PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file / Votre référence

Our file / Notre référence

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

Canada

**A FAMINE FOR THE WORD OF GOD:
TESHUVAH
AND THE JEWISH RETURN TO TRADITION**

by

Faydra Snapiro

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Religion

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
August 15, 1994

©copyright
1994, Faydra Shapiro

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

**THE AUTHOR HAS GRANTED AN
IRREVOCABLE NON-EXCLUSIVE
LICENCE ALLOWING THE NATIONAL
LIBRARY OF CANADA TO
REPRODUCE, LOAN, DISTRIBUTE OR
SELL COPIES OF HIS/HER THESIS BY
ANY MEANS AND IN ANY FORM OR
FORMAT, MAKING THIS THESIS
AVAILABLE TO INTERESTED
PERSONS.**

**L'AUTEUR A ACCORDE UNE LICENCE
IRREVOCABLE ET NON EXCLUSIVE
PERMETTANT A LA BIBLIOTHEQUE
NATIONALE DU CANADA DE
REPRODUIRE, PRETER, DISTRIBUER
OU VENDRE LES COPIES DE SA
THESE DE QUELQUE MANIERE ET
SOUS QUELQUE FORME QUE CE SOIT
POUR METTRE DES EXEMPLAIRES DE
CETTE THESE A LA DISPOSITION DES
PERSONNE INTERESSEES.**

**THE AUTHOR RETAINS OWNERSHIP
OF THE COPYRIGHT IN HIS/HER
THESIS. NEITHER THE THESIS NOR
SUBSTANTIAL EXTRACTS FROM IT
MAY BE PRINTED OR OTHERWISE
REPRODUCED WITHOUT HIS/HER
PERMISSION.**

**L'AUTEUR CONSERVE LA PROPRIETE
DU DROIT D'AUTEUR QUI PROTEGE
SA THESE. NI LA THESE NI DES
EXTRAITS SUBSTANTIELS DE CELLE-
CI NE DOIVENT ETRE IMPRIMES OU
AUTREMENT REPRODUITS SANS SON
AUTORISATION.**

ISBN 0-315-98527-5

Canada

Name EMILIA SAPIRO

Dissertation Abstracts International is arranged by broad, general subject categories. Please select the one subject which most nearly describes the content of your dissertation. Enter the corresponding four-digit code in the spaces provided.

RELIGION -- GENERAL

SUBJECT TERM

0318

SUBJECT CODE

U·M·I

Subject Categories

THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS

Architecture 0729
Art History 0377
Cinema 0900
Dance 0378
Fine Arts 0357
Information Science 0723
Journalism 0391
Library Science 0399
Mass Communications 0708
Music 0413
Speech Communication 0459
Theater 0465

EDUCATION

General 0515
Administration 0514
Adult and Continuing 0516
Agricultural 0517
Art 0273
Bilingual and Multicultural 0282
Business 0688
Community College 0275
Curriculum and Instruction 0727
Early Childhood 0518
Elementary 0524
Finance 0277
Guidance and Counseling 0519
Health 0680
Higher 0745
History of 0520
Home Economics 0278
Industrial 0521
Language and Literature 0279
Mathematics 0280
Music 0522
Philosophy of 0998
Physical 0523

Psychology 0525
Reading 0535
Religious 0527
Sciences 0714
Secondary 0533
Social Sciences 0534
Sociology of 0340
Special 0529
Teacher Training 0530
Technology 0710
Tests and Measurements 0288
Vocational 0747

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND LINGUISTICS

Language 0679
General 0289
Ancient 0290
Linguistics 0291
Modern 0401
Literature 0294
General 0295
Classical 0297
Comparative 0298
Medieval 0316
Modern 0591
African 0305
Asian 0352
Canadian (English) 0355
Canadian (French) 0593
English 0311
Germanic 0312
Latin American 0315
Middle Eastern 0313
Romance 0314
Slavic and East European

PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION AND THEOLOGY

Philosophy 0422
Religion 0318
General 0321
Biblical Studies 0319
Clergy 0320
History of 0322
Philosophy of 0469
Theology

SOCIAL SCIENCES

American Studies 0323
Anthropology 0324
Archaeology 0326
Cultural 0327
Physical 0310
Business Administration 0272
General 0770
Accounting 0454
Banking 0338
Marketing 0385
Canadian Studies 0501
Economics 0503
General 0505
Agricultural 0508
Commerce-Business 0509
Finance 0510
History 0511
Labor 0358
Theory 0366
Folklore 0351
Geography 0578
Gerontology 0578
History 0578
General

Ancient 0579
Medieval 0581
Modern 0582
Black 0328
African 0331
Asia, Australia and Oceania 0332
Canadian 0334
European 0335
Latin American 0336
Middle Eastern 0333
United States 0337
History of Science 0585
Law 0398
Political Science 0615
General 0616
International Law and 0617
Relations 0617
Public Administration 0814
Recreation 0452
Social Work 0626
Sociology 0627
General 0938
Criminology and Penology 0631
Demography 0628
Ethnic and Racial Studies 0629
Individual and Family 0430
Studies 0700
Industrial and Labor 0344
Relations 0709
Public and Social Welfare 0999
Social Structure and 0453
Development 0453
Theory and Methods 0453
Transportation 0453
Urban and Regional Planning 0453
Women's Studies

THE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Agriculture 0473
General 0285
Agronomy 0475
Animal Culture and 0476
Nutrition 0359
Animal Pathology 0478
Food Science and 0479
Technology 0480
Forestry and Wildlife 0817
Plant Culture 0777
Plant Pathology 0746
Plant Physiology 0306
Range Management 0287
Wood Technology 0308
Biology 0309
General 0379
Anatomy 0329
Biostatistics 0353
Botany 0369
Cell 0793
Ecology 0410
Entomology 0307
Genetics 0317
Limnology 0416
Microbiology 0433
Molecular 0821
Neuroscience 0778
Oceanography 0472
Physiology 0786
Radiation 0760
Veterinary Science 0760
Zoology

Geodesy 0370
Geology 0372
Geophysics 0373
Hydrology 0388
Mineralogy 0411
Paleobotany 0345
Paleoecology 0426
Paleontology 0418
Paleozoology 0985
Polymology 0427
Physical Geography 0368
Physical Oceanography 0415

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Environmental Sciences 0768
Health Sciences 0566
General 0300
Audiology 0992
Chemotherapy 0567
Dentistry 0350
Education 0769
Hospital Management 0758
Human Development 0982
Immunology 0564
Medicine and Surgery 0347
Mental Health 0569
Nursing 0570
Nutrition 0380
Obstetrics and Gynecology 0354
Occupational Health and 0381
Therapy 0571
Ophthalmology 0419
Pathology 0572
Pharmacology 0382
Pharmacy 0573
Physical Therapy 0574
Public Health 0575
Radiology 0575
Recreation

Speech Pathology 0460
Toxicology 0383
Home Economics 0386

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Pure Sciences 0485
Chemistry 0749
General 0486
Agricultural 0487
Analytical 0488
Biochemistry 0738
Inorganic 0490
Nuclear 0491
Organic 0494
Pharmaceutical 0495
Physical 0754
Polymer 0405
Mathematics 0605
Physics 0986
General 0606
Acoustics 0608
Astronomy and 0748
Astrophysics 0607
Atmospheric Science 0798
Atomic 0759
Electronics and Electricity 0609
Elementary Particles and 0610
High Energy 0752
Fluid and Plasma 0756
Molecular 0611
Nuclear 0463
Optics 0346
Radiation 0984
Solid State
Statistics
Applied Sciences
Applied Mechanics
Computer Science

Engineering 0537
General 0538
Aerospace 0539
Agricultural 0540
Automotive 0541
Biomedical 0542
Chemical 0543
Civil 0544
Electronics and Electrical 0348
Heat and Thermodynamics 0545
Hydraulic 0546
Industrial 0547
Marine 0794
Materials Science 0548
Mechanical 0743
Metallurgy 0551
Mining 0552
Nuclear 0549
Packaging 0765
Petroleum 0554
Sanitary and Municipal 0790
System Science 0428
Geotechnology 0796
Operations Research 0795
Plastics Technology 0994
Textile Technology

PSYCHOLOGY

General 0621
Behavioral 0384
Clinical 0622
Developmental 0620
Experimental 0623
Industrial 0624
Personality 0625
Physiological 0989
Psychobiology 0349
Psychometrics 0632
Social 0451

**Thesis Acceptance Form
M.A. Candidate**

**The undersigned recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
and Research acceptance of the thesis**

**A Famine For The Word Of God:
TESHUVAH
And The Jewish Return To Tradition**

**submitted by Faydra Shapiro, B.A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts**

Eugene Rothman, Thesis Supervisor

Chair, Department of Religion

Carleton University

August 4, 1984.
date

ABSTRACT

Since the 1960s a phenomenon has arisen in the Jewish community of a move to Orthodoxy by people raised in secular or liberal homes. This thesis is a study of the meaning implicit in the contemporary emergence of this return to religious traditionalism, known as the ba'al teshuvah movement. Through a consideration of historical, social, cultural and political conditions, the messages encoded in such religious choices within a community context are assessed. The United States and Israel as the two major Jewish communities form case studies, as do the subgroups of women in America and Jews of Eastern descent in Israel. The implications of these findings for related issues in religious studies such as fundamentalism, secularization and traditional religion in a postmodern age are also discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	ii
Contents.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	v
Introduction.....	1
 Chapter One: The <u>Ba'al Teshuvah</u> Movement	
1.1 The Concept of <u>Teshuvah</u>	11
1.2 Historical Development.....	17
1.3 Mechanisms of Return.....	21
1.4 Summary.....	28
 Chapter Two: United States	
2.1 Introduction.....	29
2.2 American <u>Teshuvah</u>	29
2.2a Separatism and Ethnic Pride.....	29
2.2b Rejecting the Establishment.....	33
2.2c Relevance of Israel.....	35
2.2d Search for Stable Meaning.....	37
2.3 Summary.....	40
 Chapter Three: Israel	
3.1 Introduction.....	42
3.2 Israeli <u>Teshuvah</u>	42
3.2a Renewed Legitimacy of Religion.....	48
3.2b Search for National Identity.....	54
3.2c Dialogue with Zionism.....	53
3.3 Summary.....	57

Chapter Four: Special Cases

4.1 Introduction.....	59
4.2 Women (North America).....	59
4.3 Eastern Communities (Israel).....	72
4.4 Summary.....	81

Chapter Five: Implications

5.1 Introduction.....	82
5.2 Secularization.....	82
5.3 Fundamentalism.....	85
5.4 Religion in a Postmodern Age.....	89

Conclusion.....	92
-----------------	----

Glossary.....	95
---------------	----

Bibliography.....	99
-------------------	----

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A large debt of gratitude is owed to a number of people in helping to see this thesis to its conclusion. Firstly, to Eugene Rothman for his support, enthusiasm and helpful criticisms over the years. To Maureen Sherman who is truly the only person who knew what was due when, in which font on what kind of paper: thanks for being so incredibly patient each time I freaked out. To Shaun Longstreet, John Stopa and Janet Zylberstein for going before me and sharing their experiences ("I'm sorry, I can't hear you. There's a banana in my ear.") and Dan McKay for Xerox help. Great thanks to my family who listened to me whine for so long (and yes, Eric, for calling Rolling Stone). And finally to David for interrupting me constantly with the important stuff: poetry, jazz and love.

"Behold the days are coming," says the Lord God, "when I will send a famine on the the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord..."

Amos 8:11-12

Introduction

In the course of the second half of the twentieth century, numerous changes have occurred within the Jewish community. Consequences suggested by the secularization thesis have come to pass.¹ Assimilation, intermarriage, and lower levels of both observance and identification are, particularly in the West, major contemporary developments that have community leaders, educators and clergy rightly concerned. Efforts to stem these trends has recently become the organizational priority in North America, to which massive concentrations of funding and energy have been devoted. While the declining contemporary Jewish identity is a powerful tendency, an opposite, albeit smaller development has been taking place since the 1960s in Jewish communities world-wide. A quiet, completely unanticipated revolution has been occurring in which people with a secular upbringing discover Orthodox Judaism and come to take on its lifestyle. This is the ba'al teshuvah phenomenon: once non-observant individuals who were often ignorant of their tradition are becoming religious.

Teshuvah, the repentance for sins, has operated as a fundamental mechanism

¹ Brian Wilson defines secularization as the process in which religious institutions and thought lose their social significance. See Religion In A Secular Society. Watts, London. 1966.

within the Jewish worldview as early as the Hebrew Bible.² Later sacred and philosophical literature also discuss the need for and functioning of this literal "returning" to God.

An examination of the contemporary ba'al teshuvah phenomenon amongst major Jewish communities is the fundamental purpose of this work. The evolution of this movement will then be considered within the context of the social and historical environments of each particular community. Within this context, an interpretation of the significance of the ba'al teshuvah phenomenon among the four different groups will be postulated. The task of this paper, then, is to derive the meaning and messages embedded in the emergence of such religious choices.

It is the contention of this work that, without devaluing the religious experiences and commitments of individuals, the teshuvah phenomenon is a process of separate groups of people responding to different and particular historical, social, economic or cultural conditions in a similar religious manner. Early studies of religious conversion, particularly in the 1930s and 1940s³ took the view that only a disturbed individual would actually choose the restrictions of religion over the liberty

² Both Biblical and later texts will be discussed in Chapter One, pp 11-16.

³ For example, see Hadley Cantril, The Psychology Of Social Movements. (Chapman, New York. 1941), Erich Fromm, Escape From Freedom (Farrar & Reinhart, New York. 1941), and Eric Hoffer, The True Believer. (Harper & Brothers, New York. 1951).

of modern secular society.⁴ This study seeks the messages implicit in such a choice made within a given community. The reader will find that the meanings located within the return to observance include discourses on politics, ethnicity, feminism, economic disenfranchisement, and postmodern anomie.

The body of literature dealing with the ba'al teshuvah phenomenon is replete with such inspirational, recruitment works as Return To The Source or "how to" manuals like Teshuvah: A Guide For The Newly Observant Jew. Newly-religious Jews have elicited enough fascination to warrant articles in the popular media, including Rolling Stone and The New York Times Magazine.⁵ While increasingly the subject of analysis as case studies in various journal articles,⁶ there remain as yet only four scholarly books devoted to the subject of this radical, contemporary turn to observant Judaism.

Janet Aviad's seminal work, Return To Judaism: Religious Renewal In Israel (University of Chicago, Chicago. 1983) is a general examination of the newly-religious in Israel. Her focus is entirely on the search for common characteristics and

⁴ See Danzger, Returning To Tradition. p 3.

⁵ See Ellen Willis, "Next Year In Jerusalem". Rolling Stone Magazine, (April 21, 1977) pp 64-76. and Natalie Gittleson, "American Jews Rediscover Orthodoxy". New York Times Magazine, (Sept. 30, 1984) pp 40-41, ff.

⁶ Newly religious Jewish patients form the case study for Eliezer Witztum's psychiatric study, entitled "Mental Illness And Religious Change". British Journal Of Medical Psychology. (No.63, 1990).

motivations for the pursuit of higher religious education amongst Jerusalem yeshiva students. Aviad's conclusions are framed within the context of illuminating what she terms a radical rejection and withdrawal from secular modernity.⁷

Returning To Tradition: The Contemporary Revival Of Orthodox Judaism by Herbert Danzger (Yale University, New Haven. 1989) provides an in depth historical study of the ba'al teshuvah movement, although almost exclusively focused on the American male community. His work on recruitment, institutions and the actual processes and conflicts involved in religious return are central for any student of the phenomenon.

Two long-awaited considerations of women who have chosen to accept Orthodox Judaism are Lynn Davidman's Tradition In A Rootless World: Women Turn To Orthodox Judaism (University of California, Berkeley. 1991) and Rachel's Daughters: Newly Orthodox Jewish Women (Rutgers University, London. 1991) by Debra Kaufman. Davidman compares the resocialization process of new members in two American Orthodox institutions: those of Lubavitch⁸ and Lincoln Square Synagogue in New York. While certainly possessing certain basic philosophical and

⁷ See Aviad, Return To Judaism. p X.

⁸ More specifically the newly-religious women's yeshiva of Bais Chana.

ritual differences,⁹ these two groups differ fundamentally according to their degree of accommodation to modernity. Davidman's interest is primarily in the reasons for and manner in which women confront modernity with a religious worldview.

