

The hidden reasons
behind the events
of the pre-messianic period

Whatever Happened
to the
Aschalta Degeula

Devorah Fastag



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This essay is dedicated to the memory of Sharone Chasida bat Avraham Avinu, who so longingly waited for the geula.

The period of history known as the modern era leaves much to ponder on. It is one of amazing, cataclysmic changes that have transformed the world physically and socially. The technological revolution transformed everyday life so drastically that the world is almost unrecognizable. The movements towards equality, in its economic, social, and feminist forms, the movement away from religion to a secular and often atheistic orientation have made the modern era almost unrecognizable in terms of world history.

The Jewish world in particular has undergone far reaching and even convulsive changes. The so called "enlightenment" and reform movements caused a mass break with Torah observance, while the same period saw the advent of Chassidut, its exact opposite. This period saw the murder of over six million Jews with the almost total destruction of the traditional centers of Europe's Jewry, and this period also saw the return of millions of Jews to the land of Israel, which, after lying desolate throughout the long exile, has once again come alive. What is the secret behind this period of history?

Zionism itself is an enigma. For two thousand years Jews cried, prayed, and yearned to return to the land of Israel. In our times this dream seems to have become at least partially true, as millions of Jews now live in an independent Israeli state, while the land itself has become productive and beautiful.

Yet at the same time, the State of Israel is beset by far reaching and serious social and moral problems. The State of Israel is suffering from the same ills as the rest of western society. Moreover, the spirit of Zionist idealism which once pervaded the state is gone.

Spiritually, too, one finds the same paradox. The existence of the State of Israel is miraculous. Although throughout history many nations tried to rejuvenate the land, no one but the Jews was successful. Security wise, Israel was far outnumbered by its hostile Arab neighbors who sought to destroy it, yet war after war was won through

miracles. Even many of Israel's secular leaders admitted this. For example, after the Six Day War, Ezer Weizman was asked how the Egyptian air force could have been destroyed on the ground with no opposition. In answer, he shrugged his shoulders and pointed heavenward. The miracles of the Six Day War were so numerous that Rabin exclaimed the verse from Psalms "This is from G-d, it is wondrous in our eyes". During the Gulf War, scud after scud fell, totally destroying houses. Blocks of buildings were totally gutted yet their inhabitants escaped alive. (By contrast, whenever a scud fell in Iran during the Iran-Iraq war, 10-12 people were killed.)

Another story from the Gulf War is about one of the great gas drums of Tel Aviv that was turned off because the red light was flashing. Although the technician could find nothing wrong he decided to take no chances and transferred all the gas to the other drum while he turned this one off. That night a scud hit the closed gas drum. Had the drum been operational, the disaster would have been too horrible to imagine, May Hashem spare us! There is so much to tell in this area that it would take a book of its own just to recount the miracles that saved Israel, and indeed, much has been written on this.

Yet, spiritually, the state is a disappointment. The Jews in exile yearned to return to the holy land, with everything that represents, but instead, they got a secular state. After 2000 years of suffering persecution for their Jewishness, the Jewish people finally returned to their own land, and then saw their children losing their Jewishness. Particularly among the Jews from the Arab lands, virtually all the immigrants were observant, yet their children and grandchildren have mostly become estranged from their religion. The grandchildren of rabbis can now be found at discotheques, mixed beaches, and the local jail.

What can all this mean? When the state was founded the excitement was very great. Many Jews saw this as the beginning of the redemption, the *aschalta degeula*. Sixty three years have since passed and we seem no closer to the redemption, not only spiritually, but even physically, as large parts of the land of Israel, and even its holy sites, are being given over to gentiles. And many people wonder - how can this be the *aschalta degeula*?

In order to answer these questions, we will have to return to the spiritual roots of Zionism. We must dig into the wellsprings of Jewish mysticism to find the secrets that will unravel the mystery of our times, for the concept of the *aschalta degeula* is explained at length in *kabala*. First, however, we will give a short history.

The Promised Land

The Torah tells us that the Creator promised the land of Israel to our forefather Abraham and his seed after him. This was not merely the promise of a homeland. The Sages tell us that a place in the land of Israel is like a place in the world to come. In order to inherit the land of Israel one must be deserving of this holiness. What would happen, Abraham wondered, if his children sinned and lost this merit? "Bameh aida ki irasheno?" - by what can I know that I will inherit it, Abraham asked? G-d answered that Abraham's children would undergo exile, and suffering but they would return to the land. Although this prophecy referred specifically to the Egyptian exile, the sages explain that all the other exiles were included as well.

The Egyptian exile prepared the Jews to receive the Torah and inherit the land of Israel. Before they were about to enter, however, something terrible happened. The Jewish people sent spies to view the land and most of them came back with frightening reports, saying that the inhabitants were too strong for them and only very strong people could live there. The report came on the ninth of Av. The Jews cried that night that they did not want to enter the land of Israel. As a consequence of that crying the ninth of Av became the day destined for Jewish tragedy. Because the Jews cried that they did not want the holy land, this became the day when both temples were destroyed and the Jewish people were sent into exile. When their sins would make them unworthy of the land it would be davka that day that would be chosen to exact punishment.

But the crying of the ninth of Av is not only a punishment; it is a rectification. The crying to return once again to the treasured holy land reverses the crying of the Jewish People who not want it, and so eventually brings the redemption. Our Sages taught, "Moshiach was born on the ninth of Av".

The first exile lasted seventy years. At the end of this period the Jews had an opportunity to return with Ezra to the land of Israel and rebuild the second temple. Yet most of the Jews chose to support the return only financially, while they themselves stayed behind in Babylon or wherever, with their comfortable homes and livelihoods. The trip itself was dangerous and exhausting, the land was desolate, and enemies, in the form of the Cuthim (Samaritans) and others, had settled in the land when the Jews were away. Ezra called for a return en masse, but he was not heeded. The sages say that if all the Jews would have returned at that time the second temple would never have been destroyed and there would have been no more exiles. Because the Jewish people did not return then en masse, the Creator made three oaths with the Jewish people: not to return as a wall (en masse and by force - Rashi) not to rebel

against the nations, and not to push (e.g. force) the end of the exile (by spiritual means). These oaths will be discussed in greater length later on.

The second temple lasted for 420 years. It was destroyed because of the sin of *sinat chinam*, unwarranted hatred, which has not yet been corrected. This started the long present exile called *galut Edom*. And now let us discuss the *aschalta degeula*.

Before we begin, however, I would like to say something about one of the main sources used in preparing this work, *Kol HaTor*. *Kol HaTor* is a book devoted entirely to the subject of the *aschalta degeula*. It was written nearly 200 years ago by Rabbi Hillel Shklover, student of the Vilna Gaon after Rabbi Hillel came to Israel as part of a plan to start the redemption, as will be explained later. The author says that everything in this book is taken from what he learned from his great master, the Vilna Gaon. Rabbi Hillel explains that the Vilna Gaon knew the secrets of the *aschalta degeula* as they were revealed to him by Eliyahu Hanavi and our forefather Jacob. He was told these secrets because he was given the heavenly assignment of actually starting the process of the *aschalta degeula*.

The original *Kol HaTor* was never printed. It was a difficult to understand kabalistic work which was respected and well known in the old *yishuv* but read only by kabalistic scholars. The book now available, which is an abridged and simplified form of the original work, was prepared by Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Rivlin, the great-grandson of the original author. Because of the necessarily controversial nature of this work there are critics who have cast doubts on the authorship or accuracy of the book now in our hands. I would therefore like to mention here that both the students of Rav Kook, and many *chareidi* authorities (such as Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach and one of the compilers of *Michtav Me'Eliyahu*, Rabbi Chaim Friedlander) accepted the present version of *Kol HaTor* as accurate and reliable. There is an appendix on this subject at the end of the booklet.

And now for some of the secrets of the *aschalta degeula*.

The Dawn of Redemption

What is the *aschalta degeula*?

Literally, *aschalta degeula* is Aramaic for the beginning of the redemption. It is mentioned in the Gemora (*Megilla 17b*) as being the stage before the complete redemption by *Moshiach ben David*, and the intention of the seventh *bracha* in the

Shmone Esrai prayer ("...who redeems Israel"). It refers to the introductory stage of the redemption, which is not the redemption in itself, but contains within it the seeds of what will exist in the full redemption (Kol HaTor, p.33). The period of the aschalta degeula is the period of Moshiach ben Yosef. In order to understand this, we must first gain a deeper understanding of the processes of redemption.

The prophets promised us that the Creator will redeem us from the exile. There, is, however, a difference of opinions among the sages as to whether the redemption will come about only through tshuva (repentance) or whether it will come even without tshuva (Sanhedrin 97). There is a rule that whenever there are contradicting opinions among the sages both are correct but are referring to different aspects or situations. Here, the Vilna Gaon explained this seeming contradiction as follows: The sages speak of two redeemers, Moshiach ben Yosef, and Moshiach ben David. Moshiach ben Yosef is the first moshiach, whose task is to prepare the world for the period of Moshiach ben David. The period of Moshiach ben Yosef is a natural period when the Jews live independently in their own land, and reach great heights of morality, holiness, and deeply enlightening Torah study. The period of Moshiach ben David, is supernatural, as it was in the Garden of Eden before the sin. To merit the period of Moshiach ben Yosef the Jewish people must do tshuva. Otherwise this period will be lost. The period of Moshiach ben David, however, will come about, even if we do not repent independently and the Creator must force this repentance on us.

The prophet Zechariah, speaking about the redemption says, "bi'eeta achishena" - in its time I will hurry it (Zechariah 9). The sages (Sanhedrin 98) explain this to mean that there are two ways in which the redemption can come. If we do not merit it, it will come in its predestined time. There is a final date by which the redemption must come. This date is not known to us and it is called "the covered (e.g. hidden) end". If, however, we repent and merit it the redemption will come earlier.

The Vilna Gaon, however, taught that there is another way to be redeemed called "the revealed end", which we will soon discuss. As brought in Kol HaTor (p. 28), the Vilna Gaon gave the passage in Zechariah an explanation which is a combination of the two words - bi'eeta, in it's time, and achishena - I will hurry it. He quoted the dictum of the sages that scripture retains its simple meaning, and that in addition to the medrashic explanation this passage means that the Creator will bring the redemption earlier, within its general period. How can this be done?

The "Do It Yourself" Redemption

There is a verse in Shir Hashirim which reads: "The buds are seen in the land, the time of the singing bird has arrived, and the voice of the dove is heard in our land" (Shir Hashirim 2:12). The Vilna Gaon explained this verse as follows: A special opportunity is now being given to us to bring the redemption. It is sort of a "do it yourself geula" where by following a certain plan, and doing certain things we can bring a heavenly response which starts the redemption. The buds which are seen in the land are the things we must do to start the redemption. The time of the singing bird is the time setting in which these things must be done. The voice of the dove (in Hebrew, Kol HaTor) is Moshiach ben Yosef. In other words, if we do the right things at the right time, we will thereby bring the first stage of the redemption, the period of Moshiach ben Yosef.

This way of bringing the redemption is called "the revealed end". There is a verse in Yechezkiel (36:8) which reads: And you the mountains of Israel give forth your branches and carry your fruit for my nation Israel for they have come close to arriving." On this the Sages comment, "There is no more revealed end than this, when the land (of Israel) gives forth its fruit". (Sanhedrin 98A, Megilla 17B). We generally understand this to mean that after so many years of desolation and destruction, if the land of Israel begins to give forth its fruit again, this is a sign that the end of the exile is at hand and the Jewish People are about to return. This is because the land of Israel will be fruitful only for its own children, the Jewish People. The Vilna Gaon, however, who knew the secrets of the aschalta degeula, interpreted this verse as follows: if you will go to the land of Israel and make it fruitful, this will bring about the end of the exile. Why is this so?

The Sin of the Spies

The root of the exile is in the sin of the spies. At their very foundation the Jewish People were given the opportunity to enter the land of Israel and inherit it forever. Instead, the people "spurned the desired land" (Tehillim 106:24). At that time the Jewish people were in the desert and they sent out spies to inform them of the nature of the land. Ten of the twelve spies called Israel "a land which devours its inhabitants" and the terrified people cried that they did not want to go there. Had it not been for this sin, the redemption from Egypt would have been permanent; there would have been no other exiles. As a result of this sin, exile was made possible, and perhaps even inevitable. Therefore by correcting the sin of the spies one can bring about the

end of the exile, according to the rule "correct that which you have marred" (Kol HaTor, p.129).

Furthermore, the Talmud says the Temple will be rebuilt only after the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Megillah 17). Since the sin of the spies caused the eventual destruction of the temple, by rebuilding Jerusalem the Jewish People would be making possible the rebuilding of the temple.

One can also perceive other logical ways in which "the revealed end" would correct the sin of the spies. The sin was that the Jewish People spurned the precious land. Now these settlers would show an unbelievable love for the precious land. They returned to the land of Israel when the destruction and desolation were immense. They suffered hardships and dangers which we can hardly imagine. There were extremely difficult climate extremes without the means to protect oneself. (The heat in the summer could reach above 50 degrees centigrade while there were very cold snowy winters.) There were wild Arabs and a hostile government. Plagues and earthquakes killed hundreds of people. Many of the settlers died, many others lost their loved ones. At that time the land really appeared to be as the spies had said, "a land which devours its inhabitants". Yet despite everything, these settlers would not leave the land of Israel, nor would they lose their love for it. On the contrary, they were tied to the land with bonds of love and holy idealism. They were out to correct the sin of the spies and thereby bring the redemption.

The physical rebuilding of the land alone, however, is not enough. There are other conditions which must be fulfilled in order to bring about the redemption, as will be discussed later. The root of the exile is spiritual; it was caused by sin. Therefore the correction must be done spiritually as well. The Torah makes clear that physical suffering and exile is because of spiritual flaws. Therefore, only if the physical return is done in holiness can it bring about the redemption.

Kol HaTor (Page 143) quotes the verse from Tehillim "If G-d has not built a house it builders have worked in vain" and explains that if the building of the land of Israel is not done in the spirit of G-d it cannot succeed in bringing the redemption. This statement is made in connection with the need to establish "anshei emana", people of perfected character, so that, he says, the entire building will be in the spirit of G-d". It goes without saying that if that if people altogether disregard the Torah, the building is surely not in the spirit of G-d, and cannot succeed.

Kol HaTor (p. 139) explains the verse "House of Israel go, and we will go in the light of G-d" according to hidden, deeper meanings. He then continues that a verse does not leave its simple meaning, and that for this plan to succeed everything must be done in the light of G-d, which he says, is the inner soul of the Torah (e.g. kabala). Again, if

that is so, then it is obvious that the really simple meaning of the verse, that is, that everything must be done according to the Torah and mitzvot, is true all the more.

The idea that it is the spiritual which enables the physical rebuilding to succeed is stressed in many other places as well. For instance, the Gra writes says that the whole ingathering of the exiles is dependent on the merit of the mitzvot which are connected to the land (shmitta, ma'aser etc.) (Yohel Or, Parshat Mishpatim p.26, Kol HaTor, p.29). Moreover, Kol HaTor says that the purpose of the ingathering of the exiles and the entire redemption is the revelation of truth and rectifying the world for the Kingship of G-d. (p. 77).

All this would seem to easily explain why the redemption has not yet come - the return and the building were not done "in the spirit of G-d" or "in the light of G-d". This answer, however, still leaves us with some of the other perplexing questions. If this is not the aschalta degeula, then how is it that in a physical sense there really was a return of millions of Jews, and the land did become fruitful? And why is Israel being kept alive by miracles? In order to answer our original questions, then, we must continue. Let us now discuss the time element.

The Time of the Singing Bird

The world was created in six days and the seventh day was Shabbat. Had Adam and Chava overcome their test and not sinned, the world would have reached its fulfillment and that first Shabbat would have been the world to come. Because this did not happen, the six days of creation were turned into six thousand years of rectifying this sin. The Jewish people were given the task of bringing the world to its fulfillment by keeping the Torah. Each day of creation became a thousand years of world history, with the seventh millennia being the great Sabbath of the world.

This process however, comes about in stages. First there is the period of Moshiach ben Yosef who begins to rectify and prepare the world (more about this later). Then there is the period of Moshiach ben David when the world will go back to its original state as in Gan Eden before the first sin. In this period all of the curses of mankind will be removed, there will be no death or suffering, and everyone will see the glory of G-d, as it says, "The world will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem as water covers the sea". From there we will go on to the world to come, which is so great and spiritual that even the prophets could not envision it, as it says "ayin lo ro'ata" - no eye saw it.

Just as the sixth day of the week is erev Shabbat, so the sixth millennium is the erev Shabbat of the world. The Zohar (Vayeira p. 117) says that just as a person prepares himself on erev Shabbat for the coming of Shabbat, so the world does the same. The word "erev" - eve - literally means mixture. Erev Shabbat, Sabbath eve, is then a time when the mundane and the holy mix, a time which is still a weekday, yet the emanations of the coming Sabbath are already in the air. Regarding the Erev Shabbat of the world, this means that emanations of the complete redemption are already beginning to affect the world (although in a much slighter form). This is the period which is suitable to Moshiach ben Yosef who prepares the world for the complete redemption, and who is therefore connected to the sixth millennium.

The dawn of Erev Shabbat is the year 5500 since creation, or 1740 of the Common Era. (That is because the first 500 years of the sixth millennium correspond to Thursday night, since in Judaism the night precedes the day.) According to Kol HaTor, the year 5500, or 1740, marks the beginning of the period known as ikveta dimishicha, the footsteps of Moshiach. This is the period directly before the coming of Moshiach. Because the great light is pushing to come through at this time, there is also a very great outbreak of evil, as the forces of impurity try to fight the approaching redemption. For this reason, ikveta dimishicha is described by the sages as an extremely turbulent period (Kol HaTor, p. 127).

As we look into history, we see that 1740 begins the great changes of the modern era. One who has studied Kol HaTor will also notice that these changes are extremely reminiscent of, and connected to, the missions of Moshiach ben Yosef. Amazingly, however, they often reach the world in a negative, or partially negative, form. Let us first list the missions of Moshiach ben Yosef, examine history, and then try to understand what happened.

The Missions of Moshiach Ben Yosef

The Return to Zion

G-d promised our mother Rachel that in her merit the Jewish People would return from the exile (Jeremiah 31:15). This is done through her descendent, Moshiach ben Yosef who carries on the powers and personality of her son Yosef. According to the Vilna Gaon, it is Moshiach ben Yosef who brings the Jews back, causes the land to flower, and rebuilds Zion.

Yosef and Zion have the same numerical value (gematriyah). They are both 156. This is because, as Kol HaTor chapter 3, explains, the essence of a thing appears in its numerical value. Here, this means that the essence of Zion and Yosef are intrinsically connected. They are both what is called in Kabala "yesod", foundation. They are that element which sustains and feeds the entire world, both physically, and spiritually. This is why Yosef was able to support his family and the entire Egypt throughout the famine. Both Zion and Yosef are the conduits to bring down blessing to the entire world.

(This rule applies to the Sabbath as well. On Sabbath one must make the blessing on two loaves of bread called lehem mishna. The numerical value of lehem is 78. Multiplied by two this is 156, the same as Zion and Yosef. This is because the Sabbath is also yesod, since its blessing feeds the entire week. And so the Sabbath is yesod in time, Zion is yesod in place, and Yosef is yesod in souls. Therefore the medrash says, "If you keep the Shabbat candles I will show you the candles of Zion", for the two are intrinsically connected.)

The connection between Yosef and Zion is emphasized in Medrash Tanchuma, Vayigash, which says: "All the suffering that befell Yosef befell Zion...and the good which befell Yosef befell Zion".

Yosef's power comes from his special characteristic, which is the guarding of the holiness of circumcision, brit milah. It was by overcoming the test of Potiphar's wife that Yosef was given the title "tsadik". The covenant of circumcision is G-d's sign on the body of the Jew. It bonds the Jew to G-d. Likewise, the word Zion literally means a mark, an identifying sign. The Shechina, the presence of G-d, is found in Zion. All these three, the Sabbath, circumcision, and Zion are G-d's special sign with the Jewish People. Like circumcision, Zion is the bond that ties us to our Creator. It is not surprising then, that the Zohar, at the end of Lech Lecho, says that it is Brit Mila (circumcision) that provides the merit to inherit the land of Israel. It is for this reason that the Arabs also have a share in the land. The Zohar says that they were given the land of Israel in its emptiness just as their circumcision is also empty, until their merit runs out. For Jews, however, it is not enough to simply have the sign of circumcision. A Jew must guard this covenant with G-d by being moral and pure in order to connect with G-d and connect with Zion in its true sense. It is therefore understandable that it is Moshiach ben Yosef, the continuation of the essence of Yosef (who guarded his brit milah under the most trying conditions) who will bring us back to Zion.

