

## NOTES

## I A wealth of cultures

- 1 The concept culture is based on certain theories regarding meanings and significance, social reality, the force of public imperatives, the nature and types of religious faith, etc. The constituent components of this concept in our study may be found in the writings of M. Weber, E. Durkheim, G. Simmel, T. Parsons, J. Needham, A. Toynbee, P. Sorokin, J. Feibelman, and the philosophers of language in our time. See the discussion on the concepts "culture" and "civilization" in James Feibelman, *The Theory of Human Culture*, New York, Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1946, and in V.F. Lenzen *et al.*, *Civilization*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, Univ. of California Press, 1959. Due to limitations of space, I mention here only two works dealing with the problem of reality: Burkhart Holzner, *Reality Construction in Society*, Cambridge, Mass., Schenkman Pub. Co., 1968, and Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality*, Garden City, Doubleday, 1966.
- 2 On knowledge interpreted not via language, see Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958; and *The Tacit Dimension*, New York, Anchor Books, 1967.
- 3 See, for example, the discussion on historic forecasting which is so much a part of historical interpretation, in the writings of Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, rev. edn, Princeton, NJ, Princeton Univ. Press, 1950, and *The Poverty of Historicism*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957. See also R. Aron, W.H. Walsh, G. Florovskii, and younger scholars in R.H. Nash (ed.), *Ideas and History*, New York, E.P. Dutton, 1969, vol. II.
- 4 These and similar afflictions have been widely portrayed by existentialist philosophers like Jaspers, Heidegger, Tillich, Sartre, and Camus, who intensified our awareness of the "human condition." Their analyses inspired a literature of horror, caricature, and the absurd. The forces of free will which these thinkers had acclaimed as man's nostrum *vis-à-vis* the absurd are engulfed in darkness.
- 5 Sociologists and historians have frequently described the struggle for legitimation of authority. Two generations have now been drawing on Max Weber's theory of authority and power. T. Parsons, A. Shils, J. Eisenstadt, and others have extended his concepts to new contexts. The crises of our times have prompted scholars to examine the problems of legitimation in the past. See more recently Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, trans. T. McCarthy, Boston, Beacon Press, 1973. The efforts invested by each culture to reject and winnow out were just as great as the energies expended in drawing hearts and minds into a new cohesion. Even the authority of the Prophets could be dismissed by the Sages when necessary: "Many prophets arose for Israel, - only the prophecy which contained a lesson for [lit., 'was required for'] future generations was written down, and that which did not contain such a lesson was not written" (*Meg.* 14a).
- 6 Of critical importance to the spread of each culture was the strength and number of its carriers and disseminators, i.e. the intelligentsia cultivating and guarding it against opponents. Can the spread of the Talmudic culture be imagined without the prolific responsa sent to the diaspora by the Babylonian Ge'onim over a period of 400 years? Every culture commanded: "Raise many disciples!" It was the strength of the professional intelligentsia upholding a culture which tipped the scales toward domination or defeat.

- 7 In *Sefer va-saif*, Jerusalem and New York, Yeshiva Univ. Press, 1967, p. xv, Moshe Carmeli-Weinberger distinguishes three main reasons for opposition to books: (a) Ideological opposition, such as the wars against philosophy, Kabbalah, the Sabbatean movement, or the Rabbinic culture's battles against Ḥassidism, Haskalah, and religious reform movements. (b) Opposition for *halachic* reasons, e.g. to objectionable books of *halachot*, to authors with whom fault had been found, to prayerbooks into which changes had been introduced, to books of erotica, frivolity, etc. The banning of books often had no other reason than competition between authors or publishers. (c) Opposition for political reasons, such as the struggle against the Emancipation or the Zionist movement. On the problem of heresy, see E. Shmueli, *Bein 'emuna li-chfirah*, Tel Aviv, Massada, 1962.
- 8 Henri Bergson, *L'Énergie spirituelle*, Genève, edns Albert Skira, p. 33.
- 9 Many valid points and interesting formulations on the revitalization of Scripture in the Talmudic culture are presented by Simon Rawidowicz in *Bavel vi-Yerushalaim*, London and Waltham, Mass., Ararat Publishing Society, 1952. It is a pity that this author, whose approach is not altogether alien to our own perspectivistic concept, distinguishes only between the spirit of the First and the Second Temple, or "House," and sees the entire subsequent Jewish history as a ceaseless struggle between the spirit of these two "Houses." An abridged version of this work can be found in Simon Rawidowicz, *Studies in Jewish Thought*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer, trans. Lawrence V. Berman, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974, ch. 3, pp. 81-209.
- 10 Moses Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, ed. and trans. Moses Hyamson, Jerusalem, Boys Town Jerusalem Publishers, 1965, Book of Knowledge, Laws Concerning the Study of the Torah (*Hilchot talmud Torah*), ch. 3, 14, p. 59a.
- 11 Bachya Ibn Paquda, *Duties of the Heart*, trans. Moses Hyamson, Jerusalem, Feldheim Publishers, 1978, vol. 1.
- 12 *Tikkunei ha-Zohar*, beginning of *Tikkun* 43, Lemberg, J.M. Stand, 1864, p. 151. The letters making up the word *peshat* ("פֶּשֶׁט", literal meaning), instructs the *Zohar*, are also those of the word *tipesh* ("תִּפְשֵׁט", fool). Whoever learns only the *peshat* of Scriptures, removes the wisdom from the Bible.
- 13 As in the generations prior to the expulsion from Spain, between the massacres of 1391 and the decrees of 1492, or during the battle against the Sabbatean movement, for example, the bitter controversy (1750) between Jacob Emden and Jonathan Eibeschutz. The battle between the Karaites and the Ge'onim was far from an exercise in politeness. The same is true, as we shall see later, for the Mystical culture during the period of its growth and initial spread in the thirteenth century, when it leveled its polemics against the Poetic-Philosophic, the Talmudic, and the Rabbinic cultures.
- 14 It is this radical opinion, adhered to by Reish Lakish and other Amora'im and consonant, apparently, with Rabbi Akiba's system, which gained widespread acceptance: not only the commandments, but also all their refinements, commentaries, and eductions were given to Moses at Sinai, including the words of the Prophets, the Mishnah, and the Talmud. Witness Rabbi Simeon ben Lakish's commentary on Exod. 24. 12:

"And I will give thee the tables of stone, and the law and the commandment, which I have written that thou mayest teach them." "Tables of stone": these are the ten commandments; "the law": that is the Pentateuch; "the commandments": this is the Mishnah; "which I have written": these are the Prophets and Hagiographia; "that thou mayest teach them": this is the Gemara. It teaches [us] that all these things were given to Moses on Sinai. (*Ber.* 5a, also *Meg.* 19b, *Ta'an.* 9a.)

This global extension of the concept "Torah from Sinai" or "from heaven" is essentially polemical, and was leveled at Sadducees, *minim*, Christians, and later at the Karaites and sundry adversaries of the Talmudic culture. According to *Megillat Ta'anit* ("The Scroll of Fasts"), an interpretation similar to that of Reish Lakish on the same verse was used earlier, during the Second Temple, in the dispute with the Sadducees. But it seems that in Rabbi Ishmael's school, this far-fetched method was not advocated; there it was, apparently, held that the *midot*, the hermeneutical rules, had indeed been revealed to Moses at Sinai, but not the substance of each subject. See Abraham J. Heschel, *Torah min ha-shamaim be-'aspaklariah shel ha-dorot*, London and New York, Soncino Press, 1965, vol. II, p. 230.

