

# Epoch of the Messiah

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Rabbi Elchonon Bunim Wasserman, zt'l  
A Brief Biographical Sketch

Reb Elchonon, zt'l, was born in 1874 in Birz, Lithuania. Circa 1889 his parents moved to Boisk, Latvia, at that time the Rabbinical Seat of Rabbi Cook, olov hasholom. From there he went to Telz where he studied under the illustrious gaonim, Rabbi Eliezer Gordon, zt'l and Rabbi Shimon Shkop, zt'l. In Telz, he was noted for his unusual diligence and profound mind. After many years of intensive study in Telz, he went to Volozin to become a disciple of the great Reb Chaim Brisker who was Rosh yeshivah of Volozin at that time. In 1898, he married the daughter of one of the leading sages of the day, Rabbi Meir Atlas, zt'l, who was then the Rabbi of Salant.

Then came a period which impressed itself indelibly on the rest of his life. It began in 1906 when he went to Radin, the home of his master, the world-renowned Chofetz Chaim, zt'l where he studied until 1908 in the Kollel Kodshim. The Chofetz Chaim had founded this select institution for the future leaders of Israel. During the year 1908-1909, Rav Elchonon, together with the gaon Rabbi Yoel Baranchick zt'l started a yeshivah in Amsislav, Russia. In 1910, he accepted a call to become a rosh yeshivah in Brisk, the home of his teacher, Rabbi Chaim, zt'l. When World War I broke out towards the end of 1914, Brisk, situated on the line of battle, was vacated by its inhabitants, and R. Elchonon returned to Radin. In 1915, the Germans שׂרפו invaded Radin, and he rejoined the Chofetz Chaim and moved with his yeshivah to Smilovitch, near Minsk. Later, when the Chofetz Chaim decided to move deeper into Russia, to the city of Sumiatch, he left part of the yeshivah in Smilovitch under R. Elchonon's leadership. In 1921, after yeshivah students were finally given permission to leave Russia, R. Elchonon returned to Poland, to Baronovitch, where he was asked to head the local yeshivah, Ohel Torah. Under his guidance it grew until it became one of the largest yeshivos in Europe. Between the years 1921-1939 it exerted its influence not only on the whole of Poland but also on the world-wide Torah community. Yeshivah Ohel Torah continued as a dominant force in the world of Torah until 1939-40, when it ascended into Heaven martyred, after having wandered to Vilno, Truck, and Smeleshuk. During the period that existed between the two World Wars, R. Elchonon was accepted by the international Jewish community as one of its foremost leaders and spokesmen. In all matters pertaining to world Jewry, he cooperated closely with his master, the Chofetz Chaim, and his brother-in-law, the celebrated gaon, Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, zt'l.

R. Elchonon was an intellectual giant, a prober for truth who labored endlessly in Torah with a zest that was extraordinary. He tirelessly toiled and strove to plumb the profundities in all areas of Torah, while the teachings of the Chofetz Chaim were always on his lips. Imbued by his great mentors, he sought the truth. Wherever he went, he was greeted with reverence and admiration.

He shunned the rabbinate in order to devote his life to teaching G-d's Torah, lest the next generation be ignorant of its Divine heritage. He guided his students with kindness, and his devotion to them knew no limits. He helped carry their burdens, and he shared in their anguish. He sought for and succeeded in acquiring the services of outstanding roshei yeshivah, men like Rabbi Shlomo Hyman, zt'l, who later became Dean of Mesivta Torah V'daath in Brooklyn, Rabbi David Rappaport, zt'l, author of the classic, Tzemach David, Rabbi Leib Gavia, zt'l, and Rabbi Yisroel Yaakov Lubtchanski, zt'l.

The influence of the Chofetz Chaim was clearly visible in every aspect of R. Elchonon's life. Similarly, the Chofetz Chaim had aught but the greatest respect for his beloved disciple. Each time R. Elchonon came to Radin, the Chofetz Chaim greeted him with a countenance radiant with joy and love. Notwithstanding the fact that R. Elchonon always stood before the Chofetz Chaim as a student before his master, the latter considered him his confident. He was the Chofetz Chaim's right hand in all communal matters. He was often called to Radin for an opinion on some urgent issue or to help activate some plan to strengthen Torah.

Versed in all aspects of Torah, Rav Elchonon's memory was phenomenal. He once borrowed The Responsa of the Revash from Rabbi Meir Obowitz, zt'l, the Rabbi of N'vardok, his son's father-in-law. For approximately one half year, he spent a little time each morning studying the work. Yet two years after he returned the sefer to its owner, we saw him write a letter and quote the responsa word for word from memory.

When he studied Torah, his only thought was on comprehending the full depth of the text. He had no desire to display his skill in giving novel interpretations. In his Introduction to M'asef Ohel Torah, he quotes the words of his renowned teacher, Rabbi Chaim Brisker, zt'l: "To give new interpretations is not our task; only the rishonim had this ability. Our job is only to comprehend what has already been stated."

He raised countless students and left his imprint on the best young minds of the Torah empire that flourished in Lithuania and Poland. He developed a unique method to probe and to clarify the essence of complex Talmudic texts and then transmitted his findings to his disciples clearly and concisely. His method is best depicted in the Rambam, Hilchus Dayos, Chap. II: "Likewise when studying Torah and wisdom, a man's words must be few yet rich in content... he should not hurry to answer, neither should he speak at length. He must teach his students calmly and pleasantly without raising his voice or being verbose. This is what Solomon had said: 'The words of the wise are transmitted with pleasantness.'" He once said that a good teacher is someone who will not omit one necessary word or include a word which is superfluous.

His consistency was resolute. There were no visible discrepancies between the conclusions he drew from his study of Torah and what he practiced in his daily life. Nothing could ever muddle the clarity and the simplicity of his insights. He always used to say, "The Torah itself testifies that bribery 'blinds the wise.'" The greatest sage, therefore, must necessarily err if he is plagued with a vested interest. Conversely, by ridding oneself of vested interests, all that previously appeared crooked is rendered straight, and everything

that was complex is made obvious. In one of his essays, he explains at length that all errors of the intellect have their source in the heart. Without vested interests every truth is obvious and self-explanatory.

His diligence in Torah study was incredible. In his writings he explains that when someone is confronted with a mitzvah which no one else can perform, he is freed of his obligation to study Torah [in order to fulfill that mitzvah] just as he is freed of his obligation to study Torah when he must attend to his physical needs... Thus it follows that every other moment must be utilized for Torah study. As he preached, so he practiced. He never refused to participate actively in any matter which urgently affected either the community or an individual; he never ceased in his work to support the yeshivah materially; he wrote numerous articles for magazines and newspapers presenting the Torah view on all current issues - then returned to his studies as if he had never forsaken them. Many times when he had to travel, he would stop at the yeshivah with his suitcase to give a shiur (lecture) on the way to the train station - The eminent Dean of the noted Ponivezer yeshivah, Hagaon Rabbi Yosef Cahanaman, zt'l, told of the time he was studying with Rav Elchonon. The latter received a telegram saying that his wife had given birth to a son. At that moment, they had been engrossed in a Tosefos in Chulin. Rav Elchonon read the telegram, rose, pronounced a blessing [because of the good news] and immediately returned to the Tosefos, and he continued to probe the text as if nothing extraneous had ever happened.

At the eulogy that he delivered in the yeshivah at Baranovitz for his teacher, the Chofetz Chaim, zt'l, he explained what the Rambam meant when he said, "Every man can become as great as Moses." This does not imply that everyone can excel in every respect like Moses, but rather, that we can equal him in the act of Serving G-d. Just as a servant possesses nothing of his own and only exists to serve his master, so too Moses only lived to serve his Creator. This specific perfection can be attained by everyone. Rav Elchonon then testified that his sainted mentor had achieved this. Even when the Chofetz Chaim signed his name upon receipt of money sent by post, when he dipped his pen into the ink he would say, "For the Glory of G-d." Those who had the privilege of knowing R. Elchonon know how well these words describe him also.

He always used to say that Torah is called Tosheya [advice] because no person really knows what is best for him. Only Torah can solve these questions with certainty. There is no problem which concerns either the group or the individual which Torah does not answer, and no issue to which it does not elude. We must only search and learn how to search. He frequently said, "Humanity's concept of justice varies according to time and place. However, 'Your justice is just forever' - because - 'Your Torah is true,'" (Sabbath Afternoon Prayer).

Whenever he worked to strengthen and to propagate Torah, he saw it as an act of saving Jewish lives even in the physical sense. In the letter he sent to the Young Israel in 1938, enjoining them to form Torah-study groups and to organize elementary yeshivos, he explains that the ultimate cause of all our suffering is our having forgotten Torah. Thus, by encouraging Torah study, one saves our nation physically as well as spiritually. Anyone who remains indifferent to a program of this nature obviously transgresses the passage, "Do not stand idly by the blood of your brother."

The martyred demise of Rav Elchonon was the climax of a lifetime devoted to Kiddush-Hashem, to selfless self-sacrifice for G-d's honor. It is an overwhelming experience simply to quote from the memoirs of an eye-witness, Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, shlita, (Rabbi Oshry publicized the incident in his sefer, in newspapers in the United States

and in Israel, and it is quoted by Rabbi M. Yosher, shlita) which relate the last words he addressed to his sainted companions as they closed their folios - Tractate Nidah - for the last time, from whence they were led to sanctify the Divine Name by offering their lives on the altar, on that blackest of days, 11 Tammuz, 5701:

"R. Elchonon spoke quietly and calmly as was his practice. Not even the sound of his voice was changed. On his face, his customary earnestness. His tone betrayed no feeling for self, and he did not attempt to say good-bye to his son, Rav Naftali: He spoke to everyone, to the whole of Israel.

"In Heaven it appears that they deem us to be righteous because our bodies have been chosen to atone for Jewry. 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 brothers and sisters in America. "Let no thought enter our minds, G-d forbid, which is abominable and which renders an offering unfit. We are now fulfilling the greatest mitzvah. 'With fire she was destroyed, and with fire she will be rebuilt. 'The very fire which consumes our bodies will one day rebuild the Jewish people."

On that fateful day, the Sefer Torah and its appurtenances was taken into Heaven. Our sainted teacher, and after him his sons the renowned genius R. Naftali Beenush, and the righteous and beloved R. Tzvi Yehuda Lieb, departed this earth.

"You who have shown us great distresses and misfortunes will revive us, and from the depths of the earth will You bring us up again" (Psalms 71:20).

# The Epoch of the Messiah

## INTRODUCTION

The period through which we are now passing is unique, especially on the stage of Jewish life. We are eye-witnesses to happenings which have never before come into our experience. Sensations burst upon us with astounding lightning force, and we stand smitten with wonder and uncomprehending before these events. "And you shall be mad from the visions of your eyes." When does this apply? As long as our approach derives from and is based on mortal wisdom; but if we delve deeply into the Torah, we shall find everything clear and certain. All the events in Jewish History, both past and present, were foreseen from the very beginning by the Torah and traditional "Aggadah." Everything in the Torah is fact, absolute and irrevocable. Thousands of years ago we were told "And G-d shall scatter you among all the peoples from one end of the earth to the other." This prophecy has become reality. In the past, if there were scattered corners on the face of the globe which were empty of Jewish habitation, today the refugees have reached even there.

