

Mia Anderssén-Löf

May He Speedily Come

A Comparative Study on Hardal and Haredi Understandings
of Exile and Redemption





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1. INTRODUCTION

This study compares two contemporary, ostensibly antithetical¹ Jewish perspectives, the *Hardal*² and the *Haredi*³. From the *Hardal* perspective the foremost challenge for the Jewish people, at the threshold of redemption, is to build the nation; to gather the exiles, to settle in *Eretz Yisrael* and – for some voices of the perspective – to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem. From the *Haredi* perspective the Jewish people is still in exile, which prohibits the forming of a sovereign Jewish state; therefore, the representatives of this perspective oppose the mere existence of the State of Israel. This study seeks to examine how these two streams of thought understand the theological concepts of

- 1) exile and redemption; what announces the shift from exile to redemption and can the shift be accelerated?
- 2) the *Shoah*; how is it interpreted in relation to the dynamics of exile and redemption?
- 3) the Messiah; how does his arrival relate to these dynamics, and can his arrival be accelerated?
- 4) the ingathering of the exiles; that is, should the Jewish people – under the present conditions – be encouraged to remain in the Diaspora or immigrate (make *aliyah*) to the State of Israel?
- 5) the Third Temple; should it be built as soon as possible, or should it be left to God to build it, through a miracle or an emissary (i.e. the Messiah)?

These themes are given a chapter each (Chpts. 2-6). In these chapters, the beliefs of the two perspectives will be analysed and compared. There is, however, a difference between the first theme and the other four; the understanding of exile and redemption provides a *theoretical framework* to which the *Shoah*, the Messiah, the State of Israel and the Third Temple

¹ Thus described by Menachem Friedman. Friedman 1989, 167.

² *Hardal*, a subcategory to Religious Zionism. See definitions and demarcations below.

³ *Haredi*, i.e. ultra-Orthodoxy. See definitions and demarcations below.

relate. The other four themes also involve concrete expressions binding them to a physical context. Therefore, they are less able to transcend place and time.

Most of these themes⁴ are “givens” when examining traditional apocalypticism; they often appear in the scholarly literature. Their prevalence in the apocalypticisms of the Hardal and Haredi Judaism becomes apparent *inter alia* in Aviezer Ravitzky’s *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism*. He notes, for instance, that Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the *Lubavitcher Rebbe*, “postponed the time of the *ingathering of the exiles* (1) until after the longed-for *appearance of the Messiah* (2) and the miraculous *reconstruction of the Temple* (3).”⁵

The *Shoah* (4), as this study will show, is a historical impulse that retrospectively has been read in an apocalyptic light. Thus, studying it alongside other themes of Jewish apocalypticism is warranted. For example, R. J. Zvi Werblowsky deems it “impossible, for most [Jews], to pass through apocalyptic events such as the Holocaust [...] without the stirring of messianic chords in their souls.”⁶ Another historical impulse that has retrospectively been rendered an apocalyptic meaning in both perspectives is the *founding of the State of Israel* (5), stirring a discussion on whether or not it is time for the Jewish people to return to *Eretz Yisrael*.

To study the ideotheologies of Hardal and Haredi Judaism appears at first a clear-cut, relatively confined inquiry. However, when digging into it an intricate theme unfolds. The ideotheological patchwork involves a rich biblical and rabbinical tradition, myths and narratives rooted in history

⁴ It could be argued that the demarcation overlooks other central aspects of Jewish apocalypticism, for example, the importance and meaning of *Clal Yisrael* (Heb. “the whole of Yisrael”, the Jewish community). I have chosen to limit this study to apocalyptic themes with concrete nodes in history (the *Shoah* and the establishment of the State of Israel), the present (the ingathering of the exiles) or in the future (the Messiah, the Temple). The concepts of exile and redemption percolate through the four, above-mentioned, and form the theoretical framework binding the apocalypticism together.

⁵ Ravitzky 1993, 174.

⁶ Werblowsky 2005, 5978.

and a psychosocial interplay, related to the contemporary socio-political situation. By studying the extreme ends of the Orthodox perspective, one can approach an understanding of the perspective as a whole; Dina Porat considers it “virtually impossible” to understand the attitude of the Orthodox without examining the views held by the more extreme among them.⁷

The theological patchwork is a product of an interpretative process. Characteristic of an interpretation is that it is not bound to perceive reality in any particular way, but rather argues for its perception in competition with other interpretations. All narratives contain historical references, but did history unfold the way the narrative relates it? Can it be validated? And if not, would that deprive the interpretation of its significance? Or does the true significance of a narrative or a myth lie in what it can tell us about what identity the interpretative community is building?⁸

The competition between interpretations is, thus, not one of coming closest to “the truth”, but one of being the most *convincing*. Different audiences have different standards against which they assess an interpretation. The audience might ask whether it is in line with earlier traditions – in this context, with classical, Jewish sources – or if present authorities support it. It might be measured against general logic, scientific research, or against how it is received by the international community. The audience may accept an argument, although it is not entirely convinced of its truthfulness, because of a strong need for an answer, a way forward. The audience may accept the argument solely because of its confidence in the interpreter. The audience might have been unaware of the question the argument addresses until it was presented with an interpretation of it, and hence, began to see it in a particular light – i.e. that offered by the interpretation. The audience might be inclined to accept a particular kind of argument. For example, a fearful audience tends to be more susceptible

⁷ Porat 1992, 724. Porat’s study approaches an understanding of Haredi anti-Zionism, particularly the accusations against Zionism relating to the *Shoah*.

⁸ Thus argues David Ohana 2012, 7.

to arguments that sustain and protect the social structure, as Douglas R. Oxley *et alii* conclude.⁹

Even when aware of the interpretive processes and the aspects influencing them, weighing between conflicting arguments is a challenge. An interpretation is not independent, but rather woven into a “web of significance”,¹⁰ a discourse, an argumentation. Innovative arguments are tried against those already accepted. To integrate a new thinking requires more mobility than to discard it; it seems there is a general inclination to favour an argument that fits more neatly into the existing web.¹¹ Due to this dynamic, a community tends to continue in the “ways of the fathers”, and tends to find ways to stretch and expand its webs of significance until it meets the challenges of the day. An example of this process is how the ideothology of the Hardalim found its way through the events of the 20th century and developed along the way.¹² The interpretative community, thus, does not approach an interpretation independently but relates it to a chain of tradition, a discourse. As Adam Hodges explains, discourse

does not simply reflect events that take place in the world. Discourse infuses events with meaning, establishes widespread social understandings, and constitutes social reality.¹³

⁹ Oxley et al 2008, 1667.

¹⁰ Max Weber describes culture as the “webs of significance” that man has spun; Clifford Geertz takes culture “to be those webs, and the analysis of it therefore not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning.” Geertz 1973, 5; Carroll & Daniel 2000, 154.

¹¹ See discussion below on *cognitive dissonance*, Chpt. 1.4.6.

¹² However, a community or individual is not predestined to continue the tradition it inherits; throughout history – and also among the two perspectives of this study – there are examples of groups and individuals breaking with their tradition or profoundly reshaping it, upon coming into contact with conflicting understandings. This does, however, require more from them and is therefore the less preferred approach when faced with conflicting interpretations. See discussion on *cognitive dissonance*, Chpt. 1.4.6.

¹³ Hodges 2011, 4-5.

This study examines the weaving of two webs in contemporary Judaism, with a particular interest in a specific thread used: biblical and rabbinical sources.

1.1. ON THE STUDY

This study is, hence, focused on 1) what is argued in the primary sources of the Hardalim and the Haredim and 2) how they strengthen their arguments by referencing biblical and rabbinical materials. It is also interested in 3) how historical impulses stir developments in religious discourse – how tension translates into religious interpretation.

To examine the five themes mentioned above through the lens of the two perspectives, this study will analyze two sets of primary materials. These materials comprise writings by theologians and organizations considered to be representatives of the two perspectives.¹⁴ Each chapter will begin with a brief review of central aspects of the theme in the understanding of traditional Judaism.¹⁵ The study will then proceed by presenting central components of the argumentations studied: first the arguments of the Hardal perspective, then the Haredi one. At the end of each chapter, there is a summary, and conclusions are drawn.

There is an imbalance between the two perspectives from the onset, stemming from their distance or proximity to traditional Judaism. The more an interpretation deviates from the conventional, the heavier it has to invest in its argumentation. Because of its innovative reinterpretations, the argumentation of the Hardal perspective has been met with both scepticism and harsh criticism; “Even today, its theological standing

¹⁴ See list and motivations in Chpt. 1.3.1.

¹⁵ How to define “traditional Judaism” is a discussion of its own; Mark I. Dunaevsky concludes that traditional Judaism might be a “we know it when we see it”-phenomenon; he nevertheless defines it as “that which bases its practices, or claims to base its practices, on juridical reasoning about Halakah from primary sources, including the Talmud; the Rishonim, medieval commentators who interpreted the Talmud; Shulhan Arukh, Joseph Karo’s sixteenth-century codification of Halakah and its commentaries; and later authoritative halakhic texts.” Dunaevsky 2012, 515.

within Judaism is shaky and problematic”, Baruch Kimmerling analyses.¹⁶ The Haredi perspective presents interpretations that often are well within the parameters of traditional Judaism. Therefore, this argumentation can concentrate more on “attack than defence”, so to speak. Consequently, it often takes on the form of a counter-argumentation. For this reason, the argumentation of the Hardal perspective is presented first in the chapters below.

1.2. DEFINITIONS AND DEMARCATIONS

Below I will place the Haredi and Hardal perspectives in their framework of Orthodox Judaism and in relation to Zionism. Biographical details and other particulars are assembled in relation to the themes throughout the study in the footnotes.

1.2.1. ORTHODOX JUDAISM

In 1795 Orthodoxy as a perspective in Judaism was identified as a contradistinction to other forms of Judaism which were emerging at the time.¹⁷ Nathaniel Katzburg defines the Orthodox as those who

accept as divinely inspired the totality of the historical religion of the Jewish people, as it is recorded in the Written and Oral Laws and codified in the *Shulhan Arukh* and its commentaries until recent times, and as it is observed in practice according to the teachings and unchanging principles of the *Halakhah*.¹⁸

He further sees the reluctance to conform to the “spirit of the time” as a feature of Orthodoxy. Instead, Orthodoxy perceives the revealed will of God as the ultimate standard, making it “utterly incompatible with the

¹⁶ Kimmerling 2001, 187.

¹⁷ The definition of a religious perspective as “orthodox” encompassed some problematic allusions. For example, in order for the term “orthodox” to propose something about its bearer, there must be a contrasting counterpart, another perspective being less “orthodox” or “unorthodox”. See discussion in Lundgren 2000, 46.

¹⁸ Katzburg 2007, 493; see also Liebman 2005, 6898.

entire thrust of normative Judaism”. Orthodox Judaism is by no means one consistent whole; there are variations so significant that Katzburg is concerned the “rapid polarization within the Orthodox camp seriously threatens to split the movement completely”.¹⁹ There is no universally accepted authority giving Orthodox Judaism one unified voice.²⁰

In a poll conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2014-2015, 8% of the Israeli population identify themselves as *Haredi* (ultra-Orthodox), 10% as *Dati* (religious) and 23% as *Masorti* (traditional). The two first-mentioned are considered to be Orthodox approaches.²¹

In the United States, Orthodox Jews make up about 10% of the Jewish population.²² Emanuel Rackman identifies three streams of Orthodox Jews: the ultra-Orthodox, the Orthodox and the Modern Orthodox. Also within these groups, there is “substantial diversity”, particularly concerning how to relate to the world outside the community.²³ Nathaniel Katzburg even sees the approach to the non-Orthodox world as the characteristic that most perceptibly distinguishes one Orthodox category from another.²⁴ Another distinctive characteristic of Orthodox Judaism is its propensity towards what a lion’s share of scholars identifies as *passive messianism*. This form of messianism, according to Robert Eisen, sees redemption as dependent upon the divine initiative, on which human beings have little influence.²⁵

1.2.2. HAREDI JUDAISM

Haredi Judaism is, thus, its own category within Orthodox Judaism. On the surface, the Haredi community might appear homogenous, but it

¹⁹ Katzburg 2007, 493.

²⁰ Rackman 2007, 498.

²¹ Pew Research Center 2016, www.pewforum.org/2016/03/08/israels-religiously-divided-society/, accessed 15.9.2017.

²² Heilman & Skolnik 2007, 348.

²³ Rackman 2007, 499.

²⁴ Katzburg 2007, 494.

²⁵ Eisen 2011, 147.

includes a “wide range of nuances”.²⁶ In spite of the fragmentation of the perspective, the Haredim nevertheless “share a psycho-social worldview.”²⁷ The term *Haredi* (Heb. “those who tremble [in fear of God]”) once referred to religious Jews in general, but today it usually refers to

the most extreme of Orthodox Jews who, although they have changed over time, claim to have made no compromises with contemporary secular culture or essential changes in the way they practice their Judaism from what the tradition and *halakhah* have sanctified throughout the ages.²⁸

Marshall Berger observes that the term Orthodoxy may in fact have come to denote Haredi Orthodoxy.²⁹ Characteristic of this perspective is the (hostile) perception of the world as seeking to undermine their attachments to tradition:

They see themselves as an often lonely force endlessly combating obstacles, convinced that catastrophes of existence come as the inevitable culmination of past choices and experiences, which most contemporary members of secular society have made and had. [...] They consider their lives as a service to God and Jewish tradition and the only true merit that which is prescribed by the Torah and its accepted rabbinic interpretations.³⁰

A shared feature is an antipathy for secularism. In spite of this, there is ferocious tension and rivalry between the two communities, arising from doctrinal differences, competition for money and living space, personal competitiveness and differences in approaches to Zionism.³¹ The Haredim often formally organize into a) *Hasidim*, who are organized around a *rebbe* and b) *Bnei yeshivah*, who are centred around an academy of Jewish

²⁶ Inbari 2007, 106.

²⁷ Heilman & Skolnik 2007, 349.

²⁸ Heilman & Skolnik 2007, 349.

²⁹ Berger 2010, 356.

³⁰ Heilman & Skolnik 2007, 349.

³¹ Friedland & Hecht 2000, 78.

learning and its *rosh yeshivah*.³² These institutions are relatively independent of one another. Most of the Haredim are associated with *Satmar Hasidism*³³; although the Satmar group is “smaller in number”, it has had “an impact on the character of Hasidic life”.³⁴

1.2.3. ZIONISM AND RELIGIOUS ZIONISM

Zionism as a modern, political ideology has been contributed to Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), who argued that anti-Semitism is a chronic problem that eventually will lead to the annihilation of the Jewish people. The only solution for the Jewish people, in Herzl’s opinion, was for the people to find a safe haven in a national home of its own. The Zionist movement was officially formed in 1897, at the World Zionist Congress in Basel.³⁵ There were “always two schools of thought” in Zionism regarding its *raison d’être*. According to Ze’ev Sternell the *liberal* or *utilitarian* school saw in the State of Israel a solution to the political and financial insecurity of the European Jewry, while the *ideological* school perceived the same process as “a culmination of Jewish history and the rescue of the nation as a historical entity”.³⁶

³² This structure also appears, in some measure, among the national-religious ultra-Orthodox, that is, the Hardalim – which may attest to the “desired proximity” of the Hardal to the Haredim, which Nadav G. Shelef notes. Shelef 2010, 182. – The categorization between the Hasidim and the Bnei Yeshivah is not, however, categorical; there are also, for example, Hasidic Yeshivot.

³³ *Hasidism* is a Jewish pietistic movement originating from Eastern Europe. See Sagiv 2012, 277-290. R. Yoel Teitelbaum (1887-1979) was the *admor* (acronym for master, teacher and rebbe) of Satmar Hasidism. He produced the “theologically best-argued” anti-Zionist tract, *Vayoel Moshe*, in the late 1950’s. After his passing, he was succeeded by his nephew, R. Moshe Teitelbaum. Porat 1992, 699.

³⁴ Satmar Hasidism is “smaller in number” compared to other Hasidic courts, such as the Gerrer Hasidism – which probably is the most numerous in Israel – the Belzers, Wizhnitzers and Lubavitchers. Heilman & Skolnik 2007, 348-349.

³⁵ Boyer 1992, 186. Boyer argues that the prophecy belief in England and America contributed in laying the “intellectual groundwork” for the Zionist movement. See also Kippenberg 2000, 333-338.

³⁶ Sternhell 1998, 51.

Although modern, political Zionism was initially a secular movement, a clear-cut separation of “the secular” and “the religious” is bound to remain theoretical. Scott R. Appleby notes that the relationship between the two is nowadays seen as “more intimate, overlapping and mutually transformative than previously understood”.³⁷ Reuven Firestone argues, “Even secular Zionism, as a neomessianic movement, is in some way ‘religious’.”³⁸ According to David Vital, the overall ideology of Zionism was developed in retrospect:

The Zionists, it may be said, articulated their doctrine by stages, by trial and error, by periodic debate on matters of practical policy in so far as, and provided that, these forced them to consider fundamentals [...] It is not surprising, therefore, that so far as doctrine is concerned, Zionism presents a patchy and unsystematic appearance.³⁹

Baruch Kimmerling makes the interesting conclusion that the combination of national home and holy land conveyed a potential that “quickly became apparent to the secular visionaries”; Kimmerling argues that the “territorial goal was forced on them, in practice, because the ‘Land of Israel’ was the only territorial space that from the start had a value and an emotional attachment among a critical mass of Jews.” In other words, Palestine was chosen among the alternatives because of its connotations to religion and tradition, which were the only components that had the potency to mobilize the crowd.⁴⁰

Religious Zionism, then, is a branch of Zionism explicitly motivating Zionism by religious arguments, although, as discussed above, “secular Zionism” might not be so secular either. In religious Zionism, nationalism, politics and religion are intertwined, as its slogan reveals: “the Land of Israel for the People of Israel according to the Torah of Israel”.⁴¹ The

³⁷ Appleby 2000, 4; Gadi 2010, 37.

³⁸ Firestone 2006, 964.

³⁹ Vital 1989, 348-349.

⁴⁰ Kimmerling 2001, 188-189.

⁴¹ Cohen & Kampinsky 2006, 120. Lilly Weissbrod apparently refers to the same segment as “new Zionism”, which she describes as “a partially secularized version of the modern

framework for this ideotheology can be traced back to R. Tzvi Hirsch Kalisher (1795–1874) and R. Yehuda Schlomo Hai Alkalai (1798-1878), two visionaries, retrospectively considered proto-Zionist. They argued that the messianic process involves *both* a rational development towards a national existence *and* a divine intervention.⁴² Charles Liebman stresses that the ideology of religious Zionism “is more than the total of religion plus Zionism.”⁴³

Gadi Taub sees the relationship between religious and secular Zionism as “complicated from the very beginning”.⁴⁴ It has contributed to the evolving state and to the national identity by consolidating “new ethical and traditional values”, as Simone Ricca formulates it; religious Zionism affirmed the belief that the establishment of the State of Israel, and its subsequent history, reflected the will of God in a special way. The developments signalled the beginning of the promised redemption and attributed the State a unique, religious significance.⁴⁵

Dov Schwartz argues that religious Zionism cannot accept an interpretation of the national awakening of the Jewish people in strictly secular terms; “it cannot tolerate the concrete existence of secularization in the people’s renaissance”.⁴⁶ The mutual aid between secular and religious Zionism was beneficial to both parties; Robert Eisen remarks that the potency of religious Zionism today is due to the assistance it received from secular Zionism in its formative stage.⁴⁷ Similarly, Ze’ev Sternhell states

religious fundamentalist doctrine of Gush Emunim which reasserts the absolute right of Jews to the entire land, based on the Bible and later Jewish religious texts.” Weissbrod reports a “relatively quick acceptance of ‘New Zionism’ as the new Israeli identity”; one of the reasons why “new Zionism” quickly gained momentum was the need for a justification to holding on to the territories taken in 1967, as the State of Israel “obviously no longer practiced distributive justice”. Weissbrod 1997, 49.

⁴² Fishman & Mordechai 2011, 620.

⁴³ Cohen & Liebman 1997, 39.

⁴⁴ Taub 2010, 37.

⁴⁵ Ricca 2007, 29.

⁴⁶ Schwartz 2002, 185-186.

⁴⁷ Eisen 2011, 5.

that religion provided both justification and legitimization to the Zionist project:

It may be said that the religiohistorical element as a focus of national identity had even greater importance in Zionism than in any other national movement. In the final analysis, it was religion in the broadest sense, with all its national and historical connotations, that provided the justification for the conquest of the country and the legitimization of Jews' return.⁴⁸

Ideologically, Baruch Kimmerling analyses that religious Zionism has had to overcome difficult intellectual obstacles to be able to combine Judaism with Zionism. This may explain why it took time for the perspective to blossom:

Still, the religious-national mixture was a relatively marginal phenomenon, which demanded very great intellectual interpretive and re-interpretative efforts. Even today, its theological standing within Judaism is shaky and problematic.⁴⁹

Aryei Fishman and Mordechai Inbari see the development of religious Zionism as threefold. The first stage (1) began in 1902 when a group known as the Mizrahi became part of the World Zionist Organisation. This development is perceived as the formation of religious Zionism as a separate perspective.⁵⁰ In the second stage (2), the worker's party Ha-Po'el ha-Mizrahi was formed.⁵¹ The third stage (3) was dominated by the emergence of Gush Emunim,⁵² for which *Mercaz Harav Yeshiva* was the ideological cradle.⁵³ Yehudah Mirsky summarises the ideology as "a

⁴⁸ Sternhell 1998, 57.

⁴⁹ Kimmerling 2001, 187.

⁵⁰ Fishman & Mordechai 2011, 620. See also Schwartz 2009, vii; Cohen & Kampinsky 2006, 120.

⁵¹ Fishman & Mordechai 2011, 620.

⁵² Gush Emunim was founded on the West Bank in April 1974, to be a non-partisan, extra-parliamentary organization to advance "the Zionism of Redemption". Its credo includes the conviction that the final redemption will come when all the land west of the Jordan River becomes part of the State of Israel. The teachings of R. Abraham Y. Kook provide its "intellectual and spiritual basis". Lustick 1988, 32, 45; Shiloah & Newman 2007, 143-145.

⁵³ haCohen 2007, 630; Feige 2009, 24; Lustick 1988, 32.

mixture of religious fervor, Rav [Abraham Y.] Kook's messianism, the classic Zionist can-do ethos, and the romance of a revolutionary avant-garde".⁵⁴

Religious Zionists, according to Robert Eisen, have been "consistent in their unwillingness to admit their modernism"; they maintain this self-deception by "justifying their thinking on the basis of ideas and text drawn from the tradition, as if their values have always been those of Judaism."⁵⁵

1.2.4. HARDAL JUDAISM

Hardal is an acronym for *Haredi dati leumi*, ("nationalist ultra-Orthodox"), which is characterized by "religious observance in the Haredi style combined with an uncompromising nationalist position as developed by the leaders of Mercaz Harav Yeshiva."⁵⁶ Artur Hertzberg notes that religious Zionists stemming from the Kookist circles are "radically different from any group that has emerged within modern Zionism", in that they "seem Westernized", but they "think in biblical categories", simultaneously modern and traditional.⁵⁷ Asher Arian perceives the term *Hardal* as capturing the process whereby "national religious Jews grew closer to the Haredim in their religious observance".⁵⁸

The messianism of the Hardalim is, in most scholarship, understood as *active*. This is, according to Robert Eisen's definition, expressed in a conviction that they "must take action when they perceive that the messianic process has started in order that the process may come to

⁵⁴ Mirsky 2014, 227; Sacks 1992, 69; Sharot 1982, 226-227.

⁵⁵ Eisen 2011, 183-184.

⁵⁶ Shelef 2010, 183. See also Cohen & Kampinsky 2006, 120. Mercaz Harav is the "leading religious institution" within the religious Zionist community.⁵⁶ Mercaz Harav emerged as "a unique Orthodox school", involving strict observance of halakha, but also a positive attitude towards modernity and a desire to participate fully in building the state of Israel. The school was "enormously boosted" by the Six Day War in 1967. Sprinzak 1998, 118-119; Inbari 2009, 9.

⁵⁷ Hertzberg 1986, 89; Cohen & Kaminsky 2006, 120.

⁵⁸ Arian 2009, 80.

fruition". For some representatives, this apocalyptic motive is more tangible, whereas for others it is subtler.⁵⁹

The usage of the term *Hardal* fluctuates somewhat in the scholarly discourse. Yoel Cohen depicts *Hardal* as a stricter stream of the mainstream Modern Orthodoxy, a combination of "Haredi separatist view towards modern culture but a nationalist or *leumi* view towards nationalism and the Zionist state".⁶⁰ On the other hand, Cohen distinguishes between *hardal* and *dati leumi* (national religious), which he sees as a synonym for modern Orthodox.⁶¹ This study adheres to the definition of Nadav G. Shelef, according to which the stringent religious observance and the ideotheological influence of the *Mercaz Harav Yeshiva* are typical of the *Hardalim*.⁶² When describing the contemporary *Hardal* on an organizational level, Shelef mentions organizations stemming from groups such as *Kach* and *Gush Emunim*, among others the contemporary *Manhigut Yehudit* and *Zo Artzeneinu*.⁶³ However, one should bear in mind that this perspective is a loose structure, both socially and theologically:

It is likely that the followers and sympathizers of both *Gush Emunim* and other Jewish fundamentalist parties are connected (each within its own movement) in a social network that has particular nodes in religious schools, cooperative and collective settlements, parties and political lobbies [...]⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Eisen 2013, 147. However, Nadav G. Shelef notes an ongoing "haredization" of the *Hardal* perspective, with an increasing emphasis on religious authorities and religious argumentation. Shelef 2010, 182.

⁶⁰ Cohen 2014, 62; 96; 100; 141.

⁶¹ Cohen 2014, 151.

⁶² Shelef 2010, 181.

⁶³ Shelef 2010, 181-182.

⁶⁴ Antoun 2001, 25-26. Furthermore, terminology tends to convey problems. For example, the terms "religious Zionism", "secular Zionism" and "Orthodox Judaism" are all *per se* comparative; "religious Zionism" implies that there is a Zionism completely devoid of religion, although – as Scott R. Appleby notes – recent scholarship tends to view the relationship between the secular and the religious as "more intimate, overlapping and mutually transformative than previously understood", and Reuven Firestone argues that

1.2.5. INTERCHANGE BETWEEN THE HARDALIM AND THE HAREDIM

The two perspectives studied here also influence each other. For example, as Baruch Kimmerling notes the appearance of Zionism “forced the great and mighty camp of the *haredim* to organize politically, too”.⁶⁵ Nadav G. Shelef argues that religious Zionism has shifted from its closeness to secular Zionism – which turned out to be a misguided attempt at cooperation – to a “growing social, cultural and theological closeness” with the Haredi world:

The decreasing cultural gap between religious Zionism and the ultra-Orthodox world symbolized by the Hardal is evident primarily, though not exclusively, in the growing religious radicalization of the Religious Zionist movement. This increased religious fanaticism was not limited to the margins of the movement but was spearheaded by the graduates of the Merkaz Harav Yeshiva.⁶⁶

A noteworthy development after the Oslo Accords, as Shelef notes, has been the growth of the *Hardal*, both numerously and theologically. The tendency towards a “Haredization” within the perspective is characterized by, for example, the role of the rabbi being enhanced while the role of the political leadership is diminished; the Hardalim are taking on Haredi attributes, including dress codes and other social markers.⁶⁷ Michele Rosenthal and Rikva Ribak perceive the degree of restrictiveness in the interpretations of religious observance as the distinguishing factor between the Hardal faction and the “new National Religious” Jew.⁶⁸

“even secular Zionism, as a neomessianic movement, is in some way “religious”. In a similar way, the term “Orthodox Judaism” stirs the question of what constitutes un-Orthodox Judaism. See Appleby 2000, 4; Gadi 2010, 37; Firestone 2006, 964.

⁶⁵ Kimmerling 2001, 188.

⁶⁶ Shelef 2010, 183.

⁶⁷ Shelef 2010, 183.

⁶⁸ The “new National Religious” Jews are distinguished from the Hardalim by their more liberal interpretations of modesty. For example, their children attend elementary schools that are not gender-segregated, they prioritize living in harmony with the secular Israeli society, women may wear trousers and may choose not to cover their heads after marriage. Rosenthal & Ribak 2015, 151.

Furthermore, the degree of restrictiveness in the interpretations of religious observance in the Hardal faction was formerly only associated with the Haredi community. The Hardal women observe stricter interpretations of modesty (for example regarding shirt and sleeve lengths and head covering), and the children attend sex-segregated education and youth groups from as early as elementary school.⁶⁹

David Lehmann reflects that the “haredization” among the religious nationalists brought the Haredi culture “out of its ghettos” into new arenas. Therefore, Haredi Judaism is no longer confined and restricted to exclusive spheres, but is becoming increasingly prevalent and diverse:

The haredi culture of ultra-Orthodoxy has influenced and been adopted by religious nationalists, who, despite their relatively small number, have become leading – but not the only – driving force of the country’s political agenda. Ultra-Orthodoxy, once restricted to well-defined institutional and physical spaces, has broken out of its ghetto, and its habits and ways of thought are being strengthened by ‘returnees’, or newly religious, as well as fragmented and reassembled and disseminated in the broad-based culture of religious nationalism with its permanently mobilized vanguard.⁷⁰

In 1996, David Singer reported that a “fierce struggle was being waged for the control of the religious and intellectual legacy” between two groups of the religious-Zionist perspective. Competing for the interpretative precedence was a liberal element, emphasizing the universal and tolerant feature of the Kookist ideotheology, and a much larger group, which instead saw R. Kook as “the messianic Zionist supreme-dreamer of a reborn Jewish state, believer in the imminence of the final redemption, and upholder of the Jewish people’s right to the whole of the Biblical land of Israel”:

Standing on the outside of this debate – and no doubt wishing a plague on both groups – are Israel’s ultra-Orthodox Jews, the *haredim*, who

⁶⁹ Rosenthal & Ribak 2015, 151.

⁷⁰ Lehmann 2012, 1031.

regard both modernity and Zionism as heresies to be resisted, and who therefore reject both versions of Rav Kook's teachings.⁷¹

These categories of Hardal and Haredi Judaism elude scientific precision, as some are both subjective and relative, for example, the category "traditional". Even comparatively defined categories, such as "Haredi", may also be indistinct; for example, R. Shlomo Aviner perceives both R. Abraham Y. Kook and R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook as "more Haredi than the Haredim",⁷² even though both were ideologues of religious Zionism. In spite of the difficulties in acquiring reliable, statistical data of the field, the *Pew Research Report* demonstrates that the two perspectives studied here are not insignificant in the Israeli society.⁷³ Aviezer Ravitzky notes that extremist elements tend to have "an influence far beyond the circle of their own followers"; therefore, numbers and influence may be disproportionate.⁷⁴

1.3. MATERIALS

1.3.1. PRIMARY MATERIALS

To complete the picture of both the belief system and *modus operandi* of the Hardalim, it has been necessary to involve multiple voices of the perspective: firstly (1), R. Abraham Yitzhak haCohen Kook (1865-1935) and R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook (1891-1982); secondly (2), R. Yisrael Ariel (1939-) of the Temple Institute; thirdly (3), the spokesperson of the Jewish Community in Hebron, David Wilder (1954-), and fourthly (4), R. Shlomo Aviner (1943-), the rosh yeshiva of *Ateret Yerushalaim* (formerly *Ateret Cohanim*).

⁷¹ Singer 1996, 6.

⁷² www.ravaviner.com/2014/12/was-maran-ha-rav-kook-charedi.html, 7.4.2017.

⁷³ This study is not geographically limited to the Israeli context.

⁷⁴ Ravitzky 1993, 60.

R. Abraham Y. Kook was elected Chief Rabbi of Jaffa in 1904, and Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Palestine from 1921 until his death;⁷⁵ he was an “example of the Jewish mystical tradition in its pure form”, whose thought “differs sharply from that of classic Jewish theologians”, according to Ben Zion Bokser.⁷⁶ David Singer notes that his theological trajectory is not easily explored. A substantial part of his teachings exist only as unpublished manuscripts, and much of the materials accessible today were not compiled by R. Abraham Y. Kook himself, but by his disciples, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook and R. David Cohen. These compilations also stretch over time.⁷⁷ Recently, R. Chanan Morrison published three compilations of R. Abraham Kook’s writings as an English translation.⁷⁸ Also, Yehuda Mirsky recently translated R. Abraham Kook’s work *Orot*. The mysticism of the rabbi is not easily deciphered; in Singer’s opinion, these “kabbalistically-coded texts” demand “expert knowledge of the conceptual underpinnings and terminology of Jewish mysticism”.⁷⁹ Benjamin Ish-Shalom considers the writings of R. Abraham Kook a “unique phenomenon in the history of Jewish thought”, which “even for the scholarly and experienced reader [...] often seem impenetrable and strange both in content and form”.⁸⁰ He was particularly influential in “challenging the rejection of Zionism by the majority of Orthodox Jews”⁸¹ – David Ohana assesses him to be “the leading figure of the generation”.⁸²

⁷⁵ Biale 2005, 9981; Singer 1996, 7.

⁷⁶ Bokser 1978, 2-3.

⁷⁷ Singer 1996, 7.

⁷⁸ These compilations were published in 2007, 2010 and 2013, of which the first two (Gold from the Land of Israel: A New Light on the Weekly Torah Portions from the Writings of Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaKohen Kook and Silver from the Land of Israel: A New Light on the Sabbath and Holidays from the Writings of Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaKohen Kook) are published by Urim Publications, the last (Sapphire from the Land of Israel: A New Light on the Weekly Torah Portions from the Writings of Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaKohen Kook) by a self-publishing company, CreateSpace.

⁷⁹ Singer 1996, 8.

⁸⁰ Ish-Shalom 1993, xi.

⁸¹ Jones 1997, 30.

⁸² Ohana 2010, 70.

After the passing of R. Abraham Y. Kook, his son, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook became the mentor of the perspective until his death in 1982.⁸³ He too was a charismatic figure who “succeeded in channelling the energy of a generation of enormously talented young people to engage in militant activism for the settlement-conquest of the Land of Israel”.⁸⁴ Reflecting upon the differences between father and son, Robert Eisen contributes the radical and violent tendency of religious Zionism to the younger, and concludes that “there was no real precedent for using Kabbalistic thinking in this way.”⁸⁵ Yehuda Mirsky regrets that R. Abraham Y. Kook’s “seamless balance” of maintaining the religious charge while integrating the secular realms “was undone” by R. Tzvi Yehuda.⁸⁶

Retroactively, the halo surrounding R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook seems to be growing stronger. In the foreword to the compilation of his teachings, issued in 1991, R. Tzvi Yehuda’s disciple, R. Shlomo Aviner describes him as a *Tzaddik*, “a man whose life essence is ethical, spiritual, and *Kadosh* [Holy]”, “filled and surrounded with Torah”. R. Aviner compares R. Kook’s humility and grace to that of King David’s, and perceives R. Kook as “a Tzaddik of the nation”;

No one is bold enough to think he can properly describe Rav Tzvi Yehuda, our teacher, or to understand even a little of his stature. But to be silent is also forbidden. [...] These Tzaddikim are unique. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, z”tl, and Rav Tzvi Yehuda, his son, are the Tzaddikim of the redemption. The spirit of Hashem, which hovers over the world, and directs all of our history, is embodied in their souls.⁸⁷

As a primary material from the Hardal perspective, I will be referring firstly (1) to a R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook’s speech on Yom Ha’Atzmaut of 1967,

⁸³ Ravitzky 1993, 79.

⁸⁴ Firestone 2012, 278.

⁸⁵ Eisen 2011, 183-184.

⁸⁶ Mirsky 2014, 237.

⁸⁷ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, xv-xvi.

which became “a central part of the Gush Emunim mythology”,⁸⁸ as well as (2) the compilation of his teachings: *Torat Eretz Yisrael: Teachings of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook*, edited by R. Shlomo Aviner with commentary by R. David Samson. The compilation contains transcripts of recordings of the teachings of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, first published in Hebrew. Tzvi Fishman translated it to English in 1991, in order to make the “clear illumination of our relationship to Torah, to *Am Yisrael* and to *Eretz Yisrael* available to the broad Anglo-Saxon community”.⁸⁹ The *rosh yeshiva* of *Mercav Harav*, R. Avraham Elkanah Kahana Shapira acknowledges R. Samson as a student in the *Yeshiva* under “the personal tutelage” of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, under whom he “absorbed in a close and intimate fashion, an encompassing understanding of the teachings of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda’s father, HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, ZT”L, the Rabbi of all *Bnei Yisrael*”.⁹⁰ R. Shapira relates that *Torat Eretz Yisrael* was received “with great enthusiasm by our English-speaking brethren”. Thirdly, (3), in 1996, Samson & Fishman published a translation of the first chapter of R. Abraham Y. Kook’s principal work *Orot* under the title *Eretz Yisrael: The Teachings of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook*, which R. Shapira endorses as “an even more magnified manner” of raising the banner of the Torah, and praises the authors for achieving “a great deed in making the deep Torah understandings and philosophies of Rabbi Kook available in a clear and insightful fashion to the remnant of our nation in the Diaspora.”⁹¹ This study also regards Yehuda Mirsky’s translation of *Orot* (2014) as a primary material.

These works, *Eretz Yisrael*, *Orot* and *Torat Eretz Yisrael* are examined as primary materials in this study. Despite the fact that these works are compilations and translations – and thus have undergone several editorial phases since these teachings were first uttered by the sources themselves – this study accepts them as primary, for three reasons. Firstly, neither of

⁸⁸ Paine 1995, 10-11.

⁸⁹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, xiii.

⁹⁰ Samson & Fishman 1996, ix.

⁹¹ Samson & Fishman 1996, ix-x.

the Kook rabbis put much of their teachings into print, and thus, to approach the Kookist ideotheology, one is forced to turn materials that are, to some degree, secondary. Secondly, the *Mercaz Harav Yeshiva* and its *rosh yeshiva*, R. Shapira, recognize these works, which is an indication of their reliability. Thirdly, for the purpose of this study, which is a study of the Hardal and Haredi understanding of exile and redemption, it is sufficient that these sources predominantly reflect the teachings of the two influential Kook Rabbis, and moreover, to an indefinable degree, are influenced by the interpretations of authors.

To illustrate how the Kookist ideotheology plays out in a contemporary setting, I will refer to (4) the material published by David Wilder, spokesman for the Jewish community in Hebron. He has recently published a compilation of his blog posts: *Hebron Chronicles: Blessings from Hebron 1995-2014*.⁹² His blog is also available on several websites.⁹³ Wilder refers to R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook as “our beloved teacher”⁹⁴ and declares that the community is committed to the path laid out by the Kook Rabbis, who were “the guiding lights of religious Zionism and our return to *Eretz Yisrael*.”⁹⁵

Dedicated to rebuilding the Temple of Jerusalem is the *Temple Institute*. I will be referring to (5) its publications and website materials. The Temple Institute is presented in this study because of its explicit goal of accelerating redemption by rebuilding the Temple. R. Ariel Yisrael, who founded and leads the Institute, was also a student of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook.⁹⁶ However, as both Kooks discarded the idea of even entering the

⁹² www.hebron.com/english/data/downloads/hcbook.pdf, accessed 29.3.2017.

⁹³ www.jpost.com/Blogger/David-Wilder, *inter alia*, accessed 29.3.2017.

⁹⁴ Wilder 2013, 73. Friday, December 15, 1995: “Hanukkah – Hebron Today”

⁹⁵ Wilder 2013, 253. Monday, August 24, 1998: “A Guiding Light – Rabbi Shlomo Ra’anan ZT”L HY”D”. R. Shlomo Ra’anan, mentioned here, is the late grandson of R. Abraham Y. Kook. He was killed in his home in Tel Rumeida, a neighborhood in Hebron, in 1998.

⁹⁶ Sprinzak 1991, 261-263; Inbari 2009, 9.

Temple Mount, the Temple Institute does not directly derive its arguments from them – but possibly indirectly.

R. Shlomo Aviner is the compiler and editor of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook's *Torat Eretz Yisrael*; he is also a disciple of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook and is the *rosh yeshiva* of *Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalaim*. He maintains (6) the blog *Torat HaRav Aviner*⁹⁷, which will be referred to as a primary material.

The Haredi perspective is represented in this study by the two organizations *True Torah Jews Against Zionism* (JAZ) and *Neturei Karta* (NK). Both these groups define themselves as Orthodox Jews, although they are generally referred to as ultra-Orthodox or *Haredim*.⁹⁸ JAZ presents itself as a “Satmar Chassidic group”.⁹⁹ Dina Porat describes the Satmar Hassidim as “the most fanatical”, led by R. Moshe Teitelbaum (1914–2006)¹⁰⁰ from Williamsburg, New York, but with adherents in both USA and Europe:

By fanaticism, we mean here not only a strict and uncompromising observance of all the commandments, no matter how insignificant, but also the greatest possible detachment from the Israeli state and its institutions, as well as any opposition to them.¹⁰¹

NK parted ways with Agudat Israel in the late 1930s in Jerusalem. It sees the establishment of a secular state for the Jewish people as a betrayal of the Jewish faith and therefore rejects the State of Israel.¹⁰² The two most prominent rabbis of NK were R. Yoel Teitelbaum of Satmar (1888–1979)¹⁰³

⁹⁷ www.ravaviner.com, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁹⁸ Friedman 2007, 114; Friedman & Derovan 2007, 742; Rubinstein 2007, 582.

⁹⁹ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/canada, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹⁰⁰ R. Moshe Teitelbaum is the nephew of R. Yoel Teitelbaum, frequently referred to by NK. www.truetorahjews.org/berachmoshe, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹⁰¹ Porat 1992, 697.

¹⁰² Friedman 2007, 114. After the Six Day War in 1967, Agudat Israel drew the conclusion that although the State of Israel was not to be considered an expression of redemption, it could be an expression of *atchalta degeula*, the beginning of redemption. Porat 1992, 697.

¹⁰³ Rubinstein 2007, 582.

and R. Amram Blau (1894–1974).¹⁰⁴ Presently, R. Yisroel D. Weiss is its international spokesperson.¹⁰⁵ NK defines itself as

a group of Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem who refused (and still refuse) to recognize the existence or authority of the so-called "State of Israel" and made (and still make) a point of publicly demonstrating their position, the position of the Torah and authentic unadulterated Judaism.¹⁰⁶

NK states that many of its adherents emigrated from the State of Israel because of their “ideological refusal to live under the illegitimate heretical regime”, their “being exiled by the Zionist government for their insistence on remaining independent” or “being unable to live a normal family life due to them and their families being persistently harassed, repeatedly incarcerated and many times even physically tortured by the Zionist police and agents”. Because of the emigration of its adherents, NK established itself internationally. Today, NK manages synagogues in Brooklyn, Boro Park and Williamsburg, administers the organization *Friends of Jerusalem* in New York, and operates educational institutions and publishing houses.¹⁰⁷

Menachem Friedman describes NK as “ultra-religious extremist”¹⁰⁸ and an “ultra-Orthodox sect”¹⁰⁹; Rubenstein describes them as “ultra-Orthodox”.¹¹⁰ Motti Inbari categorizes NK as belonging to the “most conservative” fraction, descending – in its own understanding – from the *Old Yishuv*.¹¹¹ NK itself rejects definitions along the line of “extremist” or “ultra” because it does not accept it has made any additions or

¹⁰⁴ Friedman & Derovan 2007, 742.

¹⁰⁵ www.nkusa.org/activities/Demonstrations/20080401.cfm, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹⁰⁶ www.nkusa.org/aboutus/index.cfm, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹⁰⁷ www.nkusa.org/aboutus/index.cfm, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹⁰⁸ Friedman 2007, 114.

¹⁰⁹ Friedman & Derovan 2007, 742.

¹¹⁰ Rubenstein 2007, 582.

¹¹¹ Inbari 2009, 106. *Old Yishuv* refers to the Jewish community in Palestine existing prior to the first waves of settlement in the end of the 19th century.

subtractions from the written and oral law of the Torah as expressed in the *Halakha* and the *Shulchan Aruch*.¹¹²

JAZ is an organization “dedicated to informing the world [...] that not all Jews support the ideology of the Zionist state called ‘Israel’.”¹¹³ JAZ sees that combining the beliefs and practices of Judaism with Zionism “required a good deal of manipulation of the texts”; the religious Zionists have “perverted their meaning and ignored key passages”.¹¹⁴

For the study of the Haredi perspective, I will be referring to the primary material published by JAZ and NK: firstly, (1) website material from the respective official websites. Secondly, (2) to the book by Yakov M. Rabkin: *A Threat From Within: A Century of Jewish Opposition to Zionism*, to which JAZ has referred me for their view on exile and redemption.¹¹⁵ NK too recommends Rabkin’s book on their website. Thirdly, (3) Yirmiyahu Cohen’s compilation *In the Footsteps of the Flock: The Views of the Gedolei HaTorah on Exile, Redemption and Eretz Yisroel Arranged According to the Weekly Torah Readings*, published by Natruna.¹¹⁶ This work compiles ideas and discussions on the weekly Torah readings from prominent anti-Zionist rabbis, including R. Yoel Teitelbaum (the *Satmar Rav*, 1888–1982), R. Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik (the *Brisker Rav*, 1887-1959), the R. Israel Meir HaKohen Kagan (the *Chofetz Chaim*, 1839-1933) and R. Elchonon Wasserman (1875-1940). Yirmiyahu Cohen is the spokesperson of JAZ.¹¹⁷ Fourthly, R. Moshe Shonfeld’s book *Holocaust Victims Accuse: Documents and Testimony on Jewish War Criminals*, published by Neturei Karta of the USA, based in Brooklyn. The book is also distributed by JAZ.

Unifying these representatives is the usage of biblical and rabbinical material. As primary material considered select biblical and rabbinical

¹¹² www.nkusa.org/aboutus/index.cfm, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹¹³ www.truetorahjews.org/mission, accessed 4.5.2017.

¹¹⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/talmud5, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹¹⁵ In an interview by e-mail, 30.9.2014.

¹¹⁶ www.truetorahjews.org/footsteps, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹¹⁷ www.truetorahjews.org/issues/alliance, accessed 7.4.2017.

material referred to by these groups is also used. When citing the Talmud, I am using the Soncino Edition of the Babylonian Talmud. When referencing biblical passages, the translation by the International Bible Society, 1979 (NIV) is used.

Bordering these primary sources are the two works by Chanan Morrison: *Silver from the Land of Israel: A New Light on the Sabbath and Holidays from the Writings of Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaKohen Kook* and *Stories from the Land of Israel*. One might ask why this study views the two works by Samson & Aviner and Samson, Aviner & Fishman as primary but not the two by Morrison when both are compilations of materials stemming from the Kook rabbis. This is due to the difficulty with distinguishing between the voice of the source and that of the compiler, translator, and commentator; in both *Torat Eretz Yisrael* and *Eretz Yisrael*, this is made clear by indents, separating comments from quotations.

To understand the primary materials, this study consults a wide range of secondary materials. It is the aim of this study to approach an understanding of *how* these perspectives argue and *why* – to complete this picture, it is often necessary to “connect the dots” with the help of an external perspective. The external perspective is generally provided by scholarly literature from various angles, but sometimes the best *connoisseur* is another *internal* perspective. Yakov M. Rabkin, to whom the Haredim refer as a theoretician of their theology, also provide interesting remarks on the discrepancies between the Haredim and the Hardalim, as well as on the development of the Hardal perspective. Rabkin, himself a professor of history, appears thus in this study both as a primary and secondary source, which is, of course, problematic with respect to potential biases. However, this problem has been alleviated by validating his conclusions in other sources. Otherwise, the reader can easily distinguish between primary and secondary sources thus: the primary sources all hold the title “Rabbi”, abbreviated R., except for the spokesman for the Jewish community in Hebron, David Wilder, who is presented as such; thus, if a source is referred to as either spokesman or Rabbi, this

indicates to the reader that the argument presented stems from a primary source. If no title is mentioned, the reader can conclude that a secondary source is providing the information. An exception to this rule is, as mentioned, Yakov M. Rabkin, who generally gives voice to the Haredi ideotheology, but on occasion sheds light on both perspectives and the general ideotheological development.

1.3.2. DEMARCATIIONS OF THE PRIMARY MATERIAL

TEMPORAL DEMARCATION OF THE PRIMARY MATERIAL

Although this study stretches over the centuries, three historical impulses could be considered nodes in the argumentations of the two perspectives. The *Shoah* appears in both as an apocalyptic event; to the Hardalim, it is the “point of departure for redemption”, while to the Haredim, the *Shoah* and the establishment of the State “are part of the same process of destruction”.¹¹⁸ The establishment of the State of Israel is, hence, another of those nodes, which to the Hardalim was “the first shoots of our redemption”.¹¹⁹ The third node is the Six Day War in 1967, which to the Hardal perspective was the divine confirmation of its ideotheology; it was also how the religious right became “a true force in the politics of the Jewish state”.¹²⁰ Since then, there has been a rise of militant, messianic religiosity, which has led to a “great intensification of extremism and violence in Israeli politics.”¹²¹ Temporally, this study evolves from these three historical impulses.

These profound events have, needless to say, had a tremendous impact on the perspectives studied here – to the degree that one might claim that the ideotheological trajectory cannot be considered coherent. Can, for instance, the ideotheology of R. Abraham Y. Kook, who lived in a context

¹¹⁸ Rabkin 2006, 196.

¹¹⁹ Waxman 1987, 184.

¹²⁰ Jones 1997, 30.

¹²¹ Sprinzak 1998, 116.

pre-*Shoah*, be related to that of David Wilder, who lives in an context post-Oslo? Can they be considered related at all, ideologically and theologically? If so, on what grounds?

This study outlines a trajectory, beginning with the identification of Orthodoxy as a distinct perspective in 1795, evolving to the present, in which there are many competing representations of Orthodoxy. The two perspectives studied here parted ways somewhere during this trajectory – most likely in the aftermath of the *Shoah*.¹²² This study is an attempt at following them on their course. Therefore, it has been necessary to let the tradition lead the way and follow it to where it appears in new generations. Every generation, however, faces new contexts. The tradition is reinterpreted and understandings reformulated. Hence, as the tradition evolves, the end of the path may show little resemblance with its beginning.¹²³ Binding these representations of ideotheology together, then, is the chain of transmission, stretching over the trajectory.

DEMARCATIONS IN LANGUAGE OF THE PRIMARY MATERIAL

I have chosen to focus on materials published in English. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, because I am not fluent in Hebrew, it translating all these primary sources would have consumed too much of the available time. Secondly, not all primary sources referred in this study have published their materials in Hebrew, and following, using all Hebrew materials is not possible. Thirdly, when the primary sources have published websites in both English and Hebrew, the materials display variations in content¹²⁴, which reduces the comparability and cause an

¹²² Yakov M. Rabkin notes that for the Hardalim, the destruction came to an end when the Shoah ended in 1945, making it the point of departure for redemption, while to the Haredim, the Shoah and the very existence of the State of Israel are part of the same process of destruction. Hence, it could be argued that these two perspectives decisively parted ways after 1945; from this point on, their understandings of Jewish existence are mutually exclusive. Rabkin 2006, 196.

¹²³ Both end and beginning are, of course, theoretical, as tradition is a continuum stretching both deep into history and far into the yet unknown.

¹²⁴ This discrepancy may be grounds for future research.

imbalance in the study. It is also possible that the different languages are used with different audiences in mind, and following, it is reasonable to assume that the argumentation would be adjusted to the audience, also reducing the comparability.¹²⁵ Although this aspect is inescapable in any case, the probability of reaching false conclusions by comparing and relating mismatched materials is reduced when using all primary sources in English. There is also nothing to indicate that the groups presented in this study have chosen to publish in English to address the non-Jewish world with a “light” version of its ideotheology; for example, JAZ states that it is “trying to reach the religious Jews of the world”¹²⁶, and R. Avraham Shapira explains in the introduction to *Torat Eretz Yisrael*,

Today, the Jews who are scattered throughout the Anglo-Saxon world constitute the principle Galut. Thus, it is precisely this community which most needs a beacon of light which can connect them to Eretz Yisrael and to its Torah.¹²⁷

By this, it can be assumed that English is used because of its advantage as a *lingua franca*. To some representatives of this study, there may also be ideotheological reasons for *not* publishing in Hebrew; language is intimately connected to identity and ideotheology. John Myhill notes that for many Jews, “being Jewish has no or almost no connection to either the Hebrew language or the land of Israel, so that among Diaspora Jews there has been an unprecedented drop in practical knowledge of Hebrew

¹²⁵ To secure that there were no absolutely essential material published in Hebrew, relating to the theme of this study, I searched the RAMBI index of articles on Jewish studies, upheld by the National Library of Israel.

¹²⁶ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/rov, accessed 7.4.2017. However, JAZ also testifies to its dedication to educate “the world and in particular the American public and politicians” on what it perceives as Judasim true to the Torah. www.truetorahjews.org/our_mission, accessed 24.3.2017.

¹²⁷ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, xiii.

among Jews and an equally unprecedented indifference or, in some cases, even hostility to a Jewish presence in the Land of Israel.”¹²⁸

One may then ask why this study uses English translations of works such as *Orot* by R. Abraham Y. Kook, when these are – at least in part – available in Hebrew. This is partly because using all English materials renders the primary materials some degree of congruence, and partly because I prioritized widening the scope of the study rather than narrowing it and intensifying the focus on the writings of the Kook rabbis. A closer study of these texts alone would not have illuminated how the argumentation of the Hardal appear in relation to that of the Haredim, nor would it have been able to relate this argumentation to a broader, apocalyptic understanding.

1.4. STRUCTURE

The comparative nature of the study is visible in the structure of each main chapter: after a brief introduction to the theme of the chapter, the arguments of the Hardal perspective is presented followed by the Haredi ones. Each chapter ends with a summary and conclusions.

The introduction in the beginning of each chapter aspires to put the two argumentations into context. Particularly here, but throughout the study, secondary literature is used to draw the contours of the context, from which the discourse stems. The secondary literature, hence, elucidates the primary materials and “fills in the blanks”, so to speak.

The body of the five main chapters are the subchapters presenting key arguments provided by the primary materials concerning the theme at hand. Throughout the study, the Hardal perspective is presented first, followed by the Haredi perspective; this is because the arguments presented by the Haredi sources often appear to respond or counterargue

¹²⁸ Myhill 2004, 53. Myhill illuminates the inextricable connection between language, religion, ethnicity and citizenship. It attempts to identify and systematize trends in Jewish thought on language.

those presented by the Hardal sources. Thus, this structure is not a reflection on the weight of the arguments.

1.5. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study approaches its primary material by posing the following questions: How does it understand exile and redemption, and how is that understanding reflected in its interpretations of the *Shoah*, the ingathering of the exiles, the Messiah and the Third Temple? Does it reference biblical and rabbinical sources when arguing for its understanding?

To summarise, the hypothesis of this study is that both the Hardal and the Haredi perspectives strengthen their arguments either with direct reference to biblical and rabbinical sources or by making derivations from them. By doing so, both claim to embody a contemporary representation of traditional Judaism. This study understands the primary materials are *argumentative*; they hope to persuade the reader to embark on their mission, which ultimately seeks to enable the coming of the (ultimate) redemption.

This study is, hence, focused on 1) what the primary materials propose and 2) how they strengthen their arguments by referencing biblical and rabbinical materials. It is also interested in 3) how historical impulses stir developments in religious discourse – how tension translates into theological interpretations.

This material could have been approached with these questions in a number of ways. Early in the process, I applied the method of *argumentation analysis* and systematized the arguments in *pro- et contra*-arguments, analysing them with regard to the Aristotelian triad of *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos*,¹²⁹ and looking for *logical fallacies*. Traces of this process may shine through in the analytic discussions. However, I soon realized that by using this method, many interesting questions were left

¹²⁹ Steel 2009, 80-81.

unattended particularly those relating to the *context* in which the argumentation was taking place – the *discourse* it was a part of. Hence, I turned to *discourse analysis*, which broadly defined, is a method for analysing more or less coherent systems of meaning, that is, ways of perceiving, constructing and expressing reality.

1.5.1. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Discourse analysis has become a widely used method in a variety of academic disciplines, particularly in social sciences. This could be a reflection of social life increasingly evolving around discourse; life is organized and expressed through discourse.¹³⁰ Discourse can be described as “a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events.”¹³¹

The concept of discourse, according to Vivien Burr, includes the notion of numerous discourses surrounding any object, each of them striving to represent or ‘construct’ it. Discourses, hence, “serve to construct the phenomena of our world for us.”¹³²

If discourse can be thought of as “a kind of frame of reference, a conceptual backcloth against which our utterances can be interpreted”, it may help us see that the arguments and argumentations presented by the primary materials are part of a *discursive context*, of a whole that is *meaningful* to its members.¹³³ This theoretical approach may help us discover the *connections* between arguments, between themes, between groups and individuals, and help us understand the conceptual framework they share.

Burr further claims that there is a two-way relationship between discourse and the content of text: the discourse *manifests* itself in the text, and the

¹³⁰ Moberg 2009, 25.

¹³¹ Burr 2003, 64.

¹³² Burr 2003, 65-66.

¹³³ Burr 2003, 66.

meaning of the text *depends upon* the discursive context in which they appear.¹³⁴ Hence, when the primary materials of this study reference traditional, Jewish sources, the content itself is infused with meaning by the discursive context, but the discourse is also manifested by the sources it evokes. Jewish tradition is rich in content, and the task of this study is, therefore, to reflect upon whether the discourse evokes a particular content to *convey* meaning or to *create* meaning.

Stephanie Taylor presents four approaches to discourse analysis, of which three are primarily interested in language use: variations and imperfections of language as a system, the activity of language use and patterns in language use associated with a particular theme or activity. The fourth approach looks for patterns

within much larger contexts, such as those referred to as ‘society’ or ‘culture’ [...] The language of categorization will be implicated with, on the one hand, the values underlying it (for example, beliefs that certain people are ‘good’ or ‘bad’) and associated philosophies or logics (such as when an activity is evaluated negatively because it is believed to have negative consequences), and on the other, the consequences and social effects of the classification. The analyst’s interest will therefore extend beyond language in use, that is, from the ‘discursive’ to the ‘extra-discursive’, probably blurring any distinction between them.¹³⁵

This study is interested in such a “discursive” or “extra-discursive” dimension. It is interested in how meaning is produced within the two perspectives studied, and particularly in how that production of meaning is supported by references to traditional Jewish sources.

1.5.2. DOING DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Norman Fairclough, *inter alia*, stress that there is “no set procedure for doing discourse analysis”; how this method is implemented depends on

¹³⁴ Burr 2003, 65-66.

¹³⁵ Taylor 2001, 7-8.

the features of the project and on how the analyst understands discourse.¹³⁶ There are “many versions”¹³⁷ of how to do a discourse analysis, and it “ought ideally to be an interdisciplinary undertaking”.¹³⁸

Discourse analysis can, thus, be conducted in a number of ways but with the shared ambition of identifying *patterns* and reoccurring *elements* or *themes* in texts that appear to be central for producing a particular meaning.¹³⁹

Technically, this study has followed Norman Fairclough’s outline¹⁴⁰ of discourse analysis. I thus began with 1) *defining the question*. The structure of this study evolved “top-down”; it began with posing the questions, and then asked who would be able to answer them. That is how 2) the *text corpus was defined*. The two perspectives emerged, and within them, some voices expressed their argumentations more clearly and more systematically. These “voices” – concretely, their publications, as it was not possible to interview them all – then formed the text corpus of this study.

I then proceeded with 3) *enhancing the corpus*. As the mental map developed, patterns emerged, enhancing some aspects of the text corpus and reducing others. For example, the *Shoah* was not initially among the five themes this study examines, but after the preliminary processing of the material when it became clear that it was one of the historical impulses retrospectively read in an apocalyptic light, it was added. In this process, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook also stood out as the focal ideologue of the Hardal perspective, even superseding his father, R. Abraham Y. Kook. This caused me to add the compilation of his teachings *Torat Eretz Yisrael* to the primary materials. There were, hence, some late arrivals to the text corpus.

¹³⁶ Fairclough 1993, 225; Gee 2005, 5.

¹³⁷ Fairclough 2003, 3.

¹³⁸ Fairclough 1993, 225.

¹³⁹ Taylor 2001, 6.

¹⁴⁰ Fairclough 1993. For a condensed description of the method, see 225-240.

Stage 4) *coding and selecting samples from the text corpus* then followed. Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin define coding as “the analytic process through which data are fractured, conceptualized and integrated”.¹⁴¹ In practice, this was executed by defining words, phrases or tags to look for in the primary materials. For example, when inquiring about how the perspectives understand the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem, suitable codes were *Third Temple*, *Holy Temple* and *Temple of Jerusalem*, and in addition less explicit codes such as *God’s abode* or the *Holy of Holies*, aligned codes such as the *Temple Mount*, the *Western Wall*, the *Foundation stone*. When these codes appear in the material, it signals that this passage addresses the theme in focus.

When the central arguments were identified, and samples illustrating them were selected, the process of 5) *thematically arranging the samples* commenced. By this stage, some patterns were clearly visible: some topics were found to be reoccurring, some occurred only in the presence of another topic, and some were more frequent than others. This process resulted in the structure of the study as it is today.

Step 6) *to analyse the samples, independently and in relation to the discourse* followed. This involved approaching the theological content of the argument. If a rabbinical or biblical source is referenced, one may ask whether or not the interpretation of it is in line with, or deviating from, the way it has been read traditionally. This involves analysing what function the argument fills in the overall argumentation, and analysing how it relates to the discourse of the perspective. It can involve analysing the socio-political context in which the argument has been formed. It also involves looking for incongruence, reflecting on whether the sample is customary or unique, and looking for clues on how generalized the opinion of the sample is.

The process has now arrived at the stage of “connecting the dots”; 7) *to reflect on findings, compare and draw parallels*. A conclusion can be made as

¹⁴¹ Strauss & Corbin 1998, 3.

to whether or not the sources have been able to answer the questions of the study: how does each of the perspectives perceive the concepts of exile and redemption? How is this understanding reflected in its perception of the apocalyptic themes listed above? How does it argue for its understanding? Does it strengthen its arguments with references to biblical and rabbinical sources, or derivations thereof?

The findings can now be put in relation to the thesis, which is that both perspectives strengthen their arguments either with direct reference to biblical and rabbinical sources or by making derivations from them. By doing so, both claim to embody a contemporary representation of traditional Judaism.

Of these seven steps, the first five were conducted in the process of developing the structure of this text and the production of the text itself; consequently, the sixth and seventh steps – analysing, comparing, relating and reflecting – are conducted over the following five main chapters, and in the final chapter, where the final conclusions are drawn.

1.5.3. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

There are many possible theoretical approaches to discourse, of which social constructionism is the one this study adheres to. This approach proposes that social processes *create, uphold* and *influence* what is perceived as “knowledge”. “Meaning” is constructed in social interaction, which is also the scene of the struggle between “good” and “evil”, “false” and “true”, as well as other categories. Vivien Burr proposes this definition of social constructionism:

Social constructionism cautions us to be ever suspicious of our assumptions about how the world appears to be. This means that the categories by which we as human beings apprehend the world do not necessarily refer to real divisions.¹⁴²

¹⁴² Burr 2003, 3.

Social constructionism, hence, proposes that “reality” is constantly *constructed* and *reconstructed*. From the perspective of this study, traditional Jewish sources are constantly *interpreted* and *reinterpreted*, and the quest to understand what is *there* (in the text) may rather be a question of what is *here* (in the individual and collective mindset), as Kenneth J. Gergen formulates the distinction.¹⁴³ Social constructionism, thus, seems a useful orientation to adopt when approaching two “ostensibly antithetical”¹⁴⁴ ways of understanding “reality”:

What we take to be the truth about the world importantly depends on the social relationships of which we are a part. [...] Through participation in relationships the world comes to be what it is for us.¹⁴⁵

Gergen further sees the “network of presuppositions that constrains what it is we can ultimately say about the world” – without these networks, “all existing presumptions become optional”.¹⁴⁶ Hence, an indication of such networks being at play is the prevalence of *discursive patterns*; in the case of this study, *two* sets of patterns. These networks regulate what *can be said* and *can be done* in a particular social setting: the social construction of knowledge result in concrete actions.

The social constructionist approach is not only helpful to this study as an outlook allowing two disparate “truths” to be “true” to the perspectives that hold them; it is also helpful when navigating through the sea of historical occurrences and the interpretations and myths stemming from them. This study will provide examples of how historical impulses, such as the *Shoah*, the establishment of the State of Israel and the Six Day War receive drastically different interpretations. One historical event may,

¹⁴³ Gergen 2015, 38-39.

¹⁴⁴ Thus described by Menachem Friedman. Friedman 1989, 167.

¹⁴⁵ Gergen 2015, 3-4.

¹⁴⁶ Gergen 2002, 14.

thus, teach opposite lessons depending on the myths constructed around them by the two perspectives studied here.¹⁴⁷

David Ohana understands mythmaking as a process of re-organizing chaos into a structure that ascribes a situation meaning; it may validate social and political practices; it may confirm the dominant elite, social group or ideology; it may also be a rationalization of a status quo.¹⁴⁸ In terms of social constructionism, we see history through the lenses our social context provides. Ohana reflects that the “true significance” of the myth is not whether or not it is historically “true”, but what it can tell us about how a group seeks to organize or construct its memory and identity.¹⁴⁹

1.5.4. POSITIVE EMPATHY, OBJECTIVITY AND CONFIRMATION BIAS

Stephen O’Leary suggests that apocalyptic groups “generally do not operate from the same premises or worldviews as those of the scientists who study them”. He also suggests the process of apocalyptic conversion and the development of such groups should be considered “a communicative, and specifically an argumentative, process”. Along these lines, he argues that approaching a material with the ambition to deem it objectively as logic or illogic might not be as enlightening as approaching it with the ambition of understanding it from the subjective view of its adherents.¹⁵⁰

David Zeidan similarly concludes that while “it might be impossible for a historically and culturally located human being to attain absolute objectivity”, reliable research – with avoidance of value judgement and with non-judgemental comparisons – can be conducted by applying a

¹⁴⁷ This is by no means a new aspect of Judaism; Frank Moore Cross sees it as a “perennial and unrelaxed tension between the mythic and the historical” in Jewish religion as reflected in scripture. Moore Cross 1997, viii.

¹⁴⁸ Ohana 2012, 6.

¹⁴⁹ Ohana 2012, 7.

¹⁵⁰ O’Leary 2000, 343.

perspective of *positive empathy*.¹⁵¹ Hence, the *logic* or *rationality* of an argument may only be accessible when *seeing it through the eyes of the believer*, so to speak; that is, it may only make sense when related to its discourse. This does not, however, mean that it is beyond reach for the outside world. Nonetheless, to achieve an understanding of its logic, one must be willing to submerge into the discourse in which it is presented and in which it makes sense. The willingness to do so is what this study understands by positive empathy.

Since the 1960s, the epistemological problem of *confirmation bias* has transcended the realms of philosophy of science to be approached from a perspective of cognitive and social psychology. It has been proposed, by Ziva Kunda among others, that “cognitive processes are structured in a way that they inevitably lead to confirmation of hypotheses”.¹⁵² Margit E. Oswald & Stefan Grosjean understands confirmation bias as the mechanism by which

information is searched for, interpreted, and remembered in such a way that it systematically impedes the possibility that the hypothesis could be rejected – that is, it fosters the immunity of the hypothesis. Here, the issue is not the use of deceptive strategies to fake data, but forms of information processing that take place more or less unintentionally.¹⁵³

In other words, even if one does become aware that the information one uses may be biased, it is impossible to assess the magnitude of the bias.¹⁵⁴ Oswald & Grosjean find it almost unavoidable that the questions mainly asked are those that would confirm rather than disconfirm one’s hypothesis.¹⁵⁵

A confirmation bias seems to occur primarily when the hypotheses tested are *already established*, or are *motivationally supported*. It is also involved if

¹⁵¹ Zeidan 2003, 1.

¹⁵² Kunda 1990, 494; Oswald & Grosjean 2004, 79.

¹⁵³ Oswald & Grosjean 2004, 79.

¹⁵⁴ Kunda 1999, 105.

¹⁵⁵ Oswald & Grosjean 2004, 94.

another person's opinion is already known and if it can be assumed that questions will be answered according to one's expectation. In general, the confirmation bias occurs when one favours expectancy-congruent information over incongruent information. In practice, this appears when (a) undue weight is given to the importance of congruent information, possibly because there is a strong focus on the hypothesis and alternative explanations are overlooked; (b) sources of information that could reject the hypothesis are avoided, provided that the person is aware *a priori* of these source.¹⁵⁶

It is not yet clear what causes the bias in weighting of data congruent with the hypothesis. [...] However, as long as the alternative hypothesis itself, or the possibility that the event could be explained by an alternative hypothesis is not considered, an overestimation of the diagnostic relevance of events congruent with the hypothesis occurs very rapidly.¹⁵⁷

Although the mechanisms underlying motivated reasoning have not yet been fully uncovered, Ziva Kunda considers it clear that directional goals do affect reasoning: "People are more likely to arrive at those conclusions they want to arrive at."¹⁵⁸

How, then, does a researcher do battle with this tendency of the human psyche, described above as "impossible to assess" and "almost unavoidable", on the quest to do unbiased research? How does one alleviate the risk for or influence from confirmation biases?

Oswald & Grosjean suggest putting into practice a routine of not only asking questions in light of one's hypothesis, but also explore alternative explanations.¹⁵⁹ Barbara Koslowsky argues that confirmation biases are less likely to appear when (a) one acknowledges that confirmation, disconfirmation and testing an alternative do not involve mutually

¹⁵⁶ Oswald & Grosjean 2004, 87; 93.

¹⁵⁷ Oswald & Grosjean 2004, 90.

¹⁵⁸ Kunda 1990, 495.

¹⁵⁹ Oswald & Grosjean 2004, 94.

exclusive tests, and (b) one considers it scientifically legitimate to treat hypotheses as working hypotheses to be revised rather than circumscribed in the wake of noncongruent evidence.¹⁶⁰

In a word, since the world is rife with correlations, it is impossible to take them all seriously. Therefore, one rule of thumb congruent with the principles of scientific inquiry is to take seriously those that are plausible. However, this rule of thumb yields success only to the extent that beliefs about what is plausible are approximately correct. That is, relying on the principles of scientific inquiry makes us more likely to get the right answer to the extent that the background beliefs that we use in conjunction with the principles are approximately true.¹⁶¹

A response to Kunda's conclusion should be that the researcher grows accustomed to continuous introspection. Is there a particular conclusion *I would like* to arrive at? Why? Am I emotionally invested in the research – and if yes, on whose behalf? What do I hope to achieve with my research? Is there an agenda – and if yes, when and why was it adapted? Reflecting over these questions might bring confirmation biases into consciousness, which is a necessary prerequisite for neutralizing them.¹⁶²

Secondly, as suggested above, it might help to institute a scientific thinking that aspires to be both “outside the box” and inside of it; to establish scientific procedures that allow for alternative explanations than the hypothesis to be explored. By accepting that confirming the hypothesis is not the only possible outcome and that disconfirming a hypothesis is also a result, the researcher may become less biased in the process.

1.5.5. CRITICAL NOTES ON CONDUCTING A COMPARATIVE STUDY

This study is of a comparative nature, in that it strives to make a “conceptual homogenization of a heterogeneous domain” – that is, to identify the patterns shared by the two, contrasting perspectives. This

¹⁶⁰ Koslowski 1996, 236.

¹⁶¹ Koslowski 1996, 152.

¹⁶² This discussion will be continued with regards to this study in Ch. 1.6.

approach establishes the explanatory hypothesis before selecting objects to compare. “The integrating concept [...] gives coherence to a heteroclitic universe”, Dogan explains.¹⁶³

The motto of P.W. Holland, that there is “no causation without manipulation,”¹⁶⁴ is also worth considering. Two variables – in this case, the Hardalim and the Haredim – have many joint features; for example, they are both Jewish and Orthodox. But they are also distinct. In bringing them together, there is a risk that the study reflects a stronger causation than what *de facto* is the case.

Daniel J. Elazar complains that the present age is one of polarization, in which information is simplified and sharpened – losing depth and accuracy in the interpretative process.¹⁶⁵ However, I would argue that the illustrations of the two perspectives appear here in a range of nuances due to the number of voices that speak for them. Thus, this study has taken steps to avoid polarization.

1.5.6. CRISIS SHAPING THEOLOGY

Prompting developments in both perspectives studied here are historical impulses, crises. Therefore, it is of value to have some insights into the socio-psychological dynamics of the (religious) communities facing crises.

A crisis can be defined as a position, from which there are no given concepts of how to proceed. The *Shoah* and the establishment of the State constituted such crises upon the Hardal and Haredi communities.¹⁶⁶ Idith Zertal sees trauma as an essential ingredient in the formation of a

¹⁶³ Dogan 2009, 25-26.

¹⁶⁴ Holland 1986, 1959.

¹⁶⁵ Elazar 1998, 1.

¹⁶⁶ *Nota bene*, a crisis is not necessarily traumatic. For example, the Hardalim perceived the Six Day War as a military triumph; nevertheless, it presented them with an unfamiliar situation, to which new approaches had to be developed.

community; these ordeals bind its members together by “instilling in them a scene of common mission and destiny”, and

can yield an embracing sense of redemption and transcendence, when the shared moments of destruction are recounted and replicated by the victim-community through rituals of testimony and identification until those moments lose their historical substance, are enshrouded in sanctity, and become a model of heroic endeavor, a myth of rebirth.¹⁶⁷

Isabella Fairclough & Norman Fairclough see it as “fairly evident” that the long-term effect of a crisis is strongly affected by its narratives.¹⁶⁸ Rafi Nets-Zehngut sees *conflict narratives* as a distinct category of narrative and describes them as “significantly selective, biased and distorted, characterized by a simplistic black-white view in favour of the in-group.” These narratives are essential to the way the conflict unfolds, as they shape the reactions and provide the socio-psychological resources to manage the stressful situation.¹⁶⁹ With shifts in political structures and climates, the narratives are subjected to mutation.¹⁷⁰

A classic study on reactions to the discrediting of beliefs is Leon Festinger’s *When Prophecy Fails* from 1956. His theory of *cognitive dissonance* has become “a standard part of the description of the dynamics of apocalyptic sects and movements, regularly employed by scholars to explain why religious groups may prosper despite what would seem to be a direct refutation of deeply held beliefs.”¹⁷¹ The theory argues that this response is an attempt to even out the *cognitive dissonance*, the disturbing discrepancy caused when one’s perception of the state of affairs contradicts the interpretations proposed by the belief system. When belief systems and contradicting information are in competition, the belief

¹⁶⁷ Zertal 2005, 2.

¹⁶⁸ Fairclough & Fairclough 2012, 6.

¹⁶⁹ Nets-Zehngut 2012, 188.

¹⁷⁰ Zertal 2005, 24.

¹⁷¹ O’Leary 2000, 341.

system usually wins. This phenomenon is examined in *When Prophecy Fails*.¹⁷²

Motti Inbari presumes that cognitive dissonance occurs when a prophecy *has failed*, that is when it has been proven to be a miscalculation. Inbari examines whether cognitive dissonance also occurs when a prophecy does not have an end date and hence, does not fail, *per se*. He proposes that messianic radicalization is one possible reaction to cognitive dissonance. He remarks that no study to date has contradicted the claim that apocalyptic movements have to find logical explanations for their failed prophecies to preserve the credibility of their belief system. Although the theory of cognitive dissonance assumes that a movement, when finding its belief system challenged, will undergo a process of radicalization, it does not necessarily mean that the movement has acknowledged its beliefs as errant. It may instead, Inbari argues, *both radicalize and pursue a logical explanation to its error*. Cognitive dissonance may thus occur not only from *acknowledging* a mistake but also from the *fear* of being wrong, and lead to a radicalization.¹⁷³

The two perspectives of this study have been presented by a multitude of scholars as “radical”, “ultra” and “extreme”. Therefore, I will now briefly reflect upon two psycho-sociological phenomena, which have generated much discussion both scholarly and popularly over the past decades: *radicalization* and *fundamentalism*. Both processes stir developments in the ideotheology¹⁷⁴.

¹⁷² Festinger, Riecken & Schachter, 1964.

¹⁷³ Inbari 2009, 12-13.

¹⁷⁴ In the scholarly discussion, both “ideology” and “theology” are used to denote the belief systems approached here. Often, the Hardal perspective is perceived as an “ideology” – presumably with regards to its nationalistic aspects – and the Haredi perspective is perceived as a “theology” – presumably because of its tendency to withdraw from the political sphere. However, as this study perceives the perspectives in question to involve both a *religious understanding* and a *socio-political strategy*, it uses the term ideotheology, to illustrate that both aspects are constantly present in both these perspectives. The term is used *inter alia* by Clive Jones (1997, 28-46).

There is no simple explanation as to why a group is radicalized. Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre note that situations of threat or change tend to revive the – usually unconscious – ethnic, national and religious identity; “religious identity is never so strong as in times of war.”¹⁷⁵

Charles Kimball has identified five *indicators* of radicalization. These indicators have functioned in this study as an analysis instrument, a thermometer measuring the temperature of the context. The first (1) indicator is that the group sees itself as holding the absolute truth. Secondly, (2) the group expects obedience from its members and does not welcome critical reflection. Thirdly, (3) the group expects the establishment of an “ideal time”, i.e., a messianic age or era of redemption, perhaps preceded by an apocalypse. Fourthly, (4) the end justifies the means, but the group is often unaware of this reasoning. Fifthly, (5) the group often declares holy war; it perceives its existence as enclosed in a struggle between good and evil, in which it must participate.¹⁷⁶

One of the earliest and most palpable signs of radicalization is verbal aggression. The category “face attack” is used by a handful of scholars in the field. Jonathan Culpeper defines impoliteness as strategies “oriented towards attacking face, an emotionally sensitive concept of the self.”¹⁷⁷ He distinguishes four categories of aggravation strategies: *off record*: (insinuations, hints and irony), *bald on record* (directness, bluntness) *positive aggravation* (strategically excluding and disqualifying) and *negative aggravation* (strategically attacking a person’s social position, his basis for social action, imposing a person to interfere with his freedom of action).¹⁷⁸

Hence, radicalization is a consequence of a fear, and fear is generally a response to a perceived threat. The threat can be physical, for example being evacuated from a settlement, harassed on the street or taking part in

¹⁷⁵ Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre 1997, 54.

¹⁷⁶ Kimball 2008, 1-166.

¹⁷⁷ Culpeper 1996, 350.

¹⁷⁸ Culpeper 2003, 1553.

military operations. Social or ideological change can also pose a threat to a community; for example, assimilation and secularization can compromise the stability of a socio-religious context.

The Hardal perspective is disproportionately often exposed to a physical threat. For example, graduates of the national religious school system are overrepresented in the ranks of infantry companies and their junior and middle-rank officers, often by a ratio of 3:1.¹⁷⁹ R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook perceived the army of Israel as “the real Israel”¹⁸⁰ and likened the relationship between war, settlement and the Torah to the sides of a triangle.¹⁸¹ Moreover, he thanked God that “there are pleasant and positive relations between the [*Mercaz Harav*] Yeshiva and the army,” because “the government understood that there is a need for Torah in the nation, and in the Land of Israel.”¹⁸² Also, the Hardalim are more often both victims of violence and perpetrators of it than the Haredim. According to a study, adherents of the national-religious perspective carried out 90% of the 170 acts of Jewish terror committed in the State of Israel between 1978-2008.¹⁸³ Hence, this segment of young men and women are more likely to fight and be fought, and thus, experience threat; coupled with the understanding of their existence being a battle between God and his adversaries, radicalization is a likely outcome.

Gideon Aran & Ron E. Hassner consider the phenomenon of Jewish religious violence a “fundamentally contemporary phenomenon”, which attests to tradition being “a flexible and heterogeneous reservoir on which traditionalists draw, selectively and creatively, in order to legitimate their claims”:

It would seem that religious groups and political groups can change their character and shift from quietism, tolerance, and reconciliation to

¹⁷⁹ Cohen 2010, 283.