- 15 This is the fatigue evinced by the creator of one culture confronting creators of another culture. This confrontation poses an inescapable dialectic: on the one hand, the giving of the Torah at Sinai shuts the door, as it were, on a giving of a second Torah, which might cancel or subvert the first Torah. On the other hand, we hear that the Torah is not in the heavens, and that a Sage is superior to a Prophet. This imaginary encounter between creators of different cultures produces wonder, confusion, faintheartedness, but also a certain satisfaction that the principal of the great spiritual fund has not yet been depleted.
- 16 *Seder olam zuta*, Neubauer edn, part 1, p. 174.
- 17 E. Shmueli, *Massoret u-mahapecta*, New York, Sefarim, 1942, p. 296.
- 18 See Benzion Dinur, *Bemifneih ha-dorot*, Jerusalem, Bialik Institute Press, 1956, p. 22.
- 19 An entire literature dealing with differences among nations and religions has arisen in anthropology, history, comparative religions, etc. We should note here a relatively recent discipline known as ethnomethodology, which integrates a number of disciplines in order better to bring out that which distinguishes individuals and societies, to what extent they really "keep to themselves," and how they are "distinguished by their ways from all the other nations." See Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1967, and Roy Turner (ed.), *Ethnomethodology*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Education, 1974.
- 20 Many similar expressions can be found in the Psalms, such as: "God is our shelter and our refuge, a timely help in trouble; so we are not afraid . . . God is in that city; she will not be overthrown, and he will help her at the break of day" (Ps. 46.1-5). There is, of course, also another direction: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me . . . I cry in the day-time but thou dost not answer" (Ps. 22.1-2), and similar articulations of the feeling that God is distant, that He has abandoned the earth. Such feelings are the paramount theological subject-matter of every culture, and their intensity, the source of faith in redemption.
- 21 On the relation between theory and political action, see Nicholas Lobkowitz, *Theory and Practice: History of a Concept from Aristotle to Marx*, Notre Dame, Univ. of Indiana Press, 1967.
- 22 At least three scholars who studied this decree saw it as an accessory in implementing political goals of the Hasmonean kings. I.H. Weiss, *Dor dor ve-dorshav*, New York and Berlin, Plaut and Minkus Publishers, 1924, part 1, p. 105, believed that decreeing the lands of the Gentiles unclean was an attempt to counteract Jewish emigration from Palestine - Eretz Israel - following the persecutions of Antiochus. Rabbi Haim Tchernowitz, Rav Tza'ir, considers whether the Temple of Onias in Egypt was declared unclean by order of the first "pair" of Palestinian Tanna'itic leaders. He explains that the Gentile lands declared unclean originally were not foreign lands, but sections of Eretz Israel itself that were inhabited by Gentiles. However, when the Hasmonean kings finally succeeded in banishing the Gentiles from their borders, the decree on uncleanness was automatically voided, not to be reinstated until Gentiles again began settling in Eretz Israel, some eighty years prior to the destruction of the Second Temple. This decree then spread also to lands outside Eretz Israel in general, because it was believed that this was an ancient ruling of the first "pair." See "Ha-zugot u-mikdash H'onio" in *Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Volume*, Hebrew part (part 2), New York, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1946, pp. 233-47. But Louis Ginzberg himself was of the opinion that the uncleanness of Gentile lands extended to areas outside the borders of Eretz Israel already during the days of the Temple. See his *Al halachah va-aggadah*, Tel Aviv, Dvir, 1960, p. 14.
- 23 The first Tanna'itic pair of leaders decreed also against glass ware manufactured by Gentiles, and the reason, according to Louis Ginzberg, was that imported glass vessels created fierce competition to non-glass Israel-made products: many Jews preferred to use utensils that could not take on uncleanness (such as glass) to pottery and metal vessels made in Eretz Israel, which demanded more scrupulous observance (ibid., p. 15). For this reason, Rabbi Simeon ben Shetaḥ later decreed uncleanness upon glass utensils as well. Needless to say, I am not in a position to decide among these Talmudic experts. I merely point out that they all agree that the decrees on uncleanness had distinct political and economic dimensions. An in-depth study of the social, political, and economic implications of the Sages' opinions and acts during the Second Temple period can also be found in Yitzhak Baer, *Yisra'el ba-amim*, Jerusalem, Bialik Institute Press, 1955.

- 24 Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Philo*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Univ. Press, 1962, vol. II, and *The Philosophy of Spinoza*, New York, Schocken Books, 1969, vol. II.
- 25 Max Black, *Models and Metaphors*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell Univ. Press, 1962, p. 220.
- 26 E.E. Hutton, "The role of models in physics," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, IV, 1953-4, p. 289.
- 27 Much has been written in the last generation on the value and shortcomings of the concept developed by Max Weber in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. See R. Benedict, T. Parsons, and many others, also in numerous introductions to Weber's writings. For a critique of the "ideal type" concept, see my monograph, "The 'Pariah people' and its 'charismatic leadership,' a re-evaluation of Max Weber's *Ancient Judaism*," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research*, New York, 1968, vol. xxxvi, pp. 167-247.
- 28 Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1954; Erich Voeglin, *Order and History*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1956; Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, trans. Charles F. Atkinson, 2 vols., New York, Alfred Knopf, Inc.
- 29 On Toynbee's attitude to the Bible, and on the key concepts "challenge - response," see his article, "Indivisibility and unpredictability of human affairs" in Paul G. Kunitz (ed.), *The Concept of Order*, Seattle, 1968.
- 30 In his four-volume monumental work: Pitirim A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, New York, American Book Co., 1942-.
- 31 T.S. Eliot, *Notes Toward the Definition of Culture*, New York, 1944, pp. 13ff.
- 32 See B. Malinowski in the entry "Culture," *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, New York, Macmillan 1933, vol. IV, pp. 621-45.
- 33 Edward B. Tylor's definition in the opening to his classical book on anthropology, *Primitive Culture*, New York, Harper, 1958, thus gained wide currency: "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society." See W.F. Ogburn and M.F. Nimkoff, *A Handbook of Sociology*, London, Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1947, p. 15.
- 34 W.G. Sumner and A.G. Keller, *The Science of Society*, New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1932, vol. I.

## 2 Interpretation of Scripture in Israel's cultures

- 1 See Abraham Ibn Ezra commentaries to the Pentateuch, known also as *Sefer ha-yashar*, which appear in many editions of the Hebrew Bible, for example, in the *Mikra'ot gedolot* editions. The English excerpt cited here is found in Louis Jacobs (ed.), *Jewish Biblical Exegesis*, New York, Behrman House Inc., 1973, p. 9.
- 2 There is no need to list here the numerous books on hermeneutics, a rapidly developing discipline in the fields of philosophy of language, history, theology, and phenomenology. Suffice it to note here two volumes of Dilthey's complete works, which contain important chapters on interpretation in general and on comprehension and meaning. The introductions to these volumes by G. Misch and B. Groethuysen outline the history of the discipline up to their time. W. Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Leipzig, B.G. Teubner, 1924, vol. V; 1927, vol. VII. Today the hermeneutics built upon the philosophy of M. Heidegger by R. Boltman, M. Dibelius, H.G. Gadamer, and P. Ricoeur is of greatest importance. For a good summary of hermeneutical efforts in our times, see Paul Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations, Essays in Hermeneutics*, ed. D. Ihde, Evanston, Northwestern Univ. Press, 1974. Needless to say, we make no attempt here to consider all the commentaries to the Bible throughout the ages, an impossible endeavor and one which would in no way serve our purpose. The emphasis is on the difference in the approach of each culture to the same Biblical text.
- 3 Isaak Heinemann, *Darhei ha-aggadah*, Jerusalem, Magnes and Massada, 1960.
- 4 For a discussion of Ezra's place in Jewish history, see the introduction to Ezra and Nehemiah by Mordechai Zer-Kavod, *Sifrei Ezra ve-Nehemiah*, Jerusalem, R. Mass, 1948. The *aggadah*, Louis Ginzberg testifies, saw in Ezra a "Rabbi" figure, the first Rabbi and Sage, and the father of Rabbinic literature, who transmitted the Oral Law to the Sages in a "secret scroll," destined to be revealed only to the select few. This is how he is portrayed in the apocryphal Second Book of Esdras (known also as the Fourth Book of Ezra), written after the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE), and in later Jewish tradition. See Louis Ginzberg,

