1 רמב"ם יד החזקה הלכות חמץ ומצה פרק ז

(א) מצות עשה של תורה לספר בנסים ונפלאות שנעשו לאבותינו במצרים בליל חמשה עשר בניסן שנאמר (שמות י"ג) זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים כמו שנאמר (שמות כ') זכור את יום השבת ומנין שבליל חמשה עשר תלמוד לומר והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מונחים לפניך

2 מכילתא דר' שמעון בר יוחאי פרק יג

ויאמר משה אל העם זכור את היום הזה משום שנאמר (י"ג י"ד) והיה כי ישאלך בנך מחר לאמר יכול אם שאלך אתה מגיד לו ואם לאו אי אתה מגיד לו ת"ל (י"ג ח') והגדת לבנך אעפ"י שלא שאלך: אין לי אלא בזמן שיש לו בן בינו לבין עצמו, בינו לבין אחרים מנין ת"ל ויאמר משה אל העם זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים:

3 שירת הלויים

4 רמב"ם יד החזקה הלכות חמץ ומצה פרק ז

(ב) מצוה להודיע לבנים ואפילו לא שאלו שנאמר והגדת לבנך לפי דעתו של בן אביו מלמדו כיצד אם היה קטן או טיפש אומר לו בני כולנו היינו עבדים כמו שפחה זו או כמו עבד זה במצרים ובלילה הזה פדה אותנו הקב"ה ויוציאנו לחירות ואם היה הבן גדול וחכם מודיעו מה שאירע לנו במצרים ונסים שנעשו לנו ע"י משה רבינו הכל לפי דעתו של בן:
(ג) וצריך לעשות שינוי בלילה הזה כדי שיראו הבנים וישאלו ויאמרו מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות עד שישיב להם ויאמר להם כך וכך אירע וכך וכך היה וכיצד משנה מחלק להם קליות ואגוזים ועוקרים השולחן מלפניהם קודם שיאכלו וחוטפין מצה זה מיד זה וכיוצא בדברים האלו אין לו בן אשתו שואלתו אין לו אשה שואלין זה את זה מה נשתנה הלילה הזה ואפילו היו כולן חכמים היה לבדו שואל לעצמו מה נשתנה הלילה הזה. [השגת הראב"ד - חוטפין מצה א"א פירוש אחר ממהרין לאכול כדי שלא ישנו]:

5 רמב"ם יד החזקה הלכות חמץ ומצה פרק ח

ומוזגין הכוס השני וכאן הבן שואל **ואומר הקורא** מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות

6 רמב"ם יד החזקה הלכות חמץ ומצה פרק ז

(ד) וצריך להתחיל בגנות ולסיים בשבח כיצד מתחיל ומספר שבתחלה היו אבותינו בימי תרח ומלפניו כופרים וטועין אחר ההבל ורודפין אחר ע"ז ומסיים בדת האמת שקרבנו המקום לו והבדילנו מן התועים וקרבנו ליחודו וכן מתחיל ומודיע שעבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים וכל הרעה שגמלנו ומסיים בנסים ונפלאות שנעשו לנו ובחירותנו **והוא שידרוש** (דברים כ"ו) מארמי אובד אבי עד שיגמור כל הפרשה וכל המוסיף ומאריך בדרש פרשה זו הרי זה משובח:

7 Two Nations in Your Womb - Yuval

8 הררי קדם

9 רמב"ם יד החזקה הלכות חמץ ומצה פרק ז

(ה) כל מי שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בליל חמשה עשר לא יצא ידי חובתו ואלו הן פסח מצה ומרור פסח על שם שפסח המקום ב"ה על בתי אבותינו במצרים שנאמר (שמות י"ב) ואמרתם זבח פסח הוא לה' וגו' מרורים על שם שמררו המצרים את חיי אבותינו במצרים מצה על שם שנגאלו ודברים האלו כולן הן הנקראין הגדה:

10 ראב"ן

11 שירת הלויים

12 מכילתא פרשת בא פרשה יז

והגדת לבנך. שומע אני מראש חדש ת"ל ביום ההוא. אי ביום ההוא יכול מבעוד יום ת"ל בעבור זה בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מונחי' לפניך על שולחנך:

13 שירת הלויים

14 מכילתא פרשת בא פרשה יח

ד"א מה העדות ר' אליעזר אומ' מנין אתה אומר שאם היתה חבורה של חכמים או של תלמידים שצריכים לעסוק בהלכות פסח עד חצות לכך נאמר מה העדות וגו'

15 רמב"ם יד החזקה הלכות חמץ ומצה פרק ז

ודברים האלו כולן הן הנקראין הגדה:

16 Zakhor - Yerushalmi

17 הכרמל

18 רש"י על שמות פרק כ פסוק ח

זכור לשון פעול הוא כמו (ישעיה כב) אכול ושתו (ש"ב ג) הלוך ובכה וכן פתרונו תנו לב לזכור תמיד את יום השבת שאם נזדמן לך חפץ יפה תהא מזמינו לשבת (בילה טז):

19 ספר יצירה - נוסח דפוס מנטובא - פרק א

וברא את עולמו בשלשה ספרים בספר וספר וספור.

20 פרוש הגר"א ז"ל על ספר יצירה - פרק א משנה א

בספר וספר וספור. הן חכמה ובינה ודעת שבהן נברא העולם כידוע והם ג' אותיות אמ"ש שבהן נעשה חב"ד כמ"ש לקמן וכן הן בעש"נ. ספר וספר הן ח"ב שעדיין הוא בשכל לבד. וסיפור הוא הדעת שמוציא השכל מהכח אל הפועל כמו הסיפור

21 פירוש הגר"א לספרא דצניעותא - פרק א

דעת שכולל ח"וב

22 תשבי

מגיד

הנה בכל השנה יש מצוה של זכירת יציאת מצרים, וא"כ מה נתוסף בליל פסח ע"י המצוה של סיפור יצי"מ שאין בזכירה. ונראה לומר שהחילוק בין זכירה לסיפור הוא בשלשה דברים. א) שבזכירה אין צריך אלא להזכיר לעצמו יצי"מ, אבל סיפור הוא לספר לאחר דרך שאלה ותשובה, כדכתיב 'והיה כי ישאלך בנך' וגו', 'והגדת לבנך', "הבן שואל מה נשתנה וכו' והאב משיב עבדים היינו", ואפילו היה לבדו שואל לעצמו "מה נשתנה וכו'" כדרך סיפור לאחר. ב) שבזכירה אין צריך אלא להזכיר היציאה ממצרים לבדה, אבל בסיפור צריך לספר כל ההשתלשלות וצריך להתחיל בגנות ולסיים בשבח. ג) ועוד ניתוסף במצות סיפור, לספר טעמי המצוות של אותה הלילה, כמש"כ במשנה (מס' פסחים, דף קט"ז ע"א) "רבן גמליאל היה אומר כל שלא אמר ג' דברים אלו בפסח לא יצא ידי חובתו ואלו הן פסח מצה ומרור וכו'". וכל זה עיקר המצוה של ספור יצי"מ. ובן מבואר להדיא ברמב"ם (פ"ז מהל' חו"מ) וז"ל מצות עשה של תורה לספר בניסים ונפלאות שנעשו לאבותינו במצרים בליל ט"ו בניסן שנאמר זכור וגו' ומנין שבליל ט"ו ת"ל והגדת לבנך וכו' עכ"ל. ואח"כ מבאר הרמב"ם מה היא המצוה של סיפור וכתב שם בהלכה ב' וז"ל מצוה להודיע לבנים ואפילו לא שאלו שנאמר והגדת לבנך, לפי דעתו של בן אביו מלמדו, כילד אם היה קטן או טפש וכו', ואם היה הבן גדול וחכם וכו', וצריך לעשות שינוי בלילה הזה כדי שיראו הבנים ושאלו ויאמרו

בכל השנה יש מצוה של זכירת יציאת מצרים - כדאיתא במתני' במס' ברכות, דף י"ב ע"ב, הובא בהגדה לקמן, וכן נפסק ברמב"ם (הל' ק"ש, א': ג')]

כדכתיב והיה כי ישאלך בנך וגו', והגדת לבנך - הדברים אינם מבוארים ומדוייקים, והראיה מן הפסוקים שיש מצוה של שאלה ותשובה הוא מן הפסוק (שמות, י"ג:י"ד) 'והיה כי ישאלך בנך מחר וכו' ואמרת אליו' וכו', וכן מן הפסוקים (דברים ו:כ"א-ב) 'כי ישאלך בנך וכו' ואמרת לבנך' וכו'.

צריך לספר כל ההשתלשלות - בס' תורה לדעת (ח"ג עמ' קצ"ב) מביא בשם הג"ר אברהם פאם זצ"ל להעיר שמה שאמר הגר"ח שמדאורייתא איכא חיוב של סיפור ההשתלשלות ולא די בזכירה, באמת לא מוסכם על הכל, שהרי רבנו ירוחם כתב בשם רבנו פרץ שהטעם שלא מברכים על מצות ספור יצי"מ הוא משום שיוצאים עם קידוש, והרשב"א כתב משום שאין לה שיעור (וכן מצינן בצדקה וכיבוד או"א), ומיד כשאומר "אקב"ו לספר ביציאת מצרים" הוא יוצא, א"כ רואים שלראשונים אלו מספיק עם זכירה בעלמא.

כמש"כ במשנה רבן גמליאל היה אומר וכו' - עיקר הראיה היא מסוף דברי ר' גמליאל שם וז"ל פסח על שום וכו' מצה על שום וכו' מרור על שום וכו' עכ"ל.

לספר טעמי המצוות - בס' תורה לדעת הנ"ל הביא עוד הערה בשם הגר"א פאם זצ"ל על דברי הגר"ח זצ"ל, שהמהרש"א והצל"ח מפרשים שמה שאמר ר"ג "כל שלא אמר ג' דברים אלו בפסח לא יצא יד"ח", היינו שלא יצא כדבעי חובת פסח מצה ומרור, אבל לא הוה שום חסרון במצוות הסיפור.

מה נשתנה וכו', אין לו בן אשתו שואלתו כו', היה לבדו שואל לעצמו עכ"ל. ובהלכה ד' כתב וז"ל וצריך להתחיל בגנות ולסיים בשבח, כיצד מתחיל ומספר שבתחלה היו אבותינו בימי תרח ומלפניו כופרים וטועין אחר ההבל וכו' ומסיים בדת האמת שקרבנו המקום לו והבדילנו מהאומות וקרבנו ליחודו. וכן מתחיל ומודיע שעבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים וכל הרעה שגמלנו ומסיים בנסים ובנפלאות שנעשו לנו וכו' עכ"ל. ובהלכה ה' שם וז"ל כל מי שלא אמר ג' דברים אלו בליל חמשה עשר לא יצא ידי חובתו ואלו הן פסח מצה ומרור, פסח על שום מה וכו' [ומסיים:] ודברים האלו כולן נקראין הגדה עכ"ל. הרי להדיא שכל הג' חילוקין אלו נכללין בהמצוה של והגדת לבנך, בהמצוה של **סיפור.** [הגר"ח]

ויש להוסיף על זה, דחלוק עוד מצות זכירה ממצות סיפור, דבסיפור נכלל גם לעסוק בהלכות השייכות ליצי"מ [כמבואר לקמן ד"ה והיו מספרים]. [הגרי"ז]

הרי להדיא שכל הג' חילוקין אלו נכללין בהמצוה של והגדת לבנך, בהמצוה של סיפור - כתוב בהגדש"פ מנחת אשר (סי' ד' אות ב') וז"ל אך נראה לכאורה דלא עלה על דעת הגר"ח להסביר בכך במה שאני מצות הסיפור דליל ט"ו בניסן ממצות הזכירה של כל יום ויום, אלא להגדיר מה הן יסודות מצות הסיפור ומאפיניה למעשה, דבאמת שלשת ההלכות הללו אינם אלא מדרבנן ולא מה"ת, דמן התורה אין לנו אלא מצוה לספר בנסים שעשה הקב"ה עם אבותינו כנ"ל מלשון הרמב"ם דכל אחד מספר לפי צחות לשונו וכל ההלכות הנ"ל הנוגעות לאופן הסיפור אינם אלא מדרבנן.

אמנם לאו מילתא דפשיטותא היא, ומדברי הרמב"ם בפ"ז ה"ה מחמץ ומצה משמע דמה"ת צריך לומר פסח מצה ומרור על שום מה נאכלין וילפינן לה מ'ואמרתם זבח פסח', וכך משמע מדברי התוס' בפסחים קט"ז ע"א, ובשבלי הלקט כתב דילפינן מ'בעבור זה', ומ"מ משמע מדבריהם דהוי מה"ת, ולא כדברי הר"ן שם שכתב דכל כוונת ר"ג שאינו יוצא במצוה מן המובחר עיי"ש, אך מ"מ מלשון הרמב"ם בסהמ"צ משמע דמה"ת אין מטבע מסויים במצות הסיפור אלא כל אחד לפי צחות לשונו, ומשום כן נראה יותר כמו שכתבתי עכ"ל.

הגר"ח - בס' עמק ברכה (בעניני הגדה אות א') הביא דברים אלו, וכתב ששמען מפי הגרי"ז זצ"ל בשם הגר"ח זצ"ל. ועוד שמע ממרן הגרי"ז זצ"ל שבכל שנה בשעת הסדר של פסח היה הגר"ח זצ"ל אומר הביאור הנדפס הכא לפני בני ביתו, וכיון שמצוות צריכות כוונה היה מְצַוֶּה לכוון לצאת בג' דברים אלו.

ובהגדש"פ שי לתורה מבואר יותר בשם הגרמד"ס שליט"א (בד"ה למען תזכור) וז"ל בליל הסדר כאשר היו מגיעים באמירת ההגדה ל"מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח" ובטעמי המצוות היה מרן הגר"ח זצ"ל מזהיר לכוון לקיים בזה מצוות סיפור יצי"מ שזהו עיקר מצוות סיפור, ובזה נתייחדה ממצות הזכירה עכ"ל. ויש להעיר מדוע לא ציווה לכוון כשהתחילו את הסיפור לאחרים מכיוון שגם זה מעיקר המצווה ובזה שונה מזכירה. ובאמת הנוסח של הס' עמק ברכה היא שצווה לכוון לצאת "בג' דברים אלו" ולכאורה זה כולל ענין הסיפור לאחרים.

