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## MESSIANIC SCHOLARS: ON EARLY ISRAELI SCHOLARSHIP, POLITICS AND MESSIANISM

A MESSIANIC ORIENTATION IN EARLY ISRAELI SCHOLARSHIP

The present discussion of messianism in the thought of certain contemporary scholars in Jerusalem, especially Gershom G. Scholem, is certainly not the first of its kind,<sup>1</sup> neither is it my first treatment of the subject.<sup>2</sup> In fact, there are several discussions on the topic and it is not my intention here to summarize or even argue with them. Some of them were written referring to Scholem's European background but without the authors being acquainted with the original messianic texts that Scholem so carefully analyzed; others are simply rephrased assessments of what Scholem had thought on this important topic. I have chosen to return to this topic because previously unknown and, in my opinion, fascinating material on the place of messianism in Scholem's lifetime in the land of Israel, emerged only recently. This new material can be found especially in Hebrew studies written by Shmuel Werses,<sup>3</sup> Shalom Ratzabi,<sup>4</sup> Yonah Hadari,<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Garb,<sup>6</sup> and, especially important for our discussions below, in David Ohana's recent book,<sup>7</sup> as well as in Scholem's disparate material put together in the last twenty five years in the three collections of his articles edited by Abraham Shapira.<sup>8</sup>

The accumulation of this new material and related analyses broadens the perspectives concerning Scholem's views and gives us a better understanding of his intellectual background in the State of Israel, as well as of his European background. Even in the most recent analyses, however, a number of issues, which I will engage in detail below, are not dealt with at all. But just as it would not be wise to separate Scholem's thought from his European background, it would be equally wrong to ignore the more pressing reality of his daily life in the land of Israel, and to neglect the intellectual processes that he witnessed and was influenced by over the years. The discussions below should be seen as an exercise that seeks to prove that extracting Scholem from

the intellectual milieu in the country in which he lived most of his life, and analyzing him solely on the basis of his background of Central Europe, may miss some crucial aspects of his thought.

Let me start with a confession that will put much of the discussion below in its proper context. Scholem formulated a vision of Zionism as being, *de facto*, a non-messianic mass-movement. As an ideal, someone may share this same vision. I, for example, would like, personally, to separate, as Scholem did, the national movement that created a Jewish state, where Jews can find their home and refuge, without resorting to theological arguments or messianic views. However, as I shall try to show here, Scholem claimed that his purist vision was not only a desideratum but also a reality. Moreover, he attempted to preach that Zionism was not a messianic movement since, so I assume, he believed that the latter invoked apocalyptic elements, while the former is a voluntaristic enterprise based upon what he called a process of “entering history,”<sup>9</sup> that is, taking political responsibility for the fate of the Jews.

This reading of reality is, in my opinion, simplistic and, to a certain extent, dogmatic. However, this is not just a matter of Scholem reading present developments in a utopian and, in my opinion, inaccurate manner. It has also to do with his more professional reading of the traditional texts on messianism in a dogmatic and inaccurate manner. Therefore, while I fully agree, as a citizen, with a utopian non-messianic understanding of Zionism, I believe that what actually happened historically, and not just in the utopia, is different from the non-messianic descriptions of Zionism offered by Scholem. Or, to put it in a nutshell: I agree with much of the utopian vision of Scholem the citizen, but have many doubts about the picture of both messianism and Zionism that he offers as a scholar.

It is hardly an exaggeration to define the gist of scholarship on Kabbalah in the first generation of scholars active in the state of Israel as messianically oriented. What exactly “messianic” means is quite a difficult question, and I will avoid dealing with it here though I shall return to it later in this article. Instead, let us first turn to a more interesting question: what is an orientation toward messianism? The term “orientation” in my statement has a double meaning: On the one hand scholars of Jewish mysticism were obviously attracted to messianic elements, among many others, found in the huge literatures under scrutiny; on the other hand, there was a messianic motivation for this scholarly search for messianism in older traditions. While the first type of orientation is quite easy to demonstrate, the second is more implicit and thus hard to prove in a definitive manner. With one exception, Scholem’s dream in his youth,<sup>10</sup> I could not find an explicit declaration of a clear-cut messianic task by any other Israeli scholar

dealing with Kabbalah. Therefore, let me start with the first and simpler understanding of the meaning of orientation.

“TODAY WE ARE ALL WISE”

In a remarkable statement made by Gershom Scholem in 1958, as a response to questions posed after a lecture he delivered on messianism, he asserted that

The very existence of historical research on the topic of messianism is new. Today, we are all wise, we all understand [this topic], we all read *Zion*, we all read books on messianic movements, but we all forget how accidental, how dependent upon a miracle from heaven are the majority of the most interesting and the most heart-moving pieces of information we have. Except for the miracles and wonders of the scholars of Judaism in the last fifty years, we would not know the wing-touches of history related to these movements, which were pre-meditatedly hidden, in all of their force.<sup>11</sup>

Let me analyze this important statement in detail. The *Zion*, mentioned in this quote, is the name of a major Hebrew journal that deals with Jewish history. It is published by the Israeli Society of Historians and the Zalman Shazar Center, and has been the venue for the publication of many new studies of messianism. It is to these Israeli historians that Scholem delivered the lecture, whose end I quoted above. But who is the “we” that is mentioned so emphatically in the expression: “we all”? This must refer to the readers of *Zion*, namely, academicians and intellectuals. After all, who but they were the readers of the complex articles printed in this journal, and then of whole books on messianism? Some of these intellectuals, basically historians, were indeed present at the meeting at which Scholem gave his speech, the annual conference of Israeli historians. Thus, we have the image created by Scholem, and presumably one reflecting the reality of the 1950s, that there was an academic elite in Jerusalem, and perhaps in Israel in general, that was especially interested in the topic of messianism. And Scholem describes this as a “new” interest in a subject that had heretofore been neglected.

However, in order to better understand Scholem we need to pay attention to his resort to the phrase “messianic movements” and not just to messianism. It may well be that the noun “movements” is just as important as the adjective “messianic.” This means that not only was the topic described as “messianic” attractive, but so, too, was its social dimension, its manifestation as an historical movement. Indeed, a book having the title *The Messianic Movements in Israel*, written by Aharon Z. Aescoly around 1947, appeared in Jerusalem in 1956.

This was a relatively large volume, meant to eventually be part of a much larger trilogy, in which the many documents regarding Jewish messianic “movements” were to be printed with introductions and many notes.<sup>12</sup> It is thus clear that discussions about messianic movements were being conducted in an accelerated manner in intellectual circles in Jerusalem during the second half of the 1940s and the early 1950s. Moreover, Scholem and Aescoly were definitely not alone in having this special interest in what was called “messianic movements.” A third Jewish intellectual, Shneur Zalman Rubashov, better known than Aescoly, and to a certain extent also a scholar, an important Russian Zionist and an old acquaintance of Scholem’s from his days in Berlin, also had a special interest in messianism. He was especially concerned with, and wrote about, messianic figures like Shlomo Molkho and Sabbatai Tzevi.<sup>13</sup> Later on, in the mid-sixties, he became the third president of the State of Israel, under the name Zalman Shazar.

In this entourage, another important scholar at the Hebrew University was likewise interested in messianic topics: his original name was Ben Zion Dinaburg, later Ben-Zion Dinur, and he later became one of the ministers of education in Israel. Yet another major intellectual figure in those years in Israel was Joseph Klausner, formally a professor of Hebrew literature at the Hebrew University. Besides writing on Hebrew literature, Klausner also wrote books dealing with many other topics, including messianism in late antiquity, an extension of a thesis he had written in Heidelberg, and a book on Jesus Christ.<sup>14</sup>

Someone who remained at the margin of the academy in Jerusalem during this period was the younger Yehudah Even Shmuel, a learned scholar who edited a volume of Aescoly’s work that appeared only posthumously, and who compiled an important and quite exhaustive collection of apocalyptic texts entitled *Midrashei Ge’ulah*, the “Midrashim of Redemption,” whose second and enlarged edition was printed in 1954. We shall return to this book later on in this article. Concerns with messianism are also found in the writings of an important political thinker who was, like Klausner, a professor at the Hebrew University, Jacob Talmon. In his analysis of the concept of political messianism, he drew on Scholem’s analysis of this phenomenon.<sup>15</sup>

No doubt, messianism, and what were called “messianic movements”—an issue to which I shall return in a moment—were quite *en vogue* in 1958 when Scholem wrote the passage cited above. As in many other cases, Scholem’s comments were accurate and conveyed an insight that others were hardly able to perceive. Nevertheless, I would say that Scholem’s observation mentioned above was a

euphemism. If the area of research is new, as he asserts, one may ask, who were the authors who wrote the books that “we all” are reading? Which is to say that his statement could be complemented by adding that, “we all write books on messianic movements.” The scholars mentioned above were not only readers but also writers of scholarly books. After all, Scholem formulated the passage under review in 1958, no more than one year after he had published his seminal book about Sabbatai Tzevi, and less than two years after the printing of Aescoly’s collection of documents.

This is indeed a new and distinctive scholarly phenomenon, as Scholem correctly noticed. The few scholars active in Jewish studies in the fifties in Jerusalem had a special interest in a topic that was relatively neglected by earlier generations of scholars of Judaica. They produced in a short period of time, namely during one single generation, many more studies than all the scholars in the world had produced in the preceding fifty years.