Rachel's Daughters is a rigorous examination of the attitudes, values and experiences of newly Orthodox Jewish women. Kaufman subjects her material to intense feminist sociological analysis, dealing in an honest fashion with the paradox she describes of feeling valued as a woman in a patriarchal culture.¹⁰

This paper is broader in base than are earlier studies, in its consideration of teshuvah amongst more groups. Rather than strictly historical or sociological in nature, the methodological focus is multi-disciplinary, in an attempt to locate the actual significance of the phenomenon rather than to simply explain its causes or functioning. It contains no original primary research in the form of interviews or data gathering. Rather, it is simply a fresh way of looking at the choice to become a ba'al teshuvah, and an original analysis of the meaning of those choices within a group context. While some central institutions (e.g. the yeshiva) and processes (e.g. recruitment) are discussed for purposes of clarity, the operation and evolution of the

⁹ Their ritual differences result from the fact the Lubavitch is Chassidic while Lincoln Square is Orthodox in the Mitnag tradition. They therefore use a different rite of prayer and have certain divergent customs.

¹⁰ See Kaufman, Rachel's Daughters. p 1.

movement is not itself the highlight of this thesis. The focus is on seeking an interpretation of the emergence of this phenomenon, rather than on its explanation. It is an analysis of the return movement to observant Judaism that will be sought, as opposed to its causes.

The basic structure of this work reflects the attempt to situate the teshuvah phenomenon against differing backgrounds. The United States and Israel form the major Jewish communities for consideration. Also the subject for analysis are the major subgroups in each of these, women in North America and the Eastern Jews of Israel.

That the historical, social, and ethnic mechanisms affecting Jews in Israel and North America are different is fairly self-evident. The history, traditions, norms, and forms of self-definition of each society are almost completely independent, and both the manner and meaning of being Jewish is different in each. Israeli Jews form the majority in the only Jewish state in the world, while American Jews live as a minority in a multi-ethnic, pluralistic and voluntarist country.¹¹ This distinction and the manner in which it affects the significance of the teshuvah movement will receive further discussion in Chapter Three as American ba'alei teshuvah are considered an entity distinct from newly-religious Israelis.

¹¹ See Liebman and Cohen, Two Worlds Of Judaism: The Israeli And American Experiences. (Yale University, New Haven. 1990) p 7.

This thesis will also discuss the major subgroups in each community whose particular historical experiences and social mechanisms, while a part of those of the larger groups, are singular in many respects. The situation of women and disenfranchised Eastern Jews within the context of North America and Israel respectively, are often overlooked.

There are numerous reasons to consider women as a special case within the North American teshuvah phenomenon. While many elements that will be considered below as operative in the general case of the West are also applicable to women, their situation is subject to certain unique factors. Only recently have scholars begun to challenge the fact that studies of conversion rarely consider the role and influence of gender.¹² Men and women grow up developing different role expectations, experiences, and forms of expression and thus presumably would experience most aspects of a new religious community in dissimilar ways. Questions of gender distinctions and roles are in some way treated by all religious ideologies, and it would appear natural that the different understandings of such would affect both women's and men's experiences, albeit differently. As institutions influenced by society, religious establishments and processes are also affected by gender.¹³

¹² See Davidman and Greil, "Gender and the Experience of Conversion", Sociology Of Religion (Vol.54:1, 1993). p 84.

¹³ See Ibid. p 84.

More specifically, this case is of particular interest in that North American women "returning" to Orthodox Judaism in the period since the 1960s are those informed by feminist consciousness and concerns. The religious lifestyle chosen by these women is both patriarchal and pro-familial, maintaining distinct spheres of responsibility as well as a high degree of sex-segregated activity. It is perhaps this very paradox that lies at the heart of differentiation between male and female teshuvah experiences, and a consideration of women separately permits a more extensive discussion of this incongruity. These various factors suggest that the meaning and significance of the teshuvah phenomenon amongst women is unique and distinct from that of the general (male) American population, and thus requires analysis as a separate and extraordinary case.

The term "Sepharadi" is highly problematic, and is often used differently in various cases. Originally it applied to Spanish Jews in the Middle Ages and their descendants, regardless of their nationality. With the expulsion order of 1492, large numbers of this community came to settle in North Africa, the Middle East, and in the central provinces of the Turkish Empire. It is not uncommon to refer to all members of oriental Jewish communities that have accepted particularly distinctive ritual forms as "Sepharadim".¹⁴

¹⁴ See "Sepharadim" in Wigoder (ed.) The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia. Seventh Edition. p. 846.

For the purposes of this work, it is those communities that emigrated to Israel in substantial numbers that are of interest and as such, will include primarily those Jews from North Africa, Iraq, and Yemen.¹⁵ They are often referred to as members of the Edot HaMizrach, or the "Eastern Communities". Due to the problems mentioned, reference will be made throughout this work to oriental or eastern Jews, or to members of the Edot HaMizrach, in place of the label "Sepharadi".

The case of the Eastern Jews in Israel is an exceptional one for a number of reasons. While many of the factors in the renewal of traditionalism in Israeli society generally are influential in their case, there are aspects unique to the Oriental Israeli situation that change the message of the teshuvah phenomenon occurring in its community. Also, while they form a majority in the country, they remain marginalised to a certain degree from the European-controlled establishment. Thus it is they that must be the "special case" or exception to the rule, and are often perceived as such from the Diaspora. Finally, while precise numbers are not available, I would suggest that not only did the Eastern Jewish occurrence of a return to observance begin later than did that of Ashkenazim, but that it is also statistically smaller. Because of this, the experience of European Jews will be taken as the Israeli

¹⁵ Mass evacuation from Yemen to Israel took place through Operation Magic Carpet in 1949, while Operation Ezra and Nehemia brought Jews from Iraq, beginning in 1950. Many tens of thousands emigrated from Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria early in the establishment of the Israeli state.

norm, while that of Oriental communities will be secondary.

Each of these groups is treated in separate chapters following a general introduction to the meaning and historical development of the social functioning of the concept of teshuvah, as well as certain basic mechanisms of the contemporary movement. The implications of this return to tradition in terms of religious fundamentalism, secularization, and premodern religion in a postmodern age are discussed in the concluding chapter.

Chapter One: The Ba'al Teshuvah Movement

1.1 The Concept of Teshuvah

The actual term teshuvah in its noun form is not used in the Bible. While technically coined by the Sages¹⁶, it was clearly based on the use of its root ("shuv") in the Tanach. Originating in the Bible in its germinal form, the Rabbis worked to clarify and expand the meaning, importance, and nature of teshuvah for a community no longer bound together by the disciplines and sanctions of national state or Temple. As the basic notion of repentance in the Bible is plagued with inconsistencies and difficulties, this chapter will simply introduce the certain key elements that make up its earliest form. Instead, focus will be placed on the many changes since then that have taken place regarding teshuvah until the twentieth-century.

It is noteworthy that the earliest stories of sinners, such as the generation of Noah and the peoples of Babel and Sodom are untouched by any notion of repentance. When, at later points in the text, such an opportunity is afforded, it is

¹⁶ The term 'Sages' is used to designate the rabbis of the Oral Law and mentioned in its written sources: the Mishna, Tosefta, Midrashim (halachic and aggadic) and Talmuds. For extensive consideration of the positions of different rabbis on various issues throughout this vast body of literature, see Urbach The Sages. (Harvard University, Massachusetts. 1975)

signified by the niphal¹⁷ form of "nacham"¹⁸ or far more regularly with the root "shuv". The verb "shuv" is of common usage in its mundane meaning of "return"¹⁹. In its religious sense, though, it is used to describe a turning away from sin²⁰ or similarly back towards God²¹, either on the part of an individual or the entire people. Additionally "shuv" can signify the turning of God himself from anger or his changing the decision to punish a particular wrongdoing.²²

Certainly cases of a return to God are described using neither of these two words, such as the cultic rituals of confession, atonement and purification from sin described in Leviticus 16. At times it appears that true repentance has taken place, with vastly differing results: Moses' plea went unheard (Deut. 3:23-26), David's punishment is lessened (II Sam. 12:7-17), while Ahab's is put off until generations later (I Kngs. 21:27-29). This returning to God is central to the tribal events and politics that occur within the Judges cycle. When the Israelites sin and are punished

¹⁷ The niphal is the passive or reflexive form of the verb stem.

¹⁸ Except in the case of Num. 23:19 which uses the hitpael. This is another reflexive form, identified by the prefix "hit" added to the verb stem.

¹⁹ See Gen. 3:19, Deut. 3:20, I Sam. 5:11 for various forms of use.

²⁰ For examples of this see Jer. 18:11, Zech. 1:4, Ezk. 14:6.

²¹ For examples of this see Deut. 4:30, Isa. 55:7, Amos 4:8-11.

²² As in the cases of Exod. 32:12, Josh. 7:26 and Jonah 3:9.

by God with the rise of an external threat, it is only their repentance that merits the sending of a Judge to liberate them from their enemies.

Even in Hosea 12:6 that speaks of love and justice, the precise nature of this "turning" is hazy, as is the manner in which it is to be effected. What is made startlingly clear is the radical relationship presumed between man and God that forms the basis for this kind of repentance, as found in Zecharia: "Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you" (1:3).

The Talmud recounts numerous figures who stress the cosmic importance of this "turning", such as R. Meir who said that

Great is repentance, for on account of an individual who repents, the sins of all the world are forgiven as it is said: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him" (Hos. 14:5). 'From them' it is not said but 'from him'.²³

Repentance figures in a list of seven things such as the Torah, the Garden of Eden and the name of the Messiah, believed to be so important as to have been created even before the world came into existence.²⁴ A passage in tractate Yoma even

²³ Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 86b.

²⁴ Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim 54a. The remaining three are Gehenna, the Throne of Glory, and the Temple. These are the things considered as basic preconditions to ensure the orderly progress of the world itself.

suggests that it is this teshuvah itself that will bring about the redemption.²⁵

It is in the literature of the Oral Law that such key questions as recurring sins, authentic repentance and the need for fasting, prayer and specific confession of transgressions, are considered.²⁶ However technical and legally oriented these discussions, the tradition of the Prophets' call for heartfelt teshuvah was not lost, receiving instead a renewed emphasis with the Rabbis as a result of the Temple's destruction. The people were to be reminded of this on fast days with the elders' speech, which included the following admonition:

Our brethren, it is not stated regarding the people of Nineveh "And God saw their sackcloth and their fast", but rather: "And God saw their deeds that they repented of their evil way" (Jonah 3:10). And in the Prophets it states: "And rend your hearts and not your clothes" (Joel 2:13).²⁷

Medieval theologians and ethicists in no way neglected this central religious value of the Sages, as the moral literature of the Middle Ages was preoccupied with questions of inner ethical obligations to God. A number of special works were devoted particularly to the subject of repentance, such as Ibn Pakuda's Hovot HaLevavot ("Duties of the Heart"), Hilchot HaTeshuvah ("Laws of Repentance") by

²⁵ Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 86b.

²⁶ Ibid. 86b.

²⁷ Mishna, Taanit 2:1. (15a)

Maimonides, the thirteenth century work Shaarei Teshuvah ("Gates of Repentance") of Rabbi Yona Gerondi, and Luzzato's Messilat Yesharim ("The Path of the Upright").

The importance of teshuvah in Jewish religious life in no way lessened in the nineteenth-century. Rabbi Israel Salanter's Mussar movement in Lithuania, with its focus on medieval ethical works and on profound soul searching in terms of spiritual progress was, for example, a case of a Jewish system particularly informed by the notion of repentance.²⁸ Chassidism places a similar importance on the power of teshuvah and the value of penitence for spiritual progress. A major work by the great Chassidic figure R. Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev describes the ba'al teshuvah as one who had

...abandoned God to do ugly, wicked deeds. When he repents his evil ways and regrets having drawn away from God and removed himself from eternal life, he realizes that his indulgence of his passions has made him so impure, earthly, and material that he cannot approach God's magnificence, and then his soul cries out from deep inside him. Just as it says in the Psalm. "Out of the depths have I called Thee, O Lord" (Psalms 130:1), he laments from the depths of his heart, risking his soul and negating his own existence. Now he can ascend to a higher degree than the completely righteous person...The penitent ascends to a higher plane before the essence of the Creator because he endangered

²⁸ See Goldberg, Israel Salanter: Text, Structure, Idea: The Ethics And Theology Of An Early Psychologist Of The Unconscious. (Ktav, New York, 1982) chapter 4 section 1 (pp. 130-138) for some Jewish theoretical foundations for the behaviour modification central to the methods of the Mussar movement.

his soul and cried out to God from the depths of his heart....²⁹

Teshuvah then has at its core the Pentateuchal idea of atonement, that the specific formulaic ritual of a blood sacrifice caused the sin to be pardoned.³⁰ With the Prophets a focus on the spiritual process developed that, it was felt, must accompany any ritual processes in order to achieve pardon from God. This inner penance was reiterated by the Rabbis, bound in the halacha, and given greater treatment and depth in the moral dissertations of medieval literature.

Jewish thought does not suggest that human nature is blemished from birth, but rather that the fall into sin is so normal as to be an almost expected mode for each individual.³¹ Thus repentance formed a regular part of the cycle of religious life for each individual and the community as a whole.³² One who completes this process of abandoning sinful actions and the move back to normative behaviour is called a ba'al teshuvah, or a "possessor of repentance"³³, of whom the Talmud says "Where

²⁹ R. Levi Yitzchak of Beriditchev, Kedushat Levi, "Likutim". Op.Cit. in Dan, The Teachings of Hasidism. (Behrman, New York. 1983) p 123.

³⁰ See Leviticus chap. 16.

³¹ See Ecclesiastes 7:20 for the source of this notion.

³² This is even built into the holiday cycle, with the yearly focus on intense repentance for the period between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, also called Aseret Yemei Teshuvah, or the "ten days of repentance".

³³ For women the term is "ba'alat teshuvah", while "ba'alei teshuvah" is the plural form.

a ba'al teshuvah stands not even a fully righteous man can stand".³⁴

As Eliezer Schweid demonstrates in his discussion of what he terms the "theology of return", faith and the absolute preparation to follow God's revealed will were axiomatic within this structure, even for one who sins.³⁵ Individuals can only understand themselves as a "sinner" if the sovereignty of God and the holiness of his commandments are accepted. A sinner is one who, knowing the right course of action and accepting it as correct, is unable to fulfil his or her obligation. Traditional teshuvah recognized the authority of the Law and was an expected action that reaffirmed community norms and values.

1.2 Historical Development

Prior to the Enlightenment, there were virtually no options for an existence outside of one of the established religions in Europe. One was born Jewish, Christian or Muslim and remained a part of that community, value structure and authority system until death. Both the ghetto and the shtetl in Western and Eastern Europe

³⁴ Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 34b. There follows a disagreement here between R. Abaha and R. Hiyya bar Abba over which will receive a more glorious reward, one who has sinned and repented or one who has never sinned. The point is highly theoretical, centred around which of the two will receive peace first based on Isaiah 57:19.

³⁵ See Schweid, Jewish Thought In The Twentieth Century. (Scholars, Atlanta. 1992) p 355.

respectively were self-contained Jewish communities that to a large degree served to isolate inhabitants from the Gentile environment and alien practices. Social controls existed primarily in the form of the herem or excommunication, which entailed the complete severance of business, social and religious contact with individuals who would not conform to community standards of behaviour.³⁶ It was a society with religious law at its institutional centre and as the guideline for all aspects of ritual, daily activity, and interpersonal relations.

The two developments of the Enlightenment and emancipation in the nineteenth century irrevocably changed the face of the Jewish community. The Haskalah movement which sought to bring modern European culture to the Jews was an offshoot of the Enlightenment, with its principal aim of man's liberation from the irrational confines of religion. Thus the Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment strove to bring about intellectual and social integration with the modern, non-Jewish environment³⁷, through the modernization of religious laws and cultural customs that had hitherto served to keep the communities distinct and apart. Tradition and the centrality of halacha were weakened, no longer seen to necessarily possess the supreme authority they had previously enjoyed. At around the same time came the

³⁶ See "Excommunication" in Wigoder, ed. Standard Jewish Encyclopedia. p.318.

³⁷ See "Haskalah", Ibid. p. 417.

emancipation of the Jews and the removal of both political disabilities and effectively the Ghetto system itself occurred in various parts of Europe. It achieved the ability of the Jews to participate in greater European culture, but at the cost of a cohesive community and its social controls.

Alternatives to traditional Judaism such as Reform, Conservatism, neo-Orthodoxy, secularism, Yiddishism, socialism, and Zionism sprang directly or indirectly from the developments of Enlightenment and emancipation. With the collapse of the legal structure as normative, the term "repentance" necessarily began to take on an entirely new meaning which would have been unheard of in an earlier period.³⁸ The interpretation of teshuvah came to refer specifically to the process of movement from doubt and non-observance to an acceptance of the traditional commandments and value structures. What once signified the transition from sin to forgiveness came to represent the transformation from a lack of faith to religious conviction. This radically different understanding of teshuvah reflects the altered socio-cultural framework of Jewish life, rooted as it is in secularization and the modern crisis of faith.³⁹

* Clearly some Jewish communities were untouched by modernity, coming to be known as haredim, to whom this does not apply. As they were against any changes to traditional law and custom, and placed great emphasis on opposition to western civilization and culture, teshuvah meant precisely what it had meant since the Sages: repentance from a specific transgression. Today the haredim exist as a small, insulated, and fragmented minority.

