TIKKUN AS RESPONSE TO TRAGEDY: EM HABANIM SMEHA
OF RABBI YISSAKHAR SHLOMO TEICHTHAL
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Abstract — Rabbi Yissakhar Shlomo Teichthal’s Em Habanim Smeha (EHS) (Budapest, 1943) represents a major break with ultra-Orthodox Jewish theology. Among the last works of Judaica published in Holocaust Europe, the martyred author castigates his ultra-religious colleagues for leading their communities astray by making peace with the realities of exile and rejecting all initiatives for self-redemption. The quietistic strategy of ‘shev ve’al ta’aseh’ (cease and desist) practiced by the galut-oriented Jewish leaders may have enhanced their own leadership positions in a beleaguered exile, but proved fatal to much of Eastern European Jewry. EHS pleads for a return to tikkun (reconstruction) as a prerequisite for self-redemption. Documentation for this activist-religious Zionist program on the background of the hurban in progress is summarized in this essay.

INTRODUCTION

On 24 January 1945 (10 Sh’vat, 5705, according to the Jewish calendar), Rabbi (R.) Yissakhar Shlomo Teichthal, scion of generations of Eastern Jewish scholarship and piety, was murdered in a German cattle car transporting the remnants of Auschwitz ahead of the pursuing Russian armies.¹ Unlike millions of fellow Jews who took with them to their death their personal feelings, R. Teichthal recorded a remarkable work in Budapest between 4 January 1943 and 23 December 1943. It is not the usual war narrative of an historian or an eye-witness. Nor is it a diary, although it contains elements of Holocaust history and personal testimony. Em Habanim Smeha² (EHS) is a prodigiously documented polemic written in rabbinic Hebrew and addressed to the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) leadership and learned layman. Against the background of the unfolding horror of the hurban (destruction) of European Jewry, the author simultaneously formulated a merciless confession of what might have, and should have been. The Holocaust is also the tragic stage upon which is presented the plan for the national-religious reconstruction of the Jewish people in the postwar era. The text is replete with the documentation of the failings of religious leaders in the past. They are the results of the prolonged and enervating struggle in exile, which twisted Jewish theology, as it was perceived or misperceived. The author exposes the prevalent fatalistic streams of dependence on miraculous divine intervention which inhibited Jewish history and paralyzed human initiative in search of national redemption. Thus, the destruction of European Jewry was the calamitous combination of missed historic opportunities and misrepresented theology.

The Balfour Declaration of 1917 which ‘looked with favour on’ support for a Jewish National Homeland in Palestine, was such an opportunity, according to EHS. Among the dramatic passages in the volume are the author’s plea for tikkun (restoration, reconstruction) of the Jewish People, and the concomitant parallel Unity of the divine. This restoration
could only come about through the return of the people to its homeland in an Eretz Yisrael based on the spiritual foundations of Torah, while employing the modern tools of nation building.

Most remarkable are the passages in defense of the 'sinners' and 'heretics'. In Teichthal's view these non-observant Zionists, the settlers of the land since the 1880s, and the object of scorn and hostility of Halakhic leaders, are in fact the true catalysts of tikkun. Their love for the land — expressed in dedication, toil, and self-sacrifice, without any claims to piety — contributed more to the realization of tikkun than all the prayers of pious Jews, who have bewailed the long exile — while passively and, often comfortingly, remaining ensconced in exile.

Hence, Teichthal daringly breaks with the prevailing theological position of his ultra-Orthodox contemporaries. Yet, it was only three and a half years prior to the outbreak of World War II that Rabbi Teichthal's own vehement public opposition to settlement in Palestine was included in the ultra-Orthodox Tikun Olam, which was published at the behest of R. Haim Elazar Shapira, the Rebbe of Munkatch (Munkacs).

Although the author clearly attributed his recantation to the cataclysmic events of the Holocaust, the documentation for his activist redemptive ideology was drawn from a massive cross-section of sources in classic Judaica. Hence the author may have begun struggling with his counter-ideology even prior to the Shoah. It is clear that R. Teichthal was familiar with the writings of one of the forerunners of modern Zionism — especially the form which synthesizes piety and religious observance with the duty to settle the Holy Land — R. Zvi Hirsch Kalischer (1795–1874). The rabbinic endorsements (haskanot) for Kalischer's important Zionist work Derishat Zion ('Seeking Zion'), published in 1862, were utilized by Teichthal as posthumous, albeit controversial, support by acknowledged rabbinic authorities for his own statement on religious Zionism.

This study will examine the four introductory sections and four chapters of this important contribution to the primary literature of the Holocaust. Selected texts will be scrutinized in order to clarify the questions confronted by a person of profound belief and devotion:

1. *Why?* Is there a divine purpose to the Shoah? 'Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this?' (Job 12:9). Does the Jobian certainty apply to Rabbi Teichthal's view of human and national disaster?

2. *What?* Are there lessons to be learned by the Jewish people, its leadership, especially the religious leaders?

3. *How?* Can these lessons be applied? Are there resources for reconstruction (tikkun)? Where shall one find redeeming sources for consolation?

Texts will be selected from this prodigiously documented work which may shed light on several significant aspects: the theological—sociological climate in which R. Teichthal functioned prior to and during the Holocaust; the readership for whom the volume was intended; the causes which may have catalyzed his radical change of views; sources which may explain the continued post-Holocaust ambivalence and hostility of ultra-Orthodoxy to the Jewish State; and, clues as to the attitude the author might have assumed towards the modern State of Israel had he lived to witness its emergence.

THE AUTHOR

Rabbi Teichthal was born in Hungary in 1885. He received the traditional intensive Jewish education of a young boy within ultra-Orthodox circles in Eastern Europe, leading to
scholarly achievements, rabbinic ordination, and the growing responsibilities of a religious communal leader. The intense communal responsibilities expected of a young Rabbi in the resort town of Piestany in Slovakia did not prevent him from devoting his scholarship to rabbinic legal writings, as well as serving as head of the Yeshiva (Talmudic Academy) Moriah in Piestany. The first volume of his Responsa collection, Mishne Sakhir, was published in Slovakia in 1924. The second volume was in the process of publication when the war intervened. Some of the manuscripts were hastily deposited with a non-Jewish acquaintance and subsequently recovered by one of the author’s daughters. His son, Haim Menahem Teichthal of Jerusalem, has currently issued the second volume of Mishne Sakhir. A diary is planned for publication. These documents may shed light on the intimate thought processes of the author, and offer evidence for the radical changes in his thinking, evident in Em Habanim Smecha.

THE CONTINUING AGENDA OF THE VOLUME

This writer first encountered the work when researching Hassidic responses to the Holocaust, for a doctoral dissertation on the subject. The issues raised by R. Teichthal in 1943 continue to challenge Jewish people today. The reality of the independent Jewish State represents the physical realization of the pioneers who settled Palestine and received the belated praise and support of the martyred author. But, Teichthal’s sharp critique of his ultra-Orthodox colleagues is still relevant. The responses to the Jewish State by Haredi Judaism range from ambivalence to hostility. The author’s description of the Jew who prefers the stepmother (diaspora) over one’s natural mother (Eretz Yisrael) goes to the heart of the theological debate on the question of religious Zionism. The encounter between the world of passive belief in supernatural intervention as opposed to the activist school of national redemption continues unabated.

THE INDICTMENT

Now who is actually responsible for this innocent blood which has been spilled in our own time, due to our many iniquities? It seems to me that these very leaders who prevented Jews from joining and participating with the builders cannot alone [for their wrongs] by exclaiming: Our hands did not shed this blood.