Two Nations in Your Womb

PERCEPTIONS OF JEWS AND CHRISTIANS
IN LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE MIDDLE AGES

Israel Jacob Yuval

Translated from the Hebrew by
Barbara Harshav and Jonathan Chipman

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"and you should dull his teeth" indicates an answer that contradicts the opposing claim. To the Christian claim that they are "the true Israel," one answers the wicked son: "'To me' and not 'to him'; if he would have been there, he would not have been redeemed," because he is not one of the true children of Israel. The expression "to dull his teeth" is mentioned in *Genesis Rabbah* in two other contexts, both of them explicitly anti-Christian, and in both cases the expression indicates a complete rejection of the Christian claim.[111]

In light of all this, the answer to the wise son (or the foolish son, in the Palestinian Talmud) assumes new meaning, including the quotation from *m. Pes.* 10.5: "One does not add an *afikoman* after the Passover feast." To understand its full significance, we need to examine Melito's use of the word *aphikomenos* (which means coming or arriving) to describe Jesus's incarnation, his appearance on earth, and his Passion: "He who, coming from heaven to the earth" *(Houtos aphikomenos ex ouranōn epi tēn gēn.)*[112] Melito's remarks about Jesus's *afikoman* and his suffering on earth appear immediately after his homily on the Passover sacrifice as a symbol of Jesus, and thus presenting an entire homily on the Christological meaning of the Paschal offering, the matzah, and the bitter herbs—a parallel to Rabban Gamaliel's homily. In light of that the rule that "one does not add an *afikoman* after the Passover feast" was chosen as the answer to the wise son in order to pull out the rug from under the Christian interpretation.[113] The confrontation of the Talmudic Sages with the Christian interpretation of the ceremonies performed at the Passover feast is consistent with another change concerning the order of the meal made in the early amoraic period. During the

111. *Gen. Rab.* 98.8, ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 1259): "'Until Shiloh comes' [Gen 49:10]—This refers to the King Messiah. 'And to him shall be the obedience *[velo yiqhat]* of the peoples'—for he shall come and set on edge the teeth of [i.e, refute] the nations of the world" (because in their eyes Shiloh is identified with Jesus). And cf. p. 1220: "'And to him shall be . . . the peoples"—this refers to Jerusalem, that shall in the future dull the teeth of the peoples of the world, as is said, 'On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone'" (Zech 12:3). The verse from Zechariah seems to have been chosen carefully to refute Jesus's famous prophecy about Jerusalem: "And they will not leave one stone upon another in you" (Luke 19:44).

112. Melito of Sardis (n. 88, p. 68), sec. 66. And see also sec. 32. Werner (n. 94, p. 70, his 1966 article), 205–6, noted Melito's allusion to the *afikoman.* On this meaning of the *afikoman,* see D. Daube, *He That Cometh* (London, 1966), 1–20. On this study, see below.

113. Note that in the Middle Ages, there was a widespread tradition of pronouncing *afikomen,* and not *afikoman,* as today. This follows from the rhyme written by Rabbi Shimon ben Zemah Duran; see *Haggadah shel Pesah Torat Hayyim, 'im perusahei ha-rishonim,* ed. M. Katzenellenbogen (Jerusalem, 1998), 12). This pronunciation is very similar to *aphikomenos.*

period of the Mishnah, the meal preceded the Haggadah, while in the amoraic period it became customary to read the Haggadah before the meal; David Daube has already suggested that this change was also intended to oppose the Christian interpretation of the holiday feast and its symbols.[114]

The *amoraim* debated among themselves over the application of the words of the Mishnah: "One begins with disgrace and concludes with glory" (*b. Pes* 116a). According to Rav, this phrase alludes to the passage "In the beginning our forefathers worshipped idols, but now the Omnipresent has brought us to serve Him"—that is, a sentence expressing the idea of the election of the people of Israel. This is immediately followed by biblical verses on the choosing of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: "Your fathers lived of old beyond the River" concluding with "and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau, and I gave Esau the hill country of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt" (Josh 24:2–4). The quotation in the Haggadah ends at this point, even though the biblical passage continues by alluding to the Exodus itself: "I sent Moses and Aaron and I plagued Egypt . . . " and goes on to relate the wondrous deeds of God, who brings His people out of Egypt (Josh 24: 5–7). Truncating the quotation at a verse dealing with the separation between Esau and Jacob may also be interpreted as a rejection of the Christian protest against the election of Israel.[115]

THE "MIDRASH" OF THE HAGGADAH

The main expression of confrontation with an alternative Christian interpretation may be found in the "Midrash"—the heart of the tannaitic Haggadah. The Mishnah (*m. Pes.* 10.4) states the obligation to expound the biblical verses in Deuteronomy 26:5–8: "A wandering Aramaean was my father," and this Midrash appears in the Passover Haggadah. The Midrash in question creates a parallel between the abbreviated account of the Exodus in Deuteronomy and the lengthy and detailed account in the Book of

114. Daube (n. 110, p. 75), 194–95.

115. Finkelstein already noted the truncation of the quotation from Joshua before the description of the Exodus (n. 77, p. 63, his 1942 article), 329. Aphrahat's sermon for Passover, (n. 86, p. 67) also begins with the polemical claim that the People of Israel is no longer the chosen people. In this context, note Rabbi Shimon ben Zemah Duran's Commentary to the Haggadah on the passage: "'And I gave to Esau Mount Seir' . . . For he [Esau] did not want to accept slavery and torture as Jacob did. . . . Therefore it is fitting for us alone to tell of the Exodus from Egypt, for we suffered slavery and torture and we saw the salvation of God and we clung to His service." See *Haggadah shel Pesah Torat Hayyim* (n. 113, p. 76), 74–75.

Exodus. The level of literary sophistication of the Midrash is quite primitive compared to that of the tannaitic halakhic Midrashim. A number of parallel verses cited from Exodus add nothing to the text expounded from Deuteronomy 26. For example, the Midrash explains the verse "And the Egyptians treated us harshly, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage" (Deut 26:6) as follows:

> "And the Egyptian treated us harshly"—as is written, "Come, let us deal shrewdly with them; lest they multiply, and, if war befall us, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." (Exod 1:10)
>
> "And afflicted us"—as it is written, "Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens; and they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses." (Exod 1:11)
>
> "And laid upon us hard bondage"—as it is written, "So they [the Egyptians] made the people of Israel serve with rigor." (Exod 1:13)

The parallel from Exodus is no more than a confirmation of what is written in Deuteronomy, and the question that obviously arises is why this parallel had to be presented. Moreover, the very choice of the terse and succinct verses from Deuteronomy is surprising. Why did the Sages select these particular verses, recited upon bringing firstfruits to the Temple, as a basis for the Midrash on the Exodus? Why was the detailed and full story from the Book of Exodus not chosen? This is even more surprising in light of the Midrash's tendency to systematically turn the verses in Deuteronomy into a kind of mirror of the story in Exodus. The Midrashic author substitutes the passage beginning "A wandering Aramaean was my father" for the full story in Exodus, thereby seeking to justify his choice of verses from the Book of Deuteronomy.[116] The preference for the short passage from

116. Goldschmidt noted this enigma: "The story of the Exodus from Egypt ought to be based upon the Torah's words in the Book of Exodus." His solution is literary: "The chapters dealing with the miracle [in Exodus] are not written in one place; thus the Sages of the Mishnah chose the verses: 'A wandering Aramean was my father' . . . which, since they were included in the 'Confession' recited upon bringing Firstfruits, were familiar to the people, and their language was also easy and simple." See Goldschmidt (n. 76, p. 62), 30. David Weiss-Halivni also supports Goldschmidt's explanation; see his article "Comments on 'The Four Questions'" [in Hebrew], in Studies in Aggadah, Targum, and Jewish Liturgy in Memory of Joseph Heinemann [in Hebrew], ed. E. Fleischer and J. Petuchowski (Jerusalem, 1981), 67ff. It is not clear why verses recited at most once a year when bringing the firstfruits (in the time of the Temple!) should

Deuteronomy could have been explained as a purely literary choice, had we not known from Melito's exegesis that, by the second century, the Christians preferred to expound on Exodus 12 specifically.[117] Melito mentions the children of Israel, who placed the blood of the lamb on the doorpost and the lintels, thereby preventing the angel of destruction that killed the firstborn sons of the Egyptians from harming them. He regarded the Passover sacrifice as a typological model for Jesus and the salvation he brought with his own blood.[118] His exegesis shows that there is reason to wonder why the Jewish Haggadah refrained from telling the story of the Exodus according to the full and detailed story in the book of that name. Melito's contemporary Pseudo-Hippolyte, and Origen, in the third century, likewise placed Exodus 12 at the center of their exegeses.[119]

The explanation for the Jewish exegete's choice of Deuteronomy 26 seems to be rooted in the desire to draw a clear distinction between the Christian and Jewish interpretations of the holiday. This is not merely a choice of an alternative text but also involves the avoidance of two very important motifs in the story in Exodus that are absent in the passage from Deuteronomy 26—namely, mention of the festival sacrifice and Moses's name. This ignoring of Moses is striking, not only in the context of the Midrash, but throughout the Haggadah.[120] In light of this, it is not surprising that our

have been more familiar than other verses that could have been chosen for the Midrash. Presumably, the difficulty in remembering was not in the verses interpreted, but in the exegesis appended to them. For another explanation, see S. T. Lachs, "Two Related Arameans: A Difficult Reading in the Haggadah," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 17 (1980): 65–69.

117. Melito of Sardis (n. 88, p. 68), secs. 1–2.

118. His words, "Understand, therefore, beloved, how it is new and old, eternal and temporary," are reminiscent of Yannai's liturgical poem for Passover: "What was at the beginning will be at the end." See Z. M. Rabinovitch, *Piyyutei Yannai le-Torah ule-mo'adim* (Tel Aviv, 1985), 1:300.

119. Pseudo-Hippolyte in his exegesis *In Sanctum Pascha*. See *Homélies paschales*, vol. 1, *Une homélie inspirée du traité sur la Pâque d'Hippolyte*, ed. P. Nautin (Paris, 1950), 117–23; Origen (n. 88, p. 68). For Easter sermons on Exodus 12, see Huber (n. 69, p. 60), 139–47; Rowhourst (n. 71, p. 61), 2.111.

120. *Cant. Rab.* 3.2 states: "'Upon my bed by night'—this refers to the night of Egypt. 'I sought him whom my soul loves'—this is Moses. 'I sought him, but found him not.'" On the absence of mention of Moses in the Haggadah, see Petuchowski, (n. 138, p. 44), 95–96; Daube (n. 112, p. 76), 12; A. Shinan, "Why Is Moses Not Mentioned in the Passover Haggadah?" [in Hebrew], *Amudim* 39 (1991): 172–74. Shinan suggests four explanations for the omission of Moses's name, one of which is the dispute with Christianity. Apparently the prayer "Moses rejoiced," recited at the Sabbath Morning Service, was intended to refute the Christian position, which abolished the Sabbath and sanctified Sunday in its stead—this, as opposed to Jesus,

Midrash finds it proper to emphasize, in the following exegesis, God's exclusive redemptive acts:

> "And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders." (Deut 26:8)
>
> "And the Lord brought us out of Egypt"—Not by an angel, nor by a seraph, nor by a messenger,[121] but the Holy One blessed be He by Himself, as it is written: "For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord." (Exod 12:12)
>
> "For I will pass through the land of Egypt"—I, and not an angel. "And I will smite all the first-born"—I, and not a seraph. "And on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments"—I, and not a messenger. "I am the Lord"—I, and no other.

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who is described as "lord of the sabbath" (Matt 12:8). Moses is "a faithful servant" to whom the Sabbath is given "as his portion" (*b. Shabb.* 10b). Moses is described in this prayer as "crowned with splendor" (as in Isa 62:3: "a crown of beauty"), reminiscent of the aura around the heads of Christian saints, and perhaps in contrast to Jesus's crown of thorns. For reservations against reciting this prayer in medieval Franco-Germany, see N. Wieder, "The Controversy about the Liturgical Composition *Yismah Moshe:* Opposition and Defence" [in Hebrew], in Fleischer and Petuchowski (n. 116, p. 78), 75–99.

121. Rav Sa'adia Gaon's text of the Haggadah adds, "And not by the Word," that is, the *Logos,* in clear opposition to John 1:1. Cf. *Avot de-Rabbi Natan,* B, 1, ed. Schechter, 2): "Moses received the Torah at Sinai. Not from an angel, nor from a seraph, but from the King of Kings, the Holy One blessed be He." The anti-Christian edge is clear, as noted by F. E. Meyer, "Die Pessach-Haggada und der Kirchenvater Justinus Martyr," in *Treue zur Tora: Festschrift für Günther Harder zum 75. Geburtstag,* ed. P. V. D. Osten-Sacken (Berlin, 1977), 84–87. He maintains that the words "I and not an angel" are aimed against the interpretation of Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho,* sec. 75. Trypho sought to find an allusion to Jesus in Exodus 23:20: "Behold, I send an Angel before you" as well as from the comparison between Joshua and Jesus. As my friend Professor David Rosenthal pointed out to me, it is possible to understand in this vein Rashi's interpretation of Rav Hillel's saying in *b. Sanh* 91a, "Israel have no Messiah." Rashi explains: "Rather, the Holy One blessed be He will rule by Himself and will deliver them by Himself." For a discussion of Rabban Gamaliel's saying in a different manner, see Judah Goldin, "'Not by Means of an Angel and Not by Means of a Messenger,'" in *Studies in Midrash and Related Literature,* ed. B. L. Eichler and J. H. Tigay (Philadelphia, 1988), 163–73. On the "word" and the *Logos,* see H. Bietenhand, "Logos Theologie im Rabbinat: Ein Beitrag zur Lehre vom Worte Gottes im rabbinischen Schrifttum," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2, no. 19, pt. 2 (1979): 580–618.

