From Moses Through Philo and on to Today:

The Process of Transmuting an Immutable Revelation

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Philo of Alexandria's commentary on the Pentateuch demonstrates how vastare the divergences that can exist within Judaism. The Pentateuch claims in its own text to have been given to Moses on Sinai. However, others claim the Pentateuch to be a document progressively created in a series of manipulations throughout ancient history. Regardless which is true, since the time in which Torah was finalized, Judaism has never been the same. This I find extremely odd, because the people who have done so much to change Torah are the ones who so devoutly accepted it as the divinely revealed, immutable word of God.

The literal meaning of "God's" immutable word as given to Moses and Philo's reading of that immutable revelation give evidence of two different "revelations." Yet a third "revelation" is evident from a reading of the Talmud and the Midrashim created by the Rabbis who descend from the Pharisees. Perhaps a fourth revelation is also now evident -- the one giving authority to Reform Judaism.

Even a cursory study of Philo's writings and the Rabbinic tradition reveal a seemingly unbridgeable gap between the "literal" text and later "readings" and "interpretations" of it. Indeed, Philo's concept of God and his profile of Moses show themselves to be totally at odds with the original meaning of the Hebrew text. Similarly, the Rabbis create a new body of law which not only alters Biblical ritual, but takes texts out of context employing a series of hermeneutical principles which justify the extreme variations.

It is the purpose of this thesis to demonstrate: 1) how wide these gaps are; 2) how these gaps came to be; and 3) what the wider implications of these gaps are for the concept of revelation in Judaism. In tracing the process by which this phenomenon occurred, I hope to demonstrate that history, environment, and culture win out over a claim to immutability held by a "sacred" text. In reading the text, Philo and the rabbis each transmute the Biblical text into a revelation which becomes, in fact, their own and not Moses'. The focus of this thesis is certainly on Philo. However, to properly understand

Philo, and the mutation he represents, one must look both at Josephus and the Rabbis, and their works. For this purpose, they are included in depth, herein.

Chapter One of the thesis is an Introduction to the topic and to the study of Philo throughout history. Philo is generally considered outside the Jewish tradition. Chapter Two provides an introduction to Philo via a short biography, a study of his method and a study of the source of his philosophical leanings. Chapter Three begins the discussion of the Torah and the manner in which it is immutable, yet mutated. The focus of Chapter Three is the life and work of Moses. There are six subsections in this chapter, each devoted to a different stage in Moses' life or a special and unique character trait he posessed. Chapter Four continues the discussion of the Bible and its offshoots, but focuses on God and the methods by which humanity reaches out to God. There are only three subsections to this chapter, though perhaps there could have been more. I was not comfortable with any other separation, though, because the subject matter does not easily lend itself to definite division. Included in this chapter are discussions about God's names, prayer, sacrifice and the altar. Chapter Five ties the previous themes together as I discuss the place of Philo in Modern Judaism, and the origins of Rabbinic Judaism.

What becomes clear to one reading this thesis, is that neither the Orthodox Jew nor the Reform or Conservative Jew really has a claim on being "Torah True," for none are really true to the Torah. Both Philo and the Rabbinic tradition use the Pentateuch as a point from which they launch their theologies, but not as the actual source of the theology. The anomaly is that this describes those Jews who each claim to have the true edge over the others when it comes to authority and authenticity.

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I dedicate this thesis to:

To My wife, Cindy, for allowing me to embark on this journey and supporting me through it. Her love and compassion have truly been a blessing.

To my children, Corey, Joshua, and Ilana, who have been patient through the writing of this thesis, but with whom I have been able to spend so much more time enjoying over the last five years.

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Lastly, I need to thank Philo, who has opened my eyes to the beauty of the Jewish covenant with God and opened my heart to the poetry with which God speaks.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, thinkers have defined religion in so many ways. Karl Marx declared, "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the feeling of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of unspiritual conditions. It is the opium of the people."[1] Mordecai Kaplan insisted, "the essence of religion is the human quest for salvation."[2] Near myriads of other definitions fall between these two extremes. How appropriate it is, though, that the extremes of the spectrum should both emanate from the mouths of Jews. These viewpoints represent a wonderful phenomenon in Judaism.

There are two distinct beliefs that unite all Jews of all ages. First, Jews believe in, at most, only one God. There are some Jews who believe in no definable God. However, to believe in more than one takes an individual outside the realm of Judaism. Second, all Jews agree that we all disagree over the singular purpose of religion. The Kabbalah teaches that the Torah is intentionally vague. Vowels were intentionally not designated, so that each person who reads it may feel free to come to a conclusion of his/her own as to the meaning of a passage. This phenomenon allows for Torah to be read in so many different ways by peoples of diverse backgrounds and different cultural influences throughout history. A problem is presented only when the different peoples collide and find their understanding of the text irreconcilable. One methodology wins, and one methodology loses; it must be that way. However, the winning method will emerge from the challenges placed against its authority ever changed; ever tainted. The less dominant methodology will never really fade into oblivion; it will simply become part of the surviving method, and remembered separately only in the books of history.

One early example of this duality occurred not long after the Tanakh was formally canonized. Two divergent Jewish worlds were growing -- one in Greece and one in Palestine. While both peoples looked to Torah as the divinely written word, the reality of their own cultures brought them to at least two completely different realizations of the Torah's message and purpose. In the microcosm, the purpose of this thesis is to focus on these two wholly diverse readings of scripture. This thesis will examine the Pentateuch / Torah as read in Hebrew in Palestine and will compare it to the manner in which it was read in Greek by the Hellenistic world of the Alexandrian Jew. In particular, this thesis will revolve around a Greek and Palestinian reading of the biblical account of the nature of Moses, of God, and to a lesser degree, the tabernacle. In deciphering the differences between the divergent methodologies and ideals, one will of necessity, take note of the cultural factors that might account for the divergences. Was the religion of the Alexandrian Jewish community really a mutation of the Judaism of Palestine or simply a peripheral variation on a common theme?

Using the various answers to the above queries, the macrocosmic purpose of this work is to help define the manner in which diversity within Judaism occurs. How may diversity affect the religion over generations? Ultimately, the purposes of this thesis is an examination of whether or not the influences of the Hellenistic world survived the demise of Alexandria's Judaism. If indeed it did, one must then investigate the extent to which the Judaism that has been passed through the ages was affected by the Judaism of Alexandria.

The Hellenistic (philosophical) influence seems in direct conflict with the Pharisaic (Rabbinic) leanings in Palestine. This conflict has been a central focus of debate in the development and authority of the Rabbinic law, and the extent to which its purity and authenticity may be traced to Moses. Over the course of this introductory chapter, one

will readily find the references to the thought of authors / historians who propose various conclusions to this debate. Discussion on this topic is ongoing. It is with this ongoing debate in mind that this thesis is being written. Was Alexandria but a variational or peripheral Judaism, or was it a co-existent equally authoritative mutation? I hope to bring some resolution to the issue of whether or not a Judaism founded in Greek philosophical ideas is as authentic as the Judaism that grew from Pharisaic Palestine.

Modern day Judaism stands divided by the many selfserving voices that preach the fundamentalism of individual groups. The resolution of the above question can only serve to dowse many of the fires that currently burn, fueled by the selfish and divisive speech. Although the topic is broad enough for volumes, the focus of this work will be strictly on the introduction of Greek philosophy into Judaism. This is why I focus on Alexandria, and the writings of Philo. The only proper way to determine the long term affect of Philo and Alexandrian Judaism on Judaism, is to analyze Philo's views of the Pentateuch and the ritual practices of the community.

As this journey begins, several layers of groundwork must be laid and several presumptions are necessary. This thesis has not been written before, although there exist hundreds of texts written about Alexandrian Judaism. The majority of such texts are written specifically about the level of Jewish observance in Alexandria. While not all of these works focus on Philo Judeas, most use Philo as both a springboard to other related discussions or as a gauge by which to measure the religiosity of Jewish Alexandrians. This essay will focus on Philo, as well. Most of the treatises take sides in two arguments: 1) Was Philo an anomaly or, in reality, a representative of the actual thought and practice of Alexandrian Jewry? 2) Did Philo and/or the Alexandrian Jewish communities accept that they were Jews tied to the Torah, or members of the Hellenistic world? Before answering

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these questions for ourselves, it would first be most appropriate to examine the answers already provided for us by historians and scholars.

Azariah de Rossi opened the modern debate over Philo's Judaism/Hellenism. The works of Philo had been lost for centuries, preserved by the church in secret. In the Sixteenth Century, reading the "newly re-discovered" texts of Philo was in vogue,[3] and de Rossi sought to answer the throng who found in Philo a new, a different, a deeply inviting form of Judaism. After first extolling Philo's virtues, he proceeded to accuse Philo of apostasy and heresy. Azariah railed against Philo's scholarship (or lack thereof), accusing him of being ignorant of the Hebrew Bible along with the higher crime of abandoning the Palestinian Halakhah. Azariah found himself confronted by a problem. He viewed history as a practice in theory, not a study of practical advances. In referring to irrationality of making history a science, he stated

> Our perfect Law and the books of the Prophets contain many reports of experiences and observations on matters which proceeded or followed the promulgation of the Law. In this fashion we are able to penetrate the truth of everything useful to us through our reason and our senses, 'manifestly, and not in dark speeches' [Numbers 12:8]. We have no need of expending our physical and literary energies on matters which, among the other nations, constantly lead to conflicting interpretations. Among us everything is regulated by divine justice.[4]

For Azariah, history "was, what was."[5] Only Halakhah merited any study. Although he admitted that much of the Talmud is not traceable back to the original revelation of the Oral Law, he defended the Talmud even to extreme ends. He justified doing so by declaring that those matters which were not authentic were not halakhic. That which was halakhic could not be touched. That which was authentic (revelation to Moses at Sinai) was assumed known to all Jews. In Azariah's opinion, Philo failed to live up to the halakhic standards of the Oral Law. For this apostasy, Azariah held Philo in disdain.

We have no clue as to what evidence Azariah had at his disposal to justify his preconceptions of Philo. We do know, however, that Azariah's own faith system was rooted in the Pharisaic tradition. We may also be permitted to discern that he also found himself "out of touch" with the Jewish philosophy of his own day, as well. Either Azariah did not recognize the Neo-Platonic and Aristotelian grounding of the Jewish Philosophers of the Middle Ages, or because they observed Halakhah, he ignored their rambling. He did add a discussion of Judah HaLevi to his magnum opus, *Me-or 'Eynaim*, but only as part of a listing of observations of the *Geonim*. Such an attitude would not enable him to begin to understand the world of Philo. Azariah's first assumption was that Philo possessed ready access to the developing Pharisaism of Palestine, and secondly, that Philo rejected the ways and rituals of the then still fledgling standards for religiosity, as well. Proof of this is found in Azariah's discussion of Philo's affiliation to the Essenes as opposed to the Sadducees.[6] Without question, Azariah decided that Philo was more Greek than Jew.

> For all matters relating to this (Philo) I say to the children of Israel: I do not wish to decide whether this Yedidiah or Philo, according to his Greek name, is pure or impure; I shall call him neither master nor sage, nor a heretic and Epicurean, but simply Yedidiah, the Alexandrine. By citing him in my book, I do not propose to enter him into the intimate circle of my people. We shall merely listen to his words, as to those of any of the world's sages, concerning matters in which he has no axe to grind. It is up to any reader to pass judgement on his merits, to reject his errors, but to utilize him if he adds to the truth.[7]

In any case, Azariah contended, where one's Judaism differed at all from that of the Pharisees, he/she is to be considered a stranger. As to all of Alexandria's Jews, he stated:

> . . .Concerning the four thousand Greeks, like the Sadducees, they followed Judaism with certain modifications. From the moment, however, when another spirit reigned among them, they had nothing more in common with us.[8]

If Azariah had the final word on whether Philo was more Greek than Jew, then

there would be no need for this thesis to be written. His voice was only the first authoritative one on the subject. Over the subsequent years, we have been presented with volumes of convincing arguments as to Philo's orientation.

Erwin Goodenough spent his professional life trying to clarify the early history of Christianity. In his search for the pieces to this puzzle, he tried to explain how Christian art flourished so early. He knew of the normative Jewish practice of forbidding pictorial art. Additionally, he recognized that Christianity grew out of Judaism, and not alongside it. Goodenough surmised that there must have been a divergent Judaism that did not ban pictorial art. Perhaps it is from this Judaism that Christianity took its lead on the artistic front. As he was grappling with this hypothesis, his archeological colleagues at Yale uncovered a synagogue in Syria that was richly decorated. Possessing evidence that there did exist marginal or divergent Judaisms in antiquity, Goodenough surmised that Philo's writings portrayed such a Judaism.

In Goodenough's view, Philo's Judaism was so completely Hellenized that it was barely recognizable as Judaism. Philo, as mystic, professed a religion no more rational than the Greek mythology that he scorned. To be certain, Goodenough claimed, the mystical religion of which Philo spoke was not the same as that of the Greek pantheon. Philo did not share in the pagan beliefs in God(s), only in the pagan approach to the elusive God(s).[9] As Goodenough saw it, Philo saw the Torah as literally read, as a functioning mystery, solvable only by those ordinary Jews who were unable to fathom the greater mystery of the allegory. The literal laws existed for the purpose of allowing for salvation of the masses. It was the greater mystery, the allegory, that allowed one an avenue to attain salvation on one's own. He never quite said that Philo was not Jewish, only that his Judaism was, at best, very much peripheral to normative Palestinian Judaism. Perhaps the most poignant

attacks on Goodenough's theories of Philo came because of this assertion of Philo's Greek mystical ties. Harvard Professor Harry Wolfson published such a text (see below).[10] Additionally, Wilfred L. Knox, a then contemporary theologian, wrote, " I am quite clear that his attempt to read a 'Light-mystery' religion into Philo's writings entirely misconceives the whole aim of Philo's work."[11]

In an attempt to explain what the basis of Philo's Hellenized philosophy was, Goodenough postulates that Philo developed a contrast between two religious aspirations. The "objective" mode of religiosity saw the individual faithfully performing the rites of the religion for the sake of fulfilling the rites. Communion with God is at best secondary to the practice, if it is at all important in the experience. "Subjective" religion assumes the ritualistic demands with an end purpose of attaining the spiritual caress from the Divine.

Although the struggle over balancing this dichotomy has become central to Modern Reform Judaism, at the time Goodenough wrote, it was not an issue for any branch of normative Judaism. He was staunchly criticized for the hypothesis, but for the wrong reasons. Unlike Azariah de Rossi, Goodenough was not trying to prove that Philo's Judaism was perverted, only that it was unique. Whether it is really unique in our history is another matter to be discussed later (Chapter 5). For Goodenough, marginal Judaisms, such as he describes Philo's, must have existed in order for his hypothesis regarding religious art in the Church to be true. Perhaps it was this desperate need to prove his thesis that caused Goodenough to fail to see that Alexandrian Judaism was not marginal, only different.

The sharpest criticism against Goodenough's theory came from another scholar, Harry Wolfson. Wolfson published his own text on Philo in 1947, nearly ten years after Goodenough first published his work on Philo. Some people claim that Wolfson published

as a response to Goodenough. The work serves this purpose, but there is no evidence that this was Wolfson's intent. He saw Philo in a light at the opposite end of the spectrum than did Goodenough. Wolfson wrote that he believed Philo represented a collateral form of the Judaism practiced in Pharisaic Palestine. "Philo was a usual Jew."[12] According to Wolfson, Philo was able to read and comprehend Hebrew. Further, he thought Philo possessed intimate knowledge of the Oral Law propagated by the Pharisees. Unlike Azariah's criticism of Philo resultant from this belief, Wolfson celebrates Philo's ability to digest the Oral law and transcend it. I see no evidence that Philo can be held to this standard. In the next chapter, one will see that the fervor with which Philo celebrated the translation of Torah into Greek belies this notion. None-the-less, Philo's influence was, for Wolfson, not limited to the Jewish people. Wolfson extolled Philo as being one of the greatest philosophical minds ever to exist. If Philo's theology represented that of all of the Alexandrian Judaism, it was only because Philo taught it to the community.

Concurrent with these works, Rabbi Richard S. Sternberger completed his Rabbinic Thesis to fulfill the requirements for ordination by the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion. Therein, Rabbi Sternberger concludes, at the beginning of his work, that Philo was wholly Hellenized. [13]

In all fairness, Goodenough did seem to reconsider his position later in his studies. Most of his work does seem to evince his belief that Philo was more Greek mystic than Jew. There is, however, an article, written some nineteen years after his magnum opus on Philo, in which he bends over backwards to portray Philo as the most virtuous and true of all Jews. He wrote:

> Philo, the Jew of Alexandria, to give him his traditional title, deserves a high place in the roster of great Jews, even though he has had little direct influence on the last fifteen hundred years of Jewish life. His writings show that he was

> victorious in a recurrent struggle to live a Jewish Life and preserve Jewish values in a Gentile world which has great values of its own. . . . His deep loyalty to the People of the Book and the observances never faltered.[14]

Unless we assume that years of reflection and exposure to the works of Wolfson influenced him, Goodenough's dramatic shift is hard to understand. Upgrading Philo from Hellenized apostate to defender of the faith is a major step.

Why is this transformation important? In these later years, Goodenough and Wolfson began to really hone in on the nature of Philo's contributions to Judaism. Samuel Sandmel zt"l, a former professor at the Hebrew Union College, and a Philonic scholar, accused Wolfson of being simply, "Wrong."[15] I agree with Dr. Sandmel to the extent that he does not accept Wolfson's position that Philo was either proficient in Hebrew or in the pharisaic tradition. Dr. Sandmel also quite accurately believed that Goodenough's original views of Philo's complete Hellenization were overly simple. As one of Rabbi Sternberger's thesis advisors and referees, Dr. Sandmel recognized that this was a popular hypothesis, as Rabbi Sternberger echoes Goodenough's claim.

In answering the popular hypothesis on the nature of Philo, Dr. Sandmel claims that Philo completely assimilated. His impact on Judaism can only be suspect at best:

> [C]aution is important: Philo reflects Hellenized Judaism, but at the same time he is in many ways unique within the entity we can call hellenistic Judaism. He is almost as remote from the Hellenistic Judaism of the Greco-Jewish writers whom we know . . . as he is from the Judaism of Midrash and Talmud. It is not wrong to regard Philo as representing a marginal viewpoint. But I have seen no evidence that Philo speaks for a segment of Jewry large enough to be called a marginal Judaism.[16]

In deciding where to stand on the issue of Philo's Judaism, I am torn. Dr. Sandmel held a position, unique to that of either of his contemporaries, to see Philo's value to Judaism. As a Professor at a Reform Jewish Yeshiva, Dr. Sandmel dealt with the need to face the conflict of the tenets of Judaism with our lives in the real world, on a daily

basis. Perhaps Sandmel's failure to look further is due to his unwillingness to look at Jewish history as a series of transformations and challenges. Rather than view Philo in context with Palestinian Judaism, he is cast as an anomaly.

> The viewpoint that seems most right is that Philo and the Rabbis differed in religiosity as between Philo's philosophic mysticism and the non-mystic, non-philosophic manner of the Rabbis. Philo's philosophic mysticism is essentially Greek. If we ascribe Jewishness to the Rabbis [and their method] alone, then Philo is essentially not Jewish.[17]

Dr. Sandmel did not see that two Judaisms could exist side by side. He gave Philo credit for being loyal to Judaism, but still considered him to have lived outside of it.

> The viewpoint that seems right is not that Philo and the Rabbis differed essentially in halakhah, but that they differed in religiosity. . . . If we ascribe Jewishness to the Rabbis alone, then Philo is essentially not Jewish. But, to repeat, no Jew in history ever surpassed Philo in loyalty to Judaism. . . . [T]he Hellenization in him is a Hellenization of Judaism, not of some other religious tradition.[18]

In writing this thesis, I find myself very much at odds with this position. I will more fully delineate my position as to this issue in Chapter II, as I introduce Philo and Judaism to both Pharisaism and Plato.

Professor Goodenough's transformation intrigues me. That Philo may be seen as a great Jew is, I believe, wholly accurate. As Goodenough began to see Philo as a Jew, he overcame the greatest hurdle that stymied Dr. Sandmel. Conversely, I cannot wholly reject Wolfson's theory. He actually points out, as a curiosity, something which, for me, is far more than that, it is the purpose of my thesis. He once stated that Philo was "the direct and indirect source of religious philosophy, which continues uninterruptedly in its main assertions for well-nigh seventeen centuries, when at last it is openly challenged by Spinoza."[19] Indeed, Philo should enjoy this epitaph. His philosophy has not only been

mirrored by Maimonides and other great Jewish theologians, but his process provided a basis for Christianity as well. The three pronged relationship of God, Logos, and man, as misunderstood by the church, is the basis for the trinity.

At the beginning of this chapter, two questions were asked. Both of these will be answered over the course of this thesis. The first question, whether Philo was really representative of Alexandrian Judaism or not, will be dealt with in Chapter Two. Therein, I will examine the world in which Philo lived, the cultural influences upon him and the Jewish community, and the methodology Philo used in writing his commentaries. The most crucial second question, the place of the Alexandrian Jewish Community in or out of Judaism, will take the remainder of this work to substantiate and solve. By examining Philo's discussions regarding the nature of God, the law giver Moses, and the atmosphere in which God and Moses walked, my answer to this question will be made clear. In short, however, the answer is that Philo's work and the Judaism it reflected certainly has transcended the downfall of the Alexandrian Jewish community. More certainly, it has had a greater impact on the development of Judaism than any influence or divergence other than the Pharisaic one. In the twentieth century, it may have even a greater effect on Judaism than does Pharisaism. Ultimately, the answer to the second question above will allow us to discern whether or not Philo's religious philosophy represented a true mutation from the normative Judaism being propounded by the growing Pharisaic movement. The final chapter of this thesis will be devoted to solving this query.

END NOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE

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5. ibid.

6. ibid, p. 182.

7. ibid, p. 113.

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9. Erwin R. Goodenough, By Light, Light: The Mystical Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism, (London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1935), ppg. 184-207.

10. Harry A. Wolfson, Philo, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947).

11. Wilfred L.Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1939), p. 29.

12. Samuel Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 144.

13. Richard S. Sternberger, Hellenization in Philo Judaeus as Determined by Literary References in his *Exposition of the Law*, (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion Rabbinic / Master's Thesis, 1952) p. 29.

14. Erwin R.Goodenough, "Philo of Alexandria," Great Jewish Personalities: In Ancient and Medieval Times, B'nai B'rith Great Book Series: volume one, edited by Simon Noveck, (New York:B'nai B'rith Department of Adult Jewish Education and Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1959) p. 102.

15. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction, page 147.

16. ibid.

17. ibid. p. 134.

18. ibid.

19. Ralph Marcus, "The Hellenistic Age," Great Ages & Ideas of the Jewish People, edited by Leo Schwarz, (New York: The Modern Library, a Division of Random House, Inc., 1956), p. 134.

CHAPTER II

PHILO AND THE ALEXANDRIAN COMMUNITY

A. ALEXANDRIA AND THE SEPTUAGINT

The history of Judaism's rise to prominence in Alexandria is an interesting one. The history of the Jew in Alexandria dates back to the very foundation of the city by Alexander the Great, 332 B.C.E., an event which the Jews witnessed.[1] Of the five set districts of Alexandria, two (the northeastern ones) were wholly Jewish. One such district was the district of the Delta, the one which lay on the sea coast, giving its Jewish citizenry control over much of Alexandrian commerce. Jews were not restricted to these districts. Philo writes that despite the referenced concentration, Jews lived freely throughout Alexandria and worshipped in synagogues located throughout the city. The Talmud does speak of one large synagogue in Alexandria. Whether the Talmud means to say that it was the only place of worship there is unclear. Philo, however, does not refer to a Temple cult in Alexandria, such as the one in Jerusalem. He does refer to a beautiful synagogue, but we do not know if this is the same one mentioned in the Talmud.[2] At least one later scholar claimed that this basilica was not a synagogue, but merely a marketplace where business was transacted, and prayer services were held.[3]

> It has been taught, Rabbi Judah stated, "He who has not seen the double collonade (basilica synagogue) of Alexandria in Egypt, has never seen the glory of Israel." It was said that it was a huge basilica, one collonade within the other, and it sometimes held twice the number of people that went forth from Egypt. There were in it seventy-one cathedras of gold, corresponding to the seventy-one members of the Great Sanhedrin, not one of them containing less than twenty-one talents of gold, and a wooden platform in the middle upon which the attendant of the Synagogue stood

> with a scarf in hand. When the time came to answer "Amen," he waved his scarf and all the congregation duly responded. They moreover did not occupy their seats promiscuously, but . . . [each craft] sat separately, so that when a poor man entered the place, he recognized the members of his craft and on applying to that quarter obtained a livelihood for himself and for the members of his family.[4]

Fortuitously placed political alliances allowed for the continued success and growth of the Jewish population.[5] During Philo's time, the Alexandrian Jewish population outnumbered the Jewish population of Judea. All told, Philo estimates the Egyptian Jewish population of "Alexandria and the rest of the country from the Catabathmos on the side of Libya to the boundaries of Ethiopia were not less than a million of men."[6] Although this figure is suspect,[7] it is well agreed that the Alexandrian Jewish Population was prodigious.

The Jewish residents of Alexandria, had full polis rights and privileges of citizenship, though they were not wholly recognized as citizens.[8] The context of these rights is important, because, unique to early Jewish history, Alexandrian Jews had permission to maintain themselves as an independent political community with their own ruler or Ethnarck approved by the King. Eventually, the Ethnarck was replaced by a group of elders, but these elders were all Jews selected from within the community, by the community.[9] The Jews were allowed to develop their religion on their own, performing the rites and ceremonies as they deemed appropriate. Jews of other ages were forced to write, decode, and teach secretively, Jews of Alexandria openly studied, preached, and worshipped. There is no reason to suspect that the development of Judaism there was along any secretive lines. In fact, the Roman Emperor Claudius, amidst even the times of pogrom, wrote a letter protecting the Jewish people of Alexandria.

> Therefore, I now again call upon the Alexandrians to be mild and humane toward the Jews, who have for many years lived in the same city, and not to profane any of the rites observed by them in the worship of their God but to allow them to observe their own customs as in the time of the divine

> Augustus, which customs, after hearing both sides, I also have sanctioned.[10]

Correspondingly, the Jewish community honored the reigning governments openly in its ritual. Fragments of inscriptions exist detailing dedications of synagogues in the honor of the various ruling Ptolemaic kings and queens.[11]

The Jews of Alexandria did not segregate themselves from the surrounding world; Jews participated in the Greek world around them. They studied Greek philosophy and culture. The Palestinian languages of Aramaic and Hebrew became foreign to the tongues of Alexandrian Jews. Tied to the Bible as Jews are, it became necessary to possess a translation of the Torah to allow Greek speaking Jews the opportunity to read it. Most likely, Ptolemy had his own reason for wanting the Torah translated. He was granting the Jewish community wonderful rights equivalent to those of citizenship. That he wanted to know more about these people and their laws is not unreasonable to assume. Further, there must have been some general interest in the Bible by the Hellenistic world. We learn from the prelude to Ecclesiasticus that Ben Sirach's grandson, lived in a world where the translation of scripture was common place.[12]

The historicity of how the Greek translation of the Torah came to be, has itself been subjected to debate. Recognizing that the New Testament adopts the Septuagint as its source for proof texts, Jews have always been careful to forego acknowledging the veracity of the historicity of the "legend" of which the *Letter of Aristeas* speaks. That Philo and the Jews of the age accepted the translation as the verbatim word is undeniable. Were the Rabbis to apply the theory of "closer in time means greater in authority?"[13] They would be unable to argue with its veracity either. In discussing the circumstances surrounding the translation, Philo states that an embassy of the most respected and wise Jews from Palestine was called to Alexandria. After being quizzed by the illustrious and

wise King Ptolemy Philadelphus, they were secreted off to the island of Pharos to complete their task.

> Therefore, being settled in a secret place, and nothing even being present with them except the elements of nature, the earth, the water, the air, and the heaven, concerning the creation of which they were going in the first place to explain the sacred account; for the account of the creation of the world is the beginning of the law; they, like men inspired, prophesied, not one saying one thing and another another, but every one of them employed the self same nouns and verbs, as if some unseen prompter had suggested all their language to them. . . . In every case, exactly corresponding Greek words were employed to translate literally the appropriate Chaldaic [Hebrew] words. . . . If Chaldeans were to learn the Greek language, and if the Greeks would learn Chaldean, and if each were to meet with those scriptures in both languages, . . . they would admire and reverence them both as sisters, or rather as one and the same both in their facts and in their language.[14]

For the purposes of studying the religiosity of the Alexandrian community, it is not important whether the legend of the seventy-two translators is based in fact or fiction. Alexandrians, in particular Philo, believed with perfect faith that the Septuagint was an exact replica of the Torah given to Moses at Sinai. In using the Septuagint, Philo treats the Greek text as identical in every form to that of the original revelation. That the Alexandrian community, as a whole, acknowledged it as authentic is evinced by the Pharos festival thrown every year which was sponsored, not by the Jewish Community, but by Ptolemy; and which was attended by Jew and non-Jew alike.[15]

The *Letter of Aristeas* is believed to have a Jewish authorship and date to the mid-second century B.C.E.; the reign of Ptolemy VII. The contents of the letter detail the journey of the seventy-two scholars who translated the Pentateuch in seventy-two days. Although the fame of this text is roote in the legend of this translation, its function far transcends the legacy. The author posed as an influential courtier in the court of Ptolemy

II Philadelphus and wrote a document with the intention of unifying the Hellenistic and Jewish worlds.

