

CALUT IN RABBINIC LITERATURE

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## INTRODUCTION

"Galut, exile, seems to be the dominant feature of Jewish history," writes a contemporary Orthodox theologian.<sup>1</sup> That physical exile characterized the Jewish people's existence for much of its history there can be no dispute, but the claim can also be made that galut has played a central role in the spiritual life of the people as well. For two thousand years Jews have prayed daily: "Lift up the banner to bring our exiles together...Return thou in mercy to the city Jerusalem and dwell in it...Blessed art thou, O Lord, who restores thy divine presence to Zion."<sup>2</sup>

These petitions, part of six "national petitions"<sup>3</sup> which were standardized by the Rabbis as part of the daily Amidah, emphasize a condition of disharmony which God's aid may rectify. Within the prayers one can glimpse the nucleus of a Rabbinic view of exile. References are made both to the physical ingathering of the "dispersed of Israel" (nidche yisrael) and to the return of God's presence to Jerusalem with the concomitant restoration of the Temple cult. In other Rabbinic writings these and similar motifs embroidered with homiletic variations recur in connection with attempts to justify, rationalize, or explain the historical plight of the Jewish people.

In terming that plight "galut" we will be referring both to the historical situation of the Jews and their consciousness of that situation. Concerning our claim

that galut may be appropriately viewed in this conceptual fashion, H. H. Ben-Sasson has written:

The Hebrew term galut expresses the Jewish conception of the condition and feelings of a nation uprooted from its homeland and subject to alien rule. The term is essentially applied to the history and the historical consciousness of the Jewish people from the destruction of the Second Temple to the creation of the State of Israel...The feeling of exile does not always necessarily accompany the condition of exile. It is unique to the history of the Jewish people that this feeling has powerfully colored the emotions of the individual as well as the national consciousness.<sup>4</sup>

Yitzchak Baer, in his historical essay Galut, argues similarly for a broad conception of galut:

The word "Galut" embraces a whole world of facts and ideas that have appeared with varying strength and clarity in every age of Jewish history. Political servitude and dispersion, the longing for liberation and reunion, sin and repentance and atonement: these are the larger elements that must go to make up the concept of Galut if the word is to retain any real meaning.<sup>5</sup>

The purpose of the present work is to isolate from a particular stratum of the Jewish tradition, namely the literature of the Rabbinic period, its concept (or concepts) of galut. Given the intertwining of history and historical consciousness involved in the concept of galut we will be dealing as well with such related historical rubrics as the destruction of the Second Temple and the suffering of the Jewish people within the borders of Eretz Israel.

The period under consideration is derivative, of course, from the earlier Biblical period. In chapter I

we will detail the Biblical usage of the term galut. In addition to its specific usage in the Bible, galut already carried abstract connotations: it is therefore appropriate to speak of a "concept" of galut within the Biblical tradition.<sup>6</sup> Galut in the Bible can refer to the Babylonian exile, to the general state of forced absence from one's native habitat, to an individual banished from his home, or in an abstract sense to the condition of being exiled or collectively to the people who are in exile.<sup>7</sup>

The Rabbis inherited both the Biblical conceptions of galut and the actual experience of a widespread diaspora. They knew of a previous exile and the return of some of the people to the land. It is therefore essential at the outset of our investigation to determine the parameters of galut and to distinguish it from the diaspora.

As mentioned above, Ben-Sasson suggests that the beginning of galut in our sense of the term must be correlated with the destruction of the Second Temple. He draws both "physical" and "psychological" distinctions between galut and diaspora:

The residence of a great number of members of a nation, even the majority, outside their homeland is not definable as galut so long as the homeland remains in that nation's possession. Only the loss of a political-ethnic center and feeling of uprootedness turns Diaspora (dispersion) into galut (exile).<sup>8</sup>

Other historians view galut differently. Baer sees all the

phenomena of galut (described above) as existing previously in the Hellenistic-Roman diaspora and sees in the destruction of the Temple "only" a widening of the breach in the nation's historical continuity, an augmentation of "the treasury of national-religious jewels whose loss is to be mourned."<sup>9</sup>

Ben-Tzion Dinur, the Israeli historian whose historical work (Israel Bagolah) deals with the "special historical character of 'Israel in Diaspora'...the continuation of collective Jewish life in the Dispersion and in spite of the Dispersion,"<sup>10</sup> considers the exile to begin only after the Arab conquest of Palestine:

The real "exile"...did not begin til the moment when Palestine ceased to be a Jewish country through being occupied and permanently settled by non-Jews. It is only from the time when the nation was deprived of the soil on which it had developed its own specifically national form of life that the problem of the individual Jews' preservation of their national character in the Dispersion became particularly acute.<sup>11</sup>

Each of these definitions of galut betrays the historical bias of its author, particularly insofar as the definition will determine the terminus ad quem of galut. Baer and Dinur clearly emphasize physical separation from the land as the essential element of galut. Ben-Sasson also suggests that the establishment of the State of Israel eliminates galut. Dinur (who elsewhere betrays his Zionist intellectual bias by dating the modern period from

the early, sporadic migrations to Palestine at the turn of the eighteenth century) does mention that his historical view clashes with tradition:

Jewish tradition and popular belief, it is true, do not make any distinction between the destruction of Jewish sovereignty in Palestine and the nation's loss of its own territory, but regard them as one and the same.<sup>12</sup>

It is precisely this lack of clarity in the traditional point of view of the Rabbis which determines the texture of the Rabbinic position and distinguishes our approach from that of the historian. We will take as our starting point Ben-Sasson's suggestion that the loss of the political-ethnic center and the accompanying feelings of uprootedness turns diaspora into galut. We will therefore have to distinguish at varying points in our discussion, between actual galut and the "semi-galut" which characterized the position of the Jews living on the land after the destruction of the Temple.

The history of the relationship between the Rabbinical communities of Eretz Israel and Babylonia is relevant to our discussion and will be considered in chapter VI. In fact, conditions in the "galut" in terms of economic and political stability were often superior to those in Eretz Israel, and this will definitely be seen to color the Rabbinic view of the exile to some extent. In addition, the general contours of the material do not suggest a great deal of varia-



tion over time and Schechter's observations concerning the "development" of Rabbinic thought are reflected in our study:

On the whole, it may safely be maintained that there is little in the dogmatic teachings of the Palestinian authorities of the first and second centuries to which, for instance, R. Ashi of the fifth and even R. Sherira of the tenth century, both leaders of Rabbinic opinion in Babylon, would have refused their consent, though the emphasis put on the one or the other doctrine may have differed widely as a result of changed conditions and surroundings.<sup>13</sup>

Only in those instances where the change of emphasis is apparent will we be concerned with the dating or background of certain comments. This will be especially the case in the material which deals with the relative status of the two communities, Babylonia and Palestine.

Despite the centrality of the diaspora to Jewish history and the significance of the concept of galut from the Biblical period, the concrete reality of the Rabbinic period did not generate a great deal of comment on galut. There is no Rabbinic work which concentrates on it specifically, although the Midrash on the Book of Lamentations is richer than any other single source. Aggadic comments concerning galut are spread out in the various midrashim and throughout the Talmud.

None of the modern systematizers of Rabbinic thought (Moore, Schechter, Kadushin, Marmorstein, Urbach) devotes so much as a chapter to galut, although Bialik and Ravnitsky (in Sefer H-Aggadah) did collect a considerable number of texts describing it. The material which we have assembled

here has been classified by the systematizers under such rubrics as "Sin and Punishment," "God's Presence in the World," "Land of Israel," etc.

Instead of dealing with galut in these terms, however, we have attempted to array the material on galut according to a different set of descriptive terms, i.e., the reasons for, character of, and purpose of galut, as well as considering the theological dimension and the role of the land of Israel itself. The test of the methodology should be the same as that invoked by Kadushin to test his own terms:

We have just mentioned several of our descriptive terms. They are "justified", it seems to us, on two counts. First, they epitomized genuine aspects or qualities of rabbinic thought. Second, they represent an analysis that attempts to relate the specific rabbinic statements to rabbinic thought as a whole. Our descriptive vocabulary constitutes an interpretation, but a justified interpretation.<sup>14</sup>

In compiling the material from various sources my approach was always to attempt to understand the purpose or motive behind each comment in its own terms. For example, many of the comments imply a question: "Why did the exile occur/" Others may be seen to respond to "What purpose does it serve?" or "Why is it of this particular nature?"

In chapters two through four the comments are arranged in detail. One important distinction which arises from the texts themselves is the difference between a reason for galut and a purpose for galut. The former always tries to

define a direct correspondence between the behavior of the Jews and their exile. The latter starts from the condition of exile and attempts to understand not simply "cause," but also "effect" of the exile, both upon the Jews and the world at large.

Within our category of purpose we will distinguish the general Rabbinic position of the "teleology of the exile" from the later concept of mission. For example, the Philadelphia Conference of reformers in 1869 declared concerning the exile:

We look upon the destruction of the second Jewish commonwealth not as a punishment for the sinfulness of Israel, but as a result of the divine purpose revealed to Abraham, which, as has become ever clearer in the course of the world's history, consists in the dispersion of the Jews to all parts of the earth, for the realization of their high priestly mission, to lead the nations to the true knowledge and worship of God.

The Rabbis, on the other hand, did not need to reject the concept of galut as punishment, but rather sought an explanation of God's purposes which would embrace it. However, the theological flexibility of the Rabbis with respect to the exile is remarkable. Their comments concerning the purpose of galut typically vary according to the straits of the community of Israel. Schechter points out this "theology by impulse" and suggests:

The preacher, for instance, would dwell more on the mercy of God, or on the special claims of Israel, when his people were oppressed, persecuted, and in want of

consolation; whilst in times of ease and comfort he would accentuate the wrath of God awaiting the sinner, and his severity at the day of judgment.<sup>16</sup>

Our problem then, is essentially to look for point of congruence in this vast and unsystematic literature. We must avoid generalizations from the very scanty material directly bearing on our subject and perhaps may conclude with only "some aspects" of a Rabbinic idea of galut. Schechter alludes to this problem which becomes particularly acute in an investigation of galut:

The...Rabbis seem to have thought that the true health of a religion is to have a theology without being aware of it: and thus they hardly ever made--nor could they make--any attempt towards working their theology into a formal system, or giving us a full exposition of it.<sup>17</sup>

An alternative approach to describing aspects of galut would be to treat galut as a "value-concept." Kadushin, who introduces this idea as an attempt to understand the psychology of the Rabbis, does not treat galut in this fashion. Nevertheless, since the values referred to in the concept of galut are "communicable" and can also be viewed as personal and subjective,<sup>18</sup> we will attempt to apply his framework as well. (Chapter 7).

The problem of aggadic language and figures of speech will recur in many areas of our analysis. Kadushin treats aggadic statements as independent entities, which contain ideas or describe situations that are complete in themselves.<sup>19</sup> He treats Aggadah as a concretization of the value-concepts

in speech (as distinguished from the Halakhah which concretizes them in law and action).<sup>20</sup> With respect to galut, however, we cannot assume a priori that galut is the operative Rabbinic concept involved and references will have to be continually drawn to the accompanying ideas of suffering and Hurban (destruction).

In terms of measuring the real theological value of a given comment, in general, we are without guidelines. If the aggadah is taken as the free language play of the Rabbis with halachah serving as the limit, then our only guidelines are those which refer to the status of the land of Israel; also, the Jewish liturgy provides a point of reference and may reflect the significance of a given concept to the people as a whole.

References will occasionally be made to later conceptions of galut, particularly by way of contrast with the Rabbinic view. For example, in the mystical literature the exile is connected with a corresponding defect in the Divine Order, an adaptation of the Rabbinic idea of Shechinta Bagaluta, (that God's indwelling presence also goes into exile). Other modern thinkers have extended galut beyond its place as the historical reality and consciousness of the Jewish people to a metaphor for the human condition (Berkovits) or a metahistorical and cosmic category.<sup>21</sup>

As was suggested in a recent Midstream symposium,<sup>22</sup> "The idea of Galut has played a crucial role in shaping Jewish life and attitudes during many centuries." The present work is an attempt to take a critical slice from the history of ideas in the Jewish tradition, and to analyze whatever insights within that tradition can be said to characterize the Rabbinic literature. In order to deal in the categories suggested by the texts themselves, we will temporarily lay aside any notions of what role consciousness and "exile as consciousness," may play and focus on the Hebrew term galut. As indicated above, our approach will be both verbal, focusing on texts which mention galut, and conceptual, dealing with related ideas in the literature. Biblical usage will provide the background and take-off point for much of our Rabbinic material.

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<sup>1</sup>Eliezer Berkovits, Faith After the Holocaust, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup>Petitions #10, #14, and #17 from the daily Amidah prayer; translation from P. Birnbaum, Daily Prayer Book, pp. 94-98.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. commentary on the Amidah, Joseph Hertz, Authorized Daily Prayer Book, p. 142.

<sup>4</sup>Hayyim Hillel Ben-Sasson, "Galut," Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol. VII, p. 275.

<sup>5</sup>Yitzchak Baer, Galut, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup>יצחק אריה זליגמן, "גלות," אנציקלופדיה מקראית, ע' 496-498.

<sup>7</sup>Interpreters' Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. II, p. 186.

<sup>8</sup>Ben-Sasson, loc. cit.

<sup>9</sup>Baer, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>10</sup>Ben-Tzion Dinur, Israel and the Diaspora, p. 3-4.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p.5.

<sup>13</sup>Solomon Schechter, Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, pp. xxii - xxiii.

<sup>14</sup>Max Kadushin, The Rabbinic Mind, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup>David Philipson, The Reform Movement in Judaism, p.354.

<sup>16</sup>Schechter, op. cit., p. 612.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Kadushin, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p.60.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p.11.

<sup>21</sup>A. Cohen, Natural and Supernatural Jew, Chap. III,pt. 1.

<sup>22</sup>"The Meaning of Galut in America Today," Midstream, Vol. IX, no. 1, p.6.

## THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR LATER VIEWS OF GALUT

### CHAPTER I

In order to appreciate the nuances of Rabbinic opinion of the experience of galut it is essential to discuss their verbal and conceptual background in the Biblical tradition. The verbal precedent turns out to be fairly restricted, but the concept of galut, whether actual or potential, had a broader significance as we shall see below.

Our concern is only tangentially the problem of determining the historical-cultural roots of certain Rabbinic views of galut. The Rabbis, viewing the Bible as a unit, did not seek to analyze whether a given statement reflected a reaction to a particular situation. Consequently, similar warnings about a future exile in the torah and later periods (e.g. the time of the conquest and of the prophets) would be seen by them to reflect the continuity of certain ideas through scripture. When we assume that apparently from a very early period the concept of potential exile was conveyed to the people as an integral part of the covenant with God, we need not ask the question of the literal truth of that assumption. Although certain Biblical scholars have concluded likewise (see below), more important for our consideration is an overview of Biblical reality as it was perceived by the Rabbis. In the following analysis, we will



try to determine the place of galut in the general sweep of the Biblical view of the relationship between God and Israel.

Given our broader purposes, it is not particularly significant that the word galut (גלות) in its various forms (e.g., גלות, גלותו, גלותו) occurs only thirteen times in the Bible. The parallel substantive form, golah (גולה) occurs forty times with variations.<sup>1</sup> Translators render each of the forms as "captivity" in virtually every case, but it is possible to suggest some differences in usage:

1) The word galut occurs only one time outside of the "Later Prophets" whereas golah occurs some 15 times in the so-called "historical" books (i.e., Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah). 2) Galut is used in a construct sense (galut of Judah, galut of Jerusalem, our galut) in every instance except one (Amos 1:6 and 1:9); golah, on the other hand is used only once in construct (Ezekiel 3:15) and is occasionally the noun set in apposition to a construct (as in the expressions, זקני הגולה, בני הגולה, שבי הגולה).

3) These expressions, especially shevi-hagolah, prisoners of the captivity, and others which suggest some difference between shevi and golah (e.g. Ezekiel 12:11 בגולה בשבי ילכו and Nahum 3:10 גם היא לגולה הלכה בשבי) may perhaps intend a differentiation between the experience of, and the

location of, the captivity. The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, however, says that galut and golah may be used interchangeably (Amos 1:6, 15), "as synonyms in either the abstract sense (Ezekiel 1:2; 12:11) or the collectives meaning "exiles" (Jeremiah 29:20, 22)."<sup>2</sup>

The Rabbinic texts use the expression galut almost exclusively, and by no means restrict it to the construct usage. This particularly significant when we focus on those passages which are the locus classicus for the covenantal warnings concerning the nature of the future exile, the so called tochachot (reproofs) of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. Whereas in these instances the Bible uses other terms for expulsion and dispersion (from the verbs

לְהַפִּיץ, לְהַאֲבִיד, וּלְזַרֵּת to spread out, to ruin, or to scatter), the Rabbinic comments to the verses speak in terms of galut.

One might explain this fact as simply a linguistic development with a resulting gradual preference for the term galut. An alternative hypothesis would be that galut had established itself by the time of the Rabbinic period as a concept with certain connotations which do not characterize the term golah. For the purposes of this discussion we will use the term galut. This linguistic and partially psycholinguistic question of the term galut adumbrates our consideration of whether there is in fact a Rabbinic ideo-

logy (or ideologies) of galut. We will first have to demonstrate that galut is a conceptual category in the Biblical period.

The Encyclopedia Mikrait considers galut to develop as a concept in the Bible from two sources: a) "future expectations, which were widespread among the people of Israel from a very early period; b) the system of forced banishments which were employed by neighboring countries in the area."<sup>3</sup> If we follow Biblical history chronologically then we can trace the background of this motif of galut through the period of the sojournings and covenant-making of Abraham, the wanderings of the patriarchs, the journey to the land and the career of Moses, the covenantal guarantees and re-proofs, later specific warnings, and the actual experience of galut itself. From the exceptional beginning of Jewish history outside of the land of Israel in the case of Abraham to the crystallization of national identity and ideology in the wilderness, a situation which we can best describe as "tension" between exile and presence on the land is always manifest.<sup>4</sup>

In attempting to isolate the significance of any concept to Biblical man we are facing a severe methodological problem. Anthropologist Raphael Patai has attempted (in Tents of Jacob) to illustrate the effect of certain historical myths on the formulation of the culture of the Biblical

period. He writes of a "unique historical-mythological background, whose importance...lies in the psychological effect it had on the Hebrews following their settlement in Canaan...that set them apart from the other peoples of the contemporary world and that continued to exert its influence in all subsequent periods of Jewish history."<sup>5</sup>

The first part of this myth involves the fact that not only does the history of the people begin with Abraham outside of the land, but also "the Hebrew people came into being in the Egyptian Diaspora, that in the history of the Hebrews Diaspora came first, and nationhood, country and sovereignty second."<sup>6</sup> Concerning the early, pervasive character of the myth he suggests:

In the earliest national-traditional Hebrew consciousness (i.e., in the days of the monarchy) the Diaspora had primacy over the land of Israel, in the sense that the commonly held view was that the Hebrews had originated from the Mesopotamian Abraham and had developed into a nation known as the "Children of Israel" in Egypt. In this sense the early history of the Hebrews is unique.<sup>7</sup>

In addition, the first Jew, Abraham, remains until his very old age merely a stranger and sojourner in the land (Genesis 23:4, ger v'toshav). As part of the covenant Bein HaBettarim (between the sections, Genesis 15), in which God promises Abraham that his descendents will inherit the new land of Canaan, he is also informed that his seed will go into exile. The effect of this association of the promise

of the land with the foreknowledge of the exile is to create the model for the permanently insecure status for the Jews on the land. In fact the land does not really belong to the people at all, and they are not permitted to buy and sell it -- "For the land is mine as you are strangers (gerim) and sojourners (toshavim) with me" (Leviticus 25:23).

The status of Abraham with respect to the land is the eternally inherited status of the Jew as well. Just as it characterized the period of the patriarchs' traversing the land of Canaan which was promised to their descendents, so was the tension of the present and future of the people on the land always maintained.<sup>8</sup> Patai argues that the myth of the first covenant's being connected with the future exile of the people, was present and active together with the tradition of a group of tribes "in a land that was not theirs" (Genesis 15) who formed the nation.<sup>9</sup>

This historically symbolic formation of the people as gerim in fulfillment of the covenant Bein HaBettarim was followed by the events of the Exodus. Since virtually four-fifths of the torah describes the journey to the land and the accompanying revelation, the normative toraitic situation is that of being on the way to the land. Perhaps the greatest of the prophets, Moses, is in fact the prophet of the journey and never enters the land himself. Again we recognize a situation of tension between the current condition

and the anticipation of a new reality.

Patai also detects in the traditional retrospective view which connected legislation of moral and ritual law with the slavery in Egypt the functioning of an active exile myth. He concludes that "there can be no doubt that while the Diaspora in the monarchic period was not an actual reality, it certainly had a strong psychological immanence in the life of the Hebrews."<sup>10</sup>

The parallel of the situation of the exodus with the later phenomenon of galut is drawn graphically by Ezekiel (20:35-8). He terms galut "the wilderness of nations," and suggests that the people will be returned by it to their previous condition of being on the way to the land. In Jeremiah and Hosea there is evidence of a certain idealization of the wilderness image. The former (2:2) contrasts the affection for God which was characteristic of Israel's youth in the wilderness with their contemporary attitudes and behavior. Hosea (2:16) boldly declares, using the imagery of the renewal of a marriage bond, that the galut will serve to renovate the spiritual connection between the people and God.

