

SHLILAT HaGALUT

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JACOB KLATZKIN AND DAVID BEN GURION

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DEDICATION

TO MY WIFE, NANCY

Matsati Et Sh'ahavah Na'fshi

And with the hope that some
day she may understand the
meaning of _____

SHILLAT HAGALUT

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Dr. Borowitz has served not only as Referee, but more important to me, he has been advisor, counselor and friend. Only through his urging and guidance was I able to produce this work. I shall be ever indebted to Dr. Borowitz.

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INTRODUCTION

In the course of his remarks to the 25th World Zionist Congress in Jerusalem in December of 1960, David Ben Gurion quoted the Talmudic statement, "He who lives outside the Land, is as if he has no God." The reaction of World Jewry outside the State of Israel was that Ben Gurion implied that those Jews who were not living in Israel could not even call themselves religious. To the Jew who does not live in Israel, such a thought was unthinkable. As a result, Ben Gurion quickly clarified his statement.

The statement and the world-wide response to it led me to question Ben Gurion's attitude to the "Galut."* This, in turn, led me to the Zionist concept, "Shlilat HaGalut -- the Negation of the Galut." This term refers to the belief that a Jew cannot live a full, complete and positive life except in the Land of Israel. Life in the Galut is an empty, meaningless existence.

The man considered the classic proponent of this concept was Jacob Klatzkin, a man rarely known beyond Zionist or philosophic circles. My first hypothesis was that there had been a direct influence by Klatzkin upon Ben Gurion. Research was to show that though their thought is similar

*Existence outside the Land of Israel in a state of Exile.

er parallel, the influence both intellectually and literally is not evident. Ben Gurion's philosophy as concerns "Shililat HaGalut" is as the result of independent speculation.

Klatzkin's writings on this subject are few -- the bulk of the quotations found herein are from his major collection of Zionist essays entitled "Tehumim." Ben Gurion, on the other hand, has written many volumes as well has commented on his personal feelings in numerous periodicals. (The bibliography will indicate that these sources were supplemented by personal contacts. For the former, two persons who were close to Klatzkin were interviewed. For the latter, direct correspondence by mail was utilized.)

The purpose of the thesis then evolved into a documentation and clarification of the concept of "Shililat HaGalut" according to two outstanding Zionist thinkers, Jacob Klatzkin and David Ben Gurion, and a comparison of their thought.

CHAPTER I

THE ATTITUDE OF JACOB KLATZKIN

After the death of Theodore Herzl, the infant Zionist Movement was left without leadership. Among those who were to strive toward the reorganization of the Movement was Jacob Klatzkin, a Russian philosopher living in Berlin. Klatzkin, born in 1882, was the son of the famous Rabbi Eliyahu ben Naphtali Herz Klatzkin. His mother was a descendant of the Gaon of Vilna. Schooled by his father in the Tradition, by the age of sixteen, Klatzkin had already published a Hebrew treatise on a Halachic subject.

Philosophic speculation began to broaden his horizons and Klatzkin went to study with Hermann Cohen at Marburg. It was during this period in Germany that he came under the influence of Theodore Herzl.

In 1923, along with Nahum Goldmann, Klatzkin founded the Schoen Publishing Company. Under the co-editorship of these two men the firm produced the Encyclopedia Judaica--ten volumes in German and two in Hebrew. The work was interrupted by the rise of Nazi Germany in 1934 and Klatzkin was forced to flee to Switzerland. The last seven years of his life were spent in America where amongst other pursuits he lectured at the Chicago College for Jewish Studies. He returned to Switzerland only in early 1948, and there in April of the same year he died.

An expert in the Hebrew language, Klatskin beyond his activity with Zionism was involved in personal philosophic dissertations. Among his classic works are a volume of Hebrew philosophic terms; In Praise of Wisdom, a book of philosophic aphorisms; a work on Spinoza's Ethics; and Krisis Und Entscheidung, a work in German dealing with the subject of Zionism.

In a book entitled Tehumim, written in 1914 and published in 1925, Klatskin set forth his major ideas concerning the as yet embryonic Nationalism. At the base of his thought, lay his conviction of "Shililat HaGalut," the negation of Diaspora.*

The Galut was doomed to eventual destruction and in Klatskin's own terms--it was not worthy of survival. "The Galut can only drag out the disgrace of our people and sustain the existence of a people disfigured in both body and soul...in a word, of a horror. At the very best, it can maintain us in a state of national impurity and breed some sort of outlandish creature in an environment of

*The term in itself is rarely used, but its concept underlies his total outlook. By negation, Klatskin refers to his belief that life in the Diaspora, or the Galut, was a negative one. It was a life that was bereft of a future if it remained attached only to the past of Judaism, for that past, though once strong and solid, was decaying and withering. In characterizing this negation, Klatskin uses such descriptives as "an annulment," "a weak link," (in the bond between past and future), and "a presumption." The Galut for Klatskin means "exile" and "dispersion or Diaspora"--that is, lacking a homeland and being scattered among the nations of the world. Galut then is Jewish existence anywhere outside the Land of Israel.

disintegration of culture and of darkening spiritual horizons."¹ "Life in the Galut is really not to be considered life, not from the standpoint of Nationalism, nor from the standpoint of human personality."² This, in brief, was his thesis.

Klatskin was firmly convinced that the Galut now held only a negative place in the life of building a new positive Nationalism. Again and again, he returns to this primary theme. "Galut Jewry cannot survive and all our efforts to keep it alive are simply an act of coercion, the maintenance of an unnatural existence."³ The Galut is "incapable of preserving the National character and identity of the Jewish people."⁴ "We know that such a means of existence cannot endure."⁵

The character that was Jewish or that was borne by the Jew has no hope for fruition while there is yet the Galut. "The Galut is corrupting our human character and dignity. Such a life, if it continues to exist, will represent no more than a restless and restless wandering between two worlds. It will cause rent and broken human beings to

¹Jacob Klatskin. Tehumim (Bevir, Berlin, 1925), p. 76.

²Ibid., p. 77.

³Ibid., p. 61.

⁴Ibid., p. 48.

⁵Ibid., p. 82.

persist, ...individuals diseased by ambivalence, consumed by contradiction and spent by restless inner conflict."⁶

Judaism in the Galut had been kept alive through the bonds of religion. Since the time of exile, 2,000 years ago, the Jew could turn to the Tradition to enhance his existence among an alien people. With the "Age of Enlightenment," the Jew began to expand his horizons beyond the ghetto walls. With this new found freedom, the strength of religion diminished. Since religion was no longer an effective means for survival, the corollary to "Enlightenment" became "Assimilation." Only a reborn Nationalism, fostered through Zionism and basing itself on the two primary concepts of "Land and Language," could in any manner preserve Judaism in the Galut. The preservation itself was to be only of a temporary nature--the ultimate goal being the Jewish State.

If the spirit of Judaism has not been effective as a preservative, then why has Judaism survived? "Our strength in the Diaspora until now has been the walls of religion. ...They unified the Hebrew Nation against all the nations of the world."⁷ Religion has kept us together. "Only the religion had the necessary strength to unify the torn nation in the midst of many nations and tongues."⁸

⁶ Klatskin, Tehumim, p. 77.

⁷ Ibid., p. 49.

⁸ Ibid., p. 65.

By religion, Klatskin means the content of Judaism. "Religion, for example, holidays, laws, etc., has helped Judaism become a state within itself. This was the content within our lives. This preserved us."⁹ "The laws of our religion represent a National base; due to them, our life in the Galut has had a National and almost political character. ...National apartness is inherent in the many forms and prohibitions of our religion."¹⁰ Klatskin uses the words of Heinrich Heine by saying that because of religion, "we were a Hebrew Nation on a small scale."

By clinging to our religious forms, we were able to survive until now. "So long as our religion was strong, it was a solid wall protecting us to live a National life, almost a political life on alien soil. In effect, even in the Galut, we lived a sovereign life. The Crown of the Torah accompanied us; our Book of Laws was our companion in our wanderings."¹¹

Our spiritual life helped us to build that retaining wall. It helped us to survive as a nation within the nations wherein we lived. "In the old Galut, Judaism had its sure support in that portable state founded upon a religious constitutionalization which had not only been

⁹ Klatskin, Tehumim, p. 52.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 47.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 78.

saved, but was capable of creative expansion."¹²

"Simultaneously with its discovery of the concept of the divine uniqueness and oneness, Israel conceived the fundamental notion of the nation as something one and unique. No other people has ever conceived of its separateness and strict self-integration as the instrumentality of a world historic mandate or mission. This organic oneness and functional parallelism filled the national form with a universally valid content and gave the narrowness of national particularism, the breadth of a worldwide aim and vision."¹³

The pressure from without helped us to build our own nation within. This was our Nationalism. "Our Nationalism until now arose out of negative factors. Because we had no country on which to base our unity, we strengthened our spiritual bonds. As religion guarded us in the Diaspora, so, too, has the Diaspora guarded and strengthened it with many of the energies of National life."¹⁴

Until now, religion was the Nationalism of the Jew. We were a nation in that we were all Am Yisrael. "But ...

¹² Jacob Klatzkin. "Our Zionist Faith" from Krisis Und Einstellung, Chapter VII (published in the Jewish Frontier, Volume 9, September, 1942; translated by Ludwig Lewisohn), p. 15.

¹³ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁴ Klatzkin. Tehumim, p. 65.

(we existed in the Galut) because Israel lived in perfect faith in its own indestructibility in the exile. Israel was so serenely sure of the return of its sons to the Promised Land, that it could afford to wait in patience, that it could even afford to say that men should not of their own will seek to hasten the coming of the day. Conscious of the fullness of its inner power, the people harbored a feeling of security concerning its existence in the present and the future."¹⁵

The emancipation has caused the Jew to throw off the mantle of his Judaism. By becoming Enlightened, he no longer feels he needs the content that was once essential. The Jews' religion is deteriorating and is fated for destruction. Even in America, it is doomed as the Jew becomes more and more Americanized. Our destruction beforehand came from outside sources, for example, the destruction of the Temple by the Romans. But, now our destruction comes from within. Our forms are breaking down. Eastern Jewry has yet to be touched by the Enlightenment. There the Jew can still live within the ghetto walls; he can still cling to the forms. (These essays were written before World War I.) The Eastern Jew does not even concern himself with the survival of his people. For them, the survival

¹⁵ Elatskin. "Our Zionist Faith" from Krisis Und Einstellung, p. 15.

is a fact of history. But, when the gates of Emancipation are finally opened to them, they, too, will begin to assimilate.

Since religion was our Nationalism, its disappearance will mean that our Nationalism can find no place in the Galut. "The spirit of Judaism may preserve a Jewish consciousness, a subjective Judaism, which expresses and exhausts itself in confessionals, a make-believe Judaism, but not a Jewish existence."¹⁶

Neither Jewish ceremony nor Jewish ethics, but only the new Nationalism could supply the full and needed Jewish National content. At present, "there is nothing in religion that will give life to Nationalism ... and also in Nationalism to heal the brokenness of religion."¹⁷

Thus, Klatskin is a foe of modern Jewish religion. Religion can no longer serve as the dominant force in the life of a Jew. It has, in effect, proved to be a stumbling block to the development of Nationalism. The spiritual criterion "is a grave danger not only to our National renaissance, but even more to our humanistic renaissance as individuals. It binds our spirit with chains of tradition and subordinates our life to fixed specific doctrines,

¹⁶ Jacob Klatskin. "The Destiny of the Galut," remarks based on "Crisis and Decision" by Chanan Prinz, Furrows, Volume 8, November, 1950 (Habenin, New York), p. 16.

¹⁷ Klatskin. Tehumim, p. 53.

to the heritage and values of an ancient world view. We are constrained by antiquated contents, and in the name of National unity and cohesiveness it takes from us our freedom of thoughts and severely attacks the man in us. Our personalities are crippled for we are denied freedom of thought. Moreover, the spiritual definition of what is a Jew leads to National chauvinism. National freedom is meaningless unless it is humanistic freedom of the individual. There can be no National renaissance worth fighting for unless it liberates and builds humanistic values within the National ethos.¹⁸

It is important to understand why this past pattern of Jewish survival through religion no longer applies.