> The author's message and general purpose are evident in his remarkable portrait of Gentiles and Jews and their interaction. Differences between Gentiles and Jews are reduced to a minimum. . . . While the Law is binding on Jews, Eleazar (the priest) emphasizes that the Law's intent is compatible with the finest in Gentile ethics and wisdom. . . . The wisdom of the Jewish sages provides the theoretical undergirding for the view of God as universal sovereign and guide and mover of Gentile kings. In this portrait we see the assertion and probably the plea that Greeks can be right and good and beneficent and that the influence and acts of God make it possible for Jews to coexist and interact with them to the mutual benefit of both.[16]

Alongside this letter and its attempt to bring Hellenization and Judaism into harmony, one finds the Sybillene Oracles. These oracles are a collection of books preserving a massive oracular literature. In particular, several of the oracles date to the second and first centuries B.C.E. Book 3 seems to have been written for a purpose similar to that of the *Letter of Aristeas*. The text shows a harmonious acceptance of the pagan or non-Jewish world and may have been written for these forums. The text contains a great many prophetic type caveats regarding the need for the Greek world to repent, give up its hedonistic ways, and return to God; the real God. The disapprobation of pagan idolatry and immorality are counterpoised against the calls for pagans to repent in order to escape divine condemnation. In atoning, they would be entitled to the divine blessing bestowed by the one true God, and hence be in line with a morality accepted by the texts' authors.

> The author does not call for the wholesale surrender of the Hellenistic way of life, and as we have seen, his messianic hope reflects an irenic attitude toward the ruling house of Egypt. From this cross-cultural stance the author envisions the time when Jews and Gentiles may be joined in the worship of the one God, the universal creator.[17]

B. PHILO JUDEAUS -- BIOGRAPHICALLY SPEAKING

It is into a world already full of documentary calls to unite the Jewish and Greek worlds that Philo entered. Philo lived in Alexandria during the turn of the millennium. His dates approximate from 20 BCE to 50 CE. His dates are known by virtue of his writings. Philo's work *On the Embassy to Gaius*, for example, chronicles his journey to the court of Gaius Calligula seeking an audience with the Roman Emperor. The purpose of the journey was to seek a renouncement of an edict Calligula made regarding the posting of Statues of himself in all places of worship. As this new law was fulfilled in Alexandria, a near civil war broke out. Massive pogroms against the Jews followed this edict, threatening the safety and sanctity of the Alexandrian Jewish community. This journey, which proved to be successful, occurred in or about 40 CE. Josephus corroborates this dating. In discussing this event, Philo refers to himself as an old man.[18]

Philo came from a wealthy family, and according to Photius and Eusebius, was of priestly rank.[19] Philo's brother, Alexander, became a confidante of the Emperors of Rome.[20] Alexander's son, a hopeless apostate, was appointed Roman Procurator in Palestine, and later, Prefect of Egypt, when Nero became Emperor. Wealth was not an easily attained commodity in Alexandria. For this family to have attained its level of influence and wealth (Alexander donated the gold and silver which covered the gates of The Temple in Jerusalem), would have taken several generations. In discussing Philo's lasting effect through the generations, it is intersting to note that although later legend ascribes to Philo a noble wife, he makes no mention of a wife or of children, nor any family of his own.[21] We have no record whether or not his line even continued to the next generation.

When one considers this great family wealth and Philo's leadership of the entourage to Gaius Calligula, it is evident that Philo was a leader in his community. Goodenough refers to him as a "natural political leader of Alexandrian Jews."[22] Goodenough also hypothesizes that Jewish courts existed in Alexandria, and that these courts even had the authority to decree the death penalty[23] Although this theory is generally rejected,[24] Philo lends credibility to the argument in his lamentation that political affairs have stolen him from his study.

> There was once a time when, devoting my leisure to philosophy and to the contemplation of the world and the things in it, I reaped the fruit of excellent, and desirable, and blessed intellectual feelings, being always living among the divine oracles and doctrines, on which I fed insatiably, to my great delight, never entertaining any low or groveling thoughts . . . borne aloft by a certain inspiration of the soul, and to dwell in the regions of the sun and moon, and to associate with the whole heaven, and the whole universal world. . . . Nevertheless, the most grievous of all evils was lying in wait for me, . . . dragging me after it by force until it had taken me and thrown me into the vast sea of the cares of public politics, in which I am still tossed and without being able to keep myself swimming at the top.[25]

Following up on this lament, Goodenough attributes a dual life style to Philo which would resemble that of other Jewish statesmen.

> Just what offices he held, . . . there is no way to discover, though I suspect from his great interest in law that his primary duty was legal administration of the Jews under imperial supervision. But that is only a guess. Yet, lost as is his actual political career, I can read all of his writings only as I read the writings of Blackstone and Disraeli, who likewise solaced themselves from political cares by writing and study. [26]

There being no evidence to believe that Jewish schools existed in the diaspora during his era, and considering the wealth of his family, it may safely be presumed that Philo received his formal education in Greek schools or through tutors. It was there that he most likely gained an introduction to Plato and the Stoics, though he mentions his

teachers only rarely and without detail. He was well versed in classical literature and philosophy, although in all his voluminous works, he does not refer to predated or concurrent Greco-Jewish writing. Many scholars have connected Philo's writings to the synagogue worship service. They describe his writings as sermons delivered to Jews and apostate Jews.[27] For either of these to be wholly true would be hard to accept, for his works are lengthy and not written for the common ear.

> "If he was ever invited to expound Scripture in the Alexandrian synagogue, one guesses that he bored the congregation with his erudition and wordiness quite as much as he enlightened it. Ordinary Jews would scarcely have understood his repeated citations of abstruse philosophy; if, as is sometimes thought, some of his treatises were synagogue sermons, he must have severely tried the patience of his audience.[28]

Philo attended the theater and sporting events, was well versed in the ways of the gymnasia, and was well informed as to the professional trades of his day. Of particular interest is his command of the science of navigation. He refers to God often as the pilot or navigator, as he describes both creation and God's interaction with the world.[29] From the outset of his allegories, he draws on his vast command of literature in the designing of his philosophical exegesis. While all of this erudition gives evidence of his wealthy financial background, it also helps to provide an explanation for the honor given him as a great philosopher in his day.

The remaining question for our introduction relates to Alexandrian "Jewishness," and Philo's place in whatever that "Jewishness" might be. Were the Jews of Alexandria Jewish or were they Greek? This question is not easily answered, given that neither term "Greek" nor "Jewish" really has any one definition, and most Jews of the Modern Orthodox world, would refuse to admit that they could be anything but mutually exclusive. Regardless of this problem, scholars and theologians have gone to great pains in devoting

entire texts to resolving this question in a definitive manner. What has been definitively resolved is that the status of Philo's Jewishness has depended in part, on the agenda which the author-scholar has brought to the study. I offer as a confession, that this thesis has an agenda. My agenda is to prove Philo, and Alexandria, to be as strongly within or mutant to the Jewish tradition of that era, as was the Pharisaic movement.

The focus on Philo is due to the sad reality that we do not have any extensive Biblical commentary from another Jewish author from the region and era. The apocryphal work *The Wisdom of Solomon* dates to this period and this region. Presumably its author was acquainted with Philo, or at least with the same Judaism of which Philo writes. Although the book bases its style and format on the "wisdom" books of the Bible, it is not, in and of itself, a commentary on how the Biblical text was viewed and used by the Jews of the era. *The Wisdom of Solomon*, is more likely, a Jewish leader's attempt to reclaim the Jewish skeptics who have forsaken their heritage or else an attempt to synthesize the literal lessons of the Bible to its simplest components..

Can Philo's words be considered representative of the religiosity of the Alexandrian Jewish Community? If we had an extensive library to compare his work to, the issue would be simple to resolve. What we do have, aside from Philo, is a smattering of references in Josephus and the developmental history of the Alexandrian Jewish community. Even with the limited resources, I feel it safe to presume that Philo's work represents the prevailing theological concerns of Jewish Alexandria.

The issue for us to resolve now is a determination of the nature of those concerns and the methodology employed in the search of truth based on this theology. Is Alexandrian Judaism Jewish? In making this transition, one must note the tremendous position Alexandria maintained as being the great melting pot of cultures. The greatest

library of the ancient world existed there, and the scientists of the ages flocked to study there. From the evidence which still exists, it seems as though the arts, especially painting, flourished there, as well. It is alleged that it was in Alexandria that

> Platonism changed into Neo-Platonism, and that the religions of the world were fused and given depth as philosophic ideas were read into the cult practices of the settlers' various rites and myths. . . . Jews, who inhabited Alexandria by the hundreds of thousands, could no more be unaffected by such creativity than could Jews in nineteenth-century Germany or twentieth-century America.[30]

C. PHILO, PLATO, AND . . . JEWISH TOO?

All too easy would be my task, were I to answer the above question affirmatively, and then move directly into Chapter III. In doing so, I would avoid the need to discuss the nature of Philo's Judaism and the impact of Greek culture on it. I would be able to demonstrate solely through selected textual examples, the extent to which a hard and fast answer to the above question could be formulated. In doing so, however, I would ignore the entirety of the issue which has divided Philonic scholars throughout the ages. In reading the secondary texts that have been available, I have found myself awed by the prejudice with which most writers approach the text. One of the most prevalent and problematic errors employed in philosophic or theologic historical scholarship is the failure to view the subject matter in its own time. In deciding the degree to which Philo was or was not true to Jewish values, one must compare his writings and philosophy to that of the Judaism which existed at the time he was alive, and only then, look further forward or back in time. The error I have most seen particular to the study of Philo, is the unwillingness of many scholars to avoid judging Philo by the existent Palestinian community during his day, claiming the cult in Palestine to be ***the*** authentic Judaism.

The problem with offering a definitive statement on the matter is that there was no one Judaism which was normative at the time. To argue that Halakhic - Rabbinic Judaism was the norm by which Philo is measured is wrong, because, as Josephus surmised (infra), the Pharisees had not yet solidified their claim on the right to determine Jewish Law or dogma. At the time Philo lived, Alexandrian Judaism was no more a "fringe" Judaism than was Pharisaism. It shared with Pharisaism a status of being a coinciding co-existent mutation of what had been known at the time as Judaism in Palestine. Prior to the Maccabean times, the temple had been the focal point of Jewish Life. The Temple cult was run and administered directly by the High Priest. With the onset of the Maccabean revolt, this new class of Pharisees came to power and took over the Temple ritual and control of daily Jewish life.

Many scholars have argued, irrespective of the legitimacy of Rabbinic Judaism, that Philo's Judaism did not even resemble that of the intent of the Pentateuch. He introduced Greek philosophy into the meaning of the text seemingly violating the basic methodology intended by the author of the Pentateuch. Dr. Sandmel believed Philo went too far.

> Philo's basic religious ideas are Jewish, his intuitions Jewish, and his loyalties Jewish, but his explanations of ideas, intuitions, and devotions are invariably Greek. Scripture has its array of Prophets, and Philo "believes" in prophecy; when Philo explains what prophecy is and how it works, his exposition comes from Plato.[31]

Rabbi Sternberger was even less convinced of Philo's Jewish ties.

> Indeed, the degree to which [Philo's "Exposition of the Law"] is Greek is so great that only one conclusion seems possible -- namely that Philo was completely Hellenized. It is impossible for Philo to visualize the setting of his Bible except in terms of the Greek surroundings of Alexandria. It is impossible for him to envisage social and political institutions, indeed, even the ordinary social amenities, except in Greek terms.[32]

Numenius, a contemporary of Philo's wrote, "either Philo platonizes or Plato philonizes."[33]

For Philo, God is the soul of the Universe, the universal intellect from which all else flows, but is unknowable to man. Likewise God cannot be named, for our language is not capable of acknowledging all of the aspects of God. Maimonides echoed Philo centuries later,[34] in determining that the only way to describe God was in negatives. "God is not alone."[35] God does however have one aspect which man can attain to know. This is called *Logos*. It is in this concept of Logos that Philo draws most heavily on his Platonic background. The Logos has been a central focus for much modern era mystical theology. The Logos, provided Christianity with its third party for the trinity. The Logos has been misinterpreted by many as being God or the detached but related spirit of God. Rather, the concept of Logos is simple. For Philo, the Logos is the totality of forms, God's chief power, the instrument of creation. Logos is the divine intellect, the aspect of God that interacts with our world..

Plato's universe was divided into two. There was the world of objects and the world of forms or essence. The world of objects was transitory but the world of essence was eternal. Once the concept of a table has been designed, the concept is eternal, even if the prototype table ends up being destroyed. For Philo, there were two worlds based on the same premise, but inclusive of God as the prime being.

Philo wrote of the sensible world (also called the World of Opinion) and the intelligible world (World of Reality). The former world is the more base of the two and is the world in which we live. The latter world is the one we aspire to. Only in reaching into it are we able to begin on the road toward knowing truth. Only through a pure and devout lifestyle may one merit access into the World of Reality. Logos is that aspect of God

which dwells in between the World of Reality and the World of Opinion, and it is only this direct knowledge of God which humanity can attain.

Philo sets the tone for his Biblical exegesis in his initial dealings with creation. The Torah begins with creation so as to teach us the very most important lesson that the laws of creation are in harmony with those of nature. In honoring the words and teachings of the Pentateuch, one becomes "a loyal citizen of the world."

It is not merely enough to reach this stature, though. One must extend further, and reach that point where the sensible world meets the world of forma -- where man can meet God. Moses provides this paradigm. In the following chapter, I will look into the ways in which Moses fills this bill, in depth, but before one goes on, one probably should have a working definition of the nature of Moses' excellence. Philo did not have to look far for the paradigm upon which Moses' life is predicated. He went back to the roots of his education, to the teachings of Plato and took the Philosopher - King and made him the leader of Israel:

> The just man does not allow the several elements in his soul to usurp one another's functions; he is indeed one who sets his house in order, by self-mastery and discipline coming to be at peace with himself, and bringing into tune those three parts, like the terms in the proportion of a musical scale, the highest and the lowest notes and the mean between them, with all the immediate intervals. Only when he has linked these parts together in well-tempered harmony and has made himself one man instead of many, will he be ready to go about whatever he may have to do, whether it be making money and satisfying bodily wants, or business transactions, or the affairs of the state.[36] . . .the philosopher, the wisdom-lover, desires wisdom so, not merely parts but the whole . . . So, if anyone makes a fuss about his studies, especially one who is young and does not know what is good or what is not, we shall say that he is no lover of learning and no philosopher. . . . But if anyone has a good appetite for study, if he is ready to taste every dish, and tackles learning gladly and never can have enough, we justly call him a philosopher.[37]

In particular, Plato hands Philo a select criteria by which a man's worth can be measured. The Philosopher - King must exhibit equal profiency in all matters brought before him.

> He was called the god and king of the whole nation, and is said to have entered into the darkness where God was; into the invisible and shapeless and incorporeal world; the essence which is the model of all existing things, where he beheld things invisible to mortal nature; for, having brought himself and his own life into the middle, as an excellently wrought picture, he established himself as a most beautiful and Godlike work, to be a model for all those who were inclined to imitate him[38] . . .The absolutely perfect governor ought to be four things, royal power, the legislative disposition, and the priesthood, and the prophetic office (in order that by his legislative power he may command such things as are right to be done, and forbid such things as are not proper to be done, and that by his priesthood he may arrange not only all human but likewise all divine things; and that by his prophetic office, he may predict those things which cannot be comprehended by reason).[39]

Despite the use of Greek philosophy in his exegesis,Philo holds a very Jewish basic premise that one must be loyal to Torah to be righteous. It was not the philosophy that was sacred to Philo, but the Torah.. There is nothing fringe about this Jewish principle. In fact, in many ways, the application of allegory as a method of interpretation renders a result very similar to the middot of the Rabbinic schools.

Within the tradition of the twofold law, there exists the notion of another world of mystique which only those who are truly righteous may enter and return from unscathed.[40] Philo also asserts that following the laws of Torah is essential to salvation. Through the use of allegory, he claims that only in understanding the reason behind the performance of Mitzvot can one transcend the normal world and seek real truth. Certainly the concept of two worlds (one literal and one interpretive) is no more alien to the Pentateuch than the Rabbinic idea of a twofold law calling for an oral and a written Torah, and ressurection of the dead.

So what was Philo? He was a Jewish philosopher. He read Torah in light of the world he lived in. His ultimate methodology is no different from that of the early Rabbis, from the Kabbalists, Maimonides,or the Haskala Reformers. He is no different from the Ultra-Orthodox Rabbi in Israel who declared that the turkey was not kosher in Israel because the Torah required that it be indigenous to the land where it is eaten. Philo took an ambiguous text which he knew to have been written by God, and knew that he was duty bound to unlock the secrets which God hid inside it. The most honored method of study in his world was that of the Philosopher. Philo used what was, in his world, the highest form of thought to approach God's text.

The difficulty scholars have faced in accepting Philo as a normative Jew is complicated by his surroundings. Not only was he educated in a Platonic world, but the text he used for his Bible is a Greek text. Central to the veracity of Philo's works is the issue of the validity of the *Letter of Aristeas*. For Philo, the Septuagint was exactly the same document as the original Hebrew Torah. The letter, to Philo was historical. Subsequently, the letter has become a focal point for the Christian world who's testament is based on the Septuagint. For the Jewish community the miracle of the translation is no less valid than the episodes in the Pentateuch wherein God caused the unnatural bouts of leprosy to Miriam, or the theophany at Sinai to occur. The Seventy-two scholars sat in the place of Moses while God made sure the text was letter perfect.

Unfortunately, the real world presents us complications which may prevent us from accepting this story, factual or not, as being wholly true. Even if the events described in the letter happened just as they were written, there are barriers which even an exact translation cannot overcome. If Dr. Edward Goldman said it once, he preached it one thousand times, "Just because you can translate a text does not mean you understand it."[41]

Even where there are equivalent words between two languages, the intonations and meanings of those words may be wholly different. The differing cultures may mandate that the meanings be at opposite ends of the spectrum. God to the Palestinian world is the entity of emotion to whom placating sacrifices are to be made, and who's love and wrath are meted out according to very anthropomorphic standards. The God of the Neo-Platonized Hellenistic world could not be conceived of thusly. The Greek God was a detached source of creation emanating ideas allowing for the random formation of forms; the detached Creator God who is unknowable to the creation.

In short, the result of Philo's work is on a different level from that of the Rabbis, though not even all of the Rabbis. Maimonides and Philo preach along much the same lines. Philo's methodology is no more foreign than is gematria or either Rabbi Akiva's or Rabbi Ishmael's middot. To say that Philo was divergent, or that the Alexandrians represented a fringe Judaism, is not only not fair, but inappropriate. After all

> כי המצוה הזות אשר אנכי מצוך היום לא־נפלאת הוא ממך
> ולא־רחקה הוא: לא בשמים הוא . . . ולא־מעבר לים הוא: . . .
> כי־קרוב אליך הדבר מאד בפיך ובלבבך לעשתו:[42]

D. PHILO . . . ALLEGORICALLY SPEAKING.

The predominant method of Philo's expositions is the use of the allegory. More important are the allegorical lessons drawn from the Biblical stories than are the historicity or factual accurateness. Not every comment on text takes an allegorical form for Philo, although almost all of his amplifications of text take this form. Quite simply, by allegory, I mean the use of the text to say something different than it actually says. Philo utilizes this interpretive tactic to meet and overcome the difficulties found in the ambiguous text. By finding a meaning transcendant of the actual text's literary story, without either amending

or perverting the text, one may stay bound to a troublesome text and still profess its holiness. Allegory is not an invention of Philo's. He inherited it from his Stoic training. In fact, there is evidence that Philo did not even create all of the allegory which he uses. Some of the material on Scripture he claims to have heard from the "Natural Philosophers."[43] The Stoics used it in deciphering the Greek myths. Though the myths held no religious attraction for Philo, he was moved by the basic Stoic tennet that before one could be able to see the allegory in a text, one had to prepare oneself. The study of the "encyclica" was the method of preparation. The "encyclica" were the basic studies of "mathematics, rhetoric, or music -- the forerunners of our liberal arts."[44] Only after "graduating" from the encyclical studies could one seek truth through philosophy and allegorical studies.

Philo's allegory works on two levels. There are the allegories which he applies to the individual textual passages. For these Jews, the laws have a deeper meaning. Allegorically speaking, pork is the sweetest of meats. Abstaining from pork is a larger lesson in self control. Adam represents the intellect; while Eve represents the sensual side of mankind. Together, each of these individual allegories fits into a larger picture, an overriding allegory in which the text of the Pentateuch becomes the natural law which every man is bound and which is experiential for all mankind. To restate, the allegory of Philo is a unified body. The microcosmic allegories together form a single microcosmic allegory -- the "grand allegory." The study of the text and the participation in the allegory acts as a road map, allowing for one to embark on this journey of the soul towards the goal of spiritual perfection. The study of Philo's allegorical use of the text is to follow. I will target my study to the use of Moses and God. My methodology will be such that I will compare the Torah's depiction of these figures as the text appears, and then as viewed by

the Palestinian tradition against the manner in which the Alexandrian community, through Philo, understood these figures. The purpose of using this method will be to show that both the Pharisaic and Alexandrian traditions are mutations that co-existed and co-exploded. Why one mutation lasted while one stepped back will also be explored. Following the textual comparisons, I will effect a comparison between the method of Philo and the tradition of Modern Reform Judaism.

> Philo was the first of the great "reconcilers" of Judaism with a foreign culture. He . . . felt that [he] was reconciling [his] faith with the "ultimate truth." Today, the "ultimate truth" by which Philo swore sounds to us fantastic and unimportant. "ultimate truths" have a sad way of becoming obsolete. But what is permanently attractive about Philo is that he was a man in whom burned the divine fire. He was an exalted spirit whose thoughts and deeds moved on a lofty ethical plane, an inspired poet and mystic whose wisdom, taken altogether, was more profound than that of the philosophers he admired.a wisdom of the inner spirit that was deeper than he himself realized.[45]

What now follows is an examination of the character roles of Moses and God, as viewed through both the eyes of the early Rabbis in Palestine, the later tradition, and Philo's allegory. In reading the following chapters one should take note that there will be some descriptions and events which will seem to be shared by Philo and the Rabbis. Most scholars push this happening aside as pure coincidence, and convincingly say that Philo did not use the rabbis as his source material, nor did they influence him. As I stated earlier, the preoccupation evinced by this statement, does an injustice to both the Rabbinic tradition and to Philo. Much of the coinciding themes are pure happenstance. One can find in the Midrash, as early as the Talmud, a growing theme of interpretation which closely resembles the teaching of Philo. The Zohar itself, could almost come from the pen of Philo. Maimonides echoes the same theology and concept of the Divine essence of which

Philo writes, deviating only at the poimt of logos. Are the above conclusions the same because Philo was the source? Perhaps all authors shared a common grounding in Hellenistic Philosophy, leading them to the same answers independently? Certainly to bring this study to a conclusion, one will have to make this argument, and in the final chapter of this thesis, I intend to do so. At this point, what is noteworthy, though, is the overriding intent with which commentaries were written. Both the communities of Palestine and Alexandria witnessed a Judaism develop which was tied to the "Book." Scripture became the source of truth, and upon the ability to accurately decode the "Book," balanced the future of Judaism. After presenting the roles of God and Moses in the Pentateuch (as viewed by the parties at issue), I will bring this thesis to a conclusion analyzing alongside the above discussion, the basis for the differing methodologies and the reason for the pseudo-demise of the Alexandrian Jewish method. In doing so, I hope to realize the goal of proving that the mutation which brought about the Pharisaic tradition was no different than that which occurred in Alexandria, allowing for a Philo to have written what he did. The mutations were simultaneous, and merged into one, as the Palestinian tradition swallowed elements of the Platonic based Judaism espoused by Philo, only to surface again in the Midrash and in Saadia, Maimonides, and Reform Judaism.

END NOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO

1. Josephus Against Apion 11. 4 and Antiquities 9. 5, 2.

2. Philo On the Embassy to Gaius 132.

3. S. Krauss, *Synagogale Altertumer*, (as translated) p.261 ff. (see also Babylonian Talmud, *Sukkot* 51b).

4. *B. Sukkot* 51b.

5. During the Syrian persecutions which led up to the Hasmonean revolt, Onias IV, the son of the last legitimate High Preist in Jerusalem, fled to Alexandria after his father had been assassinated. He was well received by King Philometor, since Onias was the rightful successor to the priestship. Philometer probably felt sure that order would be restored in Jerusalem, and by sticking with the legitimate house, he could count on Israel's favor in aiding him in his military quests. Onias actually became a general for Philometor, and ethnark (prince) of the Jews. His support including the support of the Jews who rallied around Onias, allowed for Philometor to be succeful in his quests.

6. Philo *Flaccus* 43.

7. S.W. Baron, "Population," Encyclopedia Judaica volume XIII, p.870-71; and Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria, p. 7.

8. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria, pp.8 and 9.

9. Philo *Flaccus* 74 (see also *Contra Ap.* II:5.

10. Ralph Marcus, Great Ages & Ideas of the Jewish People p. 116.

11. ibid.

12. Ben Sirach's grandson admits that no translation can match the original, but that a good translator will make every effort to be as true as possible to the orignal text.

13. The tradition refers to the rabbis as the Amoraim (the speakers), the Tannaim (the teachers), the rishonim (the early ones), the achronim (the later ones), the acharon ha achronim (the ones afte rthe later ones). The name sapply to those who spoke with the most authority followed by those who taught on what the first one's said, etc.

14. Philo On the Life of Moses II 37-40.

15. ibid., 41.

16. Nickelsburg, George W. E., Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1981), page 168.

17. ibid., page 165.

18. Philo, On the Embassy to Gaius 182.

19. Photius *Cod.* 108 and Eusebius Ecclesiastical History 2. 4.

20. Sternberger, Hellenization in Philo Judaeus as Determined by Literary References in his *Exposition of the Law*, page18.

21. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction, page 13.

22. Erwin Goodenough, An Introduction to Philo Judaeus, (New Haven: Yale Press, 1940) page 3.

23. Erwin Goodenough, The Jurisprudence of the Jewish Courts in Egypt, (New Haven: Yale Press, 1929)

24. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction, page 11.

25. Philo The Special Laws III 1-3.

26. Erwin Goodenough, The Jurisprudence of the Jewish Courts in Egypt, pages 79-80.

27. "Philo, Judaeus," Encyclopedia Judaica volume XIII, p.409 et. seq.

28. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction, page 13 (as to apostasy, see page 14).

29. Covered at length in Sternberger, Hellenization in Philo Judaeus as Determined by Literary References in his *Exposition of the Law*, pages 35-39.

30. Goodenough, "Philo of Alexandria," p. 103.

31. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction, page 15.

32. Sternberger, Hellenization in Philo Judaeus as Determined by Literary References in his *Exposition of the Law*, page 29.

33. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction, page 4.

34. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Knowledge, Basic Principles 1:9 and Commentary to *Mishnah, Avot*, Eight Chapters VIII.

35. Philo Allegories of Sacred Laws II, 1.

36. Plato Republic 443-44.

37. ibid. 474B

38. Philo On the Life of Moses I 158.

39. Philo On the Life of Moses II 187.

40. *Haggigah* 11b - 15a. The story is taught that four men entered Paradise. That is, they engaged in experimentation with the esoteric mysteries, seeking to enter the esoteric world where only the purest seeker of truth may survive. The four were Ben Azzai, Ban Zoma, Elisha Ben Abuyah and Akiba. It was Akiba who warned the others against selfishness or sensual desire as they traversed there. Ben Azzai looked at the mysteries too long and he died; Ben Zoma lost his mind; Elisha became a heretic. Rabbi Akiba was the only one of the four who entered in peace and came out of the experience in peace.

41. Midrash I, academic year 1991-92.

42. Deuteronomy 30:11 et.seq.

43. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction, page 23.

44. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction, page 20.

45. Goldberg, Israel and Samson Benderly, Outline of Jewish Knowledge volume 3 of 12 (New York: Bureau of Jewish Education 1931) page 558.

CHAPTER III

MOSHE -- MOSHE RABBEINU -- MOSHE HAMELECH

"WHO IS THIS MOSES?"[1]

What an enigma! Eighty percent of the Torah is about a figure named Moses and the leadership he exhibits. Moses is the chief prophet of God. Moses is the builder of the tabernacle, the tribal leader, and the paradigmatic Rabbi. What is more, . . . Moses has seen God and is the focus of all study of the Scripture. The issue to be debated is not whether he was important, but why he was. In reaching a conclusion for this argument, one will need to explore who Moses was and what his role was in the respective sources. Additionally, one will need to argue from political and geographical context. What was happening in Alexandria? What was happening in Palestine? The purpose of asking such a question, is itself in need of explanation.

By its own language, the Torah claims immutabilty. Those who live strictly by its tenets affirm this immutability. The purpose of this thesis is to show how such a document, with such an affirmation, could have been the basis for so many different systems of Judaism.

The purpose is to study how each could claim its reading of Torah to be that one immutable message given to Moses. These changes have both been overt and passive. In some cases, the mutations have all been accepted by followers as though representative of the original text. Others have created chasms deep enough to splinter Israel. One could take this study could cross Jewish boundaries and, at some level speak to the schism that separates Judaism from Christianity (which is also based on a mutation of this immutable document) and Islam (which is based on a tangential reading and understanding, itself an

early mutation of the text). My interest here, though, is only in studying the effect of this mutational pattern on the world within Judaism.