One Biblical scholar refers these latter passages to a traditional prophetic hostility to settled agricultural or urban life. "The literary prophets draw a contrast between the virtues of the recollected life in the wilderness and

the evils inherent in urbanization."<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, Ezekiel's wilderness of nations and Jeremiah's description of it as "pits of thirst and darkness," (2:6), reflect a much more realistic description of actual conditions of exile. Von Rad characterizes this change of attitude as reflective of the changing historical circumstances:

This growth of negative aspects to such a pitch that in the end the whole time in the wilderness was given the appearance of so sombre a period, is connected with general radical insights about Israel's relationship to Jahweh and about the possibility of her existence in the light of this God, insights which only became consolidated in the later monarchical period, and certainly not without the activity of the prophets. It was the recognition of Israel's insecurity and exposedness, perhaps even her defeat, which so radically changed the picture of the wilderness. But this age also heard the tidings that Jahweh would do a new thing-- he would once more redeem Israel in the same way as he had done at the beginning and lead her again through the wilderness.<sup>12</sup>

The renewal and the redemption (in the wilderness again) would become necessary because the experience of the tension between present and future, people and land, had somehow dissolved. The terms of that tension are specified in great detail by the covenantal reproofs mentioned above. In particular, we have already noted the special character of the land which is always under the meticulous supervision of divine Providence (Deuteronomy 11:12). In Leviticus (20:22-23) the commandments are referred very specifically to the character of the land, that the Jews "should keep all my

statutes and ordinances, and perform them, so that the land to which I bring you for your dwelling will not vomit you out." The tension arises from the conditional nature of the Jews' relationship to the land; a violation of the covenant by the relaxation of the tension is the cause of the prophets' warnings.

The Bible suggests that the consciousness of this tension and the possibility of exile was constantly reiterated to the people even though it changed its character when galut became a more likely reality.<sup>13</sup> Yehezkel Kaufman describes the change of the character of galut from visionary threat to actual reality and suggests that "the descriptions of the exile in the Torah are, indeed, the most eloquent advocates of their antiquity, for they show clearly that their authors had no idea of the actual condition of Israel's historical exile...The mood of real exile is not reflected at all, nor are any of the later prophetic motifs alluded to: the gradual destruction, first of Israel then of Judah, or the destruction of the Temple. The image of exile in the torah must, therefore, be an ancient one, antedating the historical experience of destruction and exile."<sup>14</sup> Kaufman attributes the peculiar emphasis on the punishment of exile in the torah, as we have above, to the feeling that Israel was not autochthonous in Canaan, "that it was 'given' the land and might, therefore, be deprived



of it by an angry God."<sup>15</sup>

This continuous myth or feeling is communicated in periods beyond the time of the Patriarchs and the Exodus, and occurs periodically to remind the people of the possibility of exile. For example, in the course of the conquest of the land, as the land is divided among the tribes for permanent settlement, the people are informed (Joshua 23:16) "When you transgress the covenant of the Lord your God... and go and serve other gods...you shall perish quickly from off the good land which He has given you." During the reign of Solomon with the kingdom at the zenith of its power and the Temple newly constructed the king is reminded (I Kings 9:6-7): "But if you turn away from following me...and keep not My commandments...then I will cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them."

The admonitions and threats concerning the exile continue throughout the prophetic tradition from Amos and Hosea onward until the point when the people themselves had direct experience of galut. This experience is the final corroboration of a continuing tradition of galut. The reaction of the people is recorded in "exilic" poetry such as Psalm 137. The response of the Jews in exile, not to assimilate or to accept the downfall of their god, but to recognize their very existence as exilic and then to long for return, is the subject of considerable comment by Biblical scholars.

In a typical interpretation Th. C. Vriezen suggests that the "period of political annihilation brought with it a rebirth of Yahwism."<sup>16</sup> Sandmel (in The Hebrew Scriptures) remarks:

The experience of the exile was of far-reaching significance in the development of the religion of Israel. The exile marks the dividing line between the Ancient Hebrew religion and that which we call Judaism. The new experience provided a conviction of the continuous relation between the Deity and Israel.<sup>17</sup>

The actual conditions of exile provided the opportunity to test the experience of covenant theology and the people, conditioned by the warnings of the prophets, accepted the events as Divinely ordained. Peter Ackroyd writes of the deepening conception of exile which characterizes the later books of the Bible:

The exile is no longer as historic event to be dated in one period; it is much nearer to being a condition from which only the final age will bring release... the Chronicler is properly elaborating that aspect of prophetic teaching which stressed the absolute necessity of exile; that God's dealing with his people in the future must depend upon a repudiation and destruction of which the exile was the expression.<sup>18</sup>

Even with the implied development of the myths of exile, the Bible gives a fairly clear overview of the experience of galut. With respect to the reasons for galut, the tradition is virtually univocal -- violation of the covenant and the attendant sanctity of the land leads to exile. The land will not support any inhabitants who do not comport themselves righteously upon it.

Yehezkel Kaufman does suggest, however, that a certain development is evidenced in the reasons given by the Bible for galut. In particular he sees a distinction between the toraitic rationale and the views of the prophets. In the first instance the sins specified were those which involved the relationship between man and God as compared with the sins of a social character:

In the literature prior to classical prophecy, national doom and exile are, as rule, threatened only for idolatry. The idea that God dooms a whole society for moral corruption is not altogether absent in the early literature, but it is for particularly heinous sins which the whole society has committed or is responsible for that the doom comes...Classical prophecy radically alters this view; it threatens national doom and exile for everyday social sins...Amos is the first to evaluate social morality as a factor in national destiny...what underscores the novelty of this evaluation is Amos's almost complete silence regarding idolatry, the chief offense which the early literature held crucial for the destiny of the people.<sup>19</sup>

Yehudah Elitzur disputes this conclusion and gives several examples of toraitic commands on the social level that are connected with galut, as well as of prophetic "commands" of a sacral character. He suggests that the prophets simply repeated the toraitic formulations and applied them to situations which were realized during their lifetimes -- "in our days there are these specific sins and they will result in the following punishments."<sup>20</sup>

Granted that the Bible provides a reason for the exile, we may ask if it is possible to discern a purpose for the

exile or a function which it might serve ( in the sense we have defined above in the Introduction). Does the Bible, for example, support a conception of mission of the Jews as a light unto the nations in the exile?

We have already mentioned in connection with the wilderness motif the prophetic idea that the galut may serve to renew the spiritual connection between God and His people. Jeremiah apparently regarded the Babylonian exile favorably as a means of regeneration of the people. (cf. Jeremiah 24:1-10, where the prophet compares the exiles with good figs and those who remain behind are considered spoiled).<sup>21</sup>

In a thematically related verse from the reproofs themselves (Leviticus 26:41) "I brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity...", the sense is conveyed that the exile does serve a function. The question may be raised, however, whether such contingent realities can be described as "purposes" for galut. If in fact the Jews have the option of turning in repentance and avoiding exile, then these purposes may be viewed as merely ex-post-facto rationalizations of an avoidable reality and are simply the instrumentality for returning to the pre-exilic situation. They have no independent significance as purposes.

Nor is there any Biblical basis for the concept of

mission, which (as above in the introduction) later exegetes attempted to find there. Passages which refer to seemingly related ideas, e.g., "all the nations of the world will be blessed through your seed," or "light unto the nations" (or lagoyim) do not presuppose a situation of galut for their validity. In fact, an added indirect proof of this point can be adduced by reference to the lack of Rabbinic comment on verses such as Isaiah 42:6, the or lagoyim passage, which is not mentioned in any Rabbinic work at all.<sup>22</sup>

Not only is there no concept of mission in galut, but as we shall see below, the actual degenerate character of life in the galut seems to void any such possible conclusion. According to Elitzur the Biblical view is that it is redemption, not galut, which spreads the true faith.<sup>23</sup> Therefore the only purpose which galut serves in Biblical terms is that its termination may demonstrate the redemptive power of God before the other nations, perhaps on the model of the Exodus from Egypt. Kaufman suggests this as an interpretation of Ezekiel's "wilderness of nations" passage:

This remarkable prophecy is unparalleled for its depiction of God's redemption, not as a longed-for release, but as a compulsory, wrathful redemption "with a strong hand and an outstretched arm."...he will bring them out of the exile, purge them in the "desert of nations" and restore them to their land before the eyes of the nations.<sup>24</sup>

Only in the circumstance of the establishment of God's house on the top of the mountain (in Isaiah's vision of 2:2-5) is the mission of Israel fulfilled, when "out of Zion shall go forth the law." Therefore, G. F. Moore suggests, that in the prophets the return of the people of Israel to its own country from the exile and dispersion is a conspicuous feature of the restoration of God's favor: "The denunciations of calamity and captivity in the Law do not conclude without the assurance of restoration, if the misery of exile works in Israel a change of heart (Deuteronomy 30:1-10; Leviticus 26:40-45; I Kings 8:47-53).<sup>25</sup> In describing the development of the prophetic conception of exile Ackroyd concludes:

The exile is seen as judgment upon the people's life, but more than that it is understood as lying within the purposes of God not simply as judgment but in relation to what he is doing in the life of the world. The response to it must be the response of acceptance, but this involves not merely a repentant attitude, appropriate and necessary though this is, because the disaster is not simply judgment, not simply a condemnation of the past but also a stage within the working out of a larger purpose...The experience of disaster...was to be understood as providing a means by which the nature of God should be revealed, a process by which both the people on whom it was exercised and also the nations as witnesses of the action should come to the acknowledgement of who he is. For if we were to pick any one phrase which is characteristic of this whole period, it would surely be 'to know that I am Yahweh'...<sup>26</sup>

When galut is described in the Bible, consequently, it is normally referred to as a situation of degradation

and one to be remedied by God's returning of his people. For example, the abovementioned prophecy of Ezekiel (36:20-24) records: "And when they came unto the nations, wherever they came they profaned My holy name...And I will sanctify My great name which has been profaned among the nations, and then nations shall know that I am the Lord...for I will take you out from among the nations...." Galut itself is a profanation of God's name and only the return of the dispersed will ameliorate the situation. Contemporary theologian Eliezer Berkovits writes: "It is then by taking Israel back unto himself, purifying them and placing his spirit within them, that God sanctifies his name, revealing himself as the Holy one...By redeeming them from among the nations and accepting them again God is being sanctified."<sup>27</sup>

In another passage Ezekiel also refers to galut as unclean (4:13) "The children of Israel shall eat their bread unclean, among the nations whither I will drive them." Amos uses a similar expression (7:17): "And you shall die in an unclean land, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land," and Hosea ((:2-3) writes about the pollution and spoliation of life in the galut. Büchler ascribes this attribution of impurity to the galut as characterizing the distinction between "the land owned by Him, therefore pure and holy, and implying and demanding his worship and excluding idolatry, and other countries which

serve idols and are, on account of that, impure, because they are owned and ruled by idolators."<sup>28</sup>

Another element of life in the galut is its impermanence (Deuteronomy 28:65) "And among these nations you shall have no repose, and there shall be no rest for the sole of your foot...." Those who survive will be only a remnant, few in number (Deuteronomy 4:27, and many prophetic references). But the fact that this saving remnant will not find respite among the nations insures that they will be unable to assimilate, remaining therefore an exilic people -- this abnormal situation is partially the means which will bring them back to God.

One final shade of opinion in the Biblical view of life in galut comes from the period when it was already a reality. Ezekiel counsels "What is in your mind shall never happen -- the thought 'let us be like the nations, like the tribes of the countries, and worship wood and stone.'" On the other hand Jeremiah's classic statement, "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it," counsels acceptance of the temporary situation of exile, but not the acceptance of local gods or customs. Kaufman suggests that Jeremiah outlined a program for the exile which was to come and which embodied a divine plan for a universal pagan empire.<sup>29</sup> The exiles must patiently wait



on God and hope for the end.

In summation, galut occupies a very prominent place in the ambience of the Biblical period. There can be not doubt that galut stands for much more than its original verbal usage as captivity. We have described this concept as a historical myth which involves the tension between reality and the anticipated future, between presence on the land and exile. Following Kaufman, we have suggested that the concept underwent certain changes as it became a real historical possibility. Also following Kaufman (and Patai) we have emphasized the role of very early mythical history of the Jewish people in determining the connotations of galut. Elitzur summarizes this position which argues that galut is a concept in Biblical thought as follows:

Israel can never become so indigenous in Eretz Israel as to ignore the ever present possibility of exile. The Bible impresses the idea that Israel should not regard itself as autochthonous in the Land of Israel.<sup>30</sup>

In terms of the overall sweep of Biblical theology both the experience and the concept of galut have been considered to play a consequential role. In the first place, acknowledgement that the punishment of exile is exacted by God as part of his justice is seen by Eickrodt to be the carrying out of this concept of divine justice to its logical conclusion:

Any nation which went so stubbornly against the will of God as to make the entire pattern of its life, in the state, in social conditions and in cultic organization, into a conspiracy against Yahweh (cf. Jeremiah 11:9), a systematic rejection of his exclusive sovereignty, has forfeited the right to exist...the most varied imagery is used to drive home explicitly and forcefully that this is the inevitable and necessary end...<sup>31</sup>

The concept of God's justice is now broadened to encompass the scope of judgment among the nations, with the results apparent to all the world through the exile and redemption.<sup>32</sup>

The effect of the galut among the people themselves, on the other hand, has been portrayed as the concretization of certain historical processes which had already been set in motion, namely the increasing value of prayer as a substitute for sacrifice, and the importance of the individual as taking part of the value of the community within the Judaic faith.<sup>33</sup> In terms of the people as a whole, the continuity of the faith of exile with the previous faith marked the distinction between the galut of the Jewish people and the forced banishment of other peoples of the region. Berkovits sees the exile in terms of the theological lessons which it taught the Jews and through them the rest of the nations:

The behavior, the way of life, of the exiles causes them to believe that the people of Israel have rejected God. And so indeed they did. As God, however, takes pity on his name and restores his association with Israel, even though they do not deserve it, the nations learn to understand the true meaning of the exile of God's people. God's name becomes sanctified again, not

through Israel but as a result of God's intervention in the course of history.<sup>34</sup>

The Biblical point of view suggests certain definite elements toward the formation of an ideology of galut, both in terms of the mythical consciousness of the people of Israel and their relationship to the land and in terms of the galut from the point of view of God's acting in history. We will follow along these same lines in the Rabbinic material, paying special attention to both developments from the Biblical precursors and innovation where it exists.

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ש. מאנדלקרן, קנטורונציה לחנ"ך

<sup>2</sup>J.A. Sanders, "Exile," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 2, p. 186.

<sup>3</sup>י. זליגמן, "גלות," אנציקלופדיה מקראית, כר'ב, ע' 496.

<sup>4</sup>This concept of tension is elaborated in an article on which appears in the Israeli periodical Vol. 26, by Yehoshua Amir. As a student of Dr. Amir's in Jerusalem I discussed this idea with him and I am particularly indebted to him for this insight.

<sup>5</sup>R. Patai, Tents of Jacob, p.5.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p.6.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp.6-7.

<sup>8</sup>י. עמיר, הגולה במקרא, ע' 22.

<sup>9</sup>Patai, op. cit., p.9.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p.11.

<sup>11</sup>Samuel Sandmel, The Hebrew Scriptures, p. 40.

<sup>12</sup>G. Von Rad, Old Testament Theology, Vol. I, pp.243-4.

<sup>13</sup>י. זליגמן, שם, ע' 496-7.

<sup>14</sup>Y. Kaufman, The Religion of Israel, pp.204-5.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Th. C. Vriezen, The Religion of Ancient Israel, p. 241.

<sup>17</sup>Sandmel, op. cit., p. 152.

<sup>18</sup>P. Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration, pp.242-4.

<sup>19</sup>Kaufman, op. cit., pp.365-6.

<sup>20</sup>י. אליצור, גלות-לבידור משמעות הגולה במקרא ובספרות הדורות, ע' 18-19.

<sup>21</sup>Sandmel, op. cit., p. 143.

<sup>22</sup>היימן, תורה הכתובה והמסורה

<sup>23</sup>Y. Elitzur, "The Concept of Galut in the Bible," El Haayin, p.11.

<sup>24</sup>Kaufman, op. cit., p.440.

<sup>25</sup>G. F. Moore, Judaism, Vol. II, p.366.

<sup>26</sup>Ackroyd, op. cit., p.234.

<sup>27</sup>Eliezer Berkovits, Man and God, Studies in Biblical Theology, p.190.

<sup>28</sup>A. Büchler, Studies in Sin and Atonement, p. 217.

<sup>29</sup>Kaufman, op. cit., p.424.

<sup>30</sup>Elitzur, "The Concept...", p.3.

<sup>31</sup>W. Eickrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, Vol. I, pp.379-80.

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זליגמן, שם, ע' 499.

33

שם.

<sup>34</sup>Berkovits, op. cit., p.192-3.

## THE NATURE OF GALUT EXPERIENCE

### CHAPTER II

As we have noted above (Chapter I) the Bible views galut as a transitory situation of degradation. The Biblical conception clearly indicates a certain tension which anticipates a return to the land with accompanying mighty acts and miracles conspicuously wrought by God. By the Rabbinic period, however, practical experience with diaspora and galut led to a broader and more concrete description of life in the galut (although Biblical metaphors continue to be applied to the current reality).

In particular we see developing a sense of the continuity of the exile as well as certain rationalizations for the actual character of galut -- to the effect that perhaps it's not so bad here or at least not the worst of all possible fates. Although throughout a significant portion of this period life in the "exile" was relatively comfortable, it was never accepted as the desirable condition and the question was omnipresent as to when it would end:

אמר ר' לוי אמרה כנסת ישראל לפני הקב"ה רבש"ע לשעבר היית  
מאיר לי בין לילות ללילות . בין לילן של מצרים ללילן של בבל .  
בין לילן של בבל ללילן של מדי . ובין לילן של מדי ללילן של יון .  
ובין לילן של יון ללילן של אדום . ועכשיו שישנתי לי מן התורה  
ומן המצות נסמכו לי לילות ללילות.

In this text R. Levi observes that the present situation seems to persist whereas between previous nights (of exile) God provided respite for the Jews. The difference is attributed to a falling away from the torah and the commandments. R. Levi (ben Sissi), a first generation Palestinian amora who later emigrated to Babylonia,<sup>2</sup> does not specify the condition of exile here, although the subjectivity to the nations he mentions is frequently referred to as galut Bavel, galut Edom, etc. In dealing with the thought of the Rabbis as it developed in the light of the changes following the destruction of the Second Temple, it will be necessary to distinguish the actual situation of physical exile from that of the "semi-exile" which the Jews experienced who remained on the land. In this connection the original Biblical connotation of galut as forced captivity seems to be applicable at various points in the history of Eretz Israel.

Consequently the rubric of subjection to the nations can be useful in drawing a full picture of the Rabbis' conception of galut, especially since they date the beginning of the galut from the loss of religio-political independence with the destruction of the Temple. In a continuation of the above text of R. Levi, the amoraim cite the following text from R. Simeon ben Gamliel -- we face continued existence among the innards of the nations:

אמר ר' שימעון בן-גמליאל: אבותינו על ידי שהריחו מקצת צרותן של מלכויות קצרה רוחם, אנו שאנו מובעלים בחור מעיהן כמה ימים וכמה שנים וכמה קיצין וכמה עבדין - על אחת כמה וכמה.

The textual material on the conditions and characteristics of galut make some general comments of this nature as well as more specific characterization of the psychology and social concomitants of exile. Following is an attempt to delineate the major elements in the Rabbinic picture of galut, as well as certain mitigating attitudes toward it; the attitudes seem to suggest the beginnings of what was later termed "galut mentality."

In the first place, the reality of galut is typically described by allusion to Biblical verse. The verses do not necessarily derive from the sections of the tochachot, which purport to predict the conditions of galut (but as we have seen may be very far from the reality). Rather we find, as in the above examples from Song of Songs, that passages may be taken out of context entirely. For example, the "evil days" referred to in Ecclesiastes (12:2) are connected by the Midrash (Eichah Rabbati, petichta 23) with the days of galut:

עד אשר לא יבאו "ימי הרעה" - אלו ימי הגלות.

Often the Rabbinic comments will connect a reference to degradation mentioned in the Biblical text with the situation of exile. Who are the "ones bowed down" mentioned



in Psalm 146? They must be the Israelites who have been exiled from their land:<sup>3</sup>

ה' זוקף כפופים . ומי הן הכפופים, אלו ישראל שגלו בחוצה לארץ, שמיום שגלו מירושלים לא זקפו קומתם, אלא הן כפופים לפני שונאיהם.

The galut situation itself is seen here to confer upon the Jews outside of the land a stooping posture before their enemies; from the day that they left Jerusalem under exile the Jews faced this situation. The Jew in exile is compared elsewhere to a beggar (Midrash Tehillim and is deprived of his pride which has been given to the gentiles (Hagigah 5b).

In fact one homily suggests that galut can be viewed as the most severe of all punishments meted out by God:<sup>4</sup>

דבר אחר וחרה אף ה', אחר כל היסורים שאני מביא עליכם אני מגלה אתכם, קשה גלות ששקולה כבגד הכל שנאמר ויחשם ה' מעל אדמתם באף ובחימה ובקצף גדול וישליכם אל ארץ אחרת כיום הזה ואומר והיה כי יאמרו אליך אנה נצא ואמרת אליהם כה אמר ה' אשר למות ואשר לחרב לחרב ואשר לרועב לרועב ואשר לשבי לשבי ואומר כה אמר ה' אשתך בעיר תזנה ובניך ובנותיך בחרבי ופולו ואדמתך בחבל תחולק ואתה על אדמה טמאה תמות וישראל גלה יגלה מעל אדמתו ואומר אל תבכו למת ואל תנודו לו בכו בכו להולך כי לא ישוב עוד וראה את ארץ מולדתו, אל תבכו למת זה יהויקים מלך יהודה מה נאמר בו קבורת המור יקבר...

In this passage a series of punishments are suggested with galut as the culmination of each series; in the final example Yehoyakim, the King of Judah who went into exile, is considered as if he has died on account of that fact.

The galut is a continuous difficult reality for the Jews. Anyone who is capable of computing the length of the exile will recognize that compared to its extent, the time of peace and rest for the Jews is likened to one day.<sup>5</sup>

ויאמר יעקב מכרה כיום . אמר לו זבין לי חר יום מן דירך . אמר  
רבי אחא כל מי שהוא יודע לחשב ימי הגלות ימצא שיום אחר ישב יעקב  
בשלוה בצלו של עשו.

The general phenomenon of galut may be compared to the refinement process in which olive oil is taken from the olive.<sup>6</sup> First the ripe olive is selected from the tree, then it is pounded, pressed, and beaten from place to place. As we shall note below (Chapter IV) this refinement process does serve a purpose and therefore produces a reward at the end, but there can be no doubt that the metaphor suggests that it is long and painful.