For 2,000 years, the Galut had been a fact. But now, it was doomed. Why? The answer was -- ASSIMILATION. For this long period of time, the Jew had lived in a world all his own, surrounded by the walls of the ghetto or Shtetl. Now, the world had changed radically. It was the Age of Enlightenment and with this Enlightenment came Assimilation. "Our long survival in the Galut is certainly no proof of the impossibility of Assimilation. The boundaries that stood for 2,000 years, the strength of our religion, has already departed from us and there are no walls remaining. There are no longer any strong ghetto walls to protect a

National entity in the Galut."¹⁹

The values that Judaism had propounded for so many years and had disseminated through the prophets have been accepted by the nations of the world.

"And our thousands of years of the Galut -- were they a total waste? Did we create no National values in the Galut? Though we were suffering the Exile, were we not among the leaders of human civilization?"²⁰ With this new found freedom, this emancipation from the ghetto, the Jew had become confused. His answer was an ever-growing Assimilation. "We know that the struggle against Assimilation has no chance of victory."²¹ Klatzkin was so convinced of this that he remarked, "I assert that the total Assimilation of our people is possible."²² "Assimilation is not only possible, but it must come and then we shall be swallowed up within the nations of the world."²³

It is the Jew himself who is responsible for Assimilation for he has given the nations of the world the impression that he wishes to be like them. "For a century the Jewish people has been maligned by its own sons. It has been

¹⁹ Klatzkin. Tehumim, p. 47.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 77.

²¹ Ibid., p. 82.

²² Ibid., p. 46.

²³ Ibid., p. 48.

represented as yearning not for redemption from exile, but for dissolution in exile. ...Too deeply ensconced in the consciousness of the people is the miserable impression of Israel's will to die."²⁴

So incensed was Klatzkin at the Assimilationists that he felt they no longer had the right to speak or act in the name of Jewry or Judaism. Assimilation was immoral and so were those who desired such.

"The accomplishment (of Assimilation) requires the conquest of both ethical and aesthetic obstacles. Its postulate is unfreedom; its realization requires dissimulation and mimicry."²⁵

To Klatzkin, there was a difference between pre-Haskalah and post-Haskalah Judaism. It was the latter that was crumbling. Now that the nations of the world had accepted the spirit of Judaism, in this respect Judaism was no longer unique. "The judgment that the spirit and doctrine of an ethic cannot define a people implies that we cannot pin our national hopes on the power of the ethic of Judaism. ...The Spirit of Judaism is not strong enough to erect a containing wall in the Galut and guarantee our national survival within its boundaries."²⁶ "There can be no

²⁴ Jacob Klatzkin. "J'Accuse," New Palestine, Volume 34, No. 22, August 18, 1944 (Zionist Organization of America, New York, N.Y.), p. 484.

²⁵ Klatzkin. "Our Zionist Faith" from Krisis Und Einstellung, p. 16.

²⁶ Klatzkin. Tehumim, p. 48.

National base in an ethical doctrine, in ideas, in concepts, in a Weltanschauung."²⁷

Klatskin takes umbrage at the "Enlightened" Jew and his attitude toward the ethic of Judaism. "Those who affirm the Galut maintain that we are a National entity even in the Diaspora, even though we are dwelling in foreign lands and expressing ourselves in foreign languages (if only we live and labor in the spirit of Judaism). But this is in contradiction to the pioneers of our restoration on the land, for they make the "peripheral" the principle and the "preparation" the goal. They raise a generation attached to our Language and Land and not to the spirit of Judaism; they occupy themselves with the restoration of form and refrain from reviving National content."²⁸ (Note: The criteria of Land and Language now defines the Jew.)

The "Enlightened" Jew in his attempt to embrace a total Weltanschauung, to be like everyone else, had abandoned his cloak of Judaism. They are "Jews who have left the body of the nation. ...God forbid that the Jew of the future should be the featureless, second-rate imitation of a Gentile who has in recent decades seemed to dominate Jewish life in the Western World."²⁹

²⁷ Klatskin, Yehumim, p. 47.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 37-38.

²⁹ Klatskin, "I'Accuse," p. 464.

With both the spirit and the spiritual aspects of Judaism no longer being necessary or important, we must replace them if the Jews are to survive. This replacement was Nationalism. "How poor is a Judaism not symbolized and defined by National affirmations."³⁰ The basis of Nationalism is to be found in the return to the Land of our forefathers as well as their Language--Hebrew. "When we come to revive Judaism in the form of a Nation, we shall be obliged to cleanse it from the dust of spiritual criteria, and to remove it from the boundaries of Assimilation and place it within the boundaries of Nationalism, and to base it on something objective--Land and Language. ... (In the Galut) we are only a presumption of a nation, a type of nation on condition--a condition of the future. In the Galut, ... the concept of nation has not been cancelled for it is a plan for the future."³¹ In the Galut, we cannot call ourselves a nation unless our aim is the redemption from the Galut. Without this attachment to the future--without this purification of what has yet to happen, but what must come, we must remove ourselves from the concept of (calling ourselves) a nation."³²

Thus, the Nationalism which is the goal for the future will base itself on Land and Language. This definition of

³⁰ Klatskin. Tehumin, p. 76.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 36-37.

³² Ibid., p. 37.

of nationhood is what determines all of Klatskin's thinking. If Land and Language are indeed the basis of meaningful Jewishness, how is it possible to negate the Galut.

Klatskin does take into account the possibility that, despite his predictions, the Galut might survive. But, "in the Galut, a National life bereft of a soil on which to live a natural existence is only artificial."³³ "What will survive will be a people that is depressed, bereft of a soil for healthy growth and no geographical, political foundations for real existence, but a people on the other hand with an exaggerated amount of worldly intellectualism living a false and perverted existence by means of surrogates for reality."³⁴

As Galut Jews, participating in the culture and language of others, our "weak Judaism is of interest only to an historian and archeologist to cite in their record books."³⁵ Even if we were able to stop the present trend of Assimilation and become a nation within a nation, we would not have the right to be called a Hebrew nation. This appellation by definition should be reserved only for those living on the Land. "What is really new in Zionism is its territorial political definition of Jewish Nationalism. Strip Zionism of the territorial principle and you have destroyed its character and erased the distinctions

³³ Klatskin. Tehumim, p. 82.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 76.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 61

between it and the preceding periods. This is its originality -- that Judaism depends on form and not content. For it, the alternatives are clear: either the Jewish people will redeem the Land and thereby continue to live, even if the spiritual content of Judaism changes radically, or we shall remain in exile and rot away even if the spiritual condition continues to exist. ...Zionism had its real beginning with the Jewish State and its basic contention whether consciously or unconsciously is to deny any conception of Jewish identity based on spiritual criteria."³⁶

Thus, Klatskin rejects all territorial solutions, such as the "Uganda Plan." For Klatskin, there could be but one place -- Eretz Yisrael. In the words of Yehezkel Kaufman, "Herein (in Israel, the Land of our fathers) was the Jews inheritance, herein he did not need to begin or base his foundations, but rather (this foundation) had been passed on from father to son. This feeling of ownership in connection with the Land has been preserved continuously in the heart of the people."³⁷ The Jew living outside the Land wanted to be a part of the world around him and to share in the new eternal values of the Tanach. But, ironically enough, even the Assimilated Western Jew often believes in "Atah Bahartanu" (You have chosen us), which is

³⁶ Klatskin. Tehumim, p. 41.

³⁷ Kauffman, Yehezkel. Gola V'Nechar, (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1961), p. 466.

the style of his National conceit, his Nationalism."³⁸

Modern Nationalism must build on this sentiment. What now becomes necessary to be a dedicated Nationalist is an act of will. "We have had a partnership in the past and now must summon up a conscious desire to continue that partnership in the future."³⁹ "The will to return will be transformed from a yearning and a meditative wish and a mystical hope into a National determination, a coalescing of all the forces within the people."⁴⁰

The establishment of a Jewish State in the Land of Israel will have several results. First, it will mean the destruction and disintegration of the Galut. As soon as our National life is normalized on our Land, the anomaly of Galut Jewry and Judaism can no longer endure. It will rapidly fall behind the healthy Jewry which will have been regenerated upon our ancestral soil. Those living outside the Land will soon no longer be Jews and that is good. "There will be but one alternative; either to live as a full Jew, a Hebrew Jew, or not as a Jew at all. ...If the rebirth of the full-fledged Jewish National type causes the disappearance of the half and quarter Jew, then we shall have solved the problem of Jewry, but also that of Judaism."⁴¹

³⁸ Klatskin. Tehumim, p. 13.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁰ Klatskin. "Our Zionist Faith" from Krisis Und Hinstellung, p. 15.

⁴¹ Klatskin. "The Destiny of the Galut" remarks based on "Krisis and Decision", p. 19.

Secondly, Klatskin felt that once the State is a reality, the Jewish religion, which has kept Judaism alive for these many years in the Diaspora, will no longer be of primary importance. "Hebraic existence does not consist of either religious or intellectual principles."⁴² Nationalism will take the place religion once occupied. It will, on its own, supply both the essential content and form of Jewishness. Klatskin was therefore unconcerned as to the status of religion in the Jewish State. It will exist for those who desire it, but will in no way be necessary for true Jewish existence.

Finally, and positively, the Jew will be able to hold his head high, to be proud in his new found status among the nations. No longer will he be a Jew living in France, or Germany, but a Jew living on his own Land. The term "Jew" will acquire equal status with "Frenchman" or "German."

Once the Jew had the Land, Klatskin had no particular plan for the form of the State. It would be a normal nation like any other country in the world: the important factor being that the Jew would now have status among the nations.

Klatskin emphasizes the rebirth of the Hebrew Language as another element necessary for the establishment of the State. Throughout the years of exile, the Hebrew Language

⁴² Klatskin. Tehumim, p. 17.

has been the soul of the people. "A nation uprooted from its native soil, wandering homeless from place to place, may amass wealth on its way and in some measure be compensated for its tribulations. For instance, the Hebrew tongue has become enriched with the wanderings of Israel. ...The Language was made rich with fine nuances, with delicate shades and values. We know how beautifully this fact has served the Hebrew Language during its latter day renaissance. This is the reward of scattering when the hour arrives for gathering up."⁴³

In losing his ability to use Hebrew, another sign of Assimilation, the Jew has also lost the right to call himself a member of the Hebrew nation. "Like a Frenchman who moves elsewhere, though known as a French product, since his language is no longer his own and he no longer calls himself a Frenchman. What a shame that one is called a Hebrew even though the Hebrew Language has no place in his life. The Hebrew name is taken by a people who do not know their own language."⁴⁴

If the remnants in the Galut are to be salvaged, it is through Zionism. "Zionism began a new era not only to negate the Galut (existence), but also to establish a new definition

⁴³ Jacob Klatzkin. In Praise of Wisdom, translated from the Hebrew by A. Nagelson (L. B. Fischer Publishing Company, New York, N.Y., 1943), pp. 111-112.

⁴⁴ Klatzkin. Tehumim, p. 62.

of Jewish identity--a secular definition. I am certain that the builders of our Land will in the future sacrifice themselves for National forms, for Land and Language as our ancestors accepted martyrdom for the sake of the religious content of Judaism."⁴⁵

While the Enlightenment destroyed religion, it creates Nationalism. As Enlightenment expands in the West, it is responsible for the growth of the Zionist Movement. As Western humanism grows, so, too, will Zionism. "Hence it follows that as civilization matures and the sense of morality and beauty advances, the claims of dignity, truth, integrity and purity will increase. The Zionist vision will grow even stronger through these values, for Zionism is an aspiration toward morality and beauty. It has as one of its chief purposes to redeem the man in us. Zionism pins its hopes, in one sense, on the general advance of civilization and its National faith is also a faith in man in general, a faith in the power of the good and the beautiful."⁴⁶

These values, too, were the impetus behind Theodore Herzl when he founded the Zionist Movement. "Herzl appeared

*Zionism then for Klatskin based itself on more than just Land and Language. It was a humanistic faith incorporating within its precepts the values that for so long had been a part of the Jewish ideal. Here then we see the romantic side of Klatskin, one which indicates how thoroughly he has sublimated to his Nationalism. It is the irony of history that Zionism rather than being the result of the moral advance of humanity, has flourished because of man's inhumanity to man--namely, anti-Semitism.