What are the respective points of views? Well, the first changes in Torah are attributable to the changing authorities controlling the cult and religious activity of the people of Israel. Dr. Ellis Rivkin eruditely expounds on this phenomenon in his works, *The Shaping of Jewish History* and *The Hidden Revolution.* This thesis presumes his hypotheses regarding the development of the Torah to be true. For our purposes, these previous mutations within Judaism can be summarized as first, a shift from Prophetic absolutism to a system in which the prophet and the priestly class shared authority. This probably took place during the reign of King Josiah (ca. 621 B.C.E.). The next mutation ended the power sharing arrangement, in favor of resting absolute authority in the High Priest Zadok. Zadok's followers produced evidence of a genealogy that traces his roots back to Aaron, the brother of Moses. With this mutation, the Aaronides superimpose into the Torah the anointment of Aaron as high priest, the structure of the tabernacle (as opposed to the tent of Meeting) and the ritual of the Temple cult. This mutation is tied to the rebuilding of the Temple upon the return of the Israelites who had been in exile in Persia. The last mutation being discussed here is the one at issue. The perversion of the Temple Cult by an ascension of a High Priest who could not trace a direct lineage to Aaron through the now established Biblical text, caused the rise of a number of sects within Judaism.

Most affected by the mutations that occurred within the biblical Jewish practice was the Palestinian community. Jews living in Palestine faced major changes to both their daily lifestyles and the basics of their faith systems. One day one brings his/her required offerings to the Temple, to be burned by a legitimate High Priest. The next day, the

system folds since the priest is no longer legitimate. This trauma would certainly cause a population to rebel and to seek new leaders offering a new and accessible truth.

The rise of the Pharisees provided the masses with their response. The Pharisees presented the masses with a Torah no longer focusing on a Temple cult administered by the elite, rather on one in which the truth was simple and accessible. The focus of the Pharisaic Torah was the conduct of the person. Study became a way of fulfilling religious obligations. The Temple cult, which had been the focal point of religious life in Israel, was now a matter secondary to the religion. How did people cope with such an upheaval? They developed a new way to engage the Torah that took as figurative and metaphoric some matters that had before been literal. To say that they allegorized would be going too far, but a new body of texts developed which explained what the Torah really meant when it gave commands that became untenable. This new law required that Torah be turned over and over[2] until the truths rolled out from its bowels.

This new methodology was not without rules; in fact, the rules, the *middot*, were very strict. One could only perform exegesis along certain lines and only specific interpretive methods were acceptable. To violate the method, invalidated the conclusion. Of course, there was not a uniform agreement as to this method, and varying schools used varying rules. The standards were there, though, and within the individual houses of study (and then spread to the larger population), they were strictly enforced. The schools of Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Akiba led this charge and remain the exegetical standards to the present. In these houses of study, the Rabbis did all they could to gloss over the defects ascribed to Moses.[3] The Rabbis used the text to answer detractors from or heretics of their faith system and its ritual. Their politics and method in the promulgation of an oral law (much of which supersedes the written text), and the polemic form of exegesis they

employed became the standard for the rabbis, existing to this day as the accepted method of Biblical exegesis.

Their agenda seems geared toward making Moses into a figure with a greater impact on the world than Jesus, while also stressing that he was no more than a man. The rabbis stressed that, as a man, Moses did what Jesus could not. Moses was a lawgiver who saved an entire world from destruction at the wrath of God. Jesus could not even save himself.[4] This polemic caused the rabbis to take the already embellished life of the Biblical hero, and embellish it more.

Relatively unaffected by this mutation was the Alexandrian community. The Jews in Alexandria were living in the midst of a cosmopolitan area in which they were equal in entitlement to the rest of the community, but hardly equal in numbers. The stresses that governed the religious life of an Alexandrian Jew were along the lines of maintaining Jewishness in a non-Jewish world. Perhaps there was a generic move to assimilate Judaism into the Hellenistic surroundings. Perhaps the effort was the exact reverse of the above, instead to merge Hellenistic philosophy into Judaism. In either event the result was the same. The Temple cult was foreign to their way of life and they lived a mutated Judaism.

The Jews of Alexandria certainly knew of the Temple in Jerusalem. However, when the priesthood changed hands it was of no consequence to this community. The Temple still stood and the ritual continued -- far far away. The Judaism of Alexandrians was untainted by the struggle. As such, as the Pharisees began to promulgate their new laws, and new methods of reading Torah, it too was a matter far away from the Alexandrian world. There are some who say that Philo's exposition on Moses, and therefore the origin of the law, was not intended for a Jewish audience. Philo was not involved in such a struggle as missionization. Philo was a universalist who maintained

from the onset that the Mosaic laws were there for all people. There really exists no evidence to support that any overt conversionary effort was on going in Alexandria. One did not have to convert to accept such laws. Philo's exegesis was pure and non-apologetic. He too, embellished the life of the law giver, but as a paradigm for all humanity to strive to emulate, not as an apology aimed at combating the rise of Christianity. Goodenough postulated that "on the Life of Moses was written for the non-Jewish community as an attempt at conversion."[5] Professor Sandmel argues that no evidence exists to even suspect that the non-Jewish community engaged in reading the Jewish texts or even the Septuagint itself.[6] This opinion may be a little too extreme. Philo documents that non-Jews participated in the festival of Pharos, celebrating the translation of the Pentateuch into Greek.

> [E]ven to this very day, there is every year a solemn assembly held and a festival celebrated in the island of Pharos, to which not only the Jews but a great number of persons of other nations sail across, reverencing the place in which the first light of interpretation shone forth, and thanking God for that ancient piece of beneficence which was always young and fresh.[7]

There is little logical reason to participate in a festival for something with which one has no involvement or exposure. That non Jews participated in the festival is evidence that they had some reason to appreciate the Septuagint and likely what flowed from it. In our own world, scholarship and interest cross religious lines. In seeking the varied messages that one may extract from Scripture, we study the variety of commentaries that exist, even if we remain focused on those of our own sages. Most likely, this phenomenon is not unique to our own generations. Some say that Philo spoke to apostate Jews with his allegory. More likely, he spoke to non-Jews, apostate Jews, and practicing Jews alike. There is really no evidence throughout the corpus of his texts that suggest he targeted a specific group within or outside the Jewish community. His allegory is there for all to read

and gain benefit. Probably, though, it was the Jewish community, or those interested in it that partook of this opportunity.

Even as to the use of Moses, himself, Philo diverges from the Palestinian community. For the Pharisees, Moses was "Chief Prophet" and lawgiver, but more tribal leader than king. His job was controlling a rabble. Philo saw Moses as the Philosopher - King, in charge of setting the world in order. Moses is the paradigm for all leaders whose reign is marked by wisdom over brawn. For Philo, Moses' was the type of reign that Marcus Aurelieus attempted to employ. Plato assessed that the Philosopher King was the only one fit to rule a nation.

> "The philosophers must become kings in our cities," I said, or those who are now called kings and potentates must learn to seek wisdom like true and genuine philosophers, and so political power and intellectual wisdom will be joined in one; and the crowds of natures who now pursue one or the other separately must now be excluded.[8]

It is this Rulership based on a wisdom model of kingship that Aristotle tried to accomplish for students in his own day. For Philo, Moses' life history and lifestyle was the essence of perfection. It was this excellence based on an understanding of Torah that may have been responsible for his exalted status. It was this excellence that would have required him, via Philo, to address the existence of an oral law had he known of one. It is this same excellence and perfection that would have required a Philonic Moses to do all that was known to honor God. In this respect, we may presume that Philo was no greater a mutation from what was, than was the then current system in Palestine.

Jews of the Modern Orthodoxy will insist that Philo and the Alexandrian community possessed an oral law given from Moses. This is an argument they must make, or their religious world is threatened by invalidation. The problem, though, is that such a law was never referred to in Alexandria. The oral law, as the Pharisaic code has become

known, was insular to Palestine at the time and was, itself, a change from the Temple cult that had functioned for several hundred years prior. This is the scenario that gives us the divergence of readings and interpretations -- mutations -- of the immutable text of Scripture. Each community took a text, and without changing it, for it is unchangeable textually at this point, and read it in light of its existent world. One turns to Torah to get answers on how to live in the world. Since the world experiences of the varying communities were extremely diverse, so, then, must be the messages received. The Priests had performed the ritual as literally prescribed in the text possessed at the time. The Rabbis read the text as an alternative authority base from the now illegitimate priesthood. Philo and the Alexandrians read it in light of the manner in which they were trained to speak of divinity.

The starting places of Philo (allegorical proof of goodness and spirituality) and the rabbis (proof of the historicity of the Bible and its superiority over the misreading of Christianity or other sectarianism) certainly seem divergent. Both systems claimed to be the authentic Judaism, yet both were mutational from the Torah based Temple centric Judaism. As we look at textual comparisons, though, we must ask whether they had access to each others material.

The rabbis, the authors of the vast volumes of Midrash and Halakha, are the direct heirs of the Pharisees. There is even some dispute about whether or not it is appropriate to call the Pharisees - "Rabbis." Assuming the Tannaitic dating of the *M'chiltah d'Rabbi Yishmael* to be accurate (middle to end of second century), many authorities quoted therein would be contemporaries of Philo and Josephus, or at worst one generation removed. I will bring this discussion again, at the conclusion of this thesis, but it is an important framework to keep in mind, as the texts are read comparatively. It is not

unreasonable to assume that even if they did not read each other's material, each school knew of the existence of the other school.

As introduced, the life of Moses is a great place to start in investigating the divergences. In particular, I will focus on a series of aspects of Moses' life. I will include a discussion of those aspects of his life (as given by the text of the Pentateuch) which allow for the varying conclusions about this man among men. Alongside my discussion of the attributes that Philo requires of a Philosopher - King, I will present the attributes that allow Moses to be exalted by Pharisaic Judaism as well. Starting with the text itself, one may readily see all these attributes as Moses appears and reacts to the various circumstances that he faces.

As I dive into the varying traditions, one should note that the only real difference between Philo and the rabbis is that the rabbis maintain that the Torah is wholly based in history. Philo maintains that the historicity of the characters and events described in the text is not as important as the lesson to be learned from the text. For example, the issue of whether Abraham was or was not a real man, as described in Genesis is not nearly as important as the lessons that are to be found in the allegorization of his life's story. When it comes to Moses, though, the Rabbis and Philo both agree that he was a real, living, flesh and blood human being. Of this belief neither may be shaken. Whichever tradition one looks into, Moses stands alone in his Biblical importance.

What is left to be accomplished in this chapter is an examination of episodic adventures in Moses' life through the eyes of the Rabbinic world and Philo, to show where and why they diverge. In representing the outcome of the Pharisaic development in Palestine, I will cite to examples of some of the various stages of midrashim, which expound the text of the Torah. Additionally, there is probably no better gauge of what the

accepted methodology of Biblical exegesis was in Palestine (contemporary with Philo) than Josephus. Although the later Rabbis would extricate him from having any standing in the Rabbinic tradition, he was writing his Antiquities at the time and in the same communities as the Pharisaic scribes. Therefore, Josephus is worth noting in many places where his exegesis causes him to diverge from the standard words and stories of Torah, sometimes echoing Philo, sometimes foreshadowing the later rabbis, and sometimes being wholly divergent from either.

I have geared the study to include the four attributes that Philo assures us that Moses had, along with a look at the preparatory years and endeavors that Moses experienced leading up to his assuming the role as leader. The story of Moses' youth is crucial to an understanding of the Moses of our given traditions. The Torah grants this era in Moses' life a scant few verses, though both the rabbis and Philo see it as vastly more important. It is in this story (or lack there of) that they may place the basic anchors by which to later measure Moses.

A: MOSES AS A YOUTH AND PRINCE[9]

Strictly according to the Torah, we know very little about the birth of Moses. At first introduction, we are not even given a name, until Pharaoh's daughter gives him one. In response to Pharaoh's decrees of infanticide, when a certain son of Levi and his wife had a son, they secreted him away. They created a basket and placed the male child in it and sent it down the river toward the palace. The boy's unnamed sister follows the basket down river toward the palace and Pharaoh's daughter drew it from the water. The boy's sister offers to find a Hebrew nursemaid for the child, and Pharaoh's daughter agrees that this would be best.[10] Unbeknownst to Pharaoh's daughter, Moses is placed in the care of his real mother to raise him. When he had grown, Moses was brought to Pharaoh's

daughter and she named him Moses. The Pentateuch says that it means "drawn from the water."[11]

From the ten verses (Exodus 2:1-10) which make up the entirety of Moses' youth in the Torah, both the Philo and the rabbis launch into elaborate "Historisms." In turning to Philo's take on Moses' youth, one can already tell two things. The first is that Dr. Sandmel was correct in assessing that if Philo's works were to be sermons, then they were over lengthy and boring. The second is that they are too lengthy because they offer a great deal more aggrandizement of the players.

Before Moses is born, Philo goes on for pages about how wonderful he and his family were.

> His father and mother were among the most excellent persons of their time, . . . and Moses is the seventh generation in succession from the original settler in the country who was the founder of the whole race of the Jews (Jacob).[12]

Philo introduces the story of Moses by exalting his parents. Never concerned with context, Philo leaps to bring us a fact from chapter 6 of Exodus, to let us know here Moses is wonderful. He is the seventh generation from Jacob.[13] Seven is a sacred number. Philo feels compelled to apply it in a discussion of Moses' life to explain his over all specialness.

After restating the Toraitic reason for Pharaoh's death decree, Philo launches into his commentary, taking a position almost directly opposed to that of Josephus. Philo first states that Moses was a beautiful baby, but then alleges that after the initial three months of life, Amram and Jocheved were discovered harboring a boy in violation of Pharaoh's edict. They decided to get rid of the baby before they caused their own deaths as well. Unlike the faith that Josephus attributes to Amram, Philo depicts the couple lamenting the terrible

thing that they had done. Better they should have let the child die at birth, rather than give it life, allow it to grow, and kill him by exposure, drowning or whatever torture the waters held in store for their son.

> [W]ith many tears [they] exposed their child on the banks of the river, and departed groaning and lamenting, pitying themselves for the necessity which had befallen upon them, and calling themselves the slayers and murderers of their child, and commiserating the infant to for his destruction, which they had hoped to avert.[14] . . . 'In our superfluous affection, . . . inflict[ed] upon him a heavier punishment, in order that he, having at last attained to a great capacity for feeling pleasures and pains, should at last perish in the perception of the most grievous evils.'[15]

For Philo, Moses is perfect, perfect from birth. A perfect Moses from birth, would have to possess wondrous attributes. He was a special baby. Within three months he had grasped the meaning of sensory perception.

Following this ordeal, Miriam (unnamed in the text) watches her brother, out of devotion to him, not via command of her mother. The scene switches to Pharaoh's daughter who laments because of the tragedy which has befallen her, that though married for many years, she has been unable to have a grandson for Pharaoh. Her father's lineage was in danger of being cutoff. She happened to be lamenting outdoors that day when she saw the basket in the bulrushes. Divine providence had brought her a son! She knew, however, that she could not bring the son to the palace immediately (after all -- she had shown no signs of pregnancy). As the baby's sister came out from hiding, she suggested that the child be weaned by a Hebrew woman. This solved the princess' problem and also fulfilled "the providence of God, thus making the original bringing up of the child to accord with the genuine course of nature."[16] For Philo, Moses' entrance into the Palace came only after the Princess placed pillows in her dress to appear pregnant.

Representative of the developing Pharisaic line of thought, Josephus adds insight to the story of Moses' birth. Whereas the Torah does not have Amram play an active part in the birth and preparation for journey, Josephus involves him intimately. It is a vision that comes to Amram after prayer that foretells Moses' renown to come. Were Pharaoh to learn that a male child had been kept alive, both parent and child would die.

> Amram feared he would be discovered, and . . . both he and his child should perish, and so he should make the promise of God of none effect, he determined rather to trust the safety and care of the child to God, than to depend on his own concealment, which he looked upon as a thing uncertain, . . .but he believed that God would some way for certain procure the safety of the child, in order to secure the truth of his own predictions.[17]

Josephus goes on to discuss how Pharaoh's daughter found the ark and had Moses brought out of it. Moses would not suckle to any Egyptian breast. Interestingly, Josephus also seems troubled by Miriam's appearance on the scene at Pharaoh's court (though untroubled by the Biblical author's failure to give her a name). "Miriam was by when this happened; not to appear to be there on purpose, but only as staying to see the child."[18] She then admonishes the princess to try a Hebrew breast since the Egyptian one's were not found to his liking. Moses was thus reunited with his mother. When he is later brought to the palace, the princess claimed that Moses was a gift from the Gods.[19] Predictably, according to both authors, Moses grows faster and more perfect than could have been expected. The Midrash echoes this notion of both Josephus and Philo. Moses is described as a five year old, having developed physically and mentally as though he were eleven.[20]

The text of the Pentateuch does not tell the reader what happened in the palace after Moses came to live there. Of course a commentator could not let this oversight go by. As such, Philo, Josephus and the rabbis create a youth for Moses. Of course the youth is a spectacular one.

For Philo, Moses was obviously educated by the finest of teachers and philosophers. His teachers came from near and far to teach him of the sciences, astronomy, mathematics and logic. He mastered Assyrian literature and hieroglyphics. He reached the point early on that he knew more than his teachers.

> [H]e surpassed all their knowledge, anticipating all their lessons by the excellent natural endowments of his own genius; so that everything in his case appeared to be a recollecting rather than a learning, while he himself also, without any teacher, comprehended by his instinctive genius many difficult subjects, for great abilities cut out for themselves many new roads to knowledge.[21]

Moses mastered self control. Philo's first comment here is a statement that only through this great knowledge can one really discipline himself. This is a statement which Philo holds dear to his own life style. He strives towards purity and finds his control based in his ability to have mastered the sciences.

> For these passions are the cause of all good and all evil; of good when they submit to the authority of dominant reason, and of evil when they break out of bounds and scorn all government and restraint.[22]

Dr. J.H. Hertz C.H. zt"l, reading Torah in the modern era added Philo's thoughts to his commentary understanding Philo to say that while gaining his wonderful education, he had the wisdom to temper his education, knowing what was really important and what was not. This is a fair reading of Philo, since Philo, though universalistic in his desires for mankind, was nationalistic in his characterizations.

> "When Moses returned to the palace, as the adopted child of the princess, the education of the boys highest rank, probably at Heliopolis -- the Oxford of Ancient Egypt. There he must have learnt many things which from a Hebrew point of view would be extremely undesirable."[23]

Philo added that even in his stature as heir to Pharaoh, an allegorical lesson of memory and gratitude are taught through him.

> [Moses] felt a desire for and admiration of the education of his kinsman and ancestors, considering all the things which were thought good among those who had adopted him as spurious, . . . even if they might have a brilliant appearance. . . . thought good (about) those things taught by his natural parents, even though they might be for a short time obscure.[24]

Philo goes further in this allegory written around Moses' youth and upbringing to make the point that Moses was a man unlike any other man ever known. The details are given the reader, as to how Moses achieved this status. Perhaps it is a standard which is achievable by all people.

> Everyone who was acquainted with him marvelled at him, being astonished as at a novel spectacle, and inquiring what kind of mind it was that was had its abode in his body, and that was set up in it like an image in a shrine; whether it was a human mind or a divine intellect, or something combined of the two. . . . He never provided his stomach with any luxuries beyond those necessary tributes which nature has appointed to be paid to it . . . He exhibited the doctrines of philosophy in all his daily actions, saying precisely what he thought, and performing such actions only as were consistent with his words, so as to exhibit a perfect harmony between his language and life.[25]

The Rabbis begin their discussions of Moses by attempting to fill in the gaps left vacant by the over simplified discussion of Moses' youth. In line with Joesphus' commentary, the rabbis say that Pharaoh's court recognized Moses'uniqueness from the very beginning. He had an aura, and the Egyptian priests warned Pharaoh of Moses impending revolt. There exists a Midrash which says that Moses was put to a test while still young, a test to determine whether he really wanted to overthrow Pharaoh. As an infant, he took the crown from Pharaoh and placed it on his own head. Pharaoh thought this was funny, the priests were horified. They convinced Pharaoh to set a bucket of gems and another bucket of hot coals before Moses. If he reached for the gems, the priests were right. If he reached for the coals, Moses was an innocent child. As he reached for the

gems and truth, the angel Gabriel came down and moved his hand to the coals. As Moses burned his hand on the coals he stuck his hand (with a coal stuck to it) in his mouth, burning his mouth. This is the rabbis answer for the speech impediment Moses claims at the burning bush.[26]

The rabbis next pick up on the argument that Moses was well schooled and educated. They are even influenced by it. The influence, however, is not all favorable. That Moses was a scholar is taken for granted in the Midrash. "The Holy One Blessed is He, appointed Moses over all Israel, over all the hidden treasures of Torah, and all forms of wisdom, . . ."[27]

The Talmud and Midrash speak of Moses in the same manner as does Philo, in stating, "Moses' face was like the sun, as a sign of his outstanding wisdom."[28] "Moses resembles an angel of God."[29] "He [Moses] was beautiful and everyone wished to gaze on him."[30] "Fifty gates of wisdom were created in the world, and all but one were given to Moses."[31] Moses was admittedly unlike any other young man known in that day.

Strictly according to the text of the Torah, Moses did not have much of a youth. One verse after he is brought back to the Palace, he leaves it.[32] Moses was not satisfied with his life in the palace. As he grew up he went out amongst the Hebrews. The actual Biblical text spans only five versus, but it so intricately links Moses with the Hebrew people, that one might argue that it is the most important episode in this entire early setting in Egypt.

> It happened in those days, when Moses was grown up, that he went out to his brothers (people), and looked on their burdens; and he saw an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brothers. Moses looked this way and that way, he smote the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. He went out a second day, and behold, two Hebrew men were striving together, and Moses said to the one in the wrong, "Why do you strike your fellow?" The man responded, "Who made you a ruler and judge over us? DO you intend

> to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Moses feared understanding that this deed was surely known. Now, when Pharaoh heard of this thing, he sought to slay Moses. Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian.[33]

Philo addresses the matter directly. He tells us what Moses saw. Pharaoh had become cruel and treated the Hebrews, who were guests in the land, as war captives and slaves.[34] Bitter taskmasters were appointed who savagely beat the Hebrews. When a slave would die, "their taskmasters threw their bodies away unburied and beyond the borders of the land."[35] This, according to Philo, effected Moses greatly.

> Certainly he did not suffer the way of mankind who reach pinnacles and forget their roots. He lived as "the grandson of this mighty king, . . . the future inheritor of his grandfather's kingdom."[36]

Rabbi Hertz again echoes Philo, allowing us to contextualize Philo's intent..

> When Moses became great, he went out to his brethren. In later ages, it must alas be said of many a son of Israel, who had become great, that he went away from his brethren. Not so Moses. he went out of the palace into the brick fields.[37]

Moses would see the affliction of the Hebrews and try to bring them comfort.[38] At one point, he saw something he could not tolerate.

> One of these men [taskmasters], then, the most violent of them, when, . . . exasperated at the exhortations of Moses and rendered more savage by them, beating those who did not labor with energy and unremittingly at the work which was imposed on them, . . . so as to even be the death of many. Moses slew, thinking the deed a pious action; and indeed, it was a pious action to destroy one who only lived for the destruction of others.[39]

For Philo this sight brings on a clear watershed moment in Moses' life. What brought the wrath of Pharaoh, was not that a man was dead, or that Moses killed. Rather, it was that Moses, Pharaoh's own grandson, did not agree with him as to who were friends and who were enemies. According to Philo, Pharaoh's priests were already plotting to

kill Moses for they feared his strength and wisdom would overcome them. They were trying to convince Pharaoh that Moses would overthrow him, and that Moses should be killed.[40] Moses fled Egypt and went to Midian where he married the eldest daughter of Jethro.

For Philo, the youth of Moses is written to serve three purposes. First, and foremost, we read of a Moses who is more outstanding than any other human ever to walk the Earth. We learn from his youth, that he gained wisdom and stature. Philo raises the question as to whether Moses' intellect was divine, human, or both. Only Moses could have been prepared to receive a law direct from God. In fact, Moses is the paradigmatic Philosopher - King which Plato discusses. Next, we are to learn the lesson, quoted above (see footnote36), that a truly righteous person never forgets where he comes from -- never loses humility. As great as Moses was, in demand as he was by the members of Pharaoh's court, as wealthy as he became, he never lost the yearning to solve the plight of his people. We will revisit this theme throughout the texts which we discuss.

Lastly this section teaches us a lesson in the value of study. The study Philo speaks of is the education which he had. One who masters the sciences attains the highest levels of wisdom. Perhaps Philo is also telling the reader that only through mastery of the sciences can one understand God. Even though it was preordained that Moses would be a great man, it took Moses mastering his studies at a level greater than all of his teachers combined to speak to God.

Josephus ignores these lines altogether, attributing Moses' fleeing from Pharaoh to a conspiracy against Moses led by the priests of Pharaoh who were wary and\or jealous of Moses military and political successes in Ethiopia. Evidentally, there existed a body of literature unknown to Philo that places Moses in Ethiopia as Egyptian general and even as

King. Josephus introduces it, and the rabbis have written a variety of Midrashim dealing with this matter.[41]

Rabbi Hertz comments, in his own commentary, that the smiting comes as a result of Moses witnessing a flogging for his first time ever.[42] According to the Midrash, this happened when Moses' age reached either twenty years or forty years of age.[43] Numerology was a large focus for Philo, yet it was more so for the Rabbis. For Philo, every number had a significance. For the Rabbis, patterns of numbers were created and established. Those matters which fit into the number scheme, or could be fit into the number scheme were given a special, even unique, status. It is thus striking that Moses should either be twenty or forty, both numbers holding places of high esteem in the Rabbinic literature. These numbers evenly divide Moses life between experiences in Court, in Midian, before Pharaoh, and in the Wilderness. And in fact it becomes a blessing to wish that someone live to be 120 years old, for in doing so, one would possess the wisdom of Moses.

As to specifically what caused Moses to leave, the rabbis (and Cecille B. DeMille) employ a midrash wherein Dathan and Abiram (both of whom, with Korach, will later again revolt against Moses) see Moses slay the Egyptian and report the incident to Pharaoh. They are the ones who exclaim the words of Exodus 2:14.

> "Who made you into a judge over us? You are not fit to be a prince and a judges over us . . . you are the son of Jochebd; how can you be called the son of Bithia [and fit to rule]? We will make known what you did to the Egyptian!" Upon hearing this, [Moses] was afraid that they would inform on him. Moses thought, "There is evil speech among them -- how will they be worthy of redemption? Now I know the sin for which they are enslaved." Pharaoh heard (ibid. v. 15), for Dathan and Abiram informed on him. He sought to slay Moses (ibid.). Pharaoh sent for a special sword, which he placed on [Moses'] neck ten times; but his neck became like a

> marble column, and the sword did not harm him.[44] In fact, the sword rebounded from Moses' neck to the neck of the executioner killing him.[45]

Actually, if the truth be known, just as Moses was about to be decapitated, an angel descended from the heavens in the guise of Moses. The angel was seized and Moses fled. Before the Egyptians learned of the deception, Moses was well on his way to Midian.[46]

B: MOSES AS A SHEPHERD CALLED

Moses' story, according to the text of the Pentateuch, continues as he travels to Midian and marries Tzipporah, the eldest daughter of a Midian Sheik, Jethro. While tending the flock of Jethro, Moses has his first contact with God related in the Torah.

> When he came to Horeb, the mountain of God, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flaming fire out of a bush. He looked and, lo, the bush was aflame with fire, yet the bush was not consumed.[47]

Moses turns from his path and is introduced to the voice of God. God reveals God's self to be the God of Moses' ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses is told of the plight of the children of Israel and instructed to make a journey to Egypt to free them. In a role out of character with the Moses who slays the Egyptian boldly, Moses tries to persuade God that he should not be chosen as spokesman.

> Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring forth the Israelites from Egypt? . . .Please O Lord, I am not a man of words . . . for I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue. . . . Please, O Lord, send someone else if you will.[48]

Moses agrees to go, only after God reveals God's name and it is clear that Aaron will go with him, as his spokesman.

In speaking in terms of textual consistency, this episode makes sense. The nature of the theophany is couched in terms of a miraculous event: A bush that burns, but is not

consumed. The failure of Moses to stand ready to take the charge is also in keeping with the natural flow and genre of the text. The prophets go reluctantly. Jeremiah is absolutely unwilling to go. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and I ordained thee a prophet to the nations. Then said I, O Lord God. Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child."[49] Ezekiel was convinced not to fear his job, and was fed with Gods words before he embarked on his journey.[50] The Palestinian Moses and the Philonic Moses are really no different in import. In fact, the notion of testing the Shepherd co-exists in both texts. In both traditions, there is a requirement that Moses be humble. Moses is eager, in neither opinion, to embark on this journey.

Philo sees in this story certain consistency with the prophets. Moses hesitates, he does not boast of his own qualities. He feels himself to be unworthy.