This exegesis is unique in comparison with all the others in the Midrash. In the other sections, the author is content to pose a parallel between Exodus and Deuteronomy, every such parallel beginning with the words "as it is written." The essence of this Midrash is in the creation of the parallel per se, not in developing the idea in the biblical verse. But not only does this passage include such a parallel, but to each of the two parallel verses an identical exposition is attached: not an angel, nor a seraph, nor a messenger, but the Holy One blessed be He Himself. This addition creates a strongly emphasized statement, indicative of its literary and conceptual centrality.[122] This is the very essence of the Midrash and of its purpose—to say that the deliverance from Egypt was achieved by God himself. Hence, verses from Deuteronomy, in which Moses is not mentioned, in contrast to his centrality in the Book of Exodus, were chosen. However, the exegete does not completely give up on the detailed story from Exodus but preserves the natural link to that book with a systematic parallelism between Deuteronomy and Exodus. In this way he succeeds in telling the story of the Exodus without mentioning the "messenger," thereby pulling the rug out from under those who regarded Moses as an archetype of Jesus.

If the Midrash did indeed have an ideological goal, it would be reasonable to expect this purpose to be revealed in its ending. The last verse expounded in the Midrash is "And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders." The final unit of the exegesis is "'And wonders'—this refers to the blood, as is said, 'And I will give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke' (Joel 3:3)." This quotation from Joel is of great significance, since in its original context the verse speaks of the future deliverance: "In those days I will pour out my spirit. And I will give portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes" (Joel 3:2–4).

The Sabbath before Passover is known among Jews as the "Great Sabbath," while in the New Testament the same term is used for the Sabbath after the Crucifixion, that is, the Sabbath that fell on the first day of Pass-

122. According to Goldschmidt, this exegesis appears in all versions of the Passover Haggadah, unlike the other exegeses, some of which are missing in different versions. Hence, Goldschmidt concluded that this exegesis was "widely accepted" but did not explain why. See Goldschmidt (n. 76, p. 62), 44.

over.[123] This term alludes to the messianic expectation of Joel's "Great Day of the Lord," which is linked to Passover. The same verse in Joel is interpreted in Acts 2 in connection with the events that occurred seven weeks after the Crucifixion, at Pentecost, when the apostles were gathered, and had a kind of private epiphany:

> [3] And there appeared to them tongues as of fire . . . [4] And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit . . . [14] But Peter, standing with the eleven . . . addressed them . . . [16] . . . But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel . . . [22] Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know: . . . [33] Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear . . . [43] And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders were done through the apostles in Jerusalem.[124]

In his sermon, Peter claimed that the "signs and wonders" in Joel's prophecy of deliverance were realized in Jesus. The essence of Jesus's proclamation as Messiah—a proclamation known as kerygma—is in verse 22, which makes covert use of Deuteronomy 4:34: "Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?"

The two verses used by Peter, from Joel and from Deuteronomy, are also integrated into the Jewish Haggadah. The verse from Joel concludes the Midrash, and that from Deuteronomy 4 is presented earlier: "'Great awe'—this alludes to the revelation of the *Shekhinah* [divine presence], as is written: 'Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation.'" If we assume that the Jewish author used sources similar to those used in the Christian exegesis, his interpretation takes on a profound meaning. This is not merely a hermeneutical or technical parallel of biblical verses. His aim is to prove that the "signs

123. On the meaning of the concept the "Great Sabbath," and bibliography on it, see chap. 5.

124. For more on "wonders and signs," cf. Acts 4:30; 5:12; 6:8. For the affinity between Pentecost and the Giving of Torah on Shavu'ot, see H. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia, 1987), 16.

and wonders"—signs of future deliverance—happened in Egypt alone. The exegesis—"'Great awe'—this alludes to the revelation of the *Shekhinah*"—parallels the Christian Pentecostal revelation described in Acts 2:43—"Everyone was filled with awe"—and the use made there of Deuteronomy 4:34. The Christian position is of a universal revelation of divinity: the apostles are filled with the Holy Spirit, and their prophecy is understood by all present, in all languages. The Jewish author, by contrast, needs Deuteronomy 4:34 to emphasize the election of Israel ("to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation"). What the entire exegesis implies is that the redemption from Egypt is not a model for the Messiah who has already come, but for one who is yet to in the future.

In this vein, we may understand a passage that many have found difficult to comprehend: "'And He saw our affliction' [Deut 26:7]—this refers to their abstinence from sexual relations [literally, the way of the world], as is written: 'And God saw the people of Israel, and God knew *[va-yeida elohim]* [Exod 2:25].'" Daube has suggested that this exegesis is based on the biblical usage of the word *knew,* understanding the phrase "and God knew" as sexual intercourse. Even though the Israelites practiced sexual abstinence, they succeeded in having progeny by virtue of miraculous conception.[125] Daube thinks that this exegesis reflects an ancient Jewish source for the story of Mary's pregnancy, one that was not excised from the Haggadah for some unknown reason. I consider the opposite conjecture to be more likely—that this exegesis responds to the Christian story and polemicizes with it, arguing that a miraculous birth from the Holy Spirit did in fact take place, albeit not of Jesus, but of the Israelites born in Egypt. This is in accordance with the general tendency of the Haggadah to portray the Exodus from Egypt as a prototype of deliverance.[126]

125. Daube (n. 112, p. 76), 5–9. Daube's theory was rejected by Urbach (n. 77, p. 63), n. 16, who described his theory as "absurd" and "curious" and was seconded by D. Henshke, "The Midrash of the Passover Haggada" [in Hebrew], *Sidra* 4 (1988): n. 4 ("Urbach has already noted Daube's bizarre words"). But in his commentary on the Passover Haggadah, the medieval commentator Rabbi Yom Tov ben Abraham Ashbili wrote, "There are those who say that he inferred it from the verse, 'and God knew,' that this was like 'and Adam again knew his wife Eve'"; see *Hiddushei ha-Ritba al ha-Shas, Pesahim,* ed. Y. Leibovitch (Jerusalem, 1984), 31. Similar things appear in *Genesis Rabbah* on the verse, "And the Lord visited Sarah" (Gen 21:1): "R. Huna said: there is an angel appointed over desire, but Sarah had no need for such, as He in His glory [made her conceive]" (*Gen. Rab.* 53.6, ed. Theodor-Albeck, 560).

126. Such an idea is not alien to the Midrash. In *Midrash Hagadol* to Exodus, 22–23, a Jewish version of the birth of Jesus is brought (see the discussion of this below, chap. 5,

This explanation of the Midrash's tendency can also explain its beginning: "Come and learn what Laban the Syrian sought to do to our Father Jacob. For Pharaoh decreed only against the newborn males, but Laban tried to uproot all [Israel], as is written, 'A wandering Aramaean was my father . . . and he went down to Egypt'—compelled by the divine word." In its literal sense, the biblical text expounded here refers to Jacob, the Aramaean, who was an exiled "wanderer." The verse is understood thus in the Septuagint and in *Sifrei,*[127] as well as by Melito,[128] who describes Jesus as taking his followers from slavery to freedom, from darkness to light, from death to life, and from subjugation to eternal kingdom. Jesus suffered a great deal: he was present in the murdered Abel, in the bound Isaac, in the exiled Jacob, in the sold Joseph, in the Moses thrust into the river in a basket, in the slaughtered Passover sacrifice, and in the persecuted David. Stuart Hall and Shlomo Pines independently noted the parallel between the beginning of Melito's exegesis and the passage in the Haggadah: "He brought us out of slavery into freedom, from grief into joy, from mourning into festivity, from darkness into great light, and from subjection into redemption."[129] Hence the notion that this is a fragment of a Jewish-Christian Haggadah from the Land of Israel is highly plausible.[130] In any case, Melito adds "the

p. 248). In *j. Ber.* 2.4 (5a), there is also a Jewish version of the birth of Jesus. A Jewish farmer is told by a passing Arab about the Destruction of the Temple and the birth of the Messiah in the palace of the king of Bethlehem. The farmer became a salesman of baby clothes so that he could discover the baby-Messiah. The baby's mother wanted to kill her son, since the Temple had been destroyed because of his birth, but the Jew prevented her from doing so. Later the same man returned and asked about the child, and his mother replied that winds and storms had come and snatched him out of her hand. In this version, the manger is turned into the royal palace, and the role of Herod is filled by the mother. Note, too, the parallel between the birth of the Messiah and the Destruction of the Temple. This story is the basis of the Kabbalistic legend of "the baby Gadiel." See Gershom Scholem, "The Sources of 'The Tale of the Baby Gadiel' in Kabbalistic Literature" [in Hebrew], *Devarim bego* (Tel Aviv, 1976), 1.270–83. For this story and its parallel in *Lam. Rab.* (Buber edition, 89), see Galit Hasan-Rokem, "'La voix est la voix de ma soeur': Figures et symboles feminins dans le Midrach 'Lamentations Rabbah,'" *Cahiers de Litterature Orale* 44 (1988): 13–35.

127. This is discussed in detail in Tabori (n. 85, p. 67); Henshke (n. 125, p. 83).

128. Melito of Sardis (n. 88, p. 68), secs. 49, 68.

129. Hall (n. 94, p. 70), 31–32; Shlomo Pines, "From Darkness into Great Light," *Immanuel* 4 (1974): 47–51; cf. Werner (n. 94, p. 70).

130. The structure of Melito's exegesis considerably overlaps with the central kernel of our Haggadah. He opens with a "Midrash"; moves on to an explanation of the symbolic meaning of the Passover sacrifice, the matzah, and the bitter herbs; and concludes with an "anti-Hallel," which includes a sharp attack on the ingratitude of the people of Israel.

exiled Jacob" to the series of typologies of the suffering Jesus, and we may conclude that this is how he understood the phrase "A wandering Aramaean." The identification of Jesus with Jacob is already mentioned in John 4:12, in the Samaritan woman's question to Jesus: "Are you greater than our father Jacob?"[131]

But in the Aramaic translations, as in the Haggadah, the verse in question is seen as referring to Laban: "Laban the Aramaean sought to make my father perish." The Midrash as extant in the Haggadah raises three difficulties. First, how did the exegete know that Laban sought to kill Jacob, since in Genesis 31:24 the angel warns him, "Take heed that you say not a word to Jacob, either good or bad" and there is no indication that Laban sought to kill Jacob's entire family? Second, how did the Midrashic author know that Jacob went down to Egypt "compelled by the divine word"? "Word" *(dibbur)* is tantamount to *logos* and can mean "an angel"—but where is it written in the Bible that Jacob was ordered by God or by an angel to go down to Egypt? Third, how are we to understand the fact that at the heart of the Haggadah we find the view that Laban's intention to kill Jacob, an aim that was not realized, was more serious than the murder of the children of Israel by Pharaoh? Does this not completely diminish the significance of the deliverance from Egypt?

This last question, which transforms Laban into the villain of the Haggadah, led Louis Finkelstein to his bold theory that the Haggadah was composed at the end of the third century B.C.E. and was intended to serve its authors' pro-Egyptian (Ptolemaic) and anti-Syrian (Seleucid) orientation.[132] Finkelstein also noted the similarity between "Syrian" (Hebrew: *arami;* Aramaic: *arma'i*) and "Roman." (Hebrew: *roma'i*).[133] Accordingly, "A wandering Aramaean was my father" may also be read as a Midrash on the situation of the Jewish people under Roman rule. Laban, who wished to extirpate everyone, is the personification of Rome, whose subjugation was harsher than that of Egypt. Jacob exiled from his home symbolizes the fate of the nation as a whole: just as Jacob's exile in Egypt was temporary—he did not go down there to settle—so would the new Exile of Israel be.

131. See J. H. Neyrey, "Jacob Tradition and the Interpretation of John 4:10–26," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41 (1979): 419–37. There is also a similarity between the description of rolling the large rock off Jesus's tomb (Mark 16:4) and rolling the stone off the well by Jacob (Gen 29:10).

132. Finkelstein (n. 77, p. 63, his 1938 article), 300–301 and n. 20.

133. Finkelstein (n. 77, p. 63, his 1938 article), 300–301 and n. 20, and see the important discussion of Berger (n. 7, p. 34), 161–62.

The typological story created by the Midrash is based on the following frame story: an evil man (Laban) wanted to kill a good man (Jacob); an angel commanded the good man to go down to Egypt, and he went there for a limited time. If we change two of the characters in the story, substituting Laban the Aramaean with Herod the Edumean, who rules by the grace of Rome, and Jacob with Jesus, we receive the following story: "An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt" (Matt 2:13–14). The two stories are structured according to the same scheme.

The literary topos used by the Gospel—the birth of the Christian Savior, the danger in store for him, his descent to Egypt, and his rescue—also seems to have been used by the Jewish Midrashic author, who shifted it to Jacob.[134] This is yet another reflection of the tendency to apply the Christian story of salvation to the Jewish story of deliverance from Egypt. In times of subjugation and degradation, both stories offer a consolation and hope for salvation.

At this point, we must return to the peculiarity with which we began our discussion: Why, at least in terms of its literary qualities, is the Midrash "primitive," not going much beyond presentation of the parallel between Deuteronomy 26 and Exodus? And, more generally, why did the Talmudic Sages choose to create a textual Midrash in order to fill the obligation of narrating the story of the Exodus? In point of fact, Melito's "Haggadah" is also none other than such a "Midrash," whose aim is to create a source for the new exegesis of Easter on the basis of the story of the historical Exodus in the Old Testament. Without a textual Midrash and without allegorizing the meaning of the sacrifice, there is no basis for the Christian Easter. For Melito, his Midrash is no mere literary embellishment, but an essential means of turning the biblical story of Passover into a prefiguration of Jesus and the Crucifixion story. Hence, his exegesis begins with a declaration that the biblical verses from Exodus are to be read first, and only thereafter the *mysterium,* that is, their allegorization. Thus, the deliverance

134. This interpretation was supported by Daube (n. 110, p. 75), 189–92, and subsequently by R. E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah* (London, 1977), 545. But both think that the Christian story in Matthew is a Christian Midrash based on the Jewish exegesis on Laban, while I think that the opposite is more tenable, namely, that the Jewish exegesis responds to the story in Matthew and adapts it to its purpose.

of Israel from Egypt acquires a double meaning: temporal and eternal. The historical Passover is that described in the scriptural text, while the eternal Passover is that of Jesus.[135] This duality runs throughout Melito's exegesis, explaining the need for the exegetical genre to construct the allegorical level above the overt text.