If my claim here is correct then this phenomenon represents a huge increase in the interest in this topic. Here it is also interesting to add that the control group of Jewish scholars that was active outside Israel in the same generation, which includes major and prolific scholars like Leo Strauss, Alexander Altmann, Harry A. Wolfson, Georges Vajda, and Salo W. Baron, hardly paid attention to this topic in their voluminous writings. It seems, therefore, that Jewish scholars teaching in famous universities abroad were not interested—Jacob Taubes being perhaps an exception<sup>16</sup>—in issues related to the coming of the Messiah.

Let me turn now to the most difficult though the most interesting part of Scholem’s revelatory statement translated above: “Today we are all wise.” The adverb “today” qualifies the insight related to the perusal, and in my opinion as mentioned above, also to the composition, of books on messianism. It has to do with the accumulation of the information revealed by scholars in the last fifty years. It is, therefore, not just the discovery of a neglected field of research, but a more general intellectual orientation. Messianism is not just one of the forgotten areas but its research allows not just a broader view of Judaism, but also a form of wisdom and understanding. By speaking of wisdom and understanding Scholem is using a well-known statement found in the Passover *Haggadah*, in quite a verbatim manner:

Even if we are all wise and we all possess understanding, and we all know the Torah, it is incumbent [upon us] to tell the story of the exodus from Egypt.

It is hardly a coincidence that Scholem resorts to this well-known passage in order to deal with the way in which the study of messianism

is to be understood. In my opinion, he is suggesting that scholars are telling the story of messianism, just as traditional Jews tell the story of the exodus from Egypt, i.e., both have a religious dimension. The parallelism between the phrase “We all know the Torah” and the reference that Scholem makes with regard to the academic journal about history named *Zion* and the books on messianism, is fascinating. Instead of the Torah, a new Jewish literature dealing with messianism and emerging in those days took its place, at least metaphorically. Let me highlight that in both the Passover *Haggadah* and in Scholem’s statement, the preoccupation with the topic of redemption is evident.

Moreover, the parallelism between Scholem’s statement and the traditional source is not just a matter of a philological finding, or just an accidental rhetorical ornament. As is mentioned in a footnote to the published version of this article, the lecture by Scholem was delivered not just in 1958, but sometime during the Passover of that year.<sup>17</sup> I assume that the traditional formula recited during the Passover *Seder* crept into Scholem’s mind while he responded to questions related to his lecture.

This intriguing parallelism between the concept of the “Torah” in the traditional ritual and messianism in Scholem’s passage also demonstrates something more profound about Scholem’s background: the study of Jewish history, and especially the messianic part of it, including the new revelations that stem from perusing the neglected manuscript materials by scholars, constitutes the new Torah that should now be known by Israeli intellectuals. This seems to be the most significant element in the passage. Rescuing the redeemers from the historical past becomes a strong preoccupation in the present. However, I would even claim something more: just as when telling the story of the biblical exodus, the Jews of a later age had, according to the Passover *Haggadah*, to see themselves as if they had experienced the ancient event of liberation, now, in parallel fashion, the telling of the story of messianism may, according to Scholem, become part of this feeling of liberation, to be experienced by a scholar immersed in this material. I would say—following Reinhold Niebuhr—that Scholem had “not so much confidence in reason as faith in history. The conception of a redemptive history informs most diverse forms of modern culture.”<sup>18</sup> Redeeming the redeemers is in itself an act of redemption not only for those forgotten redeemers but also for the academic redeemer in the present. He participates, though only psychologically, in the historical redemptive drama that he is describing.

Redemptive or not, the preoccupation with messianism is essential to Scholem’s oeuvre, as we shall see below, but here I would like to draw attention to something else: In the above passage, Scholem

combined his appreciation of the new developments in the study of messianism with traditional language: the rhetoric of the passage is heavily indebted to the eschatological cargo of the Passover *Haggadah*. It formulates what should be a secular enterprise by academicians in terms that are unmistakably religious in their origin. This combination may be regarded as a merely stylistic ornament, but such an assumption is far from certain. In any case, it contradicts one of Scholem's well-known beliefs that the resort to religious language, especially Hebrew, charged as it is with ancient valences, for secular purpose will trigger a revenge of this language.<sup>19</sup> Some form of numinosity is introduced by the way in which Scholem treated the sacrality of Hebrew. This is an early view of Scholem that did not prevent him, to be sure, from writing a great part of his historical analyses of the past, in modern Hebrew. If the academic enterprise is to be understood as a secular enterprise, or at least free of religious presuppositions, the language adopted by Scholem in the above quoted passage addressed to Jewish historians, contradicts this tendency.

Indeed, in an interesting remark that has resonances of Niebuhr's comment adduced above, Scholem asserted that in his classes at the Hebrew University he does not teach reason but history.<sup>20</sup> However, the question is: what is the nature of this history? Is it a new sort of *historia sacra*? Let me try and shed light on this important question by resorting to the way in which Yitzhak Baer, the great historian of medieval Judaism, and a great admirer of Scholem's, understood Jewish history:

Our history is an evolutionary process of a great power and it is necessary to define and demonstrate the nature of this evolution even in those places and those ranks where this power, apparently coming from outside, is dispersed and growingly degenerates to its extreme baseness. We, who recognize ourselves as part of and messengers for this wondrous and occult power, [*ha-koah ha-nifla' ve-ha-satum*] we cannot escape this recognition...but by historical criticism we penetrate and fathom the secret of the existence [*sod ha-hawayyah*] of the historical phenomena, that are similar to personalities that develop according to their own laws<sup>21</sup>, which emerge indeed from the depths of their souls.<sup>22</sup>

This is a passage pregnant with many implicit meanings that does not reflect an ordinary vision of history or of the role of the historian, and it deserves a detailed analysis, which cannot be undertaken here. It is part of a theological understanding of history that has some few parallels in other Jewish historians, and in Scholem himself.<sup>23</sup> Though I would not identify Baer's stand with the position of Scholem, I assume that some form of affinity between the two should be discerned when they portray the role played by historians in a manner

reminiscent of ancient Jewish figures. Jewish historians are now conceived of as wonder-makers, performing miracles by virtue of their discovery of repressed traditions by conservative circles in Judaism, according to Scholem, while in Baer's more modest formulation, they are considered to be messengers of a higher power. As we are told in the Passover *Haggadah* about Moses, so, too, recent scholars are described as performing miracles. And let us not forget that we are here dealing with that special audience that Scholem addressed in his speech: Israeli historians.

In this context, let me also draw attention to the language that was early used to understand the establishment of the Hebrew University on Mt. Scopus. As David N. Myers has insightfully pointed out, two scholars in Jerusalem, one of them Judah Magnes, the first Chancellor of the Hebrew University, envisaged the University as, in some form, a Temple, mingling religious imagery in their description of a secular institution.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, as Myers mentioned, the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* project has been imagined as replacing the Torah, or at least competing with it.<sup>25</sup> To this observation I would add that there is some form of eschatology that underlies these expressions, reminding one of the way in which Scholem described the reading of the journal *Zion* and of the books of messianism. So, for example, Max Margolis, in a passage adduced by Myers, wrote that:

“This place in which we stand – Mt. Scopus from which we can see (the remnant of) the Temple – is a sanctuary for us. This edifice and the other that will rise in the not distant future will become for us a holy place.<sup>26</sup>”

In light of these views, we may assume that some scholars in Jerusalem adopted a religious language to describe their activity at the Hebrew University, with some of this language possessing clear eschatological overtones. As we have seen above, Scholem, however, attempted to deny the relevance of the resort to such a language by others insofar as history is concerned.<sup>27</sup>

#### SCHOLARSHIP OF MESSIANISM AND ZIONIST ESTABLISHMENT

Scholem's addressing his audience of historians by the phrase “we all” perceived that he and they were engaged in something more comprehensive and profound than only the academic study of a neglected area of research. I assume that the consumers of the books mentioned above were not only the few historians present at the annual meeting, but also broader audience of intellectuals. There is an interesting statement found in Scholem's Hebrew preface to his *Sabbatai Sevi*, which

was removed from the translations in other languages that here bears comment. After thanking the many persons in helping him during the writing of this book, Scholem states:

With awe and respect I recall the memory of Berl Katznelson, one [distinguished person] out of tens of thousands [*dagul me-revavah*],<sup>28</sup> who already fifteen years ago, when the publishing house 'Am 'Oved was founded, encouraged me [*hemritzani*] to compose this book, and I was not capable<sup>29</sup> of putting it in his faithful hands.<sup>30</sup>

Written in early 1957, this passage alludes to a conversation with his good friend in 1942, less than two years before the premature death of Katznelson. One of the most prominent secular Zionist activists, Katznelson had a deep respect for Jewish tradition. He became the first director of the publishing house of the Kibbutz movement, and was a very close friend of Ben-Gurion.

It is hard to underestimate the reverence that Scholem felt toward his friend. Scholem's description above is an exceptionally positive description, and I do not believe that anyone, with the possible exception of Walter Benjamin, would qualify for such appreciation.<sup>31</sup> What we learn from this passage is that with the establishment of the publishing house directed by Katznelson, the latter encouraged Scholem to write his most ambitious and important book on messianism in Judaism. The tone of apology—he excuses himself because he did not put the book on Sabbatai Tzevi in Berl's hands while he was alive—is interesting: its completion seems to be the late fulfillment of a promise that he did not fulfill in time. Indeed, the book was printed by 'Am 'Oved, Berl's press, despite the fact that Scholem had a long-standing relationship with another press, the Schocken printing house, that was also active in Israel.

