

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
California School

"The Words of Jeremiah"

Chapter Thirteen of the Pesikta de-Rav Kahana

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Nehama Illouz

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The Thesis of Nehama Illouz is approved.

A. H. Hays for David Barth

To Jacob

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Pesikta de-Rav Kahana

Leopold Zunz was the first scholar to hypothesize about the independent existence of a work called Pesikta de-Rav Kahana. In 1832, Zunz wrote in his book, Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden:

There are some writers who talk about the Pesikta de-Rav Kahana. They probably talk about the twelve parshiyot that start with the twelve Haftarot; and since the first Haftara opens with the name Rabbi Abba Bar Kahana, the name [Pesikta de-Rav Kahana] is an abbreviated or corrupt form of this opening.¹

Zunz's hypothesis was based on his knowledge that the name of the Pesikta was mentioned in the works of Saadia Gaon, Hai Gaon, Rabbenu Nathan Ba'al he-Arukh and others.²

According to Zunz, the Pesikta consisted of twenty-nine chapters. The first chapter is on Rosh Hashanah and is followed by chapters containing homiletical midrashim for holidays and special Sabbaths throughout the year, based on the readings of the Torah or the Prophets for these occasions.³

Thirty-six years later, after identifying four

manuscripts as those of the Pesikta, Solomon Buber published the first modern edition of the Pesikta. His finding of these manuscripts confirmed Zunz's hypothesis. The four manuscripts which Buber found were: the Safed manuscript (written in the 16th century in Cairo); the (first) Oxford manuscript (the oldest of the four, dating from the 13th century); the Carmoly manuscript (probably originating from North Africa and written during the late 15th or early 16th century); and the Parma manuscript (dating from the 13th or 14th century from Germany or Northern Italy). For his edition, Buber selected the Safed manuscript as the text, citing the other three manuscripts in the apparatus.⁴ It should be noted that Buber started the cycle of the Pesikta with Hanukkah, not following the order suggested by Zunz.⁵

In 1892, Meir Friedmann described two other manuscripts: the Casanense manuscript (17th century) and the second Oxford manuscript (15th century).⁶

Mandelbaum's edition of the Pesikta (1962) is the most recent one. In his edition, besides seven chapters from the Geniza, he used all the manuscripts used by Buber as well as the manuscripts described by Friedmann. He also added a third Oxford manuscript.

Pesikta de-Rav Kahana was translated into English by William G. Braude and Israel J. Kapstein. Basically, the translation is sound, but, as I will show in the paper,

one should be very careful in using Braude's translation to the thirteenth chapter, "The Words of Jeremiah," which is the subject of this thesis.

From the names of the Rabbis mentioned in the Pesikta and from the language of the midrashim, the work is believed to have been compiled in Palestine during the fifth century.⁷

The Aramaic noun כְּפִי'וֹא/pəsiqtā is derived from the verb כָּסַף/pəsaq "to cut" and, hence, means "division." This refers to the fact that each homily constitutes an independent unit.⁸

The work is attributed to Rabbi Abba Bar Kahana, a Palestinian Amora who lived in the first half of the fourth century C.E.⁹ The name of R. Kahana is mentioned in several chapters of the work (chapters 13-22). Zunz noticed the fact that the name of this Rabbi is properly R. Abba Bar Kahana whereas the work is attributed simply to Rav Kahana. Zunz explained this difference by saying that the present title, Pesikta de-Rav Kahana, is a corrupt form of what should be the full title, Pesikta de-Rav Abba Bar Kahana. He also mentioned the alternative that the present title represents an abbreviation of the fuller title.¹⁰

דִּבְרֵי יִרְמְיָה/Dibre Yirmiyyā(h) "The Words of Jeremiah" is the thirteenth chapter (Aramaic כְּפִי'וֹא/pisqā) in the Pesikta and forms the subject of this thesis. This

chapter is part of the largest unit in the Pesikta, a unit that was read on the Sabbaths after the 17th of Tammuz through the Sabbaths before or after Rosh Hashanah. This unit includes midrashim on the readings from the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah for the three Sabbaths before the Ninth of Av as well as midrashim on the prophetic readings for the seven Sabbaths after the Ninth of Av.

My analysis of this chapter is basically twofold. First, I intend to examine the literary structure of the material: the ideas, the motifs and the concepts of each individual paragraph and then the structure of the chapter as a whole. Second, I intend to examine the work of the editor/compiler of this chapter. In discussing the editorial hand behind the work, I will attempt to answer the following questions:

Why did the editor select these particular midrashim? Why did he arrange them in the order in which we have them? Did the editor compile this material primarily in order to preserve oral traditions or did he have a lesson to impart as well?

What is the image of Jeremiah in this chapter? What is the relationship of this image to the Biblical one?

Finally, what was the socio-historical context of the chapter? For what audience was it intended?

CHAPTER II

"THE WORDS OF JEREMIAH"

The Proems

The proem (Aramaic כְּנִיָּהּ/pə-tiḥtā "opening") is the only element in aggadic midrashim that has a consistent technical form. The proem opens with a verse from either the Prophets or the Hagiographa. From there, using various literary devices, the author brings us to the first verse of the Scriptures to be read in the synagogue that day.

Heinemann suggests:

The structure of the proem is based on the tension between two seemingly unrelated verses which the preacher succeeded in linking together.¹

The proem is basically a rhetorical form presented to a live audience. According to Heinemann, the proems were originally sermons delivered before the scriptural lesson itself, serving as a short introduction to it.²

A chapter is usually begun with more than one proem. In the chapter "The Words of Jeremiah," there are six proems.

R. Abba Bar Kahana opens the first proem with Isaiah 10:30: "Lift up you voice, O Bat Gallim! Hearken,

O Laish! O thou poor Anathoth!" This verse is part of a passage describing the approach of an invader towards Jerusalem (vs. 23-32).³ The names "Bat Gallim," "Laish" and "Anathoth" refer to places north of Jerusalem.

R. Abba Bar Kahana divides this verse into two parts, dealing with each separately. From the first part of the verse, he deals mainly with the name "Bat Gallim" (literally, "daughter of waves"). He offers two explanations to this name. In the first interpretation, he does not explain it as a place-name but rather as meaning "the waves of the sea." He goes on to say, "As the waves stand out in the sea, so your fathers stand out in the world."⁴ The nexus between fathers and waves is not at all apparent. The author of this midrash does not explain the connection between them, nor does he bring any proof texts. The only possible way to understand this relationship is with the help of Is. 48:18 and Sanhedrin 94b.⁵ In Is. 48:18, it is written: "O that you had harkened to my commandments. Then your peace would have been like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea." Thus, in Isaiah, righteousness is compared to the waves of the sea. In Sanhedrin 94b, it is written: "Lift up your voice, daughter from Gallim, the daughter of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who performed good deeds as the waves of the sea." Again, righteousness and good deeds are likened to the waves of the sea: since the patriarchs were full of good deeds,

they are compared to the waves, and their sons are the waves of the sea.

The second interpretation of Bat-Gallim is as the daughter of the people who were exiled. Here, R. Abba Bar Kahana explains the word "gallim" as being derived from the root ג-ל-ח "to go into exile." According to this interpretation, the patriarchs went into exile and, therefore, their sons are called "the sons of exiled patriarchs." In order to prove that the patriarchs were exiled, R. Abba Bar Kahana applies proof texts, all of which fail to prove that the patriarchs were indeed exiled. These verses only indicate that the patriarchs wandered from one place to another: Genesis 12:1--Abraham left Nahor and came to Canaan because God commanded him to do so; Genesis 26:1--Isaac went to Gerar because of a famine; and Genesis 28:1-7--Jacob went to Padan at the request of his parents. There is nothing in these verses to show a forced exile.

In the second part of this proem, R. Abba Bar Kahana deals with the second part of Is. 10:30: "Hearken, Laish! O thou poor Anathoth!" The interpretation given this is as a conditional sentence: all being dependent upon Israel's obedience to the prophetic admonition, if Israel does not obey, then a "lion" will come upon them. R. Abba Bar Kahana does not interpret the word Laish as a place-name, rather he plays upon the etymology of the name. In Hebrew, there are some six nouns for "lion," one of

which is לַיִשׁ/layish.⁶ The "lion" which will come and punish Israel is Nebuchadnezzar. (The proof text for this is Jer. 4:7, describing a lion going up from his thicket and, in fact, this is probably a reference to Nebuchadnezzar.) The prophet Isaiah warned Israel but to no avail. They have not listened to the words of Torah, nor kept the Mitzvot; neither have they listened to the prophets.⁷ That is why there was need for the לְאֶנָּתוֹת/ʿanātoṭi "man from Anathoth" --that is, for Jeremiah.

The lesson that R. Abba Bar Kahana wants to teach us is that God sent Israel the prophet Isaiah to warn them. However, because they did not listen to him, there was need for Jeremiah to come and reprove them.

The second proem opens with verse Proverbs 1:22: "How long, O simple ones, will you love simplicity and the scorners delight in their scorning and the fools hate knowledge?"⁸ Here exactly as in the first proem, the preacher deals with the first part of the verse separately from the second. R. Shimeon Ben Nezira interprets the first part by means of an allegory:

A man may eat decayed matter two or three times, but finally he will loathe it. But the people of Israel who serve idolatry for many years (of which it is written, "Thou shalt speak of it as 'that which is discharged'"), their souls have still not had their fill.⁹

Lacking wisdom, Israel is still content to worship idols.