Against this backdrop, the liturgical function of the Jewish Midrash can be seen as a pale response to the Christian homily. The Jewish Midrash uses the same literary technique as that used by the Christian one in countering the Christian attempt to appropriate the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

Thus, at least in this case, it may be argued that the hermeneutical genre has a different function in the two religions. From the very outset, Christianity saw exegesis as a vital means of creative interpretation, for only through it could Christianity construct an allegorical "second story" on top of the scriptural "first story." Yet the Jewish exegesis adopts, at least in our case, the Midrashic genre, not to create an additional level, but to show that everything is present in the first story and that there is no second story at all. For the Jewish author, the story in Deuteronomy is interpreted through the story in the Book of Exodus—that is, the written Midrash takes place on the same textual plane as the biblical text itself. This assumption—namely, that the Talmudic Sages adopted the Christian Midrashic genre to build onto or at times in opposition to it, a parallel (or reverse) Jewish Midrash—provides an historical explanation for the great flourishing of the creative Midrash specifically during the second century C.E.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the suggestions offered here regarding the development of the Passover Haggadah, we may conclude that this work emerged from a close and intimate dialogue with the Christian exegesis of the holiday. The Jewish-Christian dialogue displayed here is very extensive, essentially polemic, but it also includes a great deal of commonality. This dialogue was intended to define the identity of the two religious groups by mutual rejection but at the same time offers a similar panacea to the common problem: how to celebrate a festival of deliverance during a period of subjection or persecution. Melito expresses himself with acerbic style, writing sharply against the Jews. The Jews respond with restraint, circumventing the obstacles set up for them

135. Lieu (n. 108, p. 75), 210.

הרדי

הערה למתבונן, שיש הבדל רב בקיום של מתחיל בגנות בין רב לשמואל, דהנה לשמואל דמתחיל בגנות היינו עבדים היינו, הנה באמת ההגדה עוסקת בהרחבה בגנות של השעבוד בסבל ובעינוי של כלל ישראל במצרים, ואילו החלי השני של ההגדה עוסק בשבח ביציאה מעבדות לחירות, אבל לרב שהמתחיל בגנות הוא באמירת 'מתחילה עוע"ז היו אבותינו', אין מאריכים כלל בגנות, ומיד מסיימים ועכשיו קרבנו המקום לעבודתו, וכ"ב.

ונראה פשוט, דבגנות של ע"ז אין רצוי להאריך ולפרסם את חטאיהם של האבות, ולכן לרב אין מאריכים בהקיום של מתחיל בגנות, אבל לשמואל דהמתחיל בגנות הוא בעינוי של יצי"מ, בזה יש חיוב להרבות ולהאריך בסיפור, דע"י זה מתרבה חובת ההודאה והשבח על הנס של יצי"מ, וכלשון הרמב"ם בפהמ"ל (עשה קנ"ז), 'ויאריך הדברים בהגדלת מה שעשה לנו ה', ומה שעשו לנו המצרים מעול וחמס, ואיך לקח השם נקמתנו מהם'.

ובעיקר מחלוקת רב ושמואל, אם אומרים מתחילה עוע"ז או עבדים היינו, היה רגיל רבינו לומר בשם אחרים, דרב ושמואל אזלו לטעמייהו, דהנה רב ס"ל בגיטין (לח, ב) המפקיר עבדו צריך גט שחרור, והיינו שאף שפקע הקנין ממון, עדיין הוא עבד בהקנין איסור, והוא אסור בבת חורין, ושם עבד עליו, ולשיטתו לא היה די במה שגאל ה' אותנו בגאולה הגשמית בקנין ממון, שעדיין היה צריך לגאול את נפשם מעומק שעבוד הנפש מהקנין איסור, וזהו ע"י שעכשיו קרבנו המקום לעבודתו, אך שמואל לטעמיה דס"ל בגיטין (לח, א) דהמפקיר עבדו אינו צריך גט שחרור, דבזה שפקע ממנו הקנין ממון, הוא נעשה בן חורין לגמרי גם בקנין איסור, והוא מותר בת חורין, הנה לטעמיה הרי מיד שיצאו מתחת סבלות מצרים בהקנין ממון, הם נקראו גאולים בין בגופם ובין בנפשם, וכלל ישראל נמשך אחרי ה', ונהיו עבדי ה' ולא עבדי פרעה.

קדם

ואתן לעשיו את הר שעיר, ויעקב ובניו ירדו מצרים

ביאור הדברים, דגורל יעקב קשור בגורלו של עשיו, כדאיתא בגמ' מגילה (ו, א) 'קסרי וירושלים אם יאמר לך אדם חרבו שתיהן, אל תאמן, ישבו שתיהן אל תאמן, חרבה קסרי וישבה ירושלים חרבה ירושלים וישבה קסרי תאמן, שכ' אמלאה החרבה, אם מליאה זו חריבה זו, ואם מליאה זו חריבה זו, רנב"י אמר מהכא שכ' ולאוס מלאוס יאמן', ולכן כשלעשיו ניתן הר שעיר לרשת אותו, וישבה קסרי, מיד חרבה ירושלים ויעקב ובניו ירדו מצרים.

ארמי אובד אבי

הטעם שבחרו חז"ל לדרוש את פרשת ארמי אובד אבי לקיום סיפור יצי"מ, הוא משום דעיקר החיוב של הסיפור ביצי"מ, הוא חיוב של הודאה, וכמו שאומרים 'ולפיכך אנחנו חיבים להודות', ועיין ברמב"ם בפהמ"ל (מ"ע קנ"ז) דחלק מהחיוב של הסיפור ביצי"מ הוא הודאה, וכן מבואר בחינוך (מ' כ"א) דבסיפור יצי"מ יש חיוב של הודאה, ופרשת בכורים כולה הודאה היא, וכמו דכתיב (דברים כו, ג) 'הגדתי היום לה' אלקיך', ובתרגום יונתן ב"ע 'אודינא', וגם ההגדה עיקר שמה הוא על שם הודאה.

והנה מצינו שינוי אצל בעל ההגדה, דלפעמים הוא אומר 'מלמד', כמו דאיתא, 'ויגר שם, מלמד שלא ירד יעקב אבינו להשתקע במצרים אלא לגור שם', אף שהוא מביא אח"כ פסוק על כך, 'שנאמר ויאמרו אל פרעה לגור בארץ באנו', וכן 'ויהי שם לגוי מלמד שהיו ישראל מצוינים שם'. ולפעמים בעל ההגדה אומר 'כמו שנאמר', כמו 'במתי מעט כמו שנאמר בשבעים נפש', וכן הרבה, וכ"ב.

ונראה לבאר, דמלמד היינו שמוכח מתוכו של הפסוק את הענין הנלמד, כמו ויגר שם,

רַבָּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר: כָּל שֶׁלֹּא אָמַר שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים אֵלּוּ בַּפֶּסַח לֹא יָצָא יְדֵי חוֹבָתוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן: פֶּסַח. מַצָּה. וּמָרוֹר.

פירוש קרמון

פסח מצה ומרור. לדברי רבן גמליאל חובה לפרש אלו שלשה דברים על שום מה[223] מפני שהן עיקר, דכתיב: על מצות ומרורים יאכלוהו (במדבר ט יא), ששלשתן באין כאחת בעיתם[224].

223 נראה שכוונתו לפרש לפי מה שביאר בסמוך (עמ' קמה) שחובת האמירה היא משום שנאמר "ואמרתם זבח פסח" אם כן למה חובה לפרש גם מצה ומרור, אלא מפני ששלשתם באים כאחת. 224 היינו בזמן שבית המקדש

שבלי הלקט

רבן גמליאל היה אומר: כל שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בפסח לא יצא ידי חובתו: פסח מצה ומרורים, פסח שהיו אבותינו אוכלין בזמן שבית המקדש קיים על שום מה וכו'. פירוש, עתה חוזר לתשובת מה נשתנה כמו שפירשתי למעלה[376]. ועל אלו שלשה דברים מצות ההגדה מיוסדת לומר "בעבור זה" בזמן שמונחים לפניך[377]. ואע"פ שאין בזמן הזה פסח נוהג לא סילקוהו מכל וכל מן ההגדה[378] לפי ששאלת הבן החכם מיוסדת עליו[379],

376 לעיל עמ' כט. 377 ראה לעיל עמ' סט. 378 אף שאת השאלה "שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלים בשר צלי וכו'" סילקו מן ההגדה משום שבזמן הזה אין קרבן פסח נוהג כמש"כ לעיל עמ' כט. 379 כמו שנתפרש לעיל עמ' נה.

ארחות חיים

רבן גמליאל אומר כל שלא אמר וכו'. כלומר[200], אעפ"י שיאכל פסח מצה ומרור לא יצא ידי חובתו בלתי אמירה, שהקפיד הכתוב באמירה והגדה.

200 כ"ה במיוחס לרשב"ם.

רשב"ץ

רבן גמליאל היה אומר: כל מי שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בפסח לא יצא ידי חובתו ואלו הן פסח מצה ומרור. זאת המשנה היא בפרק ערבי פסחים[452], והיה אומר רבן גמליאל כי בכלל ההגדה הוא לומר שלשה דברים אלו, ואם לא אמרם לא יצא ידי חובת "והגדת לבנך"[453], אעפ"י שבשאלת "מה נשתנה" נזכרו שלשה אלו[454], אינו אלא לענין השינוי שיש בין זה הלילה לשאר הלילות, אבל לתת עיקר הטעם בהן לא יצא ידי חובתו אם לא אמרם כסדר.

452 קטז א–ב. 453 כפירוש הראב"ן ולא כראשונים אחרים שהכוונה לא יצא ידי חובת אכילת הפסח והמצה והמרור, ראה הע' 116 בראב"ן. 454 שבזמן הבית היו שואלים גם על הפסח, ראה לעיל עמ' כח.

מיוחס לרשב"ם

רבן גמליאל היה אומר וכו'. כלומר, אע"פ שיאכל פסח מצה ומרור לא יצא ידי חובתו[93], מפני שאנו רואין שהמקום

93 מפשטות לשונו משמע שלא יצא ידי חובת אכילת הפסח והמצה והמרור, ולא כראב"ן ורשב"ץ שלא יצא ידי חובת ההגדה. וראה הע' 534 בריטב"א.

ראב"ן

ידי חובתו. של קריאת ההגדה[116].

ומ"רבן גמליאל" ועד "גאל ישראל" הכל מפורש בערבי

116 לא כמו שמשמע במלחמות לרמב"ן ברכות כ ב שהכוונה שלא יצא ידי

ר"י בן יקר

רבן גמליאל אומר כל שלא אמר שלשה דברים הללו למה הן באין[236] **לא יצא ידי חובתו.** כך פירש ר"ש[237].

236 כלומר, אין כוונת רבן גמליאל שיש לומר רק את המלים הללו: פסח מצה ומרור, אלא שצריך לבאר למה הן באים. 237 רשב"ם פסחים קטז ב ד"ה שלשה דברים: שלא פירש טעמן, כלומר "כל שלא אמר שלשה דברים הללו" פירושו: כל שלא פירש טעמן. בש"ס וילנא תוקן ברשב"ם: שפירש טעמן, ואינו מובן.

ריטב"א

רבן גמליאל וכו'. משנה היא בפרק ערבי פסחים[530]. התחיל במשנה כמו שאמר: "[אמר] ראב"ע הרי אני"[531], וסיים בה, ונתן את הברייתות שבמכילתא[532] באמצע.

ומה שאמר: **לא יצא ידי חובתו,** כלומר[533], שלא קיים מצותו[534] כראוי[535], לפי שמצינו שהקפיד[536] הכתוב באמירה,

530 קטז א. וראה הגדה שלמה, מבוא עמ' 21 בהערה לשורה 7. 531 והיא משנה בברכות יב ב. 532 ראה הגדה שלמה, שם עמ' 18. 533 "כלומר" – בהגדת פה ישרים: פירושו לחכמים. 534 אין הכרע בלשונו אם הכוונה למצות אכילת הפסח והמצה והמרור, וכמו שנראה מדברי הרמב"ן שבהע' הבאה ובמיוחס לרשב"ם, או כראב"ן ורשב"ץ שפירשו שלא יצא ידי חובת ההגדה. 535 במובאה מדברי רבינו בספר נורא תהלות (הנ"ל בהע' 14) נוסף כאן: "אבל לא יצא ידי חובתו כלל לא קאמר", וכ"ה במלחמות לרמב"ן ברכות כ ב: "ולא שיהא צריך לחזור ולאכול פסח מצה ומרור", וכ"כ רבינו בחי' לסוכה כח א ובשיטה להר"א אלשבילי לברכות ט א והר"ן כאן. ועי' ערוך לנר סוכה שם שכתב בדעת התוס' בפסחים קטז א ד"ה ואמרתם שלא יצא ידי חובתו ממש. 536 השווה מיוחס לרשב"ם וארחות חיים ושם: באמירה

אבודרהם

רבן גמליאל היה אומר כל מי שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בפסח לא יצא ידי חובתו. פירוש[263], אע"פ שיאכל פסח מצה ומרור לא יצא ידי חובתו אם לא יאמר

263 כ"ה במיוחס לרשב"ם ובארחות חיים.

אבל לענין קידוש הרי מודה דאפשר לקדש סמוך לכניסתו]. [הגרי"ז]

והנה קשה בגוף דברי התוס' שהוצרכו להיקש לקרבן פסח לאסור אכילת מצה ומרור בזמן תוספת יו"ט, דנהי דיש על התוספת דין קדושת יו"ט מ"מ דבר שקבוע זמנו לליל חמשה עשר מה שייך בו תוספת, והלוא תוספת יו"ט אינו שייך אלא לקדושת יו"ט ולאיסור מלאכה, אבל אינו שייך למצוות מיוחדות כגון מצה וסוכה שאין להם שייכות לדין יו"ט, אלא הם מצוות שחייבה התורה לקיימם וקבעה להם זמן, ובשעת התוספת עדיין לא הגיע זמנם. [הגר"ח]

בעבור זה

יש לתקן אם דרשה זו היא רק ילפותא על זמן החיוב, דזמן חובת הסיפור הוא בליל ט"ו ניסן, או דהוא דין בעצם מצוות סיפור יצי"מ, דמדיני המצוה לספר דוקא בשעה שמצה ומרור מונחים לפניו על השולחן.

ונראה להוכיח זאת מהא דאיתא בגמ' במס' פסחים (דף ל"ו ע"א) "מאי לחם עוני, לחם שעונין עליו דברים הרבה". הרי דהוא דין בעצם חובת הסיפור שיהיה על מצות ומרורים ולא רק ילפותא על זמן החיוב. ובמכילתא מפורש יותר "בזמן שמצה ומרור מונחים לפניך על שולחנך", היינו שהמצה והמרור יהיו מונחים על השלחן במציאות.

