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"ASPECTS OF THE RABBINIC VIEW OF KING DAVID"

Stephen Neil Levinson

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters and
Ordination

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1967

Referee, Prof. Jakob J. Petuchowski

To my parents

If this study has its
Redeeming
features, appreciation
belongs to the two who
shepherded the writer
through the trials of
Creation
and the long years of
seeking after Torah's
Revelation.

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PREFACE

In the writing of this thesis, the transliteration system of The Jewish Encyclopedia has been employed. In those places where translation was required, the author has generally followed the standard translations from the sources listed in the bibliography. Where no translation was available, or where it seemed preferable, the author has composed his own version.

Grateful appreciation is due the thesis referee, Dr. Jakob Petuchowski, for his supervision, suggestions, and expenditure of time in regard to the preparation of this study. It is an appreciation that extends beyond this particular effort and includes the several years of teacher-student relationship that have been so meaningful to the writer.

DIGEST

The character of the biblical King David was transformed in rabbinic literature. The aim of this study is to reveal the essential aspects of that transformation. In order to accomplish that task, the material has been structured around the organically related themes of God, Torah, Israel--creation, revelation, and redemption. The result is a methodological approach which yields an organized picture of the purposive history of Israel in which the rabbis believed. David is revealed as a symbolic hero at each point in this cyclical reconstruction of history. While he maintains some characteristics of his biblical personality, David's new image is broadened so that he represents the individual Jew, the people Israel, and the highest example of rabbinic thought and values.

The rabbis viewed Israel's history in terms of an original, harmonious covenant linking man and God. Man ruptured that covenant through wrongdoing, and the story of history is the story of the attempt to repair that breach and to restore the original relationship in a messianic culmination of history. This is the cycle which the rabbis have concretized and personified in the figure of David. From an unblemished origin, he proceeded to wrongdoing. The result was suffering and a confrontation with various types of spiritual foes. David's attempts to repair the breach involved him in activities of repentance, study, and mizwot, that is, in Torah. He was aided in his struggle for

return by merits and God's grace. The King's image as a messianic figure of hope represents the culmination of the cycle. Thus, David is remolded into a mythic hero of rabbinic Judaism. He is a didactic symbol who is so painted as to provide the attentive Jew with an example and a program by which to secure salvation for himself, his people, and--eventually--for all mankind.

CHAPTER I

METHODOLOGY

"There are, in the main," wrote Dr. Israel Bettan, "three central themes around which the wisdom, the poetry, and the admonition of the early preachers revolve. The majesty of God, the grandeur of Torah, the unique destiny of Israel,..."[1] Dr. Max Kadushin has recognized the same pattern in his systematization of rabbinic thinking under the organically related concepts of God's justice and love, Torah, and Israel.[2] These are not separate concepts subject to rational, philosophical exposition in rabbinic literature; rather, as Kadushin has laboriously demonstrated, they are beautifully interwoven value concepts which illuminate one another and give rise to a great many other subconcepts.[3]

To be aware of this triad of God, Torah, Israel is to bring an organizing methodology to bear on a mass of material that may have appeared chaotic at first sight. To be aware of it is to have gathered together the multi-colored threads of history and tradition, fact and fable, legal declaration and poetic inspiration, logical deduction and theological point of view, polemical bite and ethical insight; for, these are the warp and woof of the rabbis' garment.

This structure will bring order out of the chaos, but it will not alone convey a sense of direction to the rabbinic material. For that purpose, a second triad must be introduced: creation, revelation, and redemption. These three mesh with the first in such a way as to give the Jew a guide for living, a set path to follow. Their message is that Jewish life has a goal to be reached.[4] In brief, the two triads converge in this way: God, in his majesty, created a perfect (or, at least, potentially perfect) world, a Garden of Eden. Man has disrupted that harmonious creation by indulging in wrongdoing. The guilt, hardship, and evil in the world reflect the resultant, sad state of affairs. In truth, man's present condition is no more than he justly deserves from God as retribution for the wrongs committed, for the breaking of an original trust. All is not lost, however, for God in His mercy has offered an antidote to man's ills. The antidote is Torah, that gift revealed to Israel, which opens the way for man to put things back in order once again. As Kadushin expresses it, it is a hope which man should feel obliged to seize:

> Only by the study and practice of the Torah can Israel remain a spiritual people. The Torah is the covenant between God and Israel, annulled when all the commandments are broken or idolatry practiced. To be God's people means to be altogether absorbed with the Torah....Israel's acceptance of the Torah is, therefore, linked with their love of God....[5]

Israel, then, carrying the hope and responsibility of Torah, is charged to use this treasure to bring mankind full

circle back to God, to Eden. In other words, the task and goal is none other than redemption.

It should be made clear that this organic pattern was not a self-conscious construct set down as the theory of intellectual idealists. In fact, it was a natural, practical approach to the problems of the day--framed in a style that the average man could understand. The biblical text was the raw material through which the rabbis could range over everyday situations. The text may have lost old meanings and accrued new ones in the process, but this is easily understood once we are aware that the purpose of the Darshanim--in regard to the Jew of their day--was "to induce him to lead a religious and moral life."[6] Indeed, they did this admirably by making full use of the free avenues of expression opened up by the haggadic method. On one level, they gave sequence and order to conflicting biblical accounts. On another level, they did infuse wider meaning into the text. On a third--closely related--level, the rabbis used haggadah as a medium to argue out their differences with fellow Jews and heretics. It was an avenue for buttressing prevailing opinion and infusing into the text a moral and ethical viewpoint which may not have been present in the Bible itself. Finally, it offered consolations to the beleaguered people to whom it was addressed. This practical focus of the rabbis is summarized by Louis Ginzberg in the preface to Legends of the Jews. He says,

> The teachers of the Haggadah...were no folklorists, from whom a faithful reproduction of the legendary material may be expected. Primarily they were homilists, who used legends for didactic purposes, and their main object was to establish a close connection between the Scripture and the creations of the popular fancy, to give the latter a firm basis and secure a long term of life for them.[7]

In sum, we can say that the rabbis drew on the biblical text for the didactic purpose of confirming their statements regarding the problems of their time. From our vantage point, we can discern the organic, purposive structure that was embedded in that activity.

This cursory review of rabbinic thinking has been necessary because the methodology employed in this study of King David emerges from it and is dictated by it. The insight into the organic, purposive construction enables us to anticipate the general outline of David's character as the rabbis drew it. We might now expect to find the biblical David transformed into a symbolic hero figure functioning in the two-fold drama of God, Torah, Israel--creation, revelation, and redemption. We might expect a blurring of the lines of his biblical character in order to allow a repainting of him that would speak to "everyman" in the rabbinic idiom. It will be no surprise if a figure who looms as large in the biblical text as does David will be so remolded as to reflect the span of Israel's purposive history from idyllic, harmonious youth; through sin, suffering, and Torah hope; to a redemptive, messianic future.

All of this might be expected, not only because it parallels the general message which the rabbis wish to bring home to us, but because King David makes an ideal subject to sit for such a rabbinic portrait. This is a fact we will point up in our discussion of the biblical David. For now, it will suffice to point out that the David of the Bible will be of interest principally because he can be thus employed. These being our expectations (and I believe that the source material will indeed justify them), our methodology should now be clear.

First, we will look at the biblical David, the "raw material." After all, whatever they may have done to tailor or enhance the meaning of the text, the rabbis took it for granted that the Bible was the starting point for their discussion and the ultimate proof-text for their point of view. The significant data for our purposes will be the factual material which is picked up by the rabbis. Therefore, we will take note of those things which are told about David which provide a take-off point for later comments; and, also, we will note some of the things which are not said--since a vacuum was also inviting to the rabbinic imagination.

Having laid the biblical groundwork, we will follow the rabbinic cycle as reflected through the image of David. Thus, we will begin with God, creation, and the structuring of the harmonies of youth "before the fall," so to speak. This will be followed by an account of David's wrongdoing, the separation from Eden, the breaking of the harmonies that

calls out for remedy. Here we will see David in confrontation with his enemies.

It is the sense of predicament that leads us to an examination of Torah in its widest sense. Through David we will come to an investigation of those different factors which mark the route back to Eden. Repentance, Torah study, miṿwah, suffering, merits, and God's grace will be the major operative concepts in this part of our study.

Finally, we will turn to the redemptive culmination of our cycle. There, again through the mirror of David, we will discuss the messianic. It will, of course, be necessary to achieve a general view of rabbinic ideas on the subject in order to see how the role of David fits into the scheme of things.

One note should be added here; namely, that we recognize by the very validity of the organic concept that our division of the subject is an arbitrary imposition. At the same time that we proclaim the interlocking character of the material which is constantly "playing-off" one idea against another, we are dividing that material into neat catagories. This seems the only way of getting at our subject, however, so we can only proceed in this manner recognizing that the sources themselves make no such separations and that a certain overlapping may occur.

Our structure thus in mind, we are ready to examine the biblical David.

CHAPTER II

THE BIBLICAL DAVID

The concern of our study is the rabbinic David, and we have already seen that his resemblance to the "original" may often be tenuous, to say the least. Yet, the biblical David who emerges principally in Samuel and Chronicles does require some consideration. The seed may not look like the flower, but we should be aware of the former in order to gain some perspective about the latter. We can only recognize the rabbinic reshaping if we have some notion of the material which was reworked.

Our purpose here is not to reconstruct all the incidents, views, and characteristics which the Bible attaches to David. It is, rather, to take note of some of the major elements which attracted rabbinic comment.

The first thing that made David a popular subject for exposition was the heroic pattern which was already established in his biblical image. He was in the mold of the great mythic hero who first appears as a pure, innocent youth; who then faces trials and temptations and knows the highs and lows of adventure, accomplishment, disappointment, and hardship. He was one who experienced confrontations

with enemies and lovers. Finally, he lived with dreams and hopes on a grand scale. Here, then, was a figure whose life could easily be linked with the three-fold story which the rabbis had to tell; for, the characteristics mentioned here were present in the history of Israel, as well.

There were other compelling reasons for drawing on the David story. Above all, the rabbis--living as they did under foreign domination--wished to highlight the elements of faithfulness to Judaism and the hope that faith would be rewarded. David's name was already linked biblically to the Psalms, Jerusalem, the Temple, the age of political self-rule under Jewish kingship, and the messianic hope. What could be more natural than that the rabbis would enlarge and idealize these factors to drive home the redemptive message to their fellow Jews.

Even a cursory reading of the scriptural accounts shows us the problems facing the rabbis who wished to idealize David. For a progenitor of the Messiah, he possessed a few too many taints on his record. There was, for example, his own descent from the Moabitess, Ruth (Ruth 4:17-22). He bore a certain responsibility for the death of the priests of Nob (I Samuel 22:22). Willingly, he had joined with the Philistines who were to fight against Saul (I Samuel 28:1-2). The sin of taking the census was on his record (II Samuel 24:10), and--most glaring of all--there was the incident with Bathsheba for which an account had to be made (II Samuel 11: 2ff.).

These were a few examples of specifically mentioned sins of commission, but they were only part of the problem from the rabbis' point of view. Their heroic figure had to embody the rabbinic virtues, and pre-rabbinic David could hardly have accomplished that feat--seeing that many of the doctrines were yet to be formulated. These matters of omission also had to be dealt with, then.

The rabbis did not have to do all this patchwork de novo, however. The Chronicler, writing from the P code perspective, had already shed light on how it could be done. Indeed, he offered the option of a different sort of David whose "new-found" qualities could be meshed with the more accurately historic ones in Samuel. The biblical scholar, Henry Smith, gives us a picture of the Chronicler's approach:

> His David...is not the David of the earlier narrative--the man who shows many human weaknesses. Whatever throws a shadow on the great king is carefully excluded from the narrative. What is shown us is a great churchman, devoted to the service of the sanctuary. The account of the bringing up of the ark, taken from the earlier narrative, is changed in details so as to make David conform to Mosaic Law. The Levites, who are conspicuous by their absence from the earlier story, now appear as legitimate carriers of the sacred object...the author makes use of them to show David's care for the ritual; for it is at his command that the Levites arrange the companies of singers and of doorkeepers....[1]

In his Introduction to the Old Testament, Robert Pfeiffer makes a similar comment regarding some of the specific problems which we have mentioned:

> ...the Chronicler tacitly omits...whatever in the ancient sources casts discredit on David...with the exception of one sin, the taking of the census ... This one misdeed could not be forgotten be-

> cause it resulted in the revelation of the site on which the Temple was to be built. Nevertheless, in Chronicles it was not Jehovah (II Samuel 24:1) but Satan (I Chronicles 21:1), in his hostility to Israel, who instigated David to count the people.