Together with the pain of exile, the Rabbis suggest certain other feeling states as characteristic. Some of these directly parallel the forecasts mentioned in the reproofs of Leviticus and Deuteronomy. For example, the impermanence of galut and the fact that Israel will find no rest there (mentioned in Deuteronomy 25) is elaborated in Genesis Rabbah (33:6):

(איכה א) היא ישובה בגוים לא מצאה מנוח . אלו מצאה מנוח לא היו חוזרים . ודכוותה (דברים כח) ובגוים ההם לא הרגיע ולא יהיה מנוח וגו' . הא אלו מצאה מנוח לא היו חוזרים.

This text directly applies the idea that the Jews will find no rest among the nations but will be perpetual wanderers. This sense of impermanence does have positive consequences as well, at least insofar as it promotes the process of return (almost certainly here teshuvah, spiritual return, as opposed to return to the land),

Elsewhere we find the paranoic supersensitivity foreshadowed in Leviticus 26:36 applied to the situation following the Bar Kochba revolt by R. Joshua ben Korcha: "The sound of a driven leaf shall put them to flight." He apparently refers here to real conditions of his time -- 7

(ד) ורדף אתכם קול עלה נדף אמר ריב"ק פעם א' היינו יושבים בין האילנות ונשבה הרוח והטיהו העלים זה בזה ועמדנו ורצנו ואמרנו אוי לנו שמא ידביקונו הפרשים . לאחר זמן נפנינו אחרינו וראינו שאין ברייה וישבנו במקומינו ובכיננו ואמרנו אוי לנו שעלינו נחקיים הפסוק ורדף אותם קול עלה נדף ונסו מנוסה חרב מפני אימה ונפלו ואין ורדף מבלי כח:

The Biblical text refers specifically to this occurring in "the land of your enemies." This gives an added indication of the supposition that a status of semi-galut was attributed by the Rabbis themselves to their lives in Eretz Israel during this period.

Another element from their present experience emphasized by the Rabbis could be described as feelings of isolation and alienation from the surrounding cultures. For example, the Rabbis compared their experience of galut with that of other nations who went into exile and concluded that the galut of Israel was more painful because the requirements of her laws prevented certain contacts with non-Israelites:

גלתה יהודה . (מז) אומות העולם אינן גולים אלא אע"פ שגולים אין גלותם גלות . אומות העולם שאוכלים מפתם ושותים מיינם אין גלותם גלות . אבל ישראל שאין אוכלין מפתם ואין שותין מיינם גלותם גלות . אומות העולם שהן מהלכין באסקפסיות שלהם אין גלותם גלות . אבל ישראל שהן מהלכין יהפין גלותם גלות . לכך נאמר גלתה יהודה.

With the development of distinctive legal institutions and restrictive observances it was more difficult than in Biblical times to assimilate naturally into local populations. This fact, which also had positive consequences for the future of the people, is not an unmixed blessing for the Rabbis. In the above example it would seem to add to the burdens of exile, although the author of the comment is clearly resigned to it.

In another example we observe that obedience to God's command is the source of ostracism by the other nations:<sup>9</sup>

וישב ממנו שבי . ורבנן פהרין קרייה בחורבן בית המקדש . את מוצא שכל מקום שבקשו ישראל לברוח היו מסגרין אותן . בקשו לברוח כלפי צפון ולא הניחום . הה"ד (עמוס א') על שלשה פשעי עזה ועל ארבעה לא אשיבנו על הגלותם גלות שלמה להסגיר לאדום . בקשו לברוח כלפי מזרח ולא הניחום הה"ד (שם) על שלשה פשעי צור ועל ארבעה לא אשיבנו על הסגירם גלות שלמה לאדום ולא זכרו ברית אחים . בקשו לברוח כלפי מערב לא הניחום דכתיב (ישעיה כ"א) משא בערב ביער בערב חלינו ארחות וגו' . כי אתה עשית . משל למלך שנשא למטרונה אמר לה אל תשיחי עם הברותיך ואל תשאי לי להן . לימים כעס עליה המלך וטודה חוץ לפלסין וחזרה על כל שכינותיה ולא קבלו אותה וחזרה לפלסין אמר לה המלך אקשיט אפיך אמרה המטרונה למלך אדני אילולי הייתי משא לה להן ושואלת מהן מנא והוה עבירתי גבה או עבירתי גבי לא הוון מקבלין לי . כך אמר הקב"ה לישראל אק יתון אפיכוון אמרו לפניו רבון העולמים לא כתבת בתורתך (דברים ז' 9) ולא תחתן בס בחך לא תתן לבנו ובתו לא תקח לבנך אילולי הוינן משאלין להון ונסכוון מינהון ואינון מינן והוית ברתיה גבי או ברתיה גביה לא הוון מקבלים לי הוי כי אתה עשית . הבאת יום קראת ויהיו כמוני בצרה ולא כמוני ברוחה:

When the Israelites attempted to flee in all directions after the destruction of the Temple they discovered that no nation would have them because their obedience to God's law had prevented them from establishing close relations with their neighbors. The text indicated one perception of the difficulties Israel would face among the nations (and demonstrates an example of a continuing tradition of challenging God's protection of the Jews).

On the other hand, the same argument about the isolationism caused by adherence to the torah was turned on its head. In Sifra (Bechukotai) we learn that if it were not for the torah which the Jews retained in the galut then they would be no different from all the nations of

of the world. Ben-Sasson, commenting on this function of torah in the galut, suggests:

In the galut the Torah was both the anchor and the protective wall for survival, preserving unity: this had already been symbolized in the promise of the "dust of the earth": As the dust of the earth is not blessed except with water, so Thy children are not blessed except by virtue of the Torah (Genesis Rabbah 41:9).<sup>10</sup>

Certain characteristics of exile can best be described as social or sociological observations. In the first place there were comments that emphasized that all existence on foreign soil implies toiling and travail for sustenance:<sup>11</sup>

ישבעו זרים כחך ועצבין בבית נכרי אין עציבה אלא בנים כמה  
דתימא (בראשית ג) בעצב תלדי בנים ד"א ועצבין זה יגיעת האדן  
לומר שיאכלו בעצבון כל מה שיאכלו בארץ נכיה כמה דתימא (שם)  
בעצבון האכלנה וגו'.

In this passage we meet another application of a Biblical verse in a general fashion to life in the galut. Since exile implies dislocation, it is suggested elsewhere that it is particularly hard on men, whose livelihood is more greatly affected than that of a woman. (Sanhedrin 26a; it is assumed that her support is based on her marriage.)

We do not necessarily have to construe the above passages in their literal sense. What we find are general associations of certain disabilities of the current situation with galut without any attempt to connect any parti-

cular element of the phenomenon of galut with a particular disability. In such a vein we find other comments concerning the effects of galut on study of torah:

For example, in the Midrash on Lamentations (Petichta 23) we read, "You find that when Israel went into exile among the nations there was no one among them who could remember his studies." Another source suggests that the galut situation itself is by definition associated with ceasing to study. <sup>12</sup> (בטול תורה):

ודמע תדמע ותרד עיני דמעה כי ויתן נשבה עדר ה' אמר ר' אלעזר שלשדמעות הללו למה אחת על מקדש ראשון ואחת על מקדש שני ואחת על ישראל שגלו ממקומן ואיכא דאמרי אחת על ביטול תורה בשלמא למ"ד על ישראל שגלו היינו דכתיב כי נשבה עדר ה' אלא למ"ד על ביטול תורה מאי כי נשבה עדר ה' כיון שגלו ישראל ממקומן אין לך ביטול תורה גדול מזה.

In the midrash it is redundant to speak of bittul torah and exile since they are synonymous.

In another comment on the same text we find a more specific social consequence attributed to galut, namely that it serves to blur social distinctions:<sup>13</sup>

(ירמיה י"ג) ודמוע תדמע ותרד עיני דמעה כי נשבה עדר ה' . את מוצא עד שלא גלו ישראל היו עשויים עדרים עדרים . דע כהנים לבד . עדרי לוייה לבד . עדרי ישראל לבד . וכיון שגלו נעשו עדר אחד . כי נשבה עדר ה' . כי נשבו אין כתיב כאן אלא כי נשבה עדר ה' :

From a modern point of view this new found solidarity might seem a positive achievement, but it seems fairly clear from the context of the Jeremiah quotation that this forced mixing was not particularly desired. In fact we learn elsewhere that R. Isaac (Shabbat 119b) blamed the destruction of Jerusalem on the break down of such social divisions, that the small and the great were made equal, i.e., "like people, like priest" (Isaiah 24:2). In any event galut is seen to be associated with dislocation on the social level.

A contrasting point of view which emphasized a relative optimism about galut was also articulated by the Rabbis. Whereas some would see in galut the equivalent of death at least in a metaphorical sense, others suggested that Abraham, confronted with a choice, chose galut over Geihinnom as future punishment for the Jews:<sup>14</sup>

עסוקים בשהים . הם נצילים משחים . פירשו משחים הם נידונין  
בשחים . א"ל במה אתה רוצה שירדו בניך . בגיהנם . או במלכויות  
ר' חנינא בר פפא אמר אברהם ברר לו את המלכויות . רבי יודן בר  
אידי בר חמא בר חנינא אמרו אברהם ברר גיהנם והקב"ה ברר לו את  
המלכויות . הה"ד (דברים לב) אם לא כי צורם מכרם זה אברהם . וה'  
הסגירם . מלמד שהסכים הקב"ה לדבריו . ר' הונא בשם ר' אהא אמר  
כך היה אבינו אברהם יושב ותמה כל אותו היום אמר במה אברר בגיהנם  
או במלכויות א"ל הקב"ה אברהם קטע הדין מונצטא מן דו . ביום ההוא  
כרת ה' את אברם בריה.



Offered the choice at the sealing of the covenant Bein HaBettarim, Abraham here "chooses" the subjugation of the nations, although his choice is apparently not without some ambivalence. The options seem to express the difference between punishment in this world and in the world to come and the fact that there is some difficulty over the choice indicates how severe a punishment galut might be considered, (if it can be compared to punishment in the world to come!)

However, the point is made in several places that galut is very distinctly exile, and not disappearance altogether:<sup>15</sup>

ואבדתם בגוים ד"ע אומר אילו י' שבטים שגלו למדי . אחרים  
אומר ואבדתם בגוים אין אובדין אלא גולה. יכול אובדן ממש  
כשהוא אומר ואכלה אתכם ארץ אויביכם הרי אובדן ממש אמור  
הא מה אני מקיים ואבדתם בגוים אין אובדן אלא גולה:

Thus, galut is short of complete destruction and despite its difficulty there was confidence in the continued existence of the people of Israel. If the Jews were to be lost among the nations (ואבדתם בגוים) and consumed among them, we find elsewhere that the manner of that consumption would be of a particular character; it would be similar to the eating of cucumbers or of pumpkins, whose seeds are left for re-planting and sowing:<sup>16</sup>

משה אומר ואבדתם בגוים בא ישעיה ואמר והיה ביום  
ההוא יתקע בשופר גדול וגו' אמר רב מסתפינא מהאי

קרא ואבדתם בגוים מתקיף לה דב פפא דילמא כאבדה  
המתבקשה דכתיב תעיני כשה אובר בקש עובר אלא מסיפא  
(דקרא) ואכלה אתכם ארץ אויביכם מתקיף לה מר זוטרא  
דילמא כאכילה קישואין ודילועין.

Tos'fot ventures the explanation here that these are vegetables from which part is saved and part eaten. Another explanation holds that these are vegetables which ripen at various times in various sections of the country. Some are eaten here and some are left to ripen there.<sup>17</sup>

Ben-Sasson commenting on the same theme, suggests

Despite the feeling of suffering and the oppression of the exile, the rabbis at all times firmly believed that the galut would not mean total destruction. God had made the nations of the world swear that "they would not subjugate Israel overmuch": the great sufferings in the galut consisted of a violation of this oath, and this would hasten the advent of the Messiah (Ketuvot 111a; Song of Songs Rabbah 2:7)<sup>18</sup>

As we shall discuss below (Chapter IV) the teleological explanations of galut suggested that the conditions of galut were designed by God to produce certain results either among the Jews or the nations. The various exiles are seen in one view to alternate in their severity, a harsh exile followed by a moderate exile (Eichah Rabbati 1:42). At no time, of course, in the Rabbinic literature is the claim made that there will be no return. In one place the exile is compared to the wandering of a deer which eventually returns to its home:<sup>19</sup>

"ודמה לך לצבי" מה הצבי הזה הולך לסוף העולם והוזר  
למקומו אף ישראל, אף על פי שנחפזו בכל העולם  
עתידין לחזור

In this example lahzor must mean physical return to the land; the atidin can mean simply in the future, but the passage has eschatological overtones as well. We therefore see that at various junctures the emphasis will be placed on return and at other times on the continuation of exile, a pattern of thought we can demonstrate more clearly from later periods of Jewish history, but which can be detected in the Rabbinic thought as well (see Chapter VII).

With respect to the recommended patterns of behavior and response in the galut none of the Rabbinic comments are as specific with regard to life in exile as were Jeremiah's. There are a considerable number of aggadic texts which deal with the actions of specific persons or groups in the semi-galut of Eretz Israel, and by viewing a number of these we begin to perceive an overall attitude of dealing with the subjection to the nations.

In the first place, if we except the period around the time of the rebellion of Bar Kochba, the common advice is to accept a posture of conciliation or passivity as we shall see below. The most active resistance recommended is flight:<sup>20</sup>

ברח ממנו ונמלט אמרו רבותינו מעשה שבאו לגדולי ציפורי  
כתבים ועים מן המלכות הלכו ואמרו לר' אלעזר בן פרטא  
רבי כתבים ועים באו לנו מן המלכות מה אתה אומר נברח והיה  
מתיירא לומר להם ברחו ואמר בדמז ולי אתם שאולים לכו ושאלו  
את יעקב ואת משה ואת דוד מה כתיב ביעקב (הושע יב) ויברח  
יעקב וכן במשה (שמות ב) ויברח משה וכן בדוד (ש"א י"ט)  
ודוד ברח וימלט וכה"א (ישעיה כו) לך עמי בא בחדריך.

Similarly the people are counselled elsewhere to  
"enter your chambers and shut your doors behind you":

לך עמי בא בחדריך - בשעה שאתה רואה השעה חצופה לא תעמוד  
כנגדה, אלא תן לה מקום. הסתכלו בי כביכול כשואיתי השעה  
חצופה בעוונותיכם נחתי לה מקום, שנ"ה "השיב אחורימיני"  
בפני האויב.

The imagery in the above comment concerning the withdrawal  
of God's right hand will be dealt with at length in the  
discussion of theological implications of galut; for the  
moment the importance of the imagery is for the withdrawal  
it counsels for the Jews. They are also advised not to  
exhibit satisfaction publicly lest it awaken envy among  
surrounding populations:<sup>22</sup>

ויאמר יעקב "למה תתראו" אמר להם יעקב לבניו אל תראו  
עצמכם כשאתם שבעין לא בפני עשו ולא בפני ישמעאל כדי  
שלא יתקנאו בכם.

Here it is possible to argue that there may be a reference  
to life among the heathens. But since there were many in  
Eretz Israel, the passage may also refer to the semi-galut  
situation on the land. One passage in Rosh Hashanah de-  
scribes a particular incident which was a continual problem

in the environment of subjection to the nations. In this instance we are again faced with decrees limiting the freedom of Jewish observance. The strategy advocated is conciliatory, with appeals to the universal character of Jewish tradition:<sup>23</sup>

ליהודאי דלא יעידון מאורייתא שגורה המלכות גזירה שלא  
יעסקו בחורה ושלא ימולו את בניהם ושיחללו שבתות מה עשה  
יהודה בן שמוע וחביריו הלכו ונטלו עצה ממטרונית אחת  
שכל גדולי העיר מצויין אצלה אמרה להם בואו והפגינו בלילה  
הלכו והפגינו בלילה אמרו אי שמים לא אחיכם אנהנו ולא בני  
אב אחד אנהנו ולא בני אם אחת אנהנו מה נישחנינו מכל אומה  
ולשון שאתם גוזרין עלינו גזירות קשות וביטלום.

The basic conciliatory pattern emerging from the above texts characterizes what has been termed in the modern period "galut mentality." As we have seen, the origin of the idea in the Rabbis is less connected with the physical exile than with the condition of subjection to the nations. This condition also produced the notion that the time of our active resistance is past, particularly in the wake of the two crushing defeats by Rome. In this text (from Yalkut, admittedly a late source although the opinion is attributed to R. Yochanon) the idea is expressed that active entrance on the stage of history for the Jews will await a signal from God, since we are unable to keep our fires burning on our own:<sup>24</sup>

קומי אורי כי בא אורח. א"ר יוחנן משל למלך ברוך עם  
דמדומי חמה בא אחד והדליק לו את הנר וכבה ובא אחד והדליק  
לו את הנר וכבה, אמר מכאן ואילך איני ממתיך אלא לאורו של  
בקר, כך אמרו ישראל לפני הקב"ה עשינו לך מנורה בימי משה  
וכבחה, בימי שלמה וכבחה, מכאן ואילך אין אנו ממתינין אלא  
לאורך שנאמר כי עמך מקור חיים באורך נראה אור, וכן אמר  
הקב"ה קומי אורי כי בא אורח.

In summary we can suggest that the root of the galut mentality can be detected in Rabbinic passages which discuss generalized reaction to the loss of political-religious autonomy and the general weakness in political terms of the Jewish community. In the material which refers to the conditions of galut itself, however, we are unable to locate material which accords particular support to some of the more positive evaluations of galut. Notions of galut as refuge and as source of strength through conversion (see below) contrast with most descriptions of the real situation. Sources which refer specifically to the exile in Babylonia will be treated separately (Chapter VI) as they do reflect a somewhat different point of view on this issue.

The experience of galut is basically seen as continuous with the predictions of the Biblical text, (which is to say that the Rabbis borrowed these motifs to describe their contemporary situation). As we have noted, the innovation in the thought of the Rabbis involved the incipient realization of the continuing character of galut. Their rationalizations and the behavior which they prescribe seem to suggest an entrenchment into a position of passivity and acceptance of the status quo.

In addition we witness a focusing on attitudes of

isolation and impermanence, degradation and impurity, and a crystallization of feelings of estrangement from alien populations. Israel will not find permanent rest there and although return is ultimately expected, for the moment galut will continue and even intensify in its difficulty. As the darshan in Sifra, B'chukotai 6:6 suggests: "The dispersion is a difficult judgment for Israel...as they will be spread as barley is winnowed and no one of them will be able to cling to his fellow for support."

Nevertheless, the long range faith of Israel remained that they would be eternal despite the difficulties of exile, as was suggested in Genesis Rabbah 41:9: "As the dust of the earth is scattered from one end of the world to the other, as the dust of the earth causes even metal vessels to wear out but exists forever, so Israel is eternal but the nations of the world will become as nought... as the dust of the earth is threshed, so thy children will be threshed by the nations...."





20

במ"ר כג:א

21

תנח' ויצא

22

תענית י:

23

ר"ה יט.

24

ילקות ח"ב תצ"ט

## THE REASONS FOR GALUT

### CHAPTER III

The concept of galut as it is understood in Rabbīnic literature and the description of the feelings it engendered reveal a community struggling against adversity and searching for a rationale for accepting its suffering. As we have seen the origin of galut is traced traditionally to a specific series of events over a seventy year period, commencing with the destruction of the Second Temple in the year 70 C.E., and culminating in the quashing of the Bar Kochba revolt between 135 and 138 C.E.

From the beginning these events demanded an explanation. Even the gentiles asked: "And His people, what did they do to Him that He exiled them from their land?"<sup>1</sup> Apparently the Rabbīnic tradition never countenanced the idea that such a series of calamities could be without intention and meaning. In particular they developed notions of y'surin shel ahavah, that God chastens those whom he loves, suggested that suffering was a necessary phase preceding the advent of the Messiah, and emphasized that the righteous could expect recompense for their actions in the world to come. They innovated a teleology of galut

out of the Biblical tradition (see Chapter IV) to explain God's purposes and Israel's place in them. However, with respect to the reasons for galut, virtually all of the material reflects an idea summarized in the liturgical statement:<sup>2</sup>

"מפני חטאינו גלינו מארצינו ונתרחקנו מאדמתנו"

"On account of our sins we were exiled from our country and removed far away from our land."

The texts which elaborate on this formulaic "On account of our sins..." suggest after the fact rationalizations of a situation which already exists. In general, therefore, they do not share in the Biblical ambience of tension over the possible exile and the potential return. Rather they seem to adopt the attitude of resignation which comprises the refrain of a series of poems which introduce the Midrash on the Book of Lamentations:<sup>3</sup>

כיון שחטאו גלו, וכיון שגלו התחיל ירמיהו מקונן  
עליהם "איכה ישבה בדד"

Galut is here the natural and predictable action which

results from the expected punishment of Israel for its misdeeds. The Rabbis were not satisfied, however, with a general answer, but rather attempted to discern the specific causes of the destruction of the Second Temple and the concomitant galut. Consequently there exists a considerable homiletic variety in the cataloguing of sins which are attested as causing galut. Some opinions speak generally, others relate galut to the violation of specific commands; impiety, ethical failure, and lack of faith are also adduced as reasons. Following is a representative sample of such opinions. As mini-sermons they reflect the point of view of the darshan as much as they indicate some intrinsic connection with galut, but some general observations will be made from their totality; in particular it should be borne in mind the extent to which Biblical models are incorporated directly (such as in the above quotation from Eichah Rabbati).

Since those models link galut with violation of the covenant, general non-observance would surely be connected by the Rabbis with the punishment of galut:<sup>4</sup>

ד"א צו אצ בני ישראל רבנן פתויין קרייה בגלות צו את בני  
ישראל על שעברו ישראל על מצות נחתייבו שילוח זה גלות  
הה"ד וישלחו מן המחנה אין וישלחו אלא לשון גלות כמה  
דתימא (ירמיה טו) שלח מעל פני ויצאו מן המחנה זו א"י  
שם השכינה חונה.