R. Shimeon Ben Nezira compares idolatry to filth, human

excrement. His comparison is based upon Is. 30:22. This verse describes the idolatry of Israel and, at its end, it is written: $\text{יֵצֵא לְךָ שֶׁרָא} \text{ } \text{לְךָ} \text{ } \text{שֶׁרָא} \text{ } \text{לְךָ} \text{ } \text{שֶׁרָא}$ to(')mar lo, literally "'Go out!' you will say to him." The preacher does not explain the word $\text{לְךָ} \text{ } \text{שֶׁרָא}$ as being derived from the root ל-צ-ו Y-ṣ-ʾ "to go out." Rather he relates it to the noun $\text{שֶׁרָא} \text{ } \text{לְךָ} \text{ } \text{שֶׁרָא}$ $\text{שֶׁרָא} \text{ } \text{לְךָ} \text{ } \text{שֶׁרָא}$ "excrement."¹⁰ Therefore, concerning Israel's idolatry, so the verse is now being read, "You will say to him, '(It is) excrement!'"

R. Yudan comments on the second half of Prov. 1:22. He does not explain this half of the verse, but he notes that it relates to the subject of mockery. Two people had prophesied against scorn: Solomon in Prov. 1:22 and Isaiah in Is. 28:22. R. Yudan's comment serves as a link between the preceding comment of R. Shimeon Ben Nezira and the following comment of R. Pinchas and R. Yirmiah.

R. Pinchas and R. Yirmiah, citing a tradition in the name of R. Samuel, the son of Rav Isaac, comment on Is. 28:22. In this verse, the prophet warned the people, saying, "Now therefore do not scoff, lest your bonds be made strong, for I have heard a decree of destruction from the Lord, the God of Hosts, upon the whole land." From this verse, the two Rabbis conclude that the beginning of mockery is suffering¹¹ and that its end is destruction.

The end of the second proem returns to the verse following the proem verse (i.e., to Prov. 1:23). If Israel

is not going to listen to the words of reproof, then the Lord will pour out His spirit through the words of Ezekiel.¹² If Israel persists in its obstinacy, then it will be necessary to bring in the direful "words of Jeremiah." In the first proem, Israel did not listen to Isaiah and, therefore, there was a need for Jeremiah. Here, in the second proem, they did not listen to Ezekiel and, therefore, there was a need for Jeremiah.

The structure of the second proem is a little more complicated than that of the first. The body of this proem is a combination of comments by several Rabbis on three different Biblical verses. R. Shimeon Ben Nezira begins with a comment on the first half of Prov. 1:22. R. Yudan's comment on the second half of this verse also mentions Is. 28:22. Next comes R. Pinchas and R. Yirmiah's comment on Is. 28:22. The end of the proem returns to the verse in Proverbs immediately following the proem verse (Prov. 1:23) and ties in with the theme of the preceding proem on the need for the reproof of Jeremiah.

The third proem is opened by R. Aha with two verses from Zechariah (1:4-5): "Be not like your fathers to whom the former prophets cried out, 'Thus says the Lord of Hosts, 'Return from your evil ways and from your evil deeds.'" 'But they did not hear or heed him,' says the Lord. Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?" The prophet warned Israel not to

follow their fathers' ways. Their fathers did not listen to the prophets and so they were punished. Since the prophets were not always going to be present to warn Israel, Zechariah suggested that they change their ways and deeds immediately.

R. Aha changes the meaning of these verses from Zechariah by placing them in the form of a conversation between the Lord and the people of Israel. The Lord asked Israel, "Your fathers who sinned, where are they?" and Israel answered, "Where are the prophets, the ones who did not sin?" God's answer, however, is that the prophecies still live on, although the prophets themselves have died. Moses died, but his words still exist, and Jeremiah, who is still alive--his words are going to be fulfilled during his lifetime.¹³

While the first three proems attempt to demonstrate the need for Jeremiah's reproof of Israel, the fourth and fifth proems deal with the ancestry of Jeremiah. Tradition has it that Jeremiah was a descendant of the harlot Rahab.

Before analyzing these two proems, however, I believe that it is necessary to first review the image of Rahab in Jewish tradition. In the Bible, the story of Rahab and the spies occurs in the second chapter of the Book of Joshua.¹⁴ Joshua sent two men to spy out the land of Canaan. After they had arrived in Jericho, the harlot Rahab helped hide them from the King of Jericho. In

exchange, the spies promised to save her and her family from death during the upcoming conquest of Jericho by the Israelites. This promise of the spies was contrary to the command of God, who had said, "And when the Lord, your God, gives them over to you and you defeat them, then you must utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them or show them mercy." ^{Deut 7:1-2, 10:16, 17} This tension between the will of God and the promise of the spies develops into two different traditions in Rabbinic literature concerning Rahab. According to one tradition, Rahab did not belong to the seven nations under the herem and, for this reason, the command of God did not apply to her.¹⁵ The other tradition says that Rahab converted to Judaism before the Israelites reached Jericho and she was spared for this reason.

Descriptions of Rahab are found throughout Rabbinic literature. In Megilla 15b, Rahab is described as having been one of the most beautiful women in the world; merely saying her name could arouse one to harlotry.¹⁶ In Zebahim 116b, it is written that there was no prince or ruler who had not possessed Rahab the harlot. According to another tradition, she was ten years old when the Israelites left Egypt and spent the whole forty years of the Israelites' sojourn in the wilderness as a harlot. Then, at the age of fifty, she converted to Judaism, saying, "May I be forgiven as a reward for the cord, the window and the flax."¹⁷

Other traditions deal with her after her conversion. One says that she married Joshua.¹⁸ Another says that among her descendants are counted eight prophets and priests: Neriah, Baruch, Seriah, Mahasiah, Jeremiah, Hilkiyah, Hanamal, and Shalum. According to R. Judah, Hulda was also one of her descendants.¹⁹ In another tradition, we find that ten prophets, adding Ezekiel and his father, Buzi, were among her descendants.²⁰ The Rabbis consider Rahab a person whom the Lord had brought close to Him but who had not been included among the Chosen People.²¹ However, she is considered to have been a righteous person:

Anytime that Israel does what the Lord wills, He sees a righteous person among the nations of the world, like Jethro or Rahab or Ruth or Antoninus, and He brings them into the community of Israel. Each time they violate Him, he removes that so-called righteous person from the community.²²

These rich and positive traditions concerning Rahab teach us about the importance of being a גֵּר צְדִיק/ger sedeq, literally, "a convert of justice," that is, a convert to Judaism for no other reason than love of the religion. Rahab, who lived as a harlot for forty years, was, nevertheless, rewarded for her conversion by her descendants' becoming priests and prophets.²³

Let us now return to the proems. In the fourth proem, R. Joshua of Siknin opens the proem with Prov. 17:2: "A slave who deals wisely will rule over a son who acts shamelessly; and he shall have part of the inheritance

among the brothers." The slave who deals wisely is Jeremiah; the son who acts shamefully is Israel. Jeremiah, a descendant of Rahab, acts wisely, but Israel, God's chosen people, acts shamefully instead of following the law of God. R. Abba Bar Kahana develops this idea further, saying that a harlot gives her services and receives her pay. Israel, however, is inferior to her: they give their services for nothing; they worship idols and do not expect remuneration for their services.²⁴ What follows now in the proem is the contrast which R. Abba Bar Kahana paints between the delightful deeds of Rahab and the shameful behavior of Israel. Rahab helped the spies, doing her best to hide them from the King of Jericho. In the process, she also saved her life. The ugly and unfaithful behavior of Israel stands in marked contrast to this: they swore falsely (Jer. 5:2); they lied (Jer. 9:4); they showed disrespect for parents (Ez. 22:7); and they committed one of the most serious of sins--they sold themselves to idolatry (Zeph. 1:5; Jer. 2:27; Hosea 9:13). So ends the first half of this proem which deals with the first half of the proem verse.

The second half of the proem treats the second half of Prov 17:2: "and (the slave) shall have part of the inheritance among the brothers." Two explanations are given to this part of the verse. Rav gives a more literal interpretation. Quoting Jer. 37:12--"Jeremiah set out from

Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin to receive his portion," Rav says that Jeremiah simply went to get his portion. R. Benjamin Ben Levi brings another interpretation. Jeremiah had many prophecies and he went and spread them abroad. Therefore, because he had many prophecies and not just one, the book of Jeremiah opens with the plural form *דִּבְרֵי*/dib^{re} and not with the singular form *דְּבַר*/d^{bar}.

The fifth proem also refers to the tradition that Jeremiah was a descendant of Rahab, but it comments on this relationship from a different point of view. R. Samuel Bar Nahman opens the proem with Num. 33:55: "But, if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the Land from before you, then those of them whom you let remain shall be pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall trouble you in the land where you dwell." Israel was commanded to destroy entirely the seven nations in order to prevent trouble in the future. Israel obeyed this command with but one exception--they saved Rahab and her family.²⁵ The punishment was that a descendant of Rahab, the prophet Jeremiah, would come and rebuke the people and would prophesy the destruction of the Temple. "The words of Jeremiah" fulfilled God's promise. As was said in Num. 33:55, his words were indeed pricks in Israel's eyes and thorns in their sides.

Apparently these two proems contradict each other. The fourth proem praises Rahab and her deeds, while the

fifth proem emphasizes the mistake committed by Israel in letting her live. These are, however, really two sides of the same coin. By emphasizing the contradiction which seemingly exists between these two views, the compiler creates a close relationship between the subjects and brings out their complementary natures.²⁶ In Hebrew, this technique is known as *ר'עין ר'ע'ן/niggud mašlim* "a harmonizing contradiction." Even though "the words of Jeremiah" are like pricks and thorns, Israel needs them in order to wake up and repent. By counterposing two seeming contradictions, the compiler is trying to remain objective by presenting an idea in its various facets.