⁴⁶ Klatskin, Tehumim, p. 105.

among us not from the National consciousness, but from the Universal human consciousness. Not the Jew, but the man in him brought him back to his people. ...Anti-Semitism was only an external factor with Herzl, not his inner motivation; the stimulus, not the cause."⁴⁷ Zionism was a phenomena concurrent with the age--a natural by-product. Emancipation meant National emancipation for the Jew as well as freedom from the shackles of the Galut and the ghetto.

If Nationalism is to be the answer for the regeneration of the dying Judaism, what will be the relationship of the Galut to the Jews living in the Jewish State? For Klatzkin, the answer is clear. The Galut is but a means to the ultimate end; it is a transition stage, but not an end in itself. "The Galut has a right to life for the sake of liberation from the Galut. It is the vision of a Homeland that validates the Galut."⁴⁸ "From this point of view, we affirm the importance of the National effort in the Galut, an affirmation based both on the negation of the Galut and the definition of its purpose. Without the negation of the Galut, there is no basis for such an affirmation."⁴⁹

The Jew in the Galut can have but one purpose--one goal--

⁴⁷ Klatzkin. Tehumim, p. 103.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 81.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 82.

that being the redemption from the Galut. Through Zionism he has found a purpose, the upbuilding of a Homeland. "The Galut must be preserved long enough to be transcended. Its function will be to serve as a source of supply for the renaissance of our people in its Homeland. Eretz Yisrael will need the Galut for many generations to come. It will draw upon the Galut for energy and vitality; it will gradually strip that Jewry, which is doomed to oblivion, and to the extent that it will strip it, it will save it."⁵⁰

That negative estimate is as positive as Klatzkin can be about the Galut. No wonder that he is considered the classic proponent of the negation of the Galut.

⁵⁰ Klatzkin, Tehumin, p. 81.

CHAPTER II

THE ATTITUDE OF DAVID BEN GURION

Unlike Jacob Klatskin, David Ben Gurion has lived most of his life in the Land of Israel, having come there as a boy of 19 in 1906. He also has been privileged to see the birth of the State. Klatskin died one month before its independence was declared. Ben Gurion, being both the Premier of Israel and the recognized spokesman for the Israeli, represents the epitome of Nationalistic thought. His philosophy, however, is tempered by a strong sense of the 4,000 years of Jewish History, the present circumstances of the State, as well as a view of the Jewish destiny. He has been influenced by the Bible, by Pinsker and Herzl (though he is disappointed at their failure to emphasize both Land and State as Zionist goals) and by Ahad Ha'am.

Ben Gurion writes on three different levels, depending upon the audience he is addressing. It must be borne in mind that he is primarily a politician and thus often couches his thought in generalities. If he is speaking to an Israeli group, he reflects not only his own thinking, but directs it as well to the personal outlook of the listener. On a second level are his words to the official Diaspora groups, e.g., the World Zionist Organization or delegations of Jews from the Western World, who are involved in the building of the State, primarily monetarily. These

words, though sometimes harsh, will still be put quite diplomatically so that these financial sources will not be impaired. On a third level are his addresses to the Jew who remains outside the Land, with no specific connection to Israel other than a financial one, or perhaps a two-week visit. His tone in this instance may vary, but normally it is his softest, and is meant to create the atmosphere of Israel one might get from the balcony of the King David Hotel.

It is difficult to extract from Ben Gurion's writings a consistent attitude toward the Galut. He does not state directly that the Galut is dead or dying, nor will he concede at the same time that there is a guaranteed promise of survival in the Galut. He does admit his personal feeling that one cannot lead a complete Jewish life outside the Land of Israel, yet he postulates a program designed to stimulate the growth of Judaism outside the Land, primarily through its ties to Israel. He would say that since the Destruction of the Second Temple, the Jew for the third time is in Exile.* Now with the establishment of the State, he again has the opportunity to return to his Homeland. The 2,000 years of wandering were in effect an empty existence.

When we went into exile, we continued to live, in our hearts and minds, within the bounds of our biblical heritage; but we did not continue to create anew except for the multiplying of the making

*The first two Exiles refer to Egypt and Babylonia.

of interpretations and interpretations of interpretations about our sacred writings. Our spiritual lives, like our material lives, were impoverished, shrivelled. And if at the commencement of the modern Renaissance period in the 17th century a great eagle -- Baruch Spinoza -- rose from our midst, and in his lofty thought ascended to the skies, he was cast out of our nest and shed his light on others, uttering his profound words in another tongue. We lived in a political, an economic, and also a spiritual ghetto. This was not because our creative power was atrophied -- had this been so, it is doubtful if we could have maintained our identity -- but because we had been torn from the roots of our people's vitality, from Homeland and independence.¹

It is a phenomenon in itself that the Jew managed to survive during this period, yet it was a negative survival. "The Galut limited the outlook of the people, shackled its spirit, and gave it a form that was neither separate nor completely weakened, but whose result was to close him off within the confines of the ghetto."² Yet, "in Exile the fount of creativeness did not cease to flow, nor did it flow less, but its waters were dammed within ghetto walls. The Galut made our spiritual and cultural world even smaller, and the understanding of our past was warped."³ For, "there, circumstances emptied the vessel of Jewish education and cut away its living base; a psychological gulf yawned between

¹Speech by David Ben Gurion, Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass., April 1959.

²David Ben Gurion, Hazon V'Derech, Vol. IV (Tel Aviv, Napai, 1952) p. 205.

³Forum I for the Problems of Zionism, Jewry and the State of Israel. Proceedings of the Jerusalem Ideological Conference. (Jerusalem: The World Zionist Organization, December 1953), p. 100. (Hereafter referred to as "Forum")

Jew and man, between matter and spirit, between creation and nature, between the Jewish community and the State and Government. Education shrivelled up in a corner. True, the little left did great things: it was our mainstay in tribulation no other peoples endured."⁴

In our exile, we saw the world with eyes of fear, strangeness or envy, disparagement or self-denial, for we had no equal share or part in it; perhaps we could not understand other peoples, garbed as we were in gloomy feelings of inferiority or an unblushing sense of superiority. At best again, we used to copy others out of deference, or sneered at their behavior and their ways, just because we had not come as far. Little, however, as we understood them, they understood us less, for the experience of nations had no satisfactory rod with which to measure us; for them we were not only different but deformed."⁵

If the history of the Jew in the Galut is to be approached negatively, then what were the forces that kept him alive? The answer was the Jewish Tradition. There the Jew could find the bond and unity necessary to combine the scattered element of his dispersed people. Each Jew, no matter where his place of residence was, shared the Tradition.

Until the 19th Century, the general adherence to the laws and religious customs of Israel served to strengthen dispersed Jewry, and hold it together. The Jews felt their Jewish singularity and mission as something vital, although this feeling did not find expression in a modern national ideology but was garbed only in religious dress.

⁴David Ben Gurion, "Call of the Spirit," Rebirth and Destiny, edited by Mordecai Nuroch, (Philosophical Library, 1954), p. 429.

⁵David Ben Gurion, "Israel Among the Nations," Rebirth and Destiny, edited by Mordecai Nuroch, (Philosophical Library, 1954), 513. (Hereinafter referred to as "Rebirth and Destiny.")

The traditional education provided the nation consciously and unconsciously with a sense of unity and historic continuity. The Hebrew language, though not a vernacular, lived in the heart of the people for it was a language of prayer and of the literature which was based on the Torah, developing steadily and serving as both the written language in the internal transactions of the community and the "international" means of communication between Jews of various countries.

The religious festivals, steeped in national memories were a kind of substitute for a common life in the Homeland. No more than a few thousand Jews dwelt in the Land of Israel, yet every Jew bore the Land of Israel in his soul, and the distant Land of his fathers was nearer to his heart than the land in which he lived and grew.

Tradition was not enough, though; there had to be a vision beyond this. The vision continually called for a speedy return to Zion -- to the Homeland. Until the 19th Century the Jew would consider the idea of permanently remaining in Exile as unthinkable. He was in the Galut -- a complete Exile from the Homeland.

For thousands of years, the Jew prayed three times a day: "Blow the great trumpet for our freedom and raise the banner for the ingathering of the exiles and gather us together from the four corners of the earth, and make our eyes behold the return to Zion in mercy." ...Until the beginning of the emancipation in the 19th Century, all Jews, wherever they were, knew that the places where they lived were only a temporary exile, and it did not even occur to them that they were part of the peoples among whom they lived, just as such an idea was foreign to the peoples themselves.⁶

⁶The Zionist Record, Vol. 44, No. 1543. (Johannesburg, February 19, 1954), p. 7.

⁷Forum IV. "Vision and Redemption," 1959, p. 115.

The Jew refused destruction and thus survived. He felt himself a foreigner. His religion served to keep him alive with the dreams of returning to Zion.

This feeling of foreignness which was expressed in the word "Galut" existed in all generations after the Destruction of the Second Temple. The Jewish faith and the feeling of moral superiority, enabled the Jews to overcome all the troubles and persecutions and sufferings that were their lot in most countries and in most historical periods. In this capacity for resisting pressure, there was a kind of moral heroism, for it was accompanied by a submission to fate and a feeling of helplessness. The longed-for redemption was to come by supernatural means.⁸

Even with the State of Israel the Galut continues to exist. It, of course, is not like the Galut of 200 years ago for the Jew has become a part of the nation in which he lives rather than existing as a separate entity within a country's borders. How today is it to be characterized?

All Jewish communities in the Galut have certain things in common which apply both to the rich, free, democratic communities, and to the impoverished, oppressed Jewries of the totalitarian countries. These common features find expression in four basic facts, unchanging and unalterable under the Galut conditions by which Jewish life in the Galut is differentiated from Jewish life in Israel. In virtue of these facts, all Jewish communities in the Galut without exception are in a condition of exile, whether the Jews in the communities concerned realize it or not.

a) The Jews are in minority, subordinate to and dependent upon the will of the majority.

⁸ Forum IV. "Vision and Redemption," 1959, p. 115.

b) The economic and social structure of the Jewish communities in the Galut is different from that of the peoples among whom they live. (Very few of the workers are Jewish. They comprise a small proportion of the population.)

c) These Galut Jews who wish to preserve their Jewishness find themselves living in two contending spheres of influence -- a Jewish and a powerful non-Jewish environment. The Jewish will and Jewish life shrink in an obscure and humble corner, set apart, and having no roots in the powerful all-pervading non-Jewish environment. As a result, a constant duality is created in the life of the Jews; a cleavage opens between the Jewish sphere and the civic sphere, and in some countries there is even a contradiction between the two. And since the culture of a people is not merely a linguistic creation, or a storehouse of memories of the past, or even a matter of religious custom or a religious idea, but the totality of the human and social experience of the entire community, an experience saturated in elements derived from nature, tradition, the economic and legal systems, social and public controversies -- there can be no such thing in the Galut as Jewish culture. At the most, there can be a cultural ghetto, even if in the favorable sense of the word; this ghetto may assume a religious, social and spiritual character, but it is no more than a ghetto, i.e., a limited and separate corner without any roots and sources of nourishment to the experiences and the conditions of the majority of the people. The majority surrounds the Jews in the Galut and there is no escape from it as long as they live within it. Even religious Jewry cannot completely observe all the laws of traditional Judaism in the Galut. The Jewish religion, unlike every other religion, is rooted in the soil of the Land of Israel and its survival is bound up with the land of its origin. A large proportion of the Jewish religious precepts can be observed only in Israel and not on foreign soil; residence abroad in itself, when it is not unavoidable, is a grave religious offence, and every Jew who lives abroad is considered by the Talmud to have no God.*

*This is the quotation that caused such a stir at the

d) In the Galut, there can be no such thing as an all-Jewish framework. The Jews are subordinate to the sovereign framework of the State and since the Jews are a minority, they have no control, as Jews, over this framework.⁹

The Jew in the Galut today is faced with not just one, but all four of these factors. The influence of each of them has created the personality in exile.