- Al halachah va-aggadah*, Tel Aviv, Dvir, 1960, p. 42, and *The Legends of the Jews*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1946, vol. vi (notes to vols. iii and iv), pp. 135-7.
- 5 See Saul Lieberman, *Yevanim ve-yavnut be-Eretz Yisrael*, Jerusalem, Bialik Institute Press, 1962, pp. 135-213, wherein the author elaborates on the problem of Scriptural interpretation in *halachah* and *aggadah* and presents the views of various scholars. A. Schwarz did not detect the influence of Greek grammarians in the *midot* which the Sages applied to the interpretation of Scriptures. See the last of his six books on Talmudic interpretation, *Der hermeneutische Kontext in der talmudischen Literatur*, Vienna, 1921. See also his Hebrew book, *Midat kal va-homer ba-sifrut-ha-talmudit*, Cracow, 1905.
- 6 Some Talmudic scholars today believe that the entire basis of the Talmudic structure in its relation to Scriptures is epitomized in the following dialogue: "Said Abaye to Rabbi Joseph: This, surely is Pentateuchal! - It is Pentateuchal, but the Rabbis have expounded it. All the Torah was expounded by the Rabbis! - But [the fact is that the prohibition is] Rabbinical, while the Scriptural text is [adduced as] a mere prop [asmakta]" (*Yeb.* 21a). The essence of this dialogue is that our Sages interpreted Scriptures freely, and that what is written in the Bible merely serves as evidence to the veracity of their interpretation. See Abraham Weiss, *Ha-Talmud ha-bavli be-hithavuto ha-sifrutit*, Warsaw, 1938-9, *Hithavut ha-Talmud bi-shlemuto*, New York, 1943, and *Le-ḥeker ha-Talmud*, New York, 1954. The above dialogue is presented in dramatic form in M.A. Tenenblatt, *Ha-Talmud ha-bavli be-hithavuto ha-historit*, Tel Aviv, 1973, p. 171.
- 7 Azariah dei Rossi, *Me'or 'eynaim*, Vilna, 1866, ch. 15.
- 8 Heinemann, *Darchei ha-aggadah*, p. 96. An extensive bibliography on Biblical exegesis is provided there on p. 197.
- 9 Ibn Ezra's introduction to the commentary of the Pentateuch, in Jacobs, *Jewish Biblical Exegesis*, p. 16.
- 10 *Sifre* on Deut. 1.7. Published by the Gesellschaft zur Forderung der Wissenschaft des Judentums, Berlin, (n.d.); republished (Hebrew only) by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, 1969.
- 11 Ibn Ezra in Jacobs, *Jewish Biblical Exegesis*, p. 21.
- 12 Moses ben Nahman (Nahmanides), *Peirush ha-Torah*, Jerusalem, Mossad Harav Kook, 1969, in his commentary on the periodization of the verse, "When the Canaanite king of Arad who lived in the Negeb heard that the Israelites were coming" (*Num.* 21.1-3).
- 13 See his commentary on 1 Sam. 28.25 in *Mikra'ot gedolot*, Schocken, 1938.
- 14 Moses Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, trans. Abraham M. Hershman, New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1949, *The Book of Judges, Laws Concerning Rebels (Hilchot mamrim)*, ch. 1, 3, p. 13a.
- 15 Moses Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, trans. Isaac Klein, New Haven and London, Yale Univ. Press, 1979, introduction to the Book of Agriculture (*Zera'im*).
- 16 *Midrash Exod. Rabbah*, 46.6, trans. S.M. Lehrman, London, Soncino Press, 1939, p. 475. This is derived from a word-play on *kelalim* (principles) and *kechaloto* ("when He had finished speaking").
- 17 Joseph Albo, *Sefer ha-ikkarim: Book of Principles*, ed. and trans. Isaac Husik, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1930, vol. III, article 23, p. 203.
- 18 Judah ha-Levi, *The Kuzari*, introd. Henry Slonimsky, New York, Schocken Books, 1964, part 3, para. 35, pp. 166-7.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 168.
- 20 *Ibid.*, para. 73, p. 193.
- 21 *Ibid.*, para. 41, p. 173.
- 22 *Ibid.*, paras. 65-7, pp. 186-91.
- 23 For an extensive bibliography, see Yehuda Even-Shmuel (ed.), *Sefer moreh ha-nevuchim*, Jerusalem, Mossad Harav Kook, 1946, and more recently, Sarah Klein-Braslavi, *Peirush ha-Rambam le-sipur beri'at ha-olam*, Jerusalem, Ha-ḥevra le-ḥeker ha-mikra, 1978.
- 24 Judah ha-Levi, *The Kuzari*, part 1, para. 89, p. 62.
- 25 Bachya Ibn Paquda, *Duties of the Heart*, trans. Moses Hyamson, Jerusalem, New York, Feldheim Publishers, 1978, 2nd treatise, ch. 5, p. 163.
- 26 Moses Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. M. Friedländer, 2nd edn, New York, Dover Publications, 1956, p. 5.

- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- 28 Moses Maimonides, *The Mishnah of Avot*, introduction in Paul Forchheimer (ed. and trans.), *Living Judaism*, New York, Feldheim publishers, 1974.
- 29 Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, p. 3.
- 30 Nissim ben Reuben Gerondi, *Derashot*, Jerusalem, 1960, p. 28.
- 31 For examples in other cultures, see Ricoeur, *The Conflict of Interpretations*.
- 32 Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, ch. 1, p. 14.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- 35 Isaac Abravanel, *Peirush al nevi'im 'aharonim*, Jerusalem, Torah va-da'at, 1957.
- 36 E. Shmueli, *Don Isaac Abravanel ve-geirush Sefarad*, Jerusalem, Bialik Institute Press, 1963.
- 37 Ibn Ezra, in Jacobs, *Jewish Biblical Exegesis*, p. 13.
- 38 *Ibid.*
- 39 See Peretz Sandler, "Le-be'ayat pardes" in A. Biram (ed.), *Sefer ha-yovel le-Elihu Auerbach*, Jerusalem, Kiryat Sefer, 1955. This paper includes excerpts from W. Bacher, G. Scholem, and Bachya ben Asher, pp. 222-35.
- 40 F. Lachover and Y. Tishbi, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 2nd edn, Jerusalem, Bialik Institute Press, 1957, vol. 1, p. 145.
- 41 S. Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, New York, Vintage Books, 1955.
- 42 Benedict Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, trans. R.H.M. Elwes, New York, Dover Publications, 1951, p. 103.

### 3 Song of Songs - a paradigm of cultural change

- 1 It should be remembered that the Septuagint incorporated the Song of Songs into the Holy Scriptures, perhaps not too long after the Great Assembly. In the Septuagint the word "love" is translated not *eros*, as a literal rendition might require, but *agape*, grace, a pure and holy love that is free of any trace of physical passion. The word *amānah* ("from the top of Amana," 4.8) was read *'emunah* (i.e. faith - "from the beginning of faith" - "*apó archés pisteos*"). It is possible that the author of the apocryphal Second Book of Esdras (also known as the Fourth Book of Ezra), already viewed the Song of Songs as a Prophetic and allegorical work when, speaking of Israel, he wrote: "Out of all the flowers of the whole world you have chosen one lily . . . From all the birds that were created you have named one dove" (2 Esd. 5.25-6). See A. Kaminka's remarks in the introduction to his commentary on Song of Songs in A. Kahana (ed.), *Torah, nevi'im u-ketuvim*, Tel Aviv, Mekorot, 1930, vol. vi.
- 2 Moses Mendelssohn, *Torah, nevi'im u-ketuvim*, Jerusalem, 1974.
- 3 Haim Shelli, *Mehkar ha-mikra be-sifrut ha-haskalah*, Jerusalem, 1942, pp. 3ff. See also studies by Peretz Sandler, especially his entries in the *Encyclopaedia ha-mikra'it*, Jerusalem, Bialik Institute Press, 1940-88.
- 4 David Baumgardt in the entry "Herder," *Encyclopaedia Ivrit*, Tel Aviv, Encyclopaedia Publishing Co., 1962, vol. xv, p. 197.
- 5 Johann Gottfried Herder, *Sämmtliche Werke*, Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1829, vol. xvii.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 218: "Dies Volk war dichterisch selbst in seinem Ursprünge."
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 220.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 223.
- 9 Herder too confronted the full severity of doctrinal tradition, for the Protestant religion by no means endorsed a secular interpretation of the Song of Songs. A humanist reformist theologian named Sebastian Castello had been expelled from the Calvinist city of Geneva for having dared to claim that the Song of Songs was a "colloquium Salomonis cum amica quad Sulamitha" (1544). It was not without an inner conflict that Herder himself resolved this dilemma. He had read the Song of Songs attentively and had consulted ancient and modern commentaries. Finally, however, no interpretation seemed to him more authoritative than the simple, literal text which, he felt, had been much distorted by others. See the introduction by Gillis Gerleman in M. Noth and H.W. Wolff (eds.), *Das Hohelied, Biblischer Kommentar*, Neukirchen, 1965, vol. xviii.
- 10 Solomon Loewisohn, *Melitzat Yeshurun*, Tel Aviv, 1944.
- 11 Simon Bernfeld, *Mavo le-kitvei ha-kodesh*, Berlin, Dvir, 1923, vol. III, p. 142.