With this shocking accusation, even prior to preparing the reader with three introductory prefices, the author presents his thesis: the ultra-Orthodox leadership in Europe is responsible for much of the innocent Jewish blood which has been shed. The guilt is collective; so are the implications for the restoration of the Jewish people, since ‘all Jews are held responsible for one another’. Throughout the generations leaders should have travelled among the Jewish communities, a day in each . . . teaching Jews the proper path, over a period of a year, two or three, until Israel will have settled in its land and thereby glorify and sanctify the name of the Holy One, blessed be He. . . . They did not do so. Rather each entered into his own field, his own vineyard [enjoying] his own wine exclaiming: ’All is well with me’, so as not to burden themselves [with responsibilities]. This is true in our present day as well. They [the leaders] should have been involved in this matter and teach Jews to return to the Holy Land in the spirit of the Torah. Where might we have been today had all of the tzaddikim (righteous) and haredim (pious) in former generations given their support! Many thousands of Jewish souls would have been saved! (EHS, 15)
The biblical spies [Numbers (Nu.), 13–14] are the arch prototypes of self-seeking leaders who sacrifice the interest of the people, the land and, hence, redemption.

Was there anyone more fit for a mission than the spies [sent by Moses]? But since their ambition for authority was firmly rooted within them, as elaborated in the Zohar, and the Shelah, they were afraid that should they come to Eretz Yisrael they will lose their positions of authority. They turned against this lovely land and deceived others as well, thereby causing this exile, as elaborated by our sages. The current situation is similar even among rabbis, rebbes and their hassidim. This one has a good rabbinic post; another is endowed with a lucrative Rebistein.

This one owns a profitable business or factory, or is appointed to a good and prestigious position offering great satisfaction. They are frightened that should they move to Eretz Yisrael their status will be shaken. (EHS, 31)

THE VOW

Religious traditions offer at least two spiritual sanctuaries for the devoted adherent in crisis. In one, the person of faith seeks stability; in the other, one searches for hope. One is situated in the past, and the second lies expectant in the future.

In the First Preface R. Teichthal develops a two-faced system in which he seeks both support and hope. For the first he chooses the patriarch Jacob, a prototype, who faced mortal danger, wrestled all alone with both human and divine elements, persevered and, albeit wounded, prevailed. Though the assuring expression 'have no fear' is a familiar biblical landmark, it is the expression 'Al tira avdi Yaakov' ('Have no fear, My servant Jacob') which has become a stabilizing motif in Jewish tradition.

Teichthal, however, does not retreat into a passive protective sanctuary. He selects an active Jacobian model. From amidst adversity is forged a vow which becomes a vital life-sustaining force protecting the integrity of the person of faith.

Our Holy Torah has already noted the act of Jacob our Patriarch, may he rest in peace. When he was in distress he made an important vow to the Lord as it is written: 'Jacob then made a vow, saying, 'If God remains with me and gives me bread to eat and clothing to wear and if He protects me on this journey that I am making and if I return safe to my father's house, etc.' Our sages of blessed memory noted: 'What is its significance? We learn from here that one must make a vow when in distress. Therefore, I shall also make a significant vow to the God of Israel. I will pray for all of Israel in the spirit of our ancient patriarch of blessed memory described previously. If God will be with me during these difficult persecutions; will watch over me against those who wish to harm me; will provide me with bread to eat and clothing to wear; will permit the merits of Eretz Yisrael to protect me and my family; that harm, hurt or confrontation shall not befall me or my household until imminent redemption will come to all of Israel; that suffering shall be commanded: Enough.' That the following verse will be speedily realized in our day: 'A righteous man falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble at once;' that our Holy Land will arouse its merit on our behalf so that we may be speedily remembered for redemption and in compassion since we have no power left to hold out; and that the suffering of these past years which have befallen us will be the pangs preceding the Messiah; that our Righteous Messiah will come and redeem us from their clutches, though we may not be privy to God’s will with respect to the coming of the Messiah since He did not reveal His thoughts on the subject. (EHS, 23)

SUFFERING IN EXILE

The purpose of the volume is to explain the suffering of the Jewish people during the course of history and especially the tragedy in progress. If such suffering has any meaning,
TIKKUN AS RESPONSE TO TRAGEDY

according to the author, it must lead to tikkun. The people and, specifically, the religious leadership are responsible for sowing the seeds of galut (exile) which are harvested at the expense of ge'ulah (redemption).

The suffering which befalls Israel is due to bad leaders. I dared to survey and research [the literature] devoted to the continued persistence of the exile. I proceed to compose this work, with the help of God, in which I publicly express my views in order to advise my people as to what should be done to advance redemption, speedily in our day. . . . After some respite following my arrival here in the capital,54 fulfilling my vow, I began work on the volume devoted to the rebuilding of our Holy Land; to raise it from the mounds of dust;55 to stimulate love and affection in the hearts of our Jewish brethren, old and young, so that they would endeavor to return to our Land, the Land of our forefathers and not remain here in the lands of exile. As expounded in the Midrash Rabbah56 'It is preferred that one lives in the deserts of Eretz Yisrael and not live in palaces outside the Land.

Furthermore, the purpose of all of the plagues with which we were assailed during our periods of exile were mainly intended to stimulate us to return to our Holy Land. (EHS, 28)

Among the central motifs to which the author returns repeatedly are:

1. The shortcircuiting of communication between the divine and the Jewish people, while the latter linger in exile, and its inversion.
2. The active and necessary initiative of a people rebuilding its land, which represents not only a sign of faithfulness, but tikkun, the requisite step towards redemption.

The Tosafot in Avodah Zara (chapter 5) remarks upon the verse:

'And I will faithfully plant them in this Land'37 [Whenever they shall be on the Land they will be as if I had planted them before me, faithfully, with all my heart and soul], but if they not be settled upon her, they will not be planted before me faithfully, neither with my whole heart nor soul.38

It is indeed startling for the Holy One, blessed be He, to declare that when Israel is not in its Land they are not at one with Him in heart nor soul. What has befallen us in our time and the limited degree of evident [divine] providence should not astonish us, since He is not faithfully linked to us with His entire heart and soul. We are after all in the land of other nations. When we shall attempt to return to her, then we will immediately cleave to Him with all heart and soul. As it is explained in the Kuzari (2:14), the Shekhinah [Divine Presence] descended upon Ezekiel despite the qualification of our sages of blessed memory that the Shekhinah does not rest outside the Land of Israel.40 Since he prophesied in the interest of Eretz Yisrael, the Shekhinah rested [upon him] outside the 'Land of Israel' [as well].

Primarily, God expects us to assume the initiative and yearn to return to our Land. We should not wait until He Himself brings us there. Therefore, we are told, 'I will faithfully plant them in this Land.'41 That is to say, we are consciously to strive and yearn for this purpose, faithfully, and with all our abilities. Then he will successfully complete the task for us. (EHS, 28–29)

ERETZ YISRAEL: THE SCRIPTURAL INHERITANCE WHICH COMMITS

Among the primary hinges upon which the volume turns is the central role of Eretz Yisrael in the contract which binds the divine to the Jewish people. First, Eretz Yisrael is the natural habitat within which both the divine and the people reach their ultimate fulfillment. Exile and activity, no matter how positive, outside the land is unnatural and delays the process of redemption. Further, and perhaps the most radical statement which marks Teichthal's departure from classic Haredi theology, is the rejection of reliance on supernatural miracles.
I chanced upon the holy volume Beit Elokim of our teacher HaMeabit. He notes that Joshua was compelled to conquer the Land by conventional means of war. The RaMaN in his commentary on the Pentateuch in Numbers (13) Shealeh has emphasized that the Torah does not rely on miracles. Rabbi Bahya also makes this point. It is also noted in Rashi, Shabbat 23b. The Jerusalem Talmud, Yuma 1:4 teaches us not to rely on miracles in order that you 'do not try the Lord your God.' It is further taught in the chapter Tamid Nishmat 64 that we do not rely on miracles.

Among the rare moments of light relief in the Holocaust literature is the segment which symbolized the tragic misconception of the Golus Yid (the Jew with the galut mentality), who was trapped in the vicious cycle of reliance on miracles, and dependence on the good will of others, rather than initiating acts of self redemption.

