Galut, Self-Defense, and Political Zionism in the Halakhic Thought of Rabbi Ya’akov Moshe Toledano

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In this article I present and analyze concepts of Galut and of the modern Return to Zion found in a seminal responsum composed by Rabbi Ya’akov Moshe Toledano (1880–1960).[1] Born in Tiberias, scion of an illustrious Sephardic family in Meknès, Rabbi Toledano served as a rabbi in Corsica, Tangier, Cairo, and Alexandria, subsequently returning to Eretz Israel and serving as Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv from 1942 until his death. For a brief period toward the end of his life he also served as minister of religious affairs of Israel’s government.[2] In his creativity and career, he may be seen as reflecting attitudes and values common to a significant but insufficiently studied group, rabbinic scholars and lay leaders of the “Old Sephardic Yishuv,” whose members held Zionist ideals in high regard while remaining loyal to their traditional heritage.[3]

Rabbi Toledano’s central halakhic publication was a collection of responsa entitled *Yam HaGadol*.[4] Several of these responsa express his deep identification with the Zionist Yishuv and his belief that halakha entailed supporting the Yishuv in various ways. Thus, he takes up the question whether halakha requires a Jew in Eretz Israel to employ only Jews and to buy only Jewish produce even if non-Jewish labor or produce is cheaper—and answers in the affirmative. Moreover, he stresses that this halakhic determination applies also with regard to the labor and produce of nonobservant Jews.[5]

In another responsum, he determines that under current conditions, halakha forbids the sale of weapons to non-Jews, especially in Eretz Israel. Only when a state of true peace prevails between Jews and Gentiles can such sales be permitted.[6]

In a third decision, Rabbi Toledano discusses the possibility of restoring a Sanhedrin-type institution. Coming out in favor of the position typical of the more radical wing of religious Zionism, he advocates the establishment in Jerusalem of a (halakhic) High Court for the Jewish people; a court which would also, if possible, restore *semikha*.[7]

However, it is yet another of Rabbi Toledano's responsa that I wish to analyze here. In August 1929, there occurred a wave of Arab violence against the Jewish population in many places throughout Eretz Israel. Especially murderous were a pogrom in the old Jewish quarter of Hebron on August 24, in which 67 Jews were massacred, and a pogrom in the old Jewish quarter of Safed in which 18 Jews were murdered.[8] In neither of these cities was there even the semblance of a Jewish self-defense framework. In *Yam HaGadol*, published soon afterward, the following question is posed:

> Does the mitzvah of settling in Eretz Israel apply in our times in a manner that obligates all Jews to obtain possession of the Land by all possible means? And, is it not halachically forbidden to teach the sons of Israel military tactics and methods of defense, so that they might fight and defend themselves against their enemies, should the necessity arise?[9]

A close reading of the question reveals an important conceptual differentiation that is further explicated in Rabbi Toledano's response. Two very distinct questions are being asked. Only one of these questions, concerning the parameters of Jewish settling of Eretz Israel, is presented as relating specifically to current reality. The second question, regarding halakha's view of the correct self-defense posture Jews should adopt, is understood to be one of basic principle, not contingent upon time or place; it is precisely because of this that Rabbi Toledano's position on the matter is so striking.

Attitudes toward self-defense stem, in his analysis, not from the way Jews conceive of settlement of Eretz Israel but rather from their conception of Galut. An understanding of Galut was fundamentally mistaken, theologically and morally, had come to prevail in rabbinic circles; in consequence, many rabbis preached that Judaism advocated a passive-submissive response to persecution. The traditionalist Jewish masses in the Diaspora and in Eretz Israel had followed the teachings of these rabbis, reacting to attacks not by defending themselves, but by allowing themselves and their families to be slaughtered "for the sanctification of the Divine Name." Rabbi Toledano wrote while it is not an easy thing to say, the truth must be stated outright: Rabbis who furthered (or continue to further) this attitude bear direct and unequivocal responsibility for Jewish blood that was unnecessarily spilled due to their misguidance. Here is the relevant paragraph, in full:

> Many of our great rabbis, both in former generations and in current times, erred—and misguided the simple masses of our people—in the belief that as long as we are in this hard exile, we are forbidden to lift up our heads. Rather, we are commanded to bow ourselves down before every tyrant and ruler, and to give our backs to the smiters and our cheeks to them that pluck our hair (cf. Isa. 50:6); as if the blood of Israel had been forfeited, and as if He, blessed is He, had decreed that Jacob be given for a spoil and Israel to the robber (cf. Isa. 47:24). They thought that the [Divine] decree of [Israel's] exile and servitude to the nations included slavery and lowliness, and that, as a matter of sanctifying the Name even at the price of one's life, a Jew must forfeit his life and surrender himself like a slave or a prisoner of war to Israel's enemies, even in a situation in which it would have been possible to resist them and retaliate in kind.

> Let me, then, state outright that—begging their pardon—they have caused the loss of individual lives and of entire communities of the Jewish people, who in many instances might have saved themselves from death and destruction, had the leaders and rabbis of that generation instructed them that they were obligated to defend themselves against aggressors, according to the rule "If a person comes to murder you, kill him first" (*Sanhedrin* 72a).

Further reading of the responsum clarifies Rabbi Toledano's understanding of the nature of the exile ordained by God. Galut, he explains, is a political category; that is, God decreed that the Jewish people be deprived of sovereignty and live as subjects of Gentile sovereigns in the various lands in which they lived. To be the subject of a state, says Toledano, entails that one obeys the duly enacted laws promulgated but the authorities, pay taxes, and the like; not that one be the object of insult and torture, and even less that one willingly acquiesces in such a role.

Rabbi Toledano states that such a conception of Galut as deprivation of political sovereignty—but not including divine requirement of acquiescence to insult and torture—is the one borne out by classic Jewish sources. What exile, he writes, was more directly and specifically ordained than that of the children of Israel in Egypt? Abraham was clearly informed that the divine plan was for his descendants to be enslaved and afflicted by the Egyptians for 400 years (Gen. 15:13). Yet when Moses saw an Egyptian attacking an Israelite, he struck the Egyptian down (Exodus 2:11–12), for he realized that such an attack could not possibly have been ordained as part of Israelite bondage. So, too, Esther and Mordecai regarded it as completely legitimate that the Jews (living in exile in the Persian Empire) not only be saved from Haman's genocidal plan, but also seek to retaliate against those who had planned to destroy them (Esther 8:11, 9:1–5).

In addition to biblical instances, Rabbi Toledano cites two other types of sources. One is Sephardic folk tradition, according to which on the eve of the 1492 expulsion Don Isaac Abarbanel and other leaders of Spanish Jewry planned together to organize their communities to confront their enemies and fight against them (a plan foiled by a treacherous *converso* who revealed it to the authorities).[10] The other comprises descriptions by historians of the Jewish uprisings against Rome outside of Eretz Israel, during the first decades of the period after the destruction of the Second Temple. It is worthy of note that most of the events to which he refers in this context (i.e., the uprisings in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Cyrenaica) could not have been known to Rabbi Toledano from traditional Jewish historiography. Clearly, Rabbi Toledano's halakhic methodology enabled him to attribute normative halakhic significance to non-canonical sources.[11]

If an uncowed defensive posture was the original and correct orientation advocated by Judaic tradition and practiced by Jews in biblical and post biblical times, how does Rabbi Toledano explain the contemporary gulf between that original view and current rabbinic attitudes? He explains that deviation originated within a specific historical-geographical framework: "It was only in France, Ashkenaz, and Russia that they demeaned themselves, and they never attempted to resist and defend themselves." In recent generations, he adds, this attitude spread to many Sephardic communities, including Morocco, Persia, and Turkey. In other words, the ideology of submissiveness, widely regarded in traditional rabbinic circles as the authentic religious norm ordained by God for Jews living in a pre-messianic reality, is in fact (Toledano explains) an Ashkenazic heresy that subsequently corrupted many Sephardic Jews, whose own ancestors never stooped to such levels. Interestingly, Gershom Cohen similarly wrote that Medieval and Early Modern Ashkenazic Jewry advocated passivity as a religious value and idealized martyrdom, while Sephardic Jewry was active and dynamic.[12] Elisheva Carlebach critiqued this dichotomy as incompatible with historical fact. However, she concluded that while historically inaccurate, the dichotomy did reflect a clear historiographical difference: Traditional Ashkenazic historiography idealized passivity and martyrdom as religious