The Jew's part is pent up in a little nook of the spirit, and lives mostly in the past. The other part, namely, the rule of others, encircles the life of the Jew completely and determines his status and education, his culture, livelihood and everyday conduct. This contact gives Galut Jews their character in their own eyes and the Gentiles'. The Jew who wanders between the ghetto and assimilation, between extinction and self-extinction, between escape from the world and escape from himself, at times retreats altogether into himself and feeds his soul on crumbs from a Jewish legacy, that is in dead banishment. We

25th Zionist Congress in Jerusalem in December of 1960 when Ben Gurion prefaced the statement by saying, "Each religious Jew has daily violated the precepts of Judaism and nullified the Torah of Israel by remaining in the Diaspora." This same quotation was made as early as 1954 in Hazon V'Derech, Vol. V, p. 62, where it is stated, "All who dwell outside the land are as if they had no God. How can they observe a religion that is built upon Mitzvot, dependent upon the Land. To give one example -- yet a specific one -- each day, when the Jew prays, he prays in the winter for rain, and in the summer for dew, yet what is the purpose of such a prayer if it is said in America, or England. Do not their prayers and religion become fraudulent in a strange land?" It is interesting to note that Davar of December 29, 1960, in its summary of the Ben Gurion speech, stated, "Because of the inner and outer conflict of the Jew, especially if even the orthodox Jew is unable to fulfill the Mitzvot, there thus remains but one salvation for the Jew -- Aliyah."

⁹State of Israel Government Yearbook. "Israel and the Diaspora." (Jerusalem: Government Printing Press 1957), p. 27. (Hereinafter referred to as "Yearbook.")

must marvel at the astounding vitality and constructive power dominant in these immortal people, when even in such travail its creativeness did not cease, albeit far divorced from fact and fluttering in space without solid grasp of the demands and needs of a life ever renewing itself. At other times, the Jew flies from his lonely and outcast habitations and beats upon the portals of an alien people, beseeching to be taken into its culture and therein remade. In the first case, he renounces the world and all that is in it, and finds solace in the feeling of superiority of a Chosen People. In this world, things are bitter and bad for his people, but it is destined to recompense and enjoy all good things in the world to come. In the second case, he is undone in the sight of others, corrupts his special character, elbows his way into a realm which is not his, accustoms himself to it, and finally becomes someone else. At best, if he succeeds, he is absorbed and assimilated. If he fails, he is disgorged and humiliated; he has lost all his world.

This tug of war of authorities has never ended in Israel's exilic history, nor will it end so long as Jews live in foreign lands and cannot or will not be wholly assimilated within them or cannot or will not return to Israel. It has confounded the Jew's outlook upon the¹⁰ world and the world's verdict upon the Jews.

The Jew is placed in the position of being a member of a small minority, and thus is pressed upon by the forces around him.

If I desired to find a common and unifying denominator, a term which distinguishes the situation of all the Jews in the dispersion, without exaggeration that term would be "the coerced ones" (perhaps even "Marranos").... The question of compulsion now is not religious as it was during the Middle Ages. When men are compelled not because of their prayers or faith,

¹⁰ David Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny, p. 511.

but because of their socialistic, ethical, political or Judaic perception and were not able to be what they wish, because of the strange external pressure exerted upon them and overpowering them, whether by legal means or not, -- then these men are "coerced" (Marranos).¹¹

The Jew is and was a second-class citizen, often needing a special "Nansen" passport giving him an identity because he is stateless. We were tolerated!

Throughout the years of the Galut, and in all the Galut lands, the Jewish people lived on alien sufferance, although its status was not alike in all periods and places. Sometimes it had a grain of comfort and its rights were upheld; sometimes it was the victim of oppression and discrimination.¹²

Galut means dependence -- material, spiritual, economic, cultural and intellectual dependence. But even compulsion from external forces was to result in an even greater phenomenon -- internal subjugation.

The sorrowful phenomenon that accompanies all the Jewish history in the Galut is not only the phenomenon of external subjugation, borders, hate, persecution, but something much worse -- internal slavery. Every time that a group of men are placed outside the boundaries of freedom and do not control their own destiny, what results with this group is not only external pressure or compulsion, but also internal slavery, a slavery of the soul; this is what Ahad Ha'am meant by "slavery in the midst of freedom." ... As long as the Jew was in a dependent position

¹¹ David Ben Gurion, B'Ma'arachah, Vol. III, (Tel Aviv: Mapai, 1947), p. 213.

¹² David Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny, p. 471.

as a minority, as one lacking a Homeland, "Land and Independence," then this internal slavery accompanied him, whether he was a millionaire publisher of the New York Times, a Socialist Leader, or a Communist Commissar.¹³

Being a wanderer for these many years, the Jew had to turn to the crumbs of occupation graciously handed to him by the "Goyim."

Not only did the Jews in the Galut live in exile and depend on the decision of others, but the structure of their economic and social life was different from that of an independent people living in its own land and controlling its own destiny. The Jews were landless and were not employed in the principle branches of economy on which the self-supporting existence of a nation depends.¹⁴

Thus the Jew was forced to live in two worlds -- his own and an alien one. Judaism became defaced and distorted; its freedom of thought was limited; its perceptions narrowed.

When freedom went, the Jews found themselves under two conflicting authorities; one their own Jewish legacy; the other the rule of an alien peoples, with all the administration, economy, culture and law peculiar to it, and its special power to repel and attract. This dual subjugation, and the mental, spiritual and material agitation it caused -- there you have in a sentence the whole of Jewish History in Exile, but at no time or place has the basis of the Galut life undergone change: the immutable law is that the Jew, so long as somehow he stays one, is under this dichotomy, and his life and soul will surely be rent asunder in his distraction between the two parts of it.¹⁵

¹³David Ben Gurion, B'Ma'arashah, Vol. III, p. 216

¹⁴Forum, 1959, "Vision and Redemption," p. 116.

¹⁵David Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny, p. 510.

Thus in the Galut there is a division between the Jew and the man. Often the pressure exerted between the two forces is so great that a solution to the conflict is impossible.

The best of Jewish education, however, even if it is attached to religious tradition, will not save the Jews of the Galut from subordination to two conflicting spheres of influence: the Jewish influence which derives only from the past, and the non-Jewish general sphere of influence, which affects the whole of every day life, both material and spiritual. there is no doubt which of the two influences is bound to conquer in the long run.¹⁶

As a result of this,

In the Galut, Jews as Jews are human dust, whose particles try to cling to each other perhaps more than the members of other peoples in similar circumstances, for the Jews are a stiffnecked people, and their attachment to the Jewish heritage, whether it is religious or linguistic, the heritage of the Homeland or of Jewish fraternity, or of the vision of redemption, is incomparably profound and strong; and in every country where they are allowed to do so, Jews create their own free frameworks and organization for Jewish activity and Jewish self-expression. But these frameworks have neither obligatory force, nor comprehensive scope, nor vital content.¹⁷

An all-pervasive duality is created in the lives of those Jews who try to maintain their Jewishness because of the tremendous gulf between the Jewish sphere and the civic one.

And since culture is not merely a collection of memories of the past or religious customs, but the totality of the human and social environment, saturated by the influences of nature, economics, politics and social and

¹⁶The Jewish Spectator, "Israel Among the Nations," Vol. XXI, No. 4 (New York), p. 9.

¹⁷Yearbook, p. 29.

political struggles and development, there cannot be a full and complete Jewish culture in the Galut, even in those free countries which grant Jews full rights.¹⁸

Being involved in two worlds, the Jew now faces even greater danger than anti-Semitism -- Assimilation.

...From the times of Babylon and Rome to those of Soviet Russia, two dangers beset us in foreign lands: extermination and self-destruction. It may be either or both of these dangers, but there is no escaping them in any continent or country, in any period or under any regime. ...Wherever the forces of eradication cease to function, the forces of self-abolition come into play, so that there is no escape anywhere for the Jews of the Galut.¹⁹

The integration in store for the Galut Jewry is absorption into the life of other peoples. Jewish history fluctuates between two contrary poles, the pole of independence, territorial unification, and the achievement of universal status in Israel; and the pole of dispersion and the adaptation to the ways of other peoples in the Galut.²⁰

Ben Gurion does not make a distinction between conscious assimilation, such as outright conversion or passing, and an unconscious assimilation which would be the absorption into and influence of the surrounding culture becoming greater than the Jewish influence. The danger of assimilation continues to grow. The religious ties no longer remain firm and secure. The effect of tradition in the Jews'

¹⁸ David Ben Gurion in Speech before the 25th Zionist Congress, Jerusalem, December 28, 1960.

¹⁹ Hamekasher, The Way of Hechalutz in the Diaspora, Vol. IV, No. 8, (Rosh Pina, December 1944), pp. 1-3.

²⁰ Yearbook, 1957, p. 34.

everyday life is now not the predominant factor in his relationship to the world.

It is an undeniable fact that the old religious traditions and observances have lost much of their power over the Jewish masses.²¹

For over 150 years, religion and tradition have ceased to be the forces uniting the scattered elements of Israel, though wherever they exist, they have the capacity to serve as a powerful brake against assimilation. But they are now the possession of only a minority of the Jewish people both in the Galut and in Israel.²²

Religion which once served as the barrier and bond of the Jew does not serve that purpose today. "There is now hardly a barrier left to hold back the onrush of Jewish assimilation in the free lands of the world."²³

If the present trend continues, then only one question remains --

And the great question -- to my mind -- it is the supreme question -- is this: Can we be confident of the survival of Jewry in the Galut and the preservation of its values, after the destruction of European Jewry and the assimilation in practice which we see taking place in all the lands of the Galut, almost without exception. In the heart of every Jew anxious for the future of Judaism, the question must arise: Will the Galut Judaism long survive?²⁴

The center of Jewish population has shifted recently from Europe to America.

²¹David Ben Gurion, The Day - Jewish Journal, March 7 1954.

²²Jerusalem Post, Vol. XXXII, No. 8523, June 8, 1956, p. 5.

²³David Ben Gurion, loc. cit.

²⁴Address by Ben Gurion, "World Jewish Unity - The Need of the Hour," 24th World Jewish Congress, April 24, 1956.

In the foremost country of the New World, there grew a center the like of which was never seen in the Diaspora for wealth, influence and power, for political and spiritual capacity. And this Jewry, which had first considered itself a spiritual "colony" of European Jewry, has become in our own day the political, material and cultural metropolis of Diaspora Jewry. Here the feeling of exile and foreignness grew weaker and disappeared completely, and although the ideology of assimilation struck no roots in American Jewry, assimilation in practice -- in language, culture, manner, economy and political life -- is constantly growing.²⁵

"The fact that there is no assimilationist ideology among American Jews does not lessen the dangers of assimilation. On the contrary, it intensifies them. There is no need for any ideology; life does its work automatically below the level of consciousness."²⁶

The American Jew has in most cases only a monetary connection to Israel (though at no time does Ben Gurion deny the great value of this connection). They consider themselves a community on their own terms. "The principle Jewish Diaspora center of our days -- the Jewish community of the United States -- does not admit that it is living in exile. America is its homeland and it has no intention of leaving it."²⁷

²⁵ Forum, 1959, "Vision and Redemption," p. 117.

²⁶ Hadassah Magazine, "This I Believe," Vol. 42, No. 2, (New York), p. 20.

²⁷ Yearbook, 1957, p. 23.

