

RABBINIC RESPONSES TO CATASTROPHE: FROM CONTINUITY TO DISCONTINUITY

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I.

It is a commonplace that rabbinic Judaism heightened the importance of extra-Temple practices such as prayer, charity, and acts of lovingkindness as part of a response to the destruction of the Second Temple and the end of the sacrificial system. The catastrophe posed a crisis of overwhelming proportions. The Second Temple had become the symbolic center for Jews in Palestine and throughout the Diaspora, an axis that insured the community's connection with the divine realm, and a place where to atone for sins and to satisfy other religious needs. Accordingly, although biblical prophets, Psalms, and various prerabbinic writings had stressed acts of piety not dependent on the Temple, the rabbinic versions of the rites had to take on a new and expanded significance.

Gedaliah Alon, Ephraim Urbach, Judah Goldin, Jacob Neusner, and others have traced details of the selection and reworking of the biblical heritage to fill the gulf created by the Temple's loss.¹ While scholars have also noted that rabbis vary

¹ See, e.g., Gedaliah Alon, *Toldot haYehudim beEreṣ Yisrael biTequfat haMishnah veHaTalmud*, vol. 1 (1953), 2d ed. 4th printing (Tel Aviv, 1967), Eng. ed. *The Jews in their Land in the Talmudic Age*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1980), pp. 46–52, 107–118, 253–87; E.E. Urbach, "Political and Social Tendencies in Talmudic Concepts of Charity" [Hebrew], *Zion* 16 (1951): 1–27, and "Ascetics and Suffering in Talmudic and Midrashic Sources" [Hebrew], in *Yitzhaq F. Baer Jubilee Volume*, ed. S.W. Baron et al. (Jerusalem, 1960), pp. 53–57; Judah Goldin, "The Three Pillars of Simeon the Righteous," *PAAJR* 17 (1958): 43–58; Jacob Neusner, *A Life of Yohanan Ben Zakkai*, 2d ed. (Leiden, 1970), pp. 183–95, and "Map without Territory: Mishnah's System of Sacrifice and Sanctuary," in idem, *Method and Meaning in Ancient Judaism*, 1st ser.

in their description and evaluation of the Temple and the extra-Temple, or extrasacrificial, activities,² they have not clarified the significance of the diversity of approaches and their relationship. The present paper addresses this issue, demonstrating that the manner in which rabbis articulate their thoughts concerning the cult is meaningful, reflecting different religious outlooks and chronological stages in the history of Judaism.

The need to treat this problem may be seen by examining the frequently cited account of the first-century master, R. Yoḥanan ben Zakkai, in *Abot de Rabbi Nathan* version A:

Once as Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai was coming out of Jerusalem, Rabbi Joshua followed him, and beheld the Temple in ruins. Said R. Joshua, Woe unto us that this place, the place where the iniquities of Israel were atoned for, is in ruins. Said [Rabban Yoḥanan] to him, My son, be not grieved. We have another atonement that is like it. And what is it? It is acts of lovingkindness, as it is said, "For I desire mercy (*heṣed*), not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6).³

The passage considers acts of lovingkindness or *gemilut ḥasadim* equivalent to sacrifices. Although the underlying principle is not novel and can be found in additional verses, such as Hosea 14:3, Ben Sira 3:30, and Tobit 12:9,⁴ the particular formulation of the idea presents a problem: the composition of *Abot de Rabbi Nathan* is probably to be dated to the third or fourth century and the tannaitic and earlier

(Missoula, 1979), pp. 133–53. See also E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia, 1977), pp. 157–80; and esp. J.F. Strange, "Archaeology and the Religion of Judaism in Palestine," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, 2. 19:1 (1979): 646–64, and the full discussion in Baruch M. Bokser, *The Origins of the Seder: The Passover Rite and Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Berkeley, 1984), chapter 1.

² See, e.g., Robert Goldenberg, "The Broken Axis: Rabbinic Judaism and the Fall of Jerusalem," *JAAR. Supplement* 45 (1977): 869–82.

³ ARNA 4 (Schechter, p. 21). On ARN's date of composition, see A.J. Saldarini, *Scholastic Rabbinism* (Chico, 1982), esp. pp. 138–42.

⁴ For Tobit 12:9, cp. Prov. 11:4.

sources do not openly compare specific extra-Temple rites with sacrifices. The passage, therefore, may have been influenced by later conceptions. Ismar Elbogen sensed this, for after referring to this passage, he notes that Tannaim do not claim that prayer is a replacement for sacrifices; such a conception derives “from a way of thinking of a later period.” Likewise Alon had to limit the meaning of the text because it did not fit into his reading of first-century Judaism.⁵ We can confirm Elbogen’s and Alon’s suspicions, and appreciate the significance of the tradition’s present formulation, once we differentiate between the several patterns used in speaking of the Temple and extra-Temple rites.

We are aided in our analysis by the recent research on cultic language in Qumran, Philo, and early Christian literature, for scholars have examined the nuances in the references to a nonsacrificial and extra-Temple piety. These ancient writers provide an analogue to the rabbinic authorities in that they too were tied to biblical religion but, lacking access to the Temple whether by circumstances or design, had to find alternative rites.

For example, scholars arguing that the Qumran community considered their prayers sacrifices of the lips point to IQS 10:15: “I will bless Him with the offering of that which proceeds from my lips.”⁶ But in developing the prophetic notion, the Qumranites extend this thought only up to a certain point. As J.M. Baumgarten observes:

It is true that the Qumran sect was led by its separatist orientation to stress the value of substitute sacrifices, but it never abandoned the belief in the sanctity of Jerusalem and the centrality of the Temple. The hypothesis that they brought offerings there when religious and political cir-

⁵ Ismar Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* (1913), Heb. rev. and enl. ed., *haTefillah beYisrael*, ed. Yehoshua Amir et al. (Tel Aviv, 1972), p. 190; and Alon, Heb. p. 31, Eng. p. 51.