ובזה יבואר נמי מה דאיתא בתוספתא סוף מס' פסחים (פ"י) וז"ל מעשה בר"ג וזקנים שהיו מסובין וכו' והיו עסוקין בהל' הפסח כל הלילה וכו' כיון שעלה עמוד השחר הגביהו מלפניהם וכו' ע"ש. ול"ד מהו הגביהו מלפניהם. ולפי דברינו י"ל דכיון שהיו עסוקין בספור יצי"מ, ובמצות ספור יש דין מסויים שצריך להיות על מצות ומרורים, לכן היה השולחן ערוך לפניהם כדי שיהיה הספור על מצות ומרורים, וכיון שעלה עמוה"ש ועבר זמן חובת הסיפור הגביהו מלפניהם את **השולחן**.

שראוי' לאכל מצה ומרור... וא"כ ע"כ אין לומר ההגדה קודם הלילה ממש עכ"ל. מוכח מזה שלמד מדרשה זאת שגם בזמן תוס' יו"ט לא יכולים לקיים מצוות סיפור וצריכים לילה ממש.

הגרי"ז - הגדש"פ מבית לוי, הגדש"פ וענפי ארזי אל (סי' ב')

והנה קשה בגוף דברי התוס' - ולכאורה יש להקשות כעין הגר"ח זצ"ל אבל ממקום אחר, והיינו מה ההו"א של תוס' שאפשר לאכול מצה בזמן תוס' יו"ט, והא כתיב "בערב תאכל מצות", א"כ יש דין מסויים של "ערב" דהיינו לילה, וא"כ ביום אסור לאכול מצה אע"פ שהוא בתוך זמן תוספת יו"ט. ומצאתי בשו"ת חזון עובדיה (חלק א', סי' א') שמדבר על זה, ומביא מכמה ראשונים שבאמת לומדים שא"א לאכול מצה ביום מטעם זה, אבל יש גם כמה ראיות שהתיבה "ערב" יכול להתייחס גם לזמן לפני הלילה עיי"ש.

הגר"ח - הגדש"פ מבית לוי

וצ"ב מהו הגביהו לפניהם - בפי' מנחת ביכורים פירש דהיינו שהגביהו הוילון לראות אם היה כבר יום.

מה נשתנה וכו', אין לו בן אשתו שואלתו וכו', היה לבדו שואל לעצמו עכ"ל. ובהלכה ד' כתב וז"ל וצריך להתחיל בגנות ולסיים בשבח, כיצד מתחיל ומספר שבתחלה היו אבותינו בימי תרח ומלפניו כופרים וטועין אחר ההבל וכו' ומסיים בדת האמת שקרבנו המקום לו והבדילנו מהאומות וקרבנו ליחודו. וכן מתחיל ומודיע שעבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים וכל הרעה שגמלנו ומסיים בנסים ובנפלאות שנעשו לנו וכו' עכ"ל. ובהלכה ה' שם וז"ל כל מי שלא אמר ג' דברים אלו בליל חמשה עשר לא יצא ידי חובתו ואלו הן פסח מצה ומרור, פסח על שום מה וכו' [ומסיים:] ודברים האלו כולן נקראין הגדה עכ"ל. הרי להדיא שכל הג' חילוקין אלו נכללין בהמצוה של והגדת לבנך, בהמצוה של סיפור. [הגר"ח]

ויש להוסיף על זה, דחלוק עוד מצות זכירה ממצות סיפור, דבסיפור נכלל גם לעסוק בהלכות השייכות ליצי"מ [כמבואר לקמן ד"ה והיו מספרים]. [הגרי"ז]

הרי להדיא שכל הג' חילוקין אלו נכללין בהמצוה של והגדת לבנך, בהמצוה של סיפור - כתוב בהגדש"פ מנחת אשר (סי' ד' אות ב') וז"ל אך נראה לכאורה דלא עלה על דעת הגר"ח להסביר בכך במה שאני מצות הסיפור דליל ט"ו בניסן ממצות הזכירה של כל יום ויום, אלא להגדיר מה הן יסודות מצות הסיפור ומאפיניה למעשה, דבאמת שלשת ההלכות הללו אינם אלא מדרבנן ולא מה"ת, דמן התורה אין לנו אלא מצוה לספר בנסים שעשה הקב"ה עם אבותינו כנ"ל מלשון הרמב"ם דכל אחד מספר לפי צחות לשונו וכל ההלכות הנ"ל הנוגעות לאופן הסיפור אינם אלא מדרבנן.

אמנם לאו מילתא דפשיטותא היא, ומדברי הרמב"ם בפ"ז ה"ה מחמץ ומצה משמע דמה"ת צריך לומר פסח מצה ומרור על שום מה נאכלין וילפינן לה מ'ואמרתם זבח פסח', וכך משמע מדברי התוס' בפסחים קט"ז ע"א, ובשבלי הלקט כתב דילפינן מ'בעבור זה', ומ"מ משמע מדבריהם דהוי מה"ת, ולא כדברי הר"ן שם שכתב דכל כוונת ר"ג שאינו יוצא במצוה מן המובחר עיי"ש, אך מ"מ מלשון הרמב"ם בסהמ"צ משמע דמה"ת אין מטבע מסויים במצות הסיפור אלא כל אחד לפי צחות לשונו, ומשום כן נראה יותר כמו שכתבתי עכ"ל.

הגר"ח - בס' עמק ברכה (בעניני הגדה אות א') הביא דברים אלו, וכתב ששמען מפי הגרי"ז זצ"ל בשם הגר"ח זצ"ל. ועוד שמע ממרן הגרי"ז זצ"ל שבכל שנה בשעת הסדר של פסח היה הגר"ח זצ"ל אומר הביאור הנדפס הכא לפני בני ביתו, וכיון שמצוות צריכות כוונה היה מְצַוֶּה לכוון לצאת בג' דברים אלו.

ובהגדש"פ שי לתורה מבואר יותר בשם הגרמד"ס שליט"א (בד"ה למען תזכור) וז"ל בליל הסדר כאשר היו מגיעים באמירת ההגדה ל"מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח" ובטעמי המצוות היה מרן הגר"ח זצ"ל מזהיר לכוון לקיים בזה מצוות סיפור יצי"מ שזהו עיקר מצוות סיפור, ובזה נתייחדה ממצות הזכירה עכ"ל. ויש להעיר מדוע לא ציווה לכוון כשהתחילו את הסיפור לאחרים מכיוון שגם זה מעיקר המצווה ובזה שונה מזכירה. ובאמת הנוסח של הס' עמק ברכה היא שצווה לכוון לצאת "בג' דברים אלו" ולכאורה זה כולל ענין הסיפור לאחרים.

THE SAMUEL AND ALTHEA STROUM LECTURES
IN JEWISH STUDIES

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Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory,
by Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi

ZAKHOR

Jewish History and Jewish Memory

YOSEF HAYIM YERUSHALMI

THE JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA
Philadelphia

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PRESS
Seattle and London

Prologue

This little book, part history, part confession and credo, has come into being through several distinct stages, none of which anticipated the other. In 1977, while on sabbatical in Jerusalem, I delivered a lecture on sixteenth-century Jewish historiography to the faculties of the Institute of Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University. My choice of subject was prompted not only by its inherent fascinations, but by my feeling that a proper understanding of this particular phenomenon can provide a fulcrum with which to raise a number of issues concerning the place of historiography within Jewish civilization generally. Upon my return to the United States I was asked to contribute a paper to the forthcoming Jubilee Volume of the American Academy for Jewish Research. In response, I submitted a lightly expanded English version of my Hebrew lecture, now entitled "Clio and the Jews: Reflections on Jewish Historiography in the Sixteenth Century," which was published when the volume finally appeared in the fall of 1980. Both in the original lecture and in the published essay I managed to confine myself rather closely to the announced topic, though there were also some scattered hints concerning its larger implications.

The matter might well have rested there had I not received, in the meantime, the gracious invitation of the University of Washington to deliver the Stroum Lectures in April 1980. This suddenly seemed to me a propitious opportunity for a more expansive treatment, no longer limited to any single period, of the issues with which I was concerned. Still, I formulated the topic as "Jewish History and Jewish Memory" with some qualms. Four lectures on so broad a theme would obviously preclude the elaborate and subtle discussion that many of the ideas to be dealt with really deserve. Despite such misgivings, I decided to plunge ahead. The lectures were given. This book is the result.

If such, then, are the external circumstances that have brought it forth, its more vital origin lies in an effort to understand myself as a Jewish historian, not within the objective context of the global

scholarly enterprise, but within the inner framework of Jewish history itself. With the former I have no particular problems—that is, none that are not shared by historians in other fields. Given that it is important to consume most of one's waking hours in the study of the past, Jewish historical scholarship is as significant as any other and its achievements are manifest. From the perspective of Jewish history, however, it is different. At the very heart of this book lies an attempt to understand what seemed a paradox to me at one time—that although Judaism throughout the ages was absorbed with the meaning of history, historiography itself played at best an ancillary role among the Jews, and often no role at all; and, concomitantly, that while memory of the past was always a central component of Jewish experience, the historian was not its primary custodian.

These significant dualities have often been obscured by rhetorical flourishes and a certain semantic confusion. The Jews, after all, have the reputation of being at once the most historically oriented of peoples and as possessing the longest and most tenacious of memories. Yet such accolades can be profoundly true or completely false, depending upon what one means by "history" or "memory." If they are not to be completely meaningless, we should at least want to know what kind of history the Jews have valued, what, out of their past, they chose to remember, and how they preserved, transmitted, and revitalized that which was recalled. Our investigation along these lines will gradually reveal, I trust, how very different the traditional concern of Jews with history was from our own. This book, therefore, may properly be considered, on one level, as an attempt at historical *distancing*.

My own terms of reference require no rigid definitions. They should emerge, on the whole, with sufficient clarity in the contexts that follow. I have discussed my understanding of "historiography" at some length in the "Clio" essay, where I have also given examples of those who would blur the crucial distinction between historical writing and various genres of Jewish literature that may reflect a deep concern with history without displaying the least

interest in recording historical events. All that need not be repeated here.

It may help to point out, however, that in repeatedly employing such terms as "collective memory" or "group memory" I do not have in mind some vaguely genetic endowment, nor an innate psychic structure analogous to the Jungian archetypes. Contrary to a theory widely held as late as the seventeenth century, a child left in the forest to its own linguistic devices would not speak Hebrew spontaneously, not even if it were a Jewish *enfant sauvage*, and neither would it "remember" that Abraham journeyed from Ur to Canaan. Only the group can bequeath both language and a transpersonal memory. It was the abiding merit of Maurice Halbwachs, more than fifty years ago, to have insisted to psychologists and philosophers alike that even individual memory is structured through social frameworks, and, all the more, that collective memory is not a metaphor but a social reality transmitted and sustained through the conscious efforts and institutions of the group (see *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, Paris, 1925, and his posthumously published *La mémoire collective*, Paris, 1950). My own use of the term is indebted to these works, in spirit if not always in substance. However, in attempting a specific examination of the dynamics of *Jewish* collective memory, I have found little help at hand. The categories generally invoked are usually not adequate to the Jewish case. What has been learned from the study of oral tradition, for example, will only partially apply to so literate and obstinately bookish a people. Notions of collective memory derived from the folklore and mythology of peasants or primitives are also of limited relevance when we consider how much of Jewish society and culture was molded, prior to modern times, by guiding elites. Significantly, Halbwachs himself devoted a chapter in the first of his aforementioned books to "La mémoire collective des groupes religieux" in which he referred exclusively to Christianity, while in the discussion of "La mémoire collective et la mémoire historique" in the latter work, it is the historical memory of a nation that is at issue. The Jews, however, have represented throughout

their history a unique fusion of religion and peoplehood, and they cannot be grasped on either side of such dichotomies. The history of Jewish collective memory, as I have indicated in the first lecture, is yet to be explored. Here I have only tried to chart some possible routes to be followed.

Returning to these lectures after the lapse of more than a year in order to prepare them for publication, I was tempted more than once to rewrite them completely, or even to lay them aside and to write a full-scale and much larger work on the very same themes. Instead I did neither. I decided to retain the format, and hence also the tonality, of the lectures as they were originally given. Revisions have been minimal and largely cosmetic. What has been lost thereby in amplitude and subtlety will perhaps be compensated by the immediacy of words spoken in a living context. At the same time, despite some initial hesitation I have seen fit to add rather extensive notes to each lecture, persuaded by close friends and colleagues that these may be useful to students, and that they would enable me to qualify and nuance at least some points that, inevitably, have been too baldly stated in the lectures themselves.

Reviewing the whole, I am under no illusion that this book is anything more than a series of tentative probes into its subject. In the end, the stance I have taken emerges out of an acute awareness that there have been a number of alternative ways, each viable and with its own integrity, in which human beings have perceived and organized their collective pasts. Modern historiography is the most recent, but still only one of these, superior in some obvious respects, deficient and perhaps even inferior in others, gain and loss. Thus I regard the emergence of modern Jewish historical scholarship since the early nineteenth century, not as an ultimate triumph of historical progress, but as an historical fact historically conditioned, something to be taken with the utmost seriousness, but not to crow about. Nevertheless, the reader will not have understood me if he interprets the doubts and misgivings I express as meaning that I propose a return to prior modes of thought. Most of us do not have that choice. For better or worse, a particular and

unprecedented experience of time and history is ours, to be reflected upon, perhaps to be channelled in new directions. My final conclusions are admittedly not sanguine. Neither, I think, are they hopeless.

Wellfleet, Cape Cod — Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi
30 Ab 5741/August 30, 1981

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BIBLICAL AND RABBINIC FOUNDATIONS

Meaning in History, Memory, and the Writing of History

The Hebrew *Zakhor*—"Remember"—announces my elusive theme. Memory is always problematic, usually deceptive, sometimes treacherous. Proust knew this, and the English reader is deprived of the full force of his title which conveys, not the blandly reassuring "Remembrance of Things Past" of the Moncrieff translation, but an initially darker and more anxious search for a time that has been lost. In the ensorcelled film of Alain Resnais the heroine quickly discovers that she cannot even be certain of what transpired "last year at Marienbad." We ourselves are periodically aware that memory is among the most fragile and capricious of our faculties.

