destroyed and in ruins, while Berlin, the crowning city, is built up to the heights.[4]

Alkalai concluded that Geiger's "wisdom" had prevented him from understanding the degree of the sanctity of Jerusalem; a sanctity which cannot be erased, even in her destruction!

In 1844, in the city of Brunswick, "the first rabbinical assembly convened to engage in the ritual ammendments of those laws pertaining to the Sabbath, circumcision, and prayer in order to clarify the Reform position on such matters. Alkalai deplored this assembly. He accused the advocates of Reform of "neglecting the covenant of brothers",[5] of assimilating, and of "imputing false notions about the nature of God, the Messiah and the Redemption.[6] For Alkalai's purposes, Reform constituted a threat to Jewish solidarity and survival. It must not be concluded, however, that Alkalai's reaction to Reform was merely the reaction of a parochial orthodoxy to a dissenting group. Alkalai, too, we must remember was a product of the same age. He was not against Reform per se, nor against the spirit of reforms, for they were in keeping with the tradition[7] and the spirit of the times. Even in the prophetic literature, he claimed the spirit of reform prevailed:

> A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you.[8]

and similarly in Isaiah:

> For I will create new heavens and a new earth . . . For behold I create a Jerusalem, a rejoicing and her people a joy . . .[9]

Alkalai showed that Reform was compatible with the tradition.

> This new spirit, the spirit of the Lord, has awakened the rulers of the earth to grant us equal rights, that it might be beneficial for us all of our days . . .[10]

But, he continued, that while "they (the reformers) want to create a new heaven and a new Torah, they do not want a new land, nor a 'Jerusalem, a rejoicing', for they have decided to erase the remembrence of Jerusalem."[11] This was the bone of contention! Alkalai did not object to the spirit of liberalism; he objected to its practical implications and ramifications. Reform had gone too far, Alkalai felt. When the Assembly of Cassel convened in 1869, Alkalai anticipated its outcome with great optimism. When, however, the Assembly accepted the proposals of the Brunswick Conference, Alkalai had no alternative than to condemn the Assembly and Ludwig Philippson, its head and accused them of extremism and assimilation. Disparingly he wrote:

> Instead of the rabbis and the congregations assembling to help the Lord . . . to prepare a road to the Lord and to pave a straight path in the wilderness to our God, they have assembled to extinguish the light of Israel and to divide the cave of Israel.[12]

In much the same way, Alkalai attacked the other camp--those who opposed Reform and Emancipation. He accused them, also, of "despising the Redemption of Israel and the Emancipation as predicted by the prophets."[13] Alkalai found support in the writings of Kalischer and Guttmacher, two traditional proto-Zionists, that such parochial, narrow-minded views, as were promulgated by the Orthodox, were

likewise causing disunity and preventing the Redemption.[14]

Another factor which Alkalai believed contributed to the disunity within the Jewish community was the disuse of the Hebrew language. In the past there were periods when Hebrew was neglected. After the Enlightenment, and the Emancipation, the Hebrew language suffered its greatest atrophy and ceased to serve as the common language of world Jewry. Alkalai bemoaned this as another obstacle to unification.

> I must attest to the pain which I have always felt at the error which our ancestors committed in allowing our Holy tongue to be forgotten. Consequently, our people was scattered among seventy nations and our language was replaced by the seventy languages of the lands of Exile . . . If the Lord should bestow His miraculous favor upon us and gather our dispersed from the four corners of the earth into our land, no man could converse with his neighbor; such a divided community could not succeed.[15]

Alkalai argued that other cultural distortions were hindering Jewish unity as well. Alkalai, himself of Spanish descent, probably felt the schism between the Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities most acutely. He expressed grief over this situation and deplored the fact that such a division should result from such minute differences as dialects and pronunciations or even that the customs of one community should be different from the customs of the other.

> There is yet another severe malady among us, for we are even divided on the manner of reading from our Holy Torah (i.e., Ashkenazic and Sephardic pronunciations). Who knows which version is correct? It is obvious, however, that the Almighty does not want us so divided for this is not one of the main principles of our faith which it impossible to change.[16]

The petty division between the Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities, Alkalai contended, corrupted religious traditions and institutions. Even within the internal structure of each community, and in the daily lives of the Jews, Alkalai observed deterioration. Religious values, he said, have become distorted and have lost all relevance for the life of the community. Jews no longer give charity to support fellow Jews, even in cases of extreme duress.[17] He argued that it is a holier act to sell the scrolls of the Torah and the holy vessels than to allow an Israelite to suffer. Quoting the words of his esteemed teacher and mentor, Eliezer Papo, Alkalai wrote that "the Torah was given only to Israel and if there is no Israel, there is no Torah; therefore, nothing should stand before saving another's life".[18]

Another condition which Alkalai attacked was the institutional life of the synagogue. Attendance was irregular, and infrequent;[19] the services were conducted without decorum. In the small shtiebels where the Jews assembled to worship, the congregants engaged in idle conversation, discussing the week's financial problems instead of following the reading of the weekly Torah portion.[20] Conditions had grown so perverse by Alkalai's time that they caused an internal breakdown of the religious, societal structure. The rabbis hated the congregants; the teachers, melamdim, and rabbis were looked down upon with disrespect by the laymen.[21] Similar conditions had existed

even in Western Europe prior to the period of the Enlightenment. Ritual amendments, and certain reforms in the mode of the service itself ameliorated those problems and prevented the situation from becoming worse. Within the Ottoman Empire and throughout the Pale these deplorable conditions still persisted in the synagogues and in the daily community life. For Alkalai, this constituted yet another manifestation of a divided Israel.

The consequences of disunity, Alkalai concluded, were exile, suffering and the loss of Redemption:

> "Because of our great sins, we are scattered and divided today, one from another, because each community has its own language and its own customs. Such obstacles divide the community and postpone the Redemption.[22]

Alkalai did not need to search for proof-texts. History and the tradition were on his side. He pointed out that because of the "sin of disunity" the Jews were exiled from their land and because they had failed to unite subsequently, tragedies befell them in all the lands of the dispersion. Even within the Ottoman Empire of Alkalai's day tragedy had not ceased. In 1840 Salonika was destroyed;[23] in that same year the Damascus Affair shook the entire Diaspora. In 1875, eight hundred cities were destroyed by fire and many Jews suffered.[24] Within Palestine the population was decimated by a series of earthquakes, plagues, and pillages driving the survivors from one city to another. Cholera hit Jerusalem in 1831 and again in 1836. The following year the dread plague struck the inhabitants of

Safad and Tiberius, which was still recovering from the effect of the earthquake of 1834.[25] Jews were being persecuted in Poland, Yemen, Morocco, and the Danubian principalities.[26] Alkalai attributed all these tragedies to the Exile; which was the consequence of the Jewish sin:

> Thus in iniquity we have suffered the birth-pangs from much oppression which has befallen us during this bitter exile . . . and we still are not saved.[27]

Alkalai, however, was not a pessimist. His laments were not elegies of despair. He intended his works to raise the clarion cry, "to arouse the slumberers", and to "stir up those who dwelt securely in the West". It was, particularly for those Jews living in the West, who had already forgotten the bitterness of the pre-Emancipation period, that he directed his plea and his warning:

> We have heard the tumultuous roar of those who seek freedom and citizenship in the lands of the dispersion. But it is this which has been our trouble and has profaned the covenant of our ancestors . . . by attempting to copy the other nations in order to obtain their good will . . . My sister, my bride, it is in vain that you beautify yourself.[28]

Alkalai concluded that the Emancipation was only a false dawn and that despite all Jewish endeavors, Jews would never be completely accepted by the non-Jewish community.[29] Assimilation would result, he said, in their attempt "to be close to them (the non-Jews) in order to be accepted and liked by them."[30] Similar views were expounded by Moses Hess and later by Leon Pinsker in his Auto Emancipation

when he wrote that "legal emancipation is not social emancipation",[31] and that

> For the sake of the comfortable position we are granted, for the flesh-pots which we may enjoy in peace, we persuade ourselves, and others, that we are no longer Jews, but full-blooded citizens. Idle delusion! Though you prove yourself patriots a thousand times, you will still be reminded at every opportunity of your Semitic descent.[32]

The solution to the Jewish problem which Alkalai proposed was precisely the slogan which Pinsker popularised by his book--Redemption thru auto-Emancipation.