With regard to the excerpt from the Talmud: 'What must a person do that he may have male children?' I am reminded of a story told to me by an aged hassid of R. Eliezer of Kumano. The holy Rebbe was attended by an elderly bachelor. Though he was of limited intelligence, he was a God fearing person. He was called Peretz 'gabbai'. They asked this Peretz: 'Why do you not marry a woman?' He replied: 'Why do I need a woman? Do I lack anything being with the Rebbe?' They replied: 'But a man is in need of children!' He retorted: 'Children? I will submit a kvittel to the Rebbe and I will have children! When they related Peretz's words to the Rebbe he laughed, exclaiming: That is the kind of image one acquires — like that of a Peretz — when one relies completely on the Rebbe. We learn from this that one without the other is insufficient. Prayer [in this instance] not accompanied by the marrying of a woman, is inadequate. One cannot emulate a Peretz gabbai who relied on the prayers of the Rebbe and would not marry a woman.

On the other hand, the natural relationship which would permit the people to inherit the land as part of the covenant, would require the observance of Torah without which Eretz Yisrael would be incomplete. The land however, provides the inspirational environment by which Torah observance can reach its ultimate realization.

'Now in accepting the morasha [legacy] of Torah we will also be worthy of the morasha of Eretz Yisrael. Should we depart from her [Torah] either right or left, so that it no longer be our morasha, then Eretz Yisrael can no longer be our morasha. This occurred to our forefathers and to ourselves because of our sins. Furthermore, we cannot grasp the true profound mysteries of Torah except in Eretz Yisrael. As [our sages] said: The atmosphere of Eretz Yisrael makes one wise. They also related the advantage of studying Torah in Eretz Yisrael. Upon this background it will be understood why I, at the very outset presented [the premise] that Torah and Eretz Yisrael were commanded simultaneously and that they function as two inseparable companions.' (EHS, 52)

The tripartite relationship between God, people and land is biblically transferred by inheritance through the ages and commits all concerned for all time, irrespective of subsequent political or military events.

Now the strongest case for [our lies to Eretz Yisrael] is based on inheritance, as it is written in the verse: ' . . . to give you this Land as a possession'. Neither the argument of acquisition [by purchase] nor the argument of military conquest are as valid. With regard to the latter; one conquest may cancel a previous one. The holy Torah is our contract and proof; it remains eternal and is evident to all the nations. (EHS, 45–46)

The paradox is now in place. This classic fundamentalist position of scriptural
absolutes is supplemented, if not challenged, by Teichthal’s radical defense of secular sinners.

THE REDEMPTIVE TIKKUN OF THE SINNERS — THE BLUNDER OF THE PIOUS

Whereas much of ultra-orthodoxy vehemently rejected political Zionism, attacking those ‘who meddled in hastening the End of Days’, the young Zionist settlers, many of whom either rejected their traditional roots or were educated in the secularism of post-emancipation, were elevated by Teichthal, to the highest level of religious fulfillment. It is likely that he was attacked for embracing the ‘heretical’ halutzim as much as he was villified for his ideological ‘backsliding’.

I shall presently address myself to the builders of our Holy Land in our own generation. By these things [the Divine promise and fulfillment] men live. And through them the Lord’s purpose may prosper. It is as clear as day that your endeavors and labors are pleasing to God. You have built cities. From waste land you have created flourishing fields. This was achieved by means of difficult and dedicated efforts. You succeeded in cleansing bodies of water which had been infected with many diseases. You then directed these to choice and fruitful fields. I shall demonstrate that your works are indeed pleasing to the Lord.

Of major moment in Teichthal’s defense of the halutzim is his reinforcing the Jewish legal principle of the intrinsic worth of every mitzvah (commandment) performed, irrespective of the motive or the quality of observance of other mitzvot.

The Hatam Sofer states in his novellae [Hiddushim] on the tractate Sukkah 354 that the acts of plowing and sowing in Eretz Yisrael are as if one performs the commandments of tefilin [phylacteries], Sukkah [the booth], or lulav [the palm], one of the four vegetative species required for the Sukkos festival.

THE INFINITE WORTH OF THE FINITE

Beyond this censure of holistic fundamentalism, which insists on examining total patterns of religious behaviorism, emerges a remarkable theory of tikkun, scaled down to finite segments of human realities. Each segment at any given time represents an independent redeeming element for which a particular individual or group may have been specifically created.

It seems to me, that this simple individual who builds the Land, without any religious pretenses, but merely for his own advantage, fulfills a greater act of tikkun in the upper spheres than even the most righteous of Izaddukim with his Tikkun Hatzot and his wailing and bewailing the Shekhinah and exilie... The text in Sanhedrin [102 b] reiterates this teaching as does our master in his introduction to the volume Reshit Hokhma. Tikkun (restoration) is achieved by the actual performance of the mitzvah... I found similar support in the volume Yismah Moshe, [that is to say] the active aspect of the mitzvah, though not based on any specific intent, is more effective than a mitzvah which lacks activity, although it is accompanied by great intentions... According to the halakhic authorities as well, it is clear that a mitzvah which involves action does not require intent. The mitzvah is fulfilled without intent. Note also the RaShbA on Ye’eremot 103: The act which results in a mitzvah cannot be retraced even should such action have come about by way of a transgression, Heaven forbid. Furthermore, the mitzvah is not negated in any manner. This major principle is valid here as well. The Yishuv [Jewish settlement] in Palestine
has expanded due to their deeds. These are irreversible and cannot be denied. After all, we are the benefactors of the fruits of their labor. Even if this may have come about by means of transgression, Heaven forbid, the mitzvah has been convincingly fulfilled, in all its revealed as well as esoteric aspects... Therefore, every Jew who is truly faithful to God, and whose love for God and His People takes precedence over self-conceit, will be grateful and appreciate your acts of building our Holy Land. (EHS, 54–55)

In sanctifying the acts of the secular pioneers, the author did not negate the preferred option for a Jewish state founded and operating on the basis of Torah. Yet, the Haredi detractors rejected Teichthal’s positive synthesis of secular activism and divine purpose. Possibly, aspects of this synthesis became apparent to the author in the midst of the 
hurban which bound the secular and the pious together within a common crucible of fate and faith.

DESTRUCTION AND DOUBT

It is clear from the text that Teichthal’s redemptive, activist theology did not evoke enthusiastic response from his suffering community, reminiscent of Moses’ rejection by the Israelites in slavery. Nevertheless, the author pleads for fortitude by accepting the pre-messianic pangs with love. Worthiness of redemption will be enhanced by suffering which is endured with faith, or weakened by enervating doubt.

We must endure with love these misfortunes, difficult decrees and pogroms which have befallen us at this time. We must brace them with all of our strength, since they are as important to us as if they were a whole burnt offering. However, the last of the prophets, Malachi, forewarned what will occur to us in the end of days when we shall be entangled in suffering during the period of the Pange of the Messiah. There will be those who will exclaim: ‘It is useless to serve God. What have we gained by keeping His Torah? Those who have done evil have found favor in the eyes of God. It is indeed they whom the Lord prefers.’ Where is the God of Justice? Yet these are precisely the words heard during these bitter times! But those who revere the Lord and cling to Him talked to one another, they do not adhere to their wicked deeds but encourage and strengthen one another. As it is written in Isaiah 8:17 ‘So I will wait for the Lord who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob, and I will trust in Him.’ Though He hides His face from the house of Jacob, nevertheless He [Jacob] will be patient and trust in Him. The Holy One, blessed be He, notes these words spoken by those who revere the Lord on the day of suffering. He records their words in a scroll of remembrance. Then with the coming of the day of retribution and redemption the Lord will distinguish between those who clung to Him and those who abandoned Him. It seems to me that it is in reference to these righteous who are inscribed in the scroll of remembrance that Daniel states: And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. (I believe this interpretation is to be found in one of the commentaries on Daniel. As I prepare this manuscript for publication I do not have any texts available to me and therefore cannot cite the exact source.) Therefore, during these trying times every Jew must surely brace himself, that His feet not slip. It is worthwhile to bear the full brunt of the yoke of exile since this will reflect the magnitude of the reward which shall be granted to us by the Almighty when everyone shall be compensated in accordance with one’s dealing with the Holy One blessed be He. (EHS, 61)

THE DECEPTIVE EXILE

Though the 
hurban represents the consequences of opportunities wasted in exile, the author assumes a position of neither self pity nor despair. Rather he identifies with the
victims of the tragedy and seeks the redemption of the remnant. The faith of the remnant in its will to reconstruct the Jewish people will be the reward of redemption. EHS is a theology of hope. The suffering, albeit a product of human failure, is also the mysterious existential ‘void prior to existence’ associated with redemption.