Yet the Hebrew Bible seems to have no hesitations in commanding memory. Its injunctions to remember are unconditional, and even when not commanded, remembrance is always pivotal. Altogether the verb *zakhar* appears in its various declensions in the Bible no less than one hundred and sixty-nine times, usually with either Israel or God as the subject, for memory is incumbent upon both.[1] The verb is complemented by its obverse—forgetting. As Israel is enjoined to remember, so is it adjured not to forget. Both imperatives have resounded with enduring effect among the Jews since biblical times. Indeed, in trying to understand the survival of a people that has spent most of its life in global dispersion, I would submit that the history of its memory, largely neglected and yet to be written, may prove of some consequence.

But what were the Jews to remember, and by what means? What have been the functional dynamics of Jewish memory, and how, if at all, is the command to remember related to the writing of history? For historiography, an actual recording of historical events, is by no means the principal medium through which the collective memory of the Jewish people has been addressed or aroused. The apparent irony is not limited to the Jews alone. It is our common experience that what is remembered is not always

recorded and, alas for the historian, that much of what has been recorded is not necessarily remembered.

In the space of these lectures I shall not venture to treat the relations between Jewish memory and the writing of Jewish history in all their tangled configurations. Nor do I propose to attempt a history of Jewish historiography. For it is not historical writing *per se* that will concern us here, but the relation of Jews to their own past, and the place of the historian within that relationship. What I have to say is ultimately quite personal. It flows out of lingering preoccupations with the nature of my craft, but I do not presume to speak for the guild. I trust that, by the time I have done, the personal will not seem merely arbitrary. I would add only that although, as an historian of the Jews, I am concerned primarily with the Jewish past, I do not think that the issues to be raised are necessarily confined to Jewish history. Still, it may be that this history can sometimes set them into sharper relief than would otherwise be possible. And with that we may begin.

* * *

For those reared and educated in the modern West it is often hard to grasp the fact that a concern with history, let alone the writing of history, is not an innate endowment of human civilization. Many cultures past and present have found no particular virtue in the historical, temporal dimension, of human existence. Out of a mass of ethnographic materials from around the world anthropologists and historians of religion have gradually clarified the extent to which, in primitive societies, only mythic rather than historical time is "real," the time of primeval beginnings and paradigmatic first acts, the dream-time when the world was new, suffering unknown, and men consorted with the gods. Indeed, in such cultures the present historical moment possesses little independent value. It achieves meaning and reality only by subverting itself, when, through the repetition of a ritual or the recitation or re-enactment of a myth, historical time is periodically shattered

and one can experience again, if only briefly, the true time of the origins and archetypes.[2] Nor are these vital functions of myth and ritual confined to the so-called primitives. Along with the mentality they reflect they are also shared by the great pagan religions of antiquity and beyond. In the metaphysics and epistemology of some of the most sophisticated of Far Eastern civilizations, both time and history are deprecated as illusory, and to be liberated from such illusions is a condition for true knowledge and ultimate salvation. These and similar matters are well documented in an abundant literature and need not be belabored here. Lest our discussion remain too abstract, however, let me cite one striking example in the case of India, of which a noted modern Indian scholar writes:

> . . . the fact remains that except Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, which is merely a local history of Kashmir, there is no other historical text in the whole range of Sanskrit literature which even makes a near approach to it, or may be regarded as history in the proper sense of the term. This is a very strange phenomenon, for there is hardly a branch of human knowledge or any topic of human interest which is not adequately represented in Sanskrit literature. The absence of real historical literature is therefore naturally regarded as so very unusual that even many distinguished Indians cannot bring themselves to recognize the obvious fact, and seriously entertain the belief that there were many such historical texts, but that they have all perished.[3]

Herodotus, we are told, was the "father of history" (a phrase that needs to be qualified, but I shall not pause to do so here), and until fairly recently every educated person knew that the Greeks had produced a line of great historians who could still be read with pleasure and empathy. Yet neither the Greek historians nor the civilization that nurtured them saw any ultimate or transcendent meaning to history as a whole; indeed, they never quite arrived at a concept of universal history, of history "as a whole." Herodotus wrote with the very human aspiration of—in his own words—"preserving from decay the remembrance of what men have done,

and of preventing the great and wonderful actions of the Greeks and the barbarians from losing their due meed of glory." For Herodotus the writing of history was first and foremost a bulwark against the inexorable erosion of memory engendered by the passage of time. In general, the historiography of the Greeks was an expression of that splendid Hellenic curiosity to know and to explore which can still draw us close to them, or else it sought from the past moral examples or political insights. Beyond that, history had no truths to offer, and thus it had no place in Greek religion or philosophy. If Herodotus was the father of history, the fathers of meaning in history were the Jews.[4]

It was ancient Israel that first assigned a decisive significance to history and thus forged a new world-view whose essential premises were eventually appropriated by Christianity and Islam as well. "The heavens," in the words of the psalmist, might still "declare the glory of the Lord," but it was human history that revealed his will and purpose. This novel perception was not the result of philosophical speculation, but of the peculiar nature of Israelite faith. It emerged out of an intuitive and revolutionary understanding of God, and was refined through profoundly felt historical experiences. However it came about, in retrospect the consequences are manifest. Suddenly, as it were, the crucial encounter between man and the divine shifted away from the realm of nature and the cosmos to the plane of history, conceived now in terms of divine challenge and human response. The pagan conflict of the gods with the forces of chaos, or with one another, was replaced by a drama of a different and more poignant order: the paradoxical struggle between the divine will of an omnipotent Creator and the free will of his creature, man, in the course of history; a tense dialectic of obedience and rebellion. The primeval dream-time world of the archetypes, represented in the Bible only by the Paradise story in Genesis, was abandoned irrevocably.[5] With the departure of Adam and Eve from Eden, history begins, historical time becomes real, and the way back is closed forever. East of Eden hangs "the fiery ever-turning sword" to bar re-entry. Thrust reluctantly into history, man in Hebrew thought comes to affirm his historical existence despite the suffering it entails, and gradually, ploddingly, he discovers that God reveals himself in the course of it. Rituals and festivals in ancient Israel are themselves no longer primarily repetitions of mythic archetypes meant to annihilate historical time. Where they evoke the past, it is not the primeval but the historical past, in which the great and critical moments of Israel's history were fulfilled. Far from attempting a flight from history, biblical religion allows itself to be saturated by it and is inconceivable apart from it.

No more dramatic evidence is needed for the dominant place of history in ancient Israel than the overriding fact that even God is known only insofar as he reveals himself "historically." Sent to bring the tidings of deliverance to the Hebrew slaves, Moses does not come in the name of the Creator of Heaven and Earth, but of the "God of the fathers," that is to say, of the God of history: "Go and assemble the elders of Israel and say to them: The Lord the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has appeared to me and said: I have surely remembered you . . ." (Exod. 3:16). When God introduces himself directly to the entire people at Sinai, nothing is heard of his essence or attributes, but only: "I the Lord am your God who brought you out of the Land of Egypt, the house of bondage" (Exod. 20:2). That is sufficient. For here as elsewhere, ancient Israel knows what God is from what he has done in history.[6] And if that is so, then memory has become crucial to its faith and, ultimately, to its very existence.

Only in Israel and nowhere else is the injunction to remember felt as a religious imperative to an entire people. Its reverberations are everywhere, but they reach a crescendo in the Deuteronomic history and in the prophets. "Remember the days of old, consider the years of ages past" (Deut. 32:7). "Remember these things, O Jacob, for you, O Israel, are My servant; I have fashioned you, you are My servant; O Israel, never forget Me" (Is. 44:21). "Remember what Amalek did to you" (Deut. 25:17). "O My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab plotted against you"

(Micah 6:5). And, with a hammering insistence: "Remember that you were a slave in Egypt. . . ."

If the command to remember is absolute, there is, nontheless, an almost desperate pathos about the biblical concern with memory, and a shrewd wisdom that knows how short and fickle human memory can be. Not history, as is commonly supposed, but only mythic time repeats itself. If history is real, then the Red Sea can be crossed only once, and Israel cannot stand twice at Sinai, a Hebrew counterpart, if you wish, to the wisdom of Heraclitus.[7] Yet the covenant is to endure forever. "I make this covenant, with its sanctions, not with you alone, but both with those who are standing here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with those who are not with us here this day" (Deut. 29:13–14). It is an outrageous claim. Surely there comes a day "when your children will ask you in time to come, saying: What mean you by these stones? Then you shall say to them: Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord when it passed through the Jordan" (Josh. 4:6–7). Not the stone, but the memory transmitted by the fathers, is decisive if the memory embedded in the stone is to be conjured out of it to live again for subsequent generations. If there can be no return to Sinai, then what took place at Sinai must be borne along the conduits of memory to those who were not there that day.

The biblical appeal to remember thus has little to do with curiosity about the past. Israel is told only that it must be a kingdom of priests and a holy people; nowhere is it suggested that it become a nation of historians. Memory is, by its nature, selective, and the demand that Israel remember is no exception. Burckhardt's dictum that all ages are equally close to God may please us, but such a notion remains alien to biblical thought. There the fact that history has meaning does not mean that everything that happened in history is meaningful or worthy of recollection. Of Manasseh of Judah, a powerful king who reigned for fifty-five years in Jerusalem, we hear only that "he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord" (II Kings 21:2), and only the details of that evil are

conveyed to us. Not only is Israel under no obligation whatever to remember the entire past, but its principle of selection is unique unto itself. It is above all God's acts of intervention in history, and man's responses to them, be they positive or negative, that must be recalled. Nor is the invocation of memory actuated by the normal and praiseworthy desire to preserve heroic national deeds from oblivion. Ironically, many of the biblical narratives seem almost calculated to deflate the national pride. For the real danger is not so much that what happened in the past will be forgotten, as the more crucial aspect of *how* it happened. "And it shall be, when the Lord your God shall bring you into the land which he swore unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you great and goodly cities, which you did not build, and houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, and cisterns hewn out, which you did not hew, vineyards and olive-trees which you did not plant, and you shall eat and be satisfied—*then beware lest you forget the Lord who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage*" (Deut. 6:10–12; cf. 8:11–18).

Memory flowed, above all, through two channels: ritual and recital. Even while fully preserving their organic links to the natural cycles of the agricultural year (spring and first fruits), the great pilgrimage festivals of Passover and Tabernacles were transformed into commemorations of the Exodus from Egypt and the sojourn in the wilderness. (Similarly, the biblical Feast of Weeks would become, sometime in the period of the Second Temple, a commemoration of the giving of the Law at Sinai.) Oral poetry preceded and sometimes accompanied the prose of the chroniclers. For the Hebrew reader even now such survivals as the Song of the Sea (Exod. 15:1–18) or the Song of Deborah (Judges 5) seem possessed of a curious power to evoke, through the sheer force of their archaic rhythms and images, distant but strangely moving intimations of an experience of primal events whose factual details are perhaps irrevocably lost.

A superlative example of the interplay of ritual and recital in the service of memory is the ceremony of the first fruits ordained

in Deuteronomy 26, where the celebrant, an ordinary Israelite bringing his fruits to the sanctuary, must make the following declaration:

> A wandering Aramean was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, few in number; and he became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians dealt ill with us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. And we cried unto the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice, and saw our affliction, and our toil, and our oppression. And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders. And He has brought us into this place, and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey . . . (Deut. 25:5–9).[8]

This is capsule history at its best. The essentials to be remembered are all here, in a ritualized formula. Compressed within it are what we might paraphrase as the patriarchal origins in Mesopotamia, the emergence of the Hebrew nation in the midst of history rather than in mythic pre-history, slavery in Egypt and liberation therefrom, the climactic acquisition of the Land of Israel, and throughout—the acknowledgment of God as lord of history.

Yet although the continuity of memory could be sustained by such means, and while fundamental biblical conceptions of history were forged, not by historians, but by priests and prophets, the need to remember overflowed inevitably into actual historical narrative as well. In the process, and within that varied Hebrew literature spanning a millennium which we laconically call "the Bible," a succession of anonymous authors created the most distinguished corpus of historical writing in the ancient Near East.

It was an astonishing achievement by any standard applicable to ancient historiography, all the more so when we bear in mind some of its own presuppositions. With God as the true hero of history one wonders at the very human scale of the historical narratives themselves. Long familiarity should not make us indifferent to such qualities. There was no compelling *a priori* reason why the

biblical historians should not have been content to produce an episodic account of divine miracles and little else. Yet if biblical history has, at its core, a recital of the acts of God, its accounts are filled predominantly with the actions of men and women and the deeds of Israel and the nations. Granted that historical writing in ancient Israel had its roots in the belief that history was a theophany and that events were ultimately to be interpreted in light of this faith. The result was, not theology, but history on an unprecedented scale.

Another surprising feature in most of biblical historiography is its concreteness. Where we might have expected a re-telling of Israel's past that would continually sacrifice fact to legend and specific detail to preconceived patterns, we find instead a firm anchorage in historical realities. The events and characteristics of one age are seldom blurred with those of another. Discrepancies between the hopes of an early generation and the situation encountered by a later one are not erased. (Compare, for example, the promised boundaries of the Land of Israel with those of the territories actually conquered in Canaan.)[9] Historical figures emerge not merely as types, but as full-fledged individuals. Chronology, by and large, is respected. There is a genuine sense of the flow of historical time and of the changes that occur within it. Abraham is not represented as observing the laws of Moses. The editors who periodically redacted the sources at their disposal did not level them out completely. Two essentially conflicting accounts of the origins of Israelite monarchy lie side by side to this day in the Book of Samuel.

That biblical historiography is not "factual" in the modern sense is too self-evident to require extensive comment. By the same token, however, its poetic or legendary elements are not "fictions" in the modern sense either. For a people in ancient times these were legitimate and sometimes inevitable modes of historical perception and interpretation.[10] But biblical historiography is hardly uniform in these respects. The historical narratives that span the ages from the beginnings of mankind to the conquest of

Canaan are necessarily more legendary, the accounts of the monarchy much less so, and even within each segment there are marked variations of degree. This is only to be expected. The historical texts of the Bible, written by different authors at different times, were often also the end products of a long process of transmission of earlier documents and traditions.