> Though he believed the words of God, nevertheless he tried to avoid the office to which God was appointing him, urging that he was a man of a weak voice, and of slow speech, and not eloquent, and especially not so ever since he had heard God himself speaking. For judging the greatest human eloquence to be mere speechlessness in comparison with the truth, . . . he shrunk from the undertaking, thinking such great matters proper for proud and bold men and not for him. . . . And God approved of his modesty, and said, "art thou ignorant who it is that giveth to man a mouth, . . . and all the apparatus of the articulate voice? I am he."[51]

Philo turns God's losing patience with Moses into a positive notion. For Philo, this episode introduces us to the greatest allegories found in this text of Moses I. Philo officially gives Moses the title of Philosopher - King at the burning bush. Here one sees Moses in the glory of possessing all of the characteristics Plato requires of such a person. He had been appropriately trained first, as a Shepherd.

> The business of the Shepherd is a preparation for the office of a king for any one who is destined to preside over that most manageable of all flocks,

> mankind, . . .the care and management of tame animals is a royal training for the government of subjects; for which reason kings are called shepherds by their people, . . . as a most pre-eminent honor. . . . That man alone can be a perfect king who is well skilled in the art of the shepherd, being thus instructed as to more important matters by experience of the inferior animals; for it is impossible for great things to be brought to perfection before small ones.[52]

How appropriate it is, that as Moses is about to be called to duty by God, he has just completed his pre-requisite training for the job. The beauty of Philo's writing, is that he writes with only one purpose in mind. Everything in the Bible is there only to glorify God. Moses was not a random selection for this job, any more than Abraham was for "lech-lecha." Moses must therefore be the perfect selection for the job.

Moses' reasoning troubles the Rabbis though. How could Moses, the one who has all of the world's wisdom at his command be slow of speech? Thus we have the Midrash offered above, wherein Moses gains his speech impediment. Was Moses otherwise qualified for the task? According to the Palestinian tradition, he was.

Josephus writes that the voice of God called Moses by name, signifying "how bold he had been in venturing to come into a place whither no man had ever come before, because the place was divine . . . and that he should have glory and honour among men, by the blessing of God upon him."[53] Josephus goes on to have Moses protest, thinking himself too commonplace to go on such a journey as God requests. Moses was humble. More important still, Moses was a strong and caring leader who enjoyed humility. This realization was the whole purpose for depicting him as a shepherd.[54] The Zohar also alludes to Moses' having been tested as a shepherd, tending and taking care of a flock not his own, prior to being empowered to tend God's flock.[55] He tended Jethro's flock for forty years. The wild beasts of the field did not consume them, and they multiplied greatly.[56] Ultimately, the lesson is drawn out thusly:

> When our teacher Moses, of blessed memory, was tending Jethro's flock in the desert, a kid ran away from him, and he pursued it. [At last the kid found] a pool of water and stopped to drink. When Moses caught, he said, "I did not know that you were running because of thirst! You must be tired." He picked it up on his shoulder and walked . . . [with it]. The Holy One, Blessed is God said, "You have [shown] compassion in tending the flocks -- by your life, you will tend My flock, Israel."[57]

The rabbis are equally ready to make sure we know that Moses was a human with human failings. When Moses announces that he does not want to go, God gets angry.

> The Holy One Blessed Be God, said to him, "When I appeared to you in the bush, you hid your face in order not to see my Shechinah. And now, who gave you permission to speak before me, like the servant of a human being speaks to his master?[58] [Additionally,] The Holy One Blessed Be God, said to him, "If you had no intention of going, you should have made it more clear at the very beginning. Instead you waited until I transmitted to you my secrets and my Ineffable name!"[59] I had said that you would be the priest and that Aaron would be the Levite. Now, [however] he will be the priest, and you the Levite.[60]

While Philo uses the speech impediment as a sign of excellence, the Palestinian authors and rabbis make sure that we never see Moses as more than a man by pointing to his defects. The rabbis never miss an opportunity to make Moses special, while simultaneously reminding the reader of Moses' earthiness. Just as one has proclaimed him to be special, one finds the need to question the specialness of Moses by using God's annoyance as an attack on Moses.

C: MOSES AS POWERFUL LEADER AND PURE PRIEST

Moses is the consummate leader according to nearly all traditions within Judaism. according to the text of the Pentateuch, he is the one with whom God speaks one on one -- uniquely in that generation. A problem arises due to the development of the text,

though, which mandates that a caveat be added to the above statement. The question of the origin of Torah is not a settled one. Many theories abound as to how Torah was pieced together. These range from the notion that many hands contributed to the text to the belief in a singular divine authorship. This is important to point out, here, because many of these theories involve proofs dealing with descriptions of Mosaic leadership. For Philo and his Palestinian counterparts, there is no need to get into a reconstruction of the text. How it might have developed, in reality, is not an issue for them. They accepted the text as though it came straight from God. Biblical criticism was, as yet, unknown and the text was, for them a whole unit. There may still have been issues as to authorship (whether Mosaic or Divine), but these are not pertinent to the discussion. In three instances in the text, God speaks to Aaron alone.[61] Could these lines have been added to the Torah? Philo nor the Rabbis would have ever asked this question. They absolutely accepted the text as a unified single document. Any such divergences from the norm, as God speaking only to Aaron, would require explanation, not investigation. In dealing with these places in text which call into question the absolute Mosaic authority, the writers of antiquity assumed it their duty to make explanations. Why might God have talked to Aaron out of the earshot of Moses? Why is it that only Aaron would be allowed in the tabernacle when Moses was the law giver and the one with whom God spoke "exclusively?"[62]

The first important episode to look at in studying Moses as a leader of the people is his election. The text of the Pentateuch is silent about any such election. God elected Moses, and he continued in that role. Interestingly, for Philo, it becomes a credal statement. Of all the men assembled leaving Egypt,

> Moses was elected the leader; receiving the authority and sovereignty over them, not having gained it like some men who have forced their way to

> power and supremacy by force of arms and intrigue, and by armies of cavalry and infantry, and by powered fleets, but having been appointed for the sake of his virtue and excellence and that benevolence towards all men which he was always feeling and exhibiting; and also, because God, who loves virtue, and piety, and excellence, gave him his authority as a well - deserved reward.[63]

After all, Moses had abandoned a life as successor to Pharaoh because of the iniquities he saw. As Philo saw it, Moses was more than a leader for only Jews. Moses was a prototype, a paradigm for all humanity.[64] In the leadership role, Moses was selfless.

> When he received this authority, he did not show anxiety, as some persons do, to increase the power for his own family, and promote his sons (for he had two) to any great dignity, to make them . . . successors to his sovereignty; for as he always cherished a pure and guileless disposition in all things both small and great.[65]

To Moses' credit, though he had access to do so, he accumulated no treasures for himself.[66] To Philo's credit, he emulated his ideal of Moses.

> [A]s great an admirer as anyone in the world of that kind of riches [the world of material wealth], he showed himself to be in his clothes, and in his food, and in his whole system of manner of life, not indulging in any theatrical affection of pomp and magnificence, but cultivating the simplicity and unpretending affable plainness of a private individual, but a sumptuousness which was truly royal, in those things which it is becoming for a ruler to desire to abound in.[67]

Moses discarded all desire for material gain. Desiring only to govern the people justly, he knew that justice came from purity and freedom from greed. In return, God honored Moses with the greatest of all gifts, the most perfect wealth, the gift of sharing in that which God had reserved for God's self -- the gifts of nature. "Everyone of the elements obeyed him as its master, changing the power which it had by nature and submitting to his commands."[68] It is this power that allows Moses to join God in parting the sea, bringing water from rock, and give perfect laws. It is Philo's focus on this power

that allows him to ignore the problems that exist between Moses and God in the Biblical text. Philo does not include in his books about Moses, anything about Moses striking the rock and blaspheming God before Israel.

As a leader, Moses may have been appreciated by God, but certainly the Biblical author depicts the throng as ever ready to revolt against Moses. Moses endures upsurges led by his brother and sister,[69] Korach, Dathan, and Abiram,[70] all of Israel over thirst and hunger,[71] and even God. Moses weathered each and found the ability to even bring God to act correctly.[72] There is a bevy of evidence to be found in a strict reading of the text that evinces Moses status as the absolute ruler of this people. His ability to overcome the trauma of rebellion after rebellion is at the heart of such evidence. Josephus understands that Moses was prepared for this. As the Israelites would be ready to stone him to death, he would rely on the strength of God to give him courage to mitigate their anger and remind them of the goodness of God.

> But as for Moses himself, while the multitudes were irritated and bitterly set against him, he cheerfully relied upon God, and upon his consciousness of the care he had taken of these his own people.[73]

Josephus continues, in describing the source of Moses' strength.

> Now we are not to disbelieve that Moses, who was but a single person, pacified so many ten thousands when they were in anger, and converted them to a mildness of temper; for God was with him, and prepared the way to his persuasions of the multitude.[74]

For Philo, the revolutions illuminated within the Biblical text are merely excuses for launching into allegories about seemingly tangent ideals or items. The revolt of Korach, appears in two places in Philo's discourse on Moses. In what seems to be best described as a synopsis and running commentary of the Biblical narrative, Philo discusses the second half of the Korach story; the proof of the staffs.[75] Philo glosses over the facts of the

rebellion to get to the matter he really wants to focus on -- the transformation and sprouting of Aaron's staff.[76] The first part of the rebellion, that of Korach, and the Levites who followed him, appears only at the end of Philo's work about Moses, and will be discussed in the subsection on prophecy.

As referred to at the beginning of this chapter, Philo (and Plato) set forth four characteristics of the Philosopher - King. Possession of powerful leadership skills fulfills but one fourth of the four prong test one must meet under this title. In dismissing the revolutions poised against Moses out of hand, Philo credits him with yet another of the crucial attributes. Moses, the Levy, is the ultimate priest. Even in the face of rebellion, he did what was right before God, the Divine Will being more important than the mood of the crowd. This is true in the Pentateuch even where it is God who rebels, as in the case of the Golden calf (see page 65). Moses' practice is exemplary of the piety of the high priest.

For Philo, "Moses practiced beyond all other men that which is the most important and most indispensable virtue in a chief priest, namely, piety."[77] In preparation for this role of high priest, this role which required the absolute of piety, Moses had to purify his body and soul. He abstained from food and drink and all other sensual activity. His abstinence from food and drink lasted the duration of the forty days in which he was with God, up on the mountain.

> For having gone up into the loftiest and most sacred mountain in that district in accordance with the divine commands, a mountain which was very difficult of access and very hard to ascend, he is said to have remained there all that time without eating any of that food which is necessary for life; and as I said before, he descended forty more days, being much more beautiful in his face than when he went up, . . . his countenance shone like the light of the sun.[78]

While with God, in God's abode on the mountain, Moses was initiated in God's sacred will, "being instructed in all the most important matters which relate to the

priesthood."[79] In fulfilling the duties of High Priest, Moses set up the Tabernacle, and then anointed the most worthy of persons to continue on as priest in its halls. So it was that Aaron and his sons were anointed to serve as high priest in the Tabernacle. Of interesting note is the continuing theme, that it was by Moses' recognition that Aaron and his sons were the most virtuous of men that brought about the anointment, and not the command of God. However, Josephus clearly believes the anointment is the decision of God.[80]

At the beginning of this chapter, I quoted from Philo as he described the most perfect of humans, Moses. Moses crossed barriers that no one else has ever been able to do. He entered God's world.

> He was called the god and king of the whole nation, and is said to have entered into the darkness where God was; into the invisible and shapeless and incorporeal world; the essence which is the model of all existing things, where he beheld things invisible to mortal nature;[81]

Having Moses ascend is in keeping with the Philonic allegorical depiction of Moses. It is not in keeping with the Palestinian close reading of the Pentateuch which sees God descend to a mountain on Earth or the Tabernacle to meet with Moses. When the biblical author says that Moses is an אלהים (Elohim) over Pharaoh, the word which can mean God is employed to mean judge.[82] Though the text does not speak of an ascension by Moses into God's world, this idea, possibly taken from Philo, appears in much of the Midrash on this matter.

Admission to God's realm appears at several levels. The greatest of sages gain admission to this world. Earlier I spoke of the trip that Akiva and his colleagues made to the heavens - to the Pardes. The Talmud celebrates the journey of Moses to Heaven.[83] The Midrash is replete with Aggadic stories of Moses in Heaven to receive the Torah.

There is an entire line of literature about the מרכבה (mercavah) -- the chariot which carries not just Elijah and Enoch, but also Moses to Heaven.

The difference really, between the Palestinian depiction and Philo's is subtle. According to Philo, as the pure High Priest, Moses ascends and takes on Godlike powers. Not wanting to situate Moses as a part of the Godhead (to distinguish him from Jesus), the rabbis, in adopting the mystical idea of Moses' ascension to God's domain, make sure that he is there only to receive God's Torah. The mainstream Midrash portrays God descending to the mountain (as the text alludes) for the theophany. That these divergent Midrashim should exist, points to the Hellenistic (seemingly Philonic), mystical influence that did seat securely in the Rabbinic tradition.

D: MOSES AS LAWGIVER

Perhaps it is in this role, that we most commonly think of Moses. From *Pirke Avot*, we read "Moses received the Torah at Sinai." The chain of tradition that presented itself to Philo, was absolutely in line with this. Although, Philo is less clear as to whether Moses was actually the giver (as in author) or receiver and transmitter.

Philo's protrayal of Moses as law giver describes Moses as the author of the laws, although admittedly, Moses never really commands or orders. He advises. He commends. He urges. He does not command though.

> It is Philo's overall contention, that the Mosaic laws rest on what we might call reason. Commands and orders, being forces outside man, are inconsistent with the view that the Mosaic laws rest on reason, since reason is inner to man. Accordingly, the Sinai episode is necessarily so treated that Philo's stress is on internal reason, not on external arbitrary commands.[84]

As lawgiver, Moses was acting at the height of his perfection. God had issued the laws of Nature that had governed all life before this time. It was Moses who was charged with creating a law code by which man could live in and alongside the Unwritten Natural Law that already existed. To be able to accomplish this feat, Moses, in his perfection would have had to fully understand -- comprehend -- the law which God had set into motion at creation. More important than the laws given, is the discussion of the giver. Philo seizes this as an opportunity to define Moses as the perfect legislator.

> A man who desires to be an excellent and perfect lawgiver ought to exercise all the virtues in their complete integrity and perfection. . . . Now, closely connected with and related to the legislative power are these four qualities: humility; the love of justice; the love of virtue, and the hatred of iniquity. . . . It is the province of humanity to prepare for adoption such opinions as will benefit the common weal, and to teach the advantages which will proceed from them. It is part of justice to point out how we ought . . . to assign every man his due according to his deserts. It is part of the love of virtue to embrace those things which are by nature good, and to give to everyone who deserves them facilities without limit for the most unrestrained enjoyment of happiness.[85]

These are, of course, descriptions of Moses, "the most admirable of all the lawgivers who have ever lived in any country either among the Greeks or the barbarians."[86]

For Palestinian Judaism, the issue was presumably simple. God spoke to Moses and revealed the Torah. What this word "Torah" means, may be at issue given the history of other earlier mutations within Judaism, but to the masses influenced by the Pharisaic tradition it can only mean a two-fold revelation: one the written text and the other an oral corollary. Josephus pronounces the Torah to be whole and divine. Torah was the written text of the Pentateuch and the Oral tradition.[87] "This legislation which appeared to be divine made this man to be esteemed as one superior to his own nature."[88] Moses was really more transmitter than lawgiver, according to Josephus and the rabbis. The confusion

between the two, allowed him, in the eyes of many to become bigger than his nature would have otherwise allowed.

> But this man was admirable for his virtue, and powerful in making men give credit to what he delivered, not only during the time of his natural life, but even still there is still no one of the Hebrews, who does not act even now as if Moses were present and ready to punish . . . any thing that is indecent. . . . There are also many other demonstrations that his power was more than human [89]

In being that excellent transmitter, Moses is responsible for all Jewish law to date; all the wisdom and guidance to be obtained from Torah existed in the corpus of the revelation he received at Sinai.

> Moses was a faithful messenger who did not add or detract, nor did he explain anything that had not been told to him at Sinai.[90] . . . Moses went and sat at the end of the eighth row of students [in Akiva's study]. He did not understand what they were saying and became weak from distress. As soon as they came to a particular law that required explanation, Akiva's students asked, "Master how do you know this?" Akiva replied, "It is a law transmitted to Moses at Sinai. Moses understood and felt better.[91]

Moses, as most "admirable lawgiver" takes on even God. The text of the Golden Calf incident is troublesome. Moses does the unthinkable and reprimands God.

> And יהוה spoke to Moses,"go and descend, for your people whom you brought up out of Egypt, have dealt corruptly. They have turned aside quickly from the manner in which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have bowed to it and sacrificed to it. They said, 'This is your God O Israel, that brought you up out of the land of Egypt.'" And יהוה continued, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiffnecked people. Now, let Me alone, that my wrath may burn against them and consume them. I will make of you a great nation." Moses exploded in the face of יהוה his God, saying, "יהוה, why are you so angry at your people, whom you brought forth out of the land of Egypt . . . why should the Egyptians be able to say, 'For evil He brought them forth, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the Earth? Turn from your fierce anger and repent of this evil against your people." [92]

For Philo, this is at best a minor incident, but a great place in the text to portray Moses as the paradigmatic judge even between God and the people. Before getting into his allegory, he first takes the opportunity to ensure the reader that it could not have been the Israelites who built the calf. Philo ignores Aaron's role completely. He states clearly that the Egyptians made the calf.[93] In addressing Moses' role in mediating against God's anger, Philo places Moses on the throne of Judgement.

> Moses, hearing the great uproar, was in great perplexity, as being at the same time a devout worshiper of God and a friend of mankind, not being able to bring his mind to quit the society of God with whom he was conversing, and in which he, being alone with him, was conferring with him by himself, nor on the other hand, could he be indifferent to the multitude thus full of anarchy and wickedness. . . . Being drawn both ways, and under strong attraction in both directions, he fluctuated this way and that way, and did not know what he ought to do . . . [he] sprung down to be a mediator and reconciler; not however in a moment, for first of all he addressed supplications and prayers on behalf of his nation to God, entreating God that he should pardon their sins; then, this governor of and intercessor for his people . . . rejoiced indeed that God had admitted his supplication, but was full of anxiety . . . at the lawlessness of his people.[94]

True to texts such as the Golden Calf episode, where Moses seems to talk God out of destroying Israel, the Rabbis have Moses teach God a variety of lessons. Moses teaches God that the Israelites did nothing wrong at the Golden Calf; that it is not correct to make a child pay for the iniquity of the parent; and that we should not commit to war just because God instructs us to.[95] The Biblical text does not hesitate to allow Moses the opportunity to rebuke God for expecting too much from Israel. In several places, God acquiesces and opts for a result that is different from the one God originally prescribes for a specific situation. Repeatedly Moses causes God to renounce the predetermined inclination to destroy Israel. Moses also manages to talk God out of causing Israel to go to war with a people without first trying peace.

> This is one of three things that Moses said before the Holy One Blessed is He, to which He replied, "You have reasoned well." "Master of the Universe, how should Israel have known the wrong they were doing [with the Golden Calf]? Did they not grow up in Egypt as idolaters? When you gave Torah, You did not give it to them; they were not even standing there, as it is written, 'The people stood far off.' (Exodus 20:18). You gave it only to me, and when you gave the Ten Commandments, You gave them only to me [as it is written], 'I am יהוה אלהיך (singular) your God (ibid v.2).' Did I perhaps sin?" The Holy One Blessed Be He said, "by your life, you have spoken well, and you have taught a good lesson. From now on I will use the attribute I am יהוה אלהיכם, (plural) your God."[96]

E: MOSES AS PROPHET

In defining prophecy, the Biblical author is clear in stating that Moses was the greatest prophet to have ever lived. Moses is the suffering servant. He is the one who heeds God's call and spends the rest of his life paying for it. It is his continual desire to serve God and seek truth that qualifies him to have as an epitaph, "And there has not risen another prophet like Moses in Israel, who knew God face to face."[97] As applied to Moses, the Biblical author employs the term prophet, to speak of Moses' having received the Torah from God.

The first three elements of the paradigmatic Philosopher-King taken care of (leadership, priestly manner, and legislative excellence), we turn our attention to the last and, perhaps the most telling of attributes: prophecy. Thus far, we have exalted Moses as the designer of laws and anointer of Aaron. Philo seems to have forgotten about God's distinct role in all of this, as we reach this discussion. Philo writes as though Moses was the actual author of the text of the laws. Philo, for the most part believes this, though the ten commandments come from God.

All of that which Moses accomplishes, he does only resultant of the powers that God granted him, and only within the guidelines of those powers. The greatest of these powers is the power to reason. In fact, the whole Sinai experience, according to Philo, is a celebration of Moses' unique tour de force of reason. The theophany and supernatural intervention by God, is down played in this allegory. The purpose is not to diminish God's role in the experience, but to emphasize the qualities necessary for a human to be able to sit in the stead of Moses in receiving revelation from God.

For Philo, then, how may Moses qualify as prophet? Philo uses the word "prophet" strictly to mean one who is able to predict the future. The Biblical author alludes to this, by having Moses list the blessings and curses with admonitions as to the results of following one path or the other.

Philo writes that it is important that Moses be able to accurately predict the future. In defining Moses as a prophet, Philo asserts that there are three kinds of divine utterances. The first is "the sacred oracle represented as delivered in person by God by his interpreter, the divine prophet."[98] To read Moses as the author of all of the laws to the exclusion of God, is thus to ignore this first method of divine utterance. Further:

> All of the earliest oracles are manifestations of the whole of the divine virtues, and especially of that merciful and bounteous character by means of which he trains all men to virtue.[99]

The second class of prophecy is the discussion whereby "the prophet asks [for] information on the subjects as to which he is in difficulty, while God answers him and instructs him." The third class is "attributed to the lawgiver, God having given him a share of his prescient power, by means of which he could foretell the future."[100]

Philo proves methods two and three by biblical example, but is clear to point out that the ultimate purpose is to vest in Moses the power to foretell the future. The ultimate

proof of his ability is his prediction of his impending death at the end of Torah. Having gained admission to God's domain, opening his eyes to the secrets of the universe, Moses qualifies easily as a prophet. His participation in the giving of the law as God's mouthpiece, or (in the case of the third type of oracle) as prophesying lawgiver is proof of this wonder. Josephus echoes the words of Torah, in proclaiming Moses to be the finest of all prophets. Again diverging from the strict meaning of the biblical text, the rabbis quite interestingly, seem to echo Philo's attributing to Moses this clarity of vision. There is extensive debate among scholars as to who "stole from who." Perhaps the idea was reached by both schools independent of each other. Regardless, the Rabbis are certain that Moses saw God clearly and not in a clouded vision.

> Our teacher Moses gazed through a clear glass.[101] the other prophets saw their prophetic visions through nine glasses; Moses saw through only one. All the other prophets saw through a dim glass; Moses saw through a polished one.[102]

The Rabbis even went so far as to place Moses in or about the heavens (God's domain) when prophesying.[103] One such Midrash places Moses at the very location of God's throne in the holy of Holies.

> Whenever he wished, he entered and stood between the two keruvim [cherubs sitting over the ark]. Then the spirit of God would cloak him and the blessing of prophecy would rest upon him.[104]

Even the ability to see God directly was available to Moses. The text of the Torah, openly says that Moses saw God face to face.[105] Additionally, one finds the Talmudic author(s) harshly commenting on Exodus 33:20, "You cannot see My face" one reads

> Said the Holy One, Blessed is He, to Moses, "When I wanted to show you my face, you did not want to look," as it is written, Moses hid his face (Exodus 3:6). Now that you want to look, I do not want to show it.[106]

There certainly exists the line of Midrash which is quick to point out, that as good as Moses was, he was not able to see God face to face. That the above Midrash should appear, though, implies that there did exist a belief that it was within the ability of Man to look upon God directly and not burn or be blinded, or otherwise afflicted.

Before I move on to the postscript, I must remark, as a way of closing discussion on the attributes of Moses, how incredibly interesting it is that Philo saved all discussion of prophecy until the end of his work on Moses. Immediately before he details the death of Moses, we not only talk about the nature of prophecy, but a certain prophecy taken far out of any chronological norm. It is here that Philo picks back up with his discussion on the Korach Rebellion. He fairly accurately (according to the Biblical text) details the rise of the rebellion, but uses it as an admonition against apostasy. Moses predicts that if Jews do not stay in line, the earth will swallow them up. For Korach this meant a literal chasm would be created just for him. For our world, it means the death of Judaism.

F: MOSES IN POSTSCRIPT

According to Philo, at the moment that Moses dies, "making his pilgrimage from earth to heaven, leaving his mortal life for immortality," God altered him from a two-fold nature of soul and body into a single unity, making his whole being into mind. Philo does not present in clear explicitness in *On Moses* what he does in various passages of *The Allegory* that allegorically, "Moses was pure mind. . . . his laws are "firm, unshaken, immovable" and "stamped, as it were, with the seals of nature itself."[107]

Moses fills the criteria which Philo believes most desirable by all people. Moses is the ultimate seeker of truth, the paradigm by which all humanity should measure itself. It

is very important to note that in his writings, Philo keeps referring to Moses in comparison to those around him. For the Biblical author, it is enough to characterize Moses as the leader without a vote, and with clear victories over rebellious hoards. For Philo, the idea is that Moses was specially chosen because of what he had accomplished. This depiction gives us hope. The opportunity is there for all people. We may share in the glory Moses shared in (the vision of God's domain) if we are willing to walk the same path Moses did.

The admonition against apostasy near the end of On Moses II says this clearly. The four elements one must possess to qualify to be the paradigmatic Philosopher - King (leadership power, priestly competence, legislator, and prophet) are all found within the pardigm for such a person. The four elements are important to separate and look at, both because they allow us a more intimate look at the detail of Moses' life, but also they let the reader explore avenues by which one might emulate the paradigm. This whole methodology allows one to read Torah as a living and breathing document. One is able to relate to Torah in the world in which Philo lived (as he brought Torah into the first century) and the world in which the reader lives.

> The Jewish people are not flourishing. . . . But if a fresh start should be made to brighter prospects . . . each nation [in the world] would abandon its peculiar ways, and, throwing overboard their ancestral customs, turn to honoring our laws alone.[108] . . .the sanctity of our legislation has been a source of wonder not only to the Jews but also to all other nations.[109]

Philo admonishes the reader not to take for granted or forsake what we have, and not to give up on our heritage, but rather to strive to make the same type of achievement Moses is acclaimed as having made.

> It seemed good to the Ruler and Governor of the universe to recompense [Moses] with the sovereign authority over a more populous and more powerful nation, . . . to consecrate him to the priesthood that it might forever offer up prayers for the whole universal race of mankind, for the

sake of averting evil from them and procuring them a participation in blessings.[110]

And here, as if Philo knew that this text would someday be written, he provides the perfect segue into Chapter Four,

> [A]ccording to the proverb, "That all the property of friends is common;" and if the prophet was truly called the friend of God, then it follows that he would naturally partake of God himself and of all his possessions as far as he need; for God possesses everything and is in need of nothing; but the good man has nothing which is properly his own, no not even himself,but he has a share granted to him of the treasures of God as far as he was able to partake of them. And this is natural enough; for he is a citizen of the world, . . . since he very appropriately has for his inheritance not a portion of a district, but the whole world. . . . Has he not enjoyed a greater communion with the Father and Creator of the universe?[111]

END NOTES FOR CHAPTER THREE

1. From the Movie "Ten Commandments."

2. *Mishnah Avot* 5:22

3. *Shemot Rabbah* 1:26

4. In July 1263, Rabbi Moses ben Nachman (Nachmanides) was summoned to the royal Spanish court, to debate with the church. The purpose of the debate was to prove that Christianity was superior to Judaism. The debate began as the Church representative made a series of unfounded claims about Judaism. Nachmanides responded to each charge and then went on to assert that "the belief in Jesus had proved disastrous. Rome, once master of the world, had declined the moment it accepted Christianity and 'now the followers of Mohammed have greater territories than they'. Moreover, he added, 'from the time of Jesus until the present the world has been filled with violence and injustice, and the Christians have shed more blood than all other peoples'. Paul Johnson, A History of the Jews, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1987), page 219.

5. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria, p. 77, note 26.

6. ibid., page 47.

7. Philo On the Life of Moses II 41

8. Plato The Republic Book V 473b.

9. Also of note here is the concern over the very Biblical story of the birth of Moses. There exists a trend, dating back to antiquity, which calls for a people to embellish the birth, life style, or characteristics of its folk heroes. The ancient Israelis were not exempt from this practice. Moses' birth nearly exactly echoes the circumstances of the birth of Sargon I, who, assuming Moses to be an historical personality, predates Moses by over one thousand (1000) years to approximately 2300 B.C.E.. Sargon I was the founder of the first recorded military empire of our world: Akkadia. The legend of his birth has been preserved thusly:

My mother conceived me, in secret she bore me.
She sent me in a basket of rushes, with Bitumen she sealed my lid.
She cast me into the river which rose not over me.
The river bore me up and carried me to Akki, the drawer of water.
Akki, the drawer of water, lifted me out as he dipped his ewer.
Akki, the drawer of water, took me as his son and reared me.
Akki, the drawer of water, appointed me as his gardener.
While I was a gardener, Ishtar granted me her love.

And for four and [?] years I exercised kingship.
The Black-headed people I ruled, I governed . . . [See G.J.Per. Page 14]

Whether or not either of the two communities had knowledge of this source, we do not know. What one may surmise though, is that both knew of this practice of embellishment. It is this need to embellish which provided the stage for both the allegory and the Midrash. Were it that there was no knowledge of this practice, these methods would have been automatically invalid, as both serve only to aggrandize the characteristics of the human.