³⁹ See Schweid, Jewish Thought, p. 355.

It is a result of the realities of these very changes that many have asked if, from a religious perspective, such a returnee should be labelled as a ba'al teshuvah. Some have suggested that a more correct category is that of the Talmudic concept used to describe the status of a Jewish child who has been raised outside the community, having been taken captive by non-Jews.⁴⁰ An individual to whom this applies, having no knowledge of Jewish law, is deemed exempt from the performance of teshuvah for those sins occurring during the period of captivity, committed as they were, in ignorance.

While the halachic details of applying such a category to contemporary ba'alei teshuvah are not specifically relevant here, it is noteworthy that this religious discussion over legal status reflects those changes in the understanding of teshuvah that have been considered above. Internal responses to historical conditions effected a metamorphosis in this central Jewish tenet, from once signalling a repentance for sins within the framework of halacha, to the process of returning to that very structure from without. It is precisely this transformation that forms the basis of the contemporary teshuvah phenomenon that began in the 1960's.

⁴⁰ This is called "tinok she'nishba" and is discussed in the Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 68b and Makot 7b.

1.3 Mechanisms Of Return

While some people come to religious observance through marriage or innovative synagogue-centred outreach, such as that of Lincoln Square Synagogue in New York, the main portal of entry into Orthodoxy is through the yeshiva system. Historically in the medieval communities of Eastern Europe, the yeshiva was an educational institution devoted entirely to the task of producing Talmudic scholars. Unlike the popular heder framework which provided local, younger boys (to the age of thirteen) with instruction in the basic elements of Jewish tradition, the yeshivot were elite structures wherein promising students could go on to master the intellectual intricacies of the voluminous religio-legal system.⁴¹

Generally anomic social conditions, the twin challenges of Chassidism and secularism combined with severe economic struggle, began the distortion and subsequent decline of this social organization in the nineteenth century. By the Second World War, persecution, emigration and religious liberalization had completely altered both the nature and geographical centre of the Jewish community.

In the United States, the new educational options developed were both unique

⁴¹ See Katz, Tradition And Crisis: Jewish Society At The End Of The Middle Ages. (Schocken, New York. 1961) pp 191-192.

and innovative, making available a great variety of options in format.⁴² While by the mid-1940s some yeshivot began opening their doors to students of limited Jewish backgrounds⁴³, these were not ba'alei teshuvah. Rather the new pupils were often teenage children present at the request of their parents who were either financial contributors in other countries (often Central or South America), or themselves lapsed Orthodox Jews.⁴⁴

It was the outreach efforts begun on college campuses by two personally charismatic rabbis, Zalman Schachter and Shlomo Carlebach, in the 1950s that initially presented the world of Orthodoxy to young people from non-observant homes. Their use of music and contemporary idioms of expression for traditional worldviews gave them access to a youthful audience which they then captured. This can be seen in the significant attendance at their concerts, lectures and other events.⁴⁵

⁴² See Danzger, Returning To Tradition. pp 44-53 for an extensive discussion of this process.

⁴³ such as Yeshiva Torah Vodaath and Tomche Temimim.

⁴⁴ See Danzger, Returning To Tradition p.56.

⁴⁵ In the summer of 1992 I attended a concert of Shlomo Carlebach in the courtyard of a private home in the Old City of Tzfat, in Israel. Even at an advanced age, after allegations of personal scandal involving young women and this many years after the peak of his "hippy-Jewish" style, the attendance was enormous for a small village and encompassed all ages. On both my recent trips to Israel, I regularly met young people whose sole purpose for coming was to spend time on kibbutz Modi'in, created by his followers.

American Jewish educational institutions then began to address the needs of those interested in learning the fundamentals of religious observance, until finally Lubavitch opened the first two schools in North America directed solely towards the education of ba'alei teshuvah.

Following the Six Day War, many young Jews from the United States came to visit Israel, often en route to India and in search of both their roots and the chance to partake of interesting religious experiences. Yeshivah Hatfutzot-Har Tzion (the Diaspora Yeshivah), opened in 1967, was the first of many yeshivot that would come to be created in Israel for North Americans new to Jewish observance. Other well-known institutions created at the same time and similar in focus are still in operation today, including Ohr Sameyach (1972), Aish HaTorah (1974) and the Shappel Colleges of Jewish Studies (1973). As these travellers often came with girlfriends, the need to accommodate women was reluctantly understood to be a necessary step in persuading young men to remain and study Torah. This situation gave rise to the creation of yeshiva facilities for women, usually within or linked with a men's institution.⁴⁶

While the majority of ba'al teshuvah yeshivot were (and still are) located in Israel, participants were overwhelmingly American with a smaller contingent from

⁴⁶ An example of this is Dvar Yerushalayim (men) and Neve Yerushalayim (women), both created in 1973.

other Western countries. Reasons for this situation include both the provision of government financial aid and the environmental support for the teshuvah process offered by a Jewish national culture and the presence of a large and vibrant Orthodox community in Israel.⁴⁷ Facilities created were designed to address their particular needs, such as instruction in English or certain concessions to the hippie lifestyle in areas such as modifications in regular dress expectations. As long as Israelis were not experiencing a similar renewal of interest in Orthodox Judaism, the fact that no programmes were aimed at their situation and requirements mattered little.

But by the late 1970's, a number of schools for newly religious Americans began small outreach efforts into the Israeli community, usually in the form of day-long seminars or part-time classes taken through a government agency such as the army.⁴⁸ Machon Meir opened originally as an evening programme directed solely towards Israelis, while Ohr Hahayim came to engage in the education and rehabilitation of wayward Jewish youths of Eastern descent.

One of the strongest characteristics distinguishing ba'al teshuvah yeshivot from the traditionalist institutions for the already-religious community is that of active recruitment. From the start these schools needed to make their presence familiar and

⁴⁷ See Aviad, Return To Judaism p.26.

⁴⁸ See Danzger, Returning To Tradition p.113.

accessible to potential participants who did not even know of their existence. This was (and continues to be) achieved by various methods. Representatives of yeshivot would locate themselves in popular Jerusalem areas such as the Central Bus Station, Hebrew University, or the Kotel, that brought large numbers of young adults on a regular basis. Often striking up conversation with "So, are you Jewish?", an invitation to a Sabbath meal or upcoming lecture would result.⁴⁹ Even today posters proclaiming movies, classes and excursions sponsored by the different yeshivot litter the Old City, while Heritage House offers free dormitory accommodation to young travellers who are then recruited into learning programmes.⁵⁰ The suggestion is that one who has visited the country without including some traditional Jewish study in a yeshiva had not seen the real Israel.⁵¹

Facilities for Israeli ba'alei teshuvah use different outreach techniques that reflect divergent needs and cultural backgrounds. Army units often seek out sessions,

⁴⁹ Figures such as Jeff Seidel or Meir Schuster who were actively involved in recruiting in the 1970's are still extremely well known amongst young Americans visiting Israel and are greeted in the streets by many. The backpacking visitor who has not been approached by one of these two men while in Jerusalem is the exception.

⁵⁰ Heritage House is well known to all young Jews who have backpacked through Israel. Some have found the experience so stifling that jokes referring to it as "Heretic House" or "Hostage House" continue to make the rounds amongst that group.

⁵¹ See Aviad, Return To Judaism p 29. On page 30 she suggests that a sign of the routinization of the ba'al teshuvah phenomenon is the abandonment of active recruitment. My two recent trips to Israel of four and three months respectively, suggested that this was not at all the case, and that such outreach methods are still widely used, although perhaps in a more organized fashion than in previous decades.

which the Israeli Defense Force endorses to enrich the soldiers' knowledge and connection with the Jewish tradition. The media also provides a great deal of positive exposure for the schools to potential Israeli members. In a unique format, Rav Elbaz actively recruits in poor oriental neighbourhoods for Ohr Hahayim using loud music and charismatic sermons that appeal to his particular audience.

The traditional yeshiva system that emerged from the Middle Ages was based on the assumption that students came from observant homes and were familiar with everyday religious strictures and basic sources. The contemporary ba'al teshuvah institution fills a radically different role than do traditional yeshivot. The new curriculum (for men) remains centred on learning gemara and the application of Talmudic decisions to questions of daily behaviour. While some philosophy and Bible are included, the focus remains on learning the legal (halachic) system, and mystical texts are almost completely ignored.⁵² Almost no women's yeshivot teach gemara, emphasizing instead the various halachot required to keep a Jewish home and marriage. Interestingly, this results in women ba'alot teshuvah often having a more extensive education in areas such as Hebrew Bible and Jewish philosophy than do their male counterparts.

While its central focus has remained on study, the ba'al teshuvah yeshiva's

⁵² Chassidic yeshivot such as those of Lubavitch and Breslov necessarily include a more mystical approach but do not teach Kabbalah directly as a rule, and gemara remains at the curriculum core.

main function is that of resocialization. Here a young man not only learns about observance but lives it, completely entering its world and values. Participation in such groups activities as thrice-daily prayer, Sabbath observance, and involvement in the sympathetic Orthodox community are mechanisms that permit students to learn appropriate behaviour and to internalize the traditional Jewish worldview. Community religious norms are communicated to the newcomer in the study hall and are transmitted through the actions and lifestyles of teachers and more advanced students. Matchmaking ensures the transition out of the yeshiva and into the greater Orthodox community when the student is prepared, and encourages the continuation of observant Jewish practice through the fundamental institutions of marriage and family.

While there do exist other forms of entrance into the lifestyle of religious traditionalism, the yeshiva is the principal mechanism of learning and resocialization for the newly observant in all the communities under consideration. Its forms responded to the needs of ba'alei teshuvah as they arose, beginning with facilities for American men in the late 1960's until the most recent establishment of a school directed solely towards the needs of oriental youths in Israel.

1.4 Summary

The concept of teshuvah and its development has been discussed, as has its changed meaning and role in the Jewish community since the Enlightenment. The transition from its original functioning as "repentance" within the Jewish worldview to its contemporary expression as a form of "return" to that very structure from without has been demonstrated. The movement of a return to religious tradition by individuals known as ba'alei teshuvah has been introduced along with some of its central functioning mechanisms. As outlined above, this work will provide an analysis of the meaning located in this phenomenon as it occurs among different groups. Chapter two will begin this study by examining the emergence of this "return" movement within the American Jewish community.

Chapter Two: United States

2.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the first of four groups among which a return to traditional religious observance from the liberal Jewish community has occurred. Viewed within the context of concrete historical, political and socio-cultural trends, the meaning of this phenomenon will be analyzed. The ba'al teshuvah movement in the United States will be shown to carry messages regarding ethnic assertion, rebellion against "the establishment", the negotiation of a new relationship with Israel, and coping with the post-counterculture disillusionment of the 1970's.

2.2 American Teshuvah

2.2a Separatism And Ethnic Pride

The spread of Enlightenment ideals in the eighteenth century facilitated the emancipation of the Jews and their integration into Western European society. Statesmen and philosophers voiced their reluctant willingness to bestow civil rights upon them, qualified by the understanding that full citizenship would be granted to individuals rather than to members of a separate, distinct group. Similarly, the Jews

themselves desired equality rather than the right to be different, and sought their dream of integration through the mechanisms of assimilation and normalization. This is illustrated clearly by the proclamation of Count Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre in the French National Assembly of December 1789:

We must not permit the Jews to constitute a separate political body or class in the state. It is necessary that each of them individually be a citizen. But, it will be claimed, they do not want this. Very well, if they do not want it, let them tell us so, and then it will be necessary to expel them. We cannot allow there to be in the state a group of non-citizens, a nation within a nation. But, in fact, it is clear that this is not their wish at all.⁵³

Innovations such as the Reform movement and secular education continued to promote the quest for cultural assimilation into the surrounding Gentile environment of Europe. For new immigrants to the United States facing prejudice and economic hardship, "Americanization"⁵⁴ was the predominant process whose unspoken maxim of "Be a Jew in the home, be a man in the street" lasted well into the 1950's.⁵⁵ The great "melting-pot" mentality that molded members of ethnic groups into Americans

⁵³ Op. Cit. Ben-Sasson, A History Of The Jewish People. (Harvard University, Massachusetts. 1976) p 744.

⁵⁴ See Ruth Carlson, The Americanization Syndrome: A Quest For Conformity. (Croom Helm, Great Britain. 1987). Specifically dealing with the Jewish experience is Neil Cowan and Ruth Schwartz Cohen Our Parents' Lives: The Americanization Of Eastern European Jews. (Basic Books, New York. 1989)

⁵⁵ See Greenberg, On Women And Judaism: A View From Tradition. (Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia. 1981)
p 23.

was a process desired by minorities seeking equal opportunity. Universalism and assimilation were the order of the day, and the particularist, isolationist attitudes of Orthodox Judaism were out of fashion.

The Holocaust served as a particularly brutal lesson in the failure of liberalism as those who felt themselves to be simply "Germans of the Mosaic persuasion" were exterminated along with traditional Jews. Hitler's "Final Solution" was applied equally to those who renounced their religion and those who lived by its dictates: a Jew was always a Jew. As increasing information of Nazi atrocities filtered overseas and the beginnings of Holocaust education emerged, group identification was strengthened. Similarly, the 1948 creation of Israel as a national homeland for Jews assisted the burgeoning process of re-affiliation.

American Jews had come to play a significant role in the black civil rights movement, sensing perhaps a common enemy in the racism that had disenfranchised and deprived the black community. By the mid-1960s, however, separatist arguments had gained popularity, and Stokely Carmichael assumed the chairmanship of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), issuing a call for "Black Power". An earlier vision of equality of individuals was replaced with the fight for group identity and rights. Blacks began to proudly emphasize their collective African

heritage in dress, music, hairstyle and names.⁵⁶ At the same time as whites were replaced by Blacks in leadership positions in the movement, violence and urban riots were perceived to specifically target Jewish business. The antagonistic level to which Black-Jewish relations had descended was demonstrated most clearly with the 1968 Ocean Hill-Brownsville teachers strike.⁵⁷ Feeling increasingly rejected and even under attack, Jewish activists began to focus their energies on explicitly Jewish causes beginning an increasing identification with their own culture.⁵⁸

With the achievement of basic civil rights and the continuing struggle for equal opportunity, a radical shift was signalled in the relationship of minorities to the dominant Protestant ethos. Or, as Sydney Ahlstrom suggests, the 1960's were "when the age of the WASP, the age of the melting pot, drew to a close."⁵⁹ The emergence of "black pride" and the celebration of cultural differences had a profound effect on Jewish youths who began to search out their own roots and ethnic identity.

⁵⁶ See Morgan, The 60s Experience: Hard Lessons About Modern America. (Temple University, Philadelphia. 1991) p 79.

⁵⁷ See Maurice Bernabe and Marilyn Gittell, Confrontation At Ocean Hill-Brownsville: The New York School Strikes Of 1968. (Praeger, U.S.A. 1969) and Martin Mayer, The Teachers Strike: New York 1968. (Harper & Row, New York. 1969)

⁵⁸ See Danzger, Returning To Tradition. p.73.

⁵⁹ See Ahlstrom, A Religious History Of The American People (Yale University, New Haven. 1972). p 1079.

The phenomenon of "Black Pride" was paralleled by a corresponding emergence of "Jewish pride". Those aspects of Orthodoxy that a generation earlier had been embarrassing in the quest for sameness and integration, such as traditional dress and dietary restrictions were looked upon with new respect as expressions of a particular cultural heritage. Just as Black Studies entered the university curriculum, so too did Jewish Studies arise as a discipline.

The return to religious observance that arose in this period has messages embedded in it that were similar to those occurring within the greater Jewish community. American ba'alei teshuvah were expressing cultural interest and pride in a search for their own roots, in response to black separatism and ethnic assertion.

2.2b Rejecting The Establishment

Permeating the counterculture was also an aggressive anti-establishment stance. As once respected institutions such as the government, police, universities and patriotism came under attack, organized religion and the churches were in no way immune to the criticisms prevalent in this period. Young American adults who began to choose a lifestyle of Jewish Orthodoxy in the late 1960's and early 1970's were also expressing a similar form of rebellion.

The Jewish "establishment" at this time was that of third-generation Americans whose Judaism was characterized by Charles Waxman as a "religion without religiosity".⁶⁰ It was a period in which leadership was focused on pragmatic considerations of congregationalism, community building, and further integration into mainstream America.⁶¹ This overwhelmingly practical, "community-centred" orientation created a religious expression that was not only a-theological, but resulted in a Judaism that was "smooth, sober, shallow and uninspiring".⁶²

The ba'al teshuvah movement was a rejection of the community priorities and foci of their parents' generation. Frustrated by a perceived spiritual emptiness, materialism, and hypocrisy, many young Jews turned to other forms of religious expression, often Eastern. The move to observant Judaism expressed a similar impulse of disenchantment and rebellion with the religious traditions they had been taught. Religious Judaism was thought to be more pure, mystical, disciplined and vibrant than were the liberal traditions.⁶³ That secular pursuits and material success

⁶⁰ See Waxman, America's Jews In Transition. (Temple University, Philadelphia. 1983) p.81.