- 12 Ibid., p. 143. See also more recent commentaries: Mordechai Halter, *Shir ha-shirim*, Tel Aviv, 1960, and Eli'ezer Levinger, *Shir ha-shirim*, Jerusalem, Ha-ḥevra le-ḥeker ha-mikra, 1973.
- 13 In Kahana, *Torah, nevi'im u-ketuvim*, vol. VI, p. 4.
- 14 *Abot de-Rabbi Nathan*, trans. and comm. Anthony J. Saladrini, SJ, Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1971, version A, ch. I, p. 5: "Until they were included in the writings, Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Qohelet (were regarded as worthy) of being suppressed."
- 15 Wherever the Sages refer to a book as "rendering the hands unclean," they mean that the book is holy. The wording "Holy Books render the hands unclean" refers to an ancient Jewish idea that holiness causes impurity. The prototype and chief source of this strange *halachah* is found in the ceremony of the red heifer (Num. 19), where all participants in the sacred ceremony were rendered ritually unclean and required purification. The ruling on holy books rendering the hands unclean was one of the eighteen *gezeirot* (decrees) formulated by the House of Shammai and enacted by the Hillelites. See also tractate *Sab.* 14.
- 16 *Midrash shir ha-shirim zuta*, Solomon Buber edn., p. 4.
- 17 Most of the references to Song of Songs are found in the two Talmuds and in two *midrashim*: *Shir ha-shirim rabbah*, also known as *Midrash hazit*, and *Midrash shir ha-shirim zuta*, also known as *Aggadat shir ha-shirim*. *Shir ha-shirim rabbah* was apparently compiled from various *midrashim*, perhaps in the eighth century. *Midrash shir ha-shirim zuta*, believed to have been composed in the ninth century, was edited and published by Solomon Buber (grandfather of Martin Buber).
- 18 *Midrash Song of Songs Rabbah*, trans. Maurice Simon, London, Soncino Press, 1939, I.10.
- 19 Ibid., I.1.
- 20 *Midrash shir-ha-shirim zuta*, I.1.
- 21 *Midrash Song of Songs Rabbah*, I.12, *Midrash shir ha-shirim zuta*, I.1.
- 22 Abraham Ibn Ezra, *Commentary on the Canticles*, ed. and trans. H.J. Mathews, London, Trubner and Co., 1874, p. 10.
- 23 Much has been written on this subject. See H. Shirman, *Hashirah ha-Ivrit bi-Sefarad u-ve-Provence*, Jerusalem, Bialik Institute Press, 1954, introd., pp. 26-8. In his book on the art of Hebrew poetry, later translated into Hebrew under the title *Shirat Yisrael*, Moses Ibn Ezra announced he would let himself be guided by the Koran and by Arabic works of poetry and philosophy in pointing out the glories of Scripture and other writings of our ancestors.
- 24 Levi ben Gershon (Gersonides), *Peirush al ḥamesh megillot*, Koenigsberg, 1760 (reprinted in Israel without indication of place and date).
- 25 Ibid., 5.2. Issac Hirsch Weiss in *Dor dor ve-dorshav*, New York and Berlin, Plaut and Pinkus Publishers, 1924, part 5, p. 111, commented that we can only wonder at Gersonides' lack of poetic appreciation, how he failed to realize that his interpretation stripped the songs of all their poetic beauty, and how he could imagine that his commentaries were any closer to the text's literal meaning than the *midrashim* he so disparaged. Weiss sees no superiority in a philosophic re-creation of the text over an *aggadic* one.
- 26 Levi ben Gerson, *Peirush al ḥamesh megillot*, 4.2.
- 27 Ibid., 7.1.
- 28 Ibid., 15.1.
- 29 Ibid., 22.1.
- 30 Ibid., 7.2.
- 31 Moses Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. M. Friedländer, 2nd edn., New York, Dover Publications, 1956, ch. 51, p. 387.
- 32 Ibid., end of ch. 51. Commentaries in this vein were made by Sa'adiah Ga'on, Joseph Ibn Caspi and the said Joseph Ibn Aknin in his *Peirush shir ha-shirim - hitgalut ha-sodot ve-hofa' at ha-me'orot*, ed. Abraham Halkin, Jerusalem, 1964.
- 33 Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, ch. 54, p. 396.
- 34 Ibid., p. 395.
- 35 Ibid., p. 396.
- 36 *Zohar ḥadash*, 63, Livorno, 1845.
- 37 *Zohar*, Exodus, 18b, trans. Harry Sperling, New York, Rebecca Bennet Publications, vol. II, p. 60.

- 38 Ibid., 143b, vol. III, p. 5.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Nahmanides' commentary to the Song of Songs, first Introduction, I. This work is included in many editions of the Hebrew Bible, such as the *Mikra'ot gedolot* editions.
- 41 Moses Isserles, *Torat ha-olah*, part 3, 83, Tel Aviv, D.E. Eilbloom, 1970.
- 42 Moses Alshech, *Sefer Shoshanat ha-amakim*, Zolkiew edn., 1755. It is worth mentioning that the author confesses in his introduction that he had been uncertain how the Song of Songs was to be interpreted, literally or mystically. He decided to follow both approaches with the result that the reader finds him alternating back and forth between traditional Talmudic exegeses and allusions to Mystical interpretations.
- 43 As hinted in the *Zohar ḥadash* and in *Midrash shir ha-shirim zuta*, I.1.

#### 4 The commandments in Israel's cultures

- 1 The text of the two Chief Rabbis appeared in the journal *Yavne*, vol. III, nos. 7-12, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, April, 1949.
- 2 The concept of the "yoke of mitzvot" and the "yoke of Torah" in Talmudic literature will be further examined later on. It is useful to mention here that Ben Sirah (Ecclesiasticus, c. 190 BCE) still employed the concept "yoke" in the general sense, as in this piece of advice: "Buy for yourselves without money, bend your neck to the yoke, be ready to accept discipline; you need not go far to find it" (Ecclus. 51.25, 26). But in a later apocryphal work, the Apocalypse of Baruch, the concept of the yoke already emerges: "I see many of Thy people who have withdrawn from Thy covenant and cast from them the yoke of Thy Law" (Baruch 41.3), ed. Revd Canon R.H. Charles, Society of Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1918, p. 58. These are later sayings and some scholars read them as warnings to the early Christians; in any event, these metaphors already manifest the influence of the Talmudic ontology.
- 3 Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, trans. and abr. Moshe Greenberg, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960, p. 171.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Haim Tchernowitz, *Toldot ha-halachah*, New York, 1938, p. 137.
- 6 E.E. Urbach, *The Sages*, trans. Israel Abrahams, Jerusalem, Magnes Press, 1975, vol. I.
- 7 *Mekilta* on Exod. 23.20 in Jacob Z. Lauterbach (ed.), *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1935, vol. III, ch. 5.
- 8 *Mekilta* on Exod. 20.23 in Lauterbach, *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, vol. II, p. 279.
- 9 *Mekilta* on Exod. 20.2 in Lauterbach, *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, vol. II, p. 229.
- 10 Isaak Heinemann, *Ta'amei ha-mitzvot be-sifrut Yisrael*, Jerusalem, Mossad Harav Kook, 1942.
- 11 Ibid., p. 34.
- 12 *Mekilta* on Exod. 31.14 in Lauterbach, *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, vol. III, p. 200.
- 13 As cited in Urbach, *The Sages*, p. 99.
- 14 *Sifre* on Deut. 32.14, para. 317.
- 15 *Midrash Genesis Rabbah* 49b, trans. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, London, Soncino Press, 1939.
- 16 See Rabbi Isaac's statement in *Midrash Exodus Rabbah*, Exod. 28.6, trans. S.M. Lehrman, London, Soncino Press, 1939, p. 335. For a detailed discussion, see also Abraham J. Heschel, *Torah min ha-shamaim be-aspaklariah shel ha-dorot*, London and New York, Soncino Press, 1965, vol. II, ch. 4, which provides references and bibliographical indications that are beyond the scope of our work.
- 17 M. Rosenbaum and M.A. Silberman (trans. and annot.), *Pentateuch with Rashi's Commentary*, London, Shapiron, Valentine and Co., 1930.
- 18 *Midrash Song of Songs Rabbah*, trans. Maurice Simon, London, Soncino Press, 1939, 5.14, para. 2, p. 246.
- 19 Gedaliahu Alon, *Mehkarim betoldot Yisrael*, Tel Aviv, Ha-kibbutz ha-me'uhad Press, 1958, p. 239.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Yesha'ayahu Leibowitz, *Yahadut, am yehudi u-medinat Yisrael*, Tel Aviv, Schocken, 1975,

