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AHAD HA-AM'S CONCEPTION OF JEWISH CULTURE
AS REFLECTED IN HIS USE OF CLASSICAL JEWISH SOURCES

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for Ordination.

Hebrew Union College--Jewish
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THESIS DIGEST

Asher Ginzberg (1856-1927), who is best known by his pseudonym Ahad Ha-Am, was one of the most influential Zionist thinkers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He believed that Judaism was at a critical juncture in its history, and that a new approach, consistent with the spirit of the times, was necessary. Deeply influenced by the prevailing theories of Nationalism and Kultur, Ahad Ha-Am constructed an approach to Judaism. He held that the Jewish people could lay claim to a unique culture which consisted of its vast literature, its history, and its language--Hebrew. He believed that there was a "National Spirit" that motivated the people throughout its history.

In contradistinction to the political Zionists of his time, Ahad Ha-Am believed that it was the "problem of Judaism" and not the "problem of the Jews" that was of greater importance. Drawing upon Nahman Krochmal's cyclical historical approach to Jewish history, and also from Auguste Comte and the Positivists, Ahad Ha-Am posited that his time was when the Jewish nation would rejuvenate and assume the character of a Positive society. He believed that the Jewish nation had been continually developing, that it had progressed through an evolution. Ahad Ha-Am turned to the theories of Darwin and Spencer to develop an approach that is both biological and social.

In order to accomplish the desired revival of the Jewish nation, Ahad Ha-Am envisioned a Spiritual Center in the Land of Israel. From this center would emanate the rays of the new Jewish society. Ahad Ha-Am believed that it would be an elite that would populate the Spiritual Center. These spiritual "priests" as he called them would be the creators of the new Jewish way. He considered that it was the elite that would lead the people. In this respect he drew strongly upon the theories of Tarde and Comte.

In terms of his concept of Jewish culture and the idea of the Jewish National Spirit, Ahad Ha-Am posited that there was a base to the entire system. He called this base "Absolute Justice", a concept derived from Krochmal but without any theological tendencies. He placed the beginning of Absolute Justice back to the period of the Literary Prophets and traced its path throughout Jewish history. It was the Jewish people's mission to attain a society that would be based upon the ideal of Absolute Justice. Ahad Ha-Am shows the development of Absolute Justice in Jewish history by marshalling proof texts from

the classical sources. The Bible, Mishnah, Midrash, and Talmud all supply him with the proof he needs to show how Absolute Justice operated within Judaism. For Ahad Ha-Am, Maimonides was a classic example of the elite creating Jewish society. Maimonides' works also supplied Ahad Ha-Am with what he considered eloquent expressions of the presence of Absolute Justice as a motivating factor in Jewish society.

Ahad Ha-Am believed that the Jewish nation was ripe for change, and it would be through his approach that the rejuvenation would occur. He conceived of a Jewish society that would immerse itself in the creation of great literary and moral works. The Jewish culture that would arise would contain all the necessary elements that Nationalism and the idea of Kultur suggested. Language, literature, a specific goal (the attainment of Absolute Justice in society) a commitment to a National Land (Israel), a love for the traditions and history of the Jewish people. He found support for his ideas throughout the classical sources. He has developed an approach that combined the prevalent ideological tendencies of his days while drawing sustenance from the vast tradition of the Jewish people. He dreamed of a moral Supernation based on the ideal of Absolute Justice.

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who has given so much to
enable me to reach so far

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CHAPTER I--THE INTELLECTUAL WORLD OF AHAD HA-AM

One of the most influential Jewish nationalist thinkers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was Ahad Ha-Am (1856-1927). His presence was felt throughout the Jewish intellectual world through his many essays, articles and critical works. His literary style was lucid and logical, which was not the dominant style of his day. He developed a concept of the Jewish people and its culture which was clearly based in the intellectual trends of his time. The stress on particularism, a reaction to the Age of Reason became embodied in the theories of Nationalism. Related to this was the idea that each nationality had its own unique Kultur. Ahad Ha-Am drew heavily from both of these concepts in his attempt to define the uniqueness of Judaism.

Ahad Ha-Am believed that the Jewish people was at an important juncture in its history. Now was the time for the revival of the Jewish people and its culture. The Enlightenment had resulted in the assimilation of many Western European Jews. They attempted to reduce Judaism to the status of a religion. Ahad Ha-Am believed that those Jews who attempted to make Judaism into a church, surrendered the very essence necessary for the revival of the Jewish people--the will to live as a national entity. The number of Jews who could be considered Orthodox was rapidly diminishing, and something had to be done to prevent the

dissolution of Judaism. Ahad Ha-Am perceived also that many of the Jewish intellectuals were deserting, following after other cultures and ideas. As far as he was concerned, the young school of writers, following the Nietzschean orientation of Micah Joseph Berdichevsky, was attempting to inject European modes into Hebrew literature.²

Ahad Ha-Am's conception of Cultural Zionism, with its National Spirit, National Ethic and Spiritual possessions, was the framework which he felt provided the solution. He developed these conceptions from a wide range of influencing ideas. We know that he was well versed in the Jewish and general literature of his time. In his "Reminiscences" he writes that he had read Mendelssohn, Geiger, Luzatto, Kant, Hegel, Locke and Hume. But it was the evolutionary theories of Darwin and Spencer and the ideas of Nationalism, Kultur and the Positivists that most deeply affected Ahad Ha-Am in his conception of Jewish culture.³ Ahad Ha-Am believed that the culture evolved through the course of history. From the works of Gabriel Tarde he absorbed his perceptions concerning the conflicting ideas of imitation and assimilation. Nahman Krochmal appears to have supplied Ahad Ha-Am with the intellectual basis for his idea of a Jewish National Spirit based on the idea of Absolute Justice.⁴

Ahad Ha-Am was not alone in the struggle to determine the nature of Judaism and its culture. The Zionist Movement headed by Theodore Herzl had given the Jewish people great hope. His forceful leadership convinced many Jews that there

could be a Jewish State in the near future. Ahad Ha-Am reacted strongly to the movement. He saw it ignoring the more important issue--the continued existence of Judaism.⁵ The Political Zionists focused their efforts on finding a place for the Jews. Ahad Ha-Am believed that the real problem was trying to strengthen Judaism through a detailed program devoted to spreading what he considered the ideals of the Jewish people. He perceived the task of the "Lovers of Zion" to be: to become living examples of what the Jewish culture is, so that the rest of the Jews will begin to live accordingly. The task of Cultural Zionism was to create a spiritual center in the Land of Israel that would serve as a beacon to all the Jews throughout the world.⁶ He reasoned that this center had to be in the Land of Israel because it was there that the Prophets had first proclaimed the Ideal of the Jewish people--Absolute Justice. This land was the birthplace of the Jewish National Spirit, and thus, was the natural place for the Spirit to once again flourish.⁷ The diaspora had too many dangers, too many competing cultures. For this reason, Ahad Ha-Am could not agree with Simon Dubnow that the Jews needed only full civil rights to develop an autonomous culture wherever they lived.⁸ Ahad Ha-Am turned to the sources to prove his arguments; creating in his works an interesting blend of modern ideologies and ancient prophecies. For him, the Jewish sources were living proof of what was unique in Jewish culture, and as such were illustrative of that culture.

In order to better understand the intellectual trends from which Ahad Ha-Am developed his conception of Jewish culture, we shall need to investigate these trends and the ways in which they are employed by Ahad Ha-Am.

Auguste Comte and Positivism

Comte theorized that society had traversed a long evolutionary path until his time. The present was the most advanced stage of this process. However, the best social system was yet to come into being--the Positivist society. Comte divided society's development into three basic periods:

. . . each branch of our knowledge (including the society) passes successively through three different theoretical conditions: the Theological or fictitious; the Metaphysical or abstract; and the scientific or positive.⁹

As the human develops and progresses, these are the stages through which one passes. He defines the first stage in this way:

In the theological stage, the human mind seeking the essential nature of beings, the first and the final causes (the origin in purpose) of all effects--in short. Absolute knowledge--supposes all phenomena to be produced by the immediate action of supernatural beings.¹⁰

This theological stage began with early humans worshipping the elements and things about them. People made gods of the sun, the weather--those aspects of nature that had a direct effect upon life, but were not understood. By creating gods associated with these natural phenomena, the people hoped that in times of trouble they would be able to appease these

gods through prayer or sacrifice. Comte held that society continues to develop and these polytheistic beliefs yield to monotheism. The search is still for the supernatural being, but the power behind the natural phenomena has been concentrated into one entity. From this idea develops what Comte considers his second stage:

In the metaphysical state, which is only a modification of the first, the mind supposes, instead of supernatural beings, abstract forces, veritable entities (that is personified abstractions) inherent in all beings, and capable of producing all phenomena.¹¹

Comte seems to have considered the study of metaphysics as detrimental to the development of society. It diverted the mind, by obfuscating thinking. This in turn prevented society from properly developing.¹² Metaphysical thinkers had reinterpreted theological notions by developing philosophical constructs. Nevertheless, they still were searching for the "Absolute." Comte considered the idea that some absolute force ruled over the human a denigration of the human experience. This would not happen in the Positive approach. Although he posits a Being, it is not some external force. It is ". . . the whole constituted beings past, future, and present, which co-operate willingly in perfecting the order of the world . . . the continuous whole formed by the beings which converge. . . ." ¹³ in the society.¹⁴ It is the naturalistic approach that characterizes the Positive stage:

In the final stage, the mind has given over the vain search after Absolute notions, the origin and the destination of the universe, and the causes of phenomena,

and applies itself to the study of their laws--that is, their invariable relations of succession and resemblance. Reasoning and observations, duly combined are the means to this knowledge. What we now mean when we speak of an explanation of facts is simply the establishment of a connection between single phenomena and some general facts, the number of which continually diminishes with the progress of science.¹⁵

One discovers the meaning of phenomena from the human experience. The Positivist searches for scientific understanding, not for some metaphysical concept.

Comte considered this time to be ripe for the creation of a Positivist society. The Middle Ages had come to an end. Feudalism fell to the demands of a new economic system. The French Revolution had toppled the monarchy. This was necessary, but the movements that had brought about these changes Comte held to be unhealthy for society. They placed too much emphasis on the individual, ignoring the needs of society. Comte perceived these movements to have torn down the old system, but they did not create a new way.¹⁶ Many ways of life were possible; their proliferation threatened the social fabric of Europe because there was no longer one system of social life: "The first social need of Western Europe is community in belief and in habits of life; this must be based upon a uniform system of education controlled and applied by a spiritual power that shall be accepted by all."¹⁷ Comte suggested a body of twenty thousand Positivist philosophers to teach this "uniform system of education." They would be educated at a special school and would then go out to the communities to spread their teachings.¹⁸ Connected to his idea of a trained cadre of Positivist

philosophers was his plan for an Encyclopedia, which would be Positivist in outlook. It would contain science, history, sociology and religious teachings.¹⁹ People would be able to use this Encyclopedia to learn the Positivist approach to all these areas. Comte placed a great value on the written word. He realized that books reached into homes where at times his cadre would be unable to reach. Also, a book is more readily accessible than would be one of the Positive philosophers.²⁰ Writings also existed after the death of the individual who wrote them. Related to his position on the written word was the emphasis he placed on language. He believed that language was of paramount importance; that it was a fundamental aspect of society.²¹

Comte considered order and progress to be touchstones of Positive Philosophy: "To form a satisfactory synthesis of all human conceptions is the most urgent of our social wants: and it is needed equally for the sake of Order and Progress."²² Comte considered the Middle Ages to have been a time when there was social order, a time when people were taught a uniform way of conduct for life. He desired a return to what he perceived was the orderliness of the Middle Ages.

Comte held that it was the Catholic Church that had been the dominant educating force in the Middle Ages. He believed that it had been the Catholic Church's moral and spiritual power that had made the Middle Ages great. Catholicism was society oriented, in contrast to Protestantism

which placed greater importance on the individual. Thus the Catholic Church was to be admired and respected, although it was tainted by theological and metaphysical concepts. Further, the Church had a long history and a detailed tradition. Comte believed that Positivism, while discarding the less important and the non-Positivist aspects, would glean the most valuable aspects from the Catholic Church. He also saw valuable input from the spiritual forces that powered the French Revolution. The Church exemplified the maintaining force present in society while the French Revolution illustrated the need for the forces of change in the development of society. Positivism would draw from both, for it was the system that would both maintain and act as an agent of change:

(Positivism) combines the opposite merits of the Catholic and the Revolutionary Spirit, and by doing so supercedes them both. Theology and Metaphysics may now disappear without danger, because the service which each of them rendered is now harmonized with that of the other, and will be performed perfectly.²³

Comte wrote at a time when the Church was losing its hold on people. There was a large group of educated and knowledgeable people who chose to live in a secular society. Comte may have aimed his writings at this group, perhaps in the hope that he would supply them with a guideline for society. In a way, he presents a secular Catholicism. He posits a group of philosophers (priests), a credo, a catechism and a way of life. It is based in the scientific world; rooted in reason and human investigation. He may have perceived that his system would present a religious system that would be palatable to the enlightened individuals of his day. He

has created a system which has no theological underpinnings that acknowledges science, education, and the uniqueness and majesty of the human.

Charles Darwin and Social Darwinism

A few years after the appearance of Comte's works, Charles Darwin published his book The Origin of Species. Despite its conflict with Church dogma and its differences with the popular theories of Lamarck, Darwin's theory of evolution quickly became the accepted approach.²⁴ His emphasis on the biological development of species found ready acceptance in the intellectual climate of his day. The Age of Reason, the trends of the Enlightenment and the Romantic Movements had all placed great importance on human progress and development. Darwin supplied the biological support for these ideas: ". . . evolution bolstered the generation's optimism by rendering progress automatic."²⁵ Darwin's theory placed the human at the pinnacle of the evolutionary ladder; the human was the most developed of all species.

One of the more important ideas of Darwin was his concept of the 'struggle-for-life'. The struggle-for-existence was a crucial aspect of Natural Selection:

How do those groups of species, which constitute what are called distinct genera, and which differ from each other more than do the species of the same genus, arise? All these results . . . follow from the struggle for life. Owing to this struggle, however slight and from whatever cause proceeding, if they be in any degree profitable to the individuals of a species, in their

infinitely complex relations to other organic beings and to their physical conditions of life, will tend to the preservation of such individuals, and will be greatly inherited by the offspring. . . .

I should premise that I use this term in a large and metaphorical sense including dependence of one being on another, and including (which is more important) not only the life of the individual, but success in leaving progeny.²⁶

Organisms adapt to their environments in order to continue to exist. Variations in the structure occur enabling the organism to continue. The useful variations and adaptations are labelled Natural Selection by Darwin:

But if variations useful to any organic being ever do occur, assuredly individuals thus characterized will have the best chance of being preserved in the struggle for life; and from the strong principle of inheritance, these will tend to produce offspring similarly characterised. This principle of preservation, or the survival of the fittest, I have called Natural Selection. It leads to the improvement of each creature in relation to its organic and inorganic conditions of life; and consequently, in most cases, to what must be regarded as an advance in organisation.²⁷

These concepts were reinterpreted by social theorists into what was called Social Darwinism. The nation and society began to be viewed as something similar to a biological organism. The Romantics developed the idea of the nation as a distinct entity; Hegel had posited that a nation went through a life cycle. Darwin provided the terminology and conceptual framework for such thinkers.

Herbert Spencer

One of the most influential of the social Darwinists was Herbert Spencer. A contemporary of Darwin, he adapted Darwin's ideas into a social setting. He held that societies progress and develop like biological organisms.²⁸ These

societies could also stagnate and die, as do organisms.

Darwin's idea of the survival of the fittest and the struggle-for-existence was directly transferred to the society:

For we see here that in the struggle for existence among societies, the survival of the fittest is the survival of those in which the power of military cooperation, and military cooperation is that primary kind of cooperation which prepares the way for other kinds. So that this formation of larger societies by the union of smaller ones in war, and this destruction or absorption of the smaller ununited societies by the united larger ones, is an inevitable process through which the varieties of men most adapted for social life supplant the less adapted varieties.²⁹

Spencer believed that societies evolved from the simple to the complex; a parallel to Darwin's approach to biological organisms. As the society became more complex, it began to have many more components. Spencer included religion, art, literature and culture as the components that played an important role in the development of a society.³⁰

Gabriel Tarde

Contrary to the general intellectual tendencies of his time, Tarde did not surrender to the Positivists or anti-Positivists. Also, in a time when Sociology was becoming the respected area of study, due to the impressive studies of Spencer and especially Durkheim, Tarde followed a more psychological bent. He did not consider society to be sui generis. He believed that societies were aggregates of individuals. Individual action and invention brought on change in society. "All human innovation and progress stems from creative associations originating in individual minds."³¹

Tarde developed the idea of 'publics'--an aggregate of separate persons, who, exposed to the same communications, developed a certain degree of self-consciousness.³² There were three basic processes in his theory: Invention, Imitation, and Opposition.

Invention was a social form of the Darwinian idea of adaptation that occurs in biological organisms. Inventions are devised by individuals to enable humans to adjust to changing environments. These inventions tend to increase in a geometric progression. There is an additive value to these inventions. The more there are, the more people use them. People tend to imitate these inventions, that is to say, they repeat those inventions which prove useful. Tarde believed that relatively few people were true inventors. Further, he felt that those inventions devised by social superiors would be more imitated than those of social inferiors.³³ He believed in a prestige hierarchy; certain individuals were more gifted and therefore would tend to exert greater influence on people.

Nationalism

The idea of Nationalism became one of the dominant theories of the second half of the 19th century. In reaction to the scientific, unemotional attitude of the Age of Reason, the thinkers of the Romantic Age developed their theories. The Age of Reason's emphasis on universalism and general acceptance of all humans into one family, met with resistance

as the 19th century progressed. A greater stress on the individual and groups arose in opposition to the attempts to accept all as equals.

The initial steps in the transformation of the eighteenth century world into that in which men live to-day were marked by a strong current of reaction against the scientific methods and ideals of the Age of Reason. Toward the close of the century (and into the next) there developed in Europe a number of tendencies representing in part a reaction against the ideas of the Newtonian world, in part a recrudescence of forces that had remained present in Western civilization since the Renaissance. These tendencies, loosely grouped together as romanticism, emphasized the emotional rather than the rational side of human nature, a richly diversified development of individuals and groups rather than a mathematical uniformity, and, most significant of all, the genesis and growth of things rather than their mechanical ordering.³⁴

The writers and poets of the Romantic Movement infused their works with emotion and the stress on the individual. Fichte, Schlegel, Friederich von Hardenberg, and many others became the dominant writers of the time. All their works show a strong antipathy to the goals of the Age of Reason and the Aufklärung. One of the most eloquent statements comes from Schleiermacher:

For a long time I too (he writes) was content with the discovery of a universal reason: I worshiped the one essential being as the highest, and so believed there is but a single right way of acting in every situation, that the conduct of all men should be alike, each differing from the other only by reason of his place and station in the world. I thought humanity revealed itself as varied only in the manifold diversity of outward acts, that man himself, the individual, was not a being uniquely fashioned, but of one substance and everywhere the same.³⁵

He changed his attitude, rejecting this universalistic conception of the human, and focused on the uniqueness of

the individual:

I feel the communion with mankind augments my own powers in every moment of my life. Each of us plies his own particular trade, completing the work of someone whom he never knew, or preparing the way for another who will scarcely recognize how much he owes to him. Thus the work of humanity is promoted throughout the world. . . . By the ingenious mechanism of this community the slightest movement of each individual is conducted like an electric spark through a long chain of a thousand living links, greatly amplifying its final effect: all are as it were members of a great organism, and whatever they may have done severally is instantaneously consummated as its work.³⁶

It was an easy move to convert this emphasis on the individual to the individual community. Nationalism was the expression of a unique, individual group of people. The community was seen to operate as an organic entity. The individual lived within a society and was educated within its cultural milieu. This had a direct effect on the personality of the individual. This was the Nationalism of the individual-- the group within which one lived:

Seeking satisfaction not in the rational and well established rules of tradition but in the realization of personality the untrammelled expression of subjective emotion, it soon came to be recognized that these deep and irrational forces of subjective personality do not come into being spontaneously but are deeply embedded in the individual's early memories, in the songs and tales imbibed in his childhood, and in his entire cultural and physical milieu. Romanticism thus exhibited an ardent interest in all forms of folk creation and in the native countryside. Once these were recognized, it followed that one's individuality was not separate and apart from all other individualities, but integrated into a greater organism of land and nation. . . . The state for them was living organism, a macroanthropos, a living individuality which was not merely a sum of individuals bound together by a rational contract but organically related by blood, descent, by tradition, and by history. . . . The organic state has its spirit, its unique individuality like the unique individual.³⁷

Kultur

Closely related to the theory of Nationalism was the concept of Kultur. It developed out of the Romantic desire to learn about the uniqueness of each Nationality. The literature, music, language, etc., of the Nation was its Kultur. These aspects were organically tied to the Nation. Kultur stood in opposition to the Enlightenment's idea of Civilization. The idea of a Civilization was universal in orientation. Comte spoke of French civilization as being the most developed, and the one upon which the Positive society would in part be based. All people would eventually adopt this civilization. Kultur had a different connotation. Particularistic in nature, it was nationally directed. There was a German Kultur, and a French Kultur, each of which was unique. The Kultur was the possession of a specific national group. People did not pursue a universalistic Civilization, instead, each experienced a particularistic Kultur. Just as Nationalism stood in opposition to the over-arching universalistic goals of the Age of Reason, so Kultur stood in opposition to the idea of a pervasive Civilization.³⁸

Every nation has certain characteristic institutions, certain representative writers and statesmen, past and present, certain forms of art and industry, a certain type of policy and moral inspiration. These are its Kultur, its national tradition and equipment. When by education the individual is brought to understand all these things, to share their spirit and life, and to be able to carry them forward faithfully, then he has absorbed the Kultur in his own person. Kultur is transmitted by systematic education. It is not, like culture, a matter of miscellaneous private attainments

and refined tastes, but, rather, participation in a national purpose and in the means of executing it. The adept in this Kultur can live freely the life of his country, possessing its secret inspiration, valuing what it pursues and finding his happiness in those successes which he can help it to attain. Kultur is a lay religion, which includes ecclesiastical religion and assigns to it its due place.

. . . Kultur resembles the polity of ancient cities and the Christian church in that it constitutes a definite, authoritative, earnest discipline, a training which is practical and is thought to be urgent and momentous. It is a system to be propagated and to be imposed. It is all-inclusive and demands entire devotion from everybody.³⁹

Part II--The Jewish World

Nahman Krochmal

One of the most influential Jewish thinkers of the 19th century was Nahman Krochmal. His work, פורה נבוכי הזמן, published posthumously in 1851, had a profound effect on the group of thinkers who later constituted the Wissenschaft des Judentums. He adhered to the idea that nations appear, develop, decay and die. He shows that he is strongly influenced by Hegel in adopting this idea.⁴⁰ Krochmal drew heavily from the ideas of post-Kantian Absolute idealism, developing the idea of the Absolute Spirit. The Absolute Spirit is equated with the God of Israel.⁴¹ Krochmal held:

This Spirit is entirely a concept of pure reason and therefore cannot at all be grasped by the imagination or by common thought and understanding. On this account, except in the case of the chosen few, the truth was hidden from the multitude. . . .⁴²

A unique spirit also exists for each people. According to Guttman, Krochmal defines the spirit of a people in this fashion:

He defines it as the "sum total of the spiritual portion and heritage" which a nation creates in all the spheres of spirit, in jurisprudence, in ethics, and in science. These add up to the "spiritual treasure" of the nation; "they are gathered to form in their totality a holy spiritual treasure in every nation." Krochmal attributes to each nation a "spirituality" which is present in the people from the beginning of its national existence, and which stamps all of its spiritual creations. . . . This spirituality contains potentially everything that is to be accomplished in the cultural development of the nations and brought to slow fruition.⁴³

Concerning the spiritual treasures of a nation Krochmal writes:

Note that all the arts, laws, virtues, language concepts, books of wisdom, and concepts of God, which we have said are diffused within each nation at various stages of development are all spiritual attributes and characteristics which become the possession of the entire nation.⁴⁴

Krochmal believed that all nations went through cycles of development. Almost all nations eventually died. The only nation that did not face this reality was the Jewish nation. His premise was that the Absolute Spirit always resided with the Jewish people, which was not the case with the other nations. Thus whenever the Jewish nation faced decay and death, the Absolute Spirit would revive the people. Krochmal posited that the Jewish nation had traversed three cycles. The first began with Abraham and ended with the fall of the First Temple. The second extends from the Babylonian exile to the fall of Betar in 135 C.E. The final cycle ended with the Chmielnicki massacres of 1648-49 (Meyer)⁴⁵, the expulsion from Spain (Schechter)⁴⁶, or the eighteenth century (Agus).⁴⁷ Each cycle began,

matured and finally decayed. When the people understood the Spirit--which for the Jewish people was the will of God, the nation flourished. When the people did not pursue the lofty goals of the Absolute Spirit it decayed. When the people returned to God, the process would begin again. All nations followed this cycle, but only the Jewish nation, because its mission was to seek God the Absolute Spirit, would revive.⁴⁸ This unique heritage was what made the Jewish people special:

The fact that, from the beginning of its national existence, only Israel had faith in the absolute spirit and recognized the ultimate religious truth, elevates it above the fate of other nations and distinguishes it from them not only in degree, but in kind. Its mission, therefore, is sui generis: it does not aim only at developing and manifesting Israel's spiritual content at its highest, but includes the task of proclaiming the word of its faith to the other nations, and by so doing, becomes the teacher of mankind.⁴⁹

Krochmal believed that the entire history of the Jewish people depended on the people's relationship with the Absolute Spirit. This relationship enabled the Jewish nation to assume eternal life, always rejuvenating before the final decay overtook it.⁵⁰

Simon Dubnow and Diaspora Nationalism

Simon Dubnow (1860-1941) developed the theory of Diaspora or Spiritual Nationalism. He claimed that there was a distinction between a nation and a state. The state is a specific political area, the nation is the essence of a people. A nationality could have a state of its own,

but it did not require one.

A nationality, in its over-all development, is a cultural-historical collectivity those members are united originally by common descent, language, territory, and state, but who after some time reach a spiritual unity based upon a common cultural heritage, historical traditions, common spiritual and social ideals and other typical characteristics of development.⁵¹

If a nationality does not have a state, it relies upon its spiritual power to maintain it in the face of other pressures.⁵² The Jewish nationality has done this since the destruction of the Second Temple:

The Jewish nationality . . . is the highest type of cultural-historical or spiritual nation. Its long and unique historical development toughened the nation and energized its vital strength even though it had neither a unified state nor a territory.⁵³

The Jewish nation had attained the pinnacle of national development. It no longer needed a specific area of land. As long as the nation was able to maintain its individuality it would survive, wherever it was located.⁵⁴

In place of the external instruments of nationality, which it had to give up, it strengthens its inner resources, the consciousness of its identity, the collective will, and the common aspirations necessary for building up its autonomous organizations and institutions, its language, its educational system and its literature.⁵⁵

If the Jewish people were able to secure the rights to develop these autonomous organizations, it would be able to fulfill its national desires wherever Jews resided. Through a careful historical analysis, Dubnow attempted to show how the Jewish nation had attained these autonomous structures. He believed that these examples illustrated that the Jewish spiritual nationality operated at full

force in different locations throughout the Diaspora.⁵⁶

Dubnow did accept the idea that Jews would be able to attain a fuller national existence in the Land of Israel than in the Diaspora. This is not to say that he considered the Land necessary for the nationality, but Dubnow recognized that a group of Jews, living a fuller national life could exert a strong and positive influence on the Jews living in the Diaspora.⁵⁷ When Dubnow admitted this he contradicted his claim that there is no need for a land.