If we want to interpret contemporary events, we must search after verses and statements which deal with the period known as the "Messiah's time," that is, the period of transition from exile to redemption. If we compare the Scriptures with events, we shall see in the Torah a clear vision of all that happens to us, as well as the causative factors. Everything spoken in these verses has become real, and all events were prophesied from the beginning. Let us begin to look in the Torah.

## THE ERA OF THE MESSIAH

In the story of the Jewish people, we can distinguish several well-defined periods: the period of the Tanaim, the period of the Amoraim, of the Saboraim, of the Gaonim, and of the later Rabbis. The latest period is known in holy writings as "end of days," and the Gemara calls it "The Era of the Messiah." The expression "end of days" comprises the immediate period before the redemption and the redemption itself, whereas "time of the Messiah" refers only to the last days of bondage. Maimonides states in reference to this period that "all the words of the prophets are full of this." In truth, in the Pentateuch as well as in the prophets, the state of the Klal Israel, both spiritual and material, is described. In Daniel (12). It is written that the oppression of these days will exceed anything that happened to Israel from the day it became a nation, that is, will outdo even the oppression at the time of the destruction of the Temple. This thing is also mentioned in Jeremiah 30. The Rabbis who foresaw the terror of the epoch of the Messiah declared "May it come, but let me not see it." (Sanhed. Helek).

The Gaon of Vilna wrote: The Redemption is called Rebirth. "Zion hath ailed and born" (Isaiah 61): the Hebrew people will then be reborn and just as the pains - the birth pangs - herald the birth and develop as the time of birth approaches, so also will the Messianic pangs precede the Redemption, and towards the approach of the Messiah increase in severity from day to day.

This same sequence of events was experienced in Egypt. At the beginning of the last phase of the Egyptian subjugation, Pharaoh decreed: "Let the work be heavier;" "Straw is not given and we are told to make bricks" (Exodus 4). In our day too, there are countries which deprive the Jews of all means of livelihood and at the same time increase their burden of taxation.

## THE SONG OF HA'AZINU

The Song of Ha'azinu is the only portion of the Torah which opens with a special introduction (Deut. 31 vs. 19-21) and finishes with an Epilogue (Deut. 32-46). - This serves to emphasize the great significance of this section.

What is said in that parashah? Everything which will happen to Israel until the coming of the Redeemer. A few verses, which we will here recount according to Rashi's explanation, relate exclusively to the Epoch of the Messiah. "For the Lord will judge His people and repent Himself for His servants." That is, after the Lord judges Israel with the chastisements which are predestined for them, the promise "and will repent Himself for His servants" will be fulfilled, i.e. the Redemption will come. When? "When He sees that their stay is gone, and there is none remaining." When the Almighty sees the powers of Israel ceasing for lack of a deliverer and savior, then will He send His rightful Messiah. So also, says the Prophet, "And I looked, and there was none to help, and I beheld in astonishment and there was none to uphold, therefore My own arm has brought salvation to Me." (Is. 61). "And he saw that there was no man." (ibid), that is, there is none even to pray for them. And it is said "Where are their gods, the rock in whom they trusted?" G-d shall ask "Where are the idols whom you hoped would be a shield to you, who ate the fat of their sacrifices, to whom you have offered the best of your sacrifices? Let them rise up and help you." All the above verses affirm that before the redemption, the Jews will err after various forms of idol-worship and from time to time will transfer their hopes from one to another.

What is the nature of the idol-worship to which they have given allegiance? First, we must understand the meaning of the conception "idol-worship." Any matter which appears to man as a controlling factor independent of G-d's will and able to do good or evil is included in idolatry (Sanhedrin).

Let us now review all the "idols" which were worshiped in the last hundred years. The "Enlightenment of Berlin" (or better, foolishness) promised a great salvation. As soon as the breeze of Liberalism began to blow, the Jews hastened to stand in the foremost ranks of its exponents. After Liberalism had made its exit, they turned to Democracy, Socialism, Communism, and to the other "isms" which have come down upon our generation in such great profusion. To these idols they made sacrifices of blood and money - and were betrayed by all of them. Not even one justified the faith that had been pinned on it. Not only that, but all these "isms" died a sudden death and vanished abruptly.

How can this phenomenon be explained? In Ezekiel (Chap. 29) it is said that Egypt will be punished "Because they have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel," that is, because Israel put their trust in them. If so, the question arises: What is the transgression and sin of the Egyptians? But one of the principles of the Torah is that all idolatry has one end: annihilation. "And in all the gods of Egypt will I do judgment" (Exodus). "And the idols shall utterly vanish." Once Israel hoped in Egypt it became an idol.

We have witnessed something amazing: Sixteen million Socialists in one land disappeared literally overnight, leaving hardly a memory of them. Socialism was also idolatry for which the Jews were not loath to make sacrifices, to give their lives. They believed in Communism and that freedom and equality were in its wake. The Red Government gave a practical demonstration of what that hoped-for "freedom" and "equality" were.

We have learned that every idol in which we put our faith has disappointed and deceived us, and G-d says "Let them rise up and help you." "See now, that I, even I, am He." "The time has arrived for you to understand that besides Me, there is no savior."

But they refuse to understand. They still clutch at the skirts of dying Democracy. This also will not help; this also has no real value.

Apart from those 'isms" which are shared by all the nations, we are blessed with an exclusively Jewish "ism." That is a Nationalism which aspires to bequeath to the people of Israel a redemption, material and especially spiritual. Its aim is to set up a new Hebrew people which will know how to "shake off from itself the dust of the preceding generations" and to proclaim "Hush! do not mention the name of G-d." Its plan of action is also very simple: to drive G-d out of the house of Israel, and from the hearts of the children of Israel. And if you ask: who will stand up for us in time of trouble? Will come the reply: We ourselves, "My power, and the might of my hand." Who are the "we?" These are the leaders, our "National" youth, the heroes who brought about a state of war between the Hebrew people and the Kingdom of Heaven. Will these bring us the Redemption? They fancied that it would not be denied them to drive G-d out of our boundaries, that the thing was not difficult. G-d's power is greater than theirs, and we stand now like smitten fools. We are not merely fools, but "fools among fools who are taught and do not learn." We are taught, we are chastised, and our ears are still closed to reason. It is written "And the Redeemer shall come unto Zion and to those who return from sin (Peshah) in Jacob." (Peshah means rebellion, as it is written, "Then the City of LIVNO shall rebel (תפשה).") That is, it is a prerequisite for salvation that the rebels shall turn in penitence, and as long as our leaders do not cease to rebel against the Kingdom of Heaven, salvation is impossible.

## THE DEEDS OF THE FATHERS

What is the meaning of the expression "Torah?" "Torah" means learning. Every word of the Torah must contain a lesson, otherwise its place in the Torah is not justified. The question arises: What is the lesson which lies hidden in all the stories of the past in all their details? Let us take this for a general rule: "The deeds of the fathers are a guide for the children." In the Torah narratives are concentrated all the future episodes in the life of the Hebrew people from beginning to end.

The portion of Vayishlach which describes the meeting of Esau and Jacob foreshadows the life of Israel among the nations. According to Nachmanides, the first section is that of Exile -the vision of the Jewish exile among the children of Esau. The second section tells of the return of Jacob, our forefather, to Eretz Israel from Padan-Aram, the land of his exile. The Gaon of Vilna asserts that this is the portion of the Epoch of the Messiah. In this portion it is written: "And he put the handmaids and their children first." From here we have proof, states the Gaon of Vilna, that in the Epoch of the Messiah the descendants of the "mixed multitude" will stand at the heads of the people. Nachmanides records in his letters: There is a promise, "And also in thee will they believe forever" that is, that the Jews will cleave forever to their faith in the Torah; and if you see atheists in Israel, it is certain "that their fathers did not stand at Mount Sinai" or their origin is not from the children of Israel, but from the "mixed multitude (Erev Rav)."

As we see nowadays unbelievers leading the people, we can know how right the Gaon was; these are the children of the mixed multitude. "And Leah and her children after" represents the masses of the house of Israel who will be subjugated to the mixed

multitude, as in Soviet Russia and another country. "And Rachel and Joseph hindmost" - these are the Torah-students, the lowest of all. To this appearance also, we are eye-witnesses; there is no land in which the escaped remnant of Torah students is not derided and shamed.

It is furthermore written there: "And a man wrestled with him." Jacob is the pillar of Torah. "A man" refers to Satan. This indicates that in the Epoch of the Messiah, immorality will struggle with the study of the Torah. "And the thigh of Jacob shrank," refers to the Torah schoolchildren who formed the backbone of the people during thousands of years. Even this foundation will weaken in the Epoch of the Messiah, through the attacks of internal and external foes. This, too, has come true in our days wherever Israel has been scattered. Most of the children behave like absolute Gentiles. There is another interpretation for "the thigh of Jacob," that is, those who support the Torah, who support Torah students to make it possible for them to study in liberal and peaceful conditions. Since Israel became a nation, much importance has been attached to this precept (Issachar and Zebulun). In the Epoch of the Messiah, this precept is annulled everywhere. Even in those countries where it is still temporarily possible to help financially, people give to all causes; only for the Torah, prutahs are left. Even the better classes are, at the most, only indifferent towards the Torah.

It is no wonder. The younger generation, ignorant of Torah, cannot appreciate the value of its study. We see that the two things are interdependent: the cessation of children's Torah-education and Torah support.

What is G-d's reply? "For the sin of suppression of Torah, the sword and plunder come, as it is written, 'And I shall bring upon you the sword avenging the covenant' - 'The covenant' means the Torah, of which it is written, 'If not my covenant by day and night, then have I not set up the statutes of Heaven and earth.'" In Vienna alone, Jewish possessions to the value of forty million dollars were plundered. "Woe to mankind for the insults to the Torah."

### "LET US BE LIKE THE PEOPLES"

In Ezekiel (Ch. 20), it is clearly stated that in the time before the Messiah a new creed will develop among the Jews: "Let us be like the Nations." The realization of this prophecy started through the "Enlightenment of Berlin" nearly 150 years ago. It was masked in the words "Be a Jew in your tent and a man in the street." The fruits of this ideal quickly ripened. The sons of its adherents became apostates. The idea was an undermining of the fundamentals of the Torah. The Torah warned that the Jews must be separated from the Nations in their whole way of living. "And I have separated you from the Nations to be Mine." (Kedoshim).

The Maskilim came and said the exact reverse: "Absolutely like the Nations." G-d said about this, "As to your saying 'Let us be like the Nations,' this shall surely not be. If not through a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, then with out-poured wrath I will reign over you.