- p. 21. See also Leibowitz's articles on the theology of the Halachah in *Bitzaron*, Jan.-Feb. 1978.
- 22 Sa'adiah Ga'on, *Book of Doctrines and Beliefs* in Alexander Altmann (ed.), *Three Jewish Philosophers*, New York, Atheneum, 1969, Prolegomena, para. 4, p. 44.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 45.
- 24 Moses Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. M. Friedländer, 2nd edn, New York, Dover Publications, 1956, part I, ch. 32, p. 43.
- 25 Sa'adiah Ga'on, *Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*, ch. 3, para. 1, p. 93.
- 26 *Ibid.*, para. 2, p. 96.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 97.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 98.
- 29 *Ibid.*, para. 3, p. 104.
- 30 *Ibid.*, para. 5, p. 110.
- 31 *Ibid.*, para. 6, p. 113.
- 32 *Ibid.*, ch. 4, para. 1.
- 33 Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, introduction, p. 6.
- 34 *Ibid.*, part I, ch. 1, p. 14.
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 *Ibid.*, part 3, ch. 54, p. 395.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 397.
- 38 *Ibid.*, ch. 51, p. 384.
- 39 Moses Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Jerusalem, Boys Town Jerusalem Publishers, 1965, Book of Knowledge, end of Laws of Repentance (*Hilchot teshuvah*), ch. 10, p. 93a.
- 40 Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, part 3, ch. 26, p. 310.
- 41 *Ibid.*, ch. 27, p. 312.
- 42 *Ibid.*, ch. 51, p. 389.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 390.
- 44 *Ibid.*, ch. 32, p. 323. Friedländer's translation speaks of "the prudence and wisdom of God," "His wisdom and plan," and "the Divine plan." We have replaced his cautious wording with what we consider a more accurate, though clearly bolder, rendition. Maimonides spoke of God's "cunning" and "stratagem," shocking as these terms may appear. Compare also Shlomo Pines' translation of *Guide for the Perplexed*, Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1963: "the deity's wily graciousness and wisdom" (vol. II, p. 524), the "divine ruse" (*ibid.*, p. 527).
- 45 Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, part 3, ch. 32, p. 323.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 324.
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 *Ibid.*, p. 325.
- 49 Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, "Book of Knowledge," pp. 48a-48b.
- 50 *Ibid.*, ch. 2, 7, p. 49b.
- 51 Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, part 3, ch. 28, p. 315.
- 52 Falaquera's (or Palquera) commentary appears in many Hebrew editions of the *Guide*.
- 53 Judah ha-Levi, *The Kuzari*, introd. Henry Slominsky, New York, Schocken books, 1964, part 3, para. 19, p. 157.
- 54 F. Lachover and Y. Tishbi, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 2nd edn, Jerusalem, Bialik Institute Press, 1957, vol. II, p. 382.
- 55 *Ibid.*
- 56 *Ibid.*, p. 386.
- 57 G. Scholem, *Devarim bego*, Tel Aviv, Am Oved, 1977, p. 177. See also Y. Guttman, *Behinat Kiyum ha-mitzvot*, Jerusalem, Makor, 1978, ch. 4, on the difference between a religion of redemption and a religion of *mitzvot*, and on the Sages' attitude toward Gnostic sects in the matter of *mitzvot*.
- 58 In the introduction to the section on the Written Torah, *Shnei luhot ha-berit*, Josepov edn, 1878, p. 26.
- 59 Joseph Gikatila, *Sefer sha'arei 'orah*, Jerusalem, Bialik Institute Press, 1970, part I. In this spirit, the Maggid of Mezeritz later declared: "Through faith you can address the Blessed One and lead Him as you please."

## 5 The threefold tension in Jewish history

- 1 Leo Baeck, *The Essence of Judaism*, Frankfurt-on-Main, J. Kaufmann Verlag, 1936, p. 66.
- 2 Ronald R. Dudley, *A History of Cynicism*, London, Methuen Co., 1937. E. Shmuelli, "Modern hippies and ancient Cynics," *Journal of World History* (UNESCO), 3, XII, Neuchâtel, 1970. The Tanna'im's attitude toward the Cynic philosophy, which gained wide appeal at that period, has yet to be adequately studied.
- 3 It has been rightly stressed by scholars that Israel's election and separation was conceived primarily in relation to God, not in relation to other nations, with whom Israel had to deal on a daily basis in matters of subsistence and security.
- 4 U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, Jerusalem, Magnes Press, 1961, Part I: "From Adam to Noah."
- 5 Samuel A. Loewenstamm, "Haviv adam shenivra be-tzelem," *Tarbiz*, 27, 1, 1958.
- 6 Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Toldot ha-'emunah ha-Yisraelit*, Tel Aviv, 1948, book I, vol. III, p. 196. Also in book 2, vol. I.
- 7 Issak Heinemann, *Darhei ha-'aggadah*, 2nd edn, Jerusalem, Magnes Press, 1954, see especially chs. 5-9.
- 8 *Mekilta* on Exod. 20. 11 in Jacob Z. Lauterbach (ed.), *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1935, vol. II.
- 9 Herbert Danby (ed.), *The Mishnah*, London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1933.
- 10 Hanoch Albeck (ed.), *The Mishnah*, Bialik Institute Press and Dvir, order *Nezikin*, tractate *Sanhedrin* B, p. 182.
- 11 Talmud scholars have established that the authentic version of this *mishnah* indeed was, "If any man saves alive a single soul," etc. This is the version found in the Munich manuscript and in the Jerusalem *Mishnah*, as also in the first Venetian printed edition, which was later copied by the Cracow and Krotoshin editions. But most editions of the *Mishnah* contained the version, "If any man saves alive a single soul in Israel." Needless to say, the adoption of one or another version has important legal ramifications: does the saving of a Gentile's life warrant desecration of the Sabbath? This question was debated in the Rabbinic culture, resulting in opinions that were generally unfavorable, sometimes downright harsh, to Gentiles, as, for example, the words of Rabbi Samuel Eliezer Edels (1555-1631), whose famous commentary, *Hidushei halachot*, accompanies most editions of the Talmud, in the commentary to *San.* 37a:
- This is intended to teach you that any man who saves one soul in Israel, and it is intentionally specified "one soul in Israel," in the singular form, as this is the image of God, the Singular One of the world, and Jacob's form [i.e. Israel] is His likeness . . . but Kuttim [i.e. Gentiles] do not have the form of man, only the form of other creatures, and whoever brings about the loss of a soul among them does not lose the world, and whoever saves a soul among them neither adds nor diminishes anything in this world.
- Rabbi Shne'ur Zalman of Ladi, author of the *Tania*, and Rabbi Israel Meir Cohen of Radun, the *Hafetz Haim* (*Mishnah berurah*, *Orah haim*, 30, 8, Tel Aviv, Pardes, 1955) also accepted this *mishnah* in its later, anti-Gentile, version. They permitted healing the Gentile sick on the Sabbath "for the sake of peace" and in order not to incur ill-feeling. This problem has arisen again in the State of Israel regarding the ministering of medical treatment to Arabs, and was brought before Chief Rabbi Untermann for judgment. See a collection on this subject in Rabbi A. Waldenberg, *Responsa tzitz Eli'ezer*, Jerusalem, part 8, ch. 6.
- 12 Moses Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah* Jerusalem, Boys Town Jerusalem Publishers, 1965, Laws of Forbidden Foods (*Hilchot ma'achalot 'assurot*), 17, 9-10. We should note here and also later on, when we inquire into Maimonides' *halachic* rulings pertaining to relations between Jews and Gentiles, that his views were strongly influenced by the Jerusalem Talmud, i.e. by those Palestinian Tanna'im and 'Amora'im who shaped the Jewish attitude toward Gentiles in the Land of Israel prior to the destruction of the Second Temple and shortly thereafter.
- 13 The first opinion is A. Buechler's, the latter is G. Alon's. According to Buechler, the notion of the ritual uncleanness of Gentiles was unknown in Israel until the close of the Second Temple period when the eighteen *gezeirot* (decrees) were enacted. Non-Jews were deemed

unclean because of their Gentleness. But this rule carried no practical consequences as uncleanness for all but priests was a term applicable only in the Temple itself and in Temple-related matters. Alon disagrees entirely both with Buechler's concept and with his details. In Alon's opinion, the uncleanness of Gentiles was rooted in ancient traditions, dating long before the destruction. "The halacha that ordains uncleanness for non-Jews led to definite consequences in the transactions between Jews and other peoples." See Gedaliahu Alon, *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World*, Jerusalem, Magnes Press, 1977, chapter on "The Levitical uncleanness of Gentiles," p. 148.