ideals, while traditional Sephardic historiography idealized activism.[13]

In its fully developed form, writes Toledano, the religious glorification of this perverted notion of Galut had turned back even against the heroes of the pre-exilic era (who ostensibly should not have been bound by ideals of passivity) and attempted to modify their images in consonance with the supposedly eternal values exemplified in the figure of the submissive Jew:

> When one reads works of homilies and musar composed by several recent rabbis, one finds that they believe Jews are religiously obligated to submit to all forms of suffering, insult, and physical degradation. They thought that this followed from [the ideal of] Galut or humility. As a result, some of them regarded as problematic the attitude of the patriarch Jacob, who said, "With my sword and bow," and of Caleb, who said, "As was my strength then, so is it even now," and they asked: "How could such saintly men boast of physical prowess?!"

Toledano refers the reader to the source of this critique of the plain meaning of Caleb's words: Rabbi Haim Aryeh Leib Fenster's introduction to Parashat *Ki Tetze*.[14] He adds that similar views can be found with ease in recent Ashkenazic rabbinical works. A reading in Mendel Piekarz's impressive work on Polish Hassidic thought provides striking examples illustrating the Ashkenazic ideal of submissiveness in Galut as a religious virtue. Thus, Piekarz cites an 1880 homily by Rabbi Yehezkel Halberstam (1813–1899), who wrote that when faced with a threat a Jew should act with submissiveness, humility, and a broken heart—and flee.[15] So too, Rabbi Shmuel Bornsztain (1855–1926) the second Rebbe of Sochatchov, wrote that Jews should maintain an inner sense of superiority over the Gentiles, but simultaneously act with humility and submissiveness as proper to the state of Exile, as the biblical author of Lamentations (3:30) instructed: "He should offer his cheek to he who strikes him." Rabbi Bornstein explicitly contrasted this with "the attitude of the well-known sect [= the Zionists] who are unable to bear the submissiveness and the suffering of Galut."[16] It is thus clear that Rabbi Toledano was not inventing a straw man but criticizing a major trend in Ashkenazic Hareidi thought of his time.

In characterizing this attitude, Rabbi Toledano employs a literary allusion of extreme force that could not fail to evoke a powerful reaction on the part of readers acquainted with classic talmudic culture. This posture, he says, calls forth the rabbis' devastating critique of Zechariah ben Avkolas: "The piety of Rabbi Zechariah ben Avkolas destroyed our temple, etc." Toledano alludes, of course, to the well-known talmudic story (*Gittin* 55b–56a) describing a chain of events that led to the destruction of the second Temple. Perhaps best-known today is the first part of the tale, often referred to as "Kamzah and Bar-Kamzah," which illustrates the moral and social callousness of Jerusalem's Jewish elite on the eve of the First Revolt. In the second part of the story, the offended Bar-Kamzah maneuvers the Roman emperor into sending an imperial sacrificial offering to the temple of Jerusalem—an offering that Bar-Kamzah secretly blemishes in a manner rendering it unfit for a sacrifice according to Temple norms.