Should we understand the relationship between Scholem and Katznelson solely as the friendship of two individuals who felt a deep affinity toward each other, or should we consider this affinity as reflecting an important link between the academy on the one hand, and the Zionist movement on the other? This is not a simple question to answer, especially for me as I am not an expert on modern Israeli history. However, I have at least an interesting parallel, which may shed a certain light on Scholem's relation to Katznelson. It should be pointed out that Katznelson had a deep interest in messianic movements, and he attempted to understand the differences between the messianic interpretations offered of the Communist revolution—as a case of false messianism—and the Zionist movement, as a closer type of phenomenon to messianism in a manner reminiscent of what Jacob Talmon did later on.<sup>32</sup> The abrupt ascent of studies dealing with messianism at a moment when the Zionist movement was at its apex,

in my opinion, points to an important nexus that should not be neglected.

Let me also compare the last passage to another one, found in the preface written some years earlier by Yehudah Even Shemuel, to his *Midrashei Ge'ulah*. Again, the author is attempting to thank the people who helped him in one way or another:

My thanks are due to the Bialik Institute, which published this book of mine, [and] especially my friend Yitzhaq Greenbaum, who stirred me to write this book, a testimony of the longings for redemption of **our generation**.<sup>33</sup>

The Hebrew formulation is unambiguous: Greenbaum, who was in fact the head of the Bialik publishing house named The Bialik Institute, stirred Even Yehudah to write the book. Greenbaum was, like Katznelson, a major Zionist activist, but unlike the latter, he was a much more radical secularist thinker. Both were, however, heads of recently established public printing houses, that turned into leading Israeli presses. Even Shmuel is much more confessional than Scholem. He presents his book not only as the result of encouragement coming from an important leader, but also as emerging from the messianic expectations of his generation. This point returns again later in his preface, where he mentioned no other than the most important Jewish poet of the twentieth century Hayyim Nahman Bialik:

By a special blessing I bless the unique and the special one, who left us several years ago but his light is still with us, Hayyim Nahman Bialik. Out of conversations I had with him about redemption, an impression remained and they were committed to writing in the fabric of the text when I came to write on the history of the longing for redemption in Israel. The hope of **our generation** is that we are the last of those who long for redemption and the first in redemption.<sup>34</sup>

Therefore, it is not Greenbaum alone who inspired Even Shmuel but also another, much more prominent, Zionist thinker, the national poet Bialik, who did so. It, therefore, turns out that two major monographs dealing with messianism, were in a way encouraged, perhaps even ordered, by Zionist thinkers, and then printed by Zionist printing houses. Thus, we have a clear linkage between Zionism and the scholarly research on messianism. Furthermore, the attempt to disentangle Zionism from messianism in several statements of Scholem, to be adduced below, turns out to be somewhat problematic against this background.

More recently, the correspondence between David ben Gurion, the famous prime minister of Israel, and a number of Israeli intellectuals concerning messianism has been printed and analyzed by

David Ohana.<sup>35</sup> The enthusiasm that Ben Gurion had for a variety of messianic topics is unmistakable, as we learn from these letters and discussions. We may, therefore, conclude that at least part of the Zionist secular elite was especially interested in messianism, at least theoretically, and encouraged scholars to write on the topic. To be sure, the religious Zionist elite was even more enthusiastic about the understanding of Zionism as a form of messianism, but this is an issue that I cannot enter into here.<sup>36</sup>

Let me be clear: I would not identify Even Shmuel's perception with that of Scholem's. The latter was indubitably much more sober, and did not share the explicit eschatological aspirations of Even Shmuel. In fact Scholem himself distinguished explicitly between his Zionistic convictions about a political and cultural process that took place in history and in the land of Israel on the one hand, and the messianic redemption he hoped for that will take place in the future. "I absolutely negate,"<sup>37</sup> Scholem wrote,

that Zionism is a messianic movement and that it has the right to employ religious terminology for political goals. The redemption of Jewish people, which as a Zionist I desire, is in no way identical with the religious redemption I hope for in the future . . . The Zionist ideal is one thing the messianic ideal is another, and the two do not meet except in the pompous phraseology of mass rallies which often infuse our youth with a spirit of new Sabbateanism, which must inevitably fail. The Zionist movement has nothing in common with Sabbateanism.<sup>38</sup>

Let me draw attention to the resort to the singular in this passage: there is, to believe Scholem, just one single "Zionist ideal" as if there is just a single "Messianic ideal", and the two are deemed to be incompatible, this incompatibility being the reason why the two ideals do not really meet or even less overlap. The language used is quite sharp: "I absolutely negate that." Scholem here and in some other instances later on in his life, takes, in quite a serious manner, his self-assumed role as the speaker for "Zionism" as a whole, identifying the whole movement that includes, as we know, many religious factions, with his secularizing outlook.

Indeed, he formulated this stark distinction as early as 1929 in a polemical response that he printed in *Davar*, a main Zionist newspaper, as part of his defense of the approach adopted by a leftist faction in cultural Zionism formed by mainly Central European intellectuals in Israel, named *Berit Shalom*, to which he belonged. And this polemical stand, like many other declarations of his youth, remained part and parcel of his approach for decades to come.<sup>39</sup> He repeated it in 1931, in a piece printed only recently by Avraham Shapira<sup>40</sup>, and again in much later interviews during the seventies.<sup>41</sup> This approach is a

matter of principle and, therefore, remained unchanged through decades. Formulated in a period when Jewish history seemed rather static, it was reiterated in a period saturated by dramatic events, in which mass murder and the mass movements of the Jews dramatically changed the landscape of Jewish history.

Like many of his other intellectual contemporaries, Scholem separates the present political developments related to Zionism on the one hand and the belief he shared with other Jews, religious ones to be sure, concerning the redemption of the nation in the future, on the other hand. In a way he was aware of the resort to messianic terminology in Israeli politics, but nevertheless decided that Zionism and messianism are dramatically different and he negated the messianic, in fact the apocalyptic, cargo of Zionism. As we shall see below, he was preoccupied with and perhaps afraid of, the question of the price paid by Jews for their adhering to what he called “the idea of messianism”. In an interesting statement, Scholem wrote: “I do not see in Zionism, as Ben Gurion did, a messianic movement.”<sup>42</sup> This is a much more tolerant expression: he acknowledges that his position is not accepted by those on the political right who inspire the youth he is criticizing, nor is it shared by such a pillar of Zionist activism, Ben Gurion himself, who had quite another opinion on the topic.

Though sharing in the intense interest in messianism in the nascent state of Israel, Scholem was, nevertheless, an exception in his group because of his prolific writings on the topic and even more so because of his profound insights and deep impact on scholarship. It is evident that Scholem’s longest book is his monograph entitled in Hebrew *Sabbatai Şevi and the Messianic Movement in His Lifetime*, in its second, expanded and final English version known as *Sabbatai Şevi, The Mystical Messiah*, that runs to nearly a thousand pages. What is, however, much less evident is the fact that when someone inspects Scholem’s entire academic corpus, the space dedicated to messianism is quite surprising: I estimate that fifty percent of the material in his books and articles are dedicated to this topic. The two longest books of Scholem’s, other than *Sabbatai Şevi*, are two big tomes in which many of his articles on and texts of Sabbateanism have been collected.<sup>43</sup> And two other smaller books are dedicated solely to Sabbateanism.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, in other books by Scholem, which are not dedicated explicitly to messianism, there are articles dealing with this topic, or even entire chapters on Sabbateanism, as it is the case in his seminal *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. Furthermore, a collection of articles on messianism in English, many of them translations from other languages, become a substantial volume.<sup>45</sup>

An interesting check can be made by inspecting the general structure of Scholem’s summary of his entire work as presented in his book

entitled *Kabbalah*, that is comprised of a collection of items he contributed early in the seventies to the *Encyclopedia Judaica*. When he discusses the most important personalities in the history of Jewish mysticism that he deems important enough to treat in separate items, he chose sixteen, out of whom seven are Sabbateans.<sup>46</sup> It was, therefore, only natural that when Scholem reached the age of eighty, the topic of the lectures and studies dedicated to him on this occasion was messianism.<sup>47</sup>

#### SCHOLEM'S VIEW OF MESSIANISM AS APOCALYPTICISM

However, quantity is not the only criterion that we should use in attempting to describe what I called above a "messianic orientation." The question is whether the statement adduced at the beginning of this essay is an exception, or, alternatively, whether it represents something deeper in Scholem's scholarly worldview. Did he believe that his scholarship dealing with this topic was the most important part of his academic activity? Let me quote another statement of his, occurring several lines before the passage with which I opened this analysis:

If I have demonstrated something [at all] in my writings I have shown that ancient apocalypse has accepted some forms and replaced them, but it is one under its metamorphoses after the destruction of the second temple, and one is it in its first metamorphoses beforehand.<sup>48</sup>

As I mentioned above, Scholem was an extraordinarily attentive and sensitive observer and this remark should be given its proper place when evaluating his views. In this passage, as in many other cases, Scholem resorted to the term "apocalyptic" not in its precise original meaning, namely as a term related to revelation, but more as pointing to a strong historical and imminent cosmic upheaval connected to the eschaton.<sup>49</sup> From many points of view, Scholem's apocalypticism is similar to the terms "millennarism" and "chiliasm" in the scholarly discussions of some forms of Western eschatology. The most explicit and helpful description of the relationship between apocalypticism and messianism in Scholem's thought is probably expressed in his statement that apocalypticism is a "form necessarily created by acute messianism."<sup>50</sup> It should be noted, however, that acute messianism can be understood also in individualistic terms, and in such a case rather strong soteriological aspirations rather than apocalypticism will emerge.