The final proem opens with a contradiction between two Biblical verses. According to God's promise to Moses in Deut. 18:18, there should be another great prophet like him. However, in Deut. 34:10, it is written: "and there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses." So, how can this contradiction be resolved? The answer is that the great prophet who will arise must be as great as Moses in one special trait: the ability to utter reproof. And why was it Jeremiah who was raised up and compared to Moses? He was chosen because he and Moses had five other points in common, among which were: both of them prophesied over a forty-year period; they both prophesied against Israel and Judah; and they both were saved by servants. The author of this proem does not cite proof texts, even

though they are readily available in the Bible.

This proem serves as an introduction to the body of the chapter. The first section in the body deals with the subject of reproof, which is a topic dealt with in this final proem. The editor includes this proem in the chapter probably because he had a bulk of material before him which he wanted to include, although it added nothing of substantial value to the chapter.

In summary, the first three proems show why there was a necessity for "the words of Jeremiah": the people of Israel did not listen to the other prophets, so God gave them one last warning--Jeremiah's prophecies. The fourth and fifth proems show why Jeremiah's prophecies were so severe: the reason is not only on account of their content, but also the fact that Jeremiah is a descendant of Rahab. The sixth proem reiterates the fact that "the words of Jeremiah" were, in fact, words of reproof. In stating this, the proem places Jeremiah in a direct line from Moses.

The Body

The body of the chapter consists of nine parts, all dealing with the opening verse of the book of Jeremiah:

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד וְיֵשׁוּעַ בְּיָמֵינוּ
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד וְיֵשׁוּעַ בְּיָמֵינוּ

dibare Yirm'yahu ben Hilqiyyahu min hakkoh^aanim
'asher ba^anatot b^a'eres Binyamin

The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah of the
priests who (were) in Anathoth in the land of
Benjamin.

The comments made in the body are organized around individual words or around phrases in this verse. For the sake of clarity, the English translation of the word or phrase being commented upon will be given in capital letters, with the original Hebrew and its transcription being placed in parentheses.

WORDS (דִּבְרֵי/dib're): The final proem ends with a comparison between Moses and Jeremiah, both of whom were prophets of reproof. The first part of the body deals further with this subject and serves as a general introduction to the subsequent parts discussing the word WORDS.

The section begins with an observation attributed to several rabbis that whenever a derivative of the root ד-ב-ר/D-B-R occurs with the meaning "word," one can expect specifically words of rebuke and reproof to follow. Examples are cited from three Biblical books: (1) Deuteronomy has as its second word דִּבְרֵי/dib'rim and the reproof is to be found in 33:24; (2) Hosea begins with דִּבְרֵי/d'bar and the words of rebuke are found in 1:9; (3) Jeremiah begins with דִּבְרֵי/dib're and words of severe chastisement are found in 33:11.²⁷

A comment of R. Tanhum Bar Hanila'i opens the next part and appears to interrupt the discussion on the word WORDS. He says that, in three places in the Bible, God

complains about Nebuchadnezzar: in Jeremiah, in Kings and in Chronicles. He does not explain the reason for God's complaint, neither does he cite proof texts. An examination of these three books only sharpens the question why did God complain about Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah describes Nebuchadnezzar as the king who was chosen by God to punish Israel. The prophet even calls him "the servant of God" (Jer. 25:9). In 2Chron. 36:5ff. and 2Kings 24:9f., there is a description of the deeds of Nebuchadnezzar. His deeds were the will of God, and the question is why would God complain about him, if he was chosen by God. A possible answer can be found in the same Biblical sources. In all three books, there is a description of the sacking of the Temple (Jer. 52:17ff., 2Chron. 36:7, 10, and 2Kings 24:13). It may be that this is the reason for God's complaint about the "dwarf of Babylon."²⁸

This observation of R. Tanhum Bar Hanila'i is not only difficult to understand, but it is also not clear why it is placed in the middle of the discussion about the WORDS of Jeremiah. According to A. Goldberg, the comment of R. Tanhum Bar Hanila'i should be placed at the end of part seven, and part eight should begin on the fourth line. His reasoning is that at the beginning of the body, the Lord complained about Israel and, at the same time, His complaint about Nebuchadnezzar is also mentioned.²⁹ I prefer, however, a different explanation. Either Jeremiah

complained about Nebuchadnezzar, or better, the WORDS of Jeremiah were that the Lord complained about Nebuchadnezzar. In spite of the fact that the comment of R. Tanhum does not directly and clearly refer to the WORDS of Jeremiah, I believe that the editor preferred to include it in his discussion about the WORDS of Jeremiah for the reason I mentioned above.

What follows now in part eight are various interpretations of the word 'דִּבְרֵי/dib're "WORDS." In an anonymous comment, the statement is made that the WORDS of Jeremiah were laments. Proof texts are cited from the opening verses of three chapters of Lamentations (1:1, 2:1, and 4:1). According to Jewish tradition, Jeremiah was the author of Lamentations.³⁰ In short, the book of Jeremiah opens with the word WORDS and, of course, the book of Lamentations opens with a lament.³¹

Another anonymous interpretation of WORDS is "words of death." This explanation is based upon the placement of the Hebrew word 'דִּבְרֵי/dib're within the inflectional paradigm of the noun דִּבְרֵי/deber "a plague that can cause death." The meaning here is that, if one does not listen to the WORDS of reproof of Jeremiah, they will bring death after them.³²

A third anonymous comment on WORDS reads:

The Holy One said to Jeremiah, "Go say to Israel, 'Turn in repentance, lest I destroy My temple.'" Thereupon, the Children

of Israel said, "And if He does destroy His Temple, will He not have destroyed what is His?" To this, the Holy One replied, "Just as surely as I shall have destroyed My Temple, even as surely, My word through Jeremiah will also be fulfilled."

One of the names in Hebrew for the Temple is דִּבְרֵי/dib^{re}bir. Since the subject of the quotation is the destruction of the Temple, one can easily assume that the word דִּבְרֵי/dib^{re} is being related to the word דִּבְרֵי/dib^{re}bir. The WORDS of Jeremiah will center upon the destruction of the דִּבְרֵי/dib^{re}bir, that is, of the Temple.³³ Another explanation is that the word of God concerning the destruction of the Temple will be fulfilled through Jeremiah's WORDS during his lifetime.³⁴

A fourth explanation relates WORDS to דִּבְרֵי/dib^{re}aray "my commandments," i.e., the Ten Commandments. The Lord demands from His people observance of the Ten Commandments. Following this opening comment, there comes a list of the Ten Commandments, interspersed among which are Biblical verses illustrating their violation by Israel. Israel did not follow the will of God, nor did they observe the Decalogue. Therefore, the Israelites, upon hearing Jeremiah's WORDS, are being urged to fulfill the Ten Commandments.

Part nine also deals with a form of the word WORDS. However, in contrast to all of the preceding comments which are made in reference to דִּבְרֵי/dib^{re} in Jer. 1:1, this comment concerns the word הַדְּבָר/haddābār "the word" in Jer. 40:1.

Jer. 40:1 reads: "THE WORD that comes to Jeremiah from the Lord after Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, had let him go from Ramah, when he took him bound in chains along with all the captives of Jerusalem and Judah who were being exiled to Babylon." We would expect to find in the next verse a quote or description of the word of the Lord to Jeremiah. Instead, there follow statements of the captain of the guards to Jeremiah. In this part of the chapter, the Rabbis attempt to answer the question of what was the word of God to Jeremiah mentioned in 40:1. According to the Rabbis, Jeremiah and God had a conversation in which God asked Jeremiah if he would like to go with the exiles to Babylon or if he would prefer to stay in Judah. Jeremiah replied that it was better for the Lord to go with Israel to Babylon, because He could help them more than he, Jeremiah, could.³⁵ It is interesting to note that, in the Biblical text, it is the captain of the guard who suggested this to Jeremiah (Jer. 40:4ff.), whereas, in the midrash, this suggestion is attributed to God.

In the Pesikta, placed following this reconstructed conversation between Jeremiah and God, are the words of Nebuchadnezzar to Nebuzaradan (Jer. 39:2) as well as a description of Jeremiah's behavior. Jeremiah showed great agony and sorrow for his people. While he did prophesy the destruction of the Temple, the exile and the disasters which befell the people, when his prophecies were fulfilled,

however, he was not a happy man. He saw the sorrow of Israel and wanted to participate in their misery. The midrash describes Jeremiah's joining "a band of young men tied by neck chains one to the other." Upon later seeing a band of old men tied together by neck chains, he cast his lot in with theirs. This legend describing Jeremiah's behavior resolves a contradiction between Jer. 39:12 and 40:2. In Jer. 39:12, Nebuchadnezzar commanded Nebuzaradan to "take him [Jeremiah], look after him well and do him no harm, but deal with him as he tells you." Yet Jer. 40:2 describes Jeremiah tied by neck chains. The midrash tells us that Jeremiah voluntarily put himself in chains.