¹⁸⁰ Sprinzak 1991, 117; Werblowsky 2005, 5978.

¹⁸¹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 167; Lustick 1988, 106.

¹⁸² Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 179.

¹⁸³ Aran & Hassner 2013, 357.

violence and back. We will argue that both currents coexist in parallel and in dialectical relationship with one another.¹⁸⁴

Fundamentalism can be defined as a strategy or a collection of strategies, adopted by a group to preserve its distinct identity. A group experiencing threat or intimidation often deploys fundamentalist strategies. By selectively reviving doctrines and practices the cultic past is recreated, enhancing the identity of the group by appealing to the charismatic intensity that once led to its formation. The fundamentalist strategy often serves as a watershed between the group and its surrounding environment.¹⁸⁵ “People tend toward fundamentalism when they fear losing a world”, Martin E. Marty explains. The strategy often includes social markers that distinguish a member of the group. The social markers do not only signal whom to include, but also whom to exclude.¹⁸⁶ David Zeidan explains that fundamentalism occurs when

the rise of charismatic prophetic individuals has coincided with deep social crises caused by modernity and secularization to produce the emergence of this new type of religious movement intent on competing with secularism for dominance in society and culture and for reshaping them in its image. Our age is characterized by this clash of paradigms and world-views between secularism and fundamentalism.¹⁸⁷

Characteristic of a fundamentalist group is its lack of – or reluctance to – introspection. Robert Eisen notes that within religious Zionism there is an “unwillingness to admit their modernism, and they maintain that self-deception by justifying their thinking on the basis of ideas and text drawn from the tradition, as if their values have always been those of Judaism.”¹⁸⁸ Similarly, Neturei Karta argues that nothing has been added or taken

¹⁸⁴ Aran & Hassner 2013, 357-58.

¹⁸⁵ Silberstein 1993, 3-22. See also Marty 1992, 18-23.

¹⁸⁶ Marty 1992, 18.

¹⁸⁷ Zeidan 2003, 19; Reflections on Zeidan’s conclusions in Peste 2003, 58. Lawrence J. Silberstein also finds the “selective retrieval of doctrines, beliefs and practices from a sacred past” a feature of fundamentalism. Silberstein 1993, 5.

¹⁸⁸ Eisen 2011, 183-184.

away to the Judaism it represents, and hence, that it represents “genuine” Judaism.¹⁸⁹

While both the descriptions “radicalized” and “fundamentalist” are relative and “elude scientific precision”,¹⁹⁰ they are useful tools to identify and understand how psycho-social processes influence ideothology, and vice versa.

1.6. SELF-POSITIONING

It was almost a decade ago that two forms of passionate activism caught my attention: that of the Temple Mount activists, and that of Jewish anti-Zionism. When looking into these groups in my master’s thesis, I discovered that they seemed to simultaneously both *share* a worldview and profoundly *disagree*. I also discovered that the Temple Institute, which was the focal point of my thesis, seemed to be part of an integral network evolving around R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook. Hence, the Temple Institute was not an isolated expression of zeal, but part of a perspective, an ideothology with tenets in Jewish history and tradition. When the opportunity arose to conduct a study investigating these two contradictory positions – and the relationship between them – I took it.

This study is conducted in the field of Jewish studies, which at Åbo Akademi University is a subdivision of Old Testament Exegetics. Therefore, I am inclined to have my home in the textual interpretations rather than in the socio-political or psychological aspects. However, as these dimensions are integrally related, I will alternate between these perspectives, not intending to emphasise one over the other. As Robert Eisen concludes, the process of interpretation and implementation is “dependent on a complex interplay between religious traditions and outside forces in the political, social and economic spheres.”¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ www.nkusa.org/aboutus/index.cfm, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹⁹⁰ Altemeyer 1996, 2.

¹⁹¹ Eisen 2011, 3-4.

This study examines two radical expressions of Jewish messianism, and I have been asked (and I have asked myself) what stirred my interest in this topic. Could it have been my early encounters with expressions of fundamentalism in the zealous Ostrobothnia region of Finland, which I am retrospectively processing? No doubt these experiences have given me a basic understanding of the constantly ongoing, interpretative process in religious environments – and how receptive these processes are to socio-political influences. Are they now contributing to my work as a researcher, in that they give me a head start, or are they interfering with my objectivity?

To have positive empathy in a comparative study requires a good deal of self-awareness, as the researcher has to alternate between perspectives and compare them without becoming biased in the process. Hence, I believe that close introspection safeguards impartiality.

This study was also complicated by my involvement in the contemporary situation, in which a conflict is ongoing. With insight comes responsibility: not just to stand by and allow the hurt to go on. One has to do something. But what should one do? How to do it? Whose side should one be on? Should one take sides with the Palestinians, who have been tossed around by other nations, without a fair chance of self-defence against the far superior war machinery? Or with the Zionists, who are trying to protect themselves from another genocide? Should one side with the Haredim, who are infuriated as they see holy concepts of their forefathers hi-jacked for nationalistic purposes? Or with the Hardalim, who are constantly in conflict – not only with Arabs, but also with their own government – for trying to assert rights and obligations they perceive as God-given?

When living in the Israeli and Palestinian context, as I did for some time, staying unbiased is not a realistic approach. In Jerusalem, you align with a side just by taking the bus, saying hello or buying lunch. The language you use gives you away: do you refer to “the Palestinian territories”, “the

Occupied territories”, to “Palestine”, “West bank” or “Shomron”¹⁹²? Do you talk about *the Nakba* or *the War of Independence*? Do you say “the State of Israel”, “the Holy Land”, “*Eretz Yisrael*” or “the Jewish state”? Each of these terms are loaded with meaning and signal your position, wittingly or not. Reuven Firestone remarks, “no term, either for protagonists or the land, is free from particular religiopolitical perspectives”.¹⁹³ For example, according to Robert Paine, the phrase *Eretz Israel* is “the religious denotation for the land of Israel – signifying its holiness as the Chosen Land of the Chosen people.”¹⁹⁴ However, conducting a study is not sharing a life, and as a researcher, I am careful not to mix these spheres of my life.

Over the years, I have made peace with this study not being a forum for my frustration with the conflict. I have also given up on the idea that this study could contribute to resolving it, although I hope and believe that it will contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of interpretation in the two perspectives in question, and generally to the understanding of the elasticity of belief systems.

1.7. EARLIER RESEARCH IN THE FIELD

Since this study covers many aspects of modern Judaism, there is an abundance of academic activity in “the field”. However, some aspects of the field generate less interest among scholars than others. For example, Michael Feige notes that academia has been relatively uninterested in the phenomenon of ideological settlement for the last decade, although there is “hardly any doubt that the settlement project is of immense geopolitical importance”.¹⁹⁵ Relatively unnoticed are also other expressions of the Hardal ideotheology, for example, the activism associated with the Third Temple, with the exception of Motti Inbari, who published *Who will build*

¹⁹² *Shomron*, Heb. for Samaria, which was a central part of the historical Northern Kingdom of Israel; today, Shomron is an Israeli term for the northern West Bank. Kass & O’Neill 1997, 144.

¹⁹³ Firestone 2006, 954.

¹⁹⁴ Paine 1995, 9.

¹⁹⁵ Feige 2009, 8.

the Third Temple – Jewish Fundamentalism and the Temple Mount, and since then has proceeded with other, equally interesting works. His most recent work, *Jewish Radical Ultra-Orthodoxy Confronts Modernity, Zionism and Women’s Equality* is one of few which address central themes of Haredi theology in the contemporary scholarly discussion.

Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar’s *The Lords of the Land* show little interest in the ideological argumentation – remaining “overtly hostile” towards it, in Feige’s opinion.¹⁹⁶ Feige himself addressed the ideology of the settlement movement in *Settling in the Hearts: Jewish Fundamentalism in the Occupied Territories*. Gadi Taub’s *The Settlers: And the Struggle over the Meaning of Zionism* studies the evolution of the settler ideology. Maria Leppäkari approached the phenomenon of radical religious Zionism in *The End is a Beginning: Contemporary Representations of Jerusalem*.

A handful of researchers have shed light on the contrast *between* the Hardalim and the Haredim; for example, Aviezer Ravitzky’s *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism* illuminates the difference in their ideotheologies and presents the historical development which contributed to creating this rift. David Ohana’s *Origins of Israeli Mythology* also contributes to a wider understanding of the mythic legacy, which appears particularly among the Hardalim presented in this study. Ohana’s earlier work - edited along with Robert Wistrich – *The Shaping of Israeli Identity: Myth, Memory and Trauma*, gives valuable insight into the dynamics of building identity, and particularly to the impact of trauma in this process. To this category of far-stretching studies also belongs Robert Eisen’s *Peace and Violence of Judaism: From the Bible to Modern Zionism*, which presents traditions and interpretations of the use of force in Judaism – a theme which appears in both the argumentations analysed in this study. Nadav Shelef’s *Evolving Nationalism: Homeland, Identity and Religion in Israel* analyses both the emergence of identities in Israel and positions them in relation to each other.

¹⁹⁶ Feige 2009, 8-9.

One can vaguely separate studies on these two perspectives into two categories: 1) those focusing on ideological developments and 2) those focusing on socio-historical developments. Ravitzky, Schwartz, Eisen and Ohana, for the most part, soar high above the concrete expressions of the conflicts that arise between the representatives of the ideotheologies they analyse and illuminate. These studies also alternate between different perspectives. They describe the influences that prompted developments in the ideotheologies, and seem more interested in describing a religion as it evolves than the situation in which it evolves. Zertal, Eldar, and Inbari have all approached concrete expressions of Hardal activism, but often with less interest in demonstrating how it is fuelled by its religious or ideological drive.

A theoretical void in this study is the lack of a gender perspective. The way the task of this study has been defined it examines primary materials produced by men, for men, in a patriarchal structure. Motti Inbari has approached women's equality in the Haredi perspective in his latest work *Jewish Radical Ultra-Orthodoxy Confronts Modernity, Zionism and Women's Equality* (2016). It would be an interesting task for future studies, to explore how female identities are construed in the Hardal and Haredi perspectives.

This study hopes to illustrate *how rabbinical and biblical sources are invoked* in support of two conflicting ideotheologies. Thus, it hopes to shed light on both *how these two positions came to be* and *what trajectories can be expected*. As far as I am cognizant of the scholarship of this field, I have found this angle to be either missing or underdeveloped.

2. THE POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR REDEMPTION

2.1. EXILE AND REDEMPTION IN JEWISH TRADITION

Jewish existence is traditionally perceived as a pendulum motion between *exile* (Heb. *galut*) and *redemption* (Heb. *geula*). If the Jewish people disobey God, it may bring an exile upon itself, but if it then repents and resorts to humbly abiding in faith, God is merciful and redeems it – “God will ultimately forgive Israel when Israel throws itself on God’s mercy”, as Jacob Neusner expresses it.¹⁹⁷ The pendulum motion between these poles is thought to be *both* divinely orchestrated *and* caused by the obedience or disobedience of the Jewish people. Over the course of time, the emphasis of one over the other has fluctuated.

The traditional perspective, held by the Haredim, among others, expects redemption to come supernaturally, by divine intervention. From the doctrine of human powerlessness “apocalypticism flows logically”, Jodi Myers explains. The postexilic, messianic era is expected to be a perfect, transformed existence; the Temple will be rebuilt, the Davidic kingdom will be restored and the exiles will be gathered to *Eretz Yisrael*.¹⁹⁸

The other perspective presented in this study, held by the Hardalim, emphasize the influence of the Jewish people upon the shift from exile to redemption. In this understanding too, the dynamics are perceived to ultimately be in God’s charge.

The interpretations of Jewish eschatology studied here can thus be perceived as a process scheme, ideally moving from exile to redemption.¹⁹⁹ This process includes specific eschatological features, such as the appearance of the Messiah, the ingathering of the exiles, the rebuilding of

¹⁹⁷ Neusner 2005, 1698.

¹⁹⁸ Myers 1991, 4-5.

¹⁹⁹ As this study will show, these perspectives are also open to the possibility that the process may halt or even regress.

the Temple and the liberation from gentile rulership. There are varying expectations on when these features will appear, but both perspectives relate the appearances of these feature to the metalevel of the process scheme; for instance, the Hardalim perceive the process to have arrived at the beginning of redemption *before* the Messiah arrives, while the Haredim perceive the process as unable to shift from the state of exile without the Messiah. In a similar way, how the perspectives relate to the process scheme influences the way they relate to the State of Israel, how they understand the *Shoah* and the possibility of rebuilding the Third Temple. This chapter will illuminate the process scheme from exile to redemption as the nexus of the above-mentioned traditional eschatological themes, as well as the historical impulses read retrospectively in an eschatological light. This chapter will, therefore, display some overlapping with the subsequent three chapters; this is to demonstrate the integral relationship between the eschatological features and the understanding of the eschatological process from exile to redemption.

A biblical reference to this dynamic is found in Deut. 28-30.²⁰⁰ The Jewish people is warned that if it does not follow all the commands and decrees of God carefully, God will “put an iron yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you” (28:48), and “bring a nation against you from far away” (28:49), who will “besiege all the cities throughout the land” (28:52) and the people will be “uprooted from the land” (28:63). Thus, the exile has begun:

Then the Lord will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. [...] There the Lord will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing and a despairing heart. You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life.” (Deut. 28:64-66)

²⁰⁰ Rabinowitz 2007a, 789.

There is also a promise that if the people return to the Lord and obey him with all their heart, he will have compassion and gather them, wherever they are dispersed among the nations (30:1-2):

Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back. He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers (Deut. 30:4-5)

An integral element in the concept of exile is the Talmudic tradition of the *Threefold oath*.²⁰¹ *BT Ketubboth 110b-111a* holds a tradition that before going into exile, the Jewish people gave an oath, which regulates life in exile:

What are these three oaths? One, that Israel not ascend the wall; one, that the Holy One, Blessed be He, adjured Israel not to rebel against the nations of the world; and one, that the Holy One, blessed be He, adjured the idolaters not to oppress Israel overly much.

An explanatory interpretation of the oath is recorded in aggadic Midrash *Songs of Songs Rabbah 2:7*, where R. Helbo discusses with R. Onya:

Rabbi Helbo said: There are four oaths that are mentioned here [Song 2:7, 'I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem', Song 3:5, 'I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the hinds of the field,' Song 5:8, I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I am sick with love,' Song 8:4 'I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that you not stir up nor awaken love until it please'], specifically, "he imposed an oath on Israel not to rebel against the kingdoms and not to force the end [before it is time], not to reveal its mysteries to the nations of the world, and not to go up from the exile by force. "For if so [that they go up from the exile by force], then why should the royal messiah come to gather together the exiles of Israel?"²⁰²

²⁰¹ Aviezer Ravitzky amplifies the *Threefold oath* thoroughly in the appendix: "The Impact of the Three Oaths in Jewish History" in *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism*. Ravitzky 1993, 211-234.

²⁰² Neusner 2001, 92-93; Green & Silberstein 2005, 1685.

The oldest reference (after midrashic literature) to an oath prohibiting forcing the end and rebelling against the nations is from the 6th century CE, from one of Simeon ben Megas ha-Kohen's *piyyutim*: "You adjured the lion cubs, saying: one, that they not force the future end and one, not to rebel against the four kingdoms."²⁰³

The primaeval myth of the Children of Ephraim, recorded in *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishma'el*, carries similar imperatives as the Threefold oath. In the myth, the tribe of Ephraim miscalculated the time of redemption and therefore, set out of the exile in Egypt 30 years too early (*BT Sanhedrin 92a*). The journey led them straight into the arms of the Philistines and a war broke out, leaving 300 000 of the Ephraimites dead. This is also considered to be the reason why God led the Israelites to the Promised Land by a longer route – so that they would not encounter the bones of the Ephraimites on their way and in fear turn back to Egypt.²⁰⁴ The myth of the Children of Ephraim is recorded, *inter alia*, in *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Ishmael, Tractate Beshallah*:

For God said: 'Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war. This refers to the war of the sons of Ephraim, as it is said: "And the sons of Ephraim: Shuthelah – and Bered was his son... whom the men of Gath that were born in the land of slew (1 Chron. 7:20-21) – two hundred thousand children of Ephraim. And it also says: "The Children of Ephraim were archers, handling the bow, they turned back in the day of battle (Ps. 78:9) Why? Because "they kept not the covenant of God and refused to walk his law" (ibid., 78:10), that is, because they ignored the stipulated term, because they violated the oath."²⁰⁵

Both the Haredi and Hardal perspective strengthen their interpretations of the Threefold oath with reference to Maimonides. Can both be right,

²⁰³ Ravitsky 1993, 214; Ravitzky 1997, 52-53. On Simeon Ben Megas ha-Kohen, see Fleisher 2007, 598.

²⁰⁴ Berenbaum & Skolnik 2007, 457; Lauterbach 2010, 118.

²⁰⁵ Lauterbach 2010, 117-118; Ravitzky 1993, 212.

despite the discrepancy between them? If not, which interpretation does Maimonides justice?

In her study on the eschatology of Maimonides, Yael Sagiv-Feldman sees a development from the early compositions to the later; he “moves from historical assurances of the coming redemption to a definite prohibition of any calculation of the End of Days”. Already in the *Epistle to Yemen* from 1172, he expresses his belief in a coming Messiah, but it is in the later *Mishneh Torah* that his unique conception of the Messiah and redemption “springs out in full bloom”.²⁰⁶ Howard Kreisel assesses that

Maimonides’ approach to miracles, both [in the Guide to the Perplexed] and in his later writings, reflects the attempt to educate people to think of prophecy in less “supernaturalistic” terms. He stops far short, however, of either denying the existence of miracles or removing all supernaturalistic elements in his presentation of the phenomenon of prophecy. A careful balance between the naturalistic and supernaturalistic approaches is maintained.²⁰⁷

In Joel L. Kraemer’s understanding, Maimonides – like others before him – perceived hardships such as wars, catastrophes, apostasy and upheavals as being “footsteps of the Messiah”; in his *Epistle to Yemen*, Maimonides proposes an “active Messianism built on natural preparation, not a passive Messianism based on eschatological visions of divine interventions.”²⁰⁸ In the *Epistle*, Maimonides explicitly refers to the Threefold oath and pleads with the people to abide by it:

Solomon, of blessed memory, inspired by the Holy Spirit, foresaw that the prolonged duration of the exile would incite some of our people to seek to terminate it before the appointed time, and as a consequence, they would

²⁰⁶ Sagiv-Feldman 1979, 107-110.

²⁰⁷ Kreisel 2003, 160.

²⁰⁸ Kraemer 2006, 34. Yael Sagiv-Feldman sees a development in Maimonides’ understanding of eschatology from the early compositions to the later; he “moves from historical assurances of the coming redemption to a definite prohibition of any calculation of the End of Days”. Already in his *Epistle to Yemen*, he expresses his beliefs in the advent of the Messiah, but it is in the later *Mishneh Torah* that his “unique conception” of the Messiah and Redemption springs out in full bloom. Sagiv-Feldman 1979, 107-110.

perish or meet with disaster. Therefore he admonished and adjured them in metaphorical language to desist, as we read, "I adjure you, O maidens of Jerusalem, by gazelles and by hinds of the field: do not wake or rouse love until it please." (Song of Songs 2:7) Now, brethren and friends, abide by the oath, and stir not up love until it pleases.²⁰⁹

One cause for interpretation seems to be Maimonides' comment (above) that Solomon implored them "in metaphorical language to desist". The Haredi reading of this detail, explicated by the R. Yoel Teitelbaum (the Satmar Rav, 1888–1982) in *Vayoel Moshe*²¹⁰, is that Maimonides is speaking of the text itself – the Song of Songs – as metaphoric, not of the Threefold oath *per se*. However, although R. Teitelbaum does not seem to deem the Threefold oath as legally binding, he nevertheless condemns "anyone thinking that one can brazenly leave our exile defies our faith and our Holy Law".²¹¹

The emphasis laid on the Threefold oath differs from time to time and context to context. Mordechai Breuer explains that in traditional Jewish thought the Threefold oath was understood as an instruction for the people in exile, not as prohibitions for Jews wanting to ascend, not even forbidding ascension in large and organized groups. Nonetheless, while the Threefold oath did not contradict going up to *Eretz Yisrael*, the Jewish dispersion had to remain in exile.

Even with the organization of large end cohesive groups of immigrants, from the group of R. Judah the Hasid, who came up [to the Land of Israel] at the head of a thousand Jews in 1700, through the *aliyah* of Hasidim and disciples of the Gaon of Vilna – the question of the three oaths did not arise as a practical halakhic one.²¹²

²⁰⁹ Halkin & Hartman 1985, 130.

²¹⁰ *Vayoel Moshe*, (Heb. "And Moses Agreed") is the principle work of R. Yoel Teitelbaum. It was composed in the late 1950s and is "possibly the harshest and theologically best-argued anti-Zionist tract". Porat 1992, 699.

²¹¹ Gilnert & Shilhav 1991, 67. For an outline of R. Yoel Teitelbaum's biography, see Green 2005, 3793.

²¹² Ravitsky 1993, 213. I have not been able to retrieve Mordechai Breuer's article, cited here by Ravitzky.

The traditions of it rose to the fore in Eastern Europe during the Emancipation, when there was a growing fear of an upcoming mass emigration to Palestine, which would cause a decline in the Jewish communities in Europe. Aviezer Ravitzky remarks that the traditions of the Threefold oath never functioned as a direct prohibition against *aliyah*, as it was considered aggadic. Ravitzky does, however, note a “deep-seated reluctance to rebel against the Exile or to force the end”.²¹³ A particularly interesting remark of Ravitsky’s is that the occurrence of the Threefold oath reveals the “impact of the land upon the life of the communities”.²¹⁴

With the awakening of nationalism and the dawning of Zionism in the 19th and 20th century, the Threefold oath rose to the fore again. In secular Zionist circles, rational arguments for making *aliyah* began outweighing theological considerations. The religious branch of Zionism, from which the Hardal perspective grew, had to, however, address the conflict with traditional Judaism and its ideal of a tranquil life in the Diaspora. Religious Zionism declared its loyalty to the Jewish faith, although it abdicated the traditional messianic outlook for its own equivalent. This called for plausible, alternative interpretations of the Threefold oath, as Jodi Myers analyses:

The harsh criticism levelled at the religious Zionists by their Orthodox opponents, and the former’s defensive apologetics, served to underline the overwhelming loyalty of the religious camp to passive messianism and the weakness of the religious Zionist position.²¹⁵

Religious Zionists, Myers continues, wanted to embrace tradition, but re-interpret its passive messianic programme and find alternative

²¹³ Ravitzky 1993, 212.

²¹⁴ Ravitsky 1993, 213.

²¹⁵ Myers 1991, 9. “Passive messianism” in Myers might best be understood in light of the active equivalent, proposing to promote the process of redemption by aiding a handful of innerworldly causes; “passive messianism”, then, is the traditional understanding that redemption is best promoted by respecting it as God’s domain and leading a humble and tranquil life while refraining from trying to influence these dynamics. Robert Eisen describes the two categories similarly. Eisen 2011, 147-154.

interpretations of the oaths. Before the Basel programme in 1897, it was argued that the Threefold oath merely prohibited the establishment of a Jewish government; after 1897, however, the development was rationalized by the argument that the Threefold oath only forbade rebellious and illegal activities, not internationally anchored developments, such as the establishment of a Jewish homeland. Their quest was perceived to be of a pragmatic and non-messianic nature, but, “of course, the Jewish tradition had always regarded an Ingathering of the Exiles and restoration of Jewish sovereignty as messianic events.”²¹⁶

Which, then, came first: the theological interpretation or the socio-political developments? Did the theological interpretation enable a change in the socio-political situation, or did the socio-political developments force the shift from passive to active messianism? In the light of David Vital’s overall assessment of Zionist ideology, i.e. that it was developed in retrospect and therefore presents a “patchy and unsystematic appearance”,²¹⁷ it seems plausible that the ideotheology of religious Zionism was developed in relation to the unfolding of history, and in response to the existential and intellectual challenges historic impulses posed upon the interpreting communities.

As shown by Myers above, religious Zionism did not present *one* re-interpretation of the Threefold oath, but rather, addressed – and continues to address – its many aspects unconnectedly. For example, R. Abraham Y. Kook seems to have perceived the Threefold oath as being in force in the messianic age; nonetheless, he did not seem to interpret the prohibition against “ascending the wall” as concerning immigration patterns, but rather, as to whether or not using force when taking territory is permitted. Robert Eisen explains:

Kook's non-violence was evident in his understanding of the Talmudic passage regarding the three oaths. Kook believed that these oaths applied to the messianic age, not just to the period of the exile.

²¹⁶ Myers 1991, 9.

²¹⁷ Vital 1989, 348-349.

Therefore, even in the messianic era, Jews were not allowed to 'ascend the wall' - that is, to use force to reoccupy the land of Israel.²¹⁸

Elie Holzer analysis is that R. Abraham Y. Kook converted the Threefold oath "from a divine decree to a religious-ethical imperative, thereby also expanding their scope"; thus, the Threefold oath applies in both eras.²¹⁹

From that time on, an alternative interpretation of redemption gained momentum: this interpretation saw redemption as a process open to the influence of human activity, rather than solely an event in the hands of God. Arie Morgenstern sees the teachings of the Gaon of Vilna (1720-1797) as being fuel to this flame:

While most of the immigrants came to the Land of Israel to await the Messiah's coming, the disciples of R. Elijah of Vilna (the Gaon of Vilna) were caught up in a messianic ideology holding that passive waiting was not adequate and that the process of redemption should be actively advanced by settling the Land of Israel and rebuilding Jerusalem.²²⁰

Chaim I. Waxman notes that the Gaon not only condoned making *aliyah* but "actually decreed it" and intended to emigrate to *Eretz Yisrael* himself. The Gaon was convinced of the approaching redemption, as was "virtually every Jewish community throughout the world". He expected the *atchalta degeulah*, the beginning of redemption, to erupt in 1840. Apparently, based on interpretations of the *BT Sanhedrin 99a* and the *Zohar I:117a*, the Messiah would appear in the Jewish year 5600, i.e. 1840.²²¹

Against this background, the return of the Jewish people to *Eretz Yisrael* has been considered an aspect of redemption. However, when a large-scale return became possible in the 20th century, this clinical way of equating exile with the Diaspora and redemption with return was

²¹⁸ Eisen 2011, 188-189.

²¹⁹ Holzer 2007, 348.

²²⁰ Morgenstern 2006, 202.

²²¹ Waxman 1987, 176; 187. Arie Morgenstern devotes a chapter to the elucidation of the Jewish year 5600 (1840) as the Year of Redemption. Morgenstern 2006, 23-50.

contested. Some could not believe God would redeem his people by an ungodly agent such as the principally secular Zionism, and arrived at the conclusion that Zionism and its achieved State was a heresy, a satanic attempt to lure the Jewish people astray. Others reasoned that although secular, Zionism had brought about a change, which enabled the return – a feature of the time of redemption. Hence, God was indeed using a secular agent to bring redemption into realization. A third approach was to refrain from interpreting the State of Israel and the return to *Eretz Israel* theological terms at all, and instead, stress a pragmatic perspective. After the catastrophic events of the 20th century, concentrating on the safety and survival of the Jewish people seemed, to some, to be the most constructive approach. Zionism, and the eventual establishment of the State of Israel, thus became a historical impulse that forced the communities to reconsider their messianic outlook.

Baruch Kimmerling reflects upon the discrepancy in the usage of sacred texts between Judaism in the Diaspora and in religious Zionism. He argues that the Bible received a “marginal place” in rabbinical culture and theology for the simple reason that it had little bearing on actual Jewish life and its continuity, despite being a moral-religious text. As religious Zionism evolved with the need to distance itself from the *galut*,

It is no wonder, therefore, that Zionism adopted the Bible, redefined it as a national historical text, and tried to transform it into the primary mythical infrastructure for a new historiography of Judaism as a nationality.²²²

The two perspectives studied here thus seem to display some differences as to where they have their homes in the sacred texts; while the Hardal made the Bible their “the primary mythical infrastructure”, the Haredim emphasize the Rabbinic sources, as JAZ relates:

The reason we stress the Rabbinic sources more than the Biblical is that there are many religious Zionists who believe in the Bible and yet support

²²² Kimmerling 2001, 192.

Zionism. [...] But once one studies the Rabbinic sources, it becomes clear that any activity on our part towards gathering the exiles and political sovereignty is forbidden. We are not allowed to do any "hishtadlus"²²³ to bring the redemption, other than repentance and mitzvos.²²⁴

Below follows first a systematization of the Hardal arguments for perceiving redemption as an event, and then of the Haredi *arguments*. The chapter is concluded with a summary and reflection.

2.2. THE HARDALIM: REDEMPTION IS A PROCESS

2.2.1. THE FOOTSTEPS OF REDEMPTION

In the Hardal sources, redemption is a multifaceted era. It is a process, but how it progresses is a subject of interpretation. Terms such as the complete²²⁵, the ultimate²²⁶ or the final²²⁷ redemption each point to an understanding of redemption evolving stage by stage. Aviezer Ravitzky reflects that in recent generation, there have been two religious streams strongly emphasizing the perceptible manifestation of the divine, one of them being the school of the Kook Rabbis.²²⁸ Ravitzky explains that the internal logic following the belief in a universe "saturated with divinity", redemption is the natural state:

If the divine bounty encompasses and suffuses not only cosmic reality but also the historical sphere, how can there be any place left for an unredeemed person and for unredeemed time?²²⁹

There are several classic Jewish texts that seem to strengthen the notion of redemption advancing stage by stage. For example, *BT Sanhedrin 98b*

²²³ Hishtadlus, a term for doing one's uttermost to achieve a specific goal.

²²⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/sources1, accessed 14.3.2017.

²²⁵ www.templeinstitute.org/January-2011-tour-map-22.pdf, accessed 27.3.2017.

²²⁶ www.templeinstitute.org/talk/Sivan_12_5771-June_14_2011.htm, accessed 23.3.2017.

²²⁷ www.templeinstitute.org/talk/Tevet_18_5768-December_27_2007.htm, accessed 23.3.2017.

²²⁸ Ravitzky 1998, 576. The other is Habad Hasidism. See also Holzer 2007, 346.

²²⁹ Ravitzky 1998, 577.

expresses the wish that the Messiah would emerge, even if he would not fully reveal himself: “Ulla’ said; Let him [the Messiah] come, but let me not see him.” Similarly, the *Gemara BT Sanhedrin 98a* hallows the growing plants in the Holy Land and concludes: “There is no more revealed end than this”. Furthermore, R. Samuel in *BT Berachot 34b* states, “There is no difference between this world and the days of the Messiah except [that in the latter there will be no] bondage of foreign powers, as it says: For the poor shall never cease out of the land.” In *Mishneh Torah (Hilchot Melachim Milchamotehem 11:3)*, Maimonides recalls that “One should not presume that the Messianic king must work miracles and wonders, bring about new phenomena in the world”.²³⁰

The understanding of redemption as a gradual process resounds throughout the Hardal perspective, beginning with R. Abraham Y. Kook. He wrote in his *Pinkesei Ha-Reiyah* that *Eretz Yisrael* is “steadily being redeemed” and “ridding itself of the dustiness of exile, degrading and depressive”.²³¹ He also taught: “We are not just living in a time of the footsteps of the Messiah, but we are seeing before us the very beginning of the messianic time itself.”²³²

Closer to our time, R. Yisrael Ariel of the Temple Institute²³³ understands redemption as a dawning day; “such is the way of Israel’s redemption. In

²³⁰ Touger 2001, 612.

²³¹ Mirsky 2014, 157.

²³² Mirsky 2014, 177.

²³³ R. Yisrael Ariel was formerly a prominent activist of Gush Emunim; Eliezer Don-Yehiya considers him “the most prominent representative of the extreme position. R. Ariel was the second candidate on Kach’s list in the elections of 1981. He was one of the leaders in the *Movement to stop the Withdrawal from Sinai* in 1982 and took part in the confrontations with the security forces executing the evacuation of the settlement. In March 1983, some yeshiva students from Kiryat Arba and Jerusalem were arrested when found digging under the mosques of the Temple Mount in an attempt to seize the site. Most of those arrested in connection with the incident were discovered in the home of R. Yisrael Ariel. Ariel was among the 71 one rabbis who established the Sanhedrin in October of 2005; today he is one of the seven member council, that convenes on a weekly basis. Lustick 1988, 68; Inbari 2009, 32; Don-Yehiya 2004, 278; www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/70349#.VFHR0leWqfw, accessed 28.3.2017.

the beginning, it progresses very slowly... but as it continues, it grows brighter and brighter.”²³⁴ R. Shlomo Aviner²³⁵ of *Ateret Cohanim Yeshiva* refers to the Ramban, who explained in a commentary that Moses was aware that the redemption from the slavery in Egypt would be a gradual process. R. Aviner forewarns that the process of redemption may pause, or even regress, just as it did during the Exodus. The Ramban taught on *Song of Songs 2:9*: “Just as a gazelle comes in and out of view, so does the Redeemer first appear to them, then disappear, then reappear”.²³⁶ R. Aviner brings to mind other examples of when the process of redemption was halted or regressed, causing the people to question whether or not redemption had truly begun:

At the start of the return to Zion, the Arabs perpetrated a terrible pogrom in Chevron [Hebron]. [...] Maran [our master] Ha-Rav Abraham Yitzhak Kook wrote an article “Return to the Stronghold!” saying, “We have to be courageous. In the terrifying event which has now occurred in Chevron, the redeemer seems to have disappeared, but he will be revealed once more” (Ma’amarei Ha’Re’eyah, page 360).²³⁷

Although this perspective expects redemption to be fully realized only in the End of Days, it is also thought to be a process that is perceptible in recent history as the “footsteps of redemption”. In his speech on Independence Day of the State of Israel in 1967, R. Tzvi Kook explains that the order of redemption is 1) agricultural settlement, 2) establishment of the state and 3) the increase and glorification of the Torah:

Indeed, surely as a result of the return of Israel to their Land there will come about the increase of Torah and its glorification. But the first step

²³⁴ www.templeinstitute.org/red_heifer/tenth_red_heifer.htm, accessed 28.3.2017.

²³⁵ R. Shlomo Aviner immigrated to Israel at the age of 23 and served in the wars of 1967 and 1973, earning the rank of lieutenant. He studied at *Mercav Harav Yeshiva*; R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook was his foremost teacher. With R. Tzvi Yehuda’s encouragement, Aviner joined the settlement in Hebron. He has also served as rabbi in Kibbutz Lavi in the lower Galil, in Moshav Keshet in the Golan Heights and of Beit El in the Binyamin Region in Shomron. Don-Yehiya 2004, 277; ateret.org.il/english/rav-aviner/, 28.3.2017.

²³⁶ www.ravaviner.com/2014/05/starts-and-stops-in-redemption.html, accessed 5.4.2017.

²³⁷ www.ravaviner.com/2014/05/starts-and-stops-in-redemption.html, accessed 5.4.2017.

is the settlement of Israel and of their Land. HaRav Eliyahu Gutmacher [1796-1874] z'tl wrote: "It is clear to me that if 130 families of Israel begin to till the land in our holy Eretz – this will be the beginning of the Redemption (Geulah) even if the people are not yet worthy." (Nefesh Hayah) Certainly this great *tzaddik* desired the increase of Torah and its glorification, but the order of redemption is: agricultural settlement, the establishment of the state, and as a consequence, to follow, the uplifting of that which is sacred, the dissemination of the teaching of Torah, its increase and glorification.²³⁸

Within the perspective, thus, is a spectrum of expectations regarding how the "footsteps of redemption" will be revealed. For R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook these footsteps were explicit, in numbers of Jewish immigrants, in "liberated" square meters of *Eretz Yisrael* and in agricultural profits. But for other segments of the perspective, the footsteps are expected to be more elusive. For example, although R. Chaim Richman of the Temple Institute notes, "the prophecy of redemption is being fulfilled [...] with the ingathering of the exiles and the liberation of the Land,"²³⁹ the Temple Institute often reflects upon the increased interest for the future temple as a seismograph for the course of redemption; they perceive a "great spiritual awakening" among all peoples of the world as divinely inspired, and the increasing desire and knowledge for the future Temple lay "the foundation for the spiritual revolution that will precipitate the rebuilding of the Holy Temple and the fulfillment of this prophecy in our time."²⁴⁰ Also, the Institute teaches that the "only solution"²⁴¹ for global peace – expected to characterize the End of Days – is "rooted in the future, rebuilt Holy Temple".²⁴²

R. Chaim Richman reflects a belief in an era when all the nations of the world will co-exist in harmony; this belief, he says, places Jerusalem as the

²³⁸ www.mercazharav.org/mizmor19.htm, accessed 23.3.2017.

²³⁹ Richman 1997a, 6.

²⁴⁰ www.templeinstitute.org/international.htm, accessed 2.4.2017.

²⁴¹ www.templeinstitute.org/red_heifer/introduction.htm, accessed 2.4.2017.

²⁴² Ariel, Richman & Makover 1998, 6. According to Richman, the quote is from Haggai 1:9. The correct reference is Haggai 2:9.

“spiritual centre of all humanity”. He refers to a prophecy in Isa 2:2-3 which tells of the temple being established and all nations streaming to it. He interprets this as reflecting the conditions of the End of Days, when redemption is completed. However, he states,

it was already partially realized in those ancient days. The First Temple, built by King Solomon, was widely acclaimed as one of the great wonders of the world, and during the era of the Second Temple, the teachings of great sages and leaders created a Golden Age. [...] The Jerusalem that houses the Holy Temple transcends its physical boundaries. Jerusalem is a concept. For the service in the Holy Temple is meant to be nothing less than an act of purification for all humanity. [...] Within the Holy Temple, all forces unite to acknowledge Him who brought them all into being as the only reality, the Supreme Force which drives the universe.²⁴³

In this way R. Richman reflects an understanding of a *dynamic* redemption; the prophecy in Isaiah of the End of Days was “partially realized” with the first temple, then again with the second. Thus, redemption advances in response to the presence or absence of a Jewish temple in Jerusalem. Presumably, these dynamics also apply to the Third Temple. R. Richman does not further expound on that in this context, but reports, “Jerusalem marks the 3,000th anniversary of King David’s reign, effectively establishing the city’s Jewish roots.” R. Yisrael Ariel and R. Chaim Richman also conclude that the Temple and its service have “the power to hasten the advent of the Messiah and bring about the final redemption.”²⁴⁴

R. Shlomo Aviner perceives redemption as depending upon “our discovering the secrets of the Torah”, and on the revelation of “the Torah’s deepest truths”.²⁴⁵ The redeeming of the Torah, he explains, was taught at the *Mercaz Harav Yehiva*, and has the power to renew both the individual and the community:

²⁴³ Richman 1997b, 7.

²⁴⁴ Ariel & Richman 2005, 1.

²⁴⁵ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, xviii.

Only this Torah and learning can renew the soul of the individual who lives it, and the soul of the general nation of Israel, which, for thousands of years, lay entombed like the dry bones of Ezekiel (37:1-14). These dry bones have now been resurrected, brought back to life by HaTorah HaGoelet.²⁴⁶

As a logical continuation of his emphasis that the agricultural settlement of *Eretz Yisrael* is the first step towards redemption, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook also emphasises that redemption is a gradual and continuous process:

The true Israel is Israel redeemed, the kingdom of Israel and the armies of Israel, a people in its wholeness and not a diaspora in exile. Thus, when Israel was sent into exile heavens and earths throughout the universe trembled. And so it was with the coming of the Geulah (Redemption). A tremor spread through the universe, billowing from step to step until it reached us. [...] The process is gradual and continuous, and each and every year [of Israel's independence] is a new hymn, a celestial song, another link in the chain.²⁴⁷

Hence, within the Hardal perspective there is a variety of expectations of how the unfolding redemption will appear, ranging from very concrete expressions to more elusive ones. All these expectations, however, can be housed under the same ideotheological roof, because all of the above-described aspects are considered parts of the course of redemption. Hence, the perspective need not agree on which aspect unlocks the eschatological drama, because whether an organization focuses on rebuilding the Temple or gathering the exiles, all efforts contribute to the process of redemption. Moreover, opening the perspective to a spectrum of interpretation is the reading of time as an unprecedented, metaphysical stage, in which there are few givens.

²⁴⁶ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, xviii.

²⁴⁷ www.mercazharav.org/mizmor19.htm, accessed 23.3.2017. Also in Mirsky 2014, 226.

2.2.2. A FLEXIBLE REDEMPTION

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook's teachings on redemption, collected in the compilation of his teachings, *Torat Eretz Yisrael*, display a flexibility of the Hardal perspective; certainly, God *could* bring about redemption through miracles, but he could *also* do it in a simpler way:

Just as Hashem can bring the redemption through miracles, He can do it without miracles, in a simpler way, through a natural process, via the conquest and settlement of Eretz Yisrael. [...] The redemption which is unfolding before us appears in stages – not all at once."²⁴⁸

As the excerpt above reveals, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook saw the socio-political development – history in the making – as the redemption unfolding. He thus infused into the Hardal perspective a tradition of making theological interpretations of socio-political developments.

This understanding of the process of redemption requires an ample interpretative work both on how to understand life as it is unfolding and how to contribute constructively. With power comes responsibility, and as the Hardalim tend to ascribe some power over the process of redemption to the Jewish people, their understanding of redemption also entails remorse when struck by disillusionment. For example, R. Yisrael Ariel holds himself and the Jewish people responsible for redemption *not* erupting in 1967. Redemption would surely have been brought to completion, had the Jewish people acted rather than passively waiting:

Through the years, the more I studied, the more I began to understand that we had only ourselves and our own inaction to hold accountable: G-d does not intend for us to wait for a day of miracles. We are expected to act. We must accomplish that with which we have been charged: to do all in our power to prepare for the rebuilding of the Holy Temple, and the renewal of the divine service.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁸ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 139-140.

²⁴⁹ www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm#Rabbi-Ariel, accessed 27.3.2017.

It seems the Temple Institute has cultivated this understanding of redemption and today it has a most activist mindset; for example, the Institute teaches that redemption is “always at hand” and “there for the taking” – if only it would be embraced with an unreserved engagement:

The opportunity for redemption - *geula* - is also always at hand - for those who seek it urgently, for those who are willing discard their appointment books and personal calendars, jettison their vacation plans, reorder their priorities, and make all holy haste to grab it. When the sense of urgency is upon us, when *geula* is for us the only option, so compelling that we are “unable to hesitate,” then redemption is ours for the taking.²⁵⁰

R. Shlomo Aviner of the *Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim* argues along the same line of argumentation when stressing that in postponing the *aliyah*, one not only exposes oneself to risk at the hands of the Gentiles but also encourage others to do the same. Furthermore, the disinterest in the process of redemption and the arrival of the Messiah is the very *cause* of his delay:

And if in 130 years he [the Messiah] has not yet arrived, I will continue to arouse the Jews to move quickly to Israel. And if they say, “We are waiting for the Messiah, and then we will move to Yerushalayim,” I will answer, “You sin and make others sin out of malice, and you do enormous damage, for in the meantime Jews assimilate or are murdered. For ‘it won’t be time for the Messiah’s arrival until the Jews pine for him and say, ‘He’s near!’ or ‘He’s far!’ (Rambam’s Igrot Kiddush Hashem, Mossad Ha-Rav Kook 66-67). We wait for the Messiah every day, so come today!²⁵¹

Embedded in this reasoning is the premise that humankind’s participation in the process of redemption is essential, and the participation comprises of both *action* and *yearning*. R. Aviner does not seem to find it fruitful to distinguish between the two. In other words, it is *not* the thought that counts, but the actions which *confirm* the thought, and both are needed to advance the process of redemption. According to R. Aviner, R. Abraham

²⁵⁰ www.templeinstitute.org/talk/Nisan_8_5770-March_23_2010.htm, accessed 27.3.2017.

²⁵¹ www.ravaviner.com/search/label/Mashiach, accessed 7.4.2017.

Y. Kook taught that the yearning for redemption has two aspects; 1) that the Jewish people stayed strong in its belief that whether it seemed like it or not, God was advancing the redemption and 2), that the Jewish people should “seize upon all possible means to advance redemption.”²⁵²

It appears as if these arguments generally tend to appeal to emotion or *pathos*; they speak of yearning, of being “unable to hesitate”, and seek to arouse the audience by lyrical metaphors (“a new hymn, a celestial song”, “a tremor spread through the universe”, “it grows brighter and brighter”). The arguments also appeal to moral fibre, *ethos*; to authorities like R. Abraham Y. Kook and R. Eliyahu Gutmacher. These materials, hence, seem to display a preference of arguments appealing to *pathos* or *ethos*.²⁵³ This could be explained by R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook’s emphasis of *emunah*, “a profound wisdom which requires deep probing”²⁵⁴, while *emunah* stemming from philosophical inquiry alone “can only bring about a situation of incomplete faith” (*Kuzari* 1:13).²⁵⁵ Similarly, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook argued that “criticism of the Almighty is the greatest sin, evolving from a lack of *Emunah*”²⁵⁶. Hence, R. Tzvi Kook seems to question the fruitfulness of approaching these aspects of human existence by intellectual means.

2.2.3. MORE HAREDI THAN THE HAREDI

The tug of war between the Haredim and the Hardalim seems to be, in essence, on which interpretation of redemption stand straighter in line with the ways of the fathers. Therefore, it seems both perspectives consider the label “Haredi” to be an honouring one, attesting to the devotion to Jewish tradition. R. Shlomo Aviner of *Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim* disregards the opinion that the *Maran* (Heb. “master”) R. Abraham Y.

²⁵² www.ravaviner.com/2014/05/starts-and-stops-in-redemption.html, accessed 23.3.2017.

²⁵³ For an introduction to the Aristotelian triad, see van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Snoeck Henkemans 2002; 121.

²⁵⁴ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 6.

²⁵⁵ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 7. *Kuzari* is the work by R. Yehuda ha-Levi (1075-1141).

²⁵⁶ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 261.

Kook was in essence Haredi, only set apart from this tradition by his understanding of *Eretz Yisrael*. Instead, he sees that R. Abraham Y. Kook was *more* Haredi than the Haredim, and that the same could be said of his son, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook. These rabbis did not weaken Haredi Judaism, but on the contrary, bolstered it:

Perhaps you will ask: But what about Rav Kook's attitude towards Eretz Yisrael, Zionism and the Redemption? These issues do not detract from his Charedi-ism but add to it. Maran Ha-Rav Kook did not invalidate Charedi-ism with his views but added to it an additional, forgotten level.²⁵⁷

R. Aviner thus claims that the Kookist interpretation is the more Haredi of the two, in that it reverses Judaism to something that was forgotten, but does so without detracting anything from it.²⁵⁸ He goes on to stress that the aspect which makes the Kookist interpretation truer, is that requires *more* from the Jew, both individually and collectively; it requires a *greater* fear of God than the Haredim now bestow him:

Furthermore, Maran Ha-Rav Kook was more Charedi than the Charedim. How so? He was the Divine agent for working not only to perfect the individual, but also to perfect the entire community, i.e. the revival of the Nation of Israel in its Land, which is a more difficult realm than working to perfect an individual. Matters relating to the entire community are always more complicated than matters relating to the individual. It is more complicated to be David, King of Israel, who was completely holy, than an individual Tzaddik hidden away in one's room. And if a person who is closed off in his own individual world, as we were in the Exile, must be equally careful in performing easy and difficult Mitzvot, then this is all the more so true for we who are

²⁵⁷ www.ravaviner.com/2014/12/was-maran-ha-rav-kook-charedi.html, accessed 7.4.2017.

²⁵⁸ Robert Eisen notes within religious Zionism an "unwillingness to admit their modernism, and they maintain that self-deception by justifying their thinking on the basis of ideas and text drawn from the tradition, as if their values have always been those of Judaism." Eisen 2011, 183-184.

involved with matters regarding the Nation, the army, the economy, politics, societal issues, etc.²⁵⁹

Hence, the Hardalim seem to regard the label Haredi as attesting to a deep reverence for God and the Torah. Nadav G. Shelef notes an overall “desired proximity” to the Haredim among the Hardalim, which he attests to the deepening rift between the Hardalim and secular Zionism.²⁶⁰

This rift has widened in the wake of land cessions following the peace processes of the 80s and the 90s. The land cessions confirmed that different motivators, resulting in different priorities, drove the political establishment and the national-religious perspective. For decades, the interests conflated and the Hardalim had been able to cultivate the idea that in spite of their different beliefs, by divine inspiration they were still all moving towards the same goal – the settling of *Eretz Yisrael*. The land cessions broke this alliance, causing the Hardal perspective to radicalize away from the secular society towards the religious sphere. The *International Crisis Group* see a clear connection between the disillusionment following land relinquishment and the increase in the influence of the Haredi perspective, numerically and theologically:

For the most part, the national-religious leadership absorbed each shock, advocating intensified settlement expansion in the territories that remained under Israeli control. But each step suggested territorial compromise and also increased the number of national-religious members willing to question their leaders’ subservience to secular authorities perceived as defying God’s plan. Initially, only a few made such arguments and even fewer resorted to force: when Israel committed to withdraw from Sinai as part of the 1978 Camp David Agreement, some formed Jewish underground; the 1993 Oslo accords – which were premised upon withdrawal from what religious Zionist considered biblical heartlands – drew larger protests and prompted a

²⁵⁹ www.ravaviner.com/2014/12/was-maran-ha-rav-kook-charedi.html, accessed 7.4.2017.

²⁶⁰ Shelef 2010, 182-183.

settler attack in the Cave of the Patriarchs/Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron, as well as the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.²⁶¹

Ehud Sprinzak refers to the institutionalization of profanity and sin, on the one hand, and the Haredi faithfulness to the Torah on the other, as *the Kookist paradox*. R. Abraham Y. Kook was convinced that Zionism, in spite of its secular expression, sprung from a source of holiness. In his understanding, "The source of Zionism is the most supreme source of holiness, the Bible, which affords all of the tradition's splendour and depth."²⁶² Ehud Sprinzak understands the Kookist paradox as a kabbalistic ploy:

He would have preferred to see a religious movement lead the modern Jewish return to Eretz Yisrael. Since there was no such movement, and since he was moved by the early pioneers, he devised a unique kabbalistic ploy, the *sacralization of the profane*, that is his religious legitimation of secular and atheist Zionism.²⁶³

Shalom Ratzabi also describes the solution R. Abraham Y. Kook offered to explain the role of the secular to the mystical; he describes the Kookist paradox as a Hegelian argument: the "cunning of reason". That is, while one might think one is building a society, one is unknowingly contributing to the process of redemption.²⁶⁴ Ratzabi notes that the mystical doctrine of R. Kook became a central part of religious Zionist thinking, rendering a religious legitimacy to the secular realm: "Thus, Zionism is not a secular ideology but the very heart of Jewish religion."²⁶⁵

²⁶¹ International Crisis Group 2009, 3. *International Crisis Group* is a non-profit, non-governmental organization conducting research in violent conflicts and publishing "detailed, high-quality reports". It is "extremely well connected to international actors, including the European Union, the United Nations, and OSCE, as well as individual state governments". Due to its economical independence, it can publish "highly critical" analyses. Gagnon 2002, 213-214. See also www.crisisgroup.org, accessed 5.5.2017.

²⁶² Ravitzky 1993, 57.

²⁶³ Sprinzak 1993, 118.

²⁶⁴ Ratzabi 2003, 81.

²⁶⁵ Ratzabi 2003, 78-79.

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook followed in the footsteps of his father. The secular character of the State, he taught, was merely a phase; little by little *Eretz Yisrael* would be built “with the non-holy, even though this causes complications and problems”, and eventually “all problems will vanish, and the sanctification of Hashem will appear in more and more light”. He drew parallels between the perfection of the Torah and the State, which he found to be “totally Kadosh, without any blemish at all”:

Secularism doesn't lessen the essential Kedusha [holiness] of the State. In the Gemara, our Sages explain that all of the material used in building the Temple became sanctified only after it was set into place. We build with the secular, and sanctify afterwards.²⁶⁶

Towards the end of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook's life, however, he experienced the gap widening between the objectives and methods of the political establishment and that of the Hardal ideology. When he was 91 years old, the settlements in Sinai were evacuated. For the settlement movement, the evacuation of Yamit in 1982 was particularly painful.²⁶⁷ R. Tzvi Yehuda wrote to the settlers of Yamit, many of whom were his students: “I am with you in all of our actions to strengthen the wholeness of Eretz Yisrael to all of her wide borders.”²⁶⁸

Hence, while it may have been a necessity for the success of the ideology that R. Abraham Y. Kook established a religious leadership closely linked to the secular establishment, the situation was different for his son, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook. While the interests of the Hardalim and the

²⁶⁶ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 347-348.

²⁶⁷ Yamit was a city on the northeastern Sinai Peninsula, where R. Yisrael Ariel served as a rosh yeshiva in a small yeshiva for some time. It was evacuated on April 26th 1982, six weeks after the passing of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook. Eliezer Don-Yehiya reports R. Ariel was “the most prominent representative of the extreme position in the battle against the withdrawal from Sinai was Rav Yisrael Ariel, rabbi of Yamit, who called on Israeli Soldiers to violate the order to evacuate the settlers.” Don-Yehiya 2004, 278; Lustick 1988, 61; Sprinzak 1991; 16; 262-263. R. Yisrael Ariel is the founder and leader of the Temple Institute, presented in Chpt. 6.

²⁶⁸ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 358-359.

political establishment often “neatly conflated”²⁶⁹, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook never hesitated to discard the authority of the political establishment, if it failed to promote the settling of the land, as Lilly Weissbrod analyses:

Rabbi Kook claimed that the government was not legitimate if it did not represent the people’s interest, which was redemption by settlement. Those who demanded Israel’s withdrawal from Judea and Samaria, and those who submitted to this request (the government), would be cursed by God.²⁷⁰

Gadi Taub explains that in the understanding of the settlement movement, the commandment to settle *Eretz Yisrael* is to be carried out regardless of whether or not it was safe for the individual and regardless of whether it being in the best interest of the nation or not. It is a commandment that advances redemption, and hence, no other interest could compare to it. Also, once redemption is brought to completion, universal peace will follow. Therefore, even if settling *Eretz Yisrael* creates conflicts, these will supernaturally be resolved when redemption springs out in full bloom. Therefore, there is no need for concern for the consequences of executing this commandment.²⁷¹

The position of the political establishment *vis-à-vis* the settlement activities have shifted from condoning it, *expressis verbis* or tacitly, symbolically or concretely, to denying and counteracting it. This is probably less an expression of ambiguity than a consequence of the movements of the democracy responding to the socio-political developments both internally and internationally. On September 3rd, 1992, Yitzhak Rabin – then prime minister – said that Israelis “should cast off delusions of a religion of Greater Land of Israel”.²⁷² Lilly Weissbrod reflects upon the outcome of the establishment’s shifting stance, particularly during the Oslo Peace Process:

²⁶⁹ Jones 1997, 31.

²⁷⁰ Weissbrod 1982, 269. This was perhaps the ideological foundation to why a spokesperson for Gush Emunim later declared: ‘settlement is above law’, *ibid*.

²⁷¹ Taub 2010, 14.

²⁷² Paine 1995, 13.

The diverse messages and self-contradictory actions of the government regarding the peace process have had two complementary results. First, they have not tempered the long-standing polarization in Israeli society. [...] Secondly, and paradoxically enough, while the public is clearly split on some issues, some people are of two minds. [...] Ambivalence also prevails regarding the very concept of peace.²⁷³

To summarize, the Hardal perspective seems to have altered its predispositions both *vis-à-vis* secular Zionism and Haredi Judaism; interestingly, this change has conflated with the shifting of the political establishment from appearing to share interests with the Hardal perspective to counteracting one of its foci for advancing redemption: the settling of *Eretz Yisrael*. This aspect of redemption will be studied closer in Chpt. 4.

2.2.4. THUS REDEMPTION HAS BEGUN

One of the clearest signs that redemption has begun is, according to the Hardal interpretation, derived from *BT Sanhedrin 98a*, which states: “When the Land of Israel yields its fruit bountifully, then the end of days will be near. You have no clearer sign of the end of days than that.” This passage, in turn, reflects Ezek. 36:8, which states that the mountains of Israel “shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to my people Israel, for they will soon be coming.”

This is, in R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook’s opinion, “a very clear definition of the end of Galut”.²⁷⁴ R. Tzvi Yehuda elucidates that the two indications are that 1) the land would have been desolate for “so many years”, but then 2) is “divinely commanded to give forth its fruit”, and *expressis verbis* not to the Gentile nations, but to the Jewish nation. R. Tzvi Yehuda seems to have interpreted the fruitfulness in a very concrete way. R. Samson comments:

²⁷³ Weissbrod 1997, 57.

²⁷⁴ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 147-148.

Interestingly, it wasn't the flourishing of Israel's spiritual life [...] which Rav Tzvi Yehuda emphasized when he spoke about Geula. Instead, he pointed to the agricultural boom, in the down-to-earth harvest of oranges, bananas, and grapes, which the Gemara says is the surest sign of the Exile's end.²⁷⁵

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook did not see the fruitfulness of Israel as a practical consequence of the time and effort invested by the *kibbutzim*, but rather, as a "miracle" expressing a "divine design":

If the Land of Israel gives forth her fruits in abundance, this is not just coincidence. We don't believe that the world is run by chance, G-d forbid. Only people of impoverished thinking, from intellectual laziness, believe that all the miracles we are witnessing today are only accidents of history. This is a mistake. If events happen in accordance with prophecy, we know that it is all a matter of Divine design.²⁷⁶

The conviction that the messianic era had begun was echoed by "an ever-expanding number of disciples" following R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook. Among them, R. Shlomo Aviner saw the agricultural settlement of *Eretz Yisrael* as the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy and concluded, "we affirm the absolute certitude of the appearance of the redemption now. Nothing here is in the realm of the secret or hidden."²⁷⁷ R. Aviner even considers this "no more clear sign" as the foremost argument to present to the Haredim to challenge their perception of redemption:

When Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda was asked what should be said to the Charedi community, which was unconvinced regarding the Redemption, he said: "We are not Karaites! We are Talmud-faithful Jews, and the Talmud itself teaches us about the revealed Final Redemption. It says that there is no more clear sign of the Final Redemption than the Land of Israel's offering its fruit generously to the ingathering Jews!"²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 149.

²⁷⁶ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 149-150.

²⁷⁷ Tal 2002, 142.

²⁷⁸ www.ravaviner.com/search/label/Redemption, accessed 7.4.2017.

R. David Samson understands the flourishing of agriculture since the establishment of the State of Israel as a sign of the prophecy of Ezekiel having been fulfilled. He comments thus in his translation of R. Abraham Y. Kook's work *Orot*,

Only with the return of her children in our time did the land of Israel return to life. In a miraculously short time, the desert land became a major world exporter of fruit and flowers. The meeting between the Land of Israel and the people of Israel gives life and strength to both. [...] With our return to Jerusalem, to the valleys of the Jordan River, and to the shores of the Kinneret, our dry bones came to life.²⁷⁹

In a more contemporary setting, the spokesperson of the Jewish community in Hebron David Wilder also points to the rich agriculture of the State of Israel as evidence of the nascent redemption:

He brought us back to the land after a two thousand year exile, and He made the land prosper. It is written in the Talmud that the sign of redemption is when the Land of Israel flourishes, when plants and flowers grow, when the trees are rich with fruit. As long as the Jews were in exile the land was desolate – no agriculture, no nothing, until the Jews returned. Then, again, the land blossomed in all its glory.²⁸⁰

This sacralization of the agriculture is problematic from a socio-political point of view. For those who might seek it, it provides a *carte blanche* to acquit the question of asymmetrical distribution of resources as it sees the agricultural success as a "miracle". Mark Zeitoun concludes that in spite of its "midstream position on the transboundary river and aquifers, the Israeli state's ability to control shared waters has ensured that it maintains the lion's share". He also shows that the State of Israel uses agricultural water – a usage exceeding that of any other sector – in a ratio of 9:1 to Palestine, although its importance to the respective economy is roughly

²⁷⁹ Samson & Fishman 1996, 22-23. *Nota bene*, "dry bones" is a reference to the prophecy of Ezekiel.

²⁸⁰ Wilder 2013, 480. Monday, April 28, 2003: "Negotiating with Nazis?"

1:25.²⁸¹ Zeitoun notes that the control of this precious resource takes on “a historical pioneering dimension”; the “hidden politics keep scientific and economic rationales well at bay.”²⁸² As a water engineer, Zeitoun sees the elegant indoor water fountain of the Tel Aviv airport as a romantic allusion to prophecy as well as an envoy of hydro-politics:

The message it sends is also subtle – to the point that it is probably lost to most travellers, who have yet to become fascinated by hydropolitics: you are arriving in Israel where there is water in abundance; Israel made the desert bloom.²⁸³

Shifting for a moment to the other perspective of the study, the Haredi organization JAZ does not interpret the rich agricultural life of the State of Israel as either a divine intervention or a fulfillment of prophecy, but rather, as a result of natural processes and hard work. JAZ also indicates that the fruits in question should be of miraculous nature – either growing unnaturally rapidly or unnaturally large. The fruitfulness of the State of Israel only proves that one can “be successful in doing wrong on a large scale”:

The Satmar Rov [R. Yoel Teitelbaum] writes that the Gemora about Eretz Yisroel producing fruit means either in a miraculous way new fruits growing every day, as we see in Shabbos 30b that they will do this in the time of Moshiach or else it at least means like the way it was in the times of Tanach; see Rashi on Bamidbar 13:23 where he talks about the great size of the fruits brought back by the spies. But if they grow naturally like in the rest of the world the more work you put into it, the more it grows that is not a proof of anything. In general, whenever people bring proof from the successes of the Zionists their successes in agriculture, in diplomacy or in battle they are missing an important point. Such arguments do have a wide appeal, for every Torah Jew believes that Hashem did, does and will do all things. The fallacy of the argument lies in the undeniable fact that there is evil in this world.

²⁸¹ Zeitoun 2008, 45; 58.

²⁸² Zeitoun 2008, 62.

²⁸³ Zeitoun 2008, 1.

Hashem allows people free will to choose to do wrong, and even to be successful in doing wrong on a large scale.²⁸⁴

In *BT Shabbat 30b*, R. Gamaliel lectures that “Trees are destined to yield fruit every day, for it is said, and it shall bring forth boughs and bear fruit”. Rashi’s commentary to Num. 23:13 mentions a “cluster of grapes” so heavy that they “carried it on a pole between two people”.²⁸⁵

The establishment of the State is, to the Hardal perspective, another sure sign that the exile has ended and the process of redemption is evolving. Simone Ricca states that the establishment – both *per se* and as its history has unfolded – reflects “in some special way the will of God”, signalling the “beginning of the promised redemption”. Thus, the State of Israel has a “special religious significance.”²⁸⁶

R. Abraham Y. Kook saw the state as “the first shoots of our redemption” – an idea he integrated into the Chief Rabbinate’s prayer for the well-being of the state.²⁸⁷ In his pivotal *Yom Ha’Atzmaut speech* in 1967, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook concluded that “the order or redemption is: agricultural settlement, the establishment of the state, and as a consequence, to follow, the uplifting of that which is sacred”.²⁸⁸ R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook further perceived that there is

no mysticism in seeing Hashem’s guiding hand in the events of our time. This is all clear, visual proof of the Divine. Our Holy Land, which was in a paralyzing slumber, is showing her powers. She began to awaken during all of the wars which erupted during these last fifty years, and which ended the Turkish rule in the Land. Thank G-d, the Land is in our hands now. Even the Temple Mount is under our control.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/chutzlaaretz, accessed 7.4.2017.

²⁸⁵ Miller 2005, 104-105.

²⁸⁶ Ricca 2007, 29.

²⁸⁷ Waxman 1987, 184.

²⁸⁸ www.mercazharav.org/mizmor19.htm, accessed 23.3.2017.

²⁸⁹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 330.

R. David Samson, who translated and commented R. Abraham Y. Kook's work *Orot*, explains that while the *Shoah* decimated the Jewish people in a way unprecedented in history, "yet upon our return to Israel, we transformed almost magically into a dynamic world power." This supernatural transformation, is perceived by R. Samson as a reflection of the verse from Isaiah, "He grants breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them who walk therein" [Isa 42:5, BT Ketuboth 111a].²⁹⁰ David Wilder of the Jewish Community in Hebron also expresses a conviction of divine powers at play when the Jewish people returned to *Eretz Yisrael* and Hebron: it is "nothing less than a true Divine Miracle", "a rekindling of a spark". Similarly, he argues that the return to Hebron, after the return to the land and the creation of the state, "is too a miracle".²⁹¹ The Temple Institute also perceives the "ongoing ingathering of millions of exiled Jews" as evidence of a "great historical and redemptive process":

In spite of the continuing pains of rebirth that this nation is experiencing, and even in spite of all careless and sometimes cruel damage we have inflicted upon ourselves, there is no humanly rational way possible to deny that a great historical and redemptive process is taking place here in the land of Israel. The ongoing ingathering of millions of exiled Jews and ancient Jewish communities from scores of countries the world over dwarfs any temporary setbacks we have met along the way.²⁹²

The Hardal perspective thus, has grown accustomed to interpreting socio-political developments in the light of the ideotheology. In their understanding, reality reflects the progression of redemption. R. Abraham Y. Kook read the unfolding history as the Beginning of the End, coming to fruition in the full redemption of time.²⁹³ "More than any other thinker", Elie Holzer deems, R. Abraham Y. Kook integrated "political and

²⁹⁰ Samson & Fishman 1996, 22-23.

²⁹¹ Wilder 2013, 742. Tuesday, September 19, 2006: "The Spark of Return".

²⁹² www.templeinstitute.org/talk/Iyar_2_5768-May_7_2008.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

²⁹³ Inbari 2009, 18; www.mercazharav.org/kook.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

historical activism into the framework of a comprehensive religious outlook, as an integral component of his messianic philosophy".²⁹⁴

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook and other voices from the perspective explicitly interpreted the establishment of the State of Israel and its agricultural success as two such reflections of the process of redemption. R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook seems to have been aware of this tendency in his ideotheology: "Be quiet, pensive and listen", he taught, "Then you will see the Almighty, who disguises Himself in the events which unfold in the world."²⁹⁵

The Six Day War in 1967 is another historical event perceived as an example of God's intervention in history, confirming that the State of Israel was established by and is continuously protected by God. The war broke on June 5th, 1967. By June 10th, the State of Israel had almost tripled its territory.²⁹⁶ The development was so incredible that "even the secularists called them a miracle".²⁹⁷ Adding to the aura of miracle in the Hardal perspective, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook had held "the speech of his life"²⁹⁸ three weeks earlier, calling upon the Jewish people to reclaim Hebron, Shechem, Jericho and "all that lies beyond the Jordan"; "each and every clod of earth, every region, hill, valley, every plot of land, that is part of Eretz Israel".²⁹⁹ In the light of the territorial conquests, the speech appeared to be a prophetic vision of the unfolding redemption. Hertzberg describes the speech as "important", as it announced redemption to be "the divine command of the hour", which meant "at the very least" all the territory west of the Jordan River.³⁰⁰ Robert Paine follows Hertzberg and describes the speech as "a breakthrough", as R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook decisively justified the struggle to occupy *Eretz Yisrael*. The

²⁹⁴ Holzer 2007, 346.

²⁹⁵ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 330.

²⁹⁶ Paine 1995, 9-11.

²⁹⁷ Hertzberg 1986, 87.

²⁹⁸ Mirsky 2014, 226.

²⁹⁹ www.mercazharav.org/mizmor19.htm, accessed 23.3.2017.

³⁰⁰ Hertzberg 1986, 88; Taub 2010, 42-34.

speech, seemingly confirmed by the outcome of the war, effectively silenced the voices critical of the righteousness of the settlement movement.³⁰¹

A few years later, in 1973, the Yom Kippur War erupted. Whereas the Six Day War was perceived as an indication of the unfolding redemption, the Yom Kippur War paradoxically reinforced that idea; although it was the “war that should never have happened”, it was theologically perceived as an evil attempt to rebuff the process of redemption, and hence, confirming the interpretation of the Six Day War:

If the Six Day War was interpreted as signifying divine intervention in hastening the process of redemption, the Yom Kippur War signified the continued rejection by Gentiles of the Jews as a people, and an attempt to negate the process of redemption.³⁰²

This paradox may be understood as an example of *cognitive dissonance*; when the State of Israel triumphs in war, it is a sign of divine protection; when a war erupts that does not fit into the theological construct, it too strengthens the construct by being worth the attention of the dark force, trying to thwart the process of redemption. Hence, the theological construct never fails, but the circumstances are interpreted in a way that evens out the cognitive dissonance.

Until this point, most Jews had made a clear distinction between Zionism and messianic redemption. With the emergence of religious Zionism and R. Tzvi Kook’s interpretations of the 1967 and 1973 wars, however, the mental landscape changed.³⁰³ Clive Jones concludes that R. Tzvi Kook

placed Israel’s military triumph within the continuing evolution of the messianic era. His vision encompassed a preordained Jewish right to settle the newly captured territories, a process that was encouraged by

³⁰¹ Paine 1995, 10-11. Paine renders the speech as a “central component of the Gush Emunim mythology”.

³⁰² Jones 1997, 32.

³⁰³ Kippenberg 2000, 335.

Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook among the students of the Yeshivat Merkaz Harav in Jerusalem. [...] Such ideas found a receptive audience among the wider religious right, offering as they did a *carte blanche* that divorced settlement activity from any moral or humanistic constraint.³⁰⁴

Jones perceives the 1967 war as a watershed in the forming of the national identity. From the founding of the state until the war, there had been a development towards universal, *Israeli* values; after the war, Jones sees a development towards particular, *Jewish* values. The capturing of the West Bank and East Jerusalem was read in wide circles as a divine intervention, and accordingly, a re-affirmation of the covenantal relationship and the Jewish identity. From the war onwards, this emphasis “increasingly influenced the political agenda in Israel”; the political agenda not to cede any of the acquired territories, “neatly conflated with the developing ideology of the religious right”, according to Clive Jones.³⁰⁵ Menachem Friedman notes that the period following 1967 was one of “spiritual uplift, which pervaded most of the religious community”.³⁰⁶

Thus, as reflected above, the historical impulses of the establishment of the State, as well as its agricultural and territorial developments, have been infused with eschatological significance in the Hardal perspective. Aviezer Ravitzky remarks,

In fact, it is difficult to find streams in Jewish orthodoxy over the last generations that have developed an attentiveness to history similar to that developed by the two movements in question [the Hardalim and the Habad Hasidim].³⁰⁷

2.2.5. REDEMPTION WILL COME IN ITS OWN DUE TIME

In contrast to the Haredi understanding of the shift from exile to redemption, the Hardalim do not believe that redemption will begin by

³⁰⁴ Jones 1997, 31.

³⁰⁵ Jones 1997, 31.

³⁰⁶ Friedman 1989, 165.

³⁰⁷ Ravitzky 1998, 576-577.

the Jewish people returning to a religious life, *teshuva*. R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook referred to *BT Sanhedrin 97b*, in which R. Eliezer debates with R. Yehoshua, ending with the latter referencing a verse from Daniel, indicating that there is a set time for redemption. R. Eliezer was silent, the *Gemara* concludes. From this, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook draws the following conclusion:

There is a set time when we will be redeemed. The matter doesn't depend on Teshuva. [...] The Rambam's statement regarding the appointed time to come, supports this view, indicating that the Geula is not dependent upon Tshuva, but will come in its own due time, whether there is a returning to Torah or not.³⁰⁸

It appears paradoxical, then, that R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook downplays the importance of *teshuva* for the process of redemption, with reference to the indications that there is a set time for redemption. This stands in contrast not only to the Haredi perspective but also to later voices of the Hardal perspective. For example, the Temple Institute stresses that redemption “is there for the taking”³⁰⁹, and R. Shlomo Aviner stresses individual responsibility for the process of redemption: “if by eighty years from now the Messiah is not yet here [...] I will know that there is much more I must do for all these, and then the Messiah will come.”³¹⁰ The question is, thus, to what degree R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook believed the process of redemption *could* be influenced, and to what degree he saw it as predestined. As outlined above, he encouraged the settlement of the land and accredited it significance. Likewise, he perceived the burgeoning agriculture to be an indication of the blooming redemption. All of these achievements required human effort, but could R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook have perceived these efforts to be predestined as well – depending, as they were, on divine intervention, protection and provision? Could it be that R. Tzvi Yehuda

³⁰⁸ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 311.

³⁰⁹ www.templeinstitute.org/talk/Nisan_8_5770-March_23_2010.htm, accessed 27.3.2017.

³¹⁰ www.ravaviner.com/search/label/Mashiach, accessed 1.4.2017.

Kook understood redemption as more preordained and less open to human influence than his followers did?

When R. Shlomo Aviner envisions the arrival of the Messiah, he predicts that upon learning that the Messiah has finally come, “I will immediately set out for my army unit, without waiting for the orders (see Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim uMilchamotehem 11:4*).”³¹¹ He believes that the arrival of the Messiah will be due to all who waited patiently, and for all those years they sent their children to religious schools, ate *kosher* food, put on *Tefillin*, kept the *Shabbat*, continued to build *Eretz Yisrael*, the State of Israel and the army, and continued to arouse Jews to make *aliyah* speedily:

I can hear the sound of the great Shofar. I see Eliyahu the Prophet. He will say, “Thank you for the generations you waited daily. His arrival is thanks to you.”³¹²

The Temple Institute also wrestles with this paradox, concerning when to rebuild the Temple: “After all, if March 16th is the projected date, then where is our input? Suppose we want to build the Holy Temple today?” The Institute solves the riddle by concluding that since there is a commandment to build a sanctuary for God, (Ex. 25:8), the *commandment* can and should be fulfilled at the earliest opportunity – “today, not necessarily on March 16th.”³¹³ Thus, the Hardal perspective seems to *both* understand redemption as predestined *and* open to influence. To solve all incongruities, however, the perspective would have to surrender the idea of redemption being responsive to human influence. The perspective

³¹¹ R. Aviner is possibly referring to the sense of haste in *Hilchot Melachim uMilchamotehem 11:4*, where Maimonides writes: “When the true messianic king will arise and prove successful, his [position becoming] exalted and uplifted, then all will return and realize that their ancestors endowed them with a false heritage and their prophets and ancestors caused them to err!” Touger 2001, 613.

³¹² www.ravaviner.com/search/label/Mashiach, accessed 1.4.2017.

³¹³ www.templeinstitute.org/gra-churva-holy-temple.htm, accessed 1.4.2017.

indeed seems to be slowly abandoning this concept, in favour of the emphasis of following all the commandments (Heb. mitzvot).³¹⁴

2.3. THE HAREDIM: REDEMPTION IS AN EVENT

2.3.1. THE THREEFOLD OATH

The two organizations representing the Haredi position in this study frequently reference the Threefold oath as a basis for their opposition to Zionism. The Threefold oath is – according to JAZ – the “foundation” of the anti-Zionist position,³¹⁵ because “the fundamental reason why Zionism is wrong” is that it violates the Threefold oath.³¹⁶ The oath is thought to have been “imposed on the roots of the Jewish souls in Heaven,” while the part of the Threefold oath that concerns the gentiles “was imposed on the angels of each nation.”³¹⁷ This understanding seems to reflect that of Avnei Nezer (R. Avraham Borenstein, Sochatover Rebbe, 1838-1910), who wrote in *Yoreh De’ah* (Ch. 456, p. 3) “The oath was directed to the root of their souls up above”.³¹⁸

Zionism is seen as a vicious attempt to undermine the Haredi belief system, and hence, the life of the Haredim, both in theory and practice. JAZ concludes, “Zionism, by advocating a political and military end to the Jewish exile, denies the very essence of our Diaspora existence.”³¹⁹

Ravitzky notes a “deep-seated reluctance to rebel against the Exile or to force the end”.³²⁰ This is exemplified by JAZ, expressing a belief that the emergence out of the exile and the restoration of the Jewish people to the Holy Land is “strictly God’s domain, and any effort in that area is a direct

³¹⁴ See Chpt. 5.2.2, where this analysis continues.

³¹⁵ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/student, accessed 13.3.2017.

³¹⁶ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/student, accessed 13.3.2017.

³¹⁷ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/avneinezer2, accessed 13.3.2017.

³¹⁸ Ravitzky 1993, 293.

³¹⁹ www.truetorahjews.org/our_mission, accessed 13.3.2017.

³²⁰ Ravitzky 1993, 212; Ravitzky 1993, 83.

affront and denial of his mastery over the world.”³²¹ The processes of exile and redemption “must be left to the control of God, with no physical effort on our part”.³²² To try to end the exile politically or forcibly would only “defy divine providence”; the only way to bring about relief is to repent, as “the fate of the Jews reflects the consequences of the Covenant between God and His people”.³²³ Abandoning this approach is bound to have serious implications:

The Jewish people are in exile by Divine Decree and may emerge from exile solely via Divine Redemption. All human efforts to alter a metaphysical reality are doomed to end in failure and bloodshed. History has clearly borne out this teaching.³²⁴

In one of their pamphlets, *Neturei Karta* formulates its understanding of the Threefold Oath. Firstly, the oath forbids “ascending against the wall” - that is, not to return *en masse* to the Holy Land: “During exile, Jews were commanded by the prophet Jeremiah (29:7), ‘Seek the peace of the city where I have exiled you, and pray to the Almighty on its behalf, for with its peace you will have peace.’”³²⁵

Secondly, the oath adjures the people not to “rebel against the nations of the world”. This prohibition is understood by NK both with regards to organized resistance in the Diaspora as well as with regards to attempting to end the exile prematurely, by own efforts.³²⁶

Thirdly, the oath charges the nations of the world not to oppress the Jewish people overly much. This part of the Threefold oath has caused vivid debate, although it, *per se*, is not an obligation laid upon the Jewish people. It has been discussed whether the *Shoah* constituted a violation of this part of the Threefold oath; and if not, what would? Moreover, if the nations of

³²¹ Cohen 2007, 4.

³²² Cohen 2007, 10.

³²³ Rabkin 2006, 12.

³²⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/our_mission, accessed 24.3.2017.

³²⁵ www.nkusa.org/books/pamphlets/pamphlet_4.pdf, accessed 7.4.2017.

³²⁶ www.nkusa.org/books/pamphlets/pamphlet_4.pdf, accessed 7.4.2017.

the world transgress the oath and oppress the Jewish people overly much, does that annul the oath altogether or are the two first parts of the Threefold oath still in force? NK summarizes its understanding of exile and the consequences of it, thus:

The Jewish people are in a state of divinely ordained Exile since the destruction of the Jewish Temple some 2000 years ago. And we are expressly forbidden to physically attempt to leave exile, only prayer is permitted in order to achieve this goal. It is important to note, that the end of exile – redemption, does not mean a “State of Israel”, only rather, a time of universal peace and brotherhood in service of the One God. Exile means that Jews are required to be loyal citizens in every country in which they live, and means that they must not rule over any other people, rebel against any nation or oppress any nation or go up en masse to the Holy Land.³²⁷

The second and third part of the Threefold oath establishes the Jewish people’s subjugation to the nations of the world while the exile endures. This subjugation is not a punishment as such but rather testifies to Israel’s special relationship with God. Yirmiyahu Cohen for JAZ explains, with reference to the *Maharal* (R. Judah Loew, 1525-1609), that the reason why the Jewish people experience exile more than other nations, is because the Jewish people, in a unique way, belong to God. Therefore, when the Jewish people stray from the life set out for them by their covenant with God, God withdraws; they go into exile and enter the domains of other nations, in which they are subjugated under the angels of those nations. Israel has no angel of its own since it belongs to God, and that is why – during exile – Israel is subjugated to the nations of the world. From these domains, God redeems them:

For each nation has a special angel, and how can one angel be subjugated to the other? But Israel has no angel, but rather when they are living up to their full spiritual potential, they belong to Hashem; and when they are not living up to their full spiritual potential, Hashem leaves them and they enter the domain of other nations. [...] Therefore

³²⁷ www.nkusa.org/activities/statements/101102wdc.cfm, accessed 23.2.2017.

they are fit for redemption: to go out from the dominion of the nations, since they belong to Hashem³²⁸

There has also been some discussion regarding whether or not the Threefold oath can be considered binding, or if it is to be viewed as an Aggadah. Stringently withholding that the Threefold oath is still in force, JAZ and NK consider it an “academic question” as to why Maimonides omitted the Threefold oath; the oath is discussed by other *poskim*³²⁹ - for example by Rashbash, Avnei Nezer and Aruch haShulchan – “as any other Halakhah”.³³⁰

The tradition of the Threefold oath is, hence, central to the Haredi argumentation against Zionism; as long as the oath is in force, it forbids immigration *en masse* to *Eretz Yisrael*. It also forbids “rebellious against the nation”, which is read both as prohibiting the formation of a sovereign state and organizing militarily. The Threefold oath does not, however, in itself *confirm* that the exile still in force – this is presupposed by the fact that Zionism has never had a messianic figure, which the Haredim see as a *sine qua non* to the messianic era. This will be further expounded in Chpt. 5.