CHAPTER IV

Alkalai's Proposed Solution for the Colonization of Palestine

Judah Alkalai was more than a romantic dreamer and more than an idealistic theorist. His analysis of the problems of contemporary Jewish life was evidence of his realistic grasp of the situation and its practical solution through nationalism. These views found expression not only in debate and exhortation, but through his personal contact with the leaders of European Jewry, and through the organizations which he helped found. During his lifetime, he met with much failure and derision, but he did bequeath a legacy to those who followed him--a proposed plan; a practical solution to the Jewish problem. Whether or not Alkalai's actual plan was the one adopted and utilized by the Zionist movement is difficult to say; however, it cannot be denied that many of his ideas and plans antedated the later-day proposals.

Alkalai believed that the return to Zion, the Redemption, was the first step toward the achievement of political independence for the Jewish people. His goal was clear: a complete Rebirth and Redemption of Israel in the historic homeland. By "Rebirth" Alkalai meant a

renaissance in all its aspects: political, religious, economic, ethical, and cultural.[1] The question which he undoubtedly asked himself was how to effect such a plan and how to actually implement it? Alkalai realized that there could be no Redemption without the unification of Israel into one band. This necessitated a change in standards, values, and a change in the internal workings of the community in which he lived. It was obvious, too, that the main condition which Jewry had to meet, even prior to their unification, was to develop the "will" to be redeemed by their own efforts.

Alkalai derived his arguments for self-emancipation from the context in which he lived. Enlightenment in Western Europe and the Haskalah in Eastern Europe were both basically humanist movements. Even Romanticism, which followed, placed its emphasis upon man and his place in the organic structure of history. The revolutions which spread throughout Europe attested to man's ability to bring about change by himself. The nineteenth century was permeated by rationalism, a reliance upon man's reason which resulted in the popularity of a natural religion.[2] Alkalai was exposed to this naturalistic philosophy and was greatly affected by it. It was a philosophy and a language through which he could communicate with his contemporaries, and reach their minds as well as their hearts:

> The spirit of the age demands from all nations to prepare their lands and to establish their languages; similarly, it demands from us to prepare the house

> of our lives, to establish our holy language and to keep it alive.[3]

Redemption, Alkalai stressed, could only be brought about by natural means, by the efforts of the Jews themselves:

> While Salvation is God's alone, He will effect it thru man, just as he caused the Salvation of the Babylonian Exile thru Cyrus.[4]

Alkalai argued that the reason Redemption failed in the past was because the "Messiahs" attempted to bring it about through supernatural means, but that this was against God's Will--"who is the creator of nature."[5] The time for the Redemption, he claimed, was 1840. He argued that this was the "acceptable time!"[6]

The first task incumbent upon all Jews, according to Alkalai's plan, was the unification of Israel into one band. He called this unified body the "Chosen Assembly", from which the elders would be appointed. It was essential that these elders be men of the highest calibre, who would command respect "so that the congregation of the Lord would not be like sheep who have no shepherd."[7] The function of these elders, Alkalai wrote, would be to eradicate those obstacles which prevent unification:

> They will unite us in a common language, custom, and law. Our worship and our laws must not be according to the customs of Spain, Germany, Poland, or Italy--but a Minhag Yisroel. These elders will make us into one nation. We shall no longer be called Spaniards, Germans or Frenchmen,--we shall be called Jews.[8]

Alkalai recognized the important place of "uniqueness" in the scheme of Redemption. As part of the spirit of Romanticism each race or ethnic group emphasized its own

particular culture rather than participate in the world of cosmopolitanism. For this reason Alkalai deemed it crucial for the Jews to revitalize their culture and their folkways. Most important was the resuscitation of their own language. The Hebrew tongue, Alkalai reasoned, must be revivified through natural means, just as the Redemption itself must be effected through the will of the Jews themselves. He warned his readers not to naively believe that "the Lord will send His angel to teach us all the seventy languages . . . for this will not be accomplished by a miracle."[9] The renaissance of the Hebrew Language will come about through the efforts of the scholarly and devoted teachers, and through the "God-inspired men who have brought to light the periodicals for the benefit of the Hebrew language: Ha-Maggid, Ha-Levanon, Ha-Havatzelet, Ha-Mevasser, and Ha-Carmal."[10] Alkalai appealed to the heads of the community "to give preference to the Hebrew language, the Mother of tongues, through which God Himself speaks."[11]

Following unification, Alkalai said, self-redemption would come. According to the rabbinic tradition, there would be no Geulah (Redemption) without Teshuvah (Repentance: literally, "return"). Alkalai interpreted this to mean that "Teshuvah" not only means the return to God, but the return to the Land as well; thus he posited two kinds of Redemption: a spiritual return, or individual salvation[12] and a physical return, or collective salvation.[13] The former was a return to God in "thought",[14] by accepting

Godliness,[15] while by the latter Alkalai meant <u>colonization</u>, the actual return to the Holy Land:

> There are two kinds of return: individual and collective. Individual return means that each man should turn from his evil ways, through the prescribed means of repentance . . . as found in the traditional literature regulating proper conduct. This is called individual return because it pertains to the particular needs of each man . . . Collective return means that all Israel should return to the land which is the inheritance of our fathers, to receive the Divine command and to accept the yoke of Heaven. This collective return was foretold by all the prophets and even though we are unworthy, the Lord will help us, in his wonderous ways, for the sake of our holy ancestors.[16]

A collective return, Alkalai concluded, would also bring individual salvation.[17] In this way, he had hoped to appeal to the entire European Jewry of his day, through the tradition, as well as through a scientific and rational approach, for both were in consonance with the age.

The next problem that Alkalai had to face was the question of the land itself; could the collective return and colonization take place on any land, or was this project to be specifically Zion-oriented? This problem was later to cause a split within the Zionist ranks during the stormy sixth Congress at Basle, when Herzl proposed Uganda as an alternative to Palestine.[18] If a "territorialist" philosophy ever appealed to Alkalai as a possible solution, it never found its way into his writings. Alkalai was adamant throughout his entire life in his insistance upon the colonization of Palestine exclusively! In this, too, he kept within the framework of the spirit of the age.

By venerating the historic homeland, he was able to make the Jewish national cause parallel to the cause of other nationalist movements. The problem arose during Alkalai's time, however, that Jews began emigrating from Europe to the Dominions of the British Commonwealth, and the Americas. (As early as 1880 there were an estimated 250,000 Jews in America.)[19] During the nineteenth century hundreds of thousands of peasants and farmers from Germany, Italy, Serbia, Poland, and Russia poured into Canada, Australia and New Zealand.[20] Alkalai was appalled over an article appearing in Ha-Maggid in 1864 which stated: "two hundred Jews from Poland have recently arrived in America and founded a colony in the Province of Canada."[21] Alkalai challenged that it was inconceivable that God should want Jews estranged even more from their land, having been already separated from it since the beginning of the Exile. Warning Jews not to pay attention to the rumors which were rampant, that Palestine was a fiery desert and that its inhabitants were impoverished and living under wretched conditions,[22] Alkalai passionately pleaded that "those who believe in the Redemption know that it will only be in the land of the inheritance of our ancestors,"[23] As for the physical condition of the land, he agreed that the country was not yet built up, but that it would take but a short while, using modern technology to transform the country into a goodly land again--"for even in the European countries," he continued, "Jews have not found

manna from heaven." Everything depends upon colonisation.

Having presented the ideological arguments for Palestine, Alkalai turned his attentions to the practical mechanics of colonisation. The first task was diplomatic; it necessitated finding the proper backing of influential people; men who occupied important political positions and who lived in the emancipated, and liberal countries of Europe. Alkalai turned to the Western powers and appealed to them for help. He realized that the political leaders of the West would be the most sympathetic toward the Jewish problem in the East.