According to the midrash, Jeremiah's behavior was not understood by Nebuzaradan and he accused Jeremiah of three things: first, of being a false prophet; second, of suffering contumaciously;³⁶ and, third, of being a murderer. Nebuzaradan did not accuse Jeremiah of being a hypocrite or a simple liar, but rather of being a prophet who tells lies. All his life, Jeremiah pointed his finger at prophets who told lies (Jer. 14:14ff.). He himself was now accused of being a false prophet, merely because he was not happy that his dreadful words had come true. All his life, Jeremiah had prophesied about the destruction of the Temple. However, when his words were realized, instead of being happy or confident about his prediction, he was saddened and distraught by the result. The second

accusation, that Jeremiah bore suffering contumaciously, is not less interesting. Israel's suffering was brought upon her by God because of her misdeeds. Jeremiah, as a prophet, warned the people constantly that they would be punished, but they did not listen to him. Now when God has punished them, Jeremiah himself joined in their suffering. By punishing himself, Jeremiah protested against the injustice of the punishment which God had inflicted. As to the third accusation, it must be noted that Jeremiah's behavior could have cost Nebuzaradan his life. Nebuchadnezzar had commanded Nebuzaradan not to harm Jeremiah. However, because of Jeremiah's non-cooperation with Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard accused him of being a murderer. No proof texts are given to support Nebuzaradan's accusations. He treated Jeremiah very kindly and he even asked him to come with him to Babylon (Jer. 40:4).³⁷ Jeremiah, however, did not accept this suggestion, not wanting to return (Jer. 40:5) until the Lord had disclosed to him what to do.³⁸ According to the midrash, these then are the words of the Lord which are missing following verse 40:1.

Before the Rabbis continue to treat the problem of the word of God in Jer. 40:1, they take up a secondary problem. In Jer. 40:1, it is written, "He [Nebuzaradan] had taken him [Jeremiah] and he was bound in chains." The problem lies in the wording of the text: why does it say "and he" instead of simply "he"? R. Aha's answer is that

"and he" is written because both Jeremiah and God were bound in chains. His interpretation is based upon the fact that one of the names for God in Biblical Hebrew is הו/hu "he."³⁹ This type of insertion is typical of the midrashic style. The Rabbis deal with various and sundry problems even if they are not germane to the subject at hand.

Returning to the theme at hand, the Rabbis now offer their versions of God's word to Jeremiah in 40:1. While the exact words differ, the versions of R. Eleazar and R. Johanan both deal with the future Redemption. R. Eleazar explains God's words as Jer. 31:9: "He that scattered Israel will gather him as a shepherd does his flock." R. Johanan suggests Jer. 31:11: "The Lord will ransom Jacob and redeem him from the hand of him that is stronger than he."

The end of part nine returns to describing Jeremiah's sorrow and sympathy for his people. On his way back, he saw fingers and toes of captive Israelites that had been cut off. He picked them up, kissed them, and put them in his cloak, crying out, "Did I not warn you? Did I not tell you, 'Give glory to the Lord, your God, before it grows dark and before your feet stumble' (Jer. 13:16)?"⁴⁰ The last part of Jer. 13:16 is interpreted by R. Johanan as "before the words of Torah grow dark for you, before the words of prophecy grow dark." These concluding lines bring us back to the first proem, in which the prophet

asked Israel to observe the words of the Torah and to listen to the words of prophecy. Israel did not listen to him and now the prophet has witnessed their punishment.⁴¹

Part ten opens with the lament found in Jer. 9:9: "For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing. And for the pastures of the wilderness, a lamentation, because they are burned up so that none passeth through. And they hear not the voice of the cattle. Both the fowl of the heavens and the beasts are fled and gone." This part is a continuation of part nine. The latter ends with the description of the fingers and toes of the captives of Israel that had been scattered in the mountains and this part opens with Jeremiah's lament over these mountains.

Mountains have a very special meaning in the Bible. Moses warned Israel in Deut. 12:2: "You shall surely destroy all the places wherein the nations that you are to dispossess served their gods--on high mountains and upon the hills and under every leafy tree." Isaiah said in Is. 2:14 that on the Day of the Lord: "God will punish all the high mountains and all the hills that are lifted up." The reason for this punishment is that the high mountains have served as places of idolatry. Hosea also blamed Israel for sacrificing upon the tops of the mountains (Hosea 4:13). Thus, the mountains, having served as sites for idolatry for both Israel and the other nations, were to be the place where Israel was to be punished.⁴²

In the Bible, Jeremiah lamented because everything fell into ruins, but, in the midrash, the reason for his lament is different. There he lamented not only over the scattered parts of the bodies but also because Israel had not listened to the prophets and, thereby, had caused the Lord to be angry and jealous of their idolatry.⁴³ Israel's behavior had caused a situation in which both the fowl of the heavens and the beasts "have fled and gone."

There follows at this juncture a collection of legends, sayings and interpretations of what happened in the land of Israel during the exile of its population:

(1) R. Yosi Bar Ḥalafta says: "For fifty-two years (after the destruction of the Temple) not a bird was seen flying over the land of Israel." Thus, Jeremiah's prophecy in 9:9 had been fulfilled.⁴⁴

(2) R. Ḥanina says that forty years before Israel's exile, palm trees had been planted in Babylon because Israel desired its sweet fruits which accustom the tongue to the sweetness of the Torah.

(3) R. Judah says, "'The whole Land therefore is brimstone and salt and burning' (Deut. 27:22) because the Scriptures say, 'And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week' (Dan. 9:27)." Israel had forsaken the Torah and had forgotten the covenant. Therefore, their enemies would punish them.⁴⁵

(4) Since we are talking about the Land, the

question is asked how the Cutheans managed to cultivate the ravaged land. The answer offered is that they used to cultivate one spot, one part at a time, until the fire caught it. Then they would cultivate another spot.

(5) R. Zeira says that the land of Israel is barefaced, impudent and arrogant. His reasoning is that, in spite of the fact that the people Israel had been exiled, the land of Israel continued to grow fruit. By way of apology, the Rabbis say that the Land continued to be fruitful, not out of any maliciousness on its part, but rather because of the agricultural skills of the Cutheans: either they used manure or they turned over the soil. As an aside, to show how hard it was to turn over the soil, the Rabbis introduce a story about a man from the Valley of Arbel who, while plowing the fiery soil, discovered that the soil was burning up the seed.

(6) The last comment about the Land is made by R. Ḥanina Bar R. Abbahu. He says that seven hundred kinds of kosher fish and eight hundred kinds of kosher grasshoppers as well as birds without number went into exile with Israel. All of them returned except for a fish called *ḥibbutā*.⁴⁶

All these stories and legends about the land of Israel are not relevant to the subject of the chapter. Only the beginning is relevant. However, we can see here again the midrashic style at work. The Rabbis feel free to

introduce into their discussions different subjects which have nothing to do with the main subject. A word, an idea or an association is sufficient reason for inclusion. In this particular case, all these stories are mentioned only because the land of Israel is being talked about.

Both parts nine and ten show a lack of internal cohesion. From the discussion above, it should be clear that a skilled editorial hand is missing from part ten. The structure of part nine is also a mixture, moving from the words of the Lord to Jeremiah, to the words of Nebuchadnezzar to Nebuzaradan, to a description of Jeremiah's behavior, to a conversation between Jeremiah and Nebuzaradan, to two other versions of God's words to Jeremiah, returning again to the conversation between Jeremiah and Nebuzaradan and returning finally to the topic of Jeremiah's behavior. It is clear then that part nine also shows a dearth of editing.

It is clear, however, that, from the beginning, the editor does attempt to create a connection between parts nine and ten. He does this by opening the unit with Jer. 39:12, the command of Nebuchadnezzar to Nebuzaradan. Then there follows a description of the behavior of Jeremiah among the captives of Israel. Then the editor includes in the next paragraph all the midrashim that attempt to answer the question what were the words of the Lord to Jeremiah in Jer. 40:1. At the end, he points out all the

legends and stories in an attempt to answer the foregoing question.

Proem 34 of Lamentations Rabba is a later edition of this midrash. From the beginning of the proem, the editor of Lamentations Rabba shows more organization than does the editor of the Pesikta. He does this by bringing together all of the midrashim which deal with the subject of the word of God to Jeremiah, as opposed to the editor of the Pesikta who leaves them scattered throughout these parts. In Lamentations Rabba, the development of the ideas in their order and the connection between the parts⁴⁷ prove that the description is indeed more fluent and dynamic. Because of the problems which he finds in this chapter of the Pesikta, the editor of Lamentations Rabba re-edits this material in more cohesive and comprehensive manner.⁴⁸

JEREMIAH (יְרֵמְיָהוּ / Yirm'yaḥu): Part eleven and the beginning of part twelve deal with the same subject: the meaning and the significance of the name JEREMIAH.

The first suggestion is that the name JEREMIAH can be divided into three parts: י' /y "ten"; הָ /hm "he went up"; ה' /yh "God." Putting this together, the preacher arrives at the conclusion that, in leaving the Temple, the Shechinah (=God) moved (=went up) ten times from one place to another. The Shechinah began her journey over one of the cherubs over the Ark and finished it on the Mount of Olives. The midrash brings a list of ten places to which

the Shechinah journeyed, with proof texts of these ten places. The description of the Shechinah moving from one place to another gives the reader or listener the feeling that the Shechinah is restless. The preacher brings a parable for this behavior: a king who was departing from his palace kissed the walls of the palace, embraced its pillars, and said, "Goodbye, farewell, my home." The parable intensifies the feeling that the Shechinah is not only restless, but may even be frantic. The reason for this behavior are the misdeeds of Israel. They did not listen to the prophets, and that is why they were punished. The Shechinah herself could not stand the loneliness and moved to the Mount of Olives.

In spite of the fact that Israel abandoned and dishonored the Shechinah, she felt saddened. For three years, according to R. Jonathan, she asked Israel to repent and return to God (on the basis of Jer. 3:22). However, when she realized that they were not going to do so, she said, (attributing Hos. 5:15 to the Shechinah): "I will go and return to My place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face. In their trouble, they will seek Me earnestly."