Continuing his account of the pious, spotless character found here, Pfeiffer adds,

> The intrigues by which.../David/...attained the throne, David's treasonable willingness to fight in the ranks of the Philistines against Saul, his affair with Bathsheba and the astute murder of her husband, Absalom's rebellion,...as also other scandalous incidents, are all consigned to oblivion.[2]

While the literature provided the rabbis with one tool for change, history added another. At first blush, David is a bit too military to suit the Torah-centered image of the rabbinic hero. Closer scrutiny of the history reveals, however, that his activity led to the kind of religious emphasis which the rabbis could embellish and read back into the character of the king, himself. As Professor William Albright states it,

> From David's time on, the prophetic mission was closely associated with moral and political reformation as well as purely religious revival, as is shown clearly by the role of Nathan. It can hardly be accidental that the flow of charismatic energy in Israel was diverted from military and political heroes and leaders to religious leaders almost immediately after the consolidation of the Monarchy. Seen in this light the establishment of the Monarchy seems to have been almost a prerequisite for spiritual revival, under the conditions which then prevailed.[3]

The point to be made here, of course, is that the rabbis did not see the conditions as simply prevailing "then." They could read David's situation as their own. Another authority, Rabbi Leo Baeck, puts this rabbinic

characteristic in perspective for us again:

> Where the Bible spoke of what had occurred to a definite person in a definite hour, the reader understood it to speak of what occurs always. All biblical history did not only tell something, it also meant something. It did not relate what had been once upon a time and had come and gone, but something which happened long ago, but also happens again and again and is, for all the changes in place and detail, always the same. A particular story reveals, as it were, a grandiose drama which is performed over and over again; the masks are changing, but the protagonists and their opponents are always the same.[4]

Thus, the rabbinic viewpoint which pervaded all the biblical material on David and which made his reformation into a symbolic figure a logical act. David was himself, but he was the model Jew of rabbinic times and personified Israel, as well.

This being the case, we can look for an exposition on his early days that will mirror unblemished, harmonious creation and Israel's romanticized past. This will mean a use of the stories of his youth as a shepherd and sweet singer of songs. It will dictate a point of view regarding the lineage which the Bible ascribes to him.

Since the next step in the wider drama involves the loss of Eden through wrongdoing, we may rightly expect to see a use of those biblical materials that speak of David's sins. We have already noted the major items involved here--especially is the Bathsheba story significant.

In the wake of the sins come crises and hardships. The presence of the enemy was very real in rabbinic times, and the preachers wished to show that it was directly related

to problems of values. To do this--and to face the issue of enemies squarely--the rabbis devoted a good deal of time to David's confrontation with his enemies. The encounters with Goliath, Saul, Absalom, and others are all there; however, they were not totally appropriate subjects into which the rabbis could symbolically read the enemies of their time. They turned, therefore, to two of David's other enemies whose characters were open to easier reworking. Doeg and Ahitophel are thereby brought to center stage, and the two play a major role in this phase of the rabbinic drama.

What follows next in the rabbinic chain of events is the prescription for meeting the crises. Here, the rabbis pull all stops in order to make David the symbol of all those Torah values which constituted their program in this regard. Many of these values were, indeed, present in some form in the biblical picture of David. He had manifested a spirit of repentance after such incidents as the taking of the census and the affair with Bathsheba (II Samuel 24:10-25 and 12:13), and the Psalms attributed to him helped to substantiate this facet of his character (e.g. Psalm 51).

The qualities of mercy and forgiveness are also in evidence. Twice he spares the life of Saul, who is pursuing him (I Samuel 24:3-7 and 26:5-12), and he is capable of the most moving words of love toward Absalom, who had sought to usurp him (II Samuel 19:1-8).

Alongside the sense of mercy, David manifested a strict notion of justice--two qualities that the rabbis understood to be in creative tension. Punishment of the

Amalekite who claimed to have killed Saul (II Samuel 1:1-16), and David's curse on Joab for killing Abner after the latter had come under a white flag of truce (II Samuel 3:28-29), are examples of this.

We have already taken note of David's concern for religious ritual in Chronicles, and his openness to ethical admonition by religious authority in the confrontations with Nathan and Gad regarding his misconduct.[5] These, too, were positive attributes in the eyes of the rabbis.

Much was already available to the rabbis, then, for reshaping the biblical David as an exemplar of rabbinic values. Their exegetic techniques were quite capable of filling in the gaps so as to paint David as a student of Torah and a follower of rabbinic law, in addition to his other qualities.

The final act of the rabbinic drama was messianic, and here, too, the Bible offered "raw material" from which to work. There was, for example, God's promise through Nathan of an enduring Davidic kingship (II Samuel 7:8-16 and its echo in Psalm 89:21-38). Numerous prophetic references also make the link between David and the redemptive future.[6] It is an association we will explore further toward the end of our study, where we will also see the way in which the rabbis enlarged, deepened, and refocused the messianic picture of David.

We now have an overview of the Biblical landscape out of which the rabbis culled material to create their own

David. Now we are ready to look more closely at the source materials that comprised their reconstruction.

CHAPTER III

THE CYCLE BEGINS: DAVID'S BACKGROUND

According to the rabbis, David was the progenitor of the Messiah and a personification of redemptive history. For both reasons, his lineage had to be above reproach. In the first instance, it was important because it would have been unseemly and illogical were the Messiah to emerge with some taint on his "birth certificate." Regarding the second, it was significant because the organic view of history required an initial, harmonious relationship between God and man--unencumbered by sin.

The rabbis proceed to illustrate David's irreproachable background in two ways. On the one hand, they describe his origin in terms of a special arrangement with God that goes back to the very beginning of the world. On the other hand, they go to great lengths to show that there is no taint on his earthly forebearers as some had charged. On the contrary, his ancestry could not have been more proper.

The first part of this argumentation emerged from the rabbinic premise that there was, from the first, a man-God covenant relationship, a pre-existent Torah--so to speak--which bound both parties.[1] On this basis of mutuality, God and Adam concluded a legal, correct arrangement not open to contention. David's role was part of that original contract.[2]

In addition to this original link with Adam in which his status is guaranteed by God, there are other signs that David entered the world with a clean slate. From the womb he was destined for kingship,[3] and he was one over whom the evil inclination had no dominion.[4] The clearest way in which the rabbis could describe someone as being born perfect and without sin was to say that he was born circumcised. This was a sign of an unencumbered covenant relationship, and David was so described.[5]

These statements failed to meet the real challenge head-on, however. The aspersions cast on David related to his earthly ancestors. In Midrash Rabbah to the book of Ruth, the statement of the problem is put into David's own mouth:

> David said to the Holy One, blessed be He, "How long will they rage against me and say,'Is he not of tainted descent? Is he not a descendant of Ruth the Moabitess?'...."[6]

It has been suggested that this challenge to David's legitimacy was the work of Sadducees who supported the Hasmonean claim to the throne.[7] It appears to be a plausible theory, but--whatever the case--the rabbis are intent to shore up the image of a proper background. Support had to be brought in order to demonstrate that Ruth was a fit ancestor for the Davidic line.

The controversery turned on the passage in Deuteronomy (23:4-7) in which the Moabite and Ammonite are forbidden to enter the congregation of Israel. The rabbis resolve the problem by arguing that only the male members of

those groups are included in the prohibition.[8] They go further by praising these two stocks which were grafted onto the Davidic line and by noting that God's hand was at work in bringing the union to pass.[9] In fact, the words which Boaz spoke to Ruth are interpreted as a forcast that David and the messianic line were intended to issue from her.[10]

Other material is presented with the clear intent of enhancing the picture of David's lineage. Descent from Miriam is attributed to him,[11] and a tradition concerning the tribe of Judah and its Davidic, messianic issue is attributed to the patriarch, Jacob.[12] Finally, there is the slightly ambiguous picture of David's father, Jesse. In a midrash on the line attributed to David, "In iniquity I was brought forth" (Psalm 51:7), the tale is related of how David was the result of a mistaken union between Jesse and his wife. He had desired his handmaiden, but she changed places with the wife without Jesse's knowledge.[13] In a similar vein is the midrash in which David appears repugnant to his father because the boy prophesies that he will kill Goliath, destroy the places of the Philistines, and build the Temple. For this seeming presumptuousness, Jesse puts David out to work as a shepherd.[14]

What these midrashim tell us about Jesse helps to explain certain problem passages in the biblical text, and they reinforce the idea that the rabbis were also concerned over the notion that a difficulty attached to David's background; however, they do not give us the predominant picture of the man. Indeed, he actually emerges as the kind of fine

personality we would expect from rabbis out to glorify the Davidic heritage.

Though he was tempted, as we have seen, Jesse did not actually sin in the incident with the handmaiden. In fact, the rabbis tell us that he was a pious scholar who died only because of the machinations of the serpent.[15] He never was truly guilty of sin, and he will be rewarded for his conduct by being placed as one of the ruling princes of the world in messianic times.[16]

Having glorified the geneology of David, the rabbis added a few more touches to the picture of the idyllic, young personality so that there could be no doubt of the unstained record with which he began. These touches are found in the stories related about his years as a shepherd.

David used his early years to develop some of his many talents. He acquired the physical skills which history would call on him to use.[17] More important, he developed his attributes of sensitive leadership and humility-before-God, attributes with which he would lead Israel.[18]

The rabbis have set the stage. As they depict the opening scene, David--like the romanticized Israel which he personifies--, begins with a harmonious, covenant relationship that is not spotted by sin. In neither case will it endure, but it will continue to exist both as a memory of a past Eden and as the goal to be sought through future strivings.

CHAPTER IV

A BROKEN COVENANT: THE SINS OF DAVID

In dealing with the sins of the biblical David, the rabbis manifested alternating views. We have already taken note of their strong desire to "cleanse" him of his faults and glorify his image as a messianic figure. As we shall see momentarily, they brought great skill to bear in explaining away many of his actions. There was another side to the coin, however, and it dictated that some of his guilt show through.

David's sins could not be totally hidden, not only because they were so clearly stated in the text, nor simply to remind us that he was human, though both of these elements play a part. They were, in fact, necessary because David was an example to the Jew and a representative of Israel's organic history in which sin was a real factor. Without sin as a means to explain the oppression and hardship which the people faced, the rabbis would have been at a loss in describing the human situation. If history is more than a joke which God plays on man, then the evil in the world must have been brought on by men. In the rabbinic frame of reference, this meant that man paid the consequences when he violated the Torah contract which he had made with God. To explain the hardships in David's life and their parallels in Israel's

situation, it was necessary to expose the cause, that is, the breach of the covenant.

Let us turn briefly to some of those passages in which the rabbis endeavor to "whitewash" David.

The rabbis must first contend with the fact that there is blood on the hands of the biblical character. He bears some responsibility for the slaughter of the priests of Nob and is involved in such matters as the hanging of Saul's family for the Gibeonites, wars of extermination against Edom and Moab, and Uzzah's death in the incident of the ark. Most important, Uriah's death is on his record.

One attempt to counter this image of David is found in a discussion of Esau in Genesis Rabbah. Both were biblically described as "ruddy," which caused Samuel to wonder if David would also be a shedder of blood. God assures him that while Esau slew on his own impulse, David would not be a murderer since he would only kill by direction of a sentence from the Sanhedrin.[1]

The focal point of David's guilt was consistently felt to be the Uriah-Bathsheba incident. For this reason, the rabbis directed their major remarks toward it. Seemingly, if that could be explained away, the other defects would be of minor importance. Several different arguments are made in this regard, usually predicated on a nuance of rabbinic law or scriptural wording. The favorite ploy was to explain that all of David's soldiers were required to

issue a bill of divorce to their wives upon their departure for battle. This would have made Bathsheba a divorced woman or, at least, doubtfully married at the time of the tryst.[2] Another defends David by saying that he desired her but never went through with the act. This argument is based on the verb tense in the Samuel verse. A third approach mitigates the guilt by evasion. David says that he is being ridiculed for the incident, and while tacitly acknowledging it, he retorts that it does not bar him from a place in the world to come. Turning on those who chide him, he adds that putting one's neighbor to shame does bar them. As to the Uriah part of the episode, this soldier is also partly to blame, since he disobeyed the king's order to return home. Finally, it is said that Bathsheba was actually destined for David from creation, and his error was only in taking her before she was mature.[3]

There is another explanation of the event which is of particular importance. While acknowledging the incident, it also explains it to David's benefit. It makes a significant point which we shall have occasion to refer to later in our study; namely, that David acted as he did in order to set an example for Israel in the area of repentance. Obviously, we are told, David was not the type to perpetrate such an act. God had predestined it so that any individual who sinned and wondered if repentance was available could look to the example of David and find assurance that God would forgive him.

There is another aspect to this section from 'Abodah Zarah which deserves our attention, since it reinforces a

central aspect of our thesis. Throughout the argument, Israel is paralleled to David. As he was not the type to sin with Bathsheba, so Israel was not the type to sin with the golden calf; rather, she acted as an example to other sinning nations of the possibility of repentance.[4]

This linking of the two experiences helps to reinforce not only the identification of David and Israel, but also the concept of Sinai as the locus for determining man's sins. It is the breach of Torah that is of concern, and that fact is underscored in the lines that follow in the Talmud text. There, we find that the story is meant to illustrate that David was the one who elevated the 'ol of repentance.[5] Certainly, the 'ol is Torah, and the thrust of the statement is that sin lies in the breach of the covenant while repentance is available through that same body of law. It is a theme to which we shall return in later chapters.

Now, we can focus our attention on certain passages which make it quite clear that all of David's sins were not to be discounted.