10. How they hoped that this would save the child is not said. How Moses' older brother was not subjected to the decree of Pharaoh is also not existent. Although analysis of this curiosity is outside the scope of this thesis, some discussion is warranted about the fact that Aaron does not appear in this opening story of the book of Exodus. The manner in which an Aaron could appear into the story, and the manner in which the Rabbis or Philo might attempt to deal with the phenomenon is the basis of this thesis. Moses has a sister, mother, and father. No mention is made of Aaron, and it is hard to assume that he existed in this story, since he would have been killed by Pharaoh's edict before Moses' birth. Josephus refers to a brother who will become priest [Antiquities II. X. 3.], but speaks as if he is not yet born. The purpose of the mention of this anomaly is simply that the later Rabbi's will take a position that the text is pure and whole, and not in need of the allegorical reconciliations which a Philo might offer. The Rabbis themselves are guilty of affecting a reconciliation of reason and text where such discrepancies occur. Their methodology is based on the use of specific rules and measures of exegesis. The end effect of the employment of these hermeneutical principles is that the text is transformed into a new writing, no differently than when a Philo might allegorize a scenario from scripture.

Another problem with the text is that the Israelites were allegedly in the land of Goshen. The land of Goshen is nowhere near the palace sight. Moses' basket (and Miriam) would have had quite a journey to actually reach the palace by the Nile.

11. The name is an Egyptian one, akin to the names of the great Pharaoh Thutmose and even Amenhotep, lending credibility to the offering of the name. Oddly, the name Moses is only a partial name. According to the way in which "Moses" is used in the names of the Egyptian rulers, it really means "offspring, born of . . . ." In any event, this is the extent of what Torah says of Moses' childhood.

12. Philo On the Life of Moses I 7.

13. Exodus 6:18.

14. Philo On the Life of Moses I 10.

15. ibid., 11.

16. ibid., 17.

17. ibid.

18. Josephus Antiquities 2. 10. 5.

19. ibid., 7.

20. *Yalkut Shimoni, Shemot* 166.

21. Philo On the Life of Moses I 21-22.

22. ibid., 26.

23. Rabbi, J.H.Hertz, The Pentateuch and Haftorahs, (London: Soncino Press 2nd Edition 1972), page 210f.

24. Philo On the Life of Moses I 32.

25. Philo On the Life of Moses I 27-29.

26. *Shemot Rabbah* 1:2.

27. *Otiot D'Rabbi Akiva* 90.

28. *B. Baba Batra* 75a.

29. *Pirke d'Rabbi Eliezar* 48.

30. *Shemot Rabbah* 1:26.

31. *B. Rosh Hashanah* 21b.

32. Exodus 2:10-11.

33. Exodus II:11-15.

34. Philo On the Life of Moses I 36.

35. ibid., 39.

36. ibid., 32.

37. Rabbi, J.H.Hertz, The Pentateuch and Haftorahs, page 211 fn. 11.

38. Philo On the Life of Moses I 42.

39. ibid., 44.

40. ibid., 46.

41. *Yalkut Shimoni, Shemot* 168.

42. Rabbi, J.H.Hertz, The Pentateuch and Haftorahs, page 211 fn. 12.

43. *Shemot Rabbah* 1:27 and *Breishit Rabbah* 100:10.

44. *Shemot Rabbah* 1:30-31.

45. *Yerushalmi Berachot* 9:1.

46. ibid.

47. Exodus 3:1.

48. Exodus 3:11 - 4:13.

49. Jeremiah 1:5-7.

50. Ezekiel 2:1-3:15.

51. Philo On the Life of Moses I 83-84.

52. ibid., 60-64.

53. Josephus Antiquities 2. 12.1.

54. *B. Sukkah* 52b.

55. *Zohar* 2:21a.

56. *Yalkut Shimoni, Shemot* 173.

57. *Shemot Rabbah* 2:2.

58. *Mechilta d'Rashbi, Shemot* 3:8.

59. *Yalkut Shimoni, Shemot* 171.

60. *B. Zevachim* 102a.

61. Leviticus 10:8, Numbers 18.1, and Numbers 18:8. (These ar ethe ones quoted by the *Mekhiltah D'Rabbi Yishmael* -- there are other citations where God speaks only to Aaron, for example Exodus 4:27.)

62. Exodus 40:34-38.

63. Philo On the Life of Moses I 148.

64. ibid., 149.

65. ibid., 150.

66. ibid., 152.

67. ibid., 153.

68. ibid., 156.

69. Exodus 32:1-6 wherein Aaron builds the Golden Calf, and then also Numbers 12:1-16 wherein Aaron and Miriam challenge Moses' prophetic authority.

70. Numbers 16:1 et.seq.

71. For example Exodus 15:20-25, Exodus 16:4-6, and Number 11:23-35.

72. Exodus 32:11-14.

73. Josephus, Antiquities 3. 1. 4.

74. ibid., 3. 15. 2-3.

75. Numbers 17:1-24.

76. Philo On the Life of Moses II 179 et. seq.

77. ibid., 66.

78. ibid., 70.

79. ibid., 71.

80. Josephus, Antiquities 3. 8. 1.

81. Philo On the Life of Moses I 158.

82. Exodus 7:1.

83. *Shabbat* 88b.

84. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria, p. 49.

85. Philo On the Life of Moses II 8-10.

86. Ibid., 12

87. Josephus, Against Apion 1.1. 8.

88. Josephus, Antiquities 3. 15. 3.

89. ibid. 2-3.

90. *Midrash Hagadol, Bamidbar* 16:28.

91. *B.Menachot* 29b.

92. Exodus 32:7-12.

93. Philo, The Posterity and Exile of Cain 158.

94. Philo On the Life of Moses II 163-164.

95. *Bemidbar Rabbah* 19:33.

96. ibid.

97. Deuteronomy 34:10.

98. Philo On the Life of Moses II 188.

99. ibid., 189.

100. ibid., 190.

101. *Yevamot* 49b.

102. *Vayikra Rabbah* 1:14.

103. *Targum Yonaton*, Devarim 32:1.

104. *Midrash Hagadol, Vayikra* 16:2.

105. Exodus 32:11 **(ויחל משה את־פני יהוה)** though it is not commonly translated as such and Deuteronomy 34:10.

106. *Brachot* 7a.

107. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria, p. 51.

108. Philo On the Life of Moses II 44.

109. ibid., 25.

110. Philo On the Life of Moses I 149.

111. ibid., 156-157.

CHAPTER IV

IS GOD -- REALLY GOD?

Isn't the Torah a wonderful literary work of art? Well, of course, isn't the better question, "What is Torah that it should be literature or art?" It is such a broad document. It is a great psychological study. For some, it is the verbatim word of God. The problem is, that we really do not know what it is. We do not even know for sure who wrote it. So, what have people taken from Torah that makes it so special? Interestingly enough, it is from Torah that we learn about God and what God wants of us.

Is God really the God of the Torah? Does God have a back, as we are told? Does God emote? So many places in the Torah speak of God's wrath, God's love, and God's jealousy. How do we know that god exists? The first known attempt to prove God's existence is an argument from design which comes to us from within Scripture. It is crude, but sound. We read it in the words attributed to the prophet Isaiah.

> Do you not know? Have you not heard? Have you not been told from the very first? Have you not discerned how the Earth was founded? It is He who is enthroned above the vault of the Earth, so that its inhabitants seem as grasshoppers; Who spread out the Earth as a gauze, stretched them out as a tent to dwell in. He brings potentates to naught; makes rulers of the Earth as nothing. Hardly are they planted, hardly are they sown, hardly has their stem taken root on Earth, when He blows upon them and they dry up and the storm bears them off as straw. "To whom, then can you liken Me? To whom can I be compared?" says the Holy One. Lift high your eyes and see: Who created these? He who sends out their host by count, Who calls them each by name: Because of his great might and vast power. Not one fails to appear.[1]

What exists outside Torah that tells us this about God? The sages have written multitudes of voluminous works to provide this proof, but ultimately, proof texts for God's

existence always come back to the Bible, whether directly or indirectly. Orthodox Judaism bases its belief in God on the strict Biblical reading. Mordecai Kaplan's Naturalism was a little more indirect in placing its base in the Bible. There have been exceptions, however. There are those, within Judaism, who have tried to prove the existence of God completely external of anything in the text itself. Maimonides announced a spiritual notion of the Deity based on the proofs of Aristotle. The Greek philosopher had "proven" that God was a simple being consisting of pure intellect. God's major activity was no more than thinking thoughts. God's thoughts move into process a series of natural occurring events.

> It is as if you say: this stone, which was in motion, was moved by a staff; the staff was moved by a hand; the hand was moved by tendons; the tendons by muscles; the muscles by nerves; the nerves by natural heat; and the natural heat by the form that subsists therein, this form being undoubtedly the first mover.[2]

Ethan Fromm approached the existence of God question from a different attack. For Fromm, God was a value.

> [God] stands for the highest value, the most desirable good. Hence, the specific meaning of God depends on what is the most desirable good for a person.[3]

Both Maimonides and Fromm, and the various other Jewish philosophers and theologians who have been unable to accept Torah's word as a proof text for God are no more than the philosophical descendant of Philo. For Philo, the Torah is a document mostly attributed to the most perfect of law givers, Moses. Torah can alert one to the search for God, but may not, in and of itself, provide the answers. The goal of Judaism, for Philo, is the search for answers -the journey to the Divine.[4] As we have seen, the real basis of Philo's theology is Platonic philosophy. That which seems to be taken for granted in his reading of scripture, Philo designs and justifies from his study of philosophy. It is the

philosophic study which leads one to be able to explain the nature of God, the universe, and humanity. "The function of philosophy is to enable man to understand his spiritual adventure."[5] This function of philosophy, is the function of Judaism.

In attempting to arrive at a concise idea of what Philo's notion of God was, one needs to view his work in a variety of ways. To begin with, Philo is inconsistent in his use of scripture. Sometimes the message is implicit, sometimes explicit, and sometimes worth ignoring. Patterns do develop, but one should not hold one's breath when predicting how Philo might interpret something. More important, we need to be aware of a governing principle when reading any discussion of Philo on God. Philo does not say a whole lot about what God is, only what we can come to know or learn from God. The greater is our intellect, so is the greater our capacity to know God. "A wise man's mind is a palace and house of God."[6]

A study of Philo's concept of God will require a series of progressive sub-studies. First, one must examine the existence and nature of God, as Philo saw it. Only then may one progress to an investigation of God's interaction with the world. Upon completing this, I will look at Philo's notion of the portrayal of God in Torah and compare it to the Torah itself and the writers included within the Palestinian tradition.

A: A GOD BY ANY OTHER NAME WOULD STILL BE -- ONTOS

What is God and what is God called? In the Torah, God is referred to as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Actually, God has many names in the Bible. God is **אל שדי** (El Shaddai -- Almighty or Mountain God in Akkadian)[7], **צור** (Tzur -- Rock)[8], **אדון** (Adon -- Lord)[9], **מלך** (Melech -- Ruler)[10], or **אליון** (Elyon -- God on high)[11]. More

commonly, God is literally translatated as אל or אלהים (El or Elohim -- God) or a derivation thereof.[12] One such derivative involves using the name that God gives us as God's name in Torah. God tells us that יהוה is God's name, yet it is first spoken by Eve as she gives birth to Cain.[13] The derivative יהוה אלהים appears as early as Genesis 2.[14]

According to the Jewish Information Source Book, God has over thirty-three names in the Jewish tradition.[15] Interestingly, Philo claims that God has only the one, though he uses several epithets which are really attributes and not names. His name for God is "Ontos" or Being, a name not in the list provided by the above reference book. As it is, the term Ontos may be potentially too descriptive for Philo's design. He will say that we can discuss attributes of God, but not use those as names. There are many theories existent in the scholarly world which take Philo's lead and designate specific attributes to each name.

The greatest debate has been over the most predominant two terms used for God in the Hebrew text: יהוה and אלהים. The majority of rabbinic opinions (as seen in text), agree that the term יהוה coincides with descriptions of God's mercy. On the other hand, אלהים is associated with God's judgement. In many places in the Hebrew text, אלהים most accurately and truthfully translates into English as judge. Philo reverses these characterizations; presumably because of the manner in which they were translated into Greek. The Greek word used for אלהים is "theos," and is credited with giving order to all, in Greek: *etheke*. The Septuagintial translation of יהוה is *kyrios*, and is used to show God in the capacity of ruler and controller of all that had been created.[16]

A plausible reason for Philo's reversal of the rabbinic understanding of the texts may be found in a minority viewpoint of recent vintage which posits that it was the rabbis and not Philo who got it backwards. They point to the *Mekhiltah* and find that the text

seemingly applies the same standard as does Philo.

> "I am יהוה thy God. Why is this said? For this reason: At the sea He appeared to them as a mighty hero doing battle, as it is said, "יהוה is a man of war" (Exodus 15:3). At Sinai He appeared to them as an old man full of mercy, as it is said, "And they saw the God (אלהים) of Israel" (Exodus 24:10).[17]

The assertion posed in the agument is that since the Mekhiltah is considered such an early work, any characterization of these terms therein would be more reliable as to employment of the terms in describing God. Any deviation from these uses would be imposed on the system for polemical or other motivating reasons.[18]

The problem with this theory, is that in other places in the same collection, the same analogies are not drawn. These other passages use the same system of attributes and characterizations as is found in the later rabbinic writings. The response to the above argument is that the cited text from *Mekhilta Bahodesh* is unique and that the associations of the terms and attributes were not intended to be read in such a light. Both sides of this argument are meritorious, since in reading the *Mekhilta*, there really is no one set pattern. Most probably, the variation are due to the text being simply a compilation of Rabbinic thought from an era when Rabbinic thought was only first developing. The "nay sayers" argue that everytime the use of אלהים and יהוהare reversed from the later standard, it is done for artistic purposes. As to Philo, this certainly could bolster an argument that the Rabbis knew of his work and that many were influened by it. It is just as likely however, that his characterizations of the terms is due as much to his inability to read and/or comprehend the Hebrew text (relying soley on the Septuagint).[19]

Whether these are names of Gods, varying names for the one God, or merely attributal descriptions is up to debate amongst the various religions, and sects within the religions. What remains evident, though, is that for many, these epithets bear the impact

and weight of being "names of God." They carry such a force in traditional communities as to require that they never be fully written. The tetragrammaton יהוה becomes יה'; אלהים becomes אלקים. Some apply this rule even where Hebrew isn't used, hence, any epithet used cannot be God's name. In English, God becomes G-d. The Rabbinic tradition adds to this laundry list of epithets: הקדוש ברוך הוא (Hakadosh Baruch Hoo -- the Holy One Blessed is God), רבונו של עולם (Ribono Shel Olam --Master of the World), מקור החים (Makhor Ha chaim -- source of life), מקום (Makom --Place, ie. Jerusalem), and השם (Hashem -- the name יהוה). For Philo, if God has any proper name, it is simply Ontos: God simply "Is."

We will discuss more about how the Torah and Philo differ from each other in their respective approaches to God, but for our present purposes, we note that for Philo, God really cannot have a name. In many places, Philo refers to God in the third person, or even as a direct object.[20] To give God a name, would be to limit God. By definition, Philos' definition, God is limitless. God is "Being" - that which is all of everything. In Greek, God is Ontos.

> It is plain, therefore, that the creator of all things, the maker of all things that have ever been made, the governor of all the things which are subject to government, must, of necessity be a being of universal knowledge. He is in truth father, and creator, and governor of all things in heaven and in the whole world; and indeed future events are overshadowed by the distance of future time. . . . But God is the creator of time also . . . there is nothing future to God, who has the very boundaries of time subject to him; . . . in eternity, nothing is past and nothing is future.[21]

If God is limitless, how do we know that God exists? In seeking to establish an answer, Philo begins a chain of Jewish thinkers who will spend ages trying to reach a satisfactory answer to the question. For Philo, the answer comes fairly easily. He poses

several solutions to this query, corresponding to the capacity of his varying audiences. For the masses, he employs a teleological argument, "See, see that I am."[22] One needs but to look around and see that God must be, simply because of what else is. More poignantly, Philo uses the divine purpose and order of the world to prove God's existence.

> We see then that any piece of work always involved the knowledge of a worker. . . .When one enters a well-ordered city in which all parts of the constitution are exceedingly well arranged and regulated, what other idea will he entertain but this city is governed by wise and virtuous rulers? He, therefore, who comes into the truly greatest of cities, namely, this world, who [wonders over the marvels of creation] . . . and conceive a notion of the Father, and Creator, and Governor of all this system; for there is no artificial work whatever which exists of its own accord? And the world is the most skillfully made of all works, as if it had been put together by some one who was altogether accomplished and most perfect in knowledge. It is in this way that we have received an idea of the existence of God.[23]

Having proved the existence of God through simple logical means, we need to go one step further. Philo's continued search for God on a plane still higher, can only be occasioned by his lack of satisfaction with the view of God one achieves through the sterility of logic. This search will satisfy the needs of those who already accept the beauty of the picture but need to learn the method and style of the artist. Had Philo been comfortable with his conceptualization of God, he would have needed to look no further. But he does; he seeks the opportunity to exile himself from the mundane world and enter the world that Moses did when answering the call of the burning bush.[24]

Philo is clear in letting us know that the above logical proofs of God's existence are only for those who have not found initiation into the higher mysteries of God. They are limited to seeing only a linear aspect of God, as if God only existed along the singular plane on which their logic flowed. There are those who have the clarity of vision necessary to transcend the top rung of the ladder which others climb only until reaching the

top. Those who worship God genuinely, apprehend God through God's self without the cooperation of reasoned inference.[25]

> Prayer is God's address to man which inspires his answer, or on deeper level the mystic in the state known as sobriety of union so identifies himself with the Divine Will in all of its manifestations that his unified personality finds the subject and object of worship itself.[26]

In short, one who prays in this state of earnest, ends up intertwining with the Divine, to whom he prays. Our very knowledge of God is itself, God's gift to us, "through God , God is known, for He is His own light."[27] As Plotinus stated it, "It must be that light by which we are enlightened: for we do not see the sun by another light than its own."[28] Specifically referring to the example of light that Plotinus and Philo would take from Plato,[29] Baruch Spinoza echoed this notion in his own theological study, "Whatsoever is, is in God, and without God nothing can either be or even be perceived."[30]

In using this analogy to discuss the nature of God, Philo will be careful to distinguish between the existence of God (knowable) as opposed to the essence of God (unknowable).[31] Philo recognizes mankind's limitations in not being capable of knowing God's essence. "In order for one to be able to comprehend God, it is first necessary to become God."[32] The Platonists of Philo's day, maintained that the essence of God, the intellect, is immanent and corporeal. There was, however, the notion of a relative transcendence to a higher level of God's intellect which is wholly unknowable to humankind. The Stoics of the day held that the intellect (God's essence) was corporeal (immanent), yet subtle and invisible to the naked eye (transcendant) -- transcendent immanence.

Philo is somewhere between the two philosophies. With the stoics, he shares the concept of a transcendent immanence of God's intellect. He removes it one step higher,

further away from us. That which is possible for man to attain, were the naked eye properly trained, would still only be an image of the real Divine Essence. The entity that is knowable to man is called the Logos (see subchapter B below). It merely projects an image of the real divine essence which is removed one step further.

So the question then remains, if Philosophical proof does not satisfactorily prove God's existence for Philo, how might this introduction of Logos aid us in understanding his unshakable overpowering belief that God existed? The teachings of both the Platonists and Stoics provide a basis for Philo's ontological proofs. God printed the idea of God on the human mind.

> For how could the soul have conceived of God had he not infused it and taken hold of it as far as was possible? For the human mind would never have made bold to soar so high as to apprehend the nature of God had not God himself drawn it up to himself, so far as it was possible for the human mind to be drawn up, and imprinted it in accordance with the divine powers accessible to reasoning.[33]

The logos is that part of God which becomes knowable to us. It justifies, in our mind, our belief in God at all. God's job is to continue creation by eternally thinking thoughts which permit the logos to employ forms to then allow for the physical manifestation of the thought to occur on earth. It is this link between Man and God that is knowable to the enlightened. How does God speak to us? The chain is connected through Philosophy.[34] Plutarch argued that the most superior animal on earth had to be the crocodile. It has no tongue and thus most imitates God who communicates without the spoken voice.[35] This, of course, is the absurd example to a sound philosophy. Philosophers have chastized mankind for years over the sunject of speech. They point out the damage we do with our mouths which undoes any holiness we had attempted to affect in searching for God to begin with. Philo echoes the sentiment, throughout his voluminous

allegories.[36] The logos does not speak to us in completing the chain, it does its job by allowing us to perceive it.

Having proved that God, exists, how are we supposed to refer to God? Philo's response to this is simple. Since God cannot have a name, God cannot have a description either. All we can do is say what God is not. To say that God is "holy" is really meaningless. The best we can offer is that God is not "unholy." Philo did feel that at least one positive statement could be made in describing God. God is one. In response to the quotation from Genesis 2:18, "It is not good for man to be alone," Philo states his view of God's oneness. It is not based in the Torah, nor is it really related to Torah. The passage simply serves as a vehicle for Philo to use in outlining his view of God.

> God is alone: a Unity, in the sense that His nature is single, not composite, whereas each one of us and all other created beings is made up of many things. . . . But God is not a composite being, consisting of many parts.[37]

God is the creator of this world, but not directly involved in running it. So how does the world operate? What is the nature of God's presence in the world? We move on to discuss the logos.

B: LOGOS AND THE INTERACTION WITH OUR WORLD

The precise goal of Philo's allegory is to explain the purpose of and need for psychic ascent; it is to urge us to abandon the life of sensual slavery imposed by a one-sided attachment to bodily needs, and the return to the proximity of God. How is one to make this journey? We live in the sensible world, the world of perception. The world where God dwells is yet further removed. Situated between the lofty realm of God and the perceptible and sensible world is the world of ideas. To see an object is to be in this

world; to conceive the idea of a tree is to transcend this world to that of the intelligible world. To make this ascension, one does not need to live in seclusion.

> I often left my kindred and friends and fatherland and went into a solitary place, in order that I might have knowledge of things worthy of contemplation, but I profited nothing: for my mind was sore tempted by desire and turned to opposite things. But now, sometimes even when I am in a multitude of men my mind is tranquil, and God aside all unworthy desires, teaching me that it is not differences of place which affect the welfare of the soul, but God alone, who knows and directs its activity howsoever he pleases."[38]

One does not have to work his/herself into a frenzy (the pagan method of communicating with the gods). Quite simply for Philo, one had merely to employ the gift God gave only to humankind, the ability to reason. In making this ascension, one comes face to face with the logos, the Divine Reason. As man through reason, reaches up out of the sensible world into the world of ideas, God reaches down (as if it were) from God's realm. Any meeting that can exist between man and God happens here.

The next step for us is to attempt a description of the nature of this logos. We start off having to acknowledge a difficulty. It seems that whenever Philo needed to find a way to allow for divine intervention with the world, he set the ability to so intervene (and the intervention itself) under the auspices of logos. It is thus really hard to fashion a definition that one may rely on throughout Philo's writing. I will attempt to give the most common of descriptions of logos for Philo. I will show where it interacts with the Earthly world, what its role is, and why it is so important. Without a fundamental understanding of logos, little of what Philo writes can really be intelligible as a packaged theology.

So what is logos? The logos represents the voice of God which, having been copied from God, exists so that God's may immanently speak to all of creation in the physical universe.

> It is the image of God, the first begotten son of the Uncreated Father, the Chief of the Angels, the High Priest of the Cosmos, the man or shadow of God, or even the second God, the idea of ideas, the paradigmatic archetype of the macrocosm and of the human mind, the microcosm. As the cup bearer of God and toastmaster of the feast, who differs not from what he pours, the Logos fills the souls of rational man with gaiety and gladness. He is the lover of the alone and solitary, never mixing with the crowd of things created and destined to perish. Yet, extending himself from the center of the universe to its further bounds and from the extremities to the center again, he runs nature's unvanquished course, joining and binding fast all of its parts. Constituting the unbreakable bond of the universe, he mediates and moderates the threatening of the opposing elements, so that the universe may produce a complete harmony.[39]

For Philo, the Logos is all these things. In short, logos equals wisdom, the wisdom of God that allows the world to have order, which in turn, allows for creation. The Logos exists somewhere between God's self and the world of matter. Most succinctly stated, the Logos operates in a world such as Plato's world of forms. God is complete to God's self, uninterrupted in the continuous act of creating. God is the Mind eternally thinking itself and thus overflowing -- causing divine matter to emanate from the ever flowing fountain (God's essence). This overflow flows into a world where there exists the eternal concepts of shape, size, color, etc. . . . concepts of existence. Logos, the knowable aspect of God, molds this divine matter into the variety of forms which came into being directly from the divine before creation began. In employing the Logos as Philo does, he solves the problem of allowing God to be both immanent and transient. The merger of matter and idea equals reality, and creation. It is the job of the Logos to make this system efficient, but more important, orderly.

Most important to Philo's theology is not the dynamic of logos, but the manner in which it acts as the instrument of God in creation. The varying Genesis stories of creation (chapters one and two of Genesis) are not contradictory for Philo. They are the creations

of first the forms and ideas, and then the physical creation. Physical creation took place all at once. Philo supports this by using the Second creation story to be the singular act of bringing all that was conceived in Chapter one, into existence.

> God judged in advance that a beautiful copy would never be produced, except from a beautiful pattern, and that no sense object would be irreproachable that was not modeled after an archetypal and intelligible idea.[40]

This is the logos, the tool of creation, which is an exact replica -- the exact form of the intellectual process begun with God.

> It pleases Him that the incorporeal and intelligible substance should be unimpressed by itself and without shape, but be formed and shaped like a seal impression by the logos of the Eternally Existent One.[41]

For Philo, this relationship is the quintessence of his work. Is the creation of our physical world, though, the intended result or just the actual result? An answer to this question is less clear, though many have tried to solve this part of the puzzle. Perhaps the best answer to date is offered by David Winston.

> Philo's view that in contemplating the Intelligible cosmos, God is indirectly causing its shadow reflection, a sensible and disordered primordial matter, which he is constantly making to conform as closely as possible to its intelligible Pattern. . . . Philo makes it clear that all things were created instantaneously. I begin with God's contemplation of the Form of the void, which results in the simultaneous and automatic projection of its shadowy image. This in turn is something qualityless that is relatively non-existent and stands wondrously poised on the very frontier between the intelligible and the corporeal.[42]

In bridging the gap between the conceptual world and the corporeal world, this qualityless medium is given a logical structure. It is ordered by the powers of the logos in congruence with the pre-created forms. "Primordial matter is thus only a logical moment rather than a temporal reality."[43] Every material thing that exists in the sensible world,

must have a balancing representational form in the intelligible world. This, of course, is true, even as to the creation of humanity.

In Philo's system, man is, at best, a microcosm. The heavenly man created on day one is really the generic form of man, intellectually resembling the logos intellectually, but possessed of a physical conception that is both male and female yet neither male nor female. The separation and distinction exist only in the world of the senses.

The flesh is a lowly part of the corporeal world, but the mind is part of the divine intellect. Our goal is to transcend the desires of the former to concentrate on fulfilling the needs of the latter. Employment of reason is the best method.

> Wisdom is a straight high road. When the mind's course is along that road, it reaches the goal -- the knowledge of God. Every comrade of the flesh hates and rejects this part and seeks to corrupt it. For there are no two things so utterly opposed as knowledge and pleasure of the flesh.[44]

Our body belongs to the world of the senses, the material world. It possesses base sensual needs (nourishment, sexuality, hygene, etc.) which though very strong, are unhealthy in the macrocosm. It is fair to say that the needs of the body detract from the purity of the soul. Our soul, our reason, which is really part of the divine logos, gives us the potential to dwell in the spiritual realm of forms. It is in this way that Moses achieved all which Philo attributes to him. The individual's goal should be to seek freedom from the baseness and the bodily prison in the material world and the ability to reach out for the Soul of the Universe.

> [The very seeking,] even if we fail to make the discovery, the very search is intrinsically useful and an object of deserved ambition; since no one ever blames the eyes of the body, because when unable to see the sun itself, they see the emanation of its rays as it reaches the earth, which is but the extremity of the brightness which the beams of the sun give forth.[45]

This striving for ascension would be akin to a run at immortality. When literal death takes place, it is only the body that dies. The soul -- the intellect -- takes permanent residence in the intelligible world, reabsorbed into the universal soul. There is some discussion amongst Philonic scholars which speak of a reincarnational system of Philo whereby one's soul ascends or descends through the variety of life forms on earth before it reaches its destination of unification with the divine soul. None the less, this is Philo's ultimate goal of religion: to encourage humanity to rise above corporeality and achieve this vision of God.

Before we can really embark on the topic of the next subchapter, it might help to recap and synopsize the nature of Philo's philosophy.

> (1) God in Himself is transcendent to the universe and to all qualities which man's mind is capable of conceiving. He is "superior to virtue, superior to knowledge, superior to the good itself and the beautiful itself"; (2) God created the ideas as the "patterns" and "powers" of all existing things and the logos as the all-embracing instrument containing them, operating them, and modifying them at will; (3) God, through the Logos, rules the world, changing the laws of nature at will. "Like a charioteer, grasping the reins, or a pilot the tiller, He guides all things in whatsoever direction He pleases, as law and right demand. . . ."[46]

C: MI-CHAMOCHA BA-ELIM ADONAI?