Two more midrashim on the name JEREMIAH are given at the beginning of part twelve. The first is based upon the Greek word ἐρημος /erēmos "destruction." Therefore, the prophet's name was selected because, during his life, the

Temple was destroyed.⁴⁹ The second midrash derives the prophet's name from the root \varnothing - ל-נ /R-Y-M or \varnothing - ל-נ /R-W-M "to be lifted up." It was in JEREMIAH's time that the measure of justice was "lifted up."

THE SON OF HILKIAH ($\text{הִלְקִיָּאֵהוּ בֶן} \text{ } \text{יְרֵמְיָהוּ}$ /ben Hilqiyyāhu):
 God said to Aaron in Num. 18:20: "You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them. I am your portion and your inheritance among the Children of Israel." The priests, therefore, did not have a geographic territory in the land of Israel. The etymology of the name of Jeremiah's father reinforces this:
 $\text{יְרֵמְיָהוּ} \text{ } \text{הִלְקִיָּאֵהוּ}$ /*heleq yāh literally "the portion of the Lord," but read here as "The Lord (is the) portion."

Again in the midrashic style of association, since we are talking about a priest whose ancestry may be marred (that is, Jeremiah's as a descendant of Rahab), material is cited here about other people who came from blemished families and whose ancestry the Scriptures had to elevate. These were Pinchas, Uriah and Ezekiel.

Pinchas was married to the daughter of Putiel (Ex. 6:25), a man who fattened calves to be used in idolatrous worship.⁵⁰ Because of the blemished reputation of his family, the Israelites did not respect him. Therefore, the Scriptures, in giving his genealogy (Num. 25:11), said, "Pinchas, the son of Aaron the priest." Pinchas, therefore, was the son of a priest, a zealous man and the son of a

zealous man.⁵¹

Uriah, the son of Shemaiah of Kiryath Yearim (Jer. 26:20), was not respected by Israel because they said that he was the son of a Gibeonite (Josh. 9:17 lists Kiryath Yearim as one of the cities of the Gibeonites). The Scriptures, in order to elevate his standing, added the words "the priest" following his name in Is. 8:2.

Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, was a descendant of Rahab the harlot.⁵² Just as here in Jer. 1:1 where the words "the priest" were added to Jeremiah's genealogy, so in Ez. 1:3 were the words "the priest" added to Ezekiel's father's name: "Ezekiel, the son of the priest Buzi."

As I pointed out above in footnote 8 to this chapter, the Rabbis use the number three many times in the midrash. Examples in this chapter include the mention of the three patriarchs in the first proem and the grouping together of Moses, Hosea and Jeremiah in part seven. In this part, however, they group together four people: Pinchas, Uriah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah. The same formula is used for Uriah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah: "Israel used to disparage him" (so the Scriptures found it necessary) "to elevate his genealogy." In contrast to this terse phrasing, the part dealing with Pinchas is longer, elaborated with more details and more proof texts. From a structural analysis, therefore, it seems that the section dealing with him may, as Dr. Lewis Barth has suggested, be a later addition. The

basis for this addition would seem to have been the fact that Parashat Pinchas was the Torah portion for the same day on which "The Words of Jeremiah" was also read. For this reason, therefore, the editor broke "the rule of three" and added the material on Pinchas.

OF THE PRIESTS WHO (WERE) IN ANATHOTH: בְּכֹהֲנֵי אֲשֶׁר בְּאַנְתוֹת (min hakkoh^anim 'a^ser ba^anātōt): The thirteenth part of this chapter deals with this phrase. According to R. Berechiah, Jeremiah complained that his name alone "out OF" those of all the priests was being slandered. The reason for this was that he alone had to rebuke the people, while all the other priests had to bless Israel (Num. 6:24ff). His fate as a priest was, therefore, different from those of the other priests. Jeremiah compared his prophecies and his words of reproof (Jer. 29:22, 15:2, 16:13 and others) with the blessings spoken by the other priests. This comparison emphasizes the severe reproof of Jeremiah and the even more difficult role of the priest who cursed Israel.

IN THE LAND OF BENJAMIN (בְּאֶרֶץ בִּנְיָמִן /b'ereṣ Binyāmin): Jeremiah's portion was set in the land of Benjamin.⁵³ In part fourteen, the Rabbis ask why this was so. Their answer is that there were three points in common between Benjamin and Jeremiah:

(1) Only when Benjamin was born was the promise that Jacob would have twelve children fulfilled. It was

only in the days of Jeremiah, among all the prophets, that the prophecy of the destruction of the Temple was fulfilled.

(2) Benjamin was "the soul" of his mother. When he left her womb, she died (an interpretation of Gen. 35:18). Likewise, Jeremiah was "the soul" of the city of Jerusalem. When he left Jerusalem, the city was destroyed. Jeremiah's complaint in this regard is mentioned here: God had asked him to buy a field (Jer. 32:7) and, when he had left his city to do this, God had destroyed the city. The Lord had enticed Jeremiah and he had yielded (based on Jer. 20:7).

(3) As Benjamin was the last of all the tribes, so Jeremiah was the last of all the prophets. There is a problem concerning this last point: was Jeremiah really the last of the prophets? What is to be done with Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi? They certainly prophesied after the time of Jeremiah. However, according to R. Eleazar and R. Samuel Bar Nahman, there is no problem. R. Eleazar states that their periods of prophecy were very brief. R. Samuel Bar Nahman says that their prophecies had been given to them during the time of Jeremiah. In either event, we need not consider their prophecies as postdating those of Jeremiah.

The conclusion of this part takes up a disagreement between R. Eleazar and R. Johanan about the way in which Jeremiah ended his prophecy. R. Eleazar says that all the

prophets except Jeremiah concluded their prophecies with words of consolation. R. Johanan says that Jeremiah also ended his prophesying with words of consolation, since in his last prophecy (Jer. 51:64), he talked about the downfall of Israel's enemies and not about the destruction of the Temple. The same can be said of Isaiah. He, as well, concluded his prophesying with words of reproof to the heathen nations (Is. 66:24).

It should be noted that Lamentations, whose attribution to Jeremiah we have already noted, concludes with words of reproof (Lam. 5:22): "But Thou has utterly rejected us." However, it is a Rabbinic tradition to finish the reading of Lamentations with words of consolation by reading verse 5:21 at the end: "Restore us to Thyself, O Lord, that we may be restored! Renew our days as of old!"

The "Neḥemta"

The editors of homiletic midrashim conclude their homilies with statements of consolation and redemption. This last part is then fittingly called "the consolation" (Aramaic כַּחֲנֻחַת נְחֵמְתָא).

The neḥemta of "The Words of Jeremiah" relates to Jer. 1:2-3. According to R. Abun, the destruction of the Temple occurred only for the sake of the future Redemption. Nebuchadnezzar, "the lion" (Jer. 4:7), destroyed the

"lion of God," that is, the Temple (Is. 29:1), in the month whose astrological sign is the lion, i.e., in the month of Av, only so that God the Lion (Amos 3:8) would come back in the "month of the lion" (Av) (Jer. 31:13) and would rebuild Jerusalem (Ps. 147:2).

The proems and the body of the chapter deal with the deeds of Israel, on the one hand, and with the role of Jeremiah as a prophet, on the other hand. Israel did not listen to the prophets, ignoring their warnings and failing to amend their ways. Therefore, they were punished. Jeremiah, the prophet of reproof, tried to warn them, but they would not listen to him. The consequence of their inaction was the destruction of the Temple. In the nehemta, however, it is clear that the Redemption will come when God decides to effect it.

There is a sharp transition, better still, perhaps even a break, between the contents of the rest of the chapter and that of the nehemta. One necessary step is missing: repentance. In Jewish tradition, repentance should come before the Redemption. In this instance, however, the Redemption will come regardless, because God promised Israel that He would never destroy her.

This break between the pessimistic contents of the body and the consoling words of the nehemta proves that the nehemta need not necessarily share in the idea which is developed in the remainder of the chapter. Rather, the

nehemta represents only the tradition of concluding the homily with words of consolation. As such, it forms a literary and thematic unit apart from the rest of the homily.

CHAPTER III

THE IMAGE OF JEREMIAH IN THE BIBLE AND IN "THE WORDS OF JEREMIAH"

In general, the Biblical image of Jeremiah is multifaceted. Jeremiah prophesied during forty of the most critical and disastrous years in the history of Israel.¹ His period of prophecy began in the thirteenth year of Josiah², continued through the reign of Jehoiakim and ended in the eleventh year of Zedekiah (Jer. 1:2-3).

When he began to prophesy, Jeremiah was an unknown figure. This can be shown by the fact that Josiah, when he sought prophetic intervention, asked for the prophetess Hulda. Jeremiah is not mentioned at all in this episode (2Kings 22:14ff.).³ Only during the reign of Jehoiakim and, especially, in the time of Zedekiah, did Jeremiah fully emerge as an active prophet of renown (Jer. 21:1ff., 28:14ff.).

Jeremiah is the only prophet about whom we know many details concerning his life, feelings, desires and troubles. In chapters eleven through twenty of the book of Jeremiah, which are known as "The Confessions of Jeremiah," the prophet described his feelings as a person chosen to be

a prophet.⁴ As Skinner points out:

The central interest of the confessions is the struggle in Jeremiah's mind between fidelity to his prophetic commission and the natural feelings and impulses of his heart.⁵

Jeremiah led a tragic life. He began his prophecy in the city of Anathoth. His reproofs and prophecies caused the people of Anathoth to hope for his death (Jer. 11:21). In addition, members of his own family did not listen to him and even wanted him dead as well. This caused the prophet to ask the Lord to take revenge on his enemies (Jer. 11:18ff.). In contrast to the hatred of the people of Anathoth toward him, Jeremiah himself maintained his innocence: "But You, O lord, know me. You have seen me and tried my heart towards You" (Jer. 12:13). Jeremiah was forced to leave Anathoth and move to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, he began a new chapter in his life. There the Lord commanded him: "You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place" (Jer. 16:2). An additional command was given: "You shall not go into the house of feasting to sit with them, to eat and drink" (Jer. 16:8). He was asked to deny himself marriage and social contacts as a symbol of the destruction that would come upon Israel (Jer. 16:3ff.).