Political Zionism

When Theodore Herzl called the first Zionist Congress in 1897, Zionism entered a new age. Herzl's forceful leadership convinced many Zionists that his was the correct path. Most of the Hoveve Zion joined him in his efforts. He had a dream--to create a Jewish state. Herzl's concern was for the plight of Jews wherever they lived--the state would act as a refuge for the persecuted Jews throughout the world.⁵⁸ In order to bring his dream into fruition, Herzl travelled to many of the world leaders.

No one can deny the gravity of the Jewish situation. Wherever they live in appreciable number, Jews are persecuted in greater or lesser measure. Their equality before the law, granted by statute, has become practically a dead letter.⁵⁹

The creation of a Jewish state would alleviate the situation by moving the Jews to their own nation. Jews would be free from the persecutions of other people and be able to develop freely as Jews in a peaceful environment.

Initially he did not seem concerned where this refuge should be, and played an important role in the East African plan. However, he also labored long and hard to persuade the Turks and the Kaiser to support the establishment of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel.⁶⁰

Part III--Ahad Ha-Am's Synthesis

Ahad Ha-Am's Use of Comte

Ahad Ha-Am drew from all the above currents of thought, in his discussions about Jewish culture. His views on the development of culture come very close to that of Comte's approach. He pictures primitive humans living in a world where they were prey to the elements.⁶¹ In an attempt to protect themselves, they created the concept that the various natural phenomena were controlled by deities. These ancient humans would then attempt to appease the deities through prayer or sacrifice.

Thus all the common phenomena of nature became gods, in more or less close contact with human life and happiness; the earth became as full of deities as nature of good things and evil.⁶²

This is almost an exact parallel to Comte's First Stage. Ahad Ha-Am continues to draw upon Comte in his analysis of the development of society. He perceives society to have developed into a stage parallel to the second stage-- the "Metaphysical" of Comte. Life had become more complex, thinking people conceived new approaches to life and the world. From these theories developed a philosophical approach to life. Certain individuals were driven to

create a philosophical system of thought based on reason, which would be capable of explaining the mysteries of life. Ahad Ha-Am considered Maimonides to be the best example of this trend within Judaism. According to Ahad Ha-Am, Maimonides considered that the importance and value of Judaism by placing it within philosophy.⁶³

Ahad Ha-Am perceived his time to be the last stage in Comte's approach--the "Positive". Jewish society had been rent by a revolution. Both the Haskalah and Reform Judaism pilloried the status quo of the Jewish world, claiming that a new way was necessary for Judaism; that a break from the past was needed. Ahad Ha-Am believed that a new system was needed; one which would be able to bring the best of the former systems together:

. . . society needs some third system, intermediate between the other two, which shall stand in between the new and the old, uprooting from the new that which needs uprooting, and restoring to the old that which has been uprooted in ignorance.⁶⁴

This parallels Comte's desire for the Positive society to take the best from the Revolutionary spirit and from the Catholic Church. This new movement that Ahad Ha-Am envisioned would revere the past, without accepting it as authoritative, and at the same time, base itself in the world of science and inquiry. He perceived that such a movement existed--Hibbat Zion.

The Bene Moshe

Ahad Ha-Am conceived of an elite within the Hibbat Zion

which he called the Bene Moshe. This parallels Comte's plan for a cadre of Positivist philosophers who would spread the Positivist ideals to all the people; the elite being to prepare the way for the masses. Ahad Ha-Am had a similar perception of society, and believed that the masses needed a group which would break ground in advance of the whole community.

I think then, that the course of events will compel Zionism to come gradually to understand itself and its supporters: To understand itself as a national movement of a spiritual character, whose aim is to satisfy the demand for a true and free national life in accordance with our distinctive spirit; and to find supporters in that nationalist section which is sufficiently conscious in all its individual members, of this demand, and which in a certain sense may be called a "spiritual proletariat."⁶⁵

Ahad Ha-Am assumes a somewhat Marxist approach in the discussion equating "spiritual proletariat" with the Marxist view of the working-class proletariat. The "spiritual proletariat" (implicitly the Bene Moshe) will become an elite which will create the new Jewish society, just as the working-class proletariat will create a new working society.

But on the other hand there is among the Jews and only among them, a proletariat in another sense-- in the sense indicated by the combination of "national" and "spiritual". The position and needs of this proletariat, which are common to all its individual members, compel it to feel a deep-rooted and powerful desire for a change in the established order; but the change desired in this case is not a concentration of the means of production, but just the opposite. What is needed is a new means of production, wherewith to create a product of a special character. . . . And so it is the men who are really conscious of this want who form the only section specially fitted to support the Zionist movement, and to work for it unitedly, patiently, in an organized manner, until

its goal is reached.⁶⁶

His vision was that Hibbat Zion would be the leaders of this type of Zionism. They would, through their elite, the Bene Moshe, "raise and educate the coming generation in the proper spirit".⁶⁷

Every new idea, whether religious moral or social, will not arise or come into being without an association of "priests" who will sanctify their lives and will labor with all their soul and strength, who ever stand at the guard post, to protect it from every negative contact, and in every place of danger they will be the first to offer their souls. The path of the new idea is one on which no person has passed, and every such path is dangerous. Consequently, neither will we be able to demand this from the masses of the people; the object of life; nor upon them will we be able to rely, for, one will conquer the path before the idea only by endangering one's life. This is the task which the priests will perform, for they have the necessary moral strength and power for this, and the people will follow afterward, inasmuch as the path will already be conquered and paved before them.⁶⁸

Ahad Ha-Am explains what he hoped the Bene Moshe would attain:

The supreme object of our society . . . is: the rebirth of our people in our ancestral land. . . . The attainment of a national object demands a national effort carried out by a combination of the pick of the national resources both material and intellectual, and involving an inner moral unity. This effort must be a prolonged one, and there must be no indiscipline, no haste, no beating of drums, but circumspection, moderation and patience, guided always by good organization and settled rules of procedure. Such a national effort will attract to itself all the constructive elements in Jewish life, which are at present scattered and unorganized, and will gather momentum from generation to generation, growing quantitatively greater and qualitatively better, and progressing toward its goal by steps that may be short, but will be secure.⁶⁹

Here then is the goal. Ahad Ha-Am does not desire a revolution in the Jewish nation. Rather, the nation should gather its best human resources together. This

group would then begin to work, ever so slowly, toward the end of uniting the Jewish culture. These individuals must be willing to give themselves to the good of the nation. They must be of high moral character, serious in their desire to strengthen the nation and they must speak Hebrew.⁷⁰ The Bene Moshe would be the examples of the proper Jewish society and culture. They would also go out and teach the other members of the Jewish nation to believe in a national renaissance.⁷¹ The purpose of the Bene Moshe would be, "to make great and glorious the settlement of Jews in the Land of Israel by means of solid, substantive moral and national foundations."⁷² The Jewish people had to be prepared once again to be the inheritors of the message proclaimed by the Prophets:

. . . for in order to do great things in the land, it is essential that the generation is worthy, therefore not only toward the land should one concentrate, but also toward the people, the aim should not be just to build, but also to plant, not only physically, but also spiritually.⁷³

The way to do this is by "moral means" in order that "the national feeling will throb in the depths of every heart. . . ." ⁷⁴ Although the Bene Moshe never reached the lofty heights that Ahad Ha-Am envisioned, many of the members in the group became influential Zionist leaders.

Use of Darwin

But, Ahad Ha-Am did not confine himself to the Positivist school of thought alone. He adopted Darwin's

evolutionary terminology as well as his theories in his discussion concerning the nation. For Ahad Ha-Am, the Jewish nation and society had an instinctual "drive-for-self preservation". This force operated within every individual in the society, even if the person did not realize it. The drive assured the continuation of the society:

This desire which is implanted in us by nature, forces every living thing to pursue at all times that which brings life and pleasure, and to shun that which leads to destruction and pain. For every living thing this desire is the motive and the goal of every action.⁷⁵

This society develops naturally, like the development of some plant or animal. This natural development precludes any judgement concerning right or wrong, good or bad within a society; for all developments are part of the natural process:

And just as the natural scientist is not concerned to pronounce judgement on the objects which he examines, to say "this is good, but that is bad; this is sweet, that bitter . . ." just as he knows no distinction between the most exquisite bird and the most repulsive insect, but examines all alike with the minutist attention, doing his best to penetrate into the mystery of their lives and the process of their evolution; so too the student of the spiritual life of mankind has no concern with good and evil, wisdom and folly. For him it is all the fruit of the human tree.⁷⁶

Thus one cannot make a value judgement concerning society or its morals. Society demonstrates a sort of "survival of the fittest", adapting those elements which will ensure its survival and rejecting those that will harm it:

. . . our outlook differs from that of our ancestors,

not because we are essentially better than they were, but simply because our mental condition has changed, and our environment is different; that there is nothing so barbarous, so evil, that the human mind cannot accept it and foster it, given suitable conditions; and that consequently many of the sacred truths of every generation must become falsehoods in the next, and they who judge today will not escape scot free from the tribunal of tomorrow.⁷⁷

From the above, Ahad Ha-Am concludes that at certain times, certain beliefs and practices were necessarily correct. This in no way implies that at another time these will still be correct. Here Ahad Ha-Am severs the link with the past that Orthodox Judaism claims for its own; that we are bound by a Divine Law to continue the practices of past generations. For Ahad Ha-Am, the past no longer maintains a stranglehold on the development of culture. However, this does not mean that a total break with the past is in order, for in the evolutionary flow of the culture the past was necessary to the present and the future. In order to understand the evolutionary development of some animal one must be cognizant of the development of the animal through all its evolutionary stages. Similarly, one should approach the past development of a culture and analyze it.

Every thinking man who examines the past in this spirit becomes, as it were a reincarnation of the souls of all ages. Understanding the mental life of past generations, and entering sympathetically into their ideas, he does not regard it as a defect in them that their opinions and customs do not in every respect come up to the standards of our ideas and demands of the present day. Consequently, the feeling of respect for the men of the past does not compel him to follow them in practice; he recognizes that every generation has its truths.⁷⁸

We shall see that this position, vis-a-vis the past, plays an important role in Ahad Ha-Am's attempt to define

Jewish culture. Ahad Ha-Am felt that Reform Judaism, for example, was not truly Jewish because it jettisoned the past as if it were excess baggage.⁷⁹

Use of Spencer

Herbert Spencer supplied additional support for Ahad Ha-Am in his attempts to show that a nation and its culture develop along Darwinistic evolutionary lines.⁸⁰ Ahad Ha-Am extended the biological conceptions of Darwin to the nation, as did Spencer. Ahad Ha-Am considered that the nation had an almost biological existence, but, he was not willing to extend the analogy of the biological organism completely. This would have forced him to admit that the nation would also have to eventually die. He was willing to accept the idea that nations are born, and mature, but he breaks with Spencer beyond this point:

But at this stage there is an important difference between the individual and the nation. The individual dies: die he must: all his hopes for the future cannot save him from death. But the nation has a spiritual thread of life, and the physical laws do not set a limit to its years of strength. And so let it but make the future an integral part of itself, though it be only in the form of a fanciful hope, it has found the spring of life, the proper spiritual food which will preserve and sustain it for many a long year despite its ailments and diseases.⁸¹

The nation's will-to-live, another Darwinian and Spencerian concept, instinctually preserves the nation, through the agency of the people living in its history. "History does not trouble about our program; it creates what it creates at the bidding of our "instinct-of-self-

preservation.⁸² This instinct-for-self-preservation is a natural biological aspect of the nation, which will interject itself at various times in the history of the Jewish people, creating the forms and ideas necessary to enable the people to continue.⁸³ Ahad Ha-Am attempts to show that this process operated throughout the history of the Jewish people especially during the long years of exile.⁸⁴ Below we shall see Ahad Ha-Am's development of this idea.

Use of Krochmal

Ahad Ha-Am appears to have turned to Nahman Krochmal for support of the idea that the Jewish nation will not die.⁸⁵ Both Krochmal and Spencer conceived of the notion that nations and societies went through cycles. Krochmal theorized that all nations except the Jewish nation completed the cycle from birth to death. But the Absolute Spirit preserved the Jewish nation. Ahad Ha-Am adopted this idea in the form of what he called the National Spirit.⁸⁶ We have seen that Ahad Ha-Am believed that "the nation has a spiritual thread of life, and the physical laws do not set a limit to its years of strength."

Just as Krochmal's Absolute Spirit had an existence of its own, so did the National Spirit of Ahad Ha-Am. The National Spirit subordinates all personal aspects to its purposes, and imposes upon them its character;

directing the people toward the Spirit's goal:

. . . over the course of long periods of time the entire soul of the people is subordinated to a certain essential spirit-goal, in which could be perceived (the spirit's) workings upon all characteristics of the people and its customs, and even if there is no apparent connection between the spirit and the people and its way of life, it works basic changes in agreement with its goal. And all its inner task is not revealed to the eyes nor can it be felt in the heart, while at work.⁸⁷

Nationalism and Kultur

Ahad Ha-Am contends that this spirit can be found throughout the Bible and rabbinic literature. The presence of the spirit in these works makes them spiritual treasures of the nation--an idea that exactly parallels Krochmal.⁸⁸

There is one major difference between Ahad Ha-Am's National Spirit and Krochmal's Absolute Spirit. Whereas the Absolute Spirit is theological in nature.⁸⁹ Ahad Ha-Am does not equate his National Spirit with the God of Israel as Krochmal does with his Absolute Spirit: rather drawing upon the Darwinist theories, and those of Nationalism, he substitutes the National Spirit and its will-to-live for the God of Israel

Each nation has a unique national spirit, a unique national identity. Ahad Ha-Am defines this "national self" in the following manner.

The national self(האני הלאומי) is nothing but a combination of past and future--a combination, that is, of memories and impressions with hopes and desires, all interwoven and common to all individual members of the nation.⁹¹

To a certain extent the National Spirit is revealed

through the national self. Thus if one can define the (Jewish) national self, one will be able to better understand the workings of the Jewish National Spirit.

Ahad Ha-Am's concepts paralleled the nationalistic theories which were popular in his day with the idea that each nation has a unique personality. For Ahad Ha-Am the nation had a life of its own. Ahad Ha-Am carefully defined what he meant by nationality and state. Similar to the ideas of Nationalism of his time he considered the nationality to be all-inclusive. The state was a political entity within whose boundaries one might live. Nationality included the possibility of a state, but also included much more. In response to a letter from a Rabbi E. Lolli, Ahad Ha-Am wrote concerning this difference:

You also overlook the distinction between the state and nation. In the political sense you are an Italian and I am a Russian; but in the national sense we are both simply Jews. If you look closely I think you will find, even in Italy, perhaps even in your own congregation, Jews who are so remote from Jewish religious belief and observance that it is impossible to suppose that they are Jews only by religion, and yet would sacrifice their lives for the nation, though they do not know themselves what is the compelling notion. . . .92

There were specific ideas and beliefs that separated the Jewish nation from other nations. Ahad Ha-Am attempted to show what were the unique characteristics of the Jewish nation in a number of his essays.⁹³

The nation was made up of many components, including language, tradition, history and literature. We have seen that Ahad Ha-Am considered the nation to have an almost

organic nature. This, too was an aspect of Nationalism.

But it is from the idea of Kultur that Ahad Ha-Am drew most heavily. It is important to realize that Ahad Ha-Am employs the term **קולטורה** which appears to have been taken from Kultur. Seldom in his writings does the word **תרבות** appear. If we are correct in our assumption, this is crucial. The idea of Kultur was something distinct, as we have seen.

Ahad Ha-Am believed that the Jewish people possessed a unique Kultur, which permeated the very soul of the individual. It is learned from birth, through the tales of the people and through education. This Kultur determined, to a great extent, the character of the individual:

. . . a man works among his own people, in the environment which gave him birth and endowed him with his special aptitude, which encircled the first slow growth of his faculties and implanted in him the rudiments of his human consciousness, his fundamental ideas and feelings thus determining in his childhood what should be the bent and character of his mind throughout his life.⁹⁴

This Kultur has a reality of its own and can be seen in the creations of the best minds in each generation.⁹⁵ Throughout his essay, **'אחא הא-אמ'**, he describes the aspects of Jewish Kultur. These aspects are part and parcel of the entire nation. It is Ahad Ha-Am's hope that the Jewish nation will once again immerse itself in the study and development of its culture: that Jews will no longer take their skills which were acquired from within the Jewish culture and offer them to alien cultures. He is

saying that when one leaves the Jewish community and works in the general community, this person takes from the Jewish culture and gives to another, that which should be added to the Jewish culture. The strengthening of Jewish culture in the souls of Jews, will ensure that the culture flourishes. To facilitate this, Ahad Ha-Am envisioned a spiritual revival. One aspect of this would be concentrating leading members of the Jewish community in one place, in a center. This would enable them to work together as a spiritual force, creating and inventing for the Jewish culture.

If society is to be molded into a single form, there must be some center towards which all the forces of Imitation are attracted, directly or indirectly, and thus become the single or chief object of universal imitation.⁹⁶

Imitation and Assimilation--Use of Gabriel Tarde

Here Ahad Ha-Am draws upon the ideas of Gabriel Tarde. Ahad Ha-Am believed that certain individuals were responsible for the development of the culture. He held that there were social elites; his idea of the Bene Moshe indicates this. He agrees with Tarde on this point, for Tarde believed in the idea that social superiors led the masses. These individuals would invent and live in a certain way. The others would imitate them. Ahad Ha-Am borrowed this concept of Imitation from Tarde. Again, in agreement with Tarde, Ahad Ha-Am distinguishes between Imitation and Assimilation. When an individual or community

Imitates, there is an attempt to internalize some idea of cultural expression from another culture without surrendering to that culture. Assimilation would be that surrender.⁹⁷ His desire is to prevent Assimilation, which he saw as a pervasive entity in his day. In order to ensure the continued existence of the Jewish culture, Ahad Ha-Am proposed a center, a unifying point, from which the scattered Jewish community could draw sustenance in order to strengthen Jewish culture. Without this strong center of Jewish culture which all Jews could imitate, Ahad Ha-Am feared that the danger of (the Jewish nation) of being split into fragments would grow more intense. He suggests that:

. . . there is one escape--and one only--from this danger. Just as in the stage of growth the members of the community were welded into a single whole, despite their different individual characteristics, through the agency of one central individual; so also in the stage of dissipation the different sections of the people can be welded together . . . through the agency of a local centre, which will possess a strong attraction for all of them, not because of some accidental or temporary relation, but by virtue of its own right. Such a centre will claim a certain allegiance from each scattered section of the people . . . all will find in this centre at once a purifying fire and a connecting link.⁹⁸

Ahad Ha-Am's despair over the pressures of assimilation convinced him that life in the Diaspora would always be difficult for the full expression of the Jewish culture. Although he accepted the reality of a continuing Jewish presence in the Diaspora, he could not, as Dubnow did, make it something positive in nature. "Dispersion is a thoroughly evil and unpleasant thing, but we can and must

live in dispersion for all its unpleasantness." 99

Yet, Ahad Ha-Am did not perceive the settlement of the Land of Israel by as many Jews as possible the correct solution. His focus was on the Jewish culture; the problem of Judaism, not the problem of the Jews. This is what he considered to be the crucial difference between Political Zionism and his approach. He believed that the Political Zionists desired some strip of land, not necessarily in the Land of Israel, where the masses of Jews could escape. Even if such a state were created, as far as Ahad Ha-Am was concerned, it would be but a pale image of what the Jewish nation should be. The condition of the Jewish culture was inadequate to develop a Jewish state that would be based on the spiritual and moral aspects of the Kultur. Also, Ahad Ha-Am did not believe that the world was prepared to accept a Jewish state that was true to its National Spirit:

One may even doubt whether the establishment of a "Jewish State" at the present time, even in its most complete form that we can imagine, having regard to the general international position, would give us the right to say that our problem had been completely solved and our national ideal attained. "Reward is proportionate to suffering (Avot 5:23)" After two thousand years of untold misery and suffering, the Jewish people cannot possibly be content with attaining at last to the position of a small insignificant nation, with a State tossed about like a ball between powerful neighbors, and maintaining its existence only in diplomatic shifts and continual trucking to the favored of fortune. An ancient people, which was once beacon to the world, cannot possibly accept, as a satisfactory reward for all that it has endured, a thing so trifling which many other peoples, unrenowned and uncultured, have won in a short time, without going through a hundredth part of the suffering.

It was not for nothing that Israel had Prophets, whose vision saw righteousness ruling the world at the end of days. It was their nationalism, their love for their people and their land, that gave the Prophets that vision. For in their days the Jewish State was always between two fires--Assyria or Babylon on one side, and Egypt on the other--and it never had any chance of a peaceful life and natural development. So "zionism" in the minds of the Prophets expanded, and produced that great vision of the end of days, when the wolf should lie down with the lamb, and nation should not lift sword against nation --then Israel should too dwell securely on its land. And so this ideal for humanity has always been and will always be an essential part of the national ideal of the Jewish people; and a "Jewish State will be able to give the people rest only when universal righteousness is enthroned and holds sway over nations and States. . . .100

The Jewish Encyclopedia

Ahad Ha-Am greatly desired a Jewish Encyclopedia. It was his hope that those educated Jews who had left the ranks of the observant would use it, in order to learn about the Jewish nation and its culture. He believed that the ranks of the Torah and Talmud scholars were diminishing, and that there was a genuine danger of the dissolution of Judaism caused by a lack of knowledgeable Jews. In a letter to Kalman Wissotsky, Ahad Ha-Am presents a long description of the way Judaism was for the previous generations, then turns to what he perceives the situation to be in the present. No longer were Jews being educated in the old way, brought up well grounded in the traditional texts.

But the situation is different now. First of all, whether the matter seems good to us or not, nevertheless, we are not able to deny it, that the

strength of practical religion weakens daily. Our children live now in an atmosphere completely different from their (the previous generation's) youth. It goes without saying concerning the children of the "maskilin" that they do not find anything in their parent's house that reminds them of Judaism. Even the children of the absolutely Orthodox, particularly those living in the large cities, are no longer able to absorb the Jewish spirit in a practical way. This is because the conditions of life that surround them outside their parents' home kill in their hearts any feeling of respect for the acts of their parents. They (the children) do not understand the historical reasons for these acts, but see only the external. They cannot perceive beauty - or any other attractive characteristic - in these acts, since the bulk of their ideas and feelings come from the bet midrash of Japheth (European culture).

Consequently, if there is any hope left to instill love of Judaism in these children of ours, it will only occur if they know the value and understand all the good that is hidden in it, in a fashion that this knowledge will of itself create a national feeling (emphasis added) in their hearts, which will no longer depend on the external patterns of living. If our parents have said, "A great teaching is brought on by action", now we are forced to say, "A great teaching is brought on by love". This difference between us and our parents with respect to the aim of knowledge is born in the necessary basic difference between us and them with respect to its quantity and quality.

In order to spur into action believers who are the children of believers, it is enough to inform them about the particulars of the acts as decrees without explanation. But to awaken love for their people in the hearts of the children of the Enlightened--this will be possible only by means of an enlightened awareness in the character of the National Spirit and the course of its historical development, an awareness which will penetrate to the depths of Judaism and will reveal the rational and moral (emphasis added) light in it. 101

The encyclopedia will be a vehicle through which this "enlightened awareness" will be transmitted. These Jews must be exposed to the beauty and value of the National Spirit that exists throughout the course of Jewish

history. The tenor of the times demanded a different method of teaching, learning and understanding for those who had experienced the world which surrounded them.¹⁰² He believed that the need for this new approach was immediate, since the number of educated Jews was fast diminishing. The idea of an all encompassing encyclopedia which would transmit the new way of education seems to have come from two sources. We have seen that Comte envisioned a great Positivist encyclopedia which would cover all subjects in the new Positivist way. From another direction the plan for an encyclopedia draws upon the ideas of Kultur that through education in the national traditions and practices "the individual is brought to understand . . . to share in the spirit and life (of the Kultur). This is what Ahad Ha-Am hoped that the Encyclopedia would in part accomplish.

The Jewish National Spirit and Absolute Justice

In discussing the Jewish National Spirit, Ahad Ha-Am follows the concepts of Kultur and Nationalism. He believed that the Jewish Spirit had certain unique characteristics which separated it from other National Spirits. In his attack on Political Zionism he posits that the Prophets expressed a unique nationalism--that which he considered to be the essence of the Jewish National Spirit.

History has not yet satisfactorily explained how it came about that a tiny nation in a corner of

Asia produced a unique religious and moral point of view, which has had so profound an influence on the rest of the world, and has yet remained so foreign to the rest of the world, unable to this day either to conquer it or to surrender to it.¹⁰³

The Jewish National Spirit possessed a unique "moral point of view."¹⁰⁴ Other nations may have had a moral sense of some time but the Jewish nation is able to lay claim to the moral sense as its unique heritage:

From the time that nationalism became strengthened in our midst, we have published the well known fact. . .: that the Hebrew moral sense is something unique in and of itself, that no other example of it can be found in the rest of the ancient cultured peoples before it became manifested in Judaism. And to all this matter is already a well known adage that the Spirit of Judaism is the moral. . .¹⁰⁵

Ahad Ha-Am is careful to show that he considers the Moral sense to be a cultural aspect independent of religion. In his essay "המוראל והדת" he claims that it is a mistake to hold that morality developed out of religion. In fact, the reverse might just be the case.

. . . within the clothing of religion is being hidden the more distinguished branch of the National life--the National Ethic, which flows from the Spirit of the people and the history of its life. . .¹⁰⁶

Ahad Ha-Am has accomplished two things in this passage. He has separated morality from religion; elevated morality to a higher plane, and he has relegated religion to the position of being merely an aspect of the National culture. This is in consonance with the ideals of Kultur, as Santayana explained--Kultur is a lay religion which includes ecclesiastical religion as part of its possessions.¹⁰⁷

But the National Ethic is the "more distinguished branch." Ahad Ha-Am describes its importance thusly:

Morality, when considered by itself--for example the methods of discerning between good and evil in all aspects of personal and societal life--is consequently, perhaps more than all the rest of branches of culture, a national possession, in which is found impressions of the life of the people and its condition at all times, and in it is found the quality of the National Spirit, and the manner of its relation to the outside world, and to the ever changing conditions of life.¹⁰⁸

Morality needs to be taught and practiced so that it becomes something people do as easily as they speak. This morality needs to permeate the soul of each Jew; it needs to become the "inner spirit" of the people, a natural part of existence.

The use of the national language draws people's hearts closer to the national spirit. And if it is so with the language, how much the more so with morality. In the end it will not be the language but in the image of the life and the movement of the spirit. When the National Ethic is the direct link between the inner spirit and the external life, and if a person is accustomed to it, to relate every aspect of life in accord with the bases of the National Ethic, even if one does so at the start only in an artificial manner, as a learned rule of society, the end is to feel the well-spring of life in one's heart, the "inner spirit" from which flows the National Ethic and thus the relation (between morality and life) will be a natural one, which will emanate from the innermost reaches of one's soul.¹⁰⁹

Ahad Ha-Am defines what this National Ethic of the Jewish People is in greater detail. The essence of the Jewish ethic is something he calls Absolute Justice. It is Absolute Justice which will become a natural part of a person's behavior.

Herbert Spencer anticipates, as the highest possible development of morality, the transformation of the altruistic sentiment into a natural instinct, so that at last men will be able to find no greater pleasure than in working for the good of others. Similarly Judaism, in conformity with its own way of thought, anticipates the development of morality to a point at which justice will become an instinct with good men, so that they will not need long reflection to enable them to decide between different courses of action according to the standard of absolute justice, but will feel as in a flash, and with the certainty of instinct, even the slightest instinct from the straight line.¹¹⁰

The idea of Absolute Justice originated with the Prophets, who envisioned the entire Jewish Nation conducting its life according to its tenets. Absolute Justice was the moral task of the entire people.