I cannot pause here to discuss the stages by which either biblical interpretations of history or the actual writing of history evolved. In terms of our larger concerns, such an atomistic discussion might even prove misleading. By the second century B.C.E. the corpus of biblical writings was already complete, and its subsequent impact upon Jewry was in its totality. Post-biblical Judaism did not inherit a series of separate historical sources and documents, but what it regarded as a sacred and organic whole. Read through from Genesis through Chronicles it offered not only a repository of law, wisdom, and faith, but a coherent narrative that claimed to embrace the whole of history from the creation of the world to the fifth century B.C.E., and, in the prophetic books, a profound interpretation of that history as well. With the Book of Daniel, the last of the biblical books in point of actual composition, an apocalyptic exposition of world history was incorporated as well, which would exercise its own particular fascination in ages to come.

Obviously much more could still be said about the place and function of history in ancient Israel that I have chosen to ignore. But if we really seek to understand what happened later, then we may already have touched on something that can prove of considerable help, and should therefore be reformulated explicitly. We have learned, in effect, that meaning in history, memory of the past, and the writing of history are by no means to be equated. In the Bible, to be sure, the three elements are linked, they overlap at critical points, and, in general, they are held together in a web of delicate and reciprocal relationships. In post-biblical Judaism, as we shall see, they pull asunder. Even in the Bible, however, historiography is but one expression of the awareness that history is meaningful and of the need to remember, and

neither meaning nor memory ultimately depends upon it. The meaning of history is explored more directly and more deeply in the prophets than in the actual historical narratives;[11] the collective memory is transmitted more actively through ritual than through chronicle. Conversely, in Israel as in Greece, historiography could be propelled by other needs and considerations. There were other, more mundane, genres of historical writing, apparently quite unrelated to the quest for transcendent meanings.[12] Of the same Manasseh who did evil in the sight of the Lord we read, as we do of other monarchs, that the rest of his acts are written "in the books of the chronicles of the kings of Judah." Significantly perhaps, those royal chronicles are long lost to us.

If Joshua, Samuel, Kings, and the other historical books of the Bible were destined to survive, that is because something quite extraordinary happened to them. They had become part of an authoritative anthology of sacred writings whose final canonization took place at Yabneh in Palestine around the year 100 C.E., some thirty years after the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans. With the sealing of the biblical canon by the rabbis at Yabneh, the biblical historical books and narratives were endowed with an immortality to which no subsequent historian could ever aspire and that was denied to certain historical works that already existed. The Jewish historiography of the Hellenistic period, even such works as the first three books of Maccabees, fell by the wayside, some of it to be preserved by the Christian church, but unavailable to the Jews themselves until modern times.[13]

That which was included in the biblical canon had, so to speak, a constantly renewable lease on life, and we must try to savor some of what this has meant. For the first time the history of a people became part of its sacred scripture. The Pentateuchal narratives, which brought the historical record up to the eve of the conquest of Canaan, together with the weekly lesson from the prophets, were read aloud in the synagogue from beginning to end. The public reading was completed triennially in Palestine, annually in Babylonia (as is the custom today), and immediately the reading

would begin again.[14] Every generation of scribes would copy and transmit the historical texts with the reverent care that only the sacred can command. An unbroken chain of scholars would arise later to explicate what had been recorded long ago in a constantly receding past. With the gradual democratization of Jewish learning, both the recitals of ancient chroniclers and the interpretations of prophets long dead would become the patrimony, not of a minority, but of the people at large.

To many, therefore, it has seemed all the more remarkable that after the close of the biblical canon the Jews virtually stopped writing history. Josephus Flavius marks the watershed. Writing in a not-uncomfortable Roman exile after the destruction of the Second Temple, sometime between 75 and 79 C.E. Josephus published his account of the *Jewish War* against Rome and then went on to an elaborate summation of the history of his people in the *Jewish Antiquities*. The latter work was published in 93/94, that is, less than a decade before the rabbis held their council at Yabneh. By coincidence the two events were almost contemporaneous. Yet in retrospect we know that within Jewry the future belonged to the rabbis, not to Josephus. Not only did his works not survive among the Jews, it would be almost fifteen centuries before another Jew would actually call himself an historian.[15] It is as though, abruptly, the impulse to historiography had ceased.

Certainly, when we turn from the Bible to classical rabbinic literature, be it Talmud or Midrash, we seem to find ourselves on different and unfamiliar terrain as far as history is concerned. Where the Bible, with austere restraint, had said little or nothing of God prior to the creation of the world we know, here we encounter the periodic creation and destruction of worlds before our own.[16] Ancient Near Eastern mythological motifs of divine victories over primeval monsters, of which only faint and vestigial traces are preserved in the Bible, suddenly reassert themselves more vividly and elaborately than before.[17] To be sure, all the historical events and personalities of the Bible are present in rabbinic aggadah; indeed, much more is told about them by the rabbis

than in the Bible itself. Guided often by an uncanny eye for gaps, problems, and nuances, the rabbis amplified the biblical narratives with remarkable sensitivity. The wide range of biblically based rabbinic aggadah has enchanted poets and intrigued anthropologists and folklorists, theologians and philosophers. Even a modern critical scholar of the Bible will often find that behind a particular midrash there lies a genuine issue in the biblical text, whether linguistic or substantive, of which he was himself previously unaware. But the fascination and importance of rabbinic literature are not at issue here. It is the historian within all of us that balks, and we recognize some of the reasons for our frustration. Unlike the biblical writers the rabbis seem to play with Time as though with an accordion, expanding and collapsing it at will. Where historical specificity is a hallmark of the biblical narratives, here that acute biblical sense of time and place often gives way to rampant and seemingly unselfconscious anachronism. In the world of aggadah Adam can instruct his son Seth in the Torah, Shem and Eber establish a house of study, the patriarchs institute the three daily prayer-services of the normative Jewish liturgy, Og King of Bashan is present at Isaac's circumcision, and Noah prophesies the translation of the Bible into Greek.

Of course there is something rather compelling about that large portion of the rabbinic universe in which ordinary barriers of time can be ignored and all the ages placed in an ever-fluid dialogue with one another. Clearly, however, something else that we would consider vital has also been lost in the course of this metamorphosis, and we need not look far to know what it is. The history of the biblical period is present in the Bible itself. Admittedly, the reconstruction of that history through modern critical scholarship, buttressed by archaeology and the recovery of ancient Near Eastern languages and literatures, now offers a more contextual understanding than was ever possible before, and can sometimes diverge sharply from the accounts and interpretations of the biblical writers themselves. But at least the biblical record is sufficiently historical to serve the modern scholar as a constant point of depar-

ture and reference for his researches. By contrast, no such reconstruction would be possible if it had to depend, not on the Bible, but on the rabbinic sources that "retell" biblical history. This would be so even if everything the rabbis told were linked together and arranged into one continuous narrative parallel to the biblical sequence, as in Ginzberg's prodigious *Legends of the Jews*.[18]

More sobering and important is the fact that the history of the Talmudic period itself cannot be elicited from its own vast literature. Historical events of the first order are either not recorded at all, or else they are mentioned in so legendary or fragmentary a way as often to preclude even an elementary retrieval of what occurred.[19]

All this raises two distinct issues. One concerns what the rabbis actually accomplished, the other, what they did not undertake to do.

It is both unfair and misleading to burden the transmutations of biblical personalities and events in rabbinic aggadah with a demand for historicity irrelevant to their nature and purpose. Classical rabbinic literature was never intended as historiography, even in the biblical, let alone the modern, sense, and it cannot be understood through canons of criticism appropriate to history alone. Anachronism, for example, may be a serious flaw in historical writing; it is a legitimate feature of other, non-historical genres. There is no more point in asking of rabbinic aggadah that it hew closely to the biblical historical record than to try to divest the biblical figures in Renaissance paintings of their Florentine costumes, or to carp at MacLeish for presenting Job as "J. B." to a twentieth-century audience. The rabbis did not set out to write a history of the biblical period; they already possessed that. Instead, they were engrossed in an ongoing exploration of the meaning of the history bequeathed to them, striving to interpret it in living terms for their own and later generations.[20] Just as, in their exposition of biblical law, they explained the *lex talionis* as a principle of monetary compensation rather than a more "historical" eye-for-an-eye, so they were not content with merely historical patriarchs

and kings endowed with the obsolete traits of a dead past. This does not mean necesssarily that they were bereft of all sense of historical perspective. They were certainly not naive. Without having a term for it they occasionally showed themselves quite capable of recognizing an anachronism for what it was,[21] but they were also able somehow to sustain and reconcile historical contradictions that we, for that very reason, would find intolerable. I know of no more telling instance of the fusion of both tendencies than what is revealed in this remarkable Talmudic aggadah:

> Rabbi Judah said in the name of Rab: When Moses ascended on high [to receive the Torah] he found the Holy One, blessed be He, engaged in affixing *taggin* [crown-like flourishes] to the letters. Moses said: "Lord of the Universe, who stays Thy hand?" [i.e., is there anything lacking in the Torah so that these ornaments are necessary?] He replied: "There will arise a man at the end of many generations, Akiba ben Joseph by name, who will expound, upon each tittle, heaps and heaps of laws." "Lord of the Universe," said Moses, "permit me to see him." He replied: "Turn thee round."
>
> Moses went [into the academy of Rabbi Akiba] and sat down behind eight rows [of Akiba's disciples]. *Not being able to follow their arguments he was ill at ease*, but when they came to a certain subject and the disciples said to the master "Whence do you know it?" and the latter replied, "*It is a law given to Moses at Sinai*," he was comforted.[22]

That the whole of the Law, not only the written (*torah she-biketab*), but also the "oral" (*torah she-be'al peh*), had already been revealed to Moses at Sinai, was an axiom of rabbinic belief;[23] nevertheless, were Moses transported to a second-century classroom, he would hardly understand the legal discussions. In the world of aggadah both propositions can coexist in a meaningful equilibrium without appearing anomalous or illogical. Similarly, elements of biblical history can be telescoped into legendary dimensions with no intimation that either the past or the Bible has been compromised thereby. The historical record remains intact within an inviolate biblical text to which, in a perpetual oscillation,

the aggadic imagination must always return before its next flight. Meanwhile, however, any event can be retold and reinterpreted, sometimes simultaneously, in several different ways. Patently, by that very token the assumptions and hermeneutics of the rabbis were often antithetical to those of the historian, and generally remote from ours even when we are not historians.[24] But they were appropriate to their particular quest, which was equally far removed from our own.

A problem of a very different sort is posed by the meager attention accorded in rabbinic literature to post-biblical events. While we can accept the aggadic transfigurations of biblical history as forms of commentary and interpretation, we may still ask, tentatively at least, why the rabbis did not see fit to take up where biblical history broke off.

For the fact is that the rabbis neither wrote post-biblical history nor made any special effort to preserve what they may have known of the course of historical events in the ages immediately preceding them or in their own time. The two solitary works frequently trotted out to demonstrate the contrary need not detain us long. *Megillat Ta'anit*, the so-called "Scroll of Fasting," is not an attempt at historiography but a terse calendar of thirty-five half-holidays originating in the Hasmonean period and commemorating various historical events, most of them connected with the Maccabean wars.[25] Such a calendar was preserved purely for its practical ritual consequences, since on the days it enumerates one was not to declare a public fast (hence the curious title) nor mourn the dead. Significantly, it notes the day of the month on which the events occurred, but not the year. At best only the other work, the *Seder 'Olam* ("Order of the World")[26] attributed to the second-century Palestinian rabbi Jose ben Halafta, may qualify as a rudimentary sort of historical recording, but even then it remains the exception that confirms the rule. It is, in essence, a dry chronology of persons and events from Adam until Alexander the Great that hardly pauses for breath while relentlessly listing its succession of names and years. Apart from this, the attempts by some modern scholars

to find traces of historiography in the Talmudic period merely reflect a misplaced projection of their own concerns upon a reluctant past.[27]

Does this signify, as is so often alleged, that the rabbis were no longer interested in history? Surely not. Prophecy had ceased, but the rabbis regarded themselves as heirs to the prophets, and this was proper, for they had thoroughly assimilated the prophetic world-view and made it their own.[28] For them history was no less meaningful, their God no less the ultimate arbiter of historical destinies, their messianic hope no less fervent and absolute. But where the prophets themselves had been attuned to the interpretation of contemporary historical events, the rabbis are relatively silent about the events of their own time. In Talmudic and midrashic literature there are many interpretations of the meaning of history, but little desire to record current events. It is this characteristic concern for the larger configurations of history, coupled with indifference to its concrete particulars, that deserves some explanation.

We will state it as simply as possible. If the rabbis, wise men who had inherited a powerful historical tradition, were no longer interested in mundane history, this indicates nothing more than that they felt no need to cultivate it. Perhaps they already knew of history what they needed to know. Perhaps they were even wary of it.

For the rabbis the Bible was not only a repository of past history, but a revealed pattern of the whole of history, and they had learned their scriptures well. They knew that history has a purpose, the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, and that the Jewish people has a central role to play in the process. They were convinced that the covenant between God and Israel was eternal, though the Jews had often rebelled and suffered the consequences. Above all, they had learned from the Bible that the true pulse of history often beat beneath its manifest surfaces, an invisible history that was more real than what the world, deceived by the more strident outward rhythms of power, could recognize. Assyria had

been the instrument of divine wrath against Israel, even though Assyria had not realized it at the time. Jerusalem had fallen to Nebuchadnezzar, not because of Babylonian might, but because of Jerusalem's transgressions, and because God had allowed it to fall. Over against the triumphalism which was the conventional historical wisdom of the nations there loomed, as though in silent rebuke, the figure of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53.