Jews who fought for Jewish emancipation 150 years ago, when asked, "What are the Jews?" they replied: "A religious community -- the Jews are Germans or Frenchmen of the Mosais faith." Most of the Jews of Russia, Poland, Galicia or Rumania would have replied a century ago: "The Jews are a minority in exile, completely different from the people among whom they live."; and fifty years ago, many of them would have added: "And they aspire to return to Zion." Not many of the Jews of America, even those who continue to call themselves Zionists would give the last answer today, for it is their desire to become rooted in their new country, as an organic part of America, like all the other religious and national groups which reached America a generation or a few generations ago.²⁸

The Jew in America is forced to live in two worlds -- the Jewish and the non-Jewish, and often the latter takes precedence over the former either through assimilation or the Jew standing in fear of "What will the Gentiles say?" Ben Gurion in B'Ma'arachah reports incidents that disturbed him greatly while he lived in America during World War II. He tells of an incident of anti-Semitism that occurred in Boston. The Jew was afraid to complain about the incident lest his complaint cause incidents of a similar nature. He also reports how in New York City mothers are afraid to send their children three blocks away to school for fear of attack by neighborhood toughs.

Ben Gurion says that the Jew fears lest his loyalties to America be suspect. He claims that even the New York

Times, which is owned by an assimilationist Jew, often attacks the Jewish position in order to bend backwards out of fear of the Gentile.

In a television interview on NBC on December 31, 1961, Ben Gurion reported his disturbance at seeing a sign reading, "Restricted," and of being told its meaning. This fear of the nation surrounding them prevails in almost every American Jew. In his fear of the Gentile, the Jew in America also fears being identified positively with the State of Israel, or more specifically with Jewish Nationalism.

...There is a great fear of the word "Nationalism" for in English this word has a double meaning, citizenship and attachment to a people -- that is, both a People and a State. ...So that if a Jew claims to be a member of the Jewish Nation, his American citizenship is in danger, for they call citizenship, nationality. Thus, how is it possible for them to harmonize the Jewish attachment to both Israel and America at the same time?²⁹

This identification might help to bring about at least a greater Jewish consciousness.

A Jew's attachment to his people does not lessen his attachment to his country, nor is lessened by it. Jews who deny their people do so not because they are more loyal citizens, but because they are less honorable men, and have neither the self-respect nor the inner strength to throw off the complex of inferiority which clings to inferior men belonging to a small nation.³⁰

²⁹ David Ben Gurion, Hazon V'derech, Vol. IV, pp. 54-55.

³⁰ David Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny, p. 489.

Judaism in America then is on the decline. "Except for the Orthodox minority which is not Zionist by name but fulfills the duty of immigration -- the Judaism of the Jews of the United States and similar countries is losing all meaning, and only a blind man can fail to see the danger of extinction which is spreading without being noticed."³¹

"The Jewishness of American Jews has few and feeble foundations. There is an increase in religious worship, but it is doubtful whether it involves an intensification of the religious consciousness."³²

Is there then a future for American Jewry? "There are in Jewish History many instances of the decline and disappearance of Jewish communities. Some Jewish centers withered away and disappeared as a result of massacres and persecutions; others by liquidation and assimilation. Their fate was sealed by a kiss of death."³³

Any comparison between the fate of European Jewry and that of Jewry in the United States -- whether for good or for ill -- is baseless. There is nothing to prevent the Jews in America from preserving their Jewishness and their bond with Zion, but at the same time, there is no internal or external obligation to do so. There is no particular usefulness in abstract discussions of the future of Jewry in America.³⁴

³¹ David Ben Gurion in Speech at 25th Zionist Congress, December 28, 1960.

³² Forum, 1959, "Vision and Redemption," p. 122.

³³ David Ben Gurion, The Day - Jewish Journal, March 7, 1954.

³⁴ Forum, 1959, loc. cit.

"We are hopeful that American Jewry will avoid the fate that overwhelmed the Jews of Europe. But who will say that American Jewry, unless it mends its ways, can forever avoid the kiss of death."³⁵ "...Assimilation in practice is bringing near the end of Judaism in the Galut."³⁶

If the future of American Jewry is a bleak one, then the outlook for the entire Galut is also a negative one.

"Whoever presupposes the survival of the Jews in the dispersion and wishes along with it the existence of the Jewish people wherever it might be, wishes to maintain the impossible."³⁷ "The Jewish people ... in exile has no security and no future."³⁸

Everyone of us has respect and profound admiration for the great moral force shown by the Jews in their wanderings and their sufferings in the Galut, which enabled them to face enemies, despoilers, oppressors and murderers without surrendering their Jewishness. But the exile in which these Jews lived and still live, is to me a wretched, poor, backward and inadequate form of life. We must not be proud of it -- on the contrary, we must negate it utterly and completely. ...Not only do I negate the Galut, but I negate the glorification of the Galut.³⁹

³⁵ David Ben Gurion, The Day - Jewish Journal, March 7, 1954.

³⁶ David Ben Gurion, Hazon Viderech, Vol. V, p. 65.-

³⁷ David Ben Gurion and Simon A. Dolgin, "Can we stay Jews outside the Land? - An Exchange," Commentary, Vol. 16, No. 3, (New York: American Jewish Committee, September 1953), p. 239. (Hereinafter referred to as "Commentary.")

³⁸ David Ben Gurion, The New Palestine, Vol. 35, No. 1, edited by Ludwig Lewisohn, (Washington D.C.: March 16, 1945), p. 154.

³⁹ David Ben Gurion, Davar, September 10, 1957.

"This is not the 'negation of the Galut' which formed a part of the ideology of some extreme Zionists who themselves continued to live in exile, but the abolition of the Galut; its abandonment and the creation of national freedom in practice."⁴⁰

There is an answer for the dilemma of the conscious Galut Jew -- Israel, the Homeland, the Land of our Biblical Ancestors.

From Bar Koshba to the new Jewish State, 1813 years went by. For most of that dreary wait the Jews were cut off from their Homeland and sprinkled in foreign parts among foreign peoples. In the infinite history of mankind, there is nothing to equal this -- a people sundered from its native hearth for nearly 2,000 years, which should yet return to it and on it stand sovereign once more. Had not the people in all its wanderings, despite the bodily wrench, hugged tightly this vision of revival, and inward kept a living link with the Land of its birth, the unique thing which came to pass in our days would never have been. Nor, indeed, did it come to pass as long as the vision was fed on passive yearning and little besides.⁴¹

In the Galut, it was the power of vision and faith that sustained us, but we were not redeemed, nor could we be, by that alone. Only when it was fortified by pioneer will, the will to achieve, was the road to redemption opened at last. All through history, the vital spark shot up, flamed and sank again; only in the last seventy years did it glow into steady, splendid incandescence.⁴²

⁴⁰Yearbook, 1957, p. 30.

⁴¹David Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny, p. 448.

⁴²Ibid., "Call of the Spirit," p. 413.

It is Israel and Israel alone that can bring about the revival of the Jewish people, bring about their redemption.

The Jew is no longer as strong in his faith as he was prior to the Emancipation. The wall of Religion are no longer as strong as they were in the ghetto.

The Jewish state was revived in a period when the House of Israel in the Diaspora was not as wholehearted and united as it was 200 years ago, in its faith; neither in the observance of the laws and commandments, nor in the "religious ideas," in which Yehenkiel Kaufmann, Golah Venechar, Vol. I, p. 199) There is no doubt, however, that without the forces which preserved Judaism in the Diaspora, we would not have achieved the revival of Israel. It was not a conquering and settling power, nor an enslaved nation in its own land casting off the foreign yoke that revived Israel. In the beginning of our revival was the vision.⁴³

In Israel, the Jew need not live in two worlds, torn between two ideals. "Jews living in the Diaspora, not living under their own government, are not free. No, citizens of any other country will not agree with me! I say it nevertheless: Jews in the Diaspora cannot be what they will be when they will work and create in their own country as free men."⁴⁴ "The builders of the Land ... did not rebel against the moral heroism of the Jewish people which was able to resist all its enemies, but

⁴³ Forum, 1959, "Vision and Redemption," p. 112.

⁴⁴ David Ben Gurion, I Believe, translated from Yiddish by John Tepfer.

against the dependence, the life in foreign surroundings, the material and moral impoverishment, the lack of independence and freedom as Jews and as human beings which are characteristic of exile -- of any exile whatsoever."⁴⁵

Here in our country, no Jew will ever rest under the suspicion that he cannot be trusted to hold certain offices, as is the case in Russia, for instance. Even in America, no Jew is truly a free man for he is ever haunted by the fear of what will the Gentiles say. I do not blame them. It must be so -- there are many more Americans than American Jews and it is only right that we should have regard for the majority. But this is precisely why the Jew cannot feel as free as the American. The constitution is one thing, and life is another ...

Here, however, we are free men, and, therefore, we can be more creative than in America, England, or anywhere else.⁴⁶

The Jews in their own State are no longer subject to two opposing and conflicting authorities: on the one hand to the authority of the Gentile people in all economic, political and social matters, and on most spiritual and cultural questions, as a citizen and subject of a state with a non-Jewish, or even anti-Jewish, majority; and on the other hand, their own authority in the one small and poor corner which draws its sustenance only from the past in which they function as members of the Mosaic faith or of the Jewish people in the world. In Israel, the profound cleavage which impoverished both the man in the Jew, and the Jew in the man, has been healed.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Forum IV, 1959, "Zionism and Pseudo-Zionism," p. 149.

⁴⁶ David Ben Gurion, I Believe, translated from Yiddish by John Tepfer.

⁴⁷ Forum, 1959, "Vision and Redemption," p. 118.

Only in sovereign Israel does the full opportunity arise for molding the life of the Jewish people according to its own needs and values, in loyalty to its own character and spirit, to its historic heritage and its vision for the future. In Israel, the barrier between the Jew and the man is destroyed; the State has assured its people of integrity and completeness as Jews and as men. Our life in Israel has become once again, as in Biblical days, one complete entity and experience, comprising in a comprehensive and binding Jewish framework all the living values of the individual and the nation, all their actions, aspirations, cares and hopes.⁴⁸

The State assured every Jew who enjoys freedom of movement in the Land where he lives, of the opportunity to live in his independent Homeland if he chooses to do so, thus ensuring potentially, if not in practice, a life of independence for the entire Jewish people. ...It is not remarkable that all parts of the Jewish people in the Diaspora, whether they called themselves Zionist or non-Zionist, orthodox or non-religious, whether they lived in lands of prosperity and freedom or in lands of poverty and enslavement, welcomed the rise of the State with love and pride, and the State became the central pillar on which the unity of Diaspora Jewry now rests.⁴⁹

Thus in Israel, the duality does not exist. The individual can be both man and Jew at the same time without conflict. The State, through Aliyah, had changed the course of modern Jewish history.

For hundreds of years, the people had bowed to its lot of a folk dispersed and dependent on alien charity. Faith in its own strength and possibilities was almost lost.

⁴⁸ Yearbook, 1957, p. 29.

⁴⁹ Forum, 1959, "Vision and Redemption," p. 118.

In the pioneer Aliyah, there found expression a resurgence of that creative faith of the Jew, faith to become master of his destiny and to change the destiny of his people. This re-kindling of belief in Jewish power and will, after centuries of sojourn in strange lands, is one of the greatest wonders in the wonderful history of our people. This renewal of trust in the resources of the Jew and Jewry, in their creative and fighting quality, drew its nourishment from three sources: the renaissance influence of the Bible, the national and social revolution in Europe, and a teeming contact with the soil of Israel.⁵⁰

"Aliyah marked a revolutionary swing in the people's spirit, from idle longing and mystic expectancy of redemption in the dim future, to the practical action and persevering effort that would hew a natural path and present salvation."⁵¹

Aliyah, which is voluntary immigration to Israel, and the Ingathering of Exiles, which is part of the basic platform of the State* becomes the base for determining the

⁵⁰ David Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny, p. 448.

⁵¹ Ibid.

*It is the supreme Law of Israel -- the Law of the Return -- which contains the objective of the Ingathering of the Exiles. This Law decrees that it is not the State that grants a Jew the right to settle in Israel, but that this is his right by reason of the fact that he is a Jew, if only he wishes to join the population of the country. The State sees the right of Jews to return to the Homeland as preceding the foundation, and having its source in the historic and never-broken bond between the Jews and their ancient Homeland. The Law of the Return is the Law of the historic permanence and continuity of the bond between the Land and our people. Forum, 1959, "Vision and Redemption," p. 119.

status and security of the State.