His lifestyle and prophecies did not please the people around him: he was "a man of strife and contention to the whole land" (Jer. 15:10). He complained that God

had compelled him to prophesy and had made him a subject of ridicule as well (Jer. 20:7).

A very important change in his life occurred when Jeremiah decided to go to the land of Benjamin (Jer. 37:12). When he arrived at the border of Benjamin, he was caught by Irijah, who accused him of deserting to the Chaldeans. As a result, Jeremiah was imprisoned (Jer. 37:15). Although he remained there quite a while, he still did not stop prophesying about the destruction and punishment that would befall Israel. He was thrown into the cistern of Malchiah, the king's son, and was removed from there only after the intervention of the Ethiopian Ebed-melech (Jer. 38:6ff.). After his prophecy of the destruction was fulfilled, he was released from prison by Nebuchadnezzar. Afterwards Jeremiah went to Egypt and very likely died there.

Jeremiah was chosen to be a prophet while he was still in his mother's womb (Jer. 1:5). His mission was "over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jer. 1:10). Yet it is amazing that God's chosen prophet did not want to accept his destiny. Jeremiah protested to God against it, complaining about the way of the world: "Righteous are You, O Lord, when I complain to You. Yet I would plead my case before You" (Jer. 12:1).

Throughout the entire Biblical book, there is a struggle between Jeremiah the prophet and Jeremiah the man.

As a prophet, he had to prophesy; he was, after all, the messenger of God. His prophecies were "difficult" because they were prophecies of destruction, anger and reproof. (Only a few of his prophecies were ones of consolation, e.g., Jer. 34:14ff.) His words caused people to hate him, to withdraw from him. As an Israelite, he loved his people. He did not want to utter what the Lord had ordered him to, but he could not oppose the stronger will of God: "If I say, I will not mention Him or speak anymore in His name, there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones and I am weary with holding it in and I cannot" (Jer. 20:9). The Lord made it even harder for Jeremiah by telling him not to pray for the benefit of Israel, because He was not going to listen (Jer. 7:16). Jeremiah could not pray for Israel and yet his prophecies had not been fulfilled. The failure and rejection of his prophetic message caused the people to say: "Behold they say to him, 'Where is the word of God? Let it come!'" (Jer. 15:5).

Jeremiah knew that he was preaching to deaf ears and that his proclamation was in vain. Judah would not and could not repent and, therefore, the words of God would have to be verified through the coming destruction. He blamed Israel for being unfaithful, for forsaking the God who had brought their ancestors out of Egypt to the land of Israel (Jer. 2:4ff.). Neither truth nor justice was to be found among the people (Jer. 5:1). Their leaders had

mislead them (Jer. 23:1). Most of all, Jeremiah was angry that Israel had forgotten the covenant that the Lord had made with their forefathers (Jer. 34:12).⁶ Because of their misdeeds and stubbornness, God was going to destroy the Temple and exile the people (Jer. 32:28ff., 38:3). Jeremiah's reproof sprang from the same source as the reproof of other prophets: the disappointment at witnessing the sins of Israel as well as their shameful violations of God's will.⁷

In the chapter "The Words of Jeremiah," the editor selects midrashim describing Jeremiah as a prophet of reproof. From the start, it is obvious that Jeremiah was chosen by God to give Israel one last warning. Israel had not listened to the words of Isaiah (proem one), had ignored the words of Ezekiel (proem two) and had not paid attention to Zecharia (proem three). Therefore, there was a need for the words of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah's warnings were more severe because they followed the reproofs of the other prophets. Jeremiah is compared to Moses in proem six. Both Moses and Jeremiah were prophets of severe reproof. Jeremiah spoke of death, plagues and destruction. All the midrashim cited to explain his name deal with destruction: he was called Jeremiah either because the measure of justice was finally lifted up during his lifetime or because the Temple was destroyed in his days (part twelve). Jeremiah was aware

of the content of his prophecies and he complained about them (part thirteen). However, even in this part of the chapter, the emphasis is not on his complaints, but rather on the ironic difference between the blessings given by the rest of the priests and the terrible words of Jeremiah. The dominant description of Jeremiah is as a prophet of destruction and reproof.

Part nine and the beginning of part ten reveal a different Jeremiah: not Jeremiah the prophet of reproof but rather Jeremiah the person who loved his people. His prophecies were fulfilled: the Temple had been destroyed and Israel had been exiled. He was, however, deeply saddened by the consequences of his prophecies and shared in their suffering and sorrow. He put himself in chains and lamented over the disaster that had come upon Israel. His pain and sorrow were dramatically illustrated when he picked up the scattered parts of the bodies of the captives: he did not gloat over this punishment, rather he lamented this dismemberment of his fellow Judeans.

In summary, the dominant image of Jeremiah in the chapter is that of a prophet of reproof and destruction. However, the editor also wants to present Jeremiah as a man in sympathy with the suffering of his countrymen (part nine).

There remains to be answered the question why the editor describes Jeremiah predominantly as a prophet of

reproof. The answer to this question can be found in the time of the reading of this homily in the synagogue. It is read on the first of the three Sabbaths between the Seventeenth of Tammuz and the Ninth of Av. This period of twenty-one days is known as $\text{בֵּין הַמַּשְׁבָּּרִים}$ /ben hammas̱arim "between the afflictions" and is a time of mourning for the destruction of the First and Second Temples. The three Sabbaths of this period are known as $\text{שַׁבְּעַת יְמֵי תַּשְׁבּוּב}$ /təṣṣəḇ dō-pur⁴anūtā "the three (Sabbaths) of retribution" and, on them, special Haftarot are read. These three Haftarot have an especially admonitory character. On the first of these three Sabbaths, Jer. 1:1-2:3 is read.⁸ Therefore, a homily which is to be given in conjunction with this Haftara must also share in this tone of admonition. Hence, the dominant image of Jeremiah in this chapter is one of a prophet of reproof.

To summarize, in the Bible, we see the many sides of Jeremiah. In contrast, in the chapter "The Words of Jeremiah," one particular characteristic is selected: the prophet of reproof. This limited image of Jeremiah is in harmony with the occasion on which the homily is read, this being the first Sabbath in the period of mourning following the Seventeenth of Tammuz.

CHAPTER IV

THE ART OF THE COMPOSITION OF "THE WORDS OF JEREMIAH"

In order to complete our understanding of the chapter "The Words of Jeremiah," we must analyze the work of the editor. The editor of works such as this does not write the midrashim; rather he selects them from the oral tradition.

On Sabbaths and festivals, a preacher delivers sermons in the synagogue. These sermons are based on the Torah portion read on the day on which the sermon is delivered. In order to maintain the interest of his audience, the preacher gives all kinds of interesting interpretations, legends and stories which simplify and clarify the written text. The function of the sermon in the life of the people is very important. The preacher tries not only to teach and explain the Torah, but also to respond to the problems and difficulties of his community. The sermons are not only responses to the current problems, but they also serve as entertainment. The preacher accompanies his sermon with stories, dramatizations and voice fluctuations. These dramatizations and voice fluctuations are very important not

only because of the fact that they draw many people to attend and listen, but they also serve as competition to the circus and theater in the Roman-Hellenistic world.¹

These sermons, delivered in front of live audiences, are the material for the compilers of homiletical midrashim. The compilers do not actually compose the midrashim, rather they select midrashim from the oral tradition and translate them into written form.² Before such compilers lies a rich oral tradition of all kinds of midrashim: different versions of the story, various opinions on the same subject, disagreements, etc. The compiler has to select the midrashim according to a subject or motif and he then arranges them in an interesting format. Many times a compiler includes midrashim that are not so relevant to his topic. He does this only in order to preserve them from certain oblivion.

The structure of the chapter of a homiletical midrash is fixed. The chapter opens with a series of proems. The length of these proems is usually half of the chapter. The body of the chapter follows this. The chapter concludes with words of consolation and hope.³

In light of this background, it is easy to examine the work of the compiler of "The Words of Jeremiah." He selects fifteen midrashim dealing with Jeremiah. The first six parts explain why Jeremiah's reproofs had been necessary. Parts seven to fourteen (the body) explain the first

verse of the book of Jeremiah, corresponding to the beginning of the Haftara of the first Sabbath after the Seventeenth of Tammuz. The final part, the nehemta, deals with Jer. 1:2-3.

From an analysis of the order and content of this chapter, we learn that the compiler does not merely put several midrashim on the same subject together, but it becomes evident that his effort is a work of art, showing a great deal of thought. At the end of the opening proem, the prophet warned the people of Israel that they should listen to the words of the Torah and to his prophecies. Otherwise the lion Nebuchadnezzar would come to punish them. Israel did not listen to Jeremiah and ignored his prophetic warnings. Exactly in the middle of the chapter, in the eighth part, there is a description of what happened to Israel because it did not listen to Jeremiah. The result was that "the Lion", Nebuchadnezzar, came and punished them. He destroyed the Temple, exiled the people and scattered about the dismembered bodies of the captives. The motif of the punishment-wielding lion shows up again in the nehemta: the lion Nebuchadnezzar came and punished Israel so that God, the Lion, would come and redeem them. By opening the chapter with a specific subject, returning to it in the middle of the chapter and then concluding the chapter with that subject, the compiler creates a motif tying together all the parts of the chapter. In addition, a chain of

development can be seen: in the beginning, there is a warning; in the middle, a description of the failure of the people to listen to that warning and of the subsequent punishment; and in the final sections, a renewal of the promise of the Redemption, despite the fact that the people had not listened and were being punished.