But the Jewish law of justice is not confined within the narrow sphere of individual relations. In its Jewish sense the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," (Lev 19:18) can be carried out by the whole nation in its dealings with other nations. For this precept does not oblige a nation to sacrifice, for the benefit of other nations, its life or its position. It is, on the contrary, the duty of every nation, as of the individual human being, to live and to develop to the utmost extent of its powers; but at the same time it must recognise the right of other nations to fulfil the like duty without let or hinderance, and "patriotism"--that is, national egoism--must not induce it to disregard justice, and to fulfil itself through the destruction of other nations. Hence Judaism was able thousands of years ago to rise to the lofty ideal expressed in the word, "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation." This ideal is, in fact, only an inevitable logical consequence of the idea of absolute justice, which lies at the foundation of Judaism.¹¹¹

Ahad Ha-Am's approach is consistent with the idea of Kultur. The Jewish Kultur has Absolute Justice as its unique moral inspiration, which can be traced back to the time of the literary Prophets, and to which the entire

people stand heir. At the same time he molds Spencer's theories into his framework.¹¹²

We shall see that Ahad Ha-Am considered the Prophet as the human epitome of Absolute Justice. The Prophet's life was devoted to the idea of Absolute Justice and its propagation among the Jewish people.¹¹³ Ahad Ha-Am's goal was that the Jewish people and its culture would follow the Prophets' vision and be based upon the moral ideal of Absolute Justice. And of all the Prophets, Ahad Ha-Am considered Moses to be the epitome of the Prophetic ideal. Therefore, when he devised a group which he hoped would show the Jewish nation as a whole the way to live according to Absolute Justice, in a free and functioning Jewish culture, he named them the Bene Moshe.

Ahad Ha-Am, living in the swirling currents of thought of 19th century Europe, was deeply influenced by the ideological concepts of his time. He sought to define a Judaism that would be compatible to the new intellectual mood. The Jewish nation was entering a new cycle, and needed a new framework within which it could exist. In the spirit of his day he attempted to show what was the makeup of the Jewish nation, its possessions and its purpose. If his framework were to convince the Jews of his day that he was right, he had to prove that his contentions were based upon sound scientific reasoning and research. Ahad Ha-Am believed that within the traditional Jewish sources could be found proof for his arguments, and he devoted himself to this.

Throughout the Notes the following abbreviations will be employed:

כ"כ.	for	כל כתבי אחר העם
עפ"ד.	for	על מרשת דרכים
אגרות	for	אגרות אחר העם

Notes--Chapter 1

1. כ"כ. עפ"ד.י. עבדות בחור חירות" סע-סעט.
2. כ"כ. עפ"ד.י. צורך ויכולת" קכה-קכט
3. Simon, A. and Heller, J, אחד העם האיש פעלו וחרותו, 132, P.
4. Simon, A. and Heller, J. Pp. 166-162 ... אחד העם האיש.
5. כ"כ. עפ"ד.י. מדינת היהודים ו"צרת היהודים" קלה-קמ
The problem for Ahad Ha-Am was solving the "Problem of Judaism" not the "Problem of the Jews."
6. cf discussion in chapter below and Chapter III.
7. כ"כ. עפ"ד.י. תחית הרוח" קכא
8. Dubnow, Simon, Nationalism and History, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1958, Pp. 116-142.
9. Comte, Auguste, The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte, Translated by Harriette Martineau, Chicago (no date), Pp. 25-26.
10. Ibid., P. 26.
11. Ibid., P. 26.
12. Comte, Auguste, A System of Positive Polity, London, 1875, Vol. I, P. 67 and Vol. III, P. 73.
13. Ibid., Vol. IV, P. 27, of Vol. II, P. 11ff.
14. Ibid., Vol. I, Pp. 86-87.
15. Comte, Auguste, The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte. op.cit., P. 26.
16. Comte, Auguste, A System of Positive Polity, op.cit., Vol. I, Pp. 65-67.
17. Ibid., Vol. I, P. 65.
18. Ibid., Vol. I, Pp. 86-87.
19. Ibid., End of Vol. I.
20. Ibid., Vol. II, Pp. 204 and 213.
21. Ibid., Vol. II, Pp. 184-185.
22. Ibid., Vol. I, P. 2.
23. Ibid., Vol. I, Pp. 86-87.

24. Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1829) developed a theory of organic evolution based on the unproved principle that changes acquired by organisms during their lifetime-such as greater development of an organ or a part through increased use-could be transmitted to their offspring. That is, that an acquired trait is heritable. (Ritterbush, Philip C., "Lamarck, Jean-Baptiste de Monet, Chevalier de", Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1978, Vol. 10, Pp. 616-618.)
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26. Darwin, Charles, The Origin of Species, New York, 1958, Pp. 73-75.
27. Ibid., P. 128.
28. Spencer, Herbert, The Evolution of Society, Chicago, 1967, Pp. 4-7, cf. P. XLI and Kaufmann, Y., P. 425.
29. Ibid., P. 76.
30. Ibid., P. XXXIV.
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32. Ibid., P. 511.
33. Ibid., Pp. 510-511.
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cf Pinson, Koppel, Modern Germany, New York, 1966, Pp. 39-49.
35. Pinson, Koppel, Modern Germany, New York, 1966, P. 42.
36. Ibid., P. 42.
37. Ibid., P. 43.
38. Ibid., P. 43.
39. Santayana, George, Soliloques in England, (1922), Pp. 170-171.
40. Guttmann, Julius, Philosophies of Judaism, New York, 1964, Pp. 367-369, 371.
41. Meyer, Michael, Ideas of Jewish History, New York, 1974, P. 190.

42. Ibid., P. 201.
43. Guttman, Julius, Philosophies of Judaism, op.cit., P. 381.
44. Meyer, Michael, Ideas of Jewish History, op.cit., P. 194.
45. Ibid., P. 191.
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48. Meyer, Michael, Ideas of Jewish History, op.cit., Pp. 202-203.
49. Guttman, Julius, Philosophies of Judaism, op.cit., P. 384.
50. Ibid., Pp. 365-366.
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52. Ibid., Pp. 98-99.
53. Ibid., P. 99.
54. Ibid., P. 86.
55. Ibid., P. 88.
56. Ibid., Pp. 289-324.
57. Ibid., Pp. 159-160, 165-166.
58. Hertzberg, Arthur, The Zionist Idea, Philadelphia, 1959, P. 205.
59. Ibid., P. 215.
60. Ibid., Pp. 222-223
61. Simon, A. and Heller, J. 146ff אחר העם האיש...
62. כ"כ עפ"ד א.מ.א. מוקדם ומאוחר בחיים" עט
Ahad Ha-Am, Selected Essays, Philadelphia, 1912, P. 71.
63. כ"כ. עפ"ד א.מ.א. שלטון השכל" שטט
64. כ"כ. עפ"ד א.מ.א. לחולדות החיוב והשלילה" עט
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65. כ"כ. עפ"ד. "הניעה השעה" שפ
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66. שפ, שפ. Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 105, 107.
67. כ"כ. עפ"ד. "הכחנים והעם" יט
My Translation
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My Translation
69. Simon, Leon, Ahad Ha-Am, Philadelphia, 1950, P. 78.
cf Simon, A. and Heller, J., 19p. op.cit.... אחר העם האיש
70. Simon, A. and Heller, J. Pp. 30-23 op.cit.:... אחר העם האיש
cf Simon, L., Ahad Ha-Am, op.cit., P. 74ff.
71. כ"כ. עפ"ד. "נסייון שלא הצליח" חלח
72. חם Ibid.
My Translation.
73. חלח Ibid.
My Translation
74. חלח Ibid.
My Translation
75. כ"כ. עפ"ד. "חשבון הנפש" סא
Ahad Ha-Am, Selected Essays, op.cit., P. 160.
76. כ"כ. עפ"ד. "נחלת אבות" רעא
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Max Turtel is of the opinion that Ahad Ha-Am was strongly influenced by Lamark, but Heller does not see the relation. (see Turtel, M. ביסוס הלאומיות והיהדות אצל אחר העם 33-32 Pp., 1954
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Ibid., P. 209.
78. רעא Ibid.
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79. כ"כ. עפ"ד. "עבדות בחור חירות" סה-סו
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80. Simon, A. and Heller, J., 146-147 pp., op.cit.:... אחר העם האיש
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81. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "עבר ועתיד" פא-מב.
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82. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "סך הכל" חכא.
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83. Kaufmann, E., 425 p., op.cit. "עקרי דעותיו של אחד העם"
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85. Simon, A. and Heller, J., 162 P. op.cit. אחד העם האיש
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87. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "הקדמה למחזור ראשונה" ב.
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88. Simon, A. and Heller, J., 217 ff P., op.cit.,
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89. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "הגיעה השעה" שפג.
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New York, Summer, 1955, P. 212.
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93. Esp. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "על שתי הסעיפים" שש-שענ.
94. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "תחית הרוח" קעו.
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95. Ibid. קער.
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96. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "חקוי והתבוללות" פו.
Ibid., P. 109.
97. Ibid. מה-פו.
Ibid., Pp. 112-117.
98. Ibid. פט.
Ibid., P. 123.

99. כ"כ. עמ"ד. IV, "שלילת הגלות" שצט.
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 215.
100. כ"כ. עמ"ד. IV, "הקונגרס הציוני הראשון" רעה.
Ahad Ha-Am, Zionism and Judaism, op.cit., Pp. 26-27.
(my emphasis)
101. כ"כ. עמ"ד. I, "על יבר אוצר היהדות בלשון עברית" קה.
My Translation
102. Rubenstein, Aryeh, footnote 29, P. 294, "הקולטורה" במשנה אחד העי
103. כ"כ. עמ"ד. IV, "על שתי הסעפים" שעג.
Ahad Ha-Am, Zionism and Judaism, op.cit., P. 253.
104. Simon, A., and Heller, J., P. 171, op.cit., אחד העם
האיש פעלו ותורתו
105. כ"כ. עמ"ד. IV, "איוב ופרומיסיוס" רפא.
My Translation (my emphasis)
106. כ"כ. עמ"ד. II, "המוסר הלאומי" קסג.
My Translation
107. 30 P. 30 March 1913 אגרות, כרך ה', לד"ר י.אברהם
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"The answer to the question what Judaism is depends, of course, on the meaning one attaches to the vague terms "Judaism," "religion" and "culture." In the sense in which I understand those terms, I should say that religion itself is only one particular form of "culture," and that "Judaism" is neither one nor the other, but is the national creative power, which in the past expressed itself in a form of culture which was primarily religious. In what form it will express itself in the future--that we cannot tell.
108. כ"כ. עמ"ד. II, "המוסר הלאומי" קסב.
My Translation
cf Kaufmann, E., P. 432, op.cit. "עקרי דעותיו של אחד העם"
Simon and Heller, Pp. 170-171, op.cit. אחד העם האיש
and כ"כ. עמ"ד. IV, "נסיון שלא הצליח" תלח-חלס.
109. כ"כ. עמ"ד. II, "המוסר הלאומי" קסב.
My Translation
cf Kaufmann, E., P. 437, op.cit., "עקרי דעותיו של אחד העם"
110. כ"כ. עמ"ד. IV, "על שתי הסעפים" שער
Ahad Ha-Am, Zionism and Judaism, op.cit., Pp. 239-240.

111. שעה. Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 243-244.
112. Kaufmann, E., P. 435, op.cit., "עקרי דעותיו של אחד העם"
113. Ahad Ha-Am, Selected Essays, op.cit., P. 15.

CHAPTER II--THE LIFE OF AHAD HA-AM

Asher Zvi Ginzberg was born August 18, 1856, (17 Av 5616) in the Southern Russian town of Skvira. In his 'Reminiscences' he describes the town as "one of the most benighted spots in the Hasidic sector of Russia." His father, Isaiah was from a better class Hasidic family. Isaiah Ginzberg was an adherent of Sadagura Hasidism, and certainly did not support the more extreme wings of Hasidism, for he was a respected Talmudist. His mother, Golda was apparently a good-natured and beautiful woman. Asher also had two sisters, who survived childhood--Hannah and Esther.,

Shortly before his birth, tsar Alexander II (1855-1881) ascended the throne. Life under the previous tsar had been harsh for the Jews. Nicholas had instituted many anti-Jewish programs during his reign the most insidious being the Cantonist program, where young Jewish males were forcibly drafted into the Russian army. They were required to serve up to 25 years, often at posts far removed from their families or any Jewish contact. The idea of the Cantonist program seems to have been an attempt to convert as many of these conscripts as possible, thus reducing the Jewish population considerably. (For 30 years this program ripped Jewish communities and families apart, created constant fear and mistrust.) When Alexander II brought a halt to this program, there was almost an audible sigh of relief heard across the Russian Jewish community. He also opened

the universities and schools to the Jews, who had been prevented from entering during the evil years of Nicholas' oppressive reign.²

This move appears to have been part of the continued attempt by the Russian government to have the Jews assimilate. Nevertheless, with the increased educational opportunities, many more Jews were exposed to the intellectual life of the times. These Jews brought this exposure back into the Jewish community, creating an intellectual revival. New periodicals appeared in Hebrew and Yiddish discussing all aspects of the Jewish community, its life and thought. Unfortunately the liberalism of the early years of Alexander's rule ended quickly. Once again restrictive legislation against the Jews appeared. There was political turmoil throughout the land, as revolutionaries carried out assassinations and riots. The Jews were accused of being the revolutionaries on the one side, and to complete the vise, were also condemned as the ones who oppressed the recently freed serf, thus causing the political unrest. As a result of these accusations, the government established committees to find a solution. The result was a severe curtailment of the recently granted Jewish rights.³ The repressive legislation was not confined to the Jews alone, nor did it curtail the revolutionaries. Finally, in the spring of 1881, they caught up with and killed Alexander.⁴ The terrible pogroms that followed dealt a severe blow to the Jewish intelligentsia and caused countless deaths and injuries to all the Jewish

population. Mass emigration was the result, and once again the Jewish community found itself being torn up at its very roots.⁵ The Jewish intelligentsia struggled to come to grips with the emerging reality that even many of the Russian intellectuals if not supporting the government's actions, at least refused to condemn it in any way. The Jews fought to find some solution. Some joined the revolutionary bands. When they were captured, they only gave fuel to the government's anti-Jewish program. Others sought solutions in different directions. The millennial dream of a Jewish return to Zion gained strength in many circles. A messianic hope certainly was needed for the beleaguered Jewish community, and Zionism supplied one such hope.⁶

Ahad Ha-Am's Early Years

Ahad Ha-Am grew up during the course of these years. It was during this confusing and turbulent time that his character developed and matured; that he began to form his perception of the Jewish world and what needed to be done for it. Ahad Ha-Am left only one source covering these years, the "שקל בתוה" which were written in later years, some as late as his last few years in Tel Aviv.⁷ According to Leon Simon, Ahad Ha-Am's sister, Esther, wrote a small work which was an attempt to fill in many of the gaps found in the "שקל בתוה".⁸ Asher apparently began his learning at the very early age of three, when he already was engaged in the study of the Torah. By the age of six he began to

investigate Rashi's commentary. An extremely adept student, he needed a special teacher for Talmud and Codes when he was only ten. His father had no trouble affording these extras, as he was a wealthy person. He also believed that the only way to acquire a good Jewish background was by constant and diligent study. Asher did not lead a leisurely life. He arrived at school early in the morning, even in the winter, without the benefit of a meal. The hot drink that the family sent him later in the day would often arrive cold.⁹ Home life was not too enjoyable for the young Asher. He describes both his parents as being very quick tempered. If he were as obstinate in his younger days as he was later in life, it is not difficult to imagine constant arguments. He wrote concerning his home life:

Overall life in our home was devoid of pleasure, and I was happy when I could spend some time away from home.¹⁰

He never did acquire a liking for nature.¹¹ He immersed himself in his studies, and ignored normal childhood pursuits. Books were his life then and continued to be throughout the rest of his years.

I distanced myself from children my age and childhood desires; my soul was immersed in Torah and I devoted myself to Talmud and Poskim night and day.¹²

Jewish literature was not his only interest. While still in heder Asher developed the habit of smoking. Only eleven at the time, his concerned parents took him to a doctor who told Asher that if he continued to smoke, he would die. To break the habit Asher found a Hebrew book on

algebra and geometry. This substitute, although it greatly interested him did not last long. When his grandfather saw the mathematical symbols on the doors and windows of Asher's room he thought that Asher was practicing witchcraft. His smoking began again immediately.¹³

In 1860 the whole family moved to the town of Gopitchitsa. His father became a tax farmer here, and apparently became even wealthier. Asher continued to study all day. It was even easier in the new town. The family lived away from the town, leaving Asher with no companions. As a result, he devoted himself to his father's library.¹⁴

Ahad Ha-Am became a mitnagged at the age of twelve. His father took him to Sukkot celebration at the house of Rabbi Abraham Jacob of Sadigura. Asher's father hoped that if he received a blessing from the rabbi, Asher might stop his studies of certain heretical works--such as the writings of Kalman Shulman. Asher seems to have been impressed with the Tsaddik, but suffered an experience that forever created a breach between him and Hasidism. The eldest son of the rebbe and one of his sons-in-law were eating in the sukkah with a crowd of followers. During the meal some old Jew entertained them with some indecent tales, which most appeared to enjoy--excluding Asher. Abruptly, a hazzan was requested to sing a hymn, and all joined in with deep reverence. The paradoxical situation of jumping immediately from filthy jokes to religious fervor proved too much for the young Asher. He devoted himself to

the more philosophical works of Maimonides and steered away from involvement in Hasidism after the incident.¹⁵ He also investigated Hebrew grammar and began to study some of the Spanish Jewish writers. Before the age of 15 he had begun to become disillusioned with the Hasidic world of his father and grandfather. He even smuggled in certain Haskalah books. In one case he sat up all night reading a book, and threw it in to the fire in the morning.¹⁶

Asher became well versed in Talmud and the Responsa literature. He was apparently well respected and considered an expert in the laws concerning the agunah. He even concocted an imaginary case concerning an agunah, replete with convoluted legalisms. He wrote a responsum on the case and sent it to Rabbi Joseph Saul Nathanson of Lemberg, one of the great scholars of his time. Rabbi Nathanson replied to the letter, which made quite an impression on the Jewish scholars in the area where Asher lived.¹⁷

He writes in the מקור חיים that by his sixteenth year he had the reputation of being skilled in rabbinic literature. He also was married the same year to a woman who bore a fine Hasidic pedigree. He remained living with his parents, which enabled him to continue his studies unabated. He had by now begun seriously to delve into the literature of the Haskalah. His philosophical interests began to dominate, and he began to question the role of religion. The Haskalah literature only served to spark his mind to more intense questioning. This drove him to learn Russian and German,

which would enable him to read the contemporary literature concerning the issue.

During the first years of my married life, whilst I continued to live with my father in the seclusion of his village, with not a care in the world, I read much and pondered deeply the question of religion in all its aspects. My naturally critical and analytical bent of mind was given full reign and my whole world was turned upside down. Of course I began to read the Haskalah literature . . .

The Haskalah literature of those days was of course only a stepping-stone to European culture. . . . Thus it was not surprising that, following as I did in the footsteps of those who made the stepping-stones, I finally found myself "on the other side", and began to learn Russian and German.¹⁸

Asher had taught himself Russian, beginning with reading the store signs as he walked to heder, but he was twenty before he started a serious study of the language.

In 1878 Asher visited the city of Odessa for the first time. He met a person there who was well read in Russian literature. This man introduced him to the essays of Pisarev, the Russian Positive philosopher.¹⁹ Thus began his study and interest in the Positive philosophical approach to history and culture. He had to wait until he was in his thirties to finally learn to read French and English and thus be able to read Comte and the English writers whose moralistic empirical philosophies had such a strong influence on him. Up until that time he had to study their works through German or Russian translations.²⁰ He returned to Odessa when he was twenty-three, determined to prepare himself for a real university education. He taught himself Latin but the myriad of little bits of information one needed to

learn in order to pass the exams proved too petty for Asher, and he abandoned his plan to enter a Russian university.

Years of Pogroms

1881 ushered in a horrible year for the Jewish community in Russia. Alexander III became tsar following the assassination of Alexander II. From the very beginning of his rule the Jews suffered. His chief advisor was one Pobedonostsev, a vicious anti-Jewish reactionary, who wished to see the Russian nation under the rule of the Russian Orthodox Church. He instituted a series of brutal attacks on all minorities including the series of pogroms that the Jewish communities suffered until finally checked in 1882. Pobedonostsev's anti-Jewish bias was so strong that he is attributed to have offered the following plan to seal the fate of Russian Jews: "One-third will die, one-third will leave the country, and the last third will be completely assimilated." While it cannot be proven that he made these remarks, his support of the Pogroms, the May Laws (1882) and restrictions on the percentage of Jews in schools point to his anti-Jewish bias.²¹ The May Laws forbade Jews from owning leases or mortgages. This ended his father's job in 1886 when his lease ran out. Jewish families were uprooted and evicted. As mentioned, this sent shock waves through the Jewish intelligentsia. The Haskalah movement and the assimilatory groups were severely crippled, for the way of general education was suddenly closed to them.

The message being sent to them was "you are not wanted, because you are Jews." New directions had to be found. Some people reacted by fleeing, others such as Leo Pinsker, one of the disillusioned Haskalah people turned to nationalism. The terrible pogroms of 1881 evoked a passionate response--his article "Autoemancipation." His essay became a spiritual source for the groups encouraging emigration to the Land of Israel--the Hovevey Zion societies.²²

Asher Ginzberg felt the impact of the pogroms, but when he left to study in Vienna in 1881 he was not doing so to flee the country. He was attempting once again to acquire a university education. This trial lasted no more than a fortnight and he returned to his parents and wife once again. He explains his reason for the failure in the following manner:

So I got to Vienna, stayed there two or three weeks--and then returned home. Why? The real reason was a defect in my own character which has stood in my way all my life--I mean lack of confidence in my own capacity and abilities.²³

This sense of unsureness remained with him always. He never felt comfortable in a leadership position and constantly believed himself to be misunderstood.

Asher returned to the small town bitter and lonely. He was convinced that life in this little village was no longer right--"It sucked me dry; it consumed the best years of my young life; I could bear it no longer." He returned to his travels throughout Europe, but always returned home in a tortured state of mind, constantly dogged by his sense

of self doubt. Finally in 1886 with his father's tax farmer lease expired, all moved to Odessa. This move enabled Asher to free himself from the trap that living in his father's house and on his good graces had been.

So at last came the hour of my escape from that furnace of iron eighteen years, the best years of my youth, and which had eaten me up and destroyed whatever of worth nature had endowed me with when I was born. I entered it a boy of twelve; and left it as a man of thirty; with a wife and children; I entered it pure of soul and full of hope and left it with despair in my soul and a heart torn and weary.²⁴

Odessa offered Asher the chance to share in the intellectual ferment that had been brought on by the state of the Russian Jewish community. He was invited to become a member of the Central Committee of the Hovevey Zion. At this time the movement stressed individual humanitarian settlement of the Land of Israel. That is, the movement put emphasis on getting people out of Russia, not necessarily on any nationalistic program or ideals. Already motivated by a strong nationalistic outlook, with a specific ideal of what the Jewish nation should be and what purpose the Land of Israel served, Ginzberg reacted vociferously to this approach. His response was his first major essay which was published in "Hamelitz" March 15, 1889. Presented for the first time was his concept of "Spiritual Zionism" which demanded that the people must be properly prepared on a spiritual level, before any settlement in the Land of Israel would be successful, both for the colonists and more importantly for the entire Jewish nation. His idea stressed the national good over the individuals.²⁵ The

article appeared over the signature "Ahad Ha-Am." Ginzberg explained the reason for this nom-de-plume:

The idea of this pen-name was to make it clear that I was not a writer, and had no intention of becoming one, but was just incidentally expressing my opinion on the subject about which I wrote, as "one of the people" who was interested in his people's affairs. Who could have told me then that this would be the beginning of a long literary career, that the name Ahad Ha-Am would become better known than my real name, that I was to edit a Hebrew paper and to make a profession of literature?²⁶

The article touched off a storm of reaction, positive and negative. Some members of Hibbat Zion asked him to make his suggestions a practicle reality. The secret society of Bene Moshe was formed for this purpose. Ahad Ha-Am was appointed the leader and spiritual advisor of the group, although he is not the founder of the group. We have seen that the group was to be the moral elite of the Jewish nation. Unfortunately the members of the group could not live up to the strict and lofty ideals that Ahad Ha-Am set for the Bene Moshe. Dissension, back room politicing, and constant re-criminations from the various Bene Moshe factions plagued the group almost from the beginning. The group in the Land of Israel appears to have entered into the same shady land speculation as those whom Ahad Ha-Am attacked had engaged. Ahad Ha-Am became disillusioned with the Bene Moshe. His faith in the ethical and moral standards of the group had diminished and he no longer believed that he could properly lead the group. He secretly resigned as leader, agreeing to remain only the spiritual and moral leader of the group.²⁷ Most of his letters to the various branches of the Bene

Moshe express a belief in the deterioration of the movement. The group was effectively destroyed in 1897 with the First Zionist Congress. The real problem that Ahad Ha-Am faced was that the movement did not follow the path that he thought was correct. When the best of the group bolted from it and joined Herzl in his quest, one can only imagine the sense of grief and disappointment Ahad Ha-Am felt. Ahad Ha-Am could never come to grips with the political aspirations of these people, removed as he was from this sphere. All he could see was the membership deserting the moral and spiritual goals that were to serve the entire Jewish nation, and enter into the illusory world of politics.²⁶ With the rise of Herzl's Zionism, Ahad Ha-Am was left isolated, he felt "Like a mourner at a wedding feast"²⁷ at the First Zionist Congress. From that time until 1905 he was a lone voice crying for a Spiritual Zionism.

Hashiloah--Fulltime Writer and Editor

Ahad Ha-Am's business failed in 1896. He was offered the post of director of the Hebrew publishing company Ahiasaf. He served in this capacity until he became the editor of Hashiloah a periodical published in Berlin. He named the magazine, and one can see that even here he expressed his conviction that change must occur through a slow and deliberate process. This was a point he had stressed in "לא זה הדרך" and in the program of the Bene Moshe. He derived the name from Isaiah 3:6. "Because the people has spurned

the gently flowing waters of Shiloah." The Lord promises to bring ruin upon the Jewish people. In the same way, Ahad Ha-Am edited the journal for six years, exercising a powerful influence on its style and the entire world of Hebrew literature. He did not enjoy relying upon this position for a living. He believed that it reduced the sanctity of writing when one made a living from it. Up until this time he had deliberately separated the two-- business was the mundane sphere writing and literature were the holy. Although he was never happy in the role of editor, he nevertheless devoted himself to the task with great intensity.

. . . I am fully aware that I was a fool to accept the position of a hierarch in the wretched temple of Hebrew literature. You know that my life has always fallen into two distinct parts. After spending some hours a day at my business, I used to retire to my study, my books and my desk, and there I became another man: I was, or fancied myself, like the High priest ministering in the Holy of Holies. My literary and public work was always invested for me with a kind of sanctity, and I tried my hardest to minister in holiness and purity of spirit. But what am I doing now? I have debased my Temple; I have profaned what was sacred; I have made a business of my religion, and I can no longer keep it holy. I spend my time reading articles full of trash, correcting for the press things which previously I should not have thought worth printing, and corresponding with writers whose level of culture is deplorable.³⁰

He never lost this intellectual snobbery, and was not hesitant to tell prospective writers that their material was "trash". In a rejection letter to a certain S. Z. he writes"

If I undertook to enter into correspondence about articles that I do not accept, life would be too short. What is not accepted is not worth printing, and no explanation is called for.