The byways of suffering characterized by the mysterious need of ‘void prior to existence’, is supplemented, however, by Rabbi Teichthal with a rational, behavioral approach to suffering and redemption.

Now, should redemption take place in a setting of goodness, tranquility and calm among the nations, many of our Jewish brethren would never consider leaving. What would they lack here in exile? They are well-to-do, prominent and fill important posts among the nations, such as the Rothschilds and Jewish barons who have achieved fame and have been elevated to positions of officialdom and aristocracy. What is their link to the Messiah and Eretz Yisrael? They have their own Messiah. Jerusalem is right here. They need not seek a better Messiah than the one they already have here [in exile]. The mystery of Exile and the hardships of the decrees which have constantly been our lot are designed to arouse us from our slumber in exile. This is the voice of our Beloved. This refers to the Holy One, blessed be He, who pounds at the portal of our hearts, to stimulate within us a desire and longing to return to our Holy Land, neglected for almost two thousand years. We have instead compromised for a nominal and tenuous life of calm among the nations, thereby rejecting the glory of God and the splendor of our nation and Holy Land. We have sold the birthright of Israel for a portion of lentil stew of the nations.

THE HAREDI ANACHRONISTIC THEOLOGY

The negation of exile takes on a tragically renewed connotation during the disaster to which the author is witness. Eretz Yisrael is not only a sacred dwelling of a people in the historic-theological reality, but now has become an emergency life raft for the sacred remnant.

Israel is a dispersed flock of sheep, lost among the nations with nothing which would unite one Jew with another. They are like dismembered organs dangling from their various places of residence, neither linked to the individual and certainly not with the [Jewish] totality. We are all as abandoned fish in the sea. As we have witnessed during recent years, even the lowest and most common scoundrel has felt free to do with us as he wishes; commit against us depravities and murder without having to account to anyone. Such [anarchy] could not be possible if we were to found, with the help of God, a center in Eretz Yisrael which would raise our glory with honor before all nations of the earth. We too would be considered a distinguished nation. Thus the individual who remains in exile would not be irresponsible abandoned. Anyone considering acts of violence against us must understand that he will be accountable to someone for his acts. He will be held responsible and therefore would refrain from acting towards us with hostility. [The ingathering] would also cause the hearts of Jews to be reunited, even those in exile. Peace will reign among us. Thereby we shall attain, with good hope, the final redemption, speedily in our time, Amen (EHS, 92).

The Haredi theologies represent an illusory luxury of the past, a cruel anachronism during the current catastrophic realities.

[Even] as I clearly respond throughout to all the arguments of our master and Rabbi, the author of Minhat Elazar of Munkatch (I too was among his circle), I am also aware that his premises were based upon a form of miraculous and wondrous redemption. Those who took matters into their own hands were considered to be meddlers. These arguments are maintained in all of his works.
Without detracting from his revered status, I must respectfully indicate that he viewed all things from a meritorious perspective based on his [lofty] standards. Yet, in truth, this last generation, due to our many transgressions is ‘not worthy’. Redemption must, therefore, be disguised in the natural process.

It is worth adding that had our Rabbi, the author of Minhat Eliazar, been with us to witness all these terrible decrees and acts of murder which have befallen us, Heaven help us, he too would acknowledge that we abandon the lands of exile, return to Eretz Yisrael which had provided us [in the past] with royalty, and not wait for the call to the Messiah. (EHS, 94)

Haredi leaders who continued to oppose redemptive initiatives as if nothing has changed come under scathing attack throughout the volume. Applying the teaching in the Kuzari of R. Yehuda Halevi96 R. Teichthal notes:

Thus we have a clear opinion from this divine personage. Even if, Heaven forbid, Eretz Yisrael becomes inhabited with forces of obscenity, it is still preferred to live there than anywhere else. This should serve as an example for those in our own day who drape themselves in piety, and slander the Land claiming it does not meet their religious standards. (EHS, 96)

THE CLOAK OF PIETY AND FOLLY

In the latter sections of the volume the author exposes the costly fractionalism among Jews, especially among the pious and their relations with others, ‘their manner of separation and isolation from the total nation, the Jewish people’ (EHS, 251). Their orbit is ‘the house of worship, morning and evening’, and ‘the Talmud study circle . . . They have no attachment and affinity with the masses since their outlook is limited to the narrow circle within which they revolve’ (EHS, 251). These ‘cloaked’ Jews are referred to as ‘sheine Yidden’ who have left the masses vulnerable to the mortal danger from without. The folly of unbridled piety reached such proportions that some Haredi elements were convinced that ‘the reason our fellow Jews in Hungary have been saved is due to their not being involved in the movement to build the Land’. The author, appalled at such conclusions, responds with the silence of disdain:

Our heart truly pains us as we have to listen to so many fools who speak, saying that the Holy One, blessed be He, is compassionate with our fellow Jews who dwell in Hungary because they rejected the movement to build the Land and did not cooperate on its behalf. May the Almighty spare us from such opinions! Go see the extent of their obstinacy. With such people one should not argue at all. Solomon referred to them when he remarked: ‘Do not answer a fool in accord with his folly [else you will become like him]’ (EHS, 357) . . . May the good Lord forgive them for this deed. (EHS, 423)

TIKKUN WITHIN THE HOLOCAUST

Em Habanim Smeha looks beyond the complex strata of massive grief. The work relentlessly forges elements of tikkun from which the Jewish people will be reconstructed.

a. The tikkun of exile (galut)

The Jewish relationship with exile is to be forthwith and interminably severed. This is an example where the vessel is to be completely shattered before it can be reconstituted. The stepmother is to be cast aside for the mother who has been eagerly awaiting the return of her children; hence, the title of the volume.
hundreds and thousands of years were lost to us in exile. All of our energy and blood we gave to our stepmother. Now we have received from her in appreciation for all of our care on her behalf a stick with which she has proceeded to whip us cruelly without mercy and compassion. She has wounded our entire body, from head to toe without a spot which remained unblemished. She proceeded to expel us with vehemence. She took our wealth from us, compelled us to leave her home naked and bereft. So many of our fellow Jews, in the thousands and tens of thousands, died horrible deaths at the hands of our stepmother. Shall we now express our trust in her by returning to her once again? What guarantee do we have that after a few decades she will not again act towards us in this manner? In fact our history has demonstrated that these acts recur in cycles throughout the years. Thus far we have not learned from our past. We can no longer trust the lands of exile, because of all this which has happened—never, never! Never shall we ever return to our stepmother. Rather we will rise and ascend to our genuine mother. We will dedicate to her all of our energies, from now and forever. We will rebuild her walls and reconstruct her ruins. (EHS, 207–208)

b. The tikkun of tragedy

The martyrs of the Holocaust are to be redeemed only if the Jewish people redirect energies towards the resurrection of their homeland.

It is acknowledged, therefore, that in abandoning these countries of exile and returning to Eretz Yisrael, not only do we redeem the souls of our Jewish brethren who were murdered and fell here, in exile, because they compelled us to return to the domain of our forefathers, but we hasten their resurrection. Hence, their martyrdom was actually not in vain. (EHS, 213)

c. The tikkun of attitude

Redemptive efforts would have to include the adoption of a tolerant and balanced posture towards other Jews, and the rejection of polarizing positions in the name of ‘religious integrity and piety’.

Now it is said in the name of our holy Rabbi, R. Naftali of Ropshitz, who was known for his clever remarks, that a proper Jew must be at once ‘good, pious and wise’. One without the other is not sufficient. One who is exclusively good is an adulterer. To be pious only, is to be a fool. To be clever alone, is to be a sceptic. To be good, and pious, and clever is the proper course of a Jew. These were his words. (EHS, 274)

d. The tikkun of discord

The seeds of destruction are sown from within. Disunity proclaims to the potential perpetrator that the potential victim is prepared to participate in one’s own undoing. Consistent with Teichthal’s mystical views, discord in the world below prevents unity in the cosmos, hence delaying redemption.