Ironically, the very absence of historical writing among the rabbis may itself have been due in good measure to their total and unqualified absorption of the biblical interpretation of history. In its ensemble the biblical record seemed capable of illuminating every further historical contingency. No fundamentally new conception of history had to be forged in order to accommodate Rome, nor, for that matter, any of the other world empires that would arise subsequently. The catastrophe of the year 70 C.E. was due, like that of 586 B.C.E., to sin, although the rabbis were well aware that the nature of the sin had changed and was no longer one of idolatry.[29] The Roman triumph, like that of the earlier empires, would not endure forever:

> Rabbi Nahman opened his discourse with the text, *Therefore fear thou not, O Jacob My servant* (Jer. 30:10). This speaks of Jacob himself, of whom it is written, *And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set up on the earth . . . and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it* (Gen. 28:12). These angels, explained Rabbi Samuel ben Nahman, were the guardian Princes of the nations of the world. For Rabbi Samuel ben Nahman said: This verse teaches us that the Holy One, blessed be He, showed our father Jacob the Prince of Babylon ascending seventy rungs of the ladder, the Prince of Media fifty-two rungs, the Prince of Greece one hundred and eighty, while the Prince of Edom [i.e., Rome] ascended till Jacob did not know how many rungs. Thereupon our father Jacob was afraid. He thought: Is it possible that this one will never be brought down? Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to him: "*Fear thou not, O Jacob My servant.* Even if he ascend and sit down by Me, I will bring him down from there." Hence it is written, *Though thou make thy nest as high as the eagle, and though thou set it among the stars, I will bring thee down from thence* (Obad. 1:4).[30]

Destruction and redemption were dialectically linked. We are told: "On the day the Temple was destroyed the Messiah was born." Should you then, want to know where he is, here is one version:

> Rabbi Joshua ben Levi met Elijah standing by the entrance to the cave of Rabbi Simon bar Yohai . . . He asked him: "When will the Messiah come?"—He replied: "Go and ask him."—"And where is he sitting?"—"At the entrance to the city of Rome."—"And by what sign may he be recognized?"—"He is sitting among the poor lepers. But whereas they untie their bandages all at once and tie them back together, he unties and ties each separately, thinking: 'Perhaps I will be summoned. Let me not be delayed.' "
>
> Rabbi Joshua went to the Messiah and said to him: "Peace upon you, my master and teacher."—"Peace upon you, son of Levi," he replied.—He asked: "When will you come, master?"—He answered: "Today!"
>
> Rabbi Joshua returned to Elijah. The latter asked him: "What did he say to you?" . . . He replied: "He lied to me, for he said that he would come today, yet he has not come."—Elijah answered: "This is what he said to you—*Today, if ye would but hearken to His voice* (Ps. 95:7)."[31]

If, in these potent images, the history of the world empires is a Jacob's Ladder and the messiah sits unnoticed at the gates of Rome ready, sooner or later, to bring about her downfall, then the affairs of Rome may well appear inconsequential and ordinary historical knowledge superfluous. Whether, as R. Joshua found, the messianic advent is contingent upon Jewish repentance and obedience to God, or even if, as others claimed, it will take place independently, at the inscrutable initiative of the divine will, the question of what to do in the interim remained. Here the rabbis were

unanimous. In the interval between destruction and redemption the primary Jewish task was to respond finally and fully to the biblical challenge of becoming a holy people. And for them that meant the study and fulfillment of the written and oral law, the establishment of a Jewish society based fully on its precepts and ideals, and, where the future was concerned, trust, patience, and prayer.

Compared to these firm foundations contemporary history must have seemed a realm of shifting sands. The biblical past was known, the messianic future assured; the in-between-time was obscure. Then as now, history did not validate itself and reveal its meaning imminently. In the biblical period the meaning of specific historical events had been laid bare by the inner eye of prophecy, but that was no longer possible. If the rabbis were successors to the prophets they did not themselves lay claim to prophecy. The comings and goings of Roman procurators, the dynastic affairs of Roman emperors, the wars and conquests of Parthians and Sassanians, seemed to yield no new or useful insights beyond what was already known. Even the convolutions of the Hasmonean dynasty or the intrigues of Herodians—Jewish history after all—revealed nothing relevant and were largely ignored.[32]

Only messianic activism still had the capacity to revive and rivet attention on current historical events and even lead to direct action on the historical plane, but attempts to "hasten the end" became discredited out of bitter experience. Three tremendous uprisings against Rome, all with eschatological overtones, had ended in disaster and disillusion. In the second century, no less an authority than Rabbi Akiba could hail Bar Kochba, the military leader of the revolt of 132, as the Messiah. Thereafter the tendency to discourage and combat messianic activism in any form, already evident earlier, became a dominant characteristic of responsible rabbinic leadership for ages to come.[33] The faith of rabbinic Judaism in the coming of the Messiah remained unshaken; the time of his coming was left to heaven alone. R. Samuel bar Nahmani declared: "Blasted be those who calculate the end, for they say that

since the time has arrived and he has not come, he will never come. Rather—wait for him, as it is written: Though he tarry, wait for him. . . ."[34] The scrutiny of outward historical events for signs that the end of time was approaching remained largely the province of apocalyptic visionaries who continued to surface periodically throughout the centuries.

As for the sages themselves—they salvaged what they felt to be relevant to them, and that meant, in effect, what was relevant to the ongoing religious and communal (hence also the "national") life of the Jewish people. They did not preserve the political history of the Hasmoneans, but took note of the conflict between the Pharisees and Alexander Jannaeus.[35] They did not incorporate a consecutive history of the period of the Second Temple or its destruction, but they carefully wrote down the details of the Temple service, convinced of its eventual restoration.[36] They betrayed scant interest in the history of Rome, but they would not forget the persecution under the emperor Hadrian and the martyrdom of the scholars.[37] True, they also ignored the battles of the Maccabees in favor of the cruse of oil that burned for eight days, but their recognition of this particular miracle should not be passed over lightly. Hanukkah alone, be it noted, was a post-biblical Jewish holiday, and the miracle, unlike others, did not have behind it the weight of biblical authority. The very acceptance of such a miracle was therefore a reaffirmation of faith in the continuing intervention of God in history. Indeed, we may well ponder the audacity with which the rabbis fixed the formal Hanukkah benediction as: "Blessed be Thou O Lord our God . . . *who has commanded us* to kindle the Hanukkah light."[38]

I suspect, of course, that many moderns would rather have the Maccabees than the miracle. If so, that is assuredly a modern problem, and not that of the rabbis. They obviously felt they had all the history they required, and it will help us neither to applaud nor to deplore this. To continue to ask why they did not write post-biblical history or, as we shall yet see, why medieval Jews wrote so little, is somewhat reminiscent of those "educated" Indians who,

westernized under the benevolent auspices of the British Raj, are embarassed by the absence of historiography in their own tradition and cannot reconcile themselves to it.

We, I think, can afford to be less troubled. We can acknowledge serenely that in rabbinic Judaism, which was to permeate Jewish life the world over, historiography came to a long halt even while belief in the meaning of history remained. We can freely concede, moreover, that much in the rabbinic (and even the biblical) heritage inculcated patterns and habits of thought in later generations that were, from a modern point of view, if not anti-historical, then at least ahistorical. Yet these factors did not inhibit the transmission of a vital Jewish past from one generation to the next, and Judaism neither lost its link to history nor its fundamentally historical orientation. The difficulty in grasping this apparent incongruity lies in a poverty of language that forces us, *faute de mieux*, to apply the term "history" both to the sort of past with which we are concerned, and to that of Jewish tradition.

Some of the differences have already surfaced, others will become clearer as we go along, for what we have discussed thus far is only preparatory to what remains to be unravelled of our larger theme. The next lecture will focus on specific instances of how Jewish memory functioned in the Middle Ages. We will go on from there to examine the brief but significant renaissance of Jewish historical writing in the sixteenth century. Finally, we will marshal our accumulated resources to probe a phenomenon that is still very much with us—the unprecedented explosion of Jewish historiography in modern times.

2

THE MIDDLE AGES

Vessels and Vehicles of Jewish Memory

השלימות בעולם החדש, שנשתנה גם טבע היסודות ונחלש החומר הגס, והרוחניות גברה בארץ ומלואה, ורוח האדם עולה למעלה. בראשית ו, ט; ז, כא.

עיין עוד: ארבע תקופות.

מבוסה

השם 'מבוסה' מציין רמיסת עצם־מה, עד שנמאס ונתגעל על ידי הרמיסה כפגר מובס. והאויב, בעת יכבוש עיר, בוסס ודורך על חלליהם. ישעיהו כב, ה.

מבטח

השם 'מבטח', במ"ם הנוספת על השם 'בטח', מורה על הדבר שהוא סיבת הביטחון; למשל: הבוטח להשיג עזר על ידי שר פלוני — העזר הוא הביטחון, והשר הוא המבטח, שבו סיבת הביטחון. והבוטח בה' שיושיעהו על ידי אמצעים טבעיים, יבטח בה'; אבל ה'מבטח' שלו, רצוני לומר: הדבר שעל ידיו יושג בטחונו, אינו ה' אלא האמצעים הטבעיים שהוא מקווה שעל ידיהם יושיעהו. ואם יבטח בה' שיושיעהו בלא שום אמצעי כלל, אז גם ה'מבטח' שלו, רצוני לומר: הדבר שבו ישיג בטחונו, הוא גם כן ה'. ומזה הוא הכפל (ירמיה יז, ז): "ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח בה'" שיושיעהו, וגם "והי' ה' מבטחו" — שיושיעהו בלי שום אמצעי טבעי, וה' בעצמו הוא המבטח שלו. ירמיה ב, לז; יז, ז.

עיין עוד: בטח (א); בטח (ב).

מגור

'גור', מ'נחי עי"ן וא"ו', בא על הפחד והאסיפה (ו'גרה' מ'נחי למ"ד ה"א' בא על התגרות המלחמה). וכשהוא בא על הפחד, אינו מציין היראה אלא הכניסה, מה שמתכנס אל עצמו בסיבת היראה מהרע אשר יגיעהו: "לא תגורו מפני איש" (דברים א, יז), אמרו חז"ל (סנהדרין ו:): אל תכניסו דבריכם מפני איש. וכן 'גור' הבא על האסיפה, גדרו הוא שהוא מתאסף סביב אויבו עד שהוא מקיף אותו סביב. ומזה: "מגור מסביב" (ירמיה ו, כה) — הפחד והמגור כבר הוא מסביב לדירתכם בעיר, ומוכן האויב לבקוע העיר. ירמיה ו, כה.

עיין עוד: גור (א).

מגורה

השם 'מגורה', שרשו 'גור', מלשון אסיפה, ובא על מקום שמאספים בו תבואות השדה. 'ממגורה' בא בשתי הוספות (שתי ממי"ן נוספות), כמו: "מתלאה" (מלאכי א, יג). והוא קטן מן אוצר, שאוצר בו לזמן רב. (יואל א, יז): "נשמו אוצרות" — הגדולים; "נהרסו ממגורות" — הקטנות. יואל א, יז.

עיין עוד: אוצר.

מגיד, מבשר

ההבדל בין המגיד ובין המבשר, הוא: המגיד יגיד לפעמים דבר שאין לחבירו תועלת בידיעתו כל כך, ולפעמים הוא גם דבר ששמע במקרה מפי אחרים; והמבשר יכוון להודיע דבר שיש לחבירו תועלת, ובא לרוב על בשורה טובה ועל דבר שראה בעיניו. ש"ב ד, י.

עיין עוד: בשורה; מגיד, מספר.

מגיד, מספר

ההבדל שבין הגדה לסיפור, הוא: המגיד יגיד דבר חדש בכל הפרטים הנוגעים גם לחבירו לפעמים, והמספר

הוא רק סיפורי דברים בעלמא שאין בהם תועלת לשומע ואין נוגעים אליו כל כך. ובחלומות יוסף (בראשית לז, ה-ט) נאמר מתחילה "ויגד לאחיו", כי יוסף בצדקתו החזיק את אחיו לאוהבים שיפתרו חלומותיו לטובה; ובאשר שחלומו הי' נוגע לאחיו, הגידו להם כדבר שנוגע להם וצריך להם לדעתו. ואחר שראה אחר כך כי הוסיפו עוד שנוא אותו על ידי חלומו הראשון שהגיד להם בדרך הגדה, ורצה להוציא השנאה מליבם ולומר שהחלום הי' דבר בטל, והראיה — שחלם עוד חלום שהשמש השתחוה לו, שוודאי הוא דבר בטל, ועל זה אמר "ויספר אותו לאחיו" כסיפורי מעשיות בעלמא ודבר בטל שאין נוגע להם, וכמו כן הראשון דבר בטל.

תהלים (יט, ב): "השמים מספרים כבוד אל" בבריאתו כל גרמי השמים, כִּמספר דבר שכבר הי' לעולמים ואינו נוגע כל כך בהווה; אבל "הרקיע" — שהוא מקום הסגריר, עליית האדים, שמשם ירד המטר — "מגיד" בכל פעם דבר חדש בפלאי המטר שה' מכין לארץ בהשגחתו על עולמו בכל מקום ובכל מדינה לפי הזמן, שמזה נראה שהוא עדיין גם כן עוסק בבריאה ומחדש תמיד מעשה בראשית לקיום העולם בהווה בתמידות.

בראשית לז, ה; תהלים יט, ב.

מגילה

מגילה, שרשה 'גלל', מן ה'כפולים', ומציינת ספר העשוי להיות נגלל. "מגילה עפה" (זכריה ה, א-ב) היא שלא נגללה אז אלא נכפלה.

ישעיהו ה, א. עיין עוד: גליון.

מגן וצינה

המגן הוא בפני קשת וחץ, וצינה היא מפני חרב וחנית לבל יפגעו בבשרו, והיא מקיפה משלוש רוחות.

ירמיה מו, ג; תהלים לה, ב.

מד

השם 'מד', שרשו 'מדד', מעניין מידה. והוא נבדל מיתר השמות הבאים על הבגדים, במה ש'מד' מציין את הבגד המכוון למידת האדם, לא ארוך ולא קצר מגופו. "וילבֵּש שאול את דוד מדיו" (ש"א יז, לח), פירשו חז"ל (יבמות עו:) שהיו מכוונים למידת גופו; רצו לומר כי אחר כך (ש"א יז, לט) אמר: "ויחגור דוד את חרבו מעל למדיו" — מבואר שנעשתה מידתו של דוד כמידתו של שאול. "וילבַּש קללה כמַדו" (תהלים קט, יח) — כמידתו.

אילת השחר, תכז; ויקרא ו, ג-כ.

עיין עוד: בגד (א); לבוש; שמלה.

מדבר

במדבר ישנם שני מיני מקומות: א) מקומות שממה, שאין גדל בם שום צמח ושום שיח, ואין בהם יישוב ומדרך רגל, שמצד הטבע לא יתקיימו בם אנשים; כמו מדבריות החול, קאבא או זאמא, אשר באסיא, או מדבר המלח המחלק ארץ פרס לשתיים, או מדבר זיריא אשר בְּאראביען ודומיהם, והגדול שבהם הוא מדבר סהרה אשר באפריקא. ב) מדבר סתם — סטעפפען — אשר יחסרו בו יערות ואגמי מים, ובכל זאת הוא ארץ זרועה שגדילים שם פירות, אלא שהם קטנים ורזים מאוד מסיבת מיעוט האדים הלחים באויר, מחסרון מעיינות ונחלי