⁶ Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 2d ed. (New York, 1975, 1979), p. 70; see pp. 45–56.

cumstances were favorable is compatible with the presently available evidence.⁷

Hermann Lichtenberger, further emphasizing the group's basic respect for both Temple and sacrifice, cogently argues that the following is the correct translation of IQS 9:4-5:

They shall atone for guilty rebellion and for sins of faithlessness that they may obtain favor (*ršwn*) for the Land without the flesh of burnt-offerings and without the fat of sacrifices (*mbśr 'wlwt wmlby zhḥ*). And the right offering of lips shall be as fragrance of righteousness, and perfection of the way as a pleasing free-will offering (*wtrwmt śptym lmsḥt knyḥwt šdq wtmym drk kndbt mnhṯ ršwnn*).⁸

The "offerings of the lips" therefore are "as pleasing" but not "more pleasing" than sacrifices. In light of such studies indicating the significance of the specific formulation, we are justified in examining the patterns used in the rabbinic teachings.⁹

II.

The Mishnah provides us with the earliest example of the rabbinic treatment of the Temple's loss, dealing with the problem in a twofold manner. As Neusner observes, the Mishnah writes as if the Temple cult remains operative but at the same time it describes extra-Temple and extrasacrificial rites in effect. In contrast to biblical and Second-Temple sources which characterize the latter practices as secondary, contingent on the official cult, or mere private means of piety

⁷ J.M. Baumgarten, *Studies in Qumran Law* (Leiden, 1977), p. 74.

⁸ Hermann Lichtenberger, "Atonement and Sacrifice in the Qumran Community," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism*, vol. 2, ed. W.S. Green (Chico, 1980), pp. 159-71, esp. 161-62.

⁹ See Jacob Neusner, *The Idea of Purity* (Leiden, 1973); Lloyd Gaston, *No Stone on Another* (Leiden, 1970); L.W. Thompson, "Hebrews 9 and Hellenistic Concepts of Sacrifice," *JBL* 98 (1979): 567-78; and David Winston, *Philo of Alexandria* (New York, 1981), pp. 30-35, 157-63 and nn.

designed to supplement the public ones, the Mishnah gives them an independent and heightened role. For example, as we demonstrate elsewhere, the unleavened bread and bitter herbs of the Passover Eve celebration, dependent on the Passover offering in Ex. 12:8, Num. 9:11, Deut. 16:3, and all other prerabbinic sources, are elevated to an equal rank with the Passover sacrifice, suggesting that they may be eaten even without the offering.¹⁰

The Mishnah's practice to innovate by restructuring the old patterns without necessarily openly introducing new ideas or rituals may be seen in mPe'ah 1:1:

A. These are the things that have no measure: corners of the field [left for the poor] (*pe'ah*), and first fruits [to be taken to Jerusalem], and appearing [at the Temple on the three pilgrimage festivals], and acts of lovingkindness, and study of Torah.

B. And these are the things that a person benefits from

¹⁰ Neusner, "Map without Territory," and idem, *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah* (Chicago, 1981). See also Bokser, *Seder*, esp. chap. 3 n. 9, and chap. 7, iv. mPesahim 10:3 refers to the practice of the Temple or holy precincts but (following manuscripts reading m'viin, "they bring," and not hayu m'viin, "they used to bring") contrasts it with the ostensibly contemporary practice outside the Temple. See Saul Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-Fshutah* [henceforth = *TK*], 8 vols. to date (New York, 1955-), 4:654. Other descriptions of the cult and mentions of the Temple or holy precincts (*qadosh miqdash*, etc.) generally accord with our observation. See C.Y. Kasovsky, *Thesaurus Mishnae* [Hebrew], 4 vols. (Jerusalem, 1956-60), 1:367 and 4:1562. The exceptions (e.g. mMa'aser Sheni 5:2, 5:7 — to be cp. with 1:5-6) do not change the overall picture. Furthermore, the occasional acknowledgments of the Temple's destruction (e.g., mSotah 9:12) do not shape the structure of the presentation of the law and the religious rituals, especially those that are elevated in importance and that are not contingent on the Temple. Even the ordinances attributed to Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai requiring several rites previously performed in the Temple to remain in effect without the Temple (e.g., mRosh Hashanah 4:1, 3, 4 and parallels and tRosh Hashanah 2:9) are portrayed as special rulings. Their transmission makes it unclear when they were considered not just temporary measures but permanent enactments. See Jacob Neusner, *Development of a Legend* (Leiden, 1970), pp. 29-30, 43-47, 65-66, 206-9, 211.

their fruit in this world and the capital is laid up for him for the world to come: honoring [one's] father and mother, and acts of lovingkindness, and bringing peace between a person and his fellow, and study of Torah is equal to them all.¹¹

A-B emphasizes the importance of the specified religious acts. A does so by stating that the more one performs these deeds the better, while B treats their long-term reward. We should note that the Mishnah juxtaposes acts that were not equally viable in the post-Destruction period; without distinguishing between them, the Mishnah lists Temple matters and extra-Temple rites.

We can see how the combination of activities is essential to the Mishnah's point by examining the specific items on the list. In turning to the first three, we note that while leaving the corners of the field to the poor (prescribed in Lev. 19:9; 23:22) would remain unaffected by the Temple's destruction, bringing firstfruits to Jerusalem and appearing there on pilgrimage would be undermined. Once we recognize the importance attached to the latter two, we can realize that the inability to fulfill these requirements would have posed a serious religious problem. Several biblical verses prescribe bringing fruits to the central shrine, Num. 18:8, 11-13, 19 calling them holy and requiring them to be eaten by priests in purity. This attitude is found in numerous sources including the Temple Scroll, which extensively emphasizes the fruits' holiness.¹² In Nehemiah 10,

¹¹ See Saul Lieberman, *The Tosefta*, 4 vols. to date (New York, 1955-), 1:41 nn.; and idem, *TK*, 1:126. Whether or not parts of this text go back to pre-70 days, the passage gains significance in light of its place within the Mishnah, standing at the beginning of a tractate dealing with *pe'ah*, the corners of the field left for the poor, and thereby conveys the views of the editor of the Mishnah. Since by its very nature the Mishnah portrays a timeless reality, as if procedures did not undergo change but apply pre- and post-70 equally, the text lacks glaring post-70 traits. See n. 10 above, and the references in n. 19 below.

¹² See e.g., Ex. 23:19, 34:26; 11QTemple 18-22, 43; Judith 11:13; and Baruch M. Bokser, "Ma'al and Blessings over Food," *JBL* (1981): 557-74. Cp. Urbach, "Ascetes."

Jews take an oath to bring firstfruits and other agricultural dues to the Temple. The nature of the religious frustration posed by the Temple's destruction in 70 C.E. is suggested by 1 Mac. 3:45–51, which speaks of an earlier comparable crisis:

They also brought the garments of the priesthood and the firstfruits and the tithes, and they stirred up the Nazirites, who had completed their days; and they cried aloud to Heaven, saying, "What shall we do with these? Where shall we take them? Thy sanctuary is trampled down and profaned, and thy priests mourn in humiliation...."