On the other hand, several texts point to specific sins, as in the following examples where debauchery,

immoderation in drinking, and an apparent instance of unjustified violence are adduced:<sup>5,6,7</sup>

כל זאת אירע להם לעשרת השבטים על שהיו שטופים בנזות אשת  
איש שעליו נחתם גזר דין שנאמר בהם (עמוס ו) השוכבים על  
מטות שן וסרוחים על ערסותם וגו'

וישח מן היין . וישח . שחח שלא במרה ונתבזה א"ר חייא בר  
אבא בו ביום נסע . בו ביום שחח . בו ביום נתבזה . ייתגל  
בתוך אהליו . ר"י אמר רבי חנין בשם רבי שמואל בר יצחק ייגל  
אין כתיב כאן . אלא ויתגל גרם גלות לו ולדורות עשות  
השבטים לא גלו אלא בשביל יין הה"ד (עמוס ו) השותים במזרק  
יין.

מהו לא נפל עליה גורל אמר הקב"ה בשעה שהפלתי קלסים על אומות  
העולם להגלותם לא גלו ואחם למה גליתם . כי דמה בתוכה הי' .  
כל כך למה להעלות חמה.

In the first two instances above the specific reference is to the exile of the ten tribes although we can assume that the comments have in mind the present galut as well. We might suggest that the comments are not directed at the people of the Hurban period for their drunkenness or adultery, but that the preachers are merely preaching a sermon to their own day about these sins. (They are not referring to historical, as contrasted with symbolic, Biblical events.) Therefore galut is used not in spatio-historical terms in these comments, but rather is a symbol for extreme punishment.

In the last comment, however, we do seem to have a specific charge made against the generation of the Hurban by those who later seek to justify God's action. In terms of specific explanations of galut the most frequently articulated reasons are specified in Pirke Avot: (5:9)

גלות בא לעולם על עובדי עבדות אלילים ועל גילוי עריות  
ועל שפיכות דמים ועל שמיטת הארץ.

The gravity of the first three mentioned sins is apparent since they are elsewhere listed as the only commandments a person should rather let himself be put to death than violate.

The last mentioned sin in connection with the sh'mitah regulation is important for it recalls the dimension of the particular quality of the land itself depicted in the torah. This theme is elaborated upon in various comments with the addition of the commandment concerning the Jubilee year. This addition to the three "cardinal sins" is striking since it indicates how seriously the Rabbis took the description of God's justice described in the Bible. For example, in Shabbat 33a we find:

בעון שפיכו' דמים בית המקדש חרה ושכינה מסתלקת מישראל  
שנאמר ולא תחניפו וגו' ולא תטמאו את הארץ אשר אתם יושבים  
בה אשר אני שוכן בהוכ' הא אתם מטמאי' אותה אינכם יושבים  
בה ואיני שוכן בחוכה: בעון גילוי עריות ועבוד' אלילים  
והשטט' שמיטין ויובלות גלות בא לעולם ומגלין אותן ובאין  
אחרי' ויושבין במקומן שנאמר כי את כל התועבות האלה עשו  
אנשי הראץ וגו'.

In this text the presence of the Shechinah in the land of Israel is mentioned in order to emphasize the sanctity of the land and the significance to the mitzvot which are connected with it. This theme of God's special solicitude toward the land of Israel will be discussed below (Chapters V and VI). The idea is, of course, already substantially Biblical, although not the concept of Shechina.

Büchler in Studies in Sin and Atonement finds the idea of the "soiling nature of sin"<sup>8</sup> to be continuous without any break from the Biblical to the Rabbinic times, with only the vocabulary which expressed its character varying.

Concerning the above passages he wrote:

As they who delayed the burial of the executed and afterwards hanged criminal defile the land and cause God's presence to withdraw, how much more so in the cases of idolatry, immorality and bloodshed. (Midrash Tannaim, Deuteronomy 21, 23) The three cardinal sins which, beside others explicitly included in the Bible among those which defile the country, pollute the land; and they also form a group in the account of R. Yohanan b. Thortha, R. Ishmael's contemporary, of the sins that caused the destruction of the first Temple, and each is proved by teachers of the second century to have one or the other of the effects stated. So immorality as well as idolatry are proved from various biblical passages to cause the withdrawal of God's presence.

The connection of the withdrawal of the Shechinah with the exile is dealt with at length below (Chapter V). The texts, which Büchler mentioned that deal with matters of morality, with the "social and ethical behavior of the community are among the most elaborate which fit the category of

reasons. It is interesting and significant to note the extent to which what would be termed social and ethical misdeeds frequently dovetail with violations of "ritual" laws. For example, in the following complex passage from Eichah Rabbati (1:28) the darshan brings explanations which range from social neglect to failure to observe the Passover ordinances, in order to rationalize galut:

נאמר גלחה יהודה . מעוני . על שאכלו חמץ בפסח כמד"א  
(דברים ט"ז) לא תאכל עליו חמץ שבעת ימים תאכל עליו מצות לחם  
עוני . ד"א מעוני על שהבלו משכון עני בחור בתיהם . כמד"א  
(שם כ"ד) ואם איש עני הוא לא תשכב בעבוטו . ד"א מעוני . על  
שעשקו שכר שכיר . כמד"א (שם) לא תעשוק שכיר עי ואביון . ד"א  
מעוני . על שגזלו מהנוה עני כמד"א (שם) לעני ולגר העוזב אותם .  
ד"א מעוני . על שאכלו מעשר עני . ר' ביבי ור' הונא בשם רב .  
האוכל טבל של מעשר עני חייב מיתה . ד"א מעוני . על שעבדו  
עבודה כוכבים כמד"א (שמות ל"ב) קול ענות אנכי שומע . א"ר אהא  
קול עבודה כוכבים אנכי שומע . רבי יהודה בשם רבי יוסי אומר  
אין לך דור ודור שאינו נוטל מחטאו של עגל .

In passages such as these the consistent background principle may be seen to be the faith in God's justice; what varies is the grounds upon which the decree might have been based. Social discord (rejoicing at another's downfall) and the desuetude of the obligation of Brit Milah are mentioned elsewhere in Eichah Rabbati as reasons for galut and linked in the same comment:<sup>10</sup>

אמר רב עוקבא בליל תשעה באב נכנס אברהם אבינו לביה  
קדשי הקדשים אחזו הק"ה בידו . והוא מטייל בו ארוכות  
וקצרות . אמר לו הקב"ה (ירמיה י"א) מה לידידי בביתי .  
אמר לו רבוני בני היכן הם . אמר לו חטאו והגליתים לבין  
האומות . אמר לו לא היו בהן צדיקים . אמר לו עשותה המזומתה .  
אמר לו היה לך להסתכל בטובים שבהם , אמר לו סוגהון בישיין



דכתיב עשותה המזומתה הרבים . אמר לו היה לך להביא לברית  
מילה שבבשר . אמר לו חיילך כפרו בה . שנאמר (שם) ובשר  
קדש יעברו מעליך . ולא עוד אלא שהיו שמחין במפלתם אלו על  
אלו דכתיב (שם) ועתה אז תעלוני . וכתיב (משלי י"ז) שמה  
לאיר לא ינקה.

In pesikta Rabbati (24:3) the opinion is offered that the Israelites were not exiled until they had broken the tenth commandment and coveted their neighbor's possessions. Other comments based on similar reasons for galut include the idea that certain tribes (Reuben and Gad) were first to go into exile since they separated themselves from their brethren because of their possessions (Numbers Rabbah 22:8), or that unfair judges provoke the punishment of galut (Sifra 8:5). In Yoma (38b) neglect of study through forgetfulness is linked with the galut of one's progeny. Such a hyperbolic statement of moral instruction is illustrative of the strength of the underlying faith in God's acting justly.

One comment in Pirke Avot (1:11) seems to suggest an ethical maxim of being careful in the use of language:

אבטליון אומר חכמים הזהרו בדבריהם שמא תחובו חובה גלות  
ותגלו למקום מים הרעים וישחו התלמידים אחריהם.

However, the parallel in Abot D'Rabbi Natan refers this passage to misinterpretation of scripture, thus indicating a certain jealousy on behalf of authoritative interpretation. If this comment is reasonable, then galut here

does have overtones of national disaster, since it indicates a certain danger to Rabbinical authority. Without the addition the passage can be understood in an individual sense as well.

Other midrashim deal with matters of faith and impiety on the part of the Israelites as a cause of galut. For example they are accused of having blasphemed God and acted in a quarrelsome fashion toward Him:<sup>11</sup>

כי נדרו גם נעו (איכה ד) ר' חנינא אמר לא גלו ישראל עד  
שניאצו להקב"ה. ור' סימון אמר לא גלו ישראל עד שנעשו  
בעלי מצות להקב"ה.

In Brachot (8a) it is suggested that whoever has a synagogue in his town and does not pray there causes galut for himself and his children:

אמר ר"ל כל מי שיש לו ב"הכנ בעירו ואין נכנס שם להתפלל  
נקרא שכן רע שנ' כה אמר ה' על כל שכני הרעי' הנוגעים  
בנחלה אשר הנחלתי את עמי את ישראל ולא עוד אלא שגורם  
גלות לו ולבניו שנאמר הנני נוחשם מעל אדמתם ואת בית  
יהודה אחוש מחוכם.

Particularly with respect to questions of lack of faith there was a widespread tendency to connect the galut with the past and find specific precedents within Israel's history to blame for the present condition. H. H. Ben-Sasson contrasts these fanciful links with the "realistic" explanations we have been considering.<sup>12</sup> For example, the galut is compared with the banishment of Adam from the Garden of Eden after he had transgressed God's command (Pesikta D'Rav Kahane 119b) and is considered to have been chosen by Abraham in

place of Gehinnom (Genesis Rabbah 44:21 and above, Chapter II).

A reference to the specific incident of unnecessary weeping on Tisha B'Av is connected with galut through a historical allusion. This bechiya chinam recalls a similar wailing of the Israelites in the wilderness when the twelve spies returned from Canaan, and suggests somehow that the continuation of galut may proceed from the sins of earlier generations:<sup>13</sup>

נעשיחם קלון בעולם וכאב אנוש זה הפורענות ששלחה  
ירושלם לדורות שבכו בליל ט' באב ואמר להם הקב"ה אחם  
בכיהם בכיה של חינום לפני אני אקבע לכם בכיה לדורות  
ומן אותה שעה נגזרה על ביהמ"ק שתחרב כדי שיגלו ישראל  
לבין האומות שכה"א (תהילים קו) וישא ידו להם להפיל אותם  
במדבר ולהפיל זרעם בגוים ולזרותם כארצות נשיאות יד  
נשיאות קול.

This passage also teaches the virtue of accepting what God sends without too much complaint. Another passage which gives an example of a lack of faith from history is the following which relates the exile to the patriarch Jacob:<sup>14</sup>

בשם ר' מאיר כלמר שהראה הקב"ה ליעקב שרה של בבל עולה ויורד  
של מרי עולה ויורד ושל יון עולה ויורד ושל אדום עולה ויורד  
אמר הקב"ה ליעקב אף אתה עולה באותה שעה נתיירא יעקב אבינו  
ואמר שנא ח"ו כשם שלא לו ירידה אף לי כן אמר לו הקב"ה ואתה  
אל תירא אם אתה עולה אין לך ירידה עולמית לא האמין ולא  
עלה א"ר ברכיה זר' חלבו בשם רשב"י ר' מאיר היה דורש  
(תהילים עח) בכל זאת חטאו (לו) עוד ולא האמינו בנפלאותיו  
זה אבינו יעקב שלא האמין ולא עלה אמר לו הקב"ה אלו האמנת  
ועלית עוד לא ידת ועכשיו שלא האמנת ולא עליה עוירין בניך  
סיהו משחעבדין בד' מלכויות בעולם הזה במסים ובארנוניות  
ובזימיות ובגלגליות באותה שעה נתיירא יעקב אמר לפני הקב"ה  
רשב"ע יכול לעולם אמר לו (ירמיה ל) ואל תחת ישראל כי הנני  
מושיעך מרחוק.

Although this passage does not specify galut, speaking rather of the subjugation of the nations, it does indicate an attempt to focus on historical precedent.

In addition to the precedents taken from the Bible, which is then applied to the contemporary period, the Biblical material on the relationship of the covenant with the Land itself is also offered as a reason. Not only does God punish the people for their violation of His laws, but also His land itself (as mentioned above Shabbat 33a) will vomit out its inhabitants under certain circumstances. The character of the land will not permit bloodshed in particular, and as we have noted the Shechinah will no longer dwell there under certain conditions:<sup>15</sup>

אורח זה אורח . האורח לרבות נשי אורחים . גר זה גר (הגר)  
לרבות נשי הגרים . בחוככם לרבות נשים ועבדים : כי כל  
התועבות האל עשו אנשי הארץ אשר לפניכם מלמד שהארץ מיסמאה  
על ידי הדברים הללו . ולא תקיא הארץ אתכם צר קאה את הגוי  
אשר לפניכם מלמד שהארץ חייבת גלות על ידי הדברים האלה :

An additional reason which was suggested by the Rabbis, that of atonement for the Jewish people with respect to the entire catalogue of sins mentioned above, will be discussed more fully under the rubric of the purpose of the exile. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the Rabbis atonement most certainly could be advanced as a reason why exile was necessary. In one example, R. Hiyya bar Abba speaking in terms of the necessity of galut in order to dramatize

the plight of the people and Resh Lakish suggests it will atone for the people:<sup>16</sup>

למה יוצאין לרחוב ר' חייא בר אבא אמר לומר זעקו בצנעא  
ולא נענינו נבזה עצמינו בפרהסיא ריש לקיש אמר גלינו  
גלותינו מכפרת עלינו

This comment hints at the Rabbinic strategy in their teleology of galut and the following chapter will continue with this argument. I have attempted to indicate above the very limited innovations that the Rabbis made with respect to the Biblical-covenantal formulation of the reasons for the exile. We have also observed a lack of tension concerning the situation of galut and a general acceptance of its justifiability. In fact this may well be the most important premise of Rabbinic thinking about galut, that it represents the natural process of God working in History through the means of just punishment. The Rabbis bring to the material their strong faith in this divine justice with respect to reward and punishment, and seem to have no difficulty in using these values to explain galut. Nor do they differentiate between "ethical" and "ritual" violations.

From our own modern context we face some degree of difficulty in evaluating the real significance of the Rabbinic drashah with such a variety of opinions on the question of the reasons for galut. We can distinguish, however, between the various texts adduced above which fit together

reasonably well, and what would seem to be somewhat more rococo attempts at sermonic flourish, e.g.:<sup>17</sup>

ראה אותם בניוולם ואמר איכה ישבה . שאלו את בן עזאי אמרו לו  
ובינו דרוש לנו דבר אחד ממגילת קינוה אמר להם גלו ישראל עד  
שכפרו ביחידו של עולם ובמילה שנחנה לעשרים דורות ובעשרת  
הדורות ובחמשה ספרי תורה מניין איכ"ה . א"ר לוי לא גלו ישראל  
עד שכפרו בשלשים ושש כריחות שבתורה ובעשרת הדורות מניין איכ"ה  
ישבה בדר.

Even through the homiletic play involved here, we nevertheless observe the continuity of faith in God's justice, with the only question being what is the appropriate grounds for His carrying out of that justice. All of the above comments start either with certain premises about the seriousness of galut as a punishment or with its particular character as banishment from the land, and proceed to connect the exile with similarly weighty issues. All share the premise that galut is related to punishment and intrinsically connected with the operation of God's justice in the world.

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אבות דר' נתן א:ד

<sup>2</sup>from Musaf Amidah, Rosh Hashanah and Festivals.

3

אי"ר פתיחתא ה,ו,ז, וכו'.

- 4 במ"ר ז:י
- 5 במ"ר ס:ז
- 6 ב"ר לו:ד
- 7 אי"ר פתיחתא ה
- <sup>8</sup>A. Büchler, Studies in Sin and Atonement, p. 307.
- <sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 294-5.
- 10 אי"ר א:כ
- 11 שם ד:יח
- <sup>12</sup>H. H. Ben-Sasson, "Galut", Encyclopedia Judaica, p.278.
- 13 במ"ר טז:כ
- 14 ויק"ר כט:כ
- 15 ספרי אחרי מות יג:יט
- 16 תענית טז.
- 17 אי"ר א:א

## THE TELEOLOGY (PURPOSE) OF GALUT

### CHAPTER IV

In our introduction a distinction was drawn between the reasons for galut and the purposes which galut serves. The Reformers whose views were quoted had a very clear idea of galut as leading the nations of the world to the true knowledge and worship of God. They therefore saw galut as necessary and purposive in its very essence.

Rabbinic literature also ascribed to galut an essentially purposive nature. The Rabbis inherited a Biblical tradition which in part viewed the function or utility of galut to be its creation of the conditions for redemption and return. Most of the comments described below are expansions of this idea that either the existence of galut, or in some way the character of galut, are designed to facilitate the "return " of the Jewish people, (whether this be return to the land in the physical sense or turning in repentance).

This argument from the design and character of galut is literally a Rabbinic teleology of galut, an argument based on logical deduction from the current situation of the Jews. Webster's Third International Dictionary defines teleology as "the fact or the character of being directed



toward an end or shaped by a purpose; said especially of natural processes or of nature as a whole conceived of as determined by a final cause or by the design of divine Providence...." Rabbinic thinking is inherently teleological in this sense in that all ends are justified in terms of God's design. As we shall see, most of the Rabbinic texts which attempt to explore that design seem to fit into the category of a teleology of galut. We do find, however, an admittedly small sample of opinions which indicate a distinct attempt to justify galut on grounds which emphasize a different aspect of God's providence.

In the first category lie certain passages which have been considered in detail above for their bearing on the character of galut (Chapter II). For example, the following passage from Exodus Rabbah (36:1), which speaks of the painful process of the subjugation of Israel (comparing it to the process of grinding, hammering, etc., the olive to produce pure olive oil) can be adduced to explain the design of exile:

ובא ירמיה לומר זית רענן יפה פרי חואר אלא מה הזית  
הזה עד שהוא באילנו מגרדין אותו ואח"כ מורדין אותו  
מן הזית ונחבט . ומשחובטין אותו מעלין אותו לגת וגתנין  
אותו במסחן ואח"כ סוחנין אותו ואח"כ מקיפין אותו בחבליים.  
ומביאין אבנים ואח"כ נוחנין את שומן כך ישראל באין  
עובדי כוכבים וחובטין אותם ממקום למקום וחובשים אותן  
וכן פתין אותם בקולרין ומקיפין אותן טרסוטיין ואח"כ עושין  
חשובה והקב"ה עונה להם . מנין שנא' (שמות ב) ויאנחו בני  
ישראל . וכן (דברים ד) בצר לך ומצאוך כי אל רחום ה'  
אלהיך . הוי זית רענן יפה פרי חואר.

This passage concludes on a hopeful note with the Jews doing teshuvah and God answering them.<sup>1</sup> One clear implication of the text is that galut seems to be a process as natural as the production of olive oil, that the Jews have about as much free will in the matter as does the olive on the tree. In the end, the teshuvah of Israel will flow forth like olive oil and God will naturally answer them. The nations of the world are God's instrument for refining and purifying the Jews by their affliction. The context of this particular passage might be applicable either to the situation of galut per se (it mentions the beating of the Jews from place to place) or of subjugation in the land of Israel itself.

Similar theological referents are suggested in the passages which speak of the special nature of the galut of the Jews. These passages range from the special character of galut Bavel, which was designed by God with Israel's particular weaknesses in mind (Pesachim 87b), to the comment in Eichah Rabbati (1:29) which speaks of galut yehudah as being especially difficult because of the inability of the Jews to eat from the bread and drink from the wine of their captors.

The quotations which indicate the positive characteristics of galut Bavel obviously have teleological ends in

mind. Yet the unassimilable condition of the Jews had other "positive" consequences as well. The latter are demonstrated in the midrash (Genesis R<sup>a</sup>bbah 33:6) which compares the Jews to Noah's dove sent out from the ark. If it (the nation) had found rest, they would not have returned (לא היו חוזרים).<sup>2</sup>

A parallel may be drawn here with the previous example of the olive in that galut is here viewed as a stimulant to the turning (the first case specifies teshuvah). A subtle distinction may be drawn between the imagery in the two passages. In the first example, the galut or suffering was itself necessary in order to produce the desired result of teshuvah. In the other case, the focus has shifted to the character of galut, in particular its quality of impermanence, which gives evidence of Divine plan behind the experience of galut.

In order to explain the poignant sufferings of Jewish history (whether in galut proper or the semi-galut of the land), the Rabbis interpreted them as necessary antecedents to redemption. Similar to the above metaphors is the following comment on Psalm 20:<sup>3</sup>

ה' ביום צרה . לאב ובן שהיו מהלכין בדרך ונחיצה הבן  
לאביו והיכן היא המדינה אמר לו בני סימן זה יהא בידך  
אם ראית בית הקברות לפניך דע כי המדינה קרובה לך .  
כך אמר הקב"ה לישראל אם ראיתם שהצרות מכסות אתכם באותה  
שעה אתם נגאלים שנאמר יענך ה' ביום צרה

In this comparison of the period before redemption with a graveyard, the darshan suggests an intrinsic connection between suffering and redemption -- i.e., God's answer will come only at the time when suffering is so great that the end is in sight.

A more specific reference to galut in the same context is found in Exodus Rabbah (2:4). The following passage extols the accoutrements of the first wandering in the wilderness, namely manna, the quails, the well, the Tabernacle, the Shechina, etc. Then the passage from Hosea (2:2, see Chapter I above) is quoted to suggest that in Messianic times the Jews will be brought back from the wilderness again:

וינהג את אחר המדבר . א"ר יהושע למה היה רודף למדבר לפי  
שישראל נחעלו מן המדבר שנא' (שיר ג) מי זאת עולה מן המדבר  
שהי להם מן המדבר המן והשליח והבאר והמשכן והשכינה כהונה  
ומלכות וענני כבוד... ואמר ר' לוי א"ל הקב"ה למשה סימן זה  
לך במדבר אחה מניחן ומן המדבר עתה עתיד להחזירן לעתיד לבא .  
שנ' (הושע ב) לכן הנה אנכי מפתיה והולכתיה המדבר.