- 14 *Sifre* Deut. 51. Other sources relating to Israel's boundaries can be found in the Jerusalem Talmud, *Shevi'it* 6b, 31, 3, in the *Tosefta*, *Shevi'it*, and in a mosaic inscription on the floor of a synagogue in the Beit She'an Valley.
- 15 I Macc. 15:33-4.
- 16 See S. Klein, *Eretz Yehudah*, Tel Aviv, Dvir, 1939, and *Eretz ha-galil*, Jerusalem, Mossad Harav Kook, 1945; A. Buechler, *Am ha-aretz he-galili*, Jerusalem, 1962; S. Safrai, "Mitzvot shevi'it ba-metzi'ut shele'ahar hurban bait sheini," *Tarbiz*, 4, xxxv, 1966, pp. 304-28.
- 17 Cicero, *Pro-Flacco*, trans. Louis E. Lord, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Univ. Press, 1967, vol. x, p. 441.
- 18 It is indeed with this thesis that Maimonides opens his *Guide for the Perplexed*, although the first chapters attempt precisely to remove any incorporation of God.
- 19 Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton, London, Macmillan and Co., 1935.
- 20 Judah ha-Levi, *The Kuzari*, New York, Schocken Books, 1964, part 1, paras. 26-7, p. 47.
- 21 For more on the "racial theology," see Y. Baer on Judah ha-Levi and on Don Isaac Abravanel, both in his *History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, trans. Louis Schoffman, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961, and in *Galut*, trans. Robert Warshaw, New York, Schocken Books, 1947. See also Baer's Hebrew article on Don Isaac Abravanel's attitude to problems of history and politics, *Tarbiz*, 3-4, viii, 1937, pp. 241-59. See also Menahem Stein, *Dat va-da'at*, Cracow, Miflat, 1938, p. 178, and E. Shmuely, *Don Isaac Abravanel ve-geirush Sefarad*, Jerusalem, Bialik Institute Press, 1963, p. 123.
- 22 As quoted in Nahum N. Glatzer (ed.), *The Judaic Tradition*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1969, pp. 395-6.
- 23 Moses Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. M. Friedländer, 2nd edn, New York, Dover Publications, 1956, part 2, ch. 25, p. 200.
- 24 Ha-Levi, *The Kuzari*, part 1, para. 115, p. 79.
- 25 Moses Maimonides, *Epistle to Yemen*, ed. Abraham S. Halkin, English trans. Boaz Cohen, New York, American Academy for Jewish Research, 1952, p. xi.
- 26 Ha-Levi, *The Kuzari*, part 4, para. 23, p. 227.
- 27 Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Book of Knowledge, Laws Concerning Idolatry and the Ordinances of the Heathens (*Hilchot 'achum*), ch. 11, 1, p. 78b. See also note 12 above.
- 28 *Ibid.* ch. 10, 6, p. 78b.
- 29 *Ibid.*, Laws Relating to Moral Dispositions and to Ethical Conduct (*Hilchot de'ot*), ch. 4, 4, p. 55a.
- 30 E. Shmuely, *Beit Yisrael u-medinat Yisrael*, Tel Aviv, Yavne and the Cleveland College for Jewish Studies, 1966, p. 380. See also the last chapter of this book.
- 31 See P. Sorokin's arguments on this issue in *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, London, 1937, vol. 1, ch. 1 and vol. III, ch. 15.
- 32 See M. Buber, *Pnei 'adam*, Jerusalem, 1962, p. 382. In the essay on "The nature of culture" Buber discusses contradictions in culture by presenting a number of dualisms: culture has two faces, a creative face and a traditional one, an arena for personal creative initiatives, and integration with the endeavors of past generations, with the generality. These two faces of culture, revolutionary and conservative, initiating and preserving, each had its own historic value, Buber thought, but only the combination of the two had the value of culture. The cultural creation gives form and permanence to the flux of life, thereby creating a world of things that have an independent existence, outside of life and above it. A third type of dualism is growth and form, growth and consciousness. Form grows by itself, as it were, out of nature, but there is also a directing and inventive consciousness. Clearly, these types of dualisms are not the kind of tensions we are discussing here, but they are

useful in understanding the entire humanistic concept of culture. Our conception of culture, which is neither humanistic nor anthropological-sociological, as explained in chapter 1, is therefore quite different from Buber's ideas on this matter.

- 33 *Mekilta* on Exod. 13:17 in Lauterbach, *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, vol. 1, p. 173.
- 34 A. Roberts and I. Donaldson (eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, rev. A. Cleveland Coxe, Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Erdman Publisher, reprinted 1977, vol. 1, p. 217.
- 35 On this see the writings of my teacher Yehiel Michael Hacoheh Guttmann, especially in *Behinat kiyum ha-mitzvot*, Breslau, 1931, ch. 1.
- 36 H.N. Bialik, *Devarim shebe'al pe*, Tel Aviv, Dvir, 1935, vol. 1, p. 225.

## 6 Historical knowledge in the service of faith

- 1 On Vico's work and the controversy it engendered, see F. Nicolini, *Commento Storico alla seconda Scienza Nuova*, Rome, 1949-50; A.R. Caponigri, *Time and Idea; The Theory of History in Giambattista Vico*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953; I. Berlin, "The philosophical ideas of Giambattista Vico" in *Art and Ideas in 18th Century Italy*, Rome, edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1960; A. Momigliano, "Vico's Scienza Nuova," *History and Theory*, The Hague, 1966, vol. v. This wide acceptance of historical perspective is not an indication of general agreement. Many readers, including social scientists, philosophers, and writers, shared the dissatisfaction which Nietzsche had already expressed in his 1873 essay on the utility and harm in history: "Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben." All three forms of historiography - the monumental, the antiquarian, and the critical - present numerous dangers to the welfare of men and nations; the latter have need, at times, of oblivion. Nietzsche warned against the "hypertrophy of the historical sense." His comments there on the "historical" and the "super-historical" pointed to a problem which later became the focus of the "historismus" debate, i.e. the dependence of values on the historical process, as explained by Troeltsch, Croce, Meinecke, and in our century, by Mannheim, Popper, and others. The weariness of history and the withdrawal from its burdensome heritage do not, of course, weaken the tie to history. For Vico, at any rate, the historical perspective was still a newly discovered triumph.
- 2 Moses Maimonides, *The Mishnah of Avoth*, end of ch. 1, in Paul Forchheimer (ed. and trans.), *Living Judaism*, New York, Feldheim Publishers, 1974.
- 3 2 Chron. 16:11; I Kgs. 22:39, 46, and many similar verses. Biblical historiography is not our subject here, nor do we deal with the writings of Josephus Flavius. Space limitations impose brevity, especially in matters that have already been adequately treated by many scholars.
- 4 On metaphors of time, see Frank E. Manuel, *Shapes of Philosophical History*, Stanford Univ. Press, 1965; R. Nisbet, *Social Change and History*, New York, Oxford Univ. Press, 1969. Nisbet described and analyzed the evolution of organological metaphors in European historical awareness. We know that Israel was viewed as one body both in the Talmud and in the Mystical culture. The organological metaphor is also very prevalent in the National-Israeli culture.
- 5 Benzion Dinur, *Dorot u-reshumot*, Jerusalem, Bialik Institute Press, 1978, p. 87. Dinur deals here with the historiographic fragments in the Talmudic literature, and mentions, *inter alia*, notebooks kept by Sages, records of the ancient *yeshivot* and of the presidents, historiographic *halachah* and historic *midrash*.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 162. Isaak Heinemann cited many examples of this phenomenon, but used a different terminology to describe it.
- 7 All Talmud scholars have dealt with this matter, thus we only mention briefly Joseph Klausner, Gedaliahu Alon, A. Buechler, for their works on this period. Saul Lieberman for his studies on the Jerusalem Talmud and the *Tosefta*, and his method of dating the composition of tractates and *midrashim* based on variations in language, style, concepts, details of daily life, general prevailing conditions, and the influence exercised by Greek culture; lastly, Yitzhak Baer for his articles on the historical foundations of the Halachah, *Zion*, xxvii, Jerusalem, 1962, on Jerusalem during the Great Revolt, *Zion*, xxxvi, 1971, and others.
- 8 Much has been written about this ruling from the legal viewpoint. See Shmuel Shilo's *Dina*