Are there really more Gods than just the one? When one compares the Godhead of the religions of the world, one is struck by two notions. First, God teaches essentially the same lessons in all norantive religions. Second, the members of each individual religion refuse to acknowledge the first point. Unfortunately, this dilemma is not unique to disputes amongst the various religions. It is alive and well within the confines of a religion as well. Withing the Jewish view, many different views of God exist. A large number of

Jews refuse to acknowledge that any view but one is Jewish. all other teaching according to the hareidim are foreign and anti-Torah, even where the view seems to come from the Torah itself. These views are developed after lifetime incestments into the search for truth and the nature of God. Giving up the work of a lifetime is dificult, but those who can incorporate the truths of the world into their own point of view, are of a higher degree of faith.

For Philo, this was as much a standard and flag, as it was the basis for his entire religious search. Perhaps this is why he has been so misunderstood throughout the ages. This subsection and the sunsequent chapter will explore the nature of the Philonic God as opposed to the Biblical One or the Rabbinic One.

Philo's life was spent in pursuit of the divine. At some level, one might even say that Philo found what he was looking for. His writing is esoteric and beautifully poetic. The imagery of God, of the world, is unmatched by any exegete, save the prophets themselves. He lived at the same time as Hillel. Philo saw the Temple in Jerusalem thrive, and he was acquainted with the ways of the Palestinian world. What separated him from this world? The predominant view has always been that Philo was clearly an outsider. Where the differences might come, or how they manifest, we will save for the next chapter. What is evident, however, is that this dichotomy existed.

The issue remaining to us is the compatibility of Philo with the biblical tradition and the tradition of the Pharisees in Palestine, in relation to the issue of God. Can one really read Philo and the Bible (as understood by Rabbinic Judaism) side by side and see them as compatible? Seemingly, this would be a difficult task. A biblical text wherein God spoke to humanity, could not possibly mean simply that in the Greek world. When God spoke, to the Greek world, it was merely the intellect of God that spoke. In the עקדה (Binding

of Isaac) the מלאך יה' is read by the Rabbis as either God directly or an angel. For Philo, this is the intellect of God, the logos, conversing with the patriarch.

Amidst this diversity, one finds, however, that an interesting phenomenon occurred. Either the Palestinian schools and later rabbis had access to Philo's work and shared in some sense his calling, or they independently came to many of the same conclusions he reached. Earlier I have discussed the issue of the greater probability. I intend to revisit the point in the concluding chapter. For the sake of this discussion, the very agreement or disagreement is the focus.

Starting with a basic credal directive, Philo was convinced that simple faith is for the simple and philosophical faith is for the philosophical. Reaching the same conclusion, Josephus wrote his Biblical commentary, embellishing where he needed to, to bring the truth of text, as he saw it, to the masses. In doing so, he almost mimics Philo. In fact, there are those who claim that Josephus wrote his Antiquities with Philo's work open before him..[47] Maimonides echoed this sentiment of the dualistic natur of faith. He wrote that the Torah speaks in the language of man, in describing God, because most humans are not sophisticated to understand the truth.[48] Further:

> Every human being may become righteous like Moses our teacher, or wicked like Jeroboam; wise or foolish, merciful or cruel.[49] . . . It behooves him who refers to be a human being in truth, not a beast having the shape and configuration of a human being, to endeavor to diminish all the impulses of matter -- such as eating, drinking, sex, and anger -- to be ashamed of them, and to set for them limits in his soul.[50]

There is some evidence that the Chasidic master Nachman of Bratslav shared this notion as well. Two levels of faith existed,

> the simple and the didactical. His frequent exhortations to the life of simple and unquestioning faith seem to be in direct contrast to the spiral of constant growth through challenge. . . . The latter path was undoubtedly

> intended for an elite compromised of the tzaddik himself and his immediate disciples.[51]

Again, whether or not there is a common source for this idea of a duality of faithlevels dependant upon one's capacity to comprehend divinity, is certainly up in the air. To raise the point that this is a Jewish concept though, would necessarily raise the question of whether Philo's God concept was Jewish, as well. Was he the source, or were there other common sources for these theologians.

Having raised the question, it seems reasonable to move into an analysis of Philo's method as compared to that of the Rabbinic world. One easily recognizes that both take the extant scripture and interpret according their own world view and own world needs. In their application of their respective methods it almost seems as though each exegete refers to a different God. Philo's exegesis is grounded in the use of allegory. He did not invent the method nor was he unique in employing it as an exegetical method. Rabbi Akiva and the RAMBAN (Rabbi Moses ben Nachman) also employed the allegorical method to their biblical exegesis.[52]

Philo believed that it was more important that the life of a character have meaning, than that the character be considered historical. There exist no *middot* or other rules that require a certain methodology. Philo is not tied to the guidelines of a *Gezerah Shaveh* or a *Binyan Av*.[53] For Philo, Torah speaks not in hidden mysteries, but in mysterious ways available for all to see. The metaphors run through the book, taking the characters or situations as they are found, in the context in which they are found, and building the message from there.

The predominant rabbinic method allows for changes of context, and allows for secretive meaning. One reveals the hidden secrets of Torah only through use of the tools that God gave Moses at Sinai. It is not really a matter of taking texts out of context,

according to this method, all of Torah is in context. We are just not able to understand the context without using these tools. In both cases, the commentary provides an exposition on the text it discusses and/or a running narrative of the "real" meanings of the language of the text. In both cases, the method is the one prescribed by God as the appropriate method for understanding Scripture.

Introductions to the manner in which the various groups study scripture to determine God's will, having been made, we move on.. Do the rules elucidated above, apply when God is the object of the examination? Before attempting to offer an answer to this query, it might help to first detail the scriptural nature of God from which Philo and the Rabbis take their starting places.

The Biblical God is multifaceted. I have already introduced the varying names for God employed by the Bible. As such, it is not surprising that there are many different characteristics of God discussed in the text, as well. One thing is not at issue. The God of Israel is portrayed by both Philo and the rabbis as singular. "Hear, O Israel, יהוה is our God, יהוה is One![Deuteronomy 6:4] Interestingly enough, the Biblical text itself may not be so well defined. The God of all nature is Israel's, yet not two chapters before the pronouncement of the above line which has become the watchword of Jewish faith, we learn that other "Gods" do exist.

> When you look up to the sky and behold the sun and the moon and the stars, the whole heavenly host, you must not be lured into bowing to them or serving them. these . . . god allotted to the other peoples [as divinities] everywhere under heaven.[54]

In scripture, God seems to serve different purposes at different times and places. From the Song of the Sea, we have a text which refers to a hierarchy, not a singular God. "Who is like you, Adonai, amongst the Gods? Who is like You, majestically holy?"[55] God

has physical characteristics. God has a back.[56] God is jealous.[57] God has a mighty arm.[58] As we saw earlier, God also has names. As to these attributes, they themselves are not really descriptive of God, but of descriptive of that which is only a facet of God. Philo mentions specifically three powers or attributes of God. God's paramount powers are two - goodness and sovereignty. Through goodness he begot all that is and through sovereignty God rules all that he has created. Between them there is a third power which unites them -- Reason -- the Logos, for it through reason that God is both ruler and good.[59] God is good by the fact that God's dignity as ruler is made manifest, while He rules by the fact that his goodness is made manifest.

Specifically, I will point to a series of passages from the Pentateuch wherein we will be able to compare the various "Jewish" systems at work. The selections are representative of the various genres in the biblical text -- the various way in which the Bible depicts God and God's work. Certainly a plethora of other examples exist, however, I have selceted ones which are pertinent to Philo's portrayal of Moses as Philosopher - King. Where better to start on this journey, than with the notion of creation itself. The text of the Pentateuch provides for an orderly creation in which God creates from nothing, well, almost nothing.

> When in the Beginning of God's creation of the Heaven's and Earth, the Earth was in chaos and turmoil; darkness covered the face of the Earth.[60]

If anything exists, according to the text, prehaps three things: darkness (חשך); chaos (תהו); and turmoil (בהו). These do not represent anything orderly or masterful. Philo, of course, posits that before all of this, the logos existed, for it was the logos which matched form to idea (perhaps תהו to בהו) and created the world. There was order to creation.

> God judges in advance that a beautiful copy would never be produced except from a beautiful pattern and that no sense object would be

irreproachable that was not modeled after an archetypal and intelligible idea.[61]

In as much as Philo was trying to maintain a strict adherence to Plato's notion of the visible world as a living being, made in the image of an eternal ideal, he stretches Plato's boundaries a little. While this is a matter for another discussion, it is important to note that in introducing Plato to Judaism, Philo did not always feel compelled to place Plato's philosophy in a superior position to the Biblical text. Philo creates new norms in reconciling, but not superimposing one and the other. It is important to remind oneself, in reading the variations of Philo's exegesis, that though a devout student of philosophy, it remained the Torah that was sacred to him and not the philosophy. All tools were moldable in the face od the Torah, so that if anything were to suffer a compromise in theis melding of Judaism and Philosophy, it would always be the philosophical concept.

In his commentary to Chapter one of Genesis, Josephus announces that he will impose allegory and philosphy to the creation story, in the same manner that Philo did. Interestingly, he employs neither to the story of creation, leaving the text of Chapter One veritably untouched in his commentary. Rabbi Hoshaya of Caesarea (in Genesis Rabbah) seems to echo Philo in writing that Torah served as God's working tool, the paradigm upon which creation is based. His sentiments are echoed in a series of Midrash (also from Genesis Rabbah and RASHI) wherein Proverbs 8:22 is used as the basis for creation. Wisdom is speaking, saying that God possessed wisdom from the beginning of his way. "Wisdom" and "way" are used almost as theologic puns, basing God's creation (way) on the possession (wisdom), with the possession itself being the equivalent of Torah. The commentaries from the later rabbis do not all follow suit. One author asks why creation (torah) begins with a "ב", as in **בראשית**, the first word of the Torah. The answer he finds is that the letter is closed on all sides but the one moving forward, not allowing us to even

question what came before it.[62] Another voice, in accounting for the glory of creation, posits that God's throne, the name of Messiah, Israel, The Temple's blueprint, Repentance and the Torah were created long before the universe.[63]

With creation out of the way, the Torah goes on to discuss the rules which are to govern one's life in this new world. The Pentateuch contains directives. Throughout the text, Israel is receiving instruction on what they should or should not do. There is a perenniel dispute dating back to the writing of the texts which comprise the Pentateuch, over what the term *Mitzvah* means. To seek a simple dictionary definition would be useless, since it is reflective of specifically only one of the view points. The dispute is whether these directives are commands, precepts or conscience bound moral imperatives. The dispute is fueled by the manner in which they are used in the portrayal of Jewish maxim throughout the ages.

The clear language of the Pentateuch is "Thou shall not boil a calf in its mother's milk."[64] What is the import of this line? The text itself ties this directive to a series of warnings which seem to respond to an adjuration not to break the status of being *Kadosh* - separate from the other nations.[65]

Philo, reads the text very narrowly, calling in to question the sanctity of dressing a kid with the milk of its own mother.

> So that, there is the greatest abundance of lambs, kids and all other kinds of animals, the man who seethes the flesh of anyone of them in the milk of its own mother is exhibiting a terrible perversity of disposition and exhibits himself as wholly destitute of that feeling which, of all others, is the most indispensable to, and most akin to, a rational soul, namely, compassion.[66]

Philo's concern, however, is not just one of compassion. One who would cook a kid in its mother's milk, profanes the creator of all, by using the milk, which God created to give and sustain life, to take life. Especially so, since the purpose of the slaying is to line the belly of

a man who is more concerned with the fulfillment of his sensual needs than the sanctity of the blessing of life.[67]

Josephus does not address the issue in his commentary, except to say that Abel's offering was of milk and meat together. This is an interesting statement, given the fact that it was the offering accepted by God. Josephus makes no attempt to reconcile his comment nor to explain a motive for making it. Ignoring that the Torah itself depicts Abraham serving milk and meat to God's own angels,[68] the Pharisaic tradition, though, takes this repetitive directive and builds an entire dietary ritual around it. The rabbis understand the three time repetition of the directive not to boil a calf in its mother's milk as pointing to the notion that the verse has three applications. One stands for a command not to prepare milk and meat together; another commands one not to serve them together. The third mentioning is a command not to eat milk and meat together.[69] Note that the rabbis extend the simple statement to apply to all milk and all meat, even where the milk could not possibly come from the mother of the animal to be eaten (ie. the prohibition against fowl and milk being co-mingled).[70] The rabbis even differ as to the original purpose of this command,[71] but they are certain that it is not a merely a statement of morality, but rather a command which, if violated would cause one to suffer the punishment of being exiled from the community.

So what importance does this word *Mitzvah* carry? For Philo, the answer is found along moral guidelines. Torah had to be a multifaceted, poetic, legal, philosophic, prophetic and priestly document. Otherwise, he would have had to admit that regardless as to the issue of divine or man made, the wisdom of Torah would be inferior to the breadth of wisdom taught by philosophers. The *Mitzvot* have an intrinsic value, and are to be observed not because they are of divine origin, rather they are to be accounted divine

because of the perfect way they conform to the laws of nature.[72] In keeping with this, Philo credits Moses with starting Torah with creation, to show:

> The law corresponds to the world and the world to the law, and the man that is obedient to the law, being, by so doing, a citizen of the world, and arranges his actions with reference to the intention of nature, in harmony with which the whole universal world is regulated.[73]

Josephus' view is seemingly closest in line with the Biblical author. Quite simply, he states that Moses handed down laws that God had given him. The Israelites embraced the law, but there is no specific reference to the body of law and how it works in the everyday life. In as much as Josephus claimed to be part of the Pharisaic class, presumably he would have agreed with the Rabbinic position which I am about to discuss. The reason for mentioning this potential discrepancy, is found in the view held by many scholars, that Josephus' only tie to the Pharisaic community, was his use of their name. He did not represent them accurately in his work. He did not represent the zealots (who were thought to be extremist Pharisees) in an appropriate manner either.[74] Hence, making a call as to precisely where Josephus stood on an issue, absent his own words is a precarious task.

The place of Mitzvot (these commands or directives) in the life of the Rabbinic Jewish world is unmatched by any other aspect of the cult, ritual, or theology of the religion. The rule of the Rabbinic world was that the performance of Mitzvot is the absolute basis of all Judaism. There are disputes as to how much of this is a modern misunderstanding, and how much is really set in stone. In reading through the Talmudic works, one is struck by the extremes to which some arguments are taken. For the purposes of intellectual honesty, I must state that I do not believe the rabbis agreed as to the import of Mitzvah, or, at least that for some, while they could not be wiped from the Torah, they could be shown to be wholly impracticable, as written, though the may serve

some other intrinsic purpose.[75] For the purposes of this thesis, I will work from the assumption held by the Modern Orthodox Jewish world, that the Mitzvot were all intended to be followed strictly. It is the notion that this system is the singular direct truth of Torah, as the one immutable revelation which I seek to disprove. Very clear, though, is the tradition, if one reads the Pentateuch and the coincidental "oral law" as God given. There can exist nothing which is impracticable. There can exist no directive which one can choose not to follow. Moreover, one cannot rely only on the written text of the Pentateuch in arriving at the true essence of a directive, but must read the text in light of the oral tradition as well.

> Moses was told 613 precepts: 365 negative ones, corresponding to the number of days in the solar year, and 248 positive ones, corresponding the bones of the human body.[76]

The rabbis recognize these laws as governing everything from the slaughter of meat, to the wearing of linens, to making interest free loans to the poor. Moses was given the directives from God and faithfully and exactly passed them on, not adding to nor detracting from them.[77] The Midrash (both in the Talmud and in other collectives) places the authorship of these laws at Sinai, with God instructing Moses both by word and by action. God wraps God's self in a tallit[78] and God shows Moses that the wisdom he is receiving that day will lead to only more in depth study.[79]

Interestingly enough, there are two passages from the Midrash, which seem overly contrived and apologetic, as attempting to give credence to the theory that the law came from Sinai. They place Moses in situation which almost seem to poke fun at the idea that the Oral tradition really existed from Sinai. Certainly they could be read as having been written to justify why no one knew of this "oral tradition" until the Pharisees became so open with it. Believeing as I do, however, that the authors of antiquity were of sharp wit

and keen intelligence, the Midrash seems to contrived to have been written for that purpose.

Moses requested that the Mishnah be written.[80] This Midrash, which we will look at later in its entirety (page 125), includes a request that the whole Mishnah be written at Sinai, alongside the Torah. The Midrash calls the Mishnah by name, obviously referring to the already written text of what had been the oral law. This would include the arguments of the rabbis by name, and would if the Midrash is serious, make a mockery of the debates included therein. The request was denied, on the basis that it should be kept secret.

The second Midrash is potentially a little more far afield.

> The day Moses ascended to Mount Nebo, he taught all the Midrash and all the laws [to Israel]. Some say: [this happened] on the third hour of the day he died.[81]

Fixing the time for Moses giving all of the law as right before he dies is certainly a convenient way of showing that no one had an opportunity to argue with it. In any event, as skeptically as one may or may not consider the texts, they represent that the Pentateuch is not what it claims to be, the immutable, unchangeable law from God. The interpretative process does a great deal to modify the simple meaning of the text.

God has given us directives. Granted, there have been a variety of ways in which these directives have been implemented or pushed aside, but they are there to be dealt with. In a similar sense, since the beginning of monotheistic faith, the method of the human approach to God has been varied. In the Jewish tradition, there have been roughly three basic methods by which mankind seeks to reach God and get God's attention. We have already examined one such method, that being the daily ritual, the following of these directives. Additionally, we are told that We attract the attention of God when we pray, and through our sacrifice. Prayer will be much easier to discuss in light of the different

uses of and importance of prayer. In some way, we have always been able to communicate with God for the purposes of petition, praise or gratefulness. In effect, the sacrifice is a form of such communication, but I will save that for the end of this chapter. At present, I wish to examine a comparison of the importance of prayer in the Bible, according to Philo, Josephus, and the rabbis.

The Pentateuch is filled with both suggestion to prayer and actual description of prayer. We read the words "Hear O Israel, יהוה is our God, יהוה is One." The text goes on to admonish us to say these words when we lie down and when we rise up. Absent any other commentary, the directive is simple enough. One is to recite this formula at set periods of time. This is a suggestion toward prayer. Abraham openly prayed to God on several occasions, though the text of the prayer is not revealed.[82] At other times, the text alludes to a prayerful moment.[83] Public confessional is required of those who brought sin offerings to the altar.[84] The first fruit offerings and tithe were accompanied by a set liturgical formula.[85] Of course the most well known prayer from the Pentateuch is the Priestly Blessing. The prayer is simple and erudite at the same time; as narrow as it is universal.

> May יהוה bless you and keep you.
> May יהוה cause the brightness of God's face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.
> May יהוה lift up his countenance upon us, and give us fulfillment.[86]

What was the nature of biblical prayer? Prayer in the Bible is individual and non-fixed (though the Rabbis will argue that there is a fixed prayer formula in the bible). Prayer is spontaneous and geared to specific episodic events in the life of the biblical character. Noah offers a blessing for his son, Shem, following a formula similar to the one adopted by the Rabbis. "Praised (ברוך) is יהוה of Shem."[87] Abraham's adjuration of

God, on behalf of the Sodomites could be considered prayer as well.[88] Perhaps one of the clearest episodes of prayer in the Bible comes with Moses asking to see God.

> Moses said to יהוה, ". . . now, therefore, I pray of You, if I have found favor in Your eyes, show me your ways, that I may know you, and find favor in your eyes to know that this nation is your people." God said, "My face will go with you, and I will give you rest." Moses retorted to God, "If your presence does not go with me, carry us not up further [from Sinai]. Wherein now shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not your presence that travels with us, that which distinguishes us from the rest of the people on the earth? . . .Show me your glory."[89]

God answered by showing Moses his back, passing before him on a cliff. I have singled this prayer out as representative of all spontaneous prayer, for it is the grounding of Moses' faith. If God will not answer this prayer favorably, Moses will not move further in leading the people.

Philo reads this text as being symbolic of the grandest of prayer. Asking to behold God's presence is a prayer for wisdom and the strength to use it to understand, more fundamentally, the nature of the world.

> Moses, the most beloved by God, besought God and said, "Show me thy self." -- all but urging him, crying aloud: "This universe has been my teacher, to bring me to the knowledge that Thou art and does subsist. As to thy son, it has told me of its father, as thy work, of its workman. But what thou art in Thy essence, I desire to understand, yet find in no part of the All, anyone who can guide me to this knowledge. Therefore I pray and beseech Thee to accept the supplications of a suppliant, a lover of God, one who's mind is set to serve The alone, for as knowledge of the light does not come by any other source but what itself supplies, so too Thou alone can tell me of Thyself."[90]

The prayer is one asked by all who look to religion for answers. In wanting to see God, Moses is acting as the paradigm for all Jews. The question is not, as the biblical text alludes, whether we have found favor or not. Rather, Moses assumes already to have

found favor, and now asks God what the boundaries are, which will govern his search. Philo here is more concerned with giving a purpose to prayer, than with the continued journey from Sinai. In fact, the need for God's presence to continue the journey is not even brought up in this part of Philo's commentary. God's reply is even more telling. The answer is universal and welcoming, informing Moses that an honest search is all that is needed to receive all that God can offer. Again it is important to note, and is evident from this piece, that this journey is not for Moses alone, but for all humanity. The intimation is that to ask more from God than a mere creation of God is able to comprehend, is a distraction -- a detour from the right and honest path.

> . . . God replied, "I receive, indeed, your eagerness, in as much as it is praiseworthy; but the request which you make is not fitting to be granted to any created being. . . . Not only is mankind, but even the whole heaven and the whole world is unable to an adequate comprehension of me. So know yourself, be not carried away with impulses and desires beyond your power; and let not a desire of unattainable objects carry you away and keep you in suspense. For you shall not lack anything which may be possessed by you. . . . The powers which you seek to behold are altogether invisible, and appreciable by the intellect; since I myself am invisible and am only appreciable to the intellect. . . . Do not, then, ever expect to be able to comprehend me nor any one of my powers, in respect of our essence. But, as I have said, I willingly and cheerfully grant to you such things as you may receive. And this gift is to call you to the beholding of the world and all the things that are in it, which must be ccomprehended, not indeed by the eyes of the body, but by the sleepless vision of the soul. The desire of wisdom alone is continual and incessant, and it fills all its pupils and disciples with famous and most beautiful doctrines."[91]

The prayer and the prayer's response is the basis for our search for truth. We need to know what our limits are as we continue our journey to God. Prayer, for Philo, is this very experience. It is an essential part of the journey from the sensory world to the intellectual one -- to the logos. Prayer is a journey through stages which the human mind must ascend

as it moves from one world to the other. The final goal is to reach, "the Supreme Divine Word, who is the Fountain of Wisdom, in order that he may draw from the stream and, . . . gain life eternal as his prize."[92] The prayer need not be articulate, it might even be silent, so long as it is in earnest.[93]

Josephus does not write about this prayer, but the rabbis expound on it. Interestingly they are split as to its merit. The responses range from a rebuke from God;

> *You cannot see my face.* Said the Holy One Blessed is God, to Moses, "When I wanted to show you my face, you did not want to look" (as it is written, *Moses hid his face*). "Now that you want to look, I do not want to show it."[94]

to a glorification of Moses;

> Moses' face did not shine with the first tablets, but with the second tablets it did.[95] From where did Moses get the rays of glory? Our sages taught; from the cave, as it is written, *When my glory passes, I will place you.*[96]

to a neutral statement that merely adevises Moses that what he asks is impossible.

> *You cannot see My face.* He informed him that it is impossible to perceive God's glory as it actually is.[97]

The rabbis have determined, though (as per the references above and their sources), that this prayer and response have ramifications greater than the episode from which it comes.

This prayer culminates in Moses' knowledge of God's presence, and it gives assurance that as the journey across the wilderness progresses, God will be with Israel. Prayer, in general, for the rabbis, becomes a set ritual, to be accomplished as a matter of law. Though unique to each person who seeks God, many felt the need to ensure a proper time and sequence for prayer. An entire tractate of the Talmud is devoted to the offering of prayers (Brachot), and there are a smattering of related discussions throughout the text.

What starts as spontaneous prayer becomes fixed by the rabbis. They take their

lead from two other forms of verbal prayer occuring in the Pentateuch. Both represent a fixed requirement for prayer, as the rabbis read them. The most notable call to prayer in the Torah is found in the farewell address of Moses. "When you have eaten to the point of beind sated, give thanks to יהוה, your God for the good land which God has given you."[98] While the text of the Torah is fairly flexable, in the *Talmud* this becomes a command for *Birkat Hamazon*, the blessing after the meal. It is considered a sacrilige to "enjoy the gifts of this world without a benediction."[99] Thrown into the mix, in the *Talmud* and *Mishneh Torah*, is the idea that not only should a blessing be said after a meal, but also before.[100]

The above formula really references a fixture in event, but not time. There is a reference to a fixed time for prayer as well. The line itself is only part of what has become the accepted rabbinic liturgy, though it is, itself, not a command to pray, but a command to observe. Specifically, I refer to the piece which always follows the Shema in the modern service. Therein is found the command to teach "these words" to our chidren, when we lie down and when we rise up. The rabbis take "these words" to mean the Shema, with this directive reminding us to say it twice daily.[101] Of note, the "watchwords of our faith," are absent in Philo's entore commentary. How far the rabbis go with this piece is outside the scope of this thesis.

Additionally, prayer is communal in the Pentateuch. There are reminders to gather for worship. These directives are geared toward attending the sacrifice, or remembering the Exodus, or the like. Oddly enough, there exist only few rituals in the Bible for which a specific liturgy is spelled out. One of the most outstanding of these is the ritual of Sotah, for it is the only trial by ordeal in the Pentateuch.[102] The priest is given a specific ritual (which is not so uncommon), but (uncommon in the Torah) is also given a specific liturgy.

> So the priest shall cause her to swear, and shall say unto the woman, "If no man has laid with you, and if you have not gone aside to uncleanness, being under thy husband, you shall be free from this oracular water that causes the curse, but if you have gone aside, being under your husband, and if you are defiled, and some man has lain with you besides your husband then . . . יהוה will prepare a curse and an oath among your people, when יהוה does make your belly to swell and your thigh to fall off; and this water that causes the curse shall go into your bowels, and make your belly swell and your thigh fall off," and the woman shall say, "Amen. Amen."[103]

Granted, this is an interesting example to select, but it does represent one of the few places in the Pentateuch that a specific prayer formula is mentioned.

Philo uses the Sotah episode to discuss not just adultery (which he does do in another work),[104] but the practice of the prayer itself. He uses the "stage directions" of the episode as the crux of the message, as he discusses the appropriate way which one who is being judged should be brought before God. As is stated in the Pentateuch, one should be brought to stand before God, with head uncovered.[105] This is to show that one's inner truth is open before God. Even were a wrongful act done, one should be judged not on the act, but on the intent.

> If in the case of a wise man who gives false information to the enemy to secure the safety of his country, fearing lest through speaking the truth the affairs of the adversaries should succeed, in this case, action which is not intrinsically right is done in a proper manner.[106]

In using the episode of Sotah to show how one is judged in one's heart, there is a nice connection between allegory and text. The prerequisite for the biblical episode is that one cannot prove the unfaithfulness with evidence, for it is known only in the heart of the woman, and potentially her lover. The only evidence which may be brought to bear is the evidence of innocence or guilt which will be made known only after the verdict.

For Josephus, the incident has prayerful ramifications, but he gives the text a twist. The biblical text says that the words which the priest is to write on the paper to be dunked

in the water are to be those of the curse just pronounced. For Josephus, the writing is supposed to be only the name of God. Also of note, is the way in which Josephus manipulates the ramifications of this test. The ultimate prayer experience is when an immediate response is given. For Josephus, the woman, "if she were unjustly accused, conceived with child, and brought it to perfection in her womb."[107] Without any other comment, Josephus leaves the reader hanging on this miracle which presumably says that the woman will become impregnated through the oracular waters. The biblical author(s) allude to a renewal or enhancement of the innocent woman's likelihood for pregnancy, but the text is not quite as strong in its tone or assurity.

The episode of Sotah has been preserved in the Rabbinic heritage, in that it was given an entire tractate of the Mishnah and susequently, the Talmud. Throughout the Mishnah Tractate entitled "Sotah," the debate persists amongst the Rabbis, as to what the nature of the offering to be brought for this ritual might be. The debate contiues into a discussion of which words are to be written on the parchment that is washed in the holy water. Of interest, is that fact that there is no voice in the Mishnah which agrees with Josephus. The debate in the Mishnah deals with whether the whole passage quoted above gets written down, only the part before the woman says, "Amen, Amen,"or just the woman's affirmation.[108] Shortly after the destruction of the Temple, Jochanon Ben Zakkai abolished this ritual.[109]

That prayer existed, is without question. As to what rules there might have been to govern prayer, well, maybe this answer is not quite so easy to arrive at. Until the time of the Second Temple, there seems to be no set regimen for prayer. A fixing of such a regimen comes with Ezra, the scribe, and the men of the Great Assembly who are credited with fixing the number of times one was to pray daily at three. This allegedly corresponds

to the three sacrificial times of the day. It is not until the destruction of the Temple, though, that these times for prayer became acceptable substitutes for the sacrifices.[110]

Language of prayer and the times of worshipped all become fixed, and of course, all are based in law not found directly in the Pentateuch. The standardization of prayer is a rabbinic creation, which is thrown back into the scripture. From the many places in the scriptural text which requires one to serve God, we interpret this to mean prayer.[111] Echoing Maimonides,[112] Chabad Chasidism has its basis in the belief that the idea of prayer is the foundation of all of Torah.