> "The first and most preferable task is to obtain permission from the governments. Since according to the temperment of our age, the rulers of Europe are more righteous and compassionate than the rulers of the East, we must first obtain permission from the European leaders; from the governments of Britain, France, and Austria, the horn of Salvation will flourish."[24]

Alkalai was well aware of the security which Western Jewry enjoyed. He realized, too, that they would never leave their homes to participate actively in the colonization of Palestine. His appeal to the wealthy Jews living in the north of Europe, therefore, was for political, and financial assitance. Much of his pleading was addressed to the Jewish notables of Western Europe—men like the English financier Moses Montfiore, and the French polititian Adolphe Cremieux,—without whose financial support and political influence Alkalai's schemes

could not succeed.[25] Though these leaders of Western Jewry were, themselves not Jewish nationalists, they could, nevertheless, supply the leadership and the necessary funds for the Zionist activities of Eastern Europe.

> "The heads of the communities of Israel must assemble into one band, with one purpose: to present a general petition to the rulers of their nations . . . This Mitzvah of petitioning is incumbent upon our brothers who have the rights to stand in the palace of the king.[26]

Palestine was, at this time, under Turkish rule. Alkalai's plan called for the western powers to negotiate with Turkey and induce the Sultan to cede Palestine to the Jews as a tributary country, on a plan similar to that by which the Danubian principalities were governed.[27]

> The Sultan will not delay; it is well known before the Throne of His Majesty, the Sultan and before his officers that the Jews are his loyal subjects. Differences of religion will not be an obstacle, for each nation will worship its own God and we shall worship the Lord, our God, forever.[28]

The next obstacle was one of finances. In order to even begin diplomatic negotiations with Turkey, it was necessary to raise large sums of money--considerably more than could be supplied by any individual contributor or by any philanthropic organization. An additional source of revenue would be needed, in addition, after negotiations were completed, to cover the initial expenditures for the transportation of immigrants, soil reclamation, housing, industry, etc. "Money will solve everything", he wrote.[29] Alkalai, therefore, proposed the establishment of a Stock Company, on the mode of the fire insurance, the railroad,

and the steamship companies.[30] Both the Jews and non-Jews of Europe would be encouraged to invest. He also proposed the creation of a National Treasury, and a National tax for all Jews regardless of their domecile.[31] This, he said, would be similar to the taxes paid to Turkey by her citizens residing outside of the Ottoman Empire. Similarly, would Jewish resident aliens "of Europe contribute to the tax. Alkalai envisioned this tax as a revival of the biblical tithe. He urged every Jew to donate one-tenth of his earnings to help support his fellow Jew in the task of colonization,[32] and in the rebuilding of the homeland. Another scheme for fundraising which Alkalai devised was the revival of the half-shekel donation as enjoined by the Bible, (Exodus 30:11-16); in addition to the investments in the Company, Alkalai urged for the purchase and sale of houses and land through the lotteries of Europe. He foresaw both Jewish and non-Jewish investors, who owned property in Europe, jumping at this opportunity to buy and sell land at high profits. He estimated the value of land and property to increase by 10% within ten years.[35] When, as a result of the Damascus Affair (1840) and the Mortara Affair (1857), several philanthropic organizations began to appear, Alkalai praised them and urged for their strong support. In Paris, the Alliance Israelite Universal was founded by Adolphe Cremieux in 1860. That same year in Frankfort on the Oder the Society for the Colonization of Palestine was organized under Hayyim Lurie, and the following

year the society "Tikitzay Nirdamim, was formed to publish valuable texts and manuscripts. In London The Society of Deputies convened under the able leadership of Moses Montefiore.

Through these organizations, particularly the Alliance, Alkalai envisioned the practical realization of his schemes, even down to the fashioning of the shekels which would then be sold to the treasuries of each community.[36] Through the Alliance and the Societies Alkalai had hoped to effect his entire plan;[37] however, he soon realized that philanthropic endeavors, in and by themselves, were not sufficient. The normalization of Palestine in the nineteenth century required the establishment of an independent, self-sufficient up-to-date country equipped with all the contemporary technologies:

> If the colonization of the Holy Land will only be through philanthropy, then it will be to no avail; therefore, the Holy Society, the Alliance, must colonize the country similar to that of other countries--thru trades, building, planting, ship building, and commerce; with God's help they will see the rewards of their labor, for the land is fruitful; the poor of Israel will earn their livelihood with the toil of their hands and the sweat of their brows.[38]

In order for this venture to succeed and to appeal to the masses, Alkalai realized that this return to Palestine had to be carried out with dignity.[39] Through the Societies, the groundwork had to be laid; it was necessary to first prepare the land, build homes, roads and shelters for the poor, who undoubtedly, would be among the first to settle

in Palestine. Therefore, he argued that this return be gradual, with a moderate beginning so that "we would not be spread out over the fields like Bedouins; but rather, Redemption must come slowly until our land is built up and prepared."[40]

Despite the hardships that the Jews of Eastern Europe and North Africa were enduring, Alkalai realized that the appeal of Palestine, as a refuge, had been eclipsed by reports and rumors of the terrible conditions which prevailed there. Before these Jews considered emigrating to Palestine it was necessary for Alkalai to dispel their doubts and discredit the rumors. He quoted the consul of Prussia, who resided in Palestine, that such reports were gross exaggerations,[41] and that even though "The Lord will not fill their houses with silver and gold, neither will they die from starvation."[42] Now that the stage had been set, it was time to bring on the players. Undoubtedly, the settlers would not come from the West. Alkalai's plea went out to the poor of the East, the persecuted of Poland, Yemen and Morocco. He offered them an end to suffering and privation. He offered them dignity through labor.

> The colonization of the land will heal the pains of our brethren, who have been burned, persecuted, plundered and broken in the lands of their dispersion. The colonization of the land will heal the sickness of our brethren who live in Poland, so that they will no longer wander from nation to nation in search of rest. At this time, the straits of our Polish brethren has awakened the heart of every Jew to pity.[43]

The first task for these new immigrants was to work the

soil. After the fallow land had been sown, and the crops harvested, then others, artisans, and those who were engaged in business and trades in the Diaspora, would follow. Once on the land the poor would find work in building, as quarrymen and masons. Gradually the soil would be built up and slowly the land would be populated.

But the greatest impediment that Alkalai encountered was not the technical aspects of colonization; nor the struggle for Western support. Ironically, his greatest obstacle was Judaism itself--in the form of the rabbinate of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER V

The Religious Objection to Colonization: The Rabbis of Jerusalem

The place of Zion was always central in Jewish liturgy and enshrined in the hearts of Jews the world over. Even during those periods, when the ideology of the times argued against the collective return to the Holy Land, Jews in every corner of Europe faced East and fervently prayed for the restoration of Israel to the land of Israel; no Passover seder was completed without the prayerful hope "next year in Jerusalem."

For some Jews the Holy Land was more than a Jewish hope or idea. There had always been some form of Jewish community life in Palestine, even after the year 70 C.E. During the centuries that followed, this community was occasionally augmented by refugees from persecutions and expulsions, or by pious Jews and Mystics, who settled in the four "holy cities" of Jerusalem, Safed, Hebron, and Tiberias. Invasions and natural calamities, plagues and earthquakes, however, continually decimated the population and kept the community small. The Jews who remained were abjectly poor; the land was barren. Only a few of those who settled in Palestine earned their livelihood from the country itself. The majority of the settlers, composed of

elderly people, widows, and poor scholars were dependent upon and supported by contributions and gifts from Diaspora Jewry.

During the eighteenth century, due to adverse conditions in Eastern Europe, a relatively large Ashkenazic immigration flowed into Palestine. These Ashkenazic Jews became an important element in the community. During the following century immigration increased. In 1839 there was an estimated six thousand Jews in Palestine. A steady influx of Jewish refugees from North Africa and Southeastern Europe brought the figure to over ten thousand in 1856.[2] This increased immigration caused serious economic problems for the Palestinian community. Insufficient jobs produced problems of unemployment. Internal disputes arose between the Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities over leadership problems and the control of the charities. Both groups began soliciting separately for financial aid from abroad. In 1866, R. Meir Auerbach (1815-1878), the chief rabbi of the Ashkenazic community organized the Vaad ha-Kelali,[3] a central agency for the distribution of funds, collected in Europe, for the Ashkenazic poor in Palestine. The duplication of activities, in the area of charity collections caused a greater schism between the two Jewish communities.