I am again unable to find space for your contribution, and I advise you to give up writing, as your attempts show no sign of promise. A man may be a good and intelligent reader even if he is not a writer.³¹

He continued in the editor's chair for six years only in order to supply sustenance for his family.³² He finally resigned in January 1903 and took a job with the Wissotzky tea firm, which he claimed "will enable me to live in comfort, though not in luxury and which will leave me some time for study and writing."³³ Hashiloah continued to appear with a few breaks until 1927 under the editorship of Joseph Klausner.³⁴

Ahad Ha-Am's years in Berlin enabled him to encounter the impact of Reform Judaism. He had read Mendelssohn and Geiger, and was therefore acquainted with the philosophy of the movement. He could not accept it for it represented a revolutionary break with the Jewish past and the Jewish people. He would have been appalled to learn of the Frankfurt-Am-Main Reform community's banning of circumcision.³⁵ He also kept in close contact with the young writers engaging in constant discussions concerning the nature of Judaism. These exchanges prompted him to write his essay "ענין הערכין", his reevaluation of Nietzschean philosophy.

Working for Wissotzky--Russia and London

Ahad Ha-Am's responsibilities with Wissotzky compelled him to travel throughout Russia for three years, yet he was certainly left "some time for study and writing". Three of

his most important and lengthy essays were written during this period of travel; "Moses", "Judaism and Asceticism" and "The Supremacy of Reason" his study of the thought and writings of Maimonides. Life for Jews in Russia was hardly better, even with the reforms of 1905, which brought the resignation of Pobedonostsev. Shortly before he left for England Ahad Ha-Am was attacked by the police on the streets of Odessa. He describes the incident in a letter to Dr. J. Tshlenow:

. . . Good news! I have already tasted the joys of citizenship under our Constitution (the Russian Constitution of 1905). No doubt you have read in the papers that yesterday morning some police officers here were killed by a bomb, and afterward the "real Russians" turned out, and they and the police beat up passers-by in the streets, most of whom, of course, were Jews. It was my privilege to be among the victims. They hit me on the face and on the head and elsewhere, and it was only by a miracle that I had no limbs broken, and am left with nothing worse than a headache. But it is a great comfort to me that I was beaten up not by an ordinary hooligan, but by a representative of our most noble government--I mean no less a person than a policeman.³⁶

The firm sent him to London in 1907 to establish offices in that city. At last he would be able to reside in a free country, in the country which gave birth to many of his spiritual mentors; Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill and others.³⁷ Despite the more open political climate in England, Ahad Ha-Am found little time for his pursuits. He found a place to live close to the British Museum, where he dearly wished to spend time. Unfortunately he never found the time and could not avail himself of the treasures found in the Museum.³⁸ He found

little time for serious intellectual study or writing. The hectic lifestyle of London, the constant trips back and forth and the time consuming nature of his job, all prevented him from engaging in such activity. He wrote few articles while in England, confined to correspondence most evenings and to his job during the day. His mental state was not good, his nerves were constantly on edge.

. . . You ask how I am, physically and mentally. I cannot complain of my physical health; but as to mental health! At first it was absolutely as though I had sunk to the bottom of the sea. Now the first impression has gone, but I have not yet altogether recovered my balance. My work at the office is not too exacting at present, but whether there is work to do or not, I have to be there from morning till evening. And of course the office is in the Babel known as the City; and there is no place on earth like the City on a weekday for noise--noise that drives you to distraction and makes it impossible to think. In the evening, after a long journey above and below ground, I return to my lodgings, and so I have a few hours of freedom. But after a day in the City I am so tired and limp that I am not fit for any brain work, and all I do is to read a little, rest a little, and sometimes receive visitors.³⁹

The mundane affairs of life ate up most of this time. He was able to do only a little serious writing. One article was a response to the Diaspora Nationalism championed in the works of Dubnow. "שליח הגלות" was Ahad Ha-Am's interpretation of the situation of the Jews and Judaism in the Diaspora, and what he saw as a mistaken approach by Dubnow to the solution of the problems. The other essay was his impassioned analysis of Claude Montefiore's recently published book on the "Synoptic Gospels". In this essay he presented his analysis of the difference between Judaism and Christianity. He also summarized his approach to Zionism and its role for Judaism

in this article.

Most of his correspondence from London express a sense of acute loneliness and despair.⁴⁰ He found no comfort in British Judaism, which appeared to be nothing more than "a ceremonial tombstone."⁴¹ His cynicism deepened and his disappointment grew with the failure of humans to live up to the ideals he set. When World War I flared it seemed that all was for naught, that the entire human race had gone insane.

Since the world went mad I have not written a single line (except a translation of Pinsker's "Auto-Emancipation", which I finished last winter). What should I write about? Unfortunately, I have always been deeply interested in ethical and social questions; and now that the moral world has reeled back in chaos, and humanity has become utterly vile, I am filled with loathing at the memory of all the empty phrases which used to mean so much, and I simply cannot think, still less speak out my thoughts, about all the questions connected with the life of the despicable creature called "man".⁴²

Despite his despair, he did work with Chaim Weizmann during discussions which eventually led to the Balfour Declaration. He appears to have been involved in the debates over the Jewish legion as well.⁴³ It seems somewhat unusual for the proponent of Spiritual Zionism, who at one time declared that "The salvation of Israel will be achieved by Prophets, not by diplomats. . . ." ⁴⁴ to engage in such political activity. He took joy in the Declaration, but fully realized that the whole project was dependent upon the good graces of the British. He also incisively recognized that the Arabs had rights in the Land of Israel and it would

be a mistake for the Zionist movement to ignore them.⁴⁵

At the close of his insightful article on the Balfour Declaration and its importance, he once again stresses the idea that the Jewish nation needs to move slowly:

And at this great and difficult moment I appear before my readers--perhaps for the last time--on the threshold of this book, and repeat once more my old warning . . . Do not press on too quickly to the goal, so long as the actual conditions without which it cannot be reached have not been created; and do not disparage the work which is possible at any given time, having regard to actual conditions, even if it will not bring the Messiah to-day or to-morrow.⁴⁶

The Final Years

Ahad Ha-Am moved to the Land of Israel in 1921, being advised to do so for medical reasons.⁴⁷ He finally established himself in the Land which had formed such an important part of his philosophy. Yet, he enjoyed no comfort in arriving in the Land where the Jewish Spirit resided in its purest form. He was not able to write any articles once there, and only gathered and edited his letters for publication. He also dictated his Memoirs shortly before his death.

Despite the honors given to him and the Tel Aviv municipalities' efforts to make his life as comfortable as possible, Ahad Ha-Am felt no joy. The people did not live up to his expectations; he could not find the moral leaders of the Jewish nation present in the Yishuv. He did not see the Spiritual Center. He wrote to Dubnow describing his profound sense of disillusionment:

What can I tell you about my wretched self? I am

broken, shattered, utterly and incurably depressed. I should have laughed aloud if anybody had foretold years ago what has happened to me. I am surrounded by intimate and devoted friends; respect and admiration are shown me on every hand; my children live near me; and I now have time for study and rest. And all this in Palestine, which has been my dream for years and years. And in the midst of all these Blessings, I long for--London! Yes, for London--not for the friends I left there . . . but literally for the dark City in which I spent so many hours without light or air, for the choking fog, and so forth. This longing is doubly painful because I regard it as a sure sign that I am suffering from some malady of the spirit--otherwise such a thing would be impossible.⁴⁸

Ahad Ha-Am never came to grips with a reality that could not reach the lofty moral heights he envisioned for the Jewish people. As long as he held the dream outside the Land of Israel he could continue to imagine what life there could and would become. But when he moved there, and entered into the everyday life of normal human beings the dream was shattered, and so was he. Too much the elitist, he failed to reconcile himself with the masses of humanity that made the Yishuv function. He died in his sleep January 2, 1927, and was mourned by the entire Yishuv. At least in death he became "one of the people".

Notes--Chapter II

1. Simon, Leon, Ahad Ha-Am, Philadelphia, 1960, op.cit., P. 8.
2. Dubnow, Simon, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland, Vol. II, Philadelphia, 1918, Pp. 154-176.
3. Ibid., Pp. 184-205.
4. Ibid., P. 243
5. Ibid., Pp. 243-323; cf Elbogen, Ismar, A Century of Jewish Life, Philadelphia, 1944, Pp. 200-223.
6. Ibid., (Dubnow), Pp. 324-335.
7. כ"כ. "פרקי זכרונות" חסו-חצו.
Simon, Leon, Ahad Ha-Am, op.cit., P. 6.
8. Ibid., P. 7.
9. כ"כ. "פרקי זכרונות" חפב-חפג.
10. Ibid. חפא.
My Translation
11. Ibid. חצו.
Ahad Ha-Am seems to have been embarrassed when he felt an emotional outburst as seen in a letter to S. Ben Zion (Jaffa). London, Oct. 17th, 1909.
"Your letter reached me when I was preparing to go abroad for a few weeks' rest. I took it with me, intending to write to you from where I was staying; but the beauties of the Harz mountains made me feel poetical (please do not give away the shameful confession to anybody else), and you know that poetry and letter-writing do not go together. . . ."
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 312.
He did, however, have an occasional burst of inspiration as seen by,
12. כ"כ. "פרקי זכרונות" חסו.
My Translation
13. כ"כ. "פרקי זכרונות" חפא.
Ahad Ha-Am Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., Pp. 336-337.
14. חצו. Ibid.
15. חפב-חפג. Ibid.
Simon, Leon, Ahad Ha-Am, op.cit. P. 117.

16. תמא-תמב. Ibid.
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., Pp. 338-339.
17. Simon, Leon, Ahad Ha-Am, op.cit., Pp. 20-21.
18. כ"כ. "פרקי זכרונות" תסו.
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 327.
19. כ"כ. "פרקי זכרונות" תסו.
20. Simon, Leon, Ahad Ha-Am, op.cit., P. 27.
21. Dubnow, Simon, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland, op.cit., Pp. 284-308; cf. Slutsky, Yehuda, "Pobedonostsev", Encyclopedia Judaica (Jerusalem, 1972), Vol. 13, Pp. 664-665.
22. Elbogen, Ismar, A Century of Jewish Life, op.cit., Pp. 245-263. cf. Sokolow, Hibbath Zion, (Jerusalem, 1934), Pp. XVII-XXVII.
23. כ"כ. "פרקי זכרונות" תסג.
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 329.
24. תסח. Ibid.
Simon, Leon, Ahad Ha-Am, op.cit., P. 34.
25. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "לא זה הדרך" יא.
26. כ"כ. "פרקי זכרונות" תסט.
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., Pp. 333-334.
27. כ"כ. עפ"ד. IV, "נסיון שלא הצליח" תמא. 1.
28. כ"כ. עפ"ד. III, "הקונגרס הציוני הראשון" רעה.
Ahad Ha-Am, Zionism and Judaism, op.cit., P. 28.
29. רעו. Ibid.
Ibid., P. 30.
30. P. 14 24 Aug. 1896 אגרות כרך א' למר שמואל ברבש
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 237.
31. P. 105 13 June 1897 אגרות כרך א' לש. ז.
Ibid., P. 243.
32. P. 14 אגרות כרך א' למר שמואל ברבש
Ibid., P. 237.
33. P. 83-84 12 Dec. 1907 אגרות כרך ג' לד"ר ש. ברנפלד
Ibid., P. 259.
34. P. 84 Ibid.
Ibid., P. 260, cf P. 364 n. 50.

35. Graetz, Heinrich, History of the Jews, Philadelphia, 1895, Vol. V, P. 676.
36. אגרות כרך ג' לד"ר י. טשלינוב
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 308.
37. אגרות כרך ד' למר ש. דובנוב
Pp. 252-253 26 Dec 1911
Ibid., P. 313.
38. אגרות כרך ג' למר ש. דובנוב
P. 292 18 Dec 1907
Ibid., P. 309
39. אגרות כרך ג' למר י.ח. רבניצקי
Pp. 292-293 20 Dec 1907
Ibid., Pp. 309-310.
40. אגרות כרך ה' לד"ר ש. ברנפלד
P. 195 30 June 1914
Ibid., Pp. 315-316.
41. אגרות כרך ד' לד"ר י. קלוזנר
Pp. 14-15 28 Feb 1908
Ibid., P. 311.
42. אגרות כרך ה' למר ש. מקסימון
Pp. 256-257 20 April 1916
Ibid., P. 318
43. Simon, Leon, Ahad Ha-Am op.cit., Pp. 256-257.
44. כ"כ. עפ"ד "הקונגרס הציוני הראשון" רעו.
Ahad Ha-Am, Zionism and Judaism op.cit., P. 312.
45. כ"כ. עפ"ד "הקונגרס הציוני הראשון" רעו.
Ahad Ha-Am, Zionism and Judaism op.cit., XX
46. Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. XXI-XXII.
47. אגרות כרך ו' לד"ר ש. ברנפלד
P. 79 8 Dec 1921
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 321.
48. Ibid., Pp. 321-322.

CHAPTER III--AHAD HA-AM'S CONCEPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND COMPONENTS OF JEWISH CULTURE

We now turn to Ahad Ha-Am's Jewish culture and its development. We have seen that he considered the Age of the literary Prophets as the starting point in the development of the Jewish National Spirit. (רוח הלאומי) He believed that the Prophets, motivated by the "Will-to-Live" became the vehicle for the National Spirit to reach the Jewish nation.

In the early days of Jewish history, when the people was full of youthful vigor, and had no experience of misfortune, the national will-to-live was healthy and natural, and its biddings were followed spontaneously without sophisticated questionings. Wisely and skillfully the nation fought for life against external enemies; and at home the Prophets encouraged and incited to action, by painting in brilliant and alluring colors the national happiness which was the nation's goal--a happiness not to be sought in Heaven or outside nature, but very near to each man's heart; a happiness to be sought in the present, to be fought for every day.¹

The Prophets embodied the "National Spirit" of the Jewish people in their concept of Absolute Justice.² Ahad Ha-Am considered this prophetic concept to be the hallmark of the Jewish National Spirit.

The tension between the individual and the group grew within the Jewish community. Israel and Judah could not maintain powerful enough defenses against outside aggressors. Eventually, more powerful nations to the north and the south conquered both lands. Faced with the loss of their freedom to develop independently, their

political future, the people turned to the internal struggle of redefining their position vis a vis the covenant. The most tumultuous changes occurred when the First Temple fell and the covenant appeared to be completely shattered. Until 586 B.C.E. most of the Jewish people had held to polytheistic beliefs. Now, the instinct of self preservation moved into action. If the people of Israel was to survive, they had to intensify their faith in the national God. The "everyday gods of nature"³ had sufficed in times of peace; now in exile, a new approach became imperative:

It was only after the destruction of the Temple, when the spirit of the exiled people had changed sufficiently to admit of a belief in the Unity, that the Prophets of the time found it easy to uproot the popular faith and to make the idea of the Unity supreme throughout the whole range of the people's life.⁴

Only at this point could monotheism triumph. Yet, the strictly national God in which the people placed their trust presented a problem. The people was in exile. Thus, there arose the idea of a Universal God. In this way, the victory of the Babylonians would not indicate a victory for the Babylonian gods. Not they, but the God of Israel, who was also the God of the world, had given all countries to the king of Babylon; and He who had given could take away.⁵

Ahad Ha-Am draws on several sources for his historiography outlined above. In attempting to explain how the people turned so whole-heartedly to this Monotheistic approach, he uses Isaiah 46:5:

Thus at length the people understood and felt the sublime teaching, which hitherto it had known from afar, with mere li-knowledge. The seed which the earlier Prophets had sown on the barren rock burst into fruit now that its time had come. When the Prophet of the Exile cried in the name of the Lord, "To whom will ye liken Me and make Me equal? . . . I am God and there is none else," his words were in accord with the wishes of the people and its national hope; and so they sank into the hearts of the people, and wiped out every trace of the earlier outlook and manner of life.⁶

Ahad Ha-Am appears to be saying that in the time of their exile Jewish culture had developed to a sufficient degree that it was ready to accept monotheism whole-heartedly. Problems arose, however, when the monotheistic ideal began to supplant the national goals of the people. Religion became the most important factor in life, and the people asked only to worship in peace.⁷ Yet, the religious idea had arisen from the national. This was a perversion according to Ahad Ha-Am, and led to a turning away from the true national goal.

The Pharisees

Despite the return to the Land of Israel, the people continued to place greater emphasis on religious concerns than on national concerns. Ahad Ha-Am attempts to show this in his analysis of the situation at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple. He virtually ignores the period between Ezra and Nehemia and jumps immediately to the age of the Pharisees.

An important result in the religious developments of the Exile was the transference of the national goal

to a heavenly sphere. Their hope lost its grounding in the here and now, in the world in which the people lived, and was relegated to an ambiguous time to come. The people no longer believed in an imminent salvation; salvation would come in a misty "end time". Teachings, customs and practices became oriented toward this other worldly salvation.⁸ Now, facing another destruction, that of the Second Temple, and powered by the will-to-live, the Pharisees saw it was time to develop another form of Jewishness in which the future life would be emphasized. The Pharisees, who were exponents of the new trend heavenward actually saved the Jewish people from destruction. When the walls of Jerusalem toppled, those Jews whose commitment was only to those stones were crushed beneath them and disappeared. The Pharisees however were not constrained by the bonds of the State, as the story of Johanan ben Zakkai indicates, and continued to develop a way of Jewish life independent of the State:⁹

Thus it came about that, after the destruction of the second Temple, what the Jews felt most keenly was not the ruin of their country and their national life, but "the destruction of the House (of God)": the loss of their spiritual centre, of the power to serve God in his holy sanctuary, and to offer sacrifices at appointed times. Their loss was spiritual, and the gap was to be filled by spiritual means. Prayers stood for sacrifices, the Synagogue for the Temple, the heavenly Jerusalem for the earthly, study of the Law for everything.¹⁰

The structures that the Pharisees and their successors constructed however, were not meant to be permanent. These structures were to serve only as armor to protect

the Jewish people until its return to the Land. The Pharisees succeeded in creating a "temporary" framework national in nature without a land, which held the Jewish people together. Temporary as it was, it had the strength to withstand almost 2000 years of pressure:

And the work of the Pharisees bore fruit. They succeeded in creating a national body which hung in mid-air, without any foundation on the solid earth, and in this body the Hebrew national spirit had had its abode and lived for two thousand years. The organization of the Ghetto, the foundations of which were laid in the generations that followed the destruction of Jerusalem, is a thing marvellous and quite unique. It was based on the idea that the aim of life is the perfection of the spirit, but that the spirit needs a body to serve as its instrument. The Pharisees thought at the time that, until the nation could again find an abode for its spirit in a single complete and free political body, the gap must be filled artificially by the concentration of that spirit in a number of small and scattered social bodies, all formed in its image, all living one form of life, all united, despite their local separateness, by a common recognition of their original unity and their striving after a single aim and perfect union in the future.¹¹

While the Pharisaic regimen prepared the Jewish people to journey out into the non-Jewish world, armed with the Spirit, it had a deadening effect upon the people. So future oriented had the idea of salvation become that the people did not consider the possibility of salvation in their lifetime.¹²

As the actual position of the nation sunk lower and lower, so its spirit soared heavenwards leaving the concrete, present life of will and action for a visionary life of boundless future. The nation soon became a slave to this spiritual disease which was an inevitable outcome of its condition and history.¹³

This system of religious belief led to inaction by the

people, and even periods which we know were times of high creativity were seen by Ahad Ha-Am as periods of stagnation.

According to Ahad Ha-Am, a corollary of this emphasis on the heavenly was the more individualistic outlook. He outlines this shift in his first essay, "לא זה הדרך". In the times when the people had lived in the Land of Israel in accordance with the laws of Moses, the nation lived a healthy life and all worked for the nation as a whole. The individual took a secondary role:

All the laws and ordinances, all the blessings and the curses of the Law of Moses have but one unvarying object: the well-being of the nation as a whole in the land of its inheritance. The happiness of the individual is not regarded. The individual Israelite is treated as standing to the people of Israel in the relation of a single limb to the whole body: the actions of the individual have their reward in the good of the community. . . . For the people as one people throughout all its generations, and the individuals who come and go in each generation are but those minute parts of the living body which change every day, without affecting in any degree the character of that organic unity which is the whole body. 14

The nation is healthy when its members strive for the common good. The shift toward individuality occurred as a result of the breakdown of the national loyalty. Faced with the destruction of the center of Jewish religious and national life, Jews began to question their role in the group. The nation was a shambles, the very structures upon which the individual members of the Jewish people drew sustenance lay in ruins. The nation was crushed and could no longer hold the people together. As a result, the role of the individual grew in importance to such an

extent that the religious orientation accentuated the importance of the individual.¹⁵ National redemption faded in importance, while the resurrection of the dead was emphasized.¹⁶ Now, the individual was to focus on the Pharisees' personal spiritual development:

No longer is patriotism a pure, unselfish devotion; no longer is the common good the highest of all aims, overriding the personal aims of each individual. On the contrary: henceforward the summum bonum is for each individual his personal well-being, in time or in eternity, and the individual cares about the common good only in so far as he himself participates in it.¹⁷

To illustrate his point, Ahad Ha-Am quotes a passage from the Sifre showing how the Tannaim were surprised concerning the verse, ". . . the land which the Lord swore to your ancestors to give to them. (Deut. 11:9) The emphasis on the individual had become so predominant that the only response that the Tannaim could have was that the promise was made to the specific individuals to whom the verse is addressed. (על),¹⁸ Concerning another passage, "the present life is like the entrance-hall to the world to come." (Avot 4:16) Ahad Ha-Am writes: "The happiness which the individual desires will become his when he enters the banqueting-hall, if only he qualifies for it by his conduct in the ante-room."¹⁹ That is to say, the individual can attain salvation independent of the group.

Although this development was contrary to Ahad Ha-Am's conception of what Jewish life should be; the emphasis on the individual continued down through the ages. (Even

the initial efforts of Hibbat Zion were aimed at settling individuals, not toward the Jewish nation as a whole.)

Nevertheless, the Jewish people managed to continue in the Diaspora, in spite of the "demon of egoism",²⁰ possibly so because there was still some national feeling within the people, albeit much reduced in influence. Ahad Ha-Am perceived that his time was the time in which the Jewish nation would once again return to the Prophetic ideal--as a nation. His theory of Spiritual Zionism would be the program which the people could follow. By reestablishing a center in the Land of Israel, the people would be able to again fulfill the original goal.

Problems of the Exile

In exile, the Jewish people took with them and developed the structures that the Pharisees had devised. These operated as a protective garb for the people, even though certain parts of the structure placed greater emphasis on the individual rather than the group. Diaspora, however, presented intrinsic problems; could the Jews remain a distinct national group without a land; in the face of competing cultures and nationalities? According to Yehezkel Kaufmann, this task was virtually impossible. Kaufmann writes: "A people which comes into conflict with a foreign ethnic group, will ultimately be assimilated by it--this is a general historical rule."²¹

In spite of this, the Jewish people had remained a

distinct group for 2000 years. How could one explain this phenomenon? In his essay, "חקוי והחבוללות", Ahad Ha-Am attempts to explain the resilience of the Jewish nation. The Jewish people have the unique ability to accept the customs of other groups into the Jewish culture, without losing its own identity, to imitate but not to assimilate. They did not seek to be the same, instead, the nation redefines foreign ideas to fit into its unique national framework.²² For example, of the Jewish adaptation of Greek philosophy--via the Arabic culture--Ahad Ha-Am writes:

To such an extent did this new spirit become identified with the Hebrew individuality that the thinkers of the period could not believe that it was foreign to them, and that Israel could ever have existed without it. They could not rest satisfied until they found an ancient legend to the effect that Socrates and Plato learned philosophy from the Prophets, and that the whole of Greek philosophy was stolen from Jewish books which perished in the destruction of the Temple.²³

As the course of history continued, the pressures from without became stronger and stronger. The lure and the power of assimilation began to triumph within parts of the Jewish society. All through history--especially in Alexandria, assimilation had been powerful. The Jews of 19th Century Western Europe were for him the most zealous in severing the connection they had with the Jewish nation. They created a Jewish Church that paralleled the Christian churches. They declared that there was no Jewish nation; that it was but a religion with certain beliefs and practices that were distinct from Christianity. They cut completely their bond with the people Israel.²⁴

They had asked "Why do we remain Jews?" One writer whom Ahad Ha-Am mentions but does not name claimed that we remain Jews because there is no other religion to which the Jews could turn. Ahad Ha-Am replied that one could follow "natural religion" since much of what the writer claims is Judaism, is also contained in natural religion:"²⁵ Where is the chain to which they can point as that which holds them fast to Judaism, and does not allow them to be free? Is it the instinctive national feeling which they have inherited which is independent of religious beliefs or practices?"²⁶ No, these Jews have no sense for this, they gave it up when they gave in to the demands required by Emancipation.²⁷ Without national ties Ahad Ha-Am saw "enlightenment" as Jews destined for complete assimilation. In one of his most impassioned responses to the situation of assimilation he cried out:

Today, while I am still alive, I try mayhap to give my weary eyes a rest from the scene of ignorance, of degradation, of unutterable poverty that confronts me here in Russia, and find comfort by looking yonder across the border, where there are Jewish professors, Jewish members of Academies, Jewish members in the army, Jewish civil servants: and when I see there, behind the glory and the grandeur of it all, a twofold spiritual slavery--moral slavery and intellectual slavery, and ask myself: Do I envy these fellow-Jews of mine their emancipation? --I answer, in all truth and sincerity: No! a thousand times No! The privileges are not worth the price! I may not be emancipated; but at least I have not sold my soul for emancipation. I at least can proclaim from the housetops that my kith and kin are dear to me wherever they are, without being constrained to find forced and unsatisfactory excuses. I at least can remember Jerusalem at other times than those of "divine service": I can mourn for its loss, in public or in private, without being asked what Zion is to me, or I to Zion. I at

least have no need to exalt my people to Heaven, to trumpet its superiority above all other nations, in order to find a justification for its existence. I at least know "why I remain a Jew"--or, rather, I can find no meaning in such a question, any more than if I were asked why I remain my father's son. I at least can speak my mind concerning the beliefs and the opinions which I have inherited from my ancestors, without fearing to snap the bond that unites me to my people. I can even adopt that "scientific heresy which bears the name of Darwin," without any danger to my Judaism.²⁸

For Ahad H-Am, the past could not be relegated to the status of an historical curiosity. Judaism was not to be dressed in a foreign garb in order to become accepted. Judaism was not to be abased by attempts to devise some theological support for its surrender.²⁹ Education and emancipation were not to be used to relegate the past to some sort of relic. To Ahad Ha-Am, the past was part and parcel of the society in which a person lived.