Though primarily considered to be an eminent scholar of Jewish mysticism, Scholem was, as mentioned above, interested mostly in one specific form of Jewish messianism, the apocalyptic

mode. This overriding interest in one specific form of messianism is found, for example, in the following passage:

Jewish Messianism in its origins and by its nature - this cannot be sufficiently emphasized - is a theory of catastrophe. This theory stresses the revolutionary, cataclysmic element in the transition from every historical present to the Messianic future... The elements of the catastrophic and the vision of the doom are present in peculiar fashion in the Messianic vision.<sup>51</sup>

Despite his immense contribution to the study of Jewish mysticism as a whole, it is obvious that it was the drama of apocalypticism that most especially captured Scholem's imagination. So, for example, he states that to the extent that messianism entered, "as a vital force in the messianism of the mystics, it is permeated by apocalypse and it also reaches... utopian conclusions which undermine the rule of the Halakhah... in the days of redemption."<sup>52</sup> To be sure: this statement conflicts with other discussions of Scholem regarding, for example, the way in which he understood Lurianic Kabbalah as embracing a more progressive concept of redemption.<sup>53</sup> But this tension was never resolved.

Fascinated by the antinomian potentialities inherent in this extreme form of mysticism, he regarded the more mystical and less radical interpretations of messianism as forms of "neutralizations" of this phenomenon, even as its "liquidation." Though he would never expressly deny the messianic beliefs of any of the Jewish philosophers or mystics, Scholem would nevertheless conceive the more individualistic forms of Jewish eschatology as deviating very significantly from the vital version of the apocalyptic messianism. He was primarily attracted to the dramatic, revolutionary and public manifestations of messianism rather than by its private, inner or spiritual aspects. As Harold Bloom has correctly described him, Scholem had "an obsession with the imagery of catastrophe."<sup>54</sup>

Phenomenologically speaking, Scholem defined the subject-matter of messianism in a way that excluded the more private and mystical "interpretations" or "neutralizations" of the popular, apocalyptic understanding of messianism from the focus of his studies. According to him—in a manner that is strongly reminiscent of Leo Baeck's views—Jewish Messianism is drastically different from what he conceived of as the Christian emphasis on the redemption of the soul, the latter concept being "not considered by either Rabbinism or Kabbalism as having anything to do with Messianism."<sup>55</sup> Thus, by drawing attention to the apocalyptic components in the entire range of messianic phenomena, after their neglect by earlier scholars, Scholem actually identified, to a great extent, and fused the two concepts. His project was

intended, as he explicitly indicated, against the marginalization of apocalypticism in the general economy of Jewish scholarship during the previous century, which preferred less dramatic versions of Judaism. This monochromatic and less apocalyptic reading of messianism is still evident, for example, in the way that Joseph Sarachek treated the doctrine of the Messiah, putting a strong emphasis upon the philosophical literature, and relegating the kabbalistic literature to the periphery while totally ignoring messianic figures such as Abraham Abulafia and Shlomo Molkho, as well as the major discussion of the Messiah in the *Zohar*.

Scholem's particular preoccupation with messianism, actually mainly with apocalyptic messianism, as a crucial issue in Jewish mysticism is related, in my opinion, not only to his findings of neglected material in manuscripts—and indeed a great deal was done in order to unearth, print and analyze the previously marginalized messianic documents by the above mentioned scholars—but also with his Zionist ideology and nationalistic enthusiasm that were so formative in his life and thought, as well as in the lives and thought of his academic followers. By saying this, I do not intend to minimize the importance of the remarkable scholarly contribution of Scholem's school, but rather to locate it within its historical background and describe one of the main impulses that shaped the choice of its subject-matter and the specific kind of treatment the material chosen for study and analysis received. I would say that like any other major type of ideology that has emerged in Judaism, Zionism has contributed, in various ways, to shaping the understanding of messianism along lines that were important to its adherents. For Scholem this meant that the Jewish masses, living the drama of the creation of the State of Israel and after the Holocaust, should become aware of some form of "historical consciousness":

The connection between the renaissance of the Jewish people and its historical consciousness is obvious, and has resulted in a new awareness of the dynamics and dialectics of Jewish history. The papers collected in this book are, I venture to hope, living witness to this.<sup>56</sup>

#### ISAAH TISHBY AND THE MESSIANIC IDEA

Let me turn now to a second major Israeli scholar who wrote much about messianism within the context of Jewish mysticism, Isaiah Tishby. A student of Scholem's, he was part of his academic school. His emphasis on messianism, which was conceived of as a more dominant an element in Jewish mysticism than even Scholem thought,

constitutes, in a deep sense, a strong continuation with added emphasis, of the earlier Israeli preoccupation with apocalypticism.<sup>57</sup> This strong accent on messianism in Jewish mysticism even in cases where Scholem denied its existence generated the most significant exchange between the two scholars—notably over the nature of Hasidism.<sup>58</sup>

However, in the case of Tishby it seems that it was not only a matter of scholarly emphasis on the centrality of a certain component in the wider economy of Jewish mysticism. Tishby's original family name was Schwartz, but he adopted a new family name that cannot but call to mind the name of Elijah the Tishbite, the announcer of the Messiah. On the other hand, Tishby chose as his literary pseudonym the name '*Eliyhu*' *Qeidar*, when he printed poems translated from Hungarian. The proper name '*Eliyhu*' has nothing to do with *Isha'yahu*, to my best knowledge, but it has the same consonants as '*Eliyahu*', namely Elijah. *Qeidar* is indubitably a Hebrew counterpart for Schwartz, because it means something like "dark". So, let me put together the two new names adopted by Tishby: '*Eliyhu*' and *Tishby*, whose consonants amount in Hebrew to those of '*Eliyahu Tishby*', i.e., a messianic name, pointing to a figure who was widely accepted as the precursor of the Messiah. At the Hebrew University he became Scholem's main student and the most productive scholar in terms of dealing with messianic texts and the issue of messianism in Jewish mystical literatures.

#### THE POLYVALENT STATUS OF THE TERM 'MESSIAH' IN JEWISH MYSTICISM

Let me return to Scholem's sharp distinction between messianism and Zionism already argued for as early as 1929. This distinction, as argued for by Scholem, consists in a notably dogmatic type of rhetoric. After all, Scholem is here dealing with two movements, and as popular movements it is hard to avoid the existence of a variety of different phenomena being present. Even the Sabbatean movement that is invoked in this context is far from monolithic in its understanding of a variety of important topics.<sup>59</sup> That is to say, the sentence adduced above represents an ideological position: why deny the existence of messianic aspects that are found so explicitly among Zionists who are either religious, or rightists? Scholem can certainly contend that Zionism should be, in principle, non-messianic, and he may oppose and criticize tendencies that do not follow this contention, but as a scholar he should recognize facts as they are, unpleasant as they may be. To take just one striking example: one of his closest disciples,

Rivka Shatz-Uffenheimer, wrote a paper unambiguously entitled "Zionism is Messianism."<sup>60</sup> She represented the rightist side of Zionism and described the movement as one of the versions of messianism. Her position seems to be of special importance because it constitutes one of the few cases in which she, or any other student of Scholem, openly disagreed with their teacher. On the other hand, we may mention here the even more pronounced religious messianic understanding of Zionism stemming from the famous mystical thinker R. Abraham Yitzhaq ha-Kohen Kook. Kook was active in the years in which Scholem wrote the above statement in *Davar*, and his influence has continued to be powerful in Israeli religious Zionist circles up to today.<sup>61</sup>

Scholem's understanding of messianism as paramount apocalypticism reflects a dogmatic and limited approach that is not consistent with many of the Hebrew documents written by Messiahs. The apocalyptic scenario is not always, necessarily, part of all messianic scenarios. Not only was the "messianic idea" interpreted in dramatically different ways over the centuries, but a messianic figure like the thirteenth century Abraham Abulafia resorted to this term in quite a polysemic and nonapocalyptic manner. In one of his prophetic writings, which is also one of his most messianic ones, he directly addresses the meanings of the word Messiah:

the term *Mashiyah* is equivocal, [designating] three [different] matters; first and foremost the truly Agent Intellect is called the *Mashiyah*... and the man who will forcibly bring us out of the exile from under the rule of the nations due to his contact with the Agent Intellect - he will [also] be called *Mashiyah*. And the material human hylic intellect is called *Mashiyah*, and is the redeemer and has influence over the soul and over all elevated spiritual powers. It can save the soul from the rule of the material kings and their people and their powers, [namely] the lowly bodily desires. It is a commandment and an obligation to reveal this matter to every wise man of the wise ones of Israel in order that he may be saved because there are many things that oppose the opinions of the multitude of the Rabbis, and even more differ from the views of the vulgus.<sup>62</sup>

Messianic redemption, according to this passage consists of two different, though related events: an inner, intellectual one, and an external, public one. The former is dependent on the actualization of the individual, human intellect, by its adherence to the cosmic universal intellect. This is the self-redemption that is available to anyone who develops his intellect, and who may, at his turn, save the others. Though the public event of redemption is not denied, it does not stand at the center of the activity of the intellectuals: the supernal Messiah, the Agent Intellect, and God, are supernal minds and redemption means assimilation to them. Intelligence, rather than

power and military or political success, has here moved to the center of a world that the Messiah is supposed to bring into being. The actualization of the human intellect, a classical issue in Aristotelianism and Neoaristotelianism, has nothing apocalyptic in its character, yet it is here set in direct relation to messianism. By doing so it contributes new understandings of the Messiah.<sup>63</sup>

Therefore, Scholem's sharp reduction of messianism as a polyvalent phenomenon to basically one of its forms, apocalypticism, created a sharp distinction between what happened in the *Realpolitik* of Zionism in the present and the apocalyptic messianism of the future.<sup>64</sup> Scholem's efforts to distance Zionism as he understood it from messianism may be an interesting personal opinion, but it is just that even though one formulated by a great expert on both messianism and Zionism. However, it is a fact that other persons, who also understood the processes taking place in Israeli society, had a totally different opinion. This was the case with two of the most important Israeli political scientists, Jacob Talmon, who described Zionism as "a messianic ideology,"<sup>65</sup> and his student Shlomo Avineri, who described Ben Gurion straightforwardly as a secular Messiah.<sup>66</sup> Also holding different views were, for example, Uriel Tal whose influential work dealt with political thought,<sup>67</sup> Israel Colat, an historian of Zionism at the Hebrew University,<sup>68</sup> and Baruch Kurzweil, who was a literary and cultural critic and a professor at Bar-Ilan University. Kurzweil perceived Scholem's academic project as some form of secular and anarchistic messianism.<sup>69</sup> And we should not forget the already mentioned dissenting position of Rivka Shatz-Uffenheimer.