The rabbis, the leaders of Palestine realized that the halukkah, the subsidies which were sent from abroad were hardly sufficient to cover the expenses of an increasing population. They began, therefore, to adopt an anti-immigration

policy to prevent large scale immigrations in the future. At first the rabbis ignored the initial attempts of men like Alkalai and Kal to encourage colonization. When organized colonization activities began and the problem became acute, the Palestinian rabbis--fearing that their own positions would be usurped by the proto-Zionists--responded with a militant anti-colonization policy. When, for example, the Jews of Shabatz, Serbia were expelled in 1864 and they requested permission from Turkey to settle in Palestine, the Jerusalem rabbinate objected. Yehiel Brill[4] (1839-1914), the editor of ha-Levanon, the literary organ of the extreme religious group, wrote to the Jews of Shabatz:

> I bear witness to you today . . . that when you arrive there Palestine , even before you shake the dust from off your feet, you will return to your own country and curse whomever incited this perversity to emigrate. It is better to be slain by the sword than by famine . . .[5]

The opposition to immigration by the rabbis was dictated by a realistic concern over the economic difficulties in Palestine. The rabbis were worried that the halukkah grants would end if the Diaspora concerned itself more with the colonization project than with the poor of Palestine. The rabbis, however, could not attack colonization on these grounds. They had to find an ideology which would attract the masses over to their side and would prevent future large scale immigrations. The ideology that they used was a religious ideology.

The rabbis argued that Redemption would not come through natural means. They claimed that it could only

be effected miraculously and that God, in His own time would bring it about. Meanwhile, they argued, the Jews should remain in the Diaspora and make the best of their lot until the Almighty will send His annointed Messiah to bring back the dispersed people of Israel. This was channeled Messianism.

> Don't be swayed by the idea which is current today throughout the world that we should now attempt to purchase our land. We, the children of Israel were sold for nothing. We shall not, nor shall our land be redeemed by money. The redemption of the world will be accomplished by God.[6]

Numerous articles appeared in the journal ha-Levanon during this time dissuading potential Jewish settlers from emigrating from Europe to Palestine. The anti-proto-Zionists claimed that "the time was not yet ripe" or that mass immigration "would uproot the pious from the study of Torah. A bitter attack against Alkalai and his treatise Me Oded Amerim was published in Vienna in 1864. The author was Nahman Nathan Korenel, a Dutch Jew who had settled in Palestine around 1830. He wrote that in order to strengthen the position of the Torah in Palestine it was necessary for Diaspora Jewry to contribute for its support. He claimed that even charitable Jews of the Diaspora would be considered as if they were actual residents of the Holy Land, and, thereby, "they would merit the Mitzvah of returning."[7] He condemned Alkalai's plans for colonization as dangerous. "God forbid that we believe such things!" Another attack appeared in ha-Le-Vanon in 1869 under the

pseudonym of Ben David. The author claimed that "it is a Mitzvah to nullify" the plans of the proto-Zionists. He claimed that there are already too many Jews in Safed who cry out for work. How long will they continue to cry out?

In a very real sense, the challenge of the rabbis represented a victory for Alkalai. He had previously importuned the rabbis to comment on his writings; but so long as Alkalai's writings did not constitute a threat, the rabbis ignored them. When Alkalai had succeeded in winning some support from the Jews of the West and began climbing to a position of leadership in the East, the rabbis could no longer neglect his activities or close their eyes to them. He represented a threat to their position.

Alkalai's task was now to defend his plan, also within the context of a religious ideology, and based on the tradition. Alkalai did not make any dichotomy between his religious arguments and his practical arguments in favor of colonization. He presented both in a unified and finely woven polemic. For our purposes, however, we shall deal with his practical solutions and his ideological discourse separately.

CHAPTER VI

The Defense of Colonization through the Tradition: A Polemic against the Rabbis

One of the main obstacles which hindered the realisation and accomplishment of Alkalai's program was the militant anti-immigration policy of the Jerusalem community. The rabbis, the leaders of the community, were fearful of an economic crisis in the Holy Land if immigration were to continue on a large scale. They warned would-be immigrants of the economic peril that they would encounter in Palestine. They dissuaded many from going to Palestine at all, or they suggested that the potential immigrants invest their money in European markets to be assured of a steady source of revenue and income in the event that they emigrate from Europe. The arguments of the rabbis were carefully couched in terms of the religious ideology. The rabbis maintained that Judaism and the tradition argued against colonization at that time. Only through a miraculous deliverance could the generation be redeemed. It was obvious, they told their followers, that the Messiah had not yet come, for conditions had worsened rather than improved. The Messianic Age, the rabbis

asserted would be a glorious period of peace and prosperity. They depicted it in glowing eschatological terms. Alkalai realized the imminent danger in these remarks. He passionately importuned the rabbis to "attest to the validity of his words, even though time would eventually prove him to be right."[1] Alkalai also realized that if he could not win the support of the Jerusalem rabbis, he had to counter their arguments also within the context of a religious ideology. He had to prove that Judaism had always favored a natural redemption and that such eschatological conceptions of the days of the Messiah--as propounded by the rabbis--was naive and not in accord with a true understanding of Jewish tradition.

Alkalai's ideological arguments for a natural redemption can be divided into three categories: religious, economic, and political. Within each category he attempted successfully to establish the validity of his arguments by citing proof-texts from the tradition to justify self-redemption and auto-emancipation. He began his argument by maintaining that the Restoration was the beginning Messianism.[2] He invoked the legend that the days of the Messiah were to be ushered in by a forerunner of the Messiah ben David. This first Messiah, ben David, Alkalai said would begin the process of the Restoration through natural means. This was dynamic Messianism. The Messiah was to be a mortal of flesh and blood and, according to Alkalai, was actually to be one of the exiled Jews who would

become the elected head or president of the assembly of elders. "This assembly will begin in 1840, from which time on, the days of the Messiah will commence."[3] In order to prove to the skeptical masses---who had envisioned the Messianic Age as a reversal of the cosmic order, Alkalai quoted the words of Maimonides in his Laws Concerning Sovereigns, (Chapter 12), that during the days of the Messiah the customs of the world would not be nullified nor would there be anything new in creation.[4] Alkalai warned the masses not to be misled into believing that the Messiah will be anything more than a simple mortal:

> He will not come flying through the air in a flaming chariot with flaming horses . . . but rather He shall, Himself, be one of the Exiles.[5]

This belief in the coming of the Messiah, Alkalai continued, is one of the thirteen principles of our faith and although this event had been falsely predicted before, all those who foretold of it were mistaken for they were not repentant. The real essence of the Messianic Age, Alkalai said is that "Israel would dwell securely among her hostile neighbors."[6] Alkalai argued away all notions of a supernatural redemption and set the stage for a natural process of the restoration in accordance with the tradition and in accordance with the age.

It was not only the Jews who were living in exile, Alkalai contended, but the Divine Presence was also estranged from the Land of Israel. The Restoration was not merely the return of an exiled people, it was also the return of an

exiled God! Alkalai admonished:

> We pray daily, 'let our eyes behold Thy return in mercy unto Zion.' Upon whom should the Divine Presence rest? Upon sticks and stones? Therefore, as the first step in the redemption of our souls, we must cause at least twenty two thousand to return to our land, in order for the Divine Presence to descend into our midst; afterwards, He will grant us and all Israel signs of His favor.[7]

God, Israel and Jerusalem form a unity, Alkalai said, and it is only in Jerusalem that God can once again become king. Our task then, Alkalai concluded, is to fight Armilus[8] and restore the Divine Presence to the Holy Land.