All of this presumes, however, that the sacrificial cult is no longer viable. Sacrifice is the last of the forms of prayer introduced by the biblical author(s). There are specifically listed over sixty (60) Temple offerings and sacrifices.[113] These are the sacrifices illuminated by Torah, to be completed during or for a day or occasion. Whether these sacrifices are the spontaneous one's of the Patriarchs, or the formalized routine of Leviticus, it is clear that they existed. This will be the hardest comparison in this paper to make, if for no other reason, than the Rabbinic texts look at the sacrificial cult as a ritual now in the past. Tractates of the Talmud speak of the sacrifices, but all retrospectively. Their perspective of the cult is only historical. For Philo and Josephus, it is a matter going on around them every day. For the Rabbis, they are forced to discuss the texts in terms of what might have been or what might be.

There is, to be honest, some debate as to whether the sacrifices described in the Torah were actually intended, or whether the Biblical authors wrote them in as a reflection of what was actually taking place in the Temple when the text was written. I have already brought evidence to supoort a theory that these texts were authored by the Aaronide priests, so I will not reargue that here. I do however feel it necessary to point out where

the text of the Bible belies itself. The ritual practice in the Temple was set and strictly followed. As the priest would approach the altar to perform the sacrifice, and as he would do this, the greatest of biblical satire, tells us that the Levitical helpers are in the background chanting Psalm 50. Verses 12-14 of the Psalm provide,

> Were I hungry, I would not tell you, for Mine is the world and all it holds. Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of he-goats? Sacrifice a thank offering to God, and pay your vows to the most high.

The thanksgiving offering is one that is not given to God (burned), but eaten by the priests. So, as the priest is burning flesh on the altar -- the Levites are singing a Psalm telling him to stop.[114]

The Psalmist is not alone in calling the sacrifices into question. At least six of the prophets condemn the sacrificial cult. Amos, the earliest of the prophets, says candidly, "If you offer me your burnt offerings --or meal offerings, I wil not accept them. I will pay no heed to your gifts of fatlings." He even calls into question the veracity of the story of the sacrificial cult in in the Torah. He continues rhetorically, "Did you offer sacrifice and oblation to Me those forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?"[115] Jeremiah is clear as well, "When I freed your fathers from the land of Egypt, I did not speak with them or command them regaroding burnt offerings and sacrifices."[116] Isaiah, Micah, Hosea and Samuel say virtually the same thing.[117] It is difficult to say for sure what the real intent of the biblical author(s) might have been.

Whether the abundance of sacrifices is actually a mocking of the system or an actual legal codification is normally not of sufficient concern that one (even if believing the text to be a statement against the ritual) would normally discuss it. It is an issue here, because Philo takes an approach similar to that of the prophets. Philo writes amidst the time of the cult. His use of the Tabernacle or the sacrifice as allegory is especially

important to look at, because, at one level, it denies the actual Jewish world going on around him. Further, Philo was witness to a Jewish sacrificial cult in his own homeland. After the legitimate high priest had lost the office in the rise of the Syrian Greek presence in Jerusalem (the Maccabee story), the high priest's son went to Leontopolis, where he established a sacrificial cult which ran as did the Jerusalem cult, and even past the date of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Though technically a violation of the prohibition against offering sacrifices outside of Jerusalem,[118] "the rabbis acknowledged its legitimacy, but they never denounced it as wholly sinful."[119]

For Philo, the tabernacle is clearly metaphoric at best. The tabernacle is the source of wisdom, it is almost wisdom itself.

> Do you not see that also when [Moses] received the tabernacle from God, and this tabernacle is wisdom, in which the wise man tabernacles and, dwells, he fixed it firmly and built it up strongly, not in the body but out of it . . *And it was called the tabernacle of testimony* (Exodus 33:7); that is to say wisdom was borne witness to by God.[120]

Philo adds:

> Let us then look upon the tabernacle and the altar as ideas, the one being the idea of incorporeal virtue, and the other as an emblem of an image of it. which is perceptible by the outward senses.[121]

The altar is the visible virtue, as it is seen by the people, the tabernacle and everything inside is hidden from sight. Only one of utmost purity can transcend the visible to the invisible. In essence the tabernacle and altar are waystations on the road from the base physical world (which would not even approach the altar) and the world of forms (to whom only the select few may enter).

Philo will also not specifically deny the sacrificial cult, since he believes that it is based on God's own command. It is abundantly clear, though, that he believes the act of

prayer to be more efficacious than the act of slaughtering an animal on the altar. In fact, Philo seems to be saying that the Temple was superfluous to Judaism.

> [E]very one of the virtues is a holy thing, but most especially is gratitude holy; but it is impossible to show gratitude to God in a genuine manner, by those means which people in general think the only ones, namely offerings and sacrifices; for the whole world could not be a Temple worthy to be raised in God's honor, except by means of praises and hymns, and those too must be such as are sung, not by loud voices, but by the invisible and pure mind, which shall raise the shout and song to Him.[122]

Additionally:

> Since God invisibly enters into this region of the soul, let us prepare that place in the best way the case admits of, to be an abode worthy of God; for if we do not, He, will quit us and migrate to some other habitation, which shall seem to Him to be more excellently provided. . . . [W]hat sort of habitation ought we to prepare for the King of Kings, for God the ruler of the whole universe, condescending in his mercy and lovingkindness for man to visit the beings whom He has created, and to come down from the borders of heaven to the lowest regions of the earth, for the purpose of benefitting our race? Shall we prepare him a house of stone or wooden materials? Away! Such an ideal is not holy even to utter; for not even if the whole earth were to change its nature and to become on a sudden gold, or something more valuable than gold, and if it were then to be wholly consumed by the skill of workmen, who could make it into porticoes and vestibules, and chambers, and precincts, and temples -- not even then could it be worthy for His feet to tread upon, but a pious soul is a fitting abode.[123]

Sounding very much like the prophets included in the Tanakh, he continues:

> God does not rejoice in sacrifices, even if one offer hecatombs, for all things are His possession, yet though He possesses He needs none of them, but he rejoices in the will to love Him and in men that practice holiness, and from these he accepts plain meal or barley, and things of least price, holding them most precious rather than those of highest cost. And indeed though the worshippers bring nothing else, in bringing themselves they offer the best sacrifices, the full and truly perfect oblation of noble living, as they honor with hymns and thanksgivings their Benefactor and Savior, God,

> sometimes with the organs of speech, sometimes without tongue or lips, when within the soul alone their minds recite the tale or utter the cry of praise. These one ear only can apprehend, the ear of God.[124]

Philo made his point clear. He states here, and in many places, that sacrifices are not prayer. As to his comments involving the need not to have a Temple, well, his intent seems clear. By suggesting that God can live in only one place is a blaspheme against God. In acknowledging the existence of the sacrificial cult, he admits that the relevent texts are really only suppposed to exist for the purposes of allegory.

The division of the sacrificial animal into parts is significant for Philo. the command to take it apart joint by joint must be adhered to so that when all cut up:

> the soul may appear naked without any coverings, such as are made by the empty and false opinions; and in the second place, that it might be to receive suitable divisions, for virtue is a whole and is one, which is divided into corresponding species, such as prudence and temperance, justice and courage, that we, knowing the difference of each of these qualities may submit to a voluntary service of them both in their entity and in particulars.[125]

Philo goes on to say that the purpose of "dividing" is to remind those who still do choose to sacrifice of the fundamental basis with which approach God. As to a corn offering, he suggests that, for those who:

> have lost the strength with which they were endowed by nature, whom those men have not imitated who nourished their souls on prophecy, . . . everyone of them knowing well how to knead and soften the heavenly language of virtue for the sake of making the intellect firmer.[126]

By looking at the nakedness of the parts, we see the very first fruits of labor, the seed, as it were, which carries God's blessings. In reminding us to separate parts from parts, God reminds us the significance of separating the elements from each other. God separates the species of creation between animal and vegetation and then between themselves. Woman is separated from man.

> For the Creator divided our soul and our limbs in the middle, so also, in the same manner, did he divide the essence of the universe when He made the world.[127]

Philo's next hurdle to overcome in changing the sacrifice that was into the allegory that should be, is that of justifying the animals specified for the sacrifices. He mentions specifically the species singled out in the Pentateuch, as opposed to all others.

> God chose only two classes out of them (the birds) all, the turtle dove and the pigeon: by nature the pigeon is the most gentle of all those birds which are domesticated and gregarious, and the turtle dove the most gentle of those which love solitude. . . . He selected these especially as the best -- the oxen, sheep, and goat; for these are the most gentle and manageable of all animals. . . .And the victims must be whole and without blemish, . . . to teach the Jews by this [regimen] when ever they went up to the altars, when there to pray or give thanks, never to bring with them any weakness or evil passion in their soul, but to endeavor to make it wholly and entirely bright and clean, without any blemish, so that God might not turn away with aversion from the sight of it.[128]

So, only special animals may be offered because of their gentleness and usefulness. That these animals, being the perfect animal, must be of perfect form, health, and condition, is axiomatic. Likewise, the bringer of an offering must likewise be pure and unblemished.

Unblemished, here, means that an individual must be pure in body and soul. The soul is free of all passions, diseases and vices which can be displayed by word or deed. The purity of the body relates to "purity from all things such as a body is usually defiled by." The ritual is a burning purification for both body and soul.[129]

Philo understands the intent of the sacrifices to be not a fulfillment of one's requirement as set forth in a law in a vaccum, but as a reminder to everyone who serves God to first intimately know themselves and their own essence.

> For how can the man who does not know himself ever comprehend the supreme and all-excelling power of God? . . . our bodliy essence is earth

> and water, of which God reminds us by the purifications, . . . of what utterly valueless substances mere ashes and water are, is itself [for us] the most beneficial purification. For when a man is aware of this he will at once reject all vain and treacherous conceit, and, discarding haughtiness and pride, he will seek to become pleasing to God and to conciliate the merciful power of that being who hates arrogance.[130]

At some level this sounds a lot like some of the Midrashim which surround the notion of the Temple practice. Unfortunately,Josephus, the one person who could provide us with a current view of the Temple practice in Philo's time, does not do so. His descriptions of the sacrificial system are, however worth looking at in comparison to the allegory which Philo manipulated. Quite simply, Josephus writes repeatedly that the sacrifice was to be carried out as prescribed biblically. There are some minor deviations, but I allow for translation to account for those. In the midst of this scriptural commentary, is a note which seems out of place, given the strictness with which he adheres to the "letter of the law" in performing the sacrifice. It is as if one answer is given for the benefit of Rome, to let Rome believe that all is orderly. Then, however, he turns to the reality of the matter and offers:

> One may wonder at the contempt men bear us, or which they profess to bear, on the ground that we despise the Deity, whom they pretend to honor: for if anyone do but consider the construction of the Temple, the Tabernacle, the garments of the high priest, and the vessels we use in our service, he will find our lawgiver was inspired by God. . . . For if he regard the things without prejudice, he will find that everyone is made by way of imitation and representation of the Universe.[131]

Josephus felt compelled to show that the Jewish service, despite the criticsm was a universal practice. The stranger was as welcome as the local. This view, while it echoes the plain meaning of the Bible and even the allegory of Philo, is not really indicative of the law the rabbis will develop from this point. It will become the viewpoint that the worship experience is unique for Jews, to be guarded by the Jews, and held aloof from non-Jews.

Rabbinical Judaism accepted the sacrificial laws of Torah without presuming to need a rational basis for the practice. That it was part of the Torah which they claimed came straight from God, was enough af a rational to strictly accept the ritual as reality. The predominant view held by mainstream Judaism has really not changed dramatically through the ages. Sometimes rituals are explained symbolically, but for the most part, they are just accepted. They are acts by which man can show gratitude to and dependence on God. In offering the sacrifice mankind shows the most absolute trust that God will be appeased with the effort and intent.

There are other aspects of the sacrifices that the rabis look to, as well. Medieval commentators Abraham Ibn Ezra and Moses Ben Nachman (RAMBAN) write that the one who transgresses owes one's life to God. Graciously, though, God will settle for a faultless victim in his/her place, transferring guilt to it, as it is sacrificed.. Maimonides and Isaac Abarbanel, only a few centuries apart, maintained that the sacrifices were accomodations to those unable to break cleanly from the pagan religions of their neighbors.

> By this divine plan, idolatry was eradicated, and the vital principle of our faith, the existence and unity of god, was firmly established -- without confusing the minds of the people by the abolition of sacrificial worship, to which they were accustomed.[132]

By restricting sacrifices to one locale, God was weaning Israel. This being the case, there is still a desire that the Temple should be rebuilt, technically calling for a reinstitution of the sacrificial cult. The Midrash speaks to the hope that when the age of Messiah comes, all offerings would cease, accept for "thank" offerings which should continue forever. Though this would abrogate - mutate - the Torah in its strictest reading, it is the ultimate goal of the rabbis. Although the worship service includes liturgy which specifically asks that the sacrificial cult be allowed to be reinstated, the sentiment is against the practice/

From the time the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, other avenues of worship needed to be found. In so designating other forms, the Rabbis were not able to break the unbilical chord which tied them back to the grandeur of the Temple. They couched new methodology in terms of its replacement. Study became equivalent of to sacrifice.[133] Rabbis Isaac specifically declared it so.[134] When Rabbi Sheshet would fast, he described his act as though as he diminsished his fat and blood in the fast, it was being offered on the ethereal altar.[135] The ethereal altar which still was aflame with the sacrifice was ministred in heaven by acting high priest Angel Michael.[136] The Talmud dites a conversation between Yochannon ben Zakkai and a disciple who was distraught over the destruction of the Temple. "Do not grieve, my son, we have yet a means of atonement that is equal to sacrificing -- the doing of kind deeds, as it is said, "I desire mercy, not sacrifices (Hosea 6:6).[137] To this very day, in the Orthodox siddur, there exists a benediction in the Amidah (the 18 Benedictions) calling for a return to the sacrificial cult. The Orthodox service still includes a Musaf service for Shabbat and the holidays. This Musaf prayer service is in place of the extra sacrifice made on these days.

In essence, Philo's approach to reaching God, is one which requires an internal commitment. Although Philo's family supported the Temple in Jerusalem, he offers that those who seek to honor God in this manner commit a blaspheme. One can only reach God internally, not through external deeds or words. The rabbinic world will reject this notion, as it requires one to perform a set daily regimen as a sign of purity to God. For this reason, scholars find Philo and the Rabbis to be at absolute odds. It is, however, more apparent that they are not, for out of this ritualistic world will come the Zohar and the entire Chasidic movement. Many Jews will place a new importance on sprituality and return to concentrating on the inner sanctum of the soul.

In the final chapter of this thesis, I will tie some loose ends together, including the whole reason for defining where and why the rabbis differ from Philo? I will hope to answer the question of whether or not Philo's work is alive and well in Judaism. I offer this, Philo may be more present in our day, than the Rabbis who rejected him.

END NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. Isaiah 40:21-26.

2. Pines, Shlomo, ed., Maimonides: Guide for the Perplexed, (Chicago: Chicago Press, 1963), II:1.

3. Ethan Fromm, The Art of Loving, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956) . page 63.

4. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction, page 88.

5. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction, page 89.

6. Philo On Punishments and Rewards 122.

7. Genesis 17:1.

8. Samuel I 2:2.

9. Joshua 3:13.

10. Psalms 10:16.

11. Genesis 14:18.

12. Genesis 1:1 and Psalms 57:3.

13. Genesis 4:1.

14. Genesis 2:5.

15. Ronald H. Isaacs, The Jewish Information Source Book, (Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aaronson Inc., 1993), page 211.

16. Philo On Abraham 121 and On The Life of Moses II 99.

17. *Mekhilta Bahodesh* 5.

18. Arthur Marmorstein, The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God, (repr. New York: Ktav Publishing Company, 1968) pages 41-53: Nils Dahl and Alan Segal, "Philo and the Names of God" Journal for the Study of Judaism, 9:1 (Je 1978).

19. Zacharias Frankel, *Uber den Einfluss der Palastinischen Exegese auf die Alexandrinische Hermeneutik* ., (Leipzig: 1851), pages 26-29.

20. Philo The Special Laws I 30 and 198.

21. Philo On the Unchangeableness of God 30-32.

22. Philo The Posterity and Exile of Cain 167-69.

23. Philo The Special Laws I 34-36.

24. See further, Chaper Three, page 82

25. David Winston, Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria, (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1985), page 44 and attached footnote (7).

26. ibid., page 43.

27. Philo On the Migration of Abraham 8: Special Laws I 8.

28. Plotinus 5.5.10

29. Plato Republic 507c-509b.

30. Baruch Spinoza, as translated and compiled by R.H.M. Elwes, Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza, (London: Bell, 1884) "The Ethics" Book I. 15. 55.

31. Many Jewish authors will argue that God is uknowable, or that only an aspect of God is knowable. Philo's uniqueness comes in his pointing to God as a knowable entity, via logos, yet God's essence, an aspect of God, remains unknowable.

32. Philo Questions on Exodus, (Loeb Classic Collection), supp 2,258 lines 9-10.

33. Philo Allegories of Sacred Laws I 38.

34. Philo On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile 101-02.

35. Plutarch De Iside et Osiride 381B.

36. Philo On the Unchangeableness of God 83: The Decalogue 35: On the Migration of Abraham 47-52: The Sacrifices of Abel and Cain 78.

37. Philo Allegories of Sacred Laws II 1.

38. Philo On Abraham 21.

39. David Winston, Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria, pages 16-17.

40. Philo On the Creation 16.

41. Philo Questions on Exodus 122.

42. David Winston, Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria, page 47.

43. ibid., 48.

44. Philo On the Unchangeableness of God 143.

45. Philo The Special Laws I 40.

46. Jacob B. Agus, The Evolution of Jewish Thought, (London: Ram's Horn Books Abelard - Schuman, 1959), page 89.

47. Norman Bentwich, Josephus, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1914) page 230.

48. Maimonides *Mishneh Torah*: Knowledge, "Basic Principles" 1. 9.

49. ibid., "Repentance" 3. 2.

50. Maimonides, Guide for the Perplexed III. 8.

51. David Winston, Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria, pages 60-61.

52. Edward Greenstein, "Medieval Bible Commentaries" edited by Barry Holtz, Back to the Sources (New York: A Touchstone Book Simon and Schuster, 1984), page 254.

53. These are terms for Hermeneutical tools utilized by the early Rabbinic schools in fashioning their Midrash and sermons. Specifically, they are terms to designate special methods in manipulating text for comparison or explanatory purposes.

54. Deuteronomy 4:19-20.

55. Exodus 15:11.

56. ibid., 33:23.

57. ibid., 34:6-7 and 34:14.

58. ibid., 32:11.

59. Philo Questions on Exodus 67.

60. Genesis 1:1-2.

61. Philo, On the Creation 16.

62. *Breishit Rabbah* 1:10.

63. ibid., 1:4, but see also *Pirke Avot* 5:6 wherein the text describes ten (10) things that were created before the first Sabbath. These items are the ones that appear in the Biblical text or rabbinic legend without any previous warning or history. They are te hole in the earth which swallowed Korach, the well of water which follows Israel through the wilderness, the mouth of balaam's donkey which speaks, the rainbow, the manna which descended from heaven to feed Israel in the wilderness, the staff which Aaron turned into a snake, the worm which eats stone, allowing Solomon to build the Temple, the Torah, the inscription which was to engraved onto the tablets, and the tablets upon which the inscritptionwas to be engraved.

64. Exodus 23:19; 34:26 and Deuteronomy 14:21.

65. Exodus 34:12 - 26.

66. Philo On the Virtues 144.

67. ibid., 142-144.

68. Gensis 18:8

69. There is a joke which I am always reminded of, when discussing the three times the Torah utters the command not to boil a calf in its mother's milk:

God: Do not boil a calf inits mother's milk.
Moses: So, we can't cook milk and meat together.
God: No, I said, don't boil a calf in it's mothers milk.
Moses retorts: You mean that eat them together.
God: No Moses, Do not boil a calf in its mother's milk.
Moses: So, we wait several hours after eating one before eating the other.
God: Okay Moses have it your way.

70. *B. Shabbat* 130a and *B. Chullin* 113a.

71. Rabbi, J.H.Hertz, The Pentateuch and Haftorahs, page 318 fn. 19.

72. Jacob B. Agus, The Evolution of Jewish Thought, page 91.

73. Philo On the Creation 3.

74. Norman Bentwich, Josephus, 256.

75. See the discussion (pages 112 -116) of the *Sotah* water Numbers 5:11, where the point is not to declare a woman an adultress, but rather to free her from guilt or accusation by her husband, and to promote "*Shalom Bayit*" -- peace in the home.

76. *B. Makkot* 23b.

77. *Midrash Hagadol, Bamidbar* 16:28. See further Chapter One of *Pirke Avot* wherein the chain of transmission is discussed. Even as to this chain, there is some dispute. Orthodox Judaism maintains that the text portrays the nature in which the Torah (both written and oral) was passed through the generations. A close reading of the texts, though, easily allows for a reading that the oral tradition was created and enlarged by each successive generation. Oddly, this one chapter is used by both fundamentalists to prove the authenticity of Torah, and by liberal Jews to prove that it is man made.

78. *Pesikta d'Rav Kahana* 5:212.

79. *Menachot* 29b. Moses asks God to see what will become of this Torah that he is receiving. God brings him forward in time to the study of Rabbi Akiva. The discussion sounds foreign to Moses, since he does not recall any of these matters being discussed on Sinai. As he hits the depths of despair, a student asks Akiva how he knows that a particular issue is right. Akiva responds that it was told to Moses at Sinai. This Midrash too, is a double edged sword. While it is taken to show the connectedness between the rabbis and Mose, it also shows that what was being taught was absolutely alien to anything Moses knew of.

80. *Pesikta Rabbati* 5:5.

81. *Midrash Shir Hashirim*, ed. Buber, 13.

82. e. g. Genesis 20:17.

83. ibid., 19:27.

84. Leviticus 5:5 and Numbers 5:7.

85. Deuteronomy 26:5-10; 13-15.

86. Numbers 6:24-26.

87. Genesis 9:26

88. ibid., 18:23.

89. Exodus 33:12-18.

90. Philo The Special Laws I 41-42.

91. ibid., 43-50.

92. Philo On Flight and Finding 18.

93. Philo The Special Laws I 272.

94. *B. Brachot* 7a.

95. *Midrash Hagadol, Shemot* 34:1.

96. *Yalkut Shimoni, Ki Tissah* 406.

97. *Midrash Hagadol, Shemot* 33:20.

98. Deuteronomy 8:10.

99. *B. Brachot* 35a; see also *Itture Torah*, Aaron Jacob Greenberg, compiler and editor, (Tel Aviv: Yavneh Press, 1965), volume vi page 65.

> "The command addresses itself not merely to those who have satisfied theirhunger but also, and especially to those whoare habitually well sated."

100. *B. Brachot* 48b; see also Maimonides *Mishneh Toreh Hilchot Brachot* 4.

101. Deuteronomy 6:4.

102. Numbers 5:11 et.seq.

103. Numbers 5:19-22.

104. Philo The Special Laws III 52 et.seq.

105. Numbers 5:18.

106. Philo On the Cherubim Part I. 15.

107. Josephus Antiquities 3. 11. 6.

108. *Mishnah Sotah*, Chapter 2:3-5

109. *Mishnayoth*, "Seder Nashim," Phillip Blackman, editor and compiler, (New York: Judaica Press, 1963), page 329.

110. Chaim HaLevy Donin, To Pray as a Jew, (New York: Basic Books, 1980), page 11.

111. *B. Ta'anit* 2a.

112. Maimonides *Mishneh Toreh Hilchot Tefillah* 1:1.

113. Ronald H. Isaacs, The Jewish Information Source Book, pages151-153.

114. Plaut, Gunther, The Torah: A Modern Commentary, (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981), page 751.

115. Amos 5:22-25

116. Jeremiah 7:22

117. Isaiah 1, 11-13; Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6-8; and I Samuel 15:22-23.

118. Deuteronomy 12:5-6

119. Plaut, The Torah: A Modern Commentary, page 753.

120. Philo Allegories of Sacred Laws III 46.

121. Philo On Drunkeness 134.

122. Philo Noah's Work as a Planter 126.

123. Philo On The Cherubim Part II 98-100.

124. Philo The Special Laws I 271-272.

125. Philo The Sacrifices of Abel and Cain 84.

126. ibid., 86.

127. Philo Who is the Heir of Divine Things 133.

128. Philo The Special Laws I 162-167.

129. ibid., 257.

130. ibid., 263-265.

131. Josephus Antiquities 3.11. 7.

132. Maimonides commentary to Leviticus 17:7.

133. *Vayikra Rabbah* 7:3.

134. *Midrash* Samuel 1:7.

135. *B. Brachot* 17a.

136. *B. Hagigah* 12b.

137. *Avot d'Rabbi Natan* 4a.

CHAPTER V

SO PHILO WAS A REFORM JEW?

Our battle is only part over. Gaining an understanding of Philo's theology is only half of the issue, for what good is such a study absent a discussion of his role or place in Judaism. Referring back to Chapter One, we found the consensus to be that Philo was at best on the fringe, Jewishly. Azariah d'Rossi all but excommunicated him. To a traditional Jew of the twentieth century, Philo was not a Jewish leader, but an עם הארץ who preached to only marginal Jews. Interestingly, much of Christianity disavows his involvement in the church, as well.[1] Modern scholarship recognizes Philo's scholarship as a philosopher, but denies him a place as a great Jew who's legacy has been left to us. The predominant view is that when the Alexandrian Jewish Community perished, so did Philo's works for the Jewish people. I have maintained that Philo has been preserved in the tradition of the Rabbis. In places, it may be argued that Philo is mentioned by name. In other rabbinic texts, one sees the same symbolism Philo employed. Still in other writings, one sees that the rabbinic author sees exactly what Philo saw. Even where the author knows not of Philo, he knew of the Philosophy which Philo introduced to Judaism. These will be the points of argument for this conclusionary chapter. The very last argument to pose will be that Philo's influence is alive and well in Judaism of the twentieth century.

Before launching into any of these wrap-ups, I think it is important to re-assert the basic premise of this text. Philo's work was a mutation of the Jewish structure. Philo was joined in that status by the Pharissees. It would seem that if this is true, then no Judaism exists today that is directly true to whatever original Judaism was. The Kararites[2] may

be closest, but they take the Torah as it was handed to the Pharisaic leaders, and proclaim it is truth, without the oral law. This still presumes, that the text is cohesive and of one hand. I have previously cited to Dr. Ellis Rivkin's work, wherein he calls this tenet into question, claiming instead that the Torah is a progressively created document owing its creation to at least three different periods. The first was that of an original authorship which he presumes to have taken place at Shilo. Deuteronomy and relevent texts giving rights to all Levites were written during King Josiah's reign. The third period effecting the formation of Torah was the period of return from the Babylonian/ Persian exile. Upon the return, a new group of leadership began taking control over the Temple cult. These were the Aaronide priests. When the Torah was complete, and accepted as set, no new group could then alter it any further. So, to circumvent the Torah, this whole system was then subjugated to an "Oral Tradition" which the Pharisees claimed was passed from Moses at Mt. Sinai.

The Torah that Philo and the Pharisees inherited, then is already a result of a series of mutations. They both presume it to be whole and authentically given from God, and oddly enough -- immutable. Though, one could easily argue that anything they did, or said, contributed to the mutation of Torah. This statement would not sufficiently state the purpose, goal, or extent of their efforts. If we assume that The Torah they received (whether it be in Greek or Hebrew) was accepted by them as the absolute Torah of Truth from God, we can only marvel at what they did. For the Pharisees, the task was easy.

Judaism had been a religion with a Temple cult run by the Aaronide Priesthood since the return of Jews from exile. The Aaronides established themselves as the legitimately annointed high priest, by decree of God. They accomplished this feat by writing themselves into the Pentateuch, into the wilderness journey. The key story which

substantiates their unique right to perform the rites involving the altar was that of the rebellion of Korach.[3] In placing their own imprint on the text, they undermined any other claim to the right to perform the rituals of the Temple cult, and over turn even the very annointment of Joshua as leader and new sole prophet.[4] In establishing their right of succession, the authors were careful to note the lineal relationship of Aaron to Eleazar and Eleazar to Phineas, who received the blessing of the Priesthood forever.[5] Further still, they traced the lineage of Aaron right down to Ezra's time, being careful to go through Zadok, the individual who was held on high as priest by Ezekiel and to whom the Sadducees trace their allegience (and their name).[6] The Aaronides did not recognize a two-fold law. There exists no mention of a two-fold law in the Pentateuch (without stretching the plain meanings of the writings to extremes).

The two-fold law developed out of the Hellenization of Judea under Antiochus IV. Jason bought the priesthood away from the last contiguous legitimate priest, Onias III, all but leading the Syrians to the altar of the Temple. Prior to this event, the position of *Kohen Gadol* was traceable directly through the lineage of Zadok, and hence through Aaron.. When Jason bought the Priesthood, the chain of descent was broken, and the position no longer passed in accordance with the decree from God: along the lineage of Aaron. The effect of this was that the entire ritual system of the Pentateuch failed. One could no longer put complete faith in the Aaronide system. How could one not anointed by God enter the Holy of Holies and gain expiation on behalf of the masses? More importantly, the moment that such an event occurred, one would have had to question the efficacy and "Godliness" of such a system, anyway.