Moreover, one of Scholem's closest friends, the Israeli writer Sh. Y. Agnon, composed a special prayer that has been widely adopted into the orthodox liturgy, and it is still in use, in which the State of Israel is described as "the beginning of the dawn of our redemption." And none other than the historian Jacob Katz, another scholar very close to Scholem, defined Zionism as a "Jewish messianic belief... purged of its miraculous elements, and retain[ing] its political, social and some of its spiritual aspects."<sup>70</sup> Last but not least: one of the major Israeli poets in Scholem's lifetime, Uri Tzvi Greenberg, became in the late thirties a fervent messianic thinker, deeply interested in messianic figures. In consequence, he adopted a messianic, even apocalyptic, tone in his work. He even went so far as to sign his name with the pseudonym Shlomo Molkho, a well-known late medieval messianic figure. Without understanding daily life in pre-state Israel as well as in the period immediately after the state was established, it is hard to understand Scholem's resistance to identifying Zionism and messianism.

In a way, the stark distinction Scholem attempted to draw in 1929 between Zionism and messianism, that one finds echoed in his later discussions, has never been accepted by the majority of Zionist activists in Israel, and it has been rejected, implicitly or explicitly, by some of the most influential academicians in the field. On Scholem's side, however, one must count Martin Buber who advocated a vision of prophetic messianism, that was not apocalyptic,<sup>71</sup> as well as Talmon and Avineri.

Like many other religious concepts that metamorphosed over millennia, the problem with messianism is that it is a protean concept that has drastically changed its form and taken on a variety of new meanings over the centuries, and many of these were not necessarily connected to apocalypticism. Gravitating around the popular versions of messianism, some of the scholars mentioned above were afraid of the negative repercussions that the adoption of such an apocalyptic view would have for the present, especially in a society fraught with messianic expectations. By doing so, they displayed a responsible attitude toward society on the one hand, but on the other hand they did not supply an alternative vision for their community. Scholem was constantly speaking about the price of messianism,<sup>72</sup> but never tried to imagine, as a viable alternative for the community, a form of Judaism in the nascent State of Israel that did not contain it.

It is perhaps one of the most interesting ironies of the modern study of Jewish mysticism that the most magisterial descriptions of messianism have been so strongly inclined to accept the rather popular understanding of the eschaton in sharp apocalyptic terms while the mystical models of messianism have been relegated to a secondary status. By limiting the rich and variegated constellation of messianic themes to apocalypticism, a phenomenological problem was created not only insofar as the understanding of the past was created, but also with regard to an understanding of the present. To formulate this problem in plain terms: not only are generic terms like messianism and Zionism rarely pure entities that can be separated so neatly, but also living persons are also usually far more complex beings. It is a fact that Ben-Gurion was stubborn in his refusal to separate Zionism from messianism. Indeed, he declared straightforwardly that the State of "Israel is the creation of the messianic faith... We need this faith in order to continue our struggle."<sup>73</sup> This is a far-reaching statement by the most important person connected with the creation of the State of Israel, and it sharply contradicts Scholem's understanding of Zionism.

Unlike the academic categories dealing with persons and writings in the past that cannot protest against over-simplification, the present developments in a complex phenomenon like Zionism and its activists involve many changes and sometimes deep contradictions. They

involve not only sincere dedication to an ideal, but also manipulation of the masses, some of whom are much more messianically oriented than they are Zionist. Purist approaches like those embraced by the distinguished Central European members of *Berit Shalom* are edifying from a scholarly point of view and, as pointed out at the beginning of this essay, as a citizen one may feel quite sympathetic with some of them. Nevertheless, Scholem himself understood the utopian elements manifested by this group, given the reactions of the Arabs to the Zionist enterprise.<sup>74</sup>

However, when the events moved in other directions, the question that should preoccupy a scholar—unlike a citizen—is first to understand those events and the motivations beyond them. To put it in even stronger terms: a Central European academic approach cannot but fail when it is applied to a situation in which Jews coming in the vast majority from a variety of countries from Eastern Europe, North Africa and parts of Asia, where messianic aspirations were much less concerned with the universalistic and sublime questions that haunted cultural Zionism stemming from European intellectuals, were the majority. As citizens, the academic elite in search of a little-Germany in Israel became alienated from the messianic expectations of the masses of Jews who were immigrating in to what they conceived of as being the promised land. Moreover, G.G. Scholem, has also become alienated from the liberal and progressive understanding of messianism proposed by 19<sup>th</sup> century figures inspired by the French revolution, and which, in their own way, were adopted, with changes, by Ben Gurion.<sup>75</sup> What Scholem's own understanding of the content of messianism in the future would be is an issue that he did not reveal.

I believe that there is an expression of this feeling of mutual alienation in the astonishing remark made by Ben-Gurion to the address by Scholem at the end of a difficult meeting he had with a small group of Israeli intellectuals, all professors at the Hebrew University, in 1961. They had come to see him in order to criticize the way in which he acted as a Prime Minister, and after hearing Scholem's views, he replied: "the project of your life is far away from me."<sup>76</sup> I wonder to what extent the Prime Minister was really aware of the details of Scholem's life-project, despite the fact that he was a voracious reader, including books on mysticism, especially Eastern one like Buddhism, and that he was also acquainted with contemporary scholarship on Kabbalah.<sup>77</sup> Scholem, to be sure, was a major figure known by then to every intellectual in Israel. Did Ben-Gurion know something not only about Scholem's works in general but also more specifically about his insistence on the separation between messianism and Zionism? Did Ben Gurion understand that Scholem's project, dealing

as it did with messianism, led him to an attempt to divorce it from the manner in which he understood his own life-project?

To be sure: Ben-Gurion also had serious problems with the attitude of other scholars from Scholem's entourage, like Jacob Talmon, the political thinker, Shlomo Avineri, an expert in the history of Zionism, and the philosopher Nathan Rotenstreich.<sup>78</sup> They too considered messianism—implicitly a form of apocalypse—a danger. Indeed, the latter became one of the initiators of a dissenting political group known as *Min ha-Yessod* that weakened his labor party. However, in no other case than Scholem's did Ben-Gurion express himself in such a general way about the life-project of any of those scholars and, I would say, never in such a brutal manner. And this happened only a few years after Ben Gurion, according to a certain testimony, had taken several days off in order to carefully read Scholem's book on Sabbatai Tzevi.<sup>79</sup>

The divergence between Scholem's categorical denial of the messianic cargo of Zionism versus Ben Gurion's gradual move toward a more messianic understanding of Israeli society, up to the point that he was ready to renounce his Zionism, undoubtedly constitutes a fascinating development. The alienation of the Israeli Prime Minister and the founding father of the Zionist state from a non-messianic Zionism, and his coming closer to some form of messianism,<sup>80</sup> versus the project of the prime scholar of messianism who remained a committed Zionist, though a cultural one, has much deeper roots than the specific political reason that caused the meeting between them. The two towering personalities represent, as mentioned above, two variants of a much wider messianic constellation of ideas: Ben Gurion was much closer to the socialist variant, of Russian extraction and inspired by the liberal understanding of messianism, and he was concerned with the Jewish people more than with its culture. Alternatively, Scholem was more concerned with Jewish culture than with the mass immigration of Jews to the State of Israel. For him the arrival of so many Jews who were neither cultural nor even political Zionists in the way he understood these terms, namely devoted European pioneers—*halutzim*—from a variety of non-European countries, was potentially a problem, since it might undermine the entire cultural project he envisioned.<sup>81</sup> As a political leader, however, Ben Gurion was concerned with building a national state on a specific soil, that would hopefully radiate, from the cultural and social point of view, to all the other nations, but this was, in his opinion, not only a matter of pure elite culture. That was his prophetic messianism, namely a utopia based on the visions of the prophets. Scholem, who did not like—at least formally speaking—Germany, was nevertheless concerned much more with recreating in his

neighborhood in Jerusalem a little cultural Germany,<sup>82</sup> though one gravitating around Jewish culture. He conceived of Zionism as a liberation from the exile by means of culture, including the revival of Hebrew, but was disillusioned, like another major Zionist figure Judah Magnes, with the forms that the concretization of political Zionism was taking.<sup>83</sup>

While Scholem perceived the divorce between messianism and Zionism to be a *sine qua non* for the success of the latter, Ben Gurion saw the marriage between the two as the only way to keep both alive. Ben Gurion could certainly mention in his *resumé* the establishment of the *Histadrut*—the powerful Trade Union of the Jewish Workers in the land of Israel—in 1919, being the head of the Jewish Agency in the thirties, and later on in 1948 his major contribution to the creation of a new State of Israel and its army. On the other hand, in a letter to Walter Benjamin, Scholem described his success at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem as the builder of a new school of scholars in matters of kabbalah.<sup>84</sup> However, without the former's political achievements, the later cultural achievements of the latter would have hardly been attainable and viable.