2.3.2. THE EXILE IS HEALING

While the Hardal perspective describes the exile as an inferior existence, the Haredim tend to see it in a constructive light. The exile, to the Haredim, is a divinely inflicted punishment, but that is not all it is; it is also a healing process. The exile, in both these aspects, is an expression of God’s righteousness and providence. Therefore, to fail to accept humbly it is *futile* since it is decreed by an almighty god; it is also *fatuous* since the purpose of the exile is to rectify and heal; and it is *dangerous* since it risks

³²⁸ Cohen 2007, 62.

³²⁹ Heb. *Posek*, a legal scholar who rules on the Halakhah in situations where previous rulings cannot be applied or there are no precedents.

³³⁰ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/chutzlaaretz, accessed 7.4.2017.

causing God to aggravate and/or prolong the exile. Yirmiyahu Cohen for JAZ explains that

redemption from exile and restoration of the Jewish people to the Holy Land is strictly G-d's domain, and any effort in that area is a direct affront and denial of His mastery over the world.³³¹

From the Haredi perspective, therefore, the Jewish people can only contribute to their return from exile by accepting it, and by embracing the conditions the exile sets out for them. The exile is a necessary process of healing, sheltered by God. JAZ explains this with reference to R. Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld (1848-1932), who describes the exile as a hospital:

The exile is the Jewish people's hospital. It is unthinkable that we should take ourselves power in our land before our healing process is complete. Hashem protects us and shields us while doling out to us the medicine of suffering in exact amounts. We are certain that when the time comes and our healing from our sins is complete, Hashem will not delay even one second, and He Himself will redeem us. Not so if we would hurry to leave the hospital – then a mortal danger, a perpetual danger would hover over us, G-d forbid. And even when we pray for our redemption, we only ask that our healing process be completely quickly – not that we should return to the King's palace while still sick, G-d forbid (Mara D'ara Yisroel v. 1 p. 145).³³²

Against this background, one can understand the ferocity by which the Haredim stress the importance of not hastening the end and not breaking out of the exile by force and prematurely. The Hardal understanding of redemption, thus, entails a perpetual, mortal danger.

³³¹ Cohen 2007, 4.

³³² www.truetorahjews.org/rebyosefchaim, accessed 7.4.2017.

2.3.3. REDEMPTION MUST NOT BE HASTENED

The Haredim argue that only God can end the exile. Nonetheless, they also stress that redemption must not be hastened; that doing so could have serious implications.

Yirmiyahu Cohen expounds on Gen. 15:11, "And the birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away," that Rashi interpreted the birds as symbolizing *David ben Yishai*. The Abarbanel (Isaac ben Judah Abarbanel, 1437-1508) in turn, interpreted this as Rashi not referring to David the king, but rather to his descendant, the Messiah. Because Abram saw the length and the difficulties of the exile, he feared that the people would not endure it, and would try to break out of the exile prematurely, like the Children of Ephraim. Therefore, he prevented the birds (the Messiah) from coming down on the carcasses (the nations) until the evening (the time of redemption).³³³

2.3.4. PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE

In their *parashah* (a weekly portion of the Torah) to *Pesach*, JAZ actualizes the virtue of patience and faith while waiting for redemption. JAZ references R. Shlomo Kluger (1786-1869), who reflects in *Maasei Yedei Yotzer* (on the Haggadah, page 64a) upon why *matzot* were eaten while still in Egypt, when it is eaten to remember the haste of the Exodus. JAZ reads Kluger as presenting this as a model for the current exile:

Therefore Hashem showed us during the Egyptian exile that He was in a greater hurry to redeem us than we were ourselves. The Torah says, "They were not able to tarry," implying that the Jewish people wanted to spend a little extra time in Egypt, but Hashem did not let them stay. He took them out as soon as possible and as quickly as possible. The lesson for us is that if Hashem is not redeeming us now, it is only because redemption is impossible; as soon as it becomes possible He

³³³ Cohen 2007, 17-18.

will redeem us without any delay. Therefore we need not push for the redemption with actions of our own.³³⁴

This argument appeals to all three categories of the Aristotelian triad; most notably is the appeal to *pathos*, stressing that God is longing even more passionately for redemption than the people do, and therefore, the people should be patient; it also appeals to *logos*, stressing that since God has not yet brought redemption to realization, it must be impossible, and hence, it is useless to try to achieve redemption ahead of time; it also appeals to *ethos*, referencing to an authority, the Torah, ensuring that God does not tarry, and as he is trustworthy and reliable, the Jewish people should only wait.³³⁵

One might think that the emphasis on the Threefold oath and on the virtue of patience and faith within the Haredi perspective would leave its adherents crestfallen. It seems, however, that this passive approach is counterpoised by two convictions: 1) that God is even more eager to redeem his people than the people themselves, and 2) that abiding in exile is the only way to promote redemption. Hence, it is only falsely passive, in that the passivity is, in itself, a form of activism.³³⁶ Yirmiyahu Cohen strengthens this picture by describing their activism as a form of warfare:

Our power is only through our mouth, to pray to Hashem in difficult times. But war – to fight with the nations – do not apply to us. Our “war” with them [the nations] means activism – that Jewish activists must boldly face kings and leaders and work for the good of the Jewish people. Even if the leaders throw them out angrily, they must keep coming back; this is our pillar of existence in exile, until Moshiach comes.³³⁷

³³⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/pesach, accessed 7.4.2017.

³³⁵ The Aristotelian triad and other aspects of argumentation is presented in van Eemeren, Grootendorst & Snoeck Henkemans, 2002.

³³⁶ Anderssén-Löf 2016, 243; 250-254.

³³⁷ Cohen 2007, 41.

Regarding the time of redemption, JAZ references the Midrash to Song of Songs 2:8, in which Moses goes to tell his people that they will be redeemed “in this month”, only to be met with scepticism: “Didn’t the Holy One, blessed is He, say to Abraham that they will enslave us for 400 years? It has only been 210 years so far.” Moses then replies that God never looks at their calculations, but “skips over the mountains – the predestined end-times”, alluding to the illustration in Song of Songs 2:8: “Listen! My lover! Look! Here he comes, leaping across the mountains, bounding over the hills.” JAZ further perceives the proximity of the verse to the oath saying that just as God shortened the exile as much as possible in Egypt, God is also seeking to take his people out of the current exile as soon as possible.³³⁸ Yirmiyahu Cohen emphasizes that there are no shortcuts out of exile:

[...] the Jewish people have waited hundreds of years for G-d’s redemption. Now some of them are ready to give up and go look elsewhere for their redemption. In this difficult time we must remain faithful, express our true dedication to G-d and declare that we want no substitute, nothing else but Him. Then and only then will our redemption come.³³⁹

2.3.5. HOW TO PROMOTE REDEMPTION

While the Haredim see repentance as the only way to contribute to the ending of exile, they do not perceive the *teshuva* of the Jewish people as a necessary *prerequisite* for the exile to end. Since the Maimonides state that the Messiah will *bring* the Jewish people to repentance, this indicates that they will not already *be repenting* when he appears. JAZ concludes that only when he has brought them to repent will he “begin putting redemption into action – gathering the exiles and building the Temple”.³⁴⁰

³³⁸ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/pesach, accessed 14.3.2017.

³³⁹ Cohen 2007, 22.

³⁴⁰ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/rosh, accessed 31.3.2017. See also Jacob Neusner’s description of the Messiah in relation to repentance. Neusner 2005, 1694-1698.

However eagerly the Jewish people yearn for the messianic age, NK stresses that only by prayer, good deeds and repentance may they try to bring about the ending of exile and the coming of redemption:

This yearning manifested itself over the centuries only in prayer, good deeds and a spirit of penitence. This is the only Divinely sanctioned methodology to end the punishment of exile. Zionism, at root, rejected this sacred view of history.³⁴¹

Werblowsky interprets embracing the exile as a means to further redemption as a meaningful strategy to Judaism. The exile of the Jewish people is seen as a reflection of the more profound exile of God, in which the Jewish people can participate, and thereby contribute to the redemption of God himself, his people and his creation. In this system, the role of the Messiah is diminished. Also, in this strategy, the exile is not *from God upon* the people but is a challenge which God and the people face *together*.³⁴²

The Haredi perspective sees redemption as being “strictly God’s domain”; every attempt to influence the shift from exile to redemption is an expression of distrust in God, a rebellion against his rectifying plan. Consequently, every such attempt testifies to a lack of repentance, faith and humility and indicates that the Jewish people are not yet ready to leave the exile. Conversely, every such attempt risks deepening the exile. This reasoning is one reason the Haredim perceive Zionism to be so gravely untrue; whereas the Hardal perspective sees the hand of God nourishing the State of Israel, politically, economically, militarily or agriculturally, the Haredi perspective sees the Jewish people as attempting to leave the exile and taking matters into their own hands,

³⁴¹ www.nkusa.org/AboutUs/FAQs/index.cfm#reaction, accessed 7.4.2017.

³⁴² Werblowsky 2005, 5978. An equivalent of this reasoning from the Hardal perspective could be the teaching of R. Abraham Yitzak Kook in his work *Orot*, that “The salvation of Israel is always the salvation of Hashem.” Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 148.

rebellious against the Threefold oath and thus, abandoning God and the covenant:

Their claim is that G-d is doing all this, through the medium of Zionism. To them, this is comparable to our belief that although we work for a living, G-d is the One sending us the money. We must work only because G-d so decreed, and He sends us money by way of our work ("hishtadlus"). But once one studies the Rabbinic sources, it becomes clear that any activity on our part towards gathering the exiles and political sovereignty is forbidden. We are not allowed to do any "hishtadlus" to bring the redemption, other than repentance and mitzvos.³⁴³

The Haredim argue here – somewhat apologetically – that the rabbinic sources more effectively argue their understanding than the biblical sources do; through the rabbinic sources, "it becomes clear" that their opposition against Zionism is justified. This argument seems to appeal with reference to the "rabbinic sources", whose authority should be enough to persuade the audience that "we are not allowed to do any *hishtadlus* to bring the redemption". However, in terms of dialogue, this argument becomes problematic because the Haredim might not perceive the rabbinical sources of the Haredim to be as weighty as their own biblical interpretations.

Yakov M. Rakbin, to whom JAZ refers, notes that the national-religious (i.e., the Haredim) and the anti-Zionist "share the same view" – the belief in "the miraculous nature of salvation". Rakbin analyses that the point of conflict is how to understand the Zionist enterprise, which the Haredim see as

in and of itself, an expression of divine will, 'the finger of God', which had made itself manifest during the exodus from Egypt. The difference between the two extremes does not lie in a disagreement about the total destruction that must precede redemption, but in their definition of what the destruction entails. While the National Religious believe that destruction came to an end in 1945, making the Shoah the point of

³⁴³ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/sources1, accessed 14.3.2017.

departure for redemption, the theoreticians of rabbinical anti-Zionism insist that both the Shoah and the very existence of the State of Israel are part of the same process of destruction. In their view, all the accomplishments of the Zionist enterprise will be eradicated before the arrival of the Messiah, who will find the Holy land in total devastation. From this perspective, categorically rejected by Zionist messianism, the State of Israel can be nothing but an obstacle on the path to redemption.³⁴⁴

Hence, to the Haredim, the establishment of the state has swung the pendulum even *further away* from redemption. After the *Shoah*, the Jewish people would “surely have deserved the geulah [redemption], if the Zionists had not prevented it by establishing a state.”³⁴⁵ But due to the rebellion that Zionism constituted, the exile was prolonged. Yirmiyahu Cohen for JAZ refers to the *Rogachover Gaon* (R. Yosef Rosen, 1858-1936), who wrote: “Heaven forbid that we should test Hashem and fight with Him concerning the length of the exile, and come as masters into the Land.”³⁴⁶

JAZ acknowledges that even the prayers for the ending of exile testify to the Haredi axiom: that the shift from exile to redemption is all in the hands of God, “He has to be the one to end it, not us on our own initiative”.³⁴⁷ In the closing words of the section “Our Mission”, JAZ comes to the heart of the matter: it is a question of two irreconcilable ways of understanding redemption:

It is our hope that all of our fellow Jews will soon open their eyes, return to Torah and reject this ideology that replaces the Jew's age-old hope for G-d's redemption with a false redemption and a human-initiated state.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁴ Rabkin 2006, 196.

³⁴⁵ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/rov, accessed 7.4.2017.

³⁴⁶ Cohen 2007, 52.

³⁴⁷ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/golus1, accessed 27.3.2017.

³⁴⁸ www.truetorahjews.org/our_mission, accessed 24.3.2017.

To summarize, the Haredim are more often occupied with arguing *against* Zionism than *for* their understanding; this is a consequence of the Haredim standing closer to what has been considered traditional Judaism. One consequence of this is that the Haredim have the comfort of being able to assume that religious Jews are familiar with key aspects of their argumentation, whether or not they subscribe to it. This is an advantage in any argumentation. However, with a growing percentage of the world Jewry attached directly or indirectly to the Israeli context, which favours the Hardal perspective, this advantage may be abating.

2.4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has presented two ways of “constructing the phenomena of the world”³⁴⁹ – two ways of understanding the relationship between God and man, or more specifically, the interfaces of divine and mundane realms.

This chapter has shown that the discourse of the two perspectives studied here revolves around the interpretation of biblical and rabbinical tradition. Tradition is the conceptual backcloth against which theological interpretations are perceived and assessed. Whether or not they can become *meaningful* to the adherents of the perspectives largely depends on whether or not they can be incorporated into tradition, as this seems to be the primary path of legitimizing an interpretation. With a tradition as abundant as the Jewish, as this chapter has demonstrated, one often finds what one wants to find, if not in the texts, then between the lines. The process of interpretation and implementation is furthermore “dependent on a complex interplay between religious traditions and outside forces in the political, social and economic spheres” – although the interpreting community is not always – or perhaps not usually – aware of these aspects.³⁵⁰ Hence, “meaning” is constructed in the interpretative communities, which is the scene for the drama between categories such as

³⁴⁹ Burr 2003, 65-66.

³⁵⁰ Eisen 2011, 3-4.

“true” and “false”, “good” and “evil”, “enemy” and “friend”. Tradition is, thus, constantly re-interpreted and re-negotiated. Following, a reality is constantly re-constructed, and in a religious community, the belief system is a crucial material for that construction.

The Hardal perspective has managed the transition from what the scholarly discussion perceives to be a “traditional” or “classical” understanding of exile and redemption into a nationalist-messianic can-do-ethos. The statistical and theological expansion of the perspective, particularly since the Oslo Accords, attests to the success of this transition.³⁵¹ Undoubtedly, the historical impulses of the 20th century have also benefitted the perspective; its development being a “logical culmination of the tradition of political messianism”³⁵², which gained momentum particularly after the wars in 1967 and 1973.³⁵³

Robert Eisen perceives some of the key ideas of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook as “excellent examples of how nationalism distorted traditional Jewish teaching”, how the Kookist thinking was justified “on the basis of ideas and text drawn from the tradition, as if their values have always been those of Judaism.”³⁵⁴ Characteristic of the Hardal ideotheology is the perception of the historical impulses of the 20th century as indications of the process of redemption. Most notably, the *Shoah*, the establishment of the State of Israel, the state’s agricultural richness and demographical growth, the military success of the Six-Day War in 1967 and survival in 1973, are all examples of the divine powers at play in bringing about redemption.

The eschatology of the Hardalim has undergone changes over the past century. In the beginning of the ideotheological development, the process of redemption was perceived as intimately connected to the agricultural, territorial and national development of the State of Israel. Closer to our

³⁵¹ Shelef 2010, 182.

³⁵² Biale 1986, 166.

³⁵³ Werblowsky 2005, 5977.

³⁵⁴ Eisen 2011, 183-184.

time, it seems the perspective has shifted its focus from divine interventions to the performance of *mitzvot*. Performing the *mitzvot* is a means to promote the process of redemption, and being able to do so is an indication that the process is underway.

An asset in the Hardal interpretation of exile and redemption is its flexibility: redemption could come by divine interventions, but it could also come in a natural way. Redemption could be brought into completion within days, but it could also take centuries. Redemption could come by settling the *Eretz Yisrael*, but it could also come by gathering the exiles or rebuilding the Temple. This flexibility makes the Hardal perspective more resistant to ideotheological crisis today than, for example, in 1967. One might claim that the Threefold oath is what sets the Haredi and the Hardal perspectives presented in this study apart. The Haredim are convinced that the two eras of exile and redemption are easily distinguishable and that the ending of the exile will be announced clearly and unmistakably. They also argue that the best way to promote the ending of exile is to continue on the path of the forefathers but to do more of the same: i.e. to repent and lead a pious, humble life. They are not swayed by the Hardal interpretations of the State's achievements in the 20th century, but note, "Hashem allows people free will to choose to do wrong, and even to be successful in doing wrong on a large scale."³⁵⁵

The Haredi interpretation finds a stronghold in its claim to be "the way the Jews have always believed"³⁵⁶, an expression of traditional, Jewish faith. Much of what they represent is, indeed, "very much within the parameters of the Jewish tradition."³⁵⁷ From this angle, the Hardal perspective appears as a deviation from tradition, a blunt affront to the Threefold oath, which is "the fundamental reason" why it is seen to be wrong.³⁵⁸ The Hardal interpretation is perceived as a distortion of the

³⁵⁵ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/chutzlaaretz, accessed 7.4.2017.

³⁵⁶ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/messiah1, accessed 7.4.2017.

³⁵⁷ For example, their commitment to non-violence. Eisen 2011, 193-194.

³⁵⁸ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/student, accessed 13.3.2017.

Jewish faith, misleading Jews to conduct their lives in a way that is forbidden while in exile. This prolongs the exile, but it may also deepen it and bring upon the Jewish people new catastrophes *on par* with the *Shoah*.

The Haredi perspective faces the challenge of making the exile *meaningful*, as it finds itself competing with the Hardal and other perspectives for precedence. The arrival of Zionism indeed “forced the great and mighty camp of the *haredim* to organize politically, too”. Until the emergence of other perspectives at the beginning of the 19th century, the position of traditional Judaism was nearly unchallenged.³⁵⁹ Because of its proximity to traditional Judaism, the Haredi argumentation has the advantage of being comparatively familiar. Therefore, the Haredi argumentation often takes the form of a counter-argument. Regarding the exile, the Haredim ascribe it many positive features: it is healing, it is a form of protection, it is purifying and educating. Above all, it is divinely decreed, and all other aspects are subordinate to that. By accepting the divinely decreed exile and conducting oneself accordingly, one can constructively contribute to the ending of it. This eschatology has, in earlier scholarship, been understood as a *passive* messianism, although as I have previously argued that this understanding should be revised.³⁶⁰ The Haredi messianism is also an activist one, proposing a strategy to bring about a change. The means it proposes might *appear* as a withdrawal, but living piously requires a devotion that could easily be compared to any fervent activism. My position is shared by Motti Inbari, who stresses that the Haredi theology “should not be viewed as antimessianic, but rather as an alternative path for active messianism. Passivity is merely a different course of action to channel immanent messianic expectations.”³⁶¹

The Haredi interpretation entails a strong belief in an almighty God; everything that does or does not happen is perceived as an expression of God’s righteousness and providence. One could perceive the “doctrine of

³⁵⁹ Kimmerling 2001, 188.

³⁶⁰ Anderssén-Löf 2016, 243; 250-254.

³⁶¹ Inbari 2016, 12.

human powerlessness”³⁶² as a necessary prerequisite for this belief. By the same token, the Haredi position could be perceived as one of power and influence; its inheritance a tradition, describing how to manoeuvre through life to fulfil the covenant with God. Hence, although interpreting and implementing the law is a constant challenge in a changing world, the Haredim have all the essentials in their hands to do it successfully. Therefore, “powerless” does not adequately describe this form of messianism.

To further problematize the schematic understanding of Jewish messianism in terms of “active” and “passive” it is also interesting that the Hardal perspective seems to display an ambiguity concerning the active or passive characteristic of its messianism. On one hand, the perspective sees a number of objectives as contributing to the process of redemption, but on the other hand, as displayed above, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook expected redemption to “come in its own due time, whether there is a returning to Torah or not.”³⁶³ Although the Hardal perspective prescribes methods for how to contribute to the process, it thus remains an open question as to whether the perspective see the accomplishments that follow when their methods are applied as preordained and not *per se* influencing the process of redemption, or whether they believe that the process can indeed be hastened. For example, although the establishment of the State of Israel was prepared and – in many respects – executed by the Zionist movement, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook perceived the establishment of the State as “the Lord’s doing”.³⁶⁴ Therefore, there might be grounds for problematizing the understanding of this form of messianism as active.

This study arrives, then, at the conclusion that passive messianism may not be so passive, and active messianism may not be so active. Neither of

³⁶² Myers 1991, 4-5.

³⁶³ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 311.

³⁶⁴ www.mercazharav.org/mizmor19.htm, accessed 23.3.2017. R. Yaacov Moshe Harlapp (1883-1951) was, according to Dov Schwartz, the most “systematic, radical and cogent of Kook’s disciples”. Schwartz 2002, 3.

the two messianisms seems to fit conveniently into their assigned categories. The polarization between these two forms of messianism brings to mind the motto of P.W. Holland: “There’s no causation without manipulation.”³⁶⁵

The two perspectives meet at an interesting juncture; while R. Yisrael Ariel of the Temple Institute complains that redemption would surely have erupted in 1967, had the Jewish people not loitered “for a day of miracles”³⁶⁶, JAZ similarly concludes with reference to the *Satmar Rav* that the Jewish people would surely have deserved to be redeemed after the *Shoah*, had the Zionists not prevented it by establishing a state.³⁶⁷ Hence, although the two perspectives apply this strategy on different historical impulses, both seek to rationalize the “left-out redemption” with reference to the actions of the Jewish people. Consequently, both seem to perceive that the Jewish people can, indeed, influence the outbreak of redemption, at least in the impeding of it.

³⁶⁵ Holland 1986, 1959.

³⁶⁶ www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm#Rabbi-Ariel, accessed 27.3.2017.

³⁶⁷ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/rov, accessed 7.4.2017.

3. THE SHOAH: PUNISHMENT OR PUSH

3.1. SUFFERING IN JEWISH TRADITION

The *Shoah*³⁶⁸ (Heb. “catastrophe” or “devastation”) is a term used to refer to the inconceivable and inexpressible – the loss of millions of lives, systematically persecuted and murdered on an industrial scale, by the hands of elected politicians and assigned authorities, in the eyes of a – predominantly – silent world. Abraham Burg reflects that the *Shoah* was never integrated into history; the destruction was too grim to be conceptualized as a historical event among others:

For us, the Shoah is unique in the history of the world. It is the logical climatic outcome of anti-Semitism. We have never sought to view our Shoah as an event in the historical continuum of others.³⁶⁹

As the Nazi regime was dissolved and World War II ended, the State of Israel was founded and the UN adopted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the Jewish people – and the world – was only just beginning to comprehend the scale of the catastrophe. The questions were accumulating. *How* could this have happened? *Why* did it happen? Albert H. Friedlander recalls the cry that the prayers of old could not express:

Then came Auschwitz; and there were many scholars and rabbis who would no longer say the old prayers for the new event. The Holocaust was different. It was unique. The old prayers had given comfort with their assertion that the suffering was part of the Divine Plan, “afflictions of love” (*yissurim shel ahavah*) through which the children of God were

³⁶⁸ When addressing the genocide of 1/3 of the world Jewry under the reign of Nazism, I prefer the term *Shoah* to *Holocaust*. Although both terms are used in scholarly and public discourse, the former term has the advantage of not connotating the Jewish sacrificial offering, whereas the latter may be perceived as conveying a theological positioning; that the millions of Jews murdered in the genocide was a burnt offering for the atonement of sins. Claude Faure notes that “most Israelis” and “many Jews” prefer the word *Shoah* for these reasons. The term Holocaust is derived from the Old French *holocaust*, which, in turn, has its roots in the Greek *holokauston*, of *holos* (whole) and *kaustos* (burned). Faure 2004, 172.

³⁶⁹ Burg 2008, 153.

purified. They reminded Jews of their own sins (*mipne chatta-eynu*) through which they had been exiled from the land and from the nearness of God. They taught acceptance. The Testing of Abraham (the Akedah) often became the structure for an edifice of glowing faith.³⁷⁰

The “prayers of old”, therefore, did not manage – for all - to accommodate the grief post-*Shoah*. The interpretation of suffering as a consequence, a sacrifice within the parameters of divine providence were unsatisfactory in relation to the “paradigmatic manifestation of human evil intensified by the power of a state, fuelled by technological and scientific accomplishment, and unchecked by moral, social, religious or political constraints”, as Michael Berenbaum condenses the *Shoah*.³⁷¹ Which of the available strategies for understanding suffering, developed by Jewish tradition over the centuries, could be used? How could reality be re-constituted, when the unimaginable had happened? Did tradition provide *any* useful strategies at all for living on *post-Shoah*? Understanding what is *there* (in the texts) and what is *here* (in the individual and collective midset) became a demanding odyssey for the Jewish communities.³⁷²

A fundamental aspect of Judaism is the belief in an almighty God. Often, as a result of this doctrine, God is thought to be instrumental in suffering in one way or another. For example, Ezekiel (20:33) prophesied: “As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I will reign over you with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath.” In Job 6:4, *inter alia*, God is referred to as “the Almighty”: “For the arrows of the Almighty are in me; my spirit drinks their poison; the terrors of God are arrayed against me.” Scripture provides many examples of how the Jewish people have perceived their difficulties as being inflicted by God:

Their hearts sank and they turned to each other trembling and said, “What is this that God has done to us?” (Gen. 42:28)

³⁷⁰ Wiesel & Friedlander 1988, xix-xx.

³⁷¹ Berenbaum 1990, 61.

³⁷² Gergen 2015, 38-39.

The Jewish people are warned that if they do not follow all the commands and decrees of God carefully, he will “put an iron yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you” (Deut. 28:48). The cries of lament in the book of *Lamentations* during the siege of Jerusalem in 589-587 BCE, reflect “the deep human quest for meaning in the midst of grief and pain”, according to Frances Klopper. Here, Zion is portrayed as a devastated woman, who sits alone, condemned, grieving her husband and children. Lam. 1:5 explains her suffering: “The Lord has brought her grief because of her many sins.” Thus, God is just and righteous in inflicting a punishment upon her.³⁷³

Because of the abundance of this thinking in biblical sources, it is - and has long been - a pervading thought in Jewish tradition that all that transpires is an expression of God’s just punishment or reward, and which – at the end of the day – reflects a loving care ruled by righteousness. This interpretation, however, results in an understanding of God as *directly instrumental* in causing suffering.

Abraham Burg sees the fear of destruction and annihilation by a ferocious Almighty as dating back to the destruction of Jerusalem and beyond, to Abraham pleading for Sodom and Gomorrah. Burg perceives that in the Jewish psyche, the historical experiences of destruction are interconnected with the developments of the 20th century, with fear being the common denominator:

The Shoah and the establishment of our state created a mechanism that necessitates force and obsessive defence at any cost for every Jew wherever he is. The three weeks of anxiety before the Six-Day War intensified and the 1973 war perpetuated the obsession with the destruction of the temple, which we carry with us since the year 70 A.D.³⁷⁴

³⁷³ Klopper 2007, 240-242.

³⁷⁴ Burg 2008, 88-89.

Another way of understanding God's might is to see God as *indirectly instrumental* in inflicting punishment: God *withdraws*. The infinite God restricts himself, he takes back his all-presence, he limits his unlimited power to "allow nonentity to come into being" to create independence. Hence, an estrangement from God is the reason evil can be realized in the world.³⁷⁵

If he respects his created freedom, he has to remove himself out of the human action sphere. If the human shall not perish by the consequences of his freedom, he has to stay in the world. Both are just imaginable if he is at the same time away and present, that means, if God hides his presence and restricts his power. In the shade of his absence the tragedies of humankind can happen, the suffering of the innocuous. The necessity of his presence establishes the hope that at the end evil will not triumph.³⁷⁶

Steven S. Schwarzschild identifies in Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed* an "essentially neoplatonic doctrine", which perceives evil as an absence of good; not as an existence, but a privation. This tradition, he deems, stretches far back in Jewish philosophy. Schwarzschild perceives Maimonides as opposing the idea that innocent suffering would be rewarded in the world to come, but perceives all suffering as a punishment for sins; also, evils are for the good of the universe as a whole. Similarly, Martin Buber understands evil as turning away from goodness towards "nothingness".³⁷⁷

Fred C. Alford perceives the Book of Job as pointing to the "key question" – whether or not man can survive God's withdrawal. It is in Job, where God withdraws from the world, "never to reappear in such engaged form", Alford reflects:

God's ruthlessness is not confined to his allowing Satan to physically torment Job. God is equally ruthless in failing to comfort Job once He

³⁷⁵ Link 2004, 165.

³⁷⁶ Link 2004, 166-167.

³⁷⁷ Schwarzschild 2007, 292.

makes His appearance in the whirlwind, an image of barely contained chaos – not comforting but rather, “Look around, what do you count in the scheme of things, what did you imagine you were doing trying to call me into account?” This is, in effect, what God says from the whirlwind. Neither is God necessarily being unkind, just ruthless – that is without ruth, lacking in compassion of pity. Why? Because it appears as if God is about to take His leave from His creation.³⁷⁸

Yet another way of understanding these dynamics is to see evil as posed in creation, “so to speak as its negative condition and as the condition of human freedom.” If so, God *himself* would be subjected to evil and suffer from it. In this theological construct, God cannot be held responsible for the *Shoah*. For some, this enables them to hold onto God and to the Jewish identity *post-Shoah*, as it alleviates the conflict and restores trust.³⁷⁹ But in doing so, the idea of an almighty God is surrendered; God is God without power. He would not have been able to stop evil, even if he had wanted to. Is there, thus, any help in his name? Christian Link concludes that this understanding of evil departs from traditional attempts at explaining the origin of evil, and instead, attempts to solve the riddle “in an anthropocentric manner, by deriving it from the fall of man.”³⁸⁰

Because, if evil is not just a deprivation of Good, but introduces itself as a reality *sui generis*, then, it is argued, it must be rendered understandable as the result of the change from an original perfection of creation to the worse. This change can have two causes: either it is the result of a fall caused by the human, which God just tolerated. Then evil would be the special property of the human, and its consequences would not affect God himself. Or evil is already posed in creation, so to speak as its negative condition and as the condition of human freedom. In this case God himself would be subjected to it and would have to suffer by and under it.³⁸¹

³⁷⁸ Alford 2009, 45.

³⁷⁹ Link 2004, 165.

³⁸⁰ Link 2004, 166.

³⁸¹ Link 2004, 165.

“Judaism in its non-philosophic form,” Steven S. Schwarzschild explains, “acknowledges the utter reality of evil and suffering.” Here, he notes, God himself is often described as suffering with man.³⁸²

An approach that does not explain evil, but which does provide a strategy for conceptualizing it, is to understand evil in terms of sacrifice or martyrdom. In this framework, suffering is endured *for* God and *with* God, either with a higher purpose in mind or out of a stern religious devotion. “Judaism’s classic martyr”, according to Arthur Green, is R. Akiva (50-137 CE). He spoke of his sufferings as *yissurim shel ahavah*, sufferings of love. He thus bestowed upon future generations “a rich and complex lens of self-understanding”. Green explains the concept of *yissurim shel ahavah*:

Sufferings of love may mean that we who love God continue to do so, despite our suffering. We may go further, using our suffering itself as a way of loving God, offering ourselves, as it were, on the altar of suffering and transforming that suffering into a gift to God.³⁸³

Arthur Green, however, considers another narrative to be the classic example of suffering in Judaism: that of the *Bar Kokhba Rebellion* (132-135 CE). This generation is known in classical Hebrew as *doro shel shmad*, the generation of destruction.³⁸⁴ Menachem Mor surmises that the combination of a scarcity of historical sources and the enigmatic character of Simeon Bar Kokhba “fired the imaginations of writers” and “led to a rich flowering of literary works on this subject”.³⁸⁵ In the perspectives of this study, Bar Kokhba appears on the one hand as a precursor for the activism that will eventually bring the messianic age into realization, and on the other hand as a warning example of the suffering that will follow, when the Jewish people stray from the path assigned to them by God.

³⁸² Schwarzschild 2007, 292.

³⁸³ Green 2012, 149.

³⁸⁴ Green 2012, 149.

³⁸⁵ Mor 2016, 2.

Schwarzschild notes that one strategy provided by Jewish tradition to help the people cope with the moral imbalance of the world (Jer. 19:1. Eccles. 7:15, Job) is to formulate doctrines of rewards and punishments in the afterlife.³⁸⁶ Both perspectives studied here propose an understanding of the *Shoah* in relation to the process of redemption, and hence, renders it a function as a necessary evil, which ushers in redemption.

How to make the existence of evil and its efficiency conform to the existence of God, thus remains a riddle. The two inescapable variables of the equation seem to cancel each other out. Can God still be called God if he has no power over evil? And if he has power over evil, but allows it to roam freely in the world, can he still be considered good and righteous?

Must not every attempt at co-ordinating evil with the creator of the world misunderstand its damaging character and render God himself highly ambiguous?³⁸⁷

The book of Job is one fruit of the Jewish tradition's wrestle with the problem of suffering. Not only does Job not understand his suffering, but also, his odyssey ends when he realizes that he never will.³⁸⁸ J. Cherul Exum sees Saul and Job as the "pre-eminently tragic figures against whom to measure all others". The book of Job addresses the problem of suffering and relates it to innocence, guilt and necessity, examining them from various angles without resolving them. In the end, God appears and overwhelms Job with questions out of a storm (40-41), presenting him with a vision of an awesome and incomprehensible universe. "The question is," Exum concludes, "can Job ever again feel secure in such a universe?"³⁸⁹

³⁸⁶ Schwarzschild 2007, 292.

³⁸⁷ Link 2004, 166.

³⁸⁸ Alford 2009, 129.

³⁸⁹ Exum 1992, 12-13.

Thereby it confirms, what Jewish theology since 'Job' knows before and with it: That one cannot explain evil, that one can talk about it at all only if one keeps to the hope that it will not have the last word.³⁹⁰

The *Shoah* is not buried in history, nor has it been resolved through decades of theological pondering, but is rather a relentless trauma. Albert H. Friedlander reflects:

We know that the enormity of our loss cannot be placed into human discourse; the *tremendum* of the Shoah is somewhere beyond the boundary of human understanding. But there comes a time, as it came to Job after his long and brooding silence, when one has to stand up and cry out. That cry is prayer. It addresses God, it addresses humanity.³⁹¹

The cry still calls out. Abraham Burg sees the *Shoah* as “a theological pillar of the modern Jewish identity”, but also one of the greatest challenges for the Jewish community today.³⁹² Ronald J. Berger notes that during the War of 1948³⁹³, the *Shoah* “was not a central component”.³⁹⁴ During the latter half of the 20th century, however, the *Shoah* began to play an “increasingly influential role” in shaping the Jewish identity – particularly *Israeli* identity. Baruch Kimmerling analyses that the new state civil religion was first constructed around the military and only later around the *Shoah*.³⁹⁵ In 1953, the Knesset unanimously passed a law that gave the memorial institution in Jerusalem, *Yad Vashem*, the mandate to link the memories of Jewish victimization and Jewish heroism. Berger analyses:

However, an important subtext of this martyrdom-heroism interpretive motif was the implicit contrast between the Diaspora Jews, who had

³⁹⁰ Link 2004, 167.

³⁹¹ Wiesel & Friedlander 1988, xix-xx.

³⁹² Burg 2008, 13. Also Elchanan Yakira notes that the trauma of the *Shoah* has “played a formative role in modern Jewish consciousness.” Yakira 2010, vii-viii.

³⁹³ The “War of Independence” or “the Nakba”, depending on which perspective or narrative one propels.

³⁹⁴ Berger 2002, 123.

³⁹⁵ Kimmerling 2001, 96-97. Also Dov Waxman interprets that the initial attitudes towards the *Shoah* in Israeli society were “deeply conflicted”. Waxman 2006, 34-35. See also Weitz 1995, 129-130.

known only helplessness and destruction, and the Israeli Jews, who had fought for their independence and self-preservation. The victims of the Holocaust were to be remembered because they demonstrated the need for fighters, while the fighters were to be remembered for having secured the Jewish state that had redeemed the Jewish people.³⁹⁶

Jacob Neusner argues that even without a religious framework, the Jewish history of the 20th century is viewed “through a mythic hermeneutic”. Binding the *Shoah*, the establishment of the State of Israel and the Six Day War together is the “fulfillment of prophecy”, “the apocalypse”. According to Neusner the fundamental structure of destruction and rebirth is, in important ways, unbroken:

And, of still greater consequence, the same secular people see *themselves* as having been asphyxiated at Auschwitz, reborn in the state of Israel. They understand their group life, in the most recent times, as conforming to the paradigm of ancient prophecy. The state is not merely another nation, but Israel.³⁹⁷

Mythmaking, according to David Ohana, is a process of re-organizing chaos into a structure that ascribes a situation meaning; a process of constructing the world, of organizing and constructing memory and identity.³⁹⁸ Gerald Cromer analyses that the future of Zionism, from its very beginning, depended on its ability to create a link with the past. The *Shoah* “became a metaphor for a nation that dwells alone”. Since Zionism sought to distance itself from Diaspora Jewry, other “pasts” had to provide roots for the new Israeli identity; the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, the Maccabean revolt and king David provided that root system.³⁹⁹

With a tremendous trauma at the core of its identity, Elchanan Yakira suggests that the *Shoah* induced the State of Israel with “an ethos and

³⁹⁶ Berger 2002, 125.

³⁹⁷ Neusner 1970, 67.

³⁹⁸ Ohana 2012, 6-7.

³⁹⁹ Cromer 2004, 106-107.

culture of fear”.⁴⁰⁰ Abraham Burg too sees the Shoah as a “main generator” of the Israeli confrontational philosophy: an Israel of peace and tranquillity – without ecstatic, melancholic or hysteric outbreaks – “will simply not be.”⁴⁰¹ Yair Auron sees the Shoah as

a major component of the Jewish identity of Israelis, regardless of extraction – a component which at the moment serves to unify Israeli society around the idea that “we are Jews because of our suffering” or “we are Jews because of our Holocaust.”⁴⁰²

In April 2012, *Ha’aretz* reported that a poll, conducted by the *Tel-Hai Academic College* in Galilee, indicated that 40% of Israelis believe the Shoah could happen again, and 43% feared that the State of Israel could be annihilated.⁴⁰³ In April 2014, *The Times of Israel* reported that a study conducted by *The Center of Organizations of Holocaust Survivors* indicated that 80% of Israelis believe that the *Shoah* “still resonates and influences daily life” in the State of Israel; 42,2% believe that the memory of the *Shoah* influences both public and private every-day decision making.⁴⁰⁴

Robert Wistrich and David Ohana note that the need to create a distance between the Diasporic past and the sovereign present has levelled out as the situation has stabilized. This progress has enabled a gentler approach to the suffering of the *Shoah*:

The image of the Holocaust as the nadir of Jewish powerlessness in Galut (exile) and the stigma attached to it, gave way to an increasingly strong symbolic identification with this traumatic memory. The traditional Zionist contrast between tough, resourceful Israelis who made their own history and the passive Diaspora Jews who went like “lambs to the slaughter” has been steadily muted. There is much less need today to dramatize the rupture with the Diasporic past, to create counter-model to the exilic Jew. In its place has become a more realistic and humane

⁴⁰⁰ Yakira 2010, vii-viii.

⁴⁰¹ Burg 2008, 14-15.

⁴⁰² Auron 2012, 128.

⁴⁰³ Ashkenazi for *Ha’aretz*, 16.4.2012.

⁴⁰⁴ Lewis for *The Times of Israel*, 6.4.2015.

approach to suffering, less eagerness to embrace death in the heroic mould and a much greater interest of Israelis in their own personal and collective roots, which lie after all in Diaspora traditions.⁴⁰⁵

Turning then to the two perspectives of this study, Aviezer Ravitzky notes that the worldview of the Haredim was not crystallized and set to print until after the *Shoah* and the founding of the State of Israel, although the opposition to Zionism had been infusing for some time.⁴⁰⁶ Until Zionism bore tangible fruit in a Jewish state, it may have appeared to the Haredim as a heretical and populist travesty, bound to wane when the situation stabilized. As this prediction did not hold up – Zionism did not wither away and the Jewish state did become a place of physical and existential refuge for many Jews – the Haredim found themselves in a situation where they had to *argue* their position. When Zionism appeared as an alternative to the traditional understanding – proposing a new understanding of what it is to be a Jew, allowing Jews to take charge over their own destiny, to have power over their own society, and to do that within a religious framework – it emerged as a tangible option. Therefore, it is understandable that their perspective was not crystallized and set to print until after the *Shoah* and the establishment of the State, which for this perspective are both “part of the same process of destruction”.⁴⁰⁷

From the Hardal perspective, the *Shoah* is existentially pivotal. It is the darkest hour just before the dawn, so to speak. The Zionist movement and the establishment of the State of Israel were the break of dawn, the beginning of redemption. From there, the light grows increasingly brighter. Yakov M. Rabkin perceives that to the Hardalim, the *Shoah* represents “the point of departure for redemption”.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁵ Wistrich & Ohana 1995, xii.

⁴⁰⁶ Ravitzky 1993, 53.

⁴⁰⁷ Rabkin 2006, 196.

⁴⁰⁸ Rabkin 2006, 196.

3.2. THE HARDALIM: A PUSH TOWARDS REDEMPTION

3.2.1. CONTRASTING THE TWO

A reappearing reasoning in the Hardal perspective is that the darkness of the *Shoah* is juxtaposed with the light of “an incredible revival”, as R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook puts it.⁴⁰⁹ The *Shoah* was a terrible necessity of redemption, which made sense only in relation to the subsequent rebirth of the Jewish people as a nation.⁴¹⁰

Shalom Ratzabi identifies two approaches to the *Shoah* in religious Zionism, but neither of the two draw “a specific connection between the rebirth of Israel and the Holocaust”. The dominant approach (1) bases its Zionist worldview on the “mystical, national doctrine” of R. Abraham Y. Kook, from whom the Hardal perspective stems. The minor approach (2) perceives the State of Israel as a political instrument to solve “the troubles of the Jews” but not necessarily “the troubles of Judaism”, and consequently, the birth of the state is “no more a response to the Holocaust than it is a response to other existential woes that have tormented the Jewish people in exile”.⁴¹¹

The dominant approach rendered the existence of the State of Israel a metaphysical significance in itself. In Warren Zev Harvey’s opinion, however, it is unlikely that the influential R. Abraham Y. Kook, who passed away in 1935, could have anticipated that the situation would deteriorate into genocide, even if he was “a great visionary”. Therefore, it is understandable that R. Abraham Y. Kook neither viewed the establishment of the State in the light of the *Shoah*, nor foresaw the traumatic conditions that would arise from the proclamation of Jewish independence.⁴¹² R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook was, however, faced with the

⁴⁰⁹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 263.

⁴¹⁰ Mirsky 2014, 225.

⁴¹¹ Ratzabi 2003, 79.

⁴¹² Harvey 1995, 299.

challenge of integrating what was perceived both as the darkest darkness and the brightest brightness into one, coherent ideotheology.

Shai Held contends that the *Shoah* provoked R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook into developing a deep distrust and “essentially give up” on the nations of the world, and distinguishes hostility in his writings “totally foreign” to R. Abraham Y. Kook. R. Tzvi Yehuda did not look to the universal features of Jewish messianism, but instead, stressed Jewish particularism; Jewish power, he felt, was in itself “a manifestation of its uniqueness” and “a mark of God’s presence in His people”.⁴¹³ According to Ratzabi, he interpreted the *Shoah* in a transcendental light:

The State of Israel is an important stage in the redemption process; the Holocaust is one of the most tragic expressions of the non-redemptional world. In accordance with this point of view, Rabbi Z. Y. Kook elaborated on Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day 1973 that the Holocaust should be construed not within the ordinary Jewish religious construction of sin and punishment but in the view of the final aim, i.e., as a necessary stage in the process of redemption.⁴¹⁴

Along the same lines of analysis, Yehuda Mirsky perceives that R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook “came to see a massive divine hand at work” in the horrors of the *Shoah*. A catastrophe of those proportions could only be explained by the “terrible necessities of redemption”.⁴¹⁵ He approached the question of the *Shoah* cautiously, not only because it is an “awesome topic”, but also because criticizing God constitutes “the greatest sin”:

Everything which happens in the world is a Divine mystery. The understanding of Divine Providence, in all of its complexity, is not revealed to us. Analytic studies of the Holocaust are a juvenile activity. Only with great sensitivity, and with a mature spiritual perspective, is it possible to approach this awesome topic.⁴¹⁶ [...] There are situations in a man’s life where Divine is not understood, and a person has objections

⁴¹³ Held 2014, 242.

⁴¹⁴ Ratzabi 2003, 80.

⁴¹⁵ Mirsky 2014, 225.

⁴¹⁶ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 262.

and complaints against Hashem. Criticism of the Almighty is the greatest sin, evolving from a lack of Emunah in Hashem's management over the world. Similarly, objections to the Holocaust also fall into the category of complaints against the Holy One, Blessed be He.⁴¹⁷

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook thus acknowledges that understanding the divine plan is “not easy”, and empathizes with those who abandon their faith “on the heels of the Holocaust, because they did not succeed in lifting themselves up to the knowledge of the true God”. Nonetheless, he warns, “Difficulties do not justify sin”.⁴¹⁸ Accompanying Ratzabi and Mirsky, Gershon Greenberg also proposes that R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook coupled the *Shoah* with the birth of the State of Israel as a “divinely administered drama” (citing Ezek. 16:6, “In your blood I said to you: Live!”):

Tzevi Yehuda Kook identified the interwar era as that of the *Kets hameguleh*, the manifestation of the redemptive terminus to Israel's history (Sanhedrin 98b). It was the period (exemplified by the Balfour Declaration) designated by God for Israel's dry bones to be resurrected into life. Instead of joining the process, however, grafting their history onto the metahistorical process underway, Diaspora Jews remained stuck in the “tar” of exile. To remove them, God had to perform surgery – that is, the Holocaust. [...] For Kook, the “hidden, internal [that is, surgical] procedure to purify the people” separated the people as a whole from the Diaspora – enabling them to go to the land and enhance the process of redemption. [...] Kook viewed Hitler's persecution as a subjective (anthropological) dimension to the objective (ontological or metahistorical) reality. [...] Hitler's actions were reflections of the greater reality of the divine surgical procedure.⁴¹⁹

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook saw the sufferings under Nazism as the reason for “all of the [...] uncertainty we now experience”, including the wretched national identity.⁴²⁰ In his commentary on the translation of R. Abraham Y.

⁴¹⁷ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 261.

⁴¹⁸ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 262.

⁴¹⁹ Greenberg 2004, 99-100.

⁴²⁰ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 264.

Kook's work *Orot*, R. David Samson also draws parallels between the *Shoah* and the return to *Eretz Yisrael*:

The Holocaust decimated Jewish life like no other nightmare of history, yet upon our return to Israel, we transformed almost magically into a dynamic world power. This supernatural connection is pointed to by the verse from Isaiah, "He grants breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them who walk therein" [Isa 42:5, BT Ketuboth 111a]. With our return to Jerusalem, to the valleys of the Jordan River, and to the shores of the Kinneret, our dry bones came to life.⁴²¹

The mention of dry bones is, of course, a reference to Ezek. 37:1-14, which frequently occurs in religious Zionist interpretation of the establishment of the State. This is to strengthen the understanding of the State being "the sprouting of our redemption"⁴²², in contrast to being a natural event. R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook related the destruction to the rebuilding, an "order of divine Providence":

In our generation, we have seen an awesome new form of destruction (the Holocaust), and an incredible new revival and building (the State of Israel). There are people who don't agree with this order of Divine Providence. [...] These people think that things happen accidentally, randomly, without cause. But the truth is that nothing happens randomly. [...] Not only the good events, but also the things which appear evil to us happen according to the Divine plan.⁴²³

Thus, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook argues that both the *Shoah* and the founding of the State were expressions of Divine interventions in history. This interpretation concurs with that of the Haredim, that the *Shoah* was "from the Almighty"; whereas the Haredim perceive that the destruction continued with the establishment of a Jewish state, and R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook perceived that the "incredible new revival" begun with it.

⁴²¹ Samson & Fishman 1996, 22-23.

⁴²² Ohana 2010, 70. The phrase was coined by R. Abraham Y. Kook, and is now part of the Chief Rabbinate's prayer for the State of Israel.

⁴²³ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 263.

Closer to our time, David Wilder, spokesperson for the Jewish Community in Hebron, concludes, "Israel was reborn from within the ashes of Auschwitz".⁴²⁴ The Temple Institute also see the prophecy of the dry bones to include all those who passed in exile, as well as those who fell victim to the *Shoah*; upon these dry bones, new sinew and flesh has grown, returning Israel to life. The Temple Institute, thus, also stands in a tradition of contrasting the *Shoah* with the establishment of the State of Israel:

Just as in the prophecy of Ezekiel, the bones of the two thousand year exile, which ended in the furnaces of the Holocaust, were laid over with sinew, and upon the sinew new flesh has grown. So too Israel has returned to life back in the land G-d has promised. And now having regained Jerusalem, the heart of the nation that feeds nourishment to the entire body of Israel, Israel is searching for its soul, for that animating and guiding force rooted in G-d's will, which will inspire and direct the reborn nation.⁴²⁵

The perspective often uses the noun "birth" instead of "establishment" regarding the founding of the State; this may be an expression of the need to juxtapose the *Shoah* with the State of Israel, the Diaspora with Jewish sovereignty, destruction with rebirth, and degradation with triumph.

3.2.2. THE PUSH AND PULL OF THE SHOAH

From this perspective, the *Shoah* does not carry a "message" or a "lesson" *per se*. Theologically, it is explained as a painful consequence of the Jewish people being "embedded in the tar of the Galut".⁴²⁶ Because they were idle in making *aliyah*, God, by making conditions in the Diaspora unbearable, forced them to. Gershon Greenberg analyses that "the Kook school focused on the painful intervention of God during the *Kets hameguleh*⁴²⁷,

⁴²⁴ Wilder 2013, 840. Tuesday, April 15, 2008: "Forty Years in the Desert".

⁴²⁵ www.templeinstitute.org/talk/Iyar_28_5770-May_13_2010.htm, accessed 28.2.2017.

⁴²⁶ Samson, Aviner & Fishman 1991, 271.

⁴²⁷ *Ketz Hameguleh*, "the heralded redemption", an expression that appears in *BT Sanhedrin 98b*. See Greenberg 2007, 136.

necessitated by Israel's delay in returning to land".⁴²⁸ R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook argued that a "divine amputation" had to be performed on the Jewish people, because parts of it had become too comfortable in the Diaspora; they "fell in love with the Galut and refused to come back to Israel":

When the time comes for Geula, complications arise, and large portions of the nation are embedded in the tar of the Galut. The facts bear witness - multitudes of Jews grew accustomed to the impurity of the Diaspora, and refused to extricate themselves from it. Thus begins a Divine therapy, a deep, inner, esoteric purification from this decay, a treatment of amputation and healing. All of Israel's millions are one single body, an indivisible organism, and when it is delayed from returning to health because of its cleavage to a foreign land, then a cruel, Divine amputation is needed.⁴²⁹

Hence, the *Shoah* is perceived as an act of God, needed to uproot the Jewish people from the Diaspora and replant them in Israel. To make this interpretation bearable, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook stresses that the Jewish people is "an indivisible organism" which fills an apologetic function; it ascribes every specific, horror-filled fate a cause. Death is not an isolated, tragic fate, but contributes to the healing process of *Am Yisrael*. Assigning oneness and indivisibility to the Jewish people is not an emphasis unique to the Hardalim; it lies, according to Shira L. Lander, "at the heart of Jewish self-understanding", since "corporate identity is fundamental to Judaism's theological structure."⁴³⁰ This existential framework provides – or attempts to provide – a meaning of suffering while maintaining both the concepts of God's sovereignty and devotion. R. Tzvi Yehuda continues:

We aren't speaking here about a reckoning against this person, or that person, since this is a secret matter of Hashem, belonging to the secret world of souls. We are speaking of a reckoning which encompasses all of the nation, which arises from the situation of, *They despised the desirable Land (Tehillim 106:24)*. This is an amputation which causes the

⁴²⁸ Greenberg 2004, 102.

⁴²⁹ Samson, Aviner & Fishman 1991, 271-272.

⁴³⁰ Lander 2011, 152.

nation as a whole to separate from the Diaspora and return to its life in the Land of Israel.⁴³¹

R. Tzvi Yehuda, thus, also seems to presume there is a reason for the *Shoah*, someone who failed in some way, to bring this destruction on the people. While the Haredim proposed the reason was the deterioration of faith, the Hardalim propose the reason was the reluctance to leave the exile. In stressing that no individual who suffered or died in the *Shoah* was personally responsible for his fate, but rather, that it was an “esoteric purification”, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook’s argument seems to be more pastoral than the Haredi one. David Wilder, spokesman of the Jewish community in Hebron, expresses another variation of Kook’s argument; he suggests that the *Shoah* was caused by the lack of national pride:

The State of Israel is being held hostage, not by the Arabs, but by ourselves. Until our self-image changes and we realize that Eretz Yisrael belongs to us, and that we really do have a legitimate right to be here, we will continue to cower behind apologetics that, sixty years ago, resulted in a Holocaust. We must stop regretting our existence and stop flinching every time Arafat, or anyone else, flexes his muscles. After fifty years of statehood, it’s time to start growing up.⁴³²

The *Shoah* was perceived by R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook as a “cruel excision”, performed by God to bring the Jewish people back to *Eretz Yisrael*. Because they had “clung so determinedly to the impurity of foreign lands”, removing them was not possible without “a great shedding of blood”.⁴³³ In Shai Held’s understanding, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook did not see the *Shoah* as a divine punishment, but rather, he “sought to shift the frame of reference from one of reward and punishment to one of exile and redemption – the Holocaust was thus a necessary prelude to the redemption that followed”.⁴³⁴ Aviezer Ravitzky reflects that

⁴³¹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 272.

⁴³² Wilder 2013, 222. Saturday, March 14, 1998: “Hostage”

⁴³³ Held 2014, 252; Ravitzky 1993, 127.

⁴³⁴ Held 2014, 252.

From this perspective, only a deterministic, messianic interpretation of the State of Israel can confront the Holocaust and endow it with any religious “meaning”. The calamity may have been profound, immeasurable and unprecedented, but the redemption that followed was also unprecedented and final. However far the satanic destruction may have brought us down, the messianic salvation raised us up.⁴³⁵

The idea that the existential conditions have changed with those two dramatic events is exemplified by the quote below, by R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook. “From this spot on earth, *Hashem* educates mankind. To do this, Hashem wants us here in Israel. We don’t belong in other places,” he taught. Enhancing the contrasts between “then” and “now”, he rhetorically asks: “Haven’t we already sufficiently tasted the life in Europe and Auschwitz?”⁴³⁶

R. Abraham Y. Kook gave a speech at *Rosh Hashana* in 1933, which retrospectively has been viewed as an interpretation of the impending *Shoah*. In the *Churva* Synagogue in Jerusalem’s Old City, he expounded on the three *shofars* representing the three divine calls “summoning the Jewish people to be redeemed and to redeem their land”. This was shortly after Hitler had come to power, and not long before R. Abraham Y. Kook’s own passing, which has led R. Moshe Lichtman to believe that R. Abraham Y. Kook “practically predicted the Holocaust” and “explained its ultimate purpose”.⁴³⁷ R. Kook explained that the first divine call, the “First *Shofar* of Redemption”, is the ideal one, inspiring the people with holy motivations, through faith in God and the unique mission of the people of Israel:

This elevated awakening corresponds to the ram’s horn, a horn that recalls Abraham’s supreme love of God and dedication in *Akeidat Yitzchak*, the Binding of Isaac. It was the call of this shofar, with its holy vision of heavenly Jerusalem united with earthly Jerusalem, that inspired Nachmanides, Rabbi Yehuda HaLevy, Rabbi Ovadia of Bartenura, the students of the Vilna Gaon, and the disciples of the Baal

⁴³⁵ Ravitzky 1993, 127.

⁴³⁶ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 111.

⁴³⁷ Lichtman 2006, 427.

Shem Tov to ascend to *Eretz Yisrael*. It is for this 'great shofar,' an awakening of spiritual greatness and idealism, that we fervently pray.

However, if the Jewish people do not respond to the calling of this first shofar, there is a "Second *Shofar* of Redemption", calling out to the people to return to the land of their ancestors, prophets and kings:

It beckons us to live as a free people, to raise our families in a Jewish country and a Jewish culture. This is a kosher shofar, albeit not a great shofar like the first type of awakening. We may still recite a *brachah* over this shofar.

If the Jewish people do not respond to the divine calling of this shofar either, there is a "Third *Shofar* of Redemption", the least desirable of all. It is made of an unclean animal, and over it, no blessing will be recited:

This shofar corresponds to the wake-up call that comes from the persecutions of anti-Semitic nations, warning the Jews to escape while they still can and flee to their own land. Enemies force the Jewish people to be redeemed, blasting the trumpets of war, bombarding them with deafening threats of harassment and torment, giving them no respite. The shofar of unclean beasts is thus transformed into a Shofar of Redemption. Whoever failed to hear the calls of the first two shofars will be forced to listen to the call of this last shofar. Over this shofar, however, no blessing is recited. "One does not recite a blessing over a cup of affliction" (BT Berachot 51b).⁴³⁸

R. Kook concluded, "The *shofar* of the defiled animal becomes the shofar of the Messiah. Amalek, Petliura, Hitler, etc... we pray that God not bring us to hear the unfit, defiled shofar against our will", Yehuda Mirsky references. In general, R. Abraham Y. Kook did not explicate on anti-Semitism, nor did he elaborate on his thoughts on evil. This sermon is one of the few suggestions he left behind.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁸ Morrison 2010, 49-51. Cf. Mirsky 2014, 212-213.

⁴³⁹ Mirsky 2014, 213; 224.

3.2.3. THE SAFE HAVEN ARGUMENT

In the Hardal perspective, the *Shoah* functions as a *raison d'être* of Zionism and of the State of Israel. The scholarly discourse is, however, in disagreement regarding the influence of the *Shoah* upon the Zionist movement and the establishment of the State of Israel. It has been suggested by scholars such as Avi Shlaim that the traditional Zionist narrative was “constructed around the notion of the Jews as victims”:

This narrative presents the 1948 War as a simple, bipolar, no-holds-barred struggle between a monolithic and malevolent Arab adversary and a tiny, peace-loving Jewish community. The biblical image of David and Goliath is frequently evoked in this narrative.⁴⁴⁰

Baruch Kimmerling argues that Jewish claims “became much more vigorous as a result of the dreadful years of the Holocaust” and that “in the postbellum years, the international community felt a strong obligation to compensate the Jewish people for the horrors”.⁴⁴¹ Anita Shapira, on the other hand, sees that the *Shoah* “is but one” of the founding myths of the State of Israel:

However, it is certainly true that the Holocaust has often been presented as the decisive argument in favour of the establishment of Israel, and the latter – as some compensation for the iniquities of the Holocaust, an expression, as it were, of a system of cosmic justice. This contention is reflected in loaded expressions such as “Holocaust and rebirth” or “destruction and redemption”, which made the establishment of Israel in 1948 a part of a metahistorical process, consistent with Jewish traditions that drew a connection between *hevlei mashiah* – the suffering preceding the advent of the Messiah – and the apocalyptic resolution of the final redemption.⁴⁴²

⁴⁴⁰ Shlaim 2007, 79-80. One question raised by this quote, is the extent to which this was indeed a “Zionist” narrative, intended to motivate an Israeli audience, and to what extent it was an argument directed towards a Western world audience, convincing the world opinion of the righteousness of the war?

⁴⁴¹ Kimmerling 2001, 36.

⁴⁴² Shapira 1995, 17-18.

However, Tom Segev finds “no basis for the frequent assertion that the state was established as a result of the Holocaust”; he argues that immigrating to Palestine was not a choice all the *Shoah* survivors would have made, but rather, was caused by a lack of options:⁴⁴³

Few were willing to return to countries then in the grip of various degrees of hunger, anti-Semitism, and communism, and they were never given the option of choosing between Palestine and, say, the United States. [...] Mutual disappointment was one of the causes of a great schism between the Jews of Palestine and the Holocaust survivors.⁴⁴⁴

Lilly Weissbrod proposes that Zionism chose Palestine as its destination long before the *Shoah* took place and furthermore, that it did so at a time when “the overwhelming majority” of Jews had an opportunity to emigrate to the United States. Weissbrod, hence, draws the conclusion that the argumentation for a safe haven for the harassed Jewish people is “merely a *post facto* excuse”, and the narrative of a safe haven served to sustain the ethical justification of the establishment of the State.⁴⁴⁵ Ben-Amos & Bet-El records different expressions of how this narrative was evoked:

The Zionist “lesson” of the Holocaust, which has been transmitted in history textbooks (Firer 1989), was imparted in Holocaust Day pageants as well by describing the fighting in the ghettos as a link in the chain of Jewish heroism that led all the way to the IDF. Even texts of a different kind, dealing with women’s and children’s daily struggle for survival, which could have been given universal meaning, received a particular, Zionist meaning. The structure of the ceremony and at times the teachers’ speeches emphasized the message that only the existence of the state and its army could prevent the Jews from becoming helpless victims once again.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴³ Segev 2001, 491; Berry & Philo 2006, 20-22.

⁴⁴⁴ Segev 2001, 491.

⁴⁴⁵ Weissbrod 1997, 58.

⁴⁴⁶ Ben-Amos & Bet-El 2005, 189.

In spite of these arguments, it is hard to overlook *Der Judenstaat*, in which Theodor Hertzl argues that statehood is necessary to manage the persistent threat of anti-Semitism.⁴⁴⁷ R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook emphasises that the Diaspora existence is lethal, in “every single aspect”:

One must understand that every single aspect of Diaspora existence is lethal to us. Often, the love of Zion is lost because of the stultifying influence of living in a foreign land. We forget Jerusalem. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand be forgotten. We forget who we are. Then the Master of the Universe manipulates nations, and history, to bring about the negative factors, so that we remember our true situation in the Galut.⁴⁴⁸

The idea that the *Shoah* was an expression of the chronic disposition, constantly motivating the Gentiles to attack the Jewish people, can be seen in the writings of David Wilder, spokesman for the Jewish community of Hebron. In September of 1995, the Oslo II Accord was signed in Taba, dividing the West Bank into sectors with various decrees of Palestinian management.⁴⁴⁹ Wilder interpreted this process – and the Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was instrumental in it – as a satanic act, much like the *Shoah* was:

But Satan is on his last stand. How do I know? Because in the end, inevitably, evil loses out. Fifty years ago, a different version of evil attempted to wipe us out - the entire Jewish People. It did succeed in causing a Holocaust - but three years later the State of Israel came into existence. [...] What is the major difference between the past and the present? In the past, evil almost always took the form of a non-Jew - attacking from outside. This time, evil has dressed up as one of us, attempting to attack us from within - a spy - eating at us as one of our own.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁷ Kolsky 1990, 10.

⁴⁴⁸ Aviner, Samson & Fishman, 127-128.

⁴⁴⁹ For an overview of the Oslo II process, see Aronoff & Aronoff 1998, 11-28.

⁴⁵⁰ Wilder 2013, 54. “Satan’s Last Stand”, September 5, 1995.

This excerpt shows that although David Wilder juxtaposes the *Shoah* with the establishment of the State, he does not perceive evil to have been defeated once and for all. Just as evil was attacking from the outside in the 1940s, he perceived that evil was attacking from the inside in the 1990s. This was not to say that the safe haven did not fill its purpose, quite the opposite; *Eretz Yisrael* was the means by which to combat the evil attacks, which

cannot succeed because of the inner faith, the inner strength, the inner belief, the deep determination, the true manifestation of the opposite of pure evil, that this is *our home* - that Hebron, and Shechem, and Jerusalem, are an integral part of the existence of the Jewish People, and very simply, because we will not leave. Rabins and Pereses come and go - we will be here forever. But this time, when Rabin and Peres and all their helpers, the Devil's advocates, finish, it's all over. For our victory is the victory of good over evil, virtues over corruption. Then, with the help of G-d, we will help to establish a true peace - peace for Israel and for all peoples of the world, just and lasting - based on morals and ethics - values that are eternal. This is Satan's last stand. He is on his way out.⁴⁵¹

3.3. THE HAREDIM: AN EXPRESSION OF EXILE

3.3.1. FROM THE ALMIGHTY TO INVOKE FEAR

Fundamental to traditional Judaism is faith in an almighty and righteous God. Intimately connected to this perception is the concept of the Jewish people being God's chosen people, governed by the dynamics of exile and redemption.⁴⁵² To the Haredim presented in this study, the *Shoah* – in its entire dreadfulness – is “from the Almighty”. Therefore the burning question is not whether there is a God or even why he would allow such a calamity. Rather, they ponder upon *what sin was committed* by the Jewish people, drawing upon them this punishment. JAZ instructs, “The right way to approach the Holocaust is to analyze the spiritual decline in the

⁴⁵¹ Wilder 2013, 54. “Satan's Last Stand”, September 5, 1995.

⁴⁵² See Chpt. 2, discussing these dynamics.

Jewish people that brought it on, and repair that decline.”⁴⁵³ R. Moshe Shonfeld, associated with NK, perceives the *Shoah* to be “from the Almighty”:

The fact, however, that our people were brutally murdered by beastly agents of the Angel of Death in human form would be inexplicable to us, if it were not for the understanding we derive from our holy Torah that all of this was, indeed, from the Almighty.⁴⁵⁴

Neither JAZ nor NK challenge the idea that the *Shoah* was an expression of “divine wrath” sent to “chasten the Jews”. While those who partook in the horrors of the *Shoah* will have to answer for their actions, JAZ stresses that “their actions against us are part of Hashem’s plan to punish us for violating the oaths”.⁴⁵⁵ To strengthen this argument, JAZ references – among other passages from Scripture – Isa 55:9: “Just as the heavens are high above the earth, so My ways are high above your ways, and My thoughts high above your thoughts.”⁴⁵⁶

This theological conclusion is, of course, disastrous from a pastoral perspective. Not only does it vindicate the *Shoah*, but it also places the responsibility for it on the Jewish people themselves, as it was their shortcomings that forced God’s hand. JAZ seems to be aware of this dilemma, as they stress – in capital letters – that this view was shared by “all the saints and sages” of those dark days. This is, of course, to assure the audience that 1) it is not a cruel interpretation since it was shared by those affected by the *Shoah* 2) it is not merely JAZ’s interpretation, but that of a bulk of authorities – authorities who themselves had experience of the destruction. In postmodern dogma, experience has been given primacy over other ways of establishing the truth.⁴⁵⁷ Hence, this argument seeks

⁴⁵³ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/holocaust2, accessed 23.5.2016.

⁴⁵⁴ Shonfeld 1977, 5-6.

⁴⁵⁵ For an explication of the Threefold oath, see Ch. 2.1. Aviezer Ravitzky amplifies the *Threefold oath* thoroughly in the appendix: “The Impact of the Three Oaths in Jewish History” in *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism*. Ravitzky 1993, 211-234.

⁴⁵⁶ Cohen 2007, 158-159.

⁴⁵⁷ Eagleton 1996, 67; Gabriel 2004, 27.

support in a way a postmodern (and possibly post-postmodern) context would find difficult to oppose. JAZ, thus, rebuffs responsibility for putting forward what may be perceived as a harsh interpretation of the *Shoah*:

It is common knowledge that all the sages and saints in Europe at the time of Hitler's rise declared that he was a messenger of divine wrath, sent to chasten the Jews because of the bitter apostasy of Zionism against the belief in the eventual messianic redemption.⁴⁵⁸

Yakov M. Rabkin, to whom JAZ refer, calls into memory R. Elchanan Wasserman (1874-1941), who saw "no innovation, no exception to the divine order", in the emergence of Nazism. For R. Wasserman, the *Shoah* was a direct consequence of the endorsement of Zionism; socialism and nationalism were "idols worshipped by the East-European Zionists". The violation of the Threefold oath was, to R. Wasserman, the root cause of the persecutions and the genocide.⁴⁵⁹

Yakov M. Rabkin further notes the sharp distinction between Zionism and traditional Judaism is this regard: while Zionism sees the pre-State political and military debility as the cause of the *Shoah*, the "pious Jew tends to locate its root in the seriousness of the sins committed by the Jews".⁴⁶⁰ The idea that evil is a response to sin has deep biblical roots; it is often expressed in the historical books, for example.⁴⁶¹ It is a "central theme" of the holiday *Musaf* prayers; the paragraph *umi-pêne hata'ênu* begins with the words: "On account of our sins we have been exiled".⁴⁶²

This argument forms a basis of both the Haredi understanding of the *Shoah* as well as a central aspect of its refusal of Zionism and the State of Israel.

⁴⁵⁸ www.truetorahjews.org/lieberman, accessed 23.5.2017. Statements in capital letters do not generally occur in this material.

⁴⁵⁹ Rabkin 2006, 169-170.

⁴⁶⁰ Rabkin 2006, 170.

⁴⁶¹ Cf. 1 Sam. 12:19, 2 Chron. 28:13, Neh. 9:37, Dan. 9:16.

⁴⁶² Freundel 2004, 66; Idelsohn 1932, 191.

Both are expressions of the overconfidence and disobedience to God that, in this theological construct, is the root cause of the *Shoah*.

Although the *Shoah* is perceived as an expression of divine wrath, its underlying purpose *to chasten* is central. Hence, in all its gruesomeness, the *Shoah* is viewed as a purifying act, an act of loving care from a father seeing his children go astray. Without this interpretation, the *Shoah* “would be inexplicable to us”, as R. Moshe Shonfeld concludes; if the interpretation of the *Shoah* as being “from the Almighty” to “chasten the Jews” is rejected, nothing constructive comes from the catastrophe, and all that is left are tormenting questions. Against this background, this twofold argument can be understood as a coping strategy, a way to bring structure, logic and meaning to the horrors. The energy by which the Haredim hold onto this interpretation, despite the difficulties it entails, attests to its functionality in the theological construct.

The divinely inflicted punishments are, thus, intended to motivate the Jewish people to repent and deepen their fear of God. JAZ stresses that the “flood of fire” was brought down upon the Jewish people to “terrify” and “arouse”, and the Jewish people “should be speaking [of this] constantly”:

In our time we have experienced a flood of fire, a flood that has no equal since the creation of the world. What happened to the Jewish people in Europe should terrify us and arouse us from now until the redemption. We should be speaking constantly of the judgement of Hashem – “what is this G-d has done to us?” (Bereishis 42:28)⁴⁶³

Yakov M. Rabkin draws the same conclusions: that the meaning of the *Shoah* was to arouse the Jewish people to repentance and to return to the ways of the fathers, in fear of God:

The tragedy of the Shoah calls out for the closest scrutiny of one’s own behaviour, for individual and collective atonement. It is not an occasion for accusing the executioner and even less an attempt to explain his behaviour by political, ideological or social factors. The executioner – be

⁴⁶³ Cohen 2007, 11.

he the Pharaoh, Amalek or Hitler – cannot be anything but an agent of divine punishment, an undoubtedly cruel means of bringing the Jews to repentance (BT Megila 14a, Sanhedrin 47a).⁴⁶⁴

Although the *Shoah* is seen as a just punishment for the sin of the Jewish people, Rabkin also stresses that God will revenge the “blood of his servants”, but concludes that is a divine realm; “What belongs to us, what we have to learn from this, we must learn from the past for the present and for the future.”⁴⁶⁵

JAZ indicates – like the Hardal – that their rabbis foresaw the *Shoah* and tried to warn the people of it.⁴⁶⁶ This, I take it, is to invoke a sense of reassurance and consolidation into the community: if only the Jewish people had listened and adhered to this particular ideotheology, the tragedy could have been averted:

Grand Rabbi Teitelbaum [the Satmar Rav, R. Yoel Teitelbaum], scion to a legacy of holy mystics and Hassidic Masters, unfortunately had his prediction fulfilled. We lost more than six million of our brothers, sisters, sons and daughters in a very horrible manner. This, more than six million holy people had to experience as punishment for the Zionist stupidity.⁴⁶⁷

This constellation also serves as a coping strategy to facilitate life *post-Shoah*. By adhering to a perspective which can claim to have “known so” – and can claim to know how a tragedy like the *Shoah* could and can be averted – at the very least, one can rest assured that one is contributing to securing a future, even if one’s confidence in life and in the world may never be fully restored.

⁴⁶⁴ Rabkin 2006, 169.

⁴⁶⁵ Shonfeld 1977, 8.

⁴⁶⁶ For the corresponding Hardal account, see Chpt. 3.2.2.

⁴⁶⁷ www.truetorahjews.org/lieberman, accessed 23.5.2017.

3.3.2. BECAUSE THEY HAD CAST AWAY THEIR JUDAISM

The difficult question that follows upon this understanding – that the Jewish existence is enclosed in the dynamics of sin, punishment, repentance and redemption – is that of *who* strayed and in *what way*, to cause this disaster upon the Jewish people, and particularly the European Jewry. JAZ laments that instead of a sincere and critical analysis of how the Jewish people strayed, “a great silence has descended upon the earth”. Worse still, JAZ regrets that so many refuse to criticize the generation that fell victim to the *Shoah* and that so many draw the conclusion that “it is vain to serve God” (Mal. 3:14) since the majority of the murdered Jews were Orthodox. JAZ believes “they learn the opposite of the lesson they were supposed to learn”:⁴⁶⁸

We must reveal the truth, the same truth that the Chofetz Chaim [R. Israel Meir HaKohen Kagan, 1839–1933] spoke when he said that a terrible tragedy was about to come upon the world because they had cast away Judaism. Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman wrote in a letter that most Jewish children were being raised like gentiles, and a great catastrophe was on its way. [...] The general populace had cast away their Judaism. The largest Jewish party in Poland was the Socialist Bund; in Lithuania most Jews were Zionists. Jewish Europe was rotten at the core. Of course there were *gedolim* and holy men whom we lost, but they were the atonement for the majority.⁴⁶⁹

In this excerpt, JAZ answers the questions quite explicitly: neglecting the religious education of the children and affiliating with socialism or Zionism equates to casting away one’s Judaism. This, JAZ perceives, is what made the Jewish Europe “rotten at its core”. Yirmiyahu Cohen recalls R. Wasserman prediction that a catastrophe was imminent because Jewish children were not being raised in accordance with tradition.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁸ Cohen 2007, 11.

⁴⁶⁹ Cohen 2007, 11.

⁴⁷⁰ Cohen 2007, 11.

In the excerpt above, JAZ also answers the implicit question as to why righteous Jews were punished alongside those who were secularized and assimilated, and inclined towards Zionism. European Jewry at the turn of the 20th century included many devoted, pious communities. Why, then, did these righteous communities and individuals also fall victim to the *Shoah*? Is God indiscriminate in his chastisement? JAZ's answer to this theological conundrum is that the righteous "were the atonement for the majority", a form of martyrdom. Pinchas Peli adds that this justification is unwarranted, because it is "an accepted principle, that when punishment is meted out to the nation, the righteous are stricken along with the wicked"; for example, *BT Baba Kama 92a* teaches that "Together with the torn the cabbage is smitten", and *Mishnah Negaim 12:6* exclaims: "Woe to the wicked and woe to his neighbour".⁴⁷¹

Dina Porat notes that Orthodox Jewry – one might claim, like religious Zionism – is a "house divided against itself, contentious and riddled with factionalism". The Orthodox Ashkenazi Jews "remain constantly preoccupied and troubled by the Holocaust", Porat continues.⁴⁷² The *Shoah* struck this community heavily, and the survivors wrestled with difficult existential questions. Was the *Shoah* indeed an act of God? Why?

When seen in this context, placing the blame squarely on Zionism does away with the need to struggle theologically with this central question. Those who accept the answer provided by the accusers of Zionism need no longer put their faith on trial, and are relieved of the burden of asking themselves unsettling questions which inevitably raise doubts about their entire way of life.⁴⁷³

In her analysis, while all Zionists are heretics in the eyes of the Haredim, the responsibility for the *Shoah* is unevenly ascribed to the various

⁴⁷¹ Peli 2007, 250.

⁴⁷² Porat 1992, 712.

⁴⁷³ Porat 1992, 713.

fractions of the Zionist movement. The more secular, the direr are the accusations:

The Orthodox accusers adduce several reasons for their anti-Zionist stance, interlocked in a sort of casual nexus, and the first and foremost is the fact that Zionism is a secular movement. It is difficult to understand the power of this argument for someone not familiar with the world of the ultra-Orthodox. Secularism is a blasphemy: a denial of the very principle of religion (the existence of God) and a terrible sin which naturally spawns all other sins.⁴⁷⁴

Explaining Zionism as “a modern Satan of sorts” became a method for preserving the integrity of the belief system, faced with a catastrophe.⁴⁷⁵ Zionism became a vital component in the undertaking to re-construct the understanding of the world *post-Shoah*; from its existence many explanations could be drawn, anger and bitterness could be directed towards it.⁴⁷⁶ R. Moshe Sonnenfeld confirms that by explicating the theological framework, in which the *Shoah* transpired, he hopes to warn the Jewish people and prevent the spread of heresy:

Lest you may ask, “why should we uncover this, why should we open old wounds?” this is to warn you to beware that there might be within your heart an iota of desire to serve this Zionist idol, or to get close to it and be within its realm.⁴⁷⁷

The Haredi argumentation further provides two other explanations for the European Jewry suffering under the *Shoah*: 1) that even if pious, these communities and individuals were idle in relation to Zionism, and therefore they were punished 2) that the violation of the Threefold oath caused God to withdraw, leaving the Jewish people to the indiscriminate

⁴⁷⁴ Porat 1992, 695-704.

⁴⁷⁵ Porat 1992, 713.

⁴⁷⁶ According to Vivien Burr, discourses “serve to construct the phenomena of our world for us.” Burr 2003, 65-66.