The compiler puts the proems in a specific order. The first three proems deal with one theme: the need for the words of Jeremiah because of the failure of Israel to heed the warnings of previous prophets. The next two proems deal with Jeremiah as a descendant of Rahab. The compiler assembles here two proems which, in fact, contradict one another. However, by presenting the subject from these two points of view, the compiler maintains objectivity. In reality, the contradiction is two sides of the same coin. As Heinemann states:

By emphasizing the contradiction between different subjects, he [the compiler] creates a connection until they complement each other and enlighten each other. . . . By doing so, he remains objective and tries to show the subject in all its significance and color.⁴

The last proem forms a conclusion to the set of proems as well as serving as an introduction to the body of the chapter.

The compiler tries to choose many midrashim that involve the numbers three, six and nine. For example, in the sixth proem, Jeremiah is comparable to Moses in six

aspects and, in the fourth proem, there is a list of three things to which Israel should pay attention.

As was pointed out above in the section on "The Image of Jeremiah," the compiler selects mainly those midrashim which show one aspect of Jeremiah: Jeremiah as the prophet of reproof. The desire is to create a homily of admonition suitable for the first of the three Sabbaths of "retribution" following the Seventeenth of Tammuz.

In summary, the compiler's contribution is mainly that of a good editor: he puts together a collection of midrashim which center around one specific topic--Jeremiah; he emphasizes one particular theme--Jeremiah as a prophet of reproof; and he aims to create one specific mood--contrition. In doing this, he gives a new and different image to the Biblical Jeremiah: the prophet as seen and interpreted in the context of Rabbinic legends, arguments and history.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In the last chapters, in addition to dealing with the ideas and the motifs found in "The Words of Jeremiah," I have critiqued the work of the compiler. The compiler selects midrashim which serve his goal of creating an appropriate homily to read on the first Sabbath of Telata de-Furanuta. The final question which must be answered is as follows: beyond this superficial goal of writing a suitable homily and in addition to his desire to record certain oral traditions, does the compiler have a message or lesson to teach his audience?

We can answer this question only after an historical review of the fifth century C.E.¹ During this century, Christianity gained widespread influence and was acknowledged in many places as the religion of the state. With this rise in status, Christian attitudes towards Jews changed. Not only did the Christians hold Jews in general contempt, but they also began to claim as their own Palestine and all of its holy places.² The Christians saw in the destruction of the Second Temple a visible manifestation of God's rejection of the people whom He had formerly

chosen as his own special people.

Besides the increasing influence of Christianity, the Jews lost at this time their previous autonomous communal authority which had been invested in the office of the nasi. Theodosius II accused Rabbi Gamliel II of having built a synagogue without authorization and of having defended a Jew against some Christians. As punishment, he stripped Gamliel II of the title and the powers of the nasi. Rabbi Gamliel II's death in 426 C.E. marked the formal end of this institution. With the abolition of the office of the nasi, the Jews in Palestine lost once and for all their communal control which they had held for three hundred and fifty years since the destruction of the Second Temple.

The historical sources further teach us that after Gamliel's death the Jewish population in Palestine became even poorer. Only in Tiberias and in several other small towns were there small schools for the training of rabbis and teachers. The Sanhedrin continued to exist, but without much power. Thus, the small Jewish population remained isolated and without leadership. Jerusalem was no longer a place of authoritative guidance. The Jews were left uncertain as to what the future held in store for them. Their immediate problems were to preserve their uniqueness as a religious and ethnic group and to defend themselves against external influences.

The compiler of "The Words of Jeremiah" faces these

very problems on an individual level. In his work, he tries to do two things: on the one hand, to explain why the people are caught up in the situation in which they find themselves and, on the other hand, to encourage the community which is now left without leadership or guidance.

His explanation as to why the people find themselves in this desperate situation is basically the classical explanation of the literary prophets. Just like the earlier Israelites, the ancestors of the compiler's contemporaries did not listen to the warnings and words of reproof which God had directed at them. (The stubbornness of the people in refusing to heed these warnings is emphasized in the first proems.) The fact that His warnings were ignored is sufficient reason for God's punishing them and their descendants. (The comparison between Rahab and Israel in proems four and five illustrates how much the people deserve this punishment. Rahab turned from her life of harlotry, thereby deserving God's reward. This is in complete contrast to the Israelites, who refused to abandon their old ways, even after numerous warnings, including the final one by Jeremiah.) Just as after Jeremiah's final warning the First Temple had been destroyed, so after the final warning to their ancestors the Second Temple was destroyed, bringing on the problems which the compiler's fellow Palestinian Jews are now facing.

Although the compiler of "The Words of Jeremiah"

brings the traditional explanation, in between the lines, however, he has something new to say. He wants his audience to understand that God does not want to punish them, although they are well deserving of this punishment. (The description of the Shechinah in part eleven supports this assumption. Although the Shechinah knew that she had to punish Israel, she did not accept the idea, at least at the beginning.)

This new element that God is not wholehearted in His punishment is intended as an element of encouragement. If Israel will follow the laws, God will not continue to punish them. There is hope: the Redemption will come, beginning from Palestine. Even before the Redemption, however, God will still be with His people. God has not deserted His people, even though He is punishing them. Indeed, just as earlier He had gone into exile with His people, so he has not abandoned them now. (This idea is expressed in part nine.)

From his editing and compilation of the chapter as well as from his explanations and encouragement, we can learn about the type of audience which the editor/compiler is addressing. Generally, such homilies are to be delivered before women, children and peasants in order to teach them the fundamentals of Judaism. However, it is also possible that the editor/compiler wants to deliver a message to his fellow scholars. He does not state this explicitly,

however. It does seem to me, though, that only people who know the Bible thoroughly and are familiar with Rabbinic sources can fully appreciate the message of "The Words of Jeremiah."

NOTES

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

¹Leopold Zunz, Sermons in Israel, page 85.

²Buber, in his introduction, lists most of the kadmonim who had mentioned the Pesikta in their works.

³Midrashim can be classified into three categories: homiletical, exegetical and narrative. Homiletical midrashim (the Pesikta is a collection of them) consist of presentations of the traditional interpretations of Biblical verses in the form of homilies. Collections of homiletical midrashim are formed around the verses from the beginning of the scriptural readings in the synagogue.

⁴Buber's decision to select this manuscript for the text is based on the simple fact that he obtained it first. About Buber's edition, Mandelbaum writes in the introduction to his edition of the Pesikta (page xi):

In rather irregular and unsystematic fashion, Buber's notes give the varied reading from the Oxford manuscript as well as from the Carmoly and the Parma manuscripts. Buber sometimes does not even mention the sources of his version, or he adds notes without writing the source. Because of this, it is difficult to use his edition. (Cf. also Goldberg's article, page 69.)

In light of these facts and of the fact that Buber did not possess all the presently available manuscripts, I did not use his edition in my work.

⁵It should be pointed out that several manuscripts of the Pesikta do begin the annual cycle from Hanukkah (e.g., the new Oxford manuscript). According to Goldberg (page 72), this order is more logical than the one proposed by Zunz.

⁶Meir Friedmann, (Untitled article), Beit Hatalmud, Vol. V (1892), pages 1-6.

⁷See Bernard Mandelbaum (ed.), Pesikta de Rav Kahana, vol. 2, p. x. See also William Braude and Israel J. Kapstein (trans.), Pesikta de Rav Kahana, p. xxviii.

⁸John Bowker, The Targums and Rabbinic Literature, p. 74.

⁹See Meir Friedmann, (Untitled article), Beit Hatalmud, Vol. V (1892), page 6. See also William Braude and Israel J. Kapstein (trans.), Pesikta de Rav Kahana, page xlviii.

¹⁰Leopold Zunz, Sermons in Israel, page 86.

CHAPTER II. "THE WORDS OF JEREMIAH"

¹Joseph Heinemann, "The Proem in Aggadic Midrashim: A Form-critical Study," Scripta Hierosolymitana, Vol. XXII (1971), p. 103.

²Ibid., page 105. Heinemann also mentions the objection of some scholars concerning his hypothesis.

³Scholars suggest that these verses are a description of the invasion of the Assyrian army. See, for example, Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 15, pages 246-247. See also Sanhedrin 94b for the statement of R. Huna who says that this verse refers to the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar.

⁴See Sanhedrin 94b where R. Huna says that these three places, Anathoth, Laisha and Bat Gallim, were not among the places where the invader stopped. He says that these were the words of the prophet to Israel. See also the comments of Tosafot ל'נבי' hu in Gen. 20:7.

⁵See Breshit Rabba, parasha 44, chapter 15a.

⁶The nouns for "lion" in Hebrew are: אֵרִי/^ari; קִפִּיר/^kpir; לֵבִי/^labi('); לַיִשׁ/^layish; סַהַס/^sahas; סַחַל/^sahal. See also Sanhedrin 95a.

⁷In this proem, the prophet asked the people to observe three things. On the use of the numbers 3, 6 and 9 in this chapter, see below pages 49-50.

⁸The Rabbis open many proems with verses from Psalms, Proverbs and Job because of their universal applicability.

⁹In his translation, Braude suggests that the comment of R. Shimeon Ben Nezirah relates to the second part of the verse of Proverbs. I disagree with him because it is clear that he is comparing Israel to people who lack wisdom while also comparing idolatry to simplicity (i.e., lack of wisdom). See BDB to the word ḥṣṣ/peti(y).