It was only natural, in accordance with his pro-colonization policy, that Alkalai should negate the Diaspora and build up the image of Palestine as the goal of the Messianic Age. His opponents, the upper echelon rabbis argued within the context of an ideology of channeled Messianism; that the time was not yet ripe. In the meanwhile the rabbis made a virtue out of the poverty and the conditions which prevailed in Palestine. Alkalai assailed those Jews who were dissuaded from emigrating to Palestine by citing the Talmudic maxim that "whoever lives outside of the Holy Land is considered as if he had no God." Alkalai deprecated the religious organisational structure of European Jewry: "All Israel knows that God loves the gates of Zion more than all the synagogues of the Diaspora."[9]

With all his protestations, however, Alkalai was not so naive as to believe that his arguments would induce

all Jewry, the world-over to flock en-masse into Palestine.[10] Alkalai's primary concern was not in enathematizing Diaspora Jewry, for if anything, they were as necessary to his scheme as were the immigrants he tried to reach. Alkalai was flexible. The question which was foremost in his thoughts was how to accomplish his plans most efficiently; this entailed certain concessions. To the hundreds of thousands of destitute Jews in the East, oppressed and persecuted, Alkalai offered Zion as the panacea. To the Jews of the West, however, without whose help his project could never have materialized, Alkalai compromised:

> Even if one is not able to emigrate, he should nonetheless establish a house in Palestine. The first task for the members of the Society for the Colonization of the Holy Land is to build homes until their hands become weary.[11]

Obviously, such a concession could not have been made had not Alkalai found a basis for it in the tradition. Alkalai expounded on a biblical verse from Genesis: "And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him a house."[12]

> The first act which Jacob performed after he journeyed from Padan Aram was to build a house in order to fulfill the commandment of settling the land. He performed this task even though he had no intention of living there--seeing that he was on his way to visit Isaac, his father. So must all the house of Jacob do . . .[13]

Even those Jews living outside of Palestine, who would support the colonization efforts, Alkalai assured, would also be regarded as though they had physically returned to the Holy Land. Ironically, a statement paralleling this was made by Nahman Koronel, an opponent of colonization.[14]

Koronel argued to repress immigration into Palestine. He said that any Jew who donated to help support the Jews of Palestine would be regarded as though he were a resident of the Holy Land. The difference between Alkalai's and Koronel's position was the purpose which motivated them.

Within the context of nineteenth century Romanticism and Nationalism, Alkalai envisioned Israel's return to the ancestoral homeland similar to the return being accomplished by other European nationalities. Alkalai dressed this nationalistic concept in the garb of a religious ideology. He asserted that "The first instruction therefore, is for man to return to the land of his origin"[15] just as did Samuel: "And his return was to Ramah, for there was his house . . . "[16] Only on the soil of the Holy Land, he said, could repentence be possible, for even Moses could not repent outside of the Holy Land.[17]

The second category within the ideological context was the economic basis for the return. Colonization, Alkalai maintained, would help support the rabbis. Being free from financial difficulties, the rabbis would be free from financial worries and would be able to devote themselves completely to their studies. "The first commandment is to work the land."[18] In this way Alkalai envisioned the emergence of a self-sufficient community. This in turn would lead to stability and wealth, leisure time and then the emergence of a scholar class, which would not have to rely upon charity from abroad. Contrary to the rabbis' condemna-

tion of agriculture as an obstacle and a deterrent to the study of Torah, Alkalai showed the benefits which could be derived from such an internal source of income.[19] In addition, he pointed out, the poor and hungry would find employment. Through labor and by becoming self-sufficient, the poor would achieve a sense of self-dignity and pride--no longer to roam helplessly among the other nations.[20]

Concerning the acquisition of Palestine, the Halukkah mendicants argued that during the miraculous redemption, the land would pass over to the Jews by virtue of hazakah, the presumptive claim of Israel's historic title to the land. Alkalai contended that it was forbidden to take even the smallest parcel of land without first purchasing it. He cited the biblical parallel of Abraham's purchase of the field of Mahpelah from Ephron, the Hittite. Alkalai claimed that this was a lesson to future generations that "the land was to be purchased from its non-Jewish landlords."[21] Alkalai's ideological reasoning attested to his realistic understanding of diplomatic procedures. He proved the necessity for such ventures as the stock company and the national tax program for the purpose of purchasing land from Turkey.

There were many who claimed that pouring money into Palestine for economic rehabilitation was a poor investment. They pointed out that the land was an uninhabited wasteland. There were other countries, they claimed, where business prospects were more promising. Without investors

the Holy Land, as the national homeland, could not survive. Alkalai, therefore, assured the skeptics that the land of Israel was once a thriving country, and that through colonization the country would return to its former state. He cited the midrashic pun which referred to Palestine (canaan) as Eretz Kena'an, "a land of business."[22] What is sorely wanting, he added, is the merchant class. This, too, would come in time. The righteous of every city will send their sons and servants to Palestine to continue those professions in which they were engaged in the Diaspora. This would act as an incentive for others to follow or, at least, to invest financially until the country would be firmly established and rebuilt.[23]

The third category which Alkalai formulated within the framework of a traditional ideology was the political aspect of colonization. This category was perhaps the most crucial as it contained the thread which linked reality with the idea. Alkalai realized that the rabbinic anathemas on those "who calculate the end of days" and who occupy themselves with the legendary themes of Redemption--as he, himself was doing--would hinder or perhaps possibly prevent his plans from ever materializing. As a traditional proto-Zionist, therefore, Alkalai advocated a natural redemption through the political agencies of his time and employed other midrashic statements to justify his position. At the same time, he countered any arguments presented by the Jerusalem rabbinate. The political Zionism which

Alkalai advocated was actually a modern form of messianism, transformed from the realm of religion to the sphere of politics.

> "Political Zionism is merely a renewed form of messianism that was transmitted from the enthusiastic minds of the religious Kabbalists to the minds of the political communal leaders.[24]

Natural redemption, Alkalai asserted was not new to Judaism. He cited examples from Jewish history when Israel had been liberated by political leaders. He compared the Redemption during Cyrus' rule to the Redemption that would take place during his day through the political powers of the nineteenth century. It was not man alone who would bring Redemption; it was God through man:

> "There are those who are familiar with the verse: 'Except the Lord build a house, they labor in vain to build it.' Everyone knows, however, that this verse was meant as a poetic rebuke of man's certainity in himself alone. What it does mean is that whatever a man undertakes--if it is without God's help, then, he labors in vain; therefore, in all his endeavors, he should trust in the Lord and lean upon his God. The houses of refuge would not have been built by the people of Jerusalem had not the Lord built them; however, it is their the rabbis of Jerusalem task to stir up the hearts of all Israel to help. We must begin like all other nations . . .[25]

The first task then, he argued, was to prepare the road, for even a miraculous Redemption would be impossible without the necessary preparations. He quoted the verse from Isaiah: "Go through, go through the gates, clear ye the way of the people."

Alkalai emphasized the importance of maintaining a nineteenth century mentality. In order for his project to succeed, he realized that it would have to work through

the existing political, and social institutions, and channels; it necessitated following diplomatic protocol and utilizing the contemporary slogans and ideologies. This Alkalai was able to accomplish with great clarity.

> The people await a man who will come from the heavens on a fiery chariot, led by fiery horses to gather the oppressed of Israel.[26]

This, Alkalai warned, would never be!

CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

Alkalai can be classified as a nationalist and a traditionalist. As a nationalist he advocated the establishment of the Jewish people in Palestine, where they would live free from persecution and shame. As a traditionalist, he sought to actively liberate his people in a contemporary form which, he believed, was foreseen by the tradition. Alkalai regarded the coming of the Messiah only as a means to a final goal; that goal was always clear: a complete rebirth of Israel in the historic and ancestoral homeland. There the Jews could develop their own unique culture, ethic, language and folkway, similar to other European nations. Yet, within the context of his religious ideology, Alkalai claimed that his purpose was not merely to add one more country to those already in existence, but rather "to accept Godliness and the Heavenly Kingdom" prior to the Restoration of Israel, by restoring the Divine Presence to the Temple.

Two questions must now be posited: where did Alkalai envision himself in the scheme of his nationalist movement, and did he exert any influence upon the later

Zionist thinkers? It is apparent that Alkalai left no explicit answer in his works. Any answer that might be derived, therefore, can only be inferred from a general analysis of the age in which Alkalai lived, through an understanding of the role of leadership, and particularly through an understanding of Alkalai's specific position and role in his community.