The Ingathering of the Exiles is both the precondition and the complementary process to our national and social redemption and liberation. It alone can safeguard Israel's security and independence and ensure its stability in the future. Through it alone can we build, mold and bring into being in our reborn nation, advancing towards independence a new society, which will become integrated in the new society of the entire human race.⁵²

The reasons for immigration are numerous. Basically, the Jew has always longed for the Return to Zion. "The source of Aliyah was an ancient spiritual 'reality' which derived from the Bible and the daily prayers."⁵³

Jews might also "ascend" because of the persecution. "Every Jewish immigration to Israel was prompted by persecution."⁵⁴

Primarily, it is to be hoped that Jews will come of their own free will and choice because it is "a land of Israel so regenerated that it will attract Jews unto itself."⁵⁵ The State will become attractive spiritually, physically and economically and thus promote immigration from the Western World.

⁵² Forum, 1957, p. 818.

⁵³ Forum III, 1957, A letter from David Ben Gurion to Nathan Rotenstreich, January 13, 1957, p. 27.

⁵⁴ Jewish Vanguard, "What Ben Gurion Really Said," February 1, 1952.

⁵⁵ David Ben Gurion, "The Imperative of the Jewish Revolution," The Zionist Idea, edited by Arthur Hertzberg, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company and Hernal Press, 1959), p. 613.

The question remains -- will they come? No definitive answer can be given. Personally, Ben Gurion would feel that all of Galut Jewry should come to live in Israel. "Jewish existence depends on the realization of Zionism, meaning the concentration of the Jewish people in its Homeland and in living a full Jewish life in its own domain. ...I know with certainty that the only complete security for the existence of the people of Israel is its existence within Israel."⁵⁶ "Ingathering and edifice are not to be accomplished unless the whole people takes part."⁵⁷ "A Dispersion which does not come to settle in Israel is liable to be assimilated and swallowed up by other nations."⁵⁸

"We are a people of high destiny and the Jews will come. They will come because mankind has lost its faith, and in our country even the irreligious have faith. And they will come to us because the Land is beckoning to them."⁵⁹

Yet being both a politician and a realist, Ben Gurion realizes that all the Jews of the Galut do not wish "Aliyah."

⁵⁶ Commentary, September 1953, p. 238.

⁵⁷ David Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny, p. 495.

⁵⁸ Zionist Record, No. 1552, Johannesburg, April 23, 1954, p. 7.

⁵⁹ David Ben Gurion, I Believe, translated from Yiddish by John Tepfer.

They are content to live in exile, often even refusing to admit that it is an exile. Their position in the Galut they feel is a secure one. "These mummified Galut Jews wouldn't emerge from their bag even if they heard the streets were paved with gold."⁶⁰ Thus, it is likely that the Jews en masse will not come. "I do not mean to be exact and say that all Jews without exception must flock to the Homeland."⁶¹ "No one yet can tell whether Ingathering is to mean the bringing together of the whole Jewish population in Israel, or most of it, or only some part of it."⁶²

"I would desire all the Jews to settle in their Land. It is possible that this will be essential -- if not for all of them, then at least for most of them. But I do not know and I doubt if anyone knows if this will occur or not. I am certain that this fact is possible and I am certain that it is desirable. But I do not know if it is essential and if it will occur."^{63*} "I believe that we are building a Homeland for all Jews -- that is to say -- for all Jews who have the need and desire for a Homeland, and all Jews

⁶⁰ Barnett Litvinoff, Ben Gurion of Israel - A Letter to His Father, Circa 1906, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1954), p. 26.

⁶¹ Commentary, September 1953, p. 238.

⁶² David Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny, p. 495.

⁶³ Commentary, September 1953, p. 236.

*An excellent example of the politician's attempt not to antagonize.

who do not assimilate consciously will eventually have the need for a Homeland."⁶⁴

There can be only the one answer -- for Ben Gurion there can only be the State of Israel and the hope that all the Jews of the Galut will come to the same conclusion.

As regard to "Aliyah," there is one group in the Galut that has gone bankrupt since the founding of the State -- the Zionist Organization.*

By Zionist ideology, I mean not the vision as old as Jewry itself, but the political ideology of the movement -- crystallized among the Jews of Europe in the 19th century, and was nourished not a little by demonstrations of anti-Semitism and by nationalist movements and politics of the European peoples.⁶⁵

As the original source of the term testifies, Zionism means the longing for Zion. The movement which was organized under the Zionist banner aimed at gathering together the scattered sons of Israel in their ancient Homeland. This was the teaching of Hess, Pinsker, Herzl and their predecessors. The meaning of the ideology involved in the Zionist movement is that Jews are a foreign growth in the Diaspora countries where they live and will never find peace until they return to their historic Homeland. And, indeed, the Jews of Eastern Europe, and the Balkans, of Russia, Poland, Lithuania, Galicia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Servia and Czechoslovakia never considered

⁶⁴ David Ben Gurion, Hazon V'derech, Vol. V, p. 202.

⁶⁵ David Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny, p. 497.

*Ben Gurion, to show his distaste for the term "Zionist Organization" often used only the word "Organization" to describe the group.

themselves to be part of the peoples among whom they lived. A considerable part of German Jewry, as well as individual Jews in France and Italy, uprooted themselves from their non-Jewish environment in accordance with the Zionist ideology and considered themselves to be a part of the Jewish people whose free and independent future lay in the Land of Israel. Zionism in the beginning was mainly and essentially a movement of the European Jewry; leaders from the West, followers from the East and South. Russian Jewry in those days was the mother of Jewry.⁶⁶

What was the former content of Zionism? It was first a struggle of ideas inside the Jewish people, for it proclaimed an end not to the liking of most of the Jews even though the beginnings lay deep in their past, their literature and faith. Many saw it as something harmful, a blemish imperilling Jewish existence, profaning Judaism, an ineffectual and impractical fancy, oversanguine and reactionary. To pietists, it was a bitter blow to religion and repudiation of their belief in Messiah; perversely, they believed in redemption, but in a heavenly and not a prosaic one as the Zionist preached it. The assimilationist felt that it was a danger to Jewish rights, to the recognition of their civic equality and the status that had won or aspired to win in their countries of adoption; for them to aspire to a Jewish Homeland was proof that Jews are not loyal citizens of their own countries. Socialists considered it a reactionary movement which diverted the minds of the masses from the political or class which was to improve their lot and give them equal rights. The enlightened man of affairs took issue with a vain dream and a bleak Utopia: would the Jews return to an archaic land, wild and in ruins, inhabited by Arabs under Turkish rule? Would townsfolk turn to tillers of soil and Europeans settle in an Asiatic country? Zionism was in essence a Jewish philosophy combating assimilation. It had also a territorial and practical object -- the Land of Israel.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Forum, 1957, "Words and Values," p. 8.

⁶⁷ David Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny, p. 499.

The Zionist Organization has lost its soul and all its Zionist significance. The longing for the Return to Zion no longer lives in the hearts of its members -- it is no more than a high-sounding phrase that commits no one and does not lead to any action.⁶⁸

It is doubtful whether there is any remedy for the old generation of Zionists in the Diaspora. All their lives they have clung to slogans, formulae, and institutions which are now obsolete; they did not have the strength to realize the Zionist ideal, even in the days of their youth, and it certainly cannot be demanded of them now that they are middle-aged.⁶⁹

How many Zionists nowadays really believe that they have a personal need of a Homeland? Every Zionist has a "Homeland" in the United States, in Switzerland, in England, in Argentina, and in every country where he sits over the fleshpots.

Historical consciousness is not the consciousness that characterizes the futility of the shekel-payers who played at "the State on the Way." Not only the American Zionists, but the Zionists of Russia and Poland as well did not in their time feel a personal need for a Jewish Homeland, for they did not want to stir from Russia and Poland so long as they were able to stay there. The Jews of Yemen, Morocco and Iraq came to Israel as a result of historical consciousness and Messianic vision, not in consequence of Zionist ideology.⁷⁰

American Zionist leaders went bankrupt on the establishment of the State. There were not five of them to get up and come to Israel. They might not have been followed by the masses, but this would have proved that Zionism, was not void of meaning at least for the leaders.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Forum, 1957, "Words and Values," p. 87.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

⁷⁰ Ibid., "Exchange of Letters," p. 21.

⁷¹ David Ben Gurion, Address to Parliament, Jerusalem, May 1953.

As for the Jews who consider themselves a part of the American, the British or French people, who do not feel or understand that they are living in exile, who do not see their own future or that of their children and grandchildren in Israel, and are, in fact, becoming assimilated to a non-Jewish language and culture, though they do not deny their Judaism -- and who call themselves "Zionists" and use the name "Zionist" for the organization to which they belong -- I do not deny their formal right to use the name, if they like it and it gives them a kind of satisfaction. But as for me, I have no part in this "Zionism" and I consider it a danger to the future of Jewry.⁷²

Financial and political aid to Israel comes from Jews in general -- if you want to bear the name of Zionist, you must do more -- you must be on the way to Israel; you must regard yourselves as Jews first, and as Jews who are at least preparing to live in the Jewish State.⁷³

We must realize the undeniable fact that it is not the Zionist Organization which does not even oblige its members to avoid assimilation and integration in the culture of other peoples, but the State of Israel, that is today the historic instrument for the redemption of the Jewish people in its Homeland and the preservation of Jewry in the Galut.⁷⁴

Theodore Herzl said "Zionism is the Jewish People on the Way" and he meant the "Jewish People on its way back to Israel." This profound truth was garbled somewhat and turned into the meaningless dictum that the Zionist Organization was a "State on the Way." There is no such thing as a "State on the Way" ... only "Aliyah." "The Jewish Nation on the Way" as Herzl described it, is the constructive and corporeal essence of the Zionist dream.⁷⁵

⁷²Forum, 1959, "Zionism and Pseudo-Zionism," p. 148.

⁷³Moshe Bar Natan, "Letter from Israel: Ben Gurion at 75," Jewish Frontier, Vol. 28, No. 10, (Washington, D. C., October 1961), p. 6.

⁷⁴Yearbook, 1957, p. 35.

⁷⁵David Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny, p. 491.

With the Jew now living in the Land of Israel, he has made a historical leap of time -- a leap between the time of Bar Kochba and the present -- a leap between Statehood and Statehood. The Galut has been but a transition between the two periods. "The distant past is closer to us than the recent past of the last 2,000 years -- Abraham, Moses, the Prophets, are closer to us than the utterances of Rav Ashi, Alfasi, Maimonides, the "Ari," or Joseph Caro, and in recent times, all the Zionist ideologists. There are leaps in history; we are living in the Homeland, and every excavation in Beit She'arim or Hatzor intensifies our attachment to our Homeland and to our past in it."⁷⁶

The founding of the Jewish State constituted a leap over intermediate historical stages, both in time and place; a complete detachment from the life of the Diaspora, which with all the variations of the different generations and different countries was always characterized by the four basic facts which were to be found in every Jewish community in the Galut.⁷⁷

Building the State physically is to be achieved through Aliyah and Halutzaiut -- the Pioneering Instinct. Here the Jew will create and build through the element of labor, fostering the nation through the work of his hands. What is to be the form, substance and purpose of the State? The answer -- Geula -- Redemption. The past, the present

⁷⁶ Forum, 1957, p. 22.

⁷⁷ Yearbook, 1957, p. 29.

and the future of Judaism is tied up with the vision of Messianic Redemption.