Tshuva/Repentance

When the Torah speaks about the ingathering of the exiles, it says: "And it will be when all these things will come upon you, the blessing and the curse...and you will

return to your heart amongst all the gentiles that the L-d your G-d has cast you there; And you will return to the L-d your G-d and you will listen to His voice...with all your heart and all your soul; And the L-d will return your returnees and He will have mercy upon you and He will return and gather you from all the nations that the L-d your G-d has dispersed you there." (Dvarim 30:3).

The Torah makes it clear that the physical return is dependent on a spiritual return.

Kol HaTor (p. 22) explains that the return to Zion is on two levels, the physical and the spiritual, saying: "The redemption of Moshiach ben Yosef is redemption from the subjugation of the body and the subjugation of the soul". We have already explained that the coming of Moshiach ben Yosef is dependent on tshuva. Kol HaTor, however, explains that the plan of the "revealed end" will actually bring us to tshuva (repentance). Kol HaTor, p.101 says:

"As much as we will enact this (the revealed end) there will no longer be a need for the Sages warnings about (terrible) decrees. It will also cause mass repentance. There will be no need for a ruler whose decrees are worse than Haman's. (The Sages warned that if we do not repent on our own, G-d will place over us a ruler whose decrees are worse than Haman's) and the "revealed end" will hasten the final redemption."

Not only does Moshiach ben Yosef bring the Jewish People to repentance, Kol HaTor p. 58 says that he will even give tochacha (rebuke) to the gentiles, to bring them to repentance as well.

The Wiping Out of Amalek and Other Wars

One of the main tasks of Moshiach ben Yosef is the wiping out of Amalek (Kol HaTor, p. 29). Amalek is the embodiment of evil, the representative of the Satan in this world. He wishes to do away with morality, mercy, and conscience and substitute the rule of evil instead. In order to win his battle against G-d, Amalek wants to wipe out the Jewish People who are the people of G-d, the representatives of all goodness.

While Amalek represents the attribute of gevura, strength, on the side of evil, Yosef represents the attribute of gevura on the side of holiness. Amalek wishes to conquer and destroy others; Yosef wishes to conquer and destroy the evil inclination.

Tiferes Shlomo, Purim, explains that Amalek gets his power when Jews do not keep their minds and bodies pure, thereby sullyng the holiness of the brit milah. The sins which result from this sustain and feed Amalek who then uses his power to try to destroy Jews, as Haman the Amalekite did. It is therefore understandable that it is Yosef, or his descendent, Moshiach ben Yosef, who has the power to overcome Amalek, for he is the power of the holiness of brit milah.

Amalek and the nation of Israel are polar opposites, who are in a constant spiritual battle. All the other nations of the world are drawn to goodness by the Jews, and to evil, by Amalek. It is obvious that in recent times it was Hitler who represented Amalek. He actually said that he hates the Jews because they gave the world two curses: conscience and brit milah. He also said that "our enemies are Saul and Mordechai" who both were active in wiping out Amalek. (Saul and his descendent Mordechai were from the tribe of Benjamin, who can substitute for his brother, Yosef in wiping out Amalek.) Hitler said that the Jews are his polar opposites and that his real war is not with the allies, but with the Jews, for whoever wins in this spiritual war will rule the world. This is, in fact, true. In the end of days when Amalek is wiped out, all evil will disappear and the rest of the world will follow the leadership of Moshiach, who will then teach even the gentiles the teachings of G-d.

In addition to this war against Amalek, Moshiach ben Yosef fights other wars to save the Jewish People, including the war of Gog and Magog.

Revealing the Secrets and Codes of the Torah

The Torah (Breishit 37:3) calls Yosef "ben zekunim" which the Sages explain to mean "ze shekana chochma", the one who has acquired wisdom. The numerical value of the word "zekunim" as it is spelled in the Torah is 207, which spells out the word raz, secret. In other words, Yosef is the son who has secret knowledge, the hidden, deeper meanings of the Torah. We would call this kabala.

When the Jewish People received the Torah at Mt. Sinai they were given the outer level of the Torah. The inner level of the Torah, the hidden wisdom, was to be revealed when Moshe Rabeinu returned with the tablets. The sin of the golden calf, however, made this impossible. The first tablets were broken and the Jewish People remained without this deeper level of Torah understanding (commentary to Even Shleima, Ch. 11 based on Tikuney Zohar 42:4, 43:3 and other sources).

One of the main tasks of Moshiach ben Yosef is to reveal to us the secrets of the Torah, or kabala. An example of this in practice would be the Ari z"l who is known as the father of modern kabala, and who, says Kol HaTor, had in him the soul of Moshiach ben Yosef. In Moshiach's times the entire Jewish people will know this inner dimension of Torah, and it is the task of Moshiach ben Yosef to begin teaching it to us. This idea, however, works both ways. Not only does Moshiach teach us kabala; the study of kabala, at whatever level we are capable of now, is necessary to bring moshiach (Zohar, Bamidbar, p.124). Therefore, said the Vilna Gaon, anyone who was capable of studying kabala and did not, will be held accountable for this.

In addition to kabala there is another hidden aspect of Torah which is called "remazei haTorah". These are the allusions or codes which are found in the Torah. The Torah is

full of levels of meanings and allusions which communicate much, much more to us than we would imagine when reading on the surface level. The Torah is the blueprint of creation, which means that everything that exists, human, animal, vegetable or mineral, is alluded to in the Torah. Every teaching of the Sages, the purposes and meanings behind the mitzvot, historical events, and all human beings, are alluded to in the Torah. Every ant, every blade of Grass, every Grain of sand has its place in the Torah - otherwise, it wouldn't exist.

Yosef was called "tsofnat pa'anech", the one who figures out the hidden codes. This is also the task of Moshiach ben Yosef.

The Seven Forms of Lower Wisdom

Moshiach ben Yosef teaches us not only the supernal wisdom, but also the seven forms of wisdom which are connected to this lower, physical world. Kol HaTor quotes the statement of the Zohar Parshat VaYera (p. 117) which says: "And in the 600th year of the 6th millennium, the gates of wisdom above and the streams of wisdom below will be opened up and the world will prepare itself to enter the 7th millennium." The 600th year of the sixth millennium is the secular year 1840. The Torah year is 5600, which written in Hebrew spells Tor, the appellation of Moshiach.

The Zohar then compares this to a person who prepares himself on Friday afternoon for the entering of the Sabbath.

In other words, from the period of 1840 onwards, the world will receive a tremendous influx of knowledge in order to prepare the world for its perfected state in the 7th millennium, the world's Sabbath.

Kol HaTor, Ch. 5 states: "So our master (the Vilna Gaon) told us: These are the things that bring to the sanctification of G-d's name in the period directly prior to the coming of Moshiach: the building of Jerusalem, the ingathering of the exiles, the flowering of the land of Israel, the perfection of character traits, the revelation of the codes and hidden meaning of the Torah, and the study of the seven forms of wisdom".

The seven forms of wisdom are:

1. mathematics
2. formations and fusions (inventions?)
3. medicine and the wisdom of plants
4. Grammar, correct expression, and composition
5. music and holiness (Through correct music one's soul can attach itself to holiness. The opposite is also true. Animalistic music arouses animalistic instincts and unholiness.)
6. the wisdom of repair and integration

7. the wisdom of how the physical connects with the spiritual; psychology.

These forms of wisdom, says Kol HaTor, were all made known to Yosef, and they are part of the task of his heir, Moshiach ben Yosef. Science and all forms of earthly wisdom are all part of the Torah and although they constitute its lowest level, Kol HaTor states that the knowledge of them is necessary to reach the highest levels. Furthermore, the Vilna Gaon taught that if Torah scholars will become masters of these forms of wisdom, this will be the great sanctification of G-d's name before the gentile nations of which the Torah states, "For this is your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the nations". Kol HaTor continues: "...and why should we leave this great property of our Holy Torah - or part of it - to others and the name of heaven will be desecrated and there will be great disgrace to the Torah."

Economic Equality

Another one of the tasks of Moshiach ben Yosef is to bring about economic equality. The Talmud states: "The son of David does not come until all the measurements are equal" (Sanhedrin 98). The Vilna Gaon explained this to mean that Moshiach ben David will not come until there is economic equality. Equality (hishtavut) is the first of the perfected character traits that Kol HaTor lists as necessary to attain in order to succeed in the plan to bring the redemption. There is a verse in Chumash Dvarim(25:14) which reads, "You shall not have for yourself in your home a measure and a measure, big and small". In addition to its literal, legal, meaning, the Vilna Gaon explained that this is an allusion to the fact that in the land of Israel - your home - you shall not have rich and poor. The Vilna Gaon foretold that economic equality amongst Jews, especially in the land of Israel, would bring freedom from gentile rule Kol TaTor p.34 and p.104).

Equality Of Women, and Spiritual Equality For All

According to Kol HaTor, the entire chapter 31 of Yirmiyahu is speaking about the coming of Moshiach ben Yosef. In this chapter there is a verse which reads, "...for G-d has created a new thing in the earth, a female will encircle (alternate translation - turn into, Rashi) a man". Rabbi Yonatan ben Uziel, who lived in the second temple period and whose knowledge had been passed down to him from the prophets, translates these words to mean: "the nation of the house of Israel will study Torah". The term "house of Israel" includes both men and women (see Rashi, Dvarim 32:8). In other words, what this verse means is that the new thing that G-d creates in the earth is that everyone, both men and women, will be studying Torah.

Many Torah sources describe most women as being unsuited to Torah study. This was caused by Chava's (Eve's) sin in eating from the Tree of Knowledge. Both Adam and

Chava were created with extremely high intellect, but the sin of the Tree of Knowledge caused them to lose this very high level. Chava, who initiated the sin and convinced Adam to go along with her, lost more than he did. The Vilna Gaon (Aderes Eliyahu, Breishis 3:20) says that Chava's sin caused women to lose their interest in intellectual pursuits. The Sages say that all the male souls were contained in Adam and all the female souls were contained in Chava, so the consequences of the sin affected all humankind. As a result of this sin, women lost not only the higher level of intellectual abilities; they also had a lower position in society, in marriage, and less economic power.

All this, however, is reversed in the redemption, for the Jewish woman represents the Shechina, the presence of G-d in this world. Chava's sin caused the lowering of the Shechina, meaning that G-d's rulership of the world is not clearly seen and the holiness is hidden. Consequently, woman herself was lowered. When the Shechina rises, and G-d's rulership of the world becomes visible, so woman, too, will return to her original greatness. The words prophesying woman's return to equality appear in chapter 31 of Yirmiyahu. Kol HaTor (p.55) says that everything in this chapter is speaking about the coming of Moshiach ben Yosef. We see, then, that women's equality is connected to Moshiach ben Yosef.

This chapter also tells us that children will no longer suffer for their parents' sins. Yirmiyahu (31:25) said: "In those days they will not say anymore the father's ate unripe fruit and the teeth of the children were dulled." On this the Metzudat David comments: "They will not complain anymore that the fathers ate the unripe fruit etc. [and the children suffered because of this]. [They complain] isn't it only right that the one who ate the unripe fruit should be the one whose teeth are dulled? What they meant was that the fathers sinned and the children receive the punishment, but the sinner should himself receive the punishment...and that is how it will be in the future".

Yirmiyahu is prophesying here another form of equality, because when this happens, children will not be spiritually harmed because of their parents' immoral behavior (Vayikrah Rabbah, brought in Yalkut Shimoni 317, Yirmiyahu 31). Those who had spiritually pure parents, and those who had spiritually impure parents, will be equal.

(Of course everything that Hashem did was right and fair all along, because Hashem brings these fathers, souls of children who also need to undergo rectification for something done in previous lives. This, however, is not seen or understood by human beings, and so the childrens' suffering appears to be unfair. In the time of Moshiach ben Yosef this apparent unfairness will also disappear.)

There is yet another form of equality being prophesied in this chapter. According to kabala, "a female will encircle a man" is speaking not only about actual women but also about all Jewish souls who will then be equal, without hierarchy. (The soul is called the daughter of G-d.) At that time "a man will not teach his friend for they all will know Him, from their great one to their small one" (Jeremiah 31:33). The chassidic commentary Me'or V'shemesh (Parshas B'Shalach) explains that this is because in the Garden of Eden all the souls will be at an equal distance from G-d, receiving only through Him without the need for a human intermediary or teacher. Presently there is a spiritual hierarchy where some people have souls which stem from a higher world which is closer to the G-dly origin, while others have souls which stem from a lower, less spiritual world. Those whose souls stem from the higher worlds must teach those beneath them, and they in turn, teach those beneath them, etc.

In the future, however, there will be no hierarchy of souls. G-d's presence will be felt and perceived equally in all the worlds. All the righteous will surround G-d as in a circle where there is no beginning and no end, and where all points on the circumference are equidistant from the center (G-d). Similarly, the souls of all the righteous will be equally close to G-d.

How great the spiritual equality will be at that time can be seen from the following medrash: "Rebbi said, `How do we know that in the future Israel will not need the teachings of King Moshiach? It says (Isaiah 11), "The nations will inquire of him" (i.e. only the nations will inquire of him) - not Israel" (Medrash Raba 98:14). On this the Emunat Itecho (Parshat Yitro p. 230) comments that in the future the Jewish People will not need princes of thousands, and princes of hundreds to teach them Torah. The Torah of Moshe will be sufficient for them. (But they will still be considered students of Moshe Rabeinu.) Only the gentiles will learn from King Moshiach. (Seen in the pamphlet, Kayin and Hevel from Rav Nesanel Kasnett.)

What Happened to the Powers of the Aschalta Degeula?

As we look at what transpired in the year 1740, which marks the dawn of the world's erev Shabbat, we see something amazing. The powers which are connected to Moshiach ben Yosef actually entered the world. In fact, all the major changes of the modern world were connected to these powers. In some cases it took a positive form, but in many others it took a negative, or partially negative, form. Let's take the return to Israel as an example.

It is a wonderful thing that Jews can once again live in the Holy Land, and it is also a kindness of G-d that we can be free of gentile rule. The land of Israel is not only flowering and productive; it is the greatest Torah center in the world. Moreover, there exist many agricultural settlements where the laws of shmitta (the sabbatical year) and other mitzvot pertaining to the land are really being kept. An interesting example of this is the story of the settlement, Kommemiyut.

The moshav Kommemiyut has been keeping shmitta since its inception, even during the very difficult period directly following the founding of the state. As a result of its members' dedication to Torah under very trying circumstances they were privileged to see miracles. One such miracle is the story of the locust plague which hit Israel in the early fifties. The moshav Kommemiyut was the only one at that time literally keeping shmitta. The locusts came and destroyed everything in the area. When they got to the gates of Kommemiyut, however, the locusts turned around and did not enter.

This story, and others like it, left a profound impression on Kommemiyut's neighbors, and now there are many farmers in the area keeping shmitta.

The revelation of the Torah's secrets also gained strength in this period. From the general period of erev Shabbat (1740 onwards) the leaders of the three main segments of Jewry - the Ohr Hachaim in Morocco, the Vilna Gaon in Lithuania, and the Ba'al Shem Tov in the rest of Eastern Europe - have been teaching the Jewish masses ideas which stem from kabala. These great leaders, who all lived in the same general time period, (the dawn of the world's erev Shabbat) introduced kabala to the average Jew. Although only someone who has perfected his character and studied the entire "revealed Torah" is allowed to delve into direct kabala study, it is allowed, and very meritorious, to study teachings based on kabala which have been "strained" and prepared by tsadikim to suit the average reader. This was one of the main accomplishments of the Hassidic movement which began in this period: to bring the insights of kabala to the people.

As for "the lower wisdoms", these, too, obviously entered the world at this time. The result was the technological and scientific revolutions.

The movements for freedom and equality also occurred at this time. The world now recognized the need for social aid, and the difference between rich and poor in most modern countries has become more balanced. Women, too, began to receive equal rights and greater status in this period. And this period saw the establishment of Torah schools for girls while advanced Torah study for women is no longer rare.

On the other hand, we can also see that much of these powers went in a negative direction. Instead of bringing Moshiach ben Yosef, they caused immense damage. For

example, from the potential for economic equality came communism which murdered millions, kept many more millions prisoners under a reign of terror, and destroyed religion. From the potential for women's equality came the feminist movement which did not content itself with equal rights but wanted to turn females into males in all sorts of unsuitable behavior. This greatly damaged family life and led to increased immorality and perversions.

From the study of science and psychology etc. came atheistic theories and beliefs which led to the anti-Torah, atheistically oriented "enlightenment" movement. In the physical sphere as well, man's arrogance as the "master" of nature caused much damage and danger to the physical environment.

Instead of studying the secrets of the Torah from tsadikim, who will bring them to higher levels of mitzvah observance, many Jews have been attracted to mystical cults or study kabala from unkosher sources, that do not encourage mitzvah observance at all.

Instead of our destroying Amalek, Amalek destroyed one third of the Jewish people in the holocaust. Instead of bringing Moshiach ben Yosef and the redemption we got a secular Israeli state, with all its disappointing problems. And instead of the return to Israel leading the Jewish People to repentance, the state caused millions of Jews from religious backgrounds to abandon their heritage for a secular modern lifestyle.

What Happened???

Swallowed Powers

The Torah tells us about Pharoh's dreams which were interpreted by Yosef. One of these dreams was about seven good looking cows that were swallowed by seven bad looking cows "and it was not known that they came into their midst". In addition to the interpretation which Yosef told Pharoh at that time, there is an interpretation in the Zohar. The seven good looking cows are the forces of holiness and good. The seven bad looking cows are forces of unholiness and evil (Seen in Sfas Emes and Tiferes Shlomo, parshas Miketz). There is a well known rule in kabala that any force that enters the world is meant to be used for holiness, and if not, it does not simply remain dormant but rather falls to the other side (see Michtav Me'Eliyahu 4, p123). The forces of evil will then pervert this power so that it will serve their own evil ends. The Tiferes Shlomo, Vayeshev, explains that the dreams which Yosef interpreted had a meaning for him personally. Apparently, Yosef was being informed as to what would

happen to his holy powers, meaning that they would be swallowed by the forces of unholiness. The stronger a power's potential is for the good, the stronger its negative potential will be if it falls to the other side (Michtav MeEliyahu p.123).

He Swallowed the Power and He Will Spit It Out

The idea that goodness and holiness can be swallowed by the forces of evil is expressed in kabala under the heading "he swallowed the power and he will spit it out". (Iyov 20:15) This means that, as we have said, forms of holiness have been swallowed and are kept "captive" by the forces of evil, but that these forces will eventually "spit out" the captive holiness, which will then be freed to accomplish its true function.

Yosef's powers specifically were in danger from the beginning. Our forefather Jacob, who knew the secret of Yosef's powers and missions also knew that his powers were in danger from evil forces called "chitzonim" (external forces) or klipot (shells) who were eager to "get their hands" on these powers. The purpose of the ktonet pasim (the striped coat of many colors) which Jacob made for Yosef was to protect his powers from these evil forces. (This is obviously a difficult concept for us to understand. We see the same idea, however, in the special clothing of the kohanim (priests) in the temple. There, too, kabala explains that the purpose of these special clothes was to protect the great spiritual affluence that came down in the temple from going to these "external" impure forces.) When Yosef's brothers threw him into the pit, however, they first took off his special coat. At that point something terrible happened - Yosef's powers fell to the forces of evil. (Tiferes Shlomo, Vayeshev and Purim).

Afterwards the brothers brought Yosef's coat dipped in blood for Ya'akov to identify. When he saw this, Ya'akov said: "An evil animal has eaten him, Yosef has been torn apart" (Breishis 37:33). According to kabala the evil animal is the sitra achra, (other side, in Aramaic) who were now able to get control over the holy powers of Yosef (Tiferes Shlomo, Vayeshiev, and Yom Kippur, Ne'ila). This is a major tragedy and apparently we are still suffering from it today, because the powers of Yosef are also the powers of his heir, Moshiach ben Yosef (Kol HaTor, p.76 and other sources). In other words, one can understand from this that the powers of Moshiach ben Yosef were, to a great extent, swallowed and taken over by the forces of evil.

It is important to understand that although we speak of abstract spiritual powers, these things take very concrete forms in our lives. These spiritual powers have physical representatives who act out their part in this world according to the way these forces affect them. Every material thing has a spiritual force which guides and leads it. The reverse is also true; whatever we do here in this world has profound spiritual effects in the upper worlds, which then in turn, affect us. This concept is not as abstract as it may seem. Spiritual forces will take very familiar physical forms, such as the power of the satan appearing in Hitler and the Nazis. This concept will be discussed and illustrated, I"YH as we continue.