One reason for this position may have been the very clear statements of the original text. That seems to be the position of the passage from Sanhedrin in which David asks God for forgiveness. A large measure of forgiveness is granted, but when David requests that he be declared innocent, God responds that it is impossible to remove a whole section of Scripture.[6]

Another reason for the inclusion of references to guilt may be found in the general penchant which the rabbis

demonstrated regarding the excessive glorification of any man. They seemed to sense the danger of deifying an individual, and they drew back from it. While this is a general statement which applies to all the guilt references in this section, an example from the Talmud helps concretize the notion. It is said that none were supreme in both Torah and worldly affairs from the time of Moses to Rabbi Judah Ha-Nasi. When an objection is raised on David's behalf, the response is that Ira the Jairite (i.e. his teacher, according to the rabbis) was with him, but he died before David. Then they add that this means that David was not supreme all his life.[7]

What sort of sins are pointed to by the rabbis? An example would be David's profane use of Torah passages as songs for entertainment; a jibe at those who made light of Torah, perhaps.[8] His paying heed to slander is given as the reason for the division of the kingdom and the resultant idolatry and exile of the people. All of this is related to his promise to Mephibosheth that he and Ziba would divide the land.[9] A further example concerns David's mistreatment of Saul, both in the dishonor of cutting off his skirt[10] and in the failure to render proper respect to his remains--a lapse that caused a three year famine to come upon Israel.[11]

An important sin imputed to David is his taking of the census. It seems likely that such an act had significance for the rabbis because of the way in which the census results were currently employed; namely, for purposes of taxation of the subject people. This is the implication of the midrashic passage in which it is made clear that numbering the people

was not in itself a transgression. Moses had done so for the proper purpose of dividing the land. It was the improper purpose which David had in mind that made for his guilt.[12]

Naturally, the Bathsheba incident is part of the picture of the sinful David. Rab, in a talmudic statement, is able to excuse all the mistakes except that which involves Uriah and, by inference, Bathsheba.[13]

What lent such impact to this particular sin, from the rabbinic point of view, were the implications which were read into it. This was more than a simple case of adultery and complicity in murder. It was symoblic of the change in character that marked the man who broke with Torah law. The implication was clear that what happened to David would happen to every Jew who violated the covenant with God. That change is spelled out in a midrash attributed to R. Simeon ben Yoḥai in which he expresses the notion that before a man sins he inspires awe and fear in others. After one sins, awe and fear of others characterize him. David is offered as an example of the principle; for, before he went astray he could say, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" (Psalms 27:1). After his encounter with Bathsheba, however, Ahitophel could say of him in the context of Absalom's rebellion, "I will come upon him while he is weary and weak-handed, and will make him afraid...." (II Samuel 17:2).[14]

The rabbis were reminding the people of the true source of their strength. The Jew could endure as long as he remained true to Torah. Indeed, such moral strength made

him a fearful enemy. Conversely, he was doomed to be a vulnerable, frightened subject by virtue of a falling away from Torah.

What we have seen in this chapter is the rabbinic confrontation with the sinful David. There were those who wished to preserve his untainted image and "interpreted away" the guilt imputed to David by the Bible. There were also, however, those who felt it necessary to recognize the guilt. It is the latter approach which made the hardships of David more comprehensible to the rabbinic mind. They sustained the notion that man's moral condition--his allegiance to Torah--had real consequences in terms of the human predicament in which he found himself. This was not, though, a simplistic notion which implied that the righteous would never suffer. What was maintained was that the sinner would suffer, and that man could face hardship in any case if he wrapped himself in Torah. In addition, Torah was not a mere vehicle by which God entrapped men--as Pauline Christianity would maintain--since that very same document opened the road to repentance from sin. It not only made sin and suffering understandable; then, but it also provided new hope for man. As the Talmud phrased it,

> If God created the evil inclination, he also created the Torah as its antidote.[15]

CHAPTER V

THE ENEMIES OF DAVID

God is not capricious and history is not without purpose. If Israel was surrounded by foes, there was a reason. Whether it was retribution for her own sins; part of her role as an example to others; a test of her faithfulness; or some other, similar reason, there were sense and meaning to be found behind the enemies' existence. In the end, all of these explanations could be found through a proper understanding and relationship with Torah. This was the framework in which the rabbis operated, and it should come as no surprise, then, that the enemies of David were used symbolically to explore the character and significance of Israel's foes. After all, David was, as we have often noted, a personification of his people. The nature of his hardships and encounters with difficulty must have been the same as theirs; namely, a challenge to his spiritual values. The enemy was one who tried to degrade or destroy Torah life, whether he came from outside the Jewish fold or from within it.

What we discern here is a delicate balance of two roles for David, and thus, for Israel. At the same time that he plays the part of the sinner who faces hardships through his rupture of the covenant, he must also be Torah's defender

among men. The very burden which he bears for his faults is also the possible tool by which to transcend those difficulties and move to a better life. This is the strange situation of David-Israel in his part as middleman. He is bound to be both servant to Torah and light to the nations--planting that Torah among others.

Without attempting to be exhaustive in presenting David's confrontations with his adversaries, we can view some representative selections that should help us to delineate the nature of the "foes" as the rabbis saw them. Some of the themes appear more than once under the guise of different characters, but this may be helpful in sharpening our focus on the issues.

Goliath

In the figure of Goliath, it is possible to see characteristics of the non-Jewish foe of rabbinic times. There is respect for his strength coupled with a contempt for his moral standards and those of his people. That contempt also emerges in describing his effrontery toward God and Judaism. One also finds, here, the feeling that the Jews recognize their physical weakness before the enemy and hope that God will intervene for them and for His own sake. Such a victory would indeed reflect credit on God and His servants.

Let us look briefly at the way in which these concepts are particularized in the man, Goliath. The rabbis are

quite ready to admit that this Philistine was a champion among his people and a mighty man.[1] At the same time, they are quick to point out that he was morally degenerate and the product of moral degeneracy. It is a trait portrayed particularly in sexual terms. Goliath, it is said, lusted after David.[2] As for his own background, his mother Orpah is described as a promiscuous woman. The word plays used to make the point often lead to humorous, if crude, results.[3]

Goliath demonstrates his effrontery toward the Lord and toward the faith of His people, first, by challenging God, Himself, to battle. Then he makes it a point to time his daily challenges according to the time of Jewish worship.[4]

When the confrontation between David and Goliath does come, it is God who emerges with the credit in the eyes of the rabbis. David pleads for God's help and his adversary is smitten with leprosy, looses his senses, and is rooted to the ground.[5] David finds himself with special powers from God by which he is able to slay the giant.[6] Israel's victory here raises their status, but also that of their God. His aid was, then, for the sake of His name. This principle, termed lema'an shemo, is found often in rabbinic literature and is supported here by the image of Dagon which Goliath wears on his chest and which falls into the dust when the giant is killed.[7] The wider meaning of David's victory is underlined by that image. When Israel truimphs over the heathen, it is a victory for God.

Saul

While Saul was an enemy of David in certain respects, the rabbis dealt with him with great deference. Surely, he was not free of wrongdoing in his dealings with David. Among other things, he was envious of the young hero,[8] and the rabbis knew that this led him to many ill-considered acts.[9]

The over-all picture of Saul is, however, one of a pious, devoted, and worthwhile king. Thus, David is criticized for composing a song at Saul's downfall,[10] for not seeing to his proper burial,[11] and for impulsively cursing him.[12] A comparison is made between the two kings to Saul's advantage.[13] God even refrains from killing Saul at one point, knowing that Samuel would not approve.[14]

It seems likely that the rabbis found much to praise in the character of Saul because he was the first king and represented many traits worthy of praise in their own system. Though he had his difficulties with David, then, he was just not a good candidate to represent major negative values.

Absalom

Absalom, the rebellious son of David, made a much better "foe figure" than Saul. His actions offered the rabbis material much more appropriate to their purposes. His significance hinged on the fact that he was "one of the family." Even as one could sense David's mixed emotions in his encounter with a son who had turned on him, so one could understand the tensions aroused by the need of the Jewish community to deal with the errant members of her

own fold. These are the feelings that rise to the surface in those passages relating to Absalom.

One could explain the presence of such wayward Jews as punishment for Israel's general failure to live by the Torah, even as Absalom's rebellion is pictured as retribution for David's sins.[15] The rabbis had another ax to grind in this context. As they saw it, following Torah meant more that simply living by the letter of biblical law. Their own fences around that law provided necessary protection for the preservation of a wholesome Judaism. This appears to be the impact of the passage in which Hushai the Archite tells David that Absalom's action is the consequence of David's marriage to the captive woman Maacah, the rebel's mother. While this was not a forbidden union, the Talmud advised against such marriage. The proof-text was the juxtaposition of verses in Deuteronomy twenty-one, where the words on the captive woman were immediately followed by those on the rebellious son.[16] What we have here is not only an explanation of the Absalom incident, but incidental arguments against intermarriage; for a fence around the law; and for the rabbinic method of arriving at new legislation.

All the guilt was not to be put on David's shoulders, however. The rebellious Jew was rightly to be blamed for his arrogance, vanity, and presumptuousness, even as Absalom must be acknowledged as guilty for possessing these qualities. Their spiritual corruption had led them to desire the wrong things even as they lost hold of the valuable heritage which was theirs.[17]

Difficult as it was for David-Israel to chastize such a rebel within his own ranks, one had to do it because of the very love for such errant children.[18] When the rabbis argue that Absalom's rebellion was worse than the war of Gog and Magog, it is their way of saying that, in the long run, the ultimate confrontation against those outside the fold is secondary to the struggle for unity within the Jewish community. If this latter is allowed to disintegrate, all would be lost in any case.[19]

Doeg and Ahitophel

Nowhere is the thesis more clearly demonstrated--that David's biblical enemies became rabbinic symbols of their own adversaries--than through the characters of Doeg and Ahitophel. In the biblical text these two unassociated men play somewhat minor roles. In the rabbinic literature, the two are often linked together, and they occupy a very prominent position. The reason is that they have been transformed into symbols of significant enemies of rabbinic Judaism.

There is some dispute over the exact referents which correspond to their names.[20] What seems beyond dispute is that they are archetypes of heretics.[21] As will be seen shortly, some of their heresies are almost certainly those of early Jewish-Christians. It is possible that Gnostics are being referred to in some instances. The blurring of the lines between the two groups may be the result of a certain blurring of their positions in the minds of the rabbis. In

any event, the challenge of heretics within the Jewish community was obviously of great concern to the rabbis, and they expressed that concern through their comments on Doeg and Ahitophel. We can mention, briefly, some of the elements of concern which are reflected in passages about these two.

A major source of distress was that these heretics were subverting Judaism from within.[22] Certainly, they knew the Torah. In fact, great scholarship is attributed to them.[23] This only deepened the nature of their sin, however, for they should have known better. Thus, it is said that they learned but never absorbed the knowledge. It was knowledge of the lips but not the heart; knowledge which was not in accord with halakic views; and learning whose purpose was heresy rather than pious deeds.[24] In addition, Ahitophel is accused of wrongly reading astrological signs for his own benefit. This led him to think that he, rather than Solomon, was king of the Jews.[25] An envy of the Davidic line is also attributed to Doeg.[26]

When the Jew encountered such references, his mind could quickly focus on a referent to them in his own society. Was it not the way of Christianity to turn the Bible to polemical purposes? They used it to read out prefigurations of the life of Jesus; arguments for antinomianism; and other heretical ideas, rather than employing it as a guide for the embracing of <u>halakah</u>. Indeed, they could be accused of having an envy of the Davidic line; for, they had appropriated it to justify Jesus' claim to the messianic kingship. As to astrological signs, this may well be a reference to

gnostic cosmology, but it is also possible that the rabbis were telling the Christians that they had misread their "star in the East." It was not through Jesus, but through the restoration of Solomon's Temple, that the messianic time would be ushered into the world.

There are other passages which strengthen the idea that these two characters are associated with Christianity. Doeg and Ahitophel are spoken of as having died at the ages of thirty-four and thirty-three.[27] The students leaving the school of R. Hisda, one known for his comments on Christain heresy,[28] express the hope that there will issue from their company none like Doeg and Ahitophel, who disgraced themselves in public with heretical teaching.[29]

There is, obviously, great agitation over the presence of these heretics and an apparent desire by some to weed them out of the congregation of Israel.[30] They are compared to a lion crouching over David-Israel and ready to tear their prey to pieces.[31] This is far from the only view of them, however. For all their heresy, the rabbis might have held out some hope that they could be reconciled with the Jewish community. This point of view manifests itself in those passages in which it is said that they do, indeed, have a share in the world to come, and God will see it as His duty to reconcile Doeg and Ahitophel with David.[32]

Without having attempted to be exhaustive in terms of Doeg, Ahitophel, and the challenge which heresy presented to rabbinic Judaism, we can see that a significant adversary was being symbolized through these two characters.

David-Israel was not lacking for enemies. The rabbis were honest and realistic in acknowledging the existence of foes within and outside the Jewish camp. To know the enemy was one thing, to do battle with him was something else. Israel's response to her predicament becomes the focal point for the next section of our study.