Messianic redemption can occur only after a return to the situation of wandering. Ben-Sasson reached a similar conclusion about the Rabbinic view:

The sages saw the dispersion as a prerequisite for the redemption: in the settlement of Jews throughout the whole Roman Empire ("if one of you is exiled to Barbary and another to Farnetia") they saw (in the second half of the second century) a fulfillment of this condition....<sup>4</sup>

One homiletic interpretation of the servitude of Israel under the nations is less sanguine about the association of

suffering with redemption. In this comment from Genesis Rabbah (70:20) Israel is compared to its ancestor Jacob. Just as Jacob was made to serve for Rachel after he married her, so the Jews will be forced to serve even after the Messiah is born:<sup>5</sup>

א"ר יוחנן כתיב (הושע יב) ויכר יעקב שדה ארם ויעבוד  
 ישראל באשה וגו'. אמר להם דוגמא שלכם דומה ליעקב אביכם  
 מה יעקב אביכם עד שלא נשא אשה נשתעבד משנשא אשה נשתעבד אף  
 אתם משלא נולד גואל נשתעבדתם משנולד גואל אתם נשתעבדים.

The Midrash relates the experience of servitude to a pattern established by the behavior of Jacob (a similar precedent from his life is adduced below). There is still a design implied by the servitude and it has a fixed endpoint as well (on the analogy of Jacob's servitude). Elsewhere in Genesis Rabbah (44:18) a similar metaphor is used. In the passage God assures Abraham that even as He is dispersing the Jews He will return them, and just as He will put them in pledge ממשכנן so will he redeem them:

ויאמר לאברהם ידוע חדע כי גר יהיה זרעך . ידוע שאני  
 מפזרן , חדע שאני מכנסן . ידוע שאני ממשכנן . חדע שאני  
פורקן . ידוע שאני משעבדן חדע שאני גואלן

The Soncino Midrash suggests here that "the exile is regarded as putting Israel in pledge to expiate their sins."<sup>6</sup>

We have referred above to the idea that galut is so severe a punishment that it is weighted against all other punishments. This being the case, galut may serve the

function of "atoning" for previous sins: i.e., if galut is experienced then some portion of the sins of Israel are remitted and they may therefore be closer to redemption:<sup>7</sup>

גלות מכפרת עון מחצה מעיקרא כתוב והייתי נע ונד ולבסוף כתיב וישב בארץ ניד אמר רב יהודה גלות מכפרת שלשה דברים שנ' (כה אמר ה' וגו') היושב בעיר הזאת ימות בחרב ברעב ובדבר והיוצא ונפל אל הכשדים הצרים עליכם יחיה והיתה לו נפשו לשלל ר' יוחנן אמר גלות מכפרת על הכל שנ' (כה אמר ה') כתבו את האיש הזה עירי גבר לא יצלה בימיו כי לא יצלה מזרעו איש יושב על כסא דוד ומושל עוד ביהודה ובחר דגלה כתיב ובני יכניה אסיר (בגו) שלהיאל בגו

By use of Biblical texts the passage suggests first that Cain's exile cancelled out his fugitive status (only nad, wanderer, and not na, fugitive, is mentioned in the second text); then that leaving the city to go into exile will save one from three specific punishments (חרב, יעב, ודבר). In the final example in which Jechoniah is granted a son in exile, an occurrence which had been previously forbidden by God, the power of exile to make remission for sin is greatly magnified. The theme of the passage seems to be the utility of the very unfortunate consequences of galut in its relation to potential positive consequences for the Jews.

According to Ben-Sasson:

The rabbis saw a cause for satisfaction even in the negative aspects of galut. The suffering emphasizes the faithfulness of Israel and gives it an opportunity to say to God "How many religious persecutions and harsh edicts have they decreed against us in order to nullify they sovereignty over us, but we have not done so" (Midrash on Psalms to 5:6).<sup>8</sup>

In fact all of the preceding comments have been motivated by confidence in the benevolent teleology implied in God's relationship with the Jewish people reflected in the processes of their history.

Another conceivable point of view with respect to a purposive understanding of galut is the notion that galut serves some more utilitarian end in human history. The Rabbis, of course, never conceived of God as standing apart from that history, but rather seem to emphasize in the following comments a greater concern with galut and its effect on the other nations of the world. In two specific ways the dispersion of the Jews is recognized as being to their advantage for the purpose of survival. In the first instance the dispersion itself is considered an example of God's mercy, the implication being that if the Jews had been gathered in one place then they might have been destroyed (by the Romans in this case):<sup>9</sup>

א"ר אושעיא מאי דכתיב צדקת פרוזנו בישראל צדקה עשה הקב"ה  
בישראל שפורן לבין האומות והיינו דא"ל ההוא מינא לר' הנינא  
אנן מעלינן מינייכו כתיב בכו כי ששת חדשים ישב שם וגו' ואלו  
אנן איתינו גבן כמה שני ולא קא עבדינן לכו מידי אמר לן  
רצונן יטפל לן תלמיד א' נטפל ליה ר' אושעיא א"ל משום דלא  
ידעיחו היכי תעבדו תכלינן כולהו ליחנהו גבייכו מאי דאיכא  
גבייכו קרי לכו מחכותא קטיעתא אמר ליה גפא דרומאי בהא  
נחתינן ובהא סלקינן:

In this passage the min (heretic) mentioned, who swears upon a Roman symbol, questions why it is that the nations have not destroyed the Jews among them, whereas the Jews were commanded to "cut off every male in Edom" (I Kings 11:16). The answer concludes with the suggestion that "if you would destroy all, they are not among you." It is not the mercy of the rulers of the world which assured survival in exile, but rather the demographic situation and therefore "in scattering Israel among the nations God acted righteously for them."

Another passage similarly relates that galut can serve as a refuge. Using the example of Jacob, who divided his camp into two parts when approaching Esau (in order that at least one might escape in the event of difficulty), common sense teaches us that the Jews are safer when they are divided into two camps:<sup>10</sup>

ויהי את העם . לימוד חורו דרך ואץ שלא יהא אדם נוחן כל  
ממונו בזוית אחד ממי אתה לומד מיעקב . שני' ויהי את העם  
וגו' . וכן הוא אומר (כלכים א יח) ואחביאם המשים איש  
במעה . ויאמר אם יבא עשו אל המחנה האחת והכהו . אלו  
אחינו שבדרום . והיה הבמחנה הנשאר לפליטה . אלו אחינו  
שבגלות . א"ר הושעיה אע"פ שנשארו לפליטה מחעונים היו  
עלינו בשני ובחמישי:

The passage (taking galut to refer to Babylonia<sup>11</sup>) grants to the galut an intrinsic importance, unrelated to its function as bringing redemption and almost antithetical to the idea that it should lead to return.



The text seems to refer to a specific historical situation. The last three lines above identify the camp which is stricken as "our brothers in the south," and the camp which remains as a refuge as "galut." It then reports that even though our brothers in galut serve as a refuge they would fast on account of us on Mondays and Thursdays. The parallel text in Yalkut Shimoni (Part I, paragraph 131) retains the same language except that it concludes:

אף על פי כן היו מחעניים עליהם.

This version would have the sense that despite the fact that the galut community serves as a refuge, we nevertheless fast on their behalf (perhaps because they are in galut?).<sup>12</sup>

Historians such as Zechariah Frankel see in this passage an allusion to the ravaging of the South of Palestine by Ursicinus, chief general of the Emperor Gallus in the middle of the fourth century.<sup>13</sup> In this particular era conditions were so difficult in Eretz Israel that the Patriarch Hillel II found it necessary to publish the calendar and dispense with his authority to make the official proclamation of holidays. There was considerable social and scholarly degeneration during this period (which was relatively quiescent in Babylonia).<sup>14</sup>

The passage might just as well relate, however, to the period of R. Hoshaiah, a first generation Palestinian Amora,

perhaps around the time of the conquering of Palestine by the Palmyrenes and Romans (ca. 260-270), when the Jews were back in the good graces of the Babylonian ruler, Shapur I, for joining his fight against the Palmyrenes. In either case we find in this example the discussion of a purpose for galut, unrelated to redemption but referring to the realpolitik of the Rabbinic world. Similar references are made in connection with the beneficence of God toward Israel demonstrated by his division of His world among two nations (so that the Jews could be allied with one or the other, or at least no one strong nation could eliminate them; Seder Eliyahu Rabbah 20:11,4).

Another distinct Rabbinic opinion of the purposes of galut was the idea which connected galut with the addition of converts to the Jewish people. Both R. Elazar (ben Pedat) and R. Yochanon in the following passage commend the galut for its result in adding proselytes to the Jewish people:

ואמר ר"א לא הגולה הקב"ה את ישראל לבין האומות אלא כדי  
שיתוספו עליהם גרים שנ' וזרעתיה לי בארץ כלום אדם זורע  
סאה אלא להכניס כמה כורין ור' יוחנן אמר מהכא ורוחמתי את  
לא רוחמה

R. Elazar suggests an agricultural metaphor, Israel's being sown into the land for the sake of God (and involving the spreading of his name through proselytization). R. Yochanon

derives the same stance from the continuation of the same passage in Hosea (2:25), which goes on to say, "I will have compassion upon her who has not obtained compassion and I will say to them that are not My people, thou art my people." This is a close to the idea of mission that the Rabbis will come, as Ben-Sasson suggests:

In the eyes of the homilists who expressed similar sentiments, the people of Israel was like a flask of perfume which emits its scent only when it is shaken, and to Abraham, who made converts, it was said, as a sign for his descendents, "Wander about in the world, and your name will become great in my world."  
(Song of Songs Rabbah 1:4)

The two rabbis quoted above were active in Palestine during the third century: R. Yochanon was a student of R. Hoshiaia among others, and was R. Elazar's teacher after the latter came to Eretz Israel from Babylonia. Since Caracalla had given the Jews full citizenship in 212, we are apparently dealing with a period that encouraged proselytization, particularly in competition with Christianity. In any event the increase in number of converts gave an added meaning to the galut.

As in the previous example, however, the real historical circumstances do not materially affect the significance of the comment for our purposes, namely that galut here has another intrinsic purpose. The emphasis in these three examples has been placed upon a different aspect of God's intervention and/or involvement in history, especially in regard

to the intercourse between the Jews and rest of the nations. Not only will God's saving power in redeeming the Jews signal his power to the other nations, but he will even more directly involve himself in the power politics of the nations to insure Jewish survival.

Nevertheless, the sparsity of such texts must be noted. Nor are the examples of the teleology of galut very frequently attested in the literature. In numerical terms according to our rubrics, texts which refer to the "reasons" for galut outnumber those which refer to its purposes more than three to one. In addition to this extremely rough measure, it may also be observed that the texts on purposes are isolated homilies which tend not to be repeated more than once. Their major significance may well be that they were picked out for special attention by Jews in later periods although in the Rabbinic period their import was minor.

In fact those comments which we have distinguished from the normal teleological view of galut for their attribution of intrinsic value to galut, may be restricted to a view which was expressed in only a given half century in Eretz Israel. At least two explanations may be tentatively offered for the sparsity of material on purposes and these will be reviewed in the concluding chapters: first, that the galut itself was not the pressing reality which needed justification or post-facto explanation that a teleology is designed

to provide. It might well be that the development of the concept of punishment out of love to explain suffering and the focus of life in the world to come as general explanations for the troubles of Israel were sufficient explanations for the difficulties. Second, the nature of the relationship between Eretz Israel and the Galut was of such a character (probably constantly in flux as well), that no separate and complex ideology was necessary to deal with life in galut. The reasons which the Bible, Midrash, and the by now popular liturgy provided for the galut were sufficient to a people whose faith included a very strong conviction of God's just dealing with human beings and the Jewish people through the covenant.

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<sup>1</sup>Later commentators suggest that God answers them even though it is against their will that the events transpired (Y'fei Toar, 16th century), and that Israel's only value is in doing teshuvah, a process which follows only after they have been afflicted (Y'dei Moshe, 17th century).

<sup>2</sup>Concerning this passage, a fairly late commentator to the Midrash (Zev Wolf Einhorn, Vilna, ca. 1800-1860) remarks that it was a good thing that the Jews are made to suffer by God or else they would not return to Him

לשובה הוא שמטייר אותה ביסורים ועוני שחשוב אליו

Wolf understands the passage as referring to teshuvah although

the Rabbinic comment is ambiguous as to whether return to the land is actually meant since it concentrates on the impermanence of galut in a physical sense

(ובגויים ההם לא הרגיע ולא יהיה מנוח).

3

שוהר טוב כ:ד

<sup>4</sup>H. H. Ben-Sasson, "Galut", Encyclopedia Judaica, p.279.

<sup>5</sup>Eitz Yosef (19th century commentator) remarks on this midrash that the reference must be to the tradition that the Messiah was born on the day that the Second Temple was destroyed, the very beginning of an era of subjugation. In fact in the case of Moses who was also a redeemer of the Jewish people, it is written that the work in Egypt became even more difficult after he was born.

<sup>6</sup>Genesis, p.373, n.6, apparently based on this comment on Eitz Yosef:

ממושכנים תחת ידם לבל יוכלו לצאת מרשותם ולהיות להם למס עובר

7

סנהדרין לז:

8

Ben-Sasson, loc. cit.

9

פסחים פז:

10

ב"ר עז:ג

11

cf: Soncino Talmud, ad. loc.

The issue involved is who is fasting on behalf of whom, and is there a specific historical incident or period involved here. The identification of "our brothers in the South" has variously been made with the lost ten tribes who were exiled to Yemen (Y'fei Toar, to our passage) or sages in the Negev region (Y'dei Moshe and Eitz Yosef, *ibid.*). Y'dei Mishe identifies them with the Ziknei Hanegev who respond to the questions of Alexander (Tractate Tamid) and who he assumes were involved in the instruction given by Rabbi Akiva in that region to his disciples (R. Meir, R. Yose, etc.; but see Jacob Neusner, "The Problem of our Rabbis in the South," p. 177, Vol, I, A History of the Jews in Babylonia, who disputes the evidence of this tradition).

The importance of this identification for Y'dei Moshe involves his reversal of the text:

ה"ג...המחנה א' אלו שבגלות והיה המחנה הנשאר אלו אחינו שבדרום  
ששם יהיה לימור"ע את ר"יה ור"מ וכו'.

He (Yaakov Moshe Ashkenazi, late 17th century) could only understand the passage if the camp which was stricken was galut, whereas the refuge would be those sages of the Negev who were never completely exiled but remained to pray and fast for their brethren in galut. The comment of Shmuel Yoffe Ashkenazi in the previous century (Y'fei Toar) also implies that he must be reversing the texts as well:

אלו אחינו שבדרום זה י' השבטים אשר בארץ הימן והם היו מתענים  
בב' ובה' על יתר אחיהם שלא יגלו וישארו לפליטה

It is obvious here that those who remain as a refuge are those who do not go into galut, although they are the subject of prayer and fasting by their compatriots in the galut. (We might conjecture that this refuge was a particularly troublefilled time for those who remained.)

Eitz Yosef says that the text must refer to the refuge of Southern Israel and the stricken camp to galut כן צריך לומר and that the Israelites were praying and fasting on behalf of their brothers in the galut. Bialik (in Sefer Ha-Aggadah) sees no reason to change the order of the camps, but suggests that galil might be emended in place of galut. None of these commentators seems to be able to accept the sense of the passage as it is written, despite the fact that the same R. Hoshiaia is elsewhere (Abovementioned reference in Pesachim) quoted as suggesting that the dispersion of the Jews was to their advantage.

<sup>13</sup> Soncino, loc. cit. For details of the persecutions of this period see Graetz, History of the Jews, JPS 1945 edition, Vol II, pp.568-71.

<sup>14</sup> Margolis and Marx, History of the Jewish People, chap. 25 and 27; J. Neusner, "Babylonia", Encyclopedia Judaica.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Text quoted from Ben-Sasson, op. cit., p.280.

<sup>17</sup>

פסחים פז:

<sup>18</sup> Ben-Sasson, loc. cit.

THE THEOLOGICAL DIMENSION -- GOD'S PRESENCE IN EXILE

CHAPTER V

In the previous chapters the Rabbinic comments have either been restricted to a consideration of the effects of galut on the Jewish people or involved the fulfillment of the covenantal relationship between God and Israel. In addition to these two aspects of galut, the Rabbis devoted a great deal of attention and speculation to God's response to the exile of his people. Many of their comments attempt to characterize his emotional expression in anthropopathic (often familial) imagery. Nevertheless, an emphasis on God's devotion to justice is not lacking.

Another category of Rabbinic thought concerns the actions of the Shechina, God's presence in the world, in response to the affairs of men. In particular Rabbinic theological imagery projects a controversy between differing views of the Shechina's relationship to the Jews in galut. The suggestion that the Shechina accompanies the Jews in exile and variations on a theme of alienation of the Shechina caused by sin, demonstrate the broad scope of theological options available to the Rabbis.

Before moving to consider examples from the emotional life of God as seen by the Rabbis it is important to point out a not inconsiderable overlap of the concept of galut



with the concept of Hurban. In the literature parallel expressions may be noted in several cases of God's reaction to each of these events. In fact the interweaving of the material is a prime factor in deciding the traditional date for the beginning of the exile. If the loss of political sovereignty were the key to determining galut then it might well have been marked from the invasion of Pompey in 63 BCE which ended the Hasmonean Dynasty for all practical purposes. It is beyond the scope of the present study to compare the loss of the temple with the phenomenon of galut as to which was more central to Rabbinic consciousness. The fact remains that the two events are intrinsically linked in several ways as we shall see below.

Beginning with a relatively "moderate" response of God to galut, the opinion is advanced in Sukkah 52b, that galut is one of four elements of God's creation, concerning which he later was regretful. The reason is drawn from the Biblical verse (Isaiah 52:5). "'Now therefore what is for me here?' saith the Lord, 'seeing that My people is taken away for nought.'" This seemingly "quizzical" reaction is the after effect of God's exactment of His justice.<sup>1</sup> It suggests also that God's fate is linked in some fashion with that of Israel's and that their banishment produces at least consternation for Him. God's emotions are elsewhere depicted as much stronger than remorse; he is portrayed alternatively as either weeping in sadness or roaring in anguish:<sup>2,3</sup>

בשעה שהקב"ה זוכר את בניו ששרויים בצער בין אומות העולם  
מוריד שתי דמעות לים הגדול וקולם נשמע מסוף העלם ועד סופו.

שאל בלצא את רבי עקיבא אמר לו מהיכן הרעש נעשה אמר לו בשעה  
שהקב"ה מסתכל בבתי עבודה כוכבים ובעובדיה היאך חנונין בשקט  
ובשלוה בעולם ורואה ביתו הרב ונתון בידם של עובדי כוכבים .  
כביכול הוא מקנא ושואג ומיד השמים והארץ רועשים שנ' (יואל ד)  
מציון ישאג ומירושלים יתן קולו.

In the first instance the metaphor suggests that God is not necessarily continuously cognizant of the position of Israel, but that when He is reminded His "teardrops" will shake the world from one end until the other. The second comment, which refers specifically to the Hurban, suggests that thunder is caused by God's anguished roaring, an active response on the part of God to conditions which result from the exile. Perhaps the classic statement of God's anguish is reported by R. Yose at the beginning of B'rachot (3a) when he tells the prophet that he has heard the recriminations of a bat kol crying inside a ruin by the side of the road:

אוי לי שהחרבתי את ביתי  
ושרפתי את היכלי  
והגליתי את בני

It should be noted here that Hurban and galut are intrinsically related in this comment, and that it is quite clear that God's justice has been operating along with His sympathetic reaction, that He is responsible.

This theme of a God saddened by the exercise of His justice is treated with many variations throughout the lit-

erature. For example, in Tanna D'Bei Eliyahu (28) God is described as weeping secretly for His righteous ones in galut, (since for the lion to weep before the fox would be to subject himself to derision). In Eichah Rabbati (Petichta 25) God is compared to a king who leaves his palace in great anger and returns to caress its pillars and kiss its walls tearfully.

In various images God Himself is seen to participate in the specific situation and pain of exile. In the Palestinian Talmud (Sotah 4, with parallel in Leviticus Rabbah 23:8), God suffers along with Israel's difficulties in exile; for example, before the Jews were redeemed from Egypt, God had brickwork under his feet, symbolizing the mortar and bricks by which the Jews were enslaved. The basis of this comment is a well-attested idea of God's "immutable adherence to Israel and His share in His people's misfortune."<sup>4</sup> Examples include R. Yannai's suggestion that the relation between God and Israel is like the relations between twins -- the pain felt by one reacts on the other.<sup>5</sup>

תמתי בסיני שנחממו עמי בסיני ואמרו (שמות כד) כל אשר דבר  
ה' נעשה ונשמע. א"ר ינאי מה התאומים הללו אם חשש אחד  
בראשו הבירור מרגיש כן אמר הקב"ה כביכול (תהילים צא)  
עמו אנכי בצרה.

Elsewhere (Exodus Rabbah 1:5) a similar lesson is derived from God's placing himself in the thornbush to communicate with Moses.

In each of the above passages with considerable anthropomorphic imagery God is seen as compelling the necessary exile of His people yet still being mournful about the result. He takes the responsibility for the existence of the exile as punishment, yet remains "personally" affected by the outcome. In a graphic passage of consolation in Eichah Rabbati (Petichta 2) God recognizes, as it were, that since he was forced to exile both of His sons (Israel and Judah) that the fault may lie with him as a parent.