Although tannaitic authorities responded to the crisis by in effect ruling that the requirement concerning firstfruits ceased after the Temple's destruction, such a ruling could not solve the religious problem.¹³ Did not Deut. 26:15 state that the practice of the agricultural laws insures the divine bounty? With this verse, closing the declaration affirming compliance with the laws, people call to God: "Look down from Your holy abode, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the soil You have given us, a land flowing with milk and honey, as You swore to our fathers." Once the Temple was gone, what then would allow Jews to use the produce and to remain in the divine favor?

The answer emerges from examining the rest of the items in mPe'ah 1:1, for appearing before the LORD and bringing firstfruits comprise only two among a series of important religious acts. Although they may have fallen into desuetude, the other — in addition to leaving the corners of the field — are still viable. Since both lists mention acts of lovingkindness and Torah study, they surely would have been seen as especially attractive.

To sum up: although mPe'ah 1:1 does not mention that the Temple is destroyed or that certain practices are not viable, in listing and elevating a particular set of biblical precepts it reminds people that extra-Temple or extrasacrificial rites exist,

¹³ E.g., mBikurim, 2:1–3, and tMa'ašer Sheni 2:8–9.

thereby responding to the needs of those shaken by the Temple's loss.

The Tosefta builds on the Mishnah's perspective, noting how the extra-Temple practices fulfill religious needs otherwise associated with Temple rites — but in doing so the Tosefta does not call them replacements. For example, the end of tPe'ah contains four pericopae rhetorically emphasizing the importance of acts of lovingkindness and charity. We cite the second and fourth passages, tPe'ah 4:19, 21:

A.1. Charity and acts of lovingkindness are equal to (*shqulin k'neged*) all the commandments in the Torah,

2. except that charity involves (b) the living, [while] acts of lovingkindness involve the living and the dead; charity involves the poor, [while] acts of lovingkindness involve the poor and the rich; charity involves one's money, [while] acts of lovingkindness involve one's money and one's body [e.g., visiting the sick, attending a wedding or funeral].

B.1 Said R. Eleazar the son of R. Yose, Whence do we know that charity and acts of lovingkindness are a great pacifier and a great paraclete between Israel and its Father in Heaven?

2. For it is written, "Thus said the LORD: Do not enter a house of mourning" etc. [= "do not go to lament and to condole with them; for I have withdrawn My peace (or "favor") (*shelomi*) from that people — declares the LORD — My kindness (*haḥesed*) and compassion (*hārahmim*)"] (Jer. 16:5). "Kindness" this is acts of lovingkindness (*gemilut ḥasadim*), "compassion" this is charity (*ṣedaqah*).

3. This teaches that charity and acts of lovingkindness are a great pacifier between Israel and its Father in Heaven.¹⁴

A (tPe'ah 4:19) opens with a formulation similar to the one closing mPe'ah 1:1. Since this wording is used rhetorically to stress the importance of the specified commandments, we

¹⁴ tPe'ah 4:19, 21 (Lieberman pp. 60–61, 1s. 69–72, 75–79).

should not take it in an overly literal fashion.¹⁵ Indeed, A.2 goes on to point out that despite their equality, acts of lovingkindness are preferable.¹⁶

B (tPe'ah 4:21) makes its point with a different approach, speaking of the manner in which the two precepts achieve peace or conciliation between God and Israel. The Tosefta calls them a "great pacifier" (*shālom*) and a "great paraclete" (*praqlit*). Evidently the terms are synonymous; the latter, a Greek loanword, is defined by the former, a Semitic term, for B.3, summing up the deduction, speaks only of a "great pacifier."

The key to understanding this passage is to note the usage of paraclete (*parakletos*), a technical term meaning lawyer or attorney. It and its cognate *paraklew* or *paraklesis* appear in the Septuagint, Philo, and pagan literature in the sense of advocate or intercessory agent bringing reconciliation between two parties and of comforter or helper. John's usage of *parakletos* for a comforting spirit is still debated by New Testament scholars. But a clear analogue to the sense in Tosefta is found in 1 John 2:1 and in the Christian writers drawing on this passage: "But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate (*parakleton*) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the expiation for our sins." Since Jesus as a sacrifice that intercedes before God clearly is in place of the Temple cult, the passage presents us with a figurative or extended usage of *parakletos*.¹⁷

Rabbinic sources explicitly apply paraclete to an expiation sacrifice. For example, Sifra *Mešora* uses it in treating Lev.

¹⁵ See Max Kadushin, *Worship and Ethics* (New York, 1963), pp. 11, 31–37, 127–28; E.E. Urbach, *The Sages*, Eng. 2d enl. ed., 2 vols. (Jerusalem, 1979), pp. 347–48, 484–85.

¹⁶ See Lieberman, *Tosefta*, 1:60 n. to 1. 70. Cp. idem, *TK*, 1:191.

¹⁷ See *TDNT*, 5:773–814, esp. 800–6, 812–14 (n.b. the usage in Philo; 802–3); H. Riesefeld, "A Probable Background to the Johannine Paraclete," *Ex Orbe Religionum* [G. Widengren Festschrift] 1 (Leiden, 1972), pp. 266–74, and the literature discussed there.

14:19–20's rule concerning the purification and burnt offerings brought for a leper:

Said R. Simeon, The purification offering (*ḥaṭṭāt*) resembles a paraclete who enters first to appease (*ḥraṣṣot*). Once the paraclete appeases, the gift comes in. [Therefore, the blood of the purification offering precedes the burnt offering even though the limbs of the burnt offering — the “gift” — take precedence over those of the purification offering.¹⁸

tPe'ah therefore without mentioning the sacrifices overcomes their loss by speaking of charity and acts of lovingkindness as acts equal to all the commandments and sufficient to reconcile an individual with God.¹⁹ Consequently, we see that the Tosefta like the Mishnah, in indirectly filling the gulf created by the Temple's destruction, does not acknowledge the loss. As we noted in reference to Elbogen's observation, an analogous phenomenon applies to prayer: mBerakhot 1:1 obliquely and tBerakhot 3:1–3 explicitly correlate the times of prayer with sacrifices but do not claim that the former are replacements for the latter.²⁰ It is only in amoraic sources that

¹⁸ Sifra *Meṣora* 3:14 (Weiss p. 72b). tParah 1:1 (Zuckerman p. 630, 1s. 18–19) has a different application of Simeon's comment; see Saul Lieberman, *Tosefeth Rishonim*, 4 vols. (Jerusalem, 1937–39), 3:209; mZevahim 10:2. See also mAvoth 4:1; yBerakhot 4:1, 7b, where paraclete refers to the two *temidim* or daily offerings that expiate for Israel's sins; and Targum to Job 23:23.