- de-malchuta dina*, Jerusalem, Academic Press, 1974, and his article on the legal basis for the rule *dina de-malchuta dina*, in *Mishpatim*, II, Jerusalem, 1970. Nahum Rakover in "Dina de-malchuta dina," *Hagut*, Jerusalem, 1978, p. 75, points out the alien origin of this ruling, which confers legal validity upon a foreign law having no Jewish source and superseding explicit *halachah*. The article discusses the scope and effectiveness of this ruling from a legal viewpoint, but does not explain the historical conditions which occasioned it. A number of other scholars who have studied this ruling have also ignored history, e.g. M. Silberg, *Hok u-musar ba-mishpat ha-ivry*, Jerusalem, Magnes Press, 1952.
- 9 *Midrash Genesis Rabbah*, 78, trans. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, London, Soncino Press, 1939.
- 10 Gedaliahu Alon, *Toldot-ha-yehudim be-Eretz Yisrael bi-tekfufat ha-Mishnah veba-Talmud*, Tel Aviv, Ha-kibbutz ha-me'uhad, 1958, vol II, p. 119.
- 11 Tractate *Semaḥot* 2, 9, trans. D. Zlotnick, New Haven and London, Yale Univ. Press, 1966, p. 35. In contrast to the permission, authorized in *Bab.K.* 103a, "to steal past customs."
- 12 On Rab and Shmuel and the new Persian kingdom see J. Neusner, *History of the Jews in Babylonia*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1965, part 1, "The Parthian period"; 1966, part 2, "the early Sassanian period". See also Neusner's essay "The religious uses of history" in *History and Theory*, The Hague, 1966, vol. v, p. 153.
- 13 There is a great difference in the art of narration and the attitude toward events and reality, but the purpose is identical. Again, it is not our intention to discuss here Biblical historiography. A separate study is required to compare it with Talmudic historiography.
- 14 Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason*, trans. S. Kaplan, New York, Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1972. A good number of Talmud scholars in both eastern and western Europe have written in this spirit of "idealization," a trend typified, for example, by E.E. Urbach's *The Sages*, trans. Israel Abrahams, Jerusalem, Magnes Press, 1975, a case of idealization, but not without insistence on proper testimony and evidence, as Hermann Cohen required.
- 15 Thucydides astounded and inspired his readers with the completely novel approach to historiography proclaimed in the introductory statements to *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Sir R.N. Livingstone, London, Oxford Univ. Press, book 1, para. 22, p. 44:

With reference to the narrative of events, far from permitting myself to derive it from the first source that came to hand, I did not even trust my own impressions, but it rests partly on what I saw myself, partly on what others saw for me, the accuracy of the report being always tried by the most severe and detailed tests possible. My conclusions have cost me some labour from the want of coincidence between accounts of the same occurrences by different eyewitnesses, arising sometimes from imperfect memory, sometimes from undue partiality for one side or the other. The absence of romance in my history will, I fear, detract somewhat from its interest; but I shall be content if it is judged useful by those inquirers who desire an exact knowledge of the past . . . My history has been composed to be an everlasting possession, not the show-piece of an hour.

- On the rigorous requirement for truthfulness and supporting documentation, compare Josephus Flavius' opening paragraphs in *Against Apion*, or *On the Antiquity of the Jews*: "My first thought is one of intense astonishment at the current opinion that, in the study of primeval history, the Greeks alone deserve serious attention, and that the truth should be sought from them, and that neither we nor any others in the world can be trusted." But scholars have justly remarked that Josephus uncritically accepted the historical evidence of "the two and twenty [sic] (books which) contain the record of all time," *Josephus*, trans. H. St. J. Thackeray, London, William Heinemann, 1926, vol 1, pp. 65, 179.
- 16 These statements paraphrase the Sages. See *Midrash Genesis Rabbah*, 68.11; 74.11, 68.1; *Midrash Deuteronomy Rabbah*, 11.11; 1.31.
- 17 *Mekilta* on Jethro, tractate *Bahodesh*, 1 in Jacob Z. Lauterbach (ed.), *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1935, vol. II, p. 194: "You were unwilling to be subject to God, behold now you are subjected to the most inferior of the nations, the Arabs. You were unwilling to pay the head-tax to God, "a beka head" (Exod. 38.26), now you are paying a head tax of fifteen shekels under a government of your enemies."
- 18 M.H. Amishai (Moshe Maisels), *Maḥshavah ve-emet*, Tel Aviv, Mitzpeh, 1939, vol. II,

- pp. 302, 303. One need not agree with the conclusions of this thinker in order to be impressed by what he describes as the past's sheer weight, or the "weariness" of the past, a theme widely trumpeted by Nietzsche and, later on, by members of George's circle in Germany and elsewhere down to our own times (in Hebrew literature, by Berdyczewski). See n. 1, above. An abridged version of this book exists in English, but it does not include the sections on Talmudic Judaism cited above. M. Maisels, *Thought and Truth*, trans. A. Regelson, New York, Bookman Associates, 1956.
- 19 Rabbi Yoḥanan lamented: "The hearts [i.e. the intellectual powers] of the ancients were like the door of the Ulam [one of the chambers constituting the Temple, twenty cubits wide], but that of the last generations was like the door of the Hekal [only ten cubits wide], but ours is like the eye of a fine needle" (*Eruv*. 53a). Similar sayings are frequent in the Talmudic literature. For further reading on the notion of decline held by Roman writers, see R. Starn, "Meaning-levels in the theme of historical decline," in *History and Theory*, The Hague, 1975, vol. XIV. Tacitus has even the notorious Nero complaining of the decline of Roman youth: "Quin, si qua in parte lubricum adulescentiae nostrae declinat, revocas, etc.," in Tacitus, *Annales*, XIV, 56.
- 20 See Louis Ginzberg's study on tractate *Tamid* in *Al halachah va-aggadah*, Tel Aviv, Dvir, 1960. The study attempts to demonstrate that this tractate was not part of Yehudah ha-Nassi's (*Rabbi*) Mishnah, did not come under his redaction, and when certain additions and revisions were removed from it, "this tractate constitutes the earliest Tanna'itic composition, and although its structure is similar to that of the Mishnah, it is nonetheless different from *Rabbi*'s Mishnah in its method and language," *ibid.*, p. 61.
- 21 Haim H. Ben-Sasson, "Li-megamot ha-chronographia ha-yehudit shel yemei ha-beinayim u-ve-ayoteha" in *Historionim va-askolot historiot*, lectures delivered at the seventh convention of the Historical Society of Israel, Jerusalem, 1962.
- 22 For more on the Karaites, see history books by Graetz, Dubnov, and Salo Baron, whose fifth volume of *Social and Religious History of the Jews*, New York, Columbia Univ. Press 1937, devotes some 100 pages to the subject, including detailed bibliographical notes. On the Karaite conception of history, see also Raphael Mahler, *Ha-kara'im*, trans. E. Shmueli, Tel Aviv, 1949. On p. 214, Mahler cites a statement of Sahl ben Mazliah, a militant Karaite opponent of traditional religious authority: "Know, our brethren of Israel, that each one of us will be judged for his own deeds, and our God will not heed the apologies of he who argues: 'Thus acted our fathers,' just as He paid no heed to the protestations of Adam . . . For our blessed Lord has said: 'Be not like your forefathers.'" This indeed is a declaration of radical rebellion against the traditional conception of history.
- 23 See A.M. Habermann (ed.) *Gezeirot Ashkenaz ve-Zorfat*, introd. Yitzhak Baer, Jerusalem, Tarshish Books, 1945. On the different reactions to persecutions, see the collection *Millhemet kodesh u-martyrologia be-toldot Yisrael uve-toldot ha-amim*, lectures delivered at the eleventh convention of the Historical Society of Israel, Jerusalem, 1967.
- 24 Abraham Ibn Daud, *Seder ha-kabbalah* in A. Neubauer (ed.), *Seder ha-hachamim ve-korot ha-yamim*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1938, vol. 1, p. 80. See his discussion there of the Karaites.
- 25 Moses Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. M. Friedländer, 2nd edn, New York, Dover Publications, 1956, part 3, ch. 14, p. 278. Far-reaching consequences, particularly characteristic of this culture, derive from this statement.
- 26 Moses Maimonides, the Essay on Resurrection in Abraham Halkin and David Hartman, *Crisis and Leadership*, Epistles of Maimonides, Philadelphia and New York, Jewish Publication Society, 1985. We read there even harsher expressions (p. 212):

When I learned of these exceedingly deficient folk and their doubts, who, although they consider themselves sages in Israel, are in fact the most ignorant and more seriously astray than beasts, their minds filled with the senseless prattle of old women and noxious fantasies, like children and women, I concluded that it was necessary that I clearly elucidate religious fundamentals in my works on law.