It will start with a "mighty hand." If this is not effective, then the "outstretched arm" will come. If this does not help then there must be "out-poured wrath." Under which of these three processes we are at present living we cannot know. This will show itself in the very near future. At any rate, it is clear that the prophecy of "It shall surely not be" is being realized. The nations drive us murderously from themselves. It is said that it is hard to be a



Jew. Now a miracle has happened in recent time - it is harder still to be a non-Jew. It is said in the name of the Gaon "Beth Halevi:" "It is written 'Who divides between light and darkness, between Israel and the Nations.'" Between light and darkness there is a definite period of separation (twilight). No one can alter it to make it less or more. In the same way, between Israel and the Peoples there exists a predetermined border line - how near one may approach to the other. If the Jews drift too near, then the Nations thrust back.

From this we can understand that the more Jews have drifted over to the Nations the greater has been the recoil. This is well-apparent in those lands where the Jews had completely assimilated. How terrible this repulse really is! So was the case in Egypt; when the bondage increased, Jews began to mix with the Egyptians thinking that by doing so things would become easier. What did G-d do? "He turned their heart to hate his people." (Tehillim 105) The more they sought intimacy with the Egyptians, the greater became the Egyptians' hatred towards them until the time came that the Jews recognized their mistake; then came the Redemption. The same will be with us. "If you are separated from the Peoples, then you are mine; if not, you belong to Nebuchadnezzar and his colleagues."

### THE LEADERS

Ezekiel (Chap. 34) paints a faithful picture of the generation before the times of the Messiah and the leaders of that generation. He divides the people of that generation into five separate classes, namely,

- (1) Weak
- (2) Sick
- (3) Broken
- (4) Estranged
- (5) Lost

The three latter classes symbolize the three kinds of unbelievers. The class of "broken" symbolizes those who are separated from the congregation of Israel through their having cast off from themselves the yoke of one or two precepts. About such as these, the Gaon of Vilna said that an apostate to one precept has lost one limb of his soul. The estranged and the lost are the apostates who are lost from the whole Torah, but while the estranged are deniers, that is, apostates who are yet bound to the people of Israel, the class of the lost symbolizes the apostates who have assimilated until their Jewish origin has been forgotten.

The leaders, or shepherds, whose livelihood is their sheep - "You eat the fat and you wear the wool" - and whose obligation it is to care for their sheep - they default in this duty. They feed not the sheep but themselves. The sheep wander on every mountain and hill, prey for the teeth of the beasts of the field, "And there was none that did search or seek." Therefore, says G-d: "I will cause the shepherds to cease, and I myself will feed my sheep. What will I do to the sheep of my pasture? (1) The lost will I seek out; (2) The estranged will I bring back; (3) The broken will I bind up."

It is good to look into the order of the grades in this progression. First, "The lost will I seek," that is, those men whose grandfathers and grandmothers betrayed their faith 120-130 years ago. Their "letters of descent" will be examined, and their 'non-Aryan' origin established. They will be smitten upon their heads, and it will be clearly brought home to them: Know that you are Jews and that you are obliged to remain Jews. In a land where there is only one Jew to a thousand Gentiles, there also will the Jew be sought out, sought out and found.

It is at this stage that we have arrived today. The evolution of this step has not yet been completed; but with great rapidity it spreads from one country to another. When the first step is finished, and all the lost are found, then will start the second step: "And the estranged I will bring back" - estranged only - because the lost are included in the first stage. Finally, "And I will bandage the broken" will be fulfilled.

In the above-mentioned prophecy, one should notice the words, "My sheep err." From here we see that the mass of the people, apart from its leaders, is reckoned before G-d as "erring." Were it not for the leaders who set up an iron barrier between Israel and their Father in Heaven, it would not be impossible to bring the masses back to the Torah. The teachers, the guides, the writers, the party leaders, it is they who prevent the radiance of the Torah from penetrating the darkness of men's hearts. They have their own torah, their own torah sages, their own gedolim. Through their medium of a new torah and new precepts, they cause darkness to rule in the mind and in the heart. It is also noteworthy that when a real opportunity is given the masses to hear the words of the true Torah, they drink in its words eagerly. But the leaders bring the people stones instead of pearls. In place of Torah ideals, they give their readers and hearers ideas of atheism. Levity, scorn, and a more than liberal portion of obscenity form the material of their chief writings and speeches. These are the leaders whom the Prophet foresaw for our generation.

The prophecy also sets forth various types among the flocks of sheep. "The fat and the goodly" - these are many of our modern rich, who give of their wealth to every undeserving cause and withhold their hand from Torah-appointed charity. Around the rich walk guards who close the way before the needy. The Prophet says: "The residue of your pasture you tread down with your feet; you drink from the springs of water, and the residue you make filthy; you tread down my sheep with your feet" - they drink from the dust of your feet. All who consider the attitude of the rich towards the Torah-students who are now the poorest of the poor, will understand the meaning of this prophecy. What will become of the rich? Theirs also will be the lot of the shepherds. The prophecy, "I will leave in your midst a poor and hapless people" will be realized.

In latter times we have witnessed a strange spectacle. In every Jewish community, we meet people who have come together from many places. Years ago it was otherwise; every place had its own Jews. There was not to be found in any town a large concentration of Jews from distant places. What has happened? A prophecy especially written for our times has come true: "And I will shake Israel up among the nations as in a sieve - It was a frequent saying of the Chafetz Chaim that the grains fall within in the sieve one near, one far, but not one is left in its original place. This will be the lot of the Jews in the times of the Messiah." He added in the name of the RaBad: "Before the coming of the Redeemer, Jewish families will be scattered in every direction, the parents to one land, and every child to a separate country until the Redeemer comes 'and will bring back the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.'"

Another peculiar appearance is that the whole of mankind is seized with tension. It would seem that we are living in a thick jungle among enraged beasts of prey. One country against another, within the country one people against another, and finally, in the people itself, one faction against another. All are ready to tear each other to pieces. This appearance, too, was foreseen from the very beginning for the days of the Epoch of the Messiah: "I will set each man against his fellow." (Zechariah)

"In the generation in which the son of David comes, the face of the people will be as that of a dog." (Sotah, Chelek) It is characteristic of the dog to run before its master, and it would

seem that it goes of its own free will, the master following in obedience to the wish of the dog. In reality, we know that the reverse is true. The owner goes where he likes, and the dog, while preceding him, obeys his whim. Should the master choose another direction, straight away the dog turns also - and again proceeds to run ahead.

In normal years, when the people listened to the ruling of the Torah, the Gedolim led the way. The Gedolim decided the direction to be taken, and the people walked in their footsteps. In the years approaching the coming of the Messiah, the sovereignty of the Torah will be usurped, the masses will choose their way as well as they can, and their "leaders" run ahead of them like the dog before its master. (R. Israel Salanter zt"l)

There are Rabbis in our generation who are drawn after the will of the congregation, striving to show how sociable they are, and descending from the peak to the depths. The "Chafetz Chaim" explained the above-mentioned passage in another way. If stones are thrown at a dog, it will immediately attack the stone and bite it.

When a Haman sets himself up against Israel, we must know that this Haman is nothing other than a Heaven-sent rod to smite us with. "Oh, Assyria, rod of my wrath!"

No good can come from combating the rod; does G-d lack any rods? "G-d has many messengers." We must find methods of preventing the peoples being used as "rods" against us. In the days before Messiah, sense will be lacking, and, like the mad dog, they will bite the stick.

Our new leaders have declared war against powerful nations. What is our power and strength? Newspaper articles are the cannon-balls which we aim at the enemy. What can be the outcome? They serve only to kindle the wrath of the serpents against us. The leaders see only the rod and refuse to recognise the Smiter. "The people return not to Him that smites them." (Isaiah)

"In the Epoch of the Messiah insolence will increase." One interpretation of this saying of the Rabbis is that fame be achieved by shamelessness. In bygone times, it was required of the leaders that they be endowed with Torah, that they be Gd-fearing and wise. In the Messianic era anyone who possesses an adequate amount of shamelessness can be crowned with the title "Gadol." The greater his chutzpah, the more will he be considered reliable. It is quite evident that the main prerequisite for party leadership is impudence. "And no rebuke." From the earliest times, there were "rebukers" in Israel who wandered from place to place and rebuked the people. Also, the communal rabbi would speak words of rebuke from time to time ... 100 years ago flourished the illustrious Maggid of Dubna, from whom the Gaon of Vilna himself asked for "Mussar." Not long ago lived the Maggid of Kelm who brought many to repentance with his fiery sermons. From the Responsa of the "Rishonim," it is evident that in their days there existed in every city "Exposers of sin" whose office it was to seek out the sinful.

Nowadays the rebukers have ceased; of speakers we have more than enough; but these are not rebukers. It is not their custom to bring the words of the Torah upon their lips. Who are the speakers? Paid party officials who lull the masses with sweet dreams either of the redemption of Israel bound up with the nationalist idea or of world redemption under the wing of internationalism. They have all been given to know that these dreams are vain. All these forms of "Idol worship" disappointed those who believed in them, all have been uprooted and destroyed, but their false prophets have not been stilled. The spies in the days of Moses mingled with their falsehood a measure of truth, "for complete falsehood cannot stand" (Rashi). The modern false prophets do not worry at all for the establishment of their lie, for as soon as it breaks down they have others to produce. The masses, ignorant of Torah knowledge, are not capable of distinguishing between the true and the

false. "Falsehood has no basis." It requires support. What is it that supports the false prophets of our day? Ignorance and forgetfulness of the Torah. A favourite saying of the Chafetz Chaim was "The Torah enlightens the eyes; without it we see and know not what we see. In darkness beasts of prey come out of their lairs. 'Without classification how can knowledge be found.'" It is written: "He has brought many to the dust, many has He killed." This, say the Rabbis, refers to the Torah-student who has not reached the capability of deciding law matters, matters of ritual. How much more is this applicable to questions affecting Klall Yisroel? Who are they that decide our modern problems? Irresponsible and unknowing ones lacking the knowledge of the Torah, degenerates who are ready to forego their Judaism for "pottage of lentils." Such are the leaders of our generation. The prophecy "And babes shall rule them" has come true.

"Accusation comes among the Torah-scholars."

The non-believers in days of old used to maintain "What benefit have the Rabbis afforded us? They have learned the Scriptures and studied the Talmud to their own advantage."

(Chelek) They admitted the fact of benefit and the spiritual well-being bound up with knowledge of the Torah. The contention of contemporary non-believers is that the Torah-scholars bring misfortune upon themselves and upon the whole people. The above-mentioned saying may be understood in another sense, namely, that the spirit of fault-finding penetrates the scholars themselves, and they accuse one another.

"All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword." The Chafetz Chaim commented on this verse in the name of the Zohar that the decree of death by the sword gave place to one of poverty, i.e. before the Redemption, poverty will be rife in Israel. "A poor and hapless people will I save."

"Furthermore," said the Chafetz Chaim: "Those whose riches are still in their possession, let them not take comfort in vain fancies that their wealth will endure with them indefinitely; for the Jewish people will be left like an empty vessel. Had they but sense in their heads, surely they would know now how to make use of this money while there is yet time."