¹⁹ tPe'ah's very characterization of these terms (like Yoḥanan's tradition in ARN) involves a post-70 reinterpretation of their earlier meaning; Goldin, p. 44; Neusner, *Life*, pp. 189–91; and C.F. Whitley, “The Semantic Range of *Ḥesed*,” *Biblica* 62 (1981):519–26.

²⁰ See n. 10. In the Tosefta, the apparent exceptions on close analysis turn out not to be problematic; e.g., tBava Qamma 7:6–7 (Zuckerman p. 358, 1s. 9–18) — part of an exposition attributed to Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai (see 7:3 [p. 357 l. 30]) — praises the sons of Torah who bring atonement and others who bring peace between individuals. In comparing them to the altar, it is argued that they are protected or are free from suffering, not that they are replacements for the cult.

we find that formulation. Such an explicit claim is also lacking in the halakhic Midrashim: while they may mention a pre- and post-70 practice and may relate extra-Temple rites to Temple practices, in indicating the superiority of the former, they do not fully articulate a discontinuity and hardly dwell on the issue in the manner of the Gemara.²¹

III

Common to the several amoraic approaches is the open acknowledgment that an extra-Temple practice is better than or replaces a Temple rite. We can best exemplify this by citing a passage that draws on notions found in tPe'ah 4:19–21. bSukkah 49b contains a version of tPe'ah 4:19B and a series of amoraic teachings dealing with different aspects of charity and

²¹ The more complex situation in these Midrashim may reflect their structure in relating the rabbinic perspective and tradition to the Bible and their probably post-Mishnah and post-Tosefta, later (?) third-century date of composition. The relevant passages include: (1) Mekilta *Yitro Bahodesh* 10 (Horovitz-Rabin p. 240) = Sifre Deut. 32 (Finkelstein p. 57) speaks of suffering appeasing God like sacrifices or, in a second tradition, even more than sacrifices. But suffering (in contrast, e.g., to fasting, the item mentioned in an amoraic analogue to this tradition; bBerakhot 32b, cited below) does not comprise a practice that one adopts and, applying to the pre-70 situation as well, has no implication concerning the Temple cult; (2) Mekilta *Yitro* 11 (Horovitz-Rabin p. 244) and Sifra *Qedoshim* 10:4 (Weiss p. 92b) present different versions of the above cited tBava Qamma tradition concerning the protection of peacemakers; see Neusner, *Development*, pp. 259–61; (3) Sifra *Emor* 13:12 (Weiss p. 101c) states that leaving *leqet*, *shikhehah* and *pe'ah* is as meritorious, if the Temple would exist, as bringing an offering. (4) Sifra *Emor* 14:2 (Weiss p. 102a) argues that the day of atonement brings atonement for the repentant even without sacrifices and the scapegoat. But by suggesting that this is in the reality of things the text does not sharply contrast a pre- with a post-70 situation. Cp. Urbach, *Sages*, pp. 432–34. (5) Sifre Num. 115 (Horovitz p. 126) states that fulfilling the precept of fringes is regarded as receiving the divine Presence and, in a separate teaching, equal to all the commandments — an approach similar to tPe'ah 4:19–21. (6) Sifre Deut. 41 (Finkelstein p. 88), without hinting at a discontinuity, indicates that prayer is a form of *avodah* or divine service like sacrifices; see Goldin.

acts of lovingkindness. Six of the latter traditions are attributed to R. Eleazar ben Pedat, a late third-century Palestinian master, emigré from Babylonia.²² Two comments employ an identical rhetorical phraseology:

A. Said R. Eleazar, The one who does charity is greater than (*gādol ... yoter m...*) all the sacrifices, as it is said, “To do charity (*šdāqāh*) is more pleasing to God than sacrifices (*zebah*)” (Prov. 21:3)

B. Said R. Eleazar, Acts of lovingkindness are greater than (*gādol ... yoter m...*) charity, as it is said, (*šdaqah*) for yourselves, reap the fruits of goodness (*ḥesed*)” (Hosea 10:12). If a person seeds, perhaps he eats, perhaps he does not eat. If a person reaps, he certainly eats. [As a reaped crop can no longer be ruined by the elements, so the direct acts of lovingkindness bring sure results.]²³

These traditions both extend the thought found in a text like tPe’ah 4:19A and 21 and reflect a different way of thinking. The latter is seen in A’s assertion that charity surpasses sacrifices in bringing divine favor and in B’s claim that acts of lovingkindness are even more effective. The former — the connection to tPe’ah — is indicated by the function of tPe’ah 4:19B, along with another Eleazar tradition, to explain the superiority of acts of lovingkindness.

Eleazar’s approach stands out as well in bBerakhot 32b, where we find an additional three traditions employing the same pattern of “X is greater than Y” (*gadol* or *gedolah ...*

²² J.N. Epstein, *Introduction to the Text of the Mishnah* [Hebrew], 2d ed. (Jerusalem, 1964), pp. 292–307.

²³ See Raphaelo Rabinovicz, *Diqduqe Sofrim* (1867–86; reprint ed. in 12 vols., New York, 1960), vol. 5. *Sukkah*, p. 156 nn. 5–8; *Manuscripts of the Babylonian Talmud in the Collection of the Vatican Library: Series A*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem, 1972), *Series B*, 3 vols. [= vols. 4–6] (Jerusalem, 1974), vol. A/2, p. 140. The Biblical word *šdāqāh*, as Max Kadushin noted elsewhere, is understood in the rabbinic sense of charity and not the biblical sense of righteousness; Max Kadushin, *Organic Thinking* (New York, 1938), p. 132. PT’s analogous use of Prov. 21:3 is likewise attributed to a late third-century master: yBer. 2:1, 4b and parallels, referred to at n. 30 below.

yoter m-...). They comprise one set of traditions among a series that are attributed to R. Eleazar ben Pedat and that treat prayer, especially petitionary prayer, and its role in post-70 Judaism.