It is the third part of the story, however, to which Toledano alludes. Having received the animal sent by the emperor, the rabbis of Jerusalem convene to decide upon a course of action. Most, realizing the disastrous consequences of noncompliance, favor having the animal offered up on the Temple altar despite its minor blemish. But Rabbi Zechariah ben Avkolas speaks out in a different vein: Sacrosanct rules should not be set aside because of an imperial whim, lest a precedent be set. The rabbis give in to Zechariah, but are now faced with another quandary: If Bar-Kamzah reports to the emperor that the sacrifice was not accepted, this will be construed as an act of rebellion by the Jews—with dire

consequences. The rabbis therefore conclude that the only way out is for Bar-Kamzah to be put to death. But Rabbi Zechariah ben Avkolas again rebukes them: This might lead people to incorrectly think that he who brings a blemished sacrifice is liable to the death penalty. Abashed by his devoutness and principled consistency, the other rabbis swing around to Zechariah's position—and Jerusalem's fate is sealed.

In the talmudic story, Zechariah appears as the advocate of a principled policy, with the other rabbis tending toward a weaker line of "adaptation to circumstance." In what sense, then, can Toledano, who supports a bold defensive posture vis-à-vis enemies of the Jews, identify his opponents, who preach adaptation to circumstance, as analogous to Zechariah? The answer lies not in the similarity of their specific proposals, but rather in their concept of value and norm; both first-century Zechariah and contemporary Ashkenazic rabbis identify true devoutness with unswerving commitment to set patterns of behavior, without the broader consequences of such behavior being recognized as a prime consideration in the decision-making process. In both cases, this narrow sense of what commitment to Torah entails leads to terrible loss of Jewish life. As Toledano puts it, with regard to the "Ashkenazic" glorification of submissiveness:

> This faulty humility, which rabbinical leaders instilled in the hearts of the multitude, caused an intensification of Galut, and postponed its end. And, alas for our sins, we recently saw this with our own eyes here in the Holy Land; for in the riots and disturbances which occurred in the year 5689 [1929], the number of deaths was especially great among our brethren who were yeshiva students or of the simple folk, who were educated to agree to suffer insult, to be dragged about, and to be victimized.

Misguided religious attitudes toward Galut thus affect mass behavior and contribute in no small measure to the perpetuation of the exile. Rabbi Toledano's conclusion is clear:

> Regarding the second question, then, "Is it not halakhically forbidden to teach the sons of Israel military tactics and methods of defense, etc.?" Why, according to the above, not only is it not halakhically forbidden, but it is a mitzvah and an obligation incumbent upon the rabbis and leaders of Israel, to institute mandatory daily lessons in these matters in all the *talmudei torah* and *yeshivot*, so that the students and youth be prepared to fight, in case an hour of need arises.

According to Toledano, then, renewed acknowledgment of Torah's positive attitude toward self-defense must lead to a revised notion of Torah study; the curriculum of Torah institutions should reflect the role which their students are expected to fulfill as defenders of Jewish lives. As he noted previously, however, this was not at all the actual praxis of these institutions; yeshiva students—and, of course, their teachers—were far from exemplifying the values of Judaic tradition in this crucial matter.

Until this point, Rabbi Toledano's analysis and rhetoric have unfolded purely as a discourse on Galut. His critique of the "Ashkenazic" sanctification of Israel's suffering in exile derives from the self-evident nature of the imperative of self-defense, and is supported by citation of scriptural and historical sources. His conclusion is that self-defense is "a mitzvah and an obligation" incumbent upon

all Jews, wherever they reside. In other words, there is no inherent connection between the mitzvah of self-defense and any geographical locus, e.g., Eretz Israel.

Eretz Israel, however, is squarely on the agenda of Toledano's responsum. The first question posed by the inquirer was, we recall, whether the mitzvah of settling in Eretz Israel applies in our times in a matter which obligates all Jews to obtain possession of the Land by all possible means. Accordingly, in the second part of his responsum, Toledano proceeds to discuss halakhic perspectives on the conquest and settlement of Eretz Israel. In a lengthy, detailed, and technical analysis he relates primarily to the opinions of medieval halakhists. His conclusion is that the two leading halakhic authorities who each developed a detailed position on this matter, Maimonides and Nahmanides, both agree that all Jews are at all times obligated in principle by Torah to do what they can to develop the potential of Eretz Israel, settle there, and gain possession of the Land. However, to be obligated in principle does not always entail obligation in practice. With regard to Eretz Israel, a specific question obtained: according to a midrashic tradition cited in the Talmud (*Ketubot* 111a), three vows limiting initiatives to gain control of Eretz Israel were divinely ordained in conjunction with the exile:

- *Lo la'alot ka-homah*: Forbidding the Jewish people to initiate a collective campaign to regain sovereignty in Eretz Israel against the will of the nations of the world.
- *Lo limrod be-umot ha-olam*: Forbidding Jews to revolt against sovereign powers in the lands of exile.
- *Lo lehisht'abed be-yisrael yoter midai*: Forbidding the nations of the world to overly oppress the Jews.

To what extent does the first of these vows suspend or curtail the mitzvah of settling Eretz Israel, under the conditions prevailing in 1929?

Rabbi Toledano argues that under contemporary conditions, the first vow cannot be construed as applying to the Zionist project, for two reasons:

1. It is quite probable that the limitations originally imposed by the three vows should be understood as mutually contingent. Thus, should the nations not fulfill their obligation under the third vow to limit the oppression of the Jews (and they have not done so, notes Toledano), Jews would be freed from their limitations under the first two vows, and might try to regain Eretz Israel even in the face of Gentile opposition.
2. The preceding claim, regarding the reciprocity of the vows' validity, is (while correct) unnecessary for halakhic justification of the contemporary Zionist enterprise. The vow *Lo la'alot ka-homah* relates to a collective Jewish move opposed by the nations of the world, whereas in the twentieth century the nations have endorsed political Zionism through the Balfour Declaration and the mandate of the League of Nations.

Strikingly noteworthy in Toledano's position is the absence of messianism from his presentation of Zionism. His halakhic rationale for Zionism is not based on the claim that current events with regard to Eretz Israel represent a new historical phase or mode, or a materialization of prophetic promises of

Israel's restoration to Zion. In an important sense, Toledano's understanding of Zionism stems from his understanding of Galut: Galut was not a divine decree obligating Jews to deny their group's dignity, or forbidding them to affirm that dignity through forceful reaction to persecution. Even in the depths of Galut, Jews were always expected to regard themselves as a nation, in the most conventional, political sense of the term. Galut simply meant that the Jewish nation might not unilaterally attempt to avail itself of the usual instrument for safeguarding a polity, i.e., sovereignty.

Given such a notion of Galut, it follows that political Zionism does not involve or require any redefining or rethinking of previously held concepts regarding the place and role in history of the Jewish people. Rather, Zionism requires only that Jews realize that the political limitations imposed by Galut, expressed in the three vows, are not valid in contemporary reality. No longer constrained by these limitations, Jews can legitimately (as far as halakha and the Torah are concerned) attempt to achieve the ultimate political expression of nationality, i.e., sovereignty, to which they had always inspired. In and of itself, there's nothing miraculous in the shift and ebb of international political constellations; thus, there is nothing in the emergence of a political moment favorable to Zionism which requires explanation or justification in terms of messianism or of divine intervention in the course of history. Religiously, one need not hold that Zionism's validity is contingent upon current events being understood as *reishit tzemihat geulatenu,* the inception of eschatological reality.

Yet Rabbi Toledano does allude to an aspect of recent developments as reflecting divine involvement—not directly in history, but in the realm of the psyche: God has inspired certain Jews to free themselves from the false consciousness of Galut propounded by contemporary rabbis and thus to reappropriate the authentic Judaic posture of self-defense and assertiveness. This psychological shift has enabled those Jews to seize the opportunity, provided by the international politics, for the Jewish people to regain sovereignty in Eretz Israel. As Rabbi Toledano puts it:

> Let me praise the flowers of this new generation[17] who "awoke and wakened"[18] to revive oppressed hearts,[19] to engirdle themselves with a courageous spirit, and to restore the crown of Israel's honor to its pristine glory. Indeed, it is with regard to this that the Bible says: "And I will give you a new heart and instill in you a new spirit."[20]