On a slightly higher level, in Maimonides' view, are history books:

The third category comprises the talk that is undesirable. Man derives no spiritual benefit from it, yet it is also no sin or transgression. Of this kind is most of the talk of the common

people, about events past and present, such as how such-and-such a king conducts himself at home in his palace, or about the cause of somebody's death, and how a certain person grew rich. The sages call this "idle talk."

Maimonides, *The Mishnah of Avoth*, I, 17, in Forchheimer, *Living Judaism*, p. 46.

- 27 Moses Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Book of Knowledge, Laws Concerning Idolatry and the Ordinances of the Heathens, A, 2, pp. 66b-67a, and similarly in *Guide for the Perplexed*, part I, ch. 63, we hear that the Patriarchs "guided their fellow-men by means of argument and instruction," p. 94.
- 28 Salo Baron, "The historical outlook of Maimonides" in *History and Jewish Historians*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1964.
- 29 Aristotle, *De Poetica*, trans. Ingram Bywater, 1451, ch. 9 in Richard McKeon (ed.), *Introduction to Aristotle*, New York, Random House, 1947, pp. 635-6. In Aristotle's view, history over-shadows the essential, the "generalities," and highlights instead the insignificant, i.e. the details which do not demonstrate the generalities, as we heard in Maimonides' remark above. For this reason poetry is more philosophical and more important than history:

From what we have said it will be seen that the poet's function is to describe, not the thing that has happened, but a kind of thing that might happen, i.e. what is possible as being probable or necessary. The distinction between historian and poet is not in the one writing prose and the other verse - you might put the work of Herodotus into verse, and it would still be a species of history; it consists really in this, that the one describes the thing that has been, and the other a kind of thing that might be. Hence poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature of universals, whereas those of history are singulars. By a universal statement I mean one as to what such or such a kind of man will probably or necessarily say or do - which is the aim of poetry, though it affixes proper names to the characters. (ibid.)

One can hardly claim that Greek historiography in fact exemplified this idea. Herodotus and Thucydides may have sought to clarify general and typical ideas, but in their quest for essence and for necessary laws they did not neglect the phenomena, events and contingencies of history.

- 30 Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, part 3, ch. 50, p. 382. Perhaps this argument was made primarily in order to explain in what respect the laws of Moses were superior to the laws of the surrounding Gentiles. "His apologetic purpose forces him to resort to history and to discuss the heathen practices of the ancient Near Eastern peoples"; Shlomo Pines, *Bein Maḥshevet Yisrael le-maḥshevet ha-ʿamim* Jerusalem, Bialik Institute Press, 1977, p. 163.
- 31 See S. Rawidowicz' article on Sa'adiah Ga'on in *Knesset le-zecher Bialik*, Tel Aviv, 1939, and in English, see his essays on Sa'adiah in *Studies in Jewish Thought*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer, trans. Lawrence V. Berman, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1974, pp. 227-68; Pines, *Bein Maḥshevet Yisrael le-maḥshevet ha-ʿamin*, has a chapter on the philosophical sources of *Guide for the Perplexed* dealing with Maimonides' historical conception. See also Salo Baron, n. 28, above.
- 32 I.H. Weiss, *Dor dor ve-dorshav*, New York and Berlin, 1924, part 5, p. 245. The traditional education in the German communities up until the Emancipation, when coupled with a rationalism that disdained history, was apparently responsible for this reaction from Mendelssohn: "What do I know of history? All that bears the name history . . . has never entered into my head; and I constantly yawn whenever I need to read anything historical." Cited by S. Baron in *Social and Religious History of the Jews*, New York, Columbia Univ. Press, 1937, vol. II, p. 218.
- 33 Abraham Ibn Daud, *The Book of Tradition*, trans. Gerson D. Cohen, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1967, p. 3. The reliability of Ibn Daud's work was questioned by many. Haim Joseph David Azulai (the Hida) detected many errors in this work and advised readers not to rely on it. "I noted on the page one word, 'lehadam' [i.e. nothing of the kind] or 'untrue'."
- 34 *Seder ʿolam rabbah* ("The Great Order of the World"), the first attempt to establish a

sequential chronology of Biblical events since the creation of the world, dates from the second century CE. It ends with events dating from the period of Alexander the Great and the Bar Kochba revolt (132-5 CE). *Seder ʿolam zuta* ("Brief Order of the World") is of uncertain date, and carries its chronology up to Jewish Babylonia of the sixth century CE.

- 35 See Starn, "Meaning-levels in the theme of historical decline." The Platonic and Aristotelian theory of cycles also did not postulate, so it appears to scholars today, absolute cyclical regularity.
- 36 Ginzberg, *Al halachah va-ʿaggadah*, p. 254.
- 37 *Midrash Leviticus Rabbah*, 27, London, Soncino Press, 1939.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 We recall Reish Lakish's well-known saying: "What is the meaning of the verse 'This is the book of the generations of Adam' [Gen. 5.1]? It is to intimate that the Holy One, blessed be He, showed him [Adam] every generation and its thinkers, every generation and its sages" (*San.* 38b). The entire chain of transmission is foreseen in all its details. This predestination, where the foreknowledge determines the development, was greatly overstated by the author of *Seder ʿolam rabbah* in his conclusion. However, the problem of predestination, which includes also the belief in reincarnation, a distinct belief in prefiguration, is not our concern here.
- 40 N. Rotenstreich, *Bein ʿavar le-hove*, Bialik Institute Press, Jerusalem, p. 59.
- 41 Isak Heinemann, *Darhei ha-ʿaggadah*, Jerusalem, Maḡnes and Massada, 1960, p. 177.
- 42 J.B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress*, New York, 1932, p. 21-2.
- 43 N. Rotenstreich, *Zeman u-mashmaʿut*, Tel Aviv, Sifriyat Po'alim, 1974, p. 46, seeks to contradict J.B. Bury's opinion that the idea of providence and the idea of progress are antithetical, by citing proof from the Kabbalah regarding the lengthy process of the soul's purification, an image which couples providence with progress. This is subject-matter for further study.

## 7 Historical consciousness in the Emancipation culture

- 1 The words of Ps. 146.7 *lehatir ʿassurim* ("to set prisoners free"), were read *lehatir ʿissurim* ("to permit the forbidden").
- 2 Many scholars have written on the ending of the Jewish Middle Ages and the beginning of the new era. See Benzion Dinur, *Bemifneh ha-dorot*, Jerusalem, Bialik Institute Press, 1955, in a chapter devoted to the question of redemption at the beginning of the Haskalah; Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis, Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1961; Efraim Shmueli, *Massoret u-mahapecha*, New York, Sefarim, 1942. For an economic analysis of the emergence of the Emancipation culture, see Raphael Mahler, *A History of Modern Jewry 1780-1815*, New York, Schocken Books, 1971.
- 3 Zvi Locker, "Me-ʿadat ʿanusim li-kehilat kodesh", Jerusalem, *Zion*, 1-2, XLII, 1977, p. 76.
- 4 This formulation is cited by M. Kayserling in *Moses Mendelssohn, sein Leben und seine Werke*, Leipzig, Hermann Mendelssohn, 1862, p. 568, para. 57.
- 5 Moses Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 1844, vol. V, p. 494.
- 6 Mendelssohn in a letter to the theologian Johann David Michaelis, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. III, p. 366.
- 7 Ibid., p. 360.
- 8 Herz Homberg (1749-1841) served for a number of years as a tutor in Mendelssohn's home and also participated in the latter's exegesis, the *Bifur* to Deuteronomy. From 1787-1806 he served as a state-appointed inspector-general of Jewish schools in Galicia. Another of his catechisms, *Imrei schefer*, Vienna, 1808, admonishes its young readers to obey the monarch's commands, whether good or bad, because "the Holy One, blessed be He, by His holy will seats kings on their thrones, they are His kingdom's agents for dispensing justice on earth and leading the nations in righteousness."
- 9 Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*, Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1956, vol. V, p. 289.
- 10 Moses Mendelssohn *Gesammelte Schriften* (Jubilaumsausgabe), Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1930, vol. VII, and S. Rawidowicz' introduction there, p. xvi.