A. Said R. Eleazar, Prayer is greater than (*gedolah yoter m-*) good deeds (*ma'asim tovim*),

for there is no one greater in good deeds than Moses our Rabbi. Despite that, he was answered only due to his prayer, as it is said, "Never speak to Me of this matter again" [= entering the land of Israel] (Deut. 3:26). And adjacent to it [the Bible states]: "Go up to the summit of Pisgah [and gaze about]" (Deut. 3:27). [God did respond, allowing Moses to see the land.]

B. And said R. Eleazar, Fasting is greater than (*gedolah ... yoter m-*) charity.

What is the reason? The former is with one's body and the latter is with one's money.

C. And said R. Eleazar, Prayer is greater than (*gedolah ... yoter m-*) all the²⁴ sacrifices,

as it is said, "What need have I of all your sacrifices" (Is. 1:11), and it is written, "And when you lift up your hands [I will turn My eyes away from you; though you pray at length, I will not listen, your hands are stained with blood]" (Is. 1:15). [After first rejecting sacrifices, it was still necessary to reject prayer, indicating its superior status.]²⁵

A-C is designed to emphasize the importance of prayer. A elevates it over good deeds — deeds here equivalent to acts of lovingkindness. B deemphasizes charity by comparing it to fasting, and C mentions prayer again, comparing it to sacrifices.²⁶ But in closing with sacrifices, the point of the

²⁴ We read "all the" following Rabinovicz, vol. 1. *Berakhot*, p. 171 n. 70; and *Babylonian Talmud Codex Florence. Florence National Library II I 7-9*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem, 1972), vol. 1.

²⁵ See Rashi and cp. Samuel Eliezer Halevi Edels (Maharsha), "Novellae," both in standard editions of the BT; and Rabinovicz, p. 171 no. 70.

²⁶ Other instances of the *gadol* or *gedolah ... yoter m-...* pattern appear in bBerakhot 7b, 17b; bPesahim 49b; bMegillah 14a. For A, cp. the slightly

pericope also becomes the inferiority of the animal offerings. Since in both sets of Eleazar's traditions (bBerakhot and bSukkah) the sacrifices play such an important negative role, the comments surely reflect a reality in which people not only cannot bring sacrifices, but also are considerably distanced from them emotionally and psychologically. In emphasizing the superior alternatives, Eleazar speaks in one case of charity and acts of lovingkindness and in the other of prayer. It is not surprising that the latter — prayer — appears in bBerakhot as that Gemara's wider context deals with prayer.²⁷

The open acceptance of the gulf between post-70 and pre-70 days is expressly mentioned in a diverse group of traditions describing one or another act as a replacement for a Temple rite. The following tradition assumes that eating a meal at one's dining table, just as offering a sacrifice at an altar, brings one closer to God:

R. Yoḥanan and R. Eleazar both said, When the Temple existed, the altar atoned for a person, and now when the Temple no longer exists, a person's table atones for him.²⁸

Amoraim not only delineate physical replacements for the cult but find symbolic substitutes for it as well. They extensively moralize the sacrifices, interpreting the animal offerings as symbols of different human attitudes and actions. In this

different pattern in Sifre Deut. 29 (Finkelstein p. 47). There too prayer is compared to good deeds and not a Temple rite. For B, cp. Mekilta *Yitro Bahodosh* 10, cited in n. 21 above.

²⁷ For an analysis of the larger bBerakhot 32b context see Baruch M. Bokser, "The Wall Separating God and Israel" (*JQR* in press). In general cp. Urbach, *Sages*, pp. 610-12; and J.R. Brown, *Temple and Sacrifice in Rabbinic Judaism* (Evanston, 1963), esp. pp. 24-30.

²⁸ bMenahot 97a, with slight variations in bBerakhot 55a (see Rabbinovicz, p. 296 n. 200; and Florence MS), and bḤagigah 27a (on which see Vatican MS, vol. A/2, p. 263) though here the tradition is attributed to R. Yoḥanan and Resh Laqish. See Neusner, *Purity*, p. 70; Bokser, "Wall"; Nahum N. Glatzer, "The Concept of Sacrifice in Post-Biblical Judaism," in *Essays in Jewish Thought* (University, Alabama, 1978), pp. 48-57, which classifies the different substitutes for sacrifices; and Urbach, *Sages*, pp. 430-35.

manner R. Yehoshua ben Levi, in bSanhedrin 43b, emphasizes the importance of confession and contrition:

A. Said R. Yehoshua ben Levi, Whoever sacrifices (*kol hazobeah*) his evil inclination and confesses over it (*mitvaddeh 'ālāv*), the verse regards him as if he honored God in two worlds, this world and the world to come, for it is written, "Whoever sacrifices a thanksgiving offering honors Me" (*zobeah todāh yekhabdanni*) (Ps. 50:23).

B. And said R. Yehoshua ben Levi, When the Temple stood [if] a person offered an *olah* [= expiation sacrifice] — he receives the credit for an *olah*, a *minḥah* [= a tribute sacrifice] — he receives the credit for a *minḥah*, but whoever is humble (*sheda'ato shefelah*) — the verse regards him as if he offered all the sacrifices, as it is said, "A sacrifice to God is a contrite spirit [; God, You will not despise a contrite and crushed heart]" (Ps. 51:19). Moreover, his prayer is not despised as it is said, "God, You will not despise a contrite and crushed heart."²⁹

A, drawing on the different uses of the root W/YDH, sees the confession (*mitvaddeh*) as a substitute for the thanksgiving offering (*todāh*). The doubling of the *nun* in the Hebrew word for "honor's Me" (*yekhabdanni*) enables the expounder to stress the double effectiveness of the act. B builds on a comparison already set forth in Psalm 51 which describes David beseeching God to forgive him for his sins with Bathsheba. Since he knows that sacrifices will not appease God (verse 8), perhaps because he willfully sinned while sacrifices atone only for inadvertent acts, David appeals to Him in confession and prayer and asks the LORD to make him a model for all sinners that they too can repent (verse 15):

²⁹ See bSanhedrin 43b; Rabinovicz, vol. 9. *Sanhedrin*, p. 126 nn. 2-3; Florence MS (vol. 3, p. 170); bSoṭah 5b. Cp. Richard Myles Litvak, "The Moral Transformation of Cultic Provisions in Rabbinic Homilies" (Rabbinic thesis, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, 1977), which assembles and insightfully analyzes many texts but, because it generally does not distinguish between the provenance and date of the sources, fails to place them in the proper historical framework.