In addition to all this, we would like to bring the following quote from Kol HaTor (p.33): "We know beforehand that standing in opposition to all the good things which gradually come at the time of ikvita demeshicha according to the great rule which our master (the Vilna Gaon) explained above, come obstacles from the "other side", those things which the Sages mentioned which would come at the time of ikvita demeshicha, may G-d save us.

And on p. 127: "Since the main aim of the "other side" (sitra achra) is to uproot the truth, and this is what they (the sages) said, "Eisav hates Ya'akov" because Yaakov represents truth, as it says "Give truth to Ya'akov", and since the "other side" knows that the purpose of the redemption is the redemption of truth and kiddush Hashem (the sanctification of G-d's name) which comes together with the ingathering of the exiles and the building of Jerusalem as explained above, and since the "other side" (sitra achra) knows that as the footsteps of moshiach come closer and closer, the end of the power of spiritual uncleanness also comes closer, therefore the "other side" gathers all its battle strength to uproot the truth and every good action that brings to a sanctification of G-d's name..."

The Enemy From Within - The Erev Rav

Until now we have been discussing mainly the powers of Moshiach ben Yosef that appear in the aschalta degeula. What about Moshiach ben Yosef himself? Who and what is he?

Moshiach ben Yosef is a person, a tsadik of outstanding quality and nature who has taken upon himself the suffering for the sins of the Jewish People. Until the arrival of the actual redemption the souls of Moshiach ben Yosef and Moshiach ben David appear in a tsadik in each generation, where they act as a protective force for the Jewish

people. Only when they are united, however, will their power be complete (Kol HaTor p. 80).

The Medrash (Yalkut Shimoni 499:60) describes how before the creation of the world the soul of Moshiach ben Yosef was asked if he were willing to take this suffering upon himself, and he agreed. The medrash also says that when the Satan saw the soul of Moshiach ben Yosef he fell on his face with fear. So did the angels who would represent the gentile nations. And we have already learned that it is Moshiach ben Yosef who has the power to destroy Amalek, and to defeat the other descendents of Eisav as well. And yet, despite all this, there is an enemy which presents a very real danger to Moshiach ben Yosef. His name is Aramilus and the Talmud says that he will kill Moshiach ben Yosef. Who and what is he?

Kol HaTor says that Aramilus is the sar of the erev rav. A sar is a minister or prince. It is also the heavenly force behind a nation which controls its nature and destiny. Every nation has such a sar.

The Erev Rav are the mixed multitude that left Egypt together with the Jewish People. After the ten plagues, Egypt was a wasteland and many of its citizens decided it was more worthwhile to be on the side of the victors than on the side of the defeated. They became ostensibly Jewish, but their conversion was insincere. They were interested in the land of milk and honey, not the Torah.

The Torah tells us to love the convert, and there are 36 mitzvot connected with this idea! This, however, applies to true converts. Regarding insincere converts, such as the erev rav, the sages said, "Converts are as hard on Israel as a (malignant) growth". The erev Rav illustrated this point. It was they who nearly destroyed the Jewish People by inciting the sin of the golden calf, and they have been making trouble ever since. The Or Hachaim (Shmos 13:17) quoting Shmos Raba, Ch. 42, put it like this: "This is the reason for destruction of Israel in the desert. They said, "Let us make for ourselves a leader", they said "Let us make etc" (a golden calf). The Vilna Gaon, quoted in the commentary to Even Shleima, Ch. 11 says, "all the insolent and wicked people in the generation are from the gilgul neshama (reincarnation) of the erev rav and the sons of Kayin, and the entire exile and suffering and the destruction of the temple are all because Moshe accepted the erev rav..."

The Or HaChaim on the same verse also says in the name of the sages (Zohar Part 2:45) that everywhere the term "am", nation, is used (without connecting it to holiness) instead of the term "bnei Yisroel", this is a reference to the erev rav.

(The Da'at Chaim comments that there are places where the term "am" is used which clearly do include the main body of the Jewish People. He explains that when the

term "am" is used it always includes the erev rav, but may also include the Jewish People as well. But if the verse refers only to the Jewish People, without the erev rav, then the term "bnei Yisroel" is used.)

The implication, then, is that the erev rav represent the idea of "am", secular nationhood.

The Zohar and the Zohar Chadash add many insights into the function of the erev rav. The Zohar, (Breishit 25:1) says that towards the end of the last exile the erev rav will be the leaders over the Jewish people, and the tikuney Zohar Chadash (37:B) quotes the passage from Lamentations "Her enemies have become her leaders" (hoyu tsoreho lirosh) as referring to the erev rav. The Vilna Gaon commenting on the Zohar Chadash 61:A says "and they are called erev rav because they are the heads of Israel in the exile and they are therefore called rav." (Rav literally means master e.g. they are the masters over the Jewish People in the exile.) He goes on to explain that the Jewish People in the exile are divided into three categories: first are the erev rav who are up front, second are the good but ignorant Jews who are under the control of the erev rav, and thirdly are the talmidei chachamim, the Torah scholars, who are disgraced and persecuted by the erev rav. (See the commentary to Even Shleima Ch. 11.)

Unfortunately there are some real Jews who have become so influenced by the erev rav that they have come to resemble them, as it says, "vayitarvu bagoyim vayilmidu ma'aseyhem" (and they intermingled with the gentiles and they learned their deeds.) Tehillim: 106:35). (Also taken from the commentary to Even Shleima, Ch. 11).

The Vilna Gaon in his commentary to Tikuney Zohar (44:1) explains that the erev rav were also involved in the incident of "mey meriva", the waters of dissent. Moshe and Aharon sinned by striking the rock to give water, rather than speaking to it. The Da'at Chaim explains this incident as follows: The water that would have come forth from the rock had Moshe and Aaron spoken to it, would have been accompanied by the depths of the hidden aspects of Torah, known to us as kabala. Moshe Rabeinu did not believe that the people were worthy of this revelation because of the presence of the erev rav. This lack of belief on Moshe Rabeinu's part cause that the water did not come forth. This, however, was a major mistake. Moshe Rabeinu should not have let the erev rav interfere with his teaching of the essential Jewish people.

Moshe Rabeinu said, "shimu no hamorim" - listen you "morim" - "from this rock shall we take out for you water?" The word "morim" is usually translated here as "rebellious ones". The Tikuney Zohar, however, says that what Moshe Rabeinu meant here was "morim" meaning teachers, in this case, those who teach the halacha before their rav. The Vilna Gaon explains there that this was a reference to the erev rav; they wanted to teach their teachers.

The Zohar (Part 1, 26:1) says: they are the erev rav, they are the tree of knowledge, good and bad". This means that the erev rav have a combination of Torah wisdom and wisdom from "the other side".

This incident seems to suggest that the erev rav, aside from being powerful social and political leaders, can take another form as well; teachers or "rabbis" who think that they know better than the true tsadikim.

While we are on the subject of kabala and the erev rav, it may be interesting to note that Kol HaTor p.89 says this: "in ikveta dimeshicha (the period prior to the coming of Moshiach) the sitra achra gains power over everything, but especially over the internal dimension of Torah (kabala), and is against the revelation of the secrets of the arithmetical calculations of gematriyot which apply to the ikvot meshicha. This was what the sages meant when they said: 'the words of the sofrim (those who count) will have a bad smell' as our master the Vilna Gaon explained, and about this it says 'that disgraced the ikvot of your moshiach' (Tehillim 89:52).

Since this chapter deals not only with gematriyot but also with many types of Torah codes, and since the Vilna Gaon elsewhere speaks of arithmetical codes in the Torah (such as the equal spacing codes now being discovered with computers) this passage may very well be a warning about what would happen to the subject of the Torah codes and those who work with them, e.g. that they would be slandered. Since, as we have already mentioned, one of the tasks of Moshiach ben Yosef is to reveal the secrets and allusions (codes) of the Torah (razei u'rmazei haTorah), and since the erev rav are the enemies of Moshiach ben Yosef, it seems logical to assume that they would oppose both kabala and the Torah codes.

(This is not to say that anyone who opposes kabala study, or the Torah codes is erev rav. The irresponsible study of kabala which lead to tragedies, and the irresponsible claim to supposed "codes" which do not meet the scientific criteria of true codes, have helped to give both these areas a bad name in the eyes of the uninformed.)

Kol HaTor has quite a bit more to say about the erev rav. The following are some examples:

Kol HaTor p. 81: The erev rav is our greatest enemy. He separates between the two Moshiachs. The klipa (negative spiritual force) of the erev rav works only in a very roundabout and tricky way. Therefore the war against the erev rav is the most difficult and most bitter and we must overcome it with all our remaining strength..."

Moshiach ben Yosef is also called Efraim, or Moshiach ben Efraim, for Efraim is the son of Yosef from who issues Moshiach ben Yosef. In the medrash we mentioned earlier, Hashem calls Moshiach ben Yosef "my son Efraim" and the verse in Jeremiah 31 which

says "Is Efraim a precious son to me?" is explained by Kol HaTor as referring to Moshiach ben Yosef. Kol HaTor p. 42 speaks of Efraim and says: "Efraim's war is against Aramilus (the prince of the erev rav) who is equal to him in numerical value."

This seemingly simple statement has deep connotations. What is the significance of the fact that Efraim and Aramilus have equal numerical value? Chapter Three of Kol HaTor is devoted to an explanation of the significance of gematriyot (numerical values of words and letters) and other forms of codes in the Torah. Particularly in the period prior to the coming of Moshiach, says Kol HaTor, everything will be in accordance with gematriyot and codes (p. 89). What, then, is the significance behind the above quoted gematriya?

Generally, when things have an equal gematriya this is because they are both dealing with the same area. Sometimes, however, things will have an equal numerical value because they are exact opposites; they are both fighting over the same area.

Therefore, we can understand that Efraim and Aramilus are both fighting over the same area - they both want control of Shivat Zion, the return to Zion. The essential difference between them is, that Efraim's return to Zion is for the sake of holiness and is accompanied by Tshuva, repentance, while Aramilus' return to Zion will have the exact opposite effect - it will defile the holiness of the land of Israel, and it will cause the Jewish People to sin.

Will Aramilus kill Efraim? The Ari z"l said to pray every day for the life and success of Moshaich ben Yosef, that he not be killed by Aramilus. (This is printed in some siddurim next to the blessing "boneh Yerushalayim" in the amidah prayer, for it is Moshiach ben Yosef who builds Jerusalem.)

Kol HaTor says that due to the length of the exile, the suffering of the Jewish people, and the suffering and poverty of Moshiach ben Yosef himself, the original decree has been changed, and Moshaich ben Yosef will not be killed. (There is a rule that a bad decree can be changed.) Nevertheless, Kol HaTor stresses that one should pray sincerely every day for the life and success of Moshiach ben Yosef, that he not be killed before he successfully completes his mission. Kol HaTor (p. 77–78) even brings a special prayer for this called "Od Yosef Chai" - Yosef still lives - and a long list of chapters of Tehillim to be recited every day for this purpose. It seems that after all, Moshiach ben Yosef is still in danger.

In summation, let us quote from Kol HaTor p.32: "One should know from the start that the land of Israel is acquired through suffering, but this way it is a true acquisition. Ikvot Meshicha (the period prior to the coming of Moshiach) comes with disturbances and obstacles from the sar (representative angel) of Eisav and also from Aramilus the sar of the erev rav, but in the end he falls into the hand of the sar of

Yosef, as brought in medrash Tanchuma (Ki Tetse), with the help of Moshiach ben David, according to the idea that Yehuda saves Yosef". (Moshiach ben David is a descendent of Yehuda who saved Yosef from his brothers' death sentence by advising to sell Yosef instead. Similarly, Moshiach ben David, a descendent of Yehudah, will save Moshiach ben Yosef from his enemies.)

Kol HaTor does not explain why Moshiach ben Yosef, whose power is so great that he can wipe out Amalek and even cast the Satan into mortal fear, would be endangered by the erev rav. There are, however, other sources which can give us a clue. Rashi, (Breishit 41:55) tells us that Yosef had the Egyptians circumcise themselves. The Tiferes Shlomo, Miketz, says that those Egyptians became the erev rav. (He is obviously speaking of their reincarnations, because this was 210 years before the exodus from Egypt.) As we have already mentioned, Yosef's special power, which is the key to control over Zion, is brit milah, circumcision. The Gur Aryeh explains that Yosef had the Egyptians circumcise themselves because otherwise they would not have been able to benefit from his food. The Egyptians had also stored away food for the famine but their food rotted. Only Yosef's food remained fresh. In order for Yosef to be able to support the Egyptians they had to be in some way connected to him, and resemble him, hence he had them make brit milah. This, however, seems to have given these Egyptians some of the power of Yosef himself. There is a rule that a mitzvah performed for ulterior motives carries a reward in this world, but not in the next. Apparently, then, the Egyptians' circumcision gave them power in this world - the power earned through circumcision, which is Yosef's power. This would explain why they could oppose and endanger Moshiach ben Yosef. Apparently, the merit of the erev rav's circumcision gives them the power to oppose Moshiach ben Yosef. And as we have already mentioned, brit milah is the key to control over the land of Israel (Zohar, end of Lech Lecho). Now let us see if we can recognize the working of these principles in the events that transpired in this period of history.

Part 2: A Novel Look at History

We have already mentioned that the year 5500 (1740) which is the dawn of the world's erev Shabbat marks the beginning of the modern era. It is from then on that the powers of the aschalta degeula begin to enter the world. Let us then take a closer look at what happened to those powers.

From the mid 18th century onwards a new social philosophy was spreading in the western world - equality. This took form in the American Revolution (1776) when it

was declared that "all men are created equal" and in the French revolution (1791) whose slogan was "liberty, equality, fraternity". These ideas continued to spread throughout Europe and later throughout the world. And, as we have already mentioned, these movements stem from the power of "hishtavut" - equality - which is one of the aspects of Moshiach ben Yosef.

There were other ways in which life was changing as well. Newton, "the father of modern science", lived around this era of history, and it was in 1740 that the industrial revolution developed in Europe. The industrial revolution reached the United States in 1840, (5600) which is exactly the date given by the Zohar for the opening up of "the gates of wisdom above and the wellsprings (of wisdom) below".

With the coming of the renaissance in the pre dawn of the world's erev Shabbat, the western world began to wake up from a long slumber of ignorance and to return to the Greco- Roman culture. In order to understand the modern world it is therefore necessary to understand some more about this culture.

The Talmud explains that Rome is brute force while Greece represents beauty and secular wisdom. Since Rome had no culture of its own, it took over Greek culture. From the combination of these two, arose the western culture.

The Talmud speaks about the beauty and wisdom of Greece. Noah, the father of all mankind said, "G-d will give beauty to Yefet and He will dwell in the tents of Shem". This means that Greece, who was descended from Yefet received the gift of beauty and material wisdom. The descendents of Shem, the Jewish People, hosted the presence of G-d. Had these two forces combined and the beauty of Yefet been used to enhance the holiness of Shem, both would have benefitted, and Yefet, too, would have had a share in G-d's holiness. Unfortunately, it didn't work out that way. The Sages have quite a bit to say about Greek wisdom, and it is quite negative.

The wisdom of Greece is called "chochmot chitsoniyot". We would usually call this secular wisdom, but literally it means external wisdom, e.g. wisdom which is outside of holiness. In kabala, the term "chitsonim", means the evil forces which are opposed to holiness.

As we have explained above, science, math, music, psychology, etc. are all part of the Torah if one studies them that way. If, however, one severs them from their G-dly root and sees them as secular and unconnected to G-d, not only will these studies not bring a person closer to perfection, they will put a distance between the person and G-d, and strongly influence the person towards atheism. It is important for us to understand this in order to comprehend what now transpired in Jewish history. As parts of Europe now began a period of intellectual awakening, there developed among

many of the Jews who lived in those areas a desire to take part in the general culture. This movement was called the "enlightenment", or the *haskala* movement, and its official founder was Moses Mendelsohn. Moses Mendelsohn was a Jewish intellectual who lived in Prussia (now Germany) in the 18th century. Being learned in secular subjects, and knowledgeable in the language and culture of his environment, he was admired and respected by his gentile friends. One of these, an admiring prince, introduced Mendelsohn to the royal court.

Moses Mendelsohn was also learned in Jewish subjects. He translated the Torah into German and even wrote a commentary on it called the "*Biur*". He called for his fellow Jews to adopt his lifestyle which combined secular and Jewish learning. The Jews, he said, should speak the language of the country they lived in, and participate in its culture, while still observing the Torah. This, he said, would give Jews a respected position in the surrounding (gentile) society. Since the philosophy of equal rights for all, was now spreading in western and central Europe, Mendelsohn said that this would give the Jews a viable way of living and relating to the new social conditions.

Mendelsohn seemed to be a sincere, Torah observant Jew who wanted to help his brothers relate to the new conditions created by the modern era. Although there were some great rabbis of the period who were suspicious of him, many others saw Mendelsohn as he appeared to be. One of these was the awesome Vilna Gaon.

It was only after Mendelsohn's death that it became obvious where his philosophy was leading. Not one of his students or children remained loyal to Torah; some of them even converted to Christianity. One of Mendelsohn's students, Friedlander, opened a school for the Jewish poor according to the program he said Mendelsohn had designed. This school taught mainly secular subjects, a little Tanach, some Hebrew, and absolutely NO Talmud.

With the coming of the emancipation to the Jews of western and central Europe, the *haskalah* movement spread like wildfire. No longer enclosed within ghettos, the Jews now had the opportunity to mingle freely with the gentiles. As one thinker of the "enlightenment" movement put it, "Be a Jew in your home, and a human being outside."

The result of this was that in one generation practically all the Jews of western and central Europe had left Torah observance, and conversions to Christianity were not at all rare.

The *haskalah* movement now took a new twist. It was called reform. This movement provided a new framework that permitted discarding the mitzvot which one felt got in

the way of his acclimation to gentile society, while still considering himself as belonging to the Jewish religion.

One of the outstanding features of the reform movement was its total disassociation from Zion. A desire to return to Zion, they felt, would be seen as disloyalty to the host country, who had now so graciously granted them equal rights and total entry into their society. Wouldn't they be seen as ungrateful? Besides, a return of the Jewish People to Zion was clearly an impossible dream, a "myth" that no reasonable person could believe in. The Jewish people were scattered all over the world. They had no political strength, no uniting central government. The land of Israel was not livable anyway; it was a destroyed, barren country which was clearly uninhabitable. Mark Twain visited the land of Israel in 1867 and this is how he described it:

"A desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with a pomp of life and action. We reached Tabor safely... We never saw a human being on the whole route...

(Bethlehem)... is untenanted by any living creature. Jezreel valley: "...there is not even a solitary village throughout its whole extent - not for thirty miles in either direction, just a few Bedouin tents. Jerusalem: "The further we went the more rocky and bare, repulsive and dreary the landscape became...There was hardly a tree or a shrub anywhere...even the olive and the cactus, those fast friends of a worthless soil had almost deserted the country."

He summed it up like this: "...Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies...Palestine is desolate and unlovely...it is a hopeless, dreary, heartbroken land" (from *Innocents Abroad*).

And so the people of the "enlightenment", far too "enlightened" and "reasonable" to be misled by prophecies (which they anyway didn't believe in) decided to discard Zion. They removed all mention of Zion from their prayer books. They didn't need Zion; as far as they were concerned, their redemption had already come. As one leading "rabbi" of the reform movement put it "Berlin is our Jerusalem".

When one reflects on this period of history and compares it to the warnings given in Kol HaTor, a pattern emerges. Kol HaTor (p.127) warns that the more Jews will do to bring the aschalta degeula, the stronger the sitra achra will grow to fight it. But if that were not enough, this will be done in such a tricky way that even very great Torah personalities will not be able to identify the culprit for what he truly is. As Kol HaTor (p. 128) puts it: "And how strong is the power of the sitra achra that was able to hide from our holy forefathers the danger of the klipot (negative spiritual forces that oppose holiness) - from the eyes of Avraham Avinu (our forefather Abraham)

(was hidden) the klipa of Yishmael, from the eyes of Yitzchak Avinu (our forefather Isaac) (was hidden) the klipa of Eisav, and from the eyes of Yaakov Avinu (our forefather Jacob) (was hidden) the klipa of the trafim (Laban's idols)."

(This last statement about the trafim needs explanation. The trafim were not just some empty, ordinary stone or gold idols. They were connected to very potent forces of evil and they really posed a very great danger. Rachel stole them from her father because she alone, and not Jacob, realized the tremendous threat they posed. She did this at very great personal risk, mesirat nefesh, and she did, in fact, die as a result. In a footnote of Kol HaTor (p. 128) it is explained that although the sitra achra hid the danger of these klipot from our forefathers, it did not realize that the mothers also had ruach hakodesh, a spirit of divine knowledge, and so did not bother hiding it from them. The mothers, consequently, did see the klipot, and they opposed them with great self sacrifice.)