Twenty years have passed since the Chafetz Chaim uttered these words, and now they have come true in their entirety in regard to the majority of the Hebrew people. The Gemara prophesied such a state: "The Son of David shall not come until the prutah ceases from the purse." (Sanhedrin) The Chafetz Chaim continued: "In our day, in the course of a short period, there are innovations which in the past would have required centuries. We see that the wheel of time revolves now with lightning speed. "What has G-d done to us?" Why have conditions changed so? To these questions the Chafetz Chaim answered: "In Heaven, from the beginning until now, there were set up innumerable accounts. Before the Messiah can come, all these accounts must be settled. Because the redemption will annul the evil inclination and, consequently, all the affairs of this world which are subordinate to the spiritual strife within man, will cease. Therefore, it is incumbent upon every person to pay what he has remaining due to G-d."

From the time that the Chafetz Chaim zt"l gave utterance to this, the speed with which events develop has increased still further. Things happen literally overnight, when years ago they would have needed generations. It seems that the timecycle hastens forward, spurred on by the command: "Quicker, Quicker!" Every thinking person will understand that we are living in a unique period, which is destined finally to change the whole world order. From day to day the process gathers speed.

"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." Instructing the children in Torah formed the foundation upon which Judaism was supported for thousands of years. The life

ambition of parents was to rear children who would be outstanding in Torah and fear of heaven. What about a livelihood? They knew that "He who gives life gives food." In recent times, coupled with loss of faith, trust in G-d has also been greatly lessened. Parents concern themselves with materialistic ambitions for their children. If only they complete their courses of regular study, then they are secured for the rest of their lives. Also, the deliverance of Israel (in their eyes) depends on it. With the increase in numbers of our intellectuals, so will our prestige rise in the eyes of the nations. Our days have shown how right this principle is in the materialistic sense. As far as spiritual values are concerned, the children are brought up completely as Gentiles, nationalist or internationalist.

What is the reaction of Heaven to this spiritual affliction? "Thy sin shall punish thee." The scholars, the intelligentsia, are our main assailants in most countries. Jewish scholars are smitten with iron rods by their fellow students. Jewish youth in times gone by devoted their lives to the study of the Torah. Today they sacrifice themselves for the great "honor" of sitting at one bench with wild beasts.

"Rejoice not, Israel, with the gladness of the peoples." It is not for the Jew to indulge in pleasure in the way the Gentiles do. Gentiles have free time when their work is done and look for amusements and sports with which to pass the time. The Jew has no spare time; after he has finished his work, it remains his duty to occupy himself with the study of the Torah. He who is incapable of studying by himself must find a Rabbi to teach him. The Jew is also required to dedicate some of his time to the fulfilment of the divine precepts and of good deeds to help others to the best of his ability. The Torah demands such a way of life from the Jew. "Be ye holy." The Jew must be holy, his house must be holy, and his whole heart must be holy.

"And I have separated you from the nations to be Mine." If you are separated, then you are Mine. In recent times they have ceased to learn the Torah; and, consequently, there is time to spare. What do they do with it? Jews go in their masses and fill the amusement places and theatres, and return home steeped in unholy thoughts; thus the Jewish home also becomes defiled.

G-d's answer does not hesitate; the Jews are driven like lepers from their pleasure houses. "Jews away from here! This is not your place!" This is right. The Jew's place is in the house of learning, to meditate there in Torah, or to pour out his heart in the Psalms. We have been warned of this: "If you are not separated from the nations, then you are in the hands of Nebuchadnezzar and his associates."

Nowadays, the Jews have chosen two "idols" to which they offer up their sacrifices. They are Socialism and Nationalism. The new gospel of Nationalism can be defined very briefly as: "Let us be like the nations." All that is required of the Jew is national feeling. He who pays the shekel and sings Hatikvah is thereby exempted from all precepts of the Torah. It is clear that this idea is considered to be fundamentally idol-worship from the point of view of the Torah. These two forms of idol-worship have poisoned the minds and the hearts of Hebrew Youth. Each one has its tribe of false prophets in the shape of writers and speakers who do their work to perfection.

A miracle has happened: In Heaven these two idolatries have been merged into one - National-Socialism. There has been formed from them a fearful rod of wrath which hits at the Jews in all corners of the globe.

The abominations to which we have bowed down strike back at us. "Thy sin shall punish thee." The prophets warned that a disaster would come upon Israel, the likes of which had not happened since their becoming a nation. The Gaon of Vilna writes: The sufferings of the Galuth are likened in Scriptural verses to the pains of pregnancy of a woman. The era of the pre-Messianic sufferings is likened to the birth-pangs themselves. Just as the pains during pregnancy cannot be compared to the pangs of childbirth themselves, so cannot the ordinary sufferings of the Galuth be compared with the sustained agony before the coming of the Messiah.

There is a definite plan to the troubles of Galuth. This is indicated in the section of Galuth (Vayishlach) where it is said "the camp which is left shall escape." When the Jews were hunted and tortured in one land, there was always another which served as a place of refuge. Turkey, Poland, and Holland opened their gates to the exiles during the expulsion from Spain,. In the pre-Messianic sufferings, it will be different. The Jews will be persecuted everywhere, without rest. They will be driven out from everywhere and will not be allowed in at any place.

"And put a space betwixt drove and drove." In the Galuth-period, a breathing space will be given between each fresh evil decree. In the days before the coming of the Messiah, the sufferings will not halt but will flow on like a river. Apart from this they will grow worse from day to day. "In the morning thou shalt say: 'Would it were even' "-the evening before. (Rashi)

We can feel yet another difference between our time and previous eras. In bygone generations the Jews did not feel themselves forsaken and forlorn. They knew full well that they had a Father in Heaven, the Guardian of Israel who had promised them, "And yet, for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly." They knew that they were suffering for their faith in G-d, and that "everlasting life in which nothing in creation could stand within their allotted portion" was waiting for them (Taaniith).

The recognition of this fact did much to lighten their burdens. In our days, ignorance of the Torah has caused the extinction of faith among a large part of the Jewish people, so that the Jews are left the most unfortunate of men. They do not know the reason for their suffering; they have no one to turn to in time of trouble. Who can imagine the extent of their despair and disillusionment? With no way out, they take their own lives.

## THE TORAH'S SOLUTION

What is there for man to do in such a difficult time? Can he not be aided? The Torah confers upon him its counsel. "Rabbi Eliezer's pupils asked of him : What can a man do to escape the pangs of the Messianic age? He replied to them: Let him employ himself with the study of the Torah and with philanthropy." The Chafetz Chaim remarked: Rabbi Eliezer said: "Shall employ himself," that is, man shall apply himself to the study of the Torah and to philanthropy in the same spirit that he applies himself to his employment - with all his heart, and with all his power. Only then can he hope for deliverance.

"What shall we do for our sister when she is spoken against?" (Song of Songs) The Jews in Exile have been likened to a sheep among seventy wolves. In such a position, the wisest policy for the sheep is to endeavour to become forgotten by the wolves. No good can come to the Jews unless the nations of the world apply themselves to other matters

and pay no attention to them. At a time when the peoples talk increasingly about us, great is the danger which threatens. The angels asked: "What shall we do for our sister -the congregation of Israel- when she shall be spoken of?" To this question came the answer of the Almighty: "If she will be a wall, we will build upon her a turret of silver," i.e. if they are strong in their faith, like a reinforced wall, and will not yield before any wind, we will build upon her a turret of silver-"Just as silver enters the furnace and emerges whole, so will Israel enter among the nations and come out unscathed." "The bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed."

The Song of Songs continues: And if she will be a door - like a door which turns on its hinge - we will enclose her with boards of cedar (which quickly rots). If they are swayed in every direction like the door which turns, that is, if they are inundated by every temporal stream, allowing themselves to be influenced from every side, then they will be like the wood which wallows in damp places and rots.

Such is the advice which has been given us as to what there is for us to do in difficult times. The solution is for all time: to be rock-like in our faith and not submit to our environment. Yet, we may ask, how can we possibly do this in our exceptional position? To this, also, an answer is given. "I am the Wall." This, say the Rabbis, refers to the Torah. Only the Torah has the power to stabilise us, to make us firm as iron. The history of Israel during thousands of years bears true witness to the fact that girded with Torah we have not perished, though we have been through fire and water. "When thou goest across water, I am with thee; when thou walkest in fire, thou shalt not be singed, and the flame shall not burn thee."

The same thought is expressed elsewhere in other words: "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon" (Song of Songs 1.7.). Noon is the most difficult time of the day for the flocks; then the heat is greatest. The Congregation of Israel asked of its Shepherd - G-d - how will You sustain your sheep when they arrive at the grimmest periods of their exile? The sheep wander without knowing the way in which they must go. Came the answer: "If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock." Search in those ways for the footsteps of your ancestors; choose the path in which they appear. Do not go in any novel way which your ancestors rejected, for though all paths are fraught with danger, new ones are especially so.

What is the way in which our fathers went? The way of the Torah. This being so, we have a clear indication of what system and what means we must take up in our self-defence.

## GALUTH-POLICY OF OUR FATHERS

The saintly Chafetz Chaim often used to declare: There are periods in a man's life when he is called upon to make a decision and cannot come to any resolve. Often it is in a matter of supreme importance to him; and, through not knowing what to do, he finally comes to despair. Someone whispers in his ear: You can ask the advice of G-d in His glory in this matter. How this? wonders the man. In fact, said the Chafetz Chaim, this privilege is given to every man. We possess a Torah which comprises solutions to all problems. As the Rabbis say, "There is nothing on earth which is not indicated in the Torah." The solution which we find in the Torah is G-d's advice.

It is important to know that, apart from the precepts and prohibitions which are written in the Torah, wise counsels are recorded there also, counsels which have been well-tried. And just as the Torah is everlasting, so are its counsels everlasting. For instance: "A man should always divide his wealth into three parts and invest one third in lands, a third in goods, and leave one third as ready money," for if one of his enterprises fails, then the remainder will be saved. This is a well-tried-out piece of advice. Whoever does not act according to this rule does not thereby disobey a command. He has merely declined good advice.

The Chafetz Chaim also used to say, "We need only sharp eyes to see what is written in the Torah and where, for all is therein. If it counsels the individual, it is certain that for the whole Israelite people there are innumerable, clear pointers relating to Israel's relationship with the nations in the Exile. If we do not follow the counsel of the Torah, we bring Israel into grievous danger. Until recent generations, the Jews pursued an Exile-policy in accordance with the Torah's counsel. The Tanaim, before their frequent journeys to Rome to bring about the annulment of harsh decrees, used to study the episode of Jacob's meeting with Esau and found there the necessary indications for their work (Nachmanides, Vayishlach).

In our time, the Torah has been grossly dishonored; people come to the Torah only regarding questions like the saying of the Kaddish. In political matters, that is, in matters affecting the whole people, the people do not rely on the Torah-words. Rather, those whom they trust to clarifying these issues are professional politicians and writers. These are the leaders of this generation. From which spring do they draw their political theories? From their own Torah: "Let us be like all the nations." They despise G-d's Torah. Just as to their mind we must imitate the nations in their whole way of life, so we must mimic their political and party style. They do not know, or better, they refuse to recognise, the truth, that had the Jews upheld always the system of "let us be like all the nations," then by now, just as nations greater and stronger than they have been blotted out, there would be no memory left of them either.