These Babylonian amoraic sources, openly comparing the extra-sacrificial rites with the sacrificial cult, have analogues in post-mishnaic Palestinian texts. For example, passages in the Palestinian Talmud assert that God prefers charity and justice over sacrifices, and that praying in a synagogue is equivalent to offering a pure tribute offering (*minḥāh*).³⁰ In *Leviticus Rabba* (the earliest homiletical Midrash edited perhaps in the fifth century) we find, for example, that: repenting with a contrite spirit is regarded as going on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, building the Temple and altar, and offering all the sacrifices;³¹ confessing one's sins is tantamount to the thanksgiving offering (*todāh*);³² and study of the biblical portions dealing with sacrifices is equivalent to offering the sacrifices.³³

Looking at these various amoraic teachings as a whole, we see that they agree in directly confronting and transcending the Temple cult, setting nonsacrificial rites over against the Temple ones, an outlook contrasting with the tannaitic comments and Qumran writings. It is not unreasonable to believe that this difference reflects a decrease in the social significance of the Temple and its worldview. That is, by assuming that the memory of the Temple as a concrete reality receded in the

³⁰ yBerakhot 2:1, 4b (see n. 23 above); and yBerakhot 5:1, 8d.

³¹ *Leviticus Rabba* 7.2 (Margulies pp. 150–52), in an alternative version of the text cited above from bSanhedrin 43b. The mention of going on pilgrimage, etc. is connected to Ps. 51:19 by verse 20 which speaks of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. See Mordecai Margulies, *Midrash Wayyikra Rabbah*, 5 vols. (Jerusalem, 1953–60), pp. 150–52 nn.

³² *Leviticus Rabba* 9.1 (Margulies pp. 173–74).

³³ *Leviticus Rabba* 7.3 (Margulies p. 155). On the implied reinterpretation of the *shelamim* or offerings of wellbeing, see *Leviticus Rabba* 9.8 (Margulies p. 187). On these and other interpretations, moralizing, and spiritualizing of sacrifices and their role in *Leviticus Rabba*, see Joseph Heinemann, "Profile of a Midrash," *JAAR* 39 (1971):141–50, and more extensively in "The Art of Composition in *Leviticus Rabba*" [Hebrew], *Hasifrut* 2 (1971):808–34, VI–VII, esp. 821–22, 818; and Norman J. Cohen, "Leviticus Rabbah, Parshah 3: An Example of a Classic Rabbinic Homily," *JQR* 72 (1981):18–31. Neither Heinemann nor Cohen, though, see the wider aspects of this process.

consciousness of people and in their everyday lives, we can understand how the sacrificial cult might provide a repertoire of religious motifs yet be assumed by some to be surpassed by nonsacrificial acts and attitudes of behavior. Below we shall return to the historical implications of this suggestion.

IV

We can discern an additional nuance in the thinking concerning the significance of the cult and extra-Temple rites. We find the next logical deduction. If the Temple rites are inferior to or replaced by extra-Temple or extrasacrificial rites, such as prayer or study of Torah, and if God is allknowing, from the beginning He must have taken account of this development. In suggesting that the Temple rites were thus not designed to be permanent, these sources imply that the Temple cult lacked an inherent transcendent importance. One passage in the Babylonian Talmud develops this thought in regard to the study of scriptural lessons on the sacrifices with which, it is claimed, God initially intended to replace the offering of sacrifices.³⁴ This notion, given fuller articulation, becomes more prevalent in the Midrashim composed in early medieval times. The following two examples explicitly treat the issue in terms of divine foreknowledge. While philosophers may have been troubled by the implication of the belief in God's foreknowledge on the notion of human freewill, these passages relate this belief to the fact of religious change and development.

The first example, coming from Midrash Tanḥuma *Ki Tavo*, deals with the replacements for both the offering of sacrifices and the bringing of firstfruits. The exposition relates to Deut. 26:16 which speaks of laws commanded to Israel "on that day," that is, at the end of the forty-year period in the desert.

³⁴ See C.J. Kasowski and Biniamin Kasowsky, *Thesaurus Talmudis*, 40 vols. to date (Jerusalem, 1954-), 7:408-10; 18:39-40; and 33:190. The single talmudic text is found in bTa'anit 27b = bMegillah 31b, expanded on and more fully articulated in Midrash Tanḥuma *Šav* 14 (p. 23).

These laws are understood to refer to the chapter's prescription to make a declaration concerning the tithe (26:12-15), which closes with a prayer that God continue to bless the land, and the prescription to take firstfruits to Jerusalem (26:1-11), which mentions that the individual on leaving is to "bow (*vehishtahavitā*) before the LORD" (26:10). The verbal declarations and especially the bowing are associated with later nonsacrificial liturgical acts; the bowing finds an explicit echo in Ps. 95:6:

A. "The LORD your God commands you this day to observe [these laws and norms]" (Deut. 26:16).

This is what the verse says [= the verse may be understood in light of:] "Come let us bow down (*nishtahaveh*) and kneel, bend the knee before the LORD our maker" (Ps. 95:6). And is not kneeling included under bowing down, and is not bowing down included under kneeling? And what does the teaching [= the verse] mean by "Let us bow down and kneel, bend the knee" [calling for three similar acts]?

When Moses saw with the holy spirit that the Temple is destined to be destroyed and the firstfruits are destined to cease, he immediately (*'āmad v-*) ordained that Israel pray three times every day,

B. because prayer is dearer to God than all the good deeds and all the sacrifices,

C. for it is written, "Take my prayers as an offering of incense, my raised hands as an evening sacrifice" (Ps. 141:2).

D. And Moses our Rabbi, although he did all the good deeds, when it was decreed that he would not enter the land, prayed and said, "Let me, I pray, cross over and see [the good land]" (Deut. 3:25), [but] the Holy One, praised be He, said to him, "Never speak to me of this matter again" (Deut. 3:26). [Yet God then said:] "Go up to the summit" (Deut. 3:27).

E. Therefore it is said, "The LORD commanded you this day to observe."³⁵

³⁵ Tanḥuma *Ki Tavo* (p. 238; Buber p. 45, with slight variations).