Kol HaTor continues: "And in ikveta dimeshichah (the period prior to the coming of Moshiach) the sitra achra gains so much strength that it strikes Torah scholars blind".

We have already brought the quote that "the klipa of the erev rav works only through trickery and roundabout ways. In fact, as Kol HaTor points out, the name Aramilus contains the word "ramai" which means trickster. (Arami, the beginning of this word, is the title of Laban, the archetype fraud, and, as the sages point out, when these letters are turned around they spell out "ramai" - fraud.)

When we combine all this with history it seems obvious that Moses Mendelsohn, the father of the haskalah movement, was the agent of Aramilus, sar of the erev rav. His job was to take Jews away from Torah observance while pretending to be a sincere, observant Jew. Mendelsohn succeeded to an unbelievable degree. Even some of the greatest Torah personalities of the time could not see through him.

One of the biggest questions people ask on the Vilna Gaon is, what was the reason for his opposition to Chassidut? How is it possible that such a great tsadik who had Ruach Hakodesh and studied with Eliyahu Hanavi could make such a mistake? The answer is that even a prophet knows only what Hashem wishes to show him. The forefathers could not see the klipot because Hashem didn't show these to them. The Vilna Gaon could not see the klipa of Mendelsohn because Hashem would not show that to him. And he could not see the goodness of Chassidut because Hashem did not show it to him. Had he seen either, it would have totally changed history.

What I think happened is this: The Vilna Gaon knew that the klipa of the erev rav was about to appear in a new movement that, if not stopped, would be catastrophic to the Jewish People. It is quite possible that he knew through ruach hakodesh (Divinely

inspired knowledge) that there would arise in Germany a Jew who would be learned in both Torah and general wisdom, who would have a governmental position, who would translate the Torah into German and would write a commentary on it, and who would start a new movement that would combine Torah observance with taking part in the life of the host country. And this person would be genuine, kosher, and even a tsadik. There was such a person; his name was Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsh and he appeared on the scene a generation later. But without seeing into Mendelsohn's heart, all these descriptions seemed to suit him as well. It would have seemed obvious that Mendelsohn was that person.

So, if it was not Mendelsohn who was the hidden emissary of Aramilus, who could it be? There was only one other possibility - the Chassidim. They seemed suspicious. They were making changes in tradition, in outlook, and even in a few halachic points. They disseminated teachings from kabala but they seemed to be deemphasizing the centrality of Torah study as the main point of Judaism. All sorts of rumors were spreading about this new "cult".

Many people mistakenly think that the Vilna Gaon was against kabala study. This is the exact opposite of the truth, as already explained. The Gaon knew, however, that kabala could be misused, just as Shabsai Tzvi, the false moshiach, misused it. It is also possible that the Vilna Gaon knew that this dangerous new movement of the erev rav, that was about to appear on the scene, would misuse the concept of the "Torah chadasha" - the new Torah - giving it a false meaning.

There is a medrash (Vayikra Raba 13:3) which says, "A new Torah will come forth from me. As we have already explained, what this means is that after the geula the Torah will be understood on the level of kabala, the "new Torah". Chassidut concentrated on kabala. If the Vilna Gaon knew that the problem would arise davka in the area of "the new Torah", than this would have seemed to fit the pattern. What was not yet apparent was a movement that sprouted shortly afterwards - a movement which, although totally unrelated to kabala, also based itself on a concept of "a new Torah", albeit in a very perverted way. This was the reform movement which appeared a short time later. The reformists claimed that in the new era it was no longer necessary to observe the practical mitzvot. (The truth is that at some point after the redemption there really will be a change in the observance of the practical mitzvot, as explained above, for how can one keep the laws of death when there is no death, the laws of visiting the sick, when no one is ever sick, etc. These mitzvot will then be kept according to their kabalistic meanings. This, however, has nothing to do with our present observance.) In other words, reform was the klipa, or negative parallel of Chassidut. But there was no way that the Vilna Gaon could have known this, as reform

had not yet appeared. If Mendelsohn was "kosher" than Chassidut had to be the culprit. There was no other choice.

And so the Vilna Gaon came out staunchly against Chassidut. As Kol HaTor (p.80) explains "the main desire of the erev rav is to...separate between the two moshiachs". Had the Vilna Gaon been able to identify the true emissary of the erev rav he would not have suspected the Chassidim. The Chassidim say that had the Vilna Gaon combined with the Ba'al HaTanya (who tried unsuccessfully to meet with him) the redemption would have come. The combination of the Vilna Gaon and the Chassidim would have been the union of the tree of Yosef with the tree of Yehuda, which would have immediately brought the redemption. Therefore, by presenting Mendelsohn as a sincere Jew the sitra achra scored a double victory; it started a movement which would remove millions from Torah, and it separated between the tsadikim, thereby preventing the redemption. But the time for the redemption had not yet come.

Now let us return to the plan to bring the redemption through "the revealed end". In 5542 (1782), the Vilna Gaon set off for Eretz Yisroel so that he could start the plan of "the revealed end". In the middle of the way, however, he turned around and came back. His mysterious return is explained in Kol HaTor as follows. When the Vilna Gaon started out he was the tsadik who was representing Moshiach ben Yosef. On the way, however, he rose to the level of the tsadik hosting sparks of the soul of Moshe Rabeinu. On this level he could no longer enter Eretz Yisroel, just as Moshe Rabeinu himself could not enter Eretz Yisroel. He had no choice but to return and send his students instead, just as Yehoshua, the student of Moshe Rabeinu went where Moshe Rabeinu could not go.

The Vilna Gaon passed away in 1798. About ten years later a group of his students and their families numbering 70 souls really made it to Eretz Yisroel. The trip took 10 months in tiny boats. Rabbi Hillel Shiklover's father, Rabbi Binyomin Shiklover, who had financed the trip, died on the way. When the group arrived, the conditions they found here were unbelievably discouraging, but their determination to start the resettlement and rebuilding of Eretz Yisroel was made of iron. These scholars and kabalists brought spades with them to start the physical planting of the land of Israel.

When the group arrived there were already small Jewish communities in existence. There were Sfardic Jews who came after the Spanish expulsion and there were the students of the Ba'al Shem Tov and their followers who came shortly before the students of the Vilna Gaon. (The students of the Gaon who came to Eretz Yisroel, did not abide by the ban against the Chassidim.) These Jews lived mostly in the four holy cities, Jerusalem, Hebron, Tsfat and Tiverya.

The students of the Vilna Gaon had come on a mission and they tried to put it into action. Rabbi Yisroel Shklover, one of the leaders of the community, sent an emissary to look for the 10 lost tribes, so that he could use their smicha to start a sanhedrin. (The emissary got waylaid in Yemen and never completed his task.) They wanted to build, to plant, to start agricultural communities and to rebuild Jerusalem but the difficulties were so immense they had trouble just trying to survive. There were two earthquakes in this period with grave losses, plagues, and terrible poverty. The Arab government had Rabbi Yisroel arrested on some trumped up charge and nearly had him tortured, but Divine Providence intervened and he was released. His whole family, however, died in plagues. There is a very touching story related to this.

Rabbi Yisroel's wife and many of his children had already died. He had one child and one grandchild surviving. These two also became ill. Rabbi Yisroel went up to the roof of the house and called out, "Master of the Universe, I'm only flesh and blood. How much can I take? Please, have mercy!" Then he cried like a child. His child and grandchild recovered, but took sick again and died some years later. Yet despite all his suffering Rabbi Yisroel used to sign his letters, "I, the dust of the land of Israel", so great was his love for the land of Israel. As for his family, he remarried and started another one. This story is typical of what these people went through. They knew very well that it would be very tough going, and they knew why. The sitra achra was going to fight them tooth and nail, because if they succeeded, they would bring the redemption.

After the year 5600 (Tor)-1840 conditions became somewhat easier. Eventually Sir Moses Montefiore of England became interested in supporting this new settlement in Eretz Yisroel. About 1860 something very new and daring was tried. A new neighborhood was begun outside the walls of old Jerusalem. At first people thought that Arab bandits would surely massacre any settlers outside the protecting walls. But amazingly they survived. Afterwards, neighborhood after neighborhood followed - Even Yisroel, Nahlat Shiva, Me'a She'arim and many others.

Agricultural settlements were also started. Petach Tikva was founded by very religious Jews from Meah Shearim. Other agricultural settlements such as Rehovot and Rishon Litzion, Hadera, Yesod Hama'aleh, Rosh Pina and others were all started by very religious settlers. Some of these were descendents of those early settlers.

In the 1880's there was an aliya from Yemen. News of the aschalta degeula had reached Yemen and a group of sincere and idealistic Yemenite Jews decided to come and take part. They had heard of the help of Sir Moses Montefiore and they thought that he would support them. When they got here they were in for a very unhappy surprise. No one knew of their intended arrival and no one was there to greet them.

When the Jews from Yemen arrived in Jerusalem, the other Jews thought that they were Arabs, and so they ignored them. The Yemenite Jews took shelter in caves to survive. Somehow, through Hashem's providence, they pulled through and eventually built homes and became part of the community. But that original mistake might have been the "crack" in the wall of righteousness that the sitra achra was waiting for. The power to gather in the exiles, to settle Eretz Yisroel in holiness and thereby bring the geula, would now pass out of the hands of the religious community.

Formation of Secular Zionism

The haskalah movement had by now reached Russian Jewry. An "enlightened" (e.g. secularized) Jew by the name of Leon Pinsker tried to assimilate into the intellectual Russian gentile society. Then came the pogroms against the Jews in 1881. Pinsker came up with what he thought was the only possible solution to anti-Semitism: the Jews must have their own homeland, so they would not be unwanted guests in other people's countries.

For religious Jews there was nothing new about this idea. They had been waiting and praying for this since the exile began. Pinsker, however, gave it a new twist. He said, "Stop sitting around and waiting for a heaven-sent redemption. Go out and do it yourself!" This idea he called "auto emancipation".

When one views Pinsker's ideology in the context of the aschalta degeula one cannot help noticing an uncanny outer resemblance between this, and the Vilna Gaon's plan of "the revealed end". Both are, in effect, a "do it yourself geula" plan, both could be called auto emancipation. But there the resemblance ends. The Vilna Gaon's plan was to bring about the Torah's redemption, which means the Jewish people returning to Hashem in holiness, being His beloved people who would establish His kingdom on earth. He knew that it was G-d's will that at that point in history, the Jews begin the return on their own, and that "arousal from below brings arousal from above" (e.g. man's actions in this world bring a parallel heavenly response). Pinsker's idea, on the other hand, was to forget about Hashem and establish a state without Him! (Cholila.)

For one who is familiar with the rule of "ze li'umat ze bara HaElokim" (G-d created this versus that) this situation is not difficult to understand. Everything that exists in holiness has a parallel on the "other side". Both will use the same power, but for exactly opposite ends. The Vilna Gaon called his plan to bring the geula by settling Eretz Yisroel "Hazon Zion", the vision of Zion. This really was Zionism. But while the

Vilna Gaon's Zionist movement was made to bring people closer to Hashem, Pinsker's return to Zion was to be without Hashem. Pinsker's "auto emancipation", then, fits as the opposite side of the Vilna Gaon's plan.

Pinsker realized that he could not get enough support for his idea from the ranks of the assimilated Jews called the maskilim. He would have to get followers from the ranks of the orthodox, whose hearts were filled with an overflowing love and longing for the land of Israel. As The Siege by Conor Cruise O'Brien puts it, "The linkage of secular and Orthodox Jews was a crucial factor in the development of Zionism. Zionism as a political program took off among the maskilim, but it derived its vital force and its orientation from the religious life of the Orthodox Jewish population of the shtetl..." In other words, in order to make Zionism into a living reality, the secular "maskilim" knew that they would need the orthodox Jews.

The continued Russian pogroms, however, made many young Jews, even in the secular camp, long for their own national homeland. The Russian Jews organized a group called "Chovevei Zion". Weizman, Ben Gurion, and many other future leaders of the Zionist movement, all stemmed from these Russian Zionists. The secular Zionists redefined what it meant to be Jewish. As Ben Hecht, himself a secular Zionist, says in his book *Perfidy*: "They (the secular Zionists) were out to change the Jews from the people of the Torah to the people of Zion, a nation." This puts into a nutshell the secular Zionist ideology. They did not want Jews to be the people of the Torah, they wanted them to be a secular people based on its own land, like all other nations. Their idea may never have gotten off the ground, however, if it hadn't been for reinforcement from other quarters.

In 1894 a Jew by the name of Dreyfus, who was an officer in the French army, was charged with spying for the enemy. It was a false charge but the authorities decided to blame Dreyfus because he was Jewish. He was convicted and a great wave of anti-Semitism engulfed France. A Jewish reporter was sent by a Viennese newspaper to cover the story. His name was Theodore Herzl. He watched in shock and amazement the anti-Semitic French mobs who directed their hatred at all Jews, including him.

Dreyfus was assimilated. Herzl, too, was totally assimilated. According to the philosophy of the "enlightenment", assimilation should have put an end to anti-Semitism, but it obviously hadn't. And Herzl began to ponder how the problem of anti-Semitism could be solved, once and for all.

Herzl's first idea was to convert the Jews to the gentile religion. He wrote in his diary: "I thought to solve the Jewish question, at least in Austria, with the help of the Catholic Church, who would enable me to get an interview with the Pope. I would tell the Pope, 'Help us against the anti-Semites and I will put into action a powerful

movement to convert the Jews to Christianity in a proud and free manor'. It would be proud and free in the sense that the leaders of the movement, I in particular, would remain Jewish, and as Jews would preach conversion, not in shame as was done until now, but in an upright manner, especially as the leaders would remain Jewish. We, the courageous ones, would be the borderline generation. We would remain in our ancestral religion but our young ones would be converted before they would be old enough to decide on their own." (Second volume, Diary A, p.14. Herzl's writings, published by Newman, Dec. 24, 1896)

Herzl's solution was not to be. Even the assimilated Jews of Austria were not about to embark on a campaign of wholesale conversion of their children. There was nothing new about the idea of solving anti-Semitism through defection from Judaism. The gentiles had been promoting this idea for over a thousand years. Any Jew who wished, was free to end his degrading status and lack of rights by simple conversion. No more pogroms, no more ghettos, no more special taxes, any profession or position you want, just convert to Christianity and its all yours - that was the standing offer. And the Jewish masses responded by saying, "Thanks, but no thanks - I'd rather be burnt at the stake!" Brought face to face with this "uncourageous" Jewish stubbornness Herzl realized he was going to have to think of something a lot more subtle to "solve the Jewish question".

At that time the winds of nationalism were blowing very strongly through Europe. The ideal of the times was self determination, meaning that every nation should have its own land with its own language and culture. It is not surprising then, that Herzl's next solution involved nationalism. This time, he really hit home. What strong emotions he aroused is illustrated by the following passage from Herzl's diary: "I stood on the altar platform" (in a synagogue in Sofia in 1896). When I was not quite sure how to face the congregation without turning my back to the holy of holies, someone cried, "It's alright for you to turn your back on the ark, you are holier than the Torah".

Of course, not everyone reacted like that, but Herzl did arouse an immense emotional reaction. Mordechai Ben Ami, a delegate from Odessa (a bastion of secularism) at the first Zionist congress at Basil in 1896 writes the following: "Before us was the splendid figure of the son of kings, with a deep and concentrated gaze, handsome and sad at one and the same time. It was not the elegant Herzl of Vienna, but a man of the house of David, risen all of a sudden from his grave in all his legendary glory...It seemed as if the great dream cherished by our people for two thousand years had come true at last and Messiah the son of David was standing before us" (taken from The Siege p.78 who is quoting from Joseph Nedava, Herzl and Messianism).

This is how Mordechai Ben Ami saw it. Herzl was not at all observant of the Torah and he had abandoned the idea of converting Jewish children to Christianity only out of

necessity, not out of a religious change of heart. Nor was Herzl against intermarriage. His friend and supporter Max Nordau was married to a non Jewish woman and Herzl had assured him that this would be perfectly acceptable in the "Jewish" state of his vision. None of this, however, seemed to bother Herzl's ardent admirers. So long as he would get them back to Zion, nothing else mattered to them.

Rabbis' Views on Secular Zionism

How did the rabbis of the time view secular Zionism? The majority of tsadikim definitely opposed it. Their view was that any movement emanating from the maskilim boded no good for the souls of the Jewish People. With this they had already had ample experience. The maskilim were not only irreligious themselves; wherever they went they drew large numbers of Jews away from Torah observance. If the maskilim were to make a Jewish state, they foresaw that it would be a spiritual disaster.

There were, however, a few others who did not see it this way. The most notable among them was Rav Avraham Yitzchok Kook (1865-1935). Rav Kook saw secular Zionism as a cover for a Divinely willed purpose. "What Jewish secular nationalists want", he wrote, "they do not themselves know. The spirit of Israel is so closely linked with the spirit of Hashem that a Jewish nationalist, no matter how secular his intentions may be, is despite himself imbued with the Divine Spirit even against his own will" (Making of Modern Zionism, Avneri, quoted in The Siege p.51).

Rav Kook, like the kabbalist Rav Alkali, saw the Zionist movement as the aschalta degeula, the period of Moshiach ben Yosef, which is started by the Jews' own efforts, as already explained. They saw these secularists as Hashem's tool in starting the redemption. Although Rav Kook recognized these people as resha'im (wicked) in their behavior towards G-d, he thought that in the merit of their concern for the welfare of the Jewish People they would eventually be brought to repent, and their intended state would then turn into something holy and good. The majority of rabbis, however, did not agree.

But there were tsadikim that opposed Zionism, not only because of its secular leadership. As one tsadik put it, "We didn't put ourselves into the exile and we can't take ourselves out". There were some rabbis who saw the fervor over secular Zionism as an abandonment of the ancient belief in the geula, substituting instead, the goal of

an ordinary national state. And there were some who saw in the establishment of the State of Israel a rebellion against the three oaths mentioned in the Talmud.

The Three Oaths

There are three verses in Shir Hashirim which begin, "I have made an oath with you the daughters of Jerusalem". On this the Talmud (Ktubot 111a) comments: Rabbi Yosi in the name of Rabbi Chanina said, Why are there these three oaths? One that Israel should not ascend (to the Holy Land) as a wall (together and by force - Rashi), and one that the Holy One Blessed Be He made an oath with Israel that they not rebel against the nations of the world, and one that the Holy One Blessed Be He made an oath with the nations of the world that they do not subject Israel overly much...Rabbi Levi said, why are there these six oaths? Three that were already mentioned and that they do not reveal the end, and that they do not postpone the end, and that they do not reveal the secret to the gentiles.

Medrash Raba, Shir Hashirim (Parsha 2:2) also speaks of these oaths and says: "Rabbi Yosi son of Chanina said: There are two oaths here, one to Israel, and one to the nations of the world. He made an oath with Israel that they do not rebel against the burden of nations of the world, and He made an oath with the nations of the world that they do not impose their yoke heavily, because if they impose their yoke on Israel heavily they cause the end to come not in its proper time... Rabbi Chalbo says that there are four oaths here: He made an oath with Israel not to rebel against the kingdoms, and that they do not press the end, and that they do not reveal their mysteries to the nations of the world, and that they do not ascend (as) a wall from the exile".

The present version of Kol HaTor does not deal directly with the issue of the three oaths. However, Chapter 1, footnote 31 from Rav Shlomo Zalman Rivlin, says: "See the Siddur of the Gra, Page 48 (on Shir HaShirim 2) on the verse 'I made an oath with you etc.' It should be noted that the Gra comments on the paragraph which says not to press the end, 'that they should not go out on their own to build the Bet Hamikdosh'. This clearly shows that according to the Gra the warning not to press the end was said only concerning the building of the Bet Hamikdosh but not concerning the building of Jerusalem and the settling of Eretz Yisroel."

Then in chapter 6:2 Kol HaTor says: "We are required to work for the building of Jerusalem, using all means of turning it into an inheritance, by chazakah and chozkah

(e.g. by planting and building, known in English as squatters rights, and by force (chozkah).” This goes only as far as (but not including) the building of the Bet Hamikdosh, for, according to our master the Gra, in his commentary to Shir HaShirim, one may not use this power for the building of the Bet Hamikdosh.”

(Although Kol HaTor here advocates the use of force, if necessary, for the building of Jerusalem, on p. 145 Kol HaTor says that wars may be fought only in defense. The implication, then, would be that wars of defense would bring about the conquering of areas of Eretz Yisroel. Regarding this Kol HaTor brings the verse: "Settle in the cities that you have grabbed".)