In the [commentary of the] portion of Kedoshim, the Pardes Yosef cites text from the Haggada [of Passover]: Not only one [tyrant] rose up against us to destroy us... The intent of ‘lo ehad bilvad’ [‘not only one’] refers to the fact that we are not one [united] among ourselves. This alone is cause to destroy us, God forbid. Then the Lord, blessed be He, will bring our hearts closer, one to another, and unity shall reign in Israel. Amen, may this be His will. (EHS, 226)

The unity motifs increase in vehemence with the close of the volume. The catastrophe
is linked to the tragedy of discord, to the futility of uniting the God in exile with His people in exile, to the *tikkun* which is necessary and possible.

Our entire redemption and destiny is tied to the one condition that we remain united and consolidated within one complete entity; that we unite within ourselves people representing every sector found among us, from the person on the extreme right to the one on the extreme left. [This is to be done] until all of Israel becomes a unified perfect whole. Then we will conquer the divine attribute of strict Justice. We will silence the adversary [Satan] so that he cannot scheme against us, as indicated earlier...

... Candidly, I realized that everyone would be astonished and would ridicule me, saying: you are correct. Upon the unity of all Israel rests our redemption. How is it possible to remedy all this? Who is capable of bringing them all together? How can one include and gather all of Israel from the four corners of the earth and forge them into one flock with such different points of view and features? Indeed, this difficulty was raised by our rabbi [the author of] Hafetz 'ah [commenting] at the close of Ketubot [112 b] on the eventual unification of all of Israel in our time, which was forestalled due to the differences in views among them.  

Our sages of blessed memory have instructed us saying: Do not underestimate the importance of anything. Even the ordeal of the abnormal periods which we have endured teaches us that events which people had believed to be unrealistic, proved to be very real. And things which no man even believed were possible in this world were eventually realized. Similarly, incorporating all of Israel into a unified whole is a likely possibility and is not contrary to its natural inherent tendency, as I shall proceed to relate with the help of the Almighty.

**e. The tikkun of love (ahavah)**

The concluding fourth chapter is devoted entirely to the theme of *ahavat yisrael* (love for a fellow Jew). Paradoxically it is this motif which emerges most dramatically from the hostile context of the *huban*.

The numerical value of *ohev Yisrael* is identical to the numerical value of *takkanah*, in order to teach that only it can be the solution for Israel, none other.  

R. Teichthal’s plea for the *tikkun* of love was not a pious platitude but grounded in the harsh internecine fractionalism which often characterized the competitive and complex Haredi world in which the author functioned. Epithets such as *rashia* (wicked), *poshe yisrael* (a Jewish villain), and *kofer* (heretic) were commonly employed against the non-conformist. This destructive orbit of random hostility is noted.

I also looked at the text *Malbushel Yom Tov* of the holy Zitzazover who cites R. Menahem Mendel of Rimanov. Accordingly, the second son in the *Haggadah* [of Passover] will also benefit from the *tikkun* [restoration] of the final redemption. Due to his love for Israel this holy person refused to refer to him as a villain [rasha], but rather ‘the second son’. Note to what extent one should love a fellow Jew. Not even a relentless villain, such as the second son in the *Haggadah*, was to be referred to as a ‘villain’. (This should be an example for all those who tend to evaluate others with the expression *rasha*.)

**f. The tikkun of error**

The potential to be retransformed from the ‘Golus Yid’ mentality to redemptive-oriented people, assumes recognizing and acknowledging errors of the past. Tikkun of error is the most difficult of tasks for people of faith, inclined to fatalistic thought and
be behavior. Yet his own agonizing experience within the Holocaust, fortified by classic Jewish sources, demonstrates that the tikkun of error is possible.

I proceeded to preach on this subject with considerable passion. Many were upset with me. This reached the attention of this gaon who reacted as follows: In reality, it has turned out we were in error in withdrawing from the movement to build the land. (Yiddish.) These were the very words of this great gaon, a leader of his generation. And he said further: A great many of our Jewish brethren would have been saved had we all been involved in the rebuilding of our Land and not feuded among ourselves. He then burst forth weeping, for some of his children, as well, who were trapped in Slovakia. (EHS, 161)

The author proceeds to underscore a major principle in his dynamic, existentialist philosophy of the halakha process, relevant to the debate at hand. Only those involved in the contemporary life struggle are in a position to participate in rabbinic legal discourse. Those no longer active in the affairs of this world ‘be it even Moses or the angels’, are not to rule on legal matters which concern the present generation. Consequently, rabbinic attitudes and rulings on the Zionist question which may have been appropriate in previous generations are not necessarily valid in the present. Positive dynamics of change are assumed by those who are directly affected by such change. Anachronistic considerations compound the error, which in the case of the kurban proved to be fatal.

R. Teichthal recants openly.

Now that the situation has changed so have the demands. I have already indicated at the outset of this volume, that I had never been able to grasp the profound meaning of this obligation. Now that I have become engrossed in this duty and become convinced of my error I will proceed to do what many of our sages in the Talmud did. They admitted: My statements to you were in error. Also among legal authorities we find that they changed their rulings from previously expressed opinions. Note this well. (EHS, 314).

THE CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE OF EHS

Em Habanim Smeha has assumed its place among the rare masterpieces of kurban literature. R. Teichthal is an authentic voice of witness and prophecy, the lament of the witness, the plea and hope of the prophet. As such, the work stands on its own as a major work of religious response, as well as an expression of spiritual resistance during the Holocaust.

Its position in the post-Holocaust period as one might expect, varies in extremes. The Jewish nationalist right — especially the orthodox wing of that camp, represented by Yeshivat Mercaz Harav in Jerusalem, and many of the settlements in the territories — revere the author. EHS is a textbook studied in their upper schools. The anti-Zionist (in the political sense of the term) Haredi world, to the degree that it is aware of the work, holds Rabbi Teichthal in contempt. They see him as an unfortunate aberration, and a victim, a survivor who has lost his mind. Needless to say, his work is banned in a world which has changed little since the kurban. The heresies of pre-Auschwitz remain heresies — perhaps more so, since some of the basic assumptions of the author have been realized.

Yet, despite the reality of the State of Israel — and one can only hazard a guess as to what might have been the relationship of R. Teichthal to that reality — most of the issues targeted for the tikkun of the Jewish people in the wake of the Shoah have not been addressed or resolved. Jews continue to embrace their various stepmothers. They
continue to adopt their habits and thoughts of their exilic existence. In this regard EHS is uncannily prophetic.

The decree is likely to cease.\textsuperscript{118} Surely there will come a period of rest and respite for Israel. They will readjust to their original state and will remain here in exile. Furthermore, should they come upon a good enterprise or lucrative income, they will console themselves with various pretexts in order to tie themselves once again to their stepmother. They will continue to betray their genuine mother, Eretz Yisrael. They will make a mockery of themselves, believing that their stepmother will now continue to be kind to them. They will regress to their former way and forget about Eretz Yisrael. (EHS, 211)

Irrespective of the partisan feelings which are evoked, the volume, conceived and written by a man of deep faith, raises searing theological questions. The author links the current catastrophic events and “the diminution of Divine Concern for us” (EHS, 29) to Israel’s lack of concern for its homeland, and, hence, its God. It is the “Causer of all Causes” Who incites the nations against a people who have forgotten their identity and rejected their portion.\textsuperscript{119} Is this to be taken literally? Are these mere conventional phrases of rabbinic language? Would even such standard parlance have been expunged by the author had he known in 1943 the true extent and final consequences of the Shoah? Surely, a treatise which places ahavat yisrael in the center of its concern would not simultaneously allow the architects of the Final Solution to appear even remotely as agents of the Divine Who seeks to return the people to His fold. Any explanation other than the dichotomy between the style of language addressed to a particular audience and the substance of its radical context, would remove from the perpetrators any moral responsibility to humanity and to God for their crimes.

A literal reading of the author’s references to Divine Will with regard to the Shoah would not only make absurd the principle of absolute moral responsibility of the individual, but would empty of any significance Teichthal’s own thesis of Heveli Mashlah, and his rejection of reliance upon supernatural events in human history.\textsuperscript{120} The author himself responds to this paradox.