⁶¹ See Borowitz, "The Jewish Need For Theology", Commentary (Vol.34:2, August 1962). p 140.

⁶² See Frimer, "The A-theological Judaism Of The American Community" Judaism. (Vol.11:2, Spring 1962) p 151.

⁶³ The rise of "pop" Eastern mysticism found an echo in a similar form of Jewish neo-mysticism that was particularly prevalent in campus-based Chassidism. For an extensive and classically Jewish criticism of one of the great proponents of neo-mysticism, A.J. Heschel, see Meir Ben-Horin "Via Mystica", Jewish Quarterly Review Vol. 45 (Jan. 1955), pp 249-258 and "The Ineffable: Critical

were placed secondary to spiritual learning in Orthodoxy was attractive to a generation rejecting the pragmatic, utilitarian ethos of the "establishment".

2.2c Relevance Of Israel

The weeks preceding what would come to be called the Six Day War were ones of escalating tension as Egypt moved her army into the Sinai Peninsula, blocked the Straits of Tiran, and succeeded in having UN troops removed from Sharm-El-Sheik and along the Gaza Strip. As other Arab countries readied troops and signed agreements with Egypt's President Nasser who vowed to drive Israel into the sea, the western world remained silent. Vastly outnumbered, Jews prepared for another Holocaust, anxiously anticipating their own annihilation.

The unanticipated and unambiguously supportive response of the American Jewish community to Israel in the face of this menace was tremendous. In American Jews And The Zionist Idea, Naomi Cohen notes that:

American Jews did not wait for organizational directives. Even as they sat glued to radios and TVs or put in long-distance calls to friends in

Notes On Neo-Mysticism", Jewish Quarterly Review Vol. 46 (April 1956), pp 321-354. For a discussion of how Heschel and his neo-Chassidism perfectly reflected the spirit of the 1960's, see Hillel Goldberg, "Abraham Joshua Heschel And His Times", Midstream Vol. 28, (April 1982) pp 36-42.

Israel, they fretted over what they could do. They organized meetings on the synagogue or neighbourhood level, and they donated food, blood, and medical supplies. Doctors and teachers volunteered to serve if Israel called upon them. On campuses special lectures and "teach-ins" were held as traditionally alienated intellectuals stood up and were counted. The attendance at synagogue services soared, equalling the High Holy Day mark, as Jews congregated to pray for Israel's survival.

The funds poured in, surpassing all previous campaigns...Illustrations abound on the magnitude and even sacrificial elements of the campaign...The results amazed the professional fund-raisers and caused a log-jam in tabulating the receipts...⁶⁴

The final victory was swift and decisive. Israel had not only repelled the Arab threat but conquered and occupied areas with profound Biblical and religious significance. For the first time in almost twenty years, Jews had access to the Western Wall, to which passage had been previously been restricted by Jordan. A tremendous outpouring of religious and emotional sentiment gripped world Jewry. Both the desperation prior to the war and the euphoria following roused among American Jews an intensification of their already high level of commitment and identification with Israel.

That the ba'al teshuvah movement was influenced by this turn of events is clear. Its particular importance lies in the significance of such a stirring of return to religious tradition against the background of the Six Day War. It indicates not just affiliation with Israel, but an intense identification with the country on a religious

⁶⁴ Cohen, American Jews And The Zionist Idea. (Ktav, New Jersey. 1975) p 139.

level. Prior to these events the division between Jew and Israeli was strong, the former perceived as shackled to religion and the Diaspora experience, the latter attached to reviving the new land.⁶⁵

The emergence of the ba'al teshuvah movement at this time, with most return-minded young Americans travelling to Israel for their religious education, signalled a new relationship between Israelis and Jews. The Six Day War illustrated their common fears and linked fate, while the ensuing victory and its religious overtones strengthened the commonalities of history, culture and faith. Ba'alei teshuvah in the context of the war are an expression of that new religious consciousness and the religious relevance of Israel to their emergent Judaism. Similarly, religion and the diaspora became more acceptable for Israelis resulting from the display of unity in the Jewish world.⁶⁶

2.2d Search For Stable Meaning

But while the 1960s saw the first stirrings of a large teshuvah phenomenon in North America, it was in the 1970s that the movement began to flourish. This decade

⁶⁵ See Herman, Israelis and Jews: The Continuity Of An Identity. (Random House, New York. 1970) pp 83-85 and Chapter 13.

⁶⁶ As will be discussed in Chapter Three, pp 48-51

witnessed the creation of extensive outreach networks and educational facilities for young adults returning to traditional Judaism. The height of the counterculture had passed, and as the war in Vietnam ended and college students entered the work force, "dropping back in" became the order of the day. But though the radicalism, idealism, and anti-establishment reaction waned, the frustration and disillusionment with once-hallowed American traditions continued. Disaffection, anomie and the search for moral meaning remained even as sixties youth (and subsequent generations) participated in the practical demands of modernized and conventional Western society.

In his striking work Getting Saved From The Sixties, Steven Tipton explores youth from this era who have joined a conservative Christian sect (The Living Word Fellowship), a neo-Oriental meditation centre (Pacific Zen Center) and a psychotherapeutic organization (Erhard Seminars Training)⁶⁷. Using these examples he argues that alternative religious movements can be seen as mediative successors to the conflicts of the sixties which serve to synthesize some of the most valuable elements of the counterculture with the most functionally necessary conditions of modern, mainstream society.⁶⁸ Tipton's analysis of The Living Word Fellowship in particular, as a theistic, scripture-based Pentecostal sect, grounded in authority and

⁶⁷ More commonly called est.

⁶⁸ See Tipton, Getting Saved From The Sixties: Moral Meaning In Conversion And Cultural Change. (University of California, Berkeley. 1982) p 30.

an unambiguous moral order is particularly illuminating for the situation of ba'alei teshuvah in the 1970s and 1980s with its similarities to the worldview of observant Judaism.

Countercultural critiques of tradition and convention easily devolved into anomie and an overabundance of moral options, potentially leading some participants into intense confusion, instability, and inner-conflict.⁶⁹ Greatly affected by this uncertainty, sixties youths emerged as adults involved in negotiating a mature relationship with more mainstream society, but retained numerous alternative elements in their personal systems of value. The Living Word Fellowship, for example, functions as a mediator between these two systems in that it

...carries over the message of love from the counterculture's ethic into its own, so that the Christian youth feels himself, at last, to be living out the counterculture's highest ideals while being saved from its actual contradictions.⁷⁰

Traditional Jewish concepts of love (Ahavat Israel), mutual responsibility (Kol Israel Arevim Zeh Lazeh), charity (Tzedakah), conservation (Bal Tashchit), and kindness (Chesed) all resound strongly with a morality similar to elements of the counterculture. More than simply ideals, the orthopractic nature of Judaism demands

⁶⁹ See Ibid. p 53.

⁷⁰ Ibid. p 43.

that these be lived out in the fulfilment of numerous laws governing human relationships. Both these systems reject the instrumental individualism of conventional society, focusing instead on morality, personal connections, and the rejection of social stratification rather than valuing success, money, and power.

However, while Jewish observance has certain correspondences with the sixties alternatives to the utilitarian ethos, its rationale is different. However "hip" it might appear to be in some areas, halacha is grounded in an unchanging and eternally binding moral order seen to emanate from divine authority, rather than in any assumptions of universal good will or sensitivity. Orthodoxy retains a value system independent of changing social conditions and trends, thereby providing discontented alternative-seeking youths since the 1960s with an immutable value system and an ageless moral community.⁷¹ Jewish law is authoritative, and the choice to abide by this absolute moral code expresses both the need for a stable and enduring meaning, as well as the rejection of relativist and instrumentalist ethics.

2.3 Summary

The first appearance of the ba'al teshuvah phenomenon occurred among this community, beginning in a period of great social upheaval when the earliest returnees

⁷¹ See Kaufman, Rachel's Daughters. p.33.

to Orthodoxy were products of the North American counterculture of the sixties. The movement is significant and its emergence, viewed contextually, expresses messages of ethnic assertion, rebellion against established community priorities, and a new religious connection to Israel in the wake of the Six Day War.

Its meaning is particularly interesting in its later period of growth (especially in the 1970s), viewed as a method of coping with some of the problems and contradictions of the counterculture itself. Thus the movement also expresses a need for moral meaning that is more stable and allows for an improved relationship with mainstream society than did the counterculture. This return to religious traditionalism is noteworthy not just as personal experiences of conversion but as a modern response to particular social, cultural and political changes within a society.

Chapter Three: Israel

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the ba'al teshuvah phenomenon in the other major Jewish centre, that of Israel.⁷² The different process of converting to a majority religion, as opposed to the environment in North America, is discussed. Returning to religious observance within this community will be demonstrated to express the restored legitimacy of religion, the search for national identity and purpose and a renewed dialogue with Zionism in the period of profound change and crisis following the Six Day War in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973.

3.2 Israeli Teshuvah

The unique situation of Israel suggests that the phenomenon of teshuvah in that community carries with it a distinct significance. This chapter will briefly consider the Israeli context and the manner in which it affects the potential return to observant Judaism among its citizens. The message of the ba'al teshuvah movement will be demonstrated to signify a renewed form of dialogue with Zionism and its

⁷² The case of teshuvah in the United States was discussed first only because that was the site of its first emergence. The movement arose in Israel somewhat later than it did in America.

implications, as situated against the backdrop of post-Yom Kippur War conditions of the mid-1970's.

Numerous structural, political, and demographic distinctions between Israel and the U.S. render the experience of being Jewish in each country a significantly different experience.⁷³ Issues such as majority status, the role of religious tradition in the state system and founding history, the interpretation of that tradition and the realities of life in a country self-defined as "Jewish" are unique aspects of Israeli life. These have given rise to particular situations with far-reaching implications for the process and significance of the teshuvah phenomenon within that community.

For members of all the groups discussed in this study, the choice of turning to Orthodox Judaism occurs primarily in Israel where the option is facilitated by a number of factors. These include the Jewish nature of the state and its central symbols as well as the existence of an extensive Orthodox community, both of which provide social support and reinforcement of the individuals' process of teshuvah and increase the possibility of their making such a choice.⁷⁴ While these elements are important in assessing the role of Israel in the process of becoming observant, it is

⁷³ See Liebman and Cohen, Two Worlds Of Judaism for an extensive discussion of the differences between Jewish life in the two communities, and whether it has caused the emergence of distinct "Judaisms".

⁷⁴ See Aviad, Return To Judaism. pp 26-27.

those factors affecting solely Israelis themselves that are of particular focus here. The most important of these are the availability of fewer religious options, the role of the Israeli media, and the Jewish foundation and essence of the state.

The millet system of the Ottoman Empire forms the basis for the Israeli religious system. According to this system, each inhabitant must belong to one of the officially recognized religious communities, each of which is empowered to decide on matters of personal status and family law for its own members.⁷⁵ Groups recognized by the state are limited to Islam, established Christian denominations, Orthodox Judaism, Druze, and Bahai, entitling them to government financial support for their clergy, houses of worship, and separate legal systems.⁷⁶

One is born, educated, married and buried within one or another of these groups. Thus regardless of personal levels of religious belief or observance, the individuals' identification with their own community is strong. Conversion between the groups, while legal if registered with the state for purposes of official identification, number fewer than 300 a year.⁷⁷ While the right to affiliation with

⁷⁵ See Zaidman-Dvir and Sharot, "The Response Of Israeli Society To New Religious Movements" Journal For The Scientific Study Of Religion (Vol.31:3, 1992) pp 284-285.

⁷⁶ See Beit-Hallahmi, "Judaism And The New Religions In Israel: 1970-1990". in Sobel and Beit-Hallahmi (eds.), Tradition, Innovation, Conflict: Jewishness And Judaism In Contemporary Israel. (SUNY, Albany. 1991) p 206.

⁷⁷ These are mostly conversions between Christian denominations. See Ibid. p 207.

any recognized religious community is firmly entrenched, there is no corresponding right to not belong.

While groups such as ISKON (known popularly as Hare Krishna) and TM have existed in Israel since the 1970s, there is almost no chance that a new religious movement would achieve the protected millet status. Israeli society is distinctly unlike the U.S. with its cherished separation of church and state, cultural pluralism, and voluntarist associations, all of which contribute to an agreeable environment for the growth of religious alternatives to mainstream traditions.⁷⁸

Israel is only nominally tolerant of not just established non-Jewish religions but even non-Orthodox traditions of Judaism. New religions are seen as presenting a direct challenge to Jewish identity in offering an alternative and alien religious option through proselytism. It is generally felt that given repeated attempts to convert the Jews throughout history, Israel as a post-Holocaust homeland for the Jewish people should of all places not have to tolerate such threats to the collective. Anti-missionary groups such as Yad La'Ahim ("Help To Our Brothers") are supported both ideologically and financially by the government and, by extension, with intensive media portrayal of new religious movements as illegitimate, dangerous, and degenerate. This uniquely uncongenial atmosphere permits fewer groups to flourish

⁷⁸ See Zaidman-Dvir and Sharot, The Response Of Israeli Society. p 282.

and with far smaller memberships than in other Western countries. Not only are there fewer real religious options for Jews in Israel than exist in the United States, they are also rendered distinctly less plausible as choices.⁷⁹

The Israeli media have played an important role in popularizing and legitimizing the teshuvah experience. Portrayals of returnees are overwhelmingly positive and are often presented as exemplary tales wherein a past defined by meaninglessness, confusion and inadequacy is replaced by a new life replete with happiness and peace.⁸⁰ Stories of cases in which the ba'al teshuvah was either an artist or held an elite IDF position before becoming observant are particularly prevalent, elevating the individuals themselves to the level of teshuvah movement "stars" for the admiration and respect they provoke amongst secular Israelis.⁸¹ The depiction of these and other well-known and classically secular personalities (such as famous athletes or children of political leaders) choosing Orthodoxy facilitates the teshuvah option for Israelis, making it more legitimate, accessible and plausible.

⁷⁹ The use of the term "plausibility" is from Berger, The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities Of Religious Affirmation. (Anchor, New York. 1979) p 18.

⁸⁰ See Beit-Hallahmi. "Back To The Fold" in Sobel and Beit-Hallahmi (eds.) Tradition, Innovation, Conflict. p 157.

⁸¹ See Ibid. p 158. A prime case of a star war hero turned Orthodox Jew is Reserve Colonel Noah Hertz who served as a combat pilot, was imprisoned in Syria, and was severely injured in action. Examples of artists include painter Ika Israeli, film director Uri Zohar, singer Rutti Navon, and actress Batya Lanzett.

While Israeli society is composed of a long continuum of religious observance levels with great deal of antagonism existing between the two extremes, the divisions remain within a paradigm accepted by the majority, that of Judaism. Though some might find it objectionable, ultra-Orthodoxy has a place in the common spectrum of religious values, however extreme its manifestation. It is generally perceived amongst Israelis to be sectarian in nature rather than an alternative religion, involving as it does what Danzger terms a "hyperconformity" to societal norms.⁸² The ba'al teshuvah phenomenon in Israel is less delegitimized than are new religions both because it remains within the context of collective identity and due to the great familiarity, even amongst ardent secularists, of Jewish tradition.

Orthodox Judaism is the known, dominant faith, that even if individually rejected or modified, remains the religion of one's parents or grandparents. In Christian countries, (however nominally so) it is a foreign, minority religious expression. Similarly the choice is rendered more plausible in Israel than it is in North America where ignorance, weaker levels of identification, and the desire to assimilate amongst Jews risk higher levels of social disapproval from community and family itself as the option appears more alien and "cult-like".

⁸² See Danzger, Returning To Tradition, p 221 and "Toward A Redefinition Of 'Sect' and 'Cult': Orthodox Judaism In The United States And Israel", Comparative Social Research (Vol. 10, 1987) p 119.

Thus the teshuvah option in Israel is facilitated and is made a more possible choice as a result of basic forces operative in that community. Yet it is also the foundation of those very values and the fundamental structures of society that have given rise to the urgent questions demanding a vital response. The Jewish nature of the state, its purpose, role and authority are themselves the central questions being weighed in the return to tradition occurring there.

3.3a Renewed Legitimacy Of Religion

As a religious concept, Israel was understood to be a special entity; a "kingdom of priests", a "people that dwells alone"⁸³. Zionist-socialism was a form of religious surrogate in providing meaning and purpose to individual efforts in the struggle to establish an ideal society in the Land of Israel based on principles of social justice, equality, and productive labour.⁸⁴ Statism in the newly-created country grew out of this movement and allowed for the extension of Zionist-socialist influence over the entire populace.⁸⁵ The old, pre-state community had been united

⁸³ Exodus 19:6 and Numbers 23:9, respectively.