During the nineteenth century, the world had to be understood in terms of nationalism--an ideology which appealed to both Jew and non-Jew, Easterner and Westerner. The religious ideology which bound and united the Jews of the East and their coreligionist in the West was their common religious heritage. Messianism acted as an escape-valve, as it were, or the link which connected the religious and the secular ideology. As a potential leader of the Jewish nationalist movement, it was necessary to show that nationalism could be achieved through the age-old religious tradition--and yet--within the context of the age. This was the position of Judah Alkalai. Alkalai was a somewhat obscure rabbi of the East, who occupied a second echelon position in Semlin, as a teacher. He realized that there was no possibility there, to rise from this position to a higher state, except through a new institution or movement. In the proto-Zionist world, Alkalai saw an opportunity to achieve a prominent position. The real leaders of the East, however, the rabbis who occupied the upper echelon positions viewed the nationalist movement and Alkalai with

increasing fear. At first there was little or no reaction to the novelty of the movement, but later, realizing that such a movement would eventually threaten their own positions of leadership, the rabbis adopted a militant anti-Zionist attitude, which was also based on the tradition. In addition, there were the mendicant rabbis of Palestine who opposed nationalism and immigration as an economic rivalry. Alkalai, in order to strengthen his own position, was forced into aligning himself with the Western leadership, who--after the power struggles in the East had left the field open--were only too anxious to step in and assume their new positions. This western leadership class was composed of men who would never have reached the position of leadership in the West which they eventually reached in the East' although they themselves were not Jewish nationalists, they nevertheless lead the Jewish nationalist movement.

Alkalai's influence cannot be fully estimated. That his ideas antedated those found in later writings of the Zionist thinkers cannot be denied nor overlooked. There is a curious parallel between Alkalai and his younger contemporary, Moses Hess (1812-1875). Both men found similar faults with their respective communities; they condemned the Emancipation as a false hope;[1] they proposed similar solutions to the Jewish problem; and they hoped for the renaissance of the Hebrew language.[2] Even their slogans were, at times, identical. While Hess never

mentioned Alkalai, he was familiar with the writings of Kalischer, who was in constant communication with the Sephardic rabbi Judah. It can be assumed, therefore, without fear of contradiction, that Hess was familiar, likewise, with the writings of Alkalai. Messianism, Hess wrote, was a natural phenomena, similar to Alkalai's view.

> My messianic belief was then 1840 as it is today, the belief in the rebirth of the world historic civilized peoples through the elevation of the lowly peoples to the level of those who are in a higher state.[3]

This can be compared to Leon Pinsker (1821-1891) and his rebuke of the Orthodox element which prevented the Restoration because of their beliefs.

> The belief in the Messiah, the intervention of a higher power and the religious assumption that we must bear Divine punishment has caused us to abandon thoughts of a national liberation.[4]

The idea of auto-emancipation was, of course, central in both Pinsker's and Alkalai's writings. In deploring the lack of leadership, Pinsker claimed that "we are a flock scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no shepherd to protect us and bring us together"[5]--a statement which almost paraphrased Alkalai's lament. Similar to Alkalai, the Russian doctor advocated a gradual immigration to begin the task of colonization but Pinsker differed greatly in that he was not a Zionist, but a territorialist. Any country would have sufficed, particularly America, as the homeland.[6] Alkalai's idea of the organization of a

stock company, for the purpose of purchasing land found its way into Pinsker's auto-emancipation.[7] This idea was later to become central in Theodor Herzl's proposals for the creation of a Jewish state.[8]

Perhaps the most striking similarities between Alkalai's works and the later Zionist thinkers were those found in Herzl's Jewish State. Herzl advocated the establishment of two organizations: "The Society of the Jews"--which paralleled Alkalai's "assembly of elders"--and whose task it was to confer with the various governments of Europe, and the "Jewish Company"; reminiscent of Alkalai's "joint stock company" to organize trade. Herzl, like Alkalai proposed plans for housing, encouraging the Jews of Europe to build their homes "over there".[9] Herzl, as did Alkalai, appealed to the rabbis to inspire their respective congregations to assist in the colonization efforts and reasoned that if the Sultan were to cede Palestine to the Jews, they would, in turn, pledge themselves to regulate the whole finances of Turkey.[10] Quite antithetical, however, were the positions taken by both men regarding the languages of the Jewish State. Throughout all his writings Alkalai remained adamant in his insistence upon the use of Hebrew. Herzl, however, argued that language would not present itself as a problem. Everyone, he said, would retain his own native tongue and in the new State would join in the federation of languages.

It is very possible that while Herzl did not know

Alkalai personally, he was familiar with his writings. Interestingly, Baruch Herzl, the brother of Theodor's grandfather, was the Ashkenazic rabbi in Semlin while Alkalai occupied the post as the Hacham of the Sephardic community.[11] Undoubtedly, Baruch Herzl had read Alkalai's treatises or at least knew their contents. A possible influence, therefore, has been suggested by some historians.[12]

While it is impossible to claim with any certainty, however, that Alkalai did influence later writings--or that the striking similarities revealed between their works were nothing more than being products of the same general milieux and background, one important fact must be considered: during the nineteenth century Judah Alkalai rose from a position of semi-obscurity to one of reknown in some circles and fear in others. His reputation during his lifetime bridged two continents. It is, therefore, incredulous, even inconceivable, that such a man--who was in close personal contact with the central agencies of Europe and whose writings bore the endorsement of the most respected and influential Jews of the West--would fade into oblivion in the course of less than a century without first having touched the hearts and minds of later generations. Solomon Gaon, the chief rabbi of the Sephardic community of London, respectful of the place which Alkalai occupied in the organic structure of the Zionist movement wrote:

There is no doubt that his enthusiasm for the cause he propounded must have left some impression and thereby to some extent paved the way for the debut of Theodor Herzl in London in 1895 . . . [13]

NOTES

CHAPTER I

[1]Howard M. Sachar, The Course of Modern Jewish History (Cleveland and New York: the World Publishing Company, 1958), p. 112.

[2]Ibid., p. 70.

[3]Ibid., p. 153.

[4]Simon Dubnow, "An Essay in the Philosophy of History", Nationalism and History, ed. Koppel S. Pinson (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1958), p. 318

[5]Moses Hess, Rome and Jerusalem (New York: Philosophical Library, 1958), p. 2.

[6]Ben Halpern, The Idea of the Jewish State (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 58.

[7]Sachar, loc. cit., p. 95.

[8]Ibid., pp. 80-96.

[9]Ibid., p. 186.

[10]Ibid., p. 186.

[11]Max Raisin, A History of the Jews in Modern Times (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1919), p. 134.

[12]Sachar, loc. cit., p. 202.

[13]Simon Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland (Phila.: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1916), Vol. II, p. 225.

[14]Simon Dubnow, "Reality and Fantasy in Zionism", Nationalism and History, ed. Koppel S. Pinson (Phila.: Jewish Publication Society, 1958), p. 157.

NOTES

CHAPTER II

[1]For information on the individual members of the Alkalai family, see, M. D. Gaon, Yehudey HaMizrah BeEretz Yisroel (Jerusalem: By the Author, 1937), Vol. II, pp. 88-100.

[2]c.f. Isaac Nissenbaum, HaDat VehaTehiyah HaLeumit (Warsaw: Mizrahi, 1920), p. 48., where it is stated that Alkalai was born in 1798 in "an unknown city in the East."

[3]For the role of the Hacham in the Sephardic community, see, A. A. Neuman, The Jews of Spain: Their Social Political and Cultural Life During the Middle Ages (Phila.: Jewish Publication Soc., 1942) Vol. II, pp. 82-84, 86-87, 317.

[4]Judah Alkalai, "Minhat Yehudah", Kitvey HaRav Yehudah Alkalai, ed. Isaac Werfel (Jerusalem: Mosad HaRavKook, 1944), Vol. I, p. 203.