⁴⁷⁷ Shonfeld 1977, 8-9.

morality of the *goyim*.⁴⁷⁸ R. Moshe Shonfeld, associated with NK, perceives the apathy in relation to Zionism as the root cause for the *Shoah*:

The Rabbis of Hungary, squeezed together in the cattle cars to Auschwitz [...] also saw the awesome fulfillment of these dire warnings in the Torah's list of retribution; maintaining that it all happened to us because we didn't come out strong enough against the Zionists.⁴⁷⁹

A parallel is drawn to the fate of Sodom. If God was willing to save Sodom because ten righteous men could be found in it, why then did God not save the European Jewry on behalf of its pious members? The answer JAZ gives is one provided by R. Avigdor Miller:

It states that if there will be found 'ten tzaddikim in the midst of the city' – why doesn't it just say 'in the city'? The answer is, if you have righteous people who are hiding in their houses, they are righteous but nobody knows about them, that wouldn't save them. No. They have to go out in the midst of the city. And they have to fight the city, they have to buck, they have to show opposition to the city, that's 'in the midst of the city'.⁴⁸⁰

This conclusion is further fortified by an event involving the *Satmar Rav*, R. Yoel Teitelbaum, in 1957. He organized a demonstration against religious persecution in the State of Israel but was reprimanded for this by members of the *Agudas Harabbanim*⁴⁸¹, who found it inappropriate for Jews to demonstrate against each other in front of the gentiles. The Satmar Rebbe then referred to Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089-1167) in *Parshas Vayeira*, who thought that Sodom would have been saved had there been ten righteous "in the midst of the city." The Rebbe explained that this means that "they fear Hashem in public" and that the problem in Sodom was that

⁴⁷⁸ Peli 2007, 251.

⁴⁷⁹ Shonfeld 1977, 5-6.

⁴⁸⁰ Cohen 2007, 23.

⁴⁸¹ Or *Knesset HaRabbonim*, "the Union of Orthodox Rabbis" is considered the oldest body of Haredi rabbis, established in 1901.

the righteous “were afraid to publicize their opinions in the streets of the city”.⁴⁸² Elchanan Yakira analyses:

The Satmar Rebbe’s theology is a kind of theodicy, this is, a justification of God and of the catastrophe. But what is especially striking here is not the attempt to exonerate God but the depiction of secularism, and Zionism as its ultimate expression, as a great sin, so great that the Holocaust is a fitting punishment.⁴⁸³

Pinchas Peli draws the interesting conclusion that according to R. Teitelbaum, the punishment for breaking the Threefold oath extended beyond the *Shoah* and the establishment of the state; it continued with the victories of the Six Day War in 1967. Thus, the Jews were both being punished and tested; the “success of the satanic deed of the heretical reign” was a “difficult and bitter punishment”, that “tests the people of Israel with a monumental trial” –not to be dazzled by these victories but to “recognize the truth, that it is the sin of those who promote the defiled idea of Zionism [...] that has led to all our troubles and hardships.”⁴⁸⁴

The collective aspect of the Jewish people – as well as the relationship between sin, punishment and atonement – is illustrated by R. Wasserman’s last words before the Nazis arrested him. He expressed the idea that repenting immediately would make them “better offerings”, which would save lives; their sacrificing themselves in this way would be them “fulfilling the greatest mitzvah”:

In heaven it appears that they deem us to be righteous because our bodies have been chosen to atone for the Jewish people. Therefore, we must repent now, immediately. There is not much time. We must keep in mind that we will be better offerings if we repent. In this way we will save the lives of our brethren overseas. [...] Let no thought enter our minds, God forbid, which is abominable and which renders the offering unfit. We are now fulfilling the greatest mitzvah. With fire she was

⁴⁸² Cohen 2007, 24.

⁴⁸³ Yakira 2010, 74.

⁴⁸⁴ Peli 2007, 252.

destroyed and with fire she will be rebuilt. The very fire which consumes our bodies will one day rebuild the Jewish people.⁴⁸⁵

3.3.3. ANTI-SEMITISM IS CHRONIC

The Haredim perceive anti-Semitism as a chronic tendency of the gentile world. To R. Moshe Shonfeld this tendency *is proportionate to the Jewish representation and influence* in a gentile population. The “historical axiom of eternal hatred to the eternal nation” is not even broken by the “exceptional phenomena in Scandinavian countries”, because

The strength of the anti-Semitism exists in proportion to the percentage of Jews in the Gentile population, and to the importance of their contribution to culture, economics and politics. The Scandinavian concern for the Nazi victims derives from the infinitesimal percentage of Jews in these countries.⁴⁸⁶

These dynamics, the way R. Shonfeld understands them, form an indirect imperative; that Jewish life in the Diaspora should be led in the tranquil and pious way of the Haredim, to avoid upsetting the sensitive balance that keeps anti-Semitism at bay. This balance, according to R. Shonfeld, stretches back in time even to Jacob and Esau:

The axiom that “Esau hates Jacob” is reproved amidst our people in every generation with blood and tears. Everything possible to obliterate this unwritten law hasn’t helped. Our enemies are constantly reminding us, but the Almighty has pity on His poor nation.⁴⁸⁷

Hence, the Haredim perceive anti-Semitism to be a continuous problem in the world. They propose one way to avoid provoking the inclination towards anti-Semitism among the gentiles is to steer clear of trying to influence the societies in which they live. As will be developed in Ch. 4.3.3, the Haredim also believe dispersion is a form of protection. Interestingly,

⁴⁸⁵ Wasserman for *The Jewish Guardian* 1977, 8.

⁴⁸⁶ Shonfeld 1977, 14.

⁴⁸⁷ Shonfeld 1977, 7.

the Hardalim similarly argue similarly, “Putting all the Jews in one place is what the Nazis did during the Holocaust.”⁴⁸⁸

3.3.4. THE SHOAH DOES NOT ANNUL THE THREEFOLD OATH

The Threefold oath is at the heart of the Haredi understanding of the *Shoah*. An argument related to it put forward in support of the Hardal interpretation, is that the *Shoah* negates the Threefold oath. The gentile world has obviously broken its part of the Threefold oath to “not oppress the Jewish people overly much”, so why should the Jewish people abide to their part to “not rebel against the nations” and to “not ascend the wall”?

This line of argument does not convince the Haredim. One of their counter-arguments is that the Threefold oath was sworn to God, not to the gentiles; how the gentiles commit to their part of the oath has no bearing on how the Jewish people should commit to theirs.⁴⁸⁹ Furthermore, JAZ asserts that it cannot be righteous to let one nation endure the consequences of a suffering that another nation caused the Jewish people:

One need not look far to see the fallacy of this argument. Avraham and Avimelech swore not to harm one another, so when one harmed the other the covenant was broken. But why does one nation harming the Jews in exile give the Jews the right to take Eretz Yisroel away from a different nation that occupies the land? Why should one nation suffer for the violation of another nation?⁴⁹⁰

The notion that the *Shoah* is the conclusive evidence that the gentiles have once and for all annulled the Threefold oath, is also called into question. Although Yirmiyahu Cohen acknowledges that the *Shoah* has “no equal since the creation of the world”, it is not unprecedented that the gentiles have oppressed the Jewish people “overly much”. The Roman destruction

⁴⁸⁸ Paine 1995, 13.

⁴⁸⁹ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/interdependence, accessed 12.1.2017.

⁴⁹⁰ Cohen 2007, 157.

of Jerusalem, the Crusades and the massacres of 1648 are mentioned as examples of other catastrophes. Nonetheless, despite these hardships, the Jewish people stood by the Threefold oath. Therefore, Yirmiyahu Cohen argues, the *Shoah* does not render the Jewish people a *carte blanche* in relation to the Threefold oath. Despite the persecutions and pogroms the idea of violating the Oaths was not entertained by previous generations. On the contrary, the sages reinforced them in the face of turmoil:

The Amoraim lived after the Roman massacres and yet they recorded the Three Oaths in the Gemora as practical law. The Rambam knew of early Crusades and also terrible persecutions in his own lands by the Muslims, and yet he warns the Yemenite Jews not to violate the oaths. The same is true of other Rishonim, such as the Rashbash and the Rivash, and more recent poskim such as the Avnei Nezer and Rabbi Shmuel Salant, who deal with the oaths as practical halacha.⁴⁹¹

JAZ further refers to a quotation from *the Chazon Ish* (R. Avrohom Yeshaya Karelitz, 1878-1953) in response to the question *why*: “Is it not an explicit Gemora [Gemara] in Kesubos [BT Ketubboth] that if the Jewish people violate the Three Oaths, Hashem will permit their flesh like the deer and the hinds of the field?”⁴⁹²

To sum up, this argument suggests that the *Shoah* has not altered the impact of the Threefold oath. The Oaths are still in force, the guiding life in the Diaspora and restricting migration to *Eretz Yisrael*.

3.3.5. THE SHOAH AND ZIONISM ARE PARTS OF THE SAME DESTRUCTION

Yacov M. Rabkin understands the Hardal reading of the *Shoah* as “the point of departure for redemption”, whereas the Haredim read it as a part of a process of destruction, which after 1945 continued with the establishment and life of the State of Israel. Thus, for the Hardalim, the

⁴⁹¹ Cohen 2007, 158.

⁴⁹² Cohen 2007, 122.

Shoah is a turning point; for the Haredim, it is a low point in a series of low points, of which the lowest may still be ahead:

While the National Religious believe that destruction came to an end in 1945, making the Shoah the point of departure for redemption, the theoreticians of rabbinical anti-Zionism insist that both the Shoah and the very existence of the State of Israel are part of the same process of destruction. In their view, all the accomplishments of the Zionist enterprise will be eradicated before the arrival of the Messiah, who will find the Holy land in total devastation. From this perspective, categorically rejected by Zionist messianism, the State of Israel can be nothing but an obstacle on the path to redemption.⁴⁹³

Besides assigning Zionism the existential responsibility for the *Shoah*, the Haredim also criticize its conduct during the *Shoah*. In that sense, Zionism is also part of the destruction – if not intentionally, then with a perception of reality distorted by nationalism. According to Dina Porat this criticism was “revived with fervour” during the late 1970s and the early 1980s. In these decades, the Haredim were growing in numbers and the community was recuperating from the *Shoah*. The demographic development was not only a fruit of the modern welfare states and the internal social networks of the Haredi societies but found its motivation in a sense of responsibility to restore a world destroyed in the *Shoah*. These achievements, Porat assesses, “may well represent a sublimation of the failures of [the Orthodox] community and its leaders in the period before and during the Holocaust.”⁴⁹⁴

Motti Inbari has found that R. Amram Blau (1894–1974) was the first to combine the tradition of the Threefold oath with the idea that Zionism constitutes a rebellion against the divine order, which caused the *Shoah*. He proposed this as early as 1947, years before R. Yoel Teitelbaum argued similarly in *Vayoel Moshe*, “the most important and systematic manifesto of Haredi anti-Zionism”, which was fully published in 1961.⁴⁹⁵ Dina Porat,

⁴⁹³ Rabkin 2006, 196.

⁴⁹⁴ Porat 1992, 722.

⁴⁹⁵ Inbari 2016, 201; 162.

however, views *Vayoel Moshe* as “possibly the harshest and theologically best-argued anti-Zionist tract”. In the footsteps of R. Teitelbaum followed R. Benjamin Mendelsohn, who saw Zionism as bearing the sole responsibility for the *Shoah*, and R. Moshe Scheinfeld, who perceived that it was with “systematic planning and an expression of principle” that the state leaders “are stained with blood, and the foundations of the walls are laid with [the bodies of] the children of Israel destroyed in the Exile”.⁴⁹⁶ Dina Porat summarizes this argument:

Thus, the accusers [of Zionism] formulated a kind of casual nexus with its own intrinsic logic: secularism, the mother of all sins, leads to nationalism; the striving to attain national statehood leads, in turn, to the spilling of the blood of the Jews who are not needed to attain this goal. This, in a nutshell, is the theological and substantive groundwork on which the accusations against Zionism are based.⁴⁹⁷

The leaders of the Haredim accused Zionism of not only being responsible for the *Shoah*, but also for methodically and deliberately obstructing rescue operations. This malice, the Haredim thought, was motivated by hatred of the Jewish faith, especially in the form expressed in the Diaspora. This hate was deceitfully disguised as love and concern for the Jewish people. The accusations were not only directed at the Zionist movement and the state but also at individuals. To Dina Porat, herein lies an obvious analogy:

The Zionist writer, Haim Yosef Brenner, is called a ‘proto-nazi’; the statesman David Ben-Gurion is described as ‘pervaded with a hatred of Judaism ... an irrational thing with him’. In the next sentence, the author remarks that, ‘Hitler too, was described by many historians as harbouring an irrational hatred of Jewry.’⁴⁹⁸

The Haredim argues that the rise of Nazism and the emergence of Zionism are not two parallel developments, but rather, the former is a divine retribution for the latter. Zionism is accused of 1) playing an instrumental

⁴⁹⁶ Porat 1992, 699.

⁴⁹⁷ Porat 1992, 707.

⁴⁹⁸ Porat 1992, 699.

role in tempting and assisting the Jewish people to break out of exile prematurely, 2) not prioritizing the salvation of Jewish lives, and 3) cooperating with Nazi Germany and its allies “on many occasions and in many ways”.⁴⁹⁹

JAZ supports its understanding of the Threefold oath still being in force with two arguments. Firstly, that Maimonides and other *gedolim* seem to have considered the Threefold Oath to be in effect in spite of “terrible persecutions”. Secondly, that the rejection of the Threefold oath by breaking out of exile prematurely and establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine is an act of aggression directed not at the nation that violated the Threefold oath by “oppressing the Jewish people overly much”, but at a third party. This, according to JAZ, constitutes a fallacy of the argument that since the gentile nations have violated their oath not to oppress the Jewish people overly much, the Jewish people are also released from its oath not to “rebel against the nations” and not to “go up together, by force”.

The second and third accusation are intertwined and comprise of a number of examples of how the Jewish Agency – and more generally “Zionist leaders” – failed to save Jewish lives or obstructed others from doing so. Among the examples mentioned is one of Yitzhak Greenbaum refusing to draw money from the United Jewish Appeal Fund for the rescue of Jews in Europe, with the motivation that “one should resist this wave which pushes the Zionist activities to second importance”. Another example is that of Henry Montor who denied monetary aid to a ship, carrying Jewish refugees, which was stranded on the Danube river, with the motivation that “There could be no more deadly ammunition [...] than if Palestine were to be flooded with very old people or with undesirables”.⁵⁰⁰ JAZ bitterly notes:

⁴⁹⁹ www.truetorahjews.org/lieberman, accessed 30.5.2016.

⁵⁰⁰ Shonfeld 1977, 24-25.

It is rather ironic that the Zionists claim to commemorate the deaths of Jews during World War II, since the Zionists ignored many opportunities to save Jews while the Holocaust was happening. The Zionist leaders preferred to see Jews perish in Europe rather than have the opportunity to emigrate to any countries other than the Zionist colony in the Holy Land. [...] And this has been the Zionist movement: always seeking to cause and exploit Jewish suffering, and then to claim to be the savior of the Jewish People.⁵⁰¹

Shonfeld harshly criticizes the use of the *Shoah* to accelerate the Zionist project, as well as the lack of reverence for blood spilt for this cause:

The Zionist leaders saw the spilt Jewish blood of the Holocaust as grease for the wheels of the Jewish national state. And as a general sacrifices thousands of soldiers for the sake of capturing one fortress, so did the Zionist leaders bloody their hands in building the state of "Israel" and sacrifice Jewish children of the diaspora in the fortification of its walls.⁵⁰²

These morbid metaphors come close to being so repulsive that the critical analysis of them risks being disturbed by the emotional reactions of the audience; hence, it could be argued that this argument contains the logical fallacy of *argumentum ad misericordiam*. It could also be argued that the argument *per se* is an example of the logical fallacy *argumentum ad hominem*, as it seeks to demonstrate the immoral character of the Zionist movement rather than address its arguments.

But to return to the accusations, it seems it can be substantiated that saving Jewish lives was not the main concern of the Zionist movement. In his sociological analysis of immigration patterns to the State of Israel, Yonin Cohen confirms that whenever Zionist values and goals collided with humanitarian aspects, the Israeli leadership prioritized the Zionist goals:

In sum, in the last half-century migration patterns to Israel suggest that the state has been consistently fulfilling the core Zionist mission – populating the land with a multitude of Jews. Whenever this goal

⁵⁰¹ www.truetorahjews.org/issues/independenceday, accessed 30.5.2016.

⁵⁰² Shonfeld 1977, 24.

contradicted humanitarian goals, such as helping Jews reach safe destinations other than Israel (or, alternatively, when it encountered racist attitudes against immigrants of certain ethnicity or color), Zionist values and goals prevailed.⁵⁰³

Zeev Sternhell also reflects on the stern order of priorities expressed by Berl Katznelson at the height of World War II. In 1940, Katznelson accused the Polish Jewry of being unable to cope with the situation, “unable to fight even for a few days”, a tragedy “no less than the trampling of Jewry by Hitler’s jackboots.” Sternhell concludes:

Indeed, this was the founders’ order of priorities from the beginning, and the tragedy of the Jews in the Second World War could not change it. Zionism was an act of rebirth in the most literal sense of the term. Thus, every event in the nation’s life was evaluated according to a single criterion: the degree to which it contributed to Zionism. [...] To them, the masses of Jews who were not Zionists or who were not organized for immigration to Eretz Israel were of minor importance.⁵⁰⁴

Shonfeld refers to a column by Eliezer Livneh “Thoughts on the Holocaust”, to demonstrate the readiness of the Zionist movement to sacrifice and endanger lives:

Our Zionist orientation educated us to see the growing land of Israel as the prime goal and the Jewish nation only in relation to its building the land. With each tragedy befalling the Jews in the diaspora, we saw the state as the evident solution. We continued employing this principle even during the Holocaust, saving only those who could be brought to Israel. The mandate’s limitation on immigration served as a political factor in our battle to open the doors to aliya and to establishing the state. Our programs were geared to this aim and for this we were prepared to sacrifice and endanger lives.”⁵⁰⁵

It could be argued that this criticism is misplaced; the goal of Zionism was to establish a Jewish state, not to save Jewish lives (even though the

⁵⁰³ Cohen 2002, 51.

⁵⁰⁴ Sternhell 1998, 50-51.

⁵⁰⁵ Shonfeld 1977, 24-25.

underlying motivation of Zionism was the deterrence of chronic anti-Semitism and to ensure the survival of the Jewish people). Hence, it could be argued that the Zionist leadership believed it was preventing an annihilation by bringing about the establishment of a sovereign, Jewish state, and therefore even if the consequences of its priorities were sufferings and deaths, it acted with the best interests of the Jewish people in mind.

An indirect expression of Shonfeld placing the guilt for the *Shoah* upon the shoulders of Zionism is the argument below that Zionism has “perverted” the Holy Land. Shonfeld postulates that the prophets have tried to transmit “the Almighty’s warning as to what would happen if we followed such a path”, namely, that “the full force” of God’s wrath would descend upon the Jewish people:

What is this “Zionism” that can bring even potentially priestly Jews down to such depths? It is the desire to throw off the guide and the light of the Almighty and His holy Torah and to merely live like all other peoples. It means seizing our Holy Land and perverting its Divine purpose for the sake of just having another “land” like everyone else. But even here, our prophets tried, several millennia ago, to transmit to us the Almighty’s warning as to what would happen if we followed such a path. Ezekiel (20:32) prophesied: “If you say, ‘let us be like all the nations of the world’, ‘as I live’, vows the Almighty, ‘if not with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, then with the full force of My wrath shall I reign over you.’” Shortly after this warning, the most and the best of the Jewish people found themselves under the thumb of the accursed Hitler and his allies, the nations surrounding Germany.⁵⁰⁶

Shonfeld seems to be arguing that the “full force” of God’s wrath, embodied by Hitler and his allies, was the execution of the warning given by prophets such as Ezekiel (20:32). Shonfeld seems to perceive the warning as directed against the ambition “to merely live like all other peoples”, and more explicitly, of having a land “like everyone else”. Shonfeld, thus, sees the warning in Ezekiel as directed against Zionism,

⁵⁰⁶ Shonfeld 1977, 6-7.

and the *Shoah* being an expression of God's wrath, which struck the Jewish people "shortly after this warning".

This is, however, but one way to understand Ezekiel's prophecy. Risa Levitt Kohn does not understand the "outstretched arm" of God as a vengeful arm reigning over the people, but an arm bringing the people *back* to *Eretz Yisrael*. She perceives Ezek. 20:33-42 as predicting "nothing less than a 'Second Exodus', this time not from Egypt, but from Babylonia."⁵⁰⁷ Margaret S. Odell perceives Ezek. 20:32-44 to "read like a *non sequitur* in the context", but nevertheless consistent with the logic of the chapter. Throughout the chapter, in Odell's reading, is a dynamic of God seeking to distinguish Israel and Israel resisting.⁵⁰⁸ Neither Odell nor Levitt Kohn, hence, isolates Ezek. 20:32 from the rest of the chapter in a way that would facilitate Shonfeldt's interpretation.⁵⁰⁹

3.4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Integrating a historic, traumatic event into an understanding of self and divine dynamics is almost undoable; evil remains an insoluble riddle, but nevertheless, as Christian Link reflects:

we cannot live and apparently also cannot think without hope, without the expectation that our Today could be another Tomorrow, we cannot understand evil under the conditions of our normal life.⁵¹⁰

How can a people relate to a history of its own destruction, and maintain a sense of faith, a sense of meaning? Jewish tradition is abundant in content; this chapter has sought to reflect upon what content the discourse evokes to *convey* or *create* meaning. The approach of discourse analysis

⁵⁰⁷ Levitt Kohn 2002, 107.

⁵⁰⁸ Odell 2005, 256-257.

⁵⁰⁹ Levitt-Kohn 2002, 105-106; Odell 2005, 2-9.

⁵¹⁰ Link 2004, 157.

applied in this study looks for patterns within the context and the beliefs, philosophies or logics underlying it.⁵¹¹

In this chapter, we have seen two ways of relating to the *Shoah*. Both solutions have their problems, but nevertheless seem to be able to instil their believers with some degree of hope and consolation. Thus, they fulfil their purpose: they manage to conceptualize the *Shoah* insofar as it *can* be conceptualized. They also manage to even out the *cognitive dissonance* posed upon the belief systems by the historical impulse of the *Shoah*. The two solutions both produce an answer to the burning question: Where was God during the *Shoah*?

The Hardalim meet the challenge of the *Shoah* by emphasising the beginning of redemption. However important the *Shoah* is to the construction of a national identity, the theological construct finds better ground in the notion of all being new, of the existential conditions being altered. Hence, the exile is what used to be – but will never be again – and the *Shoah* is the most horrible representation of what was. It is an essential part of history, but without much theological content on which one can build for the future. To the degree the *Shoah* is expounded in the Hardal argumentations, it is perceived as a necessary push towards redemption, a “divine amputation”, as R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook expressed it. The *Shoah* is evoked as the dark backdrop against which the shooting star of the State of Israel shines brighter; it has been used as a supporting argument for the thesis that anti-Semitism is chronic, which argues for the necessity of a sovereign, Jewish state. The *Shoah* and Nazism are also used in argumentations as symbols of the greatest evil. Shai Held offers this analysis:

There is ample room for sympathy in imagining Zvi Yehuda’s theological predicament after the Shoah. After all, it is difficult to imagine a more wrenching challenge to faith in a God who is already in the process of redeeming the Jewish people than His ostensible abandonment of them in the face of the Nazi genocide. [...] But

⁵¹¹ Taylor 2001, 7-8.

sympathy notwithstanding, it is crucial to understand the consequences of taking such a deterministic approach to the messianic unfolding: in insisting that cosmic process currently under way cannot be turned back for any reason, Zvi Yehuda effectively issued a moral blank check to his followers – whether wittingly or not.⁵¹²

The Hardalim, thus, do not integrate the *Shoah* into its theological construct as much more than a vehicle for the expedition of the end of exile. The *Shoah* forced the Jewish people to return to *Eretz Yisrael*, where the redemption came into being by the establishment of the state. As noted above, R. Abraham Y. Kook proposed that the Jewish people have been given two callings to leave the exile, but if they do not heed these calls, the “third *shofar* of redemption” will bring them out of exile in a painful way. This demonstrates that in Hardal thinking, the *Shoah* could have been averted – it was not a prerequisite to the process of redemption.

Even if the *Shoah* is not vital to support the theological construct, the Hardal perspective is also strongly nationalistic and encompasses the *Shoah* as a formative, collective memory. However, Wistrich & Ohana sees the contrast between the Diasporic Jew – submissively suffering under anti-Semitism – and the rise of the resourceful New Jew, becoming “steadily muted”; there is “much less need today to dramatize the rupture” with the past.⁵¹³ The reconciliation between the two Jewish identities, as I see it, has been enabled by Zionism establishing itself and achieving its goals: the State of Israel has proved itself to resistant and has become “a Jewish nation”, inhabited by 43% of the Jewish people, increasing linearly.⁵¹⁴ Zionism, thus, does not need to attest to its *raison d’être* anymore. The Jewish Diaspora is no longer an obstacle, but a resource, for the Israeli society.

The Hardal understanding of the *Shoah* is, in some respects, contradictory. For example, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook finds analytic studies of the *Shoah* a

⁵¹² Held 2014, 237-238.

⁵¹³ Wistrich & Ohana 1995, xii.

⁵¹⁴ DellaPergola 2012, 6-7.

“juvenile activity” but at the same time, he expounds on the *Shoah*, perceiving it a necessary “divine amputation”. Another paradox is the understanding that redemption has advanced to a point from which it can no longer be reversed, but at the same time, the Hardal often – rhetorically – reference the *Shoah*, when they find the contemporary socio-political development troubling. For example, the settlers see being scattered a security precaution, because “Putting all the Jews in one place is what the Nazis did during the Holocaust.”⁵¹⁵ To the Hardalim, hence, God was there during the *Shoah*, as the surgeon who amputates the sick limb and safeguards the recovery afterwards.

While the Hardalim stress the uniqueness of the *Shoah*, the Haredim emphasise that it is – in essence – nothing new. There have been pogroms and persecutions before, even if the *Shoah* is unprecedented in systematization and dimensions. These variations also go in line with the general understanding of exile and redemption; to the Hardalim, the existential conditions were fundamentally altered after the *Shoah*, but to the Haredim, the *Shoah* was another – even if unprecedentedly disastrous – event in the continuum of exile.

In the Haredi understanding of exile and redemption, the *Shoah* is a horrible example, but yet, only one example among others, of how cruel the exile can be. The exile, as was discussed in the previous chapter, is perceived as a consequence of a lack of faith in and servitude to God. In effect, thus, the cause for the *Shoah* must be sought from *within* the Jewish people in those times; the emancipation, secularization and politicization stand out as new elements in Jewish life in the 19th and 20th centuries. The most visible expression of these tendencies is the emergence of Zionism. Hence, the Haredim view Zionism as having contributed to the *Shoah*, although this particular dynamic is but one example of how straying from the Jewish faith results in calamity. Responsibility also lies with the *goyim*,

⁵¹⁵ Paine 1995, 13.

however, who did not resist the evil impulse. David Novak summarizes and evaluates the Haredi position concerning the Shoah thus:

Truth be told, these pietists [Haredim] have a good deal of Jewish tradition behind their assertions. [...] Certainly even these pietists, in their denunciation of the Jewish people, do not exonerate the Nazi murderers. Nevertheless, their primary intention is to tell us where God was during the Holocaust: he was there as the avenger of the sins of the Jewish people.⁵¹⁶

It seems natural that the primary intention of a religious structure in response to a catastrophe, like a genocide, is to integrate the crisis into the theological structure – to render its meaning, to neutralize its disheveling potentials, and to reassure the followers of the theology’s reliability. The Haredim do this by placing the *Shoah* on the continuum of exile and redemption. An illuminating statement from the Haredi perspective is that the *Shoah* “would be inexplicable to us” if it could not be understood as an expression of divine chastisement. Flowing logically from this, the readiness to assume responsibility for it and the harsh condemnation of Zionism completes the argumentation.

As we have seen, the Haredim did not have to reconstruct their understanding of the relation between God and his chosen people, of exile and redemption; their solution was to keep faith in a righteous and almighty God, even if it ultimately placed the responsibility for the *Shoah* on the shoulders of the Jewish people. The existential structure is thus saved. God was there, as the avenger of sins. The price seems steep, however.

The two perspectives of this study thus seem to have found ways of approaching the *Shoah*, to integrate it into their theological constructs and ascribe it meaning there. The process is likely to be an evolving one; a trauma of these proportions is bound to be an integral part of Jewish life for the unforeseeable future. The challenge of how to relate to the *Shoah*

⁵¹⁶ Novak 2007, 252.

will be renewed in every generation, raising new questions on how to revere the memory of the *Shoah*, how to tell it, how to integrate it into Jewish consciousness and identity. Elchanan Yakira regrets that not all Jewish theologians have recognized “the theological significance of the Holocaust or the seriousness of the theological difficulties it raises.”⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁷ Yakira 2010, 74.

4. THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND THE DIASPORA

4.1. THE RETURN OF THE EXILES IN JEWISH TRADITION

David Ohana perceives that the sanctity of *Eretz Yisrael* has always fascinated, but also awakened an awe, from which the exiles often shied away; “it became a taboo, forbidden to touch [...] *Eretz Yisrael*, the ultimate place, was out of reach until the ultimate time, the days of the Messiah.”⁵¹⁸

The Hebrew word *aliyah* (“ascent”), used as a synonym for the emigration to the State of Israel, contains strong, theological aspects: the individual elevates to a higher level by becoming a part of the renascent nation; the word implies that the State of Israel is above all other nations.⁵¹⁹

Both at *Yom Kippur* and *Pesach*, Jews pray that next year, the celebration would be held in Jerusalem. These hopes have often been mixed with fear: fear of intriguing revolts and causing unrest; fear of provoking the *goyim*; fear that a wave of emigration would weaken the communities in Diaspora. When, at the turn of the 20th century, emigrating to Palestine became a tangible option, the objections to it also grew stronger. One tradition evoked to numb the messianic sting is the *Threefold oath*.⁵²⁰ Aviezer Ravitzky sees the Threefold oath as “a kind of seismograph, measuring, as it were, the impact of the land upon the life of the communities.”⁵²¹

The ingathering of the exiles is a traditional concept in Judaism. According to Deut. 30:3-5, “The Lord will [...] gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. [...] He will bring you to the land that belonged

⁵¹⁸ Ohana 2012, 29-30.

⁵¹⁹ Louvish & Skolnik 2007, 660.

⁵²⁰ See Chpt. 2.3.1.

⁵²¹ Ravitsky 1993, 213.

to your ancestors, and you will take possession of it.” In the daily *‘amidah*, Jews pray to God to “raise a speedy banner for our ingathering”.⁵²²

Ever since the Jewish resistance was crushed by the Romans in the 2nd century CE, *aliyah* has been an “almost uninterrupted process”; however, under Zionism, there have been five distinctive waves of immigration. The term *yishuv* refers to the nucleus of settlers, forming the Jewish community prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.⁵²³

Intimately connected with the alteration from exile to redemption is the physical return to *Eretz Israel* by making *aliyah*.

The concept that the “ingathering of the exiles” (Heb. *kibbutz galuyyot*) as an expression of redemption stems from biblical precedents, although the phrase *per se* appears first in rabbinic literature, for example in *BT Pesachim 88a*. The hope for an ingathering of the exiles and a return to *Eretz Yisrael* is, however, an often-appearing biblical motif in different historical contexts, especially in the prophetic literature; in Isaiah (11:12, 27:13; 56:8, 66:2), in Jeremiah (16:15, 23:3, 8; 29:14; 31:8; 33:7) and Ezekiel (20:34, 41; 37:21). The motif also appears in Deut. 28:63-64 and 30:1.⁵²⁴

In the Talmud, the “ingathering of the exiles” is a process which belongs to the messianic age. In the archetypical exile in Babylon, exile ended with the decree of the Persian king Cyrus, which enabled the Jewish people to return and rebuild *Eretz Israel*. Antti Laato argues that it was Cyrus, rather than a Davidic Messiah of legitimate ancestry, who was perceived as the redeemer:

These popular doubts over the incongruities between hopes and realities necessitated a reinterpretation of the messianic programme and the results of this are to be found in the present form of Isa 40-55. [...] The best evidence that Cyrus was seen as “messiah is found in Isa 44:24-45:7 where he is called YHWH’s “shepherd” and mašîah whose mission

⁵²² Reif 2001, 291.

⁵²³ Louvish & Skolnik 2007, 660.

⁵²⁴ Rabinowitz 2007, 786.

is to release the people from captivity and provide for the organization of the rebuilding of the Temple.⁵²⁵

Louis Rabinowitz, however, argues that the return following the decree of Cyrus was *not* perceived as an “ingathering of the exiles” because Cyrus was not seen as responding to God’s instructions in Isa 45:13 – to build the city and gather the exiles – but instead, merely *allowed* the return. As an indication of this, Rabinowitz brings *BT Megillah 12a* to mind.⁵²⁶ It relates that Nahman ben Hisda did not seem to perceive this return from Babylonia as an example of an “ingathering of the exiles”:

What is the meaning of the verse, Thus saith the Lord to his anointed to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden. Now was Cyrus the Messiah? Rather what it means is: The Holy One, blessed be He, said to the Messiah: I have a complaint on thy behalf against Cyrus. I said, He shall build my house and gather my exiles, and he [merely] said, Whosoever there is among you of all his people, let him go up.

According to *BT Pesachim 88a*, the [day of] the ingathering of the exiles is as important as the day when heaven and earth were created; they shall then “be gathered together, and they shall appoint themselves one head, and shall go up out of the land”.

Nachmanides, also known as the Ramban (1194-1270), introduced a “new dimension of urgency” which was “no question of mere nostalgia and yearning” into the discussion on *aliyah*.⁵²⁷ Aryeh Newman perceives Nachmanides as seeing it as a “serious omission” by Maimonides not to include the commandment to take possession of and dwell in *Eretz Yisrael*.⁵²⁸ In his addenda to Maimonides’ *Sefer ha-Mitzvot*, Nachmanides offers this explanation regarding the fourth positive commandment:

⁵²⁵ Laato 1992, 243-246; see also Porten 2007, 609-611.

⁵²⁶ Rabinowitz 2007, 786.

⁵²⁷ Newman 1968, 23; Holzer 2002, 82.

⁵²⁸ Newman 1968, 23; Holzer 2002, 82.

We have been commanded to take possession of the land which the Lord gave to our forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and we are specifically forbidden to abandon it to any other nation or allow it to become desolate. This is implied in the text: "You shall take possession of the land and dwell therein since I have given you this land to inherit and you shall inherit it. [...] The proof that this is an outright commandment emerges from Moses' exhortation to the spies: "Go up, take possession, as the Lord, God of thy fathers, hath spoken unto thee: fear not, nor be dismayed." [...] When they refused to go up, the text observes: "You rebelled against the commandment of the Lord and disobeyed him." This indicates quite clearly that a specific commandment and not a mere promise or prophecy is involved. [...] Accordingly, it is a positive commandment applying to every generation, binding on each one of us, even during the period of exile, as is clear from many passages of the Talmud.⁵²⁹

In the medieval era, the ingathering of the exiles is a common theme in apocalyptic literature.⁵³⁰ The *Rashbash* (R. Shlomo ben Shimon, 1400-1467) distinguishes between the individual and the collective when in *She'elot u-Teshuvot* he reflects on the conflict between the Threefold oath and the *mitzvah* to live in *Eretz Yisrael*:

There is no doubt that living in *Eretz Yisroel* is a great *mitzvah* at all times, both during and after the time of the Temple [...] However, during exile this is not a general *mitzvah* for all Jews, but on the contrary it is forbidden, as the Gemara says in the last chapter of *Kesubos*, that this is one of the oaths that the Holy One, blessed is He, made the Jews swear: that they not hurry the end and not go up as a wall. Go and see what happened to the children of Ephraim when they hurried the end! However, it is a *mitzvah* for any individual to go up and live there, but if there are considerations that prevent him he is not obligated.⁵³¹

In *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer*, Isaiah 23:7 is interpreted as "the right horn that is greater than that on the left, and with it, the Holy One, blessed be He, is

⁵²⁹ Newman 1968, 23-24.

⁵³⁰ Rabinowitz 2007, 786.

⁵³¹ www.truetorahjews.org/rashbash, accessed 7.4.2017. I have not been able to retrieve *Resonsa Rashbash* as a primary source.

destined to sound in the future for the ingathering of the exiles” (Chpt. 3ff).⁵³²

Over time, exile has come to designate not only a physical disposition from *Eretz Yisrael*, but also a mental and spiritual disposition from the state of redemption. Leaving *Eretz Yisrael* for the Diaspora is also perceived as a (collective) movement of the mind from a state of redemption into a state of repentance (Heb. *teshuva*). At a time when the concepts of an existential state of exile has been detached from one’s physical disposition, a Jew may live in the State of Israel, but nevertheless see himself as living in exile; he may also live in the Diaspora, but read the unfolding of history as the process of redemption (*atchalta de-geula*). Louis Isaac Rabinowitz sees the concept of the ingathering of the exiles in modern times as “divested of its messianic character”.⁵³³ That analysis I would, however, like to problematize; with regards to the Hardal and the Hardal interpretation of this and aligned concepts, presented below, this study will show that it indeed not devoid of messianic connotations, quite the opposite.

In the middle of the 19th century, a handful of rabbis – later thought of as the forerunners of Zionism – expressed their concern about the future of the Jewish people. A national home was needed to fortify social unity, and it would be the logical next step of emancipation.⁵³⁴ Although the end of the 19th century in Europe was characterized by nationalism and rationalism, Zionism “leaned heavily” on messianism:

Jewish society achieved its nationalist transformation with the appearance of a modern idea, later called Zionism, which purged, so to speak, Jewish messianic belief of its miraculous eschatological elements and retained only its political, social, and some of its spiritual objectives. Even in this phase of development, however, Zionism leaned heavily on

⁵³² Rabinowitz 2007, 786.

⁵³³ Rabinowitz 2007, 787.

⁵³⁴ Katz 2007, 540.

the old messianism and derived from it much of its ideological and even more of its emotional appeal.⁵³⁵

Many representatives of traditional Judaism upheld that making *aliyah* to Palestine *en masse* would constitute a violation of the regulations of life in exile.⁵³⁶ As Ravitzky explains, the fear of a mass *aliyah* was a key ingredient in the Threefold oath avowed by the Jewish people to accept the yoke of exile.⁵³⁷ Mordecai Breuer reflects on the weight of the Threefold oath in relation to *aliyah*:

Traditional Jewish thought understood the three oaths as landmarks for the people in exile, not as prescriptions addressed against those who wished to go up to Zion. Hence, the oaths did not contradict the ascent of Jews to the Land of Israel, even in large and organized groups, so long as the Jewish dispersion remained in their exiles... We have not found the three oaths as explicitly cited as an on-going halakhah... Even with the organization of large and cohesive groups of immigrants, from the group of R. Judah the Hasid, who came up [to the Land of Israel] at the head of a thousand Jews in 1700, through the *aliyah* of Hasidim and disciples of the Gaon of Vilna – the question of the three oaths did not arise as a practical halakhic one.⁵³⁸

Reuven Firestone warns that the tradition of the Threefold oath should not be read out of context, as its “construct occurs within a Talmudic periscope that also conveys many statements strongly supporting living in the Land of Israel.”⁵³⁹ For example, *BT Ketubbot 110b* states that

Our Rabbis taught: One should always live in the Land of Israel, even in a town most of whose inhabitants are idolaters, but let no one live outside the Land, even in a town most of whose inhabitants are Israelites; for whoever lives in the Land of Israel may be considered to

⁵³⁵ Katz 2007, 540.

⁵³⁶ Two of the most prominent representatives of the anti-Zionist position were the Rebbe of Munkács, R. Hayyim Eleazar Shapira and the *Satmar Rav*, R. Yoel Moshe Teitelbaum. Ravitzky 1993, 40-51.

⁵³⁷ Ravitzky 1993, 211-212.

⁵³⁸ Ravitsky 1993, 213. I have not been able to retrieve Mordechai Breuer’s article, quoted by Ravitzky.

⁵³⁹ Firestone 2006, 962.

have a God, but whoever lives outside the Land may be regarded as one who has no God. For it is said in Scripture, to give you the Land of Canaan, to be your God.

The rabbinic tradition reflects an understanding of Jewish life in which “history never intervenes”, Jacob Neusner explains; in the aftermath of Bar Kokhba disaster, to ensure survival it seemed necessary to downplay messianic fervour and political activism. Hence, “silence on the subject served to express a clarion judgement.”⁵⁴⁰

The creative theology of R. Tzvi Hirsh Kalisher (1795–1874) and R. Yehuda Alkai (1798-1878), however, sought to provide a justification to deviate from traditional Judaism.⁵⁴¹ By means of Kabbalistic mysticism, R. Kalisher and R. Alkai suggested that God could be moved by “stirrings below”; he could be persuaded to alter a set plan, or at least to accelerate his plan for the redemption of the Jewish people. The “stirrings below” would then represent the “beginning of redemption”.⁵⁴² Their “mystical geography and practical settlement” was not always intertwined, as they were “primarily concerned with encouraging Jewish immigration to Palestine”.⁵⁴³

The success of what eventually grew into religious Zionism was not, however, solely dependent on the substance of the theological argumentation. Robert Eisen notes that “religious Zionism would not have become such a potent source of violence nowadays, had it not been for the assistance it received from secular Zionists in its earlier decades.”⁵⁴⁴ Jacob Katz reasons that Zionism “leaned heavily” on messianism, even when it stripped it of its eschatological elements:

⁵⁴⁰ Neusner 1987, 270; 275.

⁵⁴¹ Fishman & Mordechai 2011, 620. R. Kalisher and R. Alkai are often portrayed as pioneers of religious Zionism. The development of this perspective is described thoroughly by Schwartz 2009 and Goldwater 2009.

⁵⁴² Hertzberg 1992, 153.

⁵⁴³ Halkin 2010, 253.

⁵⁴⁴ Eisen 2011, 5.

Jewish society achieved its nationalist transformation with the appearance of a modern idea, later called Zionism, which purged, so to speak, Jewish messianic belief of its miraculous eschatological elements and retained only its political, social, and some of its spiritual objectives. Even in this phase of development, however, Zionism leaned heavily on the old messianism and derived from it much of its ideological and even more of its emotional appeal.⁵⁴⁵

According to David Vital, the ideology of Zionism was developed in retrospect, which is why the dogma of Zionism presents “a patchy and unsystematic appearance”.⁵⁴⁶ Its development can be systematized as threefold, with the Mizrahi distinguishing itself as a party in the World Zionist Organization in 1902 as a first step, the workers’ party *Ha-Po’el ha-Mizrahi* forming in Palestine in 1922 under the slogan *Torah ve-Avodah* as a second, and the emergence of *Gush Emunim*, for which the *Mercaz Harav Yeshiva* was the ideological cradle, as a third step.⁵⁴⁷

The question of whether to remain in the Diaspora or to make *aliyah* was dramatically bolstered in the earlier half of the 20th century when the deteriorating conditions under Nazism disrupted the lives of European Jews. The situation raised many theological questions. Would it be a lack of faith, to assume control of one’s own fate? Would it violate the Threefold oath to emigrate to Palestine? Would it be a “forcing of the End”? Was the degrading situation to be read as the birth pangs of redemption, ushering in the Jewish people’s return to *Eretz Yisrael*? Or was it an expression of the exile deepening, calling the Jewish people to a more profound repentance?

For those who had options, Palestine was not the obvious place of refuge. At the beginning of the 20th century, it was underdeveloped and its future was unclear. Many took refuge in countries within Europe instead or fled to the USA. Already in 1949, a year after the establishment of the state,

⁵⁴⁵ Katz 2007, 540.

⁵⁴⁶ Vital 1989, 348-349.

⁵⁴⁷ Fishman & Mordechai 2011, 620; haCohen 2007, 630; Feige 2009, 24; Lustick 1988, 32.

*Mapai*⁵⁴⁸ listed “the eradication of the exile” and the “rapid transfer of the masses of Israel to their land” as the first of the three most important challenges for the state, noting that “the yearned-for era of the ingathering of the exiles has begun”. However, this ambition was soon exchanged for a “concern for the equality of the Jews in every country”, a “deepening awareness of the unity of the Jewish nation in the dispersion” and a commitment to “nurture the ties with the Jewish community around the world”. The question of ingathering the exiles remained on the agenda, but with less fervour and with a more cautious rhetoric.⁵⁴⁹ By 1955, *Mapai* interpreted the task of ingathering the exiles as “nurturing the link between Jews in the world and the state.” By 1984, the *Israel Labour Party*⁵⁵⁰ no longer even mentioned the ingathering of the exiles as a central goal.⁵⁵¹ Simon Rawidowicz notes that since then the ingathering policy of the State of Israel has been greatly reduced and that its future is undecided.⁵⁵²

Yonin Cohen depicts Zionism as a demographic success. In 1947, only 6 percent of world Jewry lived in Palestine; by 2000, the percentage was around 40.⁵⁵³ However, Cohen appreciates the complexity of the demographic picture: there has been a “monotonic rise” in the proportion of non-Jewish immigrants, as well as a substantial growth in the Palestinian population. Cohen sees it as ironic that the success of Zionism has led to an “incipient challenge” to its original mission: to create a *Jewish* national home.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁴⁸ *Mapai* (Heb. Acronym for *Mifletet Po'alei Eretz Yisrael*) was a social-democratic workers party founded in 1930. It was a dominant force in all Israeli governments until 1968, when it merged with two other parties into the Israel Labor Party. Louvish & Hattis Rolef 2007, 497-498.

⁵⁴⁹ Shelef 2010, 151.

⁵⁵⁰ *Israel Labor Party* was formed in 1968 from a merger between *Mapai*, *Ahdut ha-Avodah-Po'alei Zion* and *Rafi*. In the 1968 elections, it received 57% of the seats. Louvish & Hattis Rolef 2007, 497-498.

⁵⁵¹ Shelef 2010, 151.

⁵⁵² Rawidowicz 1986, 193.

⁵⁵³ Cohen 2002, 50-51.

⁵⁵⁴ Cohen 2002, 52.

This chapter examines how the Hardalim argue for making *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael* as a means to further the process of redemption. The Haredim dispute that, and instead encourage the Jewish people to remain in the Diaspora until God announces the end of exile. Both perspectives argue their positions with references to Jewish tradition, which is the particular interest of this study.

4.2. THE HARDALIM: GO UP AND POSSESS

4.2.1. *GEULA* IN *ERETZ YISRAEL*, *GALUT* IN THE DIASPORA

In the Hardal context, the concept of *aliyah* is synonymous with the mass emigration to the State of Israel in the 20th century. In 1949, the state's first prime minister David Ben-Gurion wrote in his diary: "In one year we brought more than 120,000 immigrants to the country as the initial step in the ingathering of the exiles."⁵⁵⁵ Also, according to the *Declaration of the State of Israel* from 1948, "The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles", and appeals to worldwide Jewry to stand by in "the realization of the age-old dream – the redemption of Israel".⁵⁵⁶

Eretz Yisrael is one of the three aspects of the "holy triangle" in the Kookist ideotheology, in which *Eretz Yisrael*, *Am Yisrael* and *Torah Yisrael* form a mystical trinity.⁵⁵⁷ In the Hardal perspective, therefore, the term *Eretz Yisrael* is laden with theological significance. David Ohana observes a hint of the incomparability between the concepts of *Eretz Yisrael* and the State of Israel, that the messianism of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook was connected to the *Land* of Israel rather than the *State*; this messianism was attached to a

⁵⁵⁵ Drory 2004, 23.

⁵⁵⁶ Scott 1997, 1.

⁵⁵⁷ R. David Samson, in the introduction to *Orot*, explains that one of the main themes of R. Abraham Y. Kook's writings is the "inner attachment to G-d unique to the Jewish people", which is "the key to understanding the unity of the nation of Israel, the Torah, the Land of Israel and G-d". Samson & Fishman 1996, 8. Also David Wilder speaks of this triangle. Wilder 2013, 810. "The Time is Now! Moshe Feiglin & Manhigut Yehudit", Sunday, December 07, 2008.

territory, rather than to a political body.⁵⁵⁸ As a result, the relationships between the Hardal perspective and the political establishment always depended on whether or not the latter maintained a strategy to defend and expand territory. Around the time the peace talks began to relinquish land the relationship began to deteriorate. From the Hardal perspective – and the settlement movement in particular – the righteousness of the State depended on devotion to the holy cause: to restore *Eretz Yisrael* for *Am Yisrael*. Without this cause, the State is rendered a useless political structure.

R. Abraham Y. Kook mystically formulated the contrast between life in the Diaspora and life in *Eretz Yisrael* as a difference in where existence draws its strength from: “The yearning for Salvation give the Judaism of the Diaspora its power of stamina; whereas the Judaism of *Eretz Yisrael* is the salvation itself.”⁵⁵⁹ R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook perceived that

The *Geula* [redemption] stands in contrast to the *Galut* [exile], our exile from the Land of Israel. *Geula* is the opposite of *Galut*. What is *Galut*? An aberration. For instance, in our normal state, we need to be here, the entire nation of Israel, in the Land of Israel. And all of *Eretz Yisrael* needs to be in our hands. Thank G-d, *Hashem's* light is now shining upon us, and increasing, little by little, in gradual stages.⁵⁶⁰

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, hence, pairs the place of residence with *either* of the two metaphysical conditions. He describes exile as an existence away from *Eretz Yisrael*, not primarily as a metaphysical condition. Thus, he returns⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁸ Ohana 2010, 71.

⁵⁵⁹ Samson & Fishman 1996, 37; Naor 2015, 114.

⁵⁶⁰ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 139.

⁵⁶¹ The decree by Cyrus, permitting the exiles to return and rebuild the Temple, concretely ended the Babylonian exile. Hence, there is a historical precedence for coupling physical return with redemption. However, the return to *Eretz Yisrael* in the 19th and 20th centuries was not necessarily read in this light. The religious interpretation of Zionism was at first marginal and gained momentum only in the latter half of the 20th century. It also took time for the perspective to evolve. Instead, many Orthodox instantly perceived the organized return to Palestine under the Zionist movement as a rebellion against divine providence. Therefore, the coupling of return and redemption of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook is not

to an understanding of exile and redemption as primarily a question of deportation from and restoration in *Eretz Yisrael*. From this understanding, he arrives at the conclusion that the “entire nation” should settle in “all” of *Eretz Yisrael*. He thus “brought redemption and politics much closer”, Gadi Taub concludes; he reworked the ideotheology laid out by his father and connected it to the socio-political situation.⁵⁶² For example, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook saw the ingathering of the exiles as a revelation of redemption and a foundation for it:

The ingathering of the exiles is a foundation of the redemption, and, as the Rambam makes clear, an actual stage in the days of Mashiach. The revelation of the redemption comes through the ingathering of the exiles, and not through miracles.⁵⁶³

This belief is also reflected in the writings of R. Yisrael Ariel, R. Chaim Richman, and R. Menahem Makover of the Temple Institute. They write, “When Israel dwells in its land with the Holy Temple functioning in its proper place, it bestows excellence on all humanity.” They also relate that according to the sages, throughout history, the only period the world has enjoyed global peace was during the first forty years of Solomon’s Temple.⁵⁶⁴

According to Clive Jones it so happened that the interpretation of redemption being dependent on the Jewish people returning to settle *Eretz Yisrael* corresponded to the interests of the government; “the claim on both security and historical grounds no Israeli government would cede any part of Eretz Israel neatly conflated with the developing ideo-theology of the religious right.”⁵⁶⁵ In this context, the realms of religion and politics were “easily blurred”:

unprecedented in Jewish tradition and perhaps even closer at hand. See Laato 1992, 243-246.

⁵⁶² Taub 2010, 41.

⁵⁶³ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 293.

⁵⁶⁴ Ariel, Richman & Makover 1998, 6.

⁵⁶⁵ Jones 1997, 31.

The euphoria that erupted in the aftermath of the Six-Day War was not limited to the disciples of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda. It was a wider phenomenon, which swept most of Israel. In the euphoric cloud that gave politics the aura of mythology, the differences between the territorial messianism of Rabbi Kook the son and secular Zionism were easily blurred.⁵⁶⁶

The idea that secular Zionism is a divine instrument in the process of redemption was central to R. Abraham Y. Kook. Although it was “at first marginal”, it would later “beget the settler’s movement”, by then reformulated by the son, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook.⁵⁶⁷ Gadi Taub relates:

By editing his father’s writings, he derived a far more detailed political plan from theology. The difference was crucial. The messianic belief and the anticipation of redemption, as Ravitzky has observed, were replaced by a messianic confidence and a positive knowledge of the future. To put it more crudely than Ravitzky, redemption was lowered from the sphere of the state to the level of a political party. It was stripped of the theological ambiguity and turned into a political platform.⁵⁶⁸

To R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, settling *Eretz Yisrael*, waging war and living from the Torah are interconnected, all three inducing each other:

The drive toward settlement takes power from the spiritual might of Torah. Torah, war and settlement are three sides of a triangle. And how incredibly privileged we are to be assertive in all.⁵⁶⁹

He further saw the secular establishment in the State of Israel as a vehicle of redemption. Although not perfect, it would, in time, pave way for a spiritual awakening too. R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook maintained, “This is the state the prophets envisioned”:

The question has been asked, “Is this the state that our Prophets envisioned?” And I say: This is the state the prophets envisioned. Of

⁵⁶⁶ Taub 2010, 47.

⁵⁶⁷ Taub 2010, 38-39.

⁵⁶⁸ Taub 2010, 41.

⁵⁶⁹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 176. See also Lustick 1988, 106.

course, it has not yet attained perfection. But our prophets, our sages and those who followed them, said: The seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will return and will re-establish settlement and independent political rule in the Land. We were not told whether those who return will or will not be men and women of righteousness. The prophet said: "When I shall have gathered the house of Israel... then shall they dwell in their own land... And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses and plant vineyards (Ezek. 28:25-26). The prophet is speaking of real vineyards, not symbolic ones. Indeed, surely as a result of the return of Israel to their Land there will come about the increase of Torah and its glorification. But the first step is the settlement of Israel on their Land!⁵⁷⁰

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook states that the *Chofetz Chaim* (R. Israel Meir HaKohen Kagan, 1839-1933), upon hearing that the settlements of Rehovot, Rishon L'Zion and Gedera had been founded, exclaimed: "Behold, the [Geula] has already begun." His son, R. Aryeh Leib, related this to R. Tzvi Yehuda. From this he draws the conclusion that the *Chofetz Chaim*, among other *gedolim*, recognized the settling of *Eretz Yisrael* as one expression of the process of redemption:

The Chofetz Chaim was a Gaon and a holy man, and, along with this, he was alert and awake to every matter. He knew the spiritual level of a portion of the settlers in the new villages. Yet nonetheless, he recognized that the new settlement in Eretz Yisrael belonged to the process of redemption.⁵⁷¹

JAZ criticizes R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook's interpretation of the *Chofetz Chaim* on three accounts. Firstly, that since he died already in 1933, no quote ascribed to him can be interpreted as relating to the establishment of a state. Secondly, even if he expressed a wish to (or even did) go to live in Palestine at the end of his life, it does not reveal his attitudes towards a hypothetical Jewish state. Thirdly, R. Aryeh Leib Kagan, who conveyed this tradition to R. Tzvi Yehuda, may have been coloured by his own Zionist convictions and thus misinterpreting his father. JAZ argues that it

⁵⁷⁰ www.mercazarav.org/mizmor19.htm, accessed 23.3.2017.

⁵⁷¹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 345.

is a circular reasoning, a conclusion of a faulty logic, to portray the pre-State *gedolim* as if they endorsed Zionism: “the real central question of Zionism whether a state is permitted was never touched by the *Chofetz Chaim* or anyone else in that time.”⁵⁷²

Thus, either the *Hardalim* ascribe the *Chofetz Chaim* a prophetic ability and therefore also attribute a timeless value to the texts by him and other sages, or the *Chofetz Chaim* actually interpreted the early settlements in Palestine as an indication that redemption had begun.

As previously discussed, the traditional understanding of exile and redemption did not include the notion of a progressive redemption. Robert Eisen concludes that with the nationalism of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, Jewish tradition was bent out of shape:

Some of the key ideas of the younger Kook also provide excellent examples of how nationalism distorted traditional Jewish teaching [...] the younger Kook’s use of Kabbalistic metaphysics to justify the use of military force to bring the messianic redemption can also be judged as tendentious [...] There was no real precedent for using Kabbalistic thinking in this way. [...] Religious Zionists, however, have been consistent in their unwillingness to admit their modernism, and they maintain that self-deception by justifying their thinking on the basis of ideas and text drawn from the tradition, as if their values have always been those of Judaism.⁵⁷³

How then, did nationalism emerge to permeate religious traditions? The mythologization of secular place is, in David Ohana’s assessment, “one of the chief instruments” in the creation of national communities. In the light of that, it is not surprising that Zionism saw benefits in drawing upon Jewish history and tradition to strengthen the young communities – and later the young state – through a national-religious framework. In the State of Israel, both secular and religious traditions impute places sanctity.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷² www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/ohrsomayach, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁵⁷³ Eisen 2011, 183-184.

⁵⁷⁴ Ohana 2012, 30.

Ascribing a place sanctity, he reflects, “transforms the chaos of life into something with order and organization” and serves as “an anchoring point, that holds back the chaos, so that the concrete place becomes transcendental, a place beyond place”.⁵⁷⁵ Therefore it is understandable that the young State of Israel – at the process of its national formation, particularly when traumatized by the crisis of 1967 – found the Hardal ideotheology appealing, as it provided the “chief instrument” Ohana speaks of. Furthermore, it not only imputed places sanctity; it also ascribed sanctity to the nation, the secular structure, the immigration and the territorial expansion. R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook’s “theological revolution” transformed R. Abraham Y. Kook’s ideas from a “vehicle for a future religious entity” to a “reality in the present”, Gadi Taub analyses:

But whereas the elder Rabbi Kook had opened the door for sovereignty to become a positive value, his son, who sanctified settlement, in fact, subtracted from the state’s lofty status. Sovereignty became conditionally holy. So long as it served to promote the commandment to settle the land it was holy. But it could turn profane, even sinful, the moment it deviated from God’s politics of settlement. [...] “We are commanded by the Torah, not the government,” Rabbi Zvi Yehuda said.⁵⁷⁶

In the Hardal perspective, the negation of *Galut* was cultivated by, among others, R. Abraham Y. Kook. He saw *Galut* as an “existence characterized by decline, narrowness, displacement, seclusion and weakness”. The renaissance of the Jewish people, instead, constituted a return to a natural and creative mindset as well as a return to nationhood and self-government. The *Galut* identity, in R. Kook’s view, was an obstruction of the constructive development towards Judaism in its authentic form: where sacred and the secular are intertwined in state and religion. The circumstances in the Diaspora enhance the spiritual aspects of Judaism and may thus seem positive, but they are in essence unnatural, in that they separate the religious and secular realms of life. In this separation the

⁵⁷⁵ Ohana 2012, 30.

⁵⁷⁶ Taub 2010, 46.

secular falls out of focus, leaving a void to be filled by a heightened religiosity. Subsequently, R. Kook argues, the return to Judaism in its genuine form is to be found in the enhancement of secularism in national life. There, the two are in perfect balance.⁵⁷⁷

R. Abraham Y. Kook perceived life in exile to be spiritually purifying, although harsh and painful; it prepares the people for their national and religious awakening. He saw that the time had come for the Jewish people to return because the burdens of exile had become too heavy to endure. The hope of returning and the historical connection to *Eretz Yisrael* could no longer sustain the nation. He was optimistic that

one spark of this real life in the homeland will revive a very vital existence. Only with the people's return to its land, which is the only route to its rebirth, will the real, sacred life of Judaism be revealed.⁵⁷⁸

Although the Zionism of R. Abraham Y. Kook has much in common with secular Zionism – both oppose *Galut* as an out-dated form of Jewish existence – there is a fundamental difference between the two, vis-à-vis *Galut*. Secular Zionism considered the lack of breadth of *Galut* to be a consequence of a strict religion, a burden the Jewish society should be liberated from. R. Kook, on the other hand, saw the stringency of the *Galut* religiosity, in essence, as stemming from an unbalance caused by *Galut* itself. So, to simplify it, R. Kook and secular Zionism disagree upon whether it is the religion that is the problem or not: secular Zionism views that it is, while R. Kook advocates that Judaism has become distorted by the conditions of exile, but in itself, it is ideal.⁵⁷⁹ R. David Samson, who published a translation of R. Abraham Y. Kook's work *Orot*, comments,

What affords the Jewish people stamina through our long years of exile?
The yearning for Salvation. This means salvation from the Diaspora.

⁵⁷⁷ Don-Yehiya 1992, 130-132.

⁵⁷⁸ Don-Yehiya 1992, 132.

⁵⁷⁹ Don-Yehiya 1992, 130-132.

Our daily prayers for the ingathering of the exiles and the rebuilding of Eretz Yisrael grant us the fortitude to survive.⁵⁸⁰

Hence, to R. Samson, exile equals Diaspora. This understanding strengthens the understanding of redemption as a process and strengthens the interpretation of the State of Israel being the “sprouting of our redemption”, as it enabled the return out of the Diaspora, out of exile. This resonates well with the idea of the 20th century being “the beginning of redemption” – a phrase coined by R. Abraham Y. Kook.⁵⁸¹

The son, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, also emphasized the *Galut* as an incomplete Jewish existence. He stressed that being at peace in the *Galut* is an expression of “estrangement to the secrets of Hashem”⁵⁸² and that “the beginning of intelligence is to understand that existence among the gentile nations is totally unpleasant.”⁵⁸³ The long exile, subjecting the Jewish people to the impurities of the gentile nations has caused erosions in the Jewish identity.⁵⁸⁴ But, according to his view, “a man’s soul is transformed when he arrives here [to *Eretz Yisrael*]”.⁵⁸⁵

Further, the father, R. Abraham Y. Kook wrote in *Orot 7:18* that when a Jew comes to *Eretz Yisrael*, “his individual soul is engulfed in the great light of the encompassing soul which enters inside it.”⁵⁸⁶ To R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, not only is the commandment of living in Israel an “all-encompassing precept”, but also, it is only in *Eretz Israel* that there can be a “genuine keeping of the Torah”:

Our sages have clearly explained the value of Eretz Yisrael to the Torah and the mitzvoth, stating that the precept of living in Israel is equal in class to all of the commandments in the Torah. This is an awesome pronouncement. Obviously, this emphasis does not come to render all

⁵⁸⁰ Samson & Fishman 1996, 37.

⁵⁸¹ Ohana 2010, 70.

⁵⁸² Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 255.

⁵⁸³ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 116.

⁵⁸⁴ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 108-109.

⁵⁸⁵ See Chpt. 4.2.2.

⁵⁸⁶ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 107, in footnote 37.

other precepts superfluous. Every precept is an integral part of the overall 613 commandments. However, the mitzvah of living in Israel is not just an ordinary commandment. It is an all-encompassing precept – the fundamental prerequisite for Am Yisrael to be able to function as a nation. For the genuine keeping of the Torah is only in Eretz Yisrael. In every other place, the commandments are imposed as a way of reminder, so that when we return to Israel, we will know how to keep them.⁵⁸⁷

Widening the gap between the ideal – life in *Eretz Yisrael* – and the substitute – life in the Diaspora – is a way of strengthening the argumentation to make *aliyah*. R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook describes *Eretz Yisrael* as “a place designed for our Kedusha [sanctity], for our psychological health, and even for our physical well-being”.⁵⁸⁸ In addition to the obvious imperative in this quote – that Jews should return to live in *Eretz Yisrael* – there is a *circulus in probando* argument embedded in it: living in the Diaspora is polluting, and if a Jew proposes otherwise, it is because he has been polluted by the Diaspora. From this argument, the dialogue cannot proceed, as all possible counter-arguments are rejected beforehand.

4.2.2. THE HOLY LAND MAKES HOLY

The idea that *Eretz Yisrael* is holy is deeply rooted in Jewish tradition. In *BT Baba Bathra 158b*, R. Zera teaches that the “climate of the land of Israel makes one wise.” In *BT Yevamoth 105b*, it is suggested that when praying, one should direct one’s eyes towards the Temple in Jerusalem, because the eyes and heart of God “shall be there perpetually”. According to traditions stemming from Nachmanides, dwelling in *Eretz Yisrael* is equal to all the other commandments.⁵⁸⁹ Also Maimonides comments in *Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim uMilchamotehem 5:10-11*, that a person should prefer to dwell among idol-worshippers in *Eretz Yisrael* than among Jews in the

⁵⁸⁷ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 115.

⁵⁸⁸ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 118. This aspect is more closely studied in Chpt. 4.2.2.

⁵⁸⁹ Newman 1968, 21.

Diaspora.⁵⁹⁰ There is, thus, a bulk of traditions which ascribe *Eretz Yisrael* a sanctity beyond any other place on earth, and furthermore, present it as an essential prerequisite for the Jewish people to reach its full potential.

The idea of *Eretz Yisrael* conveying a particular and exclusive holiness permeates the teachings of R. Abraham Y. Kook. For instance, he saw it as impossible to gain insight into the sanctity of *Eretz Yisrael* and to love the land adequately by rational human understanding. Only the Spirit of God, he taught, who “acts on the nation as a whole” can induce deep love for *Eretz Yisrael*.⁵⁹¹ A consequence of this exaltation of *Eretz Yisrael* and its unique significance for Jewish life, is the slighting of life in the Diaspora, as was described previously.

In R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook’s understanding, returning to establish an independent rule, developing the nation – planting “real vineyards” – was crucial to the advance of redemption. The process of building *Eretz Yisrael* was not dependent on righteousness, but on the “seed of Abraham” returning to contribute:

We are honoured to witness the wonders of G-d and his secrets – in construction, agriculture, policy, security in matter and spirit [...] The real Yisrael is the redeemed Yisrael, the kingdom of Israel and the army of Israel.⁵⁹²

A more elusive way of arguing for the necessity of living in *Eretz Yisrael* is with reference to mystical aspects. The idea that the air of *Eretz Yisrael* is particularly healthy for a Jew – plainly or symbolically -reoccurs. This idea is also put forward in the *Kuzari* (4:17), according to which *Eretz Yisrael* “possesses a special power in its air which unites in a *Segula* assisting in the attainment of prophecy, and joined with this *Segula* are the conditions of soil and climate, which in connection with tilling the ground assists in

⁵⁹⁰ Kellner 2009, 13.

⁵⁹¹ Naor 2015, 113.; Samson & Fishman 1996, 24.

⁵⁹² Sprinzak 1991, 117; Werblowsky 2005, 5978.

improving the species.”⁵⁹³ R. Dov Peretz Elkins states that R. Abraham Y. Kook’s writings from his first years living in *Eretz Yisrael* “show that just breathing the air of the Holy Land increased his religious sensitivity”; his “love for prayer increased” and he “felt a closer relationship with the words of the Bible”.⁵⁹⁴ R. Abraham Y. Kook himself explicates in *Orot* that

It is impossible for a Jew to be faithful to his thoughts and visions outside of the Land in the same way that he is faithful in the Land of Israel. Manifestations of holiness, of whatever level, tend to be pure in the Land, and outside the Land, mixed with dross. However, in relation to the longing and the attachment of a person to the Land of Israel, his thoughts become purified by virtue of the “air of the Land of Israel” that hovers over all who long to see her.⁵⁹⁵

This emphasis on the advantages of living in *Eretz Yisrael* might be an echo of Nachmanides, whose “thesis is that none of the laws of Judaism have any intrinsic validity outside Eretz Yisrael”, Aryeh Newman reports.⁵⁹⁶

If R. Abraham Y. Kook has been perceived as a mystic, leaving room for metaphorical interpretation, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook’s understanding of “these stones and plants” in “this portion of the globe” can hardly be read as anything but concrete, especially in relation to his emphasis on the importance of settling *Eretz Yisrael*:

This is a part of the order of Creation, that this air, these mountains and hills, these stones and plants, and all of the Almighty’s Creation in this portion of the globe, are uniquely connected to us. Just as *Hashem chose us from all of the nations*, He chose our Land from all of the lands, *For the Lord has chosen Zion. He has desired it for his habitation (Tehillim 132:13). For the Lord has chosen Yakov for Himself, Israel for His particular possession (Tehillim 135:4).*⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹³ Samson & Fishman 1996, 12-13.

⁵⁹⁴ Elkins 2005, 46.

⁵⁹⁵ Naor 2015, 116.

⁵⁹⁶ Newman 1968, 24.

⁵⁹⁷ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 105.

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook saw the land as hosting transcendental qualities that not only affect the spiritual life, but “in every way”:

The air of Israel makes wise. [...] Eretz Yisrael is the Land of our life, in every way, whether national, historical, social or personal. Even in the aspect of our physical well-being and health. The atmosphere of Eretz Yisrael is our atmosphere. These mountains, these hills, these valleys, Jerusalem, Hevron, and Shechem, in both their spiritual and physical meanings, they are bonded to us. And if we, due to the routineness of our lives, we forget this connection – this is a catastrophe. It is a tragedy when we fall in love with the Galut.⁵⁹⁸

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook explained that this is not always consciously recognized; it is a “phenomenon, which has a profound internal effect”. It seems, however, these transformations were not only a question of being *in* the land, but also from being *attached* to it:

The more a Jew is connected to Israel, the deeper and the greater the transformation and renewal he experiences. [...] The more one is connected to *Eretz Yisrael*, and the more one understands and feels the need to live here, the greater the soul’s renewal from her special power.⁵⁹⁹

A derivation one could easily draw from this is that the more fervently one settles Eretz Yisrael, the greater, deeper and more profound is the renewal of one’s soul. As described previously, this elevation of *Eretz Yisrael* and the benefits promised to Jews who personally engage in it, juxtaposes - by default- the life in *Eretz Yisrael* with life in the Diaspora. R. Tzvi Yehuda stressed that Jews must “turn away from unhealthy, polluted places”, which are so “disorienting that one forgets who he really is”, and makes the “tragic mistake” of thinking that it is normal to live among the Gentiles. Instead, he proposes, “we must return to health”.⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁸ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 119.

⁵⁹⁹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 107-108.

⁶⁰⁰ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 118.

One problematic aspect of this argument is that it indirectly dismisses any counter-arguments *a priori*; if an argument is made from the Diaspora, it will not contain the intelligence and wisdom that the air of *Eretz Yisrael* causes. As previously stated, R. Kook perceived existence in exile as an aberration, a contrary existence to that in *Eretz Yisrael*.⁶⁰¹ Since any counter-arguments to this interpretation would most likely come from Jews in the Diaspora, they could be disregarded because of the simple fact that they stem from an “unhealthy”, “polluted” and “disorienting” context, in which one forgets one’s true self. Shai Held concludes, “for Zvi Yehuda and his circle, it [*Eretz Yisrael*] is the very heart of Judaism. It is not merely a foundation of Torah; it is, rather, the foundation.”⁶⁰² David Wilder, the spokesman of the Jewish community in Hebron, also sees *Eretz Yisrael* as an integral part of the Jewish people. Living there is the only way to express a “real self”:

We have no choice but to be ourselves – our real selves, including living in *Eretz Yisrael* – in Hebron, Shechem, Jerusalem – because *Eretz Yisrael* is as much a part of our being as is the air we breathe. Our attempts to deny this only delay the inevitable, and at a steep price.⁶⁰³

This argument puts forward two premises: 1) that the development is inevitable and hence, not optional and 2) that prolonging the development will have dire consequences. Since Shechem is traditionally associated with Nablus in the northern West Bank, expressing the “real self” by living in *Eretz Yisrael* would require settling the West Bank. This begs the question: if the only possibility for the Jewish people to be their “real selves” is to live in a nation that includes the West Bank, what prospects are there for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Is religious Zionism, as Nur Masalha assumes, “bound to have serious implications for

⁶⁰¹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 139.

⁶⁰² Held 214, 236.

⁶⁰³ Wilder 2013, 166. Friday, February 28, 1997: “To Clone or Not to Clone”. Please note that the phrase “the air be breath” is accurately quoted, although I suspect the author intended to write: “the air we breathe”.

community and interfaith relations"?⁶⁰⁴ Gadi Taub explains that in this reasoning, the end justifies the means;⁶⁰⁵ the coming redemption will solve the dilemma of occupation. Therefore, the problems related to settling the land can be disregarded as a human affair, which will eventually be solved by divine influence.⁶⁰⁶

The metaphysical connection between the land and the people, as expressed by Wilder, resonates well with the teachings of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook – to whom Wilder refers as “our beloved teacher”⁶⁰⁷ – who claimed, “every Jew, in his innermost essence, belongs to *Eretz Yisrael*”.⁶⁰⁸ This connection, this belonging, becomes obvious when a man arrives in *Eretz Yisrael*; then, his soul is transformed, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook said: “Given the specialness of the Land of Israel to the Jewish people, we can understand why a man’s soul is transformed when he arrives here.”⁶⁰⁹

4.2.3. A DIVINELY CHOSEN NATION IN A DIVINELY CHOSEN LAND

Shira L. Lander expounds that *Am Yisrael* is thought to have three supernatural aspects: 1) eternity 2) moral (and perhaps intellectual) superiority and authority; 3) oneness, including indivisibility. She sees these aspects as lying “at the heart of Jewish self-understanding”, because “corporate identity is fundamental to Judaism’s theological structure”.⁶¹⁰

In rabbinic tradition, the holiness of Israel is presumed to be primordial, Lander concludes; it is created out of the same substance as the Divine and

⁶⁰⁴ Masalha 2007, 139.

⁶⁰⁵ The end justifying the means is described by Charls Kimball as one of five signs of radicalization. Kimball 2008, 137-166. See discussion in Chpt. 1.4.6.

⁶⁰⁶ Taub 2010, 9.

⁶⁰⁷ Wilder 2013, 73. Friday, December 15, 1995: “Hanukkah – Hebron Today”.

⁶⁰⁸ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 109.

⁶⁰⁹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 108.

⁶¹⁰ Lander 2011, 152.

consequently is an integral part of it. Therefore, *Eretz Yisrael* is thought to have existed before creation and before time.⁶¹¹

An interesting term often appearing in the Hardal argumentation is *Clal Yisrael*, which Jerome Chanes translates as “the community (or society) of Israel” and “the entire, indivisible Jewish community”.⁶¹² David Wilder, the spokesperson for the Jewish community in Hebron, explains it as “the overall Jewish people, not as individuals, but as a nation, a people.”⁶¹³ R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook explained that the *Clal* is a divine creation, “a fundamental Divine formation which reveals itself, superficially, in its physical aspect, in a multiplication of parts.”⁶¹⁴

For R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, the notion that both *Eretz Yisrael* and *Am Yisrael* was of a divinely chosen nature, was an aspect so profound that to him it represented a “basic difference” between the Jewish people and other peoples:⁶¹⁵

The Divinely chosen nature of our nation, and of our Land, is integral to the understanding of *Clal Yisrael*. [...] The *Kuzari* explains that our unique essence is as a community, not as individuals. The *Maharal* also makes clear that our specialness is as a *Clal*. There are individual *Tzaddikim* among the gentile nations of the world; saintly men, and sages, and people of spiritual insight and belief. But herein lies the basic difference between *Am Yisrael* and the nations of the world – our creation is unique, Divine. We are a nation brought into existence by the Creator of heaven and earth. Our whole nation is *Kadosh*, as Isaiah says, *Thy people shall ALL be righteous*. All of our meaning and value is as a nation, a community, a *Clal*. And the specifically designated place on this planet for this segment of mankind is here in the Land of Israel. *And*

⁶¹¹ Lander 2011, 153.

⁶¹² Chanes 2007, 749.

⁶¹³ Wilder 2013, 105-106. Tuesday, April 02, 1996: “A Passover Message”.

⁶¹⁴ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 28; 33.

⁶¹⁵ However, a critical analyst might question whether or not the theological emphasis is a secondary construction.

who is like Israel, one nation in the Land. The Zohar states: *In Israel, they are one nation, and not outside of it.*⁶¹⁶

These particularistic values – in combination with the conviction that the world was at the brink of the ultimate redemption – may help explain why R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook and his students continued to promote the settling of the territories occupied in 1967, in spite of all the challenges this conveyed. Gadi Taub explains that the “extraordinary victory” in 1967 became “the spark that ignited the messianic fire” which shaped the group of young Hardalim into an ideological spearhead for the settlement movement. The intense, messianic tension pushed the settlement movement to transgress moral-human considerations; the adherents could disregard ordinary, moral imperatives with reference to the higher metaphysical justice at play in the process of redemption.⁶¹⁷ That R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook and his Yeshiva were influential right to the core of the settlement movement is confirmed from the inside, so to speak, by a student of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook:

The Yeshiva [Mercaz Harav] he [R. Abraham Yitzhak Kook] founded in Jerusalem was devoted to building *Talmidei Chachamin* who could meet the challenges facing our nation, as we returned home to Zion. During the years that Rav Tzvi Yehuda was the Rosh Yeshiva of Mercaz HaRav, the Yeshiva was the spiritual center for the rebuilding of Israel, not only for its role in clarifying the proper Torah approach to the *Geula* which is unfolding in our time, and to teaching a love for all of our people, but in being the catalyst for the establishment of settlements and Torah institutions all over the country – not through the work of other people, but by students of the Yeshiva. The people who brought Jewish settlement and Torah back to Judea and Samaria, to places like Bet-El, Shilo, Elon Moreh, Ofra, Gush Etzion, Kiriat Arba, and Hevron, to name just a few, were students of Rav Tzvi Yehuda.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁶ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 106-107.

⁶¹⁷ Taub 2010, 42-45; Firestone 2012, 278.

⁶¹⁸ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 38.

A central precept in the argumentation is that of *heritage*, which depends on the concepts of a chosen people in a chosen land. The idea that *Eretz Yisrael* was a gift from God to the Jewish people and that it is beyond debate to whom the land belongs, has become a doctrine. Therefore, it is irrelevant to them how far back the ancestral roots of other peoples stretches, or whether they can claim the land by presenting documents of ownership, or under whose jurisdiction the land falls – nothing can eradicate the conviction that *Eretz Yisrael* by divine institution, is Jewish. This idea can be found among the earliest ideologues of Zionism, for example with Aharon David Gordon (1856-1922), who saw that the Jewish history in Palestine - as it is recorded in the Bible - is enough to argue that the land belongs to the Jewish people:

We in this country created the saying 'Man is made in the image of God', and this statement has become part of the life of humanity. With this statement, a whole universe is created. [...] With this, we gained our right to the land, a right that will never be abrogated as long as the Bible and all that follows from it is not abrogated.⁶¹⁹

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook was critical of the Zionist ambition to normalize the Jewish people as a nation among others. R. Kook felt this understanding of the Jewish people would fail to reflect the unique religious significance of *Eretz Yisrael* and of the Jews as the chosen people.⁶²⁰ He saw in the "parental inheritance" the key argument for being in Palestine, and this was also sufficient reason to argue that there can be "no national Arab land in Israel":

We are here on the strength of parental inheritance, on the foundation of the Bible and history, and nobody can change this fact. What does this resemble? A man who left his house, and others came and trespassed inside. This is exactly what happened to us. There are people who claim

⁶¹⁹ Sternhell 1998, 57.

⁶²⁰ Inbari 2012, 22.

that there is an Arab national land here. This is a complete and utter falsehood! There is absolutely no national Arab land in Israel.⁶²¹

These ideas have percolated through the decades and are now a central, motivating doctrine among the settlers of Hebron. David Wilder, the spokesperson for the Jewish community in Hebron, depicts *Eretz Yisrael* as an “intrinsic element” of the Jewish people, which must be protected “at all costs”:

Our roots, which have proved to be a lifeline for our people since the days of Abraham, providing sustenance to generation after generation, lie deep in our land. Both in our physical land and in our spiritual land. As Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of Israel, wrote almost one hundred years ago, *Eretz Yisrael* is not something superficial, rather it is an intrinsic element in our being as a people, as a nation. *Eretz Yisrael* is a gift from heaven and we must do our utmost to protect it, at all costs.⁶²²

Wilder also stresses that Jews around the world must all understand that *Eretz Yisrael* belongs to Am Yisrael; “No question marks, no maybes, no doubts – *Eretz Yisrael*, all of *Eretz Yisrael*, be it Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Hebron, Bethlehem, Beit El, Ramallah or Ramla, all of it, all of *Eretz Yisrael*, belongs to Am Yisrael.”⁶²³ For example, he sees the return of Jews to the city of Hebron in the middle of the southern part of the West Bank, as a return to a piece of land that was already theirs, a home: “It must be clearly understood: when returned to Hebron in 1967, Jews did not occupy a foreign city; rather, they came back home”.⁶²⁴

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook takes the idea of Jewish particularism one step further. Although somewhat elusively, he argues that the Jewish people are not only chosen but also the “heart of the nations”, to which all other

⁶²¹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 198.