To the clear-thinking person, the history of the Jewish people runs in an individual and unique course, dissimilar to that of any other nation or race. Those who apply common political conceptions to Jewish Galuth politics measure by a false rule and weigh on a misleading balance. Merchandise is measured by the metre, milk by the litre or pint. One who tries to measure goods by the litre, or milk by the metre is mad. Such are our modern politicians. Their standards are unsuitable. Those methods which are fitted to nations dwelling in their own lands, are inappropriate to the Jewish situation. An effective policy requires that all conditions be taken into account. Just as our situation is extraordinary, so must be our political principles. These principles are written down in the Torah which foresaw everything and foretold everything. Thousands of years have shown how right are the methods of the Torah.

What are the methods of the Torah? -"G d made Israel swear three oaths. Rebel not against the peoples. (Kesuvos) This, the first of the three oaths, means that the Jews may not be revolutionaries. "My son, fear thou the Lord and the king, and do not meddle with them that are given to change." (Proverbs 24: 21) The Rabbis warned us: "If you keep the oaths, it is well, but if not, then your blood is as free as that of the deer and the antelope." "I have made you swear by the deer and the antelope of the field."

"If you see an evildoer upon whom fortune temporarily smiles, do not provoke him." "Go, my people, into seclusion." "Resist not in unfavourable times; make room for it, reflect



upon Me (G-d), for I have given evil times their place, as it is written, 'He has turned back our days.'" (Midrash) Said Rabbi Hiya, "If you see Esau who seeks to provoke you, do not resist him but hide from him until his time passes." Said R. Yehuda the son of R Shalom, 'Said Israel to G-d: Lord of the Universe his (Esau's) father blesses him, and you concur with it, and say to us 'Hide yourselves!' Whither shall we flee? G-d answered: If you see that he stirs up conflict, flee to the Torah, as it is said, Turn ye and go to the Tzaphon - and Tzaphon is none other than the Torah, as it is said "Through Tzaphon shall He give the upright salvation." (Midrash, Devarim) -

All the above quotations point to one thing, that the Jews must not stand in combat against their adversaries. This rule concurs with the situation of the Jews in the Galuth. A wise man said, "It is worth while to fight an enemy if I am stronger than he, and he more virtuous than I; but if he be stronger than I, and I more virtuous than he, it is better that I should not fight him. The various Hamans who rise up against us are superior in strength and inferior in virtue to us. Therefore, no good can come out of active opposition. Torah and prayers are our only weapons. "And we cried unto the Lord G-d of our fathers, and He heard our cry." Our power is only in the mouth. Appeals are efficacious when directed heaven-ward. Let us not, however, direct our cry to the "civilized" world or to the League of Nations.

"Why do you show yourselves before your brothers, the sons of Esau and Ishmael?" This is a clear admonition not to give the nations occasion to see us at all places, and to speak of us at all times. Accordingly, as the nations think and speak less of us, by so much will our lot be better. Except when they make decrees against the precepts of the Torah; then we must be as hard as a rock; we must not yield even a hair's breadth. When Nebuchadnezzar decreed that the Jews must bow down to his image, Chananya, Mishael, and Azariah refused to submit to this decree and said to him, "Thou art the king, and thou art Nebuchadnezzar." That is, if you decree taxes and tributes, for this you are king; but to tear us from the faith of our Torah, you are not the king, but merely Nebuchadnezzar - you and the dog are equal.

These are, briefly, the decisions of the Torah in regard to our attitude to the nations, and according to these decisions the Jews acted in all times until the latter generations, until "leaders" arose who refused to recognize the Torah and its counsels. They run Jewish politics in exactly the reverse way. Their gospel? The Jews must fight and make demands. Whom must we fight? The strongest powers in the world. We must boycott them, and assemble at congress to shoot at them with newspaper articles, and thereby bring fear and trembling into their hearts. The Jewish newspapers prove by signs and wonders that the anti-Semites are uncultured and undemocratic. They reprove the Cossack: For shame, Sir Cossack! The anti-Semites do not repent through this rebuke but, nevertheless, our newspapers do not interrupt their 'priceless' work, which is, to speak to wood and stones. Certainly, it is right to report and to comment; but it should be to ourselves. There is much to say about the various "isms" with which we are so abundantly blessed. Our writers, however, do not understand this. "The visions of thy prophets is false; and they have not revealed thy sin, to return thy captivity."

It is well known that at the time of the Prophets, there were also many false prophets. When the true Prophets cried out: "Let Jerusalem know of its abominations", the false prophets would call them troublers of Israel, who bring calumny upon the house of Israel. The Prophets of truth were not afraid of endangering their lives and fulfilled the verse: "My body have I given to the smiters and my cheeks to those that tear open." The false prophets of that period ate at Jezebel's table. The function of the true Prophets was to

awaken Israel from its slumber. The false prophets fulfilled the reverse aim: to lull Israel with sweet dreams. All this is clear: It is easier to swim with the current than against it. Nowadays, we have no true Prophets. Of false prophets we have more than enough, both nationalist and internationalist, "that eat at Jezebel's table," who are sustained by various funds. And just as Israel has paid the fearful price of listening to the false prophets in the past, so do we today pay this penalty.

Our dispersion into various parties of atheists, from the Reformers to the quasi-Orthodox who wrap themselves in the mantle of Orthodoxy, is the greatest of the curses which have come down upon our heads. There is no unity, nay, there can be no unity in a host which lacks a supreme loyalty. There is no universally-accepted authority. In the days when the Torah ruled Israel, the people were loyal. All had confidence in the Torah. Nowadays, they have replaced their trust in the Torah by trust in the parties. Instead of listening to the sages of old, they listen to their party leaders, i.e. instead of believing in the true Prophets, they believe the false prophets. Falsehood costs us dearly; we pay for it a hundred times over.

In conclusion, so long as we are guided by misleaders who have brought us into a state of war with G-d, there can be no hope that our position will improve. On the contrary. It will worsen from day to day. There is only one way left for our deliverance to make peace between ourselves and our Father in Heaven, the Guardian of Israel. Only then can peace be upon Israel.

## THE NATIONAL IDEA

The father of the modern national idea in Israel is the "Herald of the Dawn," who lived sixty years ago and fought all his life with great bitterness against the Torah. Apparently he thought that the Torah had already given up the ghost, and that he was to succeed it; for this reason he created an alternative to Torah in the shape of the national idea. In point of fact, this was not the absolute origin of the national idea. At that time, the time of the Balkan war, all the small Balkan people thought in terms of nationalism, seeking to throw the yoke of the Turks from their necks. The opportunity presented itself for him to take the finished article and replant it on Jewish soil.

The main feature of this idea is that to be a Jew means to subscribe to the national idea and nothing more. His successors brought "their rabbi's Torah" to perfection by their pronouncement that even an apostate is to be reckoned equal to any Jewish national. What is the opinion of the Torah regarding such an idea? There are clear laws for such a factor. In thirty-six places the Torah warns that the stranger is to be pampered as a father pampers his only son. What must be the stranger's origin? Even if he is a descendant of Haman, the law of the stranger applies to him. On the other hand, an Israelite that proves disloyal to his faith, even if he be a son of the greatest, comes under the ruling "To degrade and not uplift." He is worse than the dog to which the law of "to degrade" does not apply.

We see, therefore, that one's origin alone without Torah is valueless, so that the National idea is nothing but a modern idol, not recognized by the Torah. It is fundamentally idol-worship.

In the course of time, the National idea begat a child which was named "Religio-Nationalism." The name implies that religion alone is insufficient. We must perfect it by the addition of Nationalism. In its very name is contained a denial of one of the fundamentals of the faith : "The Law of the Lord is perfect." It lacks nothing and has no

blemish. We were warned, "You shall not add to it, and all who add diminish." It is clear that since modern nationalism is fundamentally idol-worship, it follows automatically that the Religio-Nationalist viewpoint is nothing less than idol-worship coupled with service to G-d.

As a matter of fact, the idea of adding a second Torah is quite old. Maimonides writes in his letters: "Since the giving of the Law, the world has fought against the Torah by various methods. One way was by the "strong hand," through evil decrees and enforced baptism. "No arms shall prosper against you." (Isaiah) A second method is opposite to this; through a "soft mouth," through persuasion and argument. We were promised "Every tongue that comes to judgment with you shall be shown wicked." In the course of many generations a new weapon was found. They say: "The Torah is true, but we must add to it a Second Torah."

All these methods which Maimonides mentions were used from outside, by the nations. Now, in the Epoch of the Messiah, all these weapons are used by our own anti-religious, by the "strong hand" when they have the opportunity. In the land of the Reds, our apostates persecute sincere Jews with fearful cruelty; also in another place, wherever they find the chance to subjugate genuine Jews. Elsewhere, for lack of physical power, they use other methods and degrade the Torah in articles and speeches.

The third method, the addition of a torah to our Torah is brought to reality by the Religio-Nationalists. The latter have brought a confusion of ideas and mixed values into our camp. Before their appearance, it was known that only one who keeps the Torah can be reckoned a real Jew. One who denies it is like an apostate and has no link with us. The Religio-Nationalists assert otherwise: "Certainly, he is a denier; but since he has Nationalist views he is one of us." The Law states: "If any person is not G-d-fearing, it is prohibited to appoint him to any office in Israel" (Maimonides); yet they condone the appointment of deniers to be leaders in Israel.

It is said : "The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold; and a man is tried by his praise." (Proverbs) How shall man be tried in order that his inner self may be known? Through those whom he praises. We must see those whom he praises. If he always praises good people, it is a sign that he too is basically good. If it is his bent to praise evildoers, it shows that he too is to be counted among them. When we hear whom the Religio-Nationalists praise, we can know their character. It is clear that one who loves the Torah cannot love its enemies; one who honors the Torah cannot honour those who degrade the Torah. "The honoring of evildoers is a fire which completely destroys." (Shaare Teshuvah of R. Jonah).

In spite of the Torah's warning: 'It is prohibited to join with Evildoers, even in obeying a precept,' they say; "Not so, for through our co-operation with the sinners we will cause them to repent." They think themselves wiser and better than the Torah itself. The Torah warns: "Be not over-righteous," i.e. more righteous than the Torah demands. Man must not attempt to outdo the Torah in righteousness.

It is said in the name of R. Israel Salanter: "It happens sometimes that a man wishes to do an action which he considers will bring great spiritual benefit, and is necessary to the upkeep of Judaism, though he knows it to be against the wishes of the Torah. The Gaon related a parable about this mentality: It happened that a king sent one of his nobles on a mission of state to the king of another country, warning him: "If the nobles of the country to which you are going wish to have any bet with you, then decline." He repeated and tripled

his warning not to bet under any circumstances. The noble duly reached his destination and completed his mission.

Before his return, the nobles of that place said: "You are a hunchback, Sir." "It is not true, I have never been a hunch-back," replied the noble. "Let us bet a million pieces of silver that you are a hunchback," they continued. He, however, remembered what the king had admonished him; nevertheless, he said to himself, the outcome of this bet is beyond doubt, and why should I not agree to it and thereby enrich the national exchequer? They stripped him and duly found that he was no hunchback. They paid him the money, and he returned to his country rejoicing and of good heart.