CHAPTER VI

THE CYCLE CONTINUES: THE ROLE OF TORAH

What had begun as a harmonious, covenant relationship between God and man had now eroded into a situation in which a tainted Israel, beleaguered and suffering, wondered if the harmony could ever be restored. Henry Slonimsky has described the resultant, spiritual need with which the rabbis had to deal. He wrote, "Man needs reassurance on double grounds. He must be saved from despairing over the fact that there is meaning in history. He must be saved from despairing over the fact that the good must suffer."[1] The rabbis offered a response to those needs through their reconstruction of the life of David.

One could, indeed, move back toward that messianic harmony, and the tools were at hand. God had provided for such redemption in His Torah, and David was a prime example of the validity of employing that revelation. Like David, one had to humble himself with prayer and praise to God and feel truly penitent for his own wrongdoing. Then, through various means at his disposal, and through God's own activity--all of which was spelled out under the broad heading of Torah--redemption could become a real possibility. History could be given purpose anew, and the suffering good could find solace in such a promised return.

Let us follow David, then, as he marks off those steps which lead through repentance and Torah and point toward redemption.

Repentance

At the base of David's return lay his will to repentance. This began with his sense of humility and servitude to God.[2] He recognized that though he had kingship, wealth, and victory to his credit, he was secondary to God and dependent on Him regarding those gifts.[3] As great as his sins might have been, he recognized that God was also great in forgiveness of them.[4] Such humility led David to a confession of his wrongs; for, that was a necessary precondition that would bring him forgiveness and make him worthy of redemption.[5]

Even David's words of humility, praise, and confession were an extraordinary example to Israel; for, such feelings poured forth in the famous Psalms attributed to him by the rabbis. He was the sweetest of singers and he used that gift to further his reconciliation with God.[6] The individual Jew could learn, here, the lesson of using his own particular gifts in God's service.

The story of David's repentance meant more to Israel, however, than example.[7] It actually had salutary effects on those who came after him. His atonement was not only personal, but also a vicarious atonement for others. He sought mercy from God in order that he might bless Israel.[8] He prayed that God would listen to his prayer; for, that would be as if He heard their prayer.[9] The purpose of his extra sacrifices

of sin-offerings, said R. Simeon b. Josina, was to make others beloved and bring them closer to the Lord.[10] Viewed from the negative side, had it not been for David's prayer, all Israel would have been sellers of unfit things, that is, forever the servants in the market places of their conquerors.[11] Viewed positively, God's acceptance of David's atonement would be reflected in the restoration of the Temple and the sacrifices, that is, in messianic fulfillment.[12]

Vicarious atonement was a gift of David to his people, then. It was also another example for them. Like David, they had to reshoulder the responsibility of Torah for those yet too weak to manage it. Such vicarious atonement was the lot of a chosen people, and the mission of the "light to the nations." In Schechter's words, "By this acceptance of Torah, Israel made peace between God and his world, the ultimate end being that its influence will reach the heathen, too, and all the gentiles will one day be converted to the worship of God."[13]

Repentance, atonement, and the cleaving to Torah meant more than verbal statements, of course. Some very definite activity was expected from the Jew. The rabbis proceeded to map out the nature of such Torah activism.

Torah Study

We learn from the example of David that the study of Torah was a means of returning to God. An excommunicated David was brought back by his teacher, Ira the Jairite.[14]

Study of God's law was more than simply a cure, however, it was also preventive medicine. When the evil inclination tempted a man, as it tempted David, the proper course was to follow that king's example and head for the house of study.[15] At times, we might note, the line seemed rather narrow between study for knowledge of the law--as the way to contest with the evil impulse--and the use of Torah as a kind of fetish, whose very presence acted as a protective shield to one who hid behind it. The passage in which David holds off the Angel of Death through continuous study, hints at the latter sort of idea.[16] This notion need not detain us, however, since the major thrust of the material surely is directed toward the efficacy of Torah knowledge and content.

If one follows the example of King David, he will apply himself to this study of the law with all his energy. In an oft-repeated midrash, the king was awakened for study by the harp that hung over his bed and acted as his "alarm clock"--with the help of the north wind.[17] In these passages, we are variously told that his disciples rose with him; that his study led to action; and that the people were motivated to the study of Torah by David's example.[18] An interesting line, found in some of the passages involved here, tells us that while other men were awakened by the dawn--the early-rising student, David, awakened <u>it</u>. The implication may be that it is the David of Torah who calls up the dawning, messianic day.

As we have noted before, the rabbinic view was that the Torah which was to be studied included material out-

side the biblical canon. If David were to be the ideal student, he had to move in the world of rabbinic law as well as Torah law. The rabbis made that point at the same time as they played down the warrior image of the hero.[19] Passages in which David played the role of a judge employing rabbinic law or working with the Sanhedrin helped to strengthen this new image.[20]

Viewed from one perspective, the rabbis were extolling the praises of the life lived in the study of biblical and rabbinic law, a life which acknowledged the authority of these materials. From another perspective, it is possible to see that these statements of principle also had a negative use. They were more than mere pieties <u>for</u> the law. They were also a response to the antinomians.

In one talmudic passage, David tells God that he has heard men hoping for his death so that the building of the Temple could begin. God responds that he prefers one day of David's study to a thousand sacrifices that Solomon will offer.[21] It is not unreasonable to read this as an expression of sentiment against those who wished to push an immediate messianism as opposed to the strictures of a life bound by Torah.

Other passages pick up this polemic in even clearer terms. Discribing Aaron's crown of the priesthood and David's crown of royalty, R. Simeon b. Yoḥai added that the third crown, the crown of Torah, was still unappropriated. If one attained that, he attained all three; but, if not, it was

as if he had attained none of them.[22] Only through Torah could one hope to attain the messianic crowns.

It had to be admitted that these were difficult days for those committed to such ideals.[23] The time would come, however, when the persecutor would regret his thrusts at the Torah; but, by then it would be too late for him. No proselytes would be allowed in the messianic time; rather, redemption would belong to those who had remained faithful through the dark days.[24] The crown of Torah may rest heavily on the head of Israel now, but the people had to understand that it was the only one that would fit an eligible descendant of David.[25] There was a bond between Torah and messianism, and anyone who said that the latter was possible without the former was not to be believed.

The antinomians took the position that Israel's merit had been abolished through Israel's sin. The golden calf incident was viewed as an illustration of the fact that the law was a punishment placed upon Israel which only served to tempt her into a display of her weaknesses. In this context, there is an illuminating passage in which Doeg and Ahitophel (Christian figures?) pursued David--something they would not have done had they expounded their interpretations on the basis of Sinai. This means, they thought they were free to pursue him following his sin with Batnsheba. What they did not understand was that only the merit of mi̇zwot was nullified by his act. The merit of Torah study remained to protect him.[26]

The rabbis were telling the antinomians that later violations of Torah were not the reason for that document's existence or the consequence of God's dislike for Israel. In fact, the acceptance of Torah by the Jew was the very thing that allowed him to surmount such obstacles.

A. Marmorstein has addressed himself to this question of Israel's special relationship to God through Torah. His words also speak of the rabbis' defense of Torah, their polemic against the antinomians, their response to those outsiders who claimed the patriarchs as their own forebearers: and, finally, they speak of the importance of "merits." This last item is one we shall dwell on at greater length further on in our study. Marmorstein said,

> The opponents of Judaism from Barnabas to most recent times, found Israel unworthy of being God's chosen people, and added that the whole Law was given as a punishment for that deed /i.e. the golden calf/. The rabbis replied to all the more or less biased arguments and theories--which have a long history--God forgave our forefathers for the merit of the patriarchs, and wiped out, not Israel, but Israel's sins.[27]

In defense against their opponents, then, and in support of their own expanding idea of Torah, the rabbis advocated study of the law as a sine qua non for moving man toward redemption. What must be added, of course, is that study was not an isolated event. It was expected to have ramifications in the activity of a man's life. Study was only one phase of Torah activity; deeds and observances were another.

Mizwot

As the rabbis redrew the activities of David, his action was made to conform to rabbinic law. Undoubtedly, part of the motivation for this was their desire to reaffirm their methods, their system, and their law. After all, there were Jews as well as non-Jews who challenged the structure they were erecting. To make David obedient to the system was to invest it with a certain sense of dignity and antiquity.

It is no surprise to us, then, that that king is pictured as concerned with the six hundred and thirteen commands from which he extracted eleven principles.[28] That was the sort of activity in which good rabbis engaged. We can understand, also, why David is pictured as one greatly concerned with the decisions of the Sanhedrin and with fighting his battles according to their vote, as well as by the general rules which the Torah imposed on him.[29] An illustration of this principle can be seen in the talmudic account of the incident in which David asked for water from the well, by the gate of the Philistine-held city of Bethlehem (II Samuel 23:15-16). According to the rabbinic exposition, David was concerned about the halakah regarding the rescuing of one's self through destruction of another's property, and he wished to act in a legally correct way. He therefore sought a legal ruling on the matter prior to battle.[30] This interpretation follows from the accepted metaphoric meaning of "water" as Torah and "the gate" as the place where legal judgments were dispensed.

Not all of the questions were so imaginitive in their origin. The best example of reading rabbinic law back into David's actions emerges from a much more basic situation. On the face of it, there were contradictions between David's marriages and the rabbinic laws governing marriage. His marriages to the sisters Michal and Merab, and the inconvenient fact of Paltiel's intervening marriage to the former, were in need of explanation. Through various interesting machinations regarding valid and invalid marriage contracts, and by glorifying Paltiel for refraining from consumating his marriage, the rabbis managed to iron out the difficulties.[31] At the same time, they made certain points regarding the marriage laws for their own time.

A more pressing matter for the rabbis was that of ritual. The daily round of prescribed activity held a pivotal position in rabbinic Judaism. Max Kadushin has described it this way:

> The ritualistic mizwot became, for the Rabbis, the means whereby the inward life, with all its fine sensibilities and aspirations, was cultivated. The ritualistic mizwot both quickened their sense for the holy and stimulated the aspiration to embody that holiness in their daily lives.[32]

In a passage on the recitation of hallel at the time of the Passover offering and the waving of the palm branches, we are told that the phrase, "To David, a Psalm," indicated that it was uttered when the Shekinah rested upon him. The passage continues,

> This teaches you that the Shekinah rests /upon man/ neither in indolence nor in gloom nor in frivolity nor in levity, nor in vain pursuits, but only in rejoicing connected with a mizwah.[33]

Through the life of David we also learn that the non-practice of a commandment can lead to disasterous results. The example was Jonathan's failure to provide food for the wayfarer, David. Here, the sin was not even deliberate; yet, it led to the slaughter of the priests of Nob, the downfall of Doeg, and the slaying of Saul and his sons.[34]

It should not be thought, however, that these commands represented a burden. On the contrary, they were an expression of God's love for Israel. David acknowledged that fact and was greatly concerned to follow the ordinances laid down for every Jew.[35]

There was an added significance to the ritual acts which made them even more important to the rabbis. They were the visible signs of one's participation in Judaism. Thus, they became the touchstone by which one demonstrated his loyalty to the faith or his desertion from it. In this context, the Sabbath and circumcision became particularly important. Henry Smith has explained it this way:

> It is not accidental that Sabbath and circumcision are singled out as having special significance. These were the two institutions which the Jews could observe in the dispersion and which, therefore, most distinctly served the purpose of a test for the faithful observer of the Law.[36]

While there is some truth here, Smith does not dig far enough into the rationale. There is every reason to suspect that these two matters became so central because

they were made into focal issues by the non-Jew. As regards the Sabbath, one finds a hint at this kind of reasoning in an interesting law. The law states that one may violate the Sabbath for a live, day-old infant, but not for David, king of Israel, who is dead.[37] The choice of the wording of the ordinance leads one to at least conjecture about the intent of it. It may be a simple affirmation of the value of life. The inclusion of the Davidic reference may be adding a dimension to it, however. What it may be telling us is that one may violate the Sabbath only if the result is to save one for future observance of it (that is, indeed, the reason given). On the other hand, a messianic position is no excuse for such non-observance. Aware, as we are, of that antinomian reasoning which justified non-observance on the basis that the son of David had come, such an interpretation surely seems plausible.

Circumcision was an even more crucial matter. Stripped of the opportunity to perform every other command, this one sign could still act as the proof of loyalty. Lacking all else, the Jew could still bear witness to the covenant when standing naked before God. Such is the imagery of the talmudic example of David.

> ...as David entered the bath and saw himself standing naked, he exclaimed, "Woe is me that I stand naked without any precepts about me!" But when he reminded himself of the circumcision in his flesh his mind was set at ease.[38]

It is important to understand, as Marmorstein has amply shown, that the rabbis saw the merit of circumcision as the cause for the redemption from Egypt.[39] Here, then,

is the central, redemptive mizwah. It was the link from Abraham to one's progeny. No better example could be found for the contention that one bore witness to a covenant relationship with God through the performance of required acts. The notion of the centrality of circumcision was only strengthened by attacks on it from the outside. The prohibition against it by Hadrian served to make it an even better test of loyalty.