⁶²² Wilder 2013, 391. Monday, January 28, 2002: “Tu b’Shvat”

⁶²³ Wilder 2013, 460. Monday, January 27, 2003: “The Choice is Ours”.

⁶²⁴ Wilder 2013, 700. Thursday, May 25, 2006: “In honor of 39 years of Hebron’s liberation: Why we live in Hebron”

organs and limbs are connected. In that sense, the Jewish nation sustains all other nations:

Just as there are diverse parts to every organism, some more important than others, and some which serve as vital centres, like the brain and the heart in the body of man, so is the body of mankind. There also is a centre, a nation who is a *Segula* – a *Treasure from among all the peoples*. (Ex. 19:5) This unique portion of mankind has a special place in world history, which is illuminated by the great Sages of Israel, and given expression by Rav Yehuda HaLevi as *The Heart of the nations* (Kuzari 2:36). As a heart which is connected to all other organs and limbs of the body. This is most truly Israel. An international, cosmopolitan nation.⁶²⁵

The Hardalim teach that adhering to the Torah is to see that finally, all of God's commandments – including going up to *Eretz Yisrael* and settling it – can be fulfilled, which in itself is a sign that God has ended the exile and empowers the Jewish people to take part in the process of redemption. R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook explains that the land was lost because previous generations failed in their approach to the Torah:

They learned and practised Torah, but not out of its national character, not out of our national pride, the pride of *Who has chosen us from all the nations* [BT Berachot 11b]. This is the blessing which must precede all Torah learning. They were industrious learners and masters of Pilpul (Talmudic dialectics) they were ultra-Orthodox in their religious observance, but they didn't approach the Torah from its national character, and for this, the Land was lost. When you come to learn Gemara and Tosefot without being filled to the core of your being with our pride in being a Divinely created nation, chosen by Hashem from amongst all of the nations, there is a danger of national destruction.⁶²⁶

4.2.4. NO BLEMISH IN OUR BORDERS

A definition of a state most often includes reference to its territory. In the case of *Eretz Yisrael*, a problematic combination arises from, on one hand,

⁶²⁵ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 145.

⁶²⁶ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 19-20.

the understanding of *Eretz Yisrael* as a holy concept, and on the other hand, the many, different historical versions of this nation. From this perspective, the map of *Eretz Yisrael* is not a political but a sacred question, as Nadav G. Shelef stresses:

Indeed, Religious Zionists commonly argue that mere mortals have no right to modify the divinely delimited borders of the Land of Israel. The territorial claims of this nationalist movement lie, in other words, outside the reach of history, much less that of politics.⁶²⁷

In this understanding, the borders of *Eretz Yisrael* were always there in theory – as a constant, metaphysical truth – even when they were not reflected in practice. This was certainly the opinion of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook. Upon hearing the news that the State of Israel had been established, he was not excited, but rather appalled that *Eretz Yisrael* had been divided:

when the people streamed into the streets to celebrate and rejoice, I could not go out and join in the jubilation. [...] I could not accept that fact that indeed “they have divided My land” (Joel 4:2)! [...] Yes [and now after nineteen years] where is our Hebron? Have we forgotten her? Where is our Shechem, our Jericho – where? Have we forgotten them? And all that lies beyond the Jordan – each and every clod of earth, every region, hill, valley, every plot of land that is part of Eretz Israel – have we the right to give up even one grain of the Land of God?⁶²⁸

Hence, for R. Kook, anything but the whole of *Eretz Yisrael* was a defeat – even the establishment of a sovereign state could not distract him from this viewpoint. R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook also stressed that the thought of relinquishing “even a single square meter of Hashem’s inheritance” was out of the question: “There is not to be any blemish in our borders, G-d forbid. We are to battle for this to the end, without any surrender at all.”⁶²⁹

⁶²⁷ Shelef 2010, 50.

⁶²⁸ www.mercazharav.org/mizmor19.htm, accessed 17.3.2017.

⁶²⁹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 185.

Ehud Sprinzak notes that the great emphasis on the territory and sanctity of *Eretz Yisrael* arose in reaction to the territorial compromises made after 1967. It had not been a central theme in the teachings of R. Abraham Kook, but R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, made a creative interpretation regarding the injunctions of *yehareg uval yaavor* (“to be killed rather than to sin”) and *pikuah nefesh* (“mortal danger”). In traditional interpretation of these injunctions, a Jew should sacrifice his life rather than 1) commit idolatry, 2) shed blood or 3) have incestuous relations. R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook compared giving up the territories of *Eretz Yisrael* in the age of redemption to the sin of idolatry.⁶³⁰

In the light of their understanding of the present time as the era of redemption, concerns about the socio-political situation becomes an unnecessary impediment: unnecessary, because the “Arab question” will find its solution in due course, as redemption unfolds; an impediment, because halting the progress out of concern for collateral damage, will only delay the inevitable, full redemption. Hertzberg explains:

In any event, the task of uniting Judea and Samaria with the rest of the Holy Land is a divinely appointed mission. One can, therefore, proceed to accomplish this task without regard for any immediate difficulties with the Arabs or with those political forces that insist on raising the Arab question.⁶³¹

David Wilder, the spokesperson for the Jewish Community in Hebron, also frequently brings up the division of land, probably not only because it was central to the Kookist ideotheology, but also because the Jewish community in Hebron constantly lives under the threat of evacuation. Wilder stresses that *Eretz Yisrael* is God’s gift to the past, present and future Jewish people, and therefore, it cannot be relinquished:

Can the question of Eretz Yisrael be decided in a national referendum?
The obvious answer: Of course not. Why? Very simply, Eretz Yisrael

⁶³⁰ Sprinzak 1991, 113; Jones 1997, 33.

⁶³¹ Hertzberg 1986, 89.

does not belong to us. What about our children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, etc. How can we deny them their land? It belongs to them too. What right do we have to deny them their birthright, especially when the question is not whether or not to 'conquer the land' rather, it is to simply stay put. How can we give away what belongs to them too. But most notably: Eretz Yisrael is a G-d -given land, it belongs to Him, He gave it to us. One does not give away, abandon, or run away from G-d –given gifts.⁶³²

Wilder argues with reference to ethics dependent on the premise that God has promised *Eretz Yisrael* to the Jewish people; one cannot give away a gift of God, and furthermore, the gift does not only belong to those who preside over it today. In relation to borders, suggestions along the lines of giving up land in order to achieve a sustainable solution for both peoples is unthinkable to Wilder, to whom it would be equal to “participating in a Holocaust”:

I cannot cut off my arm or finger, or anything else, because my body is a gift from Above. And the same is true with Eretz Yisrael. It is not ours to cut up, to give away, to abandon. And especially not to our worst enemies. [These ideas] are tantamount to Jews sitting down at the negotiating table with the Nazi leadership. They are equivalent to participating in a Holocaust.⁶³³

David Wilder considers a two-state solution “nothing less than a death trap, waiting to be sprung at a fateful moment in the future”.⁶³⁴ The likely fate of Hebron⁶³⁵ is not the only reason why Wilder rejects a two-state solution in any form. It also seems Wilder⁶³⁶ simply does not believe in it as a path towards peace. Instead, he suggests that an undivided *Eretz Yisrael* is the only way to achieve peace. As long as the Jewish people

⁶³² Wilder 2013, 302, Monday October 18, 1999: “Eretz Yisrael is Not For Sale”

⁶³³ Wilder 2013, 480. Monday, April 28, 2003: “Negotiating with Nazis?”

⁶³⁴ Wilder 2013, 827. Tuesday, May 05, 2009: “Mahtapim”

⁶³⁵ Hebron is located in the center of the Southern part of the West Bank, and it is the largest city of this area. Therefore, it is unlikely that Hebron could be left under Israeli or even joint control, should the two-state solution be realized.

⁶³⁶ It is not always clear in this source when he shares his own opinions and when he speaks on behalf of the community, for whom he is the spokesman.

waiver on the question of who the land belongs to, the “enemy will not desist”:

I am frequently asked by reporters for my ‘magic solution’ to the Middle East crisis. After all, if I reject out of hand the idea of a Palestinian state, what can I possibly offer to resolve the conflict? My answer is very simple: Only when the people of Israel – Am Yisrael, in Israel and throughout the world understand that Eretz Yisrael belongs to us, only then will we be able to reach a solution. As long as we question whether this land is ours or not our enemy will not desist, not even for a minute.⁶³⁷

David Wilder perceives the State of Israel as being incomparable to other nations; for example, he criticizes Shimon Peres for recommending Sweden as “a role-model for Israel”. Wilder raises the point that if there is no understanding of the uniqueness of the State of Israel, and explicitly the land it possesses, there is also no understanding of its significance and value. This lack of understanding, he claims, resulted in the willingness to partition Eretz Yisrael:

That philosophy, regarding Israel as ‘just another country’, ‘like all the other countries of the world’, led to the political upheaval of the previous administration. Total disregard for Jewish heritage, for Judaism as a way of life, for Jewish past, for Jewish tradition, resulted in a willingness to partition Eretz Yisrael. After all, if the land has no meaning, if it has no intrinsic value, why keep it? This is one of the major reasons why the Israeli electorate voted Peres out and voted Netanyahu in. At least on the surface, Netanyahu seemed to have a commitment to Judaism and to Eretz Yisrael. His campaign promises [...] an intense desire to ensure continued Jewish presence throughout the Land of Israel. His utterances seemed deeply rooted, not only because of political or security rationalizations, but because he really believed in inherent Jewish rights to Israel.⁶³⁸

The Temple Institute has also published an open letter concerning the two-state solution. The Institute views the solution as an “anti-G-d affront

⁶³⁷ Wilder 2013, 513. December 2, 2003: “No More Sellouts”

⁶³⁸ Wilder 2013, 164. Friday, February 28, 1997: “To Clone or Not to Clone”

against the Jewish people and G-d's promise to them". In the letter, all who are loyal to the people of Israel are encouraged to rise up and use their voices against the "un-Biblical and immoral" solution.⁶³⁹

The question of how to draw the border of *Eretz Yisrael* remained theoretical until the Six Day War, after which two ideological camps emerged: the *maximalists* and the *minimalists*. Central to the maximalists was the idea of *Eretz Yisrael haSchlema* (the Greater Land of Israel). It was thought that peace with the Arabs was impossible due to their mental predisposition and that the size of the state would guarantee its security. The minimalist camp favoured territorial negotiations. This camp believed the war had created a useful setting, but that security and peace could not be achieved by occupation, but rather by a gradual and peaceful settlement.⁶⁴⁰ R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook rejected the minimalist approach:

There is absolutely no room to entertain thoughts of relinquishing even a single square meter of Hashem's inheritance to us. There is not to be any blemish in our borders, G-d forbid. We are to battle for this to the end, without any surrender at all.⁶⁴¹

What, then, is this *Eretz Yisrael* that should be put under Jewish control? How is it defined? What would its ideal map look like? As relevant as these questions are from a socio-political perspective, it is not crucial for the credibility of the Hardal ideotheological construct to answer them. The silence over these questions can be interpreted in many ways. It could 1) stem from the conviction that the land will miraculously attain its divinely intended dimensions as the redemption proceeds. It could also 2) be that since the borders of the State of Israel have been modified time and again, linking the interpretation of redemption to territory may damage the credibility of the perspective, if or when the socio-political reality collides with the theological vision. This could be said to have happened to the

⁶³⁹ www.templeinstitute.org/archive/open_appeal.htm, accessed 1.9.2017.

⁶⁴⁰ Sprinzak 1998, 118. See also Wilder 2013, 503-504. Monday, August 18, 2003: "Not now, Not Ever"

⁶⁴¹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 185.

settlement movement in the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, when first Yamit was evacuated and then the Oslo Accords were signed, in which the State was said to be withdrawing from what was perceived as biblical heartlands. The settling of Yamit and Hebron had been seen as expressions of the process of redemption, so could these withdrawal developments be read in any other way than as the work of Satan? On April 10th, 1995, the spokesman of Hebron – who sees the Oslo process as a “calamity”, a “curse” and a “lie”⁶⁴² – wrote:

They [the government] have forsaken the Land of Israel, preferring to see the heart of Israel in the hands of foreigners, whose only true desire is to see us drowning in the sea. And they have deserted a heritage over 3,000 years old, preferring Oslo and Geneva to Jerusalem and Hebron.⁶⁴³

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook considered it a divine commandment to settle the “spiritually desolate land”⁶⁴⁴ in a military sense, and not surrender “a grain of the Land of God”.⁶⁴⁵ Although even from this position *Eretz Yisrael* is not defined, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook’s pivotal speech at Yom Ha’Atzmaut in 1967 renders some insight into what territory, in his perception, belonged to *Eretz Yisrael*: Shechem is generally identified with Nablus in the northern West Bank, Jericho is located near the Jordan River in the east of the West Bank, and Hebron is situated in the southern part of the West Bank, some ten kilometres south of Jerusalem. It is, hence, natural to draw the conclusion that R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook saw the West Bank as a part of *Eretz Yisrael*, of which “not even a grain” may be surrendered. He also taught that the establishment of Jewish sovereignty over *Eretz Yisrael* is a “fundamental precept of the Torah”, and that the Jewish people “must actively promote the development and settlement of the Land, in every sphere possible.”⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴² Wilder 2013, 174; 143; 160.

⁶⁴³ Wilder 2013, 30.

⁶⁴⁴ Lustick 1988, 106.

⁶⁴⁵ www.mercazharav.org/mizmor19.htm, accessed 23.3.2017.

⁶⁴⁶ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 113.

One problem when seeking to reassert the “biblical borders of Israel” is that the “borders of promise”⁶⁴⁷ are wider than the “borders of exodus”⁶⁴⁸, which are wider than the borders envisioned by the prophet Ezekiel⁶⁴⁹, and none of these coincides with the borders of the kingdoms of David and Solomon.⁶⁵⁰ According to Exod. 23:31, God promised that he would “establish your borders from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the desert to the Euphrates River” (Exod. 23:31), that he would give to Abram and his descendants the land “from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates” (Gen. 15:18). The maximalist idea of *Eretz Yisrael haShlema* based on these biblical references includes all the land between the Nile and the Euphrates; that is, not only the State of Israel and the Palestinian territories, but also east Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and parts of Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

In themselves, these biblical accounts open numerous possibilities for interpretation, and thus, deviations in the cartographical conclusions.⁶⁵¹ Ehud Sprinzak draws the conclusion that to *Gush Emunim*, the borders of *Eretz Yisrael* were those promised in Gen. 15, which included not only the territories conquered in 1967 but also parts of Jordan, Syria and Iraq.⁶⁵²

Against this background, it is understandable that the Hardalim preferred to focus on settling “our Hebron”, “our Schehem” and “our Jericho”, than to risk dividing the perspective between the minimalist and the maximalist camps. Even if one subscribes to the idea of *Eretz Yisrael haShlema* – an *Eretz Yisrael* reaching “from the Euphrates to the Nile” – it appears unreachable, for the time being, even in the light of the military triumphs of the Six Day War. But since the Hardal understanding of redemption allows for imperfections in the now, this perspective can - with upheld credibility - focus on *some* aspect of settling the land, while

⁶⁴⁷ Gen. 15:18; Exod. 3:8, 23:31; Josh. 1:4

⁶⁴⁸ Num 34:1-13; Deut. 2:1-23, 3:8; Josh. 12:1, 13:3-6).

⁶⁴⁹ Ezek. 47:15-21.

⁶⁵⁰ 1 Chron. 13:5, 15:8-12; 2 Chron. 9:26.

⁶⁵¹ Shelef 2010, 51.

⁶⁵² Sprinzak 1991, 113.

being equally clear that it is a work in progress. Often, messianic or apocalyptic movements have little tolerance for imperfections in the ideal time – but the Hardal perspective has found a theological solution that allows them both to *live* in the messianic era and *anticipate* it.⁶⁵³

R. Abraham Y. Kook never demarcated the borders of *Eretz Yisrael*; he taught that in the fullness of time, the borders would be revealed. Instead, he emphasized the redemptive process, which the establishment of the state heralded. R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, on his part, emphasized “a preordained Jewish right to settle the newly captured territories” taken in the 1967 war, encouraging students of the *Mercaz Harav Yeshiva* to spearhead early settlements, for example, that of Kiryat Arba next to Hebron. Clive Jones analyses:

Rabbi [Zvi Yehuda] Kook used the ideas of this father to add theological legitimacy to the use of force in order to achieve and maintain the unity of *Eretz Israel*. Such ideas found a receptive audience among the wider religious right, offering as they did a *carte blanche* that divorced settlement activity from any moral or humanistic constraints.⁶⁵⁴

In the compilation of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook’s lectures, *Torat Eretz Yisrael*, it states: “it is not the settlement of Israel which is illegal; its prevention is, for we are commanded and obligated to settle the full breadth and width of our Land.” He also called any decisions to relinquish parts of *Eretz*

⁶⁵³ The establishing of an ideal time is one of Charles Kimball’s five indications of radicalization. Kimball 2008, 137-166. See discussion in 1.4.6.

⁶⁵⁴ Jones 1997, 31. While I believe Jones is right in his conclusions on the function the authority of the father provided for the interpretations of the son, I do not agree that this liberated the settlement activity from *any* moral constraint. Rather, I believe R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook altered the premises from which morality is derived, resulting in a new morality. For example, a derivation of the idea that the Jewish nation upholds all other nations is that it is in the best interest of all humanity – including the Palestinians – that the State of Israel is secure and prosperous. When the practical consequences of such a reasoning are viewed from a perspective of international law, it appears as being divorced from any moral constraints, but when studying the path of thought leading to them, it becomes clear that it is not; rather, the moral constraints the Western world has come to think of as universal have been replaced with an alternative.

Yisrael as “null and void”.⁶⁵⁵ Understandably, this question caused vivid debates among rabbis of the Hardal perspective, but as one prominent leader of the perspective concluded, “if generals can disagree over what borders constitute secure boundaries, rabbis could disagree about their biblical designation”.⁶⁵⁶

In the early 1980s, when the religious Zionist movement was confounded by the government’s decision to withdraw from Sinai, and further shocked at the death of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, the territorial grandiosity was also at its peak: the map of *Eretz Yisrael*, envisioned by the movement, was an Israel stretching from “the Euphrates to the Nile”⁶⁵⁷. Over time, Shelef notes a change in the territorial claims of the Hardal perspective. For example, Wilder suggests integrating Gaza with Egypt, and issuing Jordanian citizenships for all the Palestinians of the West Bank (presumably, followed by them emigrating); this, he feels, would be “natural” and would “allow the Palestinian to live as free citizens of their countries”, “without forcing Israel to divide its holy land.”⁶⁵⁸

In Shelef’s opinion, the changes to the envisaged map of *Eretz Yisrael* was not a result of a weakening of the movement, but a result of a reinterpretation of the sanctity of the land: although every inch of it is holy, some areas are more so than others: “While we might expect the most expansive interpretation to be used whenever possible, the availability of alternatives allows claims to different areas to be equally ‘religious’.”⁶⁵⁹ In relation to the definition of *Eretz Yisrael*, hence, the Hardal perspective has a theological flexibility, which allows it to adapt to the historical impulses.

⁶⁵⁵ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 357.

⁶⁵⁶ Shelef 2010, 51.

⁶⁵⁷ Freedman 2000, 185.

⁶⁵⁸ Wilder 2014, 833. Friday, June 12, 2009: “Special Secret Preview of Netanyahu’s Sunday Speech”

⁶⁵⁹ Shelef 2010, 51.

4.2.5. SETTLING THE LAND AS *THE* MITZVAH

As the previous chapters have revealed, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook emphasized the importance of settling the land and dwelling in it. Gadi Taub notes that taking after Nachmanides,⁶⁶⁰ he elevated the settling of and dwelling in *Eretz Yisrael* to *the* mitzvah.⁶⁶¹ R. Tzvi Yehuda perceived Nachmanides as “one of the most outstanding sages and Kabbalists” – in his view, widely accepted among the Rishonim and second in importance to Maimonides. R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook bases an argument on Nachmanides’ supplement to *Sefer HaMitzvot*, the fourth positive commandment (a.k.a. *mitzvah dalet*):

The Ramban concluded that the commandment to settle the Land of Israel is a positive mitzvah of the 613 commandments in the Torah. He bases his decision on the language of the verse, *And you shall dispossess the inhabitants of the Land and dwell in it*, which is stated in the language of a command. We are enjoined with two tasks: first, to possess the Land through conquest; and, secondly, to dwell in the land.⁶⁶²

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook’s interpretation is that it is “clear” that by this injunction, the Ramban saw it as a divine obligation to keep the *Eretz Yisrael* under Jewish control, to ensure that it is “not under the control of any other nation”; this is

clearly meant in a national sense, for everyone understands that ruling a land means the establishment of a state in that land. The establishment of Jewish sovereignty over the Land of Israel is a fundamental precept of the Torah. To ensure that the Land does not remain desolate, we must

⁶⁶⁰ Gadi Taub does not precisely expound on what aspect of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook’s approach he perceives as Nachmanidean. Possibly he shares Aaron W. Hughes’ impression (2012: 154), that Nachmanides sought to “uncover the literal, rationalist, and mystical levels of the text”, and “connect the truths of the kabbalah with the traditional genre of biblical commentary”. While Robert Eisen (2011, 183-184) assesses that there was “no real precedence for using Kabbalistic thinking” the way R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook did, and while Benjamin Ish-Shalom (1993, xi) sees R. Abraham Y. Kook as a “unique phenomenon in the history of Jewish thought”, the Kookist and Nachmanidean interpretations might both be perceived as stretching towards a similar mystical-literal revelation of scripture.

⁶⁶¹ Taub 2010, 45.

⁶⁶² Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 112.

actively promote the development and settlement of the Land, in every sphere possible.⁶⁶³

Although both the Kooks refrained from defining *Eretz Yisrael*, both stressed the importance of participating in settling it. However, father and son viewed the task of settling *Eretz Yisrael* somewhat differently. Gadi Taub notes that R. Abraham Y. Kook only mentioned *mitzvah dalet* once, in a correspondence; he “never sanctified settlement itself as a specific mitzvah”.⁶⁶⁴ R. Ze’ev Gold relates a memory of R. Abraham Kook from an official ceremony to inaugurate a new forest. R. Kook was to plant a sapling, but instead of preparing the soil with the hoe he had been given, he knelt down and dug with his bare hands and planted the sapling with shaking hands. R. Ze’ev Gold recalls, “His face shone like a burning torch, his entire body quivered with excitement”. When asked about the emotional reaction, according to R. Gold R. Abraham Kook replied as follows,:

As I held the young sapling in my hands, I remember how the Sages elucidated the verse, ‘Follow the Eternal your God... and cling to Him’ (Deut. 13:5). They asked: Is it possible for flesh and blood to ascend to the heavens and cling to the Shechinah, about Whom it is written, “For the Eternal your God is a consuming fire”? (Deut. 4:24)? Rather, understand the verse as follows: At the beginning of creation, the Holy One engaged in planting, as it says, “God planted a garden in Eden” (Gen. 2:8). Similarly, when you enter the Land of Israel, you should first engage in planting, as it is written “When you will come into the Land, you shall plant all types of fruit trees (Leviticus 19:23). (Vayikra Rabbah 25:3).⁶⁶⁵

One of the clashes of doctrine between the Hardalim and the Haredim in relation to the settling of the land is whether or not the use of force is justifiable when performing the *mitzvah dalet*, settling the land. The Hardalim often argue that the Jewish people have every right to claim

⁶⁶³ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 113.

⁶⁶⁴ Taub 2010, 44-45.

⁶⁶⁵ Morrison 2015, 56-57.

Eretz Yisrael and thus, are never aggressors when it comes to the land. R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook stressed that it is a “fundamental precept” of the Torah to establish Jewish sovereignty over *Eretz Yisrael*:

We are enjoined with two tasks: first, to possess the Land through conquest; and, secondly, to dwell in the Land. [...] The Ramban clearly establishes that this Land, which Hashem promised our forefathers, must be kept under our control. And not under the control of any other nation. [...] The establishment of Jewish sovereignty over the Land of Israel is a fundamental precept of the Torah.⁶⁶⁶

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook indicated that he was aware that warfare could be the consequence of abiding by his understanding of the commandment to “come and possess” (Deut. 1:6-8, 21), and that this may stir up conflicting emotions. In this context he stressed that a commandment is a commandment, whether it is enjoyable or “goes against our nature and spirit”:

Come and possess. How is this precept performed? If need be, through the waging of war to conquer the land – whether this be enjoyable to us, or whether it goes against our nature and spirit. *Baruch Hashem*, we don’t choose between mitzvot like certain ‘Orthodox’ Jews do. If it were possible to conquer the Land without spilling blood, certainly this would be better. This is obvious. However, until the End of Days, when, *Nation shall not lift up sword against nation* [Isa 2:4], sometimes we have no choice but to act with our soldiers and army. We actualize this commandment, to hold the Land of Israel in our hands, and not leave it under the role of any other nation, through our military actions, even in light of the unpleasant consequences which war involves.⁶⁶⁷

As a justification for the use of force, it is also emphasised that the Land was *given* to Abraham and that the military force the State of Israel is exercising today is a *consequence* of that. Abraham was commanded, “Get yourself forth to the Land I will show you” (Gen. 12:1-2); therefore, the Jewish people would not be passers-through nor robbers who conquer the

⁶⁶⁶ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 112-113.

⁶⁶⁷ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 168-169.

land, but a nation, “great in its spiritual depth, great in its prophetic capacity, great as an empire, and as a political state”.⁶⁶⁸ R. Tzvi Kook seems to have perceived the military actions relating to statehood as a consequence of the divine commandment to “hold the land”.⁶⁶⁹

Interestingly, the Haredim draw almost the opposite conclusion from the notion that God *gave* the land to the Jewish people; their interpretation stresses that the land is for God to give, not for the Jewish people to take. This conclusion is drawn from God being the subject and the Jewish people being the object.⁶⁷⁰

R. Abraham Y. Kook seems to have believed that the *segullah* – the unique quality of Israel – was an inherent aspect of the Jewish people which would make the use of force abhorrent; Elie Holzer ascribes Hegelian elements to Kook’s approach, in that it “does not distinguish between the ideal and the real”, but saw it as “the true ethical essence”.⁶⁷¹ Elie Holzer remarks, “When discussing the messianic era, R. Kook does not explicitly distinguish between the use of force in self-defence or for any other purpose”. In relation to Kook’s understanding of *segullah* a distinction becomes superfluous, as “the moral limitation of activism is an inevitable consequence of the desire to exert influence through harmony.”⁶⁷² The unique quality of Israel would protect it from moral corruption; recognizing this feature of the nation and merging nationalism with religion, would prevent Zionism from degenerating into an ideology of hatred and violence.⁶⁷³

Another rabbinical authority referenced in *Torat Eretz Yisrael* is the *Ohr Somayah* (R. Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk, 1843-1926). A letter of his, written in response to a request by the *Mizrachi* movement in Dvinsk, is cited:

⁶⁶⁸ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 159-160.

⁶⁶⁹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 168-169.

⁶⁷⁰ Rabkin 2006, 115.

⁶⁷¹ Holzer 2007, 351.

⁶⁷² Holzer 2007, 348.

⁶⁷³ Holzer 2007, 355.

Since the fear of the [Three] Oaths has been removed with the permissions of the nations, the mitzvah of settling the Land of Israel arises, a mitzvah equal to all of the other precepts in the Torah, and this mitzvah returns to its place.⁶⁷⁴

JAZ criticizes this interpretation of the *Ohr Somayah* on three accounts: firstly, JAZ questions the authenticity, and thereby the credibility, of the cited letter. Secondly, JAZ contradicts that the *Ohr Somayah* would have supported Zionism and instead states that he was “against the position that views the creation of a state with favour and sees it in the context of the redemption process.”⁶⁷⁵ Thirdly, JAZ assures that the pre-State *gedolim* would never have supported founding an independent state at the cost of Jewish lives.⁶⁷⁶

But as demonstrated above, the Hardal perspective does not seem to view the wars and military actions of the State of Israel as “spilling Jewish blood”, but rather as self-defence; furthermore, the State of Israel, in the Hardal understanding, was not established by the Zionist movement, but by the British Mandate and the UN – hence, by the Gentile nations. This attests to the establishment of the State being a work of God and not a transgression of the Threefold oath. However, peace is not the highest priority of the Hardal perspective; rather it is the settling of the land that by divine decree belongs to the Jewish people. David Wilder explains that

it makes no difference what they [the Arabs] say or what they do – they could be the most wonderful peace-loving people in the universe. That does not change one iota the fact that Eretz Yisrael belongs to Am Yisrael – the Land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people. G-d gave us this land,

⁶⁷⁴ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 235. The commentator to R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook’s teachings, *Torat Eretz Yisrael*, R. David Samson, presents the *Ohr Somayah* as “known for his constant support of the Zionist movement” and relates that “he was aware of the controversy surrounding the Zionist movement, and spoke out sharply in its behalf”. R. Samson relates that the *Ohr Somayah* adapted Zionism from R. Shmuel Mohilever, founder of the Chabat Zion movement and Chief Rabbi of Bialistok. The *Ohr Somayah* settled at Bialistok a young age. *Ibid.*, 235.

⁶⁷⁵ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/ohrsomayach, accessed 24.4.2016.

⁶⁷⁶ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/ohrsomayach, accessed 24.4.2016.

He brought us back to the land after a two thousand year exile, and He made the land prosper.⁶⁷⁷

By the 1960s, the *Mercaz Harav Yeshiva* had become “the intellectual centre of activist Religious Zionism”.⁶⁷⁸ Elie Holzer records that various articles by R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook published after 1948 indicate, “the idea of military involvement had become a part of a comprehensive religious outlook”.⁶⁷⁹ In contrast to Kook senior, Kook junior perceived military activism as an expression of the beginning of redemption:

While for the elder R. Kook the achievement of national revival without force was a hallmark of redemption, his son and the latter’s pupils interpreted Israel’s renewed involvement in military affairs and war as yet another sign of ongoing, visible redemption. In their view, military activism had also become an expression of the “Manifest Redemption” (*ha-ketz ha-megulleh*) and the renaissance of the “Uniqueness of Israel” (*segullat Yisrael*) [...] One can therefore point to a gradual but unmistakable process of radicalization, a progress from the interpretation of military renaissance and wars as having spiritual meaning to a call for purposeful military activity.⁶⁸⁰

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook perceived both the state apparatus and its army as “an essential and clearly stated commandment”, necessary to achieve Jewish sovereignty:

Everyone understands that dominion over a geographic section of land demands sovereignty and government. All of the Poskim, both Rishonim and Achronim, decide the law in this fashion, on the basis of the Ramban, that the precept of conquering the Land applies in all generations – and all of them agree that it is a commandment of the Torah. [...] Jewish sovereignty in *Eretz HaKodesh*, meaning the State of

⁶⁷⁷ Wilder 2013, 480. Monday, April 28, 2003: “Negotiating with Nazis?”

⁶⁷⁸ Firestone 2012, 263.

⁶⁷⁹ Holzer 2007, 357.

⁶⁸⁰ Holzer 2007, 343-344. See also the analysis in Firestone 2012, 263-266.

Israel and its army [...] is an essential and clearly stated commandment, a precept incumbent on all of *Clal Yisrael*.⁶⁸¹

There are two categories of war: *milchemet reshut* (Heb. “authorized war”) and *milchemet mitzvah* (Heb. “war by commandment”).⁶⁸² Both concepts appear in *BT Sotah 44b*. The latter is a war which is commanded by the Torah and which does not require any additional authorization. Maimonides acknowledges three types of *milchemet mitzvah*: 1) the war for Canaan in the times of Exodus, 2) the war against the people of Amalek⁶⁸³ 3) a war to deliver Israel from attacking enemies. Kalman Neuman sees the third category as “an extension of the principle of self-defence”. In his view, this category is the only one of the three that is applicable today.⁶⁸⁴ R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook saw the venture of “liberating the land” as the key meaning of *milchemet mitzvah*:

What is the criterion of a compulsory war? Its principle meaning is liberating the Land [BT Sotah 44b]. In its fundamental sense, the concept of a Torah-commanded war is bound up with entering the Land, as explained by the Ramban that this Land must be in our hands, under

⁶⁸¹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 166.

⁶⁸² These concepts are discussed in Eisen 2011, 93.

⁶⁸³ Amalek was the grandson of Esau (Gen. 36:2). The inhabitants of the Negev desert are referred to as the Amalekites; they are considered a hereditary enemy of Israel (Exod. 17:8–16; Judg. 3:13; 6:3; 10:12; 1 Sam. 14:48; 1 Sam 15; 1 Sam 30). In Num. 24:40, Amalek is called “first among the nations”, but also foretells, “their end will be utter destruction.” Aggadah recalls that the Amalekites tried to incite other nations to join them in their fight against Israel, and in rabbinic literature, Amalek is presented as an eternal enemy. To naïvely show him mercy is forbidden. There is an injunction to remember the conflicts with the Amalekites. This is not, however, to remember the transgressions of others, but of oneself, because “the enemy comes only on account of sin and transgression” (Pesikta De Rav Kahana 27). Elimelech Epein Halevy notes, “In the course of time, this biblical injunction became so deeply rooted in Jewish thought that many important enemies of Israel were identified as direct descendants of Amalek. Thus the tannaitic aggadah of the first century B.C.E. identifies Amalek with Rome.” Abramsky & Sperling 2007, 28-30; Halevy 2007, 30-31.

⁶⁸⁴ Neuman 2012, 187. I would, however, note that there have been wars perceived among Religious Zionists as wars against Amalek. For example, the Six Day War in 1967 ended with the seizure of Hebron. Before the soldiers engaged in battle, R. Goren reminded them: “Don’t forget what the Amalekites did to us!” Rabinovich 2001, 401.

our active sovereignty and government, and not under the rule of any other nation.⁶⁸⁵

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook further expounded his idea of how to distinguish a *milchemet mitzvah* from a *milchemet reshut*: a war is a *milchemet mitzvah* if it (1) strives to “save Israel from the hand of the enemy” and (2) strives to fulfil the commandment to conquer Eretz Yisrael, which he called the “real essence” of *milchemet mitzvah*.⁶⁸⁶

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook presented it as “obvious” that the settling of *Eretz Yisrael* would involve military conflict. According to Kook, the Chofetz Chaim too saw it as self-evident that a future Jewish state would have an army, and that the Jewish people should prepare itself for service in that army:

It is obvious that establishing ourselves throughout the Land of Israel is intertwined with military conflict and war. I heard several reports on the reaction of the Chofetz Chaim to Jews serving in the armed forces of the Gentiles. He indicated that it would be good training and preparation for serving in our army. [...] He said to them: ‘In a short time the Maschiah will come, and we will have a State, and a State needs an army. Will you wait until then to learn how to be soldiers? Now you have the opportunity to learn how to fight. This is very important to us. The Master of the World is arranging this practice to prepare you for service in our army.’⁶⁸⁷

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook saw that the army had received its structure from the Torah and its military posture from Moses, who was “to conduct the wars of Torah”, as “a part of his learning and teaching”.⁶⁸⁸ R. Kook stressed that serving Israel, as it initially appears in the Torah, originally implied a divine – not a military – service. Nonetheless, he also saw a transcendental

⁶⁸⁵ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 169.

⁶⁸⁶ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 173-174.

⁶⁸⁷ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 169-170.

⁶⁸⁸ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 170.

bond between the military aspects of the nation as arising from a “holy source”:

First, the army in Israel is an army of Divine worship, an army of Torah study. The service of the Sanctuary precedes all work in Israel. The statistical accounting of the hosts of Israel begins with the hosts of the Tabernacle, with *avodah hakadosh*, and with the Yeshiva. The military host stems, and evolves, from this holy source. [...] Our Sages describe Joshua as, *The one who arranged the benches* in Moshe Rabenu’s Yeshiva (Midrash Rabbah 21:14). Along with this, he was commanded to, *Go out and wage war upon Amalek* (Exod. 17:9). From the spiritual depths, from the most profound recesses of Torah, the soul of Israel, from the heights of *Kedusha*, from the source of prophecy in Israel, comes the military aspect of the nation.⁶⁸⁹

If conquering *Eretz Yisrael* is the truest essence of *milchemet mitzvah*, a critical question which naturally follows is: why was this obligation neglected by previous generations? Could it be because this interpretation of *milchemet mitzvah* is progressive in relation to Jewish tradition? R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook explains that waging the compulsory war was not possible in previous generations:

In previous generations, including generations of Tzaddikim, we did not fulfil this mitzvah. Why? Because we were in a situation where, against our will, we could not. [...] Though the obligation always exists, it is impossible to perform it without the weapons of war. Thus, previous generations did not have the technical capacity to fulfil the commandment. Today, thank G-d, we have the ‘etrogim’ of war, and this precept has returned to our hands. [...] Out of the Balfour Proclamation sprang the Hebrew Fighting Brigade. Little by little, the chance to conquer the Land, to renew the precept took form. The mitzvah includes possessing the Land and dwelling there. Possession of Land has a sense of conquest, and from this, the mitzvah of living in the Land is made possible, so that the Land will not lie in desolation. Also, the spiritual wasteland, represented by the people who deny the Torah, must be returned to repentance. The word, [yishuv] is common to both the settlement of the Land, and to the learning of Torah [yeshivah]. There is a connection between them in the Holy Tongue. The drive

⁶⁸⁹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 171-173.

toward settlement takes power from the spiritual might of the Torah. Torah, war and settlement are three sides of a triangle. And how incredibly privileged we are to be assertive in all.⁶⁹⁰

BT Sotah 44b, referenced above, explains that in wars commanded by the Torah, “all go forth, even a bridegroom from his chamber and a bride from her canopy.” In the *Gemara* there is a discussion on the difference between voluntary and obligatory wars; “One calls them commanded and the other voluntary, the practical issue being that one who is engaged in the performance of a commandment is exempt from the performance of another commandment.” Yishai Kiel sees that “important developments” occur in the rabbinic literature regarding the morality of warfare. While it appears that the Tannaitic literature does not address the moral problems of warfare, some Amoraic traditions “show the first signs” of addressing these issues. “However,” Yishai Kiel analyses, “a vivid and systemic normative expression of these ideas is achieved only later, in post-Talmudic collections and medieval commentary.”⁶⁹¹

Kalman Neuman notes that the classic Jewish texts on warfare stem from a time when the Jewish people had no independence and no ability to wage wars; the wars of the State of Israel are the first applications of those laws to the “real world”.⁶⁹² This explains the “understandable reticence” when, for example, R. Hertzog justified the categorization of the War of 1948 as a *milchemet mitzvah*:

For Talmudists trained in a world without a Jewish state, when the Maimonidean depictions of war were thought of belonging to an undetermined and perhaps eschatological future, much like the laws of the Temple, the introduction of the halakhic category of war was a revolution in Jewish legal discourse and required specific justification.⁶⁹³

⁶⁹⁰ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 174-176.

⁶⁹¹ Kiel 2012, 132-133.

⁶⁹² Neuman 2012, 186.

⁶⁹³ Neuman 2012, 189.

Reuven Firestone interprets it as a “part of Tzvi Yehuda Kook’s legacy” when R. Shlomo Aviner – presented as one of Kook’s closest students – saw Nachmanides’ understanding of medieval war as a parallel to the modern concept of war of liberation. In a speech directed to an audience of military officers, R. Shlomo Aviner taught:

We are obligated to endanger our lives: Nachmanides emphasizes that our obligation to the commandment [of settling the Land] exists even if observing it is bound up in wars. And in war, unfortunately, people kill and are killed. There is no promise in the Torah that in a war to free the Land (*milchemet sichrur ha’aretz*) or conquest of the Land (*kibbush ha’aretz*), people will not be killed.⁶⁹⁴

To conclude, the Kookist ideotheology displays a progression from seeing the use of force as something contradictory to the process of redemption to seeing it as an integral part of it. As part of this development, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook derives arguments both from biblical and rabbinical sources.

4.2.6. SANCTIFYING AND DESECRATING GOD’S NAME

Two rabbinical expressions that occur in the Hardal argumentation are *kiddush ha-Shem* (to glorify God’s name) and *hillul haShem* (to desecrate God’s name). Norman Lamm perceives them as “two aspects of one of the most significant concepts in Judaism”, that is, the proliferation or diminution of God’s honour. While the terms are rabbinic, the concept is biblical⁶⁹⁵ and appears among the 613 commandments. Lamm notes that the rabbinic tradition emphasised the ethical aspect of this concept over the national-redemptive, but that the glorification of God’s name before the *goyim* was “always a potent element in the folk understanding of the concept”. In the Tannaitic times, *kiddush ha-Shem* also denoted martyrdom. At the council in Lydda (2nd century), it was declared that in times of

⁶⁹⁴ Firestone 2012, 293.

⁶⁹⁵ Lev. 21:6, 22:2, 23:31-32; Ez. 20, 36, 39; Num. 20:12; Deut. 32:51.

religious persecution it was obligatory to suffer martyrdom rather than to engage in idolatry, unchastity and murder. R. Abraham Y. Kook perceives it obligatory as an emergency measure, while others perceive it as merely meritorious.⁶⁹⁶ R. Rafael Fuchs explains:

The Rambam (*Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* 5:4) says that if a man is threatened with being killed if he does not violate one of the *mitzvos* for which he must surrender his life and he allows himself to be killed by not transgressing the *mitzvoah*, he has created a *kiddush Hashem*. But if he saves his life by violating the *mitzvoah*, it is a *chillul Hashem*.⁶⁹⁷

In contrast, R. Tzvi Kook, in his Independence Day speech in 1967, when regarding the imperfections of the State of Israel, concluded that “with all that is shocking from the aspect of *hillul haShem*, there is an enormous value of *kiddush haShem* which cannot, by any account, be set aside in relation to the state and Israel’s day of Independence.”⁶⁹⁸ In R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook’s understanding, the Diaspora is the worst example of *hillul haShem*:

The Diaspora is the worst Desecration of Hashem that there is, as we find in Ezekiel: And when they came to the nations into which they came, they profaned My holy Name, in that men said of them, these are the people of the Lord, and they are gone out of His Land (Ezekiel 36:8, Sanhedrin, 98A).⁶⁹⁹

By the same logic, the best example of *kiddush haShem* comes when “the national body of Israel” returns to its health and its land:

This Sanctification of Hashem, which comes through the instrument of his nation, isn’t limited to the Orthodox and Haredim. The Sanctification of Hashem comes through all of the House of Israel. [...] Today, we see with our own eyes that the national body of Israel is returning to its health, and to its healthy Land, from amidst the impurity of the gentile nations. This is the highest Sanctification of Hashem we

⁶⁹⁶ Lamm 2007, 139-142.

⁶⁹⁷ R. Rafael Fuchs for jewishpress.com, www.jewishpress.com/judaism/parsha/yehareg-val-yaavor/2012/05/02/, accessed 9.5.2017.

⁶⁹⁸ www.merczharav.org/mizmor19.htm, accessed 23.3.2017.

⁶⁹⁹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 271.

can find. [...] In contrast to this, the condition of Galut, is a Chillul Hashem.⁷⁰⁰

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook expresses that God's name is sanctified through the nation, and there is no "greater Kiddush Hashem than this" since the "Almighty has chosen His nation in love". A derivation of this doctrine, then, is the labelling of all acts conducted in the interest of *Eretz Yisrael* as a *kiddush haShem*, and hence rendering them a justification. For example, David Wilder dedicates his work "Hebron Chronicles" to all "murdered on *Kiddush Hashem*, sanctifying G-d's name, so that we can continue to live here in *Eretz Yisrael*".⁷⁰¹ In one of his blog posts, he relates an incident in which a Palestinian youngster was killed when assaulting a police officer at a Hebron checkpoint. The youngster, mistakenly taken as being armed because he was carrying a toy gun, was shot in self-defence:

The border guard did exactly what she had to, and thank G-d for that. [...] Seeing Israeli soldiers run from marauding, rioting Arabs is a disgrace. Hearing a policewoman say, "I did what I was taught to do, I was only doing my job," is a 'Kiddush HaShem', a sanctification of G-d's name. For two thousand years, in exile from our land, Jews had no choice but to run. Today, we must stand strong and tall, as did the Maccabees, 2,300 years ago, thereby bequeathing us Hanukkah.⁷⁰²

Shai Held states that to R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, the ethical or interpersonal aspects of desecrating God's name are subsidiary to the political: "Political sovereignty soon becomes a central – one is tempted to say the central – religious value. [...] *Hillul Ha-Shem* can be understood simply as Israel's lack of sovereignty over the land."⁷⁰³

⁷⁰⁰ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 147.

⁷⁰¹ Wilder 2013, 1.

⁷⁰² davidwilder.blogspot.fi/2012/12/red-ribbons-and-khaki-green-uniforms.html, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁷⁰³ Held 2014, 243.

4.2.7. MASADA MAY NOT FALL AGAIN

A narrative that reappears in the writings of Wilder from around the time of the Hebron Protocol⁷⁰⁴ is the Masada narrative. Masada, a Herodian fortress, was the last Jewish stronghold in the war against Rome in 66-73/74 CE. Guy D. Stiebel concludes that the perception of the episode of Masada throughout the 20th century mirrors the history of the state; it was transformed into “a symbol of defiant resistance”, first particularly among young Zionists, and later more generally among Israelis. This trend climaxed in the 60s and 70s. One of its manifestations, Stiebel informs, was that the recruits to Israel’s Armoured Corps swore an oath of allegiance at the site, “Masada shall not fall again”.⁷⁰⁵

In evoking the Masada narrative, Wilder leans against an underground precedence; Nachman Ben-Yehuda notes that the Masada narrative appeared “on more than one occasion” in a number of socio-politically desperate situations. In 1948, the four settlements comprising *Gush Etzion* were constantly attacked, and conditions were deteriorating; it was getting cut off from the paramilitary force defending and supplying it, and becoming increasingly isolated. Soon the choice stood between surrendering or fighting until death, and the chronicle of these times relates, “The ‘Masada question’ stood before the battle-ready, remaining, fighters.” The Masada myth is often mentioned *on par* with the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, according to Nachman Ben-Yehuda. Connecting the two narratives or myths are the images of a heroic fight, against all odds, to the end, and being left with no choice.⁷⁰⁶ Samuel G. Freedman mentions that

⁷⁰⁴ In 1997, Hebron was divided into two sections by the Hebron Protocol. Faure 2004, 239.

⁷⁰⁵ Stiebel 2007, 599.

⁷⁰⁶ Ben-Yehuda 1996, 130. Nachman Ben-Yehuda suggests, “the association of Masada to the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto revolt must be viewed within the broader historical and analytical framework of Jewish-Israeli attitudes towards the Holocaust. [...] The Masada mythical narrative presented an image of Jews “fighting to the end,” whereas the Holocaust implied the slaughter of most Jews without even the semblance of a fight. [...] Against this background, the rhetoric was transformed into an emphasizing of the few occasions when the Jews did fight”.

already in 1982, the settlement movement referred to Yamit as “the Masada of the right-wing settlers”.⁷⁰⁷ On June 14th, 1997 – roughly a half-year after the Hebron Protocol was signed – David Wilder assures that

The Jewish Community of Hebron has no intentions of being another Masada. [...] But we will never abandon Hebron – we will never abandon Eretz Yisrael – we will never abandon G-d. And we know, He will never abandon us.⁷⁰⁸

A year later, on July 9th, 1998, Wilder again mentions Masada, but this time accuses Benjamin Netanyahu of trying to arrange “a replay of Masada”. However, while the people of Masada had no choice, the Jewish community of Hebron do have a choice, and will not “open our arms to voluntary death”, choosing not to allow Masada to fall again.⁷⁰⁹

R. Chaim Richman and Yitzhak Reuven of the Temple Institute reflect on examples in history when the Jewish people have preserved their freedom and integrity, even at a high price. They mention Masada, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and the crossing of the Sea of Reeds as situations when all options looked grim:

Committing mass suicide would mark the end of the nation, but at least they would be taking their own lives as free men. They would die with their dignity.⁷¹⁰

4.2.8. THE BATTLE IS ALREADY WON

A feature of the Hardal argumentation is the parallel stressing of two seemingly contradictory suppositions: that the socio-political situation is grave, but at the same time, the fate of *Eretz Yisrael* is in the hands of God.

⁷⁰⁷ Freedman 2000, 184-185.

⁷⁰⁸ Wilder 2013, 191. Saturday, June 14, 1997: “Moments of Truth”

⁷⁰⁹ Wilder 2013, 248. Thursday, July 09, 1998: “Masada”

⁷¹⁰ www.templeinstitute.org/talk/Nisan_14_5771-April_18_2011.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

In a discussion with a journalist, suggesting that the “chances of Israel surviving as a Jewish state are steadily decreasing”, David Wilder replied:

You’re missing something, and that is the Divine element. You have to understand that G-d didn’t bring us back to Israel after two thousand years, to again expel us from our land. [...] The military victories of 1948, 1967 and 1973 didn’t happen by themselves. The fact that during the Lebanese War in the early 1980s Israel shot down over 100 Syrian M.I.G.s without losing any airplanes is statistically impossible. Yet it happened. And the deciding factor was, always has been, and always will be, the hand of G-d.⁷¹¹

This paradox – of relying completely on divine providence, while at the same time, vigorously fighting to shape destiny – is characteristic of apocalyptic movements. Charles Kimball sees the struggle towards the establishment of an ideal time as one of five characteristics of a radicalized movement. When the ambition to establish the ideal time overrides humanitarian concerns, it is bound to have dire consequences:

When the hoped-for ideal is tied to a particular religious worldview and those who wish to implement their vision become convinced that they know what God wants for them and everyone else, you have a prescription for disaster.⁷¹²

4.3. THE HAREDIM: STAY IN THE DIASPORA

4.3.1. EXILE IS STILL IN FORCE

The Haredi perspective stresses that living in the Diaspora is an expression of being in exile; when the exile began, the Jewish people were scattered among the nations. Until the Messiah appears to announce the end of exile, it is still in force, regardless of where one chooses to reside.⁷¹³ Therefore, making *aliyah* is futile as far as the commencement of redemption is concerned. Living in

⁷¹¹ Wilder 2013, 503-504. August 18, 2003: “Not Now, Not Ever”

⁷¹² Kimball 2008, 115.

⁷¹³ See Chpt. 5.

Eretz Yisrael in the state of exile is also believed to convey special challenges, relating to its sanctity.⁷¹⁴

One of the weightiest theological arguments of the Haredi argumentation for remaining in the Diaspora relates to the tradition of the Threefold oath. It forbids “forcing the end”, which has been interpreted as any activity or attitude aimed at advancing the coming of redemption. To the Haredim of this study, it is clear that forming a nation is a feature of the messianic era. Thus, establishing a state before the arrival of the Messiah is a blunt violation of the Threefold oath:

Also, do not forget about the other oath, which prohibits forcing the end. Founding a state before the coming of moshiach certainly falls under that category. Even the *Avnei Nezer* only says that the oath against “going up as a wall” becomes permitted when the nations give it to us, which would mean that mass immigration is permitted according to him, but not founding a state.⁷¹⁵

The other part of the Oath, which forbids “ascending the wall”, has been interpreted as forbidding immigration *en masse* into Palestine. JAZ records that *Avnei Nezer* proposed an interpretation in which “ascending the wall” implicates the use of military force.⁷¹⁶ However, Aviezer Ravitzky understands *Avnei Nezer* as suggesting “a spiritualistic interpretation of the oaths, removing them entirely from the political-historical arena.”⁷¹⁷ J. David Bleich mentions *Avnei Nezer* as one of the “revered latter-day rabbinic scholars who recognize other normatively binding halakhic prescriptions based upon considerations other than revelation.”⁷¹⁸ Hence,

⁷¹⁴ Rabkin 2006, 54. However, JAZ also concludes with reference to Chofetz Chaim that “*Eretz Yisroel* without Torah is just a piece of earth”. It seems, thus, that JAZ embraces both an idea of *Eretz Yisrael* having an integral sanctity, and an idea of that sanctity being conditional upon (the reverence of?) the Torah. See www.truetorahjews.org/parsha-pearls/pesach, accessed 20.5.2017.

⁷¹⁵ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/aviner, accessed 13.3.2017.

⁷¹⁶ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/aviner, accessed 13.3.2017.

⁷¹⁷ Ravitzky 1993, 293.

⁷¹⁸ Bleich 2015, 86.

there are question marks regarding the Avnei Nezer's understanding of the Threefold oath.

To understand what appear as contradictions in Ramban's position on *aliyah*, - and subsequently, in Raahash and Avnei Nezer's - Paul Eidelberg stresses the importance of distinguishing between a *hechsher-mitzvah* (a prerequisite to the *mitzvah per se*) and a *kiyum-ha'mitzvah* (the *mitzvah per se*). All positive commandments of the Torah involve both these categories. The *hechsher-mitzvah* is obligatory only if it is a prerequisite for the fulfillment of the *kiyum-ha'mitzvah*, but there is no defined sequence for the two categories. Therefore, when the Ramban - and after him, the Rashbash and Avnei Nezer - use the terms *yerusha* (Heb. conquer) and *yeshiva* (Heb. dwell) from Num. 33:53, the first is merely a *hechsher-mitzvah*, whereas the latter is the actual *mitzvah*. In relation to the Threefold oath, it is clear from the use of the word *yaalu* - they shall go up - that it is directed to a people in Diaspora, in exile; therefore, Avnei Nezer affirms, making *aliyah* is merely a *hechsher-mitzvah*. Eidelberg notes that these applications and definitions eradicate what for centuries had appeared as a contradiction in Ramban; the prohibition against "ascending as a wall" applies only to those Jews in exile who might be planning to invade through *aliyah*, but not to Jews who individually and with due permission have immigrated, or to those who are already living there. Eidelberg goes on to make this interesting remark:

Indeed, once they have done so, the *mitzvah* of conquering the land comes into force. They may then wage war from within Israel to liberate the land from foreign rule. Halachically, this constitutes a perfectly logical reversal of the liberation and settlement of Eretz Yisrael. Since conquering the land is only a pre-*mitzvah*, it can be undertaken after the *mitzvah per se*, the settling in the land. This is why the commandment to conquer the land can be realized even today in complete consistency with the great Ramban.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁹ Eidelberg 2004, 259-260.

JAZ dismisses the interpretation that “ascending the wall” necessarily implies by military means. “The Avnei Nezer is the only one who says that”, JAZ stresses, “Others (Yefeh Kol, Ahavas Yonasan) understand it as any mass immigration.”⁷²⁰ In response to a pamphlet by R. Shlomo Aviner, an unnamed rabbi of JAZ states that even if there are some question marks concerning the prohibition to “ascend as a wall”, the existence of a sovereign state cannot be overlooked:

This is probably the most common Zionist argument. They base it on Rashi’s comment on the words of the Gemara, “The Holy One, blessed is He, made Israel swear not to go up as a wall.” Rashi says, “Together, with a strong hand.” They assume that this means with military force. Thus, they argue, it is allowed to establish a state with permission from the nations. [...] Even if mass immigration with the permission of the nations is allowed, founding a sovereign state is a different story – it involves the oath against forcing the end of exile.⁷²¹

JAZ also refers to *Chazal*⁷²² to find support for its interpretation that any form of political independence constitutes a violation against the prescribed life in exile:

Also, Chazal say clearly that we will not achieve political independence until moshiach comes: “The only difference between the present era and the days of moshiah is our subjugation to the nations” (Shabbos 63a). The Avnei Nezer never permitted any kind of political sovereignty.⁷²³

This is, of course, a far drawn conclusion and a generalization of a bulk of tradition. The Hardalim, on the contrary, understand Jewish independence as an indication of the present era indeed *being* the days of

⁷²⁰ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/aviner, accessed 13.3.2017.

⁷²¹ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/aviner, accessed 13.3.2017.

⁷²² *Chazal* is an acronym for Heb. *Hakhameinu Zikhronam Liv'rakha*, “Our Sages, may their memory be blessed”. The term refers to Jewish sages of the periods of the Mishnah, Tosefta and Talmud, that is, approximately between 100 BCE – 500 CE. See Kolatch 2006, 65-68.

⁷²³ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/aviner, accessed 13.3.2017. For biographical details of R. Abraham Bornstein, see www.truetorahjews.org/avneinezer, accessed 4.4.2017.

the Messiah or, at the very least, being the *atchalta d'geulah* (footsteps of the Messiah).

JAZ further points out that the late R. Yoel Teitelbaum forbade the celebration of the Israeli Independence Day; instead, it should mark the day of rebellion against God and Judaism. JAZ considers rejoicing over and celebrating the “terrible rebellion” a graver sin than idolatry and blasphemy; committing a sin is grave, but endorsing and rejoicing in a sin is even graver. Therefore, referring to R. Teitelbaum, JAZ stresses that celebrating “the Zionist holiday” causes God to reject any religious holiday observances. R. Teitelbaum prohibits both the celebrating of and the appearing to celebrate the Independence Day:

We must not minimize the seriousness of the grave sin of rejoicing or appearing to rejoice and making a festival on the terrible Day of Blasphemy that they call Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Independence Day). The day that the members of the conspiracy against G-d and his Messiah established their State of atheism over the Jewish People, uprooting the Holy Torah and our faith, ushering in a period of bloodshed and suffering for myriads upon myriads of Jews.⁷²⁴

Through Yirmiyahu Cohen, JAZ uses the narrative of the Children of Ephraim to make a warning example.⁷²⁵ They see it as “a lesson for all generations, that the Jewish people may not leave the exile on their own. This was the error of the Children of Ephraim: they left Egypt before the proper time.”⁷²⁶ Additionally, Yakov M. Rabkin considers it a “traditional view” that the conquest of *Eretz Yisrael* is an aspect of the messianic era:

In the traditional view, settlement in the Land of Israel will be brought about by the universal effect of good deeds rather than by military force or diplomacy. It will follow the advent of the Messiah, unlike the biblical

⁷²⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/issues/independenceday, accessed 10.5.2017.

⁷²⁵ Regarding the myth on the Children of Ephraim, see discussion in Chpt. 2.1

⁷²⁶ Cohen 2007, 65.

conquest of Joshua, which was achieved by the use of power. And since it will be the work of God, it will be final and permanent.⁷²⁷

Rabkin further sees the Jewish tradition as being “lukewarm at best” regarding Jewish nationhood, because “the history of the Jewish people transcends any state framework”. With a strong belief in an almighty God, there is no need for concern about how to establish a state, how to obtain territory or what the fate of its inhabitants will be.⁷²⁸

History, and the 20th century, in particular, has presented the Jewish people with austere difficulties. JAZ understands these trials as “the birth pangs of the Messiah”, of which R. Moshe Sofer (“the Chasam Sofer”, 1762–1839), warned in his *Michtav Sofer*.⁷²⁹ Therefore, the Jewish people should be prepared for difficulties and endure the test without abandoning the ways of the forefathers. R. Sofer draws parallels to the Exodus from Egypt, when the Jewish people were tried in a similar way:

On the night before they left Egypt, our ancestors sat in their houses and heard shouting and wailing from all sides: "A great cry in all the land of Egypt, such as never was before and never will be again" (Exodus 11:6). But the Jews were not permitted to go out of their houses and see what was going on. And the Egyptians surrounded the Jewish houses, yelling, "Leave us!" But the Jewish people were strong and remained faithful and did not leave until the morning, when G-d permitted them to leave. [...] And so it will be in the time of the birthpangs of the messiah – G-d will test us, so that we may gain merit for the redemption.⁷³⁰

Rabkin states that both the Hardal and the Haredi perspectives expect redemption to be of a miraculous nature; setting them apart is not “a disagreement about the total destruction that must precede redemption, but in their definition of what the destruction entails.” For the Hardalim,

⁷²⁷ Rabkin 2006, 67.

⁷²⁸ Rabkin 2006, 70.

⁷²⁹ For a biography of the Chasam Sofer, see Samet 2007, 742.

⁷³⁰ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha-pearls/bo, accessed 13.3.2017.

the destruction ended in 1945, when Zionism began to harvest the fruits of its work; the “point of departure” for redemption, hence, is the *Shoah*. For the Haredim, then, the *Shoah* and the State of Israel are “part of the same process of destruction”; the establishment of the State constitutes a rebellion against God, an attempt to force the end:

From this perspective, categorically rejected by Zionist messianism, the State of Israel can be nothing but an obstacle on the path to redemption. By this same logic, to concentrate millions of Jews in such a dangerous place is suicidal folly.⁷³¹

Another form of argument presented by JAZ is one appealing to the good values of the Jewish people; the argument below argues that clinging to *Eretz Yisrael* is not fulfilling an obligation to God, but rather, stealing God’s gift ahead of time:

G-d loves the Jewish people and wants to give them something good. So how do the Jews show their appreciation and loyalty to G-d? By going and stealing it before G-d is ready to give it to them? Of course not.⁷³²

Among other efforts to persuade the Jewish people to accept life in exile, JAZ also appeals to *pathos* and *ethos*, when reminding them of all the ancestors who “marched through seas of blood and tears” to keep the faith; if the Jewish people “have compassion” for themselves, they will maintain the “golden legacy”:

We have been sentenced to exile by the King of Kings because of our sins. The eternal blessed be He, has decreed that we accept the exile with humble gratitude until the time comes, or until we merit His pardon through repentance if we seek to end the exile with force, G-d will catch us, as our sages have forewarned, and our sentence becomes longer and more difficult.⁷³³

⁷³¹ Rabkin 2006, 196.

⁷³² www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/redemption2, accessed 4.4.2017.

⁷³³ www.truetorahjews.org/tenquestions, accessed 4.4.2017.

To conclude the different angles of this argument, the Haredim firstly argue that the exile is still in force and will continue to be in force until the Messiah announces its end. Thus, a Jew can choose whether or not to remain in the Diaspora, but he cannot choose whether or not to remain in exile. Therefore, the Threefold Oath is also still in force, forbidding both “forcing the end” and “ascending the wall”, which the Haredim perceive as corresponding to mass immigration to the State of Israel. Ingathering the exiles to a state established by political negotiations and military achievements, hence, constitutes a double violation of the Threefold Oath, which is “the fundamental reason why Zionism is wrong.”⁷³⁴

4.3.2. ZIONISM AND ITS STATE IS A BLASPHEMY

The Haredi position on the State of Israel stems from the understanding that only God can end the exile. Any attempt to assume any degree of control or influence his supremacy is a lack of faith. In Zionism, this disbelief has escalated into heresy, either disregarding the traditional understanding of exile or reinterpreting it beyond recognition. Since Zionism is heretical, the fruit of its struggle – the State of Israel – constitutes a blasphemy. Therefore, NK demands “without compromise, the peaceful dismantling of the State of “Israel”.”⁷³⁵

NK justifies its demand thus: firstly, that Zionism has transformed Judaism from a faith and spirituality into a nationalist and materialistic project. Secondly, as a fruit of Zionism, “a grievous moral evil” has been committed against the Palestinian people. Thirdly, God has *expressis verbis* forbidden the Jewish people to recreate an entity of their own “in this Divinely decreed exile”. Fourthly, in establishing a sovereign, Jewish state, Zionism “denies the Divine punishment inherent in the Jewish people’s exile and seeks to remedy what is essentially a spiritual state by this worldly means”. Fifthly, NK criticizes the energy spent by the Zionist

⁷³⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/student, accessed 31.3.2017.

⁷³⁵ www.nkusa.org/Books/Pamphlets/Pamphlet.pdf, accessed 4.4.2017.

movement on uprooting the traditional Jewish faith.⁷³⁶ NK underlines that it is not the secularism of Zionism which it so stringently opposes, but rather “the entire concept of a sovereign Jewish state is contrary to Jewish law.”⁷³⁷ The *Satmar Rav* does not *per se* annul the commandment of settling in *Eretz Yisrael*, but he makes it conditional upon the holiness of the land; if the land is in a state of impurity, the *mitzvah* of settling in *Eretz Yisrael* cannot be fulfilled, according to JAZ.⁷³⁸ JAZ furthermore argues, with reference to the Chofetz Chaim, “Eretz Yisroel without Torah is just a piece of earth”:

The Chofetz Chaim elaborates further with an analogy: A person consists of a body and a soul. The soul alone cannot live in the physical world, but must have a body. Nevertheless, the soul alone is a complete and independently existing entity. The body, on the other hand, when separated from the soul is no more than a piece of earth. So too, the soul of the Jewish people is the holy Torah; the body is Eretz Yisroel. Certainly without a body it is very bitter: we cannot keep the mitzvos that depend on Eretz Yisroel, the anti-Semites take away our livelihood and persecute us. We are broken physically and spiritually. Certainly it is bitter – we cannot stand it any longer in exile – and yet we are holding out. But Eretz Yisroel without Torah is just a piece of earth.⁷³⁹

Joseph Agassi emphasizes in the foreword to Yakov M. Rabkin’s book, “It is intellectually important to think clearly, to distinguish between concepts. [...] For example, when one calls Israel ‘the Jewish state’ this creates a real and dangerous confusion between faith and nationality”.⁷⁴⁰ In the opinion of JAZ, its entire existence violates the Jewish religion.⁷⁴¹ When reading the publications of NK and JAZ, one cannot fail to notice their reluctance to refer to the State of Israel using that term; it is continuously referred to as “the so-called state” or “the heretical state”.

⁷³⁶ www.nkusa.org/Books/Pamphlets/Pamphlet.pdf, accessed 4.4.2017.

⁷³⁷ www.nkusa.org/aboutus/index.cfm, accessed 4.4.2017.

⁷³⁸ www.truetorahjews.org/divrei-yoel-parashas-shelach, accessed 25.5.2017.

⁷³⁹ www.truetorahjews.org/issues/pesach, accessed 25.5.2017.

⁷⁴⁰ Rabkin 2006, ix.

⁷⁴¹ www.truetorahjews.org/neverbeen, accessed 10.5.2017.

From a Haredi perspective, the State of Israel, as a fruit of the Zionist movement, is “completely alien to Judaism and the Jewish faith”.⁷⁴² NK mentions that the name *Israel* originally referred to the Jewish people, and hence, the name Israel has been “hijacked” or “stolen”, just like King Solomon’s name was stolen by the king of demons, Ashmedai, according to a *Gemara (BT Gittin 68a)*. The true King Solomon walked from door to door and tried to convince everyone he was the true king, but he appeared insane and no one listened. JAZ recalls the late R. Amram Blau, of NK, who already in 1948 drew parallels between this *Gemara* and the Jewish state, claiming the name Israel:

Today as well, the Zionists have stolen our name, "Israel," and they pretend to represent the Jewish people in the world, thus denying the identity of the true Israel, the people of Hashem, the people of the Torah. And our situation is worse than that of Shlomo, for at least Ashmedai, it seems, ruled the kingdom in the same way Shlomo ruled it. But the Zionists are using our name for a purpose that is the opposite of our national purpose - to deny the Torah and rebel against Hashem's decree of exile. And the Jewish people cries out to the world, who help this terrible forgery to exist - but no one listens.⁷⁴³

The imperative JAZ draws from this *Gemara* is to continue crying out to fellow Jews and to the world, even if the reception is cool. This argument pleads with the audience to empathize with the victimized *Shlomo HaMelech* or true Israel, having been robbed of their true identities. This argument can also be interpreted as calling into question the character of the Zionists— they steal, rebel and deny the identity of the true Israel, while “no one listens” to the Haredim. NK call upon the Jewish people to

⁷⁴² www.nkusa.org/activities/speeches/bham022603.cfm, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁷⁴³ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

Let the world know that Zionism and Judaism are diametrically opposed and their use of the name "Israel" is a falsification. The Zionists have no right to speak in the name of the Jewish nation.⁷⁴⁴

The State of Israel and its authoritative institutions have, since the days of the *Shoah*, been accused of “selective aliya”, that is, of granting citizenship only to known Zionists and other “desirables”. This, in R. Moshe Shonfeld’s perception, attests to the hypocrisy of the Israeli leadership, particularly of its rabbinical leadership; it is “the way of Satan”, who “comes down and deceives, goes up and angers, takes permission, and takes souls.”⁷⁴⁵ R. Amram Blau, the founder of NK, criticizes the Zionists for claiming to be “the proud descendants of the infamous hoodlums” whom he holds responsible for the destruction of the First temple. R. Blau teaches that the transgression that brought that calamity upon the Jewish people was their refusal to lay down their arms and surrender to Nebuchadnezzar:

Jeremiah proclaimed it was the will of God that the city of Jerusalem and the Holy Temple be destroyed as a punishment for their sins and if the “people of Israel” accepted this decree then their lives would be spared. Jeremiah was labelled a traitor by these hoodlums and as a result not only was the Temple destroyed, but almost the entire population slaughtered.⁷⁴⁶

Furthermore, R. Blau sees the Zionists as descendants of those responsible for the destruction of the Second temple as well. In that historical context too, the refusal to surrender – this time to the Romans – “brought upon the Jews the calamity of the destruction of the Second Temple and the exile which followed.”⁷⁴⁷ R. Blau thus couples Zionism with both destroyed temples and sees a spirit of revolt as the common denominator in all three situations. Rabkin notes the Zionist usage of historical precedence “for its

⁷⁴⁴ www.nkusa.org/activities/NewsAds/Friends_of_Jerusalem/foj100589.cfm, accessed 31.3.2017.

⁷⁴⁵ Shonfeld 1977, 94.

⁷⁴⁶ Rabkin 20006, 68-69.

⁷⁴⁷ Rabkin 2006, 69.

own ends”, but concludes that Zionism ends up misreading the teachings history has borne out:

The Zionist narrative also resorts to using history for its own ends, appropriating the Maccabees or Bar Kokhba, whom they transform into romantic resistance fighters against the foreign invader. The Zionist use of history is at the same time a rejection of the rabbinical interpretations, which remain the focal point of Torah anti-Zionism. The Zionist moral of the story is also opposed to the Jewish tradition: the Jews should have fought harder and better.⁷⁴⁸

JAZ notes that during the Portuguese inquisition in the 16th century, a Jewish sage beseeched God for guidance using Kabbalistic methods. He was then reminded of a passage from the *Songs of Songs* (2:7), which the Talmud quotes when arguing that the Jewish people are not allowed to force the end of exile. Due to this revelation, the Jews of Portugal refrained from using force to bring about a change to their situation, although they had the opportunity to do so. Another example noted by JAZ is one from the early 19th century when it was proposed that a Jewish state or colony be established on Grand Island outside New York. The Chief Rabbi of Paris, Abraham de Cologna, dismissed the idea, asserting that “God alone knows the epoch of the Israelitish restoration”, that “he alone will make it known to the whole universe,” and that “every attempt on our part to reassemble with any politico-national design is forbidden, as an act of high treason against the Divine Majesty”. Furthermore, when Simeon Bar Kochba, who led a revolt in 132 CE and established a Jewish kingdom, was found by the Sages to be a false Messiah, he was killed. From this, JAZ argues, one has to draw the conclusion that the Talmudic Sages rejected the thought of a Jewish state established by anyone other than the Messiah.⁷⁴⁹

In the view of NK, the Jewish people did not decide themselves to go into exile and similarly, they cannot end it. The exile is a punishment for the

⁷⁴⁸ Rabkin 2006, 69.

⁷⁴⁹ www.truetorahjews.org/neverbeen, accessed 10.5.2017.

transgressions of the people, and hence, exile is a consequence which only God can revoke. Parallels could be drawn to forgiveness in general – one can *ask* for forgiveness, one can even *live* as if one is already forgiven, but whether one *is forgiven* or not is a question that lies with the one who *forgives*. By a similar logic, the Jewish people cannot choose to end the exile, but can certainly live as if it has ended; still, the question of whether or not the exile has ended, lies with God.⁷⁵⁰ In the view of JAZ, gathering the exiles without repentance is heretical:

There is an explicit Gemara the Three Oaths in Kesubos 111a prohibiting a return to Zion en masse before the redemption. The question is why the Rambam doesn't codify this Gemara in his Mishneh Torah. The Satmar Rav proposes that the Rambam didn't need to bring it because he already states that teshuva must precede the geulah. Therefore, anyone trying to gather in the exiles without repentance is denying this principle, and is thus a heretic.⁷⁵¹

In spite of the above-mentioned reasons to avoid living in the State of Israel, it is not completely ruled out, although doing so would have to be under a non-Jewish government:

The mitzvah is to live in Eretz Yisroel, and the oath says that we must live without sovereignty, under another nation. Therefore, one can fulfil both by living in Eretz Yisroel under a non-Jewish government. However, if the non-Jewish government ruling the land is not accepting any more Jewish immigrants, and the only way to live there is to overthrow the government or conquer the land, then it is forbidden under the oath.⁷⁵²

The argumentation of the Haredim is, in many respects, a counter-argumentation. It confronts Zionism and all perspectives that have integrated Zionism into its ideotheology. As an expression of this character of its argumentation, JAZ has a Q&A section, where it answers

⁷⁵⁰ www.nkusa.org/books/pamphlets/pamphlet_4.pdf, accessed 8.11.2014.

⁷⁵¹ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/student, accessed 4.12.2014

⁷⁵² www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/yishuvey, accessed 10.3.2015.

questions to prove Zionism and all its subdivisions wrong. For example, a reader when asking whether or not the establishment of the state should be viewed as a miracle is offered this reply by JAZ:

You bring proof from the Israeli victory in 1948. Even if it were a miracle, we do not bring proof to refute a religious principle from a miracle. If a Jew got into his car on the Sabbath and a serious accident happened and, miraculously, he came out without a scratch, would you say that this is proof that a Jew may drive on the Sabbath?⁷⁵³

4.3.3. BEING DISPERSED IS A PROTECTION

NK argues that the exile is not only a punishment for sins and a protection against total annihilation, but it is also in the world's best interest: by dispersing his people throughout the world, the message of God will be spread to all the nations.⁷⁵⁴ Similarly, JAZ argues that the exile in itself sustains the world, as the Jewish faith is scattered all over the world:

Thus the decree of exile is not something secondary or ephemeral, but is a major part of the Jewish people's role, and part of G-d's plan when He created the world. Only through the fulfillment of this plan can we achieve our success.⁷⁵⁵

By quoting Avigdor Miller, JAZ also sees it as a misunderstanding that the Jewish people are only making history in *Eretz Yisrael*. Instead, JAZ puts forward the idea that exile is as valuable a part of history as the time the Jewish people lived in *Eretz Yisrael*:

So can we say that Hashem, the Author of history, would keep us in Eretz Yisroel for a limited time, and then when we are expelled for 2000 years, that's just a misfortune, an addendum to history? Don't make this serious error. This exile is our history. Even today, we're fulfilling that history, whether in Yerushalayim, Bnei Brak, Williamsburg, Borough Park or Flatbush. In Oshkosh, Wisconsin where there's a single Jew

⁷⁵³ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/redemption, accessed 24.3.2017.

⁷⁵⁴ www.nkusa.org/books/pamphlets/pamphlet_4.pdf, accessed 24.3.2017.

⁷⁵⁵ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha-pearls/bereishis, accessed 8.4.2017.

fighting the environment - he is also making history. History is not only up to the destruction of the Temple. The Jewish people is creating history today, and who knows what part of history is greater?"⁷⁵⁶

JAZ also brings into memory a teaching of R. Osheia, related in *BT Pesachim 87b*: "The Holy One, blessed be He, showed righteousness [mercy] unto Israel by scattering them among the nations." From this, JAZ draws the conclusion that Jews are dispersed throughout the world to make it impossible to eliminate all of them.⁷⁵⁷

4.3.3. THE REAL CRUX IS 1948

The Haredim also address the question of borders. JAZ notes that the borders proposed by the UN would make up a nation of three pieces of land barely connected and not constitute a functional, independent state. In other words, the UN did not consent to the creation of a state, and most of the territory the State of Israel today presides over was achieved by military conquests, not by diplomatic processes in international organs.⁷⁵⁸ Nonetheless, while the Haredim oppose the territorial expansions of the State as well as the methods by which land has been acquired, the heart of the matter "is not 1967, but 1948", as Yakira Elhanan so eloquently puts it:

The conclusion is plain: the real crux of anti-Zionism is not and has probably never really been the occupation, but Israel itself. The real issue, to put it differently, is not 1967 but 1948.⁷⁵⁹

JAZ holds that the State of Israel does not represent Jews or Judaism, as a heading banner states on JAZ's official website. Furthermore, in the view of JAZ, "it is un-Jewish to have a state":

Throughout their 2000-year-long exile, Jews have had many opportunities to establish their own state, but they voluntarily refrained

⁷⁵⁶ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha-pearls/bereishis, accessed 8.4.2017.

⁷⁵⁷ www.truetorahjews.org/siman18, accessed 8.4.2017.

⁷⁵⁸ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/aviner, accessed 13.3.2017.

⁷⁵⁹ Yakira 2010, ix.

from doing so, knowing that G-d commanded them to wait for His redemption, via the messiah. [...] We see clearly that subsequent to the destruction of the Temple, the Talmudic Sages were against the existence of any Jewish state before the coming of the messiah. [...] Such was always the Jewish viewpoint, accepted as obvious by all Jews, everywhere, throughout 19 centuries. It was only Jews who knew nothing of Judaism, such as Herzl and his colleagues, who could conceive of a "Jewish state."⁷⁶⁰

NK is clear on its demand of a “peaceful dismantling” of the State of Israel. It also unequivocally supports Palestinian sovereignty over all of *Eretz Yisrael*. NK sees the Palestinians as “victims of the Zionist movement’s moral blindness and obstinate refusal to take into account the existence of peoples other than themselves”:

The Palestinian people have a right to their homeland. And they have a right to financial restitution for property loss and damages inflicted upon them over the past decades. With the help of the Almighty, we are frequently publishing statements in support of Palestinian claims and in sympathy with their suffering. We have joined Palestinians in protests against the abuses that they have been subjected to. We have, in general, attempted to maintain a public presence in both the Jewish and Islamic world in order that the venerable tradition of Jewish, Torah based anti-Zionism be not forgotten and with the help of the Almighty, we hope that the true Torah way will in the near future, once again prevail.⁷⁶¹

JAZ emphasizes that the territorial aspect of the State “is not at all the issue”; what the Haredi perspective opposes is the making of a nation in a political sense, of transforming the Jewish people into a nation.⁷⁶²

The Hardal perspective has argued that the establishment of the state did not violate the Threefold oath, because it was established by diplomatic measures by the UN, and that Jews legally emigrated to Palestine under the British Mandate. The subsequent wars and conflicts, this perspective

⁷⁶⁰ www.truetorahjews.org/neverbeen, accessed 10.5.2017.

⁷⁶¹ www.nkusa.org/Books/Pamphlets/Pamphlet.pdf, accessed 29.9.2016.

⁷⁶² Rabkin 2006, 196.

holds, was of a defensive nature only, and hence, they also do not violate the Threefold oath. Thus, none of the force used by the State of Israel should be seen as “rebellious against the nations” or “ascending the wall”. JAZ perceives this reasoning as “specious”:

Think about it: If I walk into your house and declare it mine, and, when you resist me, I fight back, is that self-defence? Who is the aggressor? I am, of course. Declaring someone else’s land mine is an act of aggression. True, there was no sovereign power from which the Israelis took the land. The previous government was the British, and they left voluntarily. But my point is that self-defence is not defined by who attacks physically first.⁷⁶³

Furthermore, JAZ responds to this “most common Zionist argument”, that the British *abandoned* Palestine rather than *entrusting* it to the Zionist movement. The subsequent war of 1948 is proof that it was not peacefully transferred. Hence, the Threefold oath was definitely transgressed:

In the case of Zionism, the permission given by the British just meant that those Jews who came legally under the British Mandate were not violating the oath. But in the end the British did not hand Palestine over to the Jews. They just pulled out of the country in 1948, leaving it to whoever would prevail in the war. That is not a *pekidah*. Fighting that war and taking over the country definitely fit the description of Rashi – “together, with a strong hand”. At this point Zionists invariably argue that the U.N. voted for a Jewish state. But the nations in the U.N. who voted in favour of a Jewish state did not include the nation ruling over the land, the British. The British abstained in the vote and did nothing to help carry out the U.N. resolution. In the end, the Zionists had to fight for their land, first against the local Arabs (Palestinians) and then against the surrounding nations. That is definitely “with a strong hand” and a rebellion against the nations.⁷⁶⁴

For NK, the warfare of the State of Israel is a symptom of a deviant understanding of redemption. Instead of putting faith and hope in a divine intervention bringing about a redemption which the whole world can

⁷⁶³ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/aviner, accessed 15.7.2015.