[5]c.f. Ben Zion Dinaburg in his Sefer HaShanah Shel Eretz Yisroel (Tel Aviv: Histadrut HaSofrim HaIvriim, 1925), p. 474, and in Sefer Meah Shanah Anshey Mofet Vehalutzim Rishonim, eds. Isaac Triwaks and Eliezar Steinman (Tel Aviv: 1938), p. 350. The date given for Alkalai's appointment as 1823, however, both Israel Cohen (ed.), Rebirth of Israel (London: Goldston & Son Ltd., 1952), p. 140, and G. Kressel, Rabbi Judah Alkalai-Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalisher: Mivhar Kitveyhem (Tel Aviv: Mizpeh, 1943), p. 17, list 1825.

[6]In Semlin there were two small communities of Jews--one Sephardic, and the other Ashkenazic. In 1862 there were thirty families in Semlin. Ten years later, in 1872, there were, already, forty Sephardic families and sixty Ashkenazic Families. See, G. Kressel, Rabbi Judah Alkalai--Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalisher: Mivhar Kitveyhem (Tel Aviv: Mizpeh, 1943), p. 18, also, G. Kressle, Mivhar Kitvey Yisroel Dov Frumkin (Jerusalem: Mosad Rav Kook, 1954), p. 164.

[7]Judah Alkalai, "Shalom Yerushalayim," Kitvey HaRav Yehudah Alkalai, ed. Isaac Werfel (Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook, 1944), Vol. I, p. 36.

[8]c.f. Sefer Meah Shana . . . ; eds. Isaac Triwaks, and Eliezar Steinman (Tel Aviv: 1938), p. 350., and Isaac Gur Ari,

HaRav Y. H. Alkalai (Tel Aviv: Omanut, 1929), p. 12. Both claim that Shema Yisrael was Alkalai's first treatise and that it was published in 1834.

[9]Judah Alkalai, "Darke Noam", Kitvey HaRav Yehudah Alkalai, ed. Isaac Werfel (Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook, 1944), Vol. I, p. 13.

[10]Ibid., p. 21.

[11]Ketubot, p. 110b.

[12]Judah Alkalai, "Shelom Yerushalayim", Kitvey HaRav Yehudah Alkalai, ed. Isaac Werfel (Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook, 1944), Vol. I, p. 31.

[13]Ibid., p. 60.

[14]c. 1750-1880; the period of Enlightenment in Eastern Europe.

[15]The place of publication of Minhat Yehudah is not given. The book was published through the donation of Hayyim Gabriel HaKohen.

[16]Alkalai, "Minhat Yehudah", Vol. I, p. 194.

[17]Ibid., p. 220.

[18]The place of publication is not mentioned. Kol Kore did appear again in 1887 with an Arabic translation.

[19]The place of publication is not mentioned.

[20]Alkalai, "Petah Kettudah Shel Mahat", Vol. I, p. 260.

[21]Alkalai mentioned an earlier trys which he took in 1841, following the Damascus Affair, to see the Sultan Ibd El Majjid, but nothing materialized from it. See, Alkalai, "Ragley MeVasser", Vol. II, pp. 499-500.

[22]"Eshkol: Encyclopedia Yisraelite, (Berlin and Jerusalem: 1929), Vol. II, p. 797.

[23]Alkalai, "Mashmia Shalom", Vol. II, p. 450.

[24]Alkalai, "Petah Kettudah Shel Mahat", Vol. I, p. 260.

[25]Alkalai, "Sefer Hayyim", Vol. II, p. 356.

[26]c.f. S. L. Zitron, Toledot Hibbat Zion (Odessa: 1914), p. 11. records Goral la-Adonai as having been published as early as 1837; and Sefer Meah Shana . . .; eds. I. Triwaks, and E. Steinman (Tel Aviv: 1938), pp. 351-352., records it

as 1853.

[27]Mashmia Shalom appeared in 1861. The place of publication is unknown.

[28]c.f. Alkalai, "Kibbutz Galuyot", Vol. II, p. 544.

[29]Shema Yisrael was published in 1861-62, according to Charles B. Friedberg, Bet Ekked Sefarim: Bibliographical Lexicon (Tel Aviv: Published by Baruch Friedberg, 1951), p. 1022, Shema Yisrael was written between 1860-61. Other sources without any foundation, date the book as early as 1834, (c.f. note 8). Note that in Alkalai, "Shema Yisroel", Vol. I, p. 450, Alkalai mentions the organization which he founded in 1852. He also refers to the date 1840 on p. 448. Therefore, it is impossible that Shema Yisroel could have been written so early!

[30]Alkalai, "Menahem Zion", Vol. II, p. 555.

[31]As early as 1530, Belgrad, the capital of Serbia had an organized Jewish community. Conditions were good until 1842 when certain discriminatory laws were introduced forbidding Jews to settle in the interior. Conditions continued to grow worse for the next twenty years until 1864 when the expulsions of the Jews of Shabats took place. c.f. Solomon Gaon, "Rabbi Jehudah Hai Alkalai", The Rebirth of Israel, ed. Israel Cohen (London: Ed. Goldston & Sons, 1952), p. 144.

[32]Until this time, the Sephardic congregation in Semlin met within the court of the Ashkenazic synagogue. c.f. G. Kressel, Mivhar Kitvey Yisroel Dov Frumkin (Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook, 1954), p. 165.

[33]c.f. Sefer Meah Shanah . . . , eds. I. Troikas, and E. Steinman (Tel Aviv: 1938), p. 364 states that Michael Yehiel Pines was sent in 1875. Pines did represent the society but this was not until 1878.

[34]The first attempt in 1878, however, was unsuccessful. It was settled in 1883 by Hovevei Zion.

NOTES

CHAPTER III

[1]Alkalai, "Minhat Yehudah", Vol. I, p. 203.

[2]Alkalai, "Shivat Zion", Vol. II, p. 535.

[3]Alkalai, "Kol Kore", Vol. II, p. 249.

[4]Alkalai, "Menahem Zion", Vol. II, p. 556.

[5]Alkalai, "Shivat Zion", Vol. II, p. 535.

[6]c.f. Alkalai, "Menahem Zion", Vol. II, pp. 554-555, and "Kibbutz Galuyot", Vol. II, pp. 545-546, and "Ragle Mavasser", Vol. II, p. 515.

[7]Alkalai, "Kibbutz Galuyot", Vol. II, p. 546.

[8]Ezekiel, 36:26.

[9]Isaiah, 65:17.

[10]Ben Halpern, The Idea of the Jewish State (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press, 1961), p. 9.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid., p. 544.

[14]Ibid., p. 547. For Alkalai's other arguments against the attitude of the rabbis, see, chapters V and VI.

[15]Alkalai, "Minhat Yehudah", Vol. I, p. 217.

[16]Ibid.,

[17]Ibid., p. 202.

[18]Ibid., p. 203.

[19]Alkalai, "Darke Noam", Vol. I, pp. 12, 22; and "Minhat Yehudah", Vol. I, p. 209.

[20]Alkalai, "Shalom Yerushalayim", Vol. I, pp. 58-60.

[21]Ibid., pp. 55, 66-67.

[22]Alkalai, "Minhat Yehudah", Vol. I, p. 216.

[23]Alkalai, "Ragle Mevasser", Vol. II, p. 514.

[24]Havatzelet, Kislev 18, 1875.

[25]Alkalai, "Darke Noam", Vol. I, p. 21, and "Shalom Yerushalayim", Vol. I, p. 69.

[26]Ha-Maggid, Rosh Hodesh Heshvan, 1870.

[27]Alkalai, "Kol Kore," Vol. i, p. 239.

[28]Alkalai, Judah, "Mehmat HaAretz," HaMevasser, Nissan 25,1866

[29]Alkalai, "Mehmat HaAretz," Vol. ii, p.550.

[30]Alkalai, "Kol Kore," Vol.i, p. 239

[31]Leo Pinsker, Auto Emancipation (N.Y: Masada, 1939), p.13.

[32]Ibid., p. 17.

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CHAPTER IV

[1]Isaac Gur Ari, HaRav Y. H. Alkalai. (Tel Aviv: Omanut, 1929), p. 15.