Society does not create its spiritual stock-in-trade and its way of life afresh in every generation. These things come to birth in the earliest stages of society, being a product of the conditions of life, then proceed through a long course of development till they attain a form that suits that particular society, and then, finally, are handed down from generation to generation without fundamental change. Thus society in any given generation is nothing but the will of earlier generations. The arch-hypnotizers, the all-powerful masters of the individual and of society alike, are the men of the distant past. The grass has grown on their graves for hundreds of years, it may be for thousands; but their voice is still obeyed, their commandments are still observed, and no man or generation can tell where lies the dividing line between himself and them, between his and theirs.³⁰

With Jewish civil rights came a dissolution of the centuries-old Jewish corporate structure and the coercive power it had over the Jews. With the walls of the ghetto

crumbling, with Jews able to enter the general society, Jews no longer were governed by their own law. Now the sea of European cultures threatened to engulf the Jewish culture completely.³¹ A breakdown in structure had intensified the crisis of Jewish identity, and Ahad Ha-Am felt that the Diaspora would never again be a healthy place for the Jewish nation. The Jewish nation was scattered and the Jew just could not help harboring some negative feelings, when one had to live as a "lamb among wolves". Attempts to redefine Jewish existence in the Diaspora as having some special "mission", such as that of the Reformers, only served to put window dressing on a bad thing:

. . . the "negative attitude toward the diaspora" . . . must be negative in the objective sense. To adopt a negative attitude toward the diaspora means, for our present purpose, to believe that the Jews cannot survive as a scattered people now that our spiritual isolation is ended, because we have no longer any defence against the ocean of foreign culture, which threatens to obliterate our national characteristics and traditions, and thus gradually put an end to our existence as a people.³²

The Jewish people had evolved in the diaspora as far as possible, but now there was a real danger of the dissolution of the people if something did not happen soon. What was necessary was a spiritual center, from which the people, wherever they were, would be able to draw strength.

There is one way out of this danger, and one only. To weld the scattered Jewish communities together, in spite of the disintegrating effect of the differing local influences to which they are subjected, we need a centre which will exert a strong pull on all

of them, not because of some fortuitous and temporary relation, but of its own right, because it is what it is. Such a centre will in some measure impose itself on every community in the diaspora, and will serve them all, despite their diversities, as a transmuting and unifying force.³³

There was but one place where this center could be located--the original home of the Jewish people. From the center would emanate the healthy and pristine Jewish national spirit. The influence of this center would not be economical--Ahad Ha-Am could not conceive of a small group of people being capable of having an economic effect on the diaspora Jewish community.³⁴ (As it turned out he was quite correct. Israel, even with 3½ million people,--far more than Ahad-Ha-Am considered,--does not exert much of an economic effect upon the Jews who are scattered throughout the world.) In this center would be realized:

A complete national life involves two things: first, full play for the creative faculties of the nation in a specific national culture of its own, and, second, a system of education whereby the individual members of the nation will be thoroughly imbued with that culture, and so molded by it that its imprint will be recognizable in all their way of life, individual and social.³⁵

This center would lead to a rebirth of not only national identity, but lead to a spiritual renaissance. The liturgy is full of references to the Land, and its importance for the people. Within the framework of Spiritual Zionism, the land of Israel would once again assume the center place of spiritual importance and influence:

"Spiritual" means that this relation of centre and circumference between Palestine and the lands of the diaspora will of necessity be limited to the spiritual side of life. The influence of the centre will strengthen the Jewish national consciousness in the diaspora; it will restore our independence of mind and self-respect; it will give to our Judaism a national content which will be genuine and natural, unlike the substitutes with which we now try to fill the void.³⁶

The center will not come into being simply by having a certain number of Jews settle in the land. It would not happen even if the trained cadre, the Bene Moshe, which Ahad Ha-Am senses to be the future leaders of the rejuvenation of the Jewish people, had begun its work. While disagreeing with the "Political Zionists" that the Land would serve as a refuge and a counter to anti-semitism by becoming a Jewish nation with a large population of Jews, he did recognize the necessity of having a substantial population in the Land to effectively enact his program of a spiritual center.

Palestine will become our spiritual centre only when the Jews are a majority of the population and own most of the land. Then they will automatically control the institutions that shape the culture of the country, will impress their own spirit and character on the whole of its life, and will thus create that new pattern of Jewishness which we need so desperately and cannot find in the diaspora.³⁷

The National Spirit would be able to operate in a healthy atmosphere in its original place.

Schools, institutions, hospitals and businesses all would be the creation of the Jewish people and would be vehicles of Jewish culture,³⁸ serving as beacons to the rest of the Jewish nation.

It is important to note here that despite his opposition to the Diaspora, Ahad Ha-Am never considered that it would disappear; the very word "center" illustrates his understanding that the Diaspora would be ongoing even after the spiritual center was established and had begun to rejuvenate:

"A centre of our nationality" implies that there is a national circumference, which, like every circumference, is much larger than the centre. That is to say, the speaker sees the majority of his people, in the future and in the past, scattered all over the world, but no longer broken up into a number of disconnected parts, because one part--the one in Palestine--will be a centre for them all and make them all into a single, complete circumference. When all the scattered limbs of the national body feel the beating of the national heart, restored to life in its native home, they too will once again draw near to one another and welcome the inrush of living blood that flows from the heart.³⁹

Thus, although Ahad Ha-Am recognized the continued existence of the Diaspora, he saw it as parts of a unified Jewish nation, with a unified culture which radiated from the spiritual center.

National Treasures

What are the components of Jewish culture, which over the long course of Jewish history have differentiated the Jewish people from other groups, which Ahad Ha-Am wanted to return and rejuvenate in his spiritual center? Drawing from the Romantic schools Ahad Ha-Am considered language a crucial component of the nation. The only literature which he considered "Jewish", was that which had been written in Hebrew.⁴⁰ His desire was to see a

revival in the use of the Hebrew language, for it was the national language of the Jewish people.

At the time Ahad Ha-Am flourished however, Yiddish literature was experiencing a renaissance. Mendele Mocher Seforim and Shalom Aleichem created masterpieces of Yiddish literature. They had an enormous audience. On the other hand, the Haskalah attempt to revive Hebrew was sputtering. Hebraists often wrote only for their fellow writers. Caught in the convolutions of Biblical Hebrew and its difficult grammar, they could not convey a sense of a living language. Ahad Ha-Am did not adopt the biblical Hebrew style of his contemporaries. His Hebrew was closer to the language and the grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew. One could make a point faster and more clearly in this Hebrew than in the Biblical idiom.⁴¹ Furthermore, the Haskalah writers did not write in the Jewish context, all too often they engaged in the translation of a foreign work into Hebrew or the miming of European literary styles. This did not enrich the Jewish spirit, it only brought in outside influences.⁴² Problems were further compounded by the fact that the Yiddishists were claiming that Yiddish was the national language. Eastern European Jews spoke it and many Western Jews understood it. By strength of numbers, Yiddish won out, at least for a time. Responding to the claims of the Yiddishists, Ahad Ha-Am presented his reasoning as to why it is impossible to consider Yiddish as the national

language, and why Hebrew is the only possible national language:

Never since the world began has it happened that a nation has accepted as its national language an alien tongue acquired in a strange land, after a long history during which it knew nothing of this tongue, but had another national language, always recognized as such, in which it produced a literature of wide range and glorious achievement, expressing every side of its national individuality. . . . Similarly, a nation has no national language except that which was its own when it stood on the threshold of its history, before its national self-consciousness was fully developed--that language which has accompanied it through every period of its career, and is inextricably bound, up with all its memories.⁴³

There is an objective understanding to culture, there are standards by which one can judge a culture's existence: "Objectively, a nation's culture is something which has a reality of its own: it is the concrete expression of the best minds of the nation in every period of its existence."⁴⁴ Thus, Hebrew culture has certain criteria by which it can be defined. "The existence of an original Hebrew culture needs no proof. So long as the Bible is extant, the creative power of the Jewish mind will remain undeniable."⁴⁵ One need only look at what works have remained important to the Jews. The works of Philo, great as they may be, disappeared, however the response literature and the Law codes--all written in Hebrew--remained. (Although Maimonides wrote his work in Arabic, the Hebrew translations of his work remained with the people.) These other languages are part of the national culture of other nations. For Ahad Ha-Am Jewish literature symbolized part of the very

essence of Jewish national spirit:

The term "Jewish literature" is often used in a wide sense, to include everything written by a Jewish writer in any language. If we were to accept that definition, we could not complain of a poverty of Jewish literature, which would include, for example, Heine's love lyrics, Börne's crusade against political reaction in Germany. . . . But the definition is fundamentally wrong. A people's literature is the literature written in its national language. A writer using a language other than that of his own people may no doubt betray his own national temperament . . . as literature what he writes belongs not to his people, but to the people in whose language it is written.⁴⁶

Even if the works written in a foreign language are concerned with specifically Jewish issues, they do not qualify as part of the national literature:

But in so far as such books deal exclusively with matters of Jewish interest, they constitute a sort of literary ghetto; and this ghetto, like any other, has no significance for the gentile world, and is regarded by the Jews as something of a purely temporal character, with no prospect of a permanent place in Jewish life.⁴⁷

What Ahad Ha-Am has done is to effectively eliminate any non-Hebrew work from membership in the permanent collection of Jewish culture. Ahad Ha-Am buttresses his literary exclusivity with a quote from Ecclesiastes:

There can be no doubt that, if all these dispersed forces were re-united in the service of Jewish culture, this culture would to-day be one of the richest and most original in the world. . . . We give everything and get nothing; we scatter our talents in every direction, to enrich the enemies who persecute us; and we ourselves are none the richer for all the achievements of our most brilliant sons. ". . . there is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is heavy upon men: a man to whom God giveth riches, wealth, and honor . . . yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth of it." (Eccl. 6:1-2)⁴⁸

Now, Ahad Ha-Am laments the fact that artists have

also caused the Jewish culture to suffer terribly due to "brain drain". What distressed him even more is that some Jews, when creating their works of art did not turn to Jewish culture for inspiration. The sculptor, Antokolski, for example, great as his work was, used non-Jewish events and characters when within the history of the Jewish people there could easily be found exemplary figures.⁴⁹ According to Ahad Ha-Am, when these artists and writers do not write in Hebrew or draw upon Jewish events and figures for inspiration, they become lost sparks to the Jewish culture. These brilliant creators are necessary for the development of the Jewish culture; they are the elite of Jewish society, and the future of the Jewish culture; depends on the people's ability to keep these minds within Jewish culture. They are the ones who will continue to create the original works in Hebrew and about Jews. When they do this they will be part of the Jewish culture and people. They will enhance the national possessions with their contributions. Otherwise, they will give nothing to the Jews and everything to other cultures.

Within the scope of literature as a whole, classical Jewish literature operates on a special plane. Ahad Ha-Am responds to an article by a Rabbi A. Lolli (who called for the abolishment of the Shulhan Arukh because it contained many laws that were distasteful to the modern Jew):

Undoubtedly this article is right in the main. All the sections and paragraphs from the Shulhan'Aruk which the author quotes are certainly quite foreign to our spirit at the present day; certainly "there is not a single Jew of modern education who can believe in them." But the inference which he draws, that "we must proclaim aloud, in season and out of season, that this is not our Law," is wrong, and has no more foundation than his hope that such proclamation will avail "to remove every stumbling-block from the path of the blind." The Shulhan'Aruk is not (as he says), "the book that we have chosen for our guide," but the book that has been made our guide, whether we would or not, by force of historical development: because this book, just as it is, in its present form, with all its most uncouth sections, was the book that best suited the spirit of our people, their condition and their needs, in those generations in which they accepted it as our Law," we shall be proclaiming a falsehood. This is our Law, couched in the only form which was possible in the Middle Ages: just as the Talmud is our Law in the form which it took in the last days of the ancient world, and just as the Bible is our Law in the form which it took while the Jews still lived as a nation on their own land. The three books are but three milestones on the road of a single development, that of the spirit of the Jewish nation. Each corresponds to the nation's condition and needs in a different period.⁵⁰

Bible, Talmud and Shulhan Arukh are the natural evolutionary product of the national spirit active in the Jewish people, ergo cannot be discarded. They had to arise because the situation at the times in which they were written demanded it.⁵¹ At one point, Jewish society needed to have the Bible. Therefore, with the impetus of the National Spirit, that ambiguous force, it came into being. The Shulhan Arukh became the official code of the Jewish people because Jewish society was at a stage which called for such a work.⁵² Each work represents a stage in the natural growth of the Jewish

people. Ahad Ha-Am understands that each of these works "is our Law", that each has within it, the spirit. The Law is presented in a different garb for each different generation. There is no doubt that in modern times such a detailed code of religious laws is not desired. This does not mean that the Shulhan Arukh should be discarded; in the future there will arise a different form of law which will satisfy parallel needs. Ahad Ha-Am believed that as the culture developed, the reasons for past works would become better understood. The task of the modern Jew therefore is to accept the works of the past for what they are and try to understand how and why they developed.⁵³

Ahad Ha-Am's reasons for the appearance of these works flow from his historiography. The Torah placed a strong emphasis on morality; especially as interpreted by the Prophets. Torah could develop, and Prophets could interpret only in the free atmosphere the Jews enjoyed in their own land. When under the rule of other nations, the Jews needed to devise protective armor. Thus, the Talmud and the Shulhan Arukh appeared. These works would preserve the people because they covered every aspect of practical life. "The nation was driven to emphasize the aspect of practical observance by the necessity of preserving itself in conditions of slavery and dispersion: hence the belief that "The Holy one Blessed be He, wished to bestow merit on Israel: wherefore He multiplied for them the Law and the commandments. (Makkot 23a)⁵⁴

The above source shows that the Jewish people

rationalized the process of evolution by making each step in that evolution part of the Divine Will. From his standpoint in the 19th century, Ahad Ha-Am could see this rationalization as a natural process; the people who lived in this situation was this progress as emanating from the Divine Will.

The Land of Israel

Related to Ahad Ha-Am's concept of a spiritual center in the Land of Israel, is the importance of the land itself. The Land of Israel is of central importance to Ahad Ha-Am's entire program of Spiritual Zionism. It was here that Jewish culture began, here where the Prophets proclaimed their message of Absolute Justice, the cornerstone of Ahad Ha-Am's Jewish culture. The Land was promised to the Jews from the time of Abraham. We have seen that from the Land of Israel will come the spiritual power that will revive the Jewish nation. It was here that the Jewish nation was able to develop healthily and where Ahad Ha-Am hoped it would do so in the future.

Reacting to both Reform Judaism and to the Diaspora Nationalists, Ahad Ha-Am attempted to show that the return to the Land had been an integral part of the hope of the Jewish nation ever since the Exile had begun. (Concerning Diaspora Nationalism the question must be asked: if the Jews are now a spiritual nationality no longer needing a land, from where are the Jews in dispersion? The very word Diaspora becomes meaningless.)

Reform Judaism had made a revolutionary break with Jewish historical continuity when it excised from the liturgy any prayers referring to the return to the Land of Israel; worse, it represented a break from the Jewish people. In doing this, the Reformers surrendered the millennial hope--the future redemption of the entire people, accomplished in the return to the Land. This action denied the people hope for the future, one of the few things that had held them together through all the pain of the Diaspora. Even the Mishna, Talmud and Rabbinic literature, and subsequent codes pointed to the importance of the return to the Land:

We are, indeed, in the habit of thinking that Israel was kept alive by the Law alone. But, our remote ancestors, who handed down the Law to us, admitted that the Law itself only lived in our keeping for the sake of the future, and that, if not for the future, there would have been no real reason for its preservation. "Though I banish you from the land, yet be ye observant of my commandments, so that, when ye return, they will not be new to you." (Sifre, Ekev)⁵⁵

These commandments would have no bearing on the life of the Jew, if returning to the land were not important. They had no meaning except and could only be enacted in the Land of Israel.

These treatises (commandments), on which the youth of Israel was subsequently trained generation after generation, did a great deal to implant the hope of a future in the nation's heart. Those who studied them grew accustomed to regard the future for which they hoped as a tangible thing. They must be prepared for it, and must spend their time in discussing questions connected with it. Thus the "commandments depending on the Land" helped to preserve the race (**האומה**) perhaps more than those which applied in exile also.⁵⁶

This was the cause of Ahad Ha-Am's opposition to the East African Plan. Uganda represented merely a different location in the Diaspora.⁵⁷ His concern was not to relocate Jews; there would be no promise of a free development of the national culture anywhere in the Diaspora. Settling Jews did not solve the problem of Jewish culture. This could be accomplished in one place only, the spiritual center, the gem of the treasures of the Jewish nation--the Land of Israel. This desire to return was not just a religious dream. The homeland of the Jews, the Land of Israel, had symbolized freedom to create and experience a pure Jewish culture, without the chains of Diaspora. The Diaspora presents a physical bondage, it is true, but the Land of Israel signified something much more important than a place where Jews will be physically free to develop. They would be spiritually free as well. This spiritual bondage in Diaspora was recognized early in Jewish history as the "exile of the Shechina". The very presence of God went into exile when the Jews were expelled from the Land of Israel. That is to say that when the people had to leave Israel, they left the spiritual center of the Jewish nationality. It was here that the Spirit of the nation had and would be free and healthy.

. . . Have we the right to regard the rebuilding of Palestine as an ideal for the whole nation, and its success as vital to the hopes of the whole nation?

We have! For the galuth is twofold--it is material

and spiritual. On the one hand it cramps the individual Jew in his material life, by taking from him the possibility of carrying on his struggle for existence, with all his strength and in complete freedom, like any other man; and on the other hand it cramps no less our people as a whole in its spiritual life, by taking from it the possibility of safeguarding and developing its national individuality according to its own spirit, in complete freedom, like any other people. This spiritual cramping, which our ancestors used to call, in their own fashion "the exile of the Divine Presence," ". . . . has become especially painful in our time Now it is this problem of spiritual galuth which really finds its solution in the establishment of a national "refuge" in Palestine: a refuge not for all the Jews who need peace and bread, but for the spirit of the people, for that distinctive cultural form, the result of a historical development of thousands of years, which is still strong enough to live and to develop naturally in the future, if only the fetters of galuth are removed.⁵⁸

The Jewish Encyclopedia

As part of the cultural renaissance emanating from the spiritual center, Ahad Ha-Am had a dream to create a Jewish encyclopedia for the entire Jewish people. This would not be a series of overly scholarly articles directed at other scholars, but an encyclopedia which every educated Jew should have in the home, a work that the interested layperson could consult and study.⁵⁹

In his day and age, religion was losing its hold on many Jews. People refused to be bound by its restrictions and dogma.⁶⁰ Ahad Ha-Am felt that many Jews were therefore becoming ignorant of their Judaism and that this would lead to the dissolution of the Jewish nation. A people that failed to know itself could not continue

"For the knowledge of Judaism is the crucial aspect for our existence as a whole people . . ."61 This was the genius which Ahad Ha-Am saw in Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai. He saw that the people needed a written work to consult and to protect the individuality of the Jewish nation. Thus, he left the flaming remains of Jerusalem and the Jewish state and went to Yavneh and built the structure that saved the Jewish nation.

Later in Jewish history, Maimonides astutely realized that the time called for a new work to preserve the people. His creation was the Mishneh Torah. Maimonides clearly stated his goal in the introduction to the work: this work would supplant all others as a clear statute of Jewish learning; Joseph Karo did the same in the 16th century. All, motivated by the National Spirit, perceived the need to produce a work which would guide the people in the coming age.62

It is important to stress that Ahad Ha-Am saw himself in the tradition of codifiers and systemizers who responded to crisis. Just as Maimonides wrote his work when he realized that there was a paucity of students of Torah, and that the trials facing the Jewish nation and its culture were increasing, Ahad Ha-Am saw the same reality in his age and proposed the same type of solution. A new "Mishneh Torah", or "Mishnah", or "Shulhan Arukh" was necessary. Of course, it could not be a work of law codes, as the earlier works were. Instead, it would be

an encyclopedia. The present age demanded a new work attuned to the educated and enlightened minds of the present-day Jews. The work must appear in the national language of the Jewish people--Hebrew. In a letter to Kalman Wissotzsky, whom Ahad Ha-Am desired to support the project, he writes:

And we arrive, sir, to the essence of the matter which I have suggested to you, after struggling along with this question, I have come to this understanding, that if there is a path to a solution, it is none other than the one which Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi, Maimonides and Rabbi Joseph Caro walked to solve the question of the Torah in their time: once again it is imperative that we have a new book, that is written in a simple Hebrew, that will include all areas of Jewish knowledge. . . .63

The dream Ahad Ha-Am had was to equal, in his age, the accomplishments of Judah Hanasi and Maimonides. He wanted to bring together the greatest minds of the Jewish world of his day to create a new Mishneh Torah, one that would show how the national spirit operated throughout the history and literature of the Jewish people. This encyclopedia would serve as a practical and intellectual guide to all Jews to help them work together in the rejuvenation of the Jewish culture.

He then outlines those main areas he considers necessary for inclusion. Here, a clearer picture of what Ahad Ha-Am considers important to Jewish culture appears:

. . . these are the primary areas which must be included 1) the Torah of Israel and all its aspects (beliefs and concepts, religious and moral laws, proscriptions and customs, etc.) presented in an

evolutionary historical approach from the ancient days until today; 2) History of Israel, in its land and in the Diaspora, its inner developments, and its relations to other peoples, and their relations with Israel; 3) Major figures of the Jewish people, their history and their life works, in literature and science; 4) the literature of the Jewish people from the Bible to the present day.⁶⁴

He also includes a history of the land of Israel and some information on Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria.⁶⁵ This material must be presented in a way that is scientific. It must not present Judaism based in a world of miracles and events that run counter to the laws of nature. Ahad Ha-Am hoped that this work would reach the Jew of his day, and that it would provide the information that would hold the people together. In a postscript to his letters to Wissotzsky, Ahad Ha-Am attempts to explain further the structure and contents of the encyclopedia:

The Jewish encyclopedia consequently does not need to contain everything that in some way is connected to Israel, rather only that which is contained within the concept of Israel in a clear way. For instance, the historical phenomena spiritual and substantive, eternal and temporal. It is in them that the national spirit of Israel, from ancient days until today, is revealed.⁶⁶

Although Wissotzsky did fund the project, it never really got off the ground. Only a slim volume with a few articles appeared under the editorship of Joseph Klausner.⁶⁷

Turning to language, he makes one of his most important statements concerning its role in Jewish culture:

The language, in many ways, is the surest key to understanding the spirit of the nation. . . .⁶⁸

The importance of the language as a key to the National Spirit is found in the literature of the people and its

place in the encyclopedia:

The literature will be a special section a collection of all the different creations within which the national spirit exerts itself to clothe the essence of its inner thoughts in an outward fashion.⁶⁹

The importance of the literature is that the national spirit is contained within it. The national spirit "uses" the literature of the Jewish people to express itself to the people. Concerning those writings Ahad Ha-Am considers important, he writes:

The holy writings first (Bible), then the Mishnah, Baraitot, the Talmuds, the Midrashim, the Targumim, the Apocryphal works, etc.--inasmuch as these are the very foundation of the free creative working of the national spirit, it is necessary that they be explained in depth. . . .⁷⁰

These works appeared when the nation freely developed its national culture, in its own land. (Ahad Ha-Am had to extend his concept to Babylon in order to include the Babylonian Talmud).

Finally, concerning the Land of Israel and its place in the encyclopedia, he writes:

The Land of Israel taken by itself, is one of the primary reasons that the Jewish spirit developed in its specific fashion, and defined its evolutionary direction in the ancient time. Therefore, the encyclopedia will include specific information concerning (the Land) its geography and its history. . . .⁷¹

A further point is that although the encyclopedia failed in Ahad Ha-Am's day, in 1902 the Jewish Encyclopedia appeared. This work, except for its being in English, was exactly what Ahad Ha-Am described. Today, we have the האנציקלופדיה העברית and the Encyclopedia Judaica. These indeed are workd that educated lay Jews keep in

their homes, consult and study, and from which they gain insight into the course of Jewish history and the Jewish people.

A few years after the failure of the encyclopedia project, Ahad Ha-Am wrote a letter to Chaim Weizmann concerning his vision of a Jewish University in the Land of Israel. He had no desire to establish a carbon copy institution, modelled on the European schools, but rather, a place where the Jewish National Spirit would permeate every area of study:

We do not know what the future has in store for us, but this we do know: that the brighter the prospects for the re-establishment of our National home in Palestine, the more urgent is the need for laying the spiritual foundations of that home on a corresponding scale, which can only be conceived in the form of a Hebrew University. By this I mean--and so, I am sure, do you--not a mere imitation of a European University, with Hebrew as the dominant language, but a University which, from the very beginning, will endeavour to become the true embodiment of the Hebrew spirit of old, and to shake off the mental and moral servitude to which our people has been so long subjected in the diaspora. Only so can we be justified in our ambitious hopes as to the future universal influence of the "Teaching" that "will go forth out of Zion." (Isa. 2:3)⁷²

It will be a University whose teachers and students will be imbued with the spirit of the Jewish people. They will learn and teach, and in this way the teaching will go out to the world. The whole Jewish people will be the example.

Both the University and the encyclopedia show what Ahad Ha-Am considered to be important to the Jewish culture, and what were the components of the Jewish culture.

The role of the National Spirit is significant, it is the power that directs and preserves the culture. The University must be in the Land of Israel, because this is where the spirit rightfully resides. We have seen what Ahad Ha-Am considers to be the components of the National Jewish Culture. We now need to turn to his discussion on the very bases of Jewish culture--the National Spirit and its essence--Absolute Justice--and its development throughout Jewish History, as he illustrated through the sources.

Notes--Chapter III

1. Ibid., כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "חשבון הנפש" סג. Ahad Ha-Am, Selected Essays, op.cit. P. 167.
cf Kaufmann Pp. 425-426 "עקרי דעותיו של אחד העם"
2. See next chapter, Pp. 110-111.
3. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "מוקדם ומאוחר בחיים" עפ. Ibid., P. 74.
4. Ibid. עפ. Ibid.
5. Ibid. P. 75.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid. P. 76.
8. Ibid. Pp. 77-78.
cf כ"כ. עפ"ד. III, "בשר ורוח" שנב.
9. כ"כ. עפ"ד. III, "בשר ורוח" שנא. Ibid., P. 156.
10. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "מוקדם ומאוחר בחיים" פ. Ibid., Pp. 76-77.
11. כ"כ. עפ"ד. III, "בשר ורוח" שנא. Ibid., Pp. 156-157, and cf., Kaufmann, Y., P. 351 גולה ונכר
12. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "מוקדם ומאוחר בחיים" פ. Ibid., P. 77.
13. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "חשבון הנפש" סב. Ibid., P. 168.
14. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "לא זה הדרך" יב. Ahad Ha-Am, Zionism and Judaism, op.cit., P. 8.
15. Ibid. יג. Ibid., P. 9.
16. Ibid. יג. Ibid., P. 10.
17. Ibid. יג. Ibid.

18. Ibid., P. 11.
19. Ibid., P. 9.
20. Ibid., P. 11.
21. Kaufmann, op.cit., P. 165. , גולה ונכר, I, My translation
22. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "חקוי והחבוללות" פה.
Ahad Ha-Am, Selected Essays, op.cit., Pp. 116-118.
cf. Simon A. & Heller J. op.cit., Pp. 150-151... אחר העם האבס
23. Ibid., P. 119.
24. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "עבדות בחור חירות" סו.
Ibid., Pp. 184-185.
25. Ibid., P. 189.
26. Ibid., P. 184.
27. Ibid., P. 190.
28. Ibid., Pp. 193-194.
29. Ibid., Pp. 190-192.
30. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "שחי רשויות" פו.
Ibid., P. 92.
cf. Simon, A. and Heller, J., op.cit., Pp. 149-150.
אחר העם האבס מעלו וחורחו
31. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "מדינת היהודים ו"צרת היהודים" קלו.
32. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "שלילת הגלות" שפט.
Hertzberg, Arthur, The Zionist Idea, Philadelphia, 1959, P. 270.
33. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "חקוי והחבוללות" פט.
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., Pp. 74-75.
34. אגרות כרך ג', לד"ר מ. עהרנפרייז 160-159
Ibid., P. 287.