¹⁰Radak, in his note to Is. 30:22, brings the two possibilities of "to go out" and "filth."

¹¹The original meaning of the word ḥṣṣ/mos'raḥem is "your bonds" from the root ḥ-ṣ-ṣ "to bind." However, these two rabbis derive the word from the root ḥ-ṣ-ṣ "to suffer" and, hence, its meaning is "suffering."

¹²A divine "spirit" or "wind" is mentioned twice in connection with Ezekiel: 1:4 and 37:1. This is to be contrasted with the divine "word" used in connection with other prophets.

¹³For a different version of this poem, see Sanhedrin 105a.

¹⁴That the word ḥṣṣ/zonah used in Josh. 2:1 with regard to Rahab means "harlot" is the generally accepted Jewish tradition (e.g., Radak). However, the Targum of Jonathan, with which Rashi concurs, translates the word as "innkeeper."

¹⁵See Tosfot to Megilla 14b, Radak to Joshua 6:25 and Louis Ginzberg, Legends of the Jews, vol. 4, note 22.

¹⁶See Rashi (Megilla 15b) in his note to the words "In her name, she was a harlot."

¹⁷See also Shemot Rabba, seder Yitro, chapter 27.

¹⁸Megilla 14b and Louis Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews, vol. 4, page 5.

¹⁹Megilla 14b.

²⁰Ruth Rabba, parasha 2, siman 1.

²¹Bamidbar Rabba, parasha 2, siman 2.

²²Kohelet Rabba, parasha 5, siman 14.

²³Bamidbar Rabba, seder Nasu, parasha 6, siman 9.

²⁴See also Ez. 16:33.

²⁵Ruth Rabba, parasha 2, siman 1.

²⁶Joseph Heinemann, "The Art of the Composition of 'Vayikra Rabba'," Hasifrut, Vol. II (1969), page 827.

²⁷See Rashi to the words "and she said" in Num. 12:1 where he says that the derivatives from the root ו-ד-ר/D-B-R connote "to reprove."

²⁸The description of Nebuchadnezzar as a dwarf is found in several places in Rabbinic literature. For a full list, see Breshit Rabba, page 147, note 1.

²⁹Abraham Goldberg, (Untitled article), Kiryat Sefer, Vol. 43 (1967-1968), page 76.

³⁰In Baba Batra 15a, it is written, "Jeremiah wrote his book and the book of Kings and Lamentations." See also the Targum to the opening verse of the book of Jeremiah.

³¹Braude (p. 257) writes:

In another comment, the name Jeremiah is construed as derived from the Greek *erēmos* 'void, destitute,' and is taken to bespeak the lamentation of Jeremiah in such verses as "How does the city sit solitary" Lam. 1:1. I disagree with his translation. Only in part twelve do the Rabbis talk about the name Jeremiah as derived from this Greek word.

³²Braude, p. 257.

³³See Mandelbaum, page 230, note to line 10.

³⁴See Braude's translation, page 258.

³⁵Braude understands here that the Rabbis construe 'דִּבְרֵי/dib're as 'דָּבָר/dabray "leading." In this translation, he is following Buber's suggestion and both of them make a mistake here. The Rabbis understand the word as meaning "a conversation" and not "to lead" or "to guide."

³⁶My translation is based upon Jastrow. Braude (p. 259), however, explains it as meaning "a protest against the justice of the punishment that God inflicts."

³⁷A full translation of the Biblical text of Jer. 40:4 reads: "And now, behold, I loosen you this day from the chains which are upon your hand. If it seem good unto you to come with me into Babylon, come, and I will look well unto you; but if it seem ill unto you to come with me

to Babylon, forebear; behold, all the land is before you; where it seems good and right to you to go, go there." Our author skipped the lines that are underlined.

³⁸Jer. 40:5 is difficult. The verse opens with the words, "Yet he would not go back." These words interrupt the statement of Nebuzaradan begun in 40:2 which includes the remainder of verse 5. The proper place for these words would seem to be at the end of verse 5 after the end of Nebuzaradan's comment. The midrash solves this problem by saying that Jeremiah did not decide to go back until God told him to do so. In reaching this interpretation, the Rabbis attribute verse 5 to God and not to Nebuzaradan.

³⁹See Rashi to Sukkah 45a to the words "I and He."

⁴⁰Here the Rabbis probably understand the verb יִפְּלוּ/yitnagg³pu not as meaning "they stumble," but as "they will be destroyed" from such other derivatives of the root פ-ל-ל/N-G-P as מַגְּעָה/magge³ah "plague."

⁴¹On the structure of this part, see below, pages 29-30.

⁴²I would like to thank Dr. Barth for drawing my attention to this point.

⁴³Cf. Jer. 9:9: "They did not hear the voice of the cattle (מִיָּנָה/miqne)." In the midrash, the word מִיָּנָה/miqne ia understood to be derived from the root י-נ-ה/Q-N-² "to be jealous." Leon Nemoy suggest that the word מִיָּנָה/miqne should be taken as a form of מִיָּנָה/qinne³ah, thus yielding two meanings: one, "jealousy" and the other, "the formal warning to the wife to cease her reprehensible behavior." This suggestion is quoted in Braude, p. 260.

⁴⁴See Sabbath 141b for the comment of R. Judah. He explains that the word מִיָּנָה/b³hemā has the numerical value 52. See also Rashi's comment there on R. Judah's statement.

⁴⁵Yoma 54a clears up the connection between Deut. 29:22 and Dan. 9:27: "R. Jose said: 'For seven years sulphur and slat prevailed in the land of Israel.' And R. Johanan said: 'What is the basis of R. Jose's view? He infers it from the analogy of the (two) usages of (the word) 'covenant.' Here (Dan. 9:27) Scriptures read: "And he shall make a firm covenant with many for one week," and in another place it is written (Deut. 29:22): "Then men shall say: 'Because they forsook the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers.'" See also Rashi on this passage.

⁴⁶According to Jastrow, this fish was probably "mullet."

⁴⁷For example, after Jeremiah saw the scattered parts of the bodies of the Israelites, it is written in Lamentations Rabba: "On this moment, it is written . . ." This is an editorial addition not found in the Pesikta.

⁴⁸This comparison is very general. It is drawn to show that parts 9 and 10 in the Pesikta are to be read together and, further, that Lamentations Rabba is more organized and has solved many of the editing problems that I have previously pointed out exist in the Pesikta. This greater readability of Lamentations Rabba is a clear indication that it is later than the Pesikta.

⁴⁹See the beginning of Kohelet Rabba.

⁵⁰See Baba Batra 109b. In Breshit Rabba, parasha 86, siman 4, it is written that Putifera was so named because he fattened calves for idolatry. (His name is sometimes given as Putriel in English.)

⁵¹Pinchas is called a zealous man because he is the one who was very zealous for God's sake (Num. 25:11). He is the son of a zealous man because of the zealousness of Levy (Gen. 34). See Rashi to Sanhedrin 82b.

⁵²See Ruth Rabba, parasha 2, siman 1 and Megilla 14b.

⁵³The text in the midrash reads, "Benjamin's portion was set in the land." However, it is necessary to accept Mandelbaum's correction that the text should read "Jeremiah's portion was set in the land of Benjamin."

CHAPTER III: THE IMAGE OF JEREMIAH IN THE BIBLE AND IN "THE WORDS OF JEREMIAH"

¹The period of Jeremiah's prophesying was a critical time in the history of the ancient Near East. During it, there occurred the collapse of Assyria and the rise of Babylonia. For details, see Yehezkel Kaufmann, The History of the Religion of Israel, Vols. 6-7, pages 393-396 as well as Abraham Malamat, "The Words of Jeremiah According to the Bible and External Sources," in Studies in the Book of Jeremiah, Vol. 1, pages 10-35.

²The thirteenth year of Josiah fell between the years

627 B.C.E. and 625 B.C.E. Rowley and Malamat support the date of 627 B.C.E., while Kaufmann supports 625 B.C.E.

³In Megilla 14b, the Rabbis try to explain why Josiah sought out Hulda's help.

⁴Sheldon Blank in "The Prophets as Paradigm," pages 113-128, suggests that the purpose of Jeremiah's confession was to make a paradigm out of himself. It seems to me that it is more than a paradigm. Jeremiah suffered from the fact that he was a prophet and, as a poet, he described his feelings and wishes in order to feel better.

⁵John Skinner, Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah, page 201.

⁶Weinfeld (page 53) says that Jeremiah asked for a new covenant. The old one had been written on stone and Israel had had to memorize it. The new one would be written in their hearts. The prophet was asking, therefore, for a Torah of the heart in place of the written one.

⁷Yehezkel Kaufmann, The History of the Religion of Israel, Vols. 6-7, page 449.

⁸Rambam, Hilechot Tefillin, chapter 13, part 19.

CHAPTER IV: THE ART OF THE COMPOSITION OF "THE WORDS OF JEREMIAH"

¹See Lamentations Rabba, proem 17.

²It is possible that the editors/compiler also write midrashim themselves and add them to the collection. However, most of the midrashim that are included seem to have been taken from the oral tradition.

³Joseph Heinemann, "The Art of the Composition of 'Vayikra Rabba'," Hasifrut, Vol. II (1969), page 810.

⁴Ibid., page 827.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

¹In this paper, I have not dealt with the problem

of dating the compilation of the Pesikta. I accept Mandelbaum's and Braude's suggestions that the Pesikta de-Rav Kahana was probably compiled in the fifth century C.E. See above, note 1 to chapter I.

²See Malamet, The History of Israel, page 336.

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