A further ramification of circumcision was the role it assumed in polemics. The typical argument of the opposition was that it was an unnecessary rite if God had created man perfectly. The response was that this was a "perfecting" through the "finishing off" of creation. This was a most critical argument when seen for its broad implications. After all, what was man's raison d'etre where a perfect God existed. One could say that this tikun, or finishing off, gave man a role to play in the world. Slonimsky has suggested that the rabbis were implying something more in this notion. The implication was that God was not yet perfect, and man was thereby called on for more than the playing out of a part already written for him. He was in an open-ended drama in which his activity was necessary for the shaping of a redemptive conclusion. As Slonimsky put it,

> ...the relation between God and man becomes a beneficent circle of give and take, each growing and profiting by the other; thus God and man can give each other comfort and forgive each other their mistakes; thus God and man can insist on an active program and goal, rather than be content with a gorgeous and infinite display of imagination and drama.[40]

Whether God be perfect or not yet perfect, man has the role--in any case--of actively carrying forward a task. Circumcision was the sign of this demand for activity.

There was no doubt, then, that the rabbis saw activity, dictated by God, as the valid means of affirming one's faith. To fail in the performance of the duty was implicitely to deny the lawgiver. Slonimsky has summarized the rabbinic attitude this way: "Man can be said to believe in God only insofar as it is an inference from his behavior, and then his saying so is unimportant."[41]

Before leaving this section on Torah activity, one more point may be made explicit. The rabbis did not categorize religious action into ritual and ethical. While we have spoken of the commandments in this fashion to some extent, the division is a false one--employed for the convenience of exposition. For the rabbis, they were organically related. Perhaps, this is one of the great values inherent in concretizing the rabbinic ideas in the form of an individual, human example.

On the one hand, one could speak of the rabbinic religion as Lauterbach did when he said that Pharisaism "sought to raise man to Divine heights and bring him nearer to God. Its God was a spiritual God and the worship offered to Him consisted of praising and glorifying His name by helping man to lead a life of <u>imitatio dei</u> and thus approach Divine perfection."[42]

David reflected that mood of <u>imitatio dei</u> when he humbled himself, and God said that David would thus become

like Him. God would make a decree and David could annul it.[43] To deal in the legal process, then, was as much a matter of imitating divine action as were such qualities as justice and mercy, which David also demonstrated.[44] All of this, however, could be classified by us as ethical activity.

On the other hand, we have the picture of David as a ritualist. He was concerned with the writing of the prayer liturgy,[45] the building of the Temple for the offering of sacrifices,[46] and the proper division of the watches among the Levites.[47] The seeming division of ethical and ritual breaks down, however. One sees that blurring of the lines in the midrash in which David sets up the twenty-four watches of priests and Levites. The midrash goes on to say that David procured God's favor in this, and he could thus bless Israel. In his ritualistic stance as well, then, David was involved in imitatio dei.

The point of all this is that there was an organic relationship among the mizwot, and they were like interdependent parts of a single human body. It is possible, then, for David, or any other individual, to operate in these varied spheres of activity at one time.

Indeed, all sorts of moral and ritual activity were required to blend symphonically in the life of the Jew. The principle to be extracted from this was that it was, above all, his activity which would open the path of the Jew to redemption. Again, it is Slonimsky who capsulizes the idea.

"When will the Messiah come?", he writes. "First and foremost when we have made ourselves ready and worthy,

and this primarily through conduct and behavior, through changing the past into ripeness for the future."[48]

Suffering

It was fine to hear the rabbis talk of repentance, study, ritual, and good deeds. For many, the coaxing and reassurance which they preached were undoubtedly soothing. They offered a constant in an otherwise changing equation of life. Yet, there must have remained a certain feeling that this was not a totally adequate response to a situation of suffering.

The rabbis confronted this problem with various notions about the meaning of suffering. What was common to almost all of them was the premise that the very enduring of the hardship was a positive aid toward redemption. We can find these responses embedded in the rabbinic explanations of David's suffering.

One could, of course, rest on the familiar ground that the suffering was the just dessert for sins committed. When David asked why he was in such straits, God's advice was that he accept his chastisement and reflect on the verses which would remind him of Bathsheba (Proverbs 6:27ff.). David did accept, and the inference was that that was the proper stance.[49]

Looking about at the cruelty of the foreign aggressor and considering God's quality of mercy,[50] other answers seemed to be needed, however.

One reply, geared to bolster morale without denying the reality of the oppression, suggested that living in such times was a true test of courage. Only the strong of faith would be called upon for such a demonstration of loyalty. Their position was like that of David who suffered the famine that should have come in the time of Saul, but which was deferred by God in the knowledge that the former could bear it as the latter could not.[51] One could also draw the lesson, here, that the present generation was bearing some of the guilt of the past. It would be improper, then, to seek a direct ratio between their personal lot and the sins which they had, themselves, committed.[52]

Surely, morale was a factor in shaping these responses. To all appearances, the non-Jew had a good case when he pointed to the lot of the Jew as a sign that God had deserted Israel. The rabbis proceeded to turn that argument inside out. They pointed out that it was not the pursuer, but the pursued, whom God loved. Saul, for example, had pursued David, but it was David whom God chose.[53] One did not have to be depressed at the execution of God's judgment, then. Like David, Israel could rejoice in the fact that they were being cleansed of their transgressions.[54]

The result of such reasoning was the conviction that even in oppression Israel was to be envied; for, she enjoyed God's love. As Slonimsky has expressed it, "It is the watchword of Jewish history: they hate me because I love you, and you love me though I am sick and stricken."[55]

This was not an invitation to go overboard, to invite suffering as David had done when he asked God to tempt him with a test of faith.[56] It was simply a way of meeting an existing crisis without losing faith. Leo Baeck has captured this rabbinic approach to suffering in these words:

> Above all, in times of grief and suffering, when the present could only seem senseless and godless, it was, as it were, annulled in order to let the ever abiding, which is beyond all change, emerge in its place. Faith perfected what imagination had begun.[57]

Merits

Brick by brick the rabbis had built an imposing structure of Torah-rooted principles. The Jew was urged to enter and enjoy the security of a life lived in Torah and in hope of redemption. One had only to rise above his suffering and engage in study and mizwot. He had only to live a life in imitation of God. It had sounded logical enough when the individual bricks were being laid. On reflection, however, many must have felt that all the building had only succeeded in creating a wall to keep them out. What man, after all, could lead such a life? If Moses could not merit to enter the promised land nor David to see the Temple, what could lesser men expect? The individual felt incapable of recasting the world in a redemptive mold without aid.

The response of the rabbis was at once humbling and reassuring. It could be read from the story of David. How had Goliath been conquered? Five pebbles representing God,

the three patriarchs, and Aaron had come into David's hand of their own accord. At his touch they turned into the one with which he killed the giant.[58]

Before we investigate the relation of this passage to our problem, let us add one other selection. It concerns David's request to God that his sin with Bathsheba be forgiven and a sign of that forgiveness be shown in his lifetime. God replies that while he is forgiven, the sign will only be shown in the days of his son, Solomon. What follows is an incident which appears several times in various forms in the literature. Solomon is pictured at the time of the dedication of the Temple. In some versions he wishes fire to descend from heaven to consume the offerings, in others he wishes to enter with the ark--only to find that the gates have clamped shut and will not open. Every prayer and offering which he made in the attempt to rectify the situation went unanswered. Finally, he said, "Remember the good deeds of David Thy servant" (II Chronicles 6:42). Immediately, his prayer was answered.[59]

The concept which underlies these stories about David is the same. It is one which came to play a major role in rabbinic thinking and is generally known as zekut abot, the merits of the fathers. We can understand its function by examining the passages already related.

Each incident begins with the recognition of man's inadequacy. Whether the problem is that of the foreign oppressor, as in the Goliath story; man's outright sin, as

with David; or his inadequacy by nature of his being just an individual man, as with Solomon; he must have aid in his search for redemption. He can not and need not stand alone. God has sealed a covenant with him and has no more desire to see it broken than does man. It is important for His own sake, as well as Israel's, that the relationship prosper. For that reason He had brought middat ha-rahamim to bear on creation in the first place.[60] This was the purpose behind the giving of the Torah. It was a way of allowing man to build merit for himself. If even that proved insufficient, there was the merit that came to him from others who had accumulated it by their acts of faithfulness. Here, we are back at the real core of the passages under investigation.

Merits were transferable, and one could be aided by those which his forebearers had amassed. As Marmorstein put it,

> Men and women can obtain merits, according to the teachings of the scribes, which shall benefit not merely themselves, but also their posterity, their fellow-creatures, their ancestry, their whole generation, not merely during their life, but even after their departure from the land of the living.[61]

Thus, we understand how Aaron and the patriarchs are joined to God and David, himself, in breaking down the barriers to redemption. Similarly, we see how God's acceptance of David's repentance builds merits which have their effect on Solomon. It is the interplay of one's own deeds, faith in God's acts, and the merits of others that make the

messianic possible. Any one of these is inadequate by itself. Speaking to this point, Marmorstein says,

> He who acquires merits is justified by faith. Faith alone, of course, was not sufficient, just as works without faith are valueless. Both must be united.[62]

It should be emphasized that this doctrine was not to be construed as a way to avoid one's own obligation to perform mizwot. Even as one receives the benefits of the merits of his ancestors, he is obliged to store them up for his descendants and not squander them on himself.

David benefited from others, but he also obtained merits in sufficient degree to feed people from the surplus of his wealth.[63] It is interesting to note that David's name is linked to those of Moses and Ezra in this context of merits. This was a way of saying that the Torah, which both of these men had put before the people, was the source of merit activity.[64]

The message to Israel in all this was that she did have the tools of merits and the Torah which commanded activity to achieve them. She was not powerless to help effect the redemption. This was an important matter to remember when facing the next, related question of God's role as an intercessor in the redemptive scheme.

God's Grace

A balanced account of rabbinic theology and of the rabbinic David requires some mention of the theme of God's grace. We have already taken note of the many tools which man had at his command in his struggle to achieve redemption.

The strong emphasis on Torah, merits, suffering, and mizwot carried the seed of humanistic excess within itself. The rabbis sometimes felt the need to remind man that all of the redemptive power was not his to control. Man was not God. To maintain such a tension in the messianic scheme was a way to keep man humble and also a way to add an element of hope when all of his efforts began to appear futile to him. It was this latter line of thinking which was most important to the Jew of rabbinic times. For all the human possibilities which he possessed, he also appreciated some assurance that he was not alone in this great enterprise. There is a thread that runs through the literature, then, that makes this point.

In the selections on David, this attitude surfaces in various ways. There is, for example, the intimation of original sin from which only God can save David.[65] There is a discussion of the fate of sinning man on judgment day. While the totally good and the wholly evil may have sealed their own fate, that of the intermediate group (which surely meant most of the people) was in question. Here, the argument of the sage, Hillel, is that God's grace and mercy will tip the scales in their favor.[66]

The rabbis were willing to go even a step further with this approach, as other David passages reveal. There are times, they suggest, when man can not fathom the reason for God's saving acts. They have their reason, however, even if only God can comprehend it at the time, or even if

it is simply a matter of His benevolence that explains it. The miracles of lunacy, the spider web, and others which saved David from Achish and Saul are examples of God's intervention with acts that seem incomprehensible at the time they occur. They can only be understood in the light of later events in history.[67] Even more revealing, however, are those acts of grace which have no explanation other than God's desire for them. The sins of Saul, Doeg, and Ahitophel regarding sexual immorality and bloodshed would appear to have a logical parallel in David's sin with reference to Bathsheba and Uriah. David's punishment is not equal, however, and the reason may simply be the beneficence of God.[68] The logical extension of this idea is that Israel, too, owes her continuance to God in the face of her own wrongdoing.[69]

There is another dimension to this matter of God's intervention into the redemptive scheme. That is the polemical dimension. It is in this connection that David asks God to answer even the wicked Israelite in order that the nations will have no basis for saying that all deities are alike.[70] This, of course, is the lema'an shemo argument which we have met before. A related argument is to be found in the request that God not respond to the prayers of the other nations. David makes such a petition, contending that these non-Jews come to God only after they have first tried their idol and it has failed to respond. God answers that He will respond to Israel even before they call.[71] In what may well be an anti-Christian polemic, the rabbis are arguing

against intermediaries at the same time as they make the point that Israel enjoys God's grace.

In a similar vein is a section from Baba Batra. There, the name of David's mother is given along with other such names not mentioned in the Bible. These names have significance, we are told, as a response to the minim.[72] The meaning of the passage appears to be that the Jew is in need of a response to those who have taken over the Bible. When they ask why the names are not found there, the Jew can reply that they are part of the oral tradition. Again, we have a polemic against the Christian along with the intimation that God has shown his special secret (the oral tradition) to the Jews as a matter of His unique beneficence toward them.

There is one more example that should be listed in this context; for, it not only partakes of the polemic, but it also reflects the basic resolution of the rabbis on the question of the respective roles of man and God in the scheme of things.