35. כ"כ. עפ"ד. IV, "שליחת הגלוה" הא. Hertzberg, Arthur, The Zionist Idea, op.cit., P. 273.
36. כ"ה. עפ"ד. II, "מלים ומושגים" שג-שגד. Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 204.
37. אגרות כרך ג', למר ש. סיפלים 129 Ibid., P. 282.
38. כ"כ. עפ"ד. IV, "מלים ומושגים" שגד. Ibid., P. 206.
39. שגד. Ibid Ibid., P. 204.
40. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "תחית הרוח" קעה-קעס. Ahad Ha-Am, Selected Essays, op.cit., Pp. 278-279. cf Rubinstein... "תפיסת הקולטור" P. 291 and Klausner. אחר העם האיש Simon, A. and Heller, J., op.cit., 173-174....
41. Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 49.
42. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "תחית הרוח" קפ. Ahad Ha-Am, Selected Essays, op.cit., P. 286. Rubinstein, op.cit., Pp. 294-295; 304 "תפיסת הקולטור" ... "עקרי דעותיו של אחד העם" Kaufmann, op.cit., Pp. 34-35.
43. קעס. Ibid Ibid., Pp. 281-282. cf Rubinstein, op.cit. 294-295 "תפיסת הקולטור" במשנת אחד העם
44. קעה. Ibid Ibid., P. 259.
45. קעה. Ibid Ibid., P. 261.
46. קעה. Ibid Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., Pp. 90-91. cf Rubinstein P. 294. "תפיסת הקולטור" במשנת אחד העם Simon A. and Heller J., op.cit Pp. 221, 222. אחר העם האיש
47. קעס. Ibid Ibid., P. 91.
48. קעו. Ibid Ibid., P. 85.
49. קעו. Ibid Ibid., Pp. 87-88
50. כ"כ. עפ"ד. III, "נחלת אבות" רעב. Ahad Ha-Am, Selected Essays, op.cit., Pp. 211-212.

51. רעג. Ibid
Ibid., P. 214.
52. רעג. Ibid
Ibid., P. 215.
53. רעג. Ibid
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 70
54. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "חחית הרוח" קעו.
Ahad Ha-Am, Selected Essays, op.cit., P. 264.
55. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "עבר ועחיד" פב.
Ibid., P. 86.
56. פב. Ibid
Ibid.
57. כ"כ. עפ"ד. III, "קול מבשר" שלה-שלו. "הבוכים" שלם..
58. כ"כ. עפ"ד. IV, "הגיעה הזמן" מכתב ראשון שפ.
Ahad Ha-Am, Zionism and Judaism, op.cit., Pp. 96-97.
59. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "על דבר אוצר היהדות בלשון עברית" קר-קה.
60. קה. Ibid.
61. קר. Ibid.
My translation.
62. קו. Ibid.
63. קו. Ibid.
My translation.
64. קו. Ibid.
My translation
65. קו. Ibid.
66. קיג. Ibid.
My translation
67. Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 346 n. 52.
68. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "על דבר אוצר היהדות בלשון עברית" קיג.
My translation
69. קיג. Ibid.
My translation
70. קיד. Ibid.
My translation

71. Ibid. קיד.
My translation
72. אגרות כרך ו' לד"ר ח. ווייצמן 18-17
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 295.

CHAPTER IV--ABSOLUTE JUSTICE: ITS PLACE AND DEVELOPMENT IN JEWISH CULTURE

As we have seen Ahad Ha-Am considered Absolute Justice to be the touchstone of the National Jewish Spirit. It was the ideal for which the Jewish nation had reached since the time of the Prophets. Ahad Ha-Am went to considerable lengths to illustrate the presence of Absolute Justice throughout Jewish history. He believed that this ideal had a direct effect on Jewish culture, and that by investigating the traditional sources one could see its impact. He attempted to show how this ideal of Absolute Justice influenced Jewish culture from the time of the Prophets, through the time of the rabbis of the Talmud, and its impact through the codes of Maimonides. He traced this process through the classical sources.

We have seen that Ahad Ha-Am considered the period of the Jewish people's existence in the Land of Israel as the purest time of its life. Further, the pure essence of the Spirit became tainted and weakened in its struggle with competing national spirits and cultures in the Diaspora after the destruction of the Second Temple. Therefore we must return to the period before the destruction to discover the essence of the Spirit in its environment. This was the Prophetic period. According to Ahad Ha-Am, the essence of the National

Jewish Spirit and of Jewish ethics is what he calls Absolute Justice.¹ This ethic had a separate existence, even though it had been closely associated with the religious development of the people.² Absolute Justice is the most important aspect of the essence of the Jewish nation.³ The Prophets hoped that the Jewish nation would live by Absolute Justice and be an example for the entire world. It has been a unique treasure of the Jewish people ever since this period, and distinguishes the Jewish people from all others.⁴ In order to more fully understand this idea, we now turn to Ahad Ha-Am's discussion on the Prophets and the place of prophecy in the Jewish nation.

The Prophet

In his essay, "כהן ונביא", Ahad Ha-Am presents a specific description of the personality of the Prophet. The Prophet was unique. He was a driven person, in pursuit of Righteousness, obsessed with a dream and a goal--the attainment of Absolute Justice. This dream and goal was the primal force in the Prophet's life subordinating all other drives:⁵

The fundamental idea of the Hebrew Prophet was the universal domination of absolute justice. In Heaven it rules through the eternally Righteous, "... who holds in His right hand the attribute of judgement," and righteously judges all His creatures: "... and on earth through man, on whom, created in God's image lies the duty of cherishing the attribute of his Maker, and helping Him, to the best of his meagre power, to guide

His world in the path of Righteousness. This Idea, with all its religious and moral corollaries, was the breath of life to the Hebrew Prophets.⁶

Although other nations have had their prophets, Prophecy is virtually the hallmark of the Jewish people.⁷

They wished the whole people to be a primal force making for Righteousness, in the general life of humanity, just as they were themselves in its own particular national life.⁸

The Prophets sought to involve the entire nation in this idea, for they realized that it would take a whole people to attain the ideal on: . . . which should be continuously, throughout all generations, the standard-bearer of the force of Righteousness against all other forces that rule the world. . . ."⁹ Ahad Ha-Am buttresses this point by the following proof text:

Their national ideal was not "a kingdom of Priests" (Ex. 19:6), but ". . . would that all the people of the Lord were Prophets." (Num. 11:29)¹⁰

The focus is not on God, but on the idea that the people become Prophets--a nation concerned with the Idea of Righteousness. Righteousness is the lofty goal, not God. The dream of the Jewish National Spirit then is the prophetic dream, assuring that the Jewish people become a nation of Prophets. This is the future goal, the driving force of the Spirit. The dream is for the time that ". . . the righteous sit crowned in glory, and drink in the radiance of the Divine Presence." (Berakot 17^a)¹¹

In an article written in response to a group of young Jewish intellectuals who had been deeply influenced by Nietzsche, Ahad Ha-Am expands his concept of the chosen

people. The article, " שנוי הערכין ", is Ahad Ha-Am's attempt to deal with the Nietzschean idea of the Superman. Ahad Ha-Am redefines the idea of the Superman, making it compatible with his idea of the Jewish Spirit. He focuses on the aspect that the Superman is superior to the masses of humanity. He finds such a figure in Jewish society--the Zaddik. He was always consumed by the struggle to find justice, to be a righteous person. Ahad Ha-Am then fits the idea of the Superman into his ideal of the entire nation being in pursuit of the goal of Absolute Justice. His Superman is one who seeks righteousness, but he seeks it in the midst of a community. The Jewish Superman works within the Jewish Supernation for, the ideal for which he strives is the very basis of Jewish national consciousness:¹²

When all is said, man is a social animal; and even the soul of the Superman is a product of society, and cannot wholly free itself from the moral atmosphere in which it has grown and developed. If we agree, then, that the Superman is the goal of all things, we must needs agree also that an essential condition of the attainment of this goal is the Supernation; that is to say, there must be a single nation better adapted than other nations, by virtue of its inherent characteristics, to moral development, and ordering its whole life in accordance with a moral law which stands higher than the common type. This nation will then serve as the soil essentially and supremely fitted to produce that fairest of all fruits--the Superman.

This idea opens up a wide prospect, in which Judaism appears in a new and splendid light.¹³

Indeed, Judaism appears in a "new and splendid light" for it is the Supernation that will give birth to the Superman.

The true "mission" of the Jewish people is to be a Supernation on a moral plane. All the other nations will turn to the Jewish nation to learn of this highest type of morality--Absolute Justice. The Jews are to be a moral Supernation, in its Land, living in a uniquely Jewish society: Then other nations will say, "Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord . . . and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths." (Isa. 2:3) We do not find that Israel is to say, "Come, let us go out to the nations and teach them the ways of the Lord, that they may walk in His paths."¹⁴ In this way, Ahad Ha-Am also confronts the reformers' claims that the Jews are scattered among the nations in order to teach them the ways of God. The Jews are to do this in their spiritual center; the land of Israel, in a healthy, naturally developing Jewish society, based on the Idea of the Prophets--Absolute Justice.¹⁵ (He refers to Jehuda Halevi as one Jewish thinker who recognized this conception of the meaning of the chosen people.¹⁶)

The Prophet and Moses

For Ahad Ha-Am, the archetype Prophet was Moses. He was the Prophet. Ahad Ha-Am then proceeds to paint a very specific picture of Moses and his importance in the creation of the Jewish culture. His Moses differs significantly from the Biblical or the traditional Moses. This does not prevent Ahad Ha-Am from using sources. He

denies that Moses was a military hero, ignoring his explicit leadership against Amalek. Moses was not a political leader either. He had to depend on Aaron when he went to the court of Pharaoh. Perhaps then he was a lawgiver? No! A lawgiver makes laws for the present; Moses whole being was future directed.¹⁷ Moses was:

. . . a Prophet. But he was different from the other Prophets, whose appearance in our history, as a specific type, dates only from the period of the monarchy. He was, as later generations learned to call him, "the lord of the Prophets," that is, the ideal archetype of Hebrew Prophecy in the purest and most exalted sense of the word.¹⁸

Ahad Ha-Am means that Moses was a man of truth and an extremist. As a man of truth, he tells the truth because this is an innate desire and characteristic of the Prophet. He has to seek truth. As an extremist, he feels the compulsion to reach his goal. He must devote his entire being to the quest of the completion of his ideal.¹⁹

A third characteristic directly related to the previous two is the combination of the search for truth, and the extremist. This results in the Prophet placing Absolute Justice as the supreme goal:

As a man of truth he cannot help being also a man of justice or righteousness; for what is righteousness but truth in action? And as an extremist he cannot subordinate righteousness (any more than he can subordinate truth) to any irrelevant end; he cannot desert righteousness from the motives of temporary expediency, even at the bidding of love or piety. Thus the Prophet's righteousness is absolute, knowing no restriction either on the side of social necessities or on that of human feelings.²⁰

According to Ahad Ha-Am, Moses is this type of person. He does not worry about reality, but about the future. He accepts the task of leading the people and directs it in a slow, deliberate fashion. He realizes that the people will need time to reach the goal. The incident of the Golden Calf illustrated the need for this type of approach rather than a speedy one:

Now he realizes the hard task that lies before him. He no longer believes in a sudden revolution; he knows that signs and wonders and visions of God can arouse a momentary enthusiasm, but cannot create a new heart, cannot uproot and implant feelings and inclinations with any stability or permanence. So he summons all his patience to the task of bearing the troublesome burden of his people and training it by slow steps till it is fit for its mission.²¹

Moses is able to pursue this program while the people wander through the desert. This description could easily apply to Ahad Ha-Am's program for Spiritual Zionism and it appears that he is presenting it in the guise of his historiography.

Ahad Ha-Am now turns to the sources to emphasize his contention that Moses was indeed absorbed by the pursuit of Absolute Justice. When Moses went into the world one of the first sights he beheld was, "An Egyptian smiting a Hebrew" (Ex. 2:11). He became aroused and came to the aid of the weaker. His next experience was, "Two Hebrews strove together" (Ex. 2:13). This time it was not a case of the strong oppressing the weak but of two of the weak fighting. "Once more the Prophet's sense of justice compels him, and he meddles in a quarrel

which is not his."²² Even after he flees Egypt and arrives in Midian, he seeks justice, protecting the women from the shepards. (Ex. 2:17) The Prophet is always driven to seek righteousness whether or not a Jew is involved. Ahad Ha-Am has made careful use of these passages to show how Moses lived up to his ideal of the Prophet.²³ Moses then spends years in the land of Midian before being appointed by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses sees that this is his goal and proceeds to prepare himself for the task. Moses realizes that he cannot use magic enchantments to accomplish his goal, since a Prophet would never engage in such activities. Even if "magic" were the only way, he could not use it and hence, would prefer to surrender his Prophetic position rather than sully the Prophetic role. Ahad Ha-Am employs Exodus 4:13 to prove this.²⁴ However the context suggests nothing of the sort. Moses does not appear to be protesting being asked to perform magic to prove the power of God to the people; there is more a sense of awe and fear in being asked to become their leader.²⁵ Moses finally discovers a solution whereby he can remain the true Prophet, and still reach the people. Aaron will become the priest, the person involved in the everyday aspects of life. Moses can remain the Prophet and not compromise himself in political affairs.²⁶

Moses leads the people out of Egypt and from slavery. He is now faced with educating the people schooled in

slavery. Now it is up to him to show the people a new form of the God of their ancestors.

Up until this time in Jewish history, the people believed only in a national God. Ahad Ha-Am contends that at the Theophany at Mount Sinai, the people learned of a Universal God who demands of them truth and righteousness:

"For all the earth is Mine . . ." (Ex. 19:5), so speaks the voice of the God of Israel. . . . Hitherto you have believed, in common with all other nations, that every people and every country has its own god, all-powerful within his boundaries, and that these gods wage war on one another and conquer one another, like the nations that serve them. But it is not so. There is no such thing as a God of Israel and a different God of Egypt; there is one God, who was, is, and shall be: He is the Lord of all the earth, and Ruler over all the nations. And it is this universal God who is the God of your fathers. The whole world is His handiwork, and all men are created in His image; but you, the children of His chosen Abraham, He has singled out to be His peculiar people, to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6) to sanctify His name in the world and to be an example to mankind in your individual and in your corporate life, which are to be based on new foundations, on the spirit of Truth and Righteousness.²⁷

Ahad Ha-Am marshalls further proof of this from numerous Torah verses. The goal of the Prophet--justice--shines through everywhere in the instructions Moses gives to the people:

"Justice, justice shalt thou follow." (Deut. 16:20)
 "Keep thee far from a false matter." (Ex. 23:7)
 You shall not respect the strong; ". . . and a stranger shalt thou not wrong. . . . Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child." (Ex. 22:21)
 But neither shall you wrest justice on the side of the weak: "Neither shalt thou favor a poor man in his cause." (Ex. 23:3) The guiding rule of your lives shall be neither hatred and jealousy, nor yet love and pity, for all alike pervert the view and

bias the judgement. "Justice, justice . . ."--
this alone shall be your rule.²⁸

Finally, to show that the Prophet is not concerned with himself, but in the fruition of his goal, Ahad Ha-Am turns to an analysis of the death of Moses. The time has come for the ideal to become practice. This is the point where the Prophet must step back. Once the Prophetic program is put into action, the Prophetic vision becomes a tool of those working in reality and, therefore will become compromised. The Prophet could not tolerate such compromise. He has given them the future; that was his purpose. Moses does not enter into the Land to which he has led his people. The task is left to a different type of individual. Instead, Moses only catches a glimpse of the Land--the future--from afar: "He shall see the Land before him, but he shall not go thither." (Deut. 32:52) Ahad Ha-Am interprets this verse in a way that shows that Moses (the Prophet) has accomplished his task. He has guided the people to their future, he has prepared the Jewish nation for its future. The people will be the ones to determine the future, not the Prophet. So, Moses stands and gazes at the goal yet to be reached.²⁹

Absolute Justice in the Sources

The issue of the National ethic and Absolute Justice appears again in one of Ahad Ha-Am's most impassioned

essays. Reacting to C. G. Montefiore's work on the Synoptic Gospels, (especially the introduction), he wrote, " **על שתי הסעיפים** ". He presents his conception of the difference between Jewish and Christian ethics. One of the central arguments he directs against Christianity is that it is based on love and not on justice; justice being the central tenet of Jewish ethics.³⁰ He attempts to show this through a careful analysis of both the Synoptic Gospels and Biblical, Midrashic and Talmudic references. He engages in a long discussion to show how these two attitudes create radically different approaches to life. Judaism's stress on Absolute Justice, as we have seen, precludes any thoughts concerning love or pity. It also refuses to recognize a difference between one human being and another. Absolute Justice seeks truth and righteousness, emotions should not be considered. Absolute Justice also implies that altruism is a misplaced virtue. Altruism forces one individual to make a subjective moral decision. Absolute Justice is based on objective moral principles. Ahad Ha-Am considers the altruism of the Gospels a sort of "inverted egoism". The person who is altruistic is concerned with the self, with the stress on the individual's life:

The moral law of the Gospels beholds man in his individual shape, with his natural attitude toward himself and others, and asks him to reverse this attitude, to substitute the "other" for the "self" in his individual life, to abandon plain egoism for inverted egoism. Altruism and egoism alike deny the individual as such all objective moral value, and make him merely a means to a subjective end; but egoism makes the "other" a means to the

advantage of the "self", while altruism does just the reverse. Now Judaism removed this subjective attitude from the moral law, and based it on an abstract, objective foundation, on absolute justice, which regards the individual as such as having a moral value, and makes no distinction between the "self" and the "other".³¹

The "self" and the "other" are equal when one takes the Jewish approach; that of Absolute Justice. "Both of us are men, and both our lives have the same value before the throne of justice."³² Ahad Ha-Am has reached this point in his discussion through a long argument about Judaism's refusal to consider a concrete representation of God. This refusal to manufacture any likeness is inherent in the Jewish approach to the religious and moral ideal. Rather than focus on the individual, Judaism has consistently emphasized the community; the entire human collective. National redemption, which will lead to universal redemption has been a hallmark of Judaism. The Prophets did not concern themselves with the individual soul, but with the soul of the entire Jewish nation. The nation had the task to be a living example to the world, to act as a holy nation; as a chosen people.³³ This emphasis on community is an abstract ideal, while the stress on individual salvation is concrete.

Ahad Ha-Am places such importance on the idea of Absolute Justice, he cannot tolerate the suggestion that a moral ideal that is not based on such should be included within Jewish teaching. He enters into an extensive

analysis of the sources, attempting to show how Judaism has always placed the stress on Absolute Justice. He compares Matthew 7:12: "So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. . . ." with Hillel's dictum: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor." (T.B. Shabbat 31^a). Ahad Ha-Am believed that there was a significant difference between the two. The verse from the Gospels is a positive statement, and he considers this to be altruistic--you want something done to you, so do it to someone else. Hillel's statement is in the negative. Ahad Ha-Am understands that the emphasis is therefore on the pursuit of justice.³⁵ By instructing people to avoid self love or prejudice, he teaches to transcend the "self" and to focus on the ideal of justice. He teaches to avoid that which is unjust. He is forced to deal with Leviticus 19:18: "Love your neighbor as yourself", which does appear to be a positive statement. Yet, in reality, it is negative as he interprets:

If the Torah had meant that a man must love his neighbor to the extent of sacrificing his life for him, it would have said: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour more than thyself." But when you love your neighbor as yourself, neither more or less, then your feelings are in a state of perfect equilibrium, with no leaning to your side or your neighbour's. And this is, in fact, the true meaning of the verse. "Self-love must not be allowed to incline the scale on the side of your own advantage; love your neighbour as yourself and then inevitably justice will be the deciding factor, and you will do nothing to your neighbour that you would consider a wrong if it were done to yourself."³⁶

Ahad Ha-Am immerses himself in the task to show that Judaism is based on the ideal of Absolute Justice.

Driving home the point that Judaism's stress is not on the individual, but on justice, he presents the Baraita from Bava Metzia 62^a concerning two men who are walking through the desert. Only one man has a bottle of water. If both drink, both will die. Who then will drink the water? Rabbi Akiba's response was that the one who owned the bottle of water should drink it. Ben Petura had suggested the other would. Ben Petura's motivation is altruistic. But, according to Ahad Ha-Am, Akiba's is the Jewish response. True, it is an evil thing that a person will die, but one will die regardless of the desire that none should. So, who should be saved?

Justice answers--let him who can, save himself. Every man's life is entrusted to his keeping, and to preserve your own charge is nearer duty than to preserve your neighbor's.³⁷

Akiba's proof text (from T.B. Shabbat) supplied Ahad Ha-Am with the necessary support for his position. Akiba refuted Ben Petura with Leviticus 25:26 ("And your brother shall live with you."). Akiba interpreted this to mean "With you--that is to say, your own life comes before your neighbor's." The verse does not imply the altruistic concept of "because of You".³⁸

Ahad Ha-Am continues his discussion by citing Pesachim 25b. In this passage Raba is presented with the following problem. One in authority threatened to kill one person if that person did not kill another. Raba responded "Be killed and kill not. Who has told

you that your blood is redder than his" Ahad Ha-Am then presents Rashi's understanding of this section. Rashi explains that the person must not kill the other, even though there is the concept that no religious law is binding on the face of danger to life (Yeb. 110a). In this case, the loss of a life is unavoidable, you cannot assume that your life is more precious. The sixth commandment may not be broken. Even if one would reverse the case, justice will be dominant. Imagine the case where one person has the chance to save another. That person will be killed, but if the first person offers his life, the other will be saved. This, the Jew could not do. Is one person more precious than the next? Is that person's blood redder? No, justice demands that the Jew not offer his life in place of the other. Maimonides supplies the reasoning that no person has the right to say "I am endangering myself; what right have others to complain of that?" (Mishnah Torah, Hilchot Rotzeakh 11:5) People do have the right and responsibility to complain. Justice is not served when one endangers one's life for another in such a case. Both are equal, and one should not presume that the other has a greater right to live.³⁹

For Ahad Ha-Am these sources show that justice is of paramount importance for Judaism. Justice takes precedence over individual desires and motivations, disregarding personal feelings that might convince a

person to actually sacrifice his life for another. As altruistic as this might be, nevertheless justice would not be served; and it is for Absolute Justice that the Jewish nation and its culture are striving.⁴⁰ The Jewish people's millennial dream is to achieve that time when moral perfection is reached, when the abstract notion of Absolute Justice reigns supreme. This can be seen clearly by the image that Jewish tradition holds about the Messiah. The struggle to attain this time of justice will have been reached. At this time the teachings of Hillel and Akiba, Raba and Maimonides will be fully understood.

And since Judaism associated its moral aspirations with the "coming of the Messiah," it attributed to the Messiah this perfection of morality, and said that "he will smell and judge" (Sanhedrin, 93b) on the basis of the scriptural verse: "And shall make him of quick understanding (Heb. "smell") in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes." (Isa. 11:3) Because the smell is a very delicate sense, he gives the name of smell to the most delicate feeling . . . that is to say, the Messiah with little attention will feel which men are good and which evil." (Kimhi's commentary to Isa. 11:3)⁴¹

Ahad Ha-Am focuses on the idea that the Messiah will not judge after the sight of his eyes; that is, he will not be swayed by personal prejudices; justice shall be the measure by which he judges good and evil.

Use of the Sources to Illustrate the Evolution of Jewish Culture

As has been discussed a basic aspect of Ahad Ha-Am's

conception of Jewish culture is that it is evolving. He is able to illustrate this development in a discussion about the Jewish view on divorce. He sees that throughout much of Jewish history, the tendency has been toward allowing greater rights to the woman. At first, in keeping with the primitive view that the man was central and that the woman a helper, the husband was compelled to stay even if the wife became a hated object. But Judaism, "with its essentially social aim" and its concern with maintaining a proper moral tone in the upbringing of the future generations, realized that changes must occur. At first, only the husband could divorce for reasons other than infidelity:

But when once it became recognized that married life cannot tolerate constraint, this recognition, limited at first to the side of the husband, was bound to be gradually extended to the wife. Hence arose the provisions under which a man may be compelled to divorce his wife (K'thuboth, ch. vii). These provisions enabled the wife to obtain a divorce against the husband's will, by decree of the courts, on many and various grounds. Thus it is impossible to assert that Judaism does not allow a woman to divorce her husband.⁴²

Thus it can be seen that the approach of Judaism has been in a progressively moral direction. Gradually it was recognized that to preserve the moral character of Jewish society, both husband and wife should have the chance to sue for divorce if the marriage failed. The idea of the emancipation of the woman indicated the moral development of Jewish culture. The culture had grown beyond the primitive notion that the male was the

more important individual, while the woman was barely more than chattel. The emancipation of the woman within Jewish culture continued until it reached its highest stage with Maimonides:

This tendency to emancipate the wife reached its highest development in the dictum of Maimonides, that if a woman says "My husband is distasteful to me, and I cannot live with him," although she gives no specific reason for her dislike, the husband is yet compelled to divorce her "because she is not like a captive woman, that she should consort with a man whom she hates" (Hilchot Ishut 14:8).⁴³

This development indicated to Ahad Ha-Am that Judaism had reached a moral height, regardless of the attempts to undermine Maimonides dictum in later times:

Here we see the Jewish attitude to marriage in its full development. Marriage is a social and moral cord, the two ends of which are in the hearts of the husband and wife; and if the cord is broken at either end--whether in the husband's heart or in the wife's--the marriage has lost its value, and it is best that it should be annulled. It is true that the jurists who came after Maimonides could not rise to the conception of so perfect an equality of the sexes, and did not wholly accept his dictum. But the mere fact that the greatest authority deduced his decision from the Talmud (and the Talmud, in fact, affords ground for his view--see Maggid Mishnah ad loc.) is proof conclusive as to the real tendency of the Jewish law of divorce, and shows whither it leads in the straight line of development.⁴⁴

Ahad Ha-Am contended that one could see that Judaism had moved through a process of development from Biblical times up through Maimonides.

This entire discussion about the improvement of the position of the Jewish woman in relation to her husband in divorce is one of Ahad Ha-Am's clearest examples of

his evolutionary approach to Jewish history and culture. He draws directly from the sources over the course of Jewish history to illustrate how the Jewish people had continually sought the higher moral; the more just; position. Jewish culture continually attempted to put the woman in a more equal status as it developed.

The Importance of ORAL Law

A major problem facing Ahad Ha-Am in his day was the state of the Jewish people and its literature. He perceived the paucity of original Hebrew work and the blind obedience of the masses of Eastern European Jewry to the Jewish Law codes. Why had this state of affairs arisen? The Jewish people were heirs to the great tradition of the Prophets, the people for whom the Bible was at one time a way of life. The problem was that the people had become a "people of the book," their creative powers had stagnated with the canonization of the Bible and the later Jewish works. Rather than continuing to develop a living tradition, the people had come to rely on the works of the past; they had enslaved themselves to these texts. This analysis appears in his essay

"חורו שלב" . To better illustrate his point,

Ahad Ha-Am enters into a discussion concerning the stultification of the motivating spirit, and how the Jewish people surrendered to the book. He draws upon Hillel's dictum from Shabbat 31a, again, showing that

at the time of Hillel, the Jews still looked within the Law and searched it, to find meaning in life. They did not merely accept the Bible and obey it word for word. An example of this could be found in the rabbinic definition of the meaning of "an eye for an eye" (Ex. 21:24). We find that the rabbis did not interpret the verse on the literal plane. Their understanding was that some sort of financial remuneration was to be made to compensate for the loss of the eye. This, to Ahad Ha-Am, was a clear indication of the ability of the Jews of that time to adjust Judaism to be consistent with the moral sense of their times; a moral sense that was more developed than that of the period of the Torah. These Jews refused to allow themselves to be bound exclusively to the Written word:

In those days it was still possible to find the source of the Law and the arbiter of the written word in the human heart, as witness the famous dictum of Hillel: Do not unto your neighbour what you would not have him do unto you; that is the whole Law." If on occasion the spontaneity of thought and emotion brought them into conflict with the written word, they did not efface themselves in obedience to its dictates; they revolted against it where it no longer met their needs, and so forced upon it a development in consonance with their new requirements. For example: the Biblical law of "an eye for an eye" was felt by the more developed moral sense of a later age to be savage and unworthy of a civilised nation, and at that time the moral judgement of the people was still the highest tribunal. Consequently it was regarded as obvious that the written word, which was also authoritative, must have meant "the value of an eye for an eye" (Baba Kamma 83b Mechilta Kiddushin) that is to say, a penalty in money and not in kind.⁴⁵

Ahad Ha-Am has assigned to the Jews of this time the

idea that the moral sense was the highest source of life. This is the reason that they redefined the Biblical injunction.