When Zionism became a practical issue some Torah authorities ruled that it is forbidden to establish a Jewish state in the land of Israel before the coming of Moshiach, saying that this would be a violation of the oaths. Others said that this is not so. This is a complex issue, and we will deal here only briefly with some of the points.

In a discussion of this issue, the book Da'at Chaim says that the three oaths do not have halachic status, but are rather warnings that these actions would be unsuccessful. (He mentions, however, that according to Rabbi Yuden, Medrash Shir HaShirim 2:18, they would also have dire results, leading to the deaths of many, many Jews.) For this reason, he says, the Rambam discusses the three oaths only in his famed letter to Yemen (Igeret Teiman) but not in his halachic work, Yad HaChazakah, for these oaths, although important, are not halacha. The Da'at Chaim also points out that according to the Ramban it is a positive command to conquer Eretz Yisroel (if possible) at all times, which could not be so, were this a contradiction of the halacha.

The Da'at Chaim quotes from Rabbi Chaim Vital, the main student of the Ari z"l, who says that according to the Braysa of Rabbi Yishma'el, Pirkei Heichalos, the oaths were in effect for the first thousand years after the destruction of the second temple. Rabbi Chaim Vital also says (in Eitz HaChaim, introduction to Sha'ar HaHakdamot) that after a thousand years the original period destined for the exile has been served, and the redemption awaits us, but if the Jewish people are still not ready, the redemption will be postponed (p. 70). (The fact that it is possible to postpone the original date for the redemption is evident from the fact that one of the oaths made with the Jewish People is not to postpone the end through sins.)

According to Targum Yonatan, the first two verses beginning "I made an oath with you, daughters of Jerusalem" are said by Moshe to the generation of the desert, while the third verse is said by King Moshiach before the war of Gog and Magog. (Shir HaShirim 2:7, 3:5 and 8:4). And according to Medrash Raba Shir HaShirim 2:2 the

oaths are still in effect at the beginning of the period of moshiach but they do not include any prohibition against the ingathering of the exiles.

The question, however, is, if these oaths are still in effect (which was obviously the opinion of the Vilna Gaon) would establishing a state against the will of the Arabs who at that time occupied Eretz Yisroel, be considered as rebelling against the nations? Or would the fact that the English, who were then in control of Eretz Yisroel, placed the matter in the hands of the United Nations, who approved of a Jewish state, show that the ban of rebelling against the nations had not been transgressed? About this, there are differences of opinions.

In summation, the Da'at Chaim (p. 68) says that according to what Rabbi Chaim Vital explains, these oaths could have expired, and the exile should have ended, for the exile was originally intended to be a thousand years. If the redemption has not yet arrived it is not because the time has not yet arrived but because the people of Israel have not yet reached the level of studying Torah without desiring reward (e.g. only out of the love of Torah itself). Rabbi Chaim Vital explains that this level is absolutely necessary to bring the redemption. And, he writes, only through the study of kabala can we reach this level of Torah study.

The Da'at Chaim then says, "And, as explained above, the oaths are "until it will be desired" (ad shetechpotz) meaning until the preparations are made so that leaving the exile will bring to perfection in faith and love of Hashem..." In other words, if leaving the exile does not lead us to perfection in faith and love of Hashem, it will be of no benefit, and can even cause harm, for the purpose of the exile has not yet been achieved.

And now this writer would like to add a point. The Medrash quoted above (Shir HaShirim, Parsha 2:2) says that if the nations of the world will impose their burden on Israel too heavily this will bring the redemption before its proper time. As we see, the holocaust led directly to the establishment of an independent Jewish state in Israel three years later - before the Jewish people were spiritually ready.

The question of whether Zionism, even if not secularized, is a contradiction of these oaths, was a crucial factor in determining the attitude of the Torah leaders towards the establishment of a Jewish State in the land of Israel. Those who said that Zionism was a violation of the oaths were clearly opposed to it in all forms. Those who did not see it as a violation of the oaths were divided. Rabbi Kook, as mentioned earlier, saw in all Zionism the hand of Hashem bringing the redemption in a hidden way. He therefore strongly encouraged and supported all forms of Zionism. There were also other orthodox Jews whose goals were not so spiritual, but who wanted to collaborate

with the secular Zionists simply because they longed for a Jewish state in the land of Israel.

The majority of rabbis, however, took a very wary position. Although they may have approved of Zionism on a theoretical level, even seeing in it the potential of the *aschalta degeula*, they were very frightened of its secular goals and ideology. Moreover, they had learned by bitter experience that any connection with the *maskilim* led to mass defection from Torah. Therefore, we find a statement by the Chofetz Chaim calling the Balfour Declaration "a smile from heaven" but also pointing out that the Hebrew letters for Balfour spell out Baal Pe'or, the name of an idol that led Jews astray in the desert. It all depends on how it is handled.

And how was it handled?

Shameful History

The people who headed the Zionist movement and who brought about the establishment of the State of Israel are seen by most Jews as great heroes. Even many orthodox Jews see them as really out to help the Jewish People in a physical sense, and give them great credit for that. The actual historical facts, however, tell a very different story. The truth is so somber and shocking that it is difficult to even read about it, but we must face facts if we aim to reach the truth.

About ten years after the establishment of the State, a trial took place in Israel which revealed the shocking fact that the World Zionist Congress, the Jewish Agency, and the leaders of the Zionist movement (Ben Gurion, Sharett, Weizman, etc.) had deliberately squelched news of the mass murder of Jews during the holocaust, and had deliberately foiled efforts to save them. This was revealed mainly through the Greenwald - Kestner trial, and the story of Yoel Brandt. The following is taken from the books *Perfidy* and *Ot Kayin*.

Malchiel Greenwald was a religious Zionist who had a little newspaper where he wrote a letter to "my friends in the Mizrahi" revealing that Rudolph Kestner, a government official and Mapai candidate, had been a Nazi collaborator. The Israeli government had Greenwald tried for libel. In the course of the trial it was revealed that not only was Kestner truly a collaborator but the "great men" behind him, Weizmann, Ben Gurion, Sharett, etc., knew about this and still supported him. But, even more important, the Zionist leaders had deliberately suppressed information on the extent of the Nazi murders. It was shown in court that Rabbi Dov Weissmandel had sent exact

information to the Zionist leaders saying that 12,000 Jews were being killed each day, and a Jewish agency official testified that he had passed it on to them. Yet their official newspaper Davar wrote: "The Nazi denial of extermination has a good foundation. Not as many were annihilated as was feared." Tamir, Greenwald's lawyer, puts it like this:

"The Jewish Agency had by then the best and most exact informative source on the fate of the Jews of Hungary, and on the deportations, and there was no British censorship of such items, as was proven in Court. But from the end of May until the 16th of July, for a full month and a half, when 12,000 Jews are being killed a day, still not a single authoritative word is uttered by the Jewish Agency or any Zionist officials, that these deportations have started and are continued, that already half a million Jews were exterminated. For a full month and a half, Mr. Sharett and the Jewish agency are knowingly and willfully suppressing all the news known to them..."

And why this suppression of the dreadful news by Ben Gurion, Sharett, Weizmann, and all the official leaders of Jewry? Because had the masses in Palestine known then what was happening in Hungary, and known then the stony hearts of their leaders, a storm would have risen in our land. Power would have fallen out of their hands. And this, it seems, was more important to them."

Yoel Brandt, like Kestner, was a representative of the World Zionist Congress in Hungary, but unlike Kestner, he was sincere. When Eichman presented him with an offer to spare the lives of one million Jews in return for trucks, soap, and coffee, Brandt turned desperately to his friends in the World Zionist Congress, who summarily turned him over for internment by the British. (Two men boarded Brandt's train to warn him that he was headed for a trap. One was from the revisionist (Begin's) party, and the other was from Agudat Yisroel. But Brandt's travelling companion from the World Zionist Congress convinced him that he was safe. When the train stopped, this travelling companion suddenly excused himself, and Brandt was arrested.)

Moshe Sharett, who visited Brandt in captivity, assured him that the Nazi offer would be discussed by the World Zionist Congress, and it was. At the meeting held on this issue, Yitzchok Greenbaum, head of the Jewish Agency Rescue Division, refused to allocate Keren HaYesod funds for the rescue of a million European Jews, because, he said, the money could be better used to build up Palestine. He said, "Of course there is sufficient money (to save the million Jews) if we take from the Keren HaYesod funds. But we will not take from the Keren HaYesod funds. We will use those means to continue our war for the geula...Zionism is above everything. We must declare this every time a great holocaust leads us astray from our war to redeem Zion. Our war to redeem Zion does not flow directly out of, nor does it directly correspond with, our actions to help the diaspora."

The point of secular Zionism was supposedly to save Jews from anti-Semitism, yet Greenbaum says that it is not to help the Jews of the diaspora. Then who is it to help? Greenbaum himself gave the answer in another reported comment. When asked by European refugees to swear to do everything possible to save the remaining Jews of Europe, Greenbaum refused. He explains: "...and again I spoke about the trust placed in our hands and the need to emerge from the status of abnormal people to be a nation like all other nations. Two thousand years of exile are enough for us. We will have equal rights among the worldwide family of nations. That is our goal and we must put it into action." In other words, the goal is not to save Jews, but for the select few to have honor, status and equal rights among the family of nations. For this goal one may sacrifice the Jews of the diaspora.

Item: Ben Gurion was present when Greenbaum refused to use the Keren HaYesod funds to save a million Jews. He offered no objection.

If this were not shocking enough, Ben Hecht, author of *Perfidy* tells a story where not only did these leaders refuse to aid the rescue of Jews, but deliberately foiled the efforts of others to do so. Ben Hecht tried to raise money in America to ransom the Jews of Rumania. There was quite a response. Then, on February 23, 1943, "Rabbi" Stephen Wise (reform) who was Zionist chieftain in New York, issued a statement in the name of the American Jewish Congress, saying that the whole deal was a fraud. The Jewish Agency in London also denied the Rumanian offer. This denial was cabled to American newspapers, and carried by them. As a result the rescue of Rumanian Jewry was prevented from materializing. Peter Bergson, who was working with Ben Hecht, called Undersecretary of State Adolph A. Berle, Jr. and asked him to affirm or deny the Rumanian offer. Berle said he would call back with the answer. He did, the next day. The story was true, said Berle. The State Department had received such an offer from the Rumanian government.

Years later, Bartlely Crum, expert on Middle Eastern affairs, confirmed the facts of the offer. Bartley Crum revealed that the 70,000 Rumanian Jews could have been saved and transported to Palestine via Turkey, but because of Jewish pressure the State Department had not given out the news. Why did the "Jewish" organizations do this? Ben Hecht says that the World Zionist Congress was afraid that to do otherwise would antagonize the British, who might then rescind their offer to allow a small Zionist state in Palestine.

Another subject discussed in *Perfidy* is the behavior of the leaders of the World Zionist Congress towards their rivals in the Irgun-Lehi groups. Ben Gurion, in his address to the Histadrut convention in Tel Aviv on April 22, 1944, called to collaborate with the British in persecuting the members of the Irgun. The following are some excerpts from his speech which appeared in the newspaper *Davar*:

"The time for action has arrived...We have decided to vomit them out of our midst...We must suppress in our hearts every personal feeling - let them not preach piety to us. Let every boy and girl be taught by our youth organizations that if the gangs come asking money of their fathers and mothers, he or she must notify the proper authority. And if they don't know any other address let them go to the (British) police." (Ben Hecht points out that Ben Gurion was "plagiarizing" Stalin's idea of using to children to inform on their parents.)

"...I repudiate the kindness which was justified in other times. In our circumstances this is a twisted kindness, a kindness of fools."

Perfidy continues: "Ben-Gurion backed up his fiery address by sending out special Haganah units to kidnap Irgunists. The Haganah forcibly extorted information from some of their Jewish captives and handed the others over directly to the British. Ben-Gurion's men also supplied the British with the names of hundreds and hundreds of other Irgun fighters, and tipped off the British to the secret hiding places of the Irgun's hard-won stores of weapons..."

Irgun victims reported that the methods of Ben-Gurion's men were more sadistic than the techniques employed by the British in tormenting Jews."

Another infamous episode in the Haganah - Irgun relationship is the story of the arms boat Altelena, which was blown up by Ben-Gurion's orders in the early days of the War of Independence. This will be discussed later when we speak about Begin, whose behavior in that incident was exemplary.

It is not hard to imagine that people who could behave with such physical cruelty towards fellow Jews would be no better in the spiritual arena. These people wanted a secular state, but they had a problem. In order to populate the state they would have to bring over Jews from the Arab lands, yet virtually all of these Jews were religious. In order to "solve" this problem, the secular Zionist leadership arranged that the atmosphere and education that would engulf these new immigrants would assure that the next generation would not be religious. The absorption of the Yemenite Jews is a strong example of this.

The Yemenite Jews came to Israel thinking that the redemption was either on its way or had already come. After 2,500 years they were finally coming back to the holy land, and it was being done "on the wings of eagles" (known to us as airplanes). When they got here they were in for a rude shock. The people who met them, processed them, and virtually took over their lives were anti-religious. The Yemenites were placed in ma'abrot (absorption camps) where the children were told that they no longer need to keep mitzvot. Their payot were cut off. When volunteers from yeshivot

came to teach the children they were not allowed in. Only secular, anti-religious education was allowed.

Later, when families left the ma'abrot, they were told that if they registered their children in yeshivot they would not receive financial benefits. Sometimes parents were told that they would not receive jobs if they did not register their children in the "right" schools. (In addition to the spiritual harm done towards the Yemenites, Ben-Gurion's attitude towards them in general, is reflected in his book Netzach Yisroel where he says that they are needed as workers, like the Negroes in America.)

Another example of the methods of the Zionist leadership in controlling the education of the Sfardic youth can be seen in the following story which was told to me personally by a friend from Morocco. In the early fifties a shaliach from the Youth Aliya came to her village in Morocco and convinced the very religious parents to send my friend's sister along with them, assuring them that she would be placed on a religious kibbutz where she would receive a religious education. Because there were problems with a local Arab, who had his eye on the girl, they decided to send her. When the entire family was finally able to immigrate to Israel they found their daughter on an irreligious kibbutz, where she was mechalel Shabbat. A very similar story was told to me years later by a woman on a moshav, about her aunt. You can multiply this story by the thousands.

Another story told to me personally by a young woman on a moshav, was how her very religious grandfather had been told by the Keren Kayemet that they would not give him a job unless he shaved off his beard. The man was a tsadik and didn't give in, but many others in similar situations could not hold out. Even worse, others were told that if they sent their children to the Chinuch Atzmai (Chareidi) school networks, they would not be given a job.

Ironically, while all this was going on, the secular press and government were screaming against the religious Jews for making "religious coercion". As the Talmud says, "Anyone who finds (untrue or exaggerated) fault with others, it's his own fault that he finds".

But most of the time, the secular influence was imposed more subtly. The immigrants were placed in an environment where there was no Torah leadership but lots of secular influence. The schools were either non-religious, or only very mildly so. The so-called religious government schools communicated the message that the laws of the Torah were not to be taken "too" seriously. Many of the teachers themselves were very lukewarm about their religious observance. The feeling of deep sincerity and enthusiasm for Torah was absent.

If immigrants lived on a moshav, rather than in the city, they might have no choice but to send their children to the local school, which was very likely irreligious. One woman on a moshav told me how years ago, when her daughter was a child, she came home one day from school and demanded to know why her parents had lied to her. What was the lie? Her parents had told her that the Torah is true, while her teacher (who must know better!) had told her the opposite.

The following story, which appeared in "Heroes Who Lived By His Word", illustrates all of the points mentioned above."

Moshav Amka in the northern Galilee was founded by Yemenite immigrants - Jews who observed the Torah and mitzvot, full of faith, who came to the Holy Land with a song in their hearts. Upon arriving, they founded a Talmud Torah, where the mori (rebbe) would teach Chumash, Mishna, and Gemara, as it had been taught for generations. But then came the Madrichim (youth leaders) from the surrounding kibbutzim - bare headed and boasting modern hairstyles - and usurped the mori's role. They replaced chumash with "Bible stories" and Gemora with Bialyk's "Sefer Ha'Agada" (Tales from the Talmud). Even these subjects merited little attention, as most of the school day was devoted to glorifying socialism and singing songs of the homeland."

Chasan, Shalom's father, didn't capitulate. His son would learn pure, unadulterated Torah. He called the parents together and they sent for Chareidi teachers from Kiryat Ata. The teachers were given a shack to sleep in. The madrichim staged a fake fedayeen (terrorist) attack - complete with gunfire and terrifying screams - to make the teachers realize the danger they were in. Thus ended religious education in Amka."

After telling how Chasan then took his son, Shalom, to a yeshiva in Tel Aviv, the story continues:

"Upon Chasan's return to the moshav, a campaign of revenge was launched. Food at that time was rationed and could be purchased only with coupons. Chasan was explicitly told that if his son remained in yeshiva his family would not receive their food coupons, he would be passed over for work outside the moshav, and Tnuva (the governmental food concern) would expropriate his orchard's produce." Threatened with economic strangulation and starvation, Chasan was forced to return his son to the moshav- and Shalom was cut off from a religious education."

"The plan, however, was only half successful. Even without knowledge and a direct connection to Torah, deep faith and continual mitzvot observance were hard to uproot. Shalom built his home on his father's spiritual legacy, and continued working the orchards on the moshav. The members of his generation learned to stand up for

their rights and demanded religious education for their children. The authorities opposed it, trying to give Amka a bad name, and in the end a compromise was reached in the form of a governmental religious school."

"To this school Shalom sent his son, Itamar. A coed institution masquerading as religious was not what Itamar's parents would have chosen - and the guise of religiosity fell away after the fifth grade, on the pretext that there weren't enough students. From the sixth grade on, therefore, Itamar and his friends were transported, together with children of the local kibbutzim, to the secular Kennedy school in Acco. There the children of Amka were exposed to the breakdown of Jewish values and total permissiveness".

This story had a happy ending. Itamar married a young woman from a similar background and they both became ba'aley tshuva through the Arachim organization. Others on the moshav also became interested. Some started keeping shmitta, and a religious preschool was opened in Amka appropriately named, "Moreshet Avot", heritage of the fathers.

Not all stories, however, ended so happily. While true Torah education was available to only very few, secular allurements were all around. Since the youth saw their parents as out of touch with the new reality, they easily succumbed to the dominant culture of their new society, which meant becoming irreligious.

Conclusions

Kol HaTor gives a time for the plan of the revealed end - between 5600 (1840) and 5750 (1990) (p.28, footnote 53). When looking back at this period of history we see that the power to return and rebuild Eretz Yisroel really did come into the world at this time. (And the intifada began two years before 1990). Even in many details there is an undeniable resemblance between what was predicted in Kol HaTor and what actually transpired in history. For example, Kol HaTor (p.101) says that the return will be as in the time of Koresh (Cyrus) with the permission of the nations, and indeed, the State of Israel was established with the permission of the United Nations. The return, rebuilding, and independence are all very remarkable because throughout the long years of the exile nothing happened that can even begin to compare with this.

Yet this resemblance, as amazing as it is, is only in the physical realm. Not only is the present spiritual situation different than that described in Kol HaTor, but the exact opposite took place. Kol HaTor speaks of a spiritual return (tshuva), accompanying the

physical return, of the wiping out of Amalek, the source of evil, of a great revelation of the secrets of the Torah, all brought about by Moshiach ben Yosef. The description is one of the Jewish people planting the land in holiness while keeping the mitzvot pertaining to the land, studying Torah with its inner, kabalistic meanings, and even making great discoveries in the "lower wisdoms" thereby making a Kiddush Hashem. Kol HaTor describes the Jewish people at this time as living in a society of economic equality, led by the "anshei amana", people of holy character traits. Is this what happened?

True, Kol HaTor does say that Moshiach ben Yosef is connected to Rochel, who enables the physical return and rebuilding of the land of Israel, while it is Moshiach ben David who is connected to the heavenly, spiritual aspects. (Chapter 2, Part 2). This is how some people have explained this contradiction. But they are ignoring the fact that Kol HaTor says that Moshiach ben Yosef is also connected to his father, Yaakov, from where he gets the spiritual aspects of his mission (such as revealing the Torah's secrets, etc.) Moreover, Moshiach ben Yosef, says Kol HaTor, brings the Jewish People to tshuva. As we mentioned previously, the physical return and the spiritual return are simultaneous and intertwined. Therefore, even if Moshiach ben David would come and bring everyone to tshuva, this does not solve the contradiction, because Kol HaTor says specifically that tshuva (repentance) and the revelation of the secrets of the Torah are an essential part of the mission of Moshiach ben Yosef. How, then, can a secular state be the aschalta degeula, the period of Moshiach ben Yosef? Moreover, even the physical aspects, such as wiping out Amalek, which is a basic requirement of Moshiach ben Yosef, was not done.