The passage under consideration comes as a response to the Christian argument that God (Elohim) is a plural word in the Hebrew. The rabbis retort that a singular form is always found in close connection to the cited examples. They recognize, however, that a problem verse remains in which the text says, "Till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit" (Daniel 7:9). Regarding the disturbing plural of the word, "thrones," Rabbi Akiba says that one was for God, Himself, and the other for David, the

Messiah. This is ultimately rejected in favor of the notion that one was a throne for God's seat, the other a footstool for His support.[73]

The rabbis are rejecting, here, any implication that the Messiah is on the same level as God. Along with this polemic, though, another notion is clarified; namely, that both God and man have their proper place in the scheme. Divinity rules above, but the earthly, the footstool, provides support to Him. The two complement one another.

What emerges from this excursion into the role of God's grace, then, may best be described as a tension. There is a certain tendency, though not a highly dominant one, to understand God's grace as necessary in redemption. Viewed from the wider perspective of its emphasis in the literature, however, we see that it is not always crucial. It is played down, perhaps for polemic reasons in some cases. It becomes just one more among the possible avenues whereby man and God may be reunited.

CHAPTER VII

THE CYCLE CLOSES: DAVIDIC MESSIANISM

Rabbinic Messianism: A General View

The cycle seeks its own closing, history its resolution, and Israel the comfort of a reconciliation with God. Even as the rest of the cycle has been mirrored through David, so does this redemptive yearning find expression through him.

This messianic David is not an easy figure to retrace. The reason for the difficulty may be found in the very strength of our contention that David is a reflection of rabbinic, theological notions. Just as the messianic views of the rabbis changed and evolved under the pressures of history, so did the role of David change.

The vast amount of material on the subject of rabbinic messianism makes it impractical for us to attempt a thorough analysis of that subject here; nor, is it necessary for our restructuring of the rabbinic David. What is required is a certain general, conceptual framework which will allow us to approach the messianic David with a greater sense of understanding. It is for the purpose of acquainting ourselves with some of the operative categories, then, that we turn to the subject of rabbinic messianism.

One valid means of gaining a perspective on messianic notions is to view them in relation to major events in the history of the periods involved. The biblical prophets, for example, reflect the prevailing political turmoil of their times. The Babylonian exile and other threats of foreign domination certainly lay at the base of some of their messianic images. To an exiled and subject people they brought a picture of national restoration and political independence coupled with their own spiritual renewal as a people. It is understandable that they often would represent such times in the images of the former days of national glory under the Davidic monarchy.[1]

In rabbinic times these national hopes continued to be maintained. They were more subdued prior to the year 70 C. E. since some measure of autonomous, Jewish political life in Palestine did obtain. After 70, the hopes were more strongly expressed. In any case, the aspirations derived support from the prophetic literature. As George Foot Moore summarizes it,

> The national,...political, expectation is an inheritance from prophecy. Its principal features are the recovery of independence and power, an era of peace and prosperity, of fidelity to God and his law, of justice and fair-dealing and brotherly love among men, and of personal rectitude and piety. The external condition of all this is liberation from the rule of foreign oppressors; the internal condition is the religious and moral reformation or regeneration of the Jewish people itself.[2]

After the destruction of the Temple and through the time of the Bar-Cochba revolt (132 C.E.) this political accent predominated in the messianic speculations of the

rabbis.[3] There was hope for a change in the national fortunes in the foreseeable future. In the wake of the defeat of Bar-Cochba, there was a noticeable change in the character of messianic thinking. The Palestinian Tannaim had conceived the redemption as part of the progress within history whereby the Jews would again find peace within their spiritual and physical homeland of Palestine. Now, the hope became a more remote, more spiritualized yearning; for, the reality of their political position could not be avoided by the Jews. With the growing intensity of their own suffering came the idea that the Messiah would have to emerge from suffering. These "birth pangs of the Messiah" were incorporated, then, into the popular post-revolt image.[4]

When the center of Jewish life shifted to Babylonia and her Amoraic spokesmen, the spiritualized nature of the Messiah and the redemptive time became even more pronounced.[5] Calculations about the end of foreign domination were pushed into a more distant future. Simultaneously, the personal nature of the spiritualized, messianic redeemer and the schematization of the messianic time were subjected to closer scrutiny. To use Klausner's division of the material: eschatology came to occupy an increasingly prominent place alongside the messianic materials.[6]

It should be emphasized that the divisions we have made here are general and not all-inclusive. They reflect an emphasis of approach and not an exclusiveness. In truth, the political and spiritual notions were never wholly separate from one another in the Jewish approach to the matter. Again,

we can look to Klausner.

> In the course of the long evolution of the Jewish Messianic idea, two different conceptions were inseparably woven together: politico-national salvation and religio-spiritual redemption.... The Messiah must be both king and redeemer. He must overthrow the enemies of Israel, and rebuild the Temple; and at the same time he must reform the world through the kingdom of God, root out idolatry from the world, proclaim the one and only God to all, put an end to sin, and be wise, pious, and just as no man had been before him or ever would be after him.[7]

In brief, we can make these observations: before 70 there is some thought but little formulation of material about the Messiah since total political collapse had not come, and the rabbis could continue to concentrate on the legal process. From 70 C. E.-135 C. E. we find a great deal of material by Palestinian Tannaim expressing their hope for a national-political restoration in the near future. It was the spiritual emphasis of that hope which became increasingly prominent after the Bar-Cochba revolt and in the shift of the Jewish spiritual center to Babylonia.

In the evolving image of the messianic David we will see a reflection of these various times and changes; thus, we turn to an exposition of that image.

David As Messiah

Our attention is directed, first, to those materials which emphasize the national, political goals of the rabbis. Here, we find material both from the Hasmonean period and from later Tannaim (through 135 C. E.) particularly prevalent. That these Palestinians saw messianism as a matter of this

world, anchored in Israel's political fortunes, is clear. As Moore phrases it, "The golden age to come, by whatever name it was called and however it was imagined, was a stage of human history on this earth."[8] It is true that there was an ongoing tension between a messianism in history in which God was the ultimate redeemer and David or his line acted as the symbol of a new historic age, and that messianism in which the Messiah was the Davidic savior who changed men and brought history to an end--as was the case in the Christian view. In Judaism these polarities functioned side by side.[9]

Attesting to the horizontal (i.e. political, in history) approach are many passages in which the political scene provides the locus for comments about the line of David. In this category fall those references to the fact that only those of the house of David have the right to sit in the Temple Court.[10] This is the rabbinic response to those like Agrippa who would act as king in the place of the rightful Davidic line. The Pharisees had used the same argument against the Hasmoneans and their Sadducean supporters;[11] namely, that only the seed of David had a rightful claim to the throne. David served here, so to speak, as a rabbinic, political "tool".

The major political foe of the Palestinian Tannaim was, of course, the Roman oppressor. After the destruction of the year 70, the desire to overthrow the foe was so strong that even a non-Davidic hero who promised restoration of political power could secure support as a messianic figure.

Such was the case in Akiba's backing of Bar-Cochba, and it demonstrated how closely the idea of the Messiah was tied to national, political fortunes.[12]

Other anti-Roman passages do maintain the Davidic restoration in their formulation. An example of this can be found in Deuteronomy Rabbah. Using the images of Psalm 60, Edom (i.e. Rome) is pictured as a strong, oppressive city. David yearns to exact vengeance upon them, but he seems to lack the power. God assures David, in consonance with the Psalm, that He will work through him to gain dominion over Edom and rule the world.[13]

There were those who placed their hope in the Persians as the instrument through whom Rome would be defeated. Here, too, the rabbis were able to link such hopes to the deeper yearning for the triumph of the messianic David. This link is seen in comments like that of R. Simeon b. Yohai. He taught (on the basis of Micah 5:4), "If you see a Persian horse tethered to a grave in Israel, look out for the coming of the Messiah." The seven shepherds who will then arise, the passage explains, will include Adam, Seth, and Methuselah on the right and Abraham, Jacob and Moses on the left. David will be in the center of this universalistic, messianic portrait.[14]

After Bar-Cochba, as we have noted, messianic speculation took on a more remote, often spiritualized nature. A note of despair over the possibility of quick or easy victory could be heard. Such is the implication of the tal-

mudic passage in which God says that the timing of the arrival of David, the Messiah, is His secret. The human response is, "Woe is me, how long?" God answers that the time will only come when Israel's enemies and their enemies have been destroyed.[15] That is, there is some time to wait.

There are a spate of guesses in Sanhedrin about the timing of the arrival of the Son of David. While some say that time will only be when all are righteous, others speak of total degeneracy as the prelude to the messianic time. Another opinion is that men should stop trying to figure the time, presumably because it leads (and has led) to great discouragement.[16] In this same context is the notion that the Messiah, Son of David, will have to be proceeded by the Messiah, son of Joseph, whose death will clear the way for the former. Suffering of great dimensions would take place with the war against the final enemies, Gog and Magog, coming before the final establishment of peace.[17] When one adds to this picture some of the long time spans which some rabbis used as guidelines for the messianic advent,[18] an overall impression does emerge. It is an impression of rabbis trying to reformulate a scheme of hope in the face of oppression and disappointment which fostered little hope among the people. The pressure of history was refocusing the rabbinic emphases.

Aware, as we are, of this nationalistic stream of thought which harkened back to the "good old days" of the Davidic monarchy, Temple sacrifices, and political hegemony,[19] we should remind ourselves that this represented but one side of the messianic hope. National restoration was only part

of the redemptive scheme which the rabbis expressed through the image of David and the Davidic line. The other side was spiritual regeneration. The defeat of the idolater and the fulfillment of Torah Judaism were an equally essential part of the envisioned redemption.

In our exploration of this stream of thinking, we will see a convergence of some of the topics which occupied us in previous chapters. Particularly, we will see the projected view of the messianic world in which the harmonies of creation are to be restored. This means a final confrontation with the problem of sin and salvation from it; a final linking of Torah activity to the redemptive resolution; and, a view of David as a link between this world and the next world.

First, let us look briefly at the problem of man's sins. On the one hand, this is a very individual problem. If the original harmonies of Eden are to be restored, the yeẓer ha-Ra' of man must be dealt with. As long as its influence can be exerted, man will continue to violate the Torah. The tension which builds around this act involves the matter of who can and will remove that yeẓer. In their comments on this finale of history, the rabbis do not wholly resolve the tension though they make it clear that redemption does mean an end to the struggle with this evil inclination. God's grace is surely involved as is indicated by references like that in Sukkah in which God brings the yeẓer ha-Ra' and slays it in man's presence.[20] On the other side

of the issue, man has definite obligations in this procedure. He must take the first step if he is to merit God's grace.[21] An even bolder approach suggests that man, himself, is capable of conquering this impulse as David finally did.[22]

Various ideas emerge from the confrontation with this problem. One is the maintenance of the man-God tension which is retained even in this final act of the drama of history. Unlike classical Christianity, God's grace never becomes the "all" in individual redemption so long as this tension remains. Another idea which emerges here is the accent on the individual which follows from a concentration on eschatology. As Moore phrases it, "Jewish eschatology is the ultimate step in the individualizing of religion, as the messianic age is the culmination of the national conception."[23] It is when the rabbis thought in such individual, eschatological terms that they emphasized such matters as reward and punishment in this world and the next and the matter of resurrection. Such doctrines were appropriate solutions to the problem of theodicy in a time when oppression was great and the political goals were too distant to serve a strong motivational purpose. This is the import of a typical passage on the matter from Yoma. There, the question is posed as to whether the reward or punishment will be greater in the future time. Israel is reassured of the greatness of her reward (symbolized in David's overflowing cup of salvation) as against the future demeaned position of her enemies.[24]

Significant as is the salvation of the individual, it is this latter, collective concept that gives a distinctive

character to the rabbinic approach to the messianic. As the rabbis saw it, the individual Jew would only approach the messianic time when the wicked vanished from the earth. This is the meaning of the passages which tell us that David prayed that his words be accepted by God. He uttered that prayer only after the eighteen benedictions, just as his "Hallelujah" came only after the line in Psalms, "let sinners cease out of the earth and the wicked be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Hallelujah" (Psalm 104:35).[25]

The fate of the individual Jew was seen as inextricably tied to that of Israel's fortunes. Moore puts it in these words:

> The idea of salvation for the individual was indissolubly linked with the salvation of the people. This continued to be true in the subsequent development of eschatology, and gives its peculiar character to Jewish ideas of the hereafter.[26]

A final set of polarities had to be resolved or brought into a meaningful synthesis. The questions underlying this tension were, "What is the relationship of redemption to that which preceeded it? Is salvation somehow the natural outgrowth of Israel's historic path or is it a break with history whose success hinges upon a savior with special powers to effect a reconciliation?" David was employed by advocates of both views as the symbol of their approach. Some pictured him as that specially ordained Messiah who could effectively mediate between man and God. More pronounced, it would seem, was that line of thinking

which placed David in the role of leader in the people's reunion with God through their Torah activity. Here, it was not so much David, the special pleader of Israel's cause, as David-Israel, the collective unit which might join with God in a final consummation of Torah history.

