

# Java and Jewish History

## *Exile and Revival*

**1) Talmud Sanhedrin 110** Samuel said: Ten men came and sat down before him [sc. the prophet]. Said he to them, 'Return and repent.' They answered, 'If a master sells his slave, or a husband divorces his wife, — has one a claim upon the other?

2) Psalm 137 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. Upon the willows in the midst thereof we hanged up our harps. For there they that led us captive asked of us words of song, and our tormentors asked of us mirth: 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.' How shall we sing the song of Hashem in a foreign land?

3) ) **Jeremiah 29:1** Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders of the captivity, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon after that Jeconiah the king, and the queen-mother, and the officers, and the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the craftsmen, and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem; by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiyah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, saying:

Thus says Hashem of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all the captivity, whom I have caused to be carried away captive from Jerusalem unto Babylon:

Build yourselves houses, and dwell in them, and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; take wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there, and be not diminished. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto Hashem for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace. For thus says Hashem of hosts, the God of Israel: Let not your prophets that are in the midst of you, and your diviners, beguile you, neither hearken to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely unto you in My name; I have not sent them, says Hashem. For thus says Hashem: After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will remember you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says Hashem, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. And you shall call upon Me, and go, and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And you shall seek Me, and find Me, when you shall search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, says Hashem, and I will turn your captivity, and gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, says

Hashem; and I will bring you back unto the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

4) I am Kurash [ "Cyrus" ], King of the World, Great King, Legitimate King, King of Babilani, King of Kiengir and Akkade, King of the four rims of the earth, Son of Kanbujiya, Great King, King of Hakhamanish, Grandson of Kurash, Great king, King of Hakhamanish, descendant of Chishpish, Great king, King of



Hakhamanish, of a family which always exercised kingship; whose rule Bel and Nebo love, whom they want as king to please their hearts. When I entered Babilani as a friend and when I established the seat of the government in the palace of the ruler under jubilation and rejoicing, Marduk, the great lord, induced the

magnanimous inhabitants of Babilani to love me, and I was daily endeavoring to worship him.... As to the region from as far as Assura and Susa, Akkade, Eshnunna, the towns Zamban, Me-turnu, Der as well as the region of the Gutians, I returned to these sacred cities on the other side of the Tigris the sanctuaries of which have been ruins for a long time, the images which used to live therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries. I also gathered all their former inhabitants and returned them to their habitations. Furthermore, I resettled upon the command of Marduk, the great lord, all the gods of Kiengir and Akkade whom Nabonidus had brought into Babilani to the anger of the lord of the gods, unharmed, in their former temples, the places which make them happy

5) **Ezra 1** NOW IN the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of Hashem by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, Hashem stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying: "Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth hath Hashem, the God of heaven, given me; and He hath charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all His people--his God be with him--let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of Hashem, the God of Israel, He is the God who is in Jerusalem. And whosoever is left, in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill-offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.' Then rose up the heads of fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, even all whose spirit God had stirred to go up to build the house of Hashem which is in Jerusalem. And all they that were round about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered. Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of Hashem, which

Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods

6) Shir haShirim 5:2-6 I sleep, but my heart waketh; Hark! my beloved knocketh: 'Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, my locks with the drops of the night.'

I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my heart was moved for him.

I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with flowing myrrh, upon the handles of the bar.

I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had turned away, and was gone.

My soul failed me when he spoke. I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.

#### **7) Kuzari 2:23-24**

23. Al Khazari: If this be so, thou fallest short of the duty laid down in thy law, by not endeavouring to reach that place, and making it thy abode in life and death, although thou sayest: 'Have mercy on Zion, for it is the house of our life,' and believest that the Shekhinah will return thither. And had it no other preference than that the Shekhinah dwelt there five hundred years, this is sufficient reason for men's souls to retire thither and find purification there, as happens near the abodes of the pious and the prophets. Is it not 'the gate of heaven'? All nations agree on this point. Christians believe that the souls are gathered there and then lifted up to heaven. Islām teaches that it is the place of the ascent, and that prophets are caused to ascend from there to heaven, and, further, that it is the place of gathering on the day of Resurrection. Everybody turns to it in prayer and visits it in pilgrimage. Thy bowing and kneeling in the direction of it is either mere appearance or thoughtless worship. Yet your first forefathers chose it as an abode in preference to their birth-places, and lived there as strangers, rather than as citizens in their own country. This they did even at a time when the Shekhinah was yet visible, but the country was full of unchastity, impurity, and idolatry. Your fathers, however, had no other desire than to remain in it. Neither did they leave it in times of dearth and famine except by God's permission. Finally, they directed their bones to be buried there.

24. The Rabbi: This is a severe reproach, O king of the Khazars. It is the sin which kept the divine promise with regard to the second Temple, viz.: Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion' (Zech. ii. 10), from being fulfilled. Divine Providence was ready to restore everything as it had been at first, if they had all willingly consented to return. But only a part was ready to do so, whilst the majority and the aristocracy remained in Babylon, preferring dependence and slavery, and unwilling to leave their houses and their affairs. An allusion to them might be found in the enigmatic words of Solomon: I sleep, but my heart waketh (Song v. 2-4). He designates the exile by sleep, and the continuance of prophecy among them by the wakefulness of the heart. 'It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh' means God's call to return; 'My head is filled with dew' alludes to the Shekhinah which emerged from the shadow of the Temple. The words: 'I have put off my coat,' refer to the people's slothfulness in consenting to return. The sentence: 'My beloved stretcheth forth his hand through the opening' may be interpreted as the urgent call of Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Prophets, until a portion of the people grudgingly responded to their invitation. In accordance with their mean mind they did not receive full measure. Divine Providence only gives man as much as he is prepared to receive; if his receptive capacity be small, he obtains little, and much if it be great. Were we prepared to meet the God of our forefathers with a pure mind, we should find the same salvation as our fathers did in Egypt. If we say: 'Worship his holy hill--worship at His footstool--He who restoreth His glory to Zion' (Ps. xcix. 9, 5), and other words, this is but as the chattering of the starling and the nightingale. We do not realise what we say by this sentence, nor others, as thou rightly observest, O Prince of the Khazars.

8) Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to have the oversight of the work of the house of the LORD. Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, and Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to have the oversight of the workmen in the house of God; the sons of Henadad also, with their sons and their brethren the Levites. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the direction of David king of Israel.

And they sang one to another in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD: 'for He is

good, for His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel.' And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, the old men that had seen the first house standing on its foundation, wept with a loud voice, when this house was before their eyes; and many shouted aloud for joy; so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people; for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off. (Ezra 3)