⁸⁴ See Liebman and Don-Yehiya, Civil Religion In Israel: Traditional Judaism And Political Culture In The Jewish State (University of California, Berkeley, 1983) p 30. While alternative Zionist ideologies did exist, such as the "Revisionism" of Jabotinsky and the Betar movement, the socialist, pioneering model was by far the most socially pervasive and central in moulding the emergent state.

⁸⁵ See Ibid. p 88.

to a certain degree by common economic hardships, security threats, and political struggle. However, mass immigration from non-European countries, the realities of having achieved statehood, and economic growth in the 1950s and 1960s contributed to a far less homogeneous society than had existed previously. Earlier models and symbol systems for national identity and self-definition became less viable within a rapidly changing context.

The inability of the culture and political system to foster a sense of Israeli national identity based on secular Judaism became increasingly apparent in the mid-1950s.⁸⁶ By 1957 the Ministry of Education had become so concerned with the apparent lack of Jewish knowledge and identity in Israel, a proposal that would require the teaching of "Jewish consciousness" in schools was passed.⁸⁷ Here lay the foundation of what would become the attempt to unite society around traditional Jewish symbols, that achieved prominence after 1967.⁸⁸

The massive support of American Jewry during the Six-Day War, when world

⁸⁶ See Liebman and Don-Yehiya Religion And Politics In Israel. p 18. The most radical formulation of this is found in the "Canaanite" movement whose ideology asserts that Israelis must find their historical roots not in Judaism, but in the ancient civilizations that had peopled the land. While a peripheral and extremely small movement, the concept of disassociation from the Jewish people and tradition in search of a new Israeli identity has been popular in various forms. See Ibid. p 5 and James Diamond Homeland Or Holy Land? The "Canaanite" Critique Of Israel. (Indiana University, Bloomington. 1986.)

⁸⁷ See Herman, Israelis And Jews. p 35.

⁸⁸ See Liebman and Don-Yehiya, Religion And Politics In Israel. p 53.

leaders abandoned Israel in the face of serious threat from its Arab neighbours, accentuated the Jewish rather than simply the Israeli nature of the state. This solidarity born of isolation from the gentile nations, reinforced tendencies rooted in the Jewish tradition towards emphasizing the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the Jewish people.⁸⁹

Similarly, the war resulted in the occupation of territory that contained significant and emotionally charged religious-historical sites, most notably the Western Wall.

When we heard over the transistor the report of the victory in Jerusalem, there was not a single soldier in my company who did not shed tears, including myself. I then sensed for the first time the Israeliness but the Jewishness of the people.⁹⁰

The famous image of the war, that of the secular paratrooper crying at the Wall, crystallizes the radical transformation that had occurred. This was the symbol of Israel intensely connecting with its own Jewish history.⁹¹ A new civil religion came to affirm the importance of traditional Judaism and its religious symbols, which began to play a far greater role in grounding nationalist sentiment and ethos, without

⁸⁹ See Liebman and Don-Yehiya, Civil Religion In Israel. p 201.

⁹⁰ See Herman, Israelis And Jews. p 213.

⁹¹ See Liebman and Don-Yehiya, Civil Religion In Israel. p 158.

necessarily demanding detailed personal religious practice.⁹²

As the country's safety seemed more assured between 1967 and 1973, the claim to territory acquired during the Six Day War required strengthening based on "historical rights".⁹³ Traditional Judaism came to fulfil a fundamental role in Israel's quest for legitimacy, and thus itself received greater validity in the process.

The emergence of the Israeli ba'al teshuvah movement in this period was an expression of precisely this new legitimacy of the religious component of the Jewish people. The profound association begun between the Israeli and the Jewishness of his or her past is best epitomized by this phenomenon of secular youths choosing religious observance.

3.2b Search For National Identity

There were many issues to cope with following the Six Day War, arising out of both the silence of world powers in a time of grave danger, and as a result of victory itself with the occupation of territory and a large subject population. This

⁹² See Ibid. Chapter 5, entitled "The New Civil Religion".

⁹³ See Ibid. p 130.

situation ushered in a period of intense self-examination regarding the very legitimacy of the state, including questions of future security, social values, and the relationship to be negotiated with both Arabs and world Jewry.

This crisis of legitimacy was heightened by the massive casualties and trauma of the Yom Kippur War in 1973, when many began to ask if perhaps the price being paid for the state's continued existence was not too high. National ideals and institutions that had once been considered "sacred" were subjected to intense scrutiny, including the functioning of the military, educational system, government and Israel's future security.

The Yom Kippur War of that year, and the revelations as to the government's unpreparedness, broke the camel's back...with the newfound evidence of serious political/security mistakes, the dam burst open-- eventually ushering in the period of huge protest waves along all issue fronts.⁹⁴

The vital existence of these issues contributed to a newly unstable national identity, widespread disillusionment, and a conspicuous absence of the sense of identity and mission that had characterized Israel prior to this period.

For the questioning young Israeli undergoing an intense role crisis in this environment, observant Judaism as a worldview offered a profound and unambiguous

⁹⁴ Lehman-Wilzig, Stiff-Necked People, Bottle Necked System: The Evolution And Roots Of Israeli Public Protest 1949-1986. (Indiana University, Bloomington. 1990) p 84.

identity, as well as an alternative to the less ideologically motivated, increasingly material Israeli existence. They were offered the chance to connect with the historic Jewish people, understood to have been chosen through a direct link with God to live according to His unique Torah and preserve holiness on earth.⁹⁵

A nineteen year old Israeli respondent in Janet Aviad's study Return To Judaism echoes the war experiences and sense of confusion that led members of this community to observant Judaism. In summarizing his conclusions, he notes that he

...became terribly disgusted with what was going on in Israel. I love the land absolutely, but I felt then very much opposed to the State as it was...Politics seems to me to be dirt and nonsense, and Zionism empty cliches. The Jewish people was destined to be more than a state and an army. It was always a special people, morally and spiritually. It seems to me that we have lost that.⁹⁶

These harsh, even disappointing realities of Israeli life are not what this generation raised on pioneering stories and founding myths were led to expect. The crime, government corruption, and materialism endemic to modern societies had not

⁹⁵ See Beit-Hallahmi, "Back To The Fold". in Sobel and Beit-Hallahmi, Tradition, Innovation, Conflict. p 163.

⁹⁶ Aviad, Return To Judaism. p 9-10. It is interesting to note the similarities between the feelings expressed in this quotation and the reaction of members of the Second Aliyah (1905-1914). Disturbed by what they perceived as the abysmal level of the national and cultural life of the early settlement, they also turned to religion. A.D. Gordon's concept of Dat Ha'Avodah, the "religion of labour" formed the basis for the national renaissance project undertaken by young, idealistic immigrants. While similar to the teshuvah phenomenon in certain respects, this disappointment and identity search found expression in a secular socialism that valued work, the Hebrew language and cultural regeneration. See Ben-Sasson (ed.) A History Of The Jewish People. pp 921-926.

been envisioned by many Israelis who believed themselves heirs to the founding of a singular Jewish entity based on ideals of social justice and equality. Religious parties were in no way exempt from the political corruption scandals of the 1960s, and were rejected in favour of non-political religious expression. Condemning those problematic facets of society caused many to ruthlessly re-evaluate the basis from which they understood this predicament to have emerged -- secular, socialist Zionism.

Ba'alei teshuvah in this period were responding to questions of national identity and purpose with a religious option. The choice of a secular Israeli to become Orthodox in this context is an expression of the disillusionment and search for meaningful alternatives that characterized popular feeling in the 1970s. Teshuvah was a rejection of the mainstream establishment, including that of entrenched, political Orthodoxy, in a quest for spiritual resurgence and a meaningful national ethos.

3.2c Dialogue With Zionism

For basic theological reasons, contemporary traditional Judaism in Israel must necessarily include some kind of fundamental engagement with the question of Zionism. Religiously charged categories of "Exile" and "Redemption" have been central to Judaism since ancient conquests forced the Jews to Babylonia. The need to evaluate the meaning of actually achieving a fundamental, almost two-thousand year

old religious goal in returning to Land is essential. But to try to do so in the face of Israel's political reality as a modern democratic state founded on secular principles is critical and creates a primary paradox from which two basic interpretations have emerged: rejection and sacralization.

A portrait of religiously observant Israel is complex and fragmented, characterized as it is by a wide variety of different sects and factions which can be categorized according to various criteria. The most fundamental of these is the basic division corresponding to the relative level of accommodation to modernity, according to which the Orthodox (called simply dat'im in Hebrew) are distinguished from the Ultra-Orthodox (known as haredim). This line of demarcation also coincides with divergent attitudes towards Zionism. While both groups judge the meaning of the State according to an observant Jewish worldview, their responses are radically opposed.

Generally, the ultra-Orthodox believe that the Zionist attempt to control Jewish history in creating the political entity of Israel is no less than a revolt against God.⁹⁷ Haredim feel that being a people singled out for a divinely ordained history requires following the path of political quietism until God sends the Messiah to renew Israel

⁹⁷ See Menachem Friedman, "Jewish Zealots: Conservative Versus Innovative". in Silberstein (ed.) Jewish Fundamentalism In Comparative Perspective. (New York University, New York. 1993) p 152.

and return the people to the Land.⁹⁸ That the Redemption has clearly not occurred, coupled with the facts of a country based on secular values, founded by non-observant Jews, and democratic in nature is not only regarded as a continuation of Exile but even that Zionist ideology is actually a dangerous force that has misled people away from the Torah and into heresies, confusion, and rebellion.

The antithesis to this understanding is located in the more modern expression of Orthodoxy, as typified by the National Religious Party (Mafdal) and Mizrachi in general,⁹⁹ who deem the modern State of Israel to possess profound religious significance as heralding the onset of the Messianic age, the "dawning of our Redemption"¹⁰⁰. Zionism, state mechanisms and the army, while of a temporal nature, are felt to be (however unwittingly) fulfilling the will of God in building and

⁹⁸ See Gerald Cromer, "Withdrawal and Conquest: Two Aspects of the Haredi Response to Modernity". in Ibid. p 166.

⁹⁹ Mafdal is the political party formed out a merger between the parties Ha-Poel ha-Mizrachi and Mizrachi in 1955. Mizrachi now refers to the worldwide organization for religious Zionism and the ideology itself. For more on Israeli political parties, see Asher Arian, Politics In Israel: The Second Generation. Chatham House, New Jersey. 1985.

¹⁰⁰ This recent phrase has found its way into many regular prayers as an additional blessing for the State of Israel. It is specifically not included by Haredim, but interestingly is said by liberal traditions. This is far more an expression of their political Zionism rather than any particular religious belief in yearning for the Redemption. Even as early as 1949 more than 200 Israeli rabbis signed a declaration that proclaimed the establishment of the state atchalta degeula ("the beginning of the redemption). See Lustick, For The Land And The Lord (Council On Foreign Relations, New York. 1988) p 28.

protecting a sacred entity.¹⁰¹ While there are much finer points of contention and division within both of these ideologies, simply put, Haredim denounce the State, while Mizrachi sacralizes it. One is anti-Zionist, the other hyper-Zionist.¹⁰²

These are the two options presented to ba'alei teshuvah, as each paradigm ideologically influences their own yeshivot, integrates returnees into different communities, and sanctions however indirectly, radically divergent forms of political-religious activism. Both approaches force newly traditional Israelis into a renewed dialogue with Zionism, offering a perspective fundamentally different from that of secular society. Newly religious Israelis are expressing an attempt to revitalize their engagement with Zionism in a more meaningful fashion. Thus choosing observant Judaism in Israel means adopting a radical interpretation of the modern State and its meaning in either ideological camp.

¹⁰¹ Religious-Zionism is the basic ideology of Gush Emunim, a radical grassroots organization that grew out of the Mizrachi movement. It is dedicated to "The Land of Israel, for the People of Israel, according to the Torah of Israel" through direct political action, most notably the settlement of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. See Ibid. for a comprehensive study.

¹⁰² There is some grey area here, where parties such as Agudah are prepared to tolerate the State and compromise with the system in certain, limited areas.

3.3 Summary

Viewed against the background of the late 1960s and 1970s, the ba'al teshuvah movement that emerged in this period expresses responses to the profound changes taking place in Israeli society. As demonstrated in this chapter, the phenomenon of a return to observant Judaism amongst secular youths expresses the renewed legitimacy of religion, a search for national identity during a crisis in the Israeli ethos, and a revitalized dialogue with Zionism and its meaning for the state.

Chapter Four: Special Cases

4.1 Introduction

As discussed in the introduction, a subgroup from each of the two major communities discussed will be considered in this chapter. The reasons for this are to demonstrate the effect of different economic, political, or socio-cultural environments on the meaning located in the ba'al teshuvah movement. In the case of North America, the subcommunity under consideration is that of women. A move to traditional religious observance among this group will be viewed particularly against the context of feminism and womens' needs. In Israel the major subgroup is that of members of the Edot HaMizrach, amongst whom the teshuvah phenomenon will be discussed as a form of ethnic assertion and a rejection of Ashkenazi or European culture and values.

4.2 Women (United States)

As discussed above, the American ba'al teshuvah movement generally was an outgrowth of the 1960's. The participants were clearly not people who have grown up in insulated religious communities, but rather they are the products of liberal, educated, middle class North American homes. Modern Western women who have

chosen the lifestyle of Jewish observance since that time are certainly no strangers to feminist ideology and critiques of traditional women's roles. Their free choices as "liberated" adult women, having opportunities available to them that never existed in previous generations seem shocking at the outset as they appear to reject a feminist utopia of freedom for an Orthodox Jewish lifestyle that is conservative, patriarchal, and fundamentalist.

Briefly, observant Judaism is strongly pro-natal both as a religion that is passed on solely through the mother and from the perspective of post-Holocaust community survival. Certain forms of birth control are permissible under halachic law,¹⁰³ and it is a technically accepted ruling that the procreative commandment can be considered as fulfilled upon achieving one child of each sex.¹⁰⁴ However, having large families retains an extremely high cultural value within the traditional Jewish community.

¹⁰³ Some methods are forbidden outright for reasons such as mutilation, improper emission of semen, or interference with the normal act of intercourse. Others, such as oral contraceptives or the diaphragm are deemed more acceptable for spacing children, particularly for the Modern Orthodox community. The ultra-Orthodox generally shun any attempt to regulate conception for numerous religious and historical reasons. For a detailed consideration of the halachic arguments regarding various methods, see David Feldman, Birth Control In Jewish Law: Marital Relations, Contraception and Abortion As Set Forth In The Classic Texts Of Jewish Law. New York University, New York. 1968.

¹⁰⁴ This is the ruling according to the School of Hillel, which is considered authoritative. It is interesting to note that the commandment of procreation is technically only binding upon men. See Biale, Women And Jewish Law: An Exploration Of Women's Issues In Halachic Sources. (Schocken, New York. 1984) p 198.

With this emphasis on family, one parent must remain at home to provide a proper environment and informal education for the children. The mother fulfils this role, thus reflecting the basic notion that the male domain is that of public life, while women should be relegated to the private realm.¹⁰⁵ In this manner women's identities are greatly affected by their roles in the emphasized values of family and domesticity.

Sexual expression is permitted solely within the heterosexual marriage union and intimacy is regulated by the laws of "family purity" which require a complete physical separation¹⁰⁶ of twelve days between the couple beginning with the woman's menstrual period and ending each month with immersion in the ritual bath. Modesty in dress is seen as particularly important for women¹⁰⁷; hemlines must conceal elbows and knees, pants are not permitted and, after marriage, the woman's hair is covered.¹⁰⁸ The sexes are segregated in many public activities, including

¹⁰⁵ As Steinsaltz notes in Teshuvah: A Guide For The Newly Observant Jew (Free Press, New York, 1987) on page 148, the woman is the akeret bayit (homemaker), meaning in turn ikaro shel habayit, or the "mainstay" of the home.

¹⁰⁶ This includes abstaining from intercourse, non-sexual touching, and sleeping in the same bed. See Ellinson, Women And The Mitzvot. (World Zionist Organization, Israel, 1992) pp 42-67.

¹⁰⁷ Based on Psalm 45:14 which states that "The honour of the king's daughter is entirely inward."

¹⁰⁸ Precise standards of hemline length and methods of concealing hair vary between communities according to their degree of accommodation to modernity, for which there is halachic lenience. See Ibid. p 172.

synagogue, dances, concerts, and education. Religiously, women are exempt from numerous ritual obligations and not permitted any public synagogue privileges. Women's identities in terms of apparel, sexuality and religious expression are strictly controlled by both religious law and community custom.