As an illustration of the David figure with special mediating powers, we can point to the description of the hero as shepherd. A picture reproduced more than once is that of God choosing David as the special agent to care for the flock of Israel after he has demonstrated his special ability as shepherd over the sheep of the field.[27]

Another instance of David's mediating role is more explicit and significant. Here, such forces as snow, hail, and storm are described as being in the heaven. R. Judah counters in the name of Rab that they are surely on earth; for, David entreated regarding them and caused them to come down to earth (Psalm 148:7-8) saying that evil should not sojourn with God.[28] The import of the passage would appear to be the removal of God from direct contact with the world's evil. David, the mediator, stands between the Divine and the created in order to absorb the taint of divine involvement in such material matters.

One more aspect of this particular Davidic image can be noted in sections where special powers to manipulate the forces of nature are ascribed to him. In a rather abstruse passage in Sukkah, the waters that threaten to overwhelm the world are stilled by David's use of a magical sort of operation. The king inscribes God's name on a sherd and throws it into

the water to stop its rise.[29] Another section depicts David as warding off evil spirits in drinking water by reciting the "seven voices" spoken of in Psalm 29.[30]

The examples mentioned here ascribe a superhuman kind of power to David. He plays the role of a special manipulator of nature and of God's name. He is a mediator or intercessor for man, and he is able to break into the natural process of things.

Another legend depicts David the shepherd innocently climbing a mountain only to find that it is really a reem. This beast awakes and stands up, lifting David toward heaven. Only when he promises to build God a temple is the king lowered from this perch.[31]

We can speculate on the meaning of this curious myth. While the other examples which we have noted, viewed in a messianic context, suggest an image of David as one with individual mediating powers, this passage reflects a stronger tension between his heavenly and earthly roles. It is true that we are shown a redeemer who is closer to heaven than other men. His redeeming activity, however, is not to be carried out through his personality alone. Instead, it will take the form of the earthly institution of the Temple. Man will not reach God through David, then, but through the earthly religious institutions which have been established on God's authority working through the hero.

It is this synthesis of positions which seems to best describe the rabbi's general messianic approach. David,

the Messiah, is harnessed to the historically proven vehicles of redemption. Unlike the Christian version of the son of David, he does not stand above history and law as a divine instrument of grace. The tendency, instead, is to tie him into the historical-legal process already in motion. In other words, a single chain is forged which links Davidic messianism to Torah Judaism. This can be illustrated by citing some passages relevant to the problem.

Commenting on the verse, "Let me dwell in Thy tent of worlds" (Psalm 61:5), the rabbis ask if David really prayed that he would dwell in two worlds. They answer that he only intended to imply that he be mentioned in synagogues and houses of study as if he were still alive.[32] This relationship between the redeeming figure of David--and the relationship of the Jew to him through the continuance of Torah--is further underscored in a passage from Ruth Rabbah. There we are told that the manifestations of the Davidic redemption will not differ from those of the former redemption of the people through Moses. What happened then is what is destined to take place again.[33]

The implication of the passage is that there will be no end to history with the appearance of the heir of David, no break from the ongoing Torah. This is a polemic against the antinomians, and it is also a reflection of the rabbinic view of messianism as a part of a "this-world" scheme. Klausner summarizes this attitude when he writes:

> ...the Law will not be forgotten in the Messianic Age. Even its ritual requirements will be in force as before. For the Temple will be rebuilt and sacrifices will be offered therein as in former times.[34]

The tie of Torah and redemption is also the motivating factor behind passages which link Moses to David. Everything that that former redeemer did has its counterpart in an action by the latter.[35] Moses is called the teacher and David the pupil.[36] Moses was the writer of the Torah and David was the one who clarified it.[37] Tradition tells us, also, that David died on Shavuot.[38] All of this provides cement for the bond between these two pivotal personalities, Moses and David, who are called Israel's "two good providers" by the Talmud.[39] It points up the link between the experiences of Torah and messianism. David has a role in this final part of the cycle, then, but it is primarily viewed as a role of one who is symbolically pointing to a direction. Israel is expected to see him not so much as "the way" as the one who points to the redemptive road. To use Bettan's phrase, it is Torah that is "...the holy bond of our union with the Divine."[40]

There is a passage in Exodus Rabbah which can act as a basis for our summary of David's place in the messianic scheme. The section tells us that God will bring fruit from Eden and feed the patriarchs from the tree of life in the messianic time. When the time comes to say grace the honor will be deferred by Michael to Gabriel, from Gabriel to the

patriarchs, and from them to Moses and Aaron, then to the elders, and finally to David. He will perform the honors with the words, "I will lift up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord" (Psalm 116:13).[41]

Many of the themes adumbrated in this chapter are brought together here. The messianic scene is related to the land and to the people Israel. David stands as the symbol of that culminating moment--pronouncing the introduction of the new age. He does not stand apart, however. His role is only to be seen in the total context of Israel's long history of striving toward redemption. Neither does he preside at the messianic banquet. In the end it is God, Himself, who presides. David is merely the one who calls upon God's name. Again, David is the figure for Israel. Their long struggle through history is symbolized in the figures at the banquet. Operating through the Torah-covenant framework of that history, they would hope to reach that time of messianic fulfillment.

There are nuances that may be read from this story. The banquet opens up the whole matter of the schematization of the messianic time and the next world. Our concern here, however, centers on the two major elements which converge in the figure of David. In this regard we can say that he is the individual representative who signals the new age as an end of things. The strongest strain remains, though, the solid link between the covenant people, their history, and their salvation as a logical stage in the development of

that history. The timing may be uncertain, but the development has its logic and its promise of hope for those who remain loyal to the continuum. The final act, as the Midrash here indicates, is the restoration of the harmonies of Eden. The entire cycle is represented in the images. After all the generations of struggle by Israel, covenantal loyalty will bring the people back into an unencumbered relationship with God.

CHAPTER VIII

EPILOGUE

Let us look back for a moment on the journey we have taken with David and with the rabbis. Our intention has been to show, through the use of selected examples from rabbinic literature, that the biblical King David was transformed by later generations. That transformation can be understood as a reflection of the problems which the rabbis, themselves, encountered and as a reflection of their responses to their situation.

Meshing the themes of God, Torah, Israel, and creation, revelation, redemption, we have been able to discern a purposive pattern in the rabbis' repainting of the biblical monarch.

It was the rabbinic notion that man's breaking of an original covenant with God resulted in suffering and hardship for His people. In His mercy, God opened the way through Torah for Israel to reestablish that harmonious, Eden situation. Repentance, study of Torah, and deeds of loving kindness, combined with man's own merits, his repayment through suffering, and God's grace provide the operative tools for the Jew in his struggle toward redemption. That redemption is the reestablishment of the harmonies.

Each step of this procedure has been concretized by the rabbis through the character of David. He becomes, then, the symbol of Israel and of Israel's possibilities. His sin, suffering, encounters with enemies, repentance, and Torah life are all fuel for the holy fire of rabbinic teaching. In the end, that fire is messianic. It is a warm flame of comfort to a troubled Israel and a light to the nations.

There are instances in the reconstruction when the material flows naturally from the biblical David. More often, it is quite a different personality that emerges. Truth to the original was not the criterion, however. The rabbis looked through the biblical David until they caught a glimpse of what they saw as a higher truth--the honest confrontation of every Jew with his world and with God.

FOOTNOTES

and

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Notes to Chapter One

1. Israel, Bettan, Studies in Jewish Preaching (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1939), p. 38.

2. Max Kadushin, The Rabbinic Mind (2nd ed.; New York, London, and Toronto: Blaisdell Publishing Company, 1965), p. 15.

3. "..every concept is related to every other concept because every concept is a constituent part of the complex as a whole." Max Kadushin, Organic Thinking (New York: J. T. S., 1938), p. vi. cf., also, Jacob Lauterbach, "The Pharisees and Their Teachings," Rabbinic Essays (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1951), footnote to p. 112. There the author quotes a statement of R. Israel Besht from the Keter Shem Tov II /Slavita/, 2a, in which we are reminded of the persistence and recognition of this organic concept among the rabbis down through the generations. The statement translates: "God, Torah, and Israel are all one."

4. That the rabbis saw history as purposive can be seen in those quotations in which the whole scheme is announced as having existed prior to creation. Torah, repentance, Eden, Gehenna, the Throne of Glory, the Temple, and the name of the Messiah are given as the seven pre-mundane creations. Thus, instruction, the ability to repent, reward and punishment (Eden and Gehenna), the goal of creation as the kingdom of God (Throne of Glory and Temple), and the assurance of the ultimate achievement of God's purpose (the name of the Messiah) offer an outline of man's direction: creation--through revelation with all its nuances and implications--to redemption. cf., Pesahim 54a and Nedarim 39b.

5. Kadushin, "Aspects of the Rabbinic Concept of Israel." in Hebrew Union College Annual (1945/46), Vol. XIX, p. 67.

6. J. Theodor, "Midrash Haggadah," in The Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. VIII (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1901), p. 550.

7. Louis Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews (11th ed.; Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961), Vol. I, pp. x-xi.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. Henry Preserved Smith, The Religion of Israel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), pp. 235-236.

2. Robert Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), pp. 807-808.

3. William Foxwell Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957), pp. 305-306.

4. Leo Baeck, Judaism and Christianity (Cleveland, New York, and Philadelphia: Meridian Books, 1961), p. 50.

5. Cf. above, p. 12.

6. Cf., Amos 9:1-4, 7-9; Jeremiah 23:5, 30:9, 33: 14-16, 19-22; and Hosea 3:5 as typical examples.

Notes to Chapter Three

1. Cf., above, p. 78, footnote 4 of Chapter I; also, Genesis Rabbah 1.1.

2. Yalkuṭ Shim'oni, Bereshit 41: "Adam said to the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Is there a gift /available/ in heaven?' He said to him, 'Yes.' He said to Him, 'Let this fated one /i.e. David/ have seventy of my years.' What did Adam do? He brought the contractual document and wrote a gift contract upon it. The Holy One, blessed be He; Meṭaṭron; and Adam signed it."

cf., also, Numbers Rabbah 3.2, 6, in which the royal house of David is listed as one of the chosen things along with the priestly and levitical families, Israel, Jerusalem, and the Sanctuary, and God is here depicted as being personally behind the royal Davidic house.

cf., also, Giṭṭin 60a, where David supports his contention that his role is ordained in the Torah.

3. Midrash Tehillim 54.3.

4. Baba Batra 17a.

5. Soṭah 10b; Midrash Tehillim 9.7.

6. Ruth Rabbah 8.1.

7. Yebamot, The Babylonian Talmud, ed. I. Epstein (34 vols.; London: Soncino Press, 1935-52), p. 518, footnote 17.

8. Ibid., 76b-77a.

9. Ibid., 63a, 77a. Note that David's grandson, Reheboam, married an Ammonitess. Both stocks are thus involved here.

10. Sanhedrin 93a, b; Shabbat 113b.

11. Soṭah 11b; Exodus Rabbah 1.17.

12. Numbers Rabbah 13.14; cf., also, Genesis 49:8ff.

13. Yalkuṭ ha-Makiri (ed. Buber), Psalm 118:28. cf., Leviticus Rabbah 14.5 on the same verse, where another midrash is offered in which Jesse is pictured as having no desire to father the child.

14. Midrash ha-Gadol of Deuteronomy 1.17 as quoted in Israel Isaac Hasidah, Ishe ha-TaNaKH be-aspaklarya shel HaZaL (Jerusalem: 1963/64), pp. 103-104.

15. Berakot 58a; Yebamot 76b; Shabbat 55b.

16. Sukkah 52b.

17. Midrash Tehillim 18.27; Ginzberg, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 248, footnote 15.

18. Midrash Tehillim 78.21, 118.21; also, Zohar Hadash, Song of Songs, 67b as quoted in Hasidah, op. cit., p. 104.

Notes to Chapter Four

1. Genesis Rabbah 68.8, also Song of Songs Rabbah I. 15. 2; cf., Ginzberg, op. cit., Vol. VI, pp. 268-271 for other references to passages in which David's guilt is dealt with, often to the hero's advantage.

2. Shabbat 56a, b; Baba Mezi'a 58b-59a; Ketubot 9a, b; Kiddushin 43a.

3. Ibid.; also, cf., Sanhedrin 107a in which Satan receives some of the blame.

4. 'Avodah Zarah 4b-5a. See this study, p. 41, in which the wider, polemical ramifications of this section are explored.

5. Ibid.

6. Sanhedrin 107a.

7. Gittin 59a; Sanhedrin 36a.

8. Sotah 35a.

9. Shabbat 56b.

10. Berakot 62b.

11. Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer (Friedlander edition), pp. 116ff.; also, Numbers Rabbah 6.4.

12. Numbers Rabbah 2.17; also, Berakot 62b, in which God has Satan "stir up" David to commit this offense as punishment for David's presumption in suggesting that the Lord might have "stirred up" Saul to pursue him (II Samuel 24:1 against I Samuel 26:19).