In audience with the king, he related the matter of the bet. Said the king: "When I warned you, I knew quite well why I had done so. The nobles of that country had bet with me for a sum a hundred times greater than what you have won, that they could strip one of my nobles naked. Now you have won a million; but I shall lose 99 millions because of your haste."

The moral is obvious. If a man thinks in his heart that in spite of the Torah's warning, a prohibited thing can bring a great advantage we must tell him: The advantage which you see, the Torah also saw. If the Torah still prohibited it, it is evident that not a benefit but great harm must result from it. Instead of bringing the wicked back into the ways of righteousness, the Religio-Nationalists have been turned into faithful disciples of the free-thinkers, who apply all their energy and strength, both privately and publicly against those who bear the standard of the Torah. They bridge the gap between the two camps of the religious and irreligious. Generally on a bridge one sees traffic to and fro; on the Religio-National bridge are to be seen only those who pass over in one direction. None return. Haggai, the Prophet said, "If one bear hallowed flesh in the skirt of his garment ... shall it become Holy?" And the Priests answered and said, "No." Then said Haggai, "If one that is unclean by a dead body touches one of these, shall it be unclean?" And the Priests answered and said, "It shall be unclean." Then answered Haggai and said, "So is this people, and so is this nation before Me," etc. These verses tell us that by mere contact with holiness, we do not become holy; but through contact with unclean things we become unclean. The Torah testifies: "Happy is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked." If he has walked, he will "stand in the way of sinners." If he has stood, he will assuredly "sit in the seat of the scornful." The Torah's testimony is everlasting and applies to all times and all conditions. He who thinks himself an exception is a fool and of haughty spirit; but he who hearkens to the advice of the Torah, happy is his lot.

## ERETZ ISRAEL

Eretz Israel is given much prominence in the Torah. There are three orders of the Mishna which deal with Eretz Israel, namely, Zeraim (laws dealing with agriculture), Kodashim (sacrifices), and Taharoth (laws of ritual purity). A large portion of the three remaining orders is bound up with Eretz Israel. In the order Moed (appointed seasons) there are the following tractates, Yoma (Day of Atonement), Shekalim (the shekel offerings), Chagigah (the festival sacrifices), the latter portion of Pesachim (the Passover), the latter chapters of Succah (Tabernacles), Taanith (Fasts). In the order Nashim (Women, marriage laws, etc.), in the tractates Nazir (the Nazirite), and Sotah (the unfaithful wife). In the order Nezikin (Civil law) : Sanhedrin (capital punishment), Makoth (punishment by stripes), Horayoth (incorrect decisions of Beth-Din). This total shows that nearly two-thirds of the Talmud deals with Eretz Israel which has an equally important place in the Pentateuch itself. It can thus be readily understood that Eretz Israel is a living necessity for Israel. Besides this, it is

a separate precept to dwell in Eretz Israel. In actual fact, however, it is nearly two thousand years that we live outside Eretz Israel. True, it has often been under harsh and bitter conditions, but, in spite of this, we have not perished even without Eretz Israel. The question arises: if we imagine that the Jews had been left without Torah, would they have then survived for two thousand years, or not? It is quite clear that Israel cannot survive even a century without its Torah.

We are eye-witnesses to a terrible happening in the Red land. It is twenty years since the Yevsekes, the "troublers of Israel," began their work of destroying all remembrances of the Torah there by prohibiting the study of the Torah and the observances of its precepts. The remembrance of the Jews has been blotted out from that land. Only those of the old generation still come under the category of Jews. The younger generation has not the slightest conception of what a Jew is. It has been brought home to us that without the Torah we cannot exist as Jews even decades, yet we have existed without Eretz Israel for two thousand years.

We can best understand this point by an example. For man to exist, he requires air to breathe and bread to eat. What must he do if he lacks both, and what must be supplied to him first, air or bread? It is clear that without air there will soon be nobody to provide with bread.

Eretz Israel is a necessity for the people of Israel; but Torah is a prior necessity. We are witnesses to the spectacle of the gradual extinction of Torah due to the fact that the majority of the younger generation are cut off from it. The same question can now be asked again. What must be our primary concern: for Torah, or for Eretz Israel? Eretz Israel is important to us; but without Torah, we cannot exist as Jews at all. Our first concern, therefore, must be for the Jewish people, and secondly, for Eretz Israel for them. What do we do in reality? We reverse the order. We do not cease to cry, Zion, Zion! when we should cry Torah, what will become of the Torah? Without Torah we lack help and salvation; with Torah we are the strongest in the world. This is not a mere phrase; it is true, for world affairs have borne it out.

The acquisition of Eretz Israel does not depend on our will. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." But to spread the Torah among the masses is in our hands; it depends on us; "He who strives towards spiritual perfection obtains divine help."

Residence in Eretz Israel is a precept; but the establishment of groups of rabid apostates is a great transgression and not a precept. This is not the building up but the ruin of the land. "They do not guard the city but destroy it." This ruin is worse and more dangerous than any disaster the nations have brought on Eretz Israel. The previous catastrophes at least atoned for Israel; but this ruin which comes at the hand of Jewish apostates is a great accusation of the whole people of Israel, which gives them millions while at the same time the Torah gets only prutahs.

To establish firmly the Torah schools is an admirable deed. Torah schools are set up, but with a slight difference that, instead of teaching the Torah, they teach denial of the Torah. The teachers take care, indeed, that this, too, shall be in the purity of the Hebrew tongue. So has the Torah school been changed into a Mission-hall.

It is the duty of the congregation to take a Rabbi who will be a true guide; yet they choose rabbis who, while ignorant of the Shulchan Aruch, are yet more than sufficiently

conversant with modern National literature. This is the outcome of fulfilling "precepts" without Torah. These precepts are kept with enthusiasm and remarkable devotion.

"Surely, they have risen early, they have corrupted," says the Prophet. Comments R. Hiya b. Abba, "All their corruption was done quickly, with alertness." What has resulted from these new precepts and new laws? We have forsaken the Law of our old Rabbis, those lofty saints, and G-d has given us other "rabbis" and teachers - Haman and his confederates who teach us by the most modern of modern methods. They will continue to teach us until we throw off the false "culture" and "enlightenment" together. Then will peace come to Israel.

Let us recount here a saying in the name of the holy Chafetz Chaim. "The evildoer has many pains, but he who trusts in G-d, mercy shall encompass him." To one who suffers an internal ailment, medicine is given, which is often bitter in taste, but it effects a cure. They hit upon the idea of putting the medicine into a capsule which can be swallowed without any sensation of bitterness. The sufferings of the evildoer are a cure for his sins; indeed the medicine is bitter as wormwood. But for him who trusts in G-d, the medicine is enclosed in a capsule of mercy, and so he swallows it. Trust in G-d helps him not to feel the bitterness of his pains.

On the verse "Ye are set up this day" Rashi explains: "It is just the sufferings which give you permanence and stability before Him." This explanation is in accordance with the verse, "He hath beheld no iniquity in Jacob." That means that G-d pays no regard to the iniquities of Israel (cf. Rashi). How can we understand the meaning of these words? The Sages say: "A man should not say that G-d is liberal with sinners." At first sight, the quotations seem contradictory. Yet, actually, both are words of truth. G-d does not seek to find the iniquities of Israel, but there is a definite Divine rule that "whoever does one sin makes for himself one accuser." The accuser is not silent, he tells and proves facts. To compromise the accuser is impossible, "for the King hath set up the world with judgment." And just as in earthly constitutions, the judge cannot free the accused even if he is his best friend, so long as the prosecutor brings clear proof of guilt, so is the way of the heavenly court. When the accusation triumphs against Israel (far be it) and demands total annihilation (far be it), and it becomes evident that this is justified according to the laws of Heaven; when no refutation of these arguments is to be found, what can G-d do? On the one hand He must give due consideration to the demands of the accusers; on the other hand, there is the promise, "I, the Lord, cannot change; and you, the children of Jacob, I cannot destroy."

Therefore, G-d sets up a Haman against Israel who persecutes them, with wrath and burning anger; and as soon as Israel comes into the category of "persecuted" so comes their deliverance. One of G-d's attributes is "G-d seeks the persecuted" even when the righteous man pursues the sinner. Thus, G-d has an answer to the charges of the accusers: Israel is persecuted; they must be helped. As much as the persecution worsens, by so much grow also the hopes for our deliverance. If our sufferings have perforce reached such fearsome proportions, it is certain that G-d seeks out the persecuted such as we are today.

It is said, "Shall I bring the crisis and not cause to bear? saith the Lord." That means that in the worst period of the Galuth, will come also the time of rebirth. It is clear that at this moment we are passing through the crisis; it is certain that the rebirth, too, is very near. Amen and Amen.

To those that persecute us we would say:

"Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; Though I am fallen, I shall arise;  
Though I sit in darkness, the Lord is a light unto me,  
I will bear the indignation of the Lord,  
Because I have sinned against Him;  
Until He plead my cause, and execute judgment for me;  
He will bring me forth to the light,  
And I shall behold His righteousness.  
Then mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her;  
Who said unto me: Where is the Lord thy G-d?  
Mine eyes shall gaze upon her;  
Now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the street.

The nations shall see and be put to shame for all their might;  
They shall lay their hand upon their mouth,  
Their ears shall be deaf.  
They shall lick the dust like a serpent;  
Crawling things of the earth they shall come trembling out of their close places;  
They shall come with fear unto the Lord our G-d,  
They shall be afraid because of Thee.  
(Micah).

### Essay on Faith

"And you shall not go about after your own heart," say our Sages, means atheism, unbelief. On the surface, this statement of our Rabbis is difficult to understand; for it is usually taken for granted that atheism is associated with the mind and the heart, or will. Therefore, it should have been written, "And you shall not go about after your own minds." As a matter of fact, we often find wisdom associated with the heart in the Holy Writings. "My heart has seen much wisdom," or "The wise of heart accomplish (the fulfilment of) the commandments."

Maimonides writes in the "Sefer Hamitzvot" that the first duty is to apprehend clearly and believe in G-d. It can be asked, "Can one speak of a duty to believe?" We can well understand where it is a question of action, of behavior. It is possible of commandments, of duties -- a duty either of doing or of not doing. Since physical behavior is under man's control, it depends on his will whether to do or not to do. It is very different when it comes to belief. It would seem that belief is something which is independent of the will. The question therefore arises, "What meaning can we attach to such a command?" Either one has faith, and it is unnecessary to command him; or, if he is unfortunate enough to have lost faith, it is evident that it is not in his power to rectify this. Therefore, in fact, he is to be considered not responsible. From the Torah, on the other hand, we see that the sin of atheism, of unbelief, is treated very strictly, more strictly, in fact, than idol-worship. One who serves idols is liable to the death penalty, but before the death sentence can be carried out the accused must be judged before the Court of Law. with witnesses and previous warning. Atheists, on the other hand, come under the law of complete debasement at every time and place. No previous warning and no Sanhedrin are necessary.