[2]Howard SaChar, The Course of Modern Jewish History (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Co., 1958), p. 74.

[3]Alkalai, "Nehmat HaAretz", Mevasser, Nisaan 14, 1866.

[4]Alkalai, "Goral LeAdonai", Vol. II, p. 427.

[5]Alkalai, "Menahem Zion", Vol. II, p. 555, and, "Kibbutz Galuyot", Vol. II, p. 545.

[6]Through the use of Gematria, Alkalai deduced the year 1840 as the time for the Redemption. In Hebrew the two middle letters of " "--"an acceptable time", add up numerically to 1840. c.f. Alkalai, "Meoded Anavim", Vol. II, p. 469.

[7]Alkalai, "Minhat Yehudah", Vol. I, p. 204.

[8]Alkalai, "Me Oded Anavim", Vol. II, p. 469.

[9]Alkalai, "Minhat Yehudah", Vol. I, p. 217.

[10]All these newspapers began to appear in the years 1856-1863 inside and outside of Palestine.

[11]Alkalai, "MeOded Anavim", Vol. II, p. 487.

[12]Alkalai, "Goral la-Adonai", Vol. II, p. 434.

[13]Alkalai, "Me Oded Anavim", Vol. II, p. 469.

[14]Alkalai, "Shelom Yerushalayim", Vol. I, p. 90.

[15]Alkalai, "Kol Kore", Vol. I, p. 244.

[16]Alkalai, "Goral la-Adonai", Vol. II, p. 434.

[17]Alkalai, "Ragle Mevasser", Vol. II, p. 511.

[18]Halpern, The Idea of the Jewish State, pp. 29, 154.

[19]Josef Kastein, History and Destiny of the Jews (N.Y.: Garden City Publishing Co., 1936), p. 439.

[20]Howard M. Sachar, The Course of Modern Jewish History (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Co., 1958), p. 501.

[21]Alkalai, "Ragle Nevasser", Vol. II, p. 501.

[22]Alkalai, "MeOded Anavim", Vol. II, p. 480.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid., p. 472 and c.f. "Sefer Hayyim", Vol. II, p. 356.

[25]Alkalai, "Mizmor LeTodah", Vol. I, p. 184.

[26]Alkalai, "Goral la-Adonai", Vol. II, p. 439.

[27]Ibid., p. 427.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Alkalai, "Mizmor LeTodah", Vol. I, p. 178.

[30]Alkalai, "Goral la-Adonai, Vol. II, p. 441.

[31]Alkalai, "Shelom Yerushalayim", Vol. I, pp. 90, 154, 168, 174.

[32]Ibid., c.f. "Shivat Zion", Vol. II, p. 540; "Minhat Yehudah", Vol. I, pp. 188, 202, 204, 214, and "Goral la Adonai," Vol. II, p. 436.

[33]Alkalai, "Shivat Zion", Vol. II, p. 540.

[34]Alkalai, "Me Oded Anavim", Vol. II, p. 485.

[35]Alkalai, "Negmat HaAretz", Vol. II, p. 523.

[36]Ha-Magrid, Av 10, 1863, p. 239.

[37]Alkalai, "Ragle MeVasser", Vol. II, p. 514.

[38]Alkalai, "Shivat Zion", Vol. II, p. 538.

[39]Ibid., p. 537.

[40]Alkalai, "Mizmor LeTodah", Vol. I, p. 181.

[41]Alkalai, "Nehmat HaAretz", Vol. II, pp. 422-423.

[42]Ibid., p. 427.

[43]Alkalai, "Menahem Zion", Vol. II, pp. 555-556.

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CHAPTER V

[1]Ben Halpern, The Idea of the Jewish State (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1961), p. 108.

[2]Ibid., pp. 106-108.

[3]J. E., ed. Isidore Singer (New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1901), Vol. VI, p. 182.

[4]Although at first opposing Zionism and Colonization, Yehiel Brill was converted by the 1881 pogroms and went to Palestine to found the colony Ekron.

[5]Alkalai, "Nehmat HaAretz", Vol. II, p. 527.

[6]Alkalai, "Me Oded Anavim", Vol. II, p. 469.

[7]Alkalai, "Eagle Mevasser", Vol. II, pp. 505-506.

[8]c.f. Alkalai, "Kol Kore", Vol. I, p. 246, "Menahem Zion", Vol. II, p. 555, "Petah Kettudah Shel Mahat", Vol. I, p. 285.

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CHAPTER VI

[1]Alkalai, "Petah Kettudah Shel Mahat", Vol. I, p. 285.

[2]Alkalai, "Shelom Yerushalayim", Vol. I, p. 81.

[3]Alkalai, "Minhat Yehudah", Vol. I, p. 200.

[4]Ibid., p. 220.

[5]Ibid., p. 221.

[6]Ibid., p. 220.

[7]Ibid., p. 209.

[8]"Armilus" was the legendary enemy of the Messiah. This legend became prominent in the Apocalyptic Midrashim from the seventh century. Armilus was supposed to slay the anticipatory Messiah, ben Joseph, ruling the world until overcome by the true Messiah, ben David.

[9]Alkalai, "Ragle MeVasser", Vol. II, p. 510, "Shelom Yerushalayim", Vol. I, p. 89.

[10]c.f. Alkalai, "Mizmor LeTodah", Vol. I, p. 180, and, "Me Oded Anavim", Vol. II, p. 468.

[11]Alkalai, "Me Oded Anavim", Vol. II, p. 485.

[12]Genesis, 33:17.

[13]Alkalai, "Me Oded Anavim", Vol. II, p. 485, and, "Menahem Zion", Vol. II, p. 557.

[14]See, Koronel's attack of MeOded Anavim in Chapter V.

[15]Alkalai, "Petah Kettudah Shel Mahat", Vol. I, p. 263.

[16]I Samuel, 7:17.

[17]Alkalai, "MeOded Anavim", Vol. II, p. 469.

[18]Alkalai, "Goral la-Adonai", Vol. II, p. 440.

[19]Alkalai, "Kol Kore", Vol. I, p. 246, and, "Menahem Zion", Vol. II, p. 556.

[20]Alkalai, "Menahem Zion", Vol. II, p. 555.

[21]Alkalai, "MeOded Anavim", Vol. II, p. 467.

[22]Numbers Rabba, Chapter 23.

[23]Havasser, Nissan 25, 1866.

[24]Ben Halpern, The Idea of the Jewish State (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 157.

[25]Alkalai, "MeOded Anavim", Vol. II, p. 467.

[26]Alkalai, "Kol Kore", Vol. I, p. 246.

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CHAPTER VII

[1]Moses Hess, Rome and Jerusalem (N.Y.:, Philosophical library, 1958); p. 26, c.f. Alkalai, "Minhat Yehudah", Vol. I, p. 216.

[2]Hess, p. 27, c.f. Alkalai, "MeOded Anavim", Vol. II, p. 487.

[3]Hess, p. 35.

[4]Leon Pinsker, Auto Emancipation (N.Y.: Masada, 1939), p. 15.

[5]Ibid., p. 26., c.f. Alkalai, "Mizmor le Todah", Vol. I, p. 180.

[6]Pinsker, p. 30.

[7]Ibid., pp. 28-29.

[8]Theodor Herzl, The Jewish State (New York: The Maccabaean Publishing Co., 1904), pp. 14, 25-26, 31.

[9]Ibid., pp. 44-45.

[10]Ibid., p. 29.

[11]G. Kressel, ed., Mivhar Kitvey Yisrael Dov Frumkin (Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook, 1954), p. 165.

[12]c.f. Nahum Sokolow, Hibbat Zion (Rubin Mass., and Jerusalem: 1941), p. 25., also, Sefer Meah Shanah, eds. I. Triwaks and E. Steinman (Tel Aviv: 1938), p. 350., Isaac GurAri, HaRav Y. H. Alkalai (Tel Aviv: Omanut, 1929), pp. 52-53.

[13]Solomon Gaon, "Rabbi Judah Alkalai", Rebirth of Israel, ed. Israel Cohen (London: Gaaston and Sons Ltd., 1952), p. 142.

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