After decades of struggle fought by the feminist movement to achieve such gains as more rights for women in the work force, greater control over their sexuality, alternatives to conventional marriage and freedom from the childbearing imperative, it appears unusual that women educated in this climate would freely choose what would appear to be patriarchal and outmoded notions of womanhood. Rather than simply taking refuge in the assertion of "false consciousness", this analysis will consider the real message of postfeminist women choosing traditional interpretations of their roles and identities.

Often ba'alot teshuvah exhibit a strong hostility towards what is perceived as the self centredness and self-interested behaviour,¹⁰⁹ suggesting an aversion to the individualism and the quest for self-fulfilment that has been the focus of much feminist rhetoric. Within their primary roles as family caretakers and homemakers, a nurturing, giving, self-sacrificing image of womanhood emerges. Deborah Kaufman notes that the women themselves place a high level of value on this image, and

¹⁰⁹ See Kaufman, Rachel's Daughters. p 21.

...claim that Jewish orthodoxy replaces the "masculine ethos" of aggression, self-importance, and individualistic orientation with a "feminine ethos" stressing modesty and a collective orientation.¹¹⁰

This rejection of the "masculine" ethic of material success is a strong worldview element that is operative for both sexes. In traditional Jewish communities, family is the expected priority for men as well as women, replacing and rejecting the goals of achievement, affluence, and power that are normally respected by Western society. Secular pursuits in general are given far less importance than are religion and family, thereby subverting the pervasive materialism of the late twentieth century.

Religious men are primarily accountable as husbands and fathers, allowing women to make demands on them in ways that would be far less possible in the secular world.¹¹¹ In this manner, traditionally "feminine" qualities of homemaking, emotional support, and sacrifice for others are raised to a level of religious and community ideals for all to emulate. Similarly, the alteration of male gender role behaviour has always been one of the goals of the movement for women's liberation, though feminist successes, ironically, often permitted men far greater irresponsibility than ever before.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* p 89.

¹¹¹ See *Ibid.* p 89.

Newly observant Jewish women form a tightly knit community, creating what often amounts to a "women's subculture" that is both separate and different from that of Orthodox men. Women form groups together to study religious texts and their implications from a uniquely female point of view.¹¹² They meet without men in an astonishing number of community activities, including prayer, lectures, concerts and weddings, forming a tightly bonded group or subgroups. This is a natural result of the high number of activities segregated by sex and the fact that personal friendships with members of the opposite sex, be they married or unmarried, would be deemed "unacceptably immodest behaviour."¹¹³

Because of the highly specific lifestyle and the tendency to work in the home, it is difficult for women to have friendships outside of the religious community. The specialized needs of Orthodoxy in areas such as food, clothing, education and even recreation cause women to frequent the same facilities, and thus see more of each other on a regular basis. There is a far greater level of uniformity in terms of daily

¹¹² An example of this are groups working through the "Emet" programme. Its name is the Hebrew word for truth and it is used as an acronym for "Emotional Maturity through Torah". Using traditional texts its focus is communal study and personal growth relating to such things as character development, parenting, conflict resolution, and increasing harmony in the home.

¹¹³ Men and women who are not related are not even permitted in an enclosed space together unless a door remains open, on the assumption that the fear of being seen would diminish chances of improper sexual behaviour. This notion is called *yichud* and is binding on both married and unmarried individuals over the age of puberty. See Ellinson, Women And The Mitzvot, pp 268-341 (Chapter Six).

activities than would be found normally among secular women, creating higher degrees of understanding and familiarity in the friendships of religious women. This is also sustained by the similarity of life choices made by ba'alei teshuvah in general, and the regular need to deal with the same female-centred issues by women themselves which they perceive to sacralize their biological and sexual realities.¹¹⁴

Rebecca Klatch's book entitled Women Of The New Right, considers the differences between what she calls "social conservative" and "laissez faire" women. The distinction is that the former are informed by religion and traditional notions of family and gender roles, while the latter is a product of nineteenth-century classical liberalism wherein the individual's pursuit of self-interest and freedom are paramount.

While lacking an equivalent to Phyllis Schlafly or the Moral Majority in terms of political activism in the secular world, ba'alot teshuvah possess a worldview that is remarkably similar to that of social conservative women.¹¹⁵ Notions such as the centrality of religious authority, the importance of blood-related family, and

¹¹⁴ Mikveh, or the monthly ritual bath, is a prime example of this. The practice changes a woman's status to that of ritual purity after menstruation and makes her sexually available to her husband again. As it always takes place in the evening at a communal site, many women can be present on any given night. Constructing a mikveh is given priority for a new community, above even schools or the acquisition of Torah scrolls, since it is this mechanism that permits the group to continue itself through procreation. For more on its uses, construction and significance see Aryeh Kaplan, Waters Of Eden: The Mystery Of The Mikvah. (NCSY, New York. 1976)

¹¹⁵ See Kaufman, Rachel's Daughters. pp 102-106 for a comparison between the Christian New Right and newly Orthodox Jewish women.

abhorrence for self-centredness and individualism, and the superior value placed on the domestic role for women, all characterize the social conservative women of the new right.¹¹⁶ While pointing out that these women feel that feminism has encouraged men's unreliability and heightened women's victimization, Klatch notes that

...social conservative women are well aware of their interests as women and act in defense of those interests. The difference between social conservative women and feminists...is rooted in the fundamentally different meanings each attaches to being female. Because social conservative women define femininity in terms of traditional roles of male breadwinner/female caretaker, they seek to extend and secure female rights *within* the context of marriage and the family. In this way, social conservative women are women for themselves; they act for themselves as traditional women.¹¹⁷

Judith Stacey points to a decline in the radical and militant elements of second-wave feminism in the United States and the "incorporation, revision, and depoliticization" of many of its central goals into an emerging "postfeminism".¹¹⁸ She considers the conversion of one feminist respondent to fundamentalist Christianity and her blending of feminist rhetoric within a patriarchal system and traditional marriage as an extreme form of this postfeminist consciousness.¹¹⁹ An example of

¹¹⁶ See Klatch, Women Of The New Right (Temple University, Philadelphia. 1987) pp 122-127.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p 139.

¹¹⁸ Stacey, "Sexism By A Subtler Name?: Postindustrial Conditions and Postfeminist Consciousness In The Silicon Valley", Socialist Review. (Vol.17:6, Nov./Dec. 1987) p 8.

¹¹⁹ See Ibid. p 16.

this fusion is suggested in the practice of encouraging Christian husbands to fulfil strong demands for emotionalism, communication, intimacy and commitment within the relationship.¹²⁰

In this way Stacey suggests that, rather than antifeminist, the gender identities of Evangelical Christians are actually part of this postfeminist stage.¹²¹ Similarly, while ba'alot teshuvah may completely reject what they would call feminism, their interest in raising women's status, promoting their community and modifying male gender roles within the family are reminiscent of many feminist concerns.¹²² Whether ba'alot teshuvah or Evangelical Christians, the paradox of modern women with diverse role options choosing traditional identities is of great significance for the feminist enterprise.

This "postfeminist" consciousness has found expression in numerous recent works, perhaps most notably in that of Betty Friedan. Almost twenty years after her book The Feminine Mystique proved such a powerful force in shattering the myths of women's experience and setting in motion the feminist movement, The Second

¹²⁰ See ibid. pp 15-16.

¹²¹ In her article entitled "The New Conservative Feminism", Feminist Studies (Vol.9:3, Fall 1983) p 574, Stacey even points out that it is possible to ascertain a radical feminist ancestry to parts of new conservative feminist thought.

¹²² See Kaufman, Rachel's Daughters. p 11.

Stage re-examines the gains and direction of that very movement.

Friedan calls into question many of the goals of the "first-stage" feminism of the 1960s and 1970s, suggesting that the once "feminine mystique" has come to be replaced by a "feminist mystique".¹²³ She contends that the adoption of a male ethos of careerism, success and individualism is outmoded and has forced women into an either/or decision between public advancement and family.

Once trampled by excessive anti-male reaction and newly expressed rage, the family, Friedan believes, deserves a re-evaluation and a new focus in light of the "quiet movement of American men."¹²⁴ The fear that equality would mean death to the family, has resulted in some situations of extreme polarization between feminists and "anti-feminists", women and men.¹²⁵ It is the transcendence of precisely these kinds of immature and destructive divisions, and the achievement of the wholeness of human potential, that Friedan sees as the true goal of feminism and the essence of this emergent "second stage".¹²⁶

Stacey suggests that these feelings are expressed by the new conservative

¹²³ See Friedan, The Second Stage. (Summit, New York. 1981) p 27.

¹²⁴ See Ibid. Chapter 4.

¹²⁵ See Ibid. p 52.

¹²⁶ See Ibid. p 41.

feminism which "speaks from and to a reservoir of unmet needs for intimacy, nurturance, and security."¹²⁷ Basic human needs for love, intimacy and security through the mechanisms of home and children have been denied by the extreme reaction of many feminists,¹²⁸ and many women have felt its effects in an adverse form. This challenges the women's movement in general with a crucial set of questions: perhaps "traditional" feminist goals and concerns have not been representative of the priorities nor managed to meet the needs of all women.

Even Vogue magazine, a mainstream, fashion-oriented publication for women with a huge North American circulation that espouses a great deal of popular feminist rhetoric succinctly notes the complexities:

Today, though child care and family leave have moved higher up on the agenda, feminism's main message is still about individualism and independence; it offers little practical help to women trying to make sense of their lives in the context of marriage and family...many women still perceive feminism's first priority as making it OK for women to be childless; a fine goal, but given that 85 percent of us become mothers, one that won't appeal to the heart-and-soul concerns of most adult women.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Stacey, The New Conservative Feminism. p 575. This comment is interesting in light of the article itself which is a scathing criticism of these notions which Stacey then believed were in fact anti-feminist. It seems that her position changed radically to label them rather post-feminist in Sexism By A Subtler Name? that appeared four years later.

¹²⁸ See Friedan, The Second Stage. p 95.

¹²⁹ Walsh, "The Mother Mystique". Vogue. (Aug. 1993) p 102.

Clearly the crux of the issue here is not whether feminism has actually misidentified or misaddressed certain key elements in the needs of contemporary women, but rather that a large number of women apparently perceive this to be the case. It is virtually irrelevant for this analysis whether or not these women have actually been "forgotten by feminism"; it is enough if they simply feel themselves to be so.

However sparse in numbers, the major analyses of newly Orthodox Jewish women are in agreement regarding the primary motivations for the religious transformation undergone, as stated by the ba'alot teshuvah themselves. The centrality of family, community, and strict gender identities are stated repeatedly as having been the most attractive aspects of a traditional observant lifestyle.¹³⁰

It is various aspects of these rigid sex roles that women seem to present in interviews as the reasons for their "return", rather than any theological arguments, so much so that Kaufman believes

The world of the ba'alot teshuvah is a microcosm of the ambiguities inherent in family, gender-role, feminism, and religious orthodoxy during the closing decades of the twentieth century.¹³¹

¹³⁰ See Aviad, Return. p 93, Davidman, Tradition. p 109, Davidman and Greil, Gender and Conversion. p 92, Kaufman, Rachel's Daughters. p 34-35, and Women Who Return. p 547.

¹³¹ Kaufman, Rachel's Daughters. p 3.

The fact that ba'alot teshuvah place such an emphasis on family, community, and traditional domesticity suggests that the significance of their 'return' might be in many ways a literal 'coming home.'¹³² They are among the women feminism forgot: those heterosexual women with conventional wants and needs for stability, family, and a home. Their worldview is much akin to that of social conservative women which often uses feminist rhetoric within a rigidly patriarchal definition of gender roles and are actually concerned with issues not far removed from those of the women's movement, but within a profamilial structure.

Some analyses have suggested that it is precisely the provision of these strict gender certainties in an era characterized by ambiguity in this area. that might be among the most useful truths of new religious movements.¹³³ Rather than anti-feminist, this suggests a "postfeminist" perspective that in merging, adapting, and depoliticizing "first-stage" goals which as a trend, is not limited to those of religious conviction.

Clearly, the message of newly observant religious Jewish women is one of needs unmet by feminist ideology and sexual politics, mirrored by the "postfeminist"

¹³² See Kaufman, Rachel's Daughters. p 106.

¹³³ See Aidala, "Social Change, Gender Roles, and New Religious Movements". Sociological Analysis. (Vol. 46:3, 1985) p 311.

concerns of secular world. The teshuvah trend in this community suggests the religious expression of traditional desires regarding home and family within the context of a society they perceive as denigrating domesticity and undervaluing the childbearing role. It is in Orthodoxy that they have found what they needed, not just as religious seekers but as women with demands unfulfilled by feminism.

4.3 Eastern Communities (Israel)

The various reasons for treating the situation of oriental Jews in Israel as an exceptional case have been discussed above. This section will demonstrate the manner in which divergent experiences of Israeli life between Oriental Jews and those of European descent, has caused the meaning of teshuvah within that community to have a very different meaning and significance than does the same phenomenon amongst the more dominant Ashkenazim. This treatment will explore the messages of ethnic assertion and rebellion against perceived oppression through rejection of a particular lifestyle, that are contained in the case of eastern Jews turning to religious observance.

Amos Oz's work, In The Land of Israel uses interviews to reveal the inner mood of various communities within the country. A chapter entitled "The Insult And The Fury" is the result of time spent in the development town of Beit Shemesh whose

inhabitants are predominantly made up of the Edot HaMizrach. From the author's discussion with a group of residents, the words of one man are particularly illuminating:

They're the Beautiful Land of Israel, and we're gangsters. Hooligans. Riffraff. The Ugly Land of Israel...Some old Polish guy'll come along and write his memoirs of the Holocaust in Yiddish, and right away they'll...put it in a book. But if I came along and brought them my memoirs, real-life stories, how they screwed us over and laughed at us, they'd tell me to get lost.¹³⁴

The twenty-nine years of Labor party rule in Israel, (following thirteen years in the pre-State era) were characterized by condescension and a level of disdain towards the Edot HaMizrach. They were expected to feel subservient gratitude for their being airlifted, rescued or shipped from Arab countries to Israel by European Jews.¹³⁵

In an attempt to force new immigrants into the norms of modern Israeli society based on the concept of socialist Zionism as the most legitimate expression of Judaism, religious children had their sidelocks shorn (allegedly to prevent lice) and

¹³⁴ Oz, In The Land Of Israel. (Fontana, London. 1983) pp 44-45. It is interesting that before this book came out, Oz was among the most public critics of Middle Eastern Jews and their perceived effect on Israeli society. See Elazar, The Other Jews: The Sephardim Today (Basic, New York. 1989) pp 5-10 for more detail on this shift.

¹³⁵ See Elazar, The Other Jews. p 48.

were directed into secular schools, for which they received extra food and clothing.¹³⁶ Political, economic, and cultural discrimination were prevalent, leading to an astonishing socioeconomic gap such that by 1975, Ashkenazi income per capita was twice that of Jews of eastern origins, and in 1981 they occupied three times as many professional, academic, or managerial positions than their Oriental counterparts. De facto neighbourhood segregation led to inferior school systems and housing for many of oriental descent.¹³⁷ Differences that had existed between themselves and European-Israelis upon their arrival in the country became entrenched.

As a result, the Edot Hamizrach continued to perceive themselves as remaining outsiders, as being locked out of social mobility, as being overlooked, the victims of discrimination, and as not belonging. These common reactions amongst large segments of Oriental Israelis, understandably led to a great deal of resentment against Labor-Zionism and towards the European-Israeli Establishment generally. Contextually, it is important to note that since around the time of the Six Day War (1967) Jews from Arab countries have constituted a majority in Israel, although still

¹³⁶ See Lehman-Wilzig, Stiff Necked People, Bottle Necked System, p 30.

¹³⁷ See Elazar, The Other Jews, p 48. It is the memory of these insensitive policies that was among the issues that resulted in a massive shift by Sepharadim to the Herut/Likud party and contributed to Begin's upset victory in 1977.

a minority of about fifteen percent in the Jewish population as a whole.¹³⁸

Objectively, the Edot HaMizrach did benefit from the rapid economic development and improvement in the standard of living that Israel underwent in the late 1950s and 1960s, subjective feelings of relative deprivation remained on the part of the bottom strata of what was still the lower class.¹³⁹ As increasing numbers of their brethren came to enjoy the fruits of upward mobility, resentment amongst those who remained part of the very poor swelled.

The socio-economic realities of life in development towns or urban slums have also led, perhaps not surprisingly, to a community with a high rate of youth delinquency and marginalization, often characterized by crime, drugs, sex, and an obsessive interest in local soccer teams.¹⁴⁰ Also, delinquent eastern Jewish youths exhibit a characteristic rebelliousness towards authority forms and the law. Israelis with wealth and power are the targets of great resentment from these young people; a natural case of the "haves" and the "have nots". Teshuvah amongst members of this community reflects the unique dynamic operative in their situation, as described above.

¹³⁸ See Sobel and Beit-Hallahmi. Tradition, Innovation, Conflict. p 5.