Moreover, even if we relate only to the physical return and rebuilding of the land of Israel, as it pertains to Rachel Imeinu, who is called "Eretz", we will see not only a discrepancy, but a glaring contradiction. Rachel represents the holiness of the Shechina inserted into the physical building. The moshav Kommemiyut, mentioned earlier, could be an example of this. But to call secular settlement of Israel by the name of Rachel is totally out of place. This is comparable to saying that a secular woman who makes a barbecue on Shabbat with unkosher meat and vegetables unchecked for bugs is the same as a very religious woman who cooks the Shabbat food on Friday, being meticulously careful in kashrut, and doing it all for the sake of the holiness of the Sabbath. Why are they the same? Because they are both cooking meals to be eaten on Shabbat! How can one possibly say such a thing?

Rachel represents the physical building of Eretz Yisroel in holiness, not in defiance of the laws of the Torah. To call secular settlement of Israel by the name of Rachel is an insult to this holy mother of the Jewish People. Physical building up of the land is

truly connected to Rachel when it is done in holiness, but not when it is done in violation of the Torah.

But how, then, can we explain the fact that in the physical realm, the State of Israel really parallels so closely the description of the period of Moshiach ben Yosef?

We have already quoted from Kol HaTor that Aramilus, the archenemy of Moshiach ben Yosef, is equal to him in numerical value, and we explained that having equal numerical value means having powers in the same area. If you take this one step further, it becomes apparent that Efraim, who is Moshiach ben Yosef is not the only one who can bring the Jewish People back to Zion. Aramilus can also do it. The difference is that Efraim will do it with holiness, bringing the Jewish People to tshuva, while Aramilus' goal is the exact opposite - to take the Jewish People away from the Torah and cause them to sin. And they both do it with the return to Zion.

When we add to this all the statements brought previously about the erev rav at the end of the exile, who will be the evil leaders over the Jewish People, and the dream about the good cows being swallowed by the bad ones, then the solution to the enigma becomes obvious. The erev rav "swallowed up" the powers of Yosef, and were thereby able to bring about a sort of shivat Zion (return to Zion). The character of the leaders of the State of Israel, as portrayed by their behavior during the holocaust, and by their efforts to deliberately remove the new olim from Torah observance, fits exactly the description of the erev rav.

(Important Note: We are speaking here only about those who were in control of the character of the state. We do not mean to say here that all secular Zionists are erev rav. Generally speaking we cannot point a finger at someone and say "this is erev rav", for we cannot know. There were people who had unfortunately been led away from Torah or never knew Torah at all who were caught up in secular Zionism, thinking that they were thereby greatly helping the Jewish People. Some of these, like Chana Senesh, belonged to the Haganah, Ben Gurion's group. We are talking here about the main leaders who gained control over the movement, not about all the individuals who were caught up in it.

As far as practical considerations are concerned, most nonobservant Jews today, no matter what their ideology, are considered "tinokot shenishbu". This means that their status is the same as that of a Jewish child raised in captivity under non-Jews. We do not hold them responsible for their nonobservance of Torah, for they were not properly educated, and we must therefore treat them with the same love and concern that we would give any other Jew, while trying to bring them lovingly back into the fold.

Nor do we mean to say here that everything about the State of Israel is negative. Just as in the other swallowed powers, not everything was taken over by the sitra achra, so here, too, the sitra achra could not gain control over everything, and some holiness was left. Eretz Yisroel does not lose its intrinsic holiness because of those who control it.)

Interestingly, certain members of the media, as well as government officials, have often called chareidim, "parasites". Judge Barak called chareidim "lice", and far from being censured for this, a higher judge told him "well done"! The Talmud says, "kol haposel bimumo posel" - anyone who finds (exaggerated or unreasonable) fault, it is his own fault that he finds. It would therefore make sense for the erev rav to call their opposition "lice" for they are projecting onto their opponents their own description; parasites feeding off the Jewish People.

But even a parasite, if he is wise, knows his limits, because if he kills his host, he himself is lost. Therefore, one finds a paradox in Ben Gurion's attitude towards religion in the State of Israel. On the one hand, when discussing the issue of "mihu Yehudi" (who is to be considered Jewish) Ben Gurion stated that twenty years hence there would be no more religious Jews in Israel except for a small enclave in Me'ah She'arim. On the other hand Ben Gurion exempted yeshiva students from army service and actually wanted to leave some remnants of religion in the state. He apparently realized that in order to survive, secular Zionism had to leave some Torah and mitzvot. You cannot have a Jewish state without any Judaism. They made sure, however, that this would be only in a very limited way.

But what about the opinion of Rav Kook regarding the secular Zionists? Didn't he align himself with them?

The truth is that Rav Kook's attitude has been very misunderstood. Although he looked for the good in them, he himself called them resha'im. (There is a kabbalistic teaching that by finding the good points in a rasha you can actually bring him to tshuva.) However, there is a distinction between ordinary reshaim, who leave Torah observance simply to give free reign to their wrong desires, and erev rav, whose inner essence is not Jewish. While one is required to try to bring back ordinary resha'im with "bonds of love"(Chazon Ish on Yoreh De'ah 2:16) one is required to completely reject and oppose the erev rav (Kol HaTor p.81), for they would spiritually destroy the Jewish People. Rav Kook explains in Igrot Part 11 p.186 that even regarding ordinary resha'im, raising up the fallen is only for those endowed with the spiritual strength and tools for this, but is not "the path for the multitude" because it is too dangerous for them. But regarding his attitude towards the erev rav, Rav Kook says of himself "And Hashem Yisborach (the blessed G-d) knows that I did not draw close all the resha'im ...about those who have completely lost their inner sgula (Jewish essence),

David Hamelech said, "misanecho Hashem esna" (those who hate you Hashem, do I hate.)

It should be noted that even regarding the Erev Rav, there are levels and distinctions, as the Gra explains in Even Shlaima Ch. 11. Regarding the worst of the erev rav Rav Kook has this to say:

"...the refuse from the side of the erev rav, stemming from Russia, the worst of whom will not be able to gain foothold in the land of Israel, as explained in the Medrash: `He Grabs ahold of the corners of the land and shakes the resha'im out of it'". (Letters of Rav Kook, Igrot Part I, p. 364).

And, "We must be armed for G-d's war against the external and INTERNAL Amalek." (No, this is not a quote from the Satmar Rebbe. It appears in Igrot of Rav Kook, Part II p. 226.)

Therefore, the only real difference between Rav Kook and the other tsadikim in this issue is on indentifying the erev rav. In this, too, Rav Kook expressed his opinion, saying as follows:

"The Zohar on Genesis 25:2 shows us the primary attributes of the Erev Rav: They are not overly concerned for the welfare of the Jewish People; they tend to side more with non Jews than with Jews, that is they see Jews suffering and ignore them, in order to do a favor for the non Jews... They care not for the Torah... "A sure sign of the Erev Rav is their denial of the "segula" (the uniqueness, and choseness of the Jew).The foundation of their wickedness is based on the denigration of the Torah and the Torah scholars." (Maamarei Raaya p. 60)

Although Rav Kook identified the Russian Yekzveksia (the Jewish Division of the K.G.B.) as Erev Rav, he did not accept the opinion of most of the leading rabbis of his era that those who stood at the helm of the secular Zionist movement were also Erev Rav. Although he agreed that they were resha'im in their relationship to G-d, he said that they could not be the dreaded erev rav because they have ahavat Yisroel (love of the Jewish People) and are very concerned with the Jews' physical welfare.

As mentioned earlier, Aramilus is a master of deception. He does not openly portray his evil, but rather, like Mendelsohn, he pretends to be working in your best interests while he is actually bringing about the destruction of Judaism. And as we explained earlier, the power of Aramilus to deceive is so great that he can lead astray even great Torah scholars (Kol HaTor p. 128). Since Rav Kook passed away in 1935, he did not live to see these people's behavior during the holocaust and their fight to destroy Torah observance in the State of Israel. Had he known how they would behave he

would have surely also identified them as erev rav, for they suited his own criteria exactly.

Today as well, many government officials seem to suit Rav Kook's descriptions of the erev rav. Unbelievably, the people entrusted with the security of the State of Israel threw to the winds the security of Israel. They made "peace" agreements which brought them the Nobel Prize and hearty congratulations from gentile leaders, but placed many thousands of settlers, and later, the entire population of Israel, in great danger. And one of these leaders of the State of Israel, who had no compunctions at all about giving away the holiest sites of the Jewish People, also planned to totally remove the state from its Jewish roots - another sign of the erev rav.

This too, fits the warnings of Rav Kook. When speaking of the resha'im who choose the ways of the gentiles without any connection to the true holiness of Israel he says, "They will become a destructive, monstrous force, eventually having sinat Yisroel (hatred of the Jewish People) and hatred of the land of Israel, as we have already seen through experience." (Igrot I, p. 183).

(The preceding quotes were taken from Havhara, Otzarot HaRa'aya.)

Heavenly intervention stopped the plans for a "secular revolution". Just as the Israeli government was trying to completely "throw out G-d" from the land He had given us, the present intifada started, and the plan was shelved.

One can also see a direct connection between the failure to behave with ahavat Yisroel and the start of the intifada, as illustrated in the following story:

William Nakash was a non observant North African Jew who lived in France. In a bar brawl Nakash killed an Arab in what he said was self defense. The French court thought otherwise. He was sentenced to prison but escaped to Israel, where he became Torah observant, married, and began to raise a family. The French government, however, caught up with him and demanded that he be extradited, and the Israeli government conceded.

According to the Law of Return, Israel was to be a haven for all Jews. The Israeli government claimed that this does not apply to criminals escaping the law. Nakash countered that he was innocent of the charges and had been convicted by the testimony of anti Semites; he was therefore fleeing anti-Semitic persecution. But at the very least, if they thought he should be imprisoned, this should be done in Israel, rather than incarcerating him in a French prison full of hostile Arabs. (This is the Torah law.)

The issue was publicized, and Nakash's friends and supporters tried to raise public opinion against the extradition. The Israeli rabbinate also tried to help by refusing to allow Nakash to leave the country on the grounds that this would make his wife an agunah (a deserted wife who could not remarry). The government, however, remained unimpressed. They were obviously more concerned with pleasing the gentiles.

On the day of the extradition, Nakash's sympathizers lay down on the runway to prevent the extradition plane from taking off. This, too, was unsuccessful and Nakash was extradited, to be incarcerated in a prison full of Arab anti Semites. The next day, the first intifada started.

The idea that the powers of Yosef were swallowed up by the forces of evil was explained earlier. According to this, it is easy to understand that the klipa of Aramilus and the erev rav must have "swallowed up" the power of Moshiach ben Yosef, which they then used to create the state. This is also the idea of the enslavement of Yosef. A slave is someone whose powers are being used not for his own goals but for the goals of his master. It seems that just as Yosef was originally under the death sentence but later this was changed to slavery, so, apparently, his continuation, Moshiach ben Yosef, also goes through the same process. Although the sages said that he would be killed by Aramilus, this sentence was apparently mitigated to slavery under Aramilus, who then took over the power of Moshiach ben Yosef.

This, then would explain the reason for the physical similarities between what was predicted in Kol HaTor and what actually happened in the state. The state really was using the enslaved powers of Moshiach ben Yosef. Just as the seven bad looking cows swallowed up the seven good looking cows, so the erev rav swallowed up the power of the aschalta degeula, and it was from this power that they built the state. There would then naturally be great physical similarities. But because they had opposite spiritual goals, one for holiness, and one against holiness, the spiritual sides are in direct contradiction.

Kol HaTor, Chapter 3, says that before the coming of moshiach everything will be according to gematriyot. The gematriya (numerical value) of Aramilus, when it is spelled without the letter yud is equal to Efraim, as previously mentioned. But when Aramilus is spelled with a yud the gematriya equals 341 - the gematriya of David Ben Gurion.

Yosef's Powers Used by Aramilus

If we accept that Aramilus was using Yosef's enslaved powers we can understand why there are amazing physical and even symbolic similarities between the State of Israel and the aschalta degeula. We will bring some examples of this.

Socialism and kibbutzim

Kol HaTor p.34 and p.141 says that maintaining economic equality in the yishuv is part of the mission of Moshiach ben Yosef, and if this would be done in Eretz Yisroel it would bring the redemption. Unfortunately, most of the religious Jews of the old yishuv did not know that the Vilna Gaon had said this, and it was not done. The money that came in to support the yishuv was distributed by the country of origin. If you came from Poland, you received the donations of the Jews of Poland, and if you came from Hungary you received the donations of the Jews of Hungary, etc. But according to the plan of the Vilna Gaon, all the money must be distributed equally to all Jews. And so the old yishuv did not bring the geula. On the other hand, the Kibbutzim and those who had a socialistic approach really did establish an independent state. However, because this was not done in holiness - another essential prerequisite - it could only bring a faltering secular state, which actually opposed the spiritual goals of the geula. The geula itself still could not come.

The Israeli Flag

The Israeli flag is patterned after a talit which is called in Hebrew "arba kanfot", a four cornered garment. The book Likutey Halachot (Breslav) states that the tsitsit and talit are the rectification of the sin of the spies and these four cornered garments provide the merit to bring us back from the four corners of the earth where we were scattered as a result of the sin of the spies. Therefore, the Israeli flag is, according to kabala, directly connected to the idea of kibbutz galuyot - the ingathering of the exiles from the four corners of the earth.

The motif on the flag is the six pointed star called a mogen David. Exactly what the significance of this is I do not know. The number six, however, is connected to the sfira of yesod, foundation, which is connected to Yosef.

HaTikvah

According to Kol HaTor (p.55) the entire chapter 31 of Jeremiah is speaking about the coming of Moshiach ben Yosef. In this chapter Hashem tells Rachel lmeinu "yesh tikvah li'acharitech" - there is hope for your end. What is the meaning of this? When something is uncertain we speak of hope. Here, the return of the exiles was promised as a certainty; why, then, is the term "tikvah", hope, used? Kol HaTor answers that

the term tikvah here is to be interpreted according to its kabalistic meaning. By showing the deeper meaning behind the letters of this word Kol HaTor (p.108) shows that tikvah is the spiritual power to make the ingathering of the exiles. On the other hand, the Ari z"l explained that our prayer in shmona esrai "Vilamalshinim al thi tikvah" is a prayer that this power not fall into the hands of the malshinim [informers]. It therefore makes sense that when the State of Israel was established its national anthem was called "HaTikvah".

The point here is not that the people who made these symbols had studied kabala, but rather that the sar, the heavenly angel guiding them towards their destiny, knew the true meanings of these symbols and found them appropriate, for it was from here that it derived its power. Just as a parasite gets its power from feeding off its host, so the erev rav and its leader Aramilus, feed off the powers of Moshiach ben Yosef.

The Knesset

The similarities do not end here. Kol HaTor (p. 29) says that everything that happens in the aschalta degeula will parallel exactly what happened at the time of Ezra and Nehemia. At that time, the court of Torah scholars established to protect Torah observance and guide the Jewish people, was called the great kneset (kneset hagedolah). It consisted of 120 members, all of them great tsadikim and talmidei chachamim (very righteous Torah scholars) and 80 of whom were prophets. The ruling body of the State of Israel, who establishes its laws is also called the kneset, and it, too, consists of 120 members. But its laws and goals, unless pressured by the religious parties, generally have nothing to do with Torah observance and quite often oppose it!

The Mnora

We already spoke about the connection between Greek culture and the "enlightenment" or haskalah movement. Greek culture represents the power of the human intellect severed from its connection to Hashem. The opposite side of this power is the study of the Oral Torah (Talmud) which uses human intellect to achieve closeness to Hashem and to understand His will. The symbol in the Bet Hamikdash which represented the study of the oral Torah was the mnora. Chanuka, with its mnora, is the victory of the Torah scholars over the Greek culture. In other words, Greek culture is the klipa, or opposite side of the mnora. As already explained, present day western culture is a continuation of Greek culture. (Interestingly, the seat of American government, the White House and the Capitol where the Congress meets, are built in the style of architecture called "Greek Revival". How appropriate!) The State of Israel, founded by maskilim, adopted the general western culture, thereby introducing Greek culture into the land of Israel. This is reminiscent of the period before Chanuka, when Hellenized Jews were in control of the land of

Israel. There is, however, a significant difference here. In the times of the Hellenists, there was no attempt to disguise what they were doing. They called themselves what they were. Aramilus, however, does not work like that. As Kol HaTor states, the name Aramilus denotes a trickster, and everything he does is with trickery. Just as Lavan the Arami was called by a name that denotes purity (Lavan means white) when his content is the exact opposite, so Aramilus, too, will use a name which represents his exact opposite, because Lavan and Aramilus are frauds. Therefore, when founding a state whose cultural content is Greek, the symbol Aramilus would use would be the exact opposite of this. And since the symbol that represents the opposite of Greek culture is the mnora, it would follow logically that would be Aramilus' symbol for a state built on Greek culture - for Aramilus the trickster will always use a facade which is the exact opposite of his essence. And indeed the symbol of the State of Israel is the mnora.

The 5th of Iyar, or Yom Ha'atzmaut

In Kol HaTor Pp. 113-114, Rabbi Hillel Shklover tells the following story: "When we, the students of our master the Gra, arrived in the land of Israel in the year 5569 (1809)...and as we established our residence in Jerusalem the holy city in 5572 (1812) ... according to the secret of Kol HaTor, and on one day in that year 5572 (1812) when they laid the foundation for the Bet Medrash Eliyahu (the House of Torah study) called after our master the Gra (Vilna Gaon) and together with this an important action for the building of Jerusalem, we, the students of the Gra, saw in lit up colors, that at that hour the first window was opened in the iron wall for attaching the merit of the fathers, (the connection which is yesod of tiferet through malchut) that was stopped since the churban (the destruction of the temple) And that day was the 20th day of the Omer, yesod of tiferet, (foundation of splendor) as is known to those who know the hidden wisdom".

In other words, on the 20th of the Omer, the first window was opened in the iron wall separating us from Eretz Yisroel since the destruction of the Bet Hamikdash.

The 20th of the Omer is the 5th of Iyar, now known as Israeli Independence Day. When Ben Gurion declared an independent Israeli State in the early days of the War of Independence he was surely not looking to Kol HaTor for guidance in setting the date. His action was determined by political and historical necessity. This date was obviously guided by heaven, for the 5th of the Iyar, the 20th of the Omer, represents Yosef the son of Yaakov, bringing down heavenly blessing according to Yesod, the sfera of Yosef, which is in Tiferet (the sfera of his father Yaakov). As Rabbi Hillel testifies, this day had already been sanctified 136 years earlier as the time when the window for attaching the merit of the fathers, that is the merit to inherit the land of Israel

which Hashem had promised to the fathers, was opened for the first time after the destruction of the temple.

Yet, what does a secular Israeli State which disregards the teachings of Yaakov and Yosef, which ignores and rejects the standards of piety and chastity which these sfirot represent, whose army is sadly very, very far from the chastity of yesod, have to do with the 20th day of the Omer? How can they receive the blessings inherent in this day if they ignore and reject its spiritual powers? But, as already explained, Aramilus had taken over and could use the powers of Moshiach ben Yosef which were "enslaved" under him. There is a rule that whatever belongs to a slave belongs to his master. Included in these enslaved powers, apparently, is the potential of the 20th of the omer, which could now be used by Aramilus. Again, Aramilus could not bring the true geula, but he could use this power to establish a secular state for Jews in Eretz Yisroel.

Connection of the Erev Rav to Israel

If the Erev Rav were given control over the land of Israel there must be a heavenly reason to justify this. We have already explained that the men of Egypt who made Brit Milah under Yosef later became the erev rav, and that Brit Milah is the key to the land of Israel. This, says the Zohar (end of Parshat Lech Lecho), is why the descendents of Yishmoel are here until their zchut is used up. But there was another group of gentiles who also made Brit Milah. When Shchem wanted to marry Dinah, her brothers told him that if the entire city would make Brit Milah they would all intermarry and become one nation. Shchem then convinced the citizens of his city to do this. Then, on the third day after the brit, Shimon and Levy went into the city intending to kill Shchem and his father Chamor (who was the king of the town of Shchem) and take Dina home. But the men of Shchem gathered around the palace to fight them, so that in order to get to Dina, Shimon and Levy had to kill them all. (This is according to the commentary of the Ohr HaChaim.)

But a promise is a promise. The men of Shchem had fulfilled their side of the bargain, and so they had to be given what was promised them. They were therefore reborn as the erev rav who then intermarried with the Jewish People and became one nation with them (Dover Tsedek, p.179-180). And Brit Milah gives control over the land of Israel.