Tanḥuma, in emphasizing the importance of prayer, combines several thoughts. According to A, daily prayer was instituted because the sacrifices and firstfruits would cease and, for example, people would need some way to thank God for the divine bounty, insuring the continued divine blessings. The reference in Deut. 26:10 apparently represents the unstated association with Psalm 95. B–D provides the reason for the choice of prayer and here the joining of the sources becomes blatant. B has the rationale that prayer is superior and C–D supplies two unbalanced prooftexts. A citation of Ps. 141:2 proves the case in regard to sacrifices, and the longer exposition accounts for the good deeds.³⁶ In closing with Deut. 26:16 (D, the initial verse), Moses' foresight and God's compassion are underscored, indicating why the people "on that day," prior to entering the land, should take Moses' command to heart. The relevance for "that day" has become clear: prayer, not contingent on the Temple, is considered superior, destined to supersede the Temple practices.³⁷

³⁶ Analogous earlier traditions indicate what the teachings may have resembled before they were combined and reworked: Sifre Deut. 41 (Finkelstein p. 88); Midrash Tehillim 141.2 (Buber p. 531) — which has David speaking to God *after* the Temple was destroyed; the Eleazar traditions from bBerakhot 32b. See Chaim Milikowsky, "The Punishment of Jacob — A Study in the Redactional Process of Midrash Tanḥuma" [Hebrew], *Bar Ilan Annual* 18–19 (1981): 144–49, 29*.

³⁷ Other examples of God's foreknowledge include: Tanḥuma *Šav* 14 (p. 23), which, as pointed out in n. 35, expands a BT passage; Tanḥuma *Aḥare* 10 (p. 62; Buber #16, p. 70), to be compared with the very different version in bMenahot 110a; Deut. Rabba 5.3 (Lieberman *Mishpatim* 3, p. 96), expanding on yBerakhot 2:1, 4b, mentioned at n. 30 above. In the last instance, yBerakhot has God telling David not to be despondent that he will not build the Temple because the justice and charity that he does are more pleasing than sacrifices. Deut. Rabba, leading up to this passage, states as one of three explanations for the superiority of justice and charity that they are operative before and after the Temple while sacrifices are valid only while the Temple exists.

Once such a discontinuity is admitted, it is not surprising that writers had to explain why sacrifices initially had been instituted. See Bokser, *Seder*, chap. 7.

Another aspect of prayer is brought out in a selection from Pirque R. Eliezer, a supplement to Seder Eliyahu, a ninth-century work.³⁸ It reworks a tradition found in bRosh Hashanah 17a that God informed Moses of the *sidre tefillah* or order of prayers that will enable people to gain forgiveness for their sins. The later text introduces the notion of God's foreknowledge of the Temple's destruction:

"The LORD will answer you in the day of trouble" (Ps. 20:2). David, knowing that because of Israel's iniquities the Temple was to be destroyed and that offerings were to cease, was distressed for Israel and said, "When troubles [in the wake of sin] come upon Israel, who will atone for them?" The Holy One, praised be He, said to him, "David, do not be distressed, for I have already revealed to Moses the order of prayers for forgiveness (*sidre selihāh*), saying to him, 'When troubles come upon Israel, let them stand before Me as one band and utter in My presence the prayers of forgiveness, and I shall answer them.'" And where did He reveal them [=the order of forgiveness]? [At Sinai, as seen in the exposition of Yoḥanan:] Said R. Yoḥanan, "When the LORD enfolded (*vaya'avor*) His face and proclaimed" [the thirteen attributes of mercy] (Ex. 34:6). This [verse] teaches that the Holy One, praised be He, came down out of His thick cloud like an emissary of the congregation who enfolds himself in his prayer shawl and passes (*vaya'avor*) before the ark, and revealed to him [=to Moses] the order of forgiveness ...³⁹

Since prayers for forgiveness are thus instituted from the beginning, designed to fill the gulf created by the coming

vi; and Stephen D. Benin, "Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods Before Me: Sacrifice In Medieval Christian and Jewish Thought" (Ph.D. diss. University of California, Berkeley, 1980).

³⁸ On the date of Seder Eliyahu, see Jacob Elbaum, *EJ*, s.v. "Tanna De-Vei Eliyahu."

³⁹ Pirque R. Eliezer 5 (Friedmann p.42). The translation is based on *Tanna Debe Eliyyahu. The Lore of the School of Elijah*, trans. by W.G. Braude and I.J. Kapstein (Philadelphia, 1981), p.516.

destruction of the Temple, God must have planned that the Temple would be superseded.

V

To conclude, we have seen that:

First, rabbinic sources formulate teachings on extra-Temple rites in several distinct ways. The Mishnah, along with describing the Temple rites, mentions practices not contingent on the Temple but acknowledges neither that they comprise substitutes nor that they have been given a greater rank or status. The Tosefta also employs the foregoing approach, though it may compare or correlate the extra-Temple rites with other practices. We specifically saw this in regard to charity and acts of lovingkindness. One tradition declares that they are equal to all the commandments; a second tradition, without calling them substitutes, portrays them as fulfilling the same function that sacrifices fulfill. The halakhic Midrashim generally follow this pattern as well. Post-mishnaic sources (the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds and an early homiletical Midrash like *Leviticus Rabba*) introduce a new formulation in presenting teachings on the subject. They expressly state that the extra-Temple rites are better than the Temple ones. Similarly, teachings claim that an extra-Temple practice replaces a Temple one, or a person can achieve the moral-religious purpose of a sacrifice through his own behavior. Finally, post-talmudic sources not only reemphasize the notion that extra-Temple rituals such as prayer are superior, but, building on a single precedent found in the Talmud suggest that from the outset they were designed by God.

Second, each of the several patterns and its implied way of thinking represents an overall outlook and not a point of view limited to a single subject. Although external economic and historical factors may account for the amount of rabbinic teachings on the importance of charity or on other topics,⁴⁰

⁴⁰ See, e.g., Urbach, "Concepts of Charity."

those factors do not explain the use of diverse patterns. They likewise do not explain why a pattern may be employed for a number of disparate activities, whether within a single source or whether within a set of sources.