⁷⁶⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/aviner, accessed 14.7.2015.

rejoice in, the Zionists have put their faith and hope in themselves and their military capacity. As a result, instead of “universal brotherhood”, a people are subjugated and dispossessed:

No Jew faithful to the Jewish religion in 1900 years of our people’s exile believed that we should seek to reclaim the land by military means. Instead, they believed that at the end of days, when the Creator chooses to redeem all mankind then all peoples will join in the worship of Him. This will not require a subjugation or dispossession of peoples. It will be a time of universal brotherhood with its spiritual centre in the Holy Land. Until then the Jewish people have a particular task in exile. To accept in faith their exile. And, by word and deed, quietly and unobtrusively, to act as moral and spiritual paragons. And, in general, to attend to the Almighty’s service via Torah study, prayer and good deeds.⁷⁶⁵

While it seems Haredim do not reject the concept of self-defence, they question placing the locus of trust with the Israeli state and its army. Rabkin, to whom JAZ refers, notes that even the two harbingers of Zionism, R. Kalisher and R. Alkalai, invoked the Threefold oath and insisted that “no sword shall cross your land” (Lev. 26:6):

The term “security” has replaced the concept of self-defence, widespread before the creation of the state. As we have already seen, the Hebrew term *bitahon* (בְּטָחוֹן) was borrowed from the rabbinical literature, where it meant, “trust in divine providence.” A Judaic concept was thus taken over by the modern language and given an opposing meaning: rather than putting trust in Providence, the new Hebrew would henceforth rely on the force of arms.⁷⁶⁶

Marcus Jastrow (1829-1903) confirms that the Hebrew term בְּטָחוֹן, from the root בָּטַח, translates as *trust, faith or hope* in *PT Berachot 9:13b, BT Sabbath 139a, BT Menachot 29a*, and elsewhere.⁷⁶⁷ The Oxford Dictionary attests the

⁷⁶⁵ www.nkusa.org/Books/Pamphlets/Pamphlet.pdf, accessed 29.9.2016.

⁷⁶⁶ Rabkin 2006, 113-114.

⁷⁶⁷ Jastrow 2007, 156.

transformation of its meaning into Modern Hebrew: בטחון, translates *confidence, security, safety or defence*.⁷⁶⁸

The Haredi position is, thus, clear-cut: since the State of Israel is an expression of a Jewish revolt, an untimely breakout from exile, one drawn border is no more righteous than another. A sovereign, Jewish state that has come about in the way the State of Israel did, is and will always be an expression of rebellion against God. The only way forward is the way back, so to speak. The State of Israel has to be dismantled in order to set the Jewish people back on its right existential course, towards redemption.

During the exile, Jews are forbidden to wage wars; they are adjured to wait peacefully until G-d brings the exile to a miraculous end. The Sages feared that if too much stress were put on the wars, Jews in exile might be led to consider the idea of war as a means to redeem themselves.⁷⁶⁹

4.3.4. THE STATE OF ISRAEL IS UNSAFE

The Haredim perceive the State of Israel as a far more dangerous place to live than the communities in the Diaspora. Of course, security issues have dominated the political reality of the State of Israel ever since its establishment. The current situation is no exception; the threat from Iran has become imminent, two wars were recently fought against Gaza, the international community is becoming more and more frustrated with the expansions of settlements and there is a general instability of the region in the wake of the Arab spring.⁷⁷⁰ According to surveys on Israeli perceptions of national security, Israelis feel “more threatened than less threatened.”⁷⁷¹

The State of Israel has lost its *raison d'être* as a safe harbour for the Jewish people, in JAZ's view. In addition to the way the socio-political situation has progressed during the 20th century, JAZ believes that the mere existence of a Jewish state is a “prohibited provocation against the

⁷⁶⁸ Levy 1995, 23.

⁷⁶⁹ www.truetorahjews.org/chanukah, accessed 29.10.2014.

⁷⁷⁰ Ben Meir & Bagno-Moldavsky 2013, 15.

⁷⁷¹ Ben Meir & Bagno-Moldavsky 2013, 58.

nations". Therefore, JAZ regards the Zionists as having "enflamed the fire of hostility against the Jewish people in ways too numerous to enumerate".⁷⁷² The instability of the Middle East and the struggles of the state are considered a confirmation of this interpretation. Now, the time has come to put an end to the misguided attempt:

To err is human, and millions of former Zionists have already admitted their mistake. For the sake of G-d and His people Israel, join them in admitting that it was a mistake to undermine G-d's plan by trying to force the redemption before its time. The prophet Yirmiyahu says in the name of G-d, "They have left Me, the source of fresh water, to dig themselves broken pits that will not hold water" (Yirmiyahu 2:13). So listen to the prophet, and let us all wait for the day when we will see the fulfillment of the verse, "And those redeemed by G-d will return and come to Zion with song, with eternal happiness on their heads" (Yishaya 35:10).⁷⁷³

To exemplify the difference between the two perspectives, JAZ mentions the developments in the tradition of Chanukah. Chanukah was established in the Second Temple period as a holiday to commemorate the miracle of a small jar of oil, an amount sufficient to fuel the menorah for one day, lasting for eight days. According to JAZ, the sages instituted this holiday to remember the divine intervention. The commemoration of the Maccabean revolt is a later and "bitterly ironic" addition to the tradition, transforming a symbol of providence into a symbol of nationalism and power.⁷⁷⁴ Yirmiyahu Cohen for JAZ sees the Menorah as a reminder of the very essence of redemption: a miraculous ending of the exile, independent of human initiatives and efforts, and references Zechariah 4:6. Cohen refers to R. Avigdor Miller, who challenged the contemporary interpretation of the Hasmoneans as nationalists, fighting for independence:

⁷⁷² www.truetorahjews.org/issues/independenceday, accessed 4.4.2017.

⁷⁷³ www.truetorahjews.org/ishoot, accessed 4.4.2017.

⁷⁷⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/chanukah, accessed 4.4.2017.

[The Hasmoneans] did not arise to do battle for national independence, as the gentile-thinking Jewish writers of today would have us believe. The nationalist Jews who forsook the Torah make a great to-do about the Hasmoneans, and depict them as patriots for political independence. [...] There was but one matter which could stir them to rebellion and cause them to take up arms: the interference with their observance of the Torah. Now the men of peace, and even the Cohanim, became warriors: and those who detested war became the fiercest of fighters.⁷⁷⁵

As its mission JAZ sees educating the world that “a great number of Jews” do not approve of the “state called Israel”, and that the ideology of Zionism is deviant, even “diametrically opposed”, to traditional Judaism.⁷⁷⁶ JAZ is concerned that Zionism discredits the Jewish people internationally and that the actions of the Zionist state “endangers Jews worldwide”. The campaign against Zionism is thus not merely an ideotheological or a geo-political battle, but a defence of Judaism and Jewish communities worldwide:

We are concerned that the widespread misconception that all Jews support the Zionist state and its actions endanger Jews worldwide [...] We are motivated by our concern for the peace and safety for all people throughout the world including those living in the Zionist state.⁷⁷⁷

Had the state been established after the eradication of the exile, JAZ analyses, the settling in *Eretz Yisrael* would have been shielded by God’s presence, which “everyone would recognize”. In that case, the Jewish people would have enjoyed divine protection, and also, God’s presence would have illuminated the *goyim*:

Hashem knew that if the Jews were to leave exile early, they would arouse the Ishmaelites to claim that they had stolen Eretz Yisroel from

⁷⁷⁵ Cohen 2007, 55. Already in 1937, a group under the name of *Brit ha-Hashmonaim* (Heb. the Hasmonean Covenant) was formed by students of the Mercaz Harav Yeshiva. The group combined radical messianism with nationalism: their ideal was a Jew fearing God and observing the Torah, but also being a fearless soldier – hence the allusion to the Hasmoneans. Don-Yehiya 1992, 137.

⁷⁷⁶ www.truetorahjews.org/our_mission, accessed 23.3.2017.

⁷⁷⁷ www.truetorahjews.org/our_mission, accessed 23.3.2017.

them. Therefore He said, “For not in haste shall you leave, and in a hurry you shall not go; for Hashem walks before you, your Gatherer, the G-d of Israel” (Yishaya 52:12). If we wait for Hashem to redeem us, He will walk before us and make His presence clear to the entire world. Everyone will recognize this, and they will abandon any claims against the Jews. This is explicit in the preceding verses in Yishaya: “Eye to eye they will see when Hashem returns to Zion” (v. 8). “Hashem has bared His holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our G-d” (v. 10).⁷⁷⁸

For the Haredim, one aspect of life in *Eretz Yisrael* is that due to its sanctity, transgressions are perceived as graver, creating harsher consequences than it would anywhere else in the world. Therefore, living in *Eretz Yisrael* comes with a weighty responsibility, requiring the most pious and conscious lifestyle. Therefore, Yakov M. Rabkin warns,

Traditionally, the Land of Israel is considered more fragile, more sensitive, than any other. The transgressions of Jews in other lands might have no serious repercussions, but in Israel they would cause a major calamity. The responsibility that accompanies living upon the land lends any attempt to settle it enormous potential consequences.⁷⁷⁹

Rabkin mentions the medieval German *hasidei Ashkenaz*, among whom a handful of prominent figures issued a warning against *aliyah*: by going to the land, they might “multiply their transgressions”, or even, “whoever hastened to live in the Land of Israel before the final redemption would have no life at all.”⁷⁸⁰ Furthermore, Rabkin underlines the point that even when an opportunity arises, the Jewish people should refrain from settling the land:

Several rabbinic sources through the centuries have interpreted these oaths [the Threefold oath, BT Ketubboth 111a] to assert that even if all the nations were to encourage the Jews to settle in the Land of Israel, it

⁷⁷⁸ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha-pearls/bo, accessed 13.3.2017.

⁷⁷⁹ Rabkin 2006, 67.

⁷⁸⁰ Rabkin 2006, 23; Ravitsky 1996, 24.

would still be necessary to abstain from doing so, for fear of committing yet other sins and of being punished by an exile even crueller still.⁷⁸¹

Living piously is a challenge as it is, and living piously in *Eretz Yisrael*, which requires absolute purity, under a blasphemous political structure such as Zionism, is quite a challenge. Therefore, the Haredim often avoid engaging in the State of Israel or any of its institutions; abstain from taking social benefits, and often do not vote or enlist in the army.⁷⁸² But although revering the Torah and avoiding the state apparatus may avert transgressions, “they must wait for G-d Himself to bring them there”; “even when the Jewish people do keep the Torah, they cannot enter Eretz Yisroel on their own.”⁷⁸³

On the question as to whether or not the State of Israel provides a safe haven for the persecuted Jewish people, NK concludes that they fear for the Jews “in the present hopeless situation”, which has turned out to be a “tragic experiment.” NK cannot accept the sacrifice of Jewish lives to maintain the state apparatus:

After 6 decades, numerous wars, endless terror and counter terror, innocent civilians dead on both sides, there is no solution in sight. Both the Israeli left and right have failed miserably to rectify this situation. We are offering an alternative to what is clearly a tragic experiment.⁷⁸⁴

The Haredim are not convinced that the State of Israel will become any safer for the Jews, even if peace negotiations like the Oslo Accord have instilled hope for a peaceful co-existence between Arabs and Jews in the past. This is because all of the undertakings of the state are bound to fail, because the state is simply not supposed to be, and Jews are not allowed to exercise power over another people while the exile endures:

⁷⁸¹ Rabkin 2006, 72; *ibid.*, 74; see also Ravitsky 1996, 229.

⁷⁸² www.nkusa.org/AboutUs/FAQs/index.cfm#israel, accessed 8.4.2017.

⁷⁸³ www.truetorahjews.org/issues/pesach, accessed 13.3.2017.

⁷⁸⁴ www.nkusa.org/Books/Pamphlets/Pamphlet.pdf, accessed 23.2.2017.

However, all these plans [Oslo Accords and similar efforts], although they may be well intentioned, are doomed to failure. Jews are forbidden to exercise political sovereignty over the Holy Land. They are called upon to seek peace with all people. Jews are forbidden to oppress any human being. For all of these reasons, Jews are required to restore the full rights of the Palestinians and free all of Palestine. The Zionist enterprise is metaphysically doomed to moral and practical failure.⁷⁸⁵

To the Haredim, the “only real path to peace” is for the Jewish people to give up the idea of a Jewish state and return to a tranquil life in exile, subjugated to the nations of the world. They further see it as inevitable, that this will happen; the question is how much death and destruction the State of Israel will have caused before returning to the divinely decreed exile:

We yearn for the day when many will come to realize that the only real path to peace lies in the Jewish people returning to their true task in exile, the undivided service of the Almighty and devotion to morality, integrity and honesty. Ultimately, we yearn and pray for the day when it will come to fruition the words of our universal prayers, “All the nations will become one organization to do Your will with their whole heart.” And in the words of the Psalms (102:23), “Nations and governments will gather together to serve the Almighty.” May it be soon, in our days, amen.⁷⁸⁶

4.4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has studied how the Hardal and Haredi understandings of exile and redemption play out in relation to *Eretz Yisrael*. To condense the positions, the Hardalim urges Jews to make *aliyah*, both as a way of contributing to the process of redemption and as a way of restoring oneself and the community. They also believe that the State of Israel can provide safety from chronic anti-Semitism. The Haredim do not forbid, but neither encourage, Jews to make *aliyah*; they consider it difficult and dangerous to

⁷⁸⁵ www.nkusa.org/Books/Pamphlets/Pamphlet.pdf, accessed 29.9.2016.

⁷⁸⁶ www.nkusa.org/Books/Pamphlets/Pamphlet.pdf, accessed 23.2.2017.

live in *Eretz Yisrael* while the exile endures. Instead, they propose a tranquil and pious life in the Diaspora.

Both perspectives ascribe this geographical territory a unique, religious significance, making it unparallel to any other territory on earth. The Hardalim stress that these qualities spring out in bloom when *Am Yisrael*, the Jewish people, inhabits *Eretz Yisrael*, the Land of Israel. When these two divine components meet, it will eventually result in an elevation of the Torah and religious devotion; this is a sign of the progressing redemption. To the Hardalim, the time has come to bring these three together; to the Haredim, only the Messiah can announce that the time has come to do so, and he will also in practice achieve it.

The Hardalim consider themselves as justified in reclaiming *Eretz Yisrael*, as both scripture and tradition state that it was given to the Jewish people by God; they are even *obliged* by *mitzvah dalet* to do so. Therefore, the State of Israel is dependent on its army, which the Hardal understands as a divine tool – although its unreserved respect for the army and the government has diminished in the wake of relinquishes of land taken in 1967, and subsequent evacuations of settlements.

The development of the Hardal ideotheology displays a flexibility and interpretative creativity. For example, the focus has shifted from settling *Eretz Yisrael* from “the Euphrates to the Nile” to settling the West Bank and concluding that it would be “natural” to integrate Gaza with Egypt. Nadav G. Shelef predicts, “we might expect the most expansive interpretation to be used whenever possible”, depending on the socially and politically open options.⁷⁸⁷ This flexibility is dependent on the theological thesis, that redemption is a process, a concept flexible in itself. If the present age is unprecedented, who can say what should or should not be, and how it should be interpreted? Therefore, the ideotheology becomes a dynamic response to the reality as it unfolds “on the ground”. The understanding of the age as one approaching the ultimate redemption

⁷⁸⁷ Shelef 2010, 51.

hands the Hardal perspective a *carte blanche* in relation to tradition – although it understands itself as harbouring an “authentic” Jewish legacy, it also sees itself as entitled to make its own interpretations. After all, these days are the *End of Days* in a more profound way than any Jew has ever lived before. Gadi Taub notes that the settlement movement is constantly renewing its ideology and its narratives:

Contrary to its image as a frozen form of fundamentalism, the religious settlers’ movement repeatedly wrote and rewrote its own ideology and its history in the service of this denial. It was easier to rewrite history, to shift ideological grounds, than to admit that the settlement was heading for a clash, not with a decadent, relativistic, lazy hedonism, but with Zionism itself.⁷⁸⁸

The perspective is, however, multi-layered; therefore, some may believe that ingathering the exiles is the major challenge of our day to promote redemption, while some see the settling of *Eretz Yisrael* as the primary cause. These discrepancies do not seem to stir any theological debate, as there is an assumption that both (and other) aspects all work towards the same goal: to promote redemption.

The Haredim tend to see the establishment of a Jewish state as an aggravation of exile, a blasphemy, bound to provoke the *goyim* against the Jewish people worldwide. Redemption, in their view, is solely in the hands of God. Any attempt to seize fate is not only futile, but testifies to a lack of faith, and thus justifies a prolonged and deepened exile. Hence, as far as redemption is concerned, it is irrelevant where the Jewish people live – the exile endures wherever one chooses to reside. However, making *aliyah* is not explicitly forbidden, as long as one abides by laws and regulations in doing so, not “rebelling against the nations” or “ascending the wall” by force, which the Threefold oath forbids. A question that arises, however, is where it is *better* to lead a life in exile; living in *Eretz*

⁷⁸⁸ Taub 2010, 17.

Yisrael is believed to convey specific difficulties, arising from its sanctity.⁷⁸⁹ This argumentation proposes that the State of Israel in itself is a blasphemy and that a life under this blasphemous regime conveys problems.⁷⁹⁰

The point of collision between the Hardalim and the Haredim in this respect, then, is the understanding of when exile ends and redemption begins. To the Hardalim, God's permission to leave exile is less obvious; it must be concluded from the *Shoah*, which drove the Jewish people out of exile, back to *Eretz Yisrael*, where they were able to found a state with the permission of the UN. Hence, the permission to leave exile is an *argumentum ex silentio* – if God does not say no, he must be saying yes. The many victories of the State of Israel since then seem to confirm that hypothesis. Also, the commandment to settle the land has come to take a central position in this argumentation. To the Haredim, the answer is clear and incontrovertible: when the Messiah announces the exile to be over, it will be, and not before.

The Haredi argumentation rarely meets with that of the Hardal on this topic; it never gets out of 1948, so to speak. To the Haredim, the crux is that the state was established, and therefore, the only solution they consider is that it is to be dismantled. The only aspects they take to heart relating to the State of Israel are 1) the protection of Jewish lives and 2) the fate of the Palestinian people, whose cause they are apt to defend. They dread the consequences of the wars and conflicts the State have engaged in, and will likely be engaged in again in the future as well. Additionally, they believe that the existence of a Jewish state so out-of-place on the exile-redemption-axis is bound to arouse the wrath of God, stir hatred among the nations of the world, resulting in violence against Jews worldwide.

⁷⁸⁹ Rabkin 2006, 67. The Hardal perspective seem to be harbouring two contradictory ideas here; on one hand, the sanctity of *Eretz Yisrael* may multiply the consequences of a transgression, but on the other, without Torah, it is "just a piece of earth". www.truetorahjews.org/issues/pesach, accessed 25.5.2017.

⁷⁹⁰ Shelef 2010, 185.

To the Haredim, the conditions for the Jewish communities would not have deteriorated in the 20th century, had it not been for the lack of faith, displayed *inter alia* in the emergence of Zionism. Hence, although the *Shoah* stirred up difficult questions, neither the *Shoah* nor the establishment of the State called for a re-evaluation of the theological construct. Instead, both the *Shoah*, the establishment of the State and its conflicts are all interpreted as confirming the Haredi interpretation: had the Jewish people faithfully held fast in exile, numerous Jewish lives could have been spared in the 20th century. This argumentation is, of course, a hypothetical and retrospective analysis, and thus, impossible to either validate or invalidate.

This chapter has studied the junctions between basic human needs (such as security, community and hope) and the construction of a perception of reality (from which – for both these perspectives – the divine realm is inseparable), in relation to the historical impulses and the available material for the ideotheological construction: that is, the Jewish tradition and the socio-political milieu. How the two perspectives studied here developed their positions *vis-à-vis* the two options for Jewish existence explored, is an interplay between the above-mentioned aspects:

What we take to be the truth about the world importantly depends on the social relationships of which we are a part. [...] Through participation in relationships the world comes to be what it is for us.⁷⁹¹

⁷⁹¹ Gergen 2015, 3-4.

5. THE MESSIAH VIS-À-VIS REDEMPTION

5.1. MESSIAH AND MESSIANISM IN THE JEWISH TRADITION

Judaism has a wide spectrum of traditions on eschatology.⁷⁹² “Monotheism without an eschatology”, Jacob Neusner writes, “leaves unresolved tensions inherent in the starting point: God is one, God is just. That is why the starting point of the theology dictates its conclusions [...]”.⁷⁹³ The messianic figure is a central motif in all discussions of eschatology.⁷⁹⁴ In Judaism, according to William Scott Green & Jeb Silberstein, the messianic theme is “inextricably bound up with the notion of exile”.⁷⁹⁵

An interesting question is how the *dominion* of the messianic figure is to be understood. *Haggai* and *Zechariah*, who both expected Zerubbabel to renew the Davidic kingdom, saw him “only as a feature of the new age, not as the author or even agent of its establishment.”⁷⁹⁶ Sigmund Mowinckel perceives Haggai and Zechariah as the “first evidence” of a messianic excitement among people.⁷⁹⁷ A classic source, referenced by both perspectives of this study concerning the dominions of the Messiah, is Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim uMilchamotehem*, which states (11:1,4):

In the future, the Messianic king will arise and renew the Davidic dynasty, restoring it to its initial sovereignty. He will build the Temple and gather the dispersed of Israel. Then, in his days, the observance of all the statutes will return to their previous state. We will offer sacrifices, observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to all their particulars as described by the Torah. Anyone who does not believe in him or does not await his coming, denies not only the statements of the other prophets, but those of the Torah and Moses, our teacher. [...] If a king

⁷⁹² For an overview of this spectrum, see Ravitzky 1993, 19-32.

⁷⁹³ Neusner 2005, 1693.

⁷⁹⁴ Neusner 2005, 1694.

⁷⁹⁵ Green & Silberstein 2005, 1679.

⁷⁹⁶ Ginsberg 2007, 110.

⁷⁹⁷ Mowinckel 2005, 284.

will arise from the House of David who diligently contemplates the Torah and observes its mitzvot as prescribed by the Written Law and the Oral Law as David, his ancestor, will compel all of Israel to walk in (the way of the Torah) and rectify the breaches in its observance, and fight the wars of God, we may, with assurance, consider him Mashiach. If he succeeds in the above, build the Temple in its place, and gathers the dispersed of Israel, he is definitely the Mashiach. He will then improve the entire world, motivating all the nations to serve together [...]⁷⁹⁸

A new phase of Jewish messianism began when the Davidic dynasty collapsed. The hope that it would one day be restored rose again, and with it, the hope that Judah would rise again to rule over all (neighbouring) nations. This hope is expressed in many prophecies (Amos 9:11-12; Isa. 11:10, Hos. 3:5, Ezek. 37:15ff). The messianic figure in Jewish tradition is expected to be a descendant of king David (2 Sam. 7; 23:1-3). In the Roman period, the Jewish people hoped for a messianic king who would break the yoke of foreign rulership and lay them all under his rule (2 Sam. 5), and restore the Davidic kingdom, to which all exiled Jews would return. This, according to Harold Lewis Ginsberg, is a “strictly post biblical concept”; one can therefore only speak of a biblical *pre-history* of messianism.⁷⁹⁹

G. H. Dix sees a curious form of messianic hope arising in the 3rd century CE: the expectation of two messianic figures: Messiah ben David and Messiah ben Joseph. The latter would be a military leader who would reunite the tribes and establish a kingdom in *Eretz Yisrael*. Dix reports that this tradition, based on Ezekiel, expects the Messiah ben Joseph to fall in a war against the *goyim*, also understood as the war with Gog and Magog. His fall would be the prelude to the emergence of the Messiah ben David, who would establish the eternal Davidic kingdom. The Messiah ben Joseph/Ephraim motif – Raphael Patai suggests – may be understood

⁷⁹⁸ Touger 2001, 608-613.

⁷⁹⁹ Ginsberg 2007, 110.

as a development of the “suffering servant” motif.⁸⁰⁰ One of the first mentions of a suffering messiah is found in a prophecy of Daniel, ca. 164 BCE. Patai suggests that when the suffering messiah became “an established tenet” in the Talmudic era, it contradicted the concept of a glorious messiah, and thus, the messianic figure was split into two.⁸⁰¹

The concepts of a messianic figure and a messianic age have, at least since the Talmudic period (1st to 7th centuries CE), been integral to Judaism.⁸⁰² Central to both perspectives of this study is *BT Ketubot 111a*, which records the prohibition against trying to hasten the coming of the end of time. *BT Pesachim 54b* and *BT Sanhedrin 97a* indicate that the time of the Messiah’s arrival is hidden from the Jewish people.⁸⁰³ *BT Sukkah 52a* records a dispute between two rabbis as to whether or not the mourning in Zech. 12:10 was to reflect the mourning of Messiah ben Joseph or not. In *BT Sukkah 52b*, four figures – “craftsmen” – are mentioned as central in ushering in the messianic age: the Messiah ben David, the Messiah ben Joseph, the Righteous Priest and the prophet Elijah. Messiah ben Joseph is also referred to as Messiah ben Ephraim, referring to the ancestor Ephraim, son of Joseph.

Over the course of history, there have been several periods of messianic expectation, often purged into a promising candidate. One character that stands out among these is *Simeon Bar Koxhba* (d. 135 CE), who led the Judean revolt against Rome (132-135 CE).⁸⁰⁴ He is mentioned in *BT Sanhedrin 93b*, as a man who

reigned two and a half years, and then said to the Rabbis, ‘I am the Messiah.’ They answered, ‘Of Messiah it is written that he smells and judges: let us see whether he [Bar Koziba] can do so.’ When they saw that he was unable to judge by the scent, they slew him.

⁸⁰⁰ Dix 1926, 130; Patai 1979, 165-166.

⁸⁰¹ Patai 1979, 166.

⁸⁰² Waxman 1987, 175-176. For a definition of the Talmud period, see Wald 2007, 320.

⁸⁰³ Green & Silberstein 2005, 186.

⁸⁰⁴ Gibson 2007, 156-157.

He was a charismatic personality who stirred up messianic hopes; he “probably had pretensions to being a redeemer and fostered these hopes.”⁸⁰⁵ Menachem Mor sees the combination of a scarcity of historical sources and the enigmatic character of Bar Kokhba as being the cause for a “rich flowering of literary works.”⁸⁰⁶ He is, thus “shrouded in the mist of legend” and “remained in the popular imagination as a supernatural hero.” R. Akiva inspired the nation to support Bar Kokhba in his revolt, and his gathered army went into battle and managed to occupy cities and fortresses, forcing the Roman garrisons to retreat. During the first year of the uprising, the revolt occupied 50 fortified cities and 985 towns and settlements, possibly also Jerusalem, according to Dio Cassius. Eventually, however, the Roman legions invaded Jerusalem in 135, and carried out a massacre, killing warriors and peaceful citizens, as well as Bar Kokhba himself. The Bar Kokhba revolt left Judea in ruin and a people either dead or taken into slavery.⁸⁰⁷ The figure of Bar Kokhba is *both* historically rooted *and* mysterious, and can thus be ascribed different meanings and still serve as an example. For example, the Hardalim see in him a “messianic potential”⁸⁰⁸, while the Haredim merely conclude that since he was found to be wrongly claiming to be the Messiah, the Sages killed him.⁸⁰⁹

Jacob Neusner notes that Messiah as an eschatological figure makes no appearance in the Mishnah. The Mishnah was composed after the defeat of Bar Kochba, towards the end of the 2nd century, and laid the foundations of the two Talmuds, defining Judaism “as we know it.” The rabbinic canon, hence, came into being in the aftermath of a messianic war, which had aspired to regain Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. Therefore, Neusner reflects that the Mishnah depicts Jewish life as one in which “history never intervenes”:

⁸⁰⁵ Gibson 2007, 156-157.

⁸⁰⁶ Mor 2016, 2.

⁸⁰⁷ Dubnov 1968, 53-55.

⁸⁰⁸ www.templeinstitute.org/messiah_temple.htm, accessed 12.3.2015.

⁸⁰⁹ www.truetorahjews.org/neverbeen, accessed 12.5.2017.

It seems probable that Bar Kokhba in his own day was perceived as a messianic general, and the war as coming at the expected end of time, the eschatological climax to the drama begun in 70. If so, the character of the Mishnah, the work of the survivors of the war, proves truly astonishing. Here, as I said, we have an immense, systematic, and encompassing picture of the life of Israel, in which events scarcely play a role. History never intervenes. The goal and purpose find full and ample expression with scarcely a word about either the end of time or the coming of Messiah. In a word, the Mishnah presents us with a kind of Judaism possessed of an eschatology without Messiah, a teleology beyond time.⁸¹⁰

Neusner argues that the point of insistence in the Mishnah, hence, is not redemption, but sanctification. With the Temple in ruins and the hope for a rebuilt one shattered, the Mishnah pays neither the Messiah nor historical impulses much attention. “Perhaps”, Neusner reflects, “in the aftermath of Bar Kokhba’s debacle, silence on the subject served to express a clarion judgment. I am inclined to think so.”⁸¹¹

William Scott Green and Jeb Silberstein view *Shabbetai Sevi* (1626-1676), as “Judaism’s most famous false messiah”. He was a charismatic figure born in Smyrna. A substantial part of the Jewish world regarded him as the Messiah, until he converted to Islam. Attempts were made by his interpreter Nathan of Gaza to explain his conversion as an act of redemption, a form of vicarious sacrifice, to bring the world closer to redemption.⁸¹² “This all shows,” Sigmund Mowinckel concludes, “that the Messiah was generally regarded as an earthly man like other men.”⁸¹³

Although the dominating tendency since the onset of the last Diaspora has been to emphasize the necessity of enduring in exile – a form of *passive messianism*, as Robert Eisen categorizes it – an alternative, *active messianism* has flared up from time to time.⁸¹⁴ Robert Eisen defines passive messianism

⁸¹⁰ Neusner 1987, 266-267.

⁸¹¹ Neusner 1987, 270; 275.

⁸¹² Green & Silberstein 2005, 1679; Neusner 2005, 1687.

⁸¹³ Mowinckel 2005, 284-285.

⁸¹⁴ See Eisen 2011, 147-154, for an elaboration of the terms active and passive messianism.

as a theology, in which redemption “comes primarily through divine initiative”, and in which “the influence of human beings on the messianic process is limited”:

In this approach, views range from the belief that the events of the redemptive process proceed according to a strictly predetermined divine plan to the belief that repentance can bring the messiah; however, even according to the latter viewpoint, messianic redemption is seen as resulting primarily from God’s wilful intervention in history.⁸¹⁵

David Novak explains that rabbinic tradition ascribes Israel a universal significance as the nation holding the Torah in trust for all mankind. However, the full acceptance of the Torah will only be realized in the messianic age, at the “end of days”, when the *goyim* will say, “let us go up to the mountain of the house of the God of Jacob, and he will instruct us in his ways and we shall walk in his paths” (Micah 4:1-2). Until that time, Israel will be a people “dwelling alone”, and it will not “be taken seriously by the nations” (Num. 23:9).⁸¹⁶

Hence, since the Diaspora begun in 69-70 CE, passive messianism has been the dominating form of messianism in Judaism, emphasising the virtue of enduring exile in tranquillity and humility. Green & Silberstein refer to it as the “rabbinic posture of messianic quietism”.⁸¹⁷

With the exception of the Sabbatean movement and some smaller messianic outbreaks, the Rabbinic prohibition against “forcing” the end dominated Jewish thinking about the messiah until the modern period.⁸¹⁸

Aviezer Ravitzky agrees; until the past two centuries, active messianism has only sporadically occurred.⁸¹⁹ Jacob Neusner reports that the idea of a

⁸¹⁵ Eisen 2011, 147-154.

⁸¹⁶ Novak 2006, 52-53.

⁸¹⁷ Green & Silberstein 2005, 1685.

⁸¹⁸ Neusner 2005, 1687.

⁸¹⁹ Ravitzky 1993, 19-32; Myers 1991, 4.

rabbinic prohibition against forcing the end” – and following – the propensity towards passivity – did not preclude the necessity of individual repentance as a precondition for redemption, merely, that agitating for redemption was strictly forbidden. However, the shift from being non-binding to being a central motif can be explained by the development of Zionism and Jewish nationalism, which “challenged Judaism’s established posture of passivity in exile”.⁸²⁰

Throughout the history of Judaism, the “oaths” against forcing the end cited above evoke the abyss between the human, historical and the divine, metaphysical spheres that can only be crossed with the messiah’s appearance.⁸²¹

From the 19th century onward, *active messianism* gained momentum. Arie Morgenstern sees the Gaon of Vilna (1720-1792) as a precursor to this thinking. His disciples were “caught up in a messianic ideology” in which settling in Palestine and rebuilding Jerusalem would advance the process of redemption.⁸²² In active messianism it is also God who brings about redemption, but in contrast to the passive equivalent, in this understanding human beings are crucial participants in the process. Whenever one (especially, but not exclusively, if one is a Jew) perceives that the messianic process has begun, one must find a way to contribute to it, to bring it to completion. Active messianism is often associated with religious Zionism, although according to Joel Kraemer, Jewish theologians as early as Maimonides also concur with its definition.⁸²³

⁸²⁰ Neusner 2005, 1687; Ravitzky 1993, 112-113.

⁸²¹ Neusner 2005, 1687.

⁸²² Morgenstern 2006, 202.

⁸²³ Kraemer 2006, 34. Yael Sagiv-Feldman (1979, 107-110) sees a development in Maimonides’ understanding of eschatology from the early compositions to the later; he ‘moves from historical assurances of the coming redemption to a definite prohibition of any calculation of the End of Days’. Already in his *Epistle to Yemen*, he expresses his beliefs in the advent of the Messiah, but it is in the later *Mishneh Torah* that his ‘unique conception’ of the Messiah and Redemption ‘springs out in full bloom’.

I have earlier argued for my criticism of the understanding of these two representations as *active* and *passive*;⁸²⁴ this position is shared by Motti Inbari, who stresses that the Haredi theology “should not be viewed as anti-messianic, but rather as an alternative path for active messianism. Passivity is merely a different course of action to channel immanent messianic expectations.”⁸²⁵

The discrepancy between the two perspectives is visible in their concept of how to influence the shift *from* exile *to* redemption. The Haredi representatives see the Messiah as a *sine qua non* to redemption, and furthermore, perceive redemption and exile as two conditions exclusive of each other. Consequently, since the Messiah has not emerged (and any candidates can be tested against unambiguous criteria), redemption has not yet begun. Following, the Jewish people are still in exile. During exile, a spirit of repentance is held to be an ideal, which is why the ideal of passivity has come to dominate many aspects of life.⁸²⁶

But it is impossible, for most of them, to pass through apocalyptic events such as the Holocaust, or to experience the end of exile and the reestablishment of Israel as a sovereign commonwealth, without the stirring of messianic chords in their souls.⁸²⁷

To the Hardalim, the dramatic events of the 20th century – with the highest points being the establishment of the State of Israel and the military triumph of the Six Day War – reveals that God is now restoring his people. Exile has ended and redemption has begun – although the messianic figure has not yet revealed himself. The regulations of life in exile no longer apply. Instead, this perspective sees it as a religious obligation to engage in the process of redemption by contributing to a handful of specific worldly goals. This ideotheology has tenets far back in Jewish tradition but was brought to the fore by R. Abraham Y. Kook and R. Tzvi

⁸²⁴ Anderssén-Löf 2016, 243; 250-254.

⁸²⁵ Inbari 2016, 12.

⁸²⁶ Ravitzky 1993, 13-22.

⁸²⁷ Werblowsky 2005, 5978.

Yehuda Kook, whose yeshiva, *Mercaz Harav* became “a greenhouse” for the Hardal perspective.⁸²⁸

That not all features of redemption are fulfilled does not pose a problem to the Hardalim. Rather, it strengthens them in their belief, that redemption is a process – for it is unthinkable, that a Jewish, sovereign state could have come into existence, endured and prospered without divine involvement. Redemption is in the making. But how long will it take before the process of redemption is completed? That depends not only on the will of God but also on the effort the Jewish people make to pave way for the Messiah. According to this view, the Jewish people should do all in their power to contribute to the process of redemption, which will, in time, be completed in the coming of the Messiah and the ultimate redemption.⁸²⁹

As R. J. Zwi Werblowsky points out that a tendency to “messianize” politics has become notable, particularly within the religious Zionist perspective, since the war of 1973.⁸³⁰ Nadav G. Shelef notes both an expansion of the Hardal perspective, theologically and in numbers, since the Oslo Accords.⁸³¹ David Biale sees the development of this ideothology as a “logical culmination of the tradition of political messianism”. It had its roots in the Talmud but was convincingly articulated by Maimonides in the 12th century. Among other aspects, Maimonides indicated that the coming of the Messiah could be advanced by human influence.⁸³²

The so-called messianic movements that appeared in nearly every century sought – but failed – to ameliorate the position of the Jews, and they did not foster major changes in the workings of Judaism itself.⁸³³

⁸²⁸ Sacks 1992, 69; Sharot 1982, 226-227.

⁸²⁹ Ravitzky 1993: 26-32.

⁸³⁰ Werblowsky 2005, 5977.

⁸³¹ Shelef 2010, 182.

⁸³² Biale 1986, 166.

⁸³³ Green & Silberstein 2005, 1679.

As was presented in the previous chapters, the existential challenges with which history has presented the Jewish people have caused the perspectives of this study to form an ideotheological reply, in which a messianic figure is an integral part. Below is a systematization of how the two perspectives of this study understand the role of the Messiah for the dynamics of exile and redemption.

5.2. THE HARDALIM: WHILE WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH

5.2.1. CONTINUING THE PROCESS WITHOUT HIM

To the voices of the Hardal perspective, represented in this study, the Messiah is seen as vital for the coming of the *ultimate* redemption, but the *process of redemption* has begun without him and can be continued without him. This understanding did not begin with – but actualized – in response to the birth of the State. This remarkable break of ever-deteriorating conditions in the Diaspora in Europe, in the darkest hour, was interpreted as a divine intervention to restore the Jewish people. For R. Tzvi Kook, it was clear that the progress was a work of God. In his speech on Independence Day in 1967, he recalls his initial reactions:

Nineteen years ago, on the night when news of the United Nations decision in favour of the re-establishment of the State of Israel reached us [...] We sat together [the following day], the two of us [R. Zvi Kook and R. Y. M. Harlap], in that small hallowed room in "Beit HaRav" [in the study of the then late R. A. Kook] - where else if not there - we sat shocked and silent. Finally, regaining our strength, we said, the two of us as one: "This is the L-rd's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes." (Ps. 118:23)⁸³⁴

Equally clear was that the circumstances were far from ideal: the State was officially secular, as was a substantial section of its Jewish population. This

⁸³⁴ www.mercazharav.org/mizmor19.htm, accessed 23.3.2017. R. Yaacov Moshe Harlapp (1883-1951) was, according to Dov Schwartz, the most "systematic, radical and cogent of Kook's disciples". Schwartz 2002, 3.

constituted a problem: if the time of redemption had indeed come, why were not all Jews inspired to repent? Why was a state, rather than a kingdom, established? Why was it a democracy and not a renewal of the Davidic kingdom? The interpretation of the State as a work of God was solid, however, suggesting that the reinterpretation of redemption, which had been gaining terrain for half a century, was in order. R. Tzvi Kook was convinced that the lack of piousness of the Jewish state would, in time, be replaced by a hunger for the Torah and its glorification: “the order of redemption is: agricultural settlement, the establishment of the state, and as a consequence, to follow, the uplifting of that which is sacred, the dissemination of the teaching of Torah, its increase and glorification.”⁸³⁵

R. Tzvi Kook’s father and predecessor, R. Abraham Y. Kook, perceived the exile to be a harsh – but spiritually purifying – preparation for the national and religious awakening. He saw that the burdens of exile had become too heavy for the Jewish people to bear and that the time had come for a return. The historical connection was no longer enough to sustain the nation. He was optimistic that

one spark of this real life in the homeland will revive a very vital existence. Only with the people’s return to its land, which is the only route to its rebirth, will the real, sacred life of Judaism be revealed.⁸³⁶

Central to the thinking of R. Abraham Y. Kook was a form of active messianism. He interpreted the national awakening of the Jewish people as the beginning of the end that would, in time, lead to the full redemption of Israel.⁸³⁷ R. Abraham Y. Kook, like Kalisher, Alkalai and other harbingers of religious Zionism, were “driven by kabbalistic-messianic

⁸³⁵ www.merczaharav.org/mizmor19.htm, accessed 23.3.2017.

⁸³⁶ Don-Yehiya 1992, 132.

⁸³⁷ Eisen 2011, 147; Inbari 2009, 18; Schwartz 2002, 123-124.

outlook”.⁸³⁸ In R. Abraham Y. Kook’s view, the State of Israel was “the foundation upon which rests the Thorne of God in this world”.⁸³⁹

The son, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, is perceived by Reuven Firestone as a charismatic figure that “succeeded in channelling the energy of a generation of enormously talented young people to engage in militant activism for the settlement-conquest of the Land of Israel”.⁸⁴⁰ He was a “spiritual father of Israel’s West Bank settlement movement”, a “kind of Zionist vanguard, courageously settling the land and displaying a degree of selfless idealism others could not help but to admire.”⁸⁴¹ Also Michael Feige highlights R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook’s influence:

Kook the Son presented them [the young religious Zionists of the Merkaz haRav Yeshiva] with an ideology that placed the victorious project within a religious framework and assigned his followers a privileged position with respect to other groups. This encounter of an enthusiastic young group, the message of the yeshiva, and the historical opportunity provided by the Six-Day and the Yom Kippur wars, helps explain why the movement emerged in the form that it did.⁸⁴²

The negation of exile or *Galut* was “highly prevalent” in both secular and religious Zionist circles, according to Eliezer Don-Yehiya. R. Abraham Y. Kook was convinced its time had passed and that the exile had become a “defective and alienated existence”, “characterized by “decline, narrowness, displacement, seclusion and weakness.”⁸⁴³ He was hopeful that, when liberated from it, Judaism would be restored to its original character, in which all areas of life are bound together and connected to its divine source. Under these conditions, the Jewish people would constitute a nation with institutions and infrastructure based on and guided by the Torah, allowing a full Jewish existence, both individually and

⁸³⁸ Schwartz 2002, 124.

⁸³⁹ www.mercazharav.org/kook.htm, accessed 1.4.2017.

⁸⁴⁰ Firestone 2012, 278.

⁸⁴¹ Held 2014, 229.

⁸⁴² Feige 2009, 27.

⁸⁴³ Don-Yehiya 1992, 130.

communally.⁸⁴⁴ R. Tzvi Kook continued in his father's footsteps in this negation of Galut, excluding the Diaspora from the "true Israel":

The true Israel is Israel redeemed, the kingdom of Israel and the armies of Israel, a people in its wholeness and not a diaspora in exile. Thus, when Israel was sent into exile heavens and earths throughout the universe trembled. And so it was with the coming of the Geulah (Redemption). A tremor spread through the universe, billowing from step to step until it reached us. [...] The process is gradual and continuous, and each and every year [of Israel's independence] is a new hymn, a celestial song, another link in the chain.⁸⁴⁵

In this understanding of redemption, the Messiah is a central aspect of redemption, but his absence does not prevent the Jewish people from doing all in their power to advance the process. While there is no consensus on how to contribute to the process, the ingathering of the exiles and the settling of *Eretz Yisrael* are generally accepted as valid objectives.

R. Yisrael Ariel's experiences of the Six Day War in 1967 – and the theological analysis of them – caused him to re-interpret the role of the Messiah in relation to the course of redemption. The military triumph – with the conquest of the Temple Mount as the *grand finale* – was widely interpreted⁸⁴⁶ as a divine intervention to bring about the final redemption. Among the paratroopers conquering the Temple Mount was R. Yisrael Ariel, later founder of the Temple Institute:

No one who was privileged enough to witness this moment, and whose feet stood on the Lord's mountain after thousands of years of Jewish absence, could fail to be elated by the great moment for the Jewish people. These are the Days of Messiah – there is no other expression for it. [...] I arrived at the Western Wall, and below me I saw two old men – none other than my two rabbis and teachers from the yeshiva, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook ZTS"l and the "Reclusive Rabbi" ZTS"l [David HaCohen; The Nazir]. We embraced and stood with tears running down

⁸⁴⁴ Don-Yehiya 1992, 132.

⁸⁴⁵ www.merczharav.org/mizmor19.htm, accessed 23.3.2017.

⁸⁴⁶ Waxman describes an "overall rise of messianic fervor in Israel" in the aftermath of the Six Day War. Waxman 1987, 184.

our cheeks, in complete silence, sensing that Messiah was still on the way – it would just take another hour or two.⁸⁴⁷

As time passed, however, and the Messiah did not appear, a sense of disappointment disrupted the magical experience. The crisis at the Western Wall caused R. Yisrael Ariel to redirect his eschatological expectations. His pondering over the years that followed led him to the conclusion that the Temple was the missing link in the chain of redemption:

Through the years, the more I studied, the more I began to understand that we had only ourselves and our own inaction to hold accountable: G-d does not intend for us to wait for a day of miracles. We are expected to act. We must accomplish that with which we have been charged: to do all in our power to prepare for the rebuilding of the Holy Temple, and the renewal of the divine service.⁸⁴⁸

R. Ariel thus placed the blame for the lost redemption on the Jewish people for “waiting for a day of miracles” instead of rebuilding the Temple of Jerusalem, which has “the power to hasten the advent of the Messiah and bring about the final redemption”.⁸⁴⁹ From that illumination onward, rebuilding the temple became his mission. Similar to the process of redemption, rebuilding the Temple is seen as a process, advancing slowly but steadily:

The rebuilding would happen, even if it happens very slowly, and in stages, one step at a time. For like the morning dawn, “such is the way of Israel's redemption. In the beginning, it progresses very slowly... but as it continues, it grows brighter and brighter.”⁸⁵⁰

⁸⁴⁷ Inbari 2009, 36. See also www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm#directors, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁸⁴⁸ www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm#Rabbi-Ariel, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁸⁴⁹ Ariel & Richman 2005, 1.

⁸⁵⁰ www.templeinstitute.org/red_heifer/tenth_red_heifer.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

5.2.2. FROM INTERVENTION TO COMMANDMENTS

R. Ariel founded the Temple Institute, an organization founded on “the principle of action”, with the ambition to “provide a basis in research, planning and infrastructure for the Third Temple”.⁸⁵¹ The Temple Institute relates the project at hand to that of King David:

The basis of the Institute's work is the commandment given to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai, *And they shall make for Me a Sanctuary, and I will dwell amongst them* (Ex. 25:8). The Institute's efforts towards preparing for the Temple in our time can be compared to the preparations that were done in the days of the tabernacle and later, by King David.⁸⁵²

R. Shlomo Aviner of the *Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim* asserts that he will not change his course of action, however long it takes for the Messiah to appear. His messianic expectation seems to resonate with that of R. Yisrael Ariel – that taking responsibility for the process of redemption is essential in order to ever get to the day when the Messiah will appear:

And if by eighty years from now the Messiah is not yet here, I will continue to build Eretz Yisrael, the State of Israel, the army of Israel, and I will know that there is much more I must do for all these, and then the Messiah will come.⁸⁵³

Over time, the emphasis of the Temple Institute on the Temple as a crucial part of the unfolding redemption was outweighed by the emphasis that building a temple is a commandment, and all of God’s commandments are binding. These ideas both fill their function: the first evens out the cognitive dissonance created when redemption did not erupt despite the

⁸⁵¹ www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁸⁵² www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁸⁵³ www.ravaviner.com/search/label/Mashiach, accessed 7.4.2017.

promising signs in 1967;⁸⁵⁴ the second provides an argumentation resistant to similar disillusionments.

There is no question about the fact that at the time G-d wills it, the messiah will arrive. This is a great promise that He made, and nothing can happen that will change that. But this has nothing to do with our obligations to G-d! Those also do not change! The messiah's job is not to come and tell us, "Now, it is time for you to fulfil this or that particular commandment." For the commandments are always to be fulfilled by Israel, at all times, to the best of our ability.⁸⁵⁵

In a similar way, R. Shlomo Aviner is reminiscent of Maimonides discouraging his disciples from dwelling on Midrashim concerning the Messiah, as they neither increase love nor fear of God (*Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim uMilchamotehem* 12:2). Instead, should the Messiah tarry, R. Aviner hopes to devote all "physical and mental energies to serving G-d, and that is what is most important."⁸⁵⁶

When stressing the perpetuity of fulfilling the commandment to build a sanctuary for God, rather than stressing its importance for the process of redemption, the order of events falls out of focus – *even if* some traditions suggest the Messiah will precede the rebuilding of the Temple, it does not call for a change in the plan of action, if the plan for action is based on adherence to the commandments, rather than on the understanding of

⁸⁵⁴ See Inbari 2009, 12-13; 38-39. Inbari relates Leo Festinger's theory of cognitive discord to the ideotheological development of R. Ariel. The theory of cognitive dissonance presumes that cognitive dissonance occurs when a prophecy has failed, that is, when it has been proven to be a miscalculation. Inbari examines whether cognitive dissonance also occurs when a prophecy does not have an end date and hence, does not fail *per se*. He proposes that messianic radicalization may be a reaction to cognitive dissonance. Although the theory of cognitive dissonance assumes that a movement, when finding its belief system challenged, will undergo a process of radicalization, it does not necessarily mean that the movement has acknowledged its beliefs as errant; it may instead, Inbari argues, *both* radicalize *and* pursue a logical explanation to its error. Cognitive dissonance may thus occur not only from *acknowledging* a mistake but also from the *fear* of being wrong, and lead to a radicalization. See also Festinger, Riecken & Schachter 1964.

⁸⁵⁵ www.templeinstitute.org/messiah_temple.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁸⁵⁶ www.ravaviner.com/search/label/Mashiach, accessed 7.4.2017.

redemption. Nevertheless, the Temple Institute interprets Maimonides as *de facto* indicating that Third Temple will, in fact, precede the coming of the Messiah:

if there really is a question as to "Which comes first, the Messiah or the Temple," there seems to be ample indication that the building of the Holy Temple will precede the Messiah's arrival. Various Biblical verses and statements made by the great sages prove this. This is actually the opinion of Maimonides, who quotes an astounding verse from the prophecy of Malachi (3:1) in his classic Letter to Yemen: "For suddenly the master whom you are seeking will come to his sanctuary."⁸⁵⁷

5.2.3. HOW THE MESSIAH WILL BE RECOGNIZED

The identity of the Messiah is another question laid out in different ways with the Hardalim. Could it be that the role of the Messiah can be held by more than one person at different times, fulfilling different purposes? Could it be that the Messiah has already emerged for example through Theodor Herzl, who gathered the exiles in? Could it be that the ingredients of the process of redemption is not fixed, but depends on the actions of the Jewish people?

The impression of Ravitzky is that undoubtedly, R. Abraham Y. Kook perceived Zionism as "a human response to a divine call".⁸⁵⁸ Therefore, the death of Theodor Herzl presented R. Kook with a difficulty: how to view the man, who made no claim to be a religious figure, but was nevertheless the *primus motor* of a divine intervention. R. Kook's solution was taken from a classical Jewish messianic imagery: he drew parallels between the legendary figure *Messiah ben Joseph* and Herzl. Both were messianic figures paving way for the ultimate redeemer, *Messiah ben David*, and both were

⁸⁵⁷ www.templeinstitute.org/messiah_temple.htm, accessed 7.4.2017. The passage from Maimonides' Letter to Yemen cited here reads: "Regarding the question of how and where Mashiach will appear; we know he will make his first appearance in *Eretz Yisrael*. As it says, "Suddenly he will come to His temple" (Malachi 3:1). But no one will know how he will arise until it actually happens." Finkel 1996, 40-41.

⁸⁵⁸ Ravitzky 1993, 135.

determined to fall in battle, making a crucial contribution to redemption, but not bringing it to completion.⁸⁵⁹ R. Kook gave a speech at Herzl's memorial service, presenting the interpretation that Messiah ben Joseph is a master of war and statecraft, paving the ground for the Messiah ben David, who will reign in a spiritual realm. The estrangement between the two messianic figures reflects the estrangement between spirit and matter, the human inability to unite body and soul: "And lo, the Zionist vision has been revealed in our time, as the footsteps of the Messiah ben Joseph."⁸⁶⁰ Yehuda Mirsky, however, finds that Hertzl was "nearly beside the point" in R. Kook's speech – he was never mentioned by name – rather,

It was about processes originating in God's attempts, through human action, to reconcile His eternity with the world He created. The process was deeply dialectical - the flourishing of the body was the essential prerequisite to the flourishing of the spirit. And in that affirmation of the body, the person of Theodor Hertzl disappeared.⁸⁶¹

Chanan Morrison relates that to R. Abraham Kook; the paradox of a secular movement being the vehicle of redemption can be understood as a form of *shevirat keilim*, a theological concept of Kabbalah mysticism. In that tradition, a "breaking of vessels" occurred when the universe was created; "the original light and holiness was simply too great to be contained within the limitations of the physical vessels", Morrison explains. The holiness of redemption, hence, broke the vessel, and so it came to pass that a secular man and a secular movement became the vehicle for redemption. Another explanation for this paradox, provided by R. Abraham Kook, is that Zionism spoke in the name of "the entire nation, all of Israel", which proved its "fundamental moral force".⁸⁶²

⁸⁵⁹ Ravitzky 1993, 98. The imagery of the two messianic figures appears, *inter alia*, with Vilna Gaon. Biale 1986, 166.

⁸⁶⁰ Mirsky 2014, 49.

⁸⁶¹ Mirsky 2014, 50.

⁸⁶² Morrison 2010, 178.

One means of downplaying the importance of the Messiah, and hence, reducing the problem of his absence is to widen the scope of interpretation. The Temple Institute elaborates on the possibility of *messianic manifestation* and *messianic potential*. It refers to *Mishneh Torah (Hilchot Ta'aniot 5 and Hilchot Melachim uMilchamotehem 11)*, where Maimonides describes Bar Kochba as “the Messianic king”, whom “R. Akiva and all the Sages of his generation” were convinced of. From these words, it is reasonable, according to the Temple Institute, to perceive Bar Kochba’s attempt to reinstitute the monarchy and gather the exiles as a *messianic manifestation* by Jewish law. Although Bar Kochba’s attempts failed, they had a *messianic potential*:

From Maimonides’ words, we understand that Bar Kochba’s attempt to restore the kingdom to Israel and return the nation to its land is clearly defined by Jewish law as messianic manifestation. Thus a fast was decreed for all generations to mourn the failure of this process. In other words, the attempts of Bar Kochba had messianic potential.⁸⁶³

Similarly, R. Shlomo Aviner and R. David Samson elucidate on the teachings of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, stating that according to him the valour of Bar Kochba against the Romans “was a revelation of Messianic sparks”.⁸⁶⁴ Gerald Cromer states that the Bar Kochba revolt generated a widespread admiration, which replaced “morality of responsibility with one of good intentions”. The revolt became “a symbol of destructive unrealism”, a situation in which “desires and yearnings are accepted as if they were a political programme, and fantasy is enthroned as vision.”⁸⁶⁵ It seems, however, that Maimonides in *Mishne Torah (Hilchot Melachim uMilchamotehem 11:3)* is actually trying to calm messianic expectations. The text in question reads:

One should not presume that the Messianic king must work miracles and wonders, bring about new phenomena in the world, resurrect the

⁸⁶³ www.templeinstitute.org/messiah_temple.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁸⁶⁴ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 302.

⁸⁶⁵ Cromer 2004, 108.

dead, or perform other similar deeds. This is [definitely] not true. [Proof can be brought from the fact] that Rabbi Akiva, one of the greater Sages of the Mishnah, was one of the supporters of King Bar Kozibah, and would describe him as the Messianic king. He and all the Sages of his generation considered him to be the Messianic king until he was killed because of sins. Once he was killed, they realized that he was not [the Mashiach]. The Sages did not ask him for any signs or wonders. The main thrust of the matter is: This Torah, its statutes and its laws, are everlasting. We may not add to them or detract from them."⁸⁶⁶

In the Book of Daniel (7:13), the Messiah is portrayed as arriving on the clouds of heaven. The Book of Zechariah (9:9), on the other hand, portrays the Messiah as arriving lowly, riding upon an ass. A discussion concerning this discrepancy is carried out in *BT Sanhedrin 98a*. The fruit of the discussion, the Temple Institute concludes, is that *how* the Messiah will arrive is not fixed. He may arrive in splendour and grandeur if the Jewish people have proven themselves worthy of him, but he may also appear in humility and stillness, if they are unworthy.⁸⁶⁷ However, the lingering Messiah does not challenge the idea that redemption is there "for the taking":

The opportunity for redemption - *geula* - is also always at hand - for those who seek it urgently, for those who are willing discard their appointment books and personal calendars, jettison their vacation plans, reorder their priorities, and make all holy haste to grab it. When the sense of urgency is upon us, when *geula* is for us the only option, so compelling that we are "*unable to hesitate*," then redemption is ours for the taking.⁸⁶⁸

⁸⁶⁶ Touger 2001, 612.

⁸⁶⁷ www.templeinstitute.org/messiah_temple.htm, accessed 1.4.2017. From the Haredi perspective, Yirmiyahu Cohen explicates in a similar fashion regarding the "announcer of Zion" (Isa 40:9). With reference to Rashi, Cohen explains why the word appears in both feminine and masculine form; if the Jewish people deserves it, redemption will come swiftly and forcefully – "like a man" – but if not, it will be delayed until the end and come weakly – "like a woman". Cohen 2007, 194.

⁸⁶⁸ www.templeinstitute.org/talk/Nisan_8_5770-March_23_2010.htm, accessed 1.4.2017.

Like the Haredim, the Hardalim also expect the Messiah to institute an era of peace; R. Abraham Y. Kook expects the “Messiah [...] who will reveal the light of divine justice in the land with supreme strength, which negates all war and bloodshed”.⁸⁶⁹

Two parallel ideas seem to exist, therefore, of how to posture the Messiah: the miraculous Messiah and the political Messiah. One does not necessarily exclude the other, but it seems one is often enhanced at the expense of the other, relating to the apocalyptic climate; as Jodi Myers concluded, “apocalypticism flow logically” from the doctrine of human powerlessness.⁸⁷⁰ That is, the propensity towards miraculous apocalypticism seems to be strengthened in times of socio-political subjection. Interestingly, in the Jewish community of Hebron, the messianic figure is sought for in contemporary politics: “Netanyahu is surely not the Messiah we prayed for – but we knew that a year ago.”⁸⁷¹ Netanyahu is also referred to as a “modern-day Shabbatai Tzvi”, “a false Messiah at his best”.⁸⁷²

5.2.4. WHY THE MESSIAH LINGERS

One consequence of the perspective’s propensity to read the socio-political development in an eschatological light is the disillusionment and conundrums that arise when developments do not meet with expectations. One such disillusionment was the Six Day War in 1967. As R. Yisrael Ariel relates the paratroopers conquering the Temple Mount were convinced that the Messiah was on the way; “it would just take another hour or two”.⁸⁷³ Gadi Taub explains that the war was “the spark that ignited the messianic fire”.⁸⁷⁴ Why, then, did the Messiah not come?

⁸⁶⁹ Naor 2015, 119.

⁸⁷⁰ Myers 1991, 4-5.

⁸⁷¹ Wilder 2013, 192. “Hebron – One Year Later”, Friday, June 20, 1997.

⁸⁷² Wilder 2013, 715. “The Bullet’s in the Chamber”, Tuesday, September 5, 2006.

⁸⁷³ Inbari 2009, 36. See also www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm#directors, accessed 24.1.2015.

⁸⁷⁴ Taub 2010, 42-45.

What went wrong? R. Shlomo Aviner implies that God shares the anxious anticipation for the Messiah, but that “strict justice” is holding the process back:

It therefore says, ‘And therefore will Hashem wait, that He may be gracious unto you, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have compassion upon you’ (Yeshayahu 30:18). Now, since we are waiting and He is waiting, what is holding it up? Strict Justice is holding it up. Yet since it is being held up, why should we wait? To receive reward, as it says, ‘Happy are all those who wait for him’ (ibid., Sanhedrin 97b).⁸⁷⁵

In this sense, there is little distance between the two perspectives of this study; the Haredim also assure that “when the time comes [...] Hashem will not delay even one second, and He Himself will redeem us.”⁸⁷⁶

Another conclusion, drawn by R. Yisrael Ariel after the disappointment of 1967, is that “we had only ourselves and our own inaction to hold accountable: G-d does not intend for us to wait for a day of miracles. We are expected to act.”⁸⁷⁷ Similarly, R. Shlomo Aviner concludes that if in eighty years the Messiah has not emerged, “I will know that there is much more I must do [...] and then the Messiah will come.”⁸⁷⁸ Hence, the cognitive dissonance⁸⁷⁹ that 1967 generated was harmonized by the idea that it was a lack of engagement that hindered the process of redemption; this solution rationalized the failure and ascribed the Jewish people with more control over this realm, which restores faith in the future. Hence, activism became the glue that put the pieces of the ideotheology back together. Additionally, although 1967 caused disillusionment, the military triumph confirmed the interpretation of the redemption proceeding and threw a prophetic light over R. Tzvi Yehua Kook’s momentous speech on

⁸⁷⁵ www.ravaviner.com/search/label/Mashiach, accessed 23.6.2016.

⁸⁷⁶ www.truetorahjews.org/rebyosefchaim, accessed 20.2.2017.

⁸⁷⁷ www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm#Rabbi-Ariel, accessed 27.3.2017.

⁸⁷⁸ www.ravaviner.com/search/label/Mashiach, accessed 23.6.2016.

⁸⁷⁹ Inbari 2009, 12-13; 38-39. Inbari relates Leo Festinger’s theory of cognitive discord to the ideotheological development of R. Ariel. Cf. Festinger, Riecken & Schachter, 1964.

Yom Ha'Atzmaut earlier that year.⁸⁸⁰ Therefore, although the situation led to an ideotheological crisis, those trials did not outweigh the confidence and sense of achievement; the war was, all in all, a turn-up for the books. R. Abraham Y. Kook had equipped the ideotheology with coping strategies for disappointments: "the greater the occlusion, the greater the light to be revealed.",⁸⁸¹ which also contributed to the swift recovery from the disappointment.

Yet another strategy the perspective applies in order to orientate through hardships is the idea that "war arouses the power of the Messiah". R. Eliezer Waldman evoked this concept by quoting R. Abraham Y. Kook's *Orot* in the wake of the Lebanon war. In *Orot*, R. Kook alludes to the Song of Songs:

When war breaks out, the power of the Messiah is aroused. The time of the nightingale has arrived; she sings in the boughs. The wicked ones disappear from the world, the earth is perfumed, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.⁸⁸²

This concept is not unique to R. Abraham Y. Kook, nor is it novel. It can be found, *inter alia*, in *BT Mas. Megillah 17b*, which explains war as the beginning of redemption:

What was their reason for mentioning redemption in the seventh blessing? Raba replied: Because they [Israel] are destined to be redeemed in the seventh year [of the coming of the Messiah], therefore the mention of redemption was placed in the seventh blessing. But a Master has said, 'In the sixth year there will be thundering, in the seventh wars, at the end of the seventh the son of David will come? – War is also the beginning of redemption [atchalta de'geulah].

David Biale concludes that according to Waldman, although world opinion may turn against the State of Israel for fighting these wars, they

⁸⁸⁰ Hertzberg 1986, 88; Taub 2010, 42-34; Paine 1995, 10-11.

⁸⁸¹ Mirsky 2014, 200.

⁸⁸² Lustick 1988, 93-94.

will help usher in the Messiah, and subsequently the nations of the world will respect and admire the Jewish people. Hence, Waldman perceives war, not peace to be the Jewish mission to the world; a messianic state, not a democracy.⁸⁸³ This interpretation also occurred in the wake of the expulsion from Yamit in 1982, when Waldman again evoked *Orot*, concluding, “Unfortunately it is still impossible to achieve the completion of Redemption by any means other than war”. A debate flared up among the Hardalim as what R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook would recommend, had he still been alive. Others drew quite the opposite conclusions from *Orot*: that it would be “feasible to conduct an independent national policy without recourse to vicious and barbaric practices”, and that it would not be in the best interest of the nation to “wield sovereignty, when this entails wholesale bloodshed and ingenuity of a sinister kind.”⁸⁸⁴

The correlation between war and the Messiah has, thus, become a driving force in the face of hardship for some segments of the Hardal perspective. The metaphorical and mystical aspects of R. Abraham Y. Kook’s writings complicate the interpretation of the passage in question; he wrote *Orot* on the threshold of the World War I when the “air was rife with a sense of Messianic imminence”.⁸⁸⁵ Would he have expressed himself differently had he lived in a time when the Jewish people enjoyed sovereignty and disposed of its own military? Could he have foreseen a time when the Jewish people would be capable of conducting wars? How his texts are interpreted vis-à-vis this topic, then, depends on whether or not his text are considered prophetic, transcending his own context. R. Abraham Y. Kook stated, “a slim membrane stands between that radicalism and the coming of the Messiah”; there is an interface between good and evil, separating radicalism (in Kook’s reflection, that of Shabbetai Zevi) from messianic activity. R. Kook himself, unlike his rabbinic peers, “deeply identified with the revolutionary religious and political currents around

⁸⁸³ Biale 1986, 167-168.

⁸⁸⁴ Lustick 1988, 93-94.

⁸⁸⁵ Naor 2015, 2.

him”, but he also “remained deeply committed to the tradition”. The idea of war arousing the power of the Messiah may, thus, be an expression of Kook the Revolutionary, but it may also be a metaphorical expression of Kook the Mystic.⁸⁸⁶

5.3. THE HAREDIM: NOT BEFORE THE MESSIAH

5.3.1. WITHOUT ANY EFFORT ON OUR PART

The particulars relating to the advent of the Messiah emerge in the Haredi perspective as keys to the unlocking of the eschatological drama. To recapitulate the previous chapter, the Haredi perspective teaches that the processes of exile and redemption “must be left to the control of God, with no physical effort on our part”.⁸⁸⁷ Any attempts to end the exile politically or forcibly would be a “direct affront and denial” of divine providence.⁸⁸⁸ Hence, the only way to bring about relief is to repent, as “the fate of the Jews reflects the consequences of the Covenant between God and His people”.⁸⁸⁹ Abandoning this approach is bound to “end in failure and bloodshed”, as teaching history has borne out.⁸⁹⁰ JAZ is confident that this is the way “Jews have always believed”: the Messiah will come and gather all Jews to *Eretz Yisrael*. Therefore, “We must wait for the messiah to tell us in the name of G-d that the exile is over and the oath is no longer in force.”⁸⁹¹ NK references R. Hirsch (Samson Raphael Hirsch, 1808-1888), to invoke the idea that while the Jewish people are allowed to “hope and pray”, it is prohibited to try actively to accelerate the coming of the messianic age:

Let us listen to Rav Hirsch. "For this (Messianic) future which is promised to us in the glorious predictions of the inspired prophets as a

⁸⁸⁶ Mirsky 2014, 40.

⁸⁸⁷ Cohen 2007, 10.

⁸⁸⁸ Cohen 2007, 4.

⁸⁸⁹ Rabkin 2006, 12.

⁸⁹⁰ www.truetorahjews.org/our_mission, accessed 23.3.2017.

⁸⁹¹ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/messiah1, accessed 31.3.2017.

goal of the exile, we hope and pray, but actively to accelerate its coming is prohibited to us.⁸⁹²

However, according to Yirmiyahu Cohen, even excessive prayer can constitute a forcing of the end, which is not a sin against the gentiles, but a sin against God himself.⁸⁹³ NK stresses that redemption can be encouraged only through repentance, but redemption will not precede the emergence of the Messiah. Without this belief, NK declares, one is not a Jew:

Only through complete repentance will the Almighty alone, without any human effort or intervention, redeem us from exile. At that time there will be universal peace. This will be after the coming of the prophet Eliyahu and Moshiach. The belief is the very essence and foundation of Judaism. It does not matter if one acts or appears to be religious, even if he is a rabbi, without the belief, he is not a Jew.⁸⁹⁴

The Haredim, thus, perceive the Messiah as the herald, bringing the era of exile to an end. Without his announcement – and without his guidance at the time of redemption – the Jewish people is both *forbidden* and *incapable* of proceeding towards redemption. In addition to *BT Ketubboth 111a*, JAZ also refers to *Isa 11:12* and Mishneh Torah, *Hilchot Melachim uMilchamotehem 11:1* for the view that the Messiah will “arise and restore the kingship of the house of David to its former status, build the Temple and gather in the exiles of Israel”.⁸⁹⁵ NK refers to *BT Ketubboth 111a* for a similar view: that Jews “shall not use human force to bring about the establishment of a Jewish state before the coming of the universally accepted Moshiach”. Furthermore, it is “forbidden to rebel against the

⁸⁹² www.nkusa.org/activities/iran/prejudice.cfm, accessed 24.3.2017.

⁸⁹³ Cohen 2007, 158.

⁸⁹⁴ www.nkusa.org/Activities/NewsAds/Friends_of_Jerusalem/foj062196.cfm, accessed 31.3.2017.

⁸⁹⁵ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/messiah1, accessed 31.3.2017.

nations”, and the Jewish people should “not attempt to leave the exile which G-d sent [the Jewish people] into, ahead of time”.⁸⁹⁶

5.3.2. HOW THE MESSIAH WILL REVEAL HIMSELF

The expectations as to how the Messiah will reveal himself are framed in concrete and observable circumstances, constricting the flexibility of the interpretation. Like NK, JAZ presumes the Messiah will bring the entire Jewish people to repentance:

Once he has accomplished the repentance of all the Jews, clearly Hashem is telling us that he has enough of a *chezkas moshiach* [presumed Messiah] to be allowed to fight wars. Once he fights the wars, he reaches an even higher level of *chazakah*, allowing him to gather the exiles and build the Temple.⁸⁹⁷

To verify that the messianic figure is indeed the Messiah, he must surpass three levels of verification. Firstly, he has to prove he is a *potential* messiah by bringing the Jewish people to repentance, including all the assimilated and the non-observant. Secondly, he has to “fight the wars of Hashem”, which includes fighting assimilation, fighting false ideologies and fighting the Gentile nations. One may ask how the potential Messiah can be allowed to wage wars, when the Threefold oath forbids rebelling against the nations and ascending together, by force. To answer this, JAZ specifies, “only if the messianic candidate succeeds in bringing all the Jews to repent he may go on to the next step of fighting wars.”⁸⁹⁸ Once he has brought the Jewish people to repentance and is fighting the wars of Hashem, he reaches the stage of *presumed Messiah* (*chezkas moshiach*). If the candidate reaches this level of confirmation, the oaths are “no problem”:

⁸⁹⁶ www.nkusa.org/aboutus/index.cfm, accessed 7.4.2017

⁸⁹⁷ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/messiah, accessed 7.4.2017. This terminology is derived from Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim uMilchamotehem*, 11:4. www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/rambam3, accessed 21.3.2017.

⁸⁹⁸ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/rambam3, accessed 21.3.2017.

the Rambam says clearly that a *chezkas moshiah* [presumed Messiah] is enough for us to assume the oaths are permitted, and we as well as the potential moshiah himself cannot be blamed if the *chazakah* turns out to be wrong. Let's say a person eats something based on a *chazakah* of a *rov* that it's kosher, and it turns out not to be kosher. Is that person a sinner? Of course not.⁸⁹⁹

Bringing the entire Jewish people to repentance is an undertaking so monumental that "no false Messiah will be able to do it and fool the world".⁹⁰⁰ Hence, there need be no confusion as to who is the true Messiah; those already living a life in repentance should continue on that path, and those who do not, should do *teshuva*. When the potential Messiah has proven himself as a presumed Messiah, it is safe to follow his lead in returning to *Eretz Yisrael*, without violating the Threefold oath. Eventually, all the nations of the world will recognize the Messiah, and then it is safe to assume that he certainly is the Messiah, *moshiah vadai*:

The messiah will be recognized by the fact that he will be a Jewish leader who brings all the Jews to repent and follow the laws of the Torah. Once he does this it may be safely assumed that he is the messiah. Once the entire Jewish and non-Jewish world has recognized him as the messiah, his next task will be to bring back the Jewish exiles and build the Temple. If he does this, then he is certainly the messiah. If he fails at this second stage or dies before completing it, then he is not the messiah.⁹⁰¹

By following these criteria on how to identify the Messiah, the Jewish people can rest assured that they will become aware of the ending of exile

⁸⁹⁹ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/rambam3, accessed 21.3.2017. Indeed, in *Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings and Wars, 11:4*, Maimonides does declare that a man who "studies the Torah", "compels all Israel to follow" and "fights the wars of the Lord" is presumably the Messiah. If he precedes and "defeats all the nations", "builds the Temple in its place" and "gathers the dispersed of Israel" he is "surely the Messiah". However, if he does not succeed to this extent or is killed, "then he is not the one whom the Torah promised", and he "were for the purpose of straightening the way". Dein 2011, 44-45.

⁹⁰⁰ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/messiah1, accessed 31.3.2017.

⁹⁰¹ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/recognizemessiah, accessed 31.3.2017. For a discussion on the three levels of verification, see www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/rambam3, accessed 20.5.2017.

in due course; until then, the most constructive way to promote the shift from exile to redemption is to strive to live piously, in repentance and in faith to the best of one's ability,.

5.3.3. THE MESSIAH WILL COME WITH PEACE

The Haredi perspective generally focuses more on how to live in exile than what to expect from the messianic era; but since the first is the path that leads to the latter, the Haredi material is not void of messianic anticipation and expectations. This form of messianism is miracle-centred and has – since its confrontation with Zionism – sharpened its traditional, passive posture, according to Aviezer Ravitzky.⁹⁰²

JAZ expects the warfare to subside when the gentile nations recognize the Messiah; in the End of Days all nations will stream to the mountain of the house of God to learn his ways, as in the prophecy of Isaiah (2:2-4).⁹⁰³ NK expects a “universally recognized Moshiach from the House of David”.⁹⁰⁴

Hence, redemption is, in a paradoxical way, indeed a divine intervention and a miracle, but at the same time, redemption will initially be manifested by the traditional features of exile: by the Jewish people repenting and abiding, while the Messiah – empowered by the divine – wages wars, gathers the exiles, rebuilds the temple and bestows peace upon the world.

This chain of messianic events, JAZ explains, is to ensure that false prophets cannot daze the people with grand miracles. This is an interpretation made by the *Satmar Rav* (R. Yoel Teitelbaum, 1888–1982) in *Vayoel Moshe*.⁹⁰⁵

⁹⁰² Ravitzky 1993, 22.

⁹⁰³ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/messiah1, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁹⁰⁴ www.nkusa.org/aboutus/index.cfm, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁹⁰⁵ Cohen 2007, 127.

5.3.4. BY REPENTANCE TOWARDS REDEMPTION

The Haredim seem to be content with the traditional strategy for redemption: to wait for the Messiah, and while waiting, to live piously, repent and abide by the Threefold oath. This strategy allows many questions related to redemption to be postponed:

Whatever the criteria are for the messiah, it is clear that we have to wait for him, and thus it is certainly wrong to conquer the Holy Land under a movement such as Zionism that does not even claim that any particular person is the messiah.⁹⁰⁶

This explication of the three levels of messianic revelation is derived from Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim uMilchamotehem 11:4*. JAZ stresses, however, that this is not the only possible interpretation of Maimonides; the most radical alternative interpretation would be that "any messianic claimant is an exception to the oaths, even before he does anything to prove himself as the moshiach".⁹⁰⁷ His divine vocation would then be the only proof of his mandate, and the Jewish people would follow him into battle solely on his word. If he turned out to be an imposter, the people would not have committed a sin by following him, because they had acted in accordance with the instructions by Maimonides. However, JAZ warns that if the people followed someone that did *not* claim to be the Messiah in violating the oaths, this would constitute a sin:

As an analogy, imagine that a father sends his child to his bedroom as a punishment, and warns him not to come out until he, the father, sends him a message telling him to do so. The child sits in his room for a long time, and then a voice from the other side of the door says, "I am the messenger of your father. He says you may come out now." Now, since the father did not give the child any signs by which to identify the messenger, he clearly allowed him to follow anyone claiming to be the messenger. Of course, if the son comes out and discovers that his father still wants him in his room, he will know that the messenger had been

⁹⁰⁶ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/messiah1, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

an impostor. Still, he did nothing wrong by following him. But suppose someone comes to the door and says, "I am not the messenger of your father. But I think you've waited long enough and you may come out." Then the son must certainly stay in his room."⁹⁰⁸

Hence, JAZ argues that the absence of a messianic figure together with a messianic claim in Zionism, should provide the Jewish people with sufficient proof: coming out of exile because of the calling of Zionism is a sin.

Maimonides was probably the earliest rabbinic figure to urge the Jews of Yemen not to emigrate, not to make *aliyah* (ascend). In the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries, the Jewish community of Yemen was significant and constituted a lion's share of the Jewish population in Egypt. Yemen was also geographically gaining importance as a route for international trade. It was an integral part of the Jewish world, and hence, it had good relations with Maimonides, who headed the Jewish community of Egypt. On behalf of the Ayyubid court in Cairo, Maimonides wrote the *Epistle to Yemen* (1172), to decrease the messianic expectations that had arisen there. Apparently, a messianic figure had appeared and was agitating the Yemenite Jews.⁹⁰⁹ In the letter, Maimonides urged the Jews to be patient, as the trials they were experiencing were sent to prove their faithfulness, and that the new revelation they were adhering to was more dangerous than both the Arab ruler who oppressed them and the alluring Hellenism. The letter had great impact.⁹¹⁰

In Howard Kriesel interpretation, Maimonides saw the Messiah as "an ideal human king", who would redeem the Jewish people and bring peace and prosperity to the whole world. He would be a "teacher of all humanity".⁹¹¹ The teachings of Maimonides regarding the Messiah and the messianic age are discussed vividly and interpreted widely, although

⁹⁰⁸ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/rambam3, accessed 21.3.2017.

⁹⁰⁹ Tobi & Spector 2007, 304.

⁹¹⁰ Rabinowitz 2007b, 383.

⁹¹¹ Kriesel 2003, 203-204.

Maimonides himself expressed the impenetrable nature of these themes in *Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim uMilchamotehem 12:1*:

Some of our Sages say that the coming of Elijah will precede the advent of the Messiah. But no one is in a position to know the details of this and similar things until they have come to pass. They are not explicitly stated by the Prophets. Nor have the Rabbis any tradition with regard to these matters. They are guided solely by what the Scriptural texts seem to imply. Hence there is a divergence of opinion on the subject. But be that as it may, neither the exact sequence of those events nor the details thereof constitute religious dogma.⁹¹²

The ambiguity of Maimonides enables both perspectives to look to him as their religious authority. JAZ seems to assume that the warnings of a false Messiah in the *Epistle to Yemen* are actually a prophetic warning against Zionism:

Although the Rambam wrote *Iggeres Teiman* against a particular false moshiach, in retrospect we see that that false moshiach did not get very far, neither did any other false moshiach in Jewish history. Even the Sabbatean movement's spread among a large part of the Jewish people lasted less than a year; after that it was a mostly undercover, shunned heresy. The warning of Shlomo Hamelech [in *Shir haShirim 2:7*] was clearly referring to the by far most successful false messianic movement in Jewish history: Zionism. Another verse from the prophets, also quoted by the Rambam in his *Letter to Yemen*, predicts Zionism. "And Zion said, Hashem has deserted me, and Hashem has forgotten me" (*Yishaya 49:14*).⁹¹³

Kenneth Seeskin concurs with Kraemer, that in Maimonides' thinking, life in the messianic age will be 'business as usual'; life will still comprise of birth and death, working to reduce poverty and weakness, striving to increase welfare and strength. Maimonides explicitly writes, "Let no one think that in the days of the Messiah any of the laws of nature will be set

⁹¹² Kellner 1986, 198.