In parshat Vayechi, Yaakov Avinu tells his children "Gather together and I will tell you what will happen at the end of days". The continuation, however, does not speak of the end of days. Rashi says that this is because Ya'akov wished to reveal the end but the Shechina left him. But In that case, why did the Torah repeat Yaakov's words - why not just leave it out if it didn't happen? The Zohar explains that Ya'akov, did, indeed tell them what would happen in the end of days, but because the Shechina left him he had to do it in a very hidden way. Yet all the secrets of the end of days are hidden away in what Ya'akov told his sons at that time.

Now let us look at what Ya'akov Avinu told Shimon and Levi, who killed out the town of Shchem. He said, "...because in their anger they killed a man and in their will they uprooted an ox" (Breishit 49:6). Rashi explains that the man here is Chamor and the men of Shchem, who altogether are equal to the value of one man. The ox is Yosef. Now let us put this together in the context of the end of days. The "man", Chamor and the men of Shchem, have become the erev rav. The "ox", Yosef, has become Moshiach ben Yosef. The meaning of the verse would then seem to be this: because Shimon and Levi killed the men of Shchem, they later became the erev rav, who, at the end of days, would have the power over the land of Israel, and would thereby uproot the "ox", Moshiach ben Yosef from this period.

Indeed, Ben Ami's description of Herzl as kingly (quoted above) could very well be true. He might have been the reincarnation of Chamor the king of Shchem. This would explain Herzl's puzzling antagonism towards giving his son a brit milah, although his wife's family very much wanted the brit. Why did Herzl oppose his wife and her family over the issue of brit milah at a time when even secular Jews made brit milah? If Herzl was a reincarnation of the king of Shchem, who was killed together with his entire city through their making brit milah, this would be very understandable.

This, however, is conjecture. What is not conjecture is the fact that the king Chamor and the men of Shchem did in fact return as the erev rav, and that the erev rav are the leaders over the Jewish People in the end of days (Tikuney Zohar Chadash 37b).

And so we can understand Yaakov's words to mean that because Shimon and Levi killed Shchem, they thereby uprooted Moshiach ben Yosef from this period, for now the erev rav, the reincarnations of the killed men of Shchem, would get this period instead. This, then, seems to be the secret of the State of Israel in acharit hayamim; it was the potential period of Moshiach ben Yosef, the aschalta degeula, that was uprooted and given instead to the erev rav.

There is another connection between the erev rav and the present State of Israel which I have heard in the name of the Vilna Gaon, but I did not see this myself. I heard that it is written in the writings of the Vilna Gaon that the erev rav came

before Moshe Rabeinu in the desert and said: You cheated us. You told us that we were going to a land of milk and honey, and instead we spent 40 years in the desert! Moshe Rabeinu then answered the erev rav, that in compensation for the 40 years they spent in the desert they would have control over the land of Israel for 40 years. If one looks at the dates connected to the State of Israel one will see something remarkable. The State of Israel was declared by the United Nations on the 17th of Kislev 5708. The Intifada started on the 17th of Kislev 5748. It was exactly 40 years later.

The Miraculous Wars

Some people may ask, if the present State of Israel is in the hands of the erev rav, why then did Hashem make miracles for this state? We will bring here some possible answers.

1. The erev rav are in control of the state, but they are certainly not its only inhabitants. Hashem made miracles to save His people who are living in the state.
2. The power of this period had an inherent semi-miraculous nature to it, for that is the nature of the period of Moshiach ben Yosef. When the erev rav "swallowed up" this period, they swallowed up this miraculous power as well. The merit of brit milah which gave them control over the state, possibly also gave them the miracles connected with the state and Moshiach ben Yosef.
3. The purpose of the miracles was to arouse the Jewish People to tshuva. I have heard said in the name of one of the tsadikim that had the people said shira (a song in praise of Hashem) after the Six Day War, Moshiach would have come. The fact that Aramilus and the erev rav took over the State of Israel does not mean that it has to stay that way! Tshuva would automatically bring everything back to the side of holiness, and bring the geula. It is not the state that is wrong. There was meant to be a Jewish state in Israel in this period established with "the permission of the nations" (Kol HaTor and the Gra's commentary of Tikuney Zohar Chadash). What is wrong is its laws and lifestyle. If these would change, if we would do tshuva, then this really would become the aschalta degeula!

Mnachem Begin

We have said that the erev rav took over the State of Israel, but we have also explained that this does not mean that everyone who was involved with establishing the state was necessarily erev rav. An example of this would be Mnachem Begin whose behavior definitely does not qualify him as erev rav.

Begin's group had no share in the crimes mentioned in Perfidy. On the contrary, they tried to work in the opposite direction. (Ben Hecht, author of Perfidy, was an official spokesman for this group.) Although officially secular, many of this party's members were traditional, just as Begin himself was. They were not anti-Torah. In fact, according to an interesting story told by one of Begin's granddaughters who is now a ba'alat tshuva, the Begins kept Taharat Hamishpacha. This granddaughter told her Taharat Hamishpacha teacher, that when she was a little girl, her grandmother, Aliza Begin, showed her a bag of receipts from the mikvah and told her that when she grows up and gets married she should also go to the mikvah.

When Mrs. Begin passed away, her husband, who was then Prime Minister, wanted to have her buried in a religious section of the Har HaZeitim (Mt. of Olives) cemetery. But the chevra kadisha (burial society) explained that only religious people could be buried in that area. In order to convince the Chevra Kadisha that Aliza Begin was worthy to be buried in this area, he showed them her bag of receipts from the mikvah. They were duly impressed, and he got the plot. Begin refused to be buried on Mt. Herzl together with the other Zionist leaders. Instead, he wanted to be buried alongside of his wife on Har HaZeitim.

But the most famous merit of Mnachem Begin is the story of the Altelena.

At the beginning of the 1948 War, Begin's group brought over to Israel a large supply of desperately needed arms on a boat called the Altelena. At that time the Israelis were vastly outnumbered by the Arabs and had very little ammunition. The Altelena could have solved the arms problem, but Ben-Gurion and his followers had other plans in mind. Although they had told the Irgun people that they would help unload the boat, their real plans were to blow it up. They did this to get rid of their rivals, who, if they had enough strength, would be able to take over the fledgling state. So when the Altelena docked, instead of meeting them with cranes and winches they met them with guns and explosives. They blew up the Altelena, together with the arms which were so desperately needed by the yishuv, and they killed twenty of Begin's men in

cold blood, some while in the water, some while on the beach. Some drowned. Begin himself was on the boat when this happened. He refused to allow his men to fire back, reaffirming the same stand he had taken when his men were kidnapped by Ben-Gurion's group, tortured, and handed to the British. He said "We don't kill Jews". Begin foresaw that if they would fight back this would start a civil war (known in Hebrew as war between brothers). That, said Begin, would be a greater catastrophe than blowing up the Altelena.

One stands in awe of the strength of character displayed here in a time of unbelievable pressure. How was it that Begin was able to have such moral clarity under such extremely trying circumstances?

There is another question here as well. We already explained why the *erev rav* had control of the state. But Begin, too, was a powerful figure in the establishment of the state, and he later became Prime Minister. If he was not *erev rav*, than how does he come into the picture? The following answer is based on something I heard orally in the name of one of the Hassidic Rebbes.

Right before the destruction of the second Beit HaMikdosh there were two groups who were desperately fighting against the Romans. The problem was that they weren't only fighting the Romans, they were fighting each other. One group were the "moderates," mostly rich *tsdokim* (the "reform" of those times) many of whom had been friendly with the Romans and were considered more moderate. The other group was known as the *Biryonim*, or the gangsters, or zealots. They hated the Romans and were what would be called today "terrorists". The *Nasi* and *tsaddik*, Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel, supported the revolt against the Romans when all the Jewish factions were united. But when early in the revolt, the *Biryonim* attacked and killed rich *tsdoky* Jews in Jerusalem, who they claimed were friends of Rome, Rabbi Shimon totally removed his support and the "*chareidim*" of those times disassociated themselves from the revolt.

Shortly after this, one of the leaders of the revolt in the Galil, Yochanan of Gush Halav, arrived in Jerusalem. The Galil had fallen in the war to the Romans, but Jerusalem he said, would not fall. Yochanan took control of the *Biryonim*. The *Tsdokim* then called in Shimon Bar Giyora, an enemy of Yochanan of Gush Halav, to head their faction. The result was civil war. The *Biryonim* barricaded themselves on the temple mount, but later, wishing to allow all Jews free entry to the Temple, they opened the gates. The "moderate" *Tsdokim* did not respect this honor truce and used the opportunity to kill *Biryonim*. At this time there were storehouses full of enough food in Jerusalem to feed the city for twenty years. The food had been provided by the three rich Jews, Kalba Savua (who later became the father in law of Rabbi Akiva) Ben Tsitsit HaKeset, and Nakdimon Ben-Gurion. The *Biryonim* burnt down the

storehouses to force the people of Jerusalem to fight the Romans. The food was lost. Starvation seized Jerusalem. When the Roman emperor died there was a lull in the fighting but instead of using it to negotiate peace with Rome, the factions continued to fight each other. In the last days of the revolt they did unite to fight the Romans but it was too late. Jerusalem fell, most of its population was killed, and the survivors sold as slaves, or dragged into exile. The long galut had started.

Right before the fall of Jerusalem, the great Torah leader, Rabbi Yohanan Ben Zakai, called in his nephew, Aba Sikra, who headed the Biryonim and asked him how long people would starve in Jerusalem. Aba Sikra asked in despair what he could do. Rabbi Yohanan devised a scheme with him that would allow Rabbi Yochanan to leave Jerusalem and meet with the Romans. This had to be done in secret because Aba Sikra could no longer control his men. The scheme worked and Rabbi Yohanan received three "gifts" from the Roman emperor: Yavne with its Torah scholars, a doctor for Rabbi Tsadok who had been fasting for ten years to forestall the destruction which he had foreseen, and the dynasty of Rabban Gamliel. But Jerusalem he did not get.

The civil war between the groups of fighters led to the destruction of the Bet HaMikdosh, Jerusalem, and the long galut. But Hashem does not deny the reward of any creature even if he has sinned. Because these people fought for Jerusalem, they were to be given control over the State of Israel before the coming of Moshiach.

Before he died, Mnachem Begin said that the thing he wants remembered about him most is not that he got the Nobel Peace Prize, not that he was prime minister, and not that he had been the head of the Irgun. The thing that he wanted remembered most about him was that he had avoided a civil war. No wonder that Mnachem Begin knew that the worst thing possible would be a civil war. Deep in his soul he remembered the catastrophe that such a thing had brought. Mnachem Begin was given a great test but he stood up to it. He had learned his lesson, and he made a tikun. The gematriya of Mnachem Mendel Begin equals Av HaBiryonim - the father of the Biryonim.

Peeling Off The Peel

The Da'at Chaim quotes the Vilna Gaon in his commentary to Sifra DiTzniuta Ch. 1 (Page 11 in the edition of Rabbi Shmuel Luria). The Vilna Gaon there explains that

before Moshiach will reveal Hashem's kingship to the world there is a period called ikveta diMeshicha, which is the klipa, or peel which comes before the fruit.

As we have explained, the fruit and the klipa (shell) have similar powers, but the shell uses these powers for evil, while the fruit uses them for good. We also mentioned that ikveta demeshicha is described in the Talmud as a period of immense chutzpa when spirituality is at a great low. This is a preparatory period, the period of the shell, when impurity rules. There is a rule in kabala that the shell always precedes the fruit, that is, the impure part gains power before the pure part does. Only by breaking through the impure peel can one get to the fruit.

We are told in Parshat Nitzavim that when Hashem brings us back from the nations at the time of the redemption He will "circumcise the orlah of your hearts". The orlah is a klipah over our hearts. We will then no longer want to sin but will return to Hashem with great desire and love, for there will be nothing blocking us from feeling His love and goodness. But as we already mentioned, the period of the orlah, the shell of unholiness, always precedes the period of the fruit, and that is a period when darkness reigns, when Hashem and his goodness are hidden.

Based on the teachings of the Ari z'l as taught by Rabbi Chaim Vital (Sha'ar HaPsukim lyov A, and others), the Da'at Chaim explains that the first father of the Jewish people Avraham Avinu, had to be born to a person who sold idols and promoted their worship. This is because by breaking the idols that controlled his environment, Avraham could make a much greater Kiddush Hashem. Through fighting against the evil of his environment Avraham was able to come to a much more profound recognition of G-d's oneness than would have been possible any other way. The light is always much more impressive when it is contrasted against the darkness.

The same, says the Da'at Chaim, is true in our situation. Previous generations would have had to reach much higher spiritual levels than we, to bring the geula, and they just didn't make it. But by fighting the spiritual darkness of our world and doing tshuva, we can create an intense kiddush Hashem, even though we ourselves are not on such a high spiritual level. When contrasted with the immense darkness of our environment, every bit of Torah that we keep is like a light bulb in a dark room. Even if it has a low wattage it still shines out spectacularly. The power of this light would make such a kiddush Hashem that it would bring the geula.

This does not mean that the danger of the sitra achra or the erev rav is not real. It is very, very real. Whoever does not stand up to this test and return to Hashem, G-d forbid, will not make it. What it means is that this challenge is necessary because by overcoming it we can bring the geula. Although we cannot on our own reach great

levels of holiness, all we need now is the desire and sincere effort and Hashem will do the rest for us.

The Da'at Chaim goes on to explain that in order to understand our situation in the State of Israel properly, we have to be able to differentiate between the shell and the fruit. We have to understand that just as Terach and his idols were certainly unkosher, so our klipa is also unkosher, but just as the great fruit, Avraham Avinu, came forth from this unkosher shell, so the true geula will come forth from our unkosher shell. The point, he says, is not to confuse the shell with the fruit. On the one hand, one must not make the mistake of thinking that the shell becomes kosher because it is the preparation for a great fruit. That would be like thinking that Terach was kosher because Avraham Avinu came out from him. But on the other hand one must realize that although the shell is unkosher, and we must fight its evil, a great fruit will eventually come forth from it.

According to this it is also possible to understand why Ya'akov Avinu told the Vilna Gaon not to be afraid to send his students to Eretz Yisroel despite the dangers. If we are speaking about physical dangers, this doesn't seem to make sense. Many of these early settlers really did die of disease, earthquakes, etc. They gave their lives in order to start the process of the geula, not to make a secular state. What then, was the point of their immense sacrifice if the plan to bring the geula was foiled by Aramilus?

The answer seems to be that the plan was not foiled; it was only temporarily taken over and enslaved. But just as Yosef, himself, was first enslaved and imprisoned but then became king, so the powers of his heir, Moshiach ben Yosef, were also enslaved and imprisoned, but will eventually go free and rule. The danger that frightened the Vilna Gaon may very well have been, above all, the spiritual danger. He saw that if his students or their descendents would not live up to the very high standards demanded of them, the sitra achra, in the form of the erev rav, would take over. Since this was so likely to happen, why should he risk their lives for a plan that might fail?

To this, it seems, Ya'akov Avinu answered him that they should go ahead anyway because in the end it would bring the geula. No matter what would happen in the interim, the resettling of Israel had to have a holy foundation, so that when the shell is removed this foundation will bring the fruit. This is what we are waiting for.

The big question, however, is what will it take to remove the shell? The prophecies that relate to the pre-geula period speak of wars and a great earthquake. They also speak very specifically of a selection of who deserves to survive. Rashi, on Yeshayahu

28:17 says that Hashem will bring suffering in order to straighten us out. The tsadikim will remain and the rebellious sinners will not. The point of everything is tshuva.

Who needs to do tshuva? All of us. Those who are not yet keeping mitzvot must start. Those who do keep mitzvot need to take them more seriously, to develop stronger faith, holiness, and yirat shamayim. They must understand that doing Hashem's will, with love and with awe, is the whole purpose of life. And those who have yirat shomayim have to look deeper into themselves, to work on their midot and find their more subtle faults. They must also understand that their yirat shomayim is a gift from Hashem and that they must devote themselves to sharing it with everyone else, because we are all Hashem's children and He wants us all to survive.

Is the aschalta degeula dead? To Ya'akov Avinu it appeared that Yosef had died, but this was not so. Eventually Yaakov Avinu lived to see that Hashem's plan had taken a long hidden route, and that Yosef, who appeared to him to be dead, was really still alive. May we, too, live to see the fulfillment of Hashem's plan of the aschalta degeula, and see Yosef's continuation, Moshiach ben Yosef, together with Moshiach ben David, and then we too will see that...

ODE YOSEF CHAI - YOSEF IS STILL ALIVE!

APPENDIX: About Kol HaTor

There has been some controversy regarding the validity of Kol HaTor. Since Kol HaTor is a major basis of this work, I thought it advisable to explain the matter.

According to the tradition known to the Rivlin family and many others, Kol HaTor was written by their ancestor, Rabbi Hillel Shklover of blessed memory, who was one of the leaders of the aliya of the Gra's students, and a cousin of the Vilna Gaon. This is mentioned in the text of the book itself.

Kol HaTor was well known and highly respected in the old yishuv (the original Chareidi settlement) of Jerusalem, but because it was a deep kabbalistic work which remained in manuscript form, it was virtually unknown to the outside world. Around 1947, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Rivlin, the great-great-grandson of the original author, abridged and simplified the original work so that it could be read by people who were not advanced kabbalists. He printed one hundred copies of this version which he distributed to friends and relatives, but due to a lack of funds, chapters six and seven were not included. Since then, the original Kol HaTor has gone lost. All that remains known is that printed edition, plus chapter six and a short introduction to chapter seven which were found, still in manuscript form, by Yosef Rivlin, the grandson of Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Rivlin.

About the time of the Six Day War, one of the printed copies of Kol HaTor reached Rabbi Chaim Friedlander, one of the compilers of *Michtav Me'Eliyahu* who was also a mashgiach in the Ponovizher Yeshiva. Rabbi Friedlander founded the va'ad for the dissemination of Kol HaTor. The booklet, however, reached only a small number of people and was not available in book stores. (I personally saw this booklet.)

About the same time, Rabbi Mnachem Kasher also read Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Rivlin's condensation of Kol HaTor, and he printed it with his own work, *Hatkufa HaGdola*. Rabbi Kasher's idea was that the State of Israel was the period of Moshiach ben Yosef spoken about in Kol HaTor. Since the only way to buy Kol HaTor in a bookstore was together with Rav Kasher's own work and interpretation, those who disagreed with Rav Kasher tended to reject Kol HaTor by association.

There were also other factors that caused some people to suspect the validity of Kol HaTor. There was no way to check if the abridged version was faithful to the original, because the original was not available. The ideas brought in Kol HaTor were new, startling, and hard for some people to digest. Furthermore, some contemporary followers of the Gra found it hard to believe that the Gra could have really taught these ideas, for it did not fit with what they expected the Gra to say. They therefore

suspected that Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Rivlin must have changed the original work to conform with his own views. Otherwise, they said, why were these ideas not found in the other writings of the Gra or his students? Others went even further, and claimed that even the original Kol HaTor was not really written by Rabbi Hillel Shklover. Interestingly, the opposition to Kol HaTor was not limited to a specific group or view. Some opposed it from the right, and some opposed it from the left.

In answer to these claims against the authenticity of Kol HaTor, I would like to state the following:

By going through the footnotes of the latest edition of Kol HaTor (ed. Yosef Rivlin 5754) one can see how the ideas brought in Kol HaTor are also found in other sources. We will give here a few examples:

The main theme of Kol HaTor - the idea that the the geula begins naturally - most definitely does appear in other writings of the Gra.

In his commentary to the Zohar on Parshas Truma (14:b) the Gra explains that the first moshiach, Moshiach ben Yosef, gathers in the exiles of Israel, and this period is called Shachar (dawn) which precedes the "light of day" which is the period of Moshiach ben David. And the Gra writes in his commentary to Tikuney Zohar Chadash (27a) says that there will be a "pkida", a remembrance for redemption, such as there was at the time of the second Bais HaMikdosh, in the days of Koresh (Cyrus): "And the right draws near, as it says, 'in great mercy I will gather you' (birachmim gdolim akabetscho - Yeshayahu 54). They will go out (from the exile) from the right side, but first there will be a remembrance (for redemption) from the left side (as it says in Shir HaShirim) 'His left beneath my head' *and there will be a remembrance as there was in the time of the second Bais HaMikdosh in the days of Koresh*, and they will not go out (of the exile) in it, and afterwards the right will be aroused."

Let's examine more closely what this means.

The right side represents chesed, unearned kindness, while the left side represents justice; getting what one deserves. The left, known as din or gevurah, also means being limited. Therefore redemption from the right side is an overwhelming, miraculous redemption, beyond what we have earned. Redemption from the left side is limited and natural, and we must do things to earn it. The Vilna Gaon explains that before the Jews actually leave the exile "there will first be a pkida (something done in connection with the redemption) from the left side...as...there was in the days of Koresh (Cyrus)".