13. Shabbat 56b.

14. Numbers Rabbah 11.3; Song of Songs Rabbah 3.5.

15. Baba Batra 16a.

Notes to Chapter Five

1. Soṭah 42b.

2. Leviticus Rabbah 21.2.

3. Soṭah 42b.

4. Ibid.

5. Leviticus Rabbah 21.2.

6. Ibid.; also, Midrash Tehillim 78.11.

7. Leviticus Rabbah 10.7.

8. Sanhedrin 93b.

9. Cf. Ginzberg, op. cit., Vol. VI, pp. 238-239.

10. Mo'ed Ḳaṭan 16b.

11. Cf., above, p. 82, footnote 11.

12. Midrash Tehillim 7.2.

13. Ibid.

14. Ta'anit 5b.

15. Soṭah 10b-11a; Numbers Rabbah 9.24.

16. Sanhedrin 107a; also, cf., Solomon Schechter, Aspects of Rabbinic Theology (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), pp. 212-213, in which he employs this incident as an example of the rabbinic fence around the law.

17. Numbers Rabbah 9.24; Soṭah 9b.

18. Exodus Rabbah 1.1.

19. Ibid.; also, Berakot 7b.

20. Cf., R. Travers Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash (London: Williams and Norgate, 1903), pp. 365-381, also Lauterbach, "Jesus in the Talmud," Rabbinic Essays, pp. 560ff.

21. Several times they are linked with Balaam, Gehazi, and others as being excluded from the world to come. Herford amply demonstrates that heresy is the reason for this exclusion. cf., Mishnah Sanhedrin 10.1-2; Numbers Rabbah 14.1; Berakot 55b; also, Herford, Christianity...., pp. 64-66.

22. Numbers Rabbah 18.17.

23. Sanhedrin 106-107a; Abot 6.2; Midrash Tehillim 3.2.

24. Sanhedrin 106b; Numbers Rabbah 18.17.

25. Sanhedrin 101b.

26. Zebahim 54b.

27. Sanhedrin 106b.

28. Herford, op. cit., pp. 37, 62.

29. Ibid., p. 57, in which Herford quotes the apparently censored versions of the text which include the words, "like Jeshu the Nazarene." Berakot 17b is the source of the passage as we now have it.

30. Sanhedrin 106b; also, Genesis Rabbah 38.1, on having them wander about as an example of wicked men.

31. Midrash Tehillim 7.2-3.

32. Sanhedrin 105a; Numbers Rabbah 14.1. Note that Balaam, who might be a figure representing Jesus, is still excluded.

Notes to Chapter Six

1. Henry Slonimsky, "The Philosophy Implicit in the Midrash," Hebrew Union College Annual (1956), Vol. XXVII, p. 264.

2. Midrash Tehillim 18.28; Sifre (ed. Ish-Shalom) on Deuteronomy, section 27; Ḥullin 89a; also, 'Erubin 63a; Mo'ed Ḳaṭan 16b; Song of Songs Rabbah I.2.1 regarding David's humility as a student before his teacher, Ira the Jairite.

3. Midrash Tehillim 144.1.

4. Leviticus Rabbah 5.8.

5. Midrash Tehillim 51.1; also, Schechter, op. cit., p. 336.

6. Esther Rabbah I.1 (proem); Ecclesiastes Rabbah VII. 19.4; Midrash Tehillim 1.1. All of these comment on David as a Psalmist. Examples of such Psalms as are considered here may be found in Midrash Tehillim 3.3, 4.

7. Cf., p. 82, above, where this theme of David as an example is noted.

8. Yalḳuṭ ha-Makiri (ed. Buber), Psalm 18.

9. Midrash Tehillim 25.5.

10. Song of Songs Rabbah V.1.1.

11. Soṭah 49a.

12. Leviticus Rabbah 7.2.

13. Schechter, op. cit., p. 130. cf., Slonimsky, op. cit., p. 269, regarding Israel's burden of vicarious atonement.

14. Numbers Rabbah 3.2.

15. Leviticus Rabbah 35.1; Midrash Tehillim 119.62; also, Schechter, op. cit., pp. 273 ff.

16. Shabbat 30 a, b; also, Makkot 10a and Baba Mezi'a 86a for a parallel story in which Rabbah b. Naḥmani is the central figure.

17. Numbers Rabbah 15.16; Sanhedrin 16a; Lamentations Rabbah II.19.22; also, see Yalḳuṭ Shim'oni on Psalms, #877 (quoted by Hasidah, op. cit., p. 104), for a similar idea.

18. Ecclesiastes Rabbah IX. 2.1.

19. Sanhedrin 93b; Ruth Rabbah 4.3.

20. Berakot 4a; Megillah 14a, b; Ruth Rabbah 2.2; also, Makkot 10a, on the centrality of the Sanhedrin.

21. Makkot 10a.

22. Ecclesiastes Rabbah VII. 1.2; cf. Abot 4.13.

23. Soṭah 49a, b; Ketubot 112b.

24. 'Abodah Zarah 3a-4a; Yebamot 24b.

25. 'Abodah Zarah 44a-46b.

26. Soṭah 21a.

27. A. Marmorstein, The Doctrine of Merits in Old Rabbinical Literature, Jews' College Publications No. 7 (London: Oxford University Press, 1920), p. 152.

28. Makkot 24a.

29. Sanhedrin 16a; Berakot 3b-4a; Midrash Tehillim 3.3; also, Pirḳe de-Rabbi Eliezer (Friedlander edition), pp. 275-280.

30. Baba Ḳamma 60b.

31. Sanhedrin 19b; Leviticus Rabbah 23.10; also, Sanhedrin 18a, 22a for related problems.

32. Kadushin, Organic Thinking (New York: J. T. S., 1938), p. 105.

33. Pesaḥim 117a.

34. Sanhedrin 104a.

35. Menaḥot 43b; Pesiḳta de-Rab Kahana 11 (quoted by Ḥasidah, op. cit., p. 106); Midrash Tehillim 28.3; Numbers Rabbah 14.1.

36. Smith, op. cit., p. 230.

37. Shabbat 151b; Genesis Rabbah 34.12.

38. Menaḥot 43b.

39. Cf., Marmorstein, op. cit., pp. 55, 63, 77, 85, 90, 133, 139-140.

40. Slonimsky, loc. cit.

41. Ibid., p. 285.

42. Lauterbach, "The Pharisees and Their Teachings," op. cit., p. 87.

43. Mo'ed Katan 16b.

44. Sanhedrin 6b.

45. Berakot 28b, 31a, 48b; Rosh ha-Shanah 25a.

46. Zebahim 54b; Numbers Rabbah 13.14.

47. Ta'anit 26a; Numbers Rabbah 3.11, 15.11; Midrash Tehillim 1.1.

48. Slonimsky, op. cit., p. 287.

49. Sanhedrin 107a; also, Midrash Tehillim 86.2

50. Midrash Tehillim 6.4; also, Gittin 57b and Midrash Tehillim 86.14, in which David reminds God of the desecration of His name by these non-Jews.

51. Ruth Rabbah 1.4; Genesis Rabbah 5.29.

52. Cf., Kadushin, "...Rabbinic Concept of Israel," op. cit., p. 86.

53. Ecclesiastes Rabbah III.15.1.

54. Midrash Tehillim 3.3.

55. Slonimsky, op. cit., p. 238.

56. Sanhedrin 107a.

57. Baeck, op. cit., p. 51.

58. Midrash Shemuel 21, 108, and Zohar III, 272a as cited in Ginzberg, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 87 and Vol. VI, p. 251.

59. Shabbat 30a; Sanhedrin 107b; Mo'ed Katan 9a; Exodus Rabbah 44.1; Ecclesiastes Rabbah IV. 1.3.

60. Genesis Rabbah 12.15, 21.7.

61. Marmorstein, op. cit., p. 4.

62. Ibid., p. 184.

63. Esther Rabbah 3.7.

64. Song of Songs Rabbah IV. 4.1, 3; Midrash Tehillim 1.2.

65. Leviticus Rabbah 14.5.

66. Rosh ha-Shanah 16b-17a, 18a.

67. Midrash Tehillim 9.6, 34.1, also Ginzberg, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 89-91.

68. Yoma 22b; Genesis Rabbah 32.1.

69. Genesis Rabbah 78.13.

70. Midrash Tehillim 4.2.

71. Deuteronomy Rabbah 2.10.

72. Baba Batra 91a; cf., Herford, op. cit., pp. 326-327.

73. Sanhedrin 38b; Hagigah 14a.

Notes to Chapter Seven

1. Typical examples of the many passages which underline national, political aspirations and/or the Davidic image are: Amos 9:1-4, 7-9; Jeremiah 23, 30-33; Hosea 3:5; Zecheriah 3:8; Ezekiel 34:23f.; Isaiah 55:3f.; etc.

2. George Foot Moore, Judaism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), Vol. II, p. 324.

3. Joseph Klausner, The Messianic Idea in Israel (3rd ed.; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), p. 395.

4. Ibid., pp. 395-403; also, Abba Hillel Silver, A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), p. 15.

5. Klausner, ibid., pp. 404-407.

6. Ibid., pp. 408-419, where Klausner divides a basically "this world" messianism from the eschatological problems like resurrection, last judgment, and the kingdom of heaven.

7. Ibid., p. 392.

8. Moore, op. cit., p. 312; also, cf., Kadushin, Organic Thinking, pp. 82 ff. Supportive of this idea are those passages in which the only distinction between the present and the messianic time is said to be the servitude to foreign oppressors. Examples may be found in: Shabbat 63a, 151b; Sanhedrin 99a.

9. Cf., Baeck, op. cit., pp. 31, 147 ff.; also, Moore, ibid., p. 330 regarding God as the deliverer.

10. Yoma 25a, 69b; Sotah 40b, 41b.

11. Cf., Klausner, op. cit., p. 260, regarding his comments on I Maccabees.

12. Ibid., pp. 394 ff.

13. Deuteronomy Rabbah 1.16; cf., also, Numbers Rabbah 14.1; Midrash Tehillim 83.3.

14. Song of Songs Rabbah VIII. 9.1; cf., also, Sukkah 52b; Yoma 10a; Lamentations Rabbah 1.13.

15. Sanhedrin 94a.

16. Ibid., 96b-98b; Pesahim 54b; cf., also, Julius H. Greenstone, The Messiah Idea in Jewish History (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1906), pp. 103 ff.

17. Greenstone, ibid., Chapter 3; also, cf., Sukkah 52 a, b. Klausner, op. cit., p. 405, tells us that no trace of the "suffering Messiah" can be found in the early Tannaitic period; rather, this image flows from the ideology which followed the Bar-Cochba defeat. Additional references to the Messiah, son of Joseph, may be found in: Ozar Midrashim, ed. J. D. Eisenstein (New York: the ed., 1915), Vol. II, pp. 389-395.

18. In addition to those time spans found in the Sanhedrin sections already mentioned, one may add the idea of having to exhaust all of the unborn souls before the Messiah could arrive. cf., Yebamot 62a-63b; Niddah 13b.

19. e.g. Sanhedrin 20b; Megillah 17b-18a; Leviticus Rabbah 2.2.

20. Sukkah 52a; cf., Schechter, op. cit., pp. 289 ff. for other references as well as a discussion of this matter.

21. Schechter, ibid., p. 289, which says: "...man has to show himself worthy of this grace, inasmuch as it is expected that the first effort against the Evil Yezer should be made on his part, whereupon the promise comes that Yezer will be finally removed by God."

22. Ibid., p. 275.

23. Moore, op. cit., p. 377.

24. Yoma 76a; also, cf., Midrash Tehillim 5.6, 7--in which Israel's enemies (especially Doeg and Ahitophel) are denied resurrection.

25. Berakot 9b-10a.

26. Moore, op. cit., p. 312.

27. Midrash Tehillim 78.70; Exodus Rabbah 2.2; also, Genesis Rabbah 59.5 where a significant change is appended to the idea of David as shepherd. The notion is that while he is Israel's shepherd, one should remember that the Lord is David's shepherd (Psalm 23:1)--a reminder that his role as mediator is in no way that of a divinity. He is, rather, a man of great ability, as were Abraham and Moses (who are also named in this same section).

28. Hagigah 12b.

29. Sukkah 53a, b; also, cf., Makkot 11a.

30. Pesahim 112a.

31. Midrash Tehillim 22.28.

32. Ibid., 61.3; also, cf., Yebamot 96b-97a; Bekorot 31b.

33. Ruth Rabbah 5.6.

34. Klausner, op. cit., p. 513; cf., Greenstone, op. cit., p. 100, for a similar interpretation. It should be noted, however, that exceptions to the idea of an unchangeable Torah can be found. This does not alter the basic premise, though, as the following quotation shows:

> ...despite the "doctrine" of the immutability of Torah, there were also occasional expressions of expectations that Torah would suffer modification in the Messianic Age....It is important, however, to recognize explicitly that all the changes envisaged were deemed to occur within the context of the existing Torah and presuppose the continuance of its validity. Moreover, the changes contemplated imply no necessary diminution in what we may be allowed to term the severity of the yoke of the Torah.

Quotation from: W. D. Davies, Torah in the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come, Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series, Vol. VII (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1952), p. 66.

35. Midrash Tehillim 1.2.

36. Ibid., 14.6.

37. Exodus Rabbah 15.22.

38. Cf., Hayyim Schauss, The Jewish Festivals (Cincinnati: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1938), p. 93.

39. Yoma 86b.

40. Bettan, op. cit., p. 41.

41. Exodus Rabbah 25.8; cf., Pesahim 119b for a similar statement.

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