The filial relationship is carried forward in other comments as well. In one passage (Eichah Rabbati 1:1) God is depicted as inquiring into the conduct of an earthly king who loses a son and resolves to comport himself likewise. Similarly Yalkut Shimoni (on Eichah 3:3) compares the sonship status of Israel to the case of an earthly king who yearns for the company of his son, despite the latter's failings and misdeeds. Concerning this relationship, Schechter wrote:

This paternal relation, according to the great majority of the Rabbis, is unconditional. Israel will be chastised for its sins, even more severely than other nations for theirs; but this is only another proof of God's fatherly love. For it was only through suffering that Israel obtained the greatest gift from heaven, and what is still more important to note is, that it was affliction which 'reconciled and attached the son to the father (Israel to God).' 'The Israelites are God's children even when full of blemishes,' and the words, 'A seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupt' (Isaiah 1:4) are cited as a proof that even corruption cannot entirely destroy the natural relation between father and child.<sup>6</sup>

Although the familial image is frequently adduced, there are other explanations of God's response. For example, simple compassion for Israel's experience is seen to cause a change in God's actions. In this passage from Eichah Rabbati (Petichta 31) God refrains from accusing Israel as sinners and begins to praise them after they have gone into exile:

רבי שמעון בן יוחאי פתח (משלי כ') רע רע יאמר הקונה ואוזל  
לו אז יתהלל. את מוצא עד שלא גלו ישראל היה הקב"ה קורא  
אותם רעים הה"ר (ירמיה י"ג) העם הרע הזה המאנים את דברי.  
וכיון שגלו התחיל משבחן שנ' ואוזל לו אז יתהלל. כיון שחטאו  
גלו. וכיבן שגלו התחיל ירמיה מקונן עליהם איכה.

All of the above passages are meant to demonstrate the intimacy of the relationship between God and Israel, so that as we have seen from the beginning it is impossible to imagine galut without a significant reaction on the part of God. Schechter, commenting on the relationship between God and Israel, illustrates the scope of this intimacy:

He is their God, their father, their strength, their shepherd, their hope, their salvation, their safety; they are his people, his children, his first-born son, his treasure, dedicated to his name, which it is a sacrilege to profane. In brief, there is not a single endearing epithet in the language, such as brother, sister, bride, mother, lamb, or ewe, which is not, according to the Rabbis, applied by the Scriptures to express this intimate relation between God and his people.<sup>7</sup>

Abelson treats this material as reflecting "the personified Shechinah as the immanent God in Israel"<sup>8</sup> He concludes:

So close was the bond riveting Israel to God, and vice versa, so fully merged was God in Israel, so complete was the oneness of God and Israel, that in redeeming Israel, God redeemed Himself. Israel was part of God and God was part of Israel.<sup>9</sup>

Abelson brings a passage from B'rachot (6a) as illustrative of the boldest attempt to merge God in Israel. In this passage God is seen as laying Tefillin and his Tefillin are the symbol of his affection for Israel. God decorates himself with the ornaments of Israel and Tefillin on the head and arm of a Jew are Tefillin on the head and arm of God.<sup>10</sup>

Abelson's conclusions about God's immanence are not accepted universally by all scholars as we shall discuss below. Taking the position, nevertheless, that this very intimate relationship between God and Israel exists, one is left with the question of how it was possible for the exile to have been created in the first place. What is the "mechanism" by which God's justice operated?

The exile must be directly related to an act of God, namely the removal of His protection from the Jewish people. This point of view, that if God had been there then surely they could not have been exiled is articulated in Eichah Rabbati (Petichta 32):

(יחזקל ל') ונאק נאקות חלל . וכתיב (איוב כ"ד) ונפש חללים  
תשוע (ירמיה ח') הה' אין בציון אם מלכה אין ה' . אילו היה  
שם לא היו גולים . וכיון שחטאו גלו . וכיון שגלו התחיל ירמיה  
מקונן עליהם איכה ישכה בדר:

This particular observation is also made more graphically in connection with the Hurban; since it may be established that God maintained a relationship with the Temple itself (since the time of its predecessor, the Tabernacle) it is not surprising that the Rabbis connect the departure

of God's presence with the Hurban (and therefore indirectly with galut):<sup>12</sup>

ד"א ויקרא ה' אלהים צבאות ביום ההוא לבכי ולמסדר וגו'.  
 בשעה שבקש הקב"ה להחריב את בית המקדש אחר כל זמן שאני בחיוב  
 אין אומות העולם נוגעין בו. אלא אכביש את עיני ממנו. ואשב  
 שלא אזקק לו עד עת קץ. ויבואו האויבים ויהריבו אותו. מיד  
 נשב הקב"ה בימינו והחזירה אחוריו הה"ד השיב חור ימינו  
 מפני אויב. באותה שעה נכנסו אויבים להיכל ורפוהו. וכיון  
 שנשרף אמר הקב"ה שוב אין לי מושב בראץ אסלק שכינתי ממנה ואעלה  
 למכוני הראשון. הה"ד (הושע ה') אלכה ואשובה אל מקומי עד אשר  
 יאשמו ובקשו פני. באותה שעה היה הקב"ה בוכה ואמר אוי לי מה  
 עשיתי השריתי שכינתי למטה בשביל ישראל. ועכשו שחטאו חזרתי  
 למקומי הראשון

According to this homily, it was only after the destruction of the Temple that God decided to withdraw his presence. The passage speaks of two stages of God's activity, the withdrawal of His protective arm and then the removal of the Shechina from the earth. This withdrawal, which is variously associated with the sins of Israel, the exile, and the Hurban, received widely disparate interpretations in the Rabbinic literature. In order to fully understand the Rabbinic view of the withdrawal of God's presence (histalkut hashechina) it is necessary to first understand their conception of Shechina.

Considerable efforts have been expended by scholars to determine the nuance of meaning of the term Shechina and with one partial exception (Abelson) a consensus has been reached. The word itself is particularly prominent in the Aramaic Targumim where it regularly substitutes for anthropomorphic expressions which refer God to a specific place (e.g. in your midst), or for other "indelicate" expressions

of God's physical being (e.g. His having a face).<sup>13</sup>

Marmorstein traces its usage in the Rabbis to Rabban Gamliel and suggests that the popularity of term may have come after the destruction of the Temple, "in order to indicate that in spite of the loss of Temple and land, the divine presence was still in Israel."<sup>14</sup>

The consensus indicates that the Shechina is in reality a "circumlocution"<sup>15</sup> or an "interdemiary term"<sup>16</sup> for God used in a given set of circumstances. Moore suggests that it is used "to avoid expressions that literally rendered in the vernacular did not beseem the dignity of God...the Presence is not something else than God, but a reverent equivalent for God."<sup>17</sup> Urbach holds that the concept is introduced to express certain sensibilities on the part of the Rabbis:

The concept arises not in order to solve questions concerning the nature of God so much as to provide expression for man's simultaneous sense of God's presence and nearness, while being aware of his distance from man.<sup>18</sup>

Abelson suggests that the term is used as a personification interchangeably with "God," expressing Divine Immanence.<sup>19</sup> Kadushin agrees with the consensus that the Shechina refers to God himself; he refers to it as a reverential appellation.<sup>20</sup> However, he strongly dissents from the point of view that the Shechina expresses divine immanence.<sup>21</sup> His argument is presented below in connection with the question of Shechinta



Bagaluta.

The only demur to this conclusion is that offered by Abelson. In his cataloguing of Rabbinic views on the Shechina he maintains that some Rabbis viewed the Shechina as light or even some material object.<sup>22</sup> The position that the Shechina represents some kind of luminous, semi-divine material was maintained by certain medieval philosophers including Maimonides, but in the Rabbinic period it is usually seen as the product of Rabbinic license.<sup>23</sup>

In sum, the Shechina refers most often to a personification of God's "immanence" in the world and the diverse uses of the term in the literature show considerable flexibility. For example, in a previous chapter we have noted that the land of Israel is associated with the Shechina (as is the Temple and its predecessor, the travelling Mishkan). The presence of the Shechina in the world was in fact finally assured by the erection of the Beth Hamikdash in Jerusalem (Sifre Devarim 40, Mechilta, Pischa 1). Although the Shechina is conceived of as everywhere present it can be seen only through the study of torah in Eretz Israel.<sup>24</sup>

אמר ר' יוסי בן חלפתא לר' ישמעאל בריה - - - - -  
לראות פני שכינה בעולם הזה עסיק בתורה בארץ ישראל.

The simultaneous presence of the Shechinah in one location and in the world at large (Baba Batra 25a) was a paradox

which the Rabbis did not attempt to resolve.

This idea, however, that the Shechinah can be isolated in a given location is a prerequisite to the abovementioned concept of histalkut hashechinah. Separation from and nearness to this divine presence is connected in a general sense with man's action. Shechter comments:

'Thus taught the sages, Thy deeds will bring thee near (to God), and thy deeds will remove thee (from God). How so? If a man does ugly things his actions remove him from the divine presence, as it is said, 'Your sins have separated between you and your God' (Isaiah 59:2). But if a man has done good deeds, they bring him near the divine presence.<sup>25</sup>

Wicked generations and individuals are said to have an effect on the positioning of the Shechinah in relation to the world. In the following passage from Genesis Rabbah (19:7) the conclusion is drawn that sinners prevent the Shechinah's dwelling on earth:

וישמעו את קול ה' אלהים מתהלך בגן לרוח היום. א"ר חלפון שמענו שיש הילוך לקול. שנ' וישמעו את קול ה' אלהים מתהלך בגן. והילוך לאש. שנ' (שמות ט) ותהלך אש ארצה. א"ר אבא בק כהנא מהלך אין כתיב כאן. אלא מתהלך מקפץ ועולה. עיקר שכינה בתחתונים היתה. כיון שחטא אדם הראשון נסתלקה שכינה לוקיע הראשון. חטא קין נסתלקה לוקיע השני. דור אנוש לג'. דור המבול לד'. דור הפלגה לה'. סדומיים לו. ומצרים בימי אברהם לו. וכנגדן עמדו ז' צדיקים. ואלו הן. אברהם יצחק ויעקב. לוי קהת עמרם משה. עמד אברהם והורידה לו. עמד יצחק והורידה מן ו' לה'. עמד יעקב והורידה מן הה' לד'. עמד לוי והורידה מן הד' לג'. עמד קהת והורידה מן הג' לב'. עמד עמרם והורידה מן הב' לא'. עמד משה והורידה מלמעלה למטה.\*

Abelson mentions this text and lists several other passages which suggest that sin and the Shechinah are antithetical:

It is the sense of conflict between Deity and sin that is expressed in such maxims as 'He who sins in secret

\* אר"י כתיב (תהילים לו) צדיקים יירשו ארץ וגו'. ורשעים מה יעשו פורחים באויר. אלא הרשעים לא השכינה שכינה בארץ:

presses against the feet of the Shechinah' (Kiddushin 31a), there being no room in the universe for both God and sinners.<sup>26</sup>

Given this point of view of the incompatibility between the Shechinah and sin, together with the idea that the Temple was destroyed on account of the sins of the people, it is not surprising that this cataclysmic event would be connected with the departure of the Shechinah. In the passage quoted above (p. ) from Eichah Rabbati concerning the Hurban, God remarks that now that they have sinned I have returned to my original place.

A change in the daily liturgy following the destruction of the Temple gives an indication of the depth of the reaction on the part of the Rabbis. Whereas previously the seventeenth blessing of the Amidah had concluded "For thee alone do we serve in reverence," it would now read "who restores thy divine presence (Shechinah) to Zion."<sup>27</sup> Thus, it was very likely a widespread belief that the Shechinah had departed after the Hurban.

One might well expect a similar association of histalkut hashechinah with the exile, since the relation of galut to the sins of the people is equally blatant in the literature. The previous passage, however, is at best equivocal evidence since it does not necessarily equate galut with Hurban. In another passage (Shabbat 33a, mentioned above in connection with the reasons for galut), the two are

linked more closely in a context which also describes the alienation of the Shechinah from Israel:

כעון שפיכו' דמים המקדש חרב ושכינה מסתלקת מ'ישראל שני' ולא תחניפו וגו'. ולא תטמאו את הארץ אשר אתם יושבים בה אשר אני שוכן בתוכי. הא אתם מטמאים אותה אינכם יושבים בה ואיני שוכן בהוכם; כעון גילוי עריות ועבוד' אלילים והשמט' שמיטין ויובלות גלות בא' לעולם ומגלין אותן ובאין יאחרי ויושבין במקומן שני' כי את כל התועבות האל עשו אני הארץ וגו' וכתיב ותטמא הארץ ואפקוד עונה עליה וגו' וכתיב ולא תליא הארץ אתכם בטמאכם

It is conceivable that the author of this passage

distinguished between galut and Hurban with respect to histalkut, but since the same sins are spoken of as leading to both of them, it seems logical to expect histalkut in connection with galut. One unimpeachable text which carries through with this logic is quoted in the name of R. Zabdi Ben-Levi:<sup>28</sup>

זבדי בן לוי פתח (תהילים סח) אלהים מושיב יחידים ביחה אתה מוצא עד שלא נגאלו ישראל ממצרים היו יושבין בפני עצמן. והשכינה בפני עצמה. וכיון שנגאלו נעשו כולן. והמוניא אחת וכיון שגלו חזרה שכינה בפני עצמה וישראל בפני עצמן הה"ד אך סוררים שכנו צחיחה. איכה ישובה בדר:

In this observation we discover that the Shechinah was only joined with the community of Israel after their redemption from Egypt, and that as a consequence of the exile the two return to their separate existences. In this instance we assume that the presence of the Shechinah among the Israelites had some temporal relationship with the Exodus (perhaps with the revelation of the torah and the sealing of the covenant, and certainly with the tabernacle). Consequently violation of the covenant would not only lead to exile, but would also cause the alienation of

the Shechinah.

R. Zabdi's position follows logically, as we have demonstrated, from Rabbinical motifs concerning the location and reaction of the Shechina and does not necessarily contradict God's identification with the pain of exile. However, the alternative position which emphasized the direct participation of the Shechinah in the exile, Shechinta Bagaluta, is reported in the name of several prominent Rabbis.

Rabbi Akiva, for example, maintained that everywhere the Jews were exiled the Shechinah accompanied them, and that when they will return the Shechinah will return with them:<sup>29</sup>

ואומר מפני עמך אשר פדית לך ממצרים גוי ואלהיו שמ' ב' ז כג).  
 ר' אריעזר אומר עבודה זרה עברה עם ישראל בים שן ועבר בים צרה  
 והבה בים גלים (זכריה י יא) ואי זה זה זה צלמו של מיכה . ר'  
 עקיבא אומר אלמלא מקרא כתיב אי אפשר לאמרו כביכול אמרו ישראל  
 לפני הקב"ה עצמך פדית. וכן את מוצא בכל מקום שג' ו' ישראל  
 כביכול גלתה שכינה עמהם, גלו למצרים שכינה עמהם שן' הוגלה  
 נגלתי אל בית אביר בהיותם במצרים (ש"א ב כז) גלו לבבל שכינה  
 עמהם שן' למענכם שולחתי בבלה (ישעיה מג יד) גלו לעילם שכינה  
 עמהם שן' ושמתי כסאי בעילם (ירמיה מט לח) גלו לאדום שכינה  
 עמהם שן' מי זה בא מאדום חמוץ בגדים מבצרה (ישעיה סג א).  
 וכשעתידין לחזור כביכול שכינה חוזרת עמהם שן' ושב י"י אלהיך  
 את שבותך (דברים ל ג) אינו והשיב אלא ושב, ואמר אתי מלבנון כלה  
 God is not seen here as separate from the Israelites at

all, but rather when the time arrives for them to return he returns (shav) with them; (not heisheev which would imply his intervention from a distance in causing them to return).

Virtually the same argument is reproduced in the name of R. Natan with the addition of a significant mashal:<sup>30</sup>

רבי נתן אומר חביבים ישראל שבכל מקום שגלו שכינה עמהם. גלו למצרים שכינה עמהם הנגלה נגליתי אל בית אביך בהיותם במצרים לבית פרעה גלו לבבל שכינה עמהם שנ' (ישעיה מג) למענכם שולחתי בבלה. גלו לעילם שכינה עמהם שנ' (ירמיה מט) ושמתי כסאי בעילם וחאבדתי משם כלך ושרים גלו לאדום שכינה עמהם שנ' (ישעיה סג) מי זה לא מאדום חמוץ בגדים מבצרה. וכשהם חוזרים שכינה עמהם שנ' (דברים ל) ושב ה' אלהיך את שבותך ורחמך והשיב לא נאמר אלא ושב ה' אלהיך. ואומר (שה"ש ד) אתי מלבנון כלה אתי מלבנון תבואי חשורי מראש אמנה מראש שניר וחרנון ממעונות אריות מהררי נמרים. ר' אומר משל למה הדבר דומה למלך שאמר לעבדו אם הבקשני הריני אצל בני כל זמן שאתה מבקשני הריני אצל בני. וכה"א (ויקרא טז) השוכן אתם בתוך טומאותם

In this formulation, the mashal (parable) is brought to emphasize that God dwells with the Israelites even in conditions of impurity (in galut). Abelson mentions several passages in which the Shechinah is said to dwell with Israel despite their impurity:

The Rabbins made much of the phrase in Ezekiel 36:17, k'tumat hanidah (the impurity of the menstrual woman); it is not the same as k'tumat met; a "Kohen" may keep company with the former but must have no contact with the latter; Israel being likened by the prophet to the former and not to the latter may therefore always hope to be in the company of God.<sup>31</sup>

Aside from R. Natan's mashal cited above, there are other examples of statements which suggest that God demonstrates his affection for Israel by permitting His Shechinah to enter into places of idolatry, filth, and uncleanness in order to redeem them:<sup>32</sup>

אמר רבי שמעון הגדולה חיבתן של ישראל שנגלה הקב"ה במקום עבודת כוכבים ובמקום טנופת ובמקום טומאה בשביל לגאלן. משל לכהן שנפלה תרומתו לבית הקברות אומר מה אעשה. לטמא את עצמי אי אפשר. ולהניח תרומתי א"א. מוטב לי לטמא את עצמי פעם אחת וחזור ומטהר ולא אאבד את תרומתי. כך אבותינו היו תרומתו של הקב"ה שנ' (ירמיה ב) קדש ישראל לה' וגו' היו בין הקברות שנ' (שמות יב) כי אין בית אשר אין שם מח ואומר (במדבר ג) ומצרים מקברים אמר הקב"ה הלאן אני גואלן להניחן א"א מוטב לירד ולהצילן שנ' (שמות ג) וארד להצילו מיד מצרים כשהוציא קרא לאהרן וטהר אותו שנ' (ויקרא טז) וכפר את מקדש הקדש. (שם) וכפר על הקדש;

In this midrash we are presented with a model for later redemption, but the text does seem to suggest that God does exile himself into such situations. It is not unequivocal proof, however, that he abides there with them. Concerning this passage Abelson suggests:

These ideas are an expansion of the oft-recurring Biblical references to the sonship of Israel. The Sifrei on a passage in Deuteronomy (32:5) says, 'Although they (i.e., Israel) are full of blemishes, yet they are called sons.' The Yalkut on Lamentations 3:3 compares this sonship to the case of an earthly monarch who yearns and frets for his son's company no matter what the latter's failings and offences may be.<sup>33</sup>

We have now developed two contrasting views of the possible reaction of the Shechinah in the situation of galut. Marmorstein hypothesizes that one point of view (that which emphasizes Shechinta Bagaluta) predominated during certain periods as a result of external circumstances. For example, he suggests:

Most of the great apologists for Judaism in the third century dwell on the doctrine of God's unchangeable love for Israel on one side, and strongly repudiate on the other side the idea of Israel being forsaken by God.<sup>34</sup>

The apparent contradiction between the incompatibility of sin and the Shechinah and the emphatic allusion to the Shechinah dwelling in contact with impurity, is explained by Abelson as follows:

An examination of all the passages bearing on the subject shows that wherever Shechinah and sin are antithetical, the reference is either to the sin of an individual or of a section of Israelites, whereas in all those passages where Shechinah and sin are in consonance, the allusion is to the sin or evil of the collective body of Israelites. The underlying idea is only another form of the emphatic assertion so constantly repeated throughout the pages of Rabbinic literature, of the Immanence of God in Israel. God dwells in Israel at all costs. Whether Israel be in good or evil repute, God is there. To ask the question how the Rabbins could harmonize their doctrine of God's Immanence in Israel in spite of Israel's wickedness, is to go beyond the scope of Rabbinic logic.<sup>35</sup>

Urbach, however, maintains that this is one of two possible explanations. He describes differing opinions of R. Akiva and R. Eliezer on the verse from Isaiah. "But your iniquities have separated you from your God." R. Akiva can be understood to be referring this passage only to the individual sinner, that the Shechinah will not rest on him, and not to the community of Israel as a whole. R. Eliezer, on the other hand, related the histalkut of the Shechinah from Israel to their iniquities: "Just as only teshuvah can bring redemption, in his opinion, so also the withdrawal of sinfulness alone can restore the shechina to its place."<sup>36</sup>

In addition, as we have seen above, it was possible to maintain that the Shechinah departed from the community as a whole. We therefore might suggest (as does Urbach)<sup>37</sup> that the difference in the explanations of the Shechinah's actions serves a homiletic purpose. The attitude that the Shechinah departs from Israel during exile and is repelled



by the sins of the people is spoken as a kind of reproach. On the other hand, the notion that the Shechinah accompanies the Jews during their various exiles and indeed weeps over them, is spoken for the purpose of solace and comfort.

Marmorstein in particular is convinced that certain motifs of God's identification and participation in exile were used to buoy up the spirits of the people and to counter Christian propaganda. Concerning the stories of the Shechinta Bagaluta he remarked:

Successive generations of teachers often repeated these words, and with them dispelled the people's despair and raised their hope and trust in God. Such an action was especially called for since Christian teachers renewed and reiterated the defamation of the Jewish nation, first broadcast by pagan writers and orators. God has forsaken the people of Israel! He is no more dwelling in their midst. This was manifested by the Exile of Israel, the defeat of the Jews on the battlefields of Galilee and Judea, the downfall of the City of Jerusalem, and last but not least the Destruction of the Temple in Zion.<sup>30</sup>

Kadushin in The Rabbinic Mind suggests another possible explanation for the histalkut-Shechinta Bagaluta question. He introduces another conceptual term, Gilluy Shekinah, which stands for those occasions when God manifests himself to mankind; he reserves for "Shechinah," the meaning of the "normal mystical experience" of God's nearness.<sup>39</sup> "The statement that God withdrew His Shekinah when the Temple was destroyed, and the statement, in a context of prayer, that Shekinah is everywhere, do not really contradict each other; the former

refers to Gilluy Shekinah whereas the latter reflects normal mystical experience."<sup>40</sup>

Kadushin, as mentioned above, rejects the notion that the Shechinah stands for a divine principle permanently inherent within Israel. Rather the Rabbis --

speak of Shekinah as sharing, as it were, the exile of Israel...Such statements reflect the normal mystical experience of the Rabbis and of the people as a whole. But the Rabbis never take it for granted that Shekinah is inevitably associated with Israel. As a matter of fact, they do dissociate Shekinah from Israel. When the people sin, Shekinah leaves Israel...."<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, statements concerning the departure of the Shechinah must refer to conditions when the Shechinah cannot be revealed for whatever reason (e.g., uncleanness, no dwelling place, etc.). Acceptance of this logical schema for viewing the controversy still leaves us with the question of the import of the differing interpretations of the activities of the Shechinah. From our own perspective we may view the various opinions as expressive either of homiletic license in response to the needs of the people or as reaction to external polemic.