¹³⁹ See Lehman-Wilzig. Stiff-Necked People, Bottle-Necked System. p 38-39.

¹⁴⁰ See Cromer, "Repentant Delinquents: A Religious Approach To Rehabilitation", Jewish Journal Of Sociology. (Vol. 23:2, Dec. 1981) p 114.

The institutional framework created to serve the religious-educational needs of these Jews returning to tradition is a yeshiva called Ohr Hahayim ("The Light of Life"), run by the dynamic personality of Rav Elbaz, a Moroccan immigrant.¹⁴¹ His recruitment is one of active outreach, including the use of loud music and charismatic preaching in the streets of Jerusalem. Traditional oriental Jewish culture is displayed with dignity and honour, as is the role of religious observance in that society. The message of anti-materialism, anti-Westernization, and anti-secularism figure prominently in the speeches of Rav Elbaz, while understanding, pride, and self-awareness are offered to a group who have habitually felt undervalued and misunderstood in Israeli society.

Ohr Hahayim is a place of transformation back to the ancestral religio-ethnic values of the Edot HaMizrach and traditional cultural identification.¹⁴² Equally important is the profound rapport and intensely personal relationship offered by the Rav to troubled youths, creating a far more supportive environment for life changes than might the "spurious intimacy" of the social worker or other professional with whom they have usually had contact in attempts to assess delinquency problems and

¹⁴¹ Rav Elbaz and Ohr Hahayim yeshiva are among those discussed in Aviad, Return To Judaism in her chapter on educational facilities for newcomers, pp 42-45.

¹⁴² This notion is even reinforced by the name "Ohr Hahayim", which is the title of a work by Rabbi Hayim ben Atar. He was a leading figure in the nineteenth century Moroccan community and led an immigration to Palestine. See Ibid. p 171, note 31.

offer alternatives.¹⁴³

One of the most central differences between western and eastern Jews centres around their divergent experiences in the Diaspora. Oriental Jews, living as they did in Islamic countries obviously did not feel the impact of Western industrialization, the European Enlightenment, and the emancipation by Gentile society.¹⁴⁴ Jewish life was always to some degree connected with religious observance in countries untouched by secularism. The effects of this different view of Jewish ritual obligations can be seen in the fact that generally, the eastern Jewish population today is far less plagued by the religious-secular dichotomy than is Ashkenazi Israel. They have remained on the whole, what is termed "traditional" (or somewhat observant) and have retained a great level of respect for religion.

In this way the Teshuvah movement amongst Oriental Jews is an assertion of a traditional ethnic identity in a society that is predominantly secular and Western.¹⁴⁵ To affirm one's Jewish-Moroccan cultural heritage would, for example, necessarily include a level of religious commitment as the many alternatives

¹⁴³ See Cromer, Repentant Delinquents. p 117.

¹⁴⁴ See Liebman and Cohen, Two Worlds Of Judaism. p 10.

¹⁴⁵ See Aviad, Return To Judaism. p 10.

in Jewish identity that existed in the West were absent from Islamic countries.¹⁴⁶ Clearly in this aspect as well, the return to tradition by members of this ethnic group is a phenomenon characterized by rejection of the mores of the dominant community.

It must be recalled that there remains a number of differences between the Ashkenazi and Sepharadi rites of prayer, and certain divergences in various ritual customs and observances.¹⁴⁷ This results in there being very little religious cross-over between the two groups: each community has, for example, their own chief rabbi, synagogues, and prayer books, and the two communities almost never meet in these areas.¹⁴⁸ The most extensive religious differences are culturally based, resulting from the experience of eastern Jewish contact with Islam. These include the veneration of saints and a belief in the power of magic and spirits.¹⁴⁹ Thus traditionally observant Sepharadi Judaism is inherently distinct from and independent of its European counterpart. Just as cultural differences have affected their religious

¹⁴⁶ This is clearly demonstrated in the Libyan and Moroccan festival of Maimouna, celebrated the day after Passover. This commemoration of the anniversary of the death of Maimonides was transported to Israel with immigrants from North Africa. The contemporary celebration of Maimouna is both an affirmation of Sephardi identity as well as a distinctive religious holiday. See Patai, The Seed Of Abraham. (University of Utah, Salt Lake City, 1986) p 178.

¹⁴⁷ Some of these include the order of synagogue ritual, the order and content of prayer, customs regarding phylacteries, permissible food on Passover. See Haddad, Jews Of Arab And Islamic Countries: History, Problems, Solutions. (Shengold, New York, 1984) pp 90-92.

¹⁴⁸ Interestingly, the Chassidim use the prayer rite of Rav Isaac Luria, the sixteenth-century Tzfat Cabbalist whose works revolutionized Jewish mysticism. This "Nusach Ari" is an adapted version of the Sepharadi rite, and in this case used by Ashkenazim.

¹⁴⁹ See Patai, The Seed Of Abraham, Chapter Six.

expression, the practice of Judaism emphasizes those cultural differences. The return to this religious way of life is a declaration of the individual's or the group's intention to live a life whose most important features are separate from and unconstrained by Ashkenazim.

Additionally, the framework of observant Judaism is one that engenders social equality, as all living according to the Torah are deemed equal before God. This value system permits religious oriental Jews to achieve respect for such accomplishments as learning and piety within their own ethnic group, rather than competing in terms of socio-economic status. Thus the choice of a divergent structure of priorities amongst lowest-class members of the Edot HaMizrach in becoming observant reinforces the message of rebellion against the dominant mores of Israeli society and the provision of alternative patterns for personal assertion and identity.

In the process of teshuvah, the simmering element of resentment towards Ashkenazim and upwardly-mob Oriental Jews remains a reality, but is simply diverted in its focus to that of non-observant Israel. The target of this rebellion remains the same as prior to becoming observant, but comes to be placed in a religious category rather than one that is overtly ethnic. Eastern hozrim b'tshuvah, rather than striving for the socio-economic position of the Ashkenazi Israeli, can instead engage in a kind of radical rebellion that completely dismisses what are

perceived as European-Israeli foci: materialism and secularism. In this manner, the value system of religious life allows the Oriental Jewish youth to completely reject the predominant mores of a society in which they feel rejected themselves. Gerald Cromer discusses this phenomenon and concludes that "despite their metamorphosis they remain outsiders. Society is still divided into them and us." ¹⁵⁰

Thus the movement towards teshuvah that exists amongst disenfranchised young members of the Edot HaMizrach is a discourse aimed at the "haves" of Israeli society, which includes both the historically dominant, secular European Israel as well as those of the same ethnic group that have come to enjoy a higher standard of living. Its message is ultimately one of rejection and the creation of an alternative through religious observance.

Evidence discussed above suggests this to be a case involving members of a disempowered group reasserting its ethnic identity in the form of traditional religious values, against a powerful minority that has invested great effort into ensuring their assimilation. It is also the quest to gain respect in joining a community that offers equality of opportunity for advancement, and appreciates qualities other than those, such as material goods or advanced secular education, which this segment of the population has failed to achieve. In this way some Israeli eastern Jews have chosen

¹⁵⁰ See Cromer, Repentant Delinquents, p 118.

individually to find meaning and as a group to affirm cultural pride, facilitated by such mechanisms as the unique methods of outreach provided by Rav Elbaz and the Ohr Hahayim yeshiva.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has focused on the teshuvah phenomenon amongst two subcommunities: American women and eastern Jews in Israel. As has been demonstrated in previous chapters, their religious choices form a response to concrete political, social, economic and historical factors. The movement among women has been shown to express a sense of isolation from the priorities and gains of feminism. Teshuvah amongst oriental Jews expresses ethnic assertion, rebellion against European values and a quest for respect in a society where they have been unsuccessful.

Chapter Five: Implications

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to consider the implications of both the ba'al teshuvah movement generally and the specific conclusions of this work for three related issues in the study of religion, those of the secularization thesis, fundamentalism, and traditional revival in the postmodern era. Also included is a discussion of future areas of fruitful research on questions or problems that have arisen over the course of this work.

5.2 Secularization

There has been much debate over the question of the secularization thesis: its definition, processes, significance, and relevance to various religions and societies. The core concept is that a consequence of modernity is a decline in the social significance of religious beliefs and practices. Critics have noted the assumed uniform process of modernization (the United States) and religious characteristics (Christianity) from which the secularization thesis stems. Some scholars of the "antiseccularization" camp have sought out and pointed to movements of contemporary

religious revival in order to refute the thesis.

The role and implications of the ba'al teshuvah phenomenon in the impact of secularization on Judaism is important and illuminating of particular trends. Stephen Sharot's article "Judaism And The Secularization Debate" provides a central summary, discussion and comparison of data noted by different researchers, and forms the basic framework for this brief overview.

For the majority, a significant decline of religiosity was noted between the first three generations of American Jewry, with a smaller decline between the second and third.¹⁵¹ Only slight change was found between the third and fourth generations,¹⁵² with a similar situation amongst Ashkenazim in Israel.¹⁵³ This suggests an initial rapid secularization whose rate of religious decline lessened until reaching a point of a relatively stable state of minimal religious observance.¹⁵⁴ Clearly the "straight-line" theory of secularization, according to which religious practice would decrease regularly until its eventual disappearance is not supported by this data. There is also no evidence to suggest any real statistically significant

¹⁵¹ See Sharot, "Judaism And The Secularization Debate". Sociological Analysis. (Vol. 52:3, 1991) p.266.

¹⁵² See Ibid. p.266.

¹⁵³ See Ibid. p.268.

¹⁵⁴ See Ibid. p.267.

religious revival amongst the majority which would reverse this trend and provide the rebalancing pendulum swing of the "steady-state" model.¹⁵⁵

Of particular interest here is the situation of the growing Orthodox minority in Israel and North America. Among this group has been noted an expansion of institutions, more stringent religious practice, and increasing retention (or decreasing defection) rate between generations.¹⁵⁶ There are many reasons for this, including financial prosperity, demographic stability, an extremely high birth rate and the reassertion of ethnic identities, in the American case, since the 1960s. The ba'al teshuvah movement is both an indication of the strength of this religious revival amongst the Orthodox minority, and a feature that contributes to group growth in terms of numbers and resources.

Thus, while secularization is undeniably a factor in contemporary Jewish life, its rate appears to have stabilized at a certain level of religious observance generally. Alongside this feature has developed an opposing trend of Orthodox growth and increased traditionalism amongst the minority. While the ba'al teshuvah movement should not be regarded as a phenomenon adequately pervasive to counter the obvious and widespread assimilation process in the Jewish community, it is a central feature

¹⁵⁵ See Ibid. p.272.

¹⁵⁶ See Ibid. p.269. For more on this phenomenon see Saul Bernstein, The Renaissance of The Torah Jew (Ktav, New Jersey, 1985).

in the increasing Orthodox alternative to the secularized majority in both Israel and North America.

5.3 Fundamentalism

As it has been popularized by the Western media, the label of "fundamentalism" has caused scholars of religious studies to wince. The term that grew out of the experience of American Protestant movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century has come to denote any religious group conjoining traditional belief with political activism. From the overthrow of the Shah in Iran to Tamil liberation movements in Sri Lanka, "fundamentalism" is blamed and applied equally to describe such disparate phenomena as conservative politicians in the United States and Israeli West Bank settlers.

In the introduction to Fundamentalisms Observed, the disinclination of the essayists to use the term is discussed. This is followed by great apologetic pains taken by the editors to explain their insistence on such usage. As they note,

When scholars made suggestions for replacements such as 'revolutionary neotraditionalist Islamic (or Jewish, or Christian, or whatever) radicalism' and were then asked to define these alternatives, they came to describe pretty much what the other authors were calling

'fundamentalism'.¹⁵⁷

The word is slippery, often misused, biased, and resistant to clear definition. This study in no way presumes to rectify these difficulties, nor is the context appropriate to restate arguments in favour of particular terminological positions. Rather this section will briefly consider Jewish fundamentalism and its relationship to the ba'al teshuvah movement.

The expression "Jewish fundamentalism" is not often used, certainly not to the degree that "Christian" or "Islamic fundamentalism" has entered mainstream vocabulary. As radical Jewish religious groups have an increasingly great impact on the Arab-Israeli conflict, more scholarly attention has been focused on the phenomenon. Again, many question the application of the term "fundamentalist" to Judaism in general.

In an important book of essays entitled Jewish Fundamentalism In Comparative Perspective, focus is placed squarely on Gush Emunim and the Haredim in Israel. Aaron Kirschenbaum draws attention to Chabad (in Israel and North America) as another group, because of its strong messianic thrust and intensive efforts to

¹⁵⁷ Marty and Appelby (eds.) The Fundamentalism Project. Volume One: Fundamentalisms Observed. (University of Chicago, Chicago. 1991) p.viii.

encourage Jewish ritual observance amongst secular Jews.¹⁵⁸ Brief mention is made also of SHAS, the hawkish Sepharadi political party in Israel, and groups such as Oz Ve Shalom, a moderately left-wing association of religious people. Many solid arguments can be made against the description of any of these as "fundamentalist", although there appears to be a high degree of consensus amongst scholars for the inclusion of Gush Emunim and certain Haredi elements.

The ba'al teshuvah phenomenon per se is not an expression of religious fundamentalism, lacking as it does an inherent political angle although it can act as a great resource for fundamentalist groups. In itself, it is a revival of traditional belief, a revitalization of Orthodox Jewish practice that while often encoding profound political, economic, or social perspectives does not necessarily engender activism in these spheres.

An exception to this is in Israel itself, where such a religious choice inexorably leads to a vital political position on Zionism.¹⁵⁹ Even so, an individual who comes to Orthodoxy through learning in a religious-Zionist yeshiva and ideologically supports such an interpretation (however strongly) does not necessarily involve himself in the radical actions of the Gush Emunim. Newly observant women, for

¹⁵⁸ See Aaron Kirschenbaum, "Fundamentalism: A Jewish Traditional Perspective" in Jewish Fundamentalism In Comparative Perspective. p.190.

¹⁵⁹ As discussed above in Chapter Three, pp 55-58.

example, while possessing certain similarities with the worldview of the social conservative "new right" are not involved in its political causes. Reasons for this would include Orthodox women's focus on the home rather than the public sphere, as well as the overwhelmingly Christian nature of groups such as the Moral Majority.

There are a variety of ways in which ba'alei teshuvah as a group could form a great contribution to Jewish "fundamentalist" groups. Simply in terms of numbers (which due to a very high birth rate amongst the Orthodox grow quickly), the newly observant form an immense pool of potential support. Except in the case of the Edot HaMizrach, the secular, higher education of ba'alei teshuvah often permits better paying and more prestigious employment than is found amongst those growing up religious. These factors could translate into both money and heightened legitimacy for radical groups. Similarly their familiarity with the modern media and other mechanisms of power are potentially very useful. Finally, the energetic zeal of the newly religious could easily be harnessed to revitalize the spirit of any committed political cause.

By and large this has not happened, except in the case of the Gush Emunim and the West Bank settlement movement in general.¹⁶⁰ Orthodoxy, and a renewed

¹⁶⁰ Robert Friedman's penetrating book Zealots For Zion: Inside Israel's West Bank Settlement Movement (Random House, New York, 1992) includes an entire chapter devoted to the role and nature of the ba'al teshuvah involvement in the settlements.

2 of/de 2

PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS

interest and involvement in Jewish observance is neither fundamentalism nor radicalism, necessarily. As often as newfound tradition engenders political opinion, it can also inspire political quietism. While ba'alei teshuvah could be of immense potential use to fundamentalist causes for reasons discussed above, the phenomenon of returning to tradition does not itself lead individuals into religiously-informed political radicalism.

5.4 Traditional Religion In A Postmodern Age

Traditional religious observance appears peculiar in a modern, secularized society in which technology, progress and logical proofs are held in high esteem. The tendency to label such an anachronistic presence as "premodern" is a simple method of its dismissal as illogical thereby rendering exploration of its cause or message unnecessary.

In deconstructing the meaning of the ba'al teshuvah movement, it has been demonstrated the degree and manner in which these religious choices encode responses to particular environmental situations of the contemporary community. This return to traditional observance amongst different groups is not just a product of

modernity, but is also a response to concrete current events and even as a method of coping with postmodern anomie.

Whether or not any form of "premodern" or truly "traditional" Judaism actually exists is open to discussion. Certainly the closest manifestations of such would be found in certain Chassidic sects (such as Satmar) or in some Haredi communities, due to their high degree of isolation from general society and even other Jews.