There is a two-pronged irony here—both prongs directed at the conventional rabbinic establishment. On the one hand, God's involvement serves precisely to eliminate the passive-submissive psychological attitude explicitly extolled by rabbis as the essence of correct Jewish conduct vs. Gentile persecution. On the other hand, God's involvement is manifest specifically within the hearts and minds of the secular *halutzim* of the New Yishuv. Paradoxically, it is those whom those rabbis identify as the furthest from Torah, whose hearts and spirits reflect God's concern for Israel. Indeed, God works in mysterious ways unacknowledged by the rabbinic "establishment."

Some questions for further thought

Rabbi Toledano's understanding of Galut, self-defense, and Zionism are fascinating in their own right. In addition, several significant directions for additional reflection and thought emanate from his responsum. These include:

Analysis of his halakhic methodology

Toledano integrates biblical, rabbinic, and historiographical sources in his discussion, and makes extensive use of reasoned arguments (*s'vara*) that are not contingent upon proof-texts. It would be of great interest to flush out the underlying methodological and conceptual assumptions that make possible such halakhic writing, and to explicitly develop their philosophical and religious implications.

Authority, commitment, and critique

Rabbi Toledano is writing within the classical genre of halakhic responsa, which is based upon the acceptance of tradition and recognition of the authority of earlier scholars who created within that framework. Yet Toledano directs a powerful attack upon what had become a pillar of convention in the rabbinic community, and, indeed, in the traditional Jewish community at large: the understanding of the Divine decree of Galut as requiring submissiveness and as justifying suffering at the hands of the nations. Obviously, then, Toledano does not hold, that to be within the halakhic tradition means to accept as binding everything that has been justified by halakhic masters of the past, or to refrain from explicit criticism of generally accepted opinions. How, then, does he understand the relationship between halakhic authority and halakhic independence, between working within a tradition and subjecting it to a direct critique?

Continuity and change

Toledano's claims that his perception of Galut harks back to a classic tradition that was accepted by Jews up to the expulsion from Spain. Are there real grounds for this claim? If so, what are they, and why and how were they subsequently supplemented by "Ashkenazic" submissive attitudes? If not so, then, what does Toledano's adoption of a novel understanding of Galut indicate regarding the integrative and transformative capacity of the halakhic system vis-à-vis cultural and social change?

Notes

[1] This article is based upon (but not identical with) two earlier versions:

1. "Sephardic Halakhic Tradition on Galut and Political Zionism," in: Yedida K. Stillman and Norman Stillman (eds.), *From Iberia to Diaspora: Studies in Sephardic History and Culture*, Leiden, Brill, 1999, 223–234.
2. "*Tziyonut Medinit u-Biqoret ha-Galut be-'Einav shel ?akham Sefaradi Artzi-Yisraeli,"* in Zvi Zohar, *He-Iru P'nei ha-Mizra?*, 2001, pp. 285–297.

[2] Scholarly research on Rabbi Toledano includes *inter alia*: Moshe Ovadia, *Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Toledano's Biography and his Contribution to Jewish Historiography*, M.A. thesis, Bar Ilan University, 5704/2003 [Hebrew]; ibid., "The Legal Discourse in Respect of the Status of Deserted

Jewish Wives-Agunot in Light of Halachic-Jewish Law Responsa of Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Toledano," in: *The International Journal of Legal Discourse*, 2,2 (2017), pp. 423–435; Izhak Bezalel, "The First Levantines in the Ottoman Period in Eretz Israel—Their Zionist Identity and their Attitude Towards Arab Identity," in: *Pe'amim* 125–127 (2010–2011), pp. 75–95 [Hebrew]; Eliezer Bashan, "The Attitude Towards Secular Jews in Eretz Israel According to a Responsum of Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Toledano," in: *Qovetz ha-Tziyonut ha-Datit*, vol. 2, Jerusalem 1999, pp. 80–86 [Hebrew].