Unfortunately, this age came to an end when the Oral Law appeared in written form. Then, the Jews came to rely on the written word, and stopped relying on their moral sense. The moral sense became subservient to the written word; it was not allowed to challenge the authority of the written word. No questioning of that authority was allowed. The rabbis of this age were forced to reinterpret the dictum of Hillel. No longer could it be understood to be a moral statement, concerning relations between two people. Now, one had to understand "your neighbor" as referring to God. Certainly, one would not do something against God's will. The most damaging aspect of this development was that the Oral Law had been the moral sense which balanced the Torah. Now, the moral sense no longer had any outlet for expression, and the Jewish people, fell from the heights of moral responsibility to a people enslaved by the written word:

The Oral Law (which is really the inner law, the law of the moral sense) was itself reduced to writing and fossilised; and the moral sense was left with only one clear and firm conviction--that of its own utter impotence and its eternal subservience to the written word. Conscience no longer had any authority in its own right; not conscience, but the book became the arbiter in every human question. More than that: conscience had no longer the right even to approve of what the written word prescribed. So we are told that a Jew must not say he dislikes pork (Sifre, Kiddushin): to do so would be like the impudence of a slave

who agrees with his master instead of unquestioningly doing his bidding. In such an atmosphere we need not be surprised that some commentators came to regard Hillel's moral interpretation of the Law as sacrilegious and found themselves compelled to explain away the finest saying in the Talmud. By "your neighbour" they said, Hillel really meant the Almighty: you are not to go against His will, because you would not like your neighbour to go against your will. (Rashi ad loc.)⁴⁶

After analyzing the position in which he believed Judaism to be mired, Ahad Ha-Am suggests that Hibbat Zion would be able to uplift the Jewish nation from these depths of servitude. Once again the nation must concern itself with the moral values for which it was famous. The spirit must be freed from the hold of the written word. This is not to say the written word should be discarded. The Talmud and the later codes will remain intact. They will not have the stranglehold on the spirit of the nation; this is the change he desired.⁴⁷ There is no doubt that Ahad Ha-Am is suggesting that the Talmud and the Codes should be reworked. The Jewish people must free itself from the fetters of the written word. This suggestion certainly would remove these works from the center stage of traditional Jewry which they held. He is not suggesting a change in the wording of the texts. His is a suggestion of even greater force--these works will no longer be the controlling force in Jewish life. At the same time Ahad Ha-Am has also elevated Hibbat Zion from a movement within the Jewish people, to being Judaism. "True Hibbat Zion is not

merely a part of Judaism nor is it something added to Judaism: it is the whole of Judaism, but with a different focal point."⁴⁸ Ahad Ha-Am has effectively relegated the whole of traditional Judaism to a place that is within the more encompassing Hibbat Zion. The "different focal point" was a complete reevaluation of the purpose and direction of the Jewish people.⁴⁹ Hibbat Zion's program would be the program for all Jews, for Hibbat Zion is Judaism. Therefore, all other Jewish expressions and works must be interpreted through the educational and ideological outlook of Hibbat Zion.

The Role of Leaders in Determining the National Culture

We have seen that Ahad Ha-Am's concern for the Land of Israel was that it was the Spiritual Center of the Jewish people in the time of the Prophets and should be the national center in the coming era of the rejuvenation of the Jewish nation. He did not feel that all Jews should move to the center, although it is clear he did believe that millions would be needed to shape the Land and its institutions along proper Jewish cultural line. Ahad Ha-Am did not wish that just any Jew or group of Jews would make aliyah. His dream was that an elite group would be the settlers which would develop the center. These people would not make aliyah for personal reasons. Their purpose in going to the Land of Israel would be to uplift the national life of the Jewish people. They

would be the leaders who would show the way for all the Jews throughout the world. Therefore, these people must be carefully screened and trained. This was Ahad Ha-Am's hope for the new spiritual Jewish center in the Land of Israel. This elite group would spur the entire nation to reach the greatness of which it was capable. The Bene Moshe were to be well educated spiritual and moral leaders, of the highest ethical standards. They were to devote themselves to the enrichment of the Jewish nation, not for individual goals.

As we have seen Ahad Ha-Am appears to have divided Jewish society into two basic divisions. The larger was the masses; the large group of Jews concerned with the problems of every day existence. These people were to be led by the elite; that small group of moral and ethical people who would determine the tone and pace of Jewish life and its culture. He perceived that the biggest problem with the Zionist venture up until the time in which he wrote, was that it concerned itself with settling individuals in the various old and new communities in the Land of Israel. Ahad Ha-Am believed that this was entirely the wrong approach. His desire was that only specially educated and trained leaders of the future of the Jewish nation should be encouraged to make aliyah; who would concentrate on developing the Land of Israel as the spiritual center for the entire Jewish people.⁵¹ Rather than building a few scattered and

impoverished settlements, forced to beg for money from abroad; Ahad Ha-Am envisioned a thriving spiritual community, engaged in all aspects of life devoted to the renaissance of Jewish cultural life. This lack of a motivating influence doomed any other settlement to the misery which most of them shared. Further, these impoverished communities were incapable of providing any spiritual leadership to the Jewish nation spread out across the world.⁵² So, Ahad Ha-Am suggested that the movement send only the elite who would create the proper spiritual community in which the lofty spiritual goals of the Jewish nation could be realized. We have seen that Ahad Ha-Am considered this group to be the Bene Moshe.

Maimonides and Elite Leadership

Ahad Ha-Am found such a division of Jewish society in the works of Maimonides. He held that Maimonides aimed some of his works at the "masses" while writing others for the elite, the intellectual leaders of the Jewish nation. He presented this analysis of Maimonides in one of his longest essays, "שלטון השכל". The very title of the essay, "The Supremacy of Reason", indicates Ahad Ha-Am's attitudes concerning the writings and importance of Maimonides. He enters into one of his most detailed analyses of the sources in order to prove his points; first, that Maimonides placed reason on the highest plane, that everything must be based on reason;

and second, that Maimonides recognized the division of Jewish society.

As a result of this attitude concerning reason, Maimonides needed to fit Judaism into his philosophical system. Ahad Ha-Am claimed that he did this through his writings, halakhic and philosophic (if such a distinction can be legitimately made.)⁵³ Even if he were forced to bend and twist meanings and ideas, he would prove that Judaism was philosophy, based on reason, as all philosophy should be. According to Ahad Ha-Am, Maimonides stated, ". . . with the conviction that there is no room for compromise, and that religion must teach only what reason approves. . . . he spares no pains to rid religious belief of every element of the supernatural."⁵⁴ His works were written in order to convince the Jewish people that this was the correct approach to Judaism and its sources.

Ahad Ha-Am held that Maimonides placed reason on the highest plane. To show the role it plays in Judaism he discusses the definition of the Divine religion--the Torah of Judaism. He believed that Maimonides considered it to be a creation of God, which he did. But, once revealed, this divine religion was open to the demands of reason. Using Guide II:29 as his source, he writes:

Religion, it is true, was given through a divinely inspired Prophet; but once given, it had emerged from its formative stage and become, like nature after its creation, something independent, with laws which can be investigated and understood by the function of reason. . . .⁵⁵

Thus, reason assumed the task of defining religion once it had been divinely revealed. Reason reigns supreme.

Ahad Ha-Am considered Maimonides to have been an elitist. He believed that humanity was divided into two species, "potential man" and "actual man". "Actual man" was the higher of the two in development and, "potential man" existed, without a doubt, for the benefit of the perfect being; the "actual man".⁵⁶ The number of people which belong to the category of "actual man" was the extreme minority.⁵⁷

Ahad Ha-Am also contends that Maimonides had a specific purpose in writing the Mishneh Torah. He wrote it for ordinary people, for those incapable of reaching the heights of the "actual man". "Here he sets forth all the practical laws of religion and morality and all the true opinions in the form best adapted to the understanding of the ordinary man."⁵⁸ This enables Maimonides to introduce philosophic themes into the Mishneh Torah without arguing for them on philosophical grounds. He also uses the Mishneh Torah to define and explain the function religion and the masses must fulfill for the philosopher. "In a word, the Mishneh Torah sets out everything that the divine religion must teach in order to fulfill its function, and sets it out precisely as it ought to be set out for that purpose."⁵⁹ By presenting a seemingly innocent work, Maimonides slips in his new ideas, which, since the Mishneh Torah was written in

Mishnaic Hebrew and appeared as a series of "canonical dicta", would have been accepted on faith.⁶⁰

Maimonides was then forced to write a work for those who were not among the ordinary people; for the philosopher and the fledgling philosopher, who were Jewish, yet perplexed by seeming contradictions between the Torah and philosophy. For the minority, Maimonides had to show how the Torah was consistent with reason. He achieved this with the Guide of the Perplexed.⁶¹

Ahad Ha-Am makes the point that there is a visible and deliberate bifurcation in Maimonides works. The Mishneh Torah and the Guide were written for different groups of people. Reason is superior to religion and religion and halakhah must be explained through reason. The Mishneh Torah, written as it is for the masses, contained his position in the form of dogma, not in philosophical terminology with proofs. The masses did not need to know these proofs, only the philosophers. The actualized people did, so he wrote the Guide. In comparing the two works, Ahad Ha-Am wrote:

For the common people it (the Mishneh Torah) was necessary to clothe philosophical truth in religious garb . . . for the few it (the Guide) was necessary to do just the reverse--to discover and expose the philosophical truth that lay beneath the religious garb. For this minority consisting of those whom human reason had attracted to abide within its sphere--who had learnt and understood its prevailing philosophy with all its preambles and proofs--could not help seeing the profound gulf between philosophy and Judaism in its literal acceptance.⁶²

Thus, for Ahad Ha-Am, the Mishneh Torah was a tool which Maimonides employed to instruct the masses. He did present philosophy in the work, but he clothed it in religious garb:

If the dose was accepted not as true philosophy, but as religious dogma, that was precisely what Maimonides intended for according to his system religion was to teach philosophical truth, which needed to demonstration.⁶³

An Halakhic Jew might read "Hilkhoh Yesodei Torah" as a religious text, never thinking to examine the premises which in reality were philosophical. That this assumes a tremendous lack of awareness on the part of a legitimate legal scholar is obvious.

Ahad Ha-Am perceived Maimonides to have subordinated religion to the demands of reason. "Follow reason and reason only, he (Maimonides) tells the "perplexed", and interpret religion in conformity with reason, for to reason is the purpose of human life, and religion is only a means to that end."⁶⁴ He turned to the Guide for his support, and found it in III:51. In his parable of the ruler's palace, Maimonides writes concerning the religious Jew:

Those who have come up to the habitation and walk around it are the jurists who believe true opinions on the basis of traditional authority and study law concerning the practices of divine service, but do not engage in speculation concerning the fundamental principles of religion and make no inquiry whatever regarding the rectification of belief.⁶⁵

But, concerning the philosopher, Maimonides wrote:

Those who have plunged into speculation concerning the fundamental principles of religion, have

entered the antechambers. . . . He, however, who has achieved demonstration; to the extent that it is possible, of everything that may be demonstrated; and who has ascertained in divine matters, to the extent that it is possible, everything that may be ascertained; and who has come close to certainty in those matters in which one can only come close to it--has come to be with the ruler in the inner part of the habitation.⁶⁶

Ahad Ha-Am was able to show explicitly that Maimonides elevated the philosopher to a position closer to the "ruler" than the religious person. It is the philosopher, the one who operates within the realm of reason, who is the most esteemed by Maimonides. The Guide was written to enable the philosopher to remain within Judaism and to see that the Torah was indeed based on reason. Ahad Ha-Am claimed that what Maimonides in effect was trying to do, was to place reason as the final arbiter, in the stead of faith. This was nothing short of a major revolutionary suggestion.⁶⁷

It is important to note that Ahad Ha-Am recognized that Maimonides considered the Prophet to be the epitome of the perfect "actual man".⁶⁸ As for Ahad Ha-Am, so for Maimonides, the Prophet was to be the leader, the one who challenged the rest of the people to reach the heights (to become actualized, for Maimonides). Ahad Ha-Am believed that Maimonides did give religion a special role, even if it were subordinate to reason. The purpose of religion was to regulate society; so that the perfect person would be able to exist in the proper environment. Religion guides society in the proper moral

path. It was aimed at the masses, not at the chosen few. Drawing upon Guide III Chapters 23 and 28, and II Chapters 34 and 40, Ahad Ha-Am contends that Maimonides defined the aim of religion as the tool used to prepare the society:

And if religion cannot directly raise its followers to the stage of "actual man", we must conclude that its whole purpose is to prepare the instrument which is necessary for the attainment of that end; and the instrument is society, which creates the environment needed for the "actual man". The aim of religion, then, is "to regulate the soul and the body" of society at large, so as to make it capable of producing the greatest number of "actual men". To this end religion must necessarily be popular; its teachings and prescriptions must be directed not to the chosen few, who strive after ultimate perfection, but to society at large. To society at large it must give, in the first place, true opinions in a form suited to the intelligence of the many; secondly, a code of morals, individual and social, which makes for the health of the society and the well-being of its members; and thirdly, a code of religious observances intended to educate the many by keeping these true opinions and moral duties constantly before their minds.⁶⁹

Religion's task then, is to provide the moral instruction for the people in order that the society will be on the highest moral plane. This will enable the "actualized men" of the society to reach their states of perfection. Ahad Ha-Am continues through the course of his essay to argue this point, using extensive references to Maimonides works, especially from the Mishneh Torah.

Ahad Ha-Am focused on one other point. In his discussion concerning the "actual man", Ahad Ha-Am attempts to show the requirements that such a person must fulfill in order to reach this state. There is a supreme moral end for which all the virtues are a preparation enabling

the person to distinguish between the extremes of behavior and the correct type of moral behavior. He finds support for his position in Guide III:54.70

Finally, all of this work which Maimonides did was directed with the Jewish nation at heart. This must have been a motivating factor. How could he have devoted ten years to the compilation of a code of religious practice when they had no application to his philosophical system?

What, then, could have led Maimonides to devote himself to this task if he had not felt a patriotic attachment to his people's Torah and ancient customs even where his philosophy had no particular use for them?71

What Maimonides did, was to provide the Jewish people with a new and better expression of the Jewish religion, one that could better protect itself:

. . . the national sentiment did gain a great deal by the transformation of the Jewish religion--the only national possession which had survived to unite our exiled and scattered people--into the philosophical truth, firmly based on rational and (as Maimonides sincerely believed) irrefrable proofs, and consequently secure against assault for all time. . . . So we come finally to the conclusion that with Maimonides . . . the ultimate aim (though perhaps he did not clearly realise it himself(!) was a national one. His task was to shape the content and form of Judaism that it could become a bulwark on which the nation could depend for its continued survival.72

Ahad Ha-Am has conveniently fit Maimonides into his conception of the course of Jewish history. We find that even though Maimonides may not have realized it, he was creating for the national good; he was providing the structure upon which the Jewish nation would rely

for protection against outside pressures.

Ahad Ha-Am's contention that there was a bifurcation between Maimonides two major works, enables him to hold that Jewish society was similarly divided. This belief in the division of society into the masses and the elite was the reason that Ahad Ha-Am considered the need for a spiritual center which was controlled by the Bene Moshe. This group could be compared to the philosophers; the "actual men".⁷³ They would lead the Jewish nation on the basis of sound human reasoning and analysis, without surrendering to some external authority. In Maimonides works, Ahad Ha-Am found strong support for his conception of the "community of priests" who must prepare the path for the masses. He also found support for his claim that Judaism must be analyzed and updated. He considered Maimonides to have done just that. One crucial aspect of Ahad Ha-Am's discussion about Maimonides is his claim that Maimonides subordinated religion to reason; that faith took a secondary role to reason. He claims that Maimonides made human reason as the central authority, ". . . as regards Maimonides . . . he placed the source of the obligation not in any external authority, but in human reason itself."⁷⁴ Thus, Maimonides now can be equated with the trend of thought in the 19th century, and is in consonance with Ahad Ha-Am's system of thinking. Throughout his discussion of Maimonides, Ahad Ha-Am attempted to show how a Jewish culture could develop--

and how the elite would be the creators of that culture. It is in this discussion that he indicates how strongly he follows Tarde--Ahad Ha-Am presents a Maimonides who places the elite few at the head of society. Ahad Ha-Am believed that Maimonides was directly responsible for such creation of Jewish culture. This is evidenced by the Mishneh Torah and the way in which Ahad Ha-Am believed it inculcated the masses with new ideas--ultimately leading to a new approach to Jewish culture and Jewish life. Consistent with his agreement with the concept of Kultur, Ahad Ha-Am also claimed that Maimonides subordinated religion to reason--thus making religion but one aspect of Jewish life rather than being the determining factor for the development of Judaism. In Maimonides, Ahad Ha-Am found a man determined to create a Jewish culture based upon the ideal of Absolute Justice and guided by sound scientific reasoning--exactly the goal he had for Jewish culture.

Notes--Chapter IV

1. כ"כ. עפ"ד. IV, "על שחי הסעיפים" שעג.
2. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "המוסר הלאומי" קסא.
3. Ibid. קסא.
4. Ibid. קסא.
5. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "כהן ונביא" זא.
Ahad Ha-Am, Selected Essays, op.cit., P. 129.
6. זא. Ibid.
Ibid., P. 133.
7. זא. Ibid.
Ibid., P. 132.
8. זב. Ibid.
Ibid., P. 135.
9. זב. Ibid.
Ibid., P. 135.
10. זב. Ibid.
Ibid., P. 135.
11. זב. Ibid.
Ibid., P. 138.
12. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "הוספה למאמר הקודם" קנט.
13. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "שנוי הערכין" קנו.
Ahad Ha-Am, Selected Essays, op.cit., Pp. 227-228.
14. קנג. Ibid.
Ibid., P. 231.
15. קנג. Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 231-232.
16. קנג. Ibid.
Ibid., P. 232.
17. כ"כ. עפ"ד. III, "משה" שמג.
Ibid., Pp. 310-311.
18. שמג. Ibid.
Ibid., P. 311.
19. שמג. Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 311-312.

20. שמו Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 312-313.
21. שמה Ibid.
Ibid., P. 323.
22. שמו Ibid.
Ibid., P. 314.
23. שמו-שמה Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 314-315.
24. שמה Ibid.
Ibid., P. 319.
25. שמו-שמה Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 318-319.
26. שמה Ibid.
Ibid., P. 319.
27. שמה Ibid.
Ibid., P. 321.
28. שמה Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 321-322.
29. שמו Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 325-326.
30. כ"כ. עפ"ד. "על שתי הסעיפים" שער-שער.
Ahad Ha'am, Zionism and Judaism, op.cit., P. 234 ff.
31. שער Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 235-236.
32. שער Ibid.
Ibid., P. 236.
33. שער Ibid.
Ibid., P. 233.
34. שער Ibid.
Ibid., P. 233.
35. שער Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 235-236.
36. שער Ibid.
Ibid., P. 241.
37. שער Ibid.
Ibid., P. 237.

38. שעג Ibid.
Ibid., P. 237.
39. שעג Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 237-238.
40. שעג Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 237-238.
41. שעג Ibid.
Ibid., P. 240.
42. שעה Ibid.
Ibid., P. 246.
43. שעה Ibid.
Ibid., P. 246.
44. שעה Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 246-247.
45. כ"כ. עמ"ד. I, "חורה שבלב"
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 60.
46. נב Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 60-61
47. נב Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 63-64.
48. נב Ibid.
Ibid., P. 63.
49. נב-נב Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 63-64.
cf. Kurzweil, Baruch, "Judaism--The Group Will-To-Survive: A Critique of Achad Ha-Amism", esp. P. 215.
50. Simon, Leon, Ahad Ha-Am, op.cit., P. 76.
51. ינ כ"כ. עמ"ד. I, "לא זה הדרך"
Ahad Ha-Am, Zionism and Judaism, op.cit., Pp. 12-14.
52. ינ Ibid.
Ibid., P. 14.
53. cf discussion below--Chapter V. Pp.158-161
54. שסס כ"כ. עמ"ד. II, "שלטון השכל"
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 182.
55. שסס Ibid.
Ibid., P. 159.

56. שם Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 159-160. He refers to Maimonides Introduction to Zeraim and to Mishneh Torah, Yesodei Hatorah, Chapter IX and X.
57. שם Ibid.
Ibid., P. 160.
58. שם Ibid.
Ibid., P. 169.
59. שם Ibid.
Ibid., P. 169.
60. שם Ibid.
Ibid., P. 170.
61. שם-שם Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 170-171.
62. שם Ibid.
Ibid., P. 170.
63. שם Ibid.
Ibid., P. 170.
64. שם Ibid.
Ibid., P. 172.
65. Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed, translated by S. Pines, Chicago, 1972, Vol. II, P. 619.
66. Ibid., P. 619.
כ"כ. עפ"ד. שלטון השכל" שם
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 154.
He refers to Guide II, Chs. 25 & 26 for support.
67. Kurzweil reacts strongly to this in his article, contending that Ahad Ha-Am completely ignores the role of God in Maimonides' thought and Maimonides' religious faith.
Kurzweil, Baruch, "Judaism--The Group Will-To-Survive . . .", Op.cit., Pp. 216-217.
68. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II "שלטון השכל" שם. תנ
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 154
69. שם Ibid.
Ibid., P. 155.
70. שם Ibid.
Ibid., P. 148.

CHAPTER V--SOME PROBLEMS IN AHAD HA-AM'S
CONCEPTION OF JEWISH CULTURE AND HIS USE OF SOURCES

Ahad Ha-Am's Periodization of Jewish History

Ahad Ha-Am's three-fold division of Jewish history was determined by his nationalistic hypothesis. The divisions corresponded to the three stages of development of general culture of Comte. As we have seen this hypothesis was derived from both the positivist influence upon his conceptual framework, and Nahman Krochmal's system of cycles of renewal. Ahad Ha-Am's periodization leads him to the conclusion that his time was the beginning of a new cycle and that naturally, Spiritual Zionism with the Spiritual Center would be the vehicle through which the process of rejuvenation would be accomplished.

This division appears to be both arbitrary and artificial. Ahad Ha-Am's claim that any emphasis on the individual resulted in a weakening of the National Spirit --which was corporate in nature--automatically forced him to denigrate any work that began to stress the individual. Thus, he relegated the period after the destruction of the First Temple to a time of continued weakening of the National Spirit for he saw increased emphasis on the individual, and a turning to a supernatural solution for the conditions in which the Jews found themselves. He admitted that this process was "an inevitable outcome of its (the nation's) condition and history., Only the

short period of Hasmonean rule exhibited a strengthening of the National Spirit. After the destruction of the Second Temple, the entire course of Jewish history occurred in Exile. Ahad Ha-Am found no glimmer of a healthy expression of the National Spirit during the course of the next 1900 years. All is Galut, which will end only with the establishment of the Spiritual Center, which will spark the people to live again according to the essence of the National Spirit--Absolute Justice. This approach completely ignores the times during which Judaism grew in strength and developed flourishing expressions of Jewishness. Ahad Ha-Am does not recognize the magnificent periods of Jewish history such as the Geonic Period, when such contributions as the beginning of the use of Responsa began, a literature in which Ahad Ha-Am had a solid grounding. There is no mention of the magnificent development of the so-called Golden Age of Jewry in Islamic Spain. Because it is rooted in the Diaspora, Ahad Ha-Am does not recognize it as a unique and healthy period. This is in spite of his early love for the Spanish writers and his claim that Jehudah Halevi recognized the unique status of the Jewish people as a moral Supernation.

For more than eight hundred years ago, there lived a Jewish philosopher--poet, Rabbi Jehuda Halevi, who recognized the inner meaning and value of the election of Israel, and made it the foundation of his system, very much on the lines of what I have said above (in his discussion on Israel's election --purpose--as the moral Supernation), though in a different style.²

This was a period when a rejuvenation of the Hebrew language occurred, when the first Hebrew grammars were designed, when Hebrew poetry reached magnificent levels of beauty.³

The arbitrary stratification also ignores the great contributions of the Jewish community of Provencal.⁴ And despite his deep respect for the work of Rashi, he fails to recognize the Spirit inherent in the development of the important Northern European Jewish community at Rashi's time and following.

The contributions of the Tosafists to Talmudic study are important and extensive. Yet, because they created their works in the Diaspora, Ahad Ha-Am relegates them to the wide period he considers to be indicative of a weak National Spirit. He does not even mention them.

Jewish Culture and the Secularization of Jewish Life

Ahad Ha-Am's contention that Jewish society is based on the idea of Kultur and Nationalism deeply influenced his perception of the development of Judaism. This influence causes Ahad Ha-Am to "secularize" Jewish history. He creates a division between the religious and the Cultural/National, with the religious becoming only one part of the National expression of the Jewish people.

Ahad Ha-Am's long analysis of the role of the

Pharisees is indicative of this process. No longer are the Pharisees motivated by their religious sensibilities. Instead, Ahad Ha-Am found the National Spirit being expressed in their innovations--which he considers to be national and not so much religious. The Pharisees were the heirs to the Prophetic Spirit--which was the National Spirit of the Jewish people.

Ahad Ha-Am redefines the period of the Prophets as one where the people begin to be taught the National Spirit. He regards this period as the beginning of the development of the Jewish nation, not as a stage of religious development.

Ahad Ha-Am's division of Jewish society and history is artificial. Until the Enlightenment, with the accompanying civil rights the Jews received, it is difficult to prove that there was any separation between the religious and secular. These terms have no real meaning until the Church (or Synagogue) lost control over the legal aspects of the community. As long as ecclesiastic law was the law there was no such dichotomy. The statutes in the Torah appear to be a law code for an entire society to follow, not just a religious catechism. The battle that the Hasmoneans and their allies fought was to restore the Temple cult, whose legal foundations were in the Torah. The Pharisees and Sadducees argued long and hard over interpretations of the Torah as the legal code of the Jewish people.⁵ The Pharisees based

their innovations upon Biblical verses and proscriptions. The works they created were certainly national in character, on this point Ahad Ha-Am is correct; but it is extremely difficult to distinguish between the national and the religious. This holds true for the Talmud and the vast array of legal literature that followed. The Tur, the Shulhan Arukh, the Levush; all these works were legal codes drawing upon the Bible, Mishnah and Talmud for proof texting. They were codes by which the Jewish people determined their daily habits.

Today we refer to these works as religious law. At the time they were written, they were the law. A person was Jewish by definition when he or she lived by the laws of the Jewish community. The religious was not secondary to the national, it was the national.⁶

Ahad Ha-Am did capture part of this understanding in his letter to Rabbi Lolli in which he contends that the various law codes were "our Law". Indeed they were.

He described his understanding of religion and Nationalism more in detail in a letter to Shmarya Levin:

After all, I cannot see any hypocrisy in permitting the religion to stand. In the final analysis, do we not all look upon religion with love and respect? For some of us religion is the legal commentary of Peri Megadim, and for others it is Isaiah and Jeremiah. We are nationalists who take our stand on the basis of history . . . 7

He sees the development of religion as part of the historical process of the Jewish people. However, he

again stresses that this development takes place as part of the more inclusive national development of the Jewish people. His letter to Levin continues:

. . . we, whether we are believers or not, are not able to do away in writing with the religious foundation as if it never existed. And if we treat our nationalism with love and honor, and also religion in general, as long as we do not perceive it to be "the most important thing", but as a part of the National Spirit, which continually develops together with life.⁸

(In his time, consistent with the prevalent ideologies, he could write this.)