Ba'alei teshuvah have not only been exposed to modernity in numerous guises, as are the vast majority of Orthodox Jews, but more significantly were raised in a modern, assimilated context and spent their formative years and education in mainstream society. Their Judaism, regardless of how orthopractic, remains indivisible from this basic fact. This is clearly demonstrated by the degree to which ba'alei teshuvah are not completely accepted by many groups made up of those "religious from birth", witnessed particularly in their unacceptability as potential marriage partners within many communities.¹⁶¹ The newly-religious often form their own social and religious communities, in some ways constituting a kind of "half-breed" for the first generation, whereas their children are almost completely

¹⁶¹ This is also seen in the way certain expressions have become current in order to distinguish the newly religious from others. Thus the term "B.T." is a popular short form for ba'al teshuvah, and "F.F.B." is regularly used for "frum-from-birth".

integrated and accepted into most religious communities. The Judaism of the ba'al teshuvah could not be a form of "premodern" religion, even were that considered a desirable goal.

Conclusion

Through a consideration of four sections of the contemporary Jewish community, we have seen that the emergence of the ba'al teshuvah phenomenon amongst those groups is profoundly linked to environmental factors. In considering the return to tradition against the background of those very elements, the teshuvah movement has been demonstrated to express responses to them in various ways.

The decision to take on the lifestyle of Orthodox Judaism is not simply an isolated religious choice. Nor is it necessarily a form of fundamentalism or even a religious revival that will counter assimilation trends in the Jewish community. This work has illustrated that the ways in which the ba'al teshuvah movement is a form of response to concrete historical, political, socio-cultural and economic changes and factors with a religious choice.

Based on these findings, it is clear that there remains much valuable study to be done concerning the phenomenon of contemporary religious neotraditionalism. Interviews and conversations with ba'alei teshuvah about their experiences raise interesting avenues for exploration in the area of language. There clearly appears to be a link between the conversion experience itself and accounts of that experience. This raises possibilities of consideration of the newly-religious in terms of their

speech patterns and methods of telling their own life-stories. This could prove interesting in demonstrating methods of dealing with issues such as the individuals' own past lifestyle, present doubts, and missionary activity. The notion is introduced briefly by Cromer in "Repentant Delinquents",¹⁶² and is an area that could be illuminating for both the sociology and psychology of religion.

Another potential avenue of enquiry that has arisen as a result of this study concerns the areas of religious observance and attitudes that are affected by a secular or liberal upbringing. More precisely this would require a comparison between the specifically Jewish worldview of ba'alei teshu'ah with that of people raised in an observant environment. This could be particularly interesting in terms of the explanations provided for certain practices, such that, for example, one would assume that a ba'alat teshuvah would give a very different defense of the laws regulating marital intimacy than would a woman who had grown up religious.

A question that had occurred to me repeatedly during my time in Israel regards the resocialization processes at different yeshivot, and how that affects young people who often come for a summer of study and then return to a liberal, North American environment. Questions regarding the retention of a still fragile and minority lifestyle,

¹⁶² See pp. 119-120.

ba'al teshuvah defection, and rationalization of environment would all be crucial issues for discussion.

GLOSSARY

- Aggada:** Non-legal material in the Talmud, such as stories and moral teaching providing a commentary on Biblical events or admonitions.
- Ahavat Israel:** A central ethic demanding the treatment of all Jews with love.
- Ashkenazim:** Jews of German and Eastern European descent. Certain customs and rites of prayer are different from those of Sepharadim.
- Ba'al Teshuvah:** Originally an observant person who sinned and repented. Contemporary usage applies to a secular or liberal Jew who becomes observant by choice. (Plural = ba'alei teshuvah, Female = ba'alat teshuvah, Female Plural = ba'alot teshuvah)
- Bal Tashchit:** A law forbidding waste, particularly concerned with damage to the environment.
- Betar:** The youth organization of the Zionist Revisionist/Herut movement, based on a non-socialist vision of Zionism.
- Breslov:** A Chassidic sect following the intensely emotional teachings of R. Nachman of Breslov.
- Chabad:** Refers to the philosophical foundation of the Chassidic sect known popularly as Lubavitch. The term is an acronym for the Kabbalistic concepts of "Chochma" ("wisdom"), "Binah" ("understanding") and "Da'at" ("knowledge"), reflecting the intellectual nature of Chabad Chassidut.
- Cheder:** A school for children that teaches the fundamentals of Jewish observance.
- Chesed:** The ethical charge to act with kindness towards others.

Dati:	Hebrew for "religious". The term is applied to the modern Orthodox in Israel who are called "dati'im".
Edot HaMizrach:	The term translates as "the eastern communities" and refers to Oriental Jews or Sepharadim in Israel.
Emet:	Hebrew word for "Truth". It is also an acronym for a women's study programme called "Emotional Maturity Through Torah".
Frum:	Yiddish word meaning "observant".
Gemara:	The extensive legal commentary on the Mishna (itself a commentary on the Hebrew Bible) which together form the Talmud.
Gush Emunim:	Religious Zionist and ultra-nationalist group in Israel, committed to the opposition to territorial concessions and prominent in the movement to settle the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
Halacha:	The entire body of laws governing all aspects of daily life from the Talmud and later Jewish literature.
Haskalah:	The movement that spread the modern European enlightenment to Jewish communities from 1750-1880.
Haredi:	Term used to designate the ultra-Orthodox. (Plural = Haredim)
Herem:	A community form of excommunication involving the severance of personal, business religious and social ties with a sinner, apostate or heretic.
Herut:	Israeli political party founded in 1948 by members of the Revisionist and Betar movements as well as Irgun veterans.

- Hozer b'Teshuvah:** Literally a "returnee in repentance". The term is synonymous with ba'al teshuvah but perhaps more accurately reflects the modern meaning of the phenomenon. (Plural = hozrim b'teshuvah)
- Kabbalah:** The mystical tradition in Judaism concerned with communion with God as well as explaining the mysteries of Creation.
- Kol Israel Arevim Ze La'Zeh:** The idea that all Jews are responsible for each other (literally "to act as guarantors").
- Kotel:** The Western Wall in Jerusalem.
- Likud:** A moderately right-wing Israeli political party formed in 1973 largely out of the Herut-Liberal alliance of 1965.
- Lubavitch:** This Russian village was once the centre of Chabad Chassidism. The name survives as a popular label for the movement.
- Mikvah:** A ritual bath constructed according to halacha, immersion in which effects a transition to the state of ritual purity. It is used by women each month, some men before the Sabbath, converts, and is required for new or "unkoshered" cooking utensils.
- Mizrachi:** The worldwide movement for Religious Zionism, founded in 1901.
- Mussar:** Late 19th century Orthodox movement founded by R. Israel Salanter in Lithuania. It focused on ethical teachings, inner piety and moral evolution.
- Oz Ve'Shalom:** The religious segment of the "Peace Now" movement in Israel.
- Satmar:** Anti-Zionist, anti-modern, and highly insular Chassidic sect in Israel and the United States.

- Sepharadim:** Jews of Spanish descent which now includes those from the Middle East, North Africa and Turkey. Certain customs and rites of prayer are different from those of Ashkenazim.
- Shas:** A religious political party in Israel made up primarily of Sepharadim and founded in 1984.
- Tanach:** An acronym for "Torah" ("Pentateuch"), "Navi'im" ("Prophets"), and "Ktuvim" ("Writings"); the Hebrew Bible.
- Teshuvah:** Literally "returning", it signifies a process of repentance and return to God.
- Tinok She'Nishba:** Refers to the Talmudic category of a Jewish child who grows up in captivity and is therefore ignorant of Jewish dictates.
- Tzedakah:** The financial charity that Jews must give.
- Yad La'Ahim:** A Haredi anti-missionary group established in 1959.
- Yeshiva:** Traditionally an institute of higher learning for boys after the age of thirteen focused on gemara. The contemporary yeshiva has also become a major resocialization mechanism for ba'alei teshuvah. (Plural = yeshivot)
- Yichud:** Literally "unity", the term refers to the law prohibiting an adult man and woman to be together alone in a room with the door closed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abramov, S. Zalman. Perpetual Dilemma: Jewish Religion In The Jewish State. Associated University Presses, New Jersey. 1976.
- Aidala, Angela. "Social Change, Gender Roles, And New Religious Movements". Sociological Analysis Vol.46, No.3 (1985) pp.287-314.
- Ah!strom, Sydney. A Religious History Of The American People. Yale University, New Haven. 1972.
- Aviad, Janet. Return To Judaism: Religious Renewal In Israel. University of Chicago, Chicago. 1983.
- Ben-Sasson, H.H. A History Of The Jewish People. Harvard University, Massachusetts. 1976.
- Berger, Peter. The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities Of Religious Affirmation. Anchor Press, New York. 1979.
- Biale, Rachel. Women In Jewish Law: An Exploration Of Women's Issues In Halachic Sources. Schocken, New York. 1984.
- Borowitz, Eugene. "The Jewish Need For Theology". Commentary Vol.34, No.2 (August 1962) pp.138-144.
- Cohen, Naomi. American Jews And The Zionist Idea. Ktav, New Jersey. 1975.
- Cromer, Gerald. "Repentant Delinquents: A Religious Approach To Rehabilitation." Jewish Journal Of Sociology. Vol.23, No.2 (Dec. 1981) pp.113-122.
- Dan, Joseph (ed.). The Teachings Of Hasidism. Behrman House, New York. 1983.

Danzger, Herbert. Returning To Tradition: The Contemporary Revival Of Orthodox Judaism. Yale University, New Haven. 1989.

-----, "Towards A Redefinition Of 'Sect' And 'Cult': Orthodox Judaism In The United States And Israel." Comparative Social Research. Vol.10 (1987) pp.113-123.

Davidman, Lynn. Tradition In A Rootless World: Women Turn To Orthodox Judaism. University Of California, Berkeley. 1991.

-----, "Accommodation And Resistance To Modernity: A Comparison Of Two Contemporary Orthodox Religious Groups". Sociological Analysis Vol.51, No.1 (Spring 1990) pp.35-51.

Davidman, Lynn and Arthur Greil. "Gender And The Experience Of Conversion: The Case Of 'Returnees' To Modern Orthodox Judaism", Sociology Of Religion Vol.54, No.1 (1993) pp.83-100.

Eisenstadt, S.N. "Post-traditional Societies And The Continuity And Reconstruction Of Tradition". Daedalus Vol.102, No.1 (Winter 1973) pp.1-28.

Elazar, Daniel. The Other Jews: The Sephardim Today. Basic Books, New York. 1989.

Ellinson, Getsel. Women And The Mitzvot, Volume Two: The Modest Way. World Zionist Organization, Israel. 1992.

Friedan, Betty. The Second Stage. Summit Books, New York. 1981.

Friedman, Norman. "Social Movement Changes: The American Jewish Counterculture, 1973-1988". Jewish Social Studies Vol.L, No.3-4 (Summer-Fall 1993) pp.127-146.

Frimer, Norman. "The A-theological Judaism Of The American Community". Judaism Vol.11, No.2 (Spring 1962) pp.144-155.

Glanz, David and Michael Harrison. "Varieties Of Identity Transformation: The Case Of Newly Orthodox Jews". Jewish Jewish Journal Of Sociology Vol.20, No.2 (Dec. 1978) pp.129-141

Goldberg, Hillel. Israel Salanter: Text, Structure, Idea: The Ethics And Theology Of An Early Psychologist Of The Unconscious. Ktav, New York. 1982.

Goldy, Robert. The Emergence Of Jewish Theology In America. Indiana University, Bloomington. 1990.

Greenberg, Blu. On Women And Judaism: A View From Tradition. Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia. 1981.

Haddad, Heskell. Jews Of Arab And Islamic Countries: History, Problems, Solutions. Shengold, New York. 1984.

Herman, Simon. Israelis And Jews: The Continuity Of An Identity. Random House, New York. 1970.

Kaufman, Debra. Rachel's Daughters: Newly Orthodox Jewish Women. Rutgers University, London. 1991.

-----, "Women Who Return To Orthodox Judaism: A Feminist Analysis". Journal Of Marriage And The Family Vol.47, No.3 pp. 543-555.

Katz, Jacob. Tradition And Crisis: Jewish Society At The End Of The Middle Ages. Schocken, New York. 1961.

Klatch, Rebecca. Women Of The New Right. Temple University, Philadelphia. 1987.

Lehman-Wilzig, Sam. Stiff-Necked People. Bottle-Necked System: The Evolution And Roots Of Israeli Public Protest, 1949-1986. Indiana University, Bloomington. 1990

Liebman, Charles and Steven Cohen. Two Worlds Of Judaism: The Israeli And American Experiences. Yale University, New Haven. 1990.

Liebman, Charles and Eliezer Don-Yehiya. Civil Religion In Israel: Traditional Judaism And Political Culture In The Jewish State. University Of California, Berkeley. 1983.

-----, Religion And Politics In Israel. Indiana University, Bloomington. 1984.

Lustick, Ian. For The Land And The Lord: Jewish Fundamentalism In Israel. Council On Foreign Relations, New York. 1988.

Marty, Martin and R. Scott Appleby. The Fundamentalism Project. Volume One: Fundamentalisms Observed. University of Chicago, Chicago. 1991.

Morgan, Edward. The 60s Experience: Hard Lessons About Modern America. Temple University, Philadelphia. 1991.

Oz, Amos. In The Land Of Israel. Fontana, London. 1983.

Patai, Raphael. The Seed Of Abraham: Jews And Arabs In Contact And Conflict. University of Utah, Salt Lake City. 1986.

Petuchowski, Jakob. "The Concept Of Teshuvah In The Bible And The Talmud". Judaism Vol.17, No.2 (Spring 1968) pp.175-185.

Pohli, Carol. "Church Closets And Back Doors: A Feminist View Of Moral Majority Women". Feminist Studies Vol.9, No.3 (Fall 1983) pp.529-558.

Robbins, Thomas and Dick Anthony. In Gods We Trust: New Patterns Of Religious Pluralism In America. Transaction, New Jersey. 1990.

Rose, Susan. "Women Warriors: The Negotiation Of Gender In A Charismatic Community". Sociological Analysis Vol.48, No.3 (Fall 1987) pp.245-258.

Sacks, Jonathan. Tradition In An Untraditional Age: Essays On Modern Jewish Thought. Valentine & Mitchell, London. 1990.

----. The Persistence Of Faith: Religion, Modernity & Society In A Secular Age. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London. 1991.

Schweid, Elizer. Israel At The Crossroads. Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia. 1973.

-----. Jewish Thought In The 20th Century. Scholars Press, Atlanta. 1992.

Shaffir, William. "The Recruitment Of 'Baalei Teshuvah' In A Jerusalem Yeshiva". Jewish Journal Of Sociology Vol.25, No.,1 (June 1983) pp.33-46.

Sharot, Stephen. "Judaism And The Secularization Debate". Sociological Analysis Vol.52, No.3 (1991) pp.255-275.

Silberstein, Laurence (ed). Jewish Fundamentalism In Comparative Perspective: Religion, Ideology, And The Crisis Of Modernity. New York University, New York. 1993.

Sobei, Zvi and Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi (eds). Tradition, Innovation, Conflict: Jewishness And Judaism In Contemporary Israel. SUNY, Albany. 1991.

Stacey, Judith. "The New Conservative Feminism" Feminist Studies Vol.9, No.3 (Fall 1983) pp.559-584.

-----. "Sexism By A Subtler Name?: Postindustrial Conditions And Postfeminist Consciousness In The Silicon Valley". Socialist Review Vol.17, No.6 (Nov-Dec. 1987) pp.7-28.

Steinsaltz, Adin. Teshuvah: A Guide For The Newly Observant Jew. Domino Press, Jerusalem. 1987.

Tipton, Steven. Getting Saved From The Sixties: Moral Meaning In Conversion And Cultural Change. University Of California, Berkeley. 1982.

Urbach, Ephraim. The Sages: Their Concepts And Beliefs. Harvard University, Massachusetts. 1975.

Walsh, Joan. "The Mother Mystique". Vogue August 1993, pp.96-102

Waxman, Charles. America's Jews In Transition. Temple University, Philadelphia. 1983.

-----, "The Fourth Generation Grows Up: The Contemporary American Jewish Community". Annals Of The American Academy Of Political And Social Science Vol.454 (1981) pp.70-85.

Wilson, Bryan (ed). The Social Impact Of New Religious Movements. The Rose Of Sharon Press, New York. 1981.

Witztum, Eliezer. et al. "Mental Illness And Religious Change". British Journal Of Medical Psychology No.63 (1990) pp.33-41.

Yinger, J. Milton. Countercultures: The Promise And Peril Of A World Turned Upside Down. Free Press, New York. 1982.

Yogev, Abraham and Judith El-Dor. "Attitudes And Tendencies Toward Return To Judaism Among Israeli Adolescents: Seekers Or Drifters?". Jewish Journal Of Sociology Vol.29, No.1 (June 1987) pp.5-18.

Zaidman-Dvir, Nurit and Stephen Sharot. "The Response Of Israeli Society To New Religious Movements: ISKCON and Teshuvah" Journal For The Scientific Study Of Religion Vol.31, No.3 (1992) pp.279-295

END

3 | 0 - 0 5 - 9 5

FIN