The same question can be asked with regard to idol worship itself. If one believes in idol worship, and is so convinced of its truth that he is ready to sacrifice himself, to bring his child as an offering to Molech, it would seem obvious that he is completely under the power of his conviction. It is evident that his belief in idols is very strong; it is a conviction

for which he is ready to sacrifice his own life and even that of his child. We would expect, therefore, that his punishment would be lighter than the punishment for any other sin committed by a believer. In the Torah, however, we see the opposite of what we should have expected; the sin of idol worship is very serious. Maimonides writes that we never find the expression "jealous" in the Torah with reference to any other sin but idolatry. By idolatry it is written "jealous and revenging."

Another thing; faith is one of the 613 commandments and as such, the duty of every Jew without exception, as soon as he is mature with regard to Mitzvoth i.e. a male when he has reached the age of 13 years and a female at the age of twelve. Therefore, we see that faith is expected from an early age. It is well-known, however, that even among the greatest thinkers, there were some who failed to achieve belief. For instance, Maimonides wrote that Aristotle almost reached Prophecy with his mental powers, i.e. that apart from Prophecy and the Divine Spirit, his wisdom found no equal. Yet, as is well-known, Aristotle's wisdom did not enable him to achieve real faith. The question therefore arises, how can the Torah expect children, all Jewish children without exception, to achieve with their little minds a level of understanding which the great Aristotle could not attain? And it is well-known that the Almighty does not expect the impossible.

Again, not only Jews have commandments to obey. There are the seven commandments to the sons of Noah i.e. the seven commandments to mankind without exception. If the "son of Noah" does not fulfil his duties, it is obvious that he will be punished in the world to come. Let us imagine that a "son of Noah," a shepherd somewhere, a lifelong drunkard, dies and comes to judgment in the other world, and is sentenced to Gehinnom because he did not fulfil the seven commandments. He will certainly cry in protest that he is not responsible, for how should he have known what was required of him? At first sight he would appear to be justified. Nevertheless, his arguments will be of no avail, and he will remain condemned by the Law.

Why? These are all questions which demand a satisfactory answer.

The fact of the matter is that if we investigate the position more deeply we shall find that G-d's creation of the world is indisputable to every intelligent being, that is, to everyone who is not an idiot. There is no necessity for philosophy in order to come to this conviction. The "Chovoth Halevavoth" writes, "There are some who maintain that the world came into existence automatically, of itself. It is greatly to be wondered at how such an idea can come about. If a person should say of a wheel made for the purpose of drawing water that it came about of itself, without the intentional work of a maker, we would consider him a mentally deficient, a madman." It is a common experience that in those things which arise haphazardly without previous intention, no sign of skill can be detected. Let us consider that if ink should spill onto white paper, it is impossible that writing should form on its own. If we were shown a script and told that it was formed as a result of ink spilling onto paper, it is quite certain that we would ridicule the person who claimed so. How, then, is it possible that a person of intelligence can think of the whole wonderful universe as having come about of itself, when we see in nature signs of unimaginably deep wisdom, unlimited and unbounded, at every step. Let us see how much unbelievably wonderful wisdom is apparent in the construction of the human body, in the precise order of its parts, and in the composition of its spiritual properties. It is enough to hear what physicians and surgeons know of this wonderful construction.

How, then, is it possible to say of such a wonderful machine that it arose by itself, without the previous intention of a Maker? Even of a watch, if a person should say that it occurred merely as a chance happening, he is certainly an idiot.



All this is to be found in the Midrash, which relates that an atheist once asked Rabbi Akiva, "Who created the world?" Rabbi Akiva replied, "G-d created the world." Said the atheist, "Show me clear proof of that." Rabbi Akiva in turn asked, "Who wove the clothes you wear?" The atheist replied, "The weaver, of course." The Rabbi demanded, "Can you prove it?" Then he turned to his disciples with the following words, "As surely as that garment bears witness to the weaver, the door to the carpenter, the house to the builder, so does the world bear witness to G-d, the Creator." Thus far the Midrash.

Let us imagine that there is born a fully-developed man. How he must be filled with wonderment at the sudden sight of the world! He takes notice of all the wonders of nature which familiarity has made no longer remarkable to us. It is clear that if we were to ask that man what he thinks of the world, did it arise of itself or was it created at the hands of a great genius, there is no doubt whatever that if he were to think for a moment, he would reply that it is certainly impossible that all this should have arisen by chance, considering what immense wisdom and extraordinary organisation prevails in every corner of Nature.

The same thought is expressed in Holy Writings. "The Heavens declare the glory of G-d." "Through my flesh do I see the power of G-d." It all seems so obvious that we should wonder at the reverse - how is it possible that great philosophers should not notice such an obvious thing and imagine that the world came into existence purely by chance. That is really a wonder.

The answer to this problem can be found in the Torah which reveals all mysteries to us. That answer is in the verse: "And you shall take no bribe, for bribery blinds the eyes of the wise." (Devarim 17:19). The minimum bribe, according to law, is the value of one prutah, the smallest coin. We must also know that the prohibition of accepting a bribe applies to all, without exception, even to the greatest Sage of all time, a righteous man of the calibre of Moses. If we could think of him taking on a single occasion a one and only prutah, the brilliance of his intellect would be dimmed, and he would lose the ability of passing true judgment. That is what we see from the Torah. Really, it is difficult to comprehend. Can we think of Moses and Aaron, the holy ones of the Most High, that because of a negligible favor they would become liable to pass false judgment? Yet the Torah so maintains, and since the Torah says so, it is the truth.

The explanation is that it is a law of nature in human psychology that the will influences the mind. Obviously, this influence depends on the measure of the will and of the mind. A weak will has only a small influence on a powerful logic; a strong will has greater effect. The will is never completely without effect, however. The weakest will creates some small bias, even when confronted with the most powerful logic. We find in the Talmud (end of Kethuboth) that our holy Sages felt at the smallest favor they received from any person a leaning towards him. And when there was a legal question in which this person was a party, they declined to judge, since they felt unable to be completely impartial towards this person. Our holy Sages, great as the Angels, with their broad wisdom and holy virtues, nevertheless felt the influence of bribery on their powers of true judgment. What is it like with persons who are sunk in earthly passions and desires? The evil inclination "bribes" them unceasingly. We can realise how the crude lust for a life of unbridled pleasure exerts a tremendous influence, dimming and blinding the balance of their judgment. Where a person is so influenced, he does not have the power of seeing the truth if that should be in conflict with his desires. In relation to this particular question, the person is as though he were drunk. It goes without saying that a wise man when drunk is no longer wise; so that it is no longer a wonder that great philosophers did not believe in the creation. Great as their understanding was, so great was their will to indulge in the desires of this world - a

bias which can persuade a person that twice two are not four, but five. Human wisdom can recognise the truth only when it is not "bribed" with regard to the matter which is being judged. But when the recognition of the truth is in opposition to that which man desires, the most powerful mind cannot enlighten him.

To summarise: the fundamentals of Emunah (faith) are self-evident and convincing to every sane person. He cannot doubt their truth, provided, however, that he is not biased, i.e. that he is free of desires and passions. What emerges is that the true cause of atheism and unbelief is not merely in a mistaken logic. In reality, it is the will for the ability to follow one's desires that influences and blinds the mind. Now we understand very well the Torah's warning of atheism with the words: "Ye shall not follow your hearts," i.e. the Torah enjoins man to restrict his passions so that his mind may be free from their influence. Then he will automatically recognise the obvious and convincing truth - that the world was created by G-d. To quote the above-mentioned words of Rabbi Akiva, "The world itself testifies that G-d created it!"

Unbelief has no place in man's mind; it derives from his will and his inclinations. If his inclinations were not so coarse it would be impossible to err into atheism or idolatry. That is why it is such a serious sin. He allowed his desires to dominate his common-sense to such an extent that he was unable to grasp a simple truth. In short, all that the duty of Emunah comprises is the refusal to give the inclinations control over the mind. Once that is achieved, faith comes of itself. There is no need for effort to achieve Emunah; the work consists of setting aside those things which are damaging to Emunah which will then come automatically. Even the simple "son of Noah" whose mind is not well-developed can grasp by himself the fact that the world bears witness to G-d who created it.

After that, it is very easy to realise that everything created by an intelligent being has a purpose, and since Nature exists through G-d who made it exist, it is clear that Nature must have a purpose. It will not be sufficient for the drunkard to plead on the Day of Judgment that he thought the purpose of the world, of heaven and earth, was to drink whisky and get drunk. It is clear and obvious that the purpose of everything that exists is to fulfil the wishes of G-d who created it all. Since he should have recognised that this was the purpose of his coming into the world, he should have considered and investigated what G-d's will was. Since he did not do that, he is deservedly punished. That is what our Sages say, "Man is put to death because he should have learned and did not." It is for the same reason that the sin of idolatry is so serious, since, were the human mind free of its inclinations, there would be no possibility of erring into idolatry. Our Sages say that the whole belief in idolatry comes through the strong desire for allowance of that which is prohibited. When Israel served idols, they did so in order to allow flagrant immorality.

It is related that a learned Gentile once asked Rabbi Jonathan Eibenschutz of Prague, "In your Torah it is written 'according to the majority shall you judge.'" The Jews are a small minority among all the nations who do not recognise the Jewish religion. You should, therefore, have gone over to the generally-accepted faiths. Why do you adhere to your Judaism?" The Gaon answered him, "We are bound to go according to the majority only where there is a doubt, where the truth is not known. But where there is no doubt, when we are quite sure where the truth lies, majority opinion has no influence. We are convinced of the righteousness of our holy Torah. We have no doubt about it, so that the great majority which is against us has no influence upon us and cannot take us out of our way

This reply is certain and clear. According to what has been stated above, however, the whole question does not arise, since the verse "you shall judge according to the majority"

speaks of judges of whom both the majority and the minority are fit to judge. Where the majority are biased and the minority not so, we certainly have to follow the opinion of the impartial minority. In matters of faith and religion, a person can only recognise the truth if he is really free and clear of all the desires of this world. Such pure people are hardly to be found among the nations of the world, only among our Sages, who were like Angels. Even if there were to be found among the nations individuals who were free of earthly passion they formed only a negligible minority, whereas our holy Sages comprised tens of thousands. As the Talmud relates, there were twice as many prophets as those who went out of Egypt. i.e. We had 1,200,000 prophets; but, states the Talmud, only those Prophecies which were necessary for later generations were written down, so that only a very small part of the prophecies was written down. But there were many. The same is true of the times of the Tannaim and Amoraim. It remains, therefore, that the duty of obeying our Sages is actually derived from, "You shall judge according to the majority." i.e. As we have seen, the majority of impartial judges are our Sages, who alone are competent in questions of faith, since their minds were free from the minutest bias.

The sense of the above-mentioned question is comparable to a company of drunkards who wish to convince a sober person that he too must get drunk. They argue that since they are many and he is only one person, he, too, is expected to follow their example, since "you shall judge according to the majority." Our case is exactly the same. Apart from our holy Sages, the average person is as though drunk through his will and desires. Our Rabbis say: "None is free but he that is occupied with the Torah," since without the help of the holy Torah, it is impossible for anyone to free himself from the evil inclination, from his passions and his blind will.