⁹¹³ www.truetorahjews.org/rabbinic_quotations/rambam, accessed 7.4.2017.

aside, or any innovation be introduced into creation. The world will follow its normal course."⁹¹⁴

To the Haredi position, an essential concept is that the Threefold oath forbids Jewish sovereignty while the exile endures, and hence, a Jewish state is unthinkable. It is of a particular interest for their argumentation that Maimonides in the *Epistle to Yemen*, seems to suggest the Messiah will come *before* the state is reinstated:

They are likewise wrong in their predictions concerning the era of the Messiah, may he speedily come. For while the Gentiles believe that our nation will never constitute an independent state, nor will they even rise above their present condition, and all the astrologers, diviners, and augurs concur in this opinion, God will prove false their views and beliefs, and will order the advent of the Messiah. Again, it is Isaiah who makes reference to this event in the verse: "That frustrate the tokens of the impostors, and makes the diviners mad; that turns wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolish; that confirms the word of His servant, and performs the counsel of His messengers; that says of Jerusalem, "She shall be inhabited"; and of the cities of Juda, "They shall be built, and I will raise up the waste places thereof" (Is. 44:25-26). This is the correct view that every Israelite should hold, without paying any attention to the conjunctions of stars, of greater or smaller magnitude."⁹¹⁵

In the *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides assembled rulings concerning all possible dispositions of Jewish life, in times of exile as well as at the time of redemption. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that in the mind of Maimonides, there was a clear distinction between the two. Rémi Brague writes:

When he assembled in the *Mishneh Torah* all the legal dispositions regulating Jewish life, Maimonides took pains to include rulings concerning all the situations in which Judaism might find itself, not just those relevant to its current state of exile. Thus we also find laws concerning the messianic period, as it was supposed to re-establish the initial situation of the people, returned to their own land, around a

⁹¹⁴ Seeskin 2006, 159.

⁹¹⁵ Twersky 1972, 453.

reconstructed Temple in which sacrifices would be offered by legitimate priests.⁹¹⁶

The Haredim, however, also find other teachings in Maimonides that seem to support their argument. With reference to his *Teshuva* 7:5, the Haredim stress that the Messiah will come to bring the Jewish people to repent; that is to say, the people will not yet be repenting at the time of his emergence. Maimonides writes that Israel “will only be redeemed through repentance [...] at the end of their exile, and then immediately they will be redeemed”. From this, and from a passage of *Hilchot Melachim uMilchamotehem* (11:4), they gather that redemption can be realized only upon the arrival of the Messiah:

it seems that the Rambam's view is that Moshiach will appear before the Jews have repented, he will get them to repent, and only then will he begin putting the redemption into action – gathering the exiles and building the Temple, etc.⁹¹⁷

The Messiah is further thought to redeem the Jewish people from subjugation to the nations, which is one aspect of being in exile. Related to this notion is the expectation that when the Messiah achieves this, the nations of the world will be spiritually enlightened and therefore accept changed relations with the Jewish people. In practice, the nations of the world will therefore not object to the Jewish people becoming elevated to an independent, sovereign nation, returning to *Eretz Yisrael* and beginning a new life there as God's people. In relation to this, it serves as a supporting argument that the State of Israel from its birth until today has received very little sympathy and support from the nations of the world for building its own, sovereign state. If the State of Israel were truly an expression of the messianic age – the argument holds – not so many lives would have had to be sacrificed to protect it, nor would it have had to face so many conflicts, both foreign and domestic.

⁹¹⁶ Brague 2007, 126.

⁹¹⁷ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/rosh, accessed 7.4.2017.

A conviction that functions as one of the core arguments against Zionism is that since there is no Messiah to Zionism, it cannot possibly be an expression of redemption, and hence, it is a deviation from the traditional faith:

In our generation we are witness to a flood of heresy. Even many of those who claim to believe in all of the 13 Principles of Faith take actions that belie that belief. The Brisker Rav said: "The Rambam (Melachim 12:2 and Teshuva 9:2) says that moshiach will redeem the Jewish people from their subjugation to the nations. Anyone who believes that it is possible to be redeemed from subjugation to the nations without moshiach is lacking in full belief in moshiach."⁹¹⁸

Closely related to the fourth chapter of this study, is the Haredi argument that the Messiah "will not come on the shoulders of the state", that is, as long as the State of Israel endures the Messiah will not come. When this argument comes full circle, it argues that the State of Israel needs to be dismantled before the messianic age can begin; NK proposes that the land should be returned to the Arabs and demands "without compromise, the peaceful dismantling of the Israeli state".⁹¹⁹ JAZ stresses that the mere existence of the State of Israel prevents redemption from breaking out:

See Sanhedrin 98a that Moshiach will not come until the Jewish people has not even the lowest level of sovereignty. This means that the state is preventing the geulah [redemption] from coming. The Satmar Rov said that after the Holocaust, the Jewish people would surely have deserved the geulah, if the Zionists had not prevented it by establishing a state. The Chazon Ish said that Moshiach will not take over from the Zionist state - there will certainly be a period in between. The Brisker Rav also said, "Moshiach will not come on the shoulders of the state." They were probably referring to the above Gemora.⁹²⁰

⁹¹⁸ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

⁹¹⁹ www.nkusa.org/books/pamphlets/pamphlet3.cfm, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁹²⁰ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/rov, accessed 7.4.2017. The "above Gemora" might here refer to *BT Sanhedrin 98a*, where it is stated that all things shall be finished, when the power of the holy people is scattered. The footnote enlightens that this, in turn, refers to Dan. 7:7,

To summarize, the Haredim perceive the State of Israel to be an obstruction to the arrival of the Messiah. Furthermore, they perceive his arrival to be clearly distinguishable: he will be universally accepted and he will bring the Jewish people to repentance. Both these expectations place the messianic figure far beyond what a *tzaddik* or *maran* could accomplish. If all Jews are to repent, how should this repentance be expressed? How is repentance defined? And what does it mean to be *universally accepted*? If by this they expect a Messiah that Jews and Gentiles alike recognize, that would, indeed, be a miracle. Hence, the Haredi understanding of the Messiah does not leave broad margins for interpretation. Instead, their messianism revolves around the idea that the emergence of the Messiah is best aided by the Jewish people doing exactly what they have been doing for the past two thousand years, only more fervently and meticulously: i.e. to repent, abide and have faith.

5.4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has focused on the role of the Messiah in the respective understandings of redemption presented by a handful of representatives from the Haredi and the Hardal perspectives. This chapter has shown that for both these perspectives historical events such as the *Shoah* and the formation of the State of Israel have generated responses related to the respective understanding of redemption, which inevitably reflect their understanding of the messianic figure.

The discourse, hence, is governed by “a network of presuppositions that constrains what it is we can ultimately say about the world”; without these networks, “all existing presumptions become optional”, Kenneth J. Gergen reflects.⁹²¹ The presentation above is an exposition of the two networks of presuppositions that lead the interpretations of the Hardalim and the Haredim on the messianic figure. For example, an absolute

“thus proving that the Messiah’s coming is dependant only upon the utter prostration of Israel, not his repentance”.

⁹²¹ Gergen 2002, 14.

presupposition in the Hardal perspective is that the establishment of the State of Israel is an expression of divine intervention; hence, the exile *has* ended, even without a messianic figure. In comparison, it is an absolute presupposition of the Haredi perspective that the exile will end with the announcement of the Messianic figure, and hence, the exile has *not* ended.

As concluded earlier in this study, a trait of the Hardal perspective, also useful with regards to this topic, is its flexibility. The Hardalim meet with a contradiction, in that they propose that redemption has begun, although the Messiah lingers. They have had to account for the missing Messiah, so to speak. This riddle has caused cognitive dissonance in the perspective many times over the past century. For example, R. Abraham Y. Kook wrestled with the death of Theodor Hertzl, the only figure who resembled a messianic figure at all. R. Kook's solution acclaimed Hertzl the Messiah ben Joseph, the messianic figure paving way for the ultimate redeemer, Messiah ben David. Another example is the cognitive dissonance on the Temple Mount during the Six Day War, when R. Yisrael Ariel recalls, "We embraced and stood with tears running down our cheeks, in complete silence, sensing that Messiah was still on the way – it would just take another hour or two."⁹²² Because the Messiah never came the disillusionment led him to the conclusion that "we had only ourselves and our own inaction to hold accountable" for the debacle; "we are expected to act."⁹²³ Within the Hardal perspective, thus, this study has encountered examples of how the messianism can unfold in relation to historical impulses. The quest to understand what is *there* (in tradition) may rather be a question of what is *here* (in the mindset of the interpretative individual and community), as Kenneth J. Gergen formulates it in his reflection on discourse analysis as a method.⁹²⁴

⁹²² Inbari 2009, 36. See also www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm#directors, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁹²³ www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm#Rabbi-Ariel, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁹²⁴ Gergen 2015, 38-39.

Another example of the flexibility of the perspective is the close relationship between its interpretation of historical impulses and its interpretation of the eschatological process. The Hardalim conclude that redemption is underway, given that the *Shoah* was juxtaposed with the establishment of the State of Israel, which in the latter half of the 20th century endured and prospered. Therefore, this perspective has departed from the notion that a messianic figure is indispensable for the process of redemption. To put it bluntly, there is no Messiah, but yet, redemption has begun – hence, the messianic program has to be reinterpreted. This is a stark departure from Jewish tradition, and thus the Hardal perspective is still completing its eschatology. As an indication of this eschatology still being “in the making”, I take the introduction of the concepts of *messianic manifestation*, *messianic potential* and “revelations of messianic sparks” into the discussion, effectively saying that while there is no messianic figure, he is on the way.

The parting of ways between the traditional understanding of exile and redemption and emergence of religious Zionism has so far been continuous. Although the adherents of these perspectives statistically are marginal, Ravitzky reminds “it is a universal phenomenon that extreme, absolutist ideologies, untainted by complexity or ambivalence, frequently have an influence far beyond the circle of their own followers.”⁹²⁵

There is a temptation to polarize these perspectives, although, *in toto*, they are in agreement on crucial aspects of redemption. Both believe in an approaching redemption; both believe that the Messiah will play a crucial role in it; both believe that the Messiah will appear at a time of God’s choosing. The disagreement concerns the shift from exile to redemption: *how* and *by whom* it will be brought about.

The messianic figure is, to the Haredim, an integral part of the shift from exile to redemption. He is the marker that the exile is ending and redemption is beginning, which opens a world of new possibilities. Until

⁹²⁵ Ravitzky 1993, 60.

he has emerged, the Jewish people are in exile and abide by the restrictions the exile conveys. The Haredim insist that the shift from exile to redemption is to be “left to the control of God, with no physical effort on our part”.⁹²⁶ The strategy the Haredim propose, hence, is to wait, hope and pray. Even excessive prayer, however, may be a way to try to accelerate the shift, and thus constitutes a transgression.⁹²⁷ To distil this strategy even purer: only through repentance can God redeem the Jewish people from exile and bring about universal peace.

In this perspective, therefore, there is no question that the messianic figure will appear *before* redemption can begin. As a consequence of this fixed interpretation, all the historical impulses of the 20th century are read as attesting to the prolonging and/or deepening of the exile. As shown above, the *Shoah* and the State of Israel are considered “part of the same process of destruction.”⁹²⁸ The prosperity and success of the state only prove that God allows free will, even for his people to be “successful in doing wrong on a large scale”.⁹²⁹ It seems, thus, the Haredim are immune to arguments based on interpretations of historical impulses; success or disaster, the exile is still in force and only the announcement of the Messiah can cause them to reconsider.

In contrast to the Hardal perspective, the Haredim do not accept any transitional phases in the process of redemption. The Messiah they expect has to prove himself by his achievements: he has to bring the Jewish people to repentance and follow the laws of the Torah, he has to get the whole world to recognize him as the Messiah, he has to gather in the exiles and rebuild the Temple. If he fails to meet these ends, he is not the Messiah. The Haredi perspective does not mention anything in-between, such as the messianic *potential* or *spark* that the Hardal reflects on. For example,

⁹²⁶ Cohen 2007, 10.

⁹²⁷ Cohen 2007, 158.

⁹²⁸ Rabkin 2006, 196.

⁹²⁹ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/chutzlaaretz, accessed 7.4.2017.

JAZ uncompromisingly concludes that when Simeon Bar Kochba was found to be a false Messiah, he was killed.

This unambiguous understanding of the Messiah is, of course, useful to the Hardal understanding of exile and redemption. If there is no risk of failing to recognize the Messiah, and the criteria for his verification are beyond the might of man, and thus the argumentation comes full circle – all the Jewish people can do is wait and repent.

However, as I have argued above, while the Haredim refuse any attempts towards accelerating the shift from exile to redemption – even excessive prayer –this absolute subordination to God is precisely the strategy they implement to be redeemed.⁹³⁰ Like Motti Inbari, I take this strategy to be as insistent as the strategies of the Hardal perspective, although its expressions are easily mistaken for passivity.⁹³¹

⁹³⁰ This strategy is archetypal of traditional Judaism. See Neusner 2005, 1698.

⁹³¹ Inbari 2016, 12; Anderssen-Löf 2016, 243; 250-254.

6. REBUILDING THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM

6.1. THE TEMPLE IN JEWISH TRADITION

Over the centuries in Diaspora, rebuilding the Temple has “remained an inspirational clarion call for a spiritual idealism even more than for a real building”, according to Simon Goldhill.⁹³² Hence, the two perspectives studied here are but two of all those who see Temple in the realm of apocalypics.

The destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BCE was a traumatic event. Hence, the first challenge upon the return from the exile was the reconstruction of it (Isa. 44:28, 45:1, 13). Cyrus implemented a policy of restoration throughout the acquired territories and granted permission for the exiles to return. The exiles were allowed to return to Jerusalem for the sake of building the Temple, and those not returning were encouraged to help the process of restoration financially (Ezra 1:2-4).⁹³³

But could the time now be ripe for rebuilding the Temple? Does the existence of a state, with the Temple Mount being under Israeli control, enable a Jewish temple? Or do these conditions, on the contrary, reflect the deepening of exile, in which case would a rebuilt Temple “not be the long-awaited Third Temple of G-d, but a temple of Satanic forces”?⁹³⁴ Will the Messiah rebuild the Temple? Or will it be built *for* him, to prompt his emergence? Would that constitute a “forcing of the End”, forbidden in the Threefold oath?⁹³⁵

The two perspectives studied here hold diametrically opposed views on these questions. This chapter seeks to overview and examine these views

⁹³² Goldhill 2006, 42.

⁹³³ Porten 2007, 610.

⁹³⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

⁹³⁵ See Chpt. 2, in which the tradition of the Threefold oath and the fear of “forcing the End” is discussed.

by analyzing two sets of primary materials stemming from representatives of the Haredi and Hardal perspectives.

The term “Zionism” stems from the root “Zion”, a word filled with religious connotations. After the destruction of Jerusalem, “Zion” is frequently used in prayers, poetry, and other literature as a synonym for Jerusalem.⁹³⁶ As Martin Buber writes, “It is impossible to appreciate the real meaning of ‘Zion’ as long as one regards it as simply one of many other national concepts”, and that “its essential quality lies precisely in that which differentiates it from all other national concepts.” Buber perceives that all historical and religious associations of the concept were integrated into the national concept when the movement adopted the name “Zion”.⁹³⁷

6.1.1. JERUSALEM’S CENTRALITY AND EXCLUSIVENESS

“Jerusalem has always been the vehicle through which Jewish hope and dreams were expressed”, David Hartman reflects.⁹³⁸ An intrinsic aspect of Judaism – sometimes in the foreground, sometimes in the background – is the idea that the heavenly and earthly realms meet on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. This notion is recorded in *Genesis Rabbah* 98:2.7.⁹³⁹

There, while the Temple stood, the temple service and the sacrificial order embodied a constantly ongoing expression of the covenant between God and his people. One of the most famous sayings from the Rabbinic literature is one by Simon the Righteous: “The world stands upon three things: the Torah, the Temple Service, the deeds of loving kindness”.⁹⁴⁰ According to *BT Pesachim 54a*, the Temple of Jerusalem is one of seven pre-existent things:

⁹³⁶ Kouts et al 2007, 539.

⁹³⁷ Buber 1997, xvii.

⁹³⁸ Hartman 1987, 229.

⁹³⁹ Neusner 2005, 1707.

⁹⁴⁰ Hayward 1996, xvii.

Surely it was taught: Seven things were created before the world was created, and these are they: The Torah, repentance, the Garden of Eden, Gehenna, the Throne of Glory, the Temple, and the name of the Messiah. The Torah, for it is written, The Lord made me [sc. the Torah] as the beginning of his way. Repentance, for it is written, Before the mountains were brought forth, and it is written, Thou turnest man to contrition, and sayest, Repent, ye children of men. The Garden of Eden, as it is written, And the Lord planted a garden in Eden from aforetime. The Gehenna, for it is written, For Tophet [i.e., Gehenna] is ordered of old. The Throne of Glory and the Temple, for it is written, Thou throne of glory, on high from the beginning, Thou place of our sanctuary. The name of the Messiah, as it is written, His [sc. the Messiah's] name shall endure forever, and has existed before the sun!

The commentary to *BT Pesachim 54a* interprets the “general idea” of this Baraitha⁹⁴¹ as that “these things are indispensable pre-requisites for the orderly progress of mankind upon earth.” Both Philo (ca 25 BCE – 50 CE) and Josephus (ca 37 – 100 CE) were convinced that the Temple had transcendental features. Josephus saw connections between the seven lamps and seven heavenly bodies. He described the temple service as a “cosmic worship”, a notion also expressed by Philo. Philo further provides elaborate interpretations of the furnishing of the Temple. For example, he understands the twelve loaves of bread as symbols of the Zodiac and the twelve months of the year.⁹⁴²

Pirkei Avot (1:2) states that the world rests on three pillars: upon the Torah, the Temple service and upon acts of loving-kindness.⁹⁴³ These mystical aspects of the Temple are also part of the theology of the Temple Institute, a contemporary organization from the Hardal perspective, whose founder was a student of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook.⁹⁴⁴ The Institute stresses that the ultimate purpose of the temple service is for all aspects of creation to reach their full potential in the service of God:

⁹⁴¹ A *baraita* is a Jewish tradition not included in the Mishnah. Eisenberg 2010, 43.

⁹⁴² Hayward 1996, 8-9.

⁹⁴³ www.templeinstitute.org/creation_timeline_5.htm, accessed 23.1.2011.

⁹⁴⁴ Inbari 2009, 9; Sprinzak 1991, 261-63.

In the Temple service, all four aspects of creation unite together in the service of God, and thus reach their full potential in fulfilling His will and sanctifying His name. The priest who offers each sacrifice represents humanity; the animal offered, the animal kingdom; the flour, frankincense, libations, etc., the world of plants; and even the inanimate level is represented... for salt must be a part of every sacrifice. Thus, when the Temple stands, all of creation functions in harmony. This is one aspect of how the Temple brings peace to the world: "...and in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of hosts" (Haggai 2:9)⁹⁴⁵

Relating to the Temple Mount are also the traditions of the stone in the centre of the Dome of Rock, *even ha-shetiyah*, known as the *foundation stone*, which is linked to the creation of the world. This notion is found, *inter alia*, in Isa (28:16): "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation [...]" *BT Yoma 54b* states that the *tannaim* taught the stone was called *shetiyah* "because from it the world was founded", the "world was created from its centre."

The stone is therefore believed to be the "navel of the earth" (Hes. 38:12)⁹⁴⁶, upon which the Ark was placed in the times of David.⁹⁴⁷ These ideas are also reflected in 2 Sam. 6:17 and 1 Chron. 21:28-22:1. In the days of Salomon, the Temple was built with the stone in the centre of the Holy of Holies, constituting its altar.⁹⁴⁸ On the Day of Atonement, the high priest rested the fire-pan on it during the atonement ceremony, as *BT Yoma 53b* records:

After the Ark had been taken away there was a stone which had been there since the days of the early prophets and it was called *Shetiyah* [i.e., the foundation stone, since it was this stone that formed the earth's foundation]. It was [a height of] three fingers above the ground and he [the high priest] would place [the shovel-pan of coals] upon it.

⁹⁴⁵ Richman 1997b, 13.

⁹⁴⁶ Gonen 2003, 128.

⁹⁴⁷ Blackman 1963, 295.

⁹⁴⁸ II Samuel 7:13

Gerard Y. Blidstein notes a variation in the traditions of the foundation stone. For example, in *Tosefta Yoma* 3:6 R. Yose ben Halafta views the term *shetiyah* as having cosmogonic significance, while the Mishnah “clearly dates the placing of the stone to the time of the Temple’s construction and ignores the mythological dimension”.⁹⁴⁹ *Mishnah Yoma* 5:2 mentions that “the stone lay there from the time of the early Prophets [i.e., of David and Samuel]”; this could be the reason why Blidstein draws the conclusion that the stone was *placed* there, although *Mishnah Yoma* 5:2 does not explicitly say so.⁹⁵⁰

These traditions are ascribed to a stone now located in the centre of the 7th century CE Muslim shrine on the Temple Mount.⁹⁵¹ However, it is not fully clear if the stone is indeed the *even ha-shetiyah*, although this “is the view most widely held today” and Muslim tradition does acknowledge this relationship. Speaking against it is the dimension of the stone (58x51 feet), which is larger than the entire Holy of Holies; on the other hand, later Jewish traditions seem to indicate that the *even ha-shetiyah* only *broke through* in the Holy of Holies, but that the whole Temple stood on it.⁹⁵²

The Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed twice, and its destruction is a multidimensional trauma that still resonates in Jewish communities. For example, R. Amram Blau of NK maligns Zionists for being “proud descendants of the infamous hoodlums” whom he holds responsible for the destruction of both temples. The First temple could have been spared, had the people listened to Jeremiah, who prophesied the Temples imminent destruction as a punishment for their sins. In the historical context of the Second Temple, the refusal to surrender – this time to the Romans – “brought upon the Jews the calamity of the destruction [...] and the exile which followed.”⁹⁵³

⁹⁴⁹ Blidstein 2007, 574.

⁹⁵⁰ Blackman 1963, 295.

⁹⁵¹ Gonen 2003, 116.

⁹⁵² Blidstein 2007, 575.

⁹⁵³ Rabkin 2006, 69.

Simon Goldhill reflects on the evergreen dream in Judaism of a “new house, grander and loftier”. Even when the Temple existed, there were dreams of rebuilding a new and purer one;⁹⁵⁴ as if the Temple always served as a medium for the existential restlessness.

There is a conviction that whether there is a temple or not, whether there is ongoing worship or not, the divine presence, God’s incarnation in the world, dwells on the Temple Mount. *Exodus Rabbah* 2:2 records: “R. Aha stated: *The Shekhinah* has never moved from the Western Wall, as it says “Look who stands past our wall!” A tradition recorded in *Zohar II 5b* portrays the Divine Presence as the guardian of Israel:

R. Yehuda said: *the Shekhinah* has never departed from the Western Wall of the Temple, as it says, Look! This one is standing past our wall and it is the head of faith of the whole world. From the head of Shnir and Hermon (Songs 4:8) From the place that the Torah goes out to the world. And why [has the Shekhina never departed]? To protect Israel from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of leopards, from the pagan peoples.

Since the destructions of the temples, first in 586/87 BCE and again in 69-70 CE, dreams of rebuilding the Temple have flared up from time to time. The prevalence of dreams and plans to rebuild the Temple can be perceived – to borrow a metaphor from Aviezer Ravitzky – as a kind of a seismograph, measuring the temperature of the apocalyptic sting in conjunction with access to the Temple Mount.⁹⁵⁵ In 1929, a protest to claim the Western Wall was carried out “with some even publicly advocating rebuilding the Temple”, David E. Guinn notes.⁹⁵⁶ The incident generated reactions and caused riots in Jerusalem, Safed, and Hebron. The violent attack in Hebron known as the *Hebron Massacre*, which is seen as related to this turbulence, is still a thorn in the collective memory of the Jewish

⁹⁵⁴ Goldhill 2005, 52-54.

⁹⁵⁵ Ravitzky uses the metaphor to describe the dynamics of the emphasis of the Threefold oath: “In a paradoxical manner, the appearance of the oaths serves as a kind of seismograph, measuring, as it were, the impact of the land upon the life of the communities.” Ravitsky 1993, 213.

⁹⁵⁶ Guinn 2006, 29.

community in Hebron.⁹⁵⁷ The confrontation over the Western Wall gained its momentum from national and religious undercurrents, which were used for the purpose of “mobilizing the masses and as a unifying banner in the overall struggle over the future of the Holy Land.”⁹⁵⁸

It seems that when the socio-political situation leaves more room for manoeuvre, the dreams to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem flare up; the most notable example of this is the Six Day War, during which no one “could fail to be elated by the great moment for the Jewish people”, for which there was “no other expression” than the “Days of Messiah”, according to R. Yisrael Ariel of the Temple Institute.⁹⁵⁹ The advances were so monumental that “even the secularists called them a miracle”;⁹⁶⁰ the euphoria was “a wider phenomenon, which swept most of Israel”.⁹⁶¹ Since 1967, there have been a handful of attempts to erect a Jewish sanctuary on the Temple Mount or damage the two Muslim shrines currently there.⁹⁶² A quote exemplifies how the war was perceived within the perspective:

It was as if the hand of God was pushing us towards the second stage of *atchalta d'geula* (beginning of redemption) and bringing us to *geula* (redemption). Living through the danger of extermination and seeing the threat lifted miraculously through a stunning victory gives one the feeling that you are part of the historic divine planning, that you are only a tool in the hand of God. And the more you know about Israel's war the more this feeling is reinforced. The miracles that happened during the war and the miracles that are occurring today – until this very moment – convince you that the Six-Day War was another sphere of *hitgalut hashechinah* [revelation of the divine presence]. There is no doubt in my mind that we are living now in *yemot ha-mashiach* [days of the Messiah]. I have no explanation for the shoah. I have no explanation for the War of Independence. I have no other explanation for the

⁹⁵⁷ Auerbach 2009, 127-139.

⁹⁵⁸ Guinn 2006, 29

⁹⁵⁹ Inbari 2009, 36.

⁹⁶⁰ Hertzberg 1986, 87.

⁹⁶¹ Taub 2010, 46.

⁹⁶² Gorenberg 2002, 171-172.

miracles of the Six Day War but the belief that we are a part of the final *geulah*. Both Rav Kook zt'l and Rav Herzog zt'l had the same idea.⁹⁶³

In relation to this study, there is an interesting unbalance between the Haredim and the Hardalim *vis-à-vis* the question of when to rebuild the Temple. To the Haredim, rebuilding the Temple is a question that falls far behind the establishment of a Jewish national body, which is “something we cannot do on our own, before the Messiah comes” to announce “in the name of G-d that the exile is over and the [Threefold] oath is no longer in force”.⁹⁶⁴ Since the Messiah has not yet emerged and made this announcement, it is clear from this point of view, that the State of Israel represents a blasphemy. JAZ has a clear view of how they predict the sequence of events in the messianic age:

Whatever the criteria are for the messiah, it is clear that we have to wait for him, and thus it is certainly wrong to conquer the Holy Land under a movement such as Zionism that does not even claim that any particular person is the messiah. Furthermore, when the messiah does come, all nations will recognize him as the messiah and there will be no war of conquest, as the prophet Isaiah says, “ [...] Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor will they learn war anymore” (Isaiah 2:2-4).⁹⁶⁵

From this quote it can be seen that JAZ dismisses the establishment of a Jewish state by the vehicle of Zionism; a proof of it being a stray path is 1) that it does not have a messianic figure and 2) that it uses military force. Thus, if the Temple of Jerusalem were to be rebuilt, it would simply be more of the same lack of faith.⁹⁶⁶

The Hardal perception of this question is in itself varied. For example, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook taught that returning sovereignty to the Land would be the first step towards redemption, upon which other stages would

⁹⁶³ Ahlberg 1977, 99-100.

⁹⁶⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/messiah1, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁹⁶⁵ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/messiah1, accessed 7.4.2017.

⁹⁶⁶ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

follow. Although he confirms that “there is a precept to build the Temple”, he also warns “those who are burning to rebuild the Temple not to extinguish themselves”:

The building of the Temple is not a commandment for the individual, but for the *Tzibur*, for *Clal Yisrael*. Just as there is a precept to build the Temple, there is a sequence to its fulfillment. The Gemara says, *Israel was commanded with three precepts when they entered the Land: to appoint a King; to annihilate the seed of Amalek; and to build Hashem's chosen house.* [...] I advise all of those people who are burning to rebuild the Temple not to extinguish themselves! First, we have to solidify the Kingdom of Israel.⁹⁶⁷

At the other end of the Hardal spectrum, R. Yisrael Ariel and his *Temple Institute* present as a “short-term goal to rekindle the flame of the Holy Temple in the hearts of mankind” and as a long-term goal to “bring about the building of the Holy Temple in our time”.⁹⁶⁸ The Temple Institute draws parallels between the process of rebuilding the Temple and the process of redemption: “The rebuilding would happen, even if it happens very slowly, and in stages, one step at a time.” The Institute compares the process of redemption to that of a daybreak: “In the beginning, it progresses very slowly... but as it continues, it grows brighter and brighter.”⁹⁶⁹ In this understanding, redemption does not only advance progressively, but it also responds to selected human activities, so much so that redemption is thought to be there “for the taking”:

The opportunity for redemption - *geula* - is also always at hand - for those who seek it urgently, for those who are willing discard their appointment books and personal calendars, jettison their vacation plans, reorder their priorities, and make all holy haste to grab it. When the sense of urgency is upon us, when *geula* is for us the only option, so

⁹⁶⁷ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 283.

⁹⁶⁸ www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm, accessed 24.5.2017.

⁹⁶⁹ www.templeinstitute.org/red_heifer/tenth_red_heifer.htm, accessed 4.4.2017.

compelling that we are "*unable to hesitate*" then redemption is ours for the taking.⁹⁷⁰

6.1.2. THE TEMPLE MOUNT AT PRESENT

"There is nothing as permanent as a temporary solution", a guide in Jerusalem once told me. Jerusalem is a constantly changing environment, it continues to hold a symbolic significance, and it hosts historically and mythically central places in all the three Abrahamic religions. Since Jerusalem became part of the State of Israel in the territorial expansions of the Six Day War in 1967, there has been an ongoing ideological and mythical struggle relating to Jerusalem and more specifically, to the Temple Mount. From a religious Zionist perspective, the Six Day War had two possible outcomes: redemption or destruction. The war is considered to be the most significant factor in the general movement toward the religious right.⁹⁷¹

In her exploration the "superimposition" of new myths and new symbolic meaning of the Jewish Quarter and the Western Wall emerging from the new cultural framework of the State of Israel, Simone Ricca proposes that there has been a calculated transformation of its original religious significance into a national symbol. The street names were changed to create new bonds between the inhabitants of the newly built Jewish Quarter. In the process, not only were the traces of Arab traditions erased, but also the historical Jewish landscape. The process could be explained as an attempt to start history anew by erasing sufficient traces of the old narratives, but at the same time, alluding to the historical roots enough to render the new narratives legitimacy.⁹⁷² Similarly, the traditional religious appeal of the Western Wall was accompanied by a "militaristic symbolism previously attached to the Masada fortress". Since the earliest days of Zionism, the Western Wall has been one of its symbols,

⁹⁷⁰ www.templeinstitute.org/talk/Nisan_8_5770-March_23_2010.htm, accessed 4.4.2017.

⁹⁷¹ New 2002, 138.

⁹⁷² Ricca 2007, 38-39.

complementing the imagery of the pioneering, modern nation with a religious, traditional dimension. During the British Mandate, its importance increased and it became both a symbol of the national struggle of Zionism as well as a source of conflict between the secular and religious interpretations of it. After 1967, its function as a symbol of “the unity of the Jewish people” was emphasized, as well as its religious importance. After 1967, Ricca analyses, the Western Wall “undoubtedly became the central altar of the Israeli state” – both a religious sanctuary and a national monument.⁹⁷³ In more recent decades, the decline of civil religion has made room for new religious communities making new symbolic use of the Western Wall:

With the progressive fading of ‘civil religion’ and of the entire Zionist narrative, new religious communities, often extremist and sometimes devoted to the dream of constructing the Third Temple, have reappropriated the Western Wall. These groups do not represent a return to traditional forms of religiosity, but represent entirely new political subjects whose ideology and symbolism greatly differ from any previous tradition. [...] The ‘master commemorative narrative’ that created the new Jewish Quarter as the symbol of continuity between the ancient past and the modern Jewish state still holds on, though it is now shared by a different constituency.⁹⁷⁴

Simon Goldhill notes that the Temple, “from its very beginning”, has been “tied up with national and religious politics”.⁹⁷⁵ The creative building of story upon story about the Temple “continues throughout the centuries – and it still continues to make up our image of the Temple.”⁹⁷⁶

Ian Lustick analyses that after 1967, “almost all Jewish politicians were constrained to act and speak in accordance with an artfully and seductively contrived fetishization” of Jerusalem, which sought to conceal the drastic expansion of Jerusalem’s municipal boundary. In this project,

⁹⁷³ Ricca 2007, 37-43.

⁹⁷⁴ Ricca 2007, 42-43.

⁹⁷⁵ Goldhill 2006, 25.

⁹⁷⁶ Goldhill 2006, 39.

the settlement of new neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem was a “crucial element”. However, *al-Quds* never became a part of *Yerushalayim*, either as a psychological or political reality, Lustick concludes; by the middle of the 1990s, this was “fully apparent”.⁹⁷⁷ Today, Israel has residual sovereignty, while the Palestinians have custodianship of the Temple Mount.⁹⁷⁸ The *status quo*⁹⁷⁹ decree reserves the Western Wall for Jewish worship and the Temple Mount itself for Muslim worship; hence, only discreet and private Jewish prayer is allowed on the Temple Mount.⁹⁸⁰ After the Al Aqsa Intifada, the Temple Mount was closed to visitors for three years.⁹⁸¹

Understandably, the co-existence on the Temple Mount has been tainted by distrust. After 1967, excavations around the Temple Mount were intensified, awakening the suspicions of the Muslim authorities. There were concerns that the excavations threatened to destabilize the walls of the Temple Mount and bring down the Moslem shrines. The most distrustful proposed that this was *de facto* the intention – a means to clear the Temple Mount, enabling the Third Temple to be built.⁹⁸² Simone Ricca sees archaeology as a tool with which “to create consensus” and “affirm the ‘historic right’ to the land”:

The Western Wall offered Israel an amazing opportunity to strengthen its link with the Jewish Diaspora and to forge a unity between all the different components of its society. It was possible to present it as a site to attract Israeli and Diaspora Jewry, secular and religious, Ashkenazi and Sephardi, soldiers and Hasidim alike.⁹⁸³

JAZ reports that there are around 30 Jewish movements hoping to either rebuild the Temple or reinstitute the ritual sacrifice. These organizations

⁹⁷⁷ Lustick 2008, 283-290.

⁹⁷⁸ For an overview of the recent history of the Temple Mount, see Lundqvist 2008, 202-212.

⁹⁷⁹ *Status quo* is a decree (*firman*) regulating access and control of the religious sites in Jerusalem, issued by the Ottoman sultan Abdul Majid in 1852. Lundqvist 2008, 204.

⁹⁸⁰ Inbari 2009, 169.

⁹⁸¹ www.templeinstitute.org/police_business.htm, accessed 4.4.2017.

⁹⁸² Lundqvist 2008, 206.

⁹⁸³ Ricca 2007, 41-42.

have made “unprecedented achievements” in trying to generate discussion on the *status quo* of the Temple Mount.⁹⁸⁴ The focus of these groups vary; some arrange guided tours and prayer sessions on the Temple Mount, others work towards establishing a synagogue on the Temple Mount or nearby, others work to develop and/or expand the Jewish Quarter and/or the Western Wall.

With regard to the rebuilding of the Temple, the two perspectives of this study assume diametrically opposed strategies. The Haredim, perceiving that the exile is still in force, removes the question from the cause list until the Messiah has arrived to announce the exile ended. For the Hardalim, rebuilding the Temple is on the cause list, but for some, it is higher up on that list than for others. I will now present central arguments for or against rebuilding the Temple at this time.

6.2. THE HARDALIM: BUILDING A TEMPLE FOR GOD

6.2.1. THE TEMPLE PRECEDES THE MESSIAH

The analysis of the Hardal perspective will, naturally, primarily focus on the Temple Institute, which is the foremost organization, group or movement *expressis verbis* dedicated to rebuilding the Temple of Jerusalem. According to Motti Inbari, the Temple Institute has become an “influential force”, even recognized as an official institution by the Israeli Ministry of Education.⁹⁸⁵

That is not to say that the Temple Institute dominates the Hardal understanding of the question, or even represents a mainstream opinion of it. The perspective holds a variety of views on the matter, most of which perceives rebuilding the Temple as one aspect of redemption, but not necessarily the most crucial one. Settling the land and securing the

⁹⁸⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/issues/templemount, accessed 28.2.2017.

⁹⁸⁵ Inbari 2009, 31.

sovereign state have traditionally been seen as vital. This can be understood in light of the teachings of the mentor of the Hardal perspective, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook:

First, sovereignty is returned to the Land. Other stages will follow after this. How long will each of these stages last? It is not specified. [...] When people approach me with this proposition [that the time has come to rebuild the Temple] I say: What you claim doesn't come from an abundance of Torah knowledge on your part, but from the paucity of it. The building of the Temple is not a commandment for the individual, but for the *Tzibur*, for *Clal Yisrael*. Just as there is a precept to build the Temple, there is a sequence to its fulfillment. The Gemara says, *Israel was commanded with three precepts when they entered the Land: to appoint a King; to annihilate the seed of Amalek; and to build Hashem's chosen house.* [...] I advise all of those people who are burning to rebuild the Temple not to extinguish themselves! First, we have to solidify the Kingdom of Israel.⁹⁸⁶

In this excerpt, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook is clear about the order of events and exhorts his students to focus on “solidifying the Kingdom of Israel”, which he goes on to explain as “any Jewish leadership which governs the nation with the consent of the people, as long as it is not implicitly opposed to the Torah.”⁹⁸⁷ In addition, R. Tzvi Kook had a transcendental strategy for how to bring about the rebuilding of the Third Temple. He said: “My father, ZT”L, said that since groundless hatred caused the destruction of the Second Temple, we must increase unconditional *ahavah* [love], to bring about the Temple’s rebuilding.”⁹⁸⁸

Why R. Yisrael Ariel came to a different conclusion is a question that remains unanswered; perhaps R. Ariel was unaware of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook’s teachings on this matter; perhaps he did not appreciate R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook as an authority; or perhaps the experience of losing Yamit caused him to doubt that the path laid out by R. Kook was viable. When

⁹⁸⁶ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 283.

⁹⁸⁷ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 284.

⁹⁸⁸ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 63. The idiom is also referenced by David Singer (1996, 8-9).

considering that the process of redemption to the Hardalim is an ongoing cosmic battle – for example, with 1967 representing an advancement of the process while 1973 being perceived as a backlash – it is not impossible that all three are true. R. Ariel may have both respected R. Kook, been aware of his teachings regarding the rebuilding of the Temple, but perceived the existential conditions altered, prompting a reassessment of the priorities. Furthermore, R. Kook’s teaching on the matter leaves some doors open for interpretation. For example, R. Kook teaches:

This is a clear order, not a haphazard arrangement. The meaning of erasing Amalek, and just who is this among the nations of the world, has not been clarified, but it is clear that the establishment of sovereignty, that is to say, national rule, precedes building the Temple, though it is not specified by how many years.⁹⁸⁹

Although there can be no doubt R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook replied disapprovingly to the idea of rebuilding the Temple, the above excerpt leaves room for interpretation: was Amalek erased in the war of 1967, when the State of Israel fought off a joint attack by its neighbours? Was the national rule established at the birth of the State of Israel? If yes, both conditions he mentions as preceding the building of the Temple had been fulfilled by 1967. And if so, R. Yisrael Ariel did not have to disregard R. Kook’s teachings in founding and leading the Temple Institute towards rebuilding the Temple.

One of the closest students⁹⁹⁰ of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, R. Shlomo Aviner of the yeshiva *Ateret Yerushalaim* (formerly *Ateret Cohanim*), has positioned himself quite differently *vis-à-vis* this topic: R. Aviner shares R. Ariel’s understanding of redemption as a process⁹⁹¹ and believed that the dry bones were being resurrected and brought back to life in this time (Ezek. 37:1-14).⁹⁹² He affirms with “absolute certitude” that the redemption has

⁹⁸⁹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 283.

⁹⁹⁰ Firestone 2012, 293.

⁹⁹¹ www.ravaviner.com/2014/05/starts-and-stops-in-redemption.html, accessed 5.4.2017.

⁹⁹² Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, xviii.

begun and that there is nothing “in the realm of the secret or hidden”.⁹⁹³ However, R. Aviner believes that redemption is being held back “by strict justice”,⁹⁹⁴ and he partook in issuing a rabbinical ban on entering the Temple Mount, and considers it “an affront to both the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and Gedolei Israel” to do so.⁹⁹⁵

Hence, the Hardal perspective holds a spectrum of views on how to relate to the Temple Mount and the rebuilding of the Temple. Below follows a presentation of the central arguments.

R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook passed away in 1984. Three years later, in 1987, R. Yisrael Ariel founded *the Temple Institute*. R. Ariel acknowledges that the historical impulse that caused him to found the institute was his experiences at the Temple Mount during the Six Day War, twenty years earlier:

No one who was privileged enough to witness this moment, and whose feet stood on the Lord’s mountain after thousands of years of Jewish absence, could fail to be elated by the great moment for the Jewish people. These are the Days of Messiah – there is no other expression for it. [...] I arrived at the Western Wall, and below me I saw two old men – none other than my two rabbis and teachers from the yeshiva, Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Kook ZTS”L [“may the memory of righteous be blessed”] and the “Reclusive Rabbi” ZTS”L [David HaCohen]. We embraced and stood with tears running down our cheeks, in complete silence, sensing that Messiah was still on the way – it would just take another hour or two.⁹⁹⁶

An hour or two did pass by, however, without the Messiah arriving, and R. Yisrael Ariel experienced a “sense of letdown.”⁹⁹⁷ R. Ariel subsequently heard a voice from heaven explaining that Messiah was unable to come until the Temple had been rebuilt and that it was now in the hands of the

⁹⁹³ Tal 2002, 142.

⁹⁹⁴ www.ravaviner.com/search/label/Mashiach, accessed 5.4.2017.

⁹⁹⁵ www.ravaviner.com/search/label/Temple%20Mount, accessed 5.4.2017.

⁹⁹⁶ Inbari 2009, 36.

⁹⁹⁷ www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm#directors accessed 7.4.2017.

Jewish people to rebuild it. Although this experience was profound and clarifying, it took R. Ariel several years to come up with a strategy of how to put this information into action.⁹⁹⁸

Through the years, the more I studied, the more I began to understand that we had only ourselves and our own inaction to hold accountable: G-d does not intend for us to wait for a day of miracles. We are expected to act. We must accomplish that with which we have been charged: to do all in our power to prepare for the rebuilding of the Holy Temple, and the renewal of the divine service.⁹⁹⁹

The Temple Institute is a non-profit educational and religious organization dedicated to “every aspect of the biblical commandment to build the Holy Temple on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem”. The Institute expresses its plan of action as follows:

Our short-term goal is to rekindle the flame of the Holy Temple in the hearts of mankind through education. Our long-term goal is to do all in our limited power to bring about the building of the Holy Temple in our time.¹⁰⁰⁰

Previously, I described the Hardal understanding of redemption as a gradual process.¹⁰⁰¹ Following as a logical derivation of this understanding, the Temple Institute concludes that rebuilding the Temple is also a gradual process. Therefore, it has defined as its primary objective to “rekindle the

⁹⁹⁸ Inbari 2009, 37. Among the paratroops on the Temple Mount that day was also Gershon Solomon, presently leader of the *Temple Mount & Land of Israel Faithful*. Interestingly, Solomon too experienced a divine calling to rebuild the Temple. The similarities between the accounts of R. Yisrael Ariel and R. Gershon Solomon are remarkable: “Tears of joy and excitement filled out eyes when we stood in front of the Holy of Holies on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. As we stood there, I once again heard the call of G-d: *From this moment and most holy place I saved your life. Build my house so I will again dwell among My people Israel and among my creation.* This was the moment I had prepared myself for all my life. We felt the presence of G-d so strongly among us.” <http://templemountfaithful.org/articles/gershon-salomon-and-the-1967-six-day-war.php>, accessed 5.4.2017.

⁹⁹⁹ www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm#Rabbi-Ariel, accessed 10.5.2017.

¹⁰⁰⁰ www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm, accessed 23.1.2011.

¹⁰⁰¹ See Chpt. 2 and 5.

flame” for the Temple in people’s hearts, but also expects the project to advance gradually:

The rebuilding [of the Temple] would happen, even if it happens very slowly, and in stages, one step at a time. For like the morning dawn, “such is the way of Israel’s redemption. In the beginning, it progresses very slowly... but as it continues, it grows brighter and brighter.”¹⁰⁰²

While the Haredi perspective believes that to deserve redemption, the Jewish people must repent and live in humble obedience to God, the Hardal perspective strongly believes in the ability of the Jewish people to contribute constructively to the process of redemption; redemption is “ours for the taking” for those who “make holy haste to grab it”.¹⁰⁰³ One way to contribute to the unfolding redemption is to assist in the rebuilding the Temple, which can be done in a number of ways – of raising awareness of it, gathering funds, conducting research, and working for Jewish access to the Temple Mount. The Haredi perspective stressed that the Temple cannot be rebuilt before the Messiah emerges; the Temple Institute, on the contrary, indicates – with reference to Malachi, among other sources – that the Messiah will emerge *after* the Temple has been rebuilt:

In fact, if there really is a question as to “Which comes first, the messiah or the Temple,” there seems to be ample indication that the building of the Holy Temple will precede the messiah’s arrival. Various Biblical verses and statements made by the great sages prove this. This is actually the opinion of Maimonides, who quotes an astounding verse from the prophecy of Malachi (3:1) in his classic Letter to Yemen: “For suddenly the master whom you are seeking will come to his sanctuary.”¹⁰⁰⁴

However, the Temple Institute today stresses that the Messiah will appear at a time of God’s choosing; it depends on the will of God alone. There are prophecies relaying how redemption will proceed, and there are

¹⁰⁰² www.templeinstitute.org/red_heifer/tenth_red_heifer.htm, accessed 12.3.2015.

¹⁰⁰³ www.templeinstitute.org/talk/Nisan_8_5770-March_23_2010.htm, accessed 9.5.2017.

¹⁰⁰⁴ www.templeinstitute.org/messiah_temple.htm, accessed 5.4.2017.

commandments incumbent on the Jewish people. Hence, the Temple Institute sees their activity towards rebuilding the Temple as a step towards the fulfillment of prophecy, the eventual emergence of the Messiah, but it nonetheless sees as its primary motivator the *commandment* to build the Temple.¹⁰⁰⁵ However, when R. Yisrael Ariel founded the Temple Institute, he concluded,

G-d does not intend for us to wait for a day of miracles. We are expected to act. We must accomplish that with which we have been charged: to do all in our power to prepare for the rebuilding of the Holy Temple, and the renewal of the divine service.¹⁰⁰⁶

Hence, from the establishment of the Institute in 1984 until today, there seem to have been a development in how the impact of its activities *vis-à-vis* redemption are viewed; it seems that it has moved away from what Ravitzky, Novak, Eisen and Myer would describe as a form of active messianism to a form of passive messianism. Although it is still highly engaged in the same spectre of activism, it seems the Institute today perceives that the process of redemption is not “dependent on anything other than the will of G-d alone”; this in contrast to its earliest years, when R. Yisrael Ariel stressed the importance of not waiting for a day of miracles, but to do “all within our power”. This would prepare the way for the Messiah, which – he believed – was the lack that caused the anti-climax in 1967: “After all, we have arrived at the threshold of the Holy Temple: we are standing at the Western Wall - where is the Messiah?”¹⁰⁰⁷

6.2.2. TO BUILD THE TEMPLE IS A COMMANDMENT

The Temple Institute stresses the *perpetual* obligation to fulfil all of the 613 commandments of the Torah, of which the commandment to build a sanctuary for God is one. The Temple Institute refers to Maimonides as

¹⁰⁰⁵ www.templeinstitute.org/messiah_temple.htm, accessed 5.4.2017.

¹⁰⁰⁶ www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm#Rabbi-Ariel, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹⁰⁰⁷ www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm#Rabbi-Ariel, accessed 5.4.2017.

“an invaluable source”, who is held in “universal huge regard by the Jewish people”.¹⁰⁰⁸ His principal work, *Mishneh Torah*, “deals extensively” with the laws of the service and the structure of the Temple, down to specific dimensions and qualifications for the vessels.¹⁰⁰⁹

Rebuilding the Temple “is a commandment binding upon all of Israel to fulfil, in every generation.”¹⁰¹⁰ This commandment is not only important *per se*, but roughly one-third of all the other commandments depend on the existence of a Temple and a temple cult:

The Jewish people accepted the “Yoke of Heaven,” the structure of their relationship with the Creator and their spiritual responsibility, at the Mount Sinai revelation. This relationship is based on Israel's acceptance and fulfillment of the Torah's 613 Divine commandments. But in fact, fully one third - 202 of these commandments - are totally dependent on the existence of the Holy Temple for their fulfillment.¹⁰¹¹

Although the Temple Institute innovatively makes use of new possibilities both for concrete solutions and for the abstract challenge of “rekindling the flame of the Holy Temple in the hearts of mankind”, it emphasizes its ancient roots in scripture and tradition:

The basis of the Institute's work is the commandment given to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai, *And they shall make for Me a Sanctuary, and I will dwell amongst them (Ex. 25:8)*. The Institute's efforts towards preparing for the Temple in our time can be compared to the preparations that were done in the days of the tabernacle and later, by King David.¹⁰¹²

In practice, the Temple Institute conducts research on objects related to the Temple, so that they may be reproduced as authentically as possible to the

¹⁰⁰⁸ www.templeinstitute.org/rambam.htm, accessed 5.12.2014.

¹⁰⁰⁹ www.templeinstitute.org/rambam.htm, accessed 5.4.2017.

¹⁰¹⁰ www.templeinstitute.org/messiah_temple.htm, accessed 23.2.2017.

¹⁰¹¹ www.templeinstitute.org/statement.htm, accessed 23.2.2017.

¹⁰¹² www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm, accessed 23.1.2011.

ones uses in the First and Second Temple.¹⁰¹³ Many of the vessels and garments needed for the Temple service have already been reproduced.¹⁰¹⁴ Construction plans for the Chamber of Hewn Stone and the Sanhedrin assembly hall are presented on the website as “the greatest progress towards rebuilding the Holy Temple in our time”.¹⁰¹⁵ The mission is summarized thus: “The Temple Institute was founded on the principle of action. Its goal is to provide a basis in research, planning and infrastructure for the Third Temple.”¹⁰¹⁶

In *Sefer ha-Mitzvot*, Maimonides explains the commandment, “Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them” (Ex. 25:8). The Temple Institute adduces this commandment as the “the basis of the institute’s work”¹⁰¹⁷. Maimonides elaborates:

By this injunction we are commanded to build a Sanctuary for His service. The sacrifices are to be offered and the perpetual fire is to burn, tither the [prescribed] pilgrimages are to be made, and there the festivals and assemblages are to be held every year, as will be explained. This injunction is contained in His words (exalted be He), And let them make Me a sanctuary. [...] Thus it has been made clear to you that the building of the Sanctuary is a distinct commandment in itself.¹⁰¹⁸

The 613 mitzvot of the Torah form the cornerstone of Judaism.¹⁰¹⁹ The first mention of a precise number of commandments appears in *BT Makkot 23b*, where R. Simlai (ca 250-290 CE) observed that 613 commandments were communicated to Moses, 365 negative commandments corresponding to the number of days in the solar year, and 248 positive commandments, corresponding to the number of parts of the human body.¹⁰²⁰ Further, The

¹⁰¹³ www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm#research, accessed 28.5.2011.

¹⁰¹⁴ These objects are presented in Ariel & Richman 2005, 47-64.

¹⁰¹⁵ www.templeinstitute.org/blueprints-for-the-holy-temple.htm, accessed 29.5.2011.

¹⁰¹⁶ www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm, 23.1.2011, 03:22

¹⁰¹⁷ www.templeinstitute.org/about.htm, accessed 23.2.2017.

¹⁰¹⁸ ben Maimon & Chavel 2003, 27.

¹⁰¹⁹ Eisenberg 2010, xix.

¹⁰²⁰ Eisenberg 2010, xxi.

Temple Institute interprets that it is the teaching of Maimonides that Israel is *perpetually* obliged to fulfil each one of these 613 *mitzvot*:

Maimonides teaches (Sefer Igeret Ha'Shmad) that the performance of all the commandments are not dependent on the coming of the messiah. They are to be fulfilled at all times. G-d does not change His mind, or nullify any of the commandments included in the Torah, which were given once, for all time. In lieu of Temple service, we may observe various "remembrances" of these commandments, but that is all they are - merely gestures of nostalgia.¹⁰²¹

This emphasis resonates well with the teachings of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, who stressed that the Torah can only be genuinely kept in *Eretz Yisrael*: "In every other place, the commandments are imposed as a way of reminder, so that when we return to Israel, we will know how to keep them," R. Kook taught.¹⁰²² It also seems Maimonides seemed to view rebuilding the Temple as a commandment upon those Jews returning to *Eretz Yisrael* from exile:

The Sifré says: "The Israelites were obliged to fulfil three Commandments upon their entry into the Land: to appoint a king over themselves, to build the Sanctuary, and to annihilate the offspring of Amalek.' (Deut. 17:15, Sifré). Thus it has been made clear to you that the building of the Sanctuary is a distinct Commandment in itself. We have already explained that this general injunction includes particular precepts, and that the candlestick, the Table, the Altar and the other [vessels and appurtenances] are all called "the Sanctuary", although there is a specific regulation for each and every part.¹⁰²³

The Temple Institute connects another quote from Maimonides's *Sefer Ha-Mitzvot*, describing the function of the House, which the Jewish people have been commanded to build for God's service: to receive the sacrificial offerings and to host the processions and festive pilgrimages that are to be conducted there three times a year.¹⁰²⁴ The Institute instructs that there

¹⁰²¹ www.templeinstitute.org/statement.htm, accessed 23.2.2017.

¹⁰²² Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 115.

¹⁰²³ ben Maimon & Chavel 2003, 27.

¹⁰²⁴ www.templeinstitute.org/biblical_sources.htm, accessed 5.4.2017.

are three important lessons to be learned from this: firstly, that the commandment to build the Temple was instated to ensure the offering of sacrifices; it is a perpetual commandment, passed down from generation to generation. Secondly, the Temple is one precept, constituted by all its components, including the vessels. Thirdly, the acknowledged blueprint for the Temple is found in *BT Middot*.¹⁰²⁵

Intimately connected to the commandment to build the Temple, is the commandment to *revere* the Temple, which the Temple Institute understands as visiting the Temple. The Institute concludes, citing Maimonides, that the positive commandment to visit the site of the Holy Temple applies to every generation, whether the Temple as a building exists or not ,:¹⁰²⁶

In spite of the fact that the Holy Temple is now in a state of destruction as a result of our transgressions, one is nonetheless obligated to conduct himself with reverence, just as he would have done, when the Holy Temple was standing. [...] Just as the observance of Shabbat is an eternal commandment, so too the commandment to revere the Holy Temple is applicable today and forever. Although the Holy Temple is currently in a state of destruction, its sanctity remains.¹⁰²⁷

Visiting the Temple was not, in Maimonides' opinion, to be a casual activity, but rather a deeply emotional experience of attempting to approach God. *BT Berachot 54a* defined reverence as meaning "One may not enter the Temple Mount with his staff, or his sandals, or his wallet or with the dust upon his feet, nor may he make of it a short cut; still less may he spit there". When leaving the Temple, the worshiper always moved toward the exit walking backward, so as never to turn his back on the Holy of Holies.¹⁰²⁸

¹⁰²⁵ www.templeinstitute.org/biblical_sources.htm, accessed 5.4.2017.

¹⁰²⁶ www.templeinstitute.org/rambam.htm, accessed 23.2.2017.

¹⁰²⁷ www.templeinstitute.org/reverence.htm, accessed 23.2.2017.

¹⁰²⁸ www.templeinstitute.org/rambam.htm, accessed 23.2.2017.

The custom of leaving the sanctuary backward is still practiced today. The Temple Institute discusses the practice on how to ascend the Temple Mount in purity. It quotes Maimonides and reminds the reader that those who ascend the Temple Mount should be careful to depart backwards.¹⁰²⁹

Maimonides informs us that biblical commandments and all of their details are eternally incumbent upon Jews. The Holy Temple is no exception; its various elements do not lend themselves to change. Accordingly, the design of God's Sanctuary must necessarily be homogenous for any Holy Temple erected by the nation of Israel in any time in history.¹⁰³⁰

The Temple Institute stresses that Maimonides presents the "universally recognized Torah authority" as an aspect of the positive commandment of revering the Temple, to pay visits to the allowed areas of the Temple Mount. The Institute perceives "no halakhic ruling [...] have the authority to uproot such a principle".¹⁰³¹ But as noted above, many past and contemporary rabbinical authorities have come to a different conclusion as to how to revere the Temple Mount correctly; several bans have been issued, forbidding Jews to ascend the Temple Mount due to ritual impurity. R. Chaim Richman opposes the ban, and issued a response on it on January 23rd, 2005:

To say that there is a prohibition against Jews visiting the Temple Mount is misleading and inaccurate, and does a serious injustice to the many religious Jews, great rabbis among them, who do ascend the Mount today in strict accordance with all the requirements of Jewish law, based for example on the previous halachic ruling of the great Radbaz (Rabbi David ben Zimra, 1479-1573). [...] It should be noted that the great codifier Maimonides establishes as a positive commandment that showing proper reverence (*morah mikdash*) to the holy site of the Temple Mount even in its present state of disrepair means, for example,

¹⁰²⁹ www.templeinstitute.org/rambam.htm, accessed 23.2.2017.

¹⁰³⁰ Ariel 2005, 37.

¹⁰³¹ www.templeinstitute.org/aliya_temple_mount.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

"entering into the permitted areas" (Maim. Hilchot Beit HaBechira Ch. 7, 7).¹⁰³²

The Temple Institute further stresses that Maimonides, when ascending the Temple Mount, obviously avoided the forbidden areas. The terminology Maimonides uses when describing his experience confirms this, according to the Institute: he speaks of entering "the great and holy house", which is a term used in Jewish liturgy for the Holy Temple in reference to the entire Temple Mount area. Had Maimonides entered the Sanctuary, he would have used the term Mikdash, and the Institute concludes that whether or not the Maimonides stayed clear of the forbidden areas "is hardly a question".¹⁰³³ Therefore, following Maimonides's example, a Jew not only may but should show reverence for the Temple by visiting the Temple Mount.

Visiting or refusing to visit the Mount has become a theological marker. In May of 2007, some forty rabbis from the Hardal perspective ascended the Temple Mount to demonstrate their attachment to the Temple Mount.¹⁰³⁴

6.2.3. THE TEMPLE IS CENTRAL TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE

The exclusive sanctity of the Temple Mount relates to a deeply rooted tradition, tied to a specific physiognomy, namely to the stone in the middle of the *Qubbat al-Sakhrah* (the Dome of the Rock). It is identified in both Jewish and Islamic tradition as "the foundation stone",¹⁰³⁵ "the stone upon which the world was woven"¹⁰³⁶, "very centre and foundation of creation"¹⁰³⁷ and the "naval of the earth".¹⁰³⁸ For these reasons, the exact

¹⁰³² www.templeinstitute.org/aliya_temple_mount.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹⁰³³ www.templeinstitute.org/week-of-the-Rambam-4.htm, accessed 20.2.2017.

¹⁰³⁴ Inbari 2009, 17.

¹⁰³⁵ Blidstein 2007, 575.

¹⁰³⁶ Blidstein 2007, 574.

¹⁰³⁷ Ariel & Richman 2005, 24.

¹⁰³⁸ Gonen 2003, 128.

location of the altar is “extremely precise, and can never be changed”, because “our sages teach us that *man was created from the very place that brings about his atonement,*” the Temple Institute explains.¹⁰³⁹ That exact location, however, is difficult to determine today. Alexei M. Sivertsev sees the imagery of the stone changing over time and context:

As we trace the development of the *even shetiyyah* imagery from its inception in Mishnah Yoma to Byzantine midrashic collections such as Tanhuma, we observe a gradual change from purely religious to religio-political symbolism. This development differed somewhat from that in the Babylonian Talmud, in which the Even Shetiyyah acquired cosmological and mythological (but no identifiable political) meaning. In Byzantine Jewish literature, however, the foundation stone has come to symbolize the imperial status of Jerusalem and its Davidic rulers, by projecting onto them images of Byzantine imperial authority and mythology.¹⁰⁴⁰

The Temple Institute argue that peace on earth is related to the Temple on the Temple Mount and that the turmoil of the world – present and previous – is a reflection of the lack of a Temple. R. Chaim Richman of the Temple Institute writes:

Thus the sages of Israel teach that during the entire history of the world, the only period of complete global peace was during the first forty years of Solomon’s Temple. Moreover, that elusive future peace which the whole world longs for is also rooted in the future, rebuilt Holy Temple, as the prophet Haggai declared: “The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, says the Lord of Hosts; and in this place I will give peace, says the Lord of Hosts.” (Haggai 1:9)¹⁰⁴¹

A distinguished feature of the Temple Institute argumentation is the reoccurring emphasis of the universal aspects of the Temple and the

¹⁰³⁹ www.templeinstitute.org/ctl_articles_3.htm, accessed 20.2.2017.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Sivertsev 2011, 74.

¹⁰⁴¹ Ariel, Richman & Makover 1998, 6. According to Richman, the quote is from Haggai 1:9. The correct reference seems to be Haggai 2:9.

temple cult. The interest in the Jewish temple and in the Temple Mount is perceived as a world-wide, spiritual awakening:

Yet the Holy Temple was also a “house of prayer for all nations” (Isaiah 56:4). While it stood, it was the spiritual center for much of the world. And though the Second Temple was destroyed nearly 2,000 years ago, the concept of the Temple has nevertheless remained a source of spiritual power, yearning and longing ever since. [...] The prophecies of the future Temple have become the banner and herald for the war-weary, spiritually-hungry denizens of the world. This belief – that the day would come when the entire world would reach its climax of harmony, unity and fulfillment – sees Jerusalem as the spiritual center and source of light and inspiration for all humanity.¹⁰⁴²

R. Chaim Richman further widens the weight of the Temple to be “the soul and conscience of the entire world”, “light and inspiration for all humanity” and the “focal point for the prayers of all humanity”.¹⁰⁴⁴ The Temple Institute argues that had the nations of the world in time realized how much they needed the Temple, they would have prevented its destruction:

The theme of the Holy Temple’s destruction has made an indelible impression on the psyche of the Jewish People and the entire world. Indeed, the Sages stated, “If the nations of the world had only known how much they needed the Holy Temple,” for it atones for them and brings them closer to the Creator, “they would have surrounded it with armed fortresses to protect it.”¹⁰⁴⁵

The universal dimension of the Temple is, indeed, rooted in tradition: both *Shimon ben Yeshua ben Eliezer ben Sirah* and *the Book of Jubilees* ascribe Adam priesthood. For Philo, the Temple is a microcosm of the universe and a copy of a heavenly reality.¹⁰⁴⁷ R. Chaim Richman of the Temple Institute

¹⁰⁴² Ariel, Richman & Makover 1998, 6-8. Note again, that the reference to Isa 56:4 in BHS occurs in Isa 56:7.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ariel & Richman 2005, 1.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ariel, Richman & Makover 1998, 55.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Hayward 1996, 9.

argues that in the Temple service, the four fundamental aspects of creation function together in harmony:

In the Temple service, all four aspects of creation unite together in the service of God, and thus reach their full potential in fulfilling His will and sanctifying His name. The priest who offers each sacrifice represents humanity; the animal offered, the animal kingdom; the flour, frankincense, libations, etc., the world of plants; and even the inanimate level is represented... for salt must be a part of every sacrifice. Thus, when the Temple stands, all of creation functions in harmony. This is one aspect of how the Temple brings peace to the world: "...and in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of hosts" (Haggai 2:9)¹⁰⁴⁸

The Temple Institute, thus, reads the growing interest in the Temple of Jerusalem world-wide as a sign of the fulfillment of prophecy: "more and more are beginning to realize that the Holy Temple is the only solution for achieving the elusive peace we all desire".¹⁰⁴⁹

This apocalyptic sting can also be read into the reappearing announcements of crucial dates. In 2010, a rumour circulated that the rebuilding of the Temple would commence on March 16th, in accordance with a prophecy by the Gaon of Vilna (R. Eliyahu ben Shlomo, 1720-1797). Supposedly, the Gaon had prophesised that the redemptive process would begin when the Churva synagogue in Jerusalem was built. Indeed, a synagogue was built in 1700 and given the name Churva, but it was destroyed in the War of 1948. The site of its location was annexed by the State of Israel in 1967, and the rebuilt synagogue was supposed to be rededicated on March 15th. From this, the idea was derived that the rebuilding of the Temple would succeed the rebuilding of the Churva synagogue since the Gaon had prophesised that redemption would begin with the Churva synagogue. Although the Temple Institute stresses that the Gaon only *purportedly* declared that the redemptive process would

¹⁰⁴⁸ Richman 1997, 13.

¹⁰⁴⁹ www.templeinstitute.org/red_heifer/introduction.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

begin with the rebuilding of the Churva synagogue in Jerusalem, the imperative derived from the story and the enthusiasm it evokes is clear:

The return to Israel and the rebuilding of Jerusalem are precursors to the great event of the rebuilding of the Holy Temple. Israel today, unlike two hundred years ago, has the means and the authority to do so. The realization of the necessity for the rebuilding of the Holy Temple and the renewal of the Divine service for the spiritual revival and redemption of all humanity, is growing day by day. Both inside Israel and abroad, the longing for the Holy Temple is becoming a powerful voice for change. May it be G-d's will that we soon begin the rebuilding of the Holy Temple, if not before the 16th of March, then not a day later!¹⁰⁵⁰

Simultaneously, the Temple Institute underlines that while there may be encouraging signs that a particular date is the time to take significant steps towards rebuilding the Temple, this should not be seen as a hindrance should an opportunity to rebuild the Temple arise sooner. Since the commandment is perpetual, the Jewish people need not await any specific conditions to be fulfilled:

After all, if March 16th is the projected date, then where is our input? Suppose we want to build the Holy Temple today? And we should so desire, of course, for G-d said, "*Build Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.*" (Exodus 25:8) Build Me - today, not necessarily on March 16th, 2010.¹⁰⁵¹

In a discussion on actual and potential holiness, David Wilder – the spokesperson for the Jewish Community in Hebron – relates that the “actual” sanctity is developed and found in Jerusalem at the site of the Temple, and the light radiating from the Temple Mount “radiates

¹⁰⁵⁰ www.templeinstitute.org/gra-churva-holy-temple.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹⁰⁵¹ www.templeinstitute.org/gra-churva-holy-temple.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

throughout the entire world”; likewise, should it be “dark” in Jerusalem, that darkness would permeate “through all of mankind”.¹⁰⁵⁴

The Temple Institute implies that, after completing the work on the First Temple, King Solomon, “announced that the Holy Temple in Jerusalem was to be at once a place of worship for the Nation of Israel and a house of prayer for all people on Earth.¹⁰⁵⁵ The Temple Institute interprets the growing interest in the Temple as a divinely-inspired revolution that will “precipitate the rebuilding of the Holy Temple”:

In our time, there is a great spiritual awakening concerning the importance of the Temple. The Temple Institute views this awakening as Divinely-inspired, and actively seeks to share the desire and knowledge of the Temple with people around the world, thereby laying the foundation for the spiritual revolution that will precipitate the rebuilding of the Holy Temple... and the fulfillment of this prophecy in our time.¹⁰⁵⁷

6.2.4. THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE TEMPLE

The Temple Institute stresses that “gestures of nostalgia” cannot replace the Temple service, and that the Jewish people should not be content with performing “remembrances”:

Maimonides teaches (Sefer Igeret Ha'Shmad) that the performance of all the commandments are not dependent on the coming of the messiah. They are to be fulfilled at all times. G-d does not change His mind, or nullify any of the commandments included in the Torah, which were given once, for all time. In lieu of Temple service, we may observe various "remembrances" of these commandments, but that is all they are - merely gestures of nostalgia.¹⁰⁵⁸

¹⁰⁵⁴ Wilder 2013, 848. Friday, November 13, 2009: “Hebron-Shabbat Chaye Sarah: The Dream and the Reality”

¹⁰⁵⁵ Ariel & Richman 2005, 1.

¹⁰⁵⁷ www.templeinstitute.org/international.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹⁰⁵⁸ www.templeinstitute.org/statement.htm, accessed 23.2.2017.

This emphasis resonates well with the teachings of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook, who stressed, “the genuine keeping of the Torah is only in *Eretz Yisrael*. In every other place, the commandments are imposed as a way of reminder, so that when we return to Israel, we will know how to keep them.”¹⁰⁵⁹

The Temple Institute further stresses the universal effect of the temple cult in Jerusalem; according to *BT Sukkah 55b*, the seventy bulls offered in the Holy Temple served as atonement for the sins of the seventy nations of the world. “The Creator Himself intended for Sukkot to be a holiday for the whole world”, the Institute concludes.¹⁰⁶⁰ The Institute states that while the Temple stood the gentiles perceived the Temple as a “universal, spiritual center”; King Mounbaz of Armenia donated gold for the construction of the Temple’s vessels, and Queen Helena contributed a golden lamp to suspend over the entrance of the Sanctuary and a golden plate.¹⁰⁶¹ Today, however, there is a “spiritual bankruptcy”:

Sadly, much of our contemporary attitudes regarding the Holy Temple are a reflection of our own spiritual bankruptcy and alienation from the spiritual underpinnings of true Torah knowledge and faith. The Holy Temple was not some magnificent building. It was the direct arena for our direct relationship with G-d; the unfolding saga of man's greatest spiritual longing. It was a place where heaven and earth met; a meeting place for man and G-d.¹⁰⁶²

Although the Temple Institute acknowledges a “great spiritual awakening”, it also perceives a threat “from within and without”. This paradox may stem from the national-religious *mélange*; the merging of two, vivid spheres is bound to pose interpretatory challenges to the Hardal perspective. It is also possible there is a rhetorical grip to uphold the sentiment of standing on the threshold to the apocalypse:

¹⁰⁵⁹ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 115.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Ariel 2005, 181.

¹⁰⁶¹ www.templeinstitute.org/ctl_articles_29.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹⁰⁶² www.templeinstitute.org/statement.htm, accessed 23.2.2017.

Taking a stand for the Holy Temple means taking a stand on the side of Israel and the G-d of Israel, and on the side of all that is good and right in this world. Especially today, when the future of the very Land of Israel itself is threatened from within and without, your support of the Temple can make the difference between a false “peace” and the vision of true peace: “For in this place I will place peace, says the L-rd of Hosts” (Haggai 2:9)¹⁰⁶³

6.2.5. THE TIME IS RIPE TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

Although the Temple Institute often emphasizes that the obligation to rebuild the Temple is independent of the socio-political circumstances, and hence, should be carried out regardless of apocalyptic conjectures, the Temple Institute also implies that the situation at present is uniquely equipped to fulfil G-d’s promise of redemption:

Ours is a truly marvelous generation. What a splendid rectification for these days of mourning for the Holy Temple: Rather than continue to cry and witness the endless cycle of mourning, we have the opportunity to contribute to the fulfillment of the promise of Israel's destiny...and the fulfillment of G-d's promise of redemption for all humanity.¹⁰⁶⁴

The Temple Institute perceives a divinely inspired, “great spiritual awakening” among all peoples of the world concerning the importance of the Temple. R. Chaim Richman states that the Temple Institute “actively seeks to share the desire and knowledge of the Temple”, thereby “laying the foundation for the spiritual revolution that will precipitate the rebuilding of the Holy Temple and the fulfillment of this prophecy in our time.”¹⁰⁶⁵ R. Yisrael Ariel relates, “the Jewish people is anxiously awaiting the building of the Third Temple. [...] May the Temple be rebuilt speedily, in our days!”¹⁰⁶⁶

¹⁰⁶³ www.templeinstitute.org/donate.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹⁰⁶⁴ www.israelnationalnews.com/Blogs/Message.aspx/7288#.ViXigqTF83g, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹⁰⁶⁵ www.templeinstitute.org/international.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Ariel, Richman & Makover 1998, 5.

Although the Temple Institute perceives the world to be “approaching climatic times”, it emphasizes that whether or not the Temple is rebuilt in the foreseeable future, the challenge is whether or not to be an “active participant” rather than “simply [a] spectator” in the process of redemption:

The reality of the Jewish experience means that the Temple will be rebuilt. Many people who visit the Temple Institute are incredulous and cannot help but exclaim: “Do you really think that you will live to see the Holy Temple rebuilt?” The answer to that question is of little importance. Let us rather recall that Jewish history has a trajectory, which began when the patriarch Abraham smashed his father’s idols. That trajectory has spanned the millennia, and it is obvious that we are rapidly approaching climactic times, in which the Holy Temple will once again become the focal point of mankind’s spiritual focus. Whether this transpires in our generation or not, we can still choose to be active participants, and not simply spectators, in G-d’s bold plan for the Redemption of Israel and all humanity.¹⁰⁶⁷

The tone of restlessness perceivable in the message of the Temple Institute may have its grounds in the analyses of Mayer Gruber, who concludes that the more time passes since the miraculous 1967, the more acute the sense of redemption slipping through one’s fingers becomes:

[C]oncomitantly, as the second millennium C.E. draws to a close, some Jews firmly believe that Israel’s failure to establish a Jewish presence on the Temple Mount itself may irrevocably turn back the clock and prevent the arrival of the messiah. Jerusalem and the Temple Mount thus retain the mythic place that they have held within Judaism for more than two thousand years.¹⁰⁶⁸

The Temple Institute seems to have found a balance between upholding the apocalyptic tension and at the same time managing the delicate transition into an established institution. Its definition of its task, to rebuild the Temple to aid the process of redemption in accordance with the

¹⁰⁶⁷ www.templeinstitute.org/statement.htm, accessed 23.2.2017.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Gruber 2005, 1201.

mitzvah, can accommodate both these aspects without losing either the restless zealots or the mature diplomats:

People often ask, how close are we to the rebuilding of the Holy Temple? The irrefutable answer is, we are one day closer than we were just one day ago. This is not a chronological fact, for there are no guarantees. It is a reflection of the determined efforts being made by the Temple Institute and others who work in the certainty that the building of the Holy Temple is both attainable and imperative.¹⁰⁶⁹

6.2.6. THE RED HEIFER CONTROVERSY

The sacrificial system in the Temple served two purposes: it 1) expressed the intimate relationship between God and Israel and 2) restored the relationship when disrupted by sin. The offering could both be one of thanksgiving and of atonement, collectively or individually. David Hartman explains:

The sin offerings were not concerned with redemption of the community or with salvation of the individual. The key concept is not redemption or salvation, but an atonement that restores the intimacy with God after it has been disrupted by sin or defilement.¹⁰⁷⁰

The sacrificial system is thus integrated into the relationship between God and his people. The validity of the cult is intimately connected to its *purity*. In order for a sacrifice to be pure, the temple cult in which it is brought before God must be in accordance with the purity laws of the Mosaic legislation. One component in the vast corpus of purity laws is the rites for purifying oneself from corpse contamination. This rite requires the use of the ashes from a burnt red heifer (Num. 19:1-13, according to the NIV translation):

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: "This is a requirement of the law that the LORD has commanded: Tell the Israelites to bring you a red heifer without defect or blemish and that has never been under a yoke.

¹⁰⁶⁹ www.templeinstitute.org/talk/Iyar_1_5771-May_5_2011.htm, accessed 5.4.2017.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Hartman 1987, 232.

[...] While he watches, the heifer is to be burned—its hide, flesh, blood and intestines. The priest is to take some cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet wool and throw them onto the burning heifer. [...] A man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and put them in a ceremonially clean place outside the camp. They are to be kept by the Israelite community for use in the water of cleansing; it is for purification from sin. [...] This will be a lasting ordinance both for the Israelites and for the foreigners residing among them. Whoever touches a human corpse will be unclean for seven days. They must purify themselves with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then they will be clean.

Susan Haber analyses that the many references to the ritual of purifying people and objects by using the ashes of the red heifer attests to its significance in early Judaism.¹⁰⁷¹ Haber notes that the “importance of the temple in Josephus’s writings cannot be denied”; he describes the use of the red heifer ashes for purification from corpse contamination in *Antiquities of the Jews* 4.80.¹⁰⁷²

The preparations of the ashes are also discussed in 4Q Miqsat Ma’aseh ha-Torah (4QMMT). In 1QS, the sprinkling of the purification water – that is, water mixed with the ashes of the red heifer – is used as a metaphor for God sprinkling the truth on the individual and purifying him with the spirit of holiness (1QS IV, 20-22).¹⁰⁷³

When the Temple was destroyed the sacrificial order was interrupted, and tradition had to adapt to the new conditions. Closer to our time, along with the interpretation of the State of Israel as the “sprouting of our redemption”,¹⁰⁷⁴ the aspirations to rebuild the Temple and reinstitute the sacrificial order have given the purification rites a new weight. It has been suggested that the sacrificial order cannot be resumed without the red

¹⁰⁷¹ Haber 2008, 154.

¹⁰⁷² Haber 2008, 34.

¹⁰⁷³ Haber 2008, 62; 102.

¹⁰⁷⁴ In the Chief Rabbinate’s prayer for the State of Israel, it is referred to as “the beginning of the sprouting of our redemption”. Marc Saperstein notes that the phrase “unmistakably identifies the State as a protagonist in *Heilsgeschichte* as well as in *Realpolitik*.” Saperstein 1990, 120.

heifer ashes, and hence, rebuilding the Temple should be a secondary concern to that of producing the ashes – whether that means finding a perfect red heifer somewhere in the world, breeding one or conducting archaeological searches to find ashes hidden away.

There is some controversy as to how necessary the ashes really are. The Temple Institute concludes that it would “certainly be desirable” to find the original ashes and for them to be proven authentic. However, the efforts being made to find the original ashes reveal that – even if not impossible to reinstitute the sacrificial order without the ashes – the Temple Institute do consider it to be important:

If a portion of those ashes were indeed set aside for the future sanctification of Israel, then perhaps they shall be found. Or, perhaps they will only be revealed through Divine intervention; perhaps when the Messiah arrives he will identify their location. It would certainly be desirable for all of Israel if the original ashes could be located and proven to be authentic beyond any doubt.¹⁰⁷⁵

A legend holds that upon the Roman invasion, the community in Qumran hid red heifer ashes and encrypted information about its location into the Copper Scroll (Q3). Therefore, projects and expeditions have been undertaken to decipher the text of the scroll and find the hidden stash. The Temple Institute relates that many expeditions have been conducted towards finding the ashes:

To this end, many people are aware that in recent years, certain individuals and groups have embarked upon numerous expeditions, most of them centered around a particular location in Israel, where it is believed that the ashes of the red heifer may have been hidden. Most of the evidence for this belief comes from a particular interpretation of passages in the Copper Scroll, one of the well-known and most cryptic Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in one of the Qumran caves in 1952. These scrolls were found in a series of caves in and around the desert area of

¹⁰⁷⁵ www.templeinstitute.org/red_heifer/original_ashes.htm, accessed 24.2.2017.