Urbach suggests that the question may have had some implication for the political thought of the figures in question -- for example, R. Akiva's usage of the Midrash concerning the Shechinta Bagaluta and its return may be connected with his messianic fervor.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, R. Eliezer's perspective would be non-political in the sense

that it would focus on the internal, moral life of the community.<sup>43</sup> In general, we may observe that each of these positions exhibit a continuity with what we have mentioned in previous chapters concerning the theological dimensions of galut.

In the first place, the dominant motif of galut remains punishment and fulfillment of the covenantal warnings; the covenant is personalized with the use of imagery reflecting the closeness of Israel and God although this closeness does not mitigate the performance of justice. Secondly, throughout this chapter we have observed a preoccupation with the participation of God's shechinah in the travail of galut. This phenomenon occurs despite the natural aversion or antithesis between sin and the Shechinah. Finally, the catastrophe surrounding the Hurban and the initiation of the galut had very distinct cosmic consequences, although the elucidation of those consequences seems to vary according to the needs of darshan and audience. Within all perspectives, however, God is never indifferent to the galut of His people.

- <sup>1</sup>Rashi, ad loc., גלות - שהגלה אותם.
- <sup>2</sup>ברכות נט.
- <sup>3</sup>ש"ר כט:ט
- <sup>4</sup>A. Marmorstein, Essays in Anthropomorphism, p.76.
- <sup>5</sup>ש"ר ב:ה
- <sup>6</sup>S. Schechter, Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, pp.51-2.
- <sup>7</sup>Ibid., p.46-7.
- <sup>8</sup>J. Abelson, The Immanence of God in Rabbinic Literature, Chap. IX.
- <sup>9</sup>Ibid., p.128.
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid., p.132-3.
- <sup>11</sup>A. Unterman, "Shekina," Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol. XIV, p.1351.
- <sup>12</sup>אי"ר פתיחתא כד
- <sup>13</sup>א. אורבך, חז"ל, ע' 32-3.
- <sup>14</sup>A. Marmorstein, The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God, Vol. I, pp.103-4.
- <sup>15</sup>G. Moore, Judaism, Vol I, p.419.
- <sup>16</sup>A. Unterman, op. cit., p.1350.
- <sup>17</sup>Moore, op. cit., pp.419, 436.
- <sup>18</sup>אורבך, עם ע' 52.
- <sup>19</sup>Abelson, op. cit., p.108.

<sup>20</sup>M. Kadushin, The Rabbinic Mind, p.225.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p.256.

<sup>22</sup>Abelson, op. cit., chap. V.

<sup>23</sup>Cf.                      אורבך, שם ע' 35-37.

<sup>24</sup>    מד' תהילים קה:א

<sup>25</sup>Schechter, op. cit., p.33.

<sup>26</sup>Abelson, op. cit., pp.135-6.

<sup>27</sup>A. Z. Idelsohn, Jewish Liturgy, p.106. See also J. Hertz, Daily Prayer Book, p.149, n.17.

<sup>28</sup>    אי"ר פתיחתא כט

<sup>29</sup>    מכילתא דפסחא פי"א ע' נא-נב.  
רבש"י מגילה כט.

<sup>30</sup>    ספרי מסעי פ' קסא

<sup>31</sup>Abelson, op. cit., p.139.

<sup>32</sup>    רמ"ר טו:ה

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>A. Marmorstein, Studies in Jewish Theology, p.192-3.

<sup>35</sup>Abelson, op. cit., p.138.

<sup>36</sup>    אורבך, שם ע' 43-4.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>A. Marmorstein, Essays in Anthropomorphism, p.72-73.

<sup>39</sup>Kadushin, op. cit., p.228.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p.254-6.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>

אורבך, שם ע' 44.

<sup>43</sup>

שם

# THE STATUS OF ERETZ BAVEL AND ERETZ ISRAEL

## CHAPTER VI

As we have noted the situation of galut which prevailed in the Rabbinic period was characterized by the existence of a prominent and relatively comfortable community in Eretz Bavel. In general, conditions there led (as we shall see below) to purer genealogical descent, great concern for the propagation of torah teaching, and equal, if not superior, authority with respect to certain legal institutions. One authority even held that to leave Babylonia for Eretz Israel was to transgress a positive commandment of the torah.<sup>1</sup>

Babylonia was certainly at least "the second land of Jewish settlement," as one modern Talmudic authority describes it,<sup>2</sup> if not an equally important location in the growth of the Jewish people. Therefore in describing the Rabbinic picture of galut, it is essential to understand the variations in attitude towards Eretz Bavel and Eretz Israel throughout the period. We will be concerned with the development of aggadic traditions with respect to each land and where possible the halachic concomitants as well. Beginning with a comparison of galut Bavel with other exiles, we will then discuss actual conditions in Babylonia itself, compare the legal status of Babylonia with Eretz Israel, describe the traditions relating to the latter and its settlement, and finally, consider the question of whether "Bavel" can in fact be viewed as galut at all.

If our concern lies with the image of the Babylonian exile contemporary with the Rabbis, then we will observe that it is considered a relatively benevolent occurrence. As early as R. Yochanon ben Zakkai galut Bavel is portrayed as having less severe consequences than other exiles. His remarks allude to the affinity of the Jews for their origins during the time of Abraham and suggested that it was natural that they would return there:<sup>3</sup>

חמישה דברים היה רבן יוחנן בן זכאי אומר כמין חונן מפני  
מה גלו ישראל לבבל יתר מכל הארצות כולן מפני ביה אברהם  
אביהם היה משם משלו משל למה הדבר דומה לאשה שקלקלה על  
בעלה להיכן משלחה לבית אביה.

The exile to Babylonia specifically is elsewhere viewed as resulting from God's compassion toward the Jewish people in carrying out of His judgment against them. He understood that Israel could not bear the decrees of the Romans so He exiled them to Babylonia where conditions were easier:<sup>4</sup>

והצני רבי חייא מאי דכתיב אלהים הבין דרכה והוא ידע את  
מקומה יודע הקב"ה בישראל שאין יכולין לקבל גזרת ארומיים  
עמד והגלה אותם לבבל.

These two traditions were recorded with some embellishment in a passage from tractate Pesachim (87b):

תנא רבי חייא מאי דכתיב אלהים הבין דרכה והוא ידע את מקומה  
יודע הקב"ה את ישראל שאין יכולין לקבל גזירות אכזריות ארם  
לפיכך הגלה אותם לבבל ואמר ר"א לא הגלה הקב"ה את ישראל לבבל  
אלא מפני שעמוקה כשאויל שנ' מיד שאול אפדס ממות אגאלם ר' חנינא  
אמר מפני שקרוב לשונם ללשון תורה ר' יוחנן אמר מפני ששיגורן \*

In the above passage we learn that one of the advantages of Babylonia is that its language is similar to the language of torah and, in fact, according to Ulla (who travelled periodically between Palestine and Babylonia)<sup>5</sup> the Babylonian exile

\* לבית אמן משל לאדם שכעס על אשתו להיכן משגרה לבית אמה.



is the kind of place where the Jews could enjoy dates and study torah. In another homily we also learn that galut Bavel is radically different from other exiles since the Jews in Babylonia were for the most part less subject to persecution than were other diaspora communities:<sup>6</sup>

הביאו בני מרחוק אמר רב הונא אלו גלות של בבל שדעתן מיושבת  
עליהן כבנים ובנוחי מקצה הארץ אלו גלות של שאר ארצות שאין  
דעתן מיושבת עליהן.

The text suggests in accord with what we have seen above that the Jews are able to contemplate their affairs in relative quiescence in Babylonia whereas the other exiles are compared to the emotional state of daughters (who are not at ease).<sup>7</sup>

"Galut Bavel" in the Rabbinic literature may also refer to the original Babylonian captivity which was variously described as bloody (Shoher Tov 6:2), a time of great darkness (exodus Rabbah 51:7), and as more difficult than the slavery in Egypt (Yerushalmi Sukkah 4). But the current exile as characterized by the Rabbis provided the very leavening for the survival and development of Judaism.<sup>8</sup> The community in Babylonia was distinguished by their piety, and by virtue of their study of torah they are sustained as we see in the following passages:<sup>9,10</sup>

אמרו ליה לרבי יוחנן איכא סבי בבבל חמה ואמר למען ירבו ימיכם  
ומימי בניכם על האדמה כתיב אבל בחוצה לארץ לא כיון דאמרי ליה  
מקדמי ומחשכי לבי כנישתא אמר היינו דאהני להו כדאמר ריב"ל  
לבניה קדימו וחשיכו ועיילו לבי כנישתא כי היכי דתורכו חיי

רבי ישמעאל בר ר' יוסי שייליה לרבי . א"ל בני בבלי בזכות  
מה הן חיים . א"ל בזכות התורה . ובני ארץ ישראל בזכות

מה . א"ל בזכות שהן מכבדין את השבתות וימים טובים .

In the first case above the elderly Babylonians have lengthened their days by their attendance at public worship; in the second they are to be distinguished both from the rest of the diaspora and also Eretz Israel by their concern for torah. The latter passage suggests in a literal form the distinctions among the three areas of Jewish settlement, distinctions whose legal consequences will be described below. Nevertheless the significance of each of the passages we have considered thus far need not be their accurate rendering of such differences, but simply the evidence they indicate of highly valued and distinctive existence in galut Bavel. It should also be noted that this view is expressed in the name of both Babylonian and Palestinian authorities.

Considering the fact that the major development of aggadic literature occurred in Palestine (while the halacha was more completely developed in Babylonia) it is significant that such positive evaluations of galut Bavel are in evidence. We do find some instances of criticism of the pilpul engaged in by Babylonian scholars (notably attributed to R. Zeira who left Babylonia to study in Palestine and who observed 100 fasts in order to forget his Talmudic learning in Babylonia);<sup>11</sup> some derogatory comments are also

made concerning their scholarship (e.g., Shabbat 145b, where R. Hiyya bar Abba claims that the Babylonian scholars dress well to compensate for the fact that they are not well learned.)

Comparable traditions are reported from the Babylonian point of view as well. These typically involve instances of Palestinian sages who suddenly recognize the superiority of the Babylonian scholars (cf. Ulla in Ketivot 111a and R. yodin who is impressed by Rav Kahane, Baba Kamma 117b). There is even one instance of a Babylonian, Abbaye, reversing the comment and suggesting that one of their scholars (from Palestine) is worth two of ours.

From the legislative and institutional point of view, however, it is apparent that Babylonia claims certain distinctions. For example, R. Judah, the Patriarch and therefore the leader of the Palestinian community makes it quite clear that he considers his status to be inferior to that of the Resh Galuta, Rav Huna. He is reported as saying (Genesis Rabbah 33.3): "If he were to come up here I would rise before him, for he is descended from Judah, whereas I am from Benjamin, he is descended on the male side while I am descended (from Judah) on the female side." The Biblical passage which indicated that the scepter (of ruling power) will never depart from Judah (Genesis 49:10, לא יסור

לא יסור is seen to allude to

the Exilarch in Babylonia whereas the m'chokek is referred to the school of Rabbi who publicly teach torah in Eretz Israel.

When in another source (Horayot 11b) the opinion is offered that Eretz Bavel and Eretz Israel may be considered analogous to the situation of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah (whose rulers each brought forward his own sin offering before God), the opinion is rejected on the grounds that the Palestinians submit in authority to the Babylonians:

מלכי ישראל ומלכי בית דוד אלו מביאים לעצמם ואלו מביאים לעצמם אמר ליה התם לא כייפי אהדרי הכא אנו כייפינו להו לדידהו

The historical significance of this submission will be considered below. With respect to genealogical purity, Eretz Bavel was also considered superior. In a chapter dealing with genealogical matters deriving from the return from the first exile to Babylonia (Kiddushin, Chapyet 4) we find that "Ezra did not go up from Babylonia until he made it pure like sifted flour," i.e., that he took the citizens of lower social class, thereby leaving a purged, genealogically purer class:<sup>12</sup>

מבבל נתני עלו לא"י מסייע ליה לר' אלעזר דאמר ר' אלעזר לא עלה עזרא מבבל עד שעשאה כסולת נקייה ועלה איהמר אביי אמר עלו מאיליהם חנן ורבא אמר העולם חנן וקמיפלגי בדרכי אלעזר דאמר ר' אלעזר לא עלה עזרא מבבל עד שעשאה כסולת נקייה ועלה אביילית ליי' דר' אלעזר רבא איה ליי' דר' אלעזר איבע"א דכולי עלמא איה להו דר' אלעזר והכא בהא קמיפלגי מר סבר אפרושי אפרושינהו ומנפשייהו סליקו ומר סבר בעל כרחיהו אסוקונהו בשלמא לכאן דאמר עלו היינו דאמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל כל ארצות עיסה לארץ ישראל וארץ עיסה לבבל.

Jacon Neusner in A History of the Jews of Babylonia accords with this interpretation that it was believed (my emphasis) that Ezra had taken up with him all of the unsuitable families.<sup>13</sup> This traditional explanation was linked with Rav Judah's doctrine, advanced in the name of Samuel, that all countries are as dough in comparison with Palestine, and that Palestine is as dough relative to Babylonia (i.e., since dough is a mixture of flour and water, those countries are less pure than Eretz Israel which is in turn less pure than Babylonia).<sup>14</sup> The legal implications of these distinctions were important and involved the assumption of purity in background of a Babylonian, impurity in the background of someone from outside of Palestine, and no a priori assumptions for someone from Eretz Israel.<sup>15</sup>

Later attempts during the life of R. Judah to invalidate this judgment did not meet with success.<sup>16</sup> R. Judah himself supported the purity claimed by Babylonian Jewry, apparently "because his own origin would have been impugned if he had not."<sup>17</sup>

Seemingly even more significant than these arguments about genealogical purity and the study of torah in Babylonia was the abovementioned dictum of Rav Judah (occurring in Ketuvot 110a, Shabbat 41a, B'rachot 24b): "Whoever goes up from Babylonia to the Land of Israel transgresses a positive commandment:"

ר' זירא הוה קמשהמיט מיניה דרב יהודה דבעא למיטק לארץ  
ישראל דאמר רב יהודה כל העולה מבבל לארץ ישראל עובר בעשה  
שנ' בבבל יובאו ושמה יהיו עד יום פקדי אותם נאם ה'

Here Rav Judah gives a theological reason for his position, name that "they" (the Israelites, according to Rav Judah) have been carried away to Babylonia and will be there (and should be there by implication) until the Lord remembers them (cf. Jeremiah 27:22). His argument is seemingly refuted afterwards bt R. Zeira who interprets "they" as referring to the vessels of the ministry, mentioned in the passage from Jeremiah. However, later in the same recording of traditions concerning Eretz Israel (ketuvot 110b-11a, detailed below), Rav Judah states in the name of Samuel: "As it is forbidden to leave the land of Israel for Babylonia, so it is forbidden to leave Babylonia for other countries (even Eretz Israel).<sup>18</sup> Even though the galut Bavel suggested in the verse from Jeremiah is the original event, there is no question that it is meant to refer to the current exile in Babylonia precipitated by the Romans.<sup>19</sup>

Later Babylonian Amoraim (Rabbah and Rav Joseph, who followed Rav Judah in the next century) added that it is even forbidden to move from city to city within Babylonia, e.g. from Pumbeditha to Be Kubi<sup>20</sup> (a nearby village).<sup>21</sup>

Neusner suggests that the original context for Rav Judah's ruling was similar to that of his other ruling in the name of Samuel, namely wariness about genealogical puri-

ty in Eretz Israel. The later reference (concerning Rabbah and Rav Joseph) is also related to an attempt by the Rabbis to try to keep people within the towns of which they approved.<sup>22</sup> Rashi offers the suggestion that the reason for the prohibition against leaving Babylonia was based on its status as an important center of learning,<sup>23</sup> and the fact that Maimonides carries forward the opinion of Rav Judah into law<sup>24</sup> gives additional indirect evidence of the more general applicability of Rav Judah's remark. It seems possible to conclude that the opinion is in fact a more general support for the status of Eretz Bavel, particularly in light of the graphic theological justification he gives for the existence of galut Bavel (linking it with the Biblical exile) and also his remark further on in the same series of opinions (Ketuvot 111a):

אמר רב יהודה כל הדר בבבל כאילו דר בארץ ישראל שנ' הרי  
ציון המלטי יושבת בבבל

The portion of tractate Ketuvot which contains the above statements of Rav Judah also relates a series of aggadic statements about the land of Israel. The mishnah (Ketuvot 12:11) to which the comments are connected is the last in the tractate and concerns the special significance of Eretz Israel and Jerusalem with respect to the obligations of marriage partners: "All may be compelled to go up to the Land of Israel but none may be compelled to leave it. All may be compelled to go up to Jerusalem but none may be compelled to leave it..."

According to the gemara to this mishna, it was taught that one should always live in the Land of Israel, even in a town most of whose inhabitants are idolators, since those who live within the land are regarded as having a God and those outside the land are regarded as having no God (even in a city of Israelites):<sup>25</sup>

ח"ר לעולם ידור אדם בא"י אפי" בעיר שרובה עובדי כוכבים ואל ידור בחו"ל ואפילו בעיר שרובה ישראל שכל הדר בארץ ישראל דומה כמי שיש לו אלוה וכל הדר בחוצה לארץ דומה כמי שאין אלוה שנא' לתת לכם את ארץ כנען להיות לכם לאלהים וכל שאינו דר בארץ אין לו אלוה אלא לומר לך כל הדר בחו"ל כאילו עובר עבודה כוכבים.  
Furthermore, whoever lives in Eretz Israel without

sin ( as the land makes expiation for his sin) and whoever is buried in Eretz Israel is deemed to be buried under the altar. Even the person who walks only four cubits in the Land of Israel is considered to have merited life in the world to come, and the dead outside of the land will not be resurrected (although righteous among them will roll through underground tunnels to the Land of Israel to be resurrected for future life).

Hyperbolic expressions of glory of Eretz Israel proliferate throughout the Rabbinic literature. One modern source has collected over 500 homilies.<sup>26</sup> We find, for example, that it is better to lodge in the deserts of Eretz Israel than in palaces outside of the land:<sup>27</sup>

"אלין במדבר סלה" - מוטב ללון במדברות של ארץ ישראל ולא ללון בפלטוניות של חו"ל



Every person in the world yearns for Eretz Israel, and although the Jews have been exiled from it they will be returned when they are free from sin and iniquity:<sup>28</sup>

אמר הקב"ה בעולם הזה היו הכל מתאוין לארץ ישראל ועל ידי עונות גלייתם ממנה אבל לע"ל שאין לכם לא חטא ולא עון אני אטע אתכם בחוכה נטיעת שלוח מנין שנ' (עמוס ט) ונטעתם על אדמתם ולא ינחשו מעל אדמתם.

In the following two comments living in Israel is considered to be equivalent to the whole torah. In the first (from the Tosefta to Avodah Zarah 5:2), we find also that one should always dwell there and depart only in the most extreme circumstances, and then, recognizing the great peril:

ישרה אדם בארץ ישראל אפילו בעיר שרובה עובדי כוכבים ולא בחו"ל אפי" בעיר שכולה ישראל מלמד ששיבת ארץ ישראל שקולה כנגד כל מצות שבתורה. והקבור בא"י כאילו הוא קבור תחת נזבח. לא יצא אדם לחוצה לארץ אא"כ היו חטין סאתים בסלע אמר רבי שמעון במה דברים אמורים בזמן שאינו מוצא ליקח אבל בזמן שמוצא ליקח אפי" סאה בסלע לא יצא וכן היה ר"ש אומר אלמלך מגדולי הדור ומפונסי צבור היה ועל שיצא לחוצה לארץ מה הוא ובניו ברעב והיו כל ישראל קיימין על אדמתן שנ' (רות א) ותהום כל העיר עליהן מלמד שכל כעיר קיימת ומת הוא ובניו ברעב. הרי הוא אומר (בר' כה) ושבת בשלום\*<sup>1</sup>

In the second R. Elazar ben Shamua and R. Yochanon the Sandalmaker turned back in the middle of a journey to Nehardea to study with R. Judah ben Batirah because they suddenly

recognize the importance of residence in the Land of Israel:<sup>29</sup>

מעשה ברבי אלעזר בן שמוע ורבי יוחנן שהיו הולכים לנציבים אצל רבי יהודה בן בתירה ללמוד ממנו תורה והגיעו לצידון וזכרו את א"י וקפו עיניהם וזלגו דמעותיהם וקראו בגדיהם וקראו את המקוא הזה וירשתם אותה וישבתם בה ושמרת לעשות את כל החוקים האל' ואת המשפטים אמרו\*<sup>2</sup>

We have previously mentioned the special character of the land dating back to Biblical references to the covenant and including Rabbinic ideas of the association of God's presence with the land. Eretz Israel is clearly not like other countries and cannot stomach transgressors. It has \*ואל בית אבי שאין ח"ל והיה ה' לי לאלהים ואומר (ויק' כה) לוח ללך את ארץ כנען להיות לכם לאלהים כל זמן שאתם בארץ כנען הריני לכם אלוה אין אתם בארץ כנען איני לכם לאלוה.