The profound attachment of the Jewish soul to Israel's ancient Homeland, to the Promised Land, to the Hebrew Language and the Book of Books, from which our entire past Biblical literature -- the Apocrypha, the Talmud, medieval Hebrew poetry, the prayers -- drew their sustenance; the Halacha -- the religious law that governed the Jew's way of life so long as religion was still the dominant force in Jewish society; the view of every country of residence apart from the Land of Israel as exile, as a temporary asylum -- all these nourished the vision of Messianic redemption, enunciated by the prophets of Israel. They were the profound and never-failing sources from which the Jews, dispersed in exile for hundreds of years, drew the moral and spiritual strength to face all the difficulties of life in foreign lands and to survive the coming of national salvation. The vision of Messianic redemption is the central truth of Jewish history.⁷⁸

It is impossible to understand everything that has happened in our days without considering the vision of Messianic redemption which is implanted deep in the heart of the Jewish people, not only since the destruction of the Second Temple, but ever since the days of the first literary prophets, if not before the departure from Egypt. This vision fills the very air of Jewish history, and in various countries at different times, it has been the motivating force in powerful movements, which at the time deeply stirred the Jewish people, sometimes as a whole and sometimes in part.⁷⁹

Anyone who does not realize that the Messianic vision of redemption is central to the uniqueness of our people, does not realize

⁷⁸ Yearbook, 1957, p. 16.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

the basic truth of Jewish history and the cornerstone of the Jewish faith. The spiritual and political transformations that have taken place in the Jewish people in the course of thousands of years have affected the characteristics and the expression of this vision. It did not assume the same form in all periods, just as Judaism as a whole assumed different forms at different times. But through all these changes, the inner kernel was preserved, the kernel whose first germination we see in the State of Israel.⁸⁰

The vision which is to become the guiding light of the State is for the redemption not only of the Jewish people, but all of humanity as well through the enunciation once again of the prophetic ideals. Israel becomes the "Light Unto the Nations."

Israel is commanded to take unto itself all the spiritual riches of humanity, all those glittering qualities of mind which made it in Biblical times a teacher of man. In its Galut, these qualities were near death in the ghetto's narrow confines. But, though beat and bloodied, they did not die, and when we are established firmly in the land of our fathers as a free people, they will breathe deeply again.⁸¹

"I believe that only the Jewish people in their Homeland can bring about the redemption of the world, not those in America or Russia."⁸²

A great part of the rebirth of the State involves itself with the rebirth of the Hebrew language. "The

⁸⁰ Forum, 1959, "Vision and Redemption," p. 113.

⁸¹ David Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny, p. 515.

⁸² David Ben Gurion, Hazon V'derech, Vol. II, p. 178.

Hebrew language which the people appeared to have laid aside for 2,000 years, came to life again and became the language of speech, life and literature and of the revived State of Israel. Nothing like this has ever happened in the history of languages."⁸³ Hebrew, the language of our forefathers; the language of the greatest contribution to civilization--the Bible; the language the people had forgotten while living in exile, and the language which, when the State was at last established, has been revived. The Bible written in Hebrew is the fountain from which our blessings flow.

Over this ancient source and secret of Israel's imperishability, the Hebrew Book stood watch. What other nation's destiny so closely and so long was the destiny of its writ? For thousands of years, we safeguarded the Book, and it has kept us safe. When we lost our independence it, too, was ripped from its birthplace, its horizons were contracted, its contents diluted, and it was immured into a narrow corner which was yet the sole refuge of our spirit -- then, miraculously, Israel, and with it the Bible, was restored.⁸⁴

Hebrew, beyond the scope of being a language, has another purpose.

The Jewish people has a language of its own, namely, Hebrew; and every Jew must teach it to his children in addition to the language of the country where he lives, because the

⁸³ Forum, 1959, "Vision and Redemption," p. 112.

⁸⁴ David Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny, p. 126.

language unites all the parts of our people throughout the Diaspora, and unites all the generations of our people in the past and in the future -- being the language in which our national culture was created, and the language of the free and independent Israel of today.⁸⁵

Today, both Israel and the Galut remain a fact. There must be a vital partnership between the two.

The survival of Jewry from now on is inconceivable without the State of Israel and an inner attachment to that State. But the survival of the State is also inconceivable without a loyal partnership between it and all the Jewries of the Diaspora. Without a moral, cultural and political illumination that will go out from Israel to all parts of the Diaspora, the partnership may be undermined.⁸⁶

For by far the greater part of the people is still divided among the nations, and so the State is not yet the consummation but an instrument of redemption and its principal means. But, by its establishment, the State gave the vision body and basis of realism, and surpassing all else became a force to weld together and unify the Galut.⁸⁷

In exile, the spirit of our people is still constrained. Like the absorption of immigrants, like expansion of agriculture, industry and communications, so the cultivation of the new wisdom of Israel is impossible without the devoted and constant cooperation of the whole Jewish people. The whole future of the Jewish people, the destiny of the State, rests on close and faithful collaboration between Israel and its Land and Jewry in America.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Forum, 1959, "Zionism and Pseudo-Zionism," p. 148.

⁸⁶ Ibid., "Vision and Redemption," p. 120.

⁸⁷ David Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny, p. 491.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 517.

It is an interdependency that must be established.

The fate of the State is involved in the fate of World Jewry and vice versa. The State of Israel is only the beginning of the redemption; its survival and the fulfillment of its mission cannot be assured without the continuation of the Ingathering of the Exiles. Jewry in the Galut, and above all in the two great centers (America and Russia) is already far gone in the process of assimilation, although its Jewish consciousness has not yet disappeared. Without mutual bonds between Israel and the Galut communities, it is doubtful whether Israel will survive, and whether Jewry in the Galut will not perish by euthanasia or suffocation.⁸⁹

The relationship between the State and the Galut will also help to strengthen the desire for Aliyah.

If only the State is made strong and durable, if only it creates a full and noble way of life equal to that of any other country, materially and spiritually -- and it can be done -- then perhaps the Jews in lands of no distress or pressures will also find in Israel all the comfort and freedom they now enjoy. They will find here, besides, rare values and assets which Jews have nowhere else; Jewish independence and all its rich expressions in economy, politics, culture, science and art, and in international status. But for that, for the Ingathering, for realization in full of the material, political and cultural autocrat of the State, we need, as always, the creative pact between the State and people.⁹⁰

This partnership does not suggest a political interdependence as well. "The State cannot interfere in the

⁸⁹ Yearbook, 1957, p. 30.

⁹⁰ David Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny, p. 197.

Galut, cannot give them instructions or make demands of them."⁹¹

Israel's governing authority reaches out to all its inhabitants and to them only. Only its citizens determine its course and elect its government; the laws of the Land are binding only on those who dwell in it. The Jews who live in other countries are their citizens, subject to their laws and policies; the State of Israel has no authority to speak in the name of those Jews or to direct their actions.⁹²

Conversely, "the link with the Galut does not signify that its Jews will shape the State in a Galut likeness."⁹³

The Jew of the Galut has a responsibility to Israel as well, and only through the fulfillment of this responsibility can there be the possibility of the survival of Jewry in the Galut.

Three elements are the common denominator which can unite religious, orthodox, conservative, reform and free-thinking Jewry and give Jewish meaning purpose and significance even to those Jews who will not join in the process of Ingathering of the Exiles. It is these three elements that can serve as a moral and cultural bond between the Galut Jewry and Israel:

1. Hebrew Education -- the central place which will be held by the studying of the Book of Books.

⁹¹ David Ben Gurion, Rebirth and Destiny, p. 506.

⁹² Ibid., p. 489.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 506.

2. The intensification of the personal bond of Israel in all forms: visits, investments of capital, education of children. Youth and university students in the Galut should come to Israel for longer or shorter periods of time; training for the best of the youth and intelligentsia to come to join the builders and defenders of the country.
3. Deepening the attachment to Messianic Vision of Redemption, that is, the division of Jewish and human redemption held by the prophets of Israel.*

It is a three-fold cord uniting and binding all Jewry -- if we will it, it shall never be broken.⁹⁴

Ben Gurion then has both a private and a public view of the Galut. In the first instance, he would state that one cannot live a complete Jewish existence outside the Land of Israel. Personally, he would negate the Galut. But, being a statesman and politician and realizing that all of World Jewry will not come to Israel to live, he then suggests a three-fold program which might aid the survival of the Jew in the Galut. Only through the partnership of Israel and the Galut, and the Messianic Vision of Redemption can there be a hope for the continuance of Jewry in the Galut.

*It is interesting to note that in his articles in the Hadasah Magazine of October 1961, the third category rather than Messianic Vision becomes the deepening of material and moral ties.

⁹⁴ Forum, 1959, "Vision and Redemption," p. 123.

CHAPTER III
COMPARISON OF THE ATTITUDES OF
JACOB KLATZKIN AND DAVID BEN GURION

In attempting a comparison between the thought of Jacob Klatzkin and David Ben Gurion, one fact is of critical significance. The environment and situation of these men were entirely different. Klatzkin lived his entire life in the Galut. Interestingly so, though negating the possibility of a future for the Jew in the Galut, Klatzkin himself did not go to Israel to live. On at least three occasions, he went to visit, but economic considerations, and personal considerations (namely, his disappointment at not being elected to the Philosophy Chair at the Hebrew University, and his feeling that nothing else could provide him with a satisfactory life there) superseded his positive philosophical speculation.¹ Klatzkin, as a result, wrote all of his work in the Galut, living in Germany, Switzerland or America. Moreover, he died just before the establishment of the State of Israel.

Ben Gurion, on the other hand, is not a figure of the Galut. His personal life evolves around the Land and the Language. Thus, his concern with the Galut is as one safely inside the Homeland, looking out at the dispersed,

¹
Based on personal conversations with Dr. Nahum Goldman and Shaul Hareli.

rather than the opposite as was the case with Klatzkin.

Klatzkin, having written his work prior to the State, could only create a theoretical Nationalism. It was a Nationalism best defined in Herzl's concept of "Zionism being the Jewish State on the Way." Klatzkin feels that the idea of Nationalism is in essence a question of Will. "If you will it -- it is no legend," said Herzl. By an act of Will, the Jewish people must reassert its nationality and determine its destiny. Yet, Klatzkin does not call for anything as practical as Aliyah. He does not suggest that even a small group go and prepare the Land for its eventual rebirth. The State will come into being, but this remains a goal of the nebulous future rather than of the immediate, concrete present. Notable also is the fact that after the publication of *Tehumim* and a similar work in German, "*Krisis und Entscheidung*," Klatzkin did not find it necessary to expand or alter his ideology save for scattered periodical articles which restate his main themes. His Nationalism then was one of conception rather than inception, a static rather than dynamic view.

The reality of the situation is a constant prod to Ben Gurion in his philosophy of Nationalism. The State and the Nationalism promoted within its borders are for him matters of historic fact. Ben Gurion can even envision two forms of Nationalism -- a Nationalism of the Israeli citizen living within the State, and a Nationalism fostered by

those living in the Galut. The first type is self-explanatory -- a Nationalism common to proud citizens of any country and enhanced through the Messianic Vision. The second results from the efforts of the entire Jewish people, who will in time recognize the emptiness of a Galut existence, awaken their Nationalistic consciousness and in turn participate in Aliyah. Nationalism thus can be a positive force and phenomenon in the life of every Jew.

Another factor which accounts for the difference between them is their audience. Klatzkin was primarily a philosophical essayist and addressed himself to a limited audience of readers. His writings are intended for scholars and for leaders in the Zionist movement. He tries to establish a philosophical basis for rejecting the Galut. His appeal is to the elite reader and not to the mass audience. It was his desire to convince the intelligentsia of the truth of his thoughts. They in turn would influence the members of the movement as well as eventually all of World Jewry.

Ben Gurion is a statesman and politician. His words are, of necessity, constantly before the masses. They are both read and heard by the majority of the Jews in the world. Being a politician places limitations on Ben Gurion. He must always be concerned with the reaction of the listener and, as one seeking funds from abroad, he must be concerned not to embarrass nor disturb any source of the needed financial support. Often, when a negative reaction

greeted an expression of his personal feelings, an immediate explanation or clarification of the remark will be forthcoming, ameliorating the initial impact. This, for example, was the case after the speech to the 25th Zionist Congress in December of 1960, calling dwellers in the Galut irreligious and godless.

The immediate situation of both men is evident in their basic language and style. Klatzkin's Hebrew reflects his feeling of his own position as an intellectual's intellectual. Klatzkin considered himself a philosopher and attempted to duplicate a philosophic style within his writing. From the standpoint of the Hebrew language itself, Klatzkin has an extraordinary grasp of Hebrew terms and vocabulary. Yet the Hebrew presents difficulties. Influenced by German, his sentences are often long and involved. His Hebrew is complicated by his attempt to play on words. The language is frequently couched in obscurities and repetition. It is a Hebrew designed mainly for the select who are at home in general philosophic discussions and whose Hebrew commands a knowledge of Biblical and medieval usage.