[3] On the attitude of the leadership of the Old Sephardic Yishuv to the Jewish national movement (Zionism) see: Penina Morag-Talmon, "Zionism in the Consciousness of the Sephardic Community of Jerusalem," in: Hagit Lavsky (ed.), *Yerushalayim ba-Toda'a u-va-Mahashava ha-Tziyyonim*, Jerusalem 1989, pp. 35–46 [Hebrew].

[4] *She'elot u-Teshuvot Yam HaGadol*, Cairo, 5691/1931.

[5] *Yam haGadol* (above note 4), responsum #92.

[6] *Ibid.*, responsum #57.

[7] *Ibid.*, responsum #21.

[8] One of those murdered in Safed was advocate Meir Toledano, 30 years of age—and the youngest brother of Rabbi Ya'akov Moshe Toledano.

[9] *Yam HaGadol*, responsum #97. All further quotes in this article are from this responsum.

[10] I have been unable to find mention of this striking tradition in other sources—traditional or academic. In the introduction to his commentary on the Book of Kings, Don Isaac Abarbanel dramatically details his attempts to prevent the Expulsion, but makes no reference to planning an uprising. Sixteenth-century historiographical works such as Eliyahu Capsali's *Seder Eliyahu Zuta* and Solomon Ibn Verga's *Shevet Yehuda* also say nothing of a planned uprising. Twentieth- century research, such as Ben-Zion Netanyahu's *Don Isaac Abravanel* (Philadelphia 1972) and Ephraim Shemueli's *Don Yitzhak Abarbanel ve-Geirush Sepharad* (Tel Aviv 1963) are also silent on this topic.

[11] It seems that the rationale for this can be understood as follows: The actions of Moses in Egypt and of Esther and Mordechai in Persia obviously embody model Jewish behavior that should be emulated by all Jews. So too, Jewish leadership in heroic times—such as in the major communities of second century Diaspora Jewry—expresses in action norms to be followed by all Jews. Thus, non-canonical sources can inform us of behavior that is of canonical validity.

[12] Gerson D. Cohen, "Messianic Postures of Ashkenazim and Sephardim (Prior to Sabbethai Zevi)," in Max Kreutzberger, ed., Studies of the Leo Baeck Institute [=Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture, no. 9] (New York: Leo Baeck Institute, 1967), 115–156.

[13] Elisheva Carlebach, “Between History and Hope: Jewish Messianism in Ashkenaz and Sepharad”: third annual lecture of the Victor J. Selmanowitz Chair of Jewish History, Touro College, New York, 1998.

[14] In Rabbi Fenster’s work *Sha’ar Bat Rabbim* [vol. 5 (*Devarim*) (Piotrko 5680/1920) fol. 39a–b] he explains, that in biblical times all of the Israelites’ victorious battles were fought not by human prowess but by God; the Israelite forces just stepped out on the field of battle—and God vanquished their enemies. If so, what could Caleb possibly mean when he declared (cf. Joshua 14:11) that at 85 years of age he was still as strong as he was 45 years earlier? He meant, that just as 45 years earlier victory was not due to any physical strength he possessed but only to God’s will, so too at age 85 his situation is identical.

[15] Mendel Piekarz, *Trends in Polish Hasidic Thought in the Interwar Years and During the Decrees of 1940–1945*, Jerusalem, 1990. The citation is from p. 269.

[16] *Ibid*., p. 270.

[17] I.e., the Zionist youth of the New Yishuv, most of whom did not follow a lifestyle characterized by commitment to Torah.

[18] This phrase is a direct allusion to Song of Songs 2:7 and 3:5—traditionally interpreted to signify the awakening of God’s love for Israel in the messianic era. Indeed, these are the very same verses interpreted by the midrash in *Ketubot* 111a as enjoining the Jewish People *not* to attempt to prematurely awaken God’s love.

[19] Cf. Isaiah 57:15.

[20] Cf. Ezekiel 36:26.