Perhaps, my brethren, you will claim that this is all a decree from heaven, part and parcel of the exile which has been fated for us until the Messiah will come, speedily in our day? [Therefore] we need not do anything about it: Let it be known, my brothers, that I do not agree with you…. On the contrary, from the teaching of Nahmanides,\textsuperscript{121} we learn that we are to blame ourselves for all this. (EHS, 221)

Exile and redemption, consequences as well as merits, are ultimately determined by man’s own will and action. Evil is, therefore, defined as the exploitation of free will by the perpetrator in response to the vacuum of the victim who has surrendered fields of initiatives to others. For Teichthal, exile is the vacuum of powerlessness. Eretz Yisrael represents the redemptive realm of sovereign initiatives.

How precisely such a sovereign Jewish state, inspired and guided by the principles of Torah Judaism, would function in a world of secularism, modern technology and finance, and international realpolitik, is not addressed. All pales when considering the immediate and only priority of Eretz Yisrael, as a sanctuary for the remnants of a repentant people returning to their homeland, to reunite with their God Who shared His people’s fate throughout their long exile.\textsuperscript{122}

References to “divine causes” during the Shoah are in fact the descriptions of a man of
faith but one who is cognizant of human failings, who acknowledges people as free agents, albeit created in the divine image, who can blunder and create hazardous consequences of their own undoing. These, according to Rabbi Teichthal, are the realities which operate in the divine–human nature of things.

The author anticipated the rejection of his views. These were anathema to Haredi elements who defended their particular theology of divine dominance in the affairs of people and nations.\textsuperscript{123}

The debate which was joined in the heat of the Holocaust continues. R. Yissakhar Shlomo Teichthal, who was murdered in a cattle car at the age of sixty, understood that the messages sent from Budapest in 1943 would continue to challenge the post-Auschwitz Jewish agenda.

'My contemporaries, I will yet come back to you in writing and by means of discourse, with the help of God.' (EHS, 349)

\textit{Em Habanim Smeha} remains the focus of such discourse even as it echoes the author's last prayer for his people:

May the Lord bind up His people's wounds and heal the injuries it has suffered\textsuperscript{124} speedily in our day. (EHS, 349)

NOTES


3. Reference to the volume \textit{Tikkun Olam}, published in Munich in 1936, authored and edited by Moše Goldstein at the request of R. Haim Elazar Shapira, the Munkatcher Rebbe. The work is a massive polemic supported by letters and statements of major rabbinic and community leaders, vehemently opposing Zionist settlement efforts in \textit{Eretz Yisrael}. The Orthodox \textit{Agudat Yisrael} and \textit{Mizrachi} movements especially came under harsh criticism. Among the 150 rabbinic leaders who lent their name to this volume, by way of signatures or supporting documents, was R. Yissakhar Shlomo Teichthal. His letter of 9 February 1936 to the editors of the \textit{Yiddishe Zeitung} in Munich (reprinted pp. 104–107); attacks the Zionist settlement efforts and the \textit{Agudat Yisrael} party for premature political involvement in \textit{Eretz Yisrael} at the expense of Torah study.

4. EHS, 314. Rabbi of Munkatch, descendant of the Bnei Yessasskhar, R. Zvi Elimelekh of Dinov, and leader of the Munkatch–Shapira dynasty from 1904 to his death in 1937. Though a zealous opponent of all forms of political Zionism, he nevertheless opposed the emerging ultra-Orthodox \textit{Agudat Israel}. This movement was founded in Katowitz (Katowice) in May 1912, and may have competed politically with Munkatcher community interests. See A. Fuchs, \textit{Yeshivot Hungaria Begadulutan Uvehurbanan} ('Hungarian Yeshivot; From Grandeur to Holocaust') (Jerusalem: A. Fuchs, 1978), pp. 497–505.

5. EHS, 314.

6. It is not clear if R. Teichthal had access to the religious activist literature of his elder
contemporary R. Abraham Isaac Kook (1885–1935), who as the first Chief Rabbi of Palestine during the British mandate, opposed by the ultra-Orthodox camp, venerated every builder of Eretz Yisrael, including non-believers. See R. Abraham Isaac Kook, Orot ("Lights") (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1961), pp. 70–72, 80, 149–151. Also, A. Hertzberg, The Zionist Idea (New York: Atheneum, 1977), pp. 422, 430. Attempts at charting any courses of influence are, therefore, difficult, though the Kook–Teichthal texts contain many similarities. The endorsements texts in EHS, 2–12.

7. With the exception of the translation and notes of the Second Preface in Tradition, 21 (3) (Fall 1984), 63–79, text selections appear in English for the first time. Text inserted between square brackets either refers to stylistic clarification not clearly evident in the original, or the completion of a source alluded to in the original. These notes seek to trace and elaborate on sources, persons, or historical data not always identified in the text or referred to only in passing.


9. (Jerusalem: Hava’ad Lehalotzat KIvu Hamehaber, 1987.)


12. 'Habonim' (the builders); referring to the 'halutzim', the Jewish pioneers of the late 19th and early 20th century in Eretz Yisrael who were opposed by the ultra-Orthodox on ideological and theological grounds. The supporting and opposing arguments are among the major themes which run through the EHS volume.

13. Cf. Deuteronomy (Deut.) 21:7. The biblical passage describes the absolution of the town elders from guilt in the event that one is found slain (by an unknown assailant) in a neighboring field. EHS, 14–15. All references are from the 1943 Budapest edition. EHS page references will hereafter appear in the text.

14. Shavu“ot (Shav.), 39a, Sanhedrin (San.), 27b. EHS, 15.

15. See Ta’anith (Ta’an.), 11a, ‘When the community is in trouble let not the person exclaim: “I will enter my home, eat, drink and all will be well with me”’. EHS partial citation of Tana D’bei Elyahu (Lemberg: 1864), Ch. 11.

16. This condemnation is repeated in EHS 17, 161 and 216–217.

18. Nu. 13:1–16. Rashi on the term ‘all the men’ (13:3) notes: ‘Whenever ‘anashim’ (men) are referred to in scripture, this signifies prominence. Indeed, they were at that moment proper people.’

19. Zohar, Bamidbar, Sheelah Lekha, 155b. ‘All the men being leaders.’ (‘Kulam anashim, etc.’). They were all virtuous, but they were misled by false reasoning. They said: ‘If Israel enter the Land we will be replaced, since it is only in the wilderness that we were considered worthy to be leaders. This was the cause of their death and the death of all who followed them.’


21. Midrash Rabbab (M.R.), Nu. Sheelah, 1920; Ta’an. 29a; Sotah 35a; Zohar, Nu., Sheelah Lecha, 161a.

22. Leadership and control of a particular hasidic community or dynasty. Rebbe (Rebbes, Rebbeinu pl.) denotes the hasidic rabbinic leader or master.

23. Genesis (Gen.) 32:25–33.

24. From Abraham, in confrontation with hostile elements (Gen. 15:1) to the comforting of Zion by the prophet Zephaniah (Zep.) (3:16).


26. The twenty-two line acrostic of unknown authorship employing ‘Al tira avdi Ya’akov’ as the repetitive refrain has been incorporated into the liturgy at the conclusion of the Sabbath.

27. A rearranged version of Gen. 28:20–21. The subsequent vow made by Jacob when fleeing
TIKKUN AS RESPONSE TO TRAGEDY

from Esau pledged the future building of a House of God and a permanent tithe contribution from his income.

28. *Gen. R.* 70:1. The full text reads: 'It is written (Ps. 66:14): [I enter Your house ... with vows] that my lips pronounced, that my mouth uttered in my distress. Rabbi Yitzhak the Babylonian said “That my mouth uttered when I was in distress.” He vowed to perform a mitzvah (religious precept) when in distress. For what purpose? In order to teach future generations to utter a vow when they will be in distress.’


30. A commonly employed anthropomorphism, based on Midrash Tanhuma Miketz. ‘He, therefore, prayed to the God, Shaddai declaring: “He who restricted Heaven and earth Dai (enough), shall also instruct my suffering: enough!”’ ‘Shaddai’ would, therefore, read ‘that it may be enough (Sha’dai).’