Ben Gurion's Hebrew is directed to his audience. Both his speeches and his essays are written in a clear, lucid style meant to be easily understandable. Though at times poetic, he does not attempt a profundity of language. His words are designed to appeal to the average man in the street, rather than to a limited group of intelligentsia.

The Hebrew is often Biblical in form, but use is made of the latest vocabulary nuances.

Klatzkin was a theoretician; Ben Gurion is a politician. Did the former influence the latter? Though some of Klatzkin's thoughts are paralleled in the works of Ben Gurion, his influence upon the Statesman is negligible. In Ben Gurion's writings there is no direct reference to Jacob Klatzkin. The offhand reference in the Government Yearbook of 1957 -- "This is not the negation of the Galut which formed a part of the ideology of some extreme Zionists who themselves continued to live in exile"² -- is probably in reference to Klatzkin since he was one of the foremost proponents of the utter hopelessness of the future in the Galut,* yet continued to live therein. If so, this is the only reference to him in all of Ben Gurion's writings.

While there is no direct influence, the thought of the two men runs along similar lines. Both men are quick to agree that presently the "forms" of Judaism no longer are the dominant feature determining Jewish survival. The result of the Enlightenment is in both cases the starting point for the negative conclusion. Enlightenment means Assimilation in a trend that cannot be checked and thus means eventually the demise of Judaism in the Galut. The

² Refer to Footnote 40, p. 41.

*Arthur Hertzberg in The Zionist Idea, calls Klatzkin the most radical denier of any possibility of a future Jewish life in the Galut. If this is the case, then most certainly Ben Gurion's remark was in reference to Klatzkin.

statement -- "I assert that the total assimilation of our people is possible" -- is applicable to each man's thought. Klatzkin lived when Jewish life still flourished in the "ghettos" of Russia. He even envisioned their walls crumbling under the influence of the Haskalah. For Ben Gurion, the ghetto was past history, and no barrier remained to hold back assimilation, be it conscious or unconscious.

The only redemption from decay and disintegration in the Galut was the State -- for Klatzkin; Land and Language being the primary elements of its composition -- for Ben Gurion; this, plus the element of Messianism is to characterize the State. Klatzkin was sufficiently a theoretician not to be concerned with the actual structure of the State -- a nation like any other nation was entirely satisfactory to him. As long as the primary elements of Land and Language were fulfilled, the remaining values would take care of themselves. Yet this might result in a second-class standing which would not be considered by Ben Gurion. The State for him must be the world's moral leader, promoting the vision of the prophets.

Klatzkin shared something of this "messianism" since Zionism and Humanism became corresponding terms for him. Influenced by the period in which he lived, Klatzkin felt that any powerful movement must embrace humanistic values as part of its philosophy. It was only natural that Zionism should include Humanism as part of its Nationalism.

Throughout all of Jewish history, the Jew had disseminated these values all over the world. Zionism, which was to replace the Jewish religion as the dominant force in the life of the Jew, would, of course, include in its makeup these ethical standards. This is as far as he goes. In all, it must be termed a tangential element in his thought.

Ben Gurion uses the term Messianic Redemption to describe the universal human values to be incorporated in the State. The "Prophetic Ideal" of 2,000 years ago becomes a fundamental goal of the reborn Israel. This ideal is a "must" for both those living in and outside the State. In respect to this Humanism, the two men agree; yet where it is peripheral to Klatzkin, Ben Gurion views it as fundamental. Where Klatzkin finds it in Zionism, Ben Gurion sees it only in the State as realized and growing.

For Ben Gurion, with the establishment of the State, the Zionist movement had fulfilled its purpose. Zionism in the Galut is "bankrupt." Even the use of the term Zionist while continuing to live in the Galut is in error. A Zionist can only be one preparing for Aliyah.

In a similar way, both men "negate the Galut," but mean something somewhat different by the term.

Now that the State has come into existence, Ben Gurion looks upon its establishment as being part of a "2,000 year leap of history." The State is more akin to the Biblical period than to the many years spent in the Galut. For Ben Gurion, the Galut definitively means Exile. The values

created by the Jew in Exile as well as his life spent therein during this 2,000 year period are negligible. During the period of the Galut, the Jew created only "interpretations of interpretations of interpretations." The essential values of Judaism were expressed by our Biblical ancestors and expanded by the prophets. It is to this ideal that the modern day Israeli wishes to return -- the Messianic ideal of the prophets. The "leap" over a 2,000 year period means the rejection of the life the Jew led; that is, being a minority in an alien land, living within the ghetto confines and being assimilated into the non-Jewish culture. The Biblical period was the last period when the Jew was able to live as a free man on his own soil unhindered by influences other than his own values and beliefs. This is why Ben Gurion states that the Judges and Prophets are closer to us today than the Rabbis. The Judges and Prophets act entirely within a Jewish framework, whereas the Rabbis living in an alien culture could only produce "pilpul." By virtue of the State being Jewish, and entirely Jewish, the Jew has made this "2,000 year leap of history."

Klatskin's negation is not concerned with the Jew in the Galut before the Enlightenment. His is a negation of the present day Galut only, not that of the past. For Klatskin, medieval Judaism was able to foster itself in the Exile because it was confined within the ghetto walls. As a "nation within a nation" Judaism survived. His

attitude would be that as long as Judaism was able to continue with relative autonomy unhindered by outside influences, it was able to progress and flourish spiritually. Within the ghetto walls, the Jews had their own nation, and their own Nationalism -- the Jewish Religion. Judaism, had it remained within these boundaries, would have been able to continue its existence in the Galut.

The one positive advantage that the Galut has had is that the Hebrew Language became enriched during Israel's wanderings. For Klatzkin, this was the reward of the Galut.

Why the negation of the contemporary situation? For Klatzkin this results from the fact that the forces which once guaranteed our survival, namely, the Jewish Tradition as developed within the secure walls of the ghetto, no longer commands the total outlook of the Jew. Religion was our Nationalism in the past. Within the form of the religion, Israel lived in the hope of returning to the Land. Even in his prayers, the Jew had a connection to Zion as he prayed in the Language of his forefathers.

But now, religion is no longer the dominant factor in the life of the "Enlightened Jew." The religion that has kept us alive until now is losing or has lost its purpose. But under the influence of the outside world, the force of the Jewish Religion is diminishing and eventually the flame will be extinguished. Since the preservative is dying, the Galut, too, is fated for destruction. Nothing will remain to hold the Galut together. (Klatzkin is unconcerned as to what form the Jewish Religion will have once the State

is established -- it is the Nation, not its religion, which concerns him.)

The Jew now must look for a replacement for the forms of Religion. The natural replacement is Nationalism and its ideals of Land and Language. Religion has kept us alive in the Galut until now; our only hope for survival in the future is Nationalism. "Negation of the Galut" then means that Jewish life in the Galut cannot survive in any meaningful form, for even the restricted religious Nationalism that kept it alive until now, is dying. The positive corollary is the return to the Land and Language; with World Jewry adopting this philosophy, the Galut will become an anomaly. With Israel's Land and Language central, the Galut loses all value or attraction. At present, the Galut will serve temporarily as a mode of preparation for the eventual establishment of the State. The State well established will signal the demise of the Galut.

Ben Gurion also negates the Galut as well as the Galut experience. He agrees that in the past, religion was instrumental in keeping the Jews alive. But it was not the religion per se. It was the hope contained therein for the Return to Zion. Three times a day the Jew prayed for this return. Within this hope was the dream of Messianic Redemption. This all-encompassing vision was the primary survival factor. Led by the prayer that not only will the world adopt the prophetic ideals, but in the belief of the

eventuality of the Messiah arriving to return the Jew to his Homeland, the Jew sustained himself in the Galut.

Two elements have now effected a change in the Jew's position -- the Enlightenment and the State. Since the Enlightenment, the Jew has been relegated either to second-class citizenship, or merely by being under the influence of the non-Jew he has been forced to adopt their ways and thus Assimilate. The Jewish religion is no longer the primary source of his entire being. Whether the Jew lives in Russia, Morocco, England or the United States, his religion does not permeate his life and, living in an alien culture, he cannot be wholehearted in his Jewishness.

Ben Gurion, though recognizing the past value of the religion itself, does not discuss its present day form. He does feel that perhaps the Orthodox Jew can be truly religious but he chides him for not following the Talmudic dictate that he who lives outside the Land is as one who has no God. The Reform Jew, though heavily promoting the prophetic ideal, is severely subject to Assimilation.

If he cannot be a complete Jew in the Galut, then his life as a Jew is essentially an empty one. Ben Gurion's negation then means that the Galut has no viable form of Jewishness. The religious form is either dying or is at essence Aliyah. In either case, the Galut is dead. Wherein is salvation? The answer is the State. Only in Israel is the Jew free of these influences. The very nature of the State is Jewish. The Jew, especially the aware Jew, who

does not wish this conflict and who wishes to identify with his people totally, will come to Israel.

But there is a limit to Ben Gurion's negation. He at no time states, as does Klatskin, that the Galut is definitely fated for destruction. He holds out hope for its survival, but only if the Galut Jew, whom he realizes will not come en masse to Israel, will follow his three-point program of Hebrew study, especially of the Bible, of cultural and technological ties with Israel (especially in the form of trips and prolonged visits of the youth) and finally of rekindling the spark of the Messianic Vision. Only through these forms can there at least be the hope of Judaism surviving in the Galut. Israel's part in this survival is to serve as the cornerstone for the dissemination of the Messianic values to the nations of the world and to serve as the foundation and support of World Jewry. Thus, with Israel as its center, there is some short term hope for the Galut.

Can then the term, "Shililat HaGalut," be applied to the philosophies of both Jacob Klatskin and David Ben Gurion? The answer is yes, but with a necessary clarification. Since Klatskin could write entirely as an essayist unconcerned with reaction, he can make the statement, "I assert that Galut Jewry cannot survive."³ Ben Gurion's negation is not

³ Refer to Footnote 3, p. 3.

nearly as severe. Though he says, "Not only do I negate the Galut, I negate the glorification of the Galut,"⁴ it must be felt that this refers to his personal view. But, whenever such a statement is made, Ben Gurion, the politician, is careful to remark that the statement is a personal estimate, or must not be taken literally. As David Ben Gurion, he negates the Galut. As Premier and Politician, he must hold out hope for its survival.*

Jacob Klatskin did not have a direct influence upon the thought of David Ben Gurion. Though their thinking on occasion is similar, such as in the idea of incorporating ethical values within the structure of Zionism or the

⁴Refer to Footnote 39, p. 40.

*One need only contrast the tone in speeches from B'Ma'arashah which are addressed to Israelis, or the Israel Government Yearbook and the article in the October 1961 issue of Hadassah Magazine, in order to note the evident contrast between the personal and public attitudes of Ben Gurion. Where he is permitted latitude, Ben Gurion will deny the possibility of a future in the Galut. On the other hand, if he addresses groups in the Galut upon whom he is dependent for financial support, he must water down his personal belief to the point wherein he must make suggestions for the methods to be carried out in order to preserve the Galut.

It is also noticeable that every English translation of Ben Gurion's writings translates "Galut" to mean Diaspora and not Exile. Dispersion would mean a scattering with Israel being only one place wherein Jews are located. Exile, as Ben Gurion would have it, means being removed from one's homeland and must some day be returned to it. Thus even the English translations proceed to dilute Ben Gurion's own views, for if one is in Diaspora, he need not return to the Homeland. By the same token, an Irishman living in America is also part of an Irish Diaspora.

State, or the necessity of Land and Language, there is no evidence of positive identification between the two. Certainly Ben Gurion is aware of Klatzkin's writings, but he never quotes directly from them. Ben Gurion's conclusions were derived independently of the thought of Jacob Klatzkin. His philosophy would be the same even if Klatzkin had not written "Tehumim." The similarity of thought is only coincidental.

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