Hellenism in Palestine was an intrusion of foreign will on the already stable populous. This intrusion brought about its rejection and the revolt of the Hasmoneans.

Oddly, it is most likely Hellenism which is responsible for the downfall of the Priesthood in Palestine. With the influx of foreign power and influence in Palestine, power struggles emerged. The Syrian persecutions caused a shift in authority and the political sale of the priesthood which had only previously been allowed to pass from father to son; generation to generation.[7]

The masses who now sought a religion which spoke to their needs sided with and supported the Scribes - Pharisees (the predecessors of the Rabbis). The nobility and wealth still operated in favor of the Sadducees (the safe guarders of the Aaronide - Zadokite system of Temple worship). Thus, with the Hasmonean wars, the Scribe - Pharisaic class and two-fold law first came into being. Though by the time that Josephus wrote, they did not yet have an iron grip on all of Judaic life. The struggle was one of class standing.

> [The Pharisees] have very great influences with the masses. . . . [The views of the Sadducees] are received by few, but these are the highest in rank and wealth.[8]

Although the revolutions were stymied and peace was restored, the Hasmonean High Priesthood was not legitimate according to the accepted ancestral requirements of Torah. To be sure, the Temple cult continued, but held influence only over Palestine, and weakened as the power and influence of the new movements within Judaism grew. The task of the Pharisees was handed to them on a platter. The people needed a new way.

Alexandrian Jews already had a 300 year head start when the Pharisees came to prominence. Early on, the Alexandrian Jews were not threatened as outsiders in the Egypt community. They had polis rights -- near citizenship in Alexandria. They even controlled land that held many of the larger ports in the city. The ongoing turmoil and revolution which began during this time in Palestine did not affect the Alexandrian community.

Indeed, there is some evidence that the Alexandrian community felt that they were far more civilized than their Palestinian brethren.

> That beauty and dignity of the legislation of Moses is honored not among the Jews only, but also by all other nations . . . In olden time the laws were written in the Chaldean language [Hebrew], and for a long time they remained in the same condition as at first, not changing their language as long as their beauty had not made them known to other nations; but . . . their reputation spread over all lands. . . . Some persons, thinking it a scandalous thing that these laws should be known among one portion of the human race, namely the barbarians, and that the Greek nation should be wholly and entirely ignorant of them, turned their attention to their translation.[9]

The Alexandrian Jewish community continued to flourish in its marriage to the Hellenistic world. Interestingly, this development flourished without the influence of Palestine. In fact, there is some evidence that Palestinian Judaism owes its development to Alexandria, as Hillel is thought, by some, to be from Alexandria and not Babylonia.[10]

The community felt free to honor not only the celebrations handed down through the generations, but holidays created for themselves as well. The life of Purim has transcended the book of Esther. There exists a tradition in many communities that calls for a "Purim" type of celebration whenever a crisis relative to Jewish destruction had been averted. Taking a page from this tradition, Alexandrians honored a holiday of thanksgiving to celebrate the day they were not trampled by a herd of elephants sent to destroy them by Ptolemy VII.[11] The only real struggle they had to deal with was healing the evident rift between what their hearts taught was truth (Torah) and what their heads thought to be truth (Platonic philosophy). I find it interesting that no party to this struggle refers to an oral or twofold lawin reconciling this struggle.

Having distinguished the two environements, we move now to the relationships between them. It is clear that the Palestinians knew of Philo, he had been welcomed as a

dignitary in Jerusalem. If we assume news travelled at all in those days, people knew of his embassy to Caligula to forestall the Emperor's sponsored pogrommic legislation. It is clear, at least that Josephus knew of Philo. Josephus wrote of this embassy in detail, and referred to Philo as its leader. Josephus was also aware of Philo's works, and was influenced by them.

> Perhaps [Josephus] had become acquainted, either at Alexandria or Rome, with Philo's *Life of Moses*, which was a popular text-book, so to speak, of universal Judaism. Certain it is that the prelude to the antiquities is reminiscent of the earlier treatise. Josephus reproduces Philo's idea that Moses began his legislation not as other law givers "with the detailed enactments, contracts, and other rules between one man and another, but by raising men's minds upwards to regard God and his creation."[12]

Josephus claimed to be a Pharisee. Whether he was or not has been previously discussed, but it is important to note, that if Josephus was a mainstream Pharisee, and used Philo's work, a whole new light needs to be brought on the Pharsaic tradition. I believe, it is safest and most accurate to say that Josephus was a Pharisee in name only. Unfortunately, he is the only one claiming to be a Pharisee and writing during the time period at issue.

So, Josephus knew Philo. What about the Rabbis that came after, did they know Philo? There is a Midrash which exists which alludes to the Greek community, but not necessarily the Alexandrian. It is important to note here, though, for it recognizes the Greek translation of the Torah to be outside of Judaism. Hence, if Philo were known, this might specifically address his community, one which did not have the Pharisaic Oral tradition, and one which might better be excluded from Judaism, given the divergence of the tradtions.

> Moses requested that the Mishnah be written. But the Holy One Blessed Be He, foresaw that in the future, the nations would translate the Torah, read it in Greek and say, "We are Israel, we are the sons of the

> Omnipresent." The scales would be balanced [there would rise doubt as to who God's children really were]. The Holy One Blessed is He, responded, "I know that only that whoever possesses My secret is My child." "What is Your secret?" one might ask. God would respond, "The Mishnah."[13]

This idea is really problematic, in that even in the Mishnah and Talmud, Greek terms are used (for example *Sanhedrin*, *apikorous*, and *afikomen*).

At least one voice thinks that Philo appears by name in the Talmud and the *Midrash*. Citing to *Midrash Tannaim*, Louis Finkelstein (former Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary) remarks that Philo's name appears, but has been clouded by a misspellingor even if not misspelled, the intent of referring to Philo should ring clear.[14] The text of the Midrash is as follows:

> *And thou shalt speak of them*: Make them your main concern and not ancillary to other things; so that your discussions will be only about them, and you shall not mix other things with them, ***like P'loni***. Perhaps you may say, "I have studied the wisdom of Israel, I will now go and study the wisdom of the nations," therefore doth the scripture say, To go in them (Lev.18:4) and not to turn away from them.[14]

Finkelstein says the כפלוני (kep'lony)-- like P'loni is actually supposed to read כפילוני (kephilony) -- like Philo. P'lony is a commonly used term in the Talmud to denote a generic person. Finkelstein believes the rabbis who wrote this Midrash must have been referring to a specific person who had mixed other things with his Jewish study. While this would certainly qualify Philo, it does not prove that Philo was intended here. It would not only stretch the meaning of the literal reading, but would also require an emendation of the text. There are those in the tradition that have believed this to be referring to Elisha Ben Abuyah, who the rabbis hesitate to mention by name because he was a traitor to Rome. He is usually referred to as אחר (Acher), meaning the "other one". Finkelstein posits that if this Midrash was referring to Elisha Ben Abuyah, the appropriate term would have been used and not yet an additional pseudonym.

Additionally, he cites another passage which he feels specifically refers to Philo. Even he is guarded about this claim. "It is with more hesitation that I suggest that Philo may be intended by the word פלוני in another passage."[16] From a discussion Rabbi Elizer ben Hyrkanos was having with his students, Finkelstein surmised that the tone of the questions and answers were moving in one direction, until the students got to a crucial question. The passge from the *Talmud*[17] protrayed the students asking a question and Eliezer answering it with the same or related question.

> [His students] knew his opinion on each of the questions, but the wanted fixed norms which they could repeat and teaching the names of others, for each of the questions referred to a living problem. . . . It is clear that the question about the immortality of the unknown Peloni must have been prompted by something more than mere theological curiosity. It seems to me that if we read here פילוני or פילון (Philo) the question becomes more clear and important. There was no need for discussing the immortality of most people. Either they were pious and deserved the future world, or impious and undeserving. But Philo was an exceptional person.[18]

Whether or not one is convinced by this argument, it evinces an interesting fact that the search for Philo in the tradition is one which scholars have found necessary to engage in. The late Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, Rabbi J. H. Hertz mentions and discusses Philo's writings nearly a dozen times in his commentary, which is the standard commentary used for Torah reading in most synagogues. There are countless other references to Philo's work in the text, though attributed to (or at least read through the eyes of) other Christian Biblical scholars.

Many of the writings passed down through the Midrash seem to come from the pen of Philo, either directly or passively. They do not mention him by name, but as you have seen throughout this thesis, there are places where the two traditions seems to nicely meld. Understanding that some of this is coincidence, one still must ask if the rabbis really were

aware of Philo; were they copying his words for their own purpose? Were they copying each other? Perhaps copying is too ambivalent a word.

The communities of Alexandria and Palestine faced different circumstantial dilemmas. Perhaps both communities came about their interpretations separately. Yet, in the same sense that the Septuagint was thought to have been revealed to different minds simultaneously, so it might be with these divergent interpretations. Of course, in the same way that the Septuagint did not resemble the Torah it purports to translate, neither did the two communities immaculately reach separate but same inspirations. The problem that any fundamentalistic reading of religion presents is that it always presents one truth, and only one truth. That there exist so many different ways of approaching God in our world is a testimony to the narrowness of this presumption. The very allegories of Philo, appear in variety of forms in the Palestinian tradition's writings, though sometimes in a slightly different context than Philo intended. Hence, there can be both a Moses Tribal Leader and Lawgiver and Moses Philosopher - King, both based on the same texts and the same legends. It is the understanding of the lesson that counts. It has been well discussed and agreed that Philo did not copy from the rabbis.[19] This having been said, is there no remnant of Philo's message in the text of the rabbis? Do we only have Philo's words, but lack his allegory?

Though ignored openly (intentionally or otherwise), Philo did manage to gain preservation, subterraineously, in the Talmud and Midrash. Possibly gifted students were allowed to study the Greek texts. Such was the practice in then contemporary Palestine.[20] Where we see the real resurrgence of Philonic thought though, is in two forums which most likely did not take directly from Philo. Both most assuredly used the same Hellenistic resources as did Philo. It is the commonality of source which lends to their similarity.

Maimonides was a devout Aristotilean. As to Torah, God, and Judaism, he adhered very strictly to the Halakhic rules, but at the same time wrote very differently. His God and Philo's God are very similar. Philonic mysticism is also sensed in study of the Zohar. The transcendence of this world into a mystical realm where God dwells seems very much to be reminiscent of Philo's system.

Why were Philo's words not given the same status as those of the rabbis? Philo is not living in the inspired city of Jeruslaem. Philo does not speak of or deal with any Oral law from Moses. He mentions several times that we should respect the ways of our ancestors, but this is not necessarily a reference to a Mosaic Oral Law. In fact, he makes a strong case for the abrogation of the very rituals and systems which the rabbis strive to uphold and supplement.

As such, Philo is not a Pharisee, and not recognized by the Pharisees as an official sage. He is, outside the Halakhic tradition. His exegesis was not studied in any of the academies. There exists no *Mekilta d'Reb Philo*. Why has Jewish history so shunned such a wonderful depiction of the love between God and Israel. The same rabbis who settled the canon of the Tanakh were self-empowered to determine the fate of Philo for the future. Recognizing the dilemma facing the Pharisaic rabbis, Abba Hillel Silver was very careful to put Philo in his proper historical place.

> The Rabbis not only derived new laws from the Written Law by a system of interpretation, but they claimed to be in possession of ancient laws not found in or derived from the Written Law, but which were nevertheless also to be accepted as "the Halachah of Moses from Sinai." . . . To maintain a proper balance between text and interpretation was no easy matter, and the road of the Pharasaic teachers was full of pitfalls. Hence their repeated insistence upon a thorough discipleship, upon the study of the Torah under the expert tutelage of some master of the Law . . . The rabbis recognized the the limitations of the self educated scholar. He was in danger of missing that discrimination which comes only as a result of a long cultural tradition

> and a close apprenticeship with the expert bearers of it. This danger, may be seen in the case of Philo.[21]

The fact that Philo was divergent was not the only problem facing the rabbis. Divergence in and of itself is certainly a problem. Divergence that causes a shattering of the known world is an entirely different matter. With the birth of Christianity, Judaism was forced to undergo a change. Traditions had to be narrowed, so that there could be no mistake as to which side of the fence one sat on. Philo's words were caught in the middle. The church based much of its early doctrine on the works of Philo. Philo studied the philosophers and writers of his day. In writing his biblical exegesis, he used Plato, as it were, in the same sense that Plato used Plato. The earliest and most prolific of church authors, Paul, learned his philosophy not from diligent study, but from the atmosphere in which he lived.[22] In creating the doctrine of the new Church, he used the ideals he learned, but not necessarily in the context in which they developed.

The logos of Christianity is vastly different from than the logos of Judaism through Philo or the Wisdom of Solomon. For Judaism, logos is a timeless idea - wisdom pervading the ages. For Christianity it is the manifestation of wisdom on Earth; referring to the birth of Jesus. Philo speaks of a virgin birth, but not of one person, rather he speaks of virtue.Dr. Sandmel put it succinctly, discussing *On the Cherubim*.

> The goal of righteous living is achieved when man, observing the Law of Moses, thereby progresses from the sensible world into the intelligible world where virtue, piety, and wisdom abide. The result of man's reaching this goal is his attainment of spiritual joy, allegorically represented by Isaac. Joy is the offspring of its mother virtue. Who is the father? God himself. . . . God is the father: however the offspring that Sarah bears, she bears not for God but for Abraham. . . . So, too, in this passage, Leah, Rebecca, and Zipporah all become pregnant "through no mortal agency."[23]

The gospels take this notion and attach it to one human, not allegorically, but literally. The strongest connection between Paul and the writings of Philo stems from Philo's assertion

that Moses actually enters God's realm and becomes part of the divine. The entirety of early church dogma is based on Philo, albeit a misread Philo. The discussion of Moses almost becoming one with God (Chapter 3), caused the Christian world to assume that this was a discussion of God's acting -- through the facet of God now known as Moses, the same as Jesus is said to be just that part of God made incarnate. This would seem to translate into Jesus as the human part of the trinity that developed. Whether these ideas were taken directly from Philo or just absorbed from the atmosphere where Philo's work resided is up for dispute.

This is not, however, the reality of the text which Philo writes. For the Rabbis, this is enough of a threat to distance themselves from Philo. First, and foremost, to overtly preserve Philo's works would mean giving credence to the Christian world built on them. Philo would never have accepted Jesus, yet a misreading of his work provided the very foundation for the church. Certainly of interest to the rabbis, though, was the need to not perpetuate anything which might serve to perpetuate and aid Christianity. By doing away with Philo, this end would be served.

Seemingly, this would sound the death knell for any Jewish effort toward the preservation of Philo's work. The church preserved Philo's works, until 1644 when arguements started surfacing announcing that Philo's trinity was not in line with that of Christianity, but Plato.[24] By 1693, Johann Fabricus had detached Philo from Christianity altogether, displaying openly Philo's Platonic roots. It became apparent to one closely reading Philo, that his words were very Jewish, and not really the basis for the dogma of the church. Coincidentally, this detachment from Christianity coincided with the resurgence of Jewish interest in Philo that Azariah d'Rossi raised issues over, just a century before.

Oddly enough, this brings us near to the point of posing the two ultimate questions. We know what happened to Pharisaic Judaism. We only have to look at the vast legal codes that exist in Judaism, and the plethora of texts, to know it is alive and well. The first question is simply, "Why?" Why has Pharisaism lasted? I suspect that there are several answers. First, it was the standard as we went into diaspora. There has not (until recently) been a cohesive contiguously linked Jewish population, living in a free world, such that any designated change would have anything but a local impact. Assuredly there have been changes in the various communities. Askenazic Jews won't eat corn, yet Sephardic Jews will. Yemenite Jews roast sheep heads for Rosh Hashannah, the Ashkenazic sect rejoice with a round raisin challah, while the Sephardic group eat fish head stew. The Sephardic Jews covered their heads, the Ashkenazic Jews refused to. Now the Ashkenazic will not go out without their heads covered. The dialects of Hebrew spoken have diverged, as have the the liturgies the various groups pray. In essence, Judaism is really a conglomeration of variations on a common theme. This is true even before the advent of Reform.

Perhaps another reason for the longevity of the rabbinic tradition is its relative ease and source of comfort and hope. Salvation is attained through following clearly laid out rules. In times of hardship it is easy to revert to, and it is really not jealous of a normal lifestyle. This is especially true in times where everyone around, lives by the same standards, or in the case of the modern day, the commercial world works to accomodate special needs. Today, one can go to the regular grocer and find cornchips, canned soups, desserts, breakfast cereals, ground meats, etc. all bearing a seal of approval from some hallakhically approved rabbinic body. Were Judaism to change, what would it change to? What would it change from? Theoretically, it will not be until Jews either all live together,

or until a time should come when the ritual observance dies of attrition, that Judaism, as a whole, will experience a new mutation. Perhaps a rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, without the sacrificial cult, as is advocated by many Orthodox Jews, is such a mutation.

This is probably as good a seguey into a discussion of Philo and Reform as one could hope for. Though before I get any further, I need to insert a caveat. We cannot lose sight of the fact that Philo did not question the divine authorship of the Torah and its divine translation into Greek. As I compare Philo's philosophy and theology to that of Reform Judaism one must remember that this is so. Most Reform Jews do not accept the divine authorship of Torah, which of course, make sthe divinity of the Greek translation suspect as well. At some level, this is an important point to keep in mind. The comparison I make does not depend on the divinty or lack of divinity of the Torah's authorship. The philosophy and theology espoused by moder Reform would most probably be the same regardless of the authorship. There exists a healthy respect for the wisdom of the Biblical author(s) and the satire, allegory, and ethic which exists in the text is paradigmatic for a righteous life without regard for its divine origin. The difference that will exist between the Orthodox community and the Reform Community will develope around the literalness with which one reads the Torah and whether one accepts as a command what another sees as intended allegory.

Has Philo been kept alive? Well, yes. Thanks in part to the Catholic Church and in part to the rabbinic tradition, we have Philo's work, if not complete, at least extensively represented. Amazingly enough, in reading Philo, one has the sensation of talking with a modern era Reform Rabbi. Although Philo's name does not appear in the platforms of Reform Judaism, it is clear that the reforming rabbis knew of him. He appears in passing in some treatises, but substantively, Philo is not quoted. Perhaps, in ignoring his work, we

are reinventing the wheel, but Philo's mission was the mission of Reform Judaism. Philo was a loyal Jew in an Hellenized world. He made Judaism work within the framework of the world in which he lived. He reasoned that one could not be a light unto the nations, and still live separate and apart from them. It is this same reasoning which brought Jews out of the shtetl in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Abraham Geiger, credited as being one of the founding fathers of liberal Judaism, affirms this quest. He points to the Alexandrian Jewish community for the paradigm for the modern world.

> Alexandria had become a haven for the Jews who had been immagrating there for centuries from the wasted and impoverished land of Judea. Here and in other places, there came into being great Jewish communities whose language, education and ideology were a mixture of those of Greece and Egypt. . . . It was only in their religion that they remained in close touch with their native land, with Jerusalem, its center, and with the Holy Temple there. Hence these Jewish communties serve as the first example of a religion outgrowing the confines of territory and nationality.[25]

Geiger extended the issue to the modern world. We had outgrown the boundaries of Jerusalem, Israel. Though we look back to the temple, we must make wherever we live our Jerusalem. This must be done, to keep Judaism alive.

How does this Judaism govern my conduct in this world? It is a 2000 year old question, yet the answers which Philo gave, are the same answers we give today. In 1976, the "San Francisco Platform" was adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the American Reform Rabbinate. In pertinent part, it provides

> It now seems self-evident to most Jews: that our tradition should interact with modern culture; that its forms ought to reflect a contemporary esthetic; that its scholarship needs to be conducted by modern, critical methods; . . . We dedicate ourselves, as did the genrations of Jews before us, to work and wait for the day when, "they shall not hurt or destory in all my holy mountain for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."[26]

Philo was universal in his philosophy and theology. Torah was meant for all mankind, and our divisions and separations were only temporary. The hope for redemption is universal. The duties and responsibilities of Judaism are intended for the common good of all mankind.

> Throughout the ages, it has been Israel's mission to witness to the Divine in the face of every form of paganism and materialism. We regard it as our historic task to cooperate with all men in the establishment of the kingdom of God, of universal brotherhood, justice, truth and peace on earth. This is our Messianic goal. . . . Judaism emphasizes the kinship of the human race, the sanctity and worth of human life and personality and the right of the individual to freedom.[27]

Philo used Torah as an allegorical road map to God. The mitzvot, to him, were not so much binding rituals to live by, as they were lessons on how to guide one's life along a path of virtue. Likewise, Reform Judaism does not stress the deed of the Biblical command, but the intent behind them and the effect they may have -- impacting on the human - God relationship. At one point, the strict adherence to a command was considered pagan and primitive.[28] More recently, the rabbinate wrote:

> Judiasm emphasizes action rather than creed as the primary expression of a religious life, the means by which we strive to achieve universal justice and Peace. . . . [T]he Jews' ethical responsibilities, personal and social, are enjoined by God. . . . Within each area of Jewish observance Reform Jews are called upon to confront the claims of Jewish tradition, however differently perceived, and to excercise their individual autonomy, choosing and creating on the basis of commitment and knowledge.[29]

For Philo, the individual is absolutely responsible for designing a way to overcome the obstacles which stand in the way of reaching to God. The most important issue was not the method (ie. the Mitzvot), but the earnest search for God, itself..

> For if you seek God, O my mind, go forth out of your self, and so seek Him, but if you remain in the substance of the body, or in the vain opinions

> of the mind, you are then without any real wish to search into divine things, even if you do put on the appearance and pretence of seeking them. . . . The mere act of seeking for Him is sufficient to entitle you to a participation in good things, for the desire for what is good, even if it fails in attaining the end which it seeks, does at all events gladden the hearts of those who cherish it.[30]

Both Philo and the Reform rabbis recognize the need for communal standards. Both understand that this autonomy must be placed within a framework. An entire section of the San Francisco Platform is devoted to the notion of Diversity within Unity. The upshot of the section may be taken from its last sentence. "Yet, in all our diversity, we perceive a certain unity and we shall not allow our differences in some particulars to obscure what binds us together." What is it that binds us together? "We are bound together like all ethnic groups by language, history, culture and institutions. We remain God's witness that history is not meaningless. We affirm that with God's help people are not powerless to affect their destiny."[31]

Philo's words are a little stronger, but the point is the same, especially given the tone of his writings as to observance of Mitzvot. It is up to the individual to to decide whether or not to participate in the community. It is the community, not the individual, however, that is the bearer of the living tradition, transmitting spiritual wealth from generation to generation.

> Customs are unwritten laws, decrees of men of old, not carved indeed upon pillars and inscribed upon parchment, but engraved upon the soul of the generations who through the ages maintain the chosen community.[32]

This leaves us with two comparisons left to make. In truth, they are one in the same. The issue is over the nature of Torah and the highest good. Reform allows for a belief either that God did write Torah, or that man did. Philo seems to argue along similar lines. Remember that Philo said that God gave the ten commandments, but that Moses

wrote the rest. Regardless of authorship, though, Philo would feel wonderfully at home in Modern Reform, as the Torah is used to bring so many wonderful lessons to our senses. The tool which is employed to do this, is, in many cases, the allegory. How similar many of the wonderful sermons heard in Temples today remind one of Philo's poetry. Reform Jews may accept Kashrut to even a greater extent than did Philo, but none would mandate it upon him, and all would feel comfortable in discussing the calf and its mother's milk along the same lines Philo did, as seen in Chapter Four. The Akedah becomes an allegory for the trauma one feels when losing a child, feeling as helpless as did Abraham to stop what was already in motion, and the exhiliration that he must have felt when the child's life -- health -- is restored. Joseph's rise to power in Egypt does not have to be historical to teach of the dangers of jealousy.

The highest good is that which leads the straightest path to whatever that aspect of God is, which mankind is able to perceive פנים אל פנים (Panim el Panim)-- face to face. For Philo, it was forgoing physical pleasures to keep the soul's view unobstructed. For Reform Judiasm - "religion and morality blend into an indissoluable unity. Seeking God means to strive after holiness, righteousness and goodness."[33]

The saddest irony, is that Jews have sought God along many different lines and paths for as long as we have been distinguishable as a people. Our traditional liturgy even speaks of the differing aspects of God as held by the Patriarches. "The God of our ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Jews are the only one's who acknowledge any differences amongst us. Philo's message of universalism is not even shared amongst Jews, for Jews, never mind the rest of humanity. When it has been the way of the nations to persecute the Jews, they have not differenetiated one from the other. This is perhaps the lesson twentieth and twenty-first century Jews should learn.

Regardless of the twelve century battle that existed between rabbinic and Karaitic Jews, when Nazi Germany captured and killed the ten thousand Karaites who lived in Russia, they suffered the same horrible fate as the Orthodox Jews, who in turn suffered the same horrible fate as liberal Jews. In retrospect, even Jewish history makes no attempt to discern between the dead. They were all Jews.

For both Philo and Reform, the key is Torah and "peoplehood." For both, the creation of Torah never ceases, and when our creativity combines with the wisdom of the divine, a new aspect of Torah descends upon us whenever the search is made with integrity. Should it happen that we would be able to combine this integrity with a universal respect for the "peoplehood," perhaps the words of our prophets would come true and God would be one and God's name would be one.[34]

> [A]ccording to the proverb, "That all the property of friends is common;" and if the prophet was truly called the friend of God, then it follows that he would naturally partake of God himself and of all his possessions as far as he need; for God possesses everyting and is in need of nothing; but the good man has nothing which is properly his own, no not even himself,but he has a share granted to him of the treasures of God as far as he was able to partake of them. And this is natural enough; for he is a citizen of the world, . . . since he very appropriately has for his inheritance not a portion of a district, but the whole world. . . . Has he not enjoyed a greater communion with the Father and Creator of the universe?[35]

KEYN YEHI RATZON

END NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. Compuserve Computer Bulletin Board Service, Jewish Forum.

2. The Karaites are a sect of Jews who adhere strictly to the written text of the Torah, rejecting the Talmud and the entire oral tradition. The founder of this sect was Anan ben David in 760 c.e.. The verbal war between Rabbinic Jews and Karaitic Jews has waged over twelve centuries.

3. Numbers 16:1 et.seq.

4. Numbers 27:21.

5. Numbers 25:10 et.seq.

6. Ezra 7:1-5 and I Chronicles 24:1-3.

7. Exodus 28 priest is passed

8. Josephus, Antiquities 13. 10. 6.

9. Philo, On the Life of Moses II 25 -27.

10. Ralph Marcus, "The Hellenistic Age," page 132.

11. Josephus Against Apion 2. 5.

12. Norman Bentwich, Josephus, page 137.

13. *Pesikta Rabbati* 5:5.

14. Louis Finkelstein, "Is Philo Mentioned in Rabbinic Literature," Journal of Biblical Literatue volume53 (1934), Pages 142-149.

15. *Midrash Tannaim* 6.7 also at *Sifre* Deuteronomy 34 in its correct form.

16. Louis Finkelstein, "Is Philo Mentioned in Rabbinic Literature," page144.

17. *B. Yoma* 66b.

18. Louis Finkelstein, "Is Philo Mentioned in Rabbinic Literature," page147-48.

19. See Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction, page [For further discussion still, see Sandmel pages 127-34]

20. *Bavli Hagigah* 11b.

21. Abba Hillel Silver, Where Judaism Differed, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1957), page 125.

22. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction, page 149

23. Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction, page 114, for a discussion of Sections 45-52.

24. David Winston, Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria, page 10.

25. Max Weiner Abraham Geiger & Liberal Judaism, (Cincinnati: HUC Press 1981), page 161.

26. Central Conference of American Rabbis, "Reform Judaism -- A Centenary Perspective" (San Francisco 1976).

27. Central Conference of American Rabbis, "Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism" (Columbus 1937).

28. Central Conference of American Rabbis, "The Pittsburgh Platform" (Pittsburgh 1885).

29. Central Conference of American Rabbis, "Reform Judaism -- A Centenary Perspective" (San Francisco 1976).

30. Philo Allegories of Sacred Laws III 47.

31. Central Conference of American Rabbis, "Reform Judaism -- A Centenary Perspective" (San Francisco 1976).

32. Philo On Joseph 360.

33. Central Conference of American Rabbis, "Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism" (Columbus 1937).

34. Siddur

35. Philo On the Life of Moses I 156-157.

EPILOGUE

So, how does Philo fit into our world? He would probably be more welcomed now than in his own time. Certainly his idea of Torah and Judaism is mutant from the one passed to his generation in Palestine. His ideas, were no more mutational than the pharisees who opposed him and his work. His misfortune was his locale. Had the geography been reversed, perhaps, we would be walking around saying, "What oral law?" What a phenomenon!!! As strong as Philo's words were pushed away, both into Christianity and away from Judaism, two thousand years later, his doctrinal - foundational - beliefs re-emerge within Judaism and provide the backbone for now, not a fringe or marginally related Jewish people, but for a mainstream of Jews whose numbers near meet or exceed that of those who sought supression. Aside from the wonderful irony of the situation, the importance of the observation is unparalelled in significance for all Jews. A modern day Judaism based on a Philonic system is as authentic a Judaism (or inauthentic a Judasim) as the one called orthodoxy. Whether this realization will cause Jews of our age to be more accepting of diversity -- or more prone to be segregative and splintering, is yet to be seen. What is evident, though, is that, given the bevy of recent publications geared at explaining and reconciling the various "branches" within Judaism, the world will not be shocked by my announcement here.

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