Fifty two years after the destruction of the first Bais HaMikdosh, the Persian king, Koresh, gave the Jews permission to return to the land of Israel and rebuild the

temple. The return to Zion at this time was not miraculous; it happened in a natural way. Furthermore, the Bais HaMikdosh was not actually built in the time of Cyrus. Cyrus died and his successor, Achashverosh of the Purim story forbade the rebuilding of the Bais HaMikdosh. It was only after Achashverosh's death, eighteen years after Cyrus first allowed the return, that the Bais HaMikdosh was actually rebuilt.

And so the Gra in his commentary to Tikuney Zohar Chadash says that there will be a pkida just as in the days of Cyrus. The pkida in Cyrus' times was not miraculous. Nor is a pkida in itself the full redemption. It is a time when Hashem remembers us and does things on the road towards redemption. This starts off small, like the first light of dawn, and then gradually grows greater and greater. Therefore, these teachings of the Gra are telling us that the beginning of the geula is natural and it comes in stages as our sages said, "So is the geula of Yisroel, little by little, as it progresses it grows greater and greater". (Yerushalmi, Brachos 4b).

The Gra, however, ends by saying "and they will not go out in it, and afterwards the right will be aroused". So the Gra is saying that first we will be given the opportunity to be redeemed in a natural way returning to our land with the permission of the nations. But this will not bring the Jewish People out of exile. We will have to wait until the right - an unearned gift - is aroused, as the Gra brings there "In great mercy I will gather you."

Another example:

It might be hard for some to accept that the Gra told his students to study science, math, correct speech, etc. since Torah leaders after him were so opposed to this. Yet there is much evidence outside Kol HaTor that corroborates this. For instance, the sons of the Gra in their introduction to *Aderes Eliyahu* (1804) speak of the Gra's amazing knowledge of the "seven wisdoms" from his youth and of his strictly held belief that one must investigate nature in order to acquire the wisdom of Torah. (ibid, p. 25-128). The "Aliyas Kir" on the writings of the Gra which is included with the book *Aliyos Eliyahu* says that the Gra composed a book on Hebrew Grammar, a book on triangles and geometry called "Ayil Hameshulosh", and a long composition on engineering which remained in manuscript form. (Chazon Tsion p. 23, end of footnote 24, brought as a footnote in Kol HaTor p. 115). Also, Rabbi Yisroel of Shklov, one of the leaders of the students of the Gra, writes in his introduction to *Pe'as HaShulchan* amongst other things, "He (the Gra) said, all the wisdoms are necessary for our holy Torah and are included in it." And Rabbi Mnachem Mendil of Shklov, also a leader of the students of the Gra, writes in his introduction of *Biur HaGra* on *Maseches Avos* (Shklov 1799) about the Gra's knowledge of the natural wisdoms saying, "Who could speak and tell even the edges of his knowledge and his amazing mastery of wisdoms,

he knew them all...and so also other wisdoms...and they were all in service of the wisdom of our holy Torah”.

Why, then, did other Torah greats so vehemently oppose introducing secular studies in yeshivos, or even studying them outside the yeshiva?

Perhaps it was because they were studied as just that - secular studies. But Kol HaTor makes it clear that these studies must be viewed as Torah and connected to Hashem. It is known that when one severs the natural studies from their Creator this is what the Sages called Greek wisdom, and it leads to atheism. Of course, this is not what the Gra was promoting!! But when the same subjects are studied as Hashem’s creation they are just what the Gra says they are.

Moreover, a problem that arose after the Gra’s times was that most of those who promoted studying these subjects had become heretical, and so in order to study them one would have needed to study from a heretical teacher, which would obviously have very detrimental effects. But this problem arose only after the power of scientific research had fallen into the hands of the klipos as explained in this work. This “fall” of science and the other seven wisdoms was actually caused by not obeying the Gra’s instructions that the Torah scholars should become master of these subjects. Had the Gra’s words been followed the later atheism would probably have been avoided. But after these subjects fell, the Torah leaders had no option but to discourage their followers from studying them, for at that point such study became truly dangerous. Practical reality showed that those who studied them left Torah observance.

And finally, one could answer simply that the Gra was encouraging these studies to his students who were already very advanced talmidei chachmim. How he would have viewed ordinary yeshiva youths spending their time on these subjects is another question altogether. And it is certainly obvious that the Gra never meant for these subjects to be studied on an equal footing with Torah, but only as subsidiary to Torah, both in time and in importance.

But getting back to our point, one can find support for the ideas in Kol HaTor not only in other writings of the Gra, but also in other Torah sources. We have shown from Kol HaTor that women becoming equal with men happens at the same period as the return from the exile. But it is not only Kol HaTor that implies this. The same idea can be found in the writings of Rabbi Yonoson ben Uziel, who says that the light of the moon will become equal with the light of the sun “on the day that Hashem returns His people from the exile”(Yeshayahu 30:26). According to the Zohar, the light of the moon becoming equal to the light of the sun means that women will become equal with men. And so it is not only Kol HaTor who says this happens together with the

ingathering of the exiles. Rabbi Yonoson ben Uziel, who knew the secrets of the prophets, said the same thing thousands of years ago.

HISTORICAL SUPPORT

Another way to see that these really were the Gra's teachings is from the behavior of the Gra's students, their descendents, and others. It is historical fact that Rabbi Yisroel Shklover, one of the leaders of the students of the Gra, sent an emissary to look for the ten lost tribes in order to renew our lost smicha and start a sanhedrin. Why? The descendents of the students of the Gra and other very religious Jews began to build up Yerushalayim and tried to resettle the land of Israel and make it fruitful, although this involved immense sacrifice and superhuman efforts to overcome terrible hardships. Rabbi Yisroel Shklover lost his entire family to disease. So did many others. Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld publicly said that all the Jews should return to Eretz Yisroel at that time (brought in Guardian of Jerusalem p. 241). His belief in the rebuilding and resettling of Eretz Yisroel never wavered despite the fact that he saw the death of eight of his eleven children. Many others suffered similarly. Settling Eretz Yisroel is not halachically in the category of a mitzvah for which one should give one's life, and certainly not the lives of one's children. What made them insist on resettling Eretz Yisroel at such a price?

In the 1880's there was an aliyah of Yemenite Jews who came to Israel because they heard that Moshiach ben Yosef had come. Where did they get this idea from? And it is also a well known historical fact that some great rabbis actually discouraged Jews who heard that Moshiach ben Yosef was coming, from dashing off to the land of Israel. But where did those Jews get this idea from? All this happened way before Kol HaTor was printed. Obviously, some people did know that indeed the Gra had said that one could bring Moshiach ben Yosef and the beginning of the redemption by settling Eretz Yisroel and making it fruitful - and that his students were aiming to do just that.

But, one may wonder, if the Gra sent his students to start a mass return of the Jewish People to the land of Israel in a natural way, in order to bring Moshiach ben Yosef, why isn't this better known?

Kol HaTor itself answers the question. As brought on page 32, the Gra told his students to call the fundraising for the settlement of Eretz Yisroel by the name Chazon Tsion (vision of Zion) rather than Shivas Tsiyon (return to Zion) because he did not want to make known their full intentions at that point. Hiding the intended good

gives protection from the forces of evil who would fight it. Therefore the Gra did not publicize the actual intended dimensions of the aliya he was planning.

Furthermore, the Gra did not tell the secrets of the aschalta degeula to his students who remained in Europe. Kol HaTor (p. 97) states that the secrets of the beginning of the geula were given to those students who promised to go to the land of Israel. This explains why the Gra's teachings on the aschalta degeula, as they appear in Kol HaTor, were not known to the Gra's other students. The Gra revealed them only to those who were to take part in the plan. But amongst the students of the Gra who did come to Eretz Yisroel, and their descendents who received the tradition, there was no controversy about this at all.

As for the suspicion that Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Rivlin might have changed his edition of Kol HaTor to suit his own views, this is refuted by the book itself. For example the present version of Kol HaTor says on page 143 that if the building of the land of Israel is not carried out in the spirit of Hashem, it cannot succeed in bringing the redemption. This is a direct contradiction to the view of Rav Kook that the secular Zionists building of the land of Israel would bring the redemption. And this is not the only example. The book stresses repeatedly that the spiritual and physical redemption come together. How Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Rivlin who saw all "Zionism" as the beginning of the geula reconciled this matter in his own mind I do not know, but one thing is clear: whatever his personal views, Rav Shlomo Zalman Rivlin remained true to the writings of his great-grandfather. He did not change things to suit his views.

Furthermore, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Aurbach, who knew Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Rivlin well, testified to his character and integrity, saying that he never would have deliberately forged or changed things. This was told to me by Rabbi Zilberstein o"n who heard it from Rabbi Marzel who spoke with Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach.

I would also like to point out that in his introduction to Kol HaTor, Yosef Rivlin has letters from important rabbis verifying and praising this book. Some of these were from members of the Old Yishuv. One of the letters praising the book was printed in the introduction to Divrei Yeshayahu, written by Rabbi Yeshayahu Cheshin, head of the teachers at Talmud Torah Eitz Chaim, and himself a descendent of the students of the Gra. This book - with its praise of Kol HaTor - was published by the author's son in law, Rabbi Eliyahu Zlotnik, a dayan in the Eida HaChareidis. There is also an approbation to Kol HaTor from HaRav Chaim Shraga Faivel Frank, another descendent of Rabbi Hillel Shklover. And, as we pointed out, the association to spread Kol HaTor was founded by Rabbi Chaim Friedlander, a student of Rav Dessler and mashgiach in the Ponovizher Yeshiva. Rabbi Friedlander's introduction to Kol HaTor is brought below.

(I would like to use this opportunity to make another point, which although off the topic, is very important in its own right. The Torah strictly forbids to be *choshed bichshemrim* - to suspect good people of bad behavior. To cause people to believe that a decent person has been dishonest is also in the category of *hotza'as shem ra*, an extremely severe prohibition.)

And finally, in my own view, the book proves its own truth, for some of the predictions of Kol HaTor happened only after it was printed. For example, the book speaks of miraculous deliverances which would cause the gentiles to recognize that Hashem is guarding over the Jewish People. This happened after the Six Day War, in 1967, about twenty years after Kol HaTor was first printed. The book speaks of the houses of the Jewish people in Israel being destroyed instead of the people themselves. This happened in the Gulf War when time after time hundreds and even thousands of houses were utterly destroyed, without any of the occupants being killed.

Another example of how the book proves itself, is the secret of *nekevah tisovev gever* (women's equality at the time of the *ge'ula*). Although Kol HaTor says that the entire chapter 31 of Yirmiyah is speaking of Moshiach ben Yosef, it does not specifically mention *nekevah tisovev gever*. The closest allusion to anything about women's equality that I found mentioned in Kol HaTor was the statement that the Gra was born in the year *Taf Feh*, which spells out "Tof", to allude to Miriam taking the *tof* (*timbrel*) in her hand against the forces of evil. We know from the *Ari z"l* that this was when she brought down the force of *nekevah tisovev gever*, but Rabbi Sholomo Zalman Rivlin's edition of Kol HaTor does not speak of this. He obviously was not meaning to take a stand on the women's issue. Very likely, he, himself did not realize the significance of what he wrote and how it connected to the equality of women. And yet, without his even seeming to know it, when he wrote that everything in chapter 31 of Yirmiyahu is connected to the coming of Moshiach ben Yosef, he was informing us that in the period preceding the *geula*, when Jews will return to the land of Israel, women will become equal with men, according to the principle of *nekevah tisovev gever*. And, indeed, historically speaking, this has begun to happen, exactly in that time period.

Kol HaTor is a very precious and holy book which gives us otherwise unattainable insights into the process of *geula* and the events of modern times. But we did not yet merit to hear the Kol HaTor, the voice of Moshiach ben Yosef. Much of his powers fell into the hands of the *klipos* who terribly misused them. This possibility too, was predicted in Kol HaTor. But these powers will eventually return to their true source and function. It is written in *Iyov* (20:15): "*Chayil bala, vayikiena*" - he has swallowed the power, and he will spit it out. According to *kabbalah* this means that the forces of

evil have swallowed up the powers of holiness, but they will have to spit them out, with interest attached. May we merit seeing this soon.

And now, I would like to present to the reader a translation of Rabbi Chaim Friedlaner's introduction to Kol HaTor.:

The book "Kol HaTor was first published by Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Rivlin z"l about twenty years ago (e.g. about twenty years before the Six Day War) in Jerusalem. It is hard to give an exact date because due to a lack of funds the book was printed bit by bit over a number of years. It seems that all that is left to us from that first edition is a few copies, which were kept by the Rav's sons and a few others who were close to him. All the copies of the first edition are incomplete, because Rav Shlomo Zalman didn't have the means to finish printing them. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman's introduction was not included in the first edition either. We found it in manuscript form in the hands of Mr. Shmuel Rivlin, his son. We are Grateful to him and to the other sons of the first publisher (e.g. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Rivlin) for allowing us to copy it and to print it with the book.

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman's introduction did not mention anything about the biographical background of the book's author, the Gaon, Rabbi Hillel son of Rabbi Binyomin of Shklov. Perhaps the reason for this is that Rabbi Shlomo Zalman relied on his book "Chazon Tsion" which told the story of the Rivlin family and the aliyah of the Gra's students. At any rate, it would be a pity to read such an exalted book as this without knowing the greatness of its author. We therefore decided to fill this need, and we present here in a few lines a basic picture of the author and of his descendents who continued his teachings.

The Torah giant, Rabbi Hillel of Shklov, author of "Kol HaTor", was born in 5518 (1758). His father, the gaon Rabbi Binyomin Rivlin, was a cousin of the Gra and one of his outstanding students. Rabbi Binyomin Rivlin was a vivacious man who was very active in affairs of Torah and kindness. He founded an advanced yeshiva in Shklov with his own money. The studies program was designed by the Gra. Rabbi Binyomin convinced many of his wealthy acquaintances to move their homes and businesses to Shklov, so they would be support for the glorious Torah center that he had founded. Shklov had already merited to be called by the nickname "Yavne of Raizen" and Rabbi Binyomin they called "the builder of Shklov and its scholars".

It is told that when Rabbi Binyomin reached the age of 52 he became extremely wealthy. At that time he had a wondrous dream about Jerusalem. Rabbi Binyomin traveled to his rabbi, the Gra, and told him of his dream and his great wealth. The Gra showed him that this dream was telling him about a heavenly mission which had

been given to him and to his son Rabbi Hillel. They must go settle in Eretz Yisroel, and also they must arouse the hearts of the House of Israel to return to Tzion.

Rabbi Binyomin was extremely moved by the Gra's interpretation, which explained both the mystery of the dream and of the sudden great wealth. Upon his return to Shklov he immediately set about to put his plans into action. We still have one of Rabbi Binyomin's fiery speeches from this period about gathering in the exiles which is based on the pasuk, "Behold I bring them from the land of the north" (Yirmiyahu 31). According to Rabbi Binyomin this scripture teaches us that from the land of the north - meaning from Russia which is at the extreme north of Yerusholayim, and especially from Shklov - there will begin the arousal to return to Zion and to rebuild Yerusholayim. Rabbi Binyomin was influential in starting a movement in Shklov for the return to Zion which the Gra named "Chazon Zion". Shklov merited that from its midst came out most of the immigrants to Eretz Yisroel, and it became a banner for all the exile. Rabbi Binyomin himself left Shklov in the year 5572 (1812) to go up to Eretz Yisroel, but he did not reach his destination for he died on the way.

The author of Kol HaTor, Rabbi Hillel the son of Rabbi Binyomin, was also one of the of the Gra's outstanding students. Rabbi Hillel studied under the Gra seventeen years. In 5543 (1783) when the Gra saw that it was not the Creator's will that he go to the land of Israel, he decided to hand over to his students the heavenly mission of gathering in the exiles and resettling Eretz Yisroel. Rabbi Hillel was the man whom the Gra chose and placed at the head of this lofty movement, the movement called "Chazon Zion", as mentioned above. The Gra gave him all the secrets of the aschalta degeula, the beginning stage of the redemption, and the details of what must be done to hasten the full redemption. The teachings of the aschalta degeula which Rabbi Hillel received from the Gra were both extensive and very deep. It was these teachings that Rabbi Hillel gathered together and put into a great and deep book - Kol HaTor. The present version of Kol HaTor is an abridged version of the basics of that original work.

The Gra passed away in the year 5558 (1798), but although he was no longer in this world, his message, the Torah of the aschalta degeula, remained alive and vibrant amongst his students. It was this Torah that gave them the courage to place themselves into the great dangers they would encounter during their long journey, and face the multitude of dangers awaiting them upon their arrival in the Land of Israel, which was then barren and desolate.

The first groups left Russia for the Holy Land in 1809, and reached Tsfat of the fifth of Elul that year, after eleven months of arduous and trouble filled travels. The first groups were led by 14 of the Gra's students. In Cheshvan of the year 5572 (end of 1812) seven of the Gra's students headed by Rabbi Hillel moved to Jerusalem. They

found there only twenty Sfardic Jews and nine Ashkenazi Jews. Immediately upon arriving in Jerusalem, Rabbi Hillel and his friends began establishing all the institutions necessary for Jewish life. They founded Torah and chesed institutions, improved health conditions, and established the Jewish militia known as the “Gebardiah” without which the community could not survive in those days even for an hour.

It required super natural dedication for Rabbi Hillel and his friends to run a community with the conditions that existed at that time. Epidemics, bandits, false charges, lack of food and water, and difficulty in communicating with the outside world, were only some of the troubles which those first settlers had to face. Were it not for their amazing faith in the heavenly mission which depended on them, and were it not for the light of the teachings of the aschalta degeula which they received from the Gra, they could not have withstood all these trials.

When news reached Russia that Rabbi Hillel and some of the other immigrants had succeeded in settling in Jerusalem, the excitement amongst Russian Jewry mounted. Many decided to immigrate to Jerusalem.

Rabbi Hillel’s son, Rabbi Moshe, became famous as an outstanding speaker when he was only fifteen years old. One time his father brought him to Vilna so that the Vilna Gaon could hear his amazing power of oratory. The Gaon praised the young Moshe and told him: “Know that with this power that Hashem Yisborach has given you, you must become a speaker for Zion, according to the words of the sages “(Rosh Hashono 30a) ‘She is Zion, none speak out for her’ - from this you see that Zion must be spoken for”. He also gave him an allusion: doresh Zion - speaker for Zion - has the numerical value of Moshe ben Hillel ben Binyomin (Moshe the son of Hillel, the son of Binyomin). The Gra’s words left a deep impression on the youngster’s heart. With a fiery spirit he followed the Gra’s instructions, becoming an orator for Zion for many years till he was known as “Rabbi Moshe, the speaker for Zion”.

Rabbi Moshe’s grandson was Rabbi Yosef, known as Rabbi Yusha Rivlin. Until his time, the activities on behalf of the Jewish community were centered around the settlement in the old city and improving conditions there. Rabbi Yosef was the first one to start settlements outside the city walls. With great daring and courage he set out to fulfill the command of the prophecy “Widen the place of your tents” according to the explanation given this by the Vilna Gaon. The first thirteen neighborhoods outside the old city walls were all built by Rabbi Yosef, with great sacrifice and dedication. The first house he built became the basis of the neighborhood Nahalat Shiva. This historical building was completed in the month of Tamuz 1869. At that time the area surrounding the old city was desolate and barren, and the gates of the city were closed at nightfall. For two years and eight months Rabbi Yosef lived alone

in this house, ignoring the desolation around him. His goal was to inspire his brothers who lived within the city to come and live outside the walls in order to build up Jerusalem and have it spread out according to the aspiration of the Gra and his students. In 1872 Rabbi Yosef saw the fruit of his labor, for in that year forty five new houses were built alongside his house, and over fifty families came and settled there. Rabbi Yosef continued this pattern throughout his lifetime; whenever he built a new neighborhood he was the first to live in it until others came and the neighborhood was firmly established.

In addition to the thirteen neighborhoods which Rabbi Yosef built, which are an eternal monument to him, he also left behind many poems and articles. All his poems are based on the teachings of the “ketz Hameguleh” of Kol HaTor. Its main points are also included in Rabbi Yosef’s poems and articles, many of which were publicized in booklets and journals of that period, such as Hamagid, HaTsfira, and HaLvanon.

Rabbi Yosef’s son, Rav Shlomo Zalman Rivlin, was the first publisher of Kol HaTor. It is to him that we owe a debt of gratitude for keeping the glorious teachings of the Ketz HaMiguleh of Rabeinu HaGra from being completely lost to us.