\*שיבת א"י שקולה כנגד כל המצוות שבתורה הזרו ובאו להם לא"י.

been compared to the delicate son of a king who was fed food which he could not digest.<sup>30</sup>

This special character of the land is reported in a dream interpretation in B'rachot (57a):

העומד ערום בחלום בבבל עומד בלא חטא בא"י ערום בלא מצוות  
The interpretation suggests that in Babylonia one would be held sinless, but that in Eretz Israel (since one is already sinless) there must be another explanation for the dream. As in the above passage from Ketuvot we find here that he who dwells in the land already abides sinless. This particular aggadic tradition had important legal consequences as well. The merit of Eretz Israel functions to augment the merits of a person accused of a capital crime, so that if he has been sentenced to death by a court outside of the land and flees to Eretz Israel, a court there can annul the decision and try him again in the hopes of finding in his favor.<sup>31</sup>

A very early legal tradition which emphasized a distinction between the soil of Eretz Israel and the rest of the world is preserved in the concept of eretz ha-amim, "soil of the nations."<sup>32</sup> In the middle of the second century B.C.E. the first of the "Zugot," Yose ben Yoezer and Yose ben Yochanon, created the idea of the Levitical impurity of all countries outside of Judah.<sup>33,34</sup> (Yerushalmi Shabbat I, 3d 43)

יוסף בן יועזר איש צרידה ויוסי בן יוחנן איש ירושלים גזרו  
טומאה על ארץ העמים ועל כלי זכוכיה....

This early tradition (perhaps instituted to stem the emigration of Jews from Palestine consequent upon traumatic times of the Maccabees)<sup>35</sup> continued to be in force throughout the Rabbinic period and rulings were made considering such subjects as what to do with the terumah offering if it comes in contact with the soil. A notable exception were the routes customarily used by travellers coming from Babylonia to Eretz Israel.<sup>36</sup>

The impurity of the soil in question derived from uncertainty concerning the burial practices in the foreign lands. Burial in the Land of Israel was, of course, desirable because of the tradition concerning resurrection, but Babylonia was also considered to have merit as this passage, which is part of the section previously discussed from Ketuvot (111a) indicates:

וכה ורב יוסף דאמרי חרוייהו כשרין שנבבל א"י קולתן  
כשרין שבשאר ארצות בבל קולטתן למאי אילימא ליוחסין  
והאמר מר כל הארצות עיסה לא"י וא"י עיסה לבבל אלא  
לענין קבורה

In this passage the question is raised as to why one would imagine that the fit would not be received in Babylonia, since it has been established that Babylonia is more pure in matters of descent than Eretz Israel. The opinion of Rabbah and Rav Joseph only makes sense if it is applied to persons received in respect to burial; for in this one area Eretz Israel is considered superior on account of its

holiness, whereas B\_bylonia is considered superior to the other nations because of the scholars and saints who made their home there.<sup>37</sup>

Legally speaking, the purity of Eretz Israel is of two separate categories:<sup>38</sup> A) intrinsic holiness which derives from the presence of the Shechinah on the land, indicated by several Biblical passages in which God speaks of His land and His choice of certain areas as holy; B) holiness which comes from the actions of the Israelites with respect to the land -- both their conquest and consecration of the land and their performance of the commandments which depend upon it (מצוות התלויות בארץ). The two categories are important, because certain commandments with respect to the holiness of the land are abrogated by the loss of the political sovereignty over the land (and more importantly the destruction of the Temple) and others are not. For example, the mitzvah of "orlah," the prohibition of fruit from fruit trees until their fourth year, is still observed after the destruction of the Temple because it is related to the first type of kedushah, which is not abrogated by the destruction; only mitzvot which derive from the conquest and division of the land are thus voided by it.<sup>39</sup>

The special characteristics of the land are developed within other legal traditions as well.<sup>40</sup> For example, the performance of the mitzvah of settling on the land confers

characteristic of fecundity. Consequently the laws which pertain to the ten year period after which a non-fertile marriage may lead to divorce are only applicable within Eretz Israel. Since only in the land is it commanded to consecrate a house, only within the land is the meal following the consecration of a house considered a seudat mitzvah, and only in the land may one be excused from military obligations to consecrate his house.

We have seen above that settlement in the land itself was classified in two sources as a mitzvah which is equivalent to all of the other mitzvot of the torah, a seemingly unequivocal statement, which nevertheless is not attested in the Talmud itself. Although certain of the early commentators included it among the listing of the 613 commandments, notably Nachmanides, others did not. They argued that it was only obligatory in the time of Joshua, that it was not obligatory during the exile when the Jews could not perform all of the mitzvot which are dependent on the land anyway, nor was it required in times of hazardous conditions on the way to the land.<sup>41</sup>

We have selected above, however, from the overwhelming aggadic material which favors settlement in the land and mentioned certain legal advantages given to those who dwell there (cf. the decisions reported in Ketuvot 110a which support the rights of the marriage partner who either wishes

to remain in or emigrate to Eretz Israel). Other legal inducements were also granted to those who wished to settle in Eretz Israel. In Baba Kamma 80b a person buying a house from a non-Jew in Eretz Israel is permitted to have the title deed written for him even on the Sabbath.

On the other hand the attitude toward those who leave Eretz Israel is summarized in a passage from Ruth Rabbah (2:13) which reports on the journey of Elimelech from Eretz Israel to dwell in Moab and which gives no account of his possessions (as compared to the account of the returnees from Babylonian exile, Ezra 2:66).<sup>42</sup> In leaving Israel for the lands of the exile one's possessions are considered of no consequence, as compared with their glorification upon entering.

It remains to be determined to what extent Eretz Bavel, with its exalted position compared to the rest of the exile, partook of the various legal devices which were used to encourage settlement in Eretz Israel, and whether it shared in the status which accrued from certain observances which took place only in the special conditions of Eretz Israel. We have already mentioned an intermediate status of Eretz Bavel in terms of its merit for burial. Certain practices were also observed in Babylonia such as tithing and the separation of the priestly terumah because of its proximity to the Land of Israel.

The relatively permanent character of the Yeshivas and centers of learning in Babylonia established a principle that certain laws were applied equally in Babylonia and Eretz Israel, a circumstance which did not obtain in other lands of the diaspora.<sup>43</sup> In one specific case we see the applicability of a practice to both communities very clearly:<sup>44</sup>

ח"ר מחריעין פרקמטיא ואפי" בשבת אמר רבי יוחנן  
כגון כלי פשתן בבבל ויין ושמן בא"י אמר רב יוסף  
הוא דזל וקום עשרה בשיחא

In the example here of a slump in trade it is permitted to inject special prayers and the sounding of the shofar for the particular staple product on which the populations' livelihood depended, in Eretz Israel and/or in Babylonia.

With respect to the institutional difference between the two communities we have already given textual evidence that the exilarch was viewed with great deference in Palestine. Neusner suggests that their relative degree of authority may not derive from difference in their ancestry (since neither of the claims to Davidic ancestry are provable) but to the difference in political power:

The Exilarchate had a higher position in the Parthian empire than the Patriarchate did in the Roman empire... He, or his officials, wore Parthian insignia of nobility. He controlled military force to execute his edicts. The patriarch, on the other hand, was subordinate to the Roman officials in Palestine, and ruled entirely at their pleasure...<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, in later periods

...Palestinian ordination was not valid in Babylonia, even according to Palestinian authorities, unless validated by the exilarch, which the exilarchic authority was recognized in Palestine.<sup>46</sup>

Certain matters were still controlled by the Palestinians, most importantly the calendar. In his summary of the question<sup>47</sup> Neusner asserts that despite the political difference there is, nevertheless, no evidence that R. Judah felt apprehensive about the spread of the influence of the exilarch in Eretz Israel and that therefore the exilarch's reputed lineage was still the major factor in determining his status and authority.

It is beyond the scope of the present work to enter into the historical questions involved in detailing the relative authority of the two communities. The present purpose has been served by the accumulation of evidence of the status of the community and the institutions of galut Bavel in the Rabbinic period. To summarize we have noted the development of special legal categories and observances in Babylonia which distinguish it from the rest of galut; considerable aggadic references which depict a social and intellectual situation which does not in any way parallel the homiletic description adduced either in the Bible (Chapter I) or the Rabbinic literature (Chapter IV), have been described.



We do see, however, considerable distinction between Eretz Israel and Eretz Bavel. These distinctions basically reflect the intrinsic character of Eretz Israel which is developed and embellished out of Biblical sources, a character which Babylonia shares neither legally nor in terms of aggadic references. Beginning with the Maccabean period with the rubric of "eretz amim," and proceeding through the development of popular sermonic motifs considering life in the world to come and matters of such consequence as resurrection, efforts have been expended to glorify and elevate the status of settlement in the Land of Israel.

As we have noted, however, although various easements were offered to encourage settlement, it is a matter of some conjecture as to whether immigration is commanded and in no source can we find the command to leave the lands of the exile on the model of Abraham. On the other hand there was clear halachic basis for remaining in Babylonia, apparently as a result of the favorable conditions prevailing there. In this area of our investigation, we are fortunate to have access to the halachic views which frame the limits of aggadic discourse. As to the question of the status of Eretz Bavel, we can therefore say that it enjoyed an intermediate position between Eretz Israel and the rest of the exile, a position which resulted from its merits as a vessel for Jewish survival and which was characterized by its own

institutional advantages.

Galut Bavel in this period cannot be seen to partake of the same quality as has been generally ascribed above to the "galut," except for the isolated comment about galut serving as a refuge. If the criteria for galut is either legal disability or social dislocation then at worst the Babylonian community was on a par with the Palestinian community through most of the period following the destruction of the Temple. In fact, if we can describe the condition of the Jews living on the land under the subjection of the nations as semi-galut, then we can term living in Babylonia during the period as semi-Palestinian existence, a description which accords well with the Rabbinic opinions we have described in the present chapter.

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<sup>1</sup>Rav Judah, explained below p. 114.

<sup>2</sup>י.מ. גוטמן, "ארץ ישראל במדרש ובתלמוד" מפתח התלמוד ע' קלח.

<sup>3</sup>תוספתא בבא קמא ז:ב

<sup>4</sup>גיטין יז.

<sup>5</sup>כתובות קיא.

<sup>6</sup>Soncino Talmud, Menachot, p.619 n. 5.

<sup>7</sup>J. Zahavi, Eretz Israel in Rabbinic Lore, p. 105, n.336.

8 גוטמן, שם ע' קלס.

9 ברכות ח.

10 ב"ר יא:ד

11 בבא קמא פה.

12 קידושין סט:

See also Soncino Talmud, Kiddushin, p.350, n.3,4.

<sup>13</sup>J. Neusner, A History of the Jews of Babylonia, Vol. II, p.257.

14 קידושין סט:

15 גוטמן, שם ע' קמא

16 קידושין עא.

<sup>17</sup>Nesuner, op. cit., Vol. I, p.110 - cf. also p.148.

18 "בבל, "אנצקלופדיה תלמודית, ע' שכו

<sup>19</sup>Tosfot, ad loc., and the law is carried forward and specified in Maimonides משנה חורה, הל' מלכים ה:יב

20 כחובות יא.

<sup>21</sup>Soncino Talmud, Kethuboth, p.715

<sup>22</sup>Neusner, op. cit., Vol IV, p.389.

<sup>23</sup>Rashi, ad loc.

- 24 משנה תורה, שם.
- 25 כתובות קי:
- 26 Zahavi, op. cit.
- 27 ב"ר לח:ז
- 28 ד"ר ג:יא
- 29 ספרי ראה, סוף פסקא פ.
- 30 ספרא כ, כב.
- 31 "ארץ ישראל", אנציקלופדיה תלמודית ע'קכ
- 32 עיין "ארץ העמים", שם, ע' קצו-קצח.
- 33 Jer. Shabbat I, 3d, 43.
- 34 A. Büchler, Studies in Sin and Punishment, p.217.
- 35 Soncino Talmud, Shabbath, p.59.
- 36 "ארץ העמים", ע' קצח.
- 37 Soncino Talmud, Ketuboth, p.715 n.15.
- 38 "ארץ ישראל", אנציקלופדיה תלמודית, ע' ריג-ריד.
- 39 "ארץ ישראל", שם ע' קכא.
- 40 שם. ע' רכד-רכה.
- 41 שם. ע' רכז.
- 42 Zahavi, op. cit., p.145
- 43 "בבל", שם, ע' שכד.

44

בבא בתרא צא.

45 J. Neusner, op. cit., Vol I, p. 107-8.

46 Ibid., p. 109.

47 Ibid., p. 173-4.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS --

IS THERE A RABBINIC IDEOLOGY OF GALUT?

CHAPTER VII

The thinking of the Rabbis on the subject of galut is multifaceted developing as it did in response to changes in the life of the Jewish people after the destruction of the Second Temple. Throughout the comments stimulated by these events we are able to sense a community battling against adverse conditions and struggling to find a rationale for the suffering it endured. Consequently the blending of ideas which involved the physical exile from the land, the destruction of the religio-political center, and the subjugation to the various nations provides a very complex problem for discerning one specific Rabbinic view or ideology of galut. Our approach here has rather been to concentrate on significant aspects of Jewish belief which have been illustrated by research into the Rabbinic response to galut, and then to elucidate their place within Rabbinic thought as a whole. In the course of summarizing these beliefs we will consider galut as theological statement, historical category, and finally as state of consciousness.

In the first place, the issue of galut is an interest-

ing window on the Rabbi's attempts to articulate a theology. From a fairly straightforward Biblical view of sin and divine retribution we now see developing attempts to deal with the question of God's intervention in history and the problem of suffering and evil. It is these attempts which have generated the religious beliefs which implicitly and explicitly characterize our texts, i.e., a firm confidence in God's justice and an equally firm conviction that the condition of the Jews was a result of His actions in history.

A second category of belief which we have observed involves the reactivity of God to human wrongdoing. We do not find, however, by way of contrast, the wholesale preoccupation with the cosmic consequences of sin and exile that fascinated the mystics. The Rabbis had a rather more simple, even mechanistic view of the alienation of God's presence from contact with human evil.

It would seem that the existence of galut does not provide a challenge to Rabbinic thought, so much as it serves to confirm their developing theological beliefs. Thus, we have noted, Rabbinic views of galut seem to lack the tension involved in the Biblical conceptualizations; the Rabbis proceed as if working out a puzzle to seek out explanations and develop rationalizations which they were convinced could be found for their circumstances.

Therefore they do not presume to argue with God's justice nor to retreat from a conception of his active involvement in their current state. This latter fact was particularly significant in the light of the severe pressure which was apparently applied to Jewish faith by Christian propaganda throughout this period.<sup>1</sup> As a response to missionaries who preached a gospel of Israel's rejection and of the Jews being forsaken by God, the Rabbis insisted that God will never sever his connection with the Jewish people. It was in this light that they emphasized ideas concerning His Shechinah accompanying them into exile, and no conception of galut was ever developed without the envisagement of a return and redemption.

With respect to galut as historical category the tradition is somewhat equivocal. The customary assumption that galut is primarily characterized by physical separation from the land is not rigidly held. There can be no doubt that galut, being traced to the destruction of the Temple, therefore transcends the issue of physical separation from the land. One could certainly assert that galut does refer to a specific sequence of events. However, as we have noted above (Chapter II) the spatio-historical sense of galut was emphasized less than its sociological concomitants.

In this sense galut has become greatly altered in meaning since the Biblical period. In Biblical parlance galut



is a physical "going into captivity" which is perceived as occurring on the stage of history and which may be redeemed (like Galut Bavel) on that level. With the broadening of galut to include the rubric of suffering under foreign domination on the land, the concept begins to take on eschatological dimensions and is perceived as a contrast with and antithesis to geulah (divine redemption).

In this sense galut as a historical category was theologized by the time of the Rabbis. In addition their attitudes became suffused with the realization that the galut will likely continue for a significant length of time and their response to it was correspondingly measured.

One further category of belief which received much attention in this period was the exaltation of the value of the Land of Israel. The Biblical text gives ample precedent for considering the land as endowed with special characteristics, but the Rabbis expanded the notion of its holiness. As the dwelling place of God's presence on earth, the land would not only vomit out its inhabitants upon their sinning (according to the Biblical prediction), but it would demand its own Sabbaths and would finally suffer the Jews to grant it rest through their banishment as it was described in Sifra (Bechukotai 7:2):

אז תרצה את שבתותיה אני אסרתי לכם שחתו זורעים שש  
ומשמים לי אחת. בשביל שתדעו שהארץ שלי היא ואתם לא עשיתם  
כן. אלא עמדו וגלו ממנה והיא תשמש מאיליה כל שמימים שהיא  
חייבת לי שנה' אז תרצה הארץ את שבתותיה כל ימי השמה. כל ימי  
הושמה תשובת.

Thus, the quality of the land with its special holiness (albeit derivative from the divine presence) should be added to the significant beliefs which comprise the Rabbinic view of galut.

Finally, there is the question of galut as state of consciousness. We began by probing the Biblical concept in terms of popular myths concerning the origins of the people and the affirmation of the covenant. The question may be raised if these continue to operate in individual and collective consciousness in the Rabbinic period. The feeling of "exile" does not always of necessity accompany the condition of exile but it is particularly characteristic of the Jewish people that this feeling represents both the emotions of the individual and the national consciousness of the people. As described by one modern historian, these feelings are characterized in this fashion: "The sense of exile was expressed by the feeling of aliation in the countries of the Diaspora, the yearning for the national and political past, and persistent question of the causes, meaning, and purpose of the exile."<sup>2</sup>

We have referred above to this sense in the Rabbinic period as the clear consciousness of galut as the "abnormal" condition of the Jewish people. Even in those circumstances (e.g., Babylonia) when the galut itself was not particularly difficult and showed every sign of continuing significantly

into the future this consciousness was cultivated. The liturgy of the community did not deviate in this regard from the tannaitic norm which prescribed the daily recitation of hope both for a renaissance of a condition of harmony for God's presence and for a return of the dispersed of the Jewish people to within the borders of Eretz Israel.

Yet as we have seen from the one other area in which we do have halachic guidance, namely in relationship to settlement on the land itself, that the tradition did not advocate the dissolution of the galut as a realistic or desirable goal. Therefore we cannot find explicit or implicit in the Rabbis an ideology which we would term "zionist" in the modern sense of focusing on settlement in Israel as the central demand of Jewish tradition.

The two comments concerning immigration which we have mentioned are simply examples of what those particular Rabbis were thinking at the moment. As one contemporary authority has suggested "a collection of all the many things which some sage at some time said was 'equivalent to the entire Torah' would bring in many odd items."<sup>3</sup> We face here the problem of hyperbole, which, it should be noted "is almost the customary tone of aggadic rabbinic utterance."<sup>4</sup>

In considering the overall place of galut in Rabbinic thought it may be useful to analyze it as a value concept, or better as the confluence of the several value concepts

or orientations to belief we have mentioned above. In his usage of the term "value-concept" to describe certain ideas in Rabbinic thought, M. Kadushin depicts aspects of the value-concept which may aid in providing a context for the Rabbinic view of galut.

Kadushin establishes that value concepts "are not only undefined but non-definable...they can, therefore, respond to and express the differentia of human personalities."<sup>5</sup> Speaking of his category in general, Kadushin suggests:

The coherence of the concepts is an organismic coherence...and it has many and far-reaching consequences. One of them is the atomistic effect of the value concepts, each statement and each deed embodying value-concepts being a complete and independent entity in itself. This is reflected in the Haggadah, where certain literary forms bring together statements that are essentially single units in themselves.<sup>6</sup>

These concepts are to be distinguished from systematic ideas embedded in a philosophical system:

Many thinkers...would doubtless stigmatize value-concepts answering to our description as nothing but naive, unsophisticated ideas. It is not a question, however, as to whether value concepts are "naive" as compared to philosophical concepts, but rather as to which type can actually function in the ever-shifting situations of life.<sup>7</sup>

Given these definitions and the notion that such concepts must be communicable it is difficult to understand galut as one discrete value concept. The isolated passages in the aggadah adduced above as reasons or purposes concentrate not on the exile itself as the phenomenon, but rather

on galut as an expression of God's justice and in many cases His compassion.

The variety of the response often indicated more about the homiletic goal of the darshan than his idea of galut. For example we may find expressions of the tragedy of the galut combined with the apprehension of the inevitability and continuity of the exile. Conversely we may find an approach to exile which sees it as a necessary road of suffering and travail which must be travelled in order to reach the ultimate good. Even more positive views are advanced which see in the galut an opportunity for the Jews to prove themselves before God. These expressions are in fact reflections of the flexible, "naive" conceptualization of the Rabbis mentioned by Kadushin.

The "unconscious theology"<sup>8</sup> of the Rabbis unfortunately precludes any but a very modest approach to a problem as complex as that of "galut." In the course of our investigation we have at best been able to demonstrate the application of Biblical ideas to the contemporary situation of the Rabbis in forming certain aspects of the latter's concept of galut. In analyzing antinomies such as the Shechinta Bagaluta--histalkut hashechinah controversy we have been led to an appreciation for the breadth of possibility available to Rabbinic thought.

The primary lesson to be learned involves the organic quality of Rabbinic thought. An experience which is as important and basic to Jewish history as galut can never be viewed as isolated from the continuous intercourse between humanity and divinity that comprises the Rabbinic view of history. Therefore no true Rabbinic ideology of galut can fall short of accomodating Rabbinic views on sin and punishment, God's justice in history, particularly with respect to His covenantal relationship with Israel, and traditions relating to the special character of Eretz Israel. The balance of the factors and the limits on the ideology are simply the rules of mental and intellectual grammar of the aggadah. The present work is an attempt to describe the range and limits of their thought in respect to one issue -- the Rabbinic understanding and evaluation of the phenomenon of galut.

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<sup>1</sup>A. Marmorstein, Studies in Rabbinic Theology, p.196.

<sup>2</sup>H. H. Ben-Sasson, "Galut," Encyclopedia Judaica, p.275.

<sup>3</sup>E. Borowitz, "Problem of Form in a Jewish Theology," HUCA, 1968, p.392.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>M. Kadushin, The Rabbinic Mind, p.2.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p.5-6.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p.6.

<sup>8</sup>S. Schechter, Aspects of Rabbinic Theology, p.12.

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