Third, while our observations are based on the characteristics of literary sources, they may reflect a historical reality as well. An earlier formulation and way of thinking may be found in a later source, but in general, especially in regard to the tannaitic and amoraic works, the reverse is not true: what we have labeled as a "later formulation" in general does not appear in the earlier sources. Hence the patterns may reflect not just different ways of thinking, but also different chronological stages. The exceptions to which one might point may indicate that an individual conception took time to mature and later became a common way of thinking. To be sure, the biblical Prophets and Psalms provide precedents for diverse formulations and a first-century person may have formulated his thought in a manner now preserved only in post-talmudic sources. But we can judge only on the basis of the extant sources and they indicate the existence of the above patterns. Moreover, since the example of Qumran proves that people did not randomly choose formulations, it is not unreasonable to assume that people's thinking might reflect the degree of social significance that they attached to the Temple cult. The more they accepted the Temple's loss, the greater on a practical level did they openly speak of superseding it. Paradoxically, such a decrease in the significance of the physical Temple in the lives of Jews may be correlated with the rise in apocalyptic and imaginary messianic speculation, for despite the willingness of some Jews to see contemporary practices as divinely desired and not merely as imperfect stopgaps, the Temple continued to attract the imagination of many Jews. But, as several scholars have noted, the later amoraic and post-talmudic sources, when speaking of the Temple, in contrast to earlier rabbinic materials, describe it in glorified terms, introducing a wide range of supernatural

motifs. The Temple in the abstract was thus honored and venerated; it was something from the past and, hopefully, of the not too distant future. The further, though, it receded from contemporary reality and experience, the more imagination took over in thinking about it.⁴¹

At this point we may comment again on the Abot de Rabbi Nathan tradition concerning Yoḥanan ben Zakkai's emphasis on acts of lovingkindness. Since this document is not from the first century, when Yoḥanan lived, our analysis of the patterns used in relating to the cult confirms the proposition that while the thought attributed to Yoḥanan could go back to him, its articulation may have been influenced by later conceptions. That such revisions do take place may be seen in the transmission of the tradition itself, for ARN version A has Yoḥanan speaking of acts of lovingkindness that are "like" (*kemotah*) sacrifices, while version B has him referring to acts of lovingkindness that are "in place of" (*taḥtehā*) sacrifices.⁴²

Our analysis of the significance of the several patterns used in relating to the cult accords with contemporary research on individual and group responses to trauma. The human psyche goes through different stages of dealing with a catastrophe. While individuals may differ, the overall patterns hold true. People generally first employ one of several defense mechan-

⁴¹ See, e.g., Urbach, *Sages*, pp. 676–84, 1000–1005; Nahum N. Glatzer, "The Attitude Toward Rome in Third-Century Judaism" (1962), in idem, *Essays*, esp. p. 5; Judah Goldin, "The Messianic Tradition in Judaism" (Paper delivered at the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies, Boston, Mass., December 1981); and n.b. Heinemann, "Art," pp. 825–27, concerning Leviticus Rabba's treatment of messianic themes. This change is also discernible in art; Helen Rosenau, *Visions of the Temple* (London, 1979). In general, cp. Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality* (New York, 1979), on the inner conflict in the notions of messianism and Torah in the Jewish tradition.

⁴² ARNB 5, p. 22. The notion of atonement is found in early Yoḥanan traditions; see the teaching cited in n. 20 above. On our dating of the ARN tradition, see Neusner, *Development*, pp. 11–14, which discusses issues affecting the revision of the teaching.

isms to spare or minimize pain. They then gradually work through the events until they have fully coped with it. In the words of one psychoanalytic observer:

Working through includes such activities as recollecting the traumatic events in detail so as to overcome the denial which was the initial response to overwhelming trauma; examining the implications of these events for the present and the future; recollecting similar events from the past and taking courage from the fact that they were overcome; reconstructing personal and group myths which provide a sense of origin, continuity, identity and destiny; making practical plans for the future that will compensate for the losses of the trauma and that will promise a reasonable prospect of protection against similar trauma in the future. In a sense one constructs a new image of the universe to replace the one that has been lost. When the working through process has been completed the individual experiences a sense of invigoration, remoralization and renewal, which in the unconscious is represented as a feeling of being reborn.⁴³

In our own day, the initial responses to the Holocaust and the bombing of Hiroshima provide graphic examples of this process. As R.J. Lifton and others observe, survivors initially remained emotionally and psychologically tied to the dead.⁴⁴ They, like others, have been able openly to talk about these events only after a considerable number of years and they still find it difficult to evaluate the full implications. Survivors likewise have been more able to start new lives than to compare their new situation with their previous one. Moreover, religious thinkers continue to grapple with the theological issues, in particular the problem posed by the belief in God's foreknowledge.

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⁴³ Mortimer Ostow, "The Jewish Response to Crisis," *Conservative Judaism* 33 (1980):3-25; quotation from pp. 15-16.

⁴⁴ R.J. Lifton, *History and Human Survival* (New York, 1971).

The Temple's destruction in 70 C.E. (and the loss of immediate hope to rebuild it as a result of the Bar Kokhba fiasco, 132–135 C.E.) elicited a variety of rabbinic responses. In studying the history of Judaism we should therefore no longer speak of a rabbinic idea simply as a "response" to that event.

Specifically the Temple's destruction initially posed a traumatic crisis and out of that crisis rabbinic Judaism developed. While the catastrophe and the Temple continued to have meaning to Jews, that meaning changed as Jews changed and further developed new forms of religiosity and piety. The problem then became how reflectively to work out the significance of that event and to relate to the old religious system while living in a different religious order.

To be sure, the power of anachronism affects Judaism like other religions and many Jews have refused to acknowledge a permanent discontinuity with the Temple cultic system. We have seen this at work even in early rabbinic Judaism, when it was restructuring Judaism and elevating the rank of extra-Temple rites. But while some Jews continued to insist on the primacy of the Temple cult, others adopted an alternative approach. At a certain point they fully admitted a discontinuity, asserting that the past institutions are superseded by the present ones and the latter are superior to the former. Naturally due to the belief in an allpowerful and allknowing God, this proposition entailed the corollary belief that the change was divinely intended. As we have seen, we can trace the articulation of these thoughts and the possible interconnections between the natural development of ideas and different historical contexts. The student of medieval Judaism can analyze the subsequent history of these notions along with the contrary trends or reaction emphasizing the importance of the Temple.⁴⁵ But only by paying close attention to the nuance of each view, may we appreciate its distinctive meaning.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., the references to Bokser and Benin in n. 37; David Goodblatt, *Rabbinic Instruction in Sasanian Babylonia* (Leiden, 1975), chap. 1; and "Avelei Zion," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 3:945–46.