32. *Heveli Mashiah* (The pangs preceding the Messiah). A major concept in the apocalyptic themes of the Talmud. (Pasahim (Pes.) 118a, Ketubot (Ket.) 111a, Megillah (Meg.) 17b, and especially San. 97–98); Kabbalah, G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1954), pp. 245–247, and Hasidic literature, P. Schindler, *Responses of Hasidic Leaders and Hasidism During the Holocaust in Europe, 1939–1945 and a Correlation Between Such Responses and Selected Concepts in Hasidic Thought*, op. cit., pp. 82–85, 105–113. The pre-messianic suffering is a central theme in Teizhtheli’s thesis. However, our prophets as well as our sages of blessed memory have predicted in the literature of the Talmud, the Midrash, and Kabbalah, the period of great suffering, persecutions and slaughter which will befall the Jewish people in the end of days prior to the advent of the Messiah. From these [demonstrations of suffering], one may already recognize the period in which the light of the Messiah glows, as it is related in our sacred texts: the hardships of exile will be felt only after the era of redemption has commenced.’ See *Avodat Avoda* (Zolkiew: 1865), 20b, of R. Shlomo Kluger of Brody, on the tractate *Avoda Zara* (A.Z.) 9a, commencing on ‘Two thousand years will be the duration of the epoch of the Messiah.’ As Rashi interprets the verse (Is. 26:17): ‘Like a woman with child approaching childbirth withering and screaming in her pangs, so are we because of You, O Lord.’ Rashi: We are witness to renewed suffering and believe these to be indications of redemption and salvation, since we are sure to be redeemed amidst sorrow and distress, like a woman in childbirth, due to Your decrees. [An extended paraphrase of Rashi, *Is.* 26:17] *EHS*, 22–23, 60–61.


34. The author arrived in Budapest from Nitra, following the High Holy Days 5703, likely between 25 and 28 October 1942. See preface to *EHS* to Jerusalem (1974) edn, p. 8 of the unpaginated biography.

35. Cf. *Nehemiah* (Neh.) 3:34.


37. *Jer.* 32:41, ‘I will rejoice in treating them graciously and I will faithfully plant them in this Land, with my whole heart and soul.’

38. This section of the *Tosefta* text is omitted in *EHS*.


42. R. Moshe ben Yosef Trani (1505–1585) descendent of the distinguished Trani family, originating in the 12th century in Italy, contemporary of R. Yosef Karo; author of Responsa literature bearing his name (*Mabit*), a commentary on the Bible and Talmud (*Kiryat Sefer*, Venice, 1551), and *Bet Elohim* (Venice, 1576), a volume devoted to ethics and belief.

Torah does not rely on a miracle whereby one [warrior] pursues a thousand. '... because Scripture will not always depend upon miracles but will in fact command the warriors to seek refuge, to beware, and to lie in ambush.'

44. R. Bialya ben Asher, 13th century commentator and kabbalist, student of R. Solomon ibn Abraham Aderet. Noted for his commentary (and encyclopedic compilation of commentaries) of the Pentateuch (Naples: 1492).

45. Bialya Ben Asher: Be‘ur al Hatorah, Vol. 3, H. D. Chovel, ed. (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1968), p. 79. '... for if someone does not prepare and relies upon a miracle he will surely fall into enemy hands.'

46. No reference to miracles is noted in Rashi, Shabbat (Shab.) 23b. Likely reference is to Rashi, Shab. 53b on R. Nahman's statement: 'The proof is that miracles do occur but food is not so readily created by miracles.' Supernatural or revealed miracles appear when the people are fully worthy. Since this is not the reality, redemption must be pursued in the natural course of events by a natural process. EHS, 86. Further, this form of redemption is to be gradual since one in long dark exile 'could not enjoy the sudden exposure to brilliant light'. EHS, 89.

47. Deut. 6:16 The Jerusalem Talmud Yuma text reads: 'Are these not among the miracles performed in the Temple? Said Rabbi Avin: Therefore, do not try [the Lord your God].'

48. Pes. 64b.

49. This is the view of Rabba. The doors of the Temple court were manually closed by those assigned this task on the Passover holiday when thongs of pilgrims would enter the courtyard in three regulated shifts (see Mishna Pes. 64a). Unlike Abaye's opinion that the doors were locked miraculously, Rabba insists 'that we do not rely on a miracle'.

50. Niddah (Nid.) 70b–71a.

51. D. 1898, son of R. Yitzkah Isaac Safin, founder of the Kumano hasidic dynasty.

52. The attendant of a hasidic Rebbe. In this instance, the term may have been applied in jest.


54. In the original text the latter portion of the story appears in Yiddish.

55. As additional material is introduced emphasizing the futility of prayer which is not accompanied by personal effort (EHS, 103–104), the author describes his difficulty in accurately citing sources away from his study and library.

56. Joshua (Jos.) 17.

57. Baba Batra (B.B.) 158b. 'The atmosphere of Eretz Yisrael inspires wisdom.'

58. See Gen. R. 16:7; 'There is no wisdom like the wisdom of Eretz Yisrael, and there is no Torah like the Torah of Eretz Yisrael.' Beit Eliehim, op. cit., 96b.


61. Is. 38:16. A contextual homiletical reading may have been intended for this complex verse:

'May the Divine spirit dwell upon them.'

62. Variation of Is. 53:10. The expression 'צדיקא למחציה' 30 עד 수행ה Phần וברכה' is identified in Hasidism with the desired experience of dveikut (clinging) to the Divine. This experience may take place irrespective of any conscious efforts. See, R. Dow Ber, Magid D'varav Leye'a'kov, R. Schatz, ed. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1976), p. 76 and f.n. to paragraph 53.

63. Actually, Sukkah (Suk.) 36a.

64. Biblical commandments based on Exodus (Ex.) 13:9; Ex. 13:18; Deut. 5:8; Deut. 11:18; Leviticus (Lev.) 23:42–43; Deut. 16:13; Lev. 23:40.

65. Heschel's terminology for 'an attitude toward the law as well as a philosophy of Judaism as a whole sort of A. J. 1 recite Eretz formal Kabbalism Divine exiled, 211b.) the inc their in comp Lied Tov ex sharing, 7 toward Shekh Zohar, 7 Teltebel and H 7 miztvah simply though 7 comm 1679 require replace 7 Rabbi able n 7 7 7 7 7 7 Alschi 3:16. 7 7 7 not wc advers
a whole', characterized by an exaggerated emphasis on 'orthopraxia' which 'reduces Judaism to a sort of sacred physics, with no sense for the imponderable, the introspective, the metaphysical'. See A. J. Heschel, *God in Search of Man* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), pp. 320–335.

67. Lit. ‘the institution of midnight’ or the ‘midnight vigil’. The practice of rising at midnight to recite prayers in memory of the destruction of the Temple and to plead for the restoration (*tikkun*) of *Eretz Yisrael*. The Talmudic basis is found in related passages *Ber* 3a–4a. The mystic R. Issac Luria formalized the practice. For the broader ramifications of *tikkun* in Kabbalah, see G. Scholem, *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974), pp. 140–144, specifically, p. 143, dealing with the influence of human activity on *tikkun* in the lower and upper worlds.

68. The concept of the *Shekhinah* in exile appears in the Talmud and *Zohar* as reflecting Divine empathy with the suffering of His people and His special love for them. ‘Wherever they were exiled, the *Shekhinah* accompanied them.’ (Meg. 29a: *J. Ta'an* 1:1; *Zohar*, Veyera, 120b, *Vayigaash* 211b.) In Kabbalah and Hasidism, the burden of releasing the *Shekhinah* from exile is transferred to the individual. The performance of the *mitzvah*, the pious act ‘below’, releases the holy sparks from their imprisonment among the *keilipot* (impure souls). On the other hand ‘acts of Edom’, sinful acts, compel the *Shekhinah* to ‘accompany’ the alien action in exile in Edom. See R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Tanya, Likute Amarin* (Kfar Hadab, Israel: Otzra Halehassidim, 1959), p. 23. The Ba’al Shem Tov expressed the Exile of the *Shekhinah* and the redeeming act of man in terms of ‘koved ha-rashi’, sharing the ‘burden of the Source’.