It is difficult to prove that this has been the case throughout Jewish history. He is, no doubt correct that the religious practices of the Jewish people developed and were affected by the course of history and the way they lived. It is another thing to claim that this development is merely an aspect of the overall National Spirit's development. One could just as easily claim that one can trace the development of the Jewish people through the development of the religion, for it was the legal and societal framework within which the community operated.⁹ Ahad Ha-Am appears to be guilty of violating one of his own principles. He does not accept the past for what it was, he reinterprets it to square with his conception of Jewish culture.

Problems With Ahad Ha-Am's Use of the Sources

Ahad Ha-Am is very careful when he turns to the sources to supply his arguments with a strong base. At

times he has to reinterpret them, at times he is extremely selective in what part of a verse he will use. He will at times deviate from traditional or historical understandings of Biblical personalities to prove his point, even ignoring what appears to be the facts of the historical situation.

It is in his essay, **"משה"**, where he exhibits this tendency most strongly. In order to prove that Moses is the epitome of the Prophet, as Ahad Ha-Am defined him, he is forced to go to great lengths to edit the Torah's description of Moses' life and activities. We have seen what type of Person Ahad Ha-Am described Moses to be. What we need to do is analyze the reasons for his deliberate violation of what the text says about the man.

Ahad Ha-Am draws a distinction between what he calls "archeological truth" and "historical truth". "Archeological Truth" is what one can learn from the objective data; from empirical information concerning a person or time. "Historical truth" is something altogether different. It is the force that creates and fashions history. The "facts" are unimportant about these unique individuals who have had an impact on the course of history.

Historical truth is that, and that alone, which reveals the forces that go to mould the social life of mankind. Every man who leaves a perceptible mark on that life, though he may be a purely imaginary figure, is a real historical force; his existence is an historical truth. And on the other hand, every man who has left no impress at a particular

time never so indisputable, is only one of the million: and the truth contained in the statement that such a one existed is merely literal truth, and makes absolutely no difference and is therefore, in the historical sense, no truth at all. . . . Hence, I do not grow enthusiastic when the dragnet of scholarship hauls up some new "truth" about a great man of the past; when it is proved by the most convincing evidence that some national hero, who lives in the hearts of his people, and influences their development, never existed, or was something absolutely unlike the popular picture of him. On such occasions I tell myself: all this is very fine and very good, and certainly this "truth" will erase or alter a paragraph of a chapter in the book of archeology; but it will not make history erase the name of its hero, or change its attitude toward him, because real history has no concern with so-and-so who is dead . . . its concern is only with the living hero, whose image is graven in the hearts of men, who has become a force in human life.¹⁰

By adopting this approach, Ahad Ha-Am can ignore the objective facts about the past. His conception of "historical truth" allows him to reject this sort of data and derive a perception of a person which could well be in complete opposition to "the most convincing evidence". He imposes this approach on his perception of Moses. The facts about the man matter not, what is important, is what he means to the Jewish people. Whether or not Moses was a real person is of no concern. He exists as an "historical truth" for the Jewish people, and has been a force in the development of its life.

The myth of Moses and its impact is what is crucial and real to the Jewish people

I care not whether this man Moses really existed; whether his life and his activity really corresponded to our traditional account of him; whether he really was the saviour of Israel and gave his people the Law in the form that is preserved among us; and so forth. . . . We have another Moses of our own, whose

image has been enshrined in the hearts of the Jewish people for generations, and whose influence on our national life has never ceased from ancient times till the present day. The existence of this Moses, as a historical fact, depends in no way on your scholars investigations. For even if you succeeded in demonstrating conclusively that the man Moses never existed, or that he was not such a man as we supposed, you would not thereby detract one jot from the historical reality of the ideal Moses--the Moses who has been our leader not only for forty years in the wilderness of Sinai, but for thousands of years in all the wildernesses in which we have wandered since the Exodus.¹¹

Ahad Ha-Am is then able to take what he describes as this "ideal Moses" and explain who and what he was, according to his outlook. He is able to remold a Moses who will be consistent with his image of the Prophet; the moral Superman, a Moses who lives the National Spirit. No longer are the specifics of Moses' life important.

And it is not only the existence of this Moses that is clear and indisputable to me. His character is equally plain, and is not liable to be altered by any archeological discovery. This ideal--I reason --has been created in the spirit of the Jewish people; and the creator creates in his own image.¹²

Inasmuch as Ahad Ha-Am has his own conception of the "Spirit of the Jewish people" it is not surprising to discover that the image of "ideal Moses" adheres strictly to this spirit. By maintaining his idea of "historical truth" Ahad Ha-Am can conveniently ignore any Biblical references or traditional account of Moses that may disagree with him. He is able to create a Moses in his own image.¹³

Ahad Ha-Am's Use of the Prophets

Ahad Ha-Am continues to employ his hypothesis con-

cerning the National Spirit and Absolute Justice with the Prophets. As with his analysis of Moses, when he discusses the Prophets he all but ignores the role of God. The focus is Righteousness and Absolute Justice. Prophecy becomes the embodiment of the National Spirit. The Prophet no longer is the Messenger of God, but the transmitter of the National Spirit. This reinterpretation of the role of the Prophets is crucial for Ahad Ha-Am's understanding of the development of Jewish culture but it does a considerable injustice to the impact and role of God in the Prophetic experience.¹⁴ This approach reaches down to his use of the sources. Perhaps the most extreme example of Ahad Ha-Am's use of the sources along these lines is to be found in his first essay. After an extensive discussion on the problems of the present state of colonization in the Land of Israel, due to the lack of the National Spirit he writes:

This, then is the wrong way. Certainly, seeing that these ruins are already there, we are not at liberty to neglect the task of mending and improving as far as we can. But at the same time we must remember that it is not on these that we must base our hope of ultimate success. The heart of the people-- that is the foundation on which the land will be regenerated. And the people is broken into fragments.

So let us return to the road on which we started when our idea first arose. Instead of adding yet more ruins, let us endeavour to give the idea itself strong roots and to strengthen and deepen its hold on the Jewish people, not by force but by the spirit (לא בחיל ולא בכוח, כי אם ברוח). Then we shall in time have the possibility of doing actual work.¹⁵

Ahad Ha-Am has lifted a verse from Zacharia (4:6) entirely out of context, and has done some editing. The

verse reads in the original לא בחיל ולא בכוח, כי אם ברוחי . Ahad Ha-Am has excised any reference to the fact that in the Biblical verse it is the Spirit of God that is the motivating force. In Ahad Ha-Am's context this is no longer the case, the Spirit itself is the focus.

Problems With Ahad Ha-Am's Use of Maimonides

Ahad Ha-Am contends the Maimonides works show that he believed in the bifurcation of society. This is crucial to Ahad Ha-Am's belief that it was the elite of society who were to lead and direct. That he is able to find a strong support for this position in the works of perhaps the most capable Jewish mind of all time, could only serve to strengthen his case. He claims that Maimonides held that "religion must teach only what reason approves . . . he spares no pains to rid religious belief of every element of the supernatural . . ." is certainly an overstatement since Maimonides commits himself to the doctrine of creatio ex nihilo.

Maimonides idea of "actualized and potential" human levels provides Ahad Ha-Am with a solid grounding for his contention. It is also true that the Guide of the Perplexed is certainly a work for the student who has a familiarity with philosophy. Maimonides wrote the text because these students were becoming perplexed concerning the apparent conflicts between philosophy and Torah.

. . . the perplexed had to be satisfied that they could devote themselves peacefully to the acquisition of the Ideas, without being disturbed by the thought that in doing so they were rejecting the fundamental principles of the Torah. Thus was the task which Maimonides set himself in his last book: the Guide for the Perplexed.¹⁶

Shlomo Pines debates whether the Guide is such a clear philosophical text, holding that it contains little more than "an inkling of physics and metaphysics."¹⁷ Further, the Guide may have been written as an attempt to prevent the philosophically inclined student from becoming indifferent to Jewish law, rather than to philosophize Judaism as Ahad Ha-Am maintains.¹⁸

Ahad Ha-Am also maintains that Maimonides inserts philosophical doctrines into the Mishneh Torah in the garb of religious dogma, in order to teach the masses without their realizing it. But the attempt to instill philosophical ideals within the minds and hearts of the masses was covert. It is unclear whether or not this position is correct. The debate has been long and continuous as to whether or not the Mishneh Torah contains overt philosophic doctrines. There are scholars who find that Maimonides instilled all his works with philosophy, attempting to convince the masses to follow the path of careful inquiry and to base their reasoning upon wisdom. Isadore Twersky wrote:

The image of Maimonides as a philosopher insisting upon the superiority of the theoretical life, questing for a rationale of the law and intimating what are its postulates, is, in fact, fully developed in the pre-Guide writings. Maimonides consistently imposed a sensitized view of religion and morality,

demanding a full and uncompromising, but inspired and sensitive observance of the law, openly disdaining the perfunctory, vulgar view of the masses, searching for the ultimate religious significance of every human action . . . and urging a commitment to and quest for wisdom.¹⁹

Ahad Ha-Am consistently maintains that Maimonides did not write his Guide for the masses, that only the elite (the "actualized man") would be served by the book.

Ahad Ha-Am also understands Maimonides as subordinating religion to philosophy. While this is necessary within his system of thought, we have seen that he subordinates religion to the position of being an aspect of the National Spirit, Maimonides may not have in reality done this. According to David Hartman, Maimonides was (and perhaps still is) unique in that he does not subordinate religion to philosophy or vice a versa.

Maimonides, the writer of the Mishneh Torah and the Guide, remains allonely figure because he believed that a total commitment to the Jewish way of life --Halakhah--can be maintained by one who recognizes that there exists a path to God independent of the Jewish tradition. Maimonides was a witness to the fact that intense love for a particular way of life need not entail intellectual and spiritual indifference, to that which is beyond one's own tradition.²⁰

This led Maimonides to presenting philosophy to all Jews not just the elite:

Maimonides, who placed a high value on philosophy, did not restrict himself to communicating his philosophical understanding of Judaism to the perplexed student alone, but also attempted to lead the traditional halakhic Jew toward a philosophical orientation to Jewish spirituality.²¹

He proceeds to attempt to illustrate his contention throughout the course of his book, finding not just covert

philosophical doctrines in the Mishneh Torah, but also overt references, which a Jew well-grounded in the traditional sources could not miss.

Ahad Ha-Am's approach to Maimonides is determined by his approach to the Jewish people. When he finds that Maimonides believed in the division of society, he is reflecting his own bias. Ahad Ha-Am's visions of the Prophet could be equated with the "actualized man" of Maimonides. Further, Ahad Ha-Am perceived himself to be part of the new age that would develop a new Mishneh Torah, a new Guide. His vision of the Bene Moshe was that they would be such "actualized" persons. It is therefore not surprising that he finds in Maimonides, a person in consonance with his own ideals.

Notes--Chapter V

1. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "חשבון הנפש" סג.
Ahad Ha-Am, Selected Essays, op.cit., P. 168.
2. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "שנוי הערכין" קנג.
Ibid., P. 232.
3. cf Beinart, Haim, "Hispano-Jewish Society", Jewish Society Through the Ages, Ed. H. H. Ben Sasson, S. Ettinger, (New York, 1969), Pp. 220-238.
4. Twersky, I., "Aspects of the Social and Cultural History of Provencal Jewry", Jewish Society Through the Ages, Pp. 185-207.
5. cf Moore, G. F., Judaism, New York, 1958, Pp. 219-356.
6. Kaufmann, E., Pp. 199-207, I, בולה ונבר
7. Kaplan, Mordecai, "Anti-Maimunism in Modern Dress-- A Reply to Baruch Kurzweil's Attack on Ahad Ha-Am", Judaism, Vol. 4: No. 4 (New York, Fall 1955), .306
אגרות כרך ד' לד"ר ש. לוויין 27 Feb. 1908
8. P. 13 Ibid. אגרות כרך ד' לד"ר ש. לוויין
My Translation
9. This is the approach of Kaufmann throughout בולה ונבר
10. כ"כ. עפ"ד. III, "משה" שמב.
Ahad Ha-Am, Selected Essays, op.cit., Pp. 307-308.
11. שמב. Ibid.
Ibid., Pp. 308-309.
12. שמב. Ibid.
Ibid., P. 309.
13. cf Kurzweil, Baruch, "Judaism-The Group Will-To-Survive. . .", op.cit., Pp. 218-219.
14. Ibid., Pp. 218-220.
15. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "לא זה הדרך" יד.
Ahad Ha-Am, Zionism and Judaism, op.cit., P. 14.
16. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "שלטון השכל" שסא.
Ahad Ha-Am, Essays, Letters, Memoirs, op.cit., P. 171.
17. Pines, S., "The Philosophic Sources of The Guide of the Perplexed", Guide of the Perplexed, (Chicago 1973), Pp. LXVI-LXVII, n. 96.

18. Ibid.
19. Twersky, I., "Some Non-Halakhic Aspects of the Mishneh Torah", Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies, A. Altmann, Ed., Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1967, P. 214.
20. Hartman, D. Maimonides--Torah and Philosophic Quest, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1967, P. 214.
21. Ibid., P. 28. cf Rawidowicz, S., "Philosophy as Duty" Moses Maimonides' VIII Centenary Volume, I. Epstein, Ed., London, Soncino Press, 1935, Pp. 177-188.

CHAPTER VI--CONCLUSION

Ahad Ha-Am developed a unique conception of Jewish culture, based upon the idea of a National Jewish Spirit which had as its essence "Absolute Justice". We have seen that Ahad Ha-Am drew from a variety of sources when he formulated this idea of Absolute Justice, especially the ideas of Kultur, and the framework of Nahman Krochmal. For Ahad Ha-Am this ideal of Absolute Justice was the key to the continued existence of the Jewish people, and the ideal for which the nation should strive. All aspects of Judaism were deeply influenced by Absolute Justice. Ahad Ha-Am traced this ideal to what he perceived to be the beginning of Jewish Nationalism in its purest form--the period of the Literary Prophets. He believed that Absolute Justice was most eloquently presented by these Prophets and the Jewish people needed to once again emulate the teachings of the Prophets.¹ From the age of the Prophets Absolute Justice has continued to evolve as the Jewish nation has evolved.² Ahad Ha-Am turned to the theories of Darwin, Spencer and Comte to define this evolutionary approach.³ Absolute Justice permeated all aspects of Jewish life. Ahad Ha-Am desired that the Jew create a society in which every action would follow from the dictates of Absolute Justice. Thus when he reads of the murder of a young Arab in retaliation to the anti-Jewish riots in and around Jaffa, he responded

with an impassioned protest against an action that most certainly violated the principles of Absolute Justice and the dream he had for Zionism.⁴ His vision was to have every aspect of Jewish culture involved with the spreading of Absolute Justice.

Ahad Ha-Am showed himself to be further influenced by the prevailing theories of Nationalism and Kultur when he presented that which he considered to be the aspects of Jewish culture. When he claimed that language and literature were two of the most important aspects of Jewish culture he mirrored the claims of the Nationalists of his day.⁵ He claimed that there was only one language which was legitimately the national language of the Jewish people. This was Hebrew--the language in which the Bible was written, the language in which the Prophets wrote and spoke. No other people, as far as Ahad Ha-Am was concerned, could lay claim to Hebrew as its language. This was the unique cultural property of the Jews. One can find a parallel to this in the insistence that German was the unique property of the German people, and that others who learned it would only be aliens using a foreign language.⁶

The ideas of the National Jewish Spirit and Absolute Justice appeared first in the Hebrew language, and these works still serve as a valuable guide for the Jewish nation. Ahad Ha-Am considered Hebrew to be the language of the Jewish people at the time in which the National Spirit resided in the natural environment--the Land of

Israel. Therefore, any other language--Yiddish for example which did not arise in a natural and healthy environment--could not be considered a truly national language. Also, any language that came into existence as the result of the combination of a number of other languages could hardly be considered national in character. Also, Yiddish arose at a very late period in the history of the Jewish nation, and only in Northern and Eastern Europe. For centuries the Jewish people had not used the "jargon". What puzzled Ahad Ha-Am, was how such a language could be called national.⁷ It must be noted that at the time Ahad Ha-Am lived, very few Jews had a working knowledge of Hebrew. Eliezer Ben Yehuda had barely begun his drive for the revival of Hebrew as a spoken language. Few people were able to employ it as a spoken living language. Yiddish was certainly more universally spoken, written and understood. However, Ahad Ha-Am was correct in his analysis, Yiddish has to a great extent faded as a language employed by Jews. The horror of the Holocaust destroyed the main group of Jews who used Yiddish. In the United States, Yiddish gave way to English and in the Land of Israel, Hebrew has become the dominant language. Nevertheless, a minority of world Jewry is able to speak or understand Hebrew today, and many more use English as their language. It is hard to support Ahad Ha-Am in his contention that the Jews who wrote Jewish works in a language other than Hebrew were creating a literary

ghetto, a genre of literature that would not be read by any but Jews, which would not be accepted into the wider stream of a nation's literature. American Jewish writers have met with considerable success in the United States, even when they have written on exclusively Jewish topics.

Nevertheless, it would still be possible to maintain that Hebrew is a unique treasure of the Jewish people. There is no doubt that the Bible is a special creation of the Jewish people, and the Talmud and Codes, with the accompanying Responsa are a special literary creation of Judaism. But it may be that one cannot make the claim that any language is the national language of the Jewish people. Jews have written important Jewish works in many languages, and these works cannot be rejected as part of the Jewish people's literature simply because they were not written in Hebrew.

Ahad Ha-Am added many other aspects to his concept of culture in addition to language and literature. For him the Land of Israel itself was an integral part of Jewish culture. Again, this was due in part to his belief that only in the Land of Israel did the Jewish National Spirit thrive on complete freedom; where Absolute Justice was (and would be) able to develop to the fullest extent. The Diaspora was an unhealthy environment for the Jewish nation. It was unnatural for a nation not to have a center in its birthplace, and instead find itself struggling to maintain its strengths and identity against competing cultures.⁸ For this reason, Ahad Ha-Am devised

the plan for a Spiritual Center in the Land of Israel. From this center would emanate the new Jewish way, the pristine and healthy development of Jewish culture. Ahad Ha-Am spent a great amount of time describing his vision of a Spiritual Center. In the first place, he could not see a mass migration of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel, and Ahad Ha-Am was an elitist; drawing from the ideas of Tarde, he believed that only the elite would be capable of creating the type of Zionism and Judaism he envisioned. Thus, if they were concentrated in one place--the Spiritual Center, then the rest of the Jewish nation--the masses--would be able to imitate this type of Judaism being lived in the center. Eventually, all Judaism would be of the sort that was initially created in the spiritual center. Ahad Ha-Am's concern was much more toward reviving Judaism; making it a viable way to live in the modern world. This was in comparison to the political Zionists who placed a much greater stress on the settling of Jewish refugees and development of a political state. For them, the Jews needed to be saved; for Ahad Ha-Am, the Jews certainly needed to be protected and defended, but the Land of Israel was more important than a refuge--it was the spiritual heart of the Jewish nation.

Ahad Ha-Am considered that Jewish culture had progressed through an evolutionary process. As mentioned above, he posited that the seminal point for the Jewish

national culture, with an emphasis on Absolute Justice, could be found in the Prophets. He then traced an evolutionary flow from that point on. As long as the people remained in the Land of Israel, the culture progressed naturally. But when the First Temple was destroyed and the people exiled to Babylon, alien influences began to appear in Jewish culture. Ahad Ha-Am deeply believed that the basis of the culture was the entire society, and that the individual must be subordinate to the needs of the society. This idea appears to have come from the Positivists. A further indication of Positivist and August Comte's influence can be seen in Ahad Ha-Am's stress on the need for an Encyclopedia for Jews. This Encyclopedia would contain almost everything about Judaism, its history, customs, rituals, ethics, etc. All of the information would be presented in a manner that would be in consonance with the program of Ahad Ha-Am. That is, each article would be written not with just information in mind--but with the philosophy of Spiritual Zionism woven into the text. This idea parallels the encyclopedia envisioned by Comte--an encyclopedia which would be a tool of instruction for Positivist ideas on all subjects. The Jewish Encyclopedia which Ahad Ha-Am outlined in his article **"על דבר"**

"אוצר היהדות בלשון עברית" would also be an instructional tool,¹⁰ with which Jewish society could be educated according to the tenets of Spiritual Zionism.

One of the most important and potentially dangerous of the alien infusions was a new stress on the individual. This threatened the very fabric of the Jewish people, and ran counter to the message of the Prophets. Nevertheless, the National Jewish Spirit continued to influence the people and enabled the nation to continue. The Jewish people faced another crisis with the Destruction of the Second Temple. At this time the Pharisees saved Judaism from dissolution by devising a system of life that could exist without a state. Ahad Ha-Am held that this system was but stop-gap in nature and was not meant to continue for the next 1800 years as it did. But the Pharisees erected a structure that enabled the Jewish people to withstand the pressures of life in Exile. Only with the rise of the Emancipation did their system begin to falter. Within the Pharisees' institutions Ahad Ha-Am found the central concept of Absolute Justice which for him, indicated the continued evolution of Jewish culture. He discovered Absolute Justice in the Mishnah and the Talmud. He discovered that the emphasis on Absolute Justice as the motivating factor in Jewish culture in later Jewish history.

By turning to the classical sources, Ahad Ha-Am showed how his ideal of Absolute Justice was continually present in Jewish history. He finds that within the prophetic utterings it is possible to see the emphasis of Absolute Justice for the entire Jewish nation. With the

Pharisees, he is able to illustrate the presence of the continued development of Absolute Justice through such rabbinic innovations as substituting a cash payment for injury in place of the Biblical concept of lex talionis. This he considered to be proof of the advancement of Jewish society to a higher stage than it was at when the lex talionis had been the proper approach. Ahad Ha-Am discovered further proof for his argument that the Jews emphasized Absolute Justice in the passage from Pesachim 25b where altruism is not the accepted answer. Instead, Ahad Ha-Am considered the accepted reasoning to be in agreement with what was just.¹¹ He also found further proof for the evolution of Jewish culture in his discussion concerning the status of the woman in divorce. Ahad Ha-Am believed that it was possible to discern a clear evolution from the biblical position to that of Maimonides. The woman received progressively more status, always moving toward greater equality, that is, in the direction of Absolute Justice.¹²

The Bible, Talmud and later Codes also illustrate how Jewish culture and society have progressed. In his answer to Rabbi Lolli, Ahad Ha-Am succinctly states his case. Each work was the right law for its particular time, just as in the future a new law would be the correct law for Jewish society in the new time.

To a great extent this idea of Absolute Justice replaced God. Ahad Ha-Am remained in agreement with the

theories of Kultur and Nationalism in placing the Jewish National Spirit as the motivating force of the Jewish nation. He is also able to bring in the ideas of evolution presented by both Darwin and Spencer, by positing such a concept. The Spirit takes on certain aspects that a traditional Jew--or an educated, recently emancipated Jew--would associate with God. To a certain extent, the National Spirit of a people--that unique motivating power that Nationalists believed that each nationality possessed might be called the god of Nationalism. Ahad Ha-Am was very careful not to bruise the sensitivities of the more traditional members of Hibbat Zion. Still, Ahad Ha-Am's thought is at best fuzzy. It is difficult to find a strong statement by him concerning his belief in God. It is apparently for this reason that Hertzberg refers to Ahad Ha-Am as the "Agnostic Rabbi".¹³ Ahad Ha-Am's adoption of the theories of Nationalism, Kultur and evolution, and his living in an age that had grown increasingly estranged from traditional understandings of God, appear to have mitigated against his positing a strong concept of God in his works.¹⁴ Instead, the Jewish National Spirit becomes almost deified and the God of Righteousness becomes the National Spirit with Absolute Justice as its essence. This relationship can be seen most obviously in comparing Krochmal's Absolute Spirit--which is the God of Israel--with what Ahad Ha-Am developed from this concept in his own time. Whenever Ahad Ha-Am refers to the Prophets he judiciously

avoids discussing what role he perceives God to have played. Krochmal perceived that the Absolute Spirit--that is God, was the activating force in each revival of the Jewish people, and the force that enabled the Jewish people to maintain an eternal status.¹⁵ Ahad Ha-Am believed that the Jewish people had a unique task in the world and as such were the holders of a unique culture. And it was the Absolute Justice and all that it meant in the life of the Jew on an everyday basis that was the "chosen" task of the Jews. This is not to say that Ahad Ha-Am conceived that an external deity had chosen the Jewish nation. Instead, just as other nationalities and cultures could lay claim to unique goals and treasures, the Jewish nation laid claim to being the people that would emulate the ideal of Absolute Justice. The National task of the Jewish people, throughout its history has been to strive for the attainment of a society that will guide its life according to the demands of Absolute Justice. Ahad Ha-Am found support for this in the Bible and was able to trace it as a continual thread in the later rabbinic sources. This then was the essence of Jewish culture--a culture that was determined and evolved in relation to Absolute Justice.

Notes--Chapter VI

1. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "כהן ונביא" ז-צב.
2. cf Chapter IV
3. cf Chapter I Pp. 4-12 and 21-29.
4. Simon, Leon, Ahad Ha-Am, op.cit., Pp. 270-271.
5. cf Chapter I Pp. 12-16 and 30-33.
6. Santayana Soliloquies in England, op.cit., Pp. 170-171.
Pinson, Modern Germany, op.cit., P. 46
7. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "שליח הגלות" שצ-תג.
8. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "ריב לשונות" חג-חז.
9. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "מדינת היהודים ו"צרת היהודים" קלה-קס.
cf Simon, A. and Heller, J., Pp. 111-112, op.cit.,
and "כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "הקונגרס ויוצרו" רעה-רעה.
10. כ"כ. עפ"ד. I, "על דבר אוצר היהדות בלשון עברית" קד-קיד:
esp. קיג-קיד.
11. כ"כ. עפ"ד. II, "על שתי הסעיפים" שג.
Ahad Ha-Am, Zionism and Judaism, op.cit., Pp. 236-238.
12. שעה. Ibid.
Ahad Ha-Am Zionism and Judaism, op.cit., Pp. 244-247.
13. Hertzberg, Arthur, The Zionist Idea, op.cit., P. 247.
14. The ambiguity concerning God in Ahad Ha-Am's works does create some problems. Baruch Kurzweil holds that Ahad Ha-Am rejects any sense of theological entity, substituting the will-to-live and the National Spirit (cf Kurzweil, "Judaism-The Group Will-To-Survive", op.cit., Pp. 219-220.). While Kaplan attempts to refute this contention (cf Kaplan, "Anti-Maimunism in Modern Dress", op.cit., Pp. 305-3-6.), he is not altogether convincing. Ambiguity also creates problems for Arthur Hertzberg in his introduction to The Zionist Idea. He appears ready to accept much of Ahad Ha-Am's ideas, but cannot find God involved in the National Spirit. For Hertzberg it appears to be inconceivable that Israel could lay claim to a unique heritage, "Absolute Justice", without God being involved in the process. (cf Hertzberg, The Zionist Idea, op.cit., P. 99.)

Yet, Ahad Ha-Am's concept of a National Spirit and National Ethic need not preclude the role of God. Kurzweil's God is not the same idea of God that all Jews have. This is pointed out by Kaplan (see above, op.cit., P. 311). I do not see any problem infusing Ahad Ha-Am's theories with the presence and power of God.

15. Meyer, Michael, Forces in Jewish History, op.cit., Pp. 199-200.

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