The first fundamental, faith in G-d, has as its direct and unconditional consequence: conviction of the second main axiom - that the Torah is from Heaven, since the purpose of creation is to fulfil the will of G-d, in one way or another. Further, it is obvious that it is impossible for man to find out by himself what G-d's will is. Thus it is clear that G-d must at one time have given man the means to know His will - i.e. in the Torah from Heaven

Furthermore, from this itself follows faith in the Messiah, for since we know clearly and certainly that the purpose of all that exists is to fulfil G-d's wishes, whereas in the world we see the very opposite - that the greater part of mankind is sunk and drowned in the sea of passions, there is hardly to be found the person who reasonably attempts to do G-d's will. It is certain that the Creation was not worth while for such people.

We must fully understand that there must come a time during which will be fulfilled the verses "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed" and "The Lord shall be King of the world."

AMEN and AMEN.

## **An Analysis of the Jewish Tragedy - Its Causes and Solution**

1. It is the duty of every Jew who sees his fellow Jew in danger of drowning or of attack by thugs, to save him, for so it is decreed in the Torah: "Thou shalt not be indifferent to the blood of thy fellow Jew." (Sanhedrin 73) This refers to the care of one individual Jew. It follows logically from this Talmudic law that certainly when the entire Jewish people is in grave danger, as in our day, it is the sacred duty of each and everyone of us to bend every possible effort towards saving his brethren. Off hand, it would seem that this observation is impossible to realize practically. What is our strength against the strong currents of evil waters rushing upon us from all sides. However, if we shall guide ourselves by the Torah, we will find that the solution to the problem is in our hands.

2. Diagnosis is half the cure. The skilled physician does not attempt to combat the symptoms or effects of a disease, but rather to determine the cause. Once he is successful in removing the cause of the disease, the symptoms and effects will disappear of themselves. So also, in our approach to a solution of the Jewish problem, we must attempt to discover the cause which, in so short a period of time, has brought upon the great majority of world Jewry untold miseries, the likes of which there have not been since the destruction of the Temple. To seek natural causes for this phenomenon would be futile. All the events of contemporary Jewish history are beyond the laws of the natural course of human history. Certainly Hitler's phenomenal rise from paperhanger to the position of the all-powerful master of the destinies of nations is inexplicable by the normal course of human history. Our only recourse is to turn to the Torah. There we shall find both the explanation of and the cure for our malady.

3. The Holy Scriptures record only those prophecies which apply to all generations. There is no record of such prophecies which were merely of temporary significance (Megillah 4). Hence all that is recorded in Scriptures is of an eternal nature and has a bearing upon all times, including even our own. Let us examine then the statement, "The Lord has commanded that Jacob be surrounded by enemies." Periodic persecution and hostile treatment of Jacob are a necessary evil in the Divine scheme of things. Whenever, in the course of history, the Jew loses consciousness of his heritage and mission in life, it becomes necessary that his enemies rouse him and restore him to the possession of his faculties. The magnitude of his enemies and the severity of the methods they employ in awakening the Jew depend entirely on the intensity of the latter's lethargy. An analogy may be found in the case of a man who is asleep in a burning house. If he sleeps lightly a gentle nudge may suffice to make him aware of the danger. However, if he has sunk into an extremely sound and deep slumber, it may be necessary to strike him hard in order to save his life. Similarly, when the Jewish people are, on the whole, conscious of their Jewishness, anti-Semitism expresses itself in minor annoyances which suffice to prevent the Jew from his forgetting his destiny. However, when the Jew completely ignores the covenant which G-d made with his ancestors and desires to live like other peoples of the earth, then hordes of beastly anti-Semites swoop down upon him with terrific force and fury, as is the case in our own day.

4. "Who gave up Jacob as a spoil and Israel to plunderers? Was it not the Lord? It is He against whom we have sinned, for they would not walk in His ways, neither did they hearken unto His law" (Isaiah 42). This verse in Isaiah makes mention of two classes of sinners: a) those who sin involuntarily, and b) those who voluntarily rebel against the Lord - "They would not walk in His ways." Both of these classes are to be found among Jews today. A great many of us are misguided by those wearing the mantle of leadership, and they sin through sheer ignorance. Many others declare arrogantly to G-d, "Away! We will have nothing of Thee and Thy ways!" This latter group organizes schools for the dissemination of the denial of Torah, where Jewish children are trained to declare, "We have no portion in the G-d of Israel." It is this class that is referred to in the verse in Deuteronomy: "And G-d saw this and He was angry

because of the provocations of His sons and daughters." They are the true cause of all that besets us today.

5. It behooves us to delve further into our problem in order to find the cause for the phenomenal prevalence of the denial of faith among a people that has always been identified with faith in G-d and belief in His Providence. Here again we shall find the answer in the Torah. "Take heed to yourselves but your heart be deceived and ye turn aside and serve other gods and worship them" (Deut.11:16). Upon this verse Rashi comments, "No sooner does a man turn aside from Torah than he embraces idolatry." For man is inherently inclined toward evil instincts, and Torah is our only safeguard against them. In the words of our Rabbis, "G-d says, I have created the evil inclination, and I have also created Torah as the remedy against it." When a Jew strays from the Torah, his faith gradually weakens until he fully denies faith (See Rashi Lev.) Today, the urge toward idolatry mentioned by the Rabbis has been replaced by the urge toward a denial of faith, which is a much more malignant growth upon the soul of Israel. The sainted Chofetz Chaim used to say: "Where there is no Torah, there can be no faith in G-d; and without faith in G-d, the world loses its basis for existence." There is no power by which man can check the beast within him except that of Yirath Shomaim -- Awe-Inspired Faith. In our day in which the denial of faith has become so prevalent, men have become deadly serpents sending their fangs into each other. And the more civilized of modern nations are those believing in the Holy Scriptures.

6. Our Sages have said: Habbakuk the prophet has postulated Israel's creed upon one principle, as it is written, "The righteous person shall live by his faith." (Habbakuk) Faith will bring the Jew to practice the tenets of the Torah by the creation of the will and desire for such practice. It is impossible to reach this faith except through the study of Torah. And since the Torah is forsaken by a great portion of our people, faith is also weakened accordingly. In the final analysis, it becomes apparent that the reason for our present plight, unparalleled in Jewish history, must be attributed to the abandonment of the study of Torah. This has been clearly stated by the prophet Jeremiah: "'Wherefore is the land destroyed?' and the Lord answers, 'Because they have forsaken my Torah.'" If this prime cause of all our ills shall be removed, we shall then become. The salvation of the Lord knows no limitations. It is only for us to seek this salvation, by attempting to spread Torah light in Israel. This is the method advised by G-d, and, therefore, no other method can help us. It is written, "Let there not be seen any abomination in thy midst, for then will the Lord forsake thee." And if the Lord forsakes us, if He removes His Divine watch over us, then there is no power which can possibly save us.

7. From the foregoing, we can readily understand that whoever works in the cause of spreading and propagating Torah promotes the salvation of Israel. And of him who stands from afar, it is written, "Thou shalt not be indifferent to the blood of thy fellow Jew." Those who are engaged in spreading a denial of Torah in Israel must be considered fully responsible for the Jewish blood being shed in our day.

8. The question, now, is, How must this sacred work of spreading Torah be organized? The answer is that the Renaissance of Torah must start with the small child. Youth is the foundation of a nation, particularly in these days, when parents are influenced by their children, rather than children being influenced by their parents. We are witnesses to the fact that in homes where there is a son who is a Torah student, a beneficial influence is wrought upon the parents to mold their lives in accordance with Torah, and vice versa. It is essential that we organize elementary schools to instruct the young in the study of chumash and the commentary of Rashi which brilliantly links the Written Law with the Oral Law of the Talmud. Such a course cannot fail to instill in their hearts faith in the knowledge of the rudiments and fundamentals of Torah and an adequate preparation for the study of Mishna and Talmud.

9. The prime prerequisite in such schools is that the teachers in these schools be G-d fearing and that they practice and live that which they preach. I was present when the saintly Chofetz Chaim ruled that it is better for a child to receive no Jewish education whatsoever than to be taught by faithless and impious teachers. Unfortunately, many well meaning parents make the grave error of entrusting their children in the care of faithless instructors, not realizing that such teachers can exert only a gravely detrimental influence upon their children.

10. As things stand today, many of our children are brought up as Gentiles, in complete ignorance of the Torah except for the empty and meaningless ceremonial of Bar Mitzvah, which might more appropriately be called Bar Averah. The maturity of the Jewish youth, rather than serving as an introduction to the practice of mitzvot, marks the beginning of an adult life devoid of Torah and replete with transgression. To aggravate the condition, a large group of our children are imbued with Jewish teachings. But what teachings! Not the teachings of the Lord but that of Satan, and this venom is injected into their blood stream in the name of "Torah." The works of Graetz, Geiger, Weiss, and modern Hebrew literature are all part of this G-dless curriculum. These teachings have created a complete falsification of the nature of Torah. The children are taught to regard these teachers and writers as scholars and authorities in Jewish culture, to honor them as we do our true Torah leaders. Ironically, authors whose every word is a negation of the Torah and sacred principles are called prophets, and men who are complete apostates are considered leaders in Israel, worthy of respect and recognition.

11. What, then, are we to do about this situation? To combat these "leaders and educators" directly and openly calls for ardent Torah Champions prepared for self sacrifice. Alas! Even if we may possess a few such personalities, for due to our transgressions we are not worthy of many, what then is the power of a few individuals against the organized array of the representatives of Satan. The right course to follow is to ignore them and apply ourselves diligently to our own affairs. The saintly Chofetz Chaim has compared the situation to an attack of robbers. If you wish to save something then grab whatever you can. It is wise to bear in mind that a little light may dispel much darkness. The Chofetz Chaim used to say, "You cannot drive away darkness with clubs, not even with cannons. Kindle light, and the darkness will disappear of itself."

12. As regards adult education, it will suffice to mention that the Rambam and all other authorities ruled that every Jew, young or old, poor or rich, shall devote a portion of each day to the study of Torah. This is a fundamental principle upon which all hinges. I heard the Chofetz Chaim relate that a Magid, an itinerant preacher, once came to the Vilna Gaon for advice. "Rabbi," he said, "I find it impractical to preach on many themes. My audience remains uninfluenced. If I were to hammer constantly on one topic, I'd be more likely to find my mark. What one theme should I concentrate on?" "Torah," replied the Gaon. "It is all inclusive."

13. In order to realize the above mentioned course, it is essential that a special organization be founded, dedicated exclusively to the dissemination of Torah. It shall be the function of this organization to (a) organize elementary schools for boys, as well as special schools for girls, (b) to organize adult education classes as well as youth groups for the study of Torah for those who are beyond the elementary stage. The success of this enterprise will depend on the teachers and instructors. A good, competent staff will attract a great number of pupils, for in the innermost recesses of every Jewish heart there is an inextinguishable spark of love for Torah. It needs only to be blown into a bright flame. All who aid in the realization of this plan will be inscribed in the Book of the Righteous and will be amply rewarded in this life and the Hereafter.