Let me point out the interesting irony that Scholem privileged the more popular form of messianism, apocalypticism, in the general economy of his late understanding of Jewish mysticism and then demanded that Zionism, which became a mass movement, should separate itself from the popular apocalyptic messianism that was portrayed by him as the only important form of messianism. In other words, the assumption that messianism means apocalypticism created in Scholem and his followers an apprehension concerning a historical crisis that might mentally endanger the Zionist project.

Last but not least: while Scholem dreamt in his youth that he was a Messiah,<sup>85</sup> he became more and more reticent regarding the role of messianism in present politics, Ben Gurion started his career as a pragmatic leader of Jewish workers, who became gradually fond of the role of messianism in what he conceived to be the consciousness and mission of the State of Israel. However, let me repeat that in his letters and messages, messianism is the fulfillment of the prophetic vision, not an apocalypse.

#### SUMMARY

Let me summarize: much of the cultural Zionist leadership in the land of Israel that created the intellectual basis for the State of Israel: a president of state, Zalman Shazar; a prime minister, David Ben Gurion; a minister of education, Ben-Zion Dinur; a Nobel-prize

winner, the distinguished author Sh. Y. Agnon; and a leading Israeli poet since the 1940s Uri Tzvi Greenberg, all increasingly turned toward the assumption that Zionism was close to messianism, while their contemporary and friend, Gershom Scholem, the eminent scholar of Jewish Messianism, and a distinguished Zionist, attempted to distinguish between the two as forcefully as possible. The political success in history created strong feelings, both in Ben Gurion and in his audience, that recent history was fulfilling the traditional messianic narrative.

In fact, I see here not only two different positions, and different indeed they are, but also a deep and reciprocal misunderstanding: Scholem wanted, practically, to reduce a much more polyvalent phenomenon, messianism, to one of its main forms, namely apocalypticism and thus divorce it from any concrete and present implication, while the other thinkers both in the Middle Ages and in modern times, wanted to expend the meaning of the term to other forms of eschatology, secular-socialistic-universalistic. By doing so, the others, including Ben-Gurion, acted in a manner that was, in my opinion, much more consistent with past Jewish traditions wherein the term messianism continually acquired new meanings.<sup>86</sup> Ben Gurion should be seen as both a political leader in the present, whose acts could be criticized by citizens, as well as a witness whose testimony about the messianic background of the creation of the State of Israel, should not be questioned, just as someone does not question the testimonies of the past. This double role of the prime minister complicates the understanding of his acts.

How should we understand Scholem's sustained attempt to keep messianism away from politics on the one hand, while dedicating his life-project to it on the other hand? Is this discrepancy a matter of inconsistency? The answer is quite difficult to give: Scholem, we should point out, was quite coherent in using the same meaning of messianism, in the two cases: i.e., in the way in which he understood the historical meaning of the "messianic idea" and in his fears as a citizen. In both cases he interpreted messianism as meaning basically apocalypticism, and his claim above that messianism did not change though it took different forms here again becomes relevant.

In short, Scholem denied or negated the existence of messianic dimensions in the activity of Israeli politicians and, and more generally, in Zionism as a mass movement. Alternatively, he attributed a strong interest in it to scholars of Jewish history as well as to present day mysticism. It is only the latter, as seen above, that performed, according to Scholem, miracles and wonders. In contrast, the politicians should work, according to both Scholem and Talmon, only with pragmatic and non-utopian designs. In a profound sense, we have here

an attempt at substituting traditional types of utopias with new, basically secular, ones, namely scholarship and culture. Yet, I wonder why the discontent with the success of political Zionism was so palpable among representatives of cultural Zionism. Two forms of redeeming the Jews, one by cultural activity and one by political activism, still confronted each other in 1960, thirteen years after the establishment of the independent State of Israel.

The question that may be asked is whether a scholar, and even more so a group of many scholars who are creating a school that deals centrally with messianism, are not also creating an intense messianic awareness? Can someone assume that by teaching messianism to students he/she does not incite messianic enthusiasm in some of them? Was Rivkah Shatz convinced by the messianic documents she studied with Scholem or from Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook's writings? Were not rightist thinkers or activists, like Prof. Joseph ben Shlomo, a philosopher by inclination who wrote a Ph. D. thesis on Rabbi Moses Cordovero's theosophy and taught kabbalah in universities in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and Geulah Cohen, a political rightist activist, both familiar with Scholem's oeuvre? Nor have Joseph Dan, the first incumbent of the Gershom Scholem chair of Kabbalah at the Hebrew University, nor Yehuda Liebes, its second incumbent, embraced Scholem's rather leftist propensities.

To be sure, I do not, as some scholars on the Israeli left do, accuse Scholem of inciting the right-wing messianism of the settlement-movement known as *Gush 'Emunim*,<sup>87</sup> or the Israeli politicians who support this group. That seems to me to be a gross exaggeration if not a total distortion of what has actually happened. What I wonder about, however, is the possible impact of the vast amount of messianic material that Scholem and the other scholars mentioned above, unearthed and so skillfully explained, on Scholem's own students, who become, in their turn, scholars of Sabbateanism and of Rabbi Abraham Yitzhaq ha-Kohen Kook's thought. That is to say, I wonder whether the rightist forms of messianism in the State of Israel could find better exponents than two professors of Jewish thought who were also former students of Scholem: R. Shatz-Uffenheimer and Joseph ben Shlomo, and to a lesser degree J. Dan. Both Scholem and Jacob Talmon spoke a lot about dialectics<sup>88</sup> that bring about a transformation of the initial utopian ideals and turn them into a harsh political totalitarianism that is related to what they called the "messianic idea."<sup>89</sup> They should have known that, "dialectically" speaking, their fascination with messianism as a phenomenon in the past, though solely part of an academic enterprise, may create a diametrically opposite pole in the present. After all, this is the nature of dialectics, if it is to exist at all. Therefore, Scholem's stand was not only marginalized

by some of the leading figures in Israeli cultural and political life, but even among his closest students and academic followers, his call for the stark dissociation between messianism and Zionism has been quite openly and emphatically rejected. This is quite a sad situation as I see it as a citizen—remember my initial remarks—but it is a quite understandable result that may provide some lessons for those who would like to learn from recent history.

Even when the exponent of the split between Zionism and messianism was a formidable authority as Scholem was, who was supported by the best minds in the humanity and social faculties of the Hebrew university in the early sixties, this view failed to have any influence on the aging though still powerful figure Ben Gurion. Deeds inspired by prophetic utopias—and Ben Gurion was an avid reader of the Bible—rather than arcane, if learned, words and texts are what counted in a mass movement. Despite the range of Scholem's staggering achievements as a scholar of Jewish messianism and his recognition in the international scholarly community he did not persuade Ben Gurion regarding the danger implicit in the use of the language of messianism for political purposes.<sup>90</sup> Independent of what the answer offered by Scholem or other scholars to the question whether Zionism is messianism or not may be (a question that cannot be answered, historically speaking, by resorting to a yes or no), what nevertheless remains is whether the involvement of scholars in politics—a salutary one in principle in my opinion—does not affect their understanding of the topics they deal with in their scholarship, especially in humanities and in social studies.

Though I am skeptical of the possibility of pure and totally detached scholarship, I am also not convinced by the historicist picture offered by writers like Edward Said and his disciples, about the deterministic nature of the background for the picture given by scholars. Both extreme stands are, in my opinion, false. However, having said this, let me add that in the cases mentioned above we do not deal with scholarship that has been produced by non-political scholars, but by scholars actively involved in political parties, whose lives have been directly shaped by dramatic decisions that influenced their opinions on issues that are very complex: Scholem by his cultural Zionism and the Holocaust, Jacob Talmon by the specter of communist totalitarianism.

So, let me return to the question: did the political opinions of the scholars discussed above color their scholarship on a topic that is so related to their political vision? My answer is definitively yes: Scholem refused to present a more diversified picture of messianism, always staying close to the concept of the “messianic idea,” despite its existence in the medieval sources he dealt with in a variety of different forms. Rather than recognize the diversity connected with the notion

of messianism and the messianic, he insisted on one of its forms, apocalypse, as the constant common denominator. This conceptual imposition is even more evident given the strong and well-known propensity by Scholem to emphasize pluralism in the context of his non-essentialist understanding of Judaism in general.<sup>91</sup> What was evident for him in the case of Judaism as a non-essential religious phenomenon was not equally evident in the case of “the idea of messianism.” Were this “idea” understood as referring to a variety of both apocalyptic and nonapocalyptic views, the danger of messianism in the present could plausibly be treated in a different manner. After all, Ben Gurion never resorted to apocalyptic imagery in his written discussions of messianism or in his political propaganda.