69. R. Ellyaheu ben Moshe de Vidas.

70. *Reshit Hokhmat*, op. cit., 2b. ‘It is true that the main objective of Torah is to bring the act towards realization.’ The world to come is achieved by performing deeds (4a). ‘Further, the *Shekhinah* is restored by action, more so than by words’ (4b). The author of *Reshit Hokhmat* cites the *Zohar*, Gen., Prologue, 8a for support.

71. Classic volume of homiletical commentary on the Bible (Sigel: 1898) by R. Moshe ben Zvi Teltiebaum (1759–1841), founder of the Teltiebaum dynasty of Hasidic leaders in Galicia, Poland and Hungary; pupil of the mashar R. Yaakov Yitzhak ‘The Seer’ of Lublin.

72. *Yisnach Moshe*, op. cit., 30a. ‘It becomes evident that one who actually acts upon this *mitzvah* easily achieves the particular act of restoration intended for that *mitzvah* although it was simply performed. His Will is done although not accompanied by mystical and esoteric thoughts, and though [the *mitzvah* was] not [performed] with appropriate purity, utmost sanctity, awe and love.’

73. Probable reference to the Rabbeinu Yonah (ben Abraham Gerondi c. 1200–1263) commentary on *Alfas*, *Ber* 3a and 6b and *Pahad Yitzhak* (R. Issac Hezekiah ben Shmuel Lampronti, 1759–1756) (Livorno: 1839), vol. 5, p. 187. ‘Even according to the [legal] position that *mitzvot* do not require concentration, this is so only in the event that it [the *mitzvah*] is characterized by action. Action replaces intent.’

74. R. Shlomo ben Abraham Aderet (1235–1310), among the most notable of Spanish Rabbinic authorities and prolific author of *Responsa*.

75. *Hidushel Yebamot LeHaraShibA* (Constantinople: 1720), p. 129a concerning the questionable motives of the levir when enacting the ceremony of *halitza*, as per *Deut.* 25:5–10.


82. *II Samuel* (*II Sam*.) 22:37; *Ps.* 18:37. The *Or Hayyim* commentary in *Nu*. 24:17.

83. Redemption need not necessarily be linked to suffering if Israel is worthy. Since Israel is not worthy, perhaps having spurned opportunities for self redemption, it must accept the path of adversity in good faith. EHS 82, citing *San.* 98a, and the *Or Hayyim* commentary in *Nu*. 24:17.
view is also supported by R. Judah Loew ben Bezalel of Prague in Netzah Yisrael (Warsaw: 1886), 44a and R. Yaakov Erden (17th century), Siddur Tefillah (Altoona: 1745) 219b–220a.

84. The author refers to the legendary rejection of the Worms Jewish community of Ezra the Scribe’s call to return to Jerusalem. (‘You live in the Greater Jerusalem. We shall remain here in the smaller Jerusalem.’) EHS, 33.

85. Song of Songs (S. of S.) 5:2 Also S. of S. R. 1:12 “ותְיִשָּׁרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל."

86. A caustic reference to Gen. 25:29–34. Whereas Esau had exchanged his precious birthright for momentary physical satisfaction, it was now the descendants of Jacob who rejected their heritage for the delusion of tranquility among the nations.


89. Lit. ‘beautiful Jews’, a caustic Yiddish expression for Jews who flaunt their pieté. אַבָּטַרְבָּה, is the phrase of the MaHarri Kohen commentary, cited by EHS, 326. The expression is found in the commentary on Midrash Shoheir Tov, Ps. 18:44 (Warsaw: 1875), 54. R. Yitzhak ben Shimon Kcat HaKohen (d. 1624), son-in-law of R. Judah Loew b. Bezalel of Prague, commentator on Midrash Sam., Ps. and Prov.

90. The Germans invaded Hungary in mid March 1944, more than seven months after this episode occurred. Further, from March 1942 to 17 March 1944, Hungary was led by Prime Minister Miklos Kallay who pragmatically began to draw closer to the Allied cause in 1943 and provided some protection to the Jewish population. This was interpreted by the Haredi anti-Zionist factions as reward for their efforts. For a less favorable evaluation of Kallay see Bets Vago, ‘Germany and the Jewish Policy of the Kallay Government’, in R. L. Braham (ed.), Hungarian Jewish Studies (vol. 2) (New York: World Federation of Hungarian Jews, 1969), pp. 183–210.

91. Prov. 26:4. See also EHS, 235.


93. Hasidic master (1760–1827), pupil of the Hozeh of Lublin, the Magid of Kuznitz and R. Elimelekh of Lizensk.

94. In Yiddish.

95. Deriving personal pleasure from being good without the broader moral religious motive.


98. E.g. Pharaoh.


100. Cf. את אָדָם אָדָם מִשְׁאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם בְּלָא דְּפַר בְּלָא לְקָל שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם בְּלָא דְּפַר בְּלָא לְקָל שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם בְּלָא דְּפַר בְּלָא לְקָל שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם בְּלָא דְּפַר בְּלָא לְקָל שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם בְּלָא דְּפַר בְּלָא לְקָל שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָם שֵׁל שֶׁאָדָaniel personal prayer of the Hazan prior to the Musaf service on the High Holy Days.

101. The extensive commentary on the tractate of Ketubot by R. Pinhas Halevi Ish Horowitz (1750–1805), whose Hebrew initials form the Hebrew lettering.


103. Aboth 4:3.

104. To those for whom pieté is a greater value than unity, the author cites the admonishment of R. Eleazer ben David Fieckel of Prague (1754–1826) in his volume of Responsa Teshuvah Me’ahavah (Prague: n.p., 1809) no. 61, p. 33b. ‘If building the holy Temple can only be achieved by means of discord, it is best that it not be built.’ The Jerusalem EHS edition (1983) copies the inaccurate citation (part I, #205) noted in the original (EHS, 327).

105. One who genuinely cares for an Israelite.

106. ‘Reconstruction’, ‘remedy’. His son and father both equal 555 in gematria numerology.

107. ‘... so will [ahavat Yisrael] be the remedy for every Jew who approaches the Lord, each in

108. R. Yissakhar Dov of Zhidachov (d. 1923) grandson and disciple of R. Isaac, founder of the Zhidachov dynasty (d. 1872), Malbush Shabbat VeYom Tov (Munkatch: Bernart Meisels, 1927), p. 51 b, is a collection of Hassidic commentary on the weekly portion of scripture.


110. The author is pained as to why Jews would question and evaluate anyone’s Jewish identity when for the foe there is no such problem. Citing the Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Sofer, The Hatam Sofer, Yoreh De’ah, no. 333 (New York: Hod Publishers, 1972), p. 143, regarding a non-observant Jew who was killed by gentiles in 1811: “A Jew who is killed by a gentile, is a kaddosh [sacred martyr] though he may have been a transgressor and rasha.” EHS, 109.

111. For patronizing the Zionist enterprise.

112. R. David Meisels, Rabbi, scholar in the community of Ohei in north-east Hungary, and a contemporary of the author.

113. EHS, 161–164. For an early rabbinic source which adopts this approach to halakha, see Baba Metzia 59a–59b.

114. EHS, 17–18.

115. The obligation to settle the Land of Israel.


117. Eruvin (Er.) 16b; Er. 104a; Shab. 63b, and others.


119. EHS, 33. See also EHS, 20; 64–65; 78–79; 219.

120. The mystical meaning of suffering prior to redemption as well as the imperative of continued human struggle on behalf of that redemption is pushed beyond any form of reductionism with the possibility of a mass criminal serving Divine ends.

121. Commentary on Leviticus 26:44.

122. EHS, 75–77, 170.

123. EHS, 347–348. On one occasion, likely in the latter part of 1943, Rabbi Telchthal was refused the privilege of leading Sabbath morning services in a hassidic synagogue, after his views became known in Budapest. EHS, 228–231.