Qumran. Presumably, they were authored by members of the Essene community at the close of the Second Temple period.¹⁰⁷⁶

Eyal Regev notes a difference between Scripture and the Dead Sea Scroll 4QMMT. While the ritual according to Scripture is not limited to individuals of a specific degree of purity, 4QMMT instructs that only a person in the state of *ha'arivut shemeh* (a state of utter purity) may perform the ritual.¹⁰⁷⁷ With the Qumran society being so meticulous regarding purity, and so critical of the cult in Jerusalem, one might question the theory that the society – upon the Roman invasion – would embark on the mission to ensure the safekeeping of these ashes.

Jeanette Greenfield states that the Copper Scroll, discovered in 1952, did contain what appeared to be an inventory in Hebrew. This inventory was considered to be items from the Temple of Jerusalem, rescued prior to its destruction in 70 CE.¹⁰⁷⁸ The Temple Institute states that the scroll also mentions a container of ashes of the red heifer:

Some have claimed to have discovered "linguistic" evidence that proves Qumran is the site described in this scroll, known as Wadi HaKippah, and that "Cave #4" is the "Cave of the Column" whose entrance is described in the Copper Scroll. It is believed that this scroll was hidden along with items from the Holy Temple just before the destruction by the Roman legions in the year 70 A.D. The scroll relates that vessels and treasures, as well as a container of ashes of the red heifer, were taken from the Holy Temple before the destruction and hidden in this area.¹⁰⁷⁹

Another theory, which Jeanette Greenfield describes as “different, but intriguing” – is that the list of items is actually a list of self-taxation, collected by the Jews after the destruction of the Temple. The collection, however, is believed to have fallen into the hands of Emperor Nerva (CE 96-98). The Roman victory is attested to by a Roman coin, struck in

¹⁰⁷⁶ www.templeinstitute.org/red_heifer/original_ashes.htm, accessed 24.2.2017.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Regev 2007, 138.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Greenfield 1996, 248.

¹⁰⁷⁹ www.templeinstitute.org/red_heifer/original_ashes.htm, accessed 5.4.2017.

commemoration of it. Greenfield assesses that this theory is “said better to fit the language of the copper scroll and its palaeography, both of which date it as after the destruction of the Temple.”¹⁰⁸⁰

Looking for ashes in the desert may seem like a hopeless project, but – as we have seen – the Temple Institute is optimistic that, if not by natural means, a divine intervention will provide the ashes. Should the red heifer ashes neither be found nor provided by divine providence, there is another possibility: to *produce* the ashes. The Temple Institute states:

But in the meantime, let the truth be known: there is nothing to stop the people of Israel from raising a new red heifer, from birth, and preparing it in the manner we have described in these pages, and raising children in purity to carry out the procedure - even without the original ashes. On the contrary: we may be in doubt as to the true nature of any discovery that is unearthed whose authenticity cannot be completely verified. But a perfect heifer, born and raised under a controlled environment, would be fit to be used for the Temple. And that is precisely what is being done today.¹⁰⁸¹

In August 2015, the Temple Institute launched an *Indie GoGo* campaign to raise \$125,000 to “produce a kosher Red Heifer” towards “restoring the state of purity that will enable the rebuilding of the Holy Temple.” This is, the Institute explains, its most ambitious project to date, which will enable the return of biblical purity to the world – “an integral part of the prophesied promise of the elevation of unity of all humanity.”¹⁰⁸²

Interestingly, the Temple Institute here moves away from ethnic particularism towards a universalism that brings the mysticism of R. Abraham Y. Kook to mind. This raises the question: does this signal a shift in the evolving Hardal ideotheology? Is it a revival of the Kookist legacy, an expression of globalization, or an appeal to a wider public?

¹⁰⁸⁰ Greenfield 1996, 248.

¹⁰⁸¹ www.templeinstitute.org/red_heifer/original_ashes.htm, accessed 5.4.2017.

¹⁰⁸² www.indiegogo.com/projects/raise-a-red-heifer-in-israel#/, accessed 5.4.2017.

6.3. THE HAREDIM: AWAITING A TEMPLE FROM GOD

6.3.1. THE TEMPLE CANNOT BE REBUILT WITHOUT DIVINE GUIDANCE

A practical objection to rebuilding the Temple is that the project depends on divine guidance, presumably given by the Messiah. The measurements of the Temple given in 1 Kings 6-7 and 2 Chronicles 3-4 are given in cubits, a unit which scholarship to this day has not been able to determine precisely. This results in a vagueness regarding the exact position of the Holy of Holies, a question which “goes to the heart of the politics of reconstruction concerning the Temple”, Simon Goldhill accounts:

What fuels this debate is not just religious or archaeological nicety, but also claims of origin, ownership and authority – life and death matters. For those involved in these arguments of ‘accuracy’ has become an ideologically charged issue which is debated with a ferocity that can seem out of all proportion.¹⁰⁸³

The Haredim do not debate over how to achieve architectural accuracy when rebuilding the Temple, but simply stress that in the view of Maimonides, only the Messiah can achieve it. The Haredim, thus, are content with relying on Maimonides – to them, it is superfluous to discuss it further:

The Rambam (Maimonides) says that only the messiah may build it, after he is recognized by the entire world as G-d's messenger based on clear criteria. But there is no opinion that holds that Jews will at any time force the building of the Temple on any other people.¹⁰⁸⁴

This quote displays the interconnection between the Temple and redemption in the Haredi perspective. Without the Messiah, it cannot be rebuilt, and the Messiah will be accompanied by metaphysical traits that leave no margin for doubt – the *entire world* will recognize him. Therefore,

¹⁰⁸³ Goldhill 2006, 26.

¹⁰⁸⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/alaqsadig, accessed 10.11.2017.

to implement the project no force would have to be used. From this, we see the distinction between the two views of redemption – the Hardalim understand redemption as involving natural, political processes, and the Haredim await a redemption marked by miraculous interventions.

From this, it is also understandable that the Haredim refuse the Hardal interpretation of redemption altogether; if the State of Israel was indeed an expression of redemption, it would not have entailed all the wars and conflicts that have arisen since its birth. The necessity of a military apparatus, from this point of view, testifies to the deceptiveness of the Hardal understanding of redemption.

6.3.2. IT IS FORBIDDEN TO ENTER THE TEMPLE MOUNT

One of the strongest and most widely accepted arguments presented by the Haredim against rebuilding the Temple is the prohibition against entering the Temple site altogether. The state of exile is traditionally perceived as combined with a state of ritual impurity,¹⁰⁸⁵ and as the sanctity of the Temple Mount is unaffected by the destruction of the Temple, according to Maimonides,¹⁰⁸⁶ a range of rabbinic authorities have prohibited Jews from entering the Temple Mount. A rabbinical ban was issued in 2005,¹⁰⁸⁷ and it was renewed by the Chief Rabbinate in 2013.¹⁰⁸⁸ The ruling, initiated by the R. Shmuel Rabinowitz and R. Shlomo Aviner, is based on three arguments:

- 1) Since the exact position and measures of the Holy of Holies have been lost, setting foot on the Temple Mount entails the risk of

¹⁰⁸⁵ Eisenberg 2005, 31.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Bleich 1977, 256.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Laurie Copans for the Jerusalem Post, Jan 19, 2005: "Chief Rabbis prohibit Jews from entering the Temple Mount". The article is reposted at www.templeinstitute.org/archive/25-01-05.htm, accessed 25.9.2017.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Jeremy Sharon for the Jerusalem Post, Feb 12, 2013: "Chief Rabbis reimpose ban on Jews visiting the Temple Mount."

desecrating the sanctity of it, regardless of which gate one enters through.

- 2) Since all Jews are now ritually impure caused by contact with the dead, or contact with someone who has been in contact with the dead, they are unfit to enter the Temple Mount.
- 3) Since there are no ashes of a flawless red heifer, essential for the purification from this defilement, the impurity cannot be repealed.

Authorities of the Hardal perspective also sustain this argument. The “highly respected”¹⁰⁸⁹ R. Shlomo Aviner of the yeshiva *Ateret Yerushalaim* sees it as an affront to both the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and to the *Gedolei* to visit the Temple Mount.¹⁰⁹⁰ Both R. Abraham Kook and R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook ruled that Jews are forbidden to enter the Temple Mount, even to “place one’s finger inside the cracks in the Western Wall”.¹⁰⁹¹

JAZ concurs with the bans, stating that it is “forbidden for any man of Israel to set foot upon the grounds of the Temple Mount”, and refers to a statement by R. Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld (1848-1932) in the *Palestine Bulletin* on Friday 29th, 1929. At the time, R. Sonnenfeld was the chief rabbi of Jerusalem. He ensured that the Jewish people have no desire to acquire the Temple Mount, because,

by reason of our sins, we were exiled from our land, the Temple was destroyed and we are without the means of purification set forth by our Torah, it is forbidden to any Jewish person to put his foot on the site of the Har Habaith (Mosque of Omar site), until the arrival of the righteous Messiah, who, by the spirit of the Lord, will righteously reign for the welfare of the entire humanity and who will give us back the means of purification prescribed for in our Torah.¹⁰⁹²

¹⁰⁸⁹ Sprinzak 1999, 256.

¹⁰⁹⁰ www.ravaviner.com/search/label/Temple%20Mount. Accessed 10.11.2017.

¹⁰⁹¹ Inbari 2009, 21-22. However, Motti Inbari underlines that this ruling should not be perceived as an intention to give up the Jewish sovereignty over the Temple Mount, but rather to protect its sanctity until the State of Israel reached an appropriate “spiritual level”.

¹⁰⁹² www.truetorahjews.org/rebyosefchaim, accessed 9.5.2017.

On October 12th, 2015 the *Eda Haredit*¹⁰⁹³ of Jerusalem again reiterated the rabbinical ban issued in 2005. The statement, referred to by JAZ, draws direct connections between the ban and the timeless Torah:

Trembling has seized us as nationalist movements are once again attempting to ascend the Temple Mount, and to campaign for free Jewish entrance to the Temple Mount. Already back in 1967, the members of our Rabbinical Court, of blessed memory, warned in the name of the Torah that it is a severe and grave sin to enter the Temple Mount nowadays, and that whoever enters the Temple grounds is liable to Divine punishment. They repeated this admonition many times over the years, and all great rabbis, both in the Holy Land and abroad, ruled similarly. Now we have come to reiterate this ban, and we declare that the Torah cannot be changed.¹⁰⁹⁴

6.3.3. FIRST THE MESSIAH, THEN THE TEMPLE

As discussed above, the Haredim anticipate a messianic figure with easily distinguishable traits. For example, he will bring the Jewish people to repentance, and will be recognized by the whole world as the Messiah. On rebuilding the Temple, the Haredim also propose that (1), there are indications in the tradition that the Temple will *not* be rebuilt before the advent of the Messiah and that (2), regardless of the order of sequence, rebuilding the Temple is God's dominion. JAZ refers to Maimonides for the interpretation that the *mitzvah* derived from Ex. 25:8 is "exclusively the domain of moschiach":

The Rambam in Hilchos Beis Habechirah 1:1 states that it is a positive commandment to make a house for Hashem where sacrifices can be offered and the Jewish people can ascend three times a year. In his Hilchos Melachim 11:1 he writes specifically that regarding the future Temple, this mitzvah is the exclusive domain of moshiach: "The king

¹⁰⁹³ *Eda Haredit* is the "main religious anti-Zionist communal organization", primarily supported by the Hasidim. Friedland & Hecht 2000, 79; 136.

¹⁰⁹⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/templemount5, accessed 9.5.2017.

moshiach will arise and restore the dynasty of David to its former state, build the Temple and gather in the exiles of Israel."

As I have shown above, the Haredim perceive redemption as characterized by miracles. Therefore, it is not surprising that JAZ suggests – with reference to *Mishnah Maaser Sheni* 5:2 and *Gemara BT Baba Kama* 60b – that God himself will rebuild the Temple in fire:

The Holy One, blessed be He, said: It is incumbent upon me to make restitution for the fire which I kindled. It was I who kindled a fire in Zion as it says, And He hath kindled a fire in Zion which hath devoured the foundations thereof, and it is I who will one day build it anew by fire, as it says, For I, [saith the Lord] will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and I will be the glory in the midst of her. [...] However, in *Bava Kama* 60b we read: "He that lighted the fire shall surely pay. Said the Holy One, blessed is He: I burned a fire in Zion and I will build it in fire, as it says (Zechariah 2:9), 'And I will be for it a wall of fire all around, and for honor I will be within it.'" A similar statement appears in the prayer "Nachem", recited on Tisha B'av afternoon, "For You, Hashem, lit it on fire, and You will one day build it in fire." If these early sources say that G-d Himself will build the future Temple, then how can the Rambam say that moshiach will build it?¹⁰⁹⁵

The discrepancy between these two views – the Temple ascending from the heavens in a cloud of fire or being built by the Messiah, are merged in an interpretation of *BT Succah* 41a. The *Aruch la-Ner* [1798-1871] proposed that the Temple would indeed be built by the Messiah, but completed by a heavenly temple. The heavenly temple would descend into the physical temple, much like a soul enters a physical body. "In a similar way," JAZ explains, "we find that in the Tabernacle and the First Temple a fire came down from Heaven and joined the fire lit on the altar by the kohanim."¹⁰⁹⁶

JAZ acknowledges that the Zionists have one source that seemingly indicates that the Temple will be built before the house of David is restored and Messiah has revealed himself. It is a tradition from *Mishnah Maaser*

¹⁰⁹⁵ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹⁰⁹⁶ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

Sheni 5:2 concerning the fruit of a tree in its fourth year of life. Torah says that fruits from the fourth year in a fruit-bearing tree's lifespan should be brought to Jerusalem and consumed there. If the distance to Jerusalem is longer than one day's journey, the fruit may be sold and the money used to buy food in Jerusalem to be consumed instead of the fruit. This is to beautify Jerusalem with fruit. This decree fell out of practice when Jerusalem was destroyed and was seized by the Romans. It was decreed, however, that whenever the Temple was rebuilt, the decree to beautify Jerusalem with fruit would automatically become valid again. The argument is this: if the Messiah revealed himself and the kingship of the House of David was re-established by the time the Temple was rebuilt and the practice was to be resumed, there would be no need for an automatic decree. The Messiah and his *Beit Din* could ensure that the practice of beautifying Jerusalem with fruit is resumed. Since the Rabbis issuing the decree stipulated that it should be automatic upon the rebuilding of the Temple, it is logical to assume they did not expect the Messiah to be in power by the time the practice is resumed. In *Mishnah Maaser Sheni 5:2* R. Aha concludes: "This means that the Temple will be rebuilt before the kingship of the house of David."¹⁰⁹⁷

The question is also commented on in *Tosafos Yom Tov*¹⁰⁹⁸ in the passage from *Mishnah*, stating, "It will be that until the kingship of the house of David, our enemies will have little lordship over us, just like there was at the beginning of the Second Temple."¹⁰⁹⁹ It seems then, that by the time the Messiah appears, there will be some sort of limited Jewish sovereignty in Israel. This does not, however, give the Jewish people either the right to or the capacity to commence rebuilding the Temple on their own initiative:

In any case, the claims of the Zionist group calling themselves the "Temple Institute" that according to the Rambam we must build the Temple ourselves, are false. The Rambam says clearly that moshiach

¹⁰⁹⁷ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹⁰⁹⁸ *Tosafos Yom Tov*, the three volume commentary to the Mishnah by R. Yom Tov Lipmann ben Nathan ha-Levi Heller.

¹⁰⁹⁹ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/student, accessed 20.5.2017.

will be the one to build it. This was also proven by Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman Heller in his commentary *Tosafos Yom Tov* on the fifth chapter of Yuma. He writes that since the passage in the Book of Yechezkel describing the exact dimensions of the future Temple is unclear in many places, and our Sages have not transmitted to us any explanation of these verses, we must wait for Eliyahu Hanavi to come with moshiach and clear up all doubts. This, he writes, is what the Rambam means in his *Hilchos Beis Hebechirah* 1:4 when he says that the dimensions of the Third Temple are written in Yechezkel but are not clear.¹¹⁰⁰

JAZ notes that the *Tosafos Yom Tov* surprisingly comments on *Yerushalmi* that the “enemies will have little rulership” – that is, the Jewish people will have some degree of sovereignty – at the time of the Temple being built. Since *Tosafos Yom Tov* seem to indicate that the Temple will be built before the Messiah arrives, JAZ asks how this could not constitute a violation of the Threefold oath:

But the Zionists point to the *Tosafos Yom Tov* commentary on the Mishnah (*Maaser Sheini* 5:2), who quotes the *Yerushalmi* and explains, “Until the coming of the kingdom of the house of David, our enemies will have a little rulership over us, just like there was at the beginning of the Second Temple.” If he understood the *Yerushalmi* to mean a Temple built by Hashem, why did he have to say the enemies will have a little rulership? Why couldn’t he understand simply that the exile will continue in full force, the enemies will have complete rulership over us, yet the Temple will be built by Hashem? So we see that he understood the *Yerushalmi* to mean Jews building the Temple on their own. Therefore he was bothered: how can Jews during exile build the Temple? Certainly the nations ruling Jerusalem would not permit it. To this he responds that the enemies will have only a little rulership over us at that time. It sounds as if the Jews will have some degree of sovereignty. How could that, combined with the building of the Temple, not constitute a violation of the oath against forcing the end of exile?¹¹⁰¹

¹¹⁰⁰ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha-pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹¹⁰¹ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017. *Tosafos Yom Tov*, R. Yom Tov Lipmann Nathan Ha-Levi Heller (1579-1654), was a Moravian rabbi who produced a commentary to the Mishnah. He received his education from – among others – the Maharal of Prague, Judah Loew ben Bezalel. Horovitz & Derovan 2007, 796.

To explain this riddle, JAZ refers to the *Satmar Rav*, who explains that the comment is based on a *Midrash* in *Genesis Rabbah* 64:10. In this narrative, Rome decreed that the Jews were to rebuild the Temple. JAZ notes that the answer lies in the word “decreed” – since the Jews were forced, it does not constitute a violation of the Threefold Oath, and hence, does not serve as a precedent for the here and now.¹¹⁰²

JAZ further refers to Maimonides, claiming that he thought “only the Messiah may build it, after he is recognized by the entire world as G-d’s messenger based on clear criteria.”¹¹⁰³

The Rambam in *Hilchos Beis Habechirah* 1:1 states that it is a positive commandment to make a house for Hashem where sacrifices can be offered and the Jewish people can ascend three times a year. In his *Hilchos Melachim* 11:1 he writes specifically that regarding the future Temple, this mitzvah is the exclusive domain of moshiach: “The king moshiach will arise and restore the dynasty of David to its former state, build the Temple and gather in the exiles of Israel.”¹¹⁰⁴

In *Gemara BT Megilla 17b*, an order of redemption is given that the *Aruch la-Ner* (R. Ya’acov Ettlinger, 1798-1871) deems authoritative. It presents the following sequence of events: the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the establishment of the kingdom of the House of David, the rebuilding of the Temple, and finally the reinstatement of the sacrificial rites. The blessings of the *‘amidah* also seem to reflect this sequence.¹¹⁰⁵ JAZ echoes the same perception:

The Gemora [in Megillah 17b] says that the order of the blessings of Shmoneh Esrei corresponds to the order of events in the time of Moshiach. After the exiles are gathered in, justice will be meted out against the wicked, then the heretics will perish, and then the pride of the righteous will be raised up. Where will their pride be raised up? In

¹¹⁰² www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹¹⁰³ www.truetorahjews.org/alaqsadig, accessed 16.10.2016.

¹¹⁰⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹¹⁰⁵ Bleich 1977, 251.

Jerusalem. So it seems that the ingathering of the exiles will precede the building of Jerusalem.¹¹⁰⁶

It seems, thus, that the Haredi understanding of how and by whom the Temple will be rebuilt has not been fixed; it could come down from the heavens in a cloud of fire, or it could be built by the Messiah, or it could be built by a combination of the two. What is central to the Haredi understanding, however, is that rebuilding the Temple is in God's dominion, occurring in the era of redemption. God may build it himself or send the Messiah to do it, but either way, it cannot be rebuilt without divine intervention. Hence, the Haredim reject the idea that it could be undertaken as a human endeavor, and therefore, for them the question can be put aside for the unforeseeable future.

To the Haredim, the goal does not sanctify the means; if the Temple is to be rebuilt, it is to be rebuilt in the right spirit, so to speak. JAZ relates a story told by the *Maharam Chagiz*¹¹⁰⁷, which serves as a precedent of a situation in which the Jewish people refused to rebuild the Temple even when the opportunity arose. The story dates back to the days of the Roman Empire. King Selim, a benevolent king, cleared the Western Wall from the rubble and said to the Jews: "Behold, G-d has brought about the restoration of your Temple. Its foundations are visible – go and build it, and I will pay all your expenses." But then the Jews began to cry, JAZ reports. When questioned why, one of them answered: "Long live the king! We, your servants, must bless G-d who has given you counsel, and we must thank you for your kindness in offering to pay for the restoration of our Temple. But according to our faith, we are not permitted to build the Temple; we believe that the future Temple will be built by G-d in Heaven, when He so desires." From this, JAZ concludes:

The Jews in this story took the Gemora literally, but we have noted that even according to the Rambam who says that the physical building will

¹¹⁰⁶ www.truetorahjews.org/parah, accessed 9.5.2017.

¹¹⁰⁷ Moses Hagiz (1672 – c.1751) was a Talmudic scholar "of the first rank". Tamar 2007, 227.

be built by human hands, no one is permitted to build it before the coming of moshiach.¹¹⁰⁸

6.3.4. A REBELLION AGAINST GOD

The Jewish people are still in exile, according to the Haredi perspective. The exile can only be ended by the Messiah, and until that day, the Jewish people are bound by the Threefold Oath, which regulates life in exile. The Threefold oath contains prohibitions against forcing the end and rebelling against the nations.¹¹⁰⁹ Establishing the State of Israel, according to this view, transgress both these parts of the oath. Against this background, JAZ is bewildered that anyone would conceive the idea of rebuilding the Temple of Jerusalem:

So, I'm talking about ways to get rid of the state, and you're asking me if I think it's permissible to build the Beis Hamidkash? That would be an even bigger violation of the Oaths than the state is already, because that would mean angering the entire Muslim world beyond belief by expelling them from one of their religion's holiest sites. The whole world would be angry too, because whoever heard of such a brazen act, to destroy one of the oldest houses of worship in the world? This would truly be "rebellious against the nations" in the greatest sense, and would bring unthinkable destruction upon the Jewish people, by simple logic, as well as in the realm of Divine punishment.¹¹¹⁰

From this excerpt, we see how the Threefold oath is an essential part of the Haredi argumentation. Breaking the Threefold oath would – seemingly without a doubt – draw divine punishment upon the Jewish people. Furthermore, the socio-political consequences would also be dire. These two consequences – the metaphysical and the logical – are both invoked to point to the rationality of abiding by the Threefold oath.

¹¹⁰⁸ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹¹⁰⁹ See Chpt. 2, and Chpt. 2.3.1 in particular.

¹¹¹⁰ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/rov, accessed 9.5.2017.

There is an interesting parallel between the two perspectives of the study here. The Haredim seem to suggest that socio-political ordeals follow “by simple logic” upon the breaking of a divine order, the Threefold oath. In a similar construct, when the “logic” of socio-political processes brings changes in the Hardal community, it tends to interpret these as reflections of a divine order: the process of redemption. In that sense, both perspectives draw connections between the worldly and the divine realms, but the two tend to start the deductive process from different outsets.

However strongly JAZ opposes rebuilding the Temple in the contemporary setting, it still seems to expect the Temple Institute to succeed in its endeavor. The reason for this pessimism could be the prophecy by *the Slonimer Rebbe* (R. Shmuel Weinberg, 1850-1916), to which JAZ refers:

Jews, you must know that before the coming of the messiah, a group of unsavoury people will travel to Eretz Yisroel, and they will enjoy great victories there, and they will build a temple, and a fire will come down from heaven in this temple as it did in the First Temple. And you must know that this fire will not be from the Holy Side, but from the Other Side.¹¹¹¹

The Haredim seem to understand the contemporary Hardal fervour to rebuild the Temple as an ambition of “the Other Side” to distort the concept of the Third Temple by replacing it within people’s minds by the faulty, heretical version the Hardalim propose:

In our time, the Satan faces an even bigger, permanent defeat. When moshiach comes and the Beis Hamikdash is rebuilt, the Satan will be slaughtered (Succah 52a). The great shofar will be sounded, and he will be swallowed up (Yerushalmi quoted by Tosafos on Rosh Hashanah 16b). Knowing that his end is near, he puts up a last struggle to avert

¹¹¹¹ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

the redemption by destroying the Beis Hamikdash through heresy. He makes sure heresy spreads in the world as much as possible.¹¹¹²

BT Sukkah 52a, referenced here, records a discussion on the “evil inclination”, which destroyed the First as well as the Second Temple and slew their scholars. However, there is reason to problematize the understanding of the evil inclination as synonymous to a personified Satan; *BT Sukkah 52a* seems to speak of the evil inclination in terms of a human propensity rather than of an independent, metaphysical force; it is “constantly hidden in the hearts of man”, and “the greater the man, the greater his evil inclination.” *BT Sukkah 52a* according to the Soncino Edition of the Talmud does not use “Satan” at all, but the “evil inclination” throughout.

R. Yaakov Teitelbaum, who referred the words of the *Slonimer Rebbe* above, also recalled his grandfather passing on to him a prophecy of R. Israel of Ryzhin, saying:

Before the coming of the messiah, a fire will come down from heaven like the fire that came down for Elijah the prophet on Mount Carmel (1Kings 18:38). Jews, you must know that it will not come down for the true prophets, but for the false prophets. And Jews will have to climb up sheer walls to remain with their faith.¹¹¹³

JAZ concludes that “even if the Zionists do, G-d forbid, succeed in building a temple, it will not be the long-awaited Third Temple of G-d, but a temple of Satanic forces”.¹¹¹⁴ Satan is eager to distort the true concept of a Temple and thereby destroy it. When the Messiah comes, however, and the Temple is rebuilt, Satan will be slaughtered (*BT Succah 52a*) and the great shofar will be sounded. Until then, “he puts up a last struggle to

¹¹¹² www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹¹¹³ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹¹¹⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

avert the redemption by destroying the Beis Hamikdash through heresy. He makes sure heresy spreads in the world as much as possible.”¹¹¹⁵

Interestingly, the Haredim seem to perceive the Hardal run-up towards rebuilding a temple as *destroying* it, whereas establishing a Jewish state in *Eretz Yisrael* was a blasphemy. The discrepancy in magnitude between these two transgressions could stem from the idea of a grading in the holiness of *Eretz Yisrael*; *Eretz Yisrael* is holy, Jerusalem is holier, and the Temple Mount – and particularly the spot where the Holy of Holies stood – is the holiest. Similarly, the Israelites were graded into three principal levels of holiness.¹¹¹⁶ Therefore, the Temple is vulnerable to defilement in an exceptional way.

There, therefore, seems to be a grading of transgression; creating a state was “not enough”, so the Temple Mount was taken in the 1967 war; and now, JAZ complains, the Hardalim want to “take the concepts and places most holy to Judaism and desecrate them”. Hence, from the Haredi perspective, claiming the Temple Mount and planning to rebuild the Temple are graver transgressions even than that of taking *Eretz Yisrael*:

Taking over the Holy Land and creating a state before the coming of the messiah is not enough for them. They must have the Temple Mount too, and eventually they will want to build the Temple themselves. They want to take the concepts and places most holy to Judaism and desecrate them, just as they have desecrated the Holy Land. [...] These provocateurs are mostly Orthodox Jews, so Orthodox Jewish organizations and communities throughout the world have a responsibility to condemn them in the strongest of terms, distance themselves from them and reiterate the ban on Jews entering the Temple Mount, agreed upon by all rabbis and kept by Jews in all generations since the destruction of the Temple 2000 years ago.¹¹¹⁷

¹¹¹⁵ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹¹¹⁶ Abrahams & Rothkoff 2007, 423.

¹¹¹⁷ www.truetorahjews.org/issues/templemount, accessed 9.5.2017.

6.3.5. GOD WILL NOT PROTECT A MAN-MADE TEMPLE

Yirmiyahu Cohen relates a *Midrash* from the time of R. Yehoshua ben Chananya, when expounding on Ex. 25:8, “Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.” In those days, a decree was issued from Rome that the Temple should be rebuilt. Jews came up from the exile, bringing silver, gold and other precious goods to begin rebuilding. Then Rome withdrew the decree and the people were outraged. R. Yehoshua ben Chananya was sent to comfort them. He told them this story, derived from *Genesis Rabbah* 64:10:

Once a lion was eating and a bone got stuck in his throat. He said, ‘Whoever comes and gets it out, I will give him a reward.’ An Egyptian kura-bird with a long neck came, stuck his neck in and took it out. He said, ‘Give me my reward.’ The lion said, ‘Go boast that you entered the lion’s mouth in peace and came out in peace.’ So too, it is enough for us that we entered our exile under this nation in peace and came out in peace.”¹¹¹⁸

Yirmiyahu Cohen explains that the lesson to be learned here was illuminated by the *Satmar Rav*, who rhetorically asked why the evil kingdom of Rome decreed that the Temple of Jerusalem should be rebuilt. To answer his question, he evoked another story, from *Lamentations Rabbah* 1:31, where R. Yochanan ben Zakkai discusses with Pangar, the prince of Arabia. R. Yochanan was asked what to do when a snake takes residence in a barrel; this was perceived as a metaphor for Jerusalem and the “militant factions of Jews” who were living there “preventing any Jew from making peace with Rome”. R. Yochanan replied that a snake charmer should be fetched to lure out the snake. Pangar, however, suggested the barrel be broken so the snake could be killed. “I mean it for your own good,” Pangar said. “For as long as the Temple is standing, kings will fight against you.” From these two traditions, Yirmiyahu Cohen draws two conclusions:

¹¹¹⁸ Cohen 2007, 93.

The Beis Hamikdash was a cause for great jealousy among the gentile nations, and it was only Hashem's protection that made the Jewish people safe during the time it stood. But now, when the time of its destruction had arrived and Hashem no longer guaranteed this special protection, it would not be good for them to have the Beis Hamikdash. All the more so that it should not be built during exile!¹¹¹⁹

6.3.6. A MAN-MADE TEMPLE WILL NOT BE THE LONG-AWAITED

JAZ concludes that "even if the Zionists do, G-d forbid, succeed in building a temple, it will not be the long-awaited Third Temple of G-d, but a temple of Satanic forces".¹¹²⁰ This quote not only reflects the Haredi understanding of the Hardal vision of rebuilding the Temple, but also the overall Haredi understanding of exile and redemption. Since the exile endures, the time is not right to rebuild the Temple; if it were to be rebuilt, it would only be another expression of the same rebellion that brought about "the heretic state". Its sacrificial cult – should it be resumed – would not contribute anything constructive to the relationship between the Jewish people and its God. This interpretation was voiced, *inter alia*, by the *Slonimer Rebbe* (R. Shmuel Weinberg, 1850-1916) on his deathbed:

Jews, you must know that before the coming of the messiah, a group of unsavory people will travel to Eretz Yisroel, and they will enjoy great victories there, and they will build a temple, and a fire will come down from heaven in this temple as it did in the First Temple. And you must know that this fire will not be from the Holy Side, but from the Other Side.¹¹²¹

Similarly, R. Eliezer Zusia (1898-1982) related that there was a tradition passed down from his grandfather, that R. Israel of Ryzhin (1796-1850) had likewise prophesied of a fire, coming down from heaven before the coming of the Messiah, just like a fire came down before the prophet Elijah on Mount Carmel (I Kings 18:38). He warned: "Jews, you must know that

¹¹¹⁹ Cohen 2007, 93-94.

¹¹²⁰ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹¹²¹ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

it will not come down for the true prophets, but rather for the false prophets. And Jews will have to climb up sheer walls to remain with their faith.”¹¹²²

Interestingly, the traditions and testimonials are considered reliable without further ado in these contexts. One would think that the long chain of transmission, the lack of written records, and the usefulness of this tradition would some stir some critical remarks. One must remember, however, that Judaism is a religion with a strong oral tradition and methodically preserves their inheritance.¹¹²³

One interesting aspect of the quote above is that it seems to predict that the Temple *will* indeed be rebuilt by “a group of unsavory people” who have enjoyed great victories in *Eretz Yisrael*. However, the tradition warns that the fire coming down from heaven will not be “from the Holy Side, but from the Other Side”. Hence, the apocalyptic vision of the Haredim includes the theory that there will be deceptions resembling a genuine era of redemption; Jews returning to *Eretz Yisrael*, Jews rebuilding the Temple. Nonetheless, “it will not be the long-awaited Third Temple”, however much it resembles it, and, ultimately, a fire will come down from heaven to consume it.

It seems both perspectives are in agreement that a temple *will* be rebuilt and *is being* rebuilt. Whereas, however, the Temple Institute and other activists of the Hardal perspective have set out to rebuild the Temple *physically*, JAZ believes that they are contributing to the Temple being rebuilt in heaven by the performance of the *mitzvot*. When it is completed, it will descend from heaven and assume a physical form. Both perspectives, thus, see re-building the Temple as a collaboration between man and God, but there are profound differences in what strategies these perspectives propose to be helpful in the process, and what preconditions they perceive as necessary. JAZ is also concerned that the Temple, being

¹¹²² www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹¹²³ See discussion in Knight 2006, 5-16.

built in heaven by the performance of the *mitzvot*, is under threat of being destroyed by “the heretics”:

The Gemara in Chagigah 12b says that there are seven heavens, and the fourth one, called *Zvul*”, contains Jerusalem and the *Beis Hamikdash*. This is the *Beis Hamikdash* that we are building through our *mitzvos*, but the heretics “stretch out their hands against *Zvul*” and destroy what we have built.¹¹²⁴

In *BT Chagigah 12b*, the fourth heaven *Zebul* is presented as the heavenly Jerusalem, including a Temple and an altar, where the “great prince” Michael performs the priestly offerings. According to *Yerushalmi Ta’antiot 5a*, God “shall not enter the Jerusalem which is above, until I enter the Jerusalem which is below”, which couples the physical and metaphysical realities. Jerusalem thus has a “prototype” in heaven. This could explain why the Haredim draw parallels between performing the *mitzvot* and building the Temple – and vice versa – committing transgressions and destroying it. Not surprisingly, then, the Haredim blame the “heretics” for being an impediment in the process. The Haredim see themselves as continuously building the Temple in the heavens, while the “heretics” are continuously destroying it:

We can answer this based on the *Yerushalmi Yuma 5a*: “Any generation in which the Temple was not rebuilt, it is considered as if they destroyed it.” Thus, even if the actual destruction took place because of other sins, the fact that the Temple is not being built in our time is the fault of the heretics, and they are considered to have destroyed it. Alternatively, we can answer that when Jews do *mitzvos* they are building the *Beis Hamikdash* in heaven, and when that *Beis Hamikdash* is complete, it will descend to earth.¹¹²⁵

With reference to a work by the *Satmar Rav*, *Kuntres Dibros Kodosh* (*Hoshana Rabbah Chelek Alef 1950-1959*, p. 158), JAZ reiterates that the “heretics” are standing in the way of rebuilding the Temple. They are,

¹¹²⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹¹²⁵ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

hence, responsible for having destroyed it, along the lines of *Yerushalmi Yoma 1:1*: in every generation that the Temple is not rebuilt, it is as if it was destroyed in that generation.¹¹²⁶ This is also why redemption is taking so long: “For many years, we have been waiting to be redeemed, and the time is long because even as the tzaddikim build the Beis Hamikdash, the reshaim destroy it.”¹¹²⁷

JAZ supports its metaphysical interpretation of the Third Temple with reference to *BT Baba Kama 60b*, according to which one day God will “make restitution for the fire which I kindled”; “it is I who will one day build it anew by fire”. Along the same lines of tradition, JAZ argues that according to a comment by the *Aruch la-Ner* (R. Jacob Ettlinger, 1798-1871) on *BT Succah 41a*, the Temple may be built physically by the Messiah, and after that the “heavenly temple will descend into the humanly built temple, just as a spiritual body enters a physical body”. Similarly, JAZ relates that both the Tabernacle and the First Temple “came down from heaven and joined the fire lit on the altar by the kohanim”.¹¹²⁸

Also regarding *BT Succah 41a*, JAZ notes that there are instructions on how one should wave the *lulav* in remembrance of the destroyed Temple during the festival of Sukkot. In the *Gemara*, there is a discussion on how this ritual should be performed, should they wake up to find the Temple erected:

The Temple may be rebuilt speedily, and people would say, ‘Did we not eat [the new corn] last year from the time that day dawned in the East? Let us now also eat it [from the same time]’ and they would be unaware of the fact that in the previous year, when there was no Temple, once day dawned in the East it was permitted [to eat of the new corn], but now that the Temple is rebuilt, it is only the [waving of the] ‘omer which [commences] the permission. But when [does this assume the Temple to be] rebuilt? If you will say that it is rebuilt on the sixteenth [of Nisan], then obviously it is permitted to eat from the time that day dawned in

¹¹²⁶ www.truetorahjews.org/divrei-yoel-parashas-shelach, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹¹²⁷ www.truetorahjews.org/divrei-yoel-parashas-shelach, accessed 20.5.2017.

¹¹²⁸ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha-pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

the East? If, however, it is rebuilt on the fifteenth why should it not be permitted after midday, for surely we have learnt, Those that lived at a distance were permitted [to eat of the new corn] from midday onwards, because [they knew that] the Beth din would not be negligent in the matter? — This was necessary [only in case] it is rebuilt at night, or [on the fifteenth] close to sunset.

Based on this excerpt, JAZ draws the conclusion that the Temple will descend from heaven, ready built. JAZ does not elucidate on how it draws this conclusion, but presumably it is from the fact that the *Gemara* seems to expect the Temple to be rebuilt in a matter of hours, which is, of course, an unreasonably short time span for such an effort.

6.4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has overviewed argumentations presented by the Haredi and the Hardal perspectives on the issue of whether or not it is time to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem. Of all the five eschatological aspects approached in this study, it seems the theological debate over the rebuilding of the Temple is less developed than the others. This could be because the Temple Mount was not under Jewish jurisdiction until 1967. After 1967, there seemed to be a consensus for decades among Orthodox rabbis that the Temple Mount could not be approached. However, from the 1980s onwards, the rabbinical ban on entering the Temple Mount has been problematized and ascending the mount has become a theological marker.¹¹²⁹

To the Hardalim, the Messiah is crucial to the breakthrough of the ultimate redemption, but what function he will fill during the shift from exile to redemption – during the *process of redemption* – is less clear. Traditionally, as outlined in the previous chapter, the ingathering of the exiles and the rebuilding of the Temple are considered dominions of the Messiah. However, the State of Israel has been established and 43% of the exiles

¹¹²⁹ Inbari 2009, 17.

have been gathered in without the Messiah so what is there to suggest that rebuilding of the Temple could not be commenced without him? One voice of the Hardal perspective even argues that “there seems to be ample indication that the building of the Holy Temple will precede the messiah’s arrival”.¹¹³⁰ On the other hand, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook discouraged the idea of rebuilding the Temple and instead considered the settlement of *Eretz Yisrael* as a prelude to redemption.¹¹³¹

Of course, the Hardal understanding of redemption as a process, evolving stage by stage, allows multiple interpretations on how far along in time the process has come and on the sequence of events. I have found no evidence in the primary material that for the Hardalim rebuilding the Temple would be the exclusive domain of the Messiah ; the opposition against the Temple Mount activism seems to relate entirely to the question of defilement.

There is, hence, a clash within the Hardal perspective on how to relate to the Third Temple. Both the Kook rabbis discouraged their adherents from approaching the Temple Mount, even “placing a finger inside the cracks in the Western Wall”; R. Shlomo Aviner took part in issuing the rabbinical ban forbidding Jews to ascend the mount. However, R. Yisrael Ariel perceived a divine calling to start preparing to rebuild the Temple and the Temple Institute organizes guided ascents.

This ambivalence strengthens the impression that the messianic era is a mystery, incomprehensible and unpredictable. Hence, the Hardal perspective seems to apply the principle to “live and let live” – some promote redemption by settling in the remote West Bank, others buy and renovate homes in the Old City, still others are engaged in promoting immigration. Yehuda Etzion, Yoel Lerner and Gershon Solomon, for example, describe their relationship as activists in the Hardal field as “all playing their part in the ‘Army of God’ by separately serving –

¹¹³⁰ www.templeinstitute.org/messiah_temple.htm, accessed 5.4.2017.

¹¹³¹ See Chpt. 4.

metaphorically speaking – in different units and serving different purposes”.¹¹³²

Over time, the Temple Institute has come to shift its initial emphasis on rebuilding the Temple to accelerate the process of redemption to emphasizing the perpetuity of the commandment to build a sanctuary. This transition could be interpreted as another expression of the “Haredization” of the Hardal perspective;¹¹³³ it could also be interpreted as the maturation of the perspective, shifting from its initial messianic spur to a *raison d’être* more resistant to time and socio-political change.

The argumentation of the Temple Institute often takes on non-argumentative, lyrical forms. For example, the process of rebuilding of the Temple is compared to the dawning of a new day; the opportunity of redemption is thought to always be at hand for those who are “willing to discard their appointment books and personal calendars”. Images like these are beautiful and resonate with the *ethos* and *pathos* of the reader, but analyzing or debating on their theological substance is difficult. This tendency could well reflect a trait of the Hardal discourse; R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook depicted that “each and every year [of Israel’s independence] is a new hymn, a celestial song, another link in the chain”, and R. Abraham Y. Kook stretched towards “a mystical-literal revelation of scripture.”¹¹³⁴

The end of days, in both perspectives, is expected to entail a universal peace. In (some examples of) the Hardal material, this peace is explicitly tied to the Temple of Jerusalem. With reference to Haggai, R. Chaim Richman proposes that the first forty years of Solomon’s Temple was the only period of global peace in the history of the world;¹¹³⁵ the Temple is, thus “the only solution for achieving the elusive peace we all desire”.¹¹³⁶ The Temple Institute stresses that it was “not some magnificent building”,

¹¹³² Leppäkari 2006, 205-206.

¹¹³³ Shelef 2010, 182.

¹¹³⁴ www.mercazharav.org/mizmor19.htm, accessed 23.3.2017. Ish-Shalom, 1993, xi.

¹¹³⁵ Richman 1997, 13.

¹¹³⁶ www.templeinstitute.org/red_heifer/introduction.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

but “the direct arena” for the relationship between God and man. Failure to see this is due to our “own spiritual bankruptcy and alienation from spiritual underpinnings of true Torah knowledge and faith.”¹¹³⁷ This is, of course, a *circulus in probando* argument – “if anyone fails to see what we see, they lack true Torah knowledge and faith.”

The Hardal perspective, as the Temple Institute represents it, is critical of the expression of Jewish faith based on “merely gestures of nostalgia”, including the liturgical elements reflecting traditions and reminiscences of the Temple and the Temple service. Interestingly, the Temple Institute is paradoxical in this regard; it disregards Jewish practices that appeal to the Temple of Jerusalem as a part of Jewish life and history, but at the same time, applauds the “great spiritual awakening” that “actively seeks to share the desire and knowledge of the Temple”.¹¹³⁸ Of course, the Temple Institute seeks to arouse the Jewish people into assisting it in its endeavor to rebuild the Temple, which may prove difficult if the present religious observance finds it superfluous.

From the Haredi perspective, the Messiah will announce the end of exile, and upon the end of exile other aspects of redemption will follow. Thus, the Haredim – to the extent they address the matter of rebuilding the Temple at all – definitely place it in the future. How distant a future that is, is not specified. Given that they call for the peaceful dismantling of the State of Israel for the ship to turn, so to speak, it is reasonable to assume they do not expect the exile to end in the foreseeable future. The Haredim, hence, do not oppose rebuilding the Temple *per se*, but they do oppose it while still in exile. The Haredim also envisage the rebuilding of the Temple to be enshrouded by miracle. Some sources expect it to descend from heaven in a cloud of fire, or a heavenly temple might descend into the physical temple, like a soul enters a body. Others expect the Messiah to build it, or lead the building project. However it is done, it will be done after the Messiah has come to announce the end of exile. Therefore, “the

¹¹³⁷ www.templeinstitute.org/statement.htm, accessed 23.2.2017.

¹¹³⁸ www.templeinstitute.org/international.htm, accessed 7.4.2017.

claims of the Zionist group calling themselves the *Temple Institute* that according to the Rambam we must build the Temple ourselves, are false.”¹¹³⁹ To combine the beliefs and practices of Judaism with Zionism, according to this perspective, “required a good deal of manipulation of the texts”; the Hardal perspective has “perverted their meaning and ignored key passages”.¹¹⁴⁰

The Haredi argumentation on this question is not particularly fervent; from this perspective, the Hardalim are Orthodox Jews who are confused and deceived by Zionism. Hence, any enterprise the Hardal might undertake is a subordinate problem to the main problem – the existence of Zionism and the “so-called-state”. Adding to the disinterest in the issue, JAZ perceives the Temple Mount activists as a “small faction” that has “no power” to realize its ideas:

These irresponsible statements about rebuilding the Temple now come from a small faction of Zionist extremists who in any case have no power to put their ideas into practice. [...] For the record, no Jewish authority in history has ever sanctioned the Jews rebuilding the Temple on their own.¹¹⁴¹

The Haredim, thus, see the aspirations to rebuild the Temple as a sin among other sins, stemming from Zionism. Given that Eretz Yisrael traditionally is considered more fragile¹¹⁴² and more sensitive to transgressions than any other land, the Haredim are outraged that the Hardalim aspire to “take the concepts and places most holy to Judaism and desecrate them.”¹¹⁴³

The Haredim nevertheless see it as quite possible that the Temple might be rebuilt. The Haredim would then perceive it as “a last struggle” by Satan to destroy the Temple through heresy, knowing that his end is near.

¹¹³⁹ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹¹⁴⁰ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/talmud5, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹¹⁴¹ www.truetorahjews.org/alaqsadig, accessed 5.4.2017.

¹¹⁴² Rabkin 2006, 67.

¹¹⁴³ www.truetorahjews.org/issues/templemount, accessed 9.5.2017.

Rebuilding the Temple would constitute “an even bigger violation” of the Threefold oath than the establishment of the State.¹¹⁴⁴ They also evoke prophecies by R. Israel of Ryzhin¹¹⁴⁵ and R. Shmuel Weinberg¹¹⁴⁶ that seem to indicate that the Hardalim will, indeed, succeed in this endeavor.

Hence, the Haredim see dark clouds gathering on the horizon. This could be perceived as characteristic of the Haredi discourse – it is an integrated aspect of identity and worldview, that “we are broken”, “it is bitter”, “we cannot stand it any longer” – “and yet we are holding out.”¹¹⁴⁷ It could also be interpreted as another example of the strategy the Haredim implement to be redeemed: the absolute subordination to God.¹¹⁴⁸ Reading history, as it unfolds, through these pessimistic lenses may, thus, be a working of the “network of presuppositions that constrains what it is we can ultimately say about the world”.¹¹⁴⁹

¹¹⁴⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/alaqsadig, accessed 5.4.2017.

¹¹⁴⁵ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹¹⁴⁶ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹¹⁴⁷ www.truetorahjews.org/issues/pesach, accessed 25.5.2017.

¹¹⁴⁸ This strategy is archetypal of traditional Judaism. See Neusner 2005, 1698.

¹¹⁴⁹ Gergen 2002, 14.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This study has explored how two contemporary, Jewish discourses relate to traditional eschatological themes and historical impulses ascribed an eschatological significance. It has sought to demonstrate that the “network of presuppositions” that guides our thinking and communicating – and following, also our interpretation of tradition and history as it unfolds – is consequently applied to differing aspects of eschatology in the two perspectives.

On the outset of this journey, I presented discourse analysis as the method applied in this study to extract “meanings” and “patterns” from the materials. This study has perceived discourse as emerging from the images, statements, metaphors, stories and other elements that produce a particular understanding of existence.¹¹⁵⁰ The “widespread social understandings” and the “social reality” which discourse establishes¹¹⁵¹ are the two understandings of Jewish existence, which percolates through all aspects of eschatology studied here.

The task of this study has been threefold. Firstly, it has analyzed how the two perspectives understand the shift from exile to redemption, and what part the Jewish people play in the eschatological process.

Secondly, it has examined the bearing respective understanding has on central eschatological themes: the emergence of the Messiah, the return to and settling in *Eretz Yisrael*, and the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem. The *Shoah* has been laden with a comparable eschatological significance and therefore, this study examined it alongside the traditional themes of eschatological significance, mentioned above.

Thirdly – and permeating throughout the above-mentioned inquiries – this study has sought to illuminate how these two perspectives refer to

¹¹⁵⁰ Burr 2003, 64.

¹¹⁵¹ Hodges 2011, 4-5.

biblical and rabbinical material to strengthen their arguments. This study has asked *which sources* the two sets of materials elicit, and analyzed whether there are joint features in their usage of materials – either between the two sets, or within them.

The thesis of this study has been that both the Hardal and the Haredi perspectives strengthen their arguments either by direct reference to biblical and rabbinical sources, or by making derivations from them. By doing so, both claim to embody a contemporary representation of traditional Judaism. Below are the conclusions confirming this thesis.

7.1. THE SHIFT FROM EXILE TO REDEMPTION

The shift from exile to redemption could be described as the interface of the divine and the mundane realm; it could also be analyzed in terms of acting subject and receiving object. This study has expressed criticism towards a categorical understanding of the two perspectives studied here as expressions of “passive” and “active” messianism. As shown above, these perspectives see themselves *both* as active participants in *and* passive recipients of redemption. The two theological constructs of exile and redemption are two ways of “constructing the phenomena of the world”.¹¹⁵² They are two ways of understanding the relationships between the Jewish people, their God and the world.

The Hardalim understands their existence as having emerged out of the exile by the hand of God. While the process of redemption can be delayed or even regressed, it can no longer be stopped. This, I conclude, is the prism through which the Hardalim view the *Shoah*, the State of Israel, the Diaspora, the Messiah, and the Third Temple.

The Haredim understand their existence as a prolongation of the exile, which has dominated Jewish life since 69-70 CE. They believe that complete repentance is the only human effort that can persuade God to

¹¹⁵² Burr 2003, 65-66.

redeem the Jewish people from exile. Any other effort towards accelerating the ending of exile is strictly prohibited, and apt to thwart redemption. This, I take it, is the prism through which the Haredim view the *Shoah*, the State of Israel, the Diaspora, the Messiah, and the Third Temple.

These are the two understandings of exile and redemption – the “network of presuppositions” – that influence all ensuing eschatological themes within (and between) these perspectives.

7.2. THE OTHER ESCHATOLOGICAL THEMES

To summarize and juxtapose the eschatological expectations of these two perspectives, hence, one suggests that the *Shoah* was a push towards redemption – the other that it was a feature of the exile. One suggests that the State of Israel is a tool to bring about redemption – the other that it thwarts redemption. One suggests that the Messiah is waiting for the people to take action – the other that the Messiah is waiting for the people to learn to abide. One suggests that the Third Temple is a prerequisite for redemption to proceed – the other that the Third Temple, should it be rebuilt today, would be a “temple of Satanic forces.” One suggests that redemption is “strictly God’s domain” – and the other that redemption is “there for the taking”.

7.2.1. THE SHOAH

The Hardal approach to the *Shoah* is nuanced; in the early history of the State of Israel, there seemed to be no stories relating to the *Shoah* that were fit to tell. It was a painful reminiscence of the perils of life in the Diaspora and of the lethality of the doctrine of passivity, infused for centuries by traditional Judaism. The *Shoah* began to fill a function as the dark setting against which the State of Israel shone even brighter. R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook explained the *Shoah* as a cruel, divine amputation, which became necessary because the Jewish people had grown “accustomed to the

impurity of the Diaspora, and refused to extricate themselves from it". Therefore a "divine therapy" had to begin, beginning with the amputation. R. Abraham Y. Kook hinted at a similar understanding in 1933, when he proposed that if the Jewish people did not respond to the callings of the first two shofars of redemption, God would "bring us to hear the unfit, defiled shofar against our will".¹¹⁵³

Both perspectives have retrospectively found a way to integrate the *Shoah* into their theological construct by understanding it as an eschatological event. To the Hardalim, the *Shoah* was the "divine amputation" performed upon the Jewish people to drive them out of the exile to *Eretz Yisrael*. The Hardal perspective, on the other hand, embraces the new, Jewish identity, where seizing fate is not only allowed, but is also endorsed. The theological sanction of this shift is built on an interpretation of exile and redemption, which breaks with that of traditional Judaism. In this understanding, redemption is *not* an event and *not* necessarily instigated by a messianic figure. Instead, redemption is perceived as a *process*, advancing step by step, but possibly also halting or regressing. This perspective perceives the *Shoah*, the establishment of the State, the ingathering of the exiles and the victory in the Six Day War in 1967 as expressions of the same process. This ideotheology has leaned heavily on its interpretations of the socio-political developments. However, over the past decades, apocalypticism as the motivating factor for its activism has, to some extent, been replaced by what could be considered traditional, Jewish emphases: the importance of performing *mitzvot* and studying the Torah. This change might be understood as an expression of a stabilization of the perspective, positioning itself as a form of Judaism among others. It could also be understood as a natural lifespan of apocalyptic movements.

To the Haredim, the *Shoah* was the inevitable consequence of the deterioration of traditional Judaism in European Jewry in the wake of the Emancipation. The rejection of the "New Jew" mindset – and instead, the

¹¹⁵³ Mirsky 2014, 213; 224.

acknowledgment of a continuing exile – demonstrates a spiritual maturity, which will eventually enable God to redeem the Jewish people. By stubbornly striving on in their own might, however, the Jewish people are drifting deeper into exile and further away from redemption, only proving that they “learned the opposite of the lesson they were supposed to learn”; they refuse to repent and let themselves be healed by the exile. The exile is perceived as a hospital, which the Jewish people cannot leave until the process of restoration is complete. While in this process, God protects and shields the people.

Both perspectives present traditions foreseeing the *Shoah* before Nazism even arose – to indicate that the interpretation was, *de facto*, there all along. This, I take it, is to instil confidence in its adherents that the strategy of the perspective is a potent strategy for life in all its complexity. The propensity towards infusing historical situations with religious significance is particularly strong in the Hardal perspective, according to Aviezer Ravitzky, Gadi Taub and Elie Holzer.

7.2.2. STATE OF ISRAEL AND THE DIASPORA

The ingathering of the exile was from the very beginning intimately connected to the Zionist project and resulted in a “demographic success”. The ingathering of the exiles and the settlement of *Eretz Yisrael* was always highly present in the Kookist ideotheology. For example, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook saw the ingathering of the exiles as “a foundation of the redemption” and “an actual stage in the days of the Mashiach”.¹¹⁵⁴ Both the Kook rabbis juxtaposed Galut with Geula; Galut was perceived as “totally unpleasant”¹¹⁵⁵, an existence of “decline and weakness”.¹¹⁵⁶ The difference between the messianism of R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook and secular Zionism was easily blurred, as Gadi Taub concludes.¹¹⁵⁷ A euphoric cloud gave politics an aura

¹¹⁵⁴ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 293.

¹¹⁵⁵ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 116.

¹¹⁵⁶ Don-Yehiya 1992, 130-132.

¹¹⁵⁷ Taub 2010, 47.

of mythology, while simultaneously, messianism under R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook was exceptionally political. The two realms of politics and religion were, thus, merged in this context.

In the earliest decades of the state, religious Zionism enjoyed good relations with the secular establishment. Their objectives and needs neatly conflated, and the understanding of secular Zionism as an unwitting tool in the hands of God seemed to strengthen both parties (and annoyed some). Closer to our time, however, the rivalry between the two in the bid for power in shaping Israeli society has caused the battle to become “sharper and more pointed”, Arthur Hertzberg reflects:

The central religious-cultural battle of a hundred years ago is being refought in this generation even more vehemently than before. Again, in this generation, those who want a modern, essentially secular, Jewish society and those who demand that the Orthodox tradition set the rules for any Jewish society are in a battle that neither side can afford to lose.¹¹⁵⁸

For the Haredi perspective, Zionism – like socialism, assimilation and secularization – is an expression of the unwillingness to conform to the rules and regulations of exile, thus rebelling against God’s nurture and a rejection of his providence. Following, the State of Israel is a representation of this rebellion – a heresy – and its achievements and its institutions are read in that light. Especially problematic to the Haredim are the wars fought by the State of Israel; it is unthinkable, that the Jewish people would organize into an army and exercise power, taking land and sacrificing Jewish lives, while in exile. In the opinion of Robert Eisen, the Haredim find firm ground for this distaste in the Jewish tradition:

Thus, ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionists are on firm Jewish ground when they claim that it is G-d who can use violence to reestablish Jewish sovereignty in the land of Israel but human beings must not. Ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionists also give a plausible reading of the Talmudic passage involving the three oaths when they interpret it to mean that

¹¹⁵⁸ Hertzberg 1997, 630.

Jews must not establish a sovereign Jewish state in the land of Israel before the coming of the messiah. Therefore, however eccentric this group of ultra-Orthodox Jews may appear to most Jews, their commitment to nonviolence vis-a-vis Palestinians and Arabs is very much within the parameters of the Jewish tradition.¹¹⁵⁹

Consequently, the Haredim propose a peaceful dismantling of the State of Israel. The messianism of the Haredim instead sees repentance, *teshuva*, as the method, which will make the Jewish people worthy of redemption in the eyes of God. There is also a notion of atoning for sins and thus, becoming worthy of redemption; for example, the Haredim believe that the Jewish people would “surely have deserved the *geulah* [redemption]” after the *Shoah*, “if the Zionists had not prevented it by establishing a state.”

The Haredi perspective, on the other hand, rejects the notion that the exile has ended and that the time has come for *kibbutz galyot* – the ingathering of the exiles, associated with redemption. Making *aliyah* is not thought to have any influence at all on the shift from exile to redemption; if anything, living in *Eretz Yisrael* while in exile gives rise to difficulties because transgressions are perceived as graver when committed there. Avoiding transgressing has, furthermore, become increasingly difficult since the establishment of the “heretic state”. Above all, however, the Haredim fear transgressing the Threefold oath which forbids forcing the shift from exile to redemption, rebelling against the nations and ascending *en masse* to *Eretz Yisrael*. The Haredim, hence, perceive it an expression of faith *not* to leave the Diaspora, but rather to embrace the exile, with its requirements of living a tranquil and humble life. They furthermore perceive it to be a necessary time of existential healing under divine protection and providence.

¹¹⁵⁹ Eisen 2011, 193-194.

7.2.3. THE MESSIAH

There is a discrepancy in the understanding of the importance of the messianic figure – the Messiah – in the shift from exile to redemption in the two perspectives. For the Hardalim, the role of the Messiah is less clear; he is expected to appear during the process of redemption, but the exile has been ended without his involvement. How far along the process has come is also unclear; for example, R. Abraham Kook taught that “We are not just living in a time of the footsteps of the Messiah, but we are seeing before us the very beginning of the messianic time itself.”¹¹⁶⁰ R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook taught that the process of redemption is “gradual” and “continuous”, in which “each and every year is a new hymn, a celestial song, another link in the chain”.¹¹⁶¹ These analyses of the time are - in themselves- unclear. Additionally, while they are the words of the two grandest ideologues of the field, they are also showing signs of senescence; R. Kook Senior passed away in 1935, and R. Kook Junior in 1982. R. Shlomo Aviner asserts that even if, in 130 years, the Messiah has not yet arrived, “We wait for the Messiah every day, so come today!”¹¹⁶² But can the perspective really maintain the apocalyptic impetus?

The Haredim, however, perceive the Messiah to be an absolute prerequisite for the exile to end; he is the one who will announce its ending, and they will only accept it from his lips. Stabilizing the Haredi understanding over time and context is the notion that the mission of the Jewish people in exile is undistinguishable from the first stage of the messianic age. When in exile, the Jewish people should concentrate on repenting and living piously; when the Messiah comes, his first challenge will be to bring all Jews to repent. Hence, the Haredim do not need to evaluate the socio-political developments and “read the signs” continuously. In time, the Messiah will reveal himself, but even then, the Jewish people will continue life as they know it, until all have returned to

¹¹⁶⁰ Mirsky 2014, 177.

¹¹⁶¹ www.mercazharav.org/mizmor19.htm, accessed 23.3.2017. Also in Mirsky 2014, 226.

¹¹⁶² www.ravaviner.com/search/label/Mashiach, accessed 7.4.2017.

the faith. The harmonization of Jews worldwide will attest to the authenticity of Messiah, and it is a challenge so difficult that “no false Messiah will be able to do it and fool the world”. Hence, this perspective has also developed immunity against the apocalyptic impetus which messianic figures and movements tend to generate.¹¹⁶³

The tasks facing the Messiah are so “monumental” that it is unimaginable that it should be realized in the foreseeable future. Therefore, the Haredim can press on with their way of life and way of belief, knowing that the messianic age is not yet within reach, and even if it were, it too require them to continue on their path until further notice. In continuing to do so, they are contributing to the move from exile to redemption.

7.3.4. THE THIRD TEMPLE

Within the Hardal perspectives, there are groups devoted to the project of rebuilding the Temple of Jerusalem. These representatives argue that there are indications in Jewish traditions that the Messiah will come to a temple which is already standing, and that rebuilding the Temple is a *mitzvah* incumbent upon every generation. It is, however, a debate within the perspective as to whether or not it is permissible to even ascend the Temple Mount, due to ritual impurity. This impurity cannot be revoked by any of the means available today. Therefore, a rabbinical ban has been issued, forbidding all Jews from ascending. Hence, even if the Temple could be rebuilt, how could it possibly be done? Moreover, how could the service be commenced? Some voices of the Hardal perspective have managed to navigate skilfully through these questions, and stress the perpetuity of the commandment in Ex. 25:8: “Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.”

¹¹⁶³ Interestingly, this is not the case with the Chabad-Lubavitcher Hasidic movement; some of its adherents consider the passed R. Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994) the Messiah; Dein 2011, 55-57. Thus, the Haredi perspective is fragmented; Friedland & Hecht 2000, 78.

The Haredi perspective meets these ambitions with frustration, disbelief and disgust; “even if the Zionists do, G-d forbid, succeed in building a temple, it will not be the long-awaited Third Temple of G-d, but a temple of Satanic forces”, they conclude.¹¹⁶⁴ While the Haredim also expect the Temple to be rebuilt in the messianic era, they do not believe that time has come, and even if it had, they believe the Temple will either be built miraculously or by the Messiah himself. Therefore, they consider the temple activism to be an attempt to “take the concepts and places most holy to Judaism and desecrate them, just as they have desecrated the Holy Land”.¹¹⁶⁵

7.3. RABBINICAL AND BIBLICAL SOURCES

Biblical and rabbinical sources form the backbone of the argumentation in both perspectives. The Hardalim, who sought to distance themselves from the Diaspora, also distanced themselves – by default – from a substantial part of the Jewish tradition, developed *for* and *from* life in exile. Its ideotheology in many respects constituted a break with traditional Judaism. For example, the perspective wavers on how to relate to the tradition of the Threefold oath. Hence, the Hardalim adopted the Bible, reinterpreted it as a national-historical text, and based its mythical infrastructure for the new, Jewish identity upon these interpretations.¹¹⁶⁶

The Haredi perspective generally prefers rabbinical sources; in their own words, “the reason we stress the Rabbinic sources more than the Biblical is that there are many religious Zionists who believe in the Bible and yet support Zionism”, but “once one studies the Rabbinic sources, it becomes clear that any activity on our part towards gathering the exiles and political sovereignty is forbidden.”¹¹⁶⁷ Hence, the Bible does not explicitly argue enough for the traditional understanding of exile and redemption, according to the Haredim. Baruch Kimmerling analyses that the Bible has

¹¹⁶⁴ www.truetorahjews.org/parsha_pearls/terumah, accessed 21.3.2017.

¹¹⁶⁵ www.truetorahjews.org/issues/templemount, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹¹⁶⁶ Kimmerling 2001, 192.

¹¹⁶⁷ www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/sources1, accessed 14.3.2017.

received a “marginal place” in rabbinical culture and theology, simply because it had little bearing on Jewish life and its continuity, despite being a moral-religious text.¹¹⁶⁸

This study can confirm that there seems to be a propensity among the Haredim to refer to rabbinical sources¹¹⁶⁹, to the *acharonim*¹¹⁷⁰ and to the Talmud¹¹⁷¹. There are, however, also ample references to biblical sources among the Haredi materials studied here; therefore, I am hesitant to draw any stark conclusions on this basis.¹¹⁷² Similarly, this study can likewise confirm the propensity among the Hardalim to prefer biblical sources.¹¹⁷³ However, the Hardalim also reference rabbinical sources¹¹⁷⁴ *acharonim*¹¹⁷⁵ and the Talmud.¹¹⁷⁶

¹¹⁶⁸ Kimmerling 2001, 187.

¹¹⁶⁹ In the materials studied here there are references to Maimonides (1153-1204), Rashbash (1400-1467), Rashi (1040-1105) and more generally “the amoraim”, the “rishonim and “chazal”.

¹¹⁷⁰ That is, leading rabbis and poskim from 16th century to the present. For example, Aruch ha-Shulhan (1829-1908), Avnei Nezer (1838-1910), Maharal (1526-1609), Chasam Sofer (1762-1839), Chofetz Chaim (1839–1933), Chazon Ish (1878-1953), R. Avigdor Miller (1908-2001), R. Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888), Slonimer Rebbe (1850-1916), Maharam Chagiz (1672-1751), R. Shlomo Kluger, the Rogachover Gaon (1848-1932), Tosafos Yom Tov (1579-1654), Aruch la-Ner (1790-1871), R. Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeldt (1848-1932), the Satmar Rav (1887-1979).

¹¹⁷¹ In the materials studied here there are references to BT Megillah 14a; 17b, BT Sanhedrin 47a; 98a, BT Baba Kama 60b; 92a, BT Ketubot 111a, BT Shabbat 63a, BT Gittin 98a, BT Pesachim 87b, BT Sukkah 41a; 52a, BT Chagigah 12b, Yerushalmi Yoma 5a.

¹¹⁷² In these materials references to Jer. 2:13; 29:7, Gen. 15:11; Gen 42:28, Songs of Songs 2:7-8, Isa 2:2-4; 11:12; 35:10; 44:25-26; 49:14; 52:12; 55:9, Mal. 4:13; Ezek. 20:32, Ex. 11:6, Psalms 102:23, 1 Kings 18:38 are found.

¹¹⁷³ In these materials there are references to Isa 2:2-4; 30:18; 42:5, 56:4, 56:7, Ezek. 16:6; 36:8; 37:1-14; Songs of Songs 2:7-9, Psalm 106:24; 118:23; 135:4, Ex. 17:9; 19:5; 25:8; 28:25-28, Mal. 3:1, Dan 7:13, Zech. 9:9, Deut. 4:24; 17:15, Haggai 2:9, Joel 4:2, Gen. 2:8; 12:1-2; 15, Lev. 19:23.

¹¹⁷⁴ In these materials there are references to Maimonides (1153-1204), Nachmanides (1194-1270), and Jehuda HaLevi (1075-1141).

¹¹⁷⁵ In these materials references to Radbaz (1479-1573), Chofetz Chaim (1839-1933), Ohr Somayah (1843-1926), R. Eliayhu Guttmacher (1796-1874), Ohr Somayah (1843-1926) and Maharal (1526-1609) are found.

¹¹⁷⁶ In these materials there are references to BT Baba Bathra 158b, BT Yevamot 105b, BT Berachot 11b; 51b, BT Sotah 44b, BT Sanhedrin 97b; 98a, BT Sukkah 55b, BT Ketubboth 111a.

7.4. NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM?

This study stretches over nearly a century, and over this time the two Jewish perspectives studied here have lived through different contexts. As a result, there have been developments within the perspectives stemming from different impulses: from within themselves, from within Judaism, and from without – from the historical impulses they have had to face.

In the Hardal perspective, Nadav G. Shelef has noted a “haredization” of religious Zionism, led by the Hardalim which sprung out from the *Mercaz Harav Yeshiva*. The rift between secular and religious Zionism seems to be widening, while the Hardalim display a “desired proximity to the Haredim”. The Hardal perspective seems, thus, to simultaneously be moving away from secularism, towards orthodoxy. In Shelef’s prognosis, the religious Zionist leadership will continue to struggle for control, and as it gains control, the “mission of replacing the current state of Israel with a ‘real’ Jewish state can be expected to become more widespread.”¹¹⁷⁷

David Ohana uses the metaphor of a “melting pot” to describe the Israeli society which has, since the 1990s, has displayed a tendency towards becoming more diversified, “supplanted by a marked trend toward ethnic particularism, localism and the cultivation of diasporic roots”:

The two thousand years of Jewish Diaspora are perceived no longer as a potential threat to the viability of Israeli statehood but as an integral part of Israel’s past, to be integrated into its contemporary history. Therefore, an Israeli identity divorced from its Jewish sources seems increasingly unlikely despite the tension that still exists between the Zionist aspiration and the reality of the Diaspora.¹¹⁷⁸

Against this background, the contrast between the two perspectives of this study becomes more complex. The Hardal perspective of tomorrow may

¹¹⁷⁷ Shelef 2010, 185.

¹¹⁷⁸ Wistrich & Ohana 1995, xii.

no longer see the need to distance itself from its Diasporic roots.¹¹⁷⁹ Hence, if this study were to be repeated in the future, the differences between the two may not appear so clearly, and the discrepancies in the argumentations for respective understandings of exile and redemption may be less noticeable. However, a fundamental difference between the two, and which is bound to live on, lies in the understanding of the Shoah, and subsequently, in the approach to the State of Israel.

A religious community has needs: needs for a congruent belief system that answers existential questions, steers one through the phases of life, and provides strategies for facing hardships. The same community, obviously, also has other needs: needs for food, shelter, education, health care, political stability, and prospects for the future. The two perspectives studied here have prioritized between these needs differently. In the face of the challenges of the 20th century the Haredim have chosen to continue on the path, which they perceive as the way “Jews have always believed”. They have prioritized keeping their theological construct intact, even if – at times – it might have been safer or more convenient to review their understanding of exile and redemption, and thus allowing them to intervene more actively in their own fate. The theological interpretation as to why things were unfolding the way they were, was explained as “all of this was, indeed, from the Almighty”. Without this belief, the *Shoah* “would be inexplicable”. The Haredim accepted and integrated this understanding into their belief system. The adherents accepted the heavy price for this understanding, and continued along its set projection.

In the Hardal perspective, the ideotheology has been adapting to the socio-political situation and the needs arising from it in its adherents. The establishment of the State found its religious legitimization in the Kookist ideotheology, proposing that redemption is a process, not necessarily instigated by the Messiah. Building the state required a commitment beyond own personal gain, and the Kookist ideotheology

¹¹⁷⁹ Infact, Robert Wistrich and David Ohana already see this tendency as levelling out. Wistrich & Ohana 1995, xii.

became a driving force, approving the settling of *Eretz Yisrael* and the advancing of agriculture eschatological dimensions. Hence, the needs of the nascent state conflated with the Hardal ideotheology.

David Vital assesses that the entire Zionist movement developed its doctrine stage by stage, “by trial and error, by periodic debate on matters of practical policy”, and is therefore not surprised that, “so far as doctrine is concerned, Zionism presents a patchy and unsystematic appearance.”¹¹⁸⁰ Therefore, it seems Zionism – and subsequently, Religious Zionism and the Hardal perspective – reinterpreted the ideotheology by and by, in relation to needs stemming from its context. Hovering over the practical context was, of course, the struggle for survival – not only because life in Palestine and later, in the State of Israel, was austere, but also because of the pending threats of anti-Semitism and regional conflicts. The Hardalim, thus, safeguarded their survival by reinterpreting their ideotheology to reassure and motivate them in the process of securing life in *Eretz Yisrael*.

For the Haredim, the need to preserve the belief system was more urgent than practical or security concerns. The Hardalim, then, saw the thriving of the State of Israel as crucial, and hence, developed the belief system in relation to that concern.

Presumably, however, both perspectives would contend that there have been any reinterpretations, from those days to this; it is a common feature of any fundamentalism, to perceive itself as conveying the original version of the faith in question.¹¹⁸¹ Thus, the Hardalim stress, “We are not a new creation, rather we are the original thing – the real thing – the one and

¹¹⁸⁰ Vital 1989, 348-349.

¹¹⁸¹ For example, Martin E. Marty and Scott R. Appleby explain, “Fundamentalists reject in principle all forms of hermeneutics and insist that theirs is the correct rendering of sacred texts and myths. Claiming privileged access to absolute truth, fundamentalists divide the world into kingdoms of provinces of light and darkness, elect and reprobate. Insisting on the purity and integrity of their doctrine and practice, they stridently resist the compromise of either.” But, however, “In practice fundamentalists may gradually modify or de-emphasize extreme doctrines or practices.” Marty & Appleby 1991,15.

only”, and the Haredim assure that they represent the way “Jews have always believed”.¹¹⁸²

Dina Porat deems it “virtually impossible” to understand Orthodoxy without examining its extreme ends and without taking into account the emotional aspects of their argumentations.¹¹⁸³ “Extreme” is, of course, a relative expression eluding scientific precision, but the two perspectives studied here do represent, in their own categories, radical positions. By analyzing their constructed worlds, this study has shown that an action that may appear as eccentric often follows an intrinsic logic. By comparing them, this study has shown that although the two share a worldview, the thrusts of history, as it evolves, have resulted in two diametrically opposed sets of imperatives. The theoretical starting point of this study is that social processes create, uphold and influence what we perceive as “true”; “meaning” is constantly constructed and re-constructed. The ever-changing socio-political milieu constantly provides impulses for this construction.

The strategies the perspectives present today to contribute to redemption can be traced back through history; while the Hardal perspective understands the *Shoah* as the departure for redemption, the Haredi perspective sees the *Shoah*, the establishment of the State of Israel and the Six Day War in 1967 as expressions of the same destruction. Hence, it seems these perspectives parted ways at the *Shoah*, and since then they have been striking out in their own directions. It would be unrealistic, therefore, to expect that these perspectives – despite all their shared features – would find common ground in the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, Asher Arian analyses that the Hardalim have, indeed, grown closer to the Haredim in religious observance, and that the Haredim have become more nationalistic *vis-à-vis* the Arab-Israeli conflict.¹¹⁸⁴ Despite the

¹¹⁸² www.truetorahjews.org/qanda/messiah1, accessed 7.4.2017.

¹¹⁸³ Porat 1992, 724. Porat is referencing explicitly the challenge of understanding the (ultra-)Orthodox attitudes towards the State of Israel.

¹¹⁸⁴ Arian 2009, 80.

mutual dislike between the two perspectives, however, they also seem to confirm each other; for example, R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook notes that

a perspective [...] which divides the whole into parts (religious and secular, Zionist and anti-Zionist), without sensitivity to the overall oneness of the nation, is a narrow-minded perspective which brings many crises in its wake. All of Israel's millions are bound together, in one body, one soul.¹¹⁸⁵

Similarly, JAZ hopes that "all of our fellow Jews" will soon return to the Torah, and set their hopes to God's redemption.¹¹⁸⁶ Thus, there is a missionary element in both perspectives, hoping to reach out and persuade the "fellow Jews", "all of Israel's millions".

We are now witnessing a formative process in Judaism. The historical impulses have forced the communities to re-read classical, Jewish texts and reconsider the answers tradition has in store for times of crisis. The Hardal perspective has evolved *with* the historical impulses and re-read Jewish tradition *in response* to them, resulting in innovative theological solutions, selectively retrieving classical, Jewish sources and re-orientating itself in relation to Jewish tradition and in relation to a new, socio-political situation. For the Haredi perspective, the process has led to a reinforcement of the traditional understanding of an enduring exile at the mercy of God, prohibiting the Jewish people from taking control over their own fate.

One may, perhaps, formulate the question which produced this division of minds more pointedly. It would then be: Can man master his own future?¹¹⁸⁷

¹¹⁸⁵ Aviner, Samson & Fishman 1991, 266.

¹¹⁸⁶ www.truetorahjews.org/our_mission, accessed 24.3.2017.

¹¹⁸⁷ Scholem 1971, 14-15.

SVENSK SAMMANFATTNING

Föreliggande studie undersöker hur de teologiska begreppen frälsning och exil förstås inom de två judiska perspektiven *Hardal* (av hebreiska *haredi dati leumi*, nationalistisk, religiös sionism influerad av de två rabbinerna R. Abraham Y. Kook och R. Tzvi Yehuda Kook) och *Haredi* (ultra-ortodox judendom, ofta affilierad med *Satmar Hasidism*). Studien undersöker hur de soteriologier dessa perspektiv presenterar konkretiseras i relation till fem eskatologiska teman. Studiens primärmaterial består av textmaterial som publicerats av representanter för vardera av de två aktuella perspektiven.

Perspektiven har utvecklat divergerande förhållningssätt till en messiasgestalt, till staten Israel, till statens territoriella expansioner, till Förintelsen och till de eskatologiska förväntningarna knutna till Tempelberget. Studien undersöker hur heliga texter och religiösa auktoriteter åberopas till stöd för dessa förhållningssätt. Forskningen bidrar till en nyanserad förståelse av judendomen, och mer allmänt till en förståelse för religioners formbarhet.

En övergripande fråga som studien ställer till primärmaterialet är till vilket bibliskt och rabbinskt material primärkällorna hänvisar för att stärka sina argument. Studien är också intresserad av vilka historiska impulser som har påverkat diskursen. Dessa två övergripande frågeställningar konkretiseras i följande frågor, som ställs till primärmaterialet: (1) Hur argumenterar primärmaterialet ifråga om exil och frälsning? Hur övergår det ena tillståndet i det andra, och går det att påverka denna förändring? (2) Hur förstås Förintelsen i relation till den existentiella dynamiken? (3) Vilken roll spelar messiasgestalten i sammanhanget? (4) Påskyndar det judiska folkets återvändo till det Heliga Landet frälsningsprocessen, eller inte? (5) Borde Jerusalems tempel återuppföras så snart som möjligt och med tillbudsstående medel, eller borde man invänta ett Guds ingripande?

De två perspektiv som studien undersöker kommer till diametralt olika slutsatser ifråga om hur människan kan påverka frälsningsprocessen. Studien identifierar diskrepansen mellan dessa två perspektiv och undersöker den.

Den teoretiska utgångspunkten för arbetet är *socialkonstruktionistisk teori*. Detta teoretiska grepp fäster vikt vid hur ideologi och teologi *formar* och *formas* av den kontext inom vilken de existerar. En religiös verklighet blir kontinuerligt tolkad och omtolkad. Som ur ett förråd kan tolkningsgemenskapen *lyfta fram* element ur religionens traditionshistoria eller *ställa dem tillbaka*, så att den religiösa verkligheten blir meningsfull för dem som lever den, dess anhängare. Ett socialkonstruktionistiskt perspektiv fäster alltså vikt vid forandet, skapandet, av den förståelse och mening som blir till i en ständigt pågående process.

I enlighet med detta teoretiska närmandesätt tillämpas i denna studie *diskursanalytisk metod*. Studien fäster därmed uppmärksamhet vid hur de två ideo-teologiska konstruktioner som undersöks konstrueras och blir meningsfulla för sina anhängare i en given kontext. Studien är i synnerhet intresserad av hur de större kriserna inom judendomen under 1900-talet reflekteras i konstruktionerna av den religiösa verkligheten. I ljuset av sina anhängares diskursiva konstruktion av vad frälsningsprocessen *är* och *innebär* utforskas även de praktiska tillämpningar som dessa ideologiska och teologiska konstruktioner får.

Studiens centrala slutsats är att dessa perspektiv förmår och har förmått erbjuda sina anhängare resurser för att på ett meningsfullt sätt skapa och förstå sin judiska identitet i en föränderlig kontext, samt att kopplingen till den judiska traditionshistorien förefaller så övertygande att dessa perspektiv bibehåller sin trovärdighet i sina anhängares ögon.

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