In other words, the sequel of the Holocaust and the creation of the state of Israel galvanized the interest in messianism as a field of research and also as a political notion. The attempt to establish a dialogue between the two shows how difficult it is to transcend one’s peculiar interest in the messianic constellation of ideas. The richness of this constellation of ideas facilitated its perennial influence in changing circumstances, but also generated misunderstandings when the academicians encountered political praxis.

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#### NOTES

1. See, e.g., David Biale, *Gershom Scholem, Kabbalah and Counter-History* (Cambridge, MA, 1982), pp. 71–93; Joseph Dan, “Gershom Scholem and Jewish Messianism,” in *Gershom Scholem, The Man and His Work*, (ed.) Paul Mendes-Flohr, (Albany, 1994), pp. 73–85; or more recently, Pierre Bouretz, *Témoins du futur, philosophie et messianisme* (Paris, 2003), especially ch. 4.

2. See my *Messianic Mystics* (New Haven, 1998); and idem, “Subversive Catalysts: Gnosticism and Messianism in Gershom Scholem’s View of Jewish Mysticism,” in *The Jewish Past Revisited: Reflections on Modern Jewish Historians*, edited by David N. Myers and David B. Ruderman (New Haven, 1998), pp. 39–76.

3. “Sabbatai Tzevi and Sabbateanism in the World of the Modern Hebrew Literature,” *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought*, Vol. 18 (2001), pp. 105–36 (Hebrew).

4. *Between Zionism and Judaism: The Radical Circle in Brith Shalom, 1925-1933* (Leiden, 2002).

5. *Messiah Rides a Tank, Public Thought Between the Sinai Campaign and the Yom Kippur War 1955-1975* (Tel Aviv, 2002) (Hebrew).

6. "Messianism, Antinomianism and the Power of Religious Zionism, the Case of the 'Underground,'" in *The Religious Zionism: An Era of Change, Studies in the Memory of Zvulun Hammer*, edited by Ayelet Bartal and Yehiel Qimhi (Jerusalem, 2004), pp. 323–63 (Hebrew).

7. David Ohana, *Messianism and Mamlachtiut, Ben-Gurion and the Intellectuals, Between Political Vision and Political Theology* (Beersheba, 2003) (Hebrew).

8. Gershom Scholem, *Devarim be-Go* (Tel Aviv, 1976) (Hebrew); idem, *'Od Davar, Explications and Implications* (Tel Aviv, 1989) (Hebrew); and idem, *Continuity and Rebellion, Gershom Scholem in Speech and Dialogue* (Tel Aviv, 1994) (Hebrew). Only a part of the material found in these collections has been translated into English. See, e.g., *On the Possibility of Jewish Mysticism in Our Time and Other Essays*, (ed.) Abraham Shapira, tr. Jonathan Chipman (Philadelphia, 1997). It should be pointed out that only a small percentage of the discussions found in these Hebrew collections has been integrated into the analyses of Scholem's approach to messianism.

9. See, e.g., *Continuity and Rebellion*, p. 110.

10. Steven Aschheim, *Scholem, Arendt, Klemperer: Intimate Chronicles in Turbulent Times* (Bloomington, 1999), pp. 17–8.

11. "Two Approaches to the Messianic Idea in the Middle Ages," *'Od Davar*, p. 240.

12. The issue of the remaining volumes on documents about messianism that have still not been published is a complex story that needs a special investigation.

13. See, e.g., Zalman Shazar, *The Story of Shabbetay Zevi by R. Leib ben R. Ozer* (Jerusalem, 1978), edited by Shlomo Zucker and Rivka Plesser (Hebrew); idem, *Ha-Tiqvah li-Shenat T"Q* (Jerusalem, 1970) (Hebrew); and idem, "The Longings for Redemption and the Idea of Aliyah in Hasidism," *Sefer ha-Besht*, (ed.) Judah Leib Maimon (Jerusalem, 1960), pp. 93–106 (Hebrew).

14. David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past, European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History* (New York, 1995), pp. 129–50. Also see Joseph Klausner, *The Messianic Idea in Israel, From its Beginning to the Completion of the Mishnah* (New York, 1955); and idem, *Jesus of Nazareth; His Life, Times and Teaching* (New York, 1925).

15. Jacob Talmon, *Political Messianism: The Romantic Phase* (London, 1960).

16. However, he had been a student in Jerusalem as a young man.

17. See *'Od Davar*, p. 231.

18. See his *Faith and History: A Comparison of Christian and Modern Views of History* (New York, 1949), p. 6. See also *ibid*, p. 203.

19. See the Hebrew translation of the letter sent to F. Rosenzweig, printed in *'Od Davar*, pp. 59–60. This letter drew a good deal of scholarly attention. See, e.g., Ohana, *Messianism and Mamlachtiut*, pp. 369–71.

20. See his *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis*, (ed.) Werner J. Dannhauser (New York, 1976), p. 46.

21. The particularistic stand is quite obvious, and is coupled by many other statements dealing with an organic vision of the Jewish communities and their history. See Israel Jacob Yuval, "Yitzhak Baer and the Search of Authentic Judaism," in *The Jewish Past Revisited: Reflections on Modern Jewish Historians*, edited by David N. Myers and David B. Ruderman (New Haven, 1998), pp. 77–87.

22. *Mehgarim ve-Masot be-Toldot 'Am Israel* (Jerusalem, 1986), Vol. I, p. 16 (Hebrew). The passage is part of an article originally printed in 1938.

23. See Moshe Idel, "That Wondrous, Occult Power': Some Reflections on Modern Perceptions of Jewish History," *Studia Judaica*, Vol. 7 (1998), pp. 57–70.

24. See David N. Myers, "Between the Diaspora and Zion: History, Memory and Jerusalem Scholars," in *The Jewish Past Revisited: Reflections on Modern Jewish Historians*, edited by David N. Myers and David B. Ruderman (New Haven, London, 1998), p. 92.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 92–3.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

27. See n 19 above.

28. This is an expression from *The Song of Songs*, 5:10, where the beloved describes her lover.

29. Literally: I did not merit.

30. P. 12. See also the equally enthusiastic description of Berl found in Gershom Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem, Memories of My Youth*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York, 1980), p. 130; and also Noam Zadoff, "The Debate between Baruch Kurzweil and Gershom Scholem on the Research of Sabbateanism," *Kabbalah*, Vol. 16 (2005), pp. 310–11 (Hebrew).

31. See also Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem*, p. 160.

32. See Israel Colat, "Zionism and Messianism," in *Messianism and Eschatology*, (ed.) Z. Baras (Jerusalem, 1983), pp. 426–27 (Hebrew).

33. *Midrashei Ge'ulah*, p. 13. Emphasis is added.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 14. Emphasis is added.

35. *Messianism and Mamlachtiut*, passim.

36. For the contribution of religious movements to Zionism from a messianic perspective see: Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism and Religious Radicalism*, translators Michael Swirsky and Jonathan Chipman (Chicago, 1996); Arie Morgenstern, *Messianism and the Settlement of Eretz-Israel* (Jerusalem, 1985) (Hebrew); idem, *Mysticism and Messianism, From Luzzatto to the Vilna Gaon* (Jerusalem, 1999) (Hebrew); Dov Schwartz, *Challenge and Crisis in Rabbi Kook's Circle* (Tel Aviv, 2001), pp. 17–138 (Hebrew); idem, *Religious Zionism between Logic and Messianism* (Tel Aviv, 1999) (Hebrew); and Jonathan Garb, "Messianism, Antinomianism and the Power of Religious Zionism," in Ashen Cohen (ed.), *Religious Zionism: A Collection of Articles in Memory of Zevulun Hammer* (Jerusalem, 2004), pp. 323–363 [in Hebrew].

37. See exactly the same expression "*'ani sholel*" many years later, in an interview given in 1974 to Zeev Galili, and printed in *Continuity and*

*Rebellion, Gershom Scholem in Speech and Dialogue*, (ed.) Avraham Shapira (Tel Aviv, 1997), p. 56.

38. Scholem, *‘Od Davar* (1929), pp. 88–9 translated and discussed in D. Biale, *Gershom Scholem*, pp. 100–2.

39. See Nathan Rotenstreich, “Gershom Scholem’s Conception of Jewish Nationalism,” in *Gershom Scholem, The Man and His Work*, (ed.) Paul Mendes-Flohr (Albany, 1994), pp. 113–4 and S. Werses, “Sabbatai Tzevi and Sabbateanism in the World of Modern Literature,” in *Studies in Hebrew Literature*, Vol 18 (2001), pp. 105–6 [in Hebrew].

40. *Continuity and Rebellion, Gershom Scholem in Speech and Dialogue*, p. 18; and S. Ratzbi’s book mentioned above in n 4.

41. *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 56–7.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 31 in an interview given in 1970 to the writer Ehud ben Ezer.

43. Gershom Scholem, *Researches in Sabbateanism*, (ed.) Yehuda Liebes (Tel Aviv, 1991) (Hebrew); and *Studies and Texts Concerning the History of Sabbetianism and its Metamorphoses* (Jerusalem, 1974) (Hebrew).

44. Gershom Scholem, *Be-‘Iqevot Mashiah* (Jerusalem, 1944) (Hebrew); and *The Dreams of the Sabbatean R. Mordecai Ashkenazi, A Follower of Shabbetai Zevi* (NP, 1938), (Hebrew).

45. *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*.

46. See *Kabbalah* (New York, 1987), pp. 391–454.

47. *The Messianic Idea in Jewish Thought: A Study Conference in Honour of the Eightieth Birth-Day of Gershom Scholem* (Jerusalem, 1990) (Hebrew).

48. *‘Od Davar*, p. 240. See also his concluding remarks in *The Messianic Idea in Jewish Thought*, p. 256.

49. On the different meanings of apocalypse, apocalypticism and apocalyptic see John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination, An Introduction in the Jewish Matrix of Christianity* (New York, 1987), pp. 1–17; Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia, 1979) Revised Edition, pp. 4–6; and for the Christian Middle Ages see Bernard McGinn, *Apocalypticism in the Western Tradition* (Variorum, 1994), essays I and II; and now the introduction of the editors, John J. Collins, Bernard McGinn and Stephen Stein, to the three volumes of the *Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism* (New York, 1998), pp. IX–XIII. See also, Joshua Bloch, *On the Apocalyptic in Judaism* (Philadelphia, 1952). For the apocalyptic understanding of the Mahdi concept consult the monograph of Abdul Abdulhussein Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism, The Idea of the Mahdi in Twelver Shi‘ism* (Albany, 1981).

50. *The Messianic Idea*, p. 4. See also *ibid.*, p. 8. Another interesting point made by Scholem in connection to apocalypticism is its secretive nature, which differs from the more exoteric type of prophetic discourse. See *ibid.*, pp. 6–7. In my opinion, in Scholem’s definition of messianism the apocalyptic element, as he understood it, is already presupposed as is evident, and therefore his definition is—to a certain extent—tautological. It should be mentioned that Scholem seldom uses the term ‘apocalyptic’

in the more classical usage of the term as revelation in his *Kabbalah*, pp. 10–11.

51. *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, pp. 7–8. See also *ibid.*, p. 38.

52. Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, p. 4; and see also *idem*, *Kabbalah*, pp. 68, 71–2.

53. See, however, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, pp. 47–8 where he recognizes explicitly that the Lurianic theory of redemption is no more catastrophic.

54. Cf. his “Scholem: Unhistorical or Jewish Gnosticism,” in *Gershom Scholem*, (ed.) H. Bloom (New York, 1987), p. 217. See also, D. Biale, *Gershom Scholem, Kabbalah and Counter-History*, pp. 154, 174.

55. See Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, p. 194.

56. *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, p. VIII. On dialectics in Scholem see below n 88.

57. Tishby’s strong propensity for messianism in kabbalistic and hasidic literature was highlighted by Mordekhai Pachter in a lecture that he delivered in Tishby’s memory several years ago but that has not yet been published. Let me also point out that Rivka Shatz-Uffenheimer had a special interest in messianism to judge from the content of the collection of her studies printed as *The Messianic Idea from the Expulsion from Spain* (Jerusalem, 2005) (Hebrew). Nota Bene the singular form of the “Messianic Idea”, which is reminiscent of Scholem’s own resort to the singular. See also the resort to the singular by R.J. Zwi Weblowsky in the text printed in Ohana, *Messianism and Mamlachtiut*, pp. 383–4.

58. See Isaiah Tishby, “The Messianic Idea and Messianic Trends in the Growth of Hasidism” *Zion*, Vol. 32 (1967), pp. 1–45 (Hebrew); and Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, pp. 176–202.

59. See Yehuda Liebes, *On Sabbateism and its Kabbalah, Collected Essays* (Jerusalem, 1995) (Hebrew). For spiritual redemption in Sabbateanism see also *idem*, *Studies in Jewish Myth and Jewish Messianism*, trans. B. Stein (Albany, 1993), pp. 93–106; and Elliot R. Wolfson, “The Engenderment of Messianic Politics,” in *Toward the Millennium, Messianic Expectations from the Bible to Waco*, edited by Peter Schaefer and Mark R. Cohen (Leiden, 1998), pp. 216–7.

60. See the newspaper *Neqqudah*, No. 145 (1990), pp. 24–8 (Hebrew), reprinted in Ohana, *Messianism and Mamlachtiut*, pp. 410–9.

61. D. Schwartz, *Challenge and Crisis in Rabbi Kook’s Circle*, pp. 17–138 (Hebrew). See also, Stephen Sharot, *Messianism, Mysticism, and Magic, A Social Analysis of Jewish Religious Movements* (Chapel Hill, 1982), pp. 225–37.

62. See my *Messianic Mystics*, pp. 65–6.

63. For the metamorphosis of what I call natural “messianism” from Abulafia to Spinoza and Zionism see Idel, *Messianic Mystics*, pp. 80–2.

64. See also *ibid.*, pp. 272–3.

65. Cf. Ohana, *Messianism and Mamlachtiut*, p. 335.

66. See Ohana, *ibid.*, p. 342–6, especially p. 346. Ben-Gurion’s confession that he had a messianic belief, whatever its content may be, is

well-known. See *ibid.*, p. 152. See especially S. Avineri's description of Ben Gurion as "a crystal of the messianic idea." *Ibid.*, p. 344.

67. See Ohana, *ibid.*, pp. 420–28.

68. "Zionism and Messianism," pp. 419–32.

69. On the controversy between Kurzweil and Scholem's school see David N. Myers, "The Scholem-Kurzweil Debate and Modern Jewish Historiosophy," *Modern Judaism*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1986), pp. 261–86, and Noam Zadoff, "The Debate between Baruch Kurzweil and Gershom Scholem on the Research of Sabbateanism," in *Kabbalah*, Vol. 16 (2007), pp. 299–360 [in Hebrew].

70. "Jewish National Movement: A Sociological Analysis," in his *Emanicipation and Assimilation, Studies in Modern Jewish History* (Farnborough, Hants, 1972), p. 130, quoted in Sharot, *Messianism, Mysticism, and Magic*, p. 218. See also, in more general terms, Sharot, *ibid.*, pp. 218–24.

71. See Idel, *Messianic Mystics*, pp. 321–3.

72. See, e.g., Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi, the Mystical Messiah*, trans. R. J. Z. Werblowsky (Princeton, 1973), p. XII; idem, *Continuity and Rebellion*, p. 30; and in his letter to R.J. Zwi Werblowsky, following the latter's critique of Scholem's views of Sabbateanism as found in the Hebrew original printed in 1957, that has been printed anonymously in his *'Od Davar*, p. 104. On this issue see, in addition, Jacob Taubes, "The Price of Messianism," *Journal of Jewish Studies*, Vol. 33 (1982), pp. 595–600; and Thomas Macho, "Zur Frage nach dem Preis Messianismus," in *Gershom Scholem, Literatur und Rhetorik*, edited by Stephane Mosès und Sigrid Weigel (Koeln, 2000), pp. 133–51.

73. See Ohana, *Messianism and Mamlachtiut*, p. 353.

74. See *Continuity and Rebellion*, p. 32.

75. See Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, pp. 37–8.

76. Ohana, *Messianism and Mamlachtiut*, p. 201: *Mif'al hayyiekhah rahog mimmeni*.

77. See now Ben Gurion's three letters addressed to kabbalists early in the fifties, printed by Michael Laitman, *The Future Generation* (Jerusalem, 2006), pp. 431–3 (Hebrew).

78. See Ohana, *Messianism and Mamlachtiut*, pp. 306–33, where the exchange of letters dealing with Messianism, between Ben Gurion on the one hand, and Nathan Rotenstreich, Jacob Talmon and Shlomo Avineri, on the other, has been printed for the first time.

79. See Steven Schwartzchild, "Gershom Scholem's Recent Writings," *Judaism*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1961), p. 72.

80. See Ohana, *Messianism and Mamlachtiut*, pp. 343–4.

81. See his interview with David Biale, in *Continuity and Rebellion*, p. 109.

82. On the use of the German language in Scholem's circle of academic acquaintances see Noam Zadoff, "'Nicht Imaginaere Portraits': The Pilegish Circle – Comradship and Satire at the Hebrew University," *Cathedra*, Vol. 126 (2007), pp. 67–82 (Hebrew).

83. Susan A. Handelman, *Fragments of Redemption, Jewish Thought & Literary Theory in Benjamin, Scholem, & Levinas* (Bloomington, 1991), pp. 87–8.

84. On Scholem's academic school see Idel, "Kabbalah-research; from monochromatism to polymorphism," *Studia Judaica*, Vol. 8 (1999), pp. 15–46; and idem, "Academic studies of Kabbalah in Israel, 1923–1998; a short survey," *ibid.*, pp. 91–114.

85. See above, n 10.

86. Both Scholem and Talmon were frightened by the Nazi and Communist misuse of messianism. For more on the latter's view see his *Political Messianism: The Romantic Phase*.

87. Scholem explicitly described this movement as messianic. See *Continuity and Rebellion*, p. 111 and Ohana, *Messianism and Mamlachtiut*, p. 379.

88. See especially Scholem, *Sabbatai Ševi*, pp. X–XI, and again in *Continuity and Rebellion*, p. 110, where Scholem speaks about the manner in which Arab nationalism emerged "dialectically" out of the Jewish one. See also Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem*, p. 166 and above n 56.

89. See J. Talmon's assumption that there is a "dibbuq with the messianic idea," namely an obsession with the messianic idea, in Ohana, *Messianism and Mamlachtiut*, p. 329. See also the resort to the term *styhyah*, namely an uncontrollable drive related to eschatology, in Zionism, *ibid.*, p. 315, already in 1957.

90. For the conscious resort to messianic, though not apocalyptic language by Ben Gurion's labor party as part of his election campaigns, see the view of S. Avineri, adduced in Ohana, *Messianism and Mamlachtiut*, pp. 345–6.

91. See, e.g., Scholem, *Sabbatai Ševi*, p. XI; and *